BAD INFLUENCE

by

David Koepp

April 17, 1989

1 EXT DESERT HIGHWAY DAY 1

The original Road to Nowhere. Sand, blacktop, dead animals.

A GAS STATION.

The sign hangs at an angle, sunburned and tired like everything else. Inside the office, a GIRL of about fifteen sits with her feet on the desk, her cutoff jeans revealing a shapely young pair of tanned legs. She watches a game show raptly.

From outside comes the WHINE of a motorcycle engine. The Girl looks up.

The motorcycle pulls into the parking lot and stops in front of one of the pumps.

The Girl squints out the window at her customer.

ALEX, about twenty-six, gets off the bike and turns around. He is drop-dead handsome. "Rough" is the best way to describe Alex's looks, rough like a diamond. He's deeply tanned, roundly muscled, so perfect he's flawed. A Rogue.

The Girl comes out of the office, openly admiring his physique.

GIRL
What can I do for 'ya?

Alex looks up and grins disarmingly.

ALEX
Got a john?

GIRL
Through the office. Fill 'er up?

ALEX
Yeah.

Alex goes into the office. The Girl watches as he goes, then tears herself away to pull the nozzle off the gas pump.

She looks back. Through the window, she sees Alex from behind as he goes into the bathroom. She bites her lip.

CUT TO:

2 INT STATION DAY 2

ALEX runs water over his face in the bathroom and regards himself in the mirror.

In the corner of the mirror, he can see through the open bathroom door and into the station's office. A cash register is on the counter.

He turns and walks into the office. The cash register drawer is hanging open slightly -- greenbacks inside.

Looking quickly out the window, he sees the GIRL bent over the motorcycle. He pulls the drawer open a little further and runs his hand over the bills.

He settles on a single ten and slips it into his pocket.

CUT TO:

3 EXT GAS STATION DAY 3

The GIRL wipes her hands, turns to ALEX as he comes back outside.

GIRL
I'm goin' on that show, you know.

ALEX
Show?

GIRL
Game show. On the tube.

ALEX
Yeah? When?

GIRL
Don't know yet. Gotta be pretty soon. I send in my card every week. Six fifty-two for the gas.

Alex pulls the ten out of his pocket and gives it to the Girl.

ALEX
Keep it.

GIRL
(impressed)
Where're you from? Not from around here, that's for damn sure.

ALEX
No. Not from around here.

He gets on the bike.

GIRL
So, you -- uh -- you wanna stick around for a while? I could close up.

ALEX
Sorry. Can't.

GIRL
Too bad.

He kicks the bike to life and flashes a wide, spectacular grin.

ALEX
See you on the show.

He ROARS away. She watches him go.

CUT TO:

4 EXT LOS ANGELES DAY 4

Downtown. Buildings, freeways, smog.

CUT TO:

5 INT A RECEPTION AREA DAY 5

An incredibly busy place. WORKERS scamper officiously in and out past the RECEPTIONIST, who monitors the BEEPS and WHISTLES of a busy phone system. A sign behind her announces the "EuroPacific Funds Management Corp."

RECEPTIONIST
EuroPacific, please hold.
(another line)
EuroPacific, please hold.
(another line)
EuroPacific, good morning. Mr. Boll? One moment.

She punches a button.

CUT TO:

6 INT MICHAEL BOLL'S OFFICE DAY 6

LESLIE is about thirty-five, earthy, wearing a blousy cotton dress and large, bizarre earrings. There's an openness in Leslie's face; she exudes warmth and sincerity.

Right now she's sitting at a large computer terminal -- uptight. She looks at her BUZZING phone in annoyance and answers it.

LESLIE
Michael Boll's office. Um, can he call you back? Thanks.

She hangs up and looks at the computer in frustration.

LESLIE (cont.)
(calling into the back office)
Michael? I still can't find it!

CUT TO:

7 INT BATHROOM DAY 7

MICHAEL BOLL is in his late twenties, conventionally handsome, bespectacled. Most striking is his careful grooming -- his natty suit and close-cropped hair give an impression of order and consistency.

Right now he looks ill -- pale, sweaty, fragile. He splashes water over his face and studies himself in the mirror, trying to gain composure.

MICHAEL
(calling out)
Just a second!
(a mumble)
I will not be sick. I will not be sick.

He takes a deep breath, steels himself, and opens the door.

CUT TO:

8 INT MICHAEL'S OFFICE DAY 8

His office is that of a busy middle level executive. Everywhere are the trappings of work -- stacks of computer forms, heavy bound reports -- but nowhere are signs of personality or an outside life.

MICHAEL strides through into the outer office purposefully and approaches LESLIE.

MICHAEL
Did you run a directory?

LESLIE
Twice. It's just gone.

MICHAEL
Try an X tree.

LESLIE
Um -- a what?

MICHAEL
An X tree. It shows everything in the whole system.

LESLIE
(news to her)
Oh.

MICHAEL
Leslie, do you read the manuals I put on your desk?

LESLIE
I intend to.

MICHAEL
Let me try it.

She moves aside and he types in a few commands, attacking the keyboard like Beethoven.

LESLIE
I hate computers. My ex-husband said computers were --

MICHAEL
It is gone. You must have erased it. It's not in the system.

LESLIE
I didn't! Honestly!

MICHAEL
Well, it's not here.

LESLIE
It wasn't me! Swear to God!

MICHAEL
(struck by a thought)
Fenwick.

He strides out of the office briskly.

CUT TO:

9 INT ANOTHER OFFICE DAY 9

MICHAEL comes into an outer office and approaches BRITT, a secretary, businesslike as hell. As Michael speaks to her, his tone rises in anger and panic.

MICHAEL
I have to see Fenwick.

BRITT
He's in a meeting, Michael.

MICHAEL
The third quarter schedule forty-seven -- it's gone. Off the computer.

BRITT
Well, I don't have it.

MICHAEL
It had seventy million in currency purchases outlined and it's gone. The only people who have access to that file are you, me, and --

The door to the office behind Britt opens and FENWICK steps out. Fenwick is in his late twenties -- handsome, expensive suit, slicked back hair. He puts a file on the desk in front of Britt.

FENWICK
What's going on?

MICHAEL
Put it back.

FENWICK
Put what back?

MICHAEL
The schedule forty-seven. It's gone. I have to trade from it Monday morning and I can't possibly do another one by then. Just put it back.

FENWICK
(sympathetic)
Look, Michael, if you didn't get the forty-seven done in time, I'm sure I can get Howard to pull me off what I'm doing and give you a hand. Why don't I go up and talk to him and --

MICHAEL
You sabotaged me, you son of a bitch. You're trying to make me look bad in front of Howard, and we both know why. Just put it back!

FENWICK
(soft, hard)
Look -- I don't know what you're talking about and I'm in a meeting.

He turns and goes back into his office, closing the door behind him. Michael watches him go, powerless.

CUT TO:

10 INT MICHAEL'S OUTER OFFICE DAY 10

MICHAEL returns to his office. LESLIE is at the outer desk.

LESLIE
Did you find it?

MICHAEL
No calls, okay?

He heads into his office.

LESLIE
Michael -- Michael, your --

But he closes the door on her.

CUT TO:

11 INT MICHAEL'S OFFICE DAY 11

MICHAEL leans against the closed door, visibly drained. Someone in the office SPEAKS and he jumps a foot.

RUTH
Forget it was Thursday?

Michael looks over at RUTH FIELDING, mid-twenties, blonde, pretty in a boring sort of way. She is impeccably dressed in a conservative business suit, not really much different from Michael's. A briefcase hovers at her side like a small child.

MICHAEL
You scared me.

RUTH
Sorry. Are you ready for lunch? I have to get back.

MICHAEL
Lunch? Oh, God.

RUTH
You're not going to cancel?

MICHAEL
I'm not -- feeling very well.

RUTH
(checks her watch)
That's fine.
(realizing)
I mean -- it's not fine that you're sick. But I should work through lunch.

She goes to him and touches his forehead tenderly.

RUTH (cont.)
You are hot. Think you'll feel up to dinner with my parents tomorrow?

MICHAEL
Yes. Of course. I want to.

RUTH
I know they're kind of a drag, but they have been sweet about the wedding arrangements. Which reminds me -- I'm having second thoughts.

MICHAEL
What?

RUTH
Oh God, that sounded terrible. No, I just meant that October might not be good for me. How's November for you?

MICHAEL
Fine. November's fine.

She puts her arms around him.

RUTH
I'm sorry. I didn't mean to scare you.
(kissing him)
I absolutely, positively want to marry you.
(another kiss)
This year.
(another kiss)
And I absolutely, positively want to have a baby.
(another kiss)
Next year.

Michael is hit by a bolt of pain in his stomach. He doubles over.

MICHAEL
Ah! Oh, Jesus!

RUTH
What is it?

MICHAEL
My stomach!
(another stab hits him)
Oh, Christ! It's like I can't breathe!

She helps him to the sofa. He holds his stomach, trying to catch his breath but unable. He gets panicky.

MICHAEL (cont.)
I can't -- I can't --

RUTH
Just take it easy, Michael. Take it easy.

He breathes deeply a few times, trying to settle down.

RUTH (cont.)
Do you want me to call my father at the hospital?

Michael suddenly stands and elbows past Ruth, moving with the conviction and swiftness of one who knows he is about to vomit.

He falls to his hands and knees in his bathroom.

Ruth moves quickly to close the door to his office. Apparently, this is not an unfamiliar situation.

Michael retches. Twice. Regaining himself, he wipes the sweat from his forehead. Ruth sighs.

RUTH (cont.)
Michael, I know you better than you know yourself --

He doesn't answer, just gets to his feet and staggers to the window, which is twenty floors up. He stares out, not really listening to her. Across the street is a large parklike area with black patches here and there.

RUTH (cont.)
-- and I just know these attacks of yours are work related. They have to be. You put yourself under too much stress.

Michael looks up, higher. Off in the distance, he can see the vibrant blue water of the Pacific Ocean, shining like diamonds in the afternoon sun.

RUTH (cont.)
You're not even thirty, and you're going to be named senior analyst.

MICHAEL
(correcting her)
Someone is going to be named senior analyst.

RUTH
Oh, you know it'll be you. You're successful, for God's sake. Try to relax and enjoy it. Christ, I have to get back now.

She moves for the door. Michael continues to stare at the water -- shimmering, beckoning.

RUTH (cont.)
Michael?

He turns back to her.

RUTH (cont.)
Call me tonight?

MICHAEL
Sure.

She leaves. He turns back to the window.

CUT TO:

12 EXT BEACH DAY 12

A stunning day -- white sand, bronzed bodies, beautiful waves kissing the shoreline.

CUT TO:

13 INT SURF SHOP DAY 13

MICHAEL is in a surf shop, checking out the vast array of colorful surfboards. He's taken off his jacket and tie, but still has that straight-from-the-office look.

EDDIE, a surf rat, is looking him up and down.

MICHAEL
What do you have that's -- easy to handle?

EDDIE
You mean like an ultra-light?

MICHAEL
Yeah, exactly.

Eddie goes to some shorter boards, all with wild paint jobs. He picks one out.

EDDIE
Could try somethin' like this. Shallow fins, makes it easier to cut on a steep face. I used one of these in the North Shore finals in eighty-six. That's me.

He points to an enlarged photo of a SURFER on the face of a wave that is roughly the size of Mount Rushmore.

MICHAEL
Actually, I meant -- I guess I meant something in a beginner's model. Sort of.

Eddie climbs up on a ladder and starts to rummage through some boards up in the rafters.

EDDIE
You sure you surfed before, Ace?

MICHAEL
Oh, yeah. Sure. Well -- body surfing. Some. Once.

EDDIE
Uh huh. Bingo!

He finds a board and comes down with it.

EDDIE (cont.)
Triple fin, ultra-light blank and a bitchin' airbrush. You gotta let me ring this up, man.

MICHAEL
How much?

EDDIE
A steal at three fifty.

Pause. Michael thinks.

EDDIE (cont.)
(temptingly)
Throw in some shorts?

CUT TO:

14 EXT BEACH DAY 14

MICHAEL, wearing loud shorts and toting his new surfboard, makes his way across the sand. He looks around, checking out the GIRLS and some of the other SURFERS, enjoying himself.

CUT TO:

15 EXT OCEAN DAY 15

MICHAEL gets to the water, wades into the surf, and promptly trips and falls, brought down by the two foot elastic cord that binds his surfboard to his ankle. He gets up, then flops onto the board, belly down, and paddles out.

A wave crashes and washes him back to the shore.

He tries again to get past the impact zone where the waves break.

Same result. This time it's a little rougher with him and he's lucky to get out of the rough whitewater at all -- still, he ends up back at the beach.

Looking around him, he spots another SURFER making his way into the sea. Seeing a wave, the Surfer rolls off his board and ducks under it. The board, strapped to his foot like Michael's, stays with him.

Michael tries again, imitating this action.

It works. Soon he's out past the break point, bobbing on the waves with a couple dozen SURFERS. They talk among themselves, but throw decidedly territorial glances at Michael.

Michael tries to decipher snatches of their conversation.

SURFER 1
Close out on ya?

SURFER 2
No way! Major left.

A wave comes, bringing excited SHOUTS to those surfers in the right position to catch it. The lucky ones paddle furiously, stand up, and drop down over the crest expertly, disappearing from sight. Michael watches, studying them.

A bit intimidated, he lets himself drift off from the main group.

SHOUTS of excitement abruptly break out. Michael looks up. The Surfers are all looking directly at him, pointing. He turns.

A Perfect Wave approaches. A very large Perfect Wave.

Michael's eyes widen as the wave sweeps under him, rolling heavy and powerful. The board is swept along with the wave, and Michael, quite without conscious effort, is in perfect position.

He sputters, pushes himself up with his hands, and staggers halfway up on one foot, trying like hell to get up on top of the darting surfboard.

And then the wave breaks, thunderously. Michael topples off the board.

The wave sends up a spectacular shower of foam, crashing over Michael, picking him up and sucking him under, raking him across the bottom, tumbling him senselessly, head over heels.

As the froth settles, he fights and kicks his way to the surface, gasping, coughing and spitting water.

He hears a sound and turns, looking behind him.

A WALL OF WATER slams into him, bouncing him around on the ocean floor like a sunken ship. He's battered, held under even longer.

He finally surfaces, vomiting water.

ON THE BEACH,

no one pays any attention as Michael, a tiny figure, continues his fight with the sea in the distance.

IN THE WATER,

Michael is floundering in the break. He looks, sees another wave coming, and this time has the presence of mind to try to dive under it.

His head pops up on the other side of the wave, but only briefly. The wave hits the board, which is still floating on the surface, and sucks it under. Michael, who is bound to the board by his foot, is dragged along with it.

He disappears beneath the surface.

A moment goes by.

The water settles.

Michael's board pops up out of the water and floats lifelessly, but he is nowhere to be seen.

ANOTHER WAVE approaches, a SURFER on a bright orange board at the front of it. The Surfer kicks out and swims to Michael's board swiftly.

He dives under and soon Michael bursts to the surface, boosted from below. He's gasping, choking, but still alive and conscious.

The other Surfer bobs up next to Michael. It's ALEX.

Michael gets a good look at him and tries to mumble his thanks, but he loses consciousness and slips beneath the waves.

Alex goes after him.

CUT TO:

16 EXT BEACH DAY 16

MICHAEL lies on his back on the beach, unconscious. Slowly he opens his eyes and a great "AAAAHH!!" goes up from the small crowd of BEACHGOERS around him.

A YOUNG WOMAN helps him sit up. Michael blinks, thoroughly confused. A GUY speaks to him.

GUY
You okay?

MICHAEL
(disoriented)
I was up for a second. Did you see me?

The crowd starts to disperse as they see he is okay.

WOMAN
Sorry, Surf King. You were down when we saw you. So you're okay, right?

Michael nods, blinking, trying to get his bearings. She gets up and starts to walk away.

MICHAEL
Where is he?

WOMAN
(turns back)
Where's who?

MICHAEL
The guy who saved me.

The Woman shrugs and turns to the Guy.

GUY
I didn't see anybody.

MICHAEL
(insistent)
There was a guy on an orange board.

The Guy nods to the Woman to leave. She shrugs again to Michael.

WOMAN
Sorry.

They leave. Michael looks out at the ocean.

CUT TO:

17 EXT MICHAEL'S APARTMENT BUILDING DAY 17

A newish four story apartment building stands in contrast to the older mid-Wilshire neighborhood that surrounds it.

A WINO leans against the gate to the building's first floor parking garage. With a sudden WHIRR, the gate starts to slide open and the Wino leaps to his feet, alarmed. A gray sedan whizzes down the road and pulls through the gate.

MICHAEL parks the car just inside the gate and gets out, carrying his briefcase and surfboard. He walks out of the garage and around the front of the building past the Wino.

The gate closes again and the Wino reclaims his resting spot.

CUT TO:

18 INT FOYER DAY 18

Between the outer door and the security door is a foyer with mailboxes and a buzzer system. A COUPLE argue in the foyer.

MAN
There's nothing going on! I work with her, for Christ's sake. I can't be rude to her.

WOMAN
You could! You could if you loved me!

MAN
We're not even to the car yet and you're fighting already. Do you want to have dinner or not?

MICHAEL comes in, lugging the cumbersome surfboard. They stop arguing as he sets the board down and gets his mail. He nods and goes inside with his board, to the elevator.

CUT TO:

19 INT MICHAEL'S HALLWAY DAY 19

MICHAEL gets off the elevator and walks down the hallway to his apartment. A WOMAN IN SWEATS, fortyish, attractive, is unlocking the door to an apartment. She carries groceries. She sees MICHAEL and is flirtatious.

WOMAN IN SWEATS
Hi, Mark!

MICHAEL
(for the fiftieth time)
It's Michael.

WOMAN IN SWEATS
I didn't know you surfed.

MICHAEL
Sometimes. Major left today.

He continues down the hallway to the next apartment.

CUT TO:

20 INT MICHAEL'S APARTMENT DAY 20

His apartment, like him, is well ordered and well furnished. A desk with a computer on top is set up on one side of the living room, part of a work area. There's lots of expensive stereo equipment, a big television, a VCR, a video camera on a tripod, and other gadgets.

It's obviously the home of a single, successful apartment dweller -- anyone with a family or a larger place could never afford such toys.

Next to the door two pieces of artwork, the same size and shape, hang side by side. The one on the right is tilted, listing a little to the right and out of line with the other.

MICHAEL comes in and flicks on a light. Almost reflexively, he straightens the crooked picture. It holds for a second, then slides back off center.

Michael punches a button on his answering machine. He opens a closet and tries to wedge the board inside while the messages play.

RUTH'S VOICE
Hi sweetheart. Just wanted to see if you were feeling better. Call me later, okay?

BEEP. The board CLUNKS up against the back wall of the closet, too big.

MAN'S VOICE
Michael, it's Howard. Fenwick seems to think there's some problem with the schedule forty-seven. That's not true, is it? Where were you this afternoon?

BEEP. Michael CLUNKS the board in sideways, but it's still too big.

Now there is a long silence filled only by the sound of someone breathing. Michael turns and looks at the machine. A very tentative man's VOICE comes on.

VOICE
Hello? It's Pismo. Are you there? Okay, yes, I need money again.

Michael GROANS at the message. He shoves the board up against the living room wall, giving up.

VOICE (cont.)
Can I come over?

CUT TO:

21 INT MICHAEL'S APARTMENT NIGHT 21

A FACE. Giant. On the television screen. Michael's video camera is set up on a tripod. PISMO BOLL mugs into the lens, making faces and turning slowly from side to side, watching himself on the screen.

Pismo is short, balding, and practically recoils from light.

He and MICHAEL finish two beers. Michael is in running shoes and sweats.

PISMO
(of the camera)
When did you get this?

MICHAEL
I don't know. Couple weeks ago.

PISMO
Why did you get this?

MICHAEL
It was on sale.

PISMO
Do you need it?

MICHAEL
That's not the point.

PISMO
Better give it away to somebody. Cut your losses.

Michael looks at him.

MICHAEL
That doesn't make sense.

PISMO
Of course it doesn't! Stop making sense, like the Hindus say. Your life makes too much sense already. At this rate you'll have a home espresso machine by the end of the year.

Michael throws a quick look to the kitchen, then sits down on the floor and starts stretching out. Pismo takes the camera off the tripod and points it at Michael, interrogating him.

PISMO (cont.)
Right now, for example. What are you doing?

MICHAEL
Stretching.

PISMO
You're going running, aren't you?

MICHAEL
Yes.

PISMO
Why?

MICHAEL
What do you mean why?

PISMO
Because you drank a beer. You always run after you drink a beer, otherwise you might ruin your whole equilibrium, and that idea just gives you hives, man. You're afraid to live.

MICHAEL
I'm afraid to live? The only reason you leave your apartment is to borrow money from me. You don't even answer your phone.

PISMO
I like to screen my calls.

MICHAEL
Nobody calls you but me!

PISMO
Haven't you noticed there's an evil symbiosis out there?

MICHAEL
Where?

PISMO
(simply)
Everywhere. The whole world. It's like a big swimming pool. Every movement of every individual stirs the water and affects everybody else. If I go out into it, I become part of it.

Michael goes to the door.

MICHAEL
Check's on the table, Pismo.

Pismo gets up and follows him, stopping him.

PISMO
You don't respect what I do. I accept that, even though I'm your uncle, your guardian, and you ought to keep quiet about these things. But cab drivers serve a valuable function too.

MICHAEL
Yes, cab drivers do. But you refuse to pick anyone up.

PISMO
I can't. Tax purposes. Besides, that's exactly what they expect me to do.

MICHAEL
I just think an ex-hippie could be a little more productive.

PISMO
You <u>always</u> say that! I'm not an ex-hippie! I sat out the whole hippie thing, and you know it! I sat it out because I knew it was doomed.

MICHAEL
What do you consider <u>not</u> doomed?

PISMO
(thinks)
Nothing.

MICHAEL
So what's the point?

PISMO
There is no point! That's my point!

Michael smiles kindly and opens the door.

MICHAEL
The check's on the table.

He leaves, closing the door behind him.

PISMO
Of course. The check's always on the table.

CUT TO:

22 EXT FISHING PIER NIGHT 22

Michael's car pulls to a stop in a parking lot at the beach at the base of a fishing pier. MICHAEL gets out. He jogs off, past the pier and down the boardwalk.

CUT TO:

23 EXT VENICE BOARDWALK NIGHT 23

MICHAEL runs along the boardwalk. He runs past a couple HOMELESS people, past ROLLER SKATERS, past a group of PEOPLE lingering and laughing outside a sidewalk cafe.

Absorbed in his running, he doesn't seem to notice any of it.

He reaches a far end of the boardwalk and turns around, heading back the other way.

CUT TO:

24 EXT FISHING PIER NIGHT 24

MICHAEL returns, finishing his run near the fishing pier he started at. He's really hauling ass now, sprinting for all he's worth. It hurts, you can just see how much it hurts, but he pushes himself, running past a Jaguar XKE now parked at the entrance to the long concrete pier.

He breaks stride and turns on to the pier, slowing to a walk, hands on hips, catching his breath.

At the end of the pier is a small wooden building, a fishing supplies store. Coming around it, Michael startles a COUPLE embracing.

A STYLISH WOMAN in her thirties, pretty, well dressed, is facing Michael. She looks up at him, annoyed at being interrupted. The MAN doesn't turn around.

Michael turns, embarrassed, and stares out at the water. He can hear snatches of their conversation.

STYLISH WOMAN
I want to. I'm happy to.

MAN
Thanks.

Michael turns over his shoulder and sees the Stylish Woman hand the man an envelope. She kisses him, then turns and walks away down the pier, her heels CLICKING.

Michael turns around. The Man, still with his back turned, stuffs the envelope in his jacket pocket. He lights a cigarette and looks out at the ocean.

MICHAEL
Sorry. I didn't think anyone was out here.

The Man turns around.

It's ALEX.

ALEX
Don't worry about it.

MICHAEL
Hey, it's you.

Michael steps forward. Alex steps back.

ALEX
You know me?

MICHAEL
Today, in the water. You saved my life.
(putting out his hand)
I'm Michael.

ALEX
(not shaking)
That was you?

MICHAEL
Yeah. But when I woke up --

ALEX
I didn't want to stick around for the "thank you's". They kinda make me sick.

MICHAEL
Well, thank you anyway.

ALEX
What did I just say? Nobody ever listens.

A pause.

Alex turns and stares out at the water again. Michael racks his brain, searching for something to say.

MICHAEL
So -- you surf a lot?

ALEX
Sometimes. If there's an ocean around.

Alex continues to stare at the sea. Michael watches him for a second, then turns to go. Alex calls after him without turning around.

ALEX (cont.)
Why'd you do it?

MICHAEL
Do what?

ALEX
Go out in those waves today. You've never surfed before, have you?

MICHAEL
Sure I have.

Alex looks at him.

MICHAEL (cont.)
(admitting it)
I don't know why. Something inside me. Like there was this little guy I'd beaten into submission every day at the office and today he just decided he wouldn't be ignored any more. Today he won. That sounds stupid, I suppose.

ALEX
I'm like that. Except my little guy always wins.

Michael laughs.

ALEX (cont.)
Name's Alex. You want to get a drink or something -- Michael?

MICHAEL
No. No, I can't. Thanks anyway.

CUT TO:

25 INT A BAR NIGHT 25

MICHAEL and ALEX sit at the bar in a beach tavern. Not much of a crowd. There are a few empty glasses in front of them and it's obvious they're a bit drunk.

MICHAEL
He's a conniving bastard, that's what he is. And he gets ahead. That's what pisses me off.

ALEX
Of course he gets ahead. It makes perfect sense.

MICHAEL
Maybe it does, but it isn't right.

ALEX
But it's the way it is. That stunt he pulled today with your --

MICHAEL
Schedule forty-seven.

ALEX
Whatever. I don't know a thing about computers, but I know people. He did it to show you he could. That you'd let him get away with it. That's his point.

MICHAEL
Just because he's childish doesn't mean I should --

ALEX
Childish? Who's childish? He looks good, you look like a moron.

MICHAEL
Maybe. But I refuse to lose my dignity over a computer file.

ALEX
You already have. And it won't be a computer file next time. It'll be your biggest account. Or your girlfriend. And you won't do anything about that either. Same principle, just a bigger scale. He understands that.

MICHAEL
So what would you do?

ALEX
Beat him at his own game. Won't be easy, though. He's smart. I like this guy. What's his name?

MICHAEL
Fenwick.

Alex lifts his glass in toast.

ALEX
To Fenwick.

Michael looks at him, dumbfounded.

ALEX (cont.)
Come on. To Fenwick.

Shaking his head, Michael lifts his own glass and CLINKS it up against Alex's. As he raises it to his mouth, Alex's hand suddenly darts out and he SLAPS the glass from Michael's hand. It CRASHES to the floor, sending shards of glass flying all over.

BARTENDER
Hey!

PATRONS look up, surprised and annoyed.

Alex grabs Michael by the collar and pulls his face close.

ALEX (cont.)
Don't you ever. Don't you <u>ever</u>. What kind of man are you, that you drink to your enemies?

MICHAEL
Let go of me.

He looks around nervously. People are staring.

MICHAEL (cont.)
Come on, this isn't funny.

Alex still holds him. Michael shakes him off roughly. Alex smiles at the slight violence in Michael's gesture.

ALEX (cont.)
Better.

Alex grins at Michael, then starts to laugh. Michael, after a moment, drops his petulant face and smiles too.

ALEX (cont.)
Let's go get another drink.

MICHAEL
Can't. I'm short gilders.

ALEX
Don't worry about it.

He reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out the envelope the Older Woman gave him. He pulls a wad of cash out of it, pays the bar bill, and pockets the rest.

MICHAEL
(firm)
I really can't. I have to be up early.

CUT TO:

26 INT ANOTHER BAR NIGHT 26

This one is a crowded, raucous club. A ROCK BAND plays at the front, loud. The crowd is wired, frenetic, alive. MICHAEL and ALEX make their way through the people.

Michael SHOUTS in Alex's ear.

MICHAEL
These guys are good!

ALEX
(also shouting)
I never miss 'em! Used to party with 'em in New York all the time.

He leads Michael to the bar and signals for drinks.

Michael looks around. At the other end of the bar is CLAIRE, about twenty-one, dark, her hair perpetually hanging in front of her face, wearing a carefully cultivated Dangerous Character look. She drinks a beer with a friend, a lady ROCKER in a leather jacket.

Michael taps Alex and tilts his head in the direction of the Women at the end of the bar. Alex grins. The drinks arrive. Alex nudges Michael forward, toward the Women. Michael resists. Alex nudges again and Michael finds himself next to Claire.

Michael, terribly uncomfortable, says something to Claire but it is mostly lost under the band.

She turns and looks at him. He smiles feebly. She turns back to her friend.

Alex shakes his head and walks over to Claire. He says something else in her ear.

She laughs.

The Lady Rocker looks at Michael fiercely.

Alex grabs Claire's hand and leads her out onto the packed dance floor.

Michael looks at the Lady Rocker with apprehension. He smiles. She holds up her empty shot glass and raises an eyebrow at him expectantly.

Michael understands. He signals to the Bartender, points to the empty shot glass, and holds up two fingers.

The shots are delivered. The Lady Rocker tosses hers back in one gulp. Michael watches and does the same.

BARTENDER
HEY PAL!

Michael looks at the Bartender, who gestures for money, holding up five fingers.

Michael remembers he has no money.

MICHAEL
WAIT A SECOND!

He looks around for Alex, but can't see him. He turns back to the Bartender, who is growing annoyed.

MICHAEL (cont.)
I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!

Michael goes out onto the dance floor, which is jammed with people -- sweaty, seething. The music isn't right, but the crowded conditions are producing a kind of slam dancing, and Michael is buffetted around as he searches for Alex.

Nowhere to be seen.

Michael takes a few hard knocks from out of control dancers. He absorbs them and continues on.

ACROSS THE CROWD,

he sees the Bartender coming out onto the dance floor, following him.

Michael takes a particularly hard shot, almost knocking him over. Briefly enraged, he SLAMS the nearest person. Then he's slammed again, and soon he's CRASHING into people with everything he's got -- getting into it.

The Bartender draws close.

Michael sees him and plows through the crowd to the exit.

CUT TO:

27 EXT BAR NIGHT 27

The street is empty and quiet, then the door bursts open, letting out a flood of NOISE -- and Michael. The door slaps shut behind him and all is abruptly quiet again.

Michael stands on the sidewalk, breathing heavily, sweating, spinning.

He turns and walks toward home.

CUT TO:

28 INT MICHAEL'S OUTER OFFICE DAY 28

LESLIE is awkwardly applying liquid paper through the keys of a typewriter at her desk in Michael's outer office. She looks up at a clock and CALLS off to Michael.

LESLIE
Michael! It's eleven o'clock.

MICHAEL (o.s.)
What?

LESLIE
You asked me to tell you when it was eleven.

He appears at the doorway to the office, smiling, eager.

MICHAEL
Oh. Right.

He straightens his tie, grinning, and walks out of the office. She watches him, curious.

CUT TO:

29 INT CORRIDOR DAY 29

MICHAEL stops outside a door marked CONFERENCE ROOM. VOICES can be heard inside. Michael looks through a narrow window that runs along the side of the door.

CUT TO:

30 INT CONFERENCE ROOM DAY 30

FENWICK is at one end of the table. HOWARD NEIL, early forties, black, gray at the temples, is at the other end. There are also two BANKERS in their forties at the table. All are somber looking men. The table is snowed under by a mass of papers and charts.

Serious meeting.

BANKER 1
-- which is why we decided to try your firm's more conservative approach.

HOWARD
Most of our pension fund clients do appreciate that.
(to Fenwick)
Can we look at the sixty day figures?

FENWICK
Of course.

He turns to a video display terminal on a swivel table to his right and swings it over closer to him. He types in a few commands expertly and looks at the screen, waiting.

A statistic pops up on the screen:

WADE BOGGS, 1988 -- .342

Fenwick's face drains of most of its color. He retypes the commands. Another statistic comes up:

DAVE WINFIELD, 1985 -- .338

Fenwick's face drains of the rest of its color. He looks up, panicked. He turns and looks to the door.

MICHAEL stands in the window, staring at him.

FENWICK
(cool, to the others)
Could you excuse me for a moment?

CUT TO:

31 INT HALLWAY DAY 31

FENWICK bursts out the door. MICHAEL leans nonchalantly against the wall.

FENWICK
What have you done?!

MICHAEL
What do you mean?

FENWICK
You know damn well what I mean! There are batting averages in my section report!

MICHAEL
(correcting him)
Batting championships. Not a sports fan, huh?

FENWICK
I am in a meeting, you swine, with Howard and two pension fund administrators. Where's my section report?!

MICHAEL
Where's my schedule forty-seven?

HOWARD NEIL pokes his head out of the meeting room.

HOWARD
Fenwick? Everything all right?

FENWICK
Yes, Howard. Fine. One minute.

HOWARD
Michael, what's this I hear about the schedule forty-seven?

MICHAEL
I don't know. It's all set. Ready to roll.

HOWARD
Oh. Good. So are we, Fenwick.

Howard goes back into the meeting room. Fenwick pauses, seeing he is beaten. He strikes a conciliatory tone.

FENWICK
I'm not admitting I did anything, of course --

MICHAEL
Of course.

FENWICK
-- but if you give me mine back, I'll see if I can get you yours back.

MICHAEL
Nah. Forget it.

He turns and walks away. Fenwick rushes up and spins him around.

FENWICK
What do you want?

MICHAEL
I want you to walk down to your office --

FENWICK
I'm in a <u>meeting</u>!

MICHAEL
-- down to your office and get my report back on line in sixty seconds. <u>Then</u> I'll see if I can find it in my heart to forgive you.

A looooooong pause while Fenwick considers it.

MICHAEL (cont.)
(taps his watch)
Sixty seconds.

Fenwick turns and hurries off down the hall. Defeated.

CUT TO:

32 INT MICHAEL'S APARTMENT NIGHT 32

MICHAEL sits on the couch, speaking on the telephone with a hoarse voice that sounds suspiciously affected.

He kicks off his black leather loafers and unwraps a box of new shoes as he speaks.

MICHAEL
No, I just don't want to have a relapse, that's all.

He takes the shoes out of the box and puts them on -- a pair of high tops.

MICHAEL (cont.)
Ruth, I swear I'll be fine. Give them my apologies and I'll call you in the morning. I love you too.

CUT TO:

33 EXT CLUB NIGHT 33

Michael's car pulls up and parks across the street from the club, the same one he was at the night before. MICHAEL gets out. His dress is an odd mixed bag -- blue jeans and high tops, but also a white button down shirt and a jacket.

Grinning in anticipation, he tugs open the door to the club.

CUT TO:

34 INT CLUB NIGHT 34

The place is empty -- at most maybe a dozen people sitting at the bar nursing beers, but no band, no dancers. A scratchy "Your Cheatin' Heart" plays on the jukebox.

Michael takes off his shades and looks around in disappointment. He goes to the bar and is met by the same BARTENDER as the night before.

BARTENDER
Get you something?

Michael puts a five on the counter.

MICHAEL
Here. I owe you that from last night.

BARTENDER
(not remembering)
If you say so.
(pockets the five)
You want a drink or what?

MICHAEL
Light beer.

Michael looks around at the few scattered patrons as the Bartender cracks open the beer.

MICHAEL (cont.)
Little slow.

BARTENDER
No band.

MICHAEL
Listen, I'm lookin' for a guy -- he's a friend of the band.

A VOICE suddenly comes from directly above Michael.

VOICE
MICHAEL!

Michael looks up. ALEX is at the upstairs railing, grinning from ear to ear. In one move, he swings out over the railing, drops down onto the bar, and jumps onto the floor next to Michael.

BARTENDER
(to Alex)
You know him, Tony?

ALEX
Sure. He's cool.

BARTENDER
Looked like a cop to me.

Alex slaps Michael on the back.

MICHAEL
Tony?

ALEX
Old joke. Tony's a guy I hate.
Hey, you got a car?

MICHAEL
Yeah.

ALEX
Let's get out of here.
(to the Bartender)
Don't wait up, sweetheart.

Alex walks to the door of the bar. Michael follows.

MICHAEL
You're staying here?

ALEX
For a while. Upstairs. Kurt and I go way back.

CUT TO:

35 INT MICHAEL'S CAR NIGHT 35

ALEX drives, fast. MICHAEL has a nice car, which he is presently riding in with something close to terror.

MICHAEL
You should have seen his --

Alex takes a turn, hard. Michael lurches up against the door.

MICHAEL (cont.)
This -- uh -- this is a company car.

ALEX
I'm burning the carbon off the plugs. You should thank me.

MICHAEL
Uh huh. Anyway, you should have seen his face. I wish I had it on film.

ALEX
You watched?

MICHAEL
Through the doorway.

ALEX
Perfect. Always gotta stick around to watch the fun. Watch 'em wriggle.

Alex guns the car through a yellow light. Cars HONK.

MICHAEL
So how'd it go with that girl?

ALEX
Got very weird. We started talking about Kirkegaard and she suddenly turned into this total theist. I couldn't deal with it.

A look from Michael. Not the answer he expected.

ALEX (cont.)
Hey, you know anything about art?

CUT TO:

36 EXT VENICE BACK STREET NIGHT 36

The car pulls to a stop in a trendy part of Venice. MICHAEL and ALEX get out and walk up to the front of a building. They stop in the doorway.

ALEX
Better let me do the talking.

MICHAEL
Talking?

ALEX
To women. Do you live, Michael?

Alex takes a capsule the size of a big cold pill out of his jacket pocket. He cracks it open and inhales deeply from it.

He offers it to Michael.

ALEX (cont.)
Decongestant?

MICHAEL
I, uh -- I don't have a cold.

Alex laughs and puts the capsule away.

ALEX
Neither do I, pal.

He opens the door and goes inside. Michael follows.

CUT TO:

37 INT GALLERY OPENING NIGHT 37

MICHAEL and ALEX arrive at an art opening at a Venice gallery. Alex surveys the party, which is populated with chic, trendy types. He breathes the air.

ALEX
A party's like a battlefield, don't you think?

MICHAEL
Yeah. Sure.

ALEX
Let's see -- who should you be?

Not hearing, Michael turns and looks at the art object next to him. It's strange, abstract expressionist, and it frankly confounds him.

ALEX (cont.)
Never mind, I'll improvise.

Michael turns back, pointing to the artwork.

MICHAEL
Geez, will you look --

Alex is nowhere in sight.

MICHAEL (cont.)
Oh, shit.

He wanders into the party alone, a little boy lost. He catches a snippet of conversation.

WOMAN IN BLACK
Didn't you hear? He's dead.

MAN IN BLACK
Dead? Ridgely?

WOMAN IN BLACK
Hans killed him. Ridgely asked him to. He was going to do it himself anyway.

MAN IN BLACK
I'm shocked.

WOMAN IN BLACK
Oh, don't be naive.

MAN IN BLACK
Well, I didn't mean shocked, exactly.

Michael keeps walking and reaches a bar.

MICHAEL
(to the Bartender)
Light beer.

DISSOLVE TO:

38 INT PARTY LATER 38

MICHAEL stands at the bar. A VOICE booms out from behind him.

VOICE
Dominick!

Michael does nothing.

VOICE (cont.)
DOMINICK!

Michael turns to see who's making the racket. It's ALEX, headed straight for him with a young woman on his arm -- CLAIRE, the girl from the bar the night before, looking chic in black thrift store clothes.

Alex reaches him and speaks with a bizarre accent.

ALEX
Ciao, Dominick! Come stai?

MICHAEL
Uh, fine.

Alex leans into the bar to get a drink, passing close to Michael's ear.

ALEX
(a whisper)
I'm Franco.

MICHAEL
Franco?

ALEX
(with a heavy accent)
Dominick! Look who is here! Claire is the woman I was before telling about to you. I think you met last night, no?

CLAIRE
Sure.

MICHAEL
You remember?

CLAIRE
Of course. I'm very sorry.

She is looking at Michael strangely, probingly -- as if she had a great deal of compassion for him. It makes him uncomfortable.

MICHAEL
Oh. Well, okay.

CLAIRE
So what do you think of the pieces?

MICHAEL
Well, I -- scuzzi.

He turns abruptly to the bar, speaking to Alex in a whisper.

MICHAEL (cont.)
Am I foreign too?

Alex laughs -- heartily, falsely.

ALEX
No, Dominick! No, of course not!
(to Claire)
He won't give his opinions so easily. He thinks the pieces are -- how do you say in English? Derivative. And cynical; without hope.

CLAIRE
Wow. That's really interesting, Dominick.

MICHAEL
(warming to this)
Well, if one hasn't hope -- then what?

CLAIRE
God. It's so cool that somebody in your -- I'm sorry, I don't mean to get personal -- but you are so totally positive. It's inspiring.

MICHAEL
(confused)
Thank you, I -- don't know what to say.
(with a look at Alex)
Really.

CLAIRE
Hey, can we get out of here? This shit's freaking me out.

ALEX
Bueno!

CLAIRE
I just gotta ditch a guy.

She turns and moves through the crowd to talk to a GUY. Alex turns to Michael.

ALEX
Try to look grief-stricken.

MICHAEL
Why?

ALEX
She thinks your wife just died.

MICHAEL
She what? You just tell girls anything, don't you?

ALEX
Lighten up. They're gonna fuck a fantasy anyway. Might as well give 'em a good one.

Claire appears at Michael's side.

CLAIRE
Let's go, Dominick.

MICHAEL
Bueno!

They walk off. Alex stifles a laugh and follows.

CUT TO:

39 INT MICHAEL'S APARTMENT NIGHT 39

Keys RUSTLE in the lock and the door swings open, revealing MICHAEL, ALEX and CLAIRE. They are all drunk, loud and animated.

Michael steps in and flicks on the lights. Alex looks around the place.

ALEX
Nice.

Michael goes into the kitchen.

MICHAEL
(gaily)
Who wants espresso?

CLAIRE
Don't you have anything to drink?

She follows him into the kitchen. Alex continues to size up Michael's apartment and furnishings. He speaks softly, to himself.

ALEX
Very, very nice.

He sees the two pictures hanging by the door, one of them listing off to one side as usual. He looks at them carefully. Instead of straightening the crooked one, he reaches out and makes crooked the straight one.

Alex checks out the expensive stereo equipment, then examines carefully the video camera on the tripod, looking through the viewfinder and pointing it around the room.

He pops open the door on the side of the camera -- it holds a tiny recording tape, about the size of an audio cassette. He clicks it shut.

From the kitchen comes GIGGLING, then a SHRIEK of some kind as food is thrown. They're having a good time.

There is a KNOCK at the door. Alex turns. The knock, a low, persistent rapping, isn't loud enough to be heard by Michael and Claire in the kitchen.

Alex opens the door and sticks his head out.

ALEX
Yeah?

It's PISMO, looking like he just ate a jar of instant coffee.

PISMO
(instantly suspicious)
Who are you?

ALEX
Friend of Michael's. Who are you?

PISMO
Is Michael here?

ALEX
He's busy.

PISMO
Tell him it's his uncle. Pismo.

ALEX
But I said he's busy.

PISMO
(urgently)
It's important.
(confidentially)
Tell him I've got the Fear. He'll understand.

ALEX
Sorry. Maybe in the morning.

He starts to shut the door. Pismo stops it.

PISMO
Who are you? What are you doing here?

Alex turns around as a particularly loud burst of GIGGLING comes from the kitchen. He turns back to Pismo.

ALEX
Helping Michael.

Alex closes the door.

He wanders across the room to the desk and sits on the corner of it. A box filled with computer discs sits next to a desk top Rolodex.

Alex looks up to the kitchen to see if Michael is still occupied, then flips through the Rolodex, whizzing through the "B's" and stopping at the card with the name PISMO BOLL. An address and phone number are printed on it.

Alex spins the Rolodex and goes into the kitchen.

CUT TO:

40 INT KITCHEN NIGHT 40

MICHAEL and CLAIRE are laughing convulsively in the kitchen, trying to keep the top on a coffee grinder that is spraying grounds all over the place. ALEX walks in.

ALEX
(casually)
Hey, Michael. You got any family?

MICHAEL
(attention still on the grinder)
Huh? No, not really.

CLAIRE
None at all? Even I have a mother. Someplace. England, I think.

She and Michael laugh.

MICHAEL
Well -- there's Pismo.

CLAIRE
What's a Pismo?

MICHAEL
My uncle. But he's kinda weird. He thinks the cops have him on a master list.

CLAIRE
Why?

MICHAEL
He got busted for pot in '72. He's been on the run ever since.

He and Claire burst out laughing again. Alex smiles too.

CUT TO:

41 INT MICHAEL'S APARTMENT NIGHT 41

MUSIC is on. It's late. Quiet. CLAIRE and MICHAEL are asleep on the couch, embracing rather chastely.

ALEX sits down in a chair across from them. He stares at Claire. After a few seconds, her eyes flicker open and lock on his. They look at each other for a moment, then he gets up and walks out of the room.

CUT TO:

42 INT BEDROOM NIGHT 42

A shaft of light from the hallway spills across the floor. ALEX walks into the room and goes to the bed. He brushes his jacket aside and pulls a handgun out of his belt. He stuffs it under the pillow.

He walks to the bedroom window and looks out. He runs his hand over the top of a set of golf clubs leaning up against the wall. He waits a few seconds, standing there as if expecting --

-- CLAIRE's arms. They snake around his waist from behind. He smiles. He turns and her arms go around his neck. He kisses her.

ALEX
(sexy)
Can I ask you something?

CLAIRE
I don't have it.

ALEX
Have what?

CLAIRE
Your accent. You must be looking for it by now.

She laughs. Alex grins engagingly. He kisses her again.

ALEX
He told you.

CLAIRE
Yeah. But I knew. He didn't want to tell on you. He's just so upset about Jasmine's death.

Alex turns her around, pushing her up against the wall, kissing her harder. She responds.

ALEX
Do you like him?

CLAIRE
He's sweet.

They kiss some more, then Alex abruptly pulls away.

ALEX
Look, I -- no, forget it.

CLAIRE
What?

ALEX
It's too much to ask.

CLAIRE
Come on, what?

ALEX
I can't. I like you too much.

CLAIRE
(thoroughly intrigued)
What is it?

Alex turns and looks through the open door into the living room, where Michael is asleep on the sofa.

ALEX
It's Dominick.

Long pause. She looks at him and he looks back, into her eyes.

CLAIRE
Okay.

ALEX
(hopeful, sweet)
Okay?

CLAIRE
Yeah. I want to. I think it would be important to him. Tell him to come in here.

ALEX
No. The couch.

She looks at him, a little confused. He gives a look to the bed.

ALEX (cont.)
I might as well get some sleep.

She touches his cheek.

CLAIRE
You're very special.

CUT TO:

43 INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT 43

CLAIRE comes back in and sits on the couch next to MICHAEL. He wakes and sits up. She looks at him purposefully. He looks away.

MICHAEL
Guess I fell asleep.

CLAIRE
Me too. We fell asleep together.

MICHAEL
Oh, yeah. It was -- nice.

CLAIRE
You thought so?

MICHAEL
Yeah. I did.

Pause. Claire looks around the room. She sees the surfboard leaning against the wall in a corner.

CLAIRE
You surf?

MICHAEL
Oh, yeah. Fanatic about it. Well, not really. I mean, sometimes. To be perfectly honest, once. Very badly.

She laughs, enchanted.

CLAIRE
Funny.

Michael looks around.

MICHAEL
Where's Alex?

CLAIRE
Asleep.

MICHAEL
Oh.

She laughs to herself.

MICHAEL (cont.)
What?

CLAIRE
I was just thinking how wrong first impressions can be.

They look at each other, a look loaded with meaning.

CLAIRE (cont.)
Another drink?

MICHAEL
Okay.
(thinks)
You sure he's asleep?

She smiles at him as she gets up.

CLAIRE
Positive.

She goes into the kitchen. Michael swallows.

CUT TO:

44 INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT 44

It's mostly dark, but the sleeping form of MICHAEL on the couch is illuminated by the flickering light of the television.

Sounds come from the TV. Moaning. Breathing.

Michael stirs a little, disturbed by the noise. Slowly he wakes up and squints at the TV, trying to figure out what it is.

All at once he recognizes the images -- it's a home video of him and Claire making love on the couch. He looks to the left of the TV, straight into the lens of the video camera on the tripod, now pointed directly at him.

He sits bolt upright and flicks on a light. ALEX is sitting in a chair watching the television, vastly amused. He flicks an empty condom packet across the room at Michael.

ALEX
Did you know you make a really funny face when you come?

Michael is horrified. He lunges for the VCR and pulls the tape out. It's a bulky VHS size, which he shoves into the pocket of his robe.

ALEX (cont.)
Aw, come on man, turn it back on. You were just getting good that time.

MICHAEL
I can't believe you did that!

ALEX
Hey, she wanted me, I wanted her, but instead I gave her to you. You could try saying thanks.

He goes into the kitchen.

MICHAEL
You gave her to me? What are you talking about?

ALEX (o.s.)
I figured you could use it.

He comes back with two beers, gives one to Michael.

MICHAEL
You're lying.

ALEX
Wasn't hard. She felt sorry for you. Incidentally, I don't mind you giving away my "Franco" thing. Good plan to keep the dead wife, though. That works great -- confess one lie and keep up another. Confuses the hell out of 'em.

MICHAEL
(still put off, but it's praise from Caesar)
Thanks. Where is she, anyway?

ALEX
Had to jam. You know, I think she would have gone for you without me. She said we looked like brothers.

MICHAEL
She did?

ALEX
Sure.

Michael sits on the sofa, Alex in a chair.

MICHAEL
I knew you must have done something. That never happens to me.

ALEX
It'll get easier. You'll see.

MICHAEL
Where are you from, anyway?

ALEX
(sighs)
Nobody ever lets you just be who you are that day. They always want to know who you used to be.

MICHAEL
Hey, if it's --

ALEX
No, no it's all right. I kind of want to tell you.

Michael sips, waits.

ALEX (cont.)
East coast. North Carolina.

MICHAEL
You like it there?

ALEX
(simply)
Not really. Friend of mine killed a guy and set me up for it.

MICHAEL
Yeah, right.

But Alex's tone and manner indicate he's serious.

ALEX
Shouldn't ask questions if you don't like answers.

MICHAEL
No. I'm just -- it's strange.

ALEX
Strange things happen to people. I was in college at Duke. I was a history major. Made it to the last year before Tony -- that was my friend -- freaked out on me. He was a philosophy major. Cold. In love with his intellect. Tony had an idea about the perfect murder. Someone you didn't know, someone chosen completely at random -- someone there was no reason for you to kill.

MICHAEL
Leopold and Loeb.

ALEX
Exactly. It is the perfect murder. Fucking perfect. So he picked a name out of the phone book and did it. But he wanted insurance.

MICHAEL
Insurance?

ALEX
He brought me to the guy's house after he was done. Told me it was a friend of his who'd asked us over for drinks. Nobody was there when we came in. We walked around a little, had a drink. Then we left.
(pause)
I didn't notice he hadn't touched anything. Only I had. When things heated up, Tony sent my fingerprints to the cops and they matched 'em up with the ones from the house. And that was that. I left the state.

Alex takes a deep drink of beer.

MICHAEL
You didn't tell them about him?

ALEX
Who'd believe me? Anyway, one thing I knew for sure about Tony was he'd take me down with him.

MICHAEL
Take you down? What do you mean?

ALEX
(simply)
Kill me. Beat me. That's the thing with Tony. He doesn't quit until somebody wins.

MICHAEL
My God.

Pause.

ALEX
I've never told anyone else that story.

Pause, then Alex leans forward, suddenly animated.

ALEX (cont.)
Tell me something you want, Mick.

MICHAEL
Mick?
(he says it to himself)
Mick.

ALEX
Tell me something you want, Mick, and tell me something you're afraid of.

MICHAEL
Come on.

ALEX
Do it. For fun. Tell me. Tell me what you're afraid of, Mick.

Michael thinks.

MICHAEL
I guess -- I guess I'm afraid of getting married.

ALEX
Simple enough. Don't.

MICHAEL
Well, I'm engaged.

ALEX
Is she nice?

MICHAEL
Yeah. She is.

ALEX
Nice is boring. And she's safe, I bet.

MICHAEL
I guess.

ALEX
Safe is boring too. But I bet she's pretty --

Michael nods proudly.

ALEX (cont.)
-- in a boring sort of way.

MICHAEL
Come to think of it, I'm fucking terrified of getting married.

ALEX
Fine. Done. Now tell me what you want. More than anything else, what do you want?

Michael thinks.

MICHAEL
This guy Fenwick -- he and I are both up for senior analyst. And I want that job. I want it so bad I can taste it. I mean, if I had to take orders from that son of a bitch --

Alex holds out his beer for a toast.

ALEX
Then drink to it. Make it happen.

Michael starts to raise his beer, then hesitates, remembering the last toast Alex made.

ALEX (cont.)
It's okay this time.

They CLINK their beers.

MICHAEL
Make it happen.

CUT TO:

45 INT MICHAEL'S OFFICE DAY 45

MICHAEL is on the phone in his office, pacing.

MICHAEL
(into phone)
You can give me that quote on the whole order?

VOICE (o.s.)
Michael, I said I could. Twice. My finger is hovering over the "enter" button. Do you want the buy or not?

HOWARD NEIL'S VOICE comes from the doorway to Michael's office.

HOWARD
Michael? Lunch?

Michael turns and puts his hand over the phone, acting as if he's been caught at something. Howard and FENWICK are standing in the doorway.

MICHAEL
Can't. I'm up to my ass. And I gotta meet somebody.

HOWARD
Fine. Oh, nice work on the bi-monthly. When have you had time to sleep the last couple weeks?

Michael shrugs modestly. Howard walks off. Fenwick walks after him, tossing a dirty look to Michael.

Michael checks his watch.

MICHAEL
(into phone)
I'll have to call you back.

CUT TO:

46 EXT LA BREA TAR PITS DAY 46

A huge IMPERIAL MAMMOTH stands stuck in a bubbling pit of tar, TRUMPETING in panic to its mate and child, who stand helplessly on the shore.

ALEX waits at the railing above the exhibit at the La Brea Tar Pits. MICHAEL comes running up the steps to him.

MICHAEL
Sorry I'm late. Here. Leave 'em under the seat, okay?

He tosses a set of car keys to Alex and turns to go.

ALEX
Thanks. Sure you can't come? Three to five up at county line.

MICHAEL
No. I can't exactly go surfing right now, much as I enjoyed my last go-out.

ALEX
What's up your ass?

MICHAEL
Sorry. It's a thing at work.

ALEX
What? Tell me about it?

MICHAEL
No, it's -- it's too complicated.

ALEX
(raising an eyebrow at that notion)
Too complicated?

CUT TO:

47 INT GEORGE C. PAGE MUSEUM DAY 47

MICHAEL and ALEX walk through the museum, which is loaded with the skeletons of animals that got stuck in the tar and didn't get out.

Michael stops in front of a wall display lined with the skulls of hundreds of wolves.

MICHAEL
The trade figure comes out at three o'clock. It's going to be down. Significantly. I know it.

ALEX
How do you know?

MICHAEL
I just know. I feel it. It's my job. But policy is I'm not supposed to buy until after the figure is released.

ALEX
What happens if you buy before?

MICHAEL
If I'm right? I'm ahead of everybody and the company cleans up. A million. Maybe more.

ALEX
So you can make them money and it's not illegal. If you ask me it's a stupid policy.

MICHAEL
It's a little more complicated than that. It's a question of judicious business.

ALEX
It's not a question of judicious business, it's a question of balls. You got the juevos or don't you?

Michael looks at him, hard. He turns and walks for the door, his step lively with purpose.

MICHAEL
(calling back)
Call me later!

Alex watches as he leaves.

CUT TO:

48 INT MICHAEL'S OFFICE DAY 48

The clock on Michael's desk says 3:04. MICHAEL stands at the window, staring out at the ocean nervously. LESLIE calls from offscreen.

LESLIE
Michael? It's here!

She hurries into the room. Michael doesn't turn around, just stares out the window, gritting his teeth.

MICHAEL
Yeah?

LESLIE
Down almost three points.

Michael closes his eyes in relief. Offscreen, the phone RINGS. Leslie hurries out to answer it. Michael goes and sits behind his desk, immensely pleased with himself. He puts his feet up.

LESLIE (o.s.)
It's a Mr. Juevos on one.

Michael smiles and snatches up the phone eagerly.

MICHAEL
(into phone)
Down three! I was right, damn it, I was right! Thanks, man.

ALEX (o.s.)
You did it yourself. Hey, let's celebrate. There's a party in Malibu tonight --

MICHAEL
Can't. I have to go to Ruth's for dinner. It's her parents' anniversary. Very formal.

ALEX
Blow it off.

MICHAEL
Can't.

ALEX (o.s.)
Suit yourself. Nice work, Mick.

He hangs up.

CUT TO:

49 INT OUTER OFFICE DAY 49

LESLIE hears Michael hang up the phone. She pushes the intercom button.

LESLIE
Do you want to return these calls now, Michael? Oh!

MICHAEL is standing behind her, grinning ear to ear.

MICHAEL
Later. And Leslie -- I'd prefer if you'd call me Mick from now on.

She breaks out into laughter, then stops when he doesn't laugh along.

LESLIE
Oh. Sure. Okay.
(trying it)
"Mick."

He walks out of the office, WHISTLING to himself.

CUT TO:

50 INT CORRIDOR DAY 50

MICK walks down the corridor. Struts, actually. He passes Fenwick's office. FENWICK, who is going over something with BRITT, looks up at him suspiciously.

Mick reaches an office at the end of the hall. He breezes past a SECRETARY, giving her a little wink.

CUT TO:

51 INT HOWARD NEIL'S OFFICE DAY 51

HOWARD sits behind an impressive desk. MICK appears in the doorway and leans against the frame, hands in pockets.

MICK
Howard!

Howard looks up.

MICK (cont.)
Good news.

CUT TO:

52 EXT RUTH'S PARENTS' HOUSE NIGHT 52

MICK gets out of his car in front of a large Beverly Hills home. He's dressed in a tuxedo and has just a touch of gel in his hair.

A VALET takes the car and gives Mick the ticket, which he stuffs in his jacket pocket.

CUT TO:

53 INT HOUSE NIGHT 53

Delicate STRINGED INSTRUMENTS play in the other room. ELEGANT GUESTS in tuxedos and gowns engage in sparkling conversation.

MICK strides into the room and surveys the place. RUTH goes to him and gives him a kiss. She touches his hair, surprised.

RUTH
Look at you! I like it. A little greasy, but nice.

MICK
This for me?

He takes a glass of champagne from her hand and drinks.

RUTH
You're late. Everything okay at the office?

MICK
Couldn't be better.
(surveying the crowd)
A party's like a battlefield, don't you think?

RUTH
Whatever you say, sweetheart. Come on. Francois is already here.

MICK
Francois?

He follows her into the other room.

CUT TO:

54 INT PARTY ROOM NIGHT 54

RUTH and MICK approach a small group of GUESTS who are gathered around a television set, chatting animatedly in French.

RUTH
(to Mick)
You didn't tell me you'd invited a friend. Francois?

One of the men excuses himself in French and turns. It's ALEX. He looks splendid, dressed in a gorgeous tuxedo. He breaks into a spectacular grin.

ALEX
(with a perfect accent)
Bon soir, Michel!

Mick is dumbfounded. Ruth nudges him.

MICK
(regaining)
Uh -- Francois! What a -- I'm surprised you made it.

ALEX
Yes, I was fortunate.
(for Mick only)
I couldn't let you celebrate without me.

A man appears next to Mick -- HENRY FIELDING, Ruth's father, an imposing, impressive man.

FIELDING
How are you, Michael?

MICK
Congratulations, Mr. Fielding.

Fielding holds up his hand, displaying a tiny gold wedding band on an enormous fist.

FIELDING
Thirty-five years. Guess I'll be coming to these things for you pretty soon.

MICK
I guess so.

RUTH
(to Mick)
You didn't tell me you were working with someone from the Paris office.

MICK
(searching)
Oh, yes. Yes.
(still searching)
Yes.

ALEX
Mais oui, I've been here for several weeks.

MRS. FIELDING breezes up and kisses Mick on the cheek.

MRS. FIELDING
(not a question at all)
How are you, dear. We were just about to look at the promotional campaign you and Francois put together for the new French office.

MICK
Oh?

ALEX
Yes.

Henry Fielding turns and flicks on the television. He pushes "play" on the VCR.

ALEX (cont.)
(to the others)
Will you excuse us? Meek and I, we have of course seen these promotions a thousand times.

The small group nods its assent and turns to the screen.

RUTH
(in Mick's ear)
He's charming!

She turns to the television as well.

Alex takes Mick by the arm and leads him around the corner into the front hallway.

CUT TO:

55 INT HALLWAY NIGHT 55

ALEX and MICK stop. Alex starts fishing through Mick's pockets.

ALEX
Don't be mad.

MICK
I'm not mad, I'm astounded. Where'd you get the tux? Where'd you learn to speak --

ALEX
You'll be mad in a second. But before anything happens, I want you to know I did it for you. Ah.

He finds Mick's parking stub in his jacket pocket and goes to the front door with it. He gives it to the VALET.

MICK
Did what for me? What --

From the other room, all conversation abruptly stops. The Stringed Instruments strike a sour note and stop.

MICK (cont.)
That tape -- oh God, you didn't --

ALEX
(from the doorway)
Just the highlights. It's for the best. Really.

From the other room comes a female SHRIEK, followed by the CRASH of glass and VOICES rising up in anger and shock.

VOICE (o.s.)
Turn it off! Turn it off! For God's sake, someone turn it off!

Mick runs to the door to the party room just in time to see a fleeting image of himself making love to Claire on the couch in his apartment.

Ruth stands in shock in front of the television, a shattered glass of wine on the floor at her feet.

Henry Fielding snaps off the television and sees Mick in the door.

FIELDING
(the voice of a murderer)
I wanna talk to you.

Mick turns. Alex is standing in the front door. Behind him, his car pulls up in front.

ALEX
Come on!

Mick doesn't stick around to chat. He bolts for the door.

CUT TO:

56 EXT HOUSE NIGHT 56

ALEX slips behind the wheel. MICK jumps in the passenger side. The car races off down the driveway as a small crowd of angry PARTYGOERS and SERVANTS gather in the doorway.

CUT TO:

57 INT CAR NIGHT 57

ALEX drives. MICK rides, eyes glued to the road.

ALEX
You're mad at me, aren't you?

MICK
Don't speak to me!

ALEX
I just want to know if you're mad.

MICK
Do <u>not</u> speak to me!

CUT TO:

58 EXT BEACH NIGHT 58

MICK's car skids to a stop in the beach parking lot. MICK gets out and stalks down to the beach. ALEX follows. They are still wearing their tuxedos.

ALEX
(calling out)
You asked me to, man! Don't you remember?

Mick ignores him.

ON THE BEACH,

a large party is in progress. A bonfire burns, there are garbage cans filled with beer and ice. Mick grabs a can of beer and rips the top off. He upends the can, drinking at least half of it in one swallow. Alex takes a beer as well and follows him, staying a safe distance away.

Mick cruises around. He sees CLAIRE and goes over to her.

Claire is tipsy and greets him enthusiastically.

CLAIRE
Dominick!

MICK
That's not my name. He made that name up. My real name is -- is --

CLAIRE
Yeah?

Mick throws a look at Alex, who watches them both through the fire.

MICK
Kirk. My name is Kirk. I was hoping I'd see you so I could tell you.

CLAIRE
Why did he lie?

MICK
It's a long story.

Mick leans in close to her, speaking earnestly. It's a different Mick we're seeing, an aggressively gregarious one. From time to time he steals a glance over at Alex to make sure he's watching.

Mick suggests something and Claire nods. Making sure Alex is watching, Mick leads her off to the side and they sit down.

They talk animatedly. She offers him a joint. He smokes some.

They laugh.

A short distance away, Alex watches them through the fire, not listening to some people who are talking to him.

Mick and Claire move closer. She's drunk, he's getting there.

Mick leans in and kisses her. She kisses back.

Alex watches, through the fire.

The kiss grows passionate, almost fierce. Mick runs his hand into her hair and pulls her head back, kissing her hard on the neck. She's turned on and runs both her hands over his chest. He leans her back and kisses between her breasts.

Mick turns his head, makes sure Alex is watching.

Alex is.

Claire slides one hand down to Mick's crotch -- surreptitiously, so no one sees.

Alex sees.

Mick looks up, making eye contact with Alex as he kisses Claire.

Alex drops his beer and walks over to them. He stands above them.

Claire looks up, startled.

MICK
(to Alex)
Yeah?

Alex reaches into his jacket and pulls out a capsule, the same kind as he had the other night. He breaks it open, inhales deeply, and offers it to Mick, a challenge.

Mick takes it defiantly. He takes a deep, hard snort, then shakes his head at the powerful effect.

ALEX
Forgive me?

Mick stands. He looks at Alex, eye to eye.

MICK
Hell with that.

He grabs Alex roughly.

MICK (cont.)
I owe you.

He hugs him -- not tenderly, but hard. Like men do. Alex laughs.

DISSOLVE TO:

59 EXT BEACH PARTY NIGHT 59

MICK and CLAIRE are huddled off to one side of the now smaller party. Mick is out of himself -- drunk, stoned, wired. Claire is writing something on a book of matches.

CLAIRE
All I'm saying is I think you should be careful, that's all.

MICK
I can take care of myself.

CLAIRE
You're a nice guy. He's --

She stops abruptly, staring at something over Mick's shoulder. ALEX.

ALEX
Come on, let's jam already.

MICK
Sure.

Claire gives him the book of matches.

MICK (cont.)
This number is good for you?

CLAIRE
For a couple days, yeah.

Alex shoots a look at both of them, then leads Mick away. He watches as Mick puts the pack of matches in his pocket. As soon as they're out of earshot --

ALEX
What was she saying?

MICK
I don't know. Nothin'.

Alex pulls a capsule out of his pocket and takes a hit.

ALEX
Don't call her. Dime a dozen, man. Dime a dozen. You tired?

He extends the capsule to Mick, who also takes a hit.

MICK
No fuckin' way.

CUT TO:

60 INT HAMBURGER JOINT NIGHT 60

TWO DISGUSTING HAMBURGERS are slid off the grill and onto two disgusting buns. The COUNTER GUY, a heroin addict in his thirties, shovels them into a brown bag and scoops up a mess of french fries.

MICK is roaming around the hamburger joint, which apparently was the scene of a kids' party. Torn crepe paper hangs from the ceiling, paper junk overflows the garbage can. Mick notices some party masks on top of the trash. He laughs and pulls them out.

ALEX is at the counter, waiting for the food. Mick calls from behind him.

MICK
Hey! Check it out!

Alex turns. Mick is wearing one of the masks.

ALEX
(smiling)
Perfect.

Mick starts to pull off the mask.

ALEX (cont.)
No -- leave it on.

MICK
(holding one out)
There's one for you too.

ALEX
I don't need one.

The Clerk steps up to the counter with a brown bag and slides it at Alex.

CLERK
Eight forty-two.

The smile vanishes from Alex's face. He turns to the Clerk and, in one motion, pulls a gun from his cummerbund and moves forward, pressing it against the Clerk's forehead.

ALEX
Close your eyes.
(a shout)
CLOSE 'EM!

The Clerk does.

MICK
Oh, Jesus, oh God, what the hell -- ?

ALEX
Shut up.
(to the Clerk)
Come out here. Come on.

He pulls the Clerk out over the counter, gun still at his head.

ALEX (cont.)
Empty the register, Dominick.

Mick doesn't move.

ALEX (cont.)
EMPTY IT!

MICK
How?!

ALEX
Press "no sale."

Mick leans over the counter, panicky, willing to do anything that will get them out of there as fast as possible. He searches the keyboard on the modern cash register.

ALEX (cont.)
Lower left.

Mick presses a button and the register springs open. He grabs another bag and fills it with cash.

ALEX (cont.)
(to the Clerk)
Lie down.

CLERK
Don't shoot, man.

ALEX
It's not your money, right? So don't die for it, right? RIGHT?!

The Clerk lies face down on the floor. Mick turns and bolts for the door with the bag of money. He pauses, seeing Alex isn't following him.

MICK
Come on!

He races out the door. Alex bends down over the Clerk, who is face down on the floor, shaking with fear. Alex puts the gun to the back of his head. His finger tightens.

His face is rigid. Sweat runs down his cheek.

Outside, a car backs up and stops in front of the door. Mick is inside. He throws open the passenger door.

Alex leans even closer to the Clerk on the floor, so his mouth is next to the Clerk's ear.

ALEX
(softly)
Bang.

He pulls back, grabs the bag of hamburgers off the counter, and races out of the restaurant.

CUT TO:

61 EXT STREET NIGHT 61

ALEX runs out of the store and jumps in the car. It SCREAMS away from the curb.

CUT TO:

62 INT CAR NIGHT 62

MICK drives, ALEX rides. The radio blasts. Hamburgers and french fries fly, not so much eaten as revelled in.

Alex lets out a war WHOOP. Mick echoes it with one of his own.

ALEX
You were great, man! You were great!

MICK
I was? I stayed cool, didn't I? Didn't I?

ALEX
Fuckin' A you did!

MICK
You know, I feel a little congested.

Mick cracks a capsule under his nose and takes a deep hit. He's gone, over the edge.

MICK (cont.)
Oh shit.

He suddenly slams on the brakes.

ALEX
What are you doin'?

The car stops. Mick piles out and falls to his knees in some bushes. He vomits.

Alex comes and leans over him.

ALEX
You alright?

MICK
I'm fine. I'm fine. It's just the way I react to things.

He looks up, wild eyed, still on his knees.

MICK (cont.)
Let's do another one. A 7-11. I always wanted to do a 7-11.

Alex looks at him, surprised. Mick's jaw is set, he's grinding his teeth like mad.

ALEX
(shakes his head)
They got cameras.

MICK
A donut shop, then! I love donuts!

ALEX
A donut shop?! Why not just stick up a police station? Come on, get up.

CUT TO:

63 EXT LIQUOR STORE NIGHT 63

A seedy hole-in-the-wall liquor store on a side street. Mick's car SQUEALS to a halt just down the street and ALEX and MICK pile out. Mick grabs Alex by the arm.

MICK
Who am I this time?

ALEX
Tony. You're Tony.

MICK
Tony.

Mick puts his mask back on and they go into the store. We see the entire action from outside, through the glass windows.

Alex takes care of the CLERK while Mick goes for the register. The action is frenetic -- after he gets the money, Mick swings himself over the counter and grabs a bottle from a shelf.

Alex pulls back from the Clerk and they both race out of the store.

CUT TO:

64 INT CAR NIGHT 64

If possible, the RADIO is louder, their moods higher. MICK is shaking his head, trying to get some feeling back in it as he laughs uncontrollably. He takes a deep pull from the bottle of rum he stole and passes it to ALEX, who does the same.

MICK
I feel weird, man. It's like I could either run a marathon or pass out, right now.

He lets out another WHOOP, then his head lolls back against the seat. Alex slaps him lightly.

ALEX
Uh-uh. Don't go. Don't fade on me now.

MICK
Just let me sleep a second.

ALEX
(holding out the bottle)
Have another blast.

Mick twists in his seat, trying to read the street signs as they whiz past.

MICK
Hey! Levering! You know where we are? Fenwick lives around here! Fenwick!

ALEX
(not the least bit surprised)
Really?

He takes a drink from the rum and tosses the bottle out the window. It bounces once in the street and SMASHES on a curb.

Their taillights recede in the distance.

CUT TO:

65 INT MICK'S BEDROOM DAY 65

MICK wakes up in bed with the inescapable feeling that a manhole cover is resting on his head.

He GROANS and rolls over to look at the clock next to him. It's 6:45. He throws the blankets aside and is surprised to see that he's still dressed in his tuxedo shirt and pants.

He lugs his guts out of bed. He heads toward the bathroom but stops in the doorway of the bedroom, looking out into the living room. The place is a mess, snowed under by junk food wrappers. There are two piles of money on the coffee table -- wrinkled fives, tens and twenties. ALEX is asleep on the sofa.

Mick remembers.

He goes into the bathroom.

CUT TO:

66 INT BATHROOM DAY 66

MICK turns on the shower. He goes to the sink and turns on the cold water tap. He feels a sharp pain in his right hand and he looks down at it.

It's slightly swollen. A purplish bruise is spreading across the knuckles, which are cut and skinned. There is some dried blood on them. He flexes his fingers painfully, then plunges his head into the cold water.

CUT TO:

67 INT LIVING ROOM DAY 67

ALEX is asleep on the couch. A hand SLAPS him lightly on the face. He wakes up.

MICK is standing over him, fully dressed in a business suit.

MICK
I have to go to work.

ALEX
So?

Mick stares at him.

ALEX (cont.)
Aw, come on -- let me sleep.

Mick checks his watch. He doesn't like it, but doesn't want the fight.

MICK
Lock up when you go.

He turns and heads for the door.

ALEX
(calling after him)
You were somethin' last night, Mick.
A changed man.

MICK
I don't want to talk about it.

He opens the door.

ALEX
(cheery)
Give my regards to Fenwick.

Mick pauses in the door for a moment to consider the meaning of that, then goes out.

Alex rolls over.

CUT TO:

68 INT EUROPACIFIC RECEPTION AREA DAY 68

MICK comes into the reception area of his office, wearing sunglasses to hide his hangover. He goes into the back area.

CUT TO:

69 INT OFFICE KITCHEN AREA DAY 69

A few WORKERS are in the kitchen area, getting coffee, talking, starting the day. LESLIE is seated at a table, talking to BRITT, Fenwick's secretary.

MICK comes in, still wearing the sunglasses, and goes directly to the coffee pot.

LESLIE
Morning, Mi -- Mick.

Mick nods and pours a large cup of coffee, finally taking off the glasses. Leslie turns back to Britt.

LESLIE (cont.)
That's just awful.

BRITT
Can you imagine? This city is getting just ridiculous.

MICK
Where's the sugar?

LESLIE
Oh. Here.

She holds out the dispenser. Mick goes over to them and she dumps some sugar into his cup.

BRITT
Did you hear about Fenwick, Michael?

MICK
What about him?

BRITT
He got mugged last night.

MICK
What?

BRITT
Assaulted. Can you believe it?

LESLIE
God, Michael, what did you do to your hand?

He spills his coffee.

MICK
Oh, shit.

LESLIE
Are you okay, Michael?

MICK
I'm fine. Fine.

He grabs a stack of napkins and starts blotting at the coffee. He looks up at Britt.

MICK (cont.)
Where? Where did it happen?

BRITT
I'm not sure.

MICK
Who was it?

BRITT
I don't know. He didn't seem to want to go into it.

MICK
Well is he okay, for Christ's sakes?

BRITT
(taken aback)
Yeah, I -- I think so. I mean, he was beaten up. Pretty badly.

LESLIE
(to Mick)
Can you believe it? I swear, it makes me want to move back to Seattle.

Mick doesn't bother to answer her, just gets up and hurries out of the kitchen. Leslie watches him go. She and Britt exchange a look.

CUT TO:

70 EXT MICK'S APARTMENT BUILDING DAY 70

Mick's car pulls to a stop in front of his building. MICK gets out and hurries inside.

CUT TO:

71 INT MICK'S APARTMENT DAY 71

MICK bursts into the apartment. ALEX is sitting on the sofa, his feet up on the coffee table, reading the morning paper. There is a box of donuts in front of him and he's eating one.

ALEX
Thought you went to --

MICK
(holds out his injured hand)
How did I get this?

ALEX
Huh?

MICK
Tell me what happened last night.

Alex shoves the box of donuts across the table toward Mick.

ALEX
Donut?

Mick sweeps them off the table.

MICK
God damn it, tell me what I DID!

ALEX
You know what you did. The Fatburger --

MICK
I remember that. Later. At the end. We were in Fenwick's neighborhood.

Alex gets up and goes to Mick. He takes Mick's injured hand, holding it like a doctor.

ALEX
It's not broken, is it?

Mick, horrified, turns and goes into the kitchen. Alex follows.

Mick turns on the tap and starts scrubbing at his hand, trying to clean off all the dried blood. ALEX follows him and leans in, close.

ALEX (cont.)
It was beautiful, man. You went in first -- you took the stairs two at a time. We found him in bed and I pulled him up. You beat him, Mick, you beat the shit out of him --

Mick scrubs harder at his injured hand.

ALEX (cont.)
-- with a belt, then with your fists. You beat him and told him to get out of your way at work. You beat him until I stopped you and if I hadn't stopped you, I think you would have killed him. You were crazy, Mick, you were outta your mind. You were beautiful.

Mick slumps to the floor, leaving the water running, and hugs his knees up against his chest.

MICK
I don't remember. I don't remember any of it. It was -- it was the drugs.

ALEX
(sarcastic)
Sure, Mick. It was the drugs. Not you. You're not like that.

Mick gets up and goes back into the living room. Alex follows him.

Mick paces.

ALEX (cont.)
Hey, relax. He won't go to the cops. He can't. He knows that you'd kill him if he did and if you didn't kill him, I would.

MICK
Don't be ridiculous. How could the man possibly know that?

ALEX
Because I told him this morning. When I got the donuts.

Long pause. Mick stares at Alex. This situation has just completely defined itself; has just settled over him with the weight and clarity of a Big Mistake.

MICK
Get out.

ALEX
What?

Mick walks to the door and opens it.

MICK
Get out. Get out of my apartment, get out of my life.

ALEX
Mick, we got it. We got you what you wanted.

MICK
Out. Now. I mean it. Go.

Alex stares.

He picks up his jacket and puts it on calmly, without a word. He walks to the door and leaves.

Mick closes it softly behind him.

CUT TO:

72 INT MICK'S OFFICE DAY 72

MICK works at his desk, feverishly, working as if to block out all other thought. LESLIE appears in the doorway.

LESLIE
Mick? That was Howard. He wants to see you in his office, right away.

Mick stares at her. He swallows, then gets up, trying to stay cool.

MICK
He say what it was about?

LESLIE
Nope. Just said right away.

MICK
Yeah, I heard you.

Mick leaves the office.

CUT TO:

73 INT HOWARD NEIL'S OFFICE DAY 73

MICK pokes his head in the open door of Howard Neil's office. He TAPS on the door.

MICK
You wanted to see me?

HOWARD looks up from behind his impressive desk.

HOWARD
Yeah. Sit down.

Mick comes in and settles into a chair opposite Howard.

Howard finishes signing two letters in front of him. He takes his time. There is a long pause. Mick shifts in the chair.

Howard finally caps his pen and looks up.

HOWARD (cont.)
I just got off the phone with Fenwick.

MICK
Oh?

HOWARD
Yes. He had some very strange things to say. Some of which involve you.

MICK
Uh huh.

Pause.

HOWARD
He's withdrawn himself from consideration for senior analyst.

MICK
He -- he has?

HOWARD
Yeah. Said he doesn't want the pressure. Personally, I think he's just overreacting to what happened to him last night. You know about it?

MICK
I heard.

HOWARD
Uh huh. Well, if Fenwick's out, that makes you far and away the leading contender. I just wanted to let you know.

MICK
I -- I see.

HOWARD
You don't seem pleased.

MICK
Well, I'm sorry it happened this way.

HOWARD
So am I.

Pause.

MICK
If that's all, I -- I've got a ton of paper on my desk.

HOWARD
Fine.

Mick forces a tight smile, gets up, and leaves the office. Howard watches him go, still puzzling over the situation.

CUT TO:

74 INT MICK'S BUILDING HALLWAY NIGHT 74

MICK steps off the elevator. The WOMAN IN SWEATS is locking her apartment.

WOMAN IN SWEATS
Hold that elevator, Mark!

Mick doesn't bother to correct her. He pauses, holding the door. She hurries up and past him, into the elevator.

WOMAN IN SWEATS (cont.)
Thanks. I'd love to see how everything looks when you're finished.

MICK
What?

WOMAN IN SWEATS
When you're finished. With your redecorating.

MICK
(covering)
Oh. Right.

She smiles and the elevator doors close. Mick turns and looks toward his apartment door. He walks to it quickly.

CUT TO:

75 INT MICK'S APARTMENT DAY 75

MICK enters and flicks on a light.

The place is empty.

The furniture is gone, the TV and stereo equipment are gone, the pictures are gone, even the carpeting has been pulled up and left in a roll in the corner.

Mick loses his grip on his briefcase, which drops to the floor with a THUD. He walks numbly into the kitchen, then runs into the bedroom and back into the empty living room. His face tells the story -- the whole place has been cleaned out.

He hurries to the phone, picks it up, and starts to dial. He pauses, the phone in midair. He SLAMS it down and runs out the door of the apartment.

CUT TO:

76 INT CLUB NIGHT 76

MICK bursts into the club, the dance place he and Alex came to the night they met. The place is mostly empty again. Mick goes quickly to the BARTENDER.

MICK
Where's Alex?

BARTENDER
Who?

MICK
Tony. Whoever. The guy who's staying upstairs.

BARTENDER
Split. Had to get back to base.

MICK
To what?

BARTENDER
To Pendelton. He's in the Marines with my brother.

MICK
That son of a bitch!

BARTENDER
Hey, you watch your mouth! Tony happens to be a hell of a guy!

Mick looks at him, decides not to bother, and heads for the door.

CUT TO:

77 EXT CLUB NIGHT 77

MICK walks down the sidewalk to his car, livid. He has just put the key in the door to unlock it when he hears a VOICE behind him.

VOICE
You know why I took your stuff?

Mick whirls around, startled. ALEX stands behind him.

ALEX (cont.)
To show you I could. To put things back in perspective for you.

MICK
Give it back. Give it back or I'll call the cops.

ALEX
Sure you will.
(imitating, whiny)
"Officer, this guy I knocked off a Fatburger with stole all my stuff!"

MICK
I want it back. All of it. It's mine.

ALEX
Yeah, just like the job is. And Claire is. You think you would have got any of that without me? Huh?

MICK
I will not have this conversation.

ALEX
You guys make me sick. What did you think you could do, just take what you wanted? Be a little more popular, wear funny shirts at parties?

Pause.

MICK
Keep it.

He turns and gets into his car.

ALEX
What?

MICK
The stuff. Keep it. You did put things in perspective for me. I owed you. And now we're even.

He tries to pull the car door shut. Alex holds onto it.

ALEX
I see. You got what you want, so now you blow me off. Is that it?

MICK
If that's how you want to look at it, yes.

He pulls at the door again. Alex still holds on.

ALEX
I just want to know one thing. At the beach the other night, when you were with Claire -- you wanted that to hurt me, didn't you?

MICK
Yes.

ALEX
What?

MICK
Yes. I wanted to hurt you.

ALEX
Okay. Good. I just wanted to be clear on that. I wanted to be real clear on that.

He lets go of the door. Mick SLAMS it shut and pulls away. Alex watches him go.

CUT TO:

78 INT PISMO'S APARTMENT NIGHT 78

Pismo's apartment is a one room furnished bachelor with a hotplate. PISMO watches curiously as MICK throws a blanket and pillow on the ratty sofa.

PISMO
What do you mean, you want to stay here?

MICK
I just do.

PISMO
What's wrong with your place?

MICK
Nothing.

He flops down on the couch, rolls over so he's facing the other way, and closes his eyes. Pismo looks at him.

PISMO
You want a beer or something?

MICK
No.

Pause.

PISMO
Well, it's nice to see you.

MICK
(into pillow)
Nice to see you.

Pismo, kind of tickled at the idea of being a host, tucks the blanket around Mick's feet and turns off the light.

CUT TO:

79 INT EUROPACIFIC OFFICE CORRIDOR DAY 79

MICK walks down the corridor at work. Ahead of him, he sees FENWICK coming the other way. He has a bandage across his nose and wears a pair of sunglasses to hide a bruised eye.

Mick ducks down another corridor until he passes.

CUT TO:

80 INT MICK'S OUTER OFFICE DAY 80

MICK passes Leslie's desk. LESLIE looks up at him.

LESLIE
Uh, Mick --

He looks up. TWO MEN are waiting for him. Both are large and incredibly official looking.

FIRST MAN
Michael Boll?

MICK
(absolutely scared shitless)
Yes?

FIRST MAN
We're from the district attorney's office.

MICK
Yes?

The Second Man reaches into his coat and pulls out an official looking pink piece of paper.

SECOND MAN
This is a court order prohibiting you from harassing or attempting to make contact with a Miss Ruth Fielding.

Relief floods over Mick's face.

SECOND MAN (cont.)
This order has been duly executed by Judge Howard Blanc of the County of Los Angeles and is in effect immediately. A copy is on file in our office. Do you understand?

MICK
Yes. I understand.

SECOND MAN
Sign it.

He extends it to Mick, who signs at the bottom.

FIRST MAN
Have a nice day.

They leave the office. Mick and Leslie exchange a glance. The phone RINGS, breaking the glance. Leslie answers it and Mick goes into his office.

CUT TO:

81 INT MICK'S OFFICE DAY 81

MICK sits behind his desk. LESLIE calls from offscreen.

LESLIE (o.s.)
Call on line one!

MICK
Well who is it?

LESLIE (o.s.)
I don't know. She wouldn't say.

Puzzled, Mick picks up the phone.

MICK
Michael Boll.

ALEX'S VOICE comes over the wire, a high falsetto.

ALEX (o.s.)
Now don't pretend you don't remember me, sweetheart.

Mick darts a glance out toward Leslie and swivels in his chair so he's facing the other way. He speaks in a low voice.

MICK
What the hell do you want?

ALEX (o.s.)
(normal voice)
Take it easy. I'm doin' you a favor.

MICK
I don't want a favor.

ALEX (o.s.)
I did what you said. Your stuff's gone. Sold. But there's a bunch of shit that's no good to anybody. Computer discs, your passport, some pictures. That kind of stuff. You want it?

MICK
(thinks)
Yeah.

ALEX (o.s.)
You know the oil fields off La Cienega? It's in a box by well number eight.

MICK
The oil fields? That's an hour drive at this time of day.

ALEX (o.s.)
Take it or leave it, pal. It's on my way out of town. I'm pullin' up stakes. You won't see me any more.

MICK
When will it be there?

ALEX (o.s.)
It's there now. I wouldn't wait too long. See you later, Bud!

CLICK. He's hung up.

MICK
Son of a bitch!

He SLAMS the phone down. Leslie turns and looks at him. He gets up and grabs his coat. He heads out of the office, livid.

MICK (cont.)
I won't be back today.

LESLIE
Where should I say you went?

MICK
It's personal!

He storms out..

CUT TO:

82 EXT OIL FIELDS DAY 82

The sun is setting over the oil fields near Baldwin Hills.

MICK's car parks on a service road and he gets out. He approaches one of the wells.

There is a medium sized cardboard box a few feet from the well. Mick looks around, but there's nobody in sight anywhere. He opens the box and sorts through the stuff inside. It is as Alex said.

He picks up the box and heads for his car.

CUT TO:

83 INT MICK'S BUILDING ENTRYWAY NIGHT 83

MICK gets his mail in the entryway to his building.

CUT TO:

84 INT CORRIDOR NIGHT 84

MICK walks down the corridor outside his apartment. He fishes out his keys and unlocks the door to his place.

CUT TO:

85 INT MICK'S APARTMENT NIGHT 85

MICK comes into his empty apartment, tired and pissed off. He drops the box near the door and goes down a little hallway to his bedroom.

He tries the door. The knob turns, but it doesn't open. He pushes on it, puzzled. It won't give.

Looking around the edges of the door, he finds it has been nailed shut by a half dozen spike nails.

MICK
Oh, for Christ's sake.

He turns and goes back into the living room. Now he sees it -- in one corner of the room, his VCR and television set are stacked neatly, the video camera beside them.

Mick approaches them cautiously, circling them like they could strike out at him at any moment.

He pushes the "eject" button on the VCR. A cassette slides out. He slides it back in, turns on the television, and presses the "play" button.

ON TAPE,

ALEX's FACE comes to life on the screen, in close-up.

ALEX
I want you to remember one thing, Mick. You asked for this.

There is a KNOCK at the door to the apartment. Alex turns.

ALEX (cont.)
Stay tuned.

Alex goes behind the camera and turns it so it faces the door. He goes to the door. As he gets further from the camera, we can see he is wearing the jacket Mick wore to the gallery opening.

Alex opens the door. It's CLAIRE.

ALEX (cont.)
Come on in.

CLAIRE
Is he okay? Where's all his stuff?

ALEX
He's in the bedroom. He wants to talk to you.

CLAIRE
Is he moving or something?

ALEX
Sort of. Come on.

She comes in and goes back to the bedroom. As Alex passes the camera, he winks and turns it so it is facing the open bedroom door.

CLAIRE
Isn't that his jacket?

ALEX
He's loaning it to me.

They go into the bedroom.

IN THE APARTMENT,

Mick snaps his head and looks at the bedroom door. He runs to it.

He tugs at the door knob, but the nails hold. He kicks at it, which splinters it some but not enough to get in.

ON THE TAPE,

The VOICES of Alex and Claire can be heard, but the camera can't quite see all the way into the bedroom.

CLAIRE (o.s.)
Where is he? What's going --

She SCREAMS and there is the sound of something very hard WHIZZING through the air and SMACKING flesh.

AT THE DOOR,

Mick hears the cries on the tape and, as if he could still do something, he resumes kicking the door. It starts to come loose.

ON THE TAPE,

the THWACKING sounds are brutal, horrific, accompanied by Claire's SCREAMS -- and then it is abruptly quiet.

AT THE DOOR,

Mick is throwing everything he has into it. A few of the nails are starting to pull out of the wood.

ON THE TAPE,

Alex staggers back, out of the room. He is covered in blood. He leans against a wall, staining it red.

AT THE DOOR,

Mick sees this action and turns to look at the wall behind him. There is a large blood smear where Alex stood. He pulls away from it.

Mick hurtles himself into the door one final time and this time it gives -- two of the nails pull out of the wood and the door splinters in half.

Mick falls into the room.

CUT TO:

86 INT BEDROOM NIGHT 86

There is blood everywhere. CLAIRE is on the bed, dead. One of his golf clubs is lying on the ground next to her, also bloodied.

MICK staggers back out of the room.

CUT TO:

87 INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT 87

ON THE TAPE,

Alex is looking into the camera, still breathing heavy.

ALEX
You thought we were even before?

But his lips haven't moved. MICK snaps his head and sees ALEX standing in the doorway to the apartment. In the flesh.

ALEX (cont.)
Now we're even.

Alex moves swiftly, coming into the apartment and closing and locking the door behind him. He goes to the VCR, extracts the tape, and pockets it.

Mick, suddenly seized by fear and loathing, lunges at Alex, catching him around the midsection and tackling him in the middle of the room. They grapple on the floor for a few moments, but Alex is stronger and ends up on top.

ALEX (cont.)
Cool it! Just cool it!

He starts to release his hold on Mick and Mick lashes out, throwing a wild punch that Alex neatly avoids.

Alex strikes, landing three consecutive jabs to Mick's face. Mick falls back to the floor, staggered by the blows, his eye bruised and his lip bleeding.

Alex gets up and goes to the door.

ALEX (cont.)
Before you do anything stupid like go to the police, think it through, buddy. I've covered all the bases.

MICK
They'll -- they'll get you.

ALEX
Think so? I'm a ghost.
(smiles)
Pooof. I'm gone.

He leaves. Mick stands, his legs shaky. He turns a half circle, in a daze.

He goes to the door to the bedroom and looks inside. He can't bear it. He turns and staggers back into the empty living room.

He paces, more turning in little circles than walking in any direction.

He is alone. And panicked. He sinks down to the floor and pushes with his feet, sliding across the room until he is up against the wall.

DISSOLVE TO:

88 INT MICK'S APARTMENT NIGHT 88

MICK is still on the floor, but now he's lying curled up against the wall, eyes wide open.

Thinking.

Outside, he hears someone walking down the hallway. His eyes dart to the door.

CUT TO:

89 INT MICK'S HALLWAY NIGHT 89

PISMO walks down the hallway and stops at Mick's door. He KNOCKS and waits. There is no response. He KNOCKS again.

PISMO
Michael?

No answer. He KNOCKS a third time.

PISMO (cont.)
Michael, it's me!

The door opens a crack, held by the chain lock. MICK looks out, his face pale and gaunt.

PISMO (cont.)
Hey, what happened? You said you'd be at my apartment three hours ago.

MICK
I can't talk right now.

He starts to close the door. Pismo stops it.

PISMO
What's goin' on? Come on, open up.

Mick pauses and looks at him. Deciding, he closes the door enough to take off the chain lock. He opens it a foot or two and nods for Pismo to come in.

He closes the door after him.

CUT TO:

90 INT MICK'S APARTMENT NIGHT 90

MICK stands at the window in the living room, staring outside without seeing much. PISMO is behind him, pacing, smoking a cigarette, very upset.

PISMO
It was just a matter of time. You got in bed with the devil, sooner or later you had to fuck.

MICK
I don't need that right now, Pismo.

PISMO
You can't go to the police. They'd never believe this guy exists. They'd think it was you.

MICK
Because he did it in my apartment?

PISMO
Yeah, and because he used your golf club and because he made sure you stormed out of your office pissed off after getting a phone call from a woman and went someplace where nobody saw you. Hell, you even look like you've been in a fight.

MICK
He said he'd covered all the bases.

PISMO
I don't get the jacket. Why did he wear it? And why take the chance of keeping it?

MICK
Think about it. I call the cops, and my blood stained jacket suddenly shows up in the dumpster in the alley, or in the trunk of my car, or at my office. It's checkmate. He did it. He's got me.

CUT TO:

91 INT APARTMENT NIGHT 91

Quick images:

-- A DRAPERY ROPE is cut and ZIPPED out of the curtain rods.

-- CLAIRE'S BODY is delicately placed in the middle of the rug pulled up from the living room floor.

-- HANDS tie cinches around the ends of the carpet bundle.

-- THE GOLF CLUB is wrapped up in newspaper.

CUT TO:

92 INT APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY NIGHT 92

PISMO pokes his head out the door to see if anyone is around. He hears voices and goes to the entrance of the building.

CUT TO:

93 INT ENTRYWAY - NIGHT 93

A MAN and a WOMAN, the same ones as before, are having a violent argument in the entryway, near the buzzers and mailboxes.

MAN
I told you -- I did not fuck her!

WOMAN
You put it in and you took it out. To me, that's fucking.

PISMO sees them and goes back to the apartment.

CUT TO:

94 INT APARTMENT NIGHT 94

MICK is holding down the "listen" button on his buzzer. He can hear the voices of the Man and Woman in the entryway, still arguing.

MAN (o.s.)
Can't we talk about this upstairs?

WOMAN (o.s.)
In front of my roommate?! I'm humiliated enough as it is!

Mick wipes the sweat off his forehead, impatient.

PISMO
Forget it. We'll try something else.

CUT TO:

95 INT ENTRYWAY NIGHT 95

MICK hurries past the still-arguing COUPLE and out the building.

MAN
Okay, once. I fucked her <u>once</u>.

WOMAN
I <u>knew</u> it!

CUT TO:

96 EXT BUILDING NIGHT 96

As MICK comes out of the building, a police car pulls up and stops at the curb. A POLICEMAN gets out of the car and approaches him.

POLICEMAN
Hold on a second.

Mick stops, nervous.

MICK
Yeah?

POLICEMAN
You the one that called?

MICK
What?

POLICEMAN
About a domestic argument.

MICK
No -- no. They're in the front hall.

The Cop walks past.

CUT TO:

97 INT GARAGE NIGHT 97

MICK starts his car and pulls it out of the garage.

CUT TO:

98 EXT BACK ALLEY NIGHT 98

MICK pulls his car into a dark alley behind the building. He looks up and down the alley and gestures up to PISMO, who is standing on the balcony above.

CUT TO:

99 EXT BALCONY NIGHT 99

PISMO and MICK place the rolled up body on top of the ledge that surrounds Mick's balcony. Using the drapery cord, they start to lower it down the side of the building.

The rug drops down jerkily, bit by bit, passing between two other balconies. The sliding glass doors are open. Drapes blow in the wind, but it's late and no one is around.

The rug is heavy, the cord thin. Pismo winces as it digs into his hands.

PISMO
It's slipping!

MICK
Hold on!

The rug continues its descent.

A BLACK DOG comes to the window of one of the balconies and, looking sideways, sees the rug. He stands motionless, staring as it goes down.

Pismo is really in pain now. Blood oozes from his palms.

PISMO
I can't!

Before Mick can answer, the rope slips out of Pismo's hands and his end of the carpet drops to the ground with a dull THUD. Mick quickly lowers his end as well.

The Dog watches.

CUT TO:

100 EXT ALLEY NIGHT 100

MICK opens the trunk of his car. He and PISMO pick up the carpet and stuff it in. Pismo tries to close the trunk, but the rug is too big.

MICK
Leave it open. It's not far.

They go around and get in the car. As he closes the door, Mick turns and looks up at the Black Dog staring down at him.

He starts the car and drives away.

The Dog WOOOFS once, lazily.

CUT TO:

101 EXT ANOTHER ALLEY NIGHT 101

The car stops next to an enormous pile of trash in another alley. MICK gets out of the car, looks both ways, and stuffs the golf club, wrapped in newspaper, into the bottom of the pile.

CUT TO:

102 EXT LOS ANGELES NIGHT 102

MICK's car turns left from a main road and into a parklike area in downtown Los Angeles. They pass a sign:

LA BREA TAR PITS.

They pull up a service road and drive into the middle of the empty park. Mick stops the car, looks around him, then he and PISMO unload the rug and carry it to a pitch black area, something like a small pond. They swing it a few times, then fling the rug a few feet out into the middle.

For a moment, it just sits on the surface of the pond.

Mick and Pismo exchange a terrified look, then turn back to the rug, begging it to go down with their eyes.

After a few seconds, it starts to sink -- but slowly, as if sinking in something much more solid than water.

In a few seconds it is out of sight. Pismo puts one hand on Mick's shoulder.

Mick stares at the bubbling tar.

CUT TO:

103 INT MICK'S OFFICE DAY 103

MICK sits at his desk, rubbing his forehead, staring down. A piece of paper slides across the desk toward him. He looks up. LESLIE is standing in front of him.

LESLIE
It's my two weeks' notice.

MICK
What?

LESLIE
My notice. Is it that much of a surprise?

MICK
But why?

LESLIE
You tell me, Mick. Something's obviously wrong and has <u>been</u> wrong. You've barely even spoken to me for days. I can't take this. I'm sorry.

She turns for the door.

MICK
Wait.

She turns.

MICK (cont.)
It's not you. It's -- it's --

He stops, his attention drawn to something across the room.

LESLIE
Yes?

But Mick isn't hearing her anymore, his attention is clearly and sqaurely focused on an object that is resting innocently in the corner of the office near the window.

His golf club. Clean and shiny.

LESLIE (cont.)
What?

MICK
Forget it. Nothing.

LESLIE
(shakes her head)
Two weeks.

She leaves the office. He looks at the club.

CUT TO:

104 INT MICK'S OFFICE DAY 104

MICK is on the phone, speaking frantically, but trying to keep his voice down. He paces, the phone in hand.

MICK
I'll tell you exactly what it means, it means he followed us! It means he knows where we put the body, he knows everything. This isn't going to end, he's going to --

He stops in the middle of his sentence as something out the window catches his eye. He looks out, down across the street, at the Tar Pits.

A crowd is gathered, watching a crew performing some kind of extraction from a pit. A half dozen POLICE CARS and an AMBULANCE are also assembled and the whole area is roped off with yellow tape.

MICK (cont.)
I'll call you back.

CUT TO:

105 EXT LA BREA TAR PITS DAY 105

MICK runs across the street and elbows his way to the front of the crowd. He can see the CREW in the middle of the pit performing some kind of extraction. Mick sees a white-coated museum EMPLOYEE just inside the yellow police tape.

MICK
What's going on?

EMPLOYEE
Found a body. Fresh one.

MICK
In the tar pit?

EMPLOYEE
Every now and then somebody tosses in a corpse. Trouble is, a pit this big is mostly water. After a couple days the stomach bloats and the body pops up. Crime don't pay.

Mick is in shock. He stares out at the pit, and now he sees it -- a CORPSE pulled out of the water. He turns his head, not wanting to see, and looks directly at --

-- ALEX.

Staring at him from across the pit. Smiling. Enjoying it.

Mick takes a step forward toward Alex. TWO PARAMEDICS step in front of him and he moves to the side.

When the Paramedics pass, Alex is gone.

CUT TO:

106 INT PISMO'S APARTMENT DAY 106

MICK paces like a madman, PISMO tries to follow him.

MICK
This is what he does! He's watching me wriggle. And if I'm not wriggling enough, he'll just give me another jab.

PISMO
It's not just you, buddy. I'm in this up to my ears.

MICK
So what do we do? We couldn't go to the police before, we certainly can't now. We're at his mercy. He knows everything about us, we know nothing about him. The only way this'll end is if he's dead.

PISMO
Now you're talking like him. Look, a guy like this has to have a history. Pin the history to the guy and maybe we've got something.

MICK
What do you mean?

PISMO
I mean he's got us in his world, let's put him in ours. Tell me everything you know about him.

MICK
It's all bullshit!

PISMO
So we'll go through the bullshit. Maybe we'll find something.

CUT TO:

107 INT CORRIDOR NIGHT 107

AN OLD MAN comes out of his apartment and walks down the hall. PISMO pokes his head out the door to his own apartment, waits for the Old Man to pass, and comes out. He's carrying a newspaper, folded open to a page.

MICK appears behind him.

PISMO
Oh, no. He sees you and everything's fucked up. Stay here.

MICK
I'm not gonna sit on my ass.

PISMO
Yes, you are. That's exactly what you're going to do. I'll call if I have any luck.

Pismo takes off down the steps. Mick goes inside, closing the door behind him.

After a moment, the door opens again. Mick looks out.

CUT TO:

108 EXT DOWNTOWN CLUB NIGHT 108

PISMO walks up to the front entrance of a downtown club. He checks an address in the newspaper with the address on the building and goes inside, past a group of CLUB-GOERS.

CUT TO:

109 INT DOWNTOWN CLUB NIGHT 109

PISMO moves through the crowded club. A ROCK BAND, the same band that played in the club Mick and Alex went to the night they met, is playing at the front. Some people dance, others are crowded around tables.

He edges his way through the crowd, searching.

Several PATRONS bump into him. He recoils, trying to move without actually touching anyone, finding it nearly impossible.

Getting fed up, he pulls out of the crowd, off to the side of the room.

And sees ALEX. He's sitting at a table across the room with the STYLISH WOMAN in her thirties, the one who was with him on the fishing pier.

The Woman is fascinated with Alex. They laugh, drink. She hangs on his arm, brushes his hair back a bit on the sides. He's charming and relaxed. They are clearly a couple.

Pismo watches them, edging forward to get a better look. As he moves, someone else is revealed, someone behind <u>him</u> --

-- MICK. He's standing in a corner of the club, looking dark, ragged, crazy. Watching Pismo. Seeing Alex.

As Pismo watches Alex and the Stylish Woman, it becomes clear they're not only making eyes at each other, they're also looking at someone at another table.

He follows their gaze to a BLONDE in her early twenties, sitting two tables away from them. She returns their look coquettishly, as if this has been going on for some time.

Alex grins at her. She grins back, then looks away.

Pismo looks at Alex again. Alex picks up a bottle of beer and takes a long, seductive drink. He fixes his gaze on the Blonde, a look that has real purpose. She turns back and returns it willingly, now completely ignoring the others at her table.

Michael stays in the shadows, watching Pismo as he watches the activity between Alex and the Blonde.

Now the Blonde gets up. She walks over toward the table of Alex and the Stylish Woman, moving as if she is going to speak to them -- but instead she keeps going, dragging one finger across their table as she cruises past them and into the ladies' room.

Alex and the Woman turn and watch her go, then have a quick, whispered conference. The Woman gets up and follows the Blonde into the bathroom.

Alex waits a moment, taking another sip of his beer. Pismo focuses on the bottle as Alex slowly sets it down on the table, next to two other bottles. Pismo looks at the bottle, an idea forming in his head.

Alex gets up and walks to the door of the ladies' room, pauses to see if anyone is looking, and slips inside.

Pismo moves. He heads over toward their table, eyes fixed on Alex's beer bottle, trying hard to keep it separated from the others.

As he moves, we see the space where Mick was standing.

<u>He's gone</u>.

Pismo draws close to the table. Suddenly, a DRUNK bumps into the table, sending the bottles reeling. Two of them fall over and CRASH on the floor. The third, Alex's, stays on the table but wobbles dangerously, rocking back and forth on the edge, moving closer and closer until --

-- a FINGER comes down into the top of the bottle and steadies it.

Pismo's finger. His finger stuck in the top, he picks up the bottle and delicately slips it into his inside jacket pocket.

His mission accomplished, he smiles and turns to go. As he turns he notices the Stylish Woman's jacket hanging over the chair. The edge of a black leather wallet is just sticking out.

Pismo throws a quick glance toward the ladies' room. He bites his lip, torn.

He goes for it. He moves up behind the chair, getting between it and the bathroom, and sidles over near the wallet. He prods it out a tiny bit more with his finger, then edges it open.

The Stylish Woman's driver's license is in the middle of the wallet, behind a plastic cover. Pismo's lips move silently as he commits her address to memory.

Satisfied, he edges the wallet back into the pocket, turns around to go --

-- and walks directly past ALEX.

Both of them keep going, as it doesn't register at first, but then there is a slight hitch in Pismo's step as he realizes who it was.

He continues on to the door, trying like hell not to break into a run.

Alex continues walking to his table, slowly, as if a thought is spinning in his head.

Then suddenly he whirls around, his eyes wide, just in time to see Pismo disappearing out of the club.

He gives chase, fighting his way through the crowd and out the front door.

CUT TO:

110 EXT CLUB NIGHT 110

ALEX comes out of the club and looks up and down the street. No sign of Pismo.

CUT TO:

111 INT PAWN SHOP NIGHT 111

MICK watches silently as a CLERK takes a .38 handgun out of the display case and shows it to him. Mick nods.

CLERK
Good choice. Two sixty-five plus tax.

Mick pulls three crisp one hundred dollar bills from his wallet and puts them on the counter.

CLERK (cont.)
And there's a two week waiting period.

Mick looks up sharply.

CLERK (cont.)
(shrugs)
It's the law.

Mick silently puts three more crisp one hundred dollar bills on the counter.

The Clerk looks left and right, bites his lip, and takes the money.

CUT TO:

112 EXT SANTA MONICA COURTHOUSE NIGHT 112

PISMO walks down the sidewalk in front of a police station. He looks up at the imposing building, steeling himself.

He starts up the steps, then sees TWO BIG COPS coming out the door. He ducks off to the side, letting them pass, trying to hide his face.

After they go, he takes a deep sigh and trudges up the steps.

CUT TO:

113 INT POLICE STATION NIGHT 113

PISMO walks into the busy precinct room of the police station, shaking like a leaf. He edges his way up to the front desk. The DESK COP hardly looks up.

DESK COP
Yeah?

PISMO
I, uh -- a guy stole my wallet in a bar.

DESK COP
Yeah?

PISMO
Well, I want you to find him.

DESK COP
You know who he is?

PISMO
Not his name. That's why I'm here. I want you to find out who he is.

DESK COP
Really? You know how this is gonna work? I'm gonna give you some forms, you're gonna fill 'em out, we're gonna file 'em, and that'll be that. My advice? Don't bother.

PISMO
What kind of attitude is that?

DESK COP
I know what I'm talking about. Some guy takes your wallet in a bar, how are we supposed to figure out who he is?

PISMO
What if I had his fingerprints?

The Cop looks up at him over the top of his glasses.

DESK COP
That would be helpful.

Pismo pulls the beer bottle out of his jacket carefully and puts it on the counter with a THUNK.

The Cop pulls some forms from a bin and SLAPS them down in front of Pismo.

DESK COP (cont.)
Triplicate.

CUT TO:

114 EXT DOWNTOWN CLUB NIGHT 114

MICK pulls up across the street from the downtown club Alex and Pismo were at. He parks across the street, watching as some people trickle out.

He holds the gun in his lap. He shakes some bullets out of a box and begins loading it.

CUT TO:

115 INT POLICE STATION NIGHT 115

PISMO now sits at a desk in the police station. Alone. Waiting. Nervous.

A plainclothes DETECTIVE comes to the desk. He sits down opposite Pismo and stares at him. Pismo stares back, waiting for him to do or say something.

The Detective looks from Pismo to the form he filled out.

DETECTIVE
Mr. "Smith"?

PISMO
Yeah. Did you find out who he is?

DETECTIVE
You left your address blank.

PISMO
Oh. I must have forgot it.

DETECTIVE
Does your phone really have a "555" exchange?

PISMO
That's just my handwriting.

DETECTIVE
Uh huh.

A VOICE calls from offscreen.

VOICE
Richard!

The Detective turns. TWO MORE DETECTIVES wave to him from an office surrounded by glass windows. He gets up and goes over to join them.

Pismo is really a wreck now. He watches the Cops through the glass. They confer excitedly, then the First Detective looks up and points to Pismo. They all turn and look, then look back at each other.

Pismo slides his chair back from the desk slowly.

CUT TO:

116 INT DETECTIVE'S OFFICE NIGHT 116

The DETECTIVES are huddled around a computer screen.

SECOND DETECTIVE
Anthony Robert Newcombe is his real name. Look here -- another state, another alias, another murder. The guy's federal. You better get your witness in here.

The FIRST DETECTIVE turns and goes to the door. He looks out at the desk where Pismo is.

Was.

CUT TO:

117 EXT CLUB NIGHT 117

MICK is still parked across the street from the club, waiting in his car. The gun is in his lap. He looks up and tenses as he sees the STYLISH WOMAN come out of the bar with the BLONDE. He watches them, confused. No Alex.

They walk down the street, get into the Stylish Woman's Jaguar, and drive off.

Mick is perplexed. He gets out of the car, tucks the gun in his belt, pulls his jacket over it, and goes to the club.

CUT TO:

118 INT CLUB NIGHT 118

MICK comes in the door to the club. It's now much less crowded than before, as the band has finished its set.

Mick looks around. Alex is nowhere to be seen.

He leaves.

CUT TO:

119 INT PISMO'S APARTMENT NIGHT 119

CLOSE ON Pismo's answering machine as it picks up the ringing phone.

MACHINE
This is Pismo. I'm out. Uh -- out of the country actually. I probably won't even get this message, so don't count on anything.

BEEP.

PISMO'S VOICE comes over the machine, sounding desperate.

PISMO (o.s.)
Michael, it's me. Pick up, damn it! I got his fingerprints but I can't deal with the cops. Stay put! I'm coming right over.

He hangs up. A finger pushes the "stop" button on the machine.

ALEX.

CUT TO:

120 EXT PISMO'S APARTMENT BUILDING NIGHT 120

PISMO pulls up in his cab and stops in front. From a third floor window above, a drape moves.

Pismo runs up the steps of the building, past a low, decorative railing that runs along the steps. There are about half a dozen evenly spaced wrought iron rods in the railing, each about eighteen inches long.

One is missing.

CUT TO:

121 INT HALLWAY NIGHT 121

PISMO steps out of the elevator and walks directly across the hall to his apartment. He passes a female TENANT carrying a bag of garbage. She nods to him.

TENANT
Lotta company lately.

PISMO
(a mumble)
Mind your own business.

He reaches for his doorknob.

His hand stops halfway there. He looks back at the Tenant, who is disappearing around a corner. He looks down at the knob. There is a pile of tiny metal flakes on the floor under the lock.

He swallows. Not making a sound, he backs up, back into the elevator. He starts to pull the heavy metal cage door closed, as quietly as he can, his eyes fixed on his apartment door.

The elevator door SQUEAKS --

-- and the apartment door opens. ALEX appears, crazy as hell, looking both ways, the iron rod in one hand. He sees Pismo.

Pismo ZINGS the door shut. Alex lunges for the cage and swings the steel pipe. It CLANGS against the cage just as Pismo SLAMS the second door shut and punches the first floor button. The elevator moves.

CUT TO:

122 INT STAIRS NIGHT 122

ALEX flies down the stairs.

CUT TO:

123 INT LOBBY NIGHT 123

ALEX reaches the elevator as the doors slide open. It's empty.

ALEX
Shit!

He turns and races back up the stairs.

CUT TO:

124 INT SECOND FLOOR NIGHT 124

ALEX breaks up onto the second floor. He looks up and down. Pismo is nowhere to be seen.

CUT TO:

125 EXT FIRE ESCAPE NIGHT 125

PISMO stands on the second floor fire escape. He raises his head just enough to look in the hallway window. He sees ALEX stalking down the hallway, spinning the iron rod deftly and murderously with his right hand.

Pismo turns and jumps onto the fire escape ladder. It slides down to the ground with a rusty CLANG.

CUT TO:

126 INT SECOND FLOOR NIGHT 126

ALEX hears the ladder and bolts for the stairs.

CUT TO:

127 EXT PISMO'S BUILDING NIGHT 127

PISMO comes tearing out of the building and makes for his cab. He leaps inside, locks all the doors, and fumbles for the ignition key. He finds it.

ALEX comes racing out of the building and dives onto the hood of the cab. Pismo SHRIEKS and drops the keys. He gropes for them on the floor of the cab, finds them, and gets the right one in the ignition.

Alex, in one mighty blow, reaches around and SMASHES the iron rod through the driver's window.

Pismo starts the car.

Alex jabs with the iron rod, missing a few times before catching Pismo in the ribs, hard. Pismo GASPS and punches the accelerator. He hauls the cab hard around a corner, sending Alex flying off the hood.

Alex manages to hold on to the door frame with his hand. Pismo pounds on his fingers, rounds another corner, and sends Alex rolling into the street.

Alex watches Pismo's taillights disappear.

CUT TO:

128 EXT AN ALLEY NIGHT 128

PISMO hauls the cab into an alley and kills the lights. He sits there, breathing hard, recomposing himself.

CUT TO:

129 EXT PISMO'S BUILDING NIGHT 129

A BUNCH OF PUNKS sit on the front steps of the apartment building, listening to MUSIC from a boom box.

Mick's car pulls up in front. MICK gets out. He walks past the Punks. They MUTTER comments as he goes into the building.

CUT TO:

130 INT HALLWAY NIGHT 130

As MICK heads toward Pismo's door, a FIGURE moves in the shadows behind him. He doesn't see it.

He reaches Pismo's door and raises his hand to knock. A shadow passes over the door. He whirls, sucking in his breath.

PISMO stands behind him.

PISMO
He's been here! He tried to kill me.

MICK
What?!

PISMO
Get inside.

CUT TO:

131 INT PISMO'S APARTMENT NIGHT 131

PISMO and MICK hurry in. Pismo closes and locks the door behind them. He holds out a scrap of paper with some writing on it.

PISMO
I think I know where he's staying.

Mick grabs it.

MICK
Perfect.

PISMO
What are you going to do?

MICK
I'm going to take care of him.

He pulls the .38 handgun he bought out of his belt and checks the chamber.

PISMO
Jesus! Where the hell did you get that?

MICK
Don't worry about it.

PISMO
You're not going to kill him, damn it!

MICK
Does he deserve to live?

PISMO
Give it to me.

MICK
Don't fuck with me, Pismo. You don't know me anymore.

PISMO
Yes, I do. Give it to me.

Long pause. They stare each other down. Pismo reaches out slowly for the gun. Mick doesn't move. Pismo closes his fingers around the barrel and gently pulls it from Mick's grasp.

Pismo hurries across the room with the gun, holding it like a live snake.

MICK
Keep it. There are other ways.

He turns to go for the door.

PISMO
For God's sake, don't do it. Let me help you.

MICK
You <u>can't</u> help me. You never could.

He goes to the door.

PISMO
Go out that door, Michael, and he really does win. Once and for all.

Pause.

Mick leaves.

CUT TO:

132 INT HALLWAY NIGHT 132

MICK closes the door behind him. He pauses.

CUT TO:

133 EXT BEACH HOUSE NIGHT 133

A modern three story house directly on the beach. Curtains blow in a second floor window.

CUT TO:

134 INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT 134

The curtains of the second story window waft into a plush, white-on-white living room, dark except for the light of the full moon over the ocean.

From upstairs, up at the top of a winding staircase, comes the SOUND of people making love.

CUT TO:

135 INT BEDROOM LOFT NIGHT 135

A framed photo on a night table shows the STYLISH WOMAN Alex was with in the bar and a handsome man in his fifties in a nuptial pose.

Over on the bed, ALEX makes passionate love to her, the moonlight spilling over them, their arms and legs entangled, gliding over one another, moving gracefully and beautifully, as if there were almost too many arms and legs.

And, in fact, there are. The BLONDE from the bar is in bed with them as well, kissing, touching, sliding in between them.

The lovemaking increases in passion and rhythm, building to a climax.

Alex rolls off both the women and lays back on the bed. They all catch their breath.

Alex sits up on the edge of the bed. The Blonde runs one hand across his chest.

BLONDE
(softly)
Me.

ALEX
In a minute.

He gets up and pulls on a pair of blue jeans. He walks across the room and down the staircase that leads from the loft to the second floor.

CUT TO:

136 INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT 136

ALEX comes down the winding staircase, turns for the kitchen -- and stops.

He turns, a look of concern flitting across his face. He looks across the room. A potted plant beneath the window has been tipped over, spilling dirt on the white carpet. He tenses.

A gust of wind blows in through the window. The curtains brush across the leaves of the plant, spilling some more dirt.

Alex relaxes and heads for the kitchen.

CUT TO:

137 INT KITCHEN NIGHT 137

ALEX opens the refrigerator and scans the contents. He opens a bin and rummages through it, but finds only lettuce, celery, and other health shit. He closes the bin and looks up top.

A lone bottle of beer is in the back, stuck behind some carrot juice. He pulls it out. He closes the door --

-- and nearly jumps through the roof.

MICK stands on the other side of the door, his eyes dark and hollowed, a huge, pointed butcher knife in his hand. Before Alex can even react, the knife moves up, fast, straight at Alex's throat. It stops there, the sharp point just pressing against the soft skin under Alex's chin.

Mick grins.

MICK
(softly)
You make a really funny face when you come. Anybody ever tell you that?

ALEX
Mick --

Mick presses the knife a little harder into the skin, just pricking it, drawing a trickle of blood. Alex GASPS.

MICK
Put the beer down.

Alex does.

MICK (cont.)
Walk.

He steers Alex out of the kitchen and into the living room, the knife still at his throat.

CUT TO:

138 INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT 138

MICK walks ALEX into the middle of the living room. They speak very softly, in intense whispers.

MICK
You're going to die. Do you know that?

No answer.

MICK (cont.)
Do you?!

ALEX
Just let me talk to you, man.

MICK
No talking.

He flicks the knife again, drawing a little more blood. Alex winces.

MICK (cont.)
You're just going to die. With your mouth shut.

Pause.

ALEX
Then do it.

MICK
I will. I want to watch you wriggle first. That's what I'm supposed to do, remember?

They stare each other down. And then Alex laughs. It's a low, quiet, evil laugh that comes from deep inside. It's mocking, sadistic.

ALEX
You can't.

MICK
Oh, yes I --

ALEX
No, you can't. You can't because I didn't show you how. You don't have it --

But he suddenly cuts himself off in the middle of his own sentence, throwing his head back, away from the knife. The motion draws a little more blood, but his arm quickly flashes up, catching Mick by the wrist, slapping the knife away.

Alex lunges at Mick and they both hit the floor with a THUD. The knife lands a few feet away.

Alex dives for the knife. Mick, seeing he's lost the advantage, rolls the other way, toward the window.

A VOICE comes from upstairs, alarmed.

VOICE (o.s.)
Maxwell?

Alex stands, holding the knife in front of him.

ALEX
I'm gonna cut you, you son of a bitch.

Mick turns and runs for the window. He jumps.

CUT TO:

139 EXT BEACH NIGHT 139

MICK flies out of the second story window and hits the sand, hard. He rolls, then scrambles to his feet and starts to run away, fast, across the sand.

Behind him, ALEX sails out the window, hits the sand, and gets to his feet, not far behind.

And gaining.

Mick runs, terrified, staggering, kicking up a spray of sand behind him.

CUT TO:

140 EXT FISHING PIER NIGHT 140

MICK comes tearing down the beach. He looks back over his shoulder, frantic, trying to see how close ALEX is.

He turns back to face forward, but not soon enough to see --

-- A SHOPPING CART, packed with blankets and dirty clothes, apparently parked there by a homeless person.

Mick CRASHES into the cart, sending it flying and falling to the ground, twisting his ankle.

He gets to his feet. He's standing at the mouth of the fishing pier he and Alex met at that first night. Disoriented from the crash, he takes off down the concrete pier, limping badly.

ALEX, now not far behind, breaks into a grin. He reaches the pier and starts down it, slowing to a trot.

Near the end of the pier is a small wooden shack with a "FISHING SUPPLIES" sign on the top. Mick races past it. A streetlight casts a single pool of light over the end of the pier.

Mick reaches the railing -- nothing but sea beyond.

Alex comes past the store and stops. He twirls the butcher knife expertly.

ALEX (cont.)
Dead end. Guess I got you now, Mick.

In one smooth motion, Mick reaches up under the railing and, with the distinctive sound of Velcro RIPPING, pulls out his .38 handgun.

MICK
Guess again.

Alex blinks. This is a new wrinkle.

MICK (cont.)
Drop the knife.

Pause. Alex does nothing.

MICK (cont.)
The knife! Drop it! No -- throw it in the water!

Pause.

ALEX
(softly)
Why?

MICK
Because I've got a gun! You lose. I win.

ALEX
You don't win shit. So you've got a gun. So what? You're not gonna use it. You wanted to kill me, you would have killed me back there.

Alex starts to walk forward, toward Mick, knife in hand.

MICK
GET BACK! Into the light. Where I can see you.

Alex keeps coming forward, knife in hand. Mick FIRES a warning shot that ricochets off the pier near Alex's feet.

Alex steps back into the light, but keeps the knife. Silence for a second.

ALEX
I'm sorry.

MICK
What?

ALEX
I'm sorry, okay? I said I'm sorry.

MICK
Sorry?! You killed Claire and now you say you're SORRY?!

ALEX
Yeah.

MICK
You think that covers it? What about everything else? What about Fenwick? Are you sorry for that too?

ALEX
Hey, I didn't make you do anything you didn't want to do.

MICK
I beat up a guy while you held him down! You think I wanted to do that?

Alex laughs.

ALEX
You didn't beat up anybody.

MICK
What?

ALEX
I beat up Fenwick. You were passed out the whole time. I whacked your hand on the pavement to fuck with you.

MICK
To fuck with me.

ALEX
Hey, I'm getting tired of saying I'm sorry here! I cannot believe you guys. You walk through life, playing innocent until the day you die. And you know it's not true. That's why you covered up Claire. Because you knew you were guilty. And I had to show you that. That's why I killed her.

MICK
It's over.

ALEX
It's not over until somebody wins, Mick.

MICK
(exhausted)
My name -- my name is Michael.
Did you get it?

ALEX
Get what?

MICHAEL
Did you get it?

The door to the fishing supplies shack swings open and a FIGURE steps out -- PISMO. He's holding Michael's video camera on his shoulder, pointing it squarely at Alex.

PISMO
Every word.

Alex is shocked. Michael looks at him and manages as much of a triumphant grin as he can.

Michael turns to look back at Pismo.

And as he does, Alex moves. With one quick motion, the knife flashes up from his side, a quick, hard, underhand toss.

But Michael sees him move and FIRES.

His shot catches Alex in the shoulder, spinning him around, sending the knife flying off its mark.

Alex THUDS back against the railing and tumbles over it, dropping down toward the ocean, vanishing into the night air.

Michael and Pismo rush forward and look down. There's no trace of Alex, only the dark, choppy, swirling waters far below.

DISSOLVE TO:

141 EXT BEACH DAWN 141

At least a dozen POLICE CARS and LIFEGUARD TRUCKS are parked at the fishing pier. OFFICERS comb the beach, a HELICOPTER flies overhead, and a BOAT offshore patrols the ocean waters around the pier as the sun comes up.

MICHAEL is standing at the entrance to the pier. A UNIFORMED COP is next to him. They watch the operation going on at the other end of the pier.

The DETECTIVE who spoke with Pismo at the station walks down the pier to them, holding Michael's tape in his hands.

DETECTIVE
Might as well go downtown.

MICHAEL
Okay.

They start across the parking lot to the Detective's car. Michael is limping severely, his ankle paining him.

Michael looks off to his right. PISMO is standing there, a short, careful distance away from the Cops.

Michael limps over next to him and extends one arm. Pismo smiles and steps under the arm, propping Michael up. They walk toward the waiting Detective and the police car, supporting each other.

The Detective casts one more look over his shoulder, then turns to Michael.

DETECTIVE
He must have drowned.

MICHAEL
Maybe.

CUT TO:

142 INT UPSCALE BAR DAY 142

The Transamerica Building is visible out the window of this upper middle class working stiff bar. The place is crowded with potted plants, brass rails, and middle aged EXECUTIVES with their ties loosened.

One executive, a GUY in his late twenties, sits morosely at the bar, nursing a huge tumbler of bourbon, the sweat stains on his starched white shirt showing the kind of day he had. An unlit cigarette is in his mouth.

A SHADOW passes over him and somebody sits down on the next stool.

The Guy pats his pockets, looking for a lighter.

There is the CRACKLE of a match being lit and a little tongue of flame is touched to the end of his cigarette.

He turns to his left, the source of the match.

ALEX touches the match to his own cigarette.

GUY
Thanks.

Alex waves it off and signals to the BARTENDER.

ALEX
(to the Guy)
Tough day, huh?

GUY
Tell me about it.

The Bartender arrives.

GUY (cont.)
Another double bourbon and --

He gestures to Alex.

ALEX
Beer.

The Bartender goes. Alex reaches for his wallet, but the Guy stops him.

GUY
Let me get this.

ALEX
No, I couldn't.

GUY
I insist.

He pulls out a twenty and puts it on the bar.

ALEX
Well -- all right. Just this once.

FADE OUT.