

American Gangster Time

Elvis Costello

One, two, three, four

Somewhere downtown a pretty girl kneels
Offers her soft lips and a handful of pills
Peels off her dress and then the rest of her skills
It buys what she wants and the rest she just steals

He speaks between deep swallows of rum
While her head is beating like a big bass drum
And she wishes he were mute and not just dumb
When the trick asked her quick, "Did you come?"

It's a drag
Saluting that starry rag
I'd rather go blind
For speaking my mind
Or use it just like a gag
So raise it in anger
Just let it hang
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He sits back and starts to invent
All about some Saigon correspondent
"'Til the carbine fell silent and spent
I never knew it could be so eloquent"

Next week there'll be some fashionable new sin
For each harlot and each Puritan
Pull off their wings stick them on a pin
And just watch the money roll in

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Saluting that starry rag
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For speaking my mind
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What you got hidden up your sleeve?
The tracks of the train that were bidding you to leave
When they say that you should flatter to deceive
Don't count on any reprieve

The hands of the helpless are raised
Your dead little secrets are praised
The people stand dumbstruck and dazed
By the inches that you have erased

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American gangster time
Committing the perfect crime
In American Gangster Time

Here we go
Bye bye
American Gangster Time