

BURNING CHROME

THE SCREEN IS BLACK.

An abrupt, grating, jangling sound punctures the stillness.

V.O.
I hate to get up early.

CUT TO:

A MYOELETRIC ARM

as it slams down on a cheap alarm clock, smashing it to bits. It is a steel prosthesis, an arm-shaped skeletal frame packed with circuitry and moving parts.

V.O.
But a man's got to make a living. And
he has to be awake to do it.
Unfortunately.

Pull back to

1 INT. - HOUSE - DAY

1

JACK SLOAN sits up slowly on the side of his bed, rubbing his face, coming to. He is rangy, broad shoulders, thirties, needs a shave. Or several. Scars of various sizes, colors and textures weave a loose tapestry on his body and his face is imprinted with the consequences of a life lived... at least at one time... at high velocity. Right now, he is just trying to get his motor running. Clothes are scattered around and three or four empty whiskey bottles are evident. Sun streams in the window through rents in the tin foil shades. He reaches over to the cheap plastic nightstand, grabs a pint bottle with an inch of liquor left in it, drains it, grimaces and stares at it.

V.O.
Lots of exotic concoctions floating
around these days to help people make
it through the day... recombinant
aphrodisiacs, hybrid opiates,
neuro-steroids, memory enhancers. Me,
I'm old fashioned. If it comes
straight out of the bottle and peels
my insides, it's for me.

He pushes himself wearily to his feet and pulls on a pair of well-worn pants. He stretches high, then bends over to touch his toes. He gets about two inches below his knees, then straightens. A faint smile flits across his face... calisthenics are over. We follow as he pads barefoot into the kitchen, a tiny cubicle with a hot plate, a propane stove and a small icebox.

He fills a cracked teapot with water from the yellowed sink and sets it on the stove. He opens a cupboard... the only things in sight are a box of dates, a few cans of beans and chili and a jar of instant coffee. He takes down the dates and munches on them as he spoons some coffee into a huge mug. He is about to put another date into his mouth when he suddenly notices it is a large, dead roach. He looks at it clinically, as though considering its nutritive value... then drops it onto the floor.

2 EXT. - HOUSE - DAY

2

Jack walks outside, dressed, wearing an ancient flight jacket with one sleeve ripped off to free the mechanical arm. His house is set in what was once the suburbs. Every other house on the block, however, is deserted. There is nothing green in sight; the ground is barren and rocky. Neighboring houses are trashed, tagged by gang slogans, not even boarded up. Oily puddles are in evidence in some back yards. Jack heads off down the cracked, neglected sidewalk.

V.O.

There was some underground toxic seepage a couple of years ago in my neighborhood. At night, some yards glow like the northern lights. Property values kind of went south and everybody left. On the plus side, it's quiet and there's no homeowner's association telling me what color to paint my house.

3 EXT. - STREET - DAY

3

It is a cold, flat, gray day. Most of them in this city are. Jack walks along, head bent into the wind, taking an occasional hit from a pocket flask. Wet, slushy patches of snow only accentuate the dullness of the cityscape. He reaches the end of his block. A huge, rusty gate cuts him off. Hung on it are old metal signs decorated with bullet holes... CONDEMNED...TOXIC AREA. He yanks on the padlocked chain, gives it a sharp tap with his mech-hand and it pops open. Sliding through, he locks it behind him. He spots a gypsy cab as it screeches around a corner and flags it down. It is a twenty-year old convertible with no top. The Driver is wrapped in about twelve layers of clothes and a ski mask. He pulls to the curb and Jack gets in next to him.

CABBIE

Where to, my man?

JACK

You take me to Skidtown? Fourth and Newcastle?

(CONTINUED)

con't

3

CABBIE

I'll take you anywhere, you got the money. Sixty-five bucks.

Jack pulls out a yellow card and sticks it into a slot in the meter. A tiny screen tells the driver the money has been deducted from Jack's credit and applied.

JACK

(shakes his head)

You guys are bandits.

CABBIE

Hey, try to get a real cab to take you there. You can always walk.

Laughing, he peels away.

4 EXT. - SKIDTOWN - DAY

4

Crowded, cluttered and seedy. Homeless people of all ages are huddled in doorways or gathered around trash can fires. Packs of roving teens and, even, pre-teens chug along the sidewalks, scattering scared pedestrians as they go. The street is filled with old cars patched together to run... they belch and fart as they spew noxious emissions into the air. Cheap consumer electronic shops and bargain clothes stores are everywhere. Shills stand on the sidewalk, directing passersby into live sex shows... women and men both are on prominent display in their windows, somehow managing to look more like mannequins than people. Dope is sold openly and it seems every fourth person has the greedy, vacant look of a junkie trying to score. Jack's taxi pulls up and he gets out. Several children immediately accost him for spare change. He walks past them without a look; they flip him off behind his back. He moves through the sidewalk crowds, his face carefully neutral.

V.O.

Skidtown is Calcutta with concrete. There are the hustlers and the hustlees... and the strong eat the weak. If you fall, people don't step over you... they step on you and grind their heel in your face. Hope is the dirty word here. Other four letter words define it... cold, ugly, rank... and, for those with no place else to go... home.

Jack looks up at the dirty, dulled sky and we

(CONTINUED)

con't

4

He

PLUNGE INTO:

CYBERSPACE

Unlike anything ever seen. We rip through it... through the "matrix"... at hellish speed. Giant geometric forms, appearing solid, hang in nothingness. Each construct represents the stored data of a major corporation. Vast surfaces crawl with ever-changing symbols and images, shifting at subliminal speed. Some constructs are permanently marked with Corporate Logos like COKE, GM, ITT. Others are strange new amalgams... ONO-SENDAI, TRAK A.G., EURO-TECH, NIGHTMEAT.

Impossibly, we begin to accelerate and cut, on a collision course with a towering datalith. It is suddenly right there and we slam into, then through it. Neon corridors of data whoosh past us... brilliant, sparkling, breathtaking colors. Everything Skidtown and the world outside is not. We continue to accelerate through whiplash turns, new angles of attack, speeding deeper into the data, a sinuous fast-forward blur... until the data-corridors begin to narrow. We hear the voice of the construct: flat, calm, secretarial.

CONSTRUCT VOICE

Identify yourself. Enter executive ID.
Identify yourself. Security alert.
Legal department alert. Parameters
violated. Triggering intrusion
countermeasures...

We slam into an invisible barrier and stop dead. Directly in front of us is a polished wall of granite. carved into this are the words: ENTER EXECUTIVE IDENTIFICATION.

CUT TO:

BOBBY QUINE

as he rips his trodes (a band of black and chrome skin-contact electrodes) off his head and throws them down.

BOBBY

Son of a bitch!

He is seated at his cyberspace rig, a desk-sized collection of state of the art computer gear. He is wiry, amped, mid-twenties, pale. He glares at the screen, then reaches down and grabs himself.

(CONTINUED)

1 con't (2)

BOBBY (cont'd)
ID this.

DORIS appears on a smaller monitor. She is a talking head, computer generated, lovely beneath her bizarre configuration. Her voice could melt iron.

DORIS
Two point eight more seconds, Bobby,
and your frontal lobe would have been
poached.

BOBBY
They weren't even close, Doris.

DORIS
You were running with the stealth
buffers down, Bobby.

BOBBY
I know, I'm faster that way.

DORIS
Bobby, I know you weren't much for
school but they did teach you the
brain doesn't regenerate once it's
toasted, didn't...

He shuts off the monitor impatiently.

BOBBY
(grumbling to
himself)
The only artificial intelligence I
ever met nags you...

JACK (O.S.)
She's right, you know.

Bobby looks over to see Jack moving into the loft. The space is vast and empty; Bobby has elected to live and work in one corner of it. Thick cables crisscross the floor and a couple of futons are tucked out of the way. Small metal trashcans are filled with soda cans and junk food wrappers. The loft is spacious, barren and cold. His life is obviously lived almost completely at his deck.

BOBBY
I was almost in! It's this pitiful
excuse for a penetration virus you got
me. When you gonna find me something
with some teeth?

(CONTINUED)

! con't (3)

4

JACK
I'm onto something now. Until then,
maybe I can modify it.

BOBBY
Man, I hope so. We're not going to
make any money with this thing.

He unwraps a twinkie as big as a kielbasa and takes a bite. He washes it down with some soda, then rummages around on his desk and comes up with a piece of paper. He wads it up and tosses it to Jack. It falls short and he picks it up off the floor.

BOBBY (cont'd)
Get a phone, will you, Jack? I'm tired
of taking messages.

JACK
(reading)
You have to answer a phone or let it
ring. I don't like to do either.

BOBBY
How'd that guy get this number? And
why don't you move out of that toxic
cave and live like a normal human
being?

JACK
I don't know and I don't want to.
(looks up)
I need a ride to the Gray Zone.

5 INT. - BOBBY'S CAR - DAY

5

An old, classic Thunderbird, battered but still running. Bobby sits up straight behind the wheel, driving with a certain sense of style. He talks fast and nonstop.

BOBBY
I'm serious, man, you got to do a
better job than you been doing lately.
I can't sweep women off their feet on
just my incredible boyish charm. I
need money.

Jack looks out the window, sipping from a half-pint.

(CONTINUED)

con't

5

V.O.

Bobby's my brother-in-law. I hustle up the software and do the repair work. He's the cowboy, jacking into cyberspace, always pushing it, risking his mind to get their money. He's a matrix junkie, only really happy when he's hooked in. Says it's more real than outside because it's where everything important happens... all the business, the decisions, the big money moved around. Who knows, maybe he's right. Nothing in the outside world makes much sense to me, anyway.

6 EXT. - GRAY ZONE - DAY

6

Exactly what its name implies. A crossover area, not nearly as funky as Skidtown but nothing like the shiny, high-tech towers of Uptown that we can see just beyond it. New cars next to old heaps, people in suits and beautiful dresses walking among punked-out street rats, shiny steel buildings next to vacant, overgrown lots. The energy is higher here, more palpable... there is the possibility of money in the air. The rich come for all the things they are safe from in their part of the city... drugs, sex, gambling, danger. They are slumming. The hustlers from Skidtown gravitate here, hoping some of whatever the rich have will rub off. Bobby pulls his car to the curb near a club: a neon sign identifies it as the GENTLEMAN LOSER. Jack and he get out and go inside.

7 INT. - LOSER - DAY

7

Even though it is early, there is plenty of activity. Jack makes a beeline for the bar and orders a drink. Bobby weaves his way past several women, confident, smiling charmingly, giving them little squeezes and quick kisses. He reaches the bar and orders a soda.

BOBBY

So, where is the guy?

JACK

I don't know. I didn't even know he was in town. I haven't seen him in years.

BOBBY

Where you know him from?

(CONTINUED)

7 con't

7

JACK
Costa Rica.

BOBBY
The Wars?
(rolls his eyes)
Oh, Jesus, not a war buddy. You're not
going to, like, swap tales, are you?

VOICE (O.S.)
Jack.

Jack looks over to see MAX walk up on them. He is eight or ten years older than Jack and moves slowly. He does not look healthy. He and Jack shake hands; Bobby isn't interested. As Jack starts to introduce them, Bobby wanders off.

BOBBY
I'll let you two oldtimers take a
stroll down memory lane.

He is gone, smiling at some woman as he hurries over to bullshit with her. Max smiles wanly and shakes his head.

MAX
Friend of yours?

JACK
Cyberjock. You know.

Max nods knowingly, as if that explains everything.

JACK (cont'd)
You want a drink?

MAX
Whatever you're having.

Jack signals to the Bartender and he pours one for Max. Jack stares at him carefully. When he speaks, his tone is soft.

JACK
You don't look good, Max.

MAX
It's that multiple virus I caught in
the jungle. You were already back here
by then. Feeds on itself
exponentially. The doctors say it
won't be long.

(CONTINUED)

7 con't (2)

7

JACK

I'm sorry to hear that.

(guilty)

You know, I always meant to stay in touch...

MAX

Forget it. We all did. You were no different than anyone else. There's just a different feeling when you're not fighting. Nothing really seems that... important.

They are quiet a moment, looking down at their drinks.

MAX (cont'd)

Look, here's the deal. Guy I know in Ohio contacted me, wants me to find his daughter and put her on a bus back home. She came to the big city for some excitement, wants to be a holo star, you know... usual shit. He offered me a grand. I'll split it with you if you help me out.

JACK

I don't think so, Max. That's not what I do.

Max pulls an envelope out of his pocket and hands it to Jack. Jack glances absently at the letter and photograph inside.

MAX

The guy and his wife are really worried. I could use some help. I checked around with some other guys but they weren't interested. Then I found out you lived here...

JACK

I'm up to my ass with other things right now.

MAX

It's five hundred bucks.

JACK

I could use the money. But it's not really my department.

(CONTINUED)

7 con't (3)

7

MAX
She's working at the House of Blue
Lights. For Chrome.

JACK
For Chrome?
(beat)
Then I'm definitely not available.
Things usually get nasty when she's
involved. And if I were you, I'd think
twice about messing with any of her
employees.

MAX
I need the money. And I gave him my
word.
(smiles wearily)
Besides... what have I got to lose?

He knocks back the rest of his drink and shakes Jack's hand
again.

MAX (cont'd)
Good to see you again, Jack.

JACK
You, too. Here... take your letter.

MAX
You keep it. If you change your mind,
I'm at the Green Lantern.

He walks away. Jack looks down again at the photo... we see it
is a beautiful, corn-fed, smiling smalltown girl, about twenty.
He puts it in his pocket and orders another drink.

DISSOLVE TO:

8 EXT. HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - DAY

8

ESTABLISH. A block long, three-story building, combination
nightclub/ brothel/ casino. A flashy facade on an old building.
Steet people hurry past while Uptowners in nice cars drive by
curiously or go inside.

INT. - HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - CASINO - DAY

9

The first floor, the casino level. Slot machines, crap and blackjack tables, several bars scattered around. Men and women come to gamble; men alone come to be directed upstairs for pleasure. Hostesses in severely short, tight outfits circulate, chatting and smiling with men, encouraging them to buy drinks, letting them know what is available on the second level. We PAN through the place and stop at a small table near one of the bars. The girl in the photograph, RIKKI, sits with a Customer. She is obviously tentative and uncomfortable, not exactly sure what her hostess duties entail... but she is a quick study.

MAN

That's right, sweetheart, I got sixteen disposal plants all over the northeast. Big money, very big.

(clumsily takes her hand)

I'm looking to spend a bunch of that dough, know what I mean?

RIKKI

You must work very hard.

MAN

I play harder.

RIKKI

(looking around)

I see. Would you like another drink?

MAN

I'd like you.

RIKKI

I think you want what's upstairs.

He tightens the grip on her hand; her face registers her discomfort.

MAN

(an edge in his voice)

I found what I want.

Rikki looks around, trying to keep her smile intact. She catches the eye of another hostess, RUBY, and signals discreetly. Ruby recognizes what is happening and bustles over, a big grin on her face.

(CONTINUED)

con't

9

RUBY

Rikki, dear, I've been looking all over for you. The Donner party has you booked for their table, did you forget?

RIKKI

Oh, God, that's right, Ruby, I'm sorry.

(to the man)

Very big tippers. You understand, don't you?

Before the drunken man can assimilate this information, Rikki is up and away from the table. We FOLLOW as she wanders over by one of the crap tables, gathering her composure. Another Hostess notices as she bustles by, drinks on a tray.

HOSTESS

Not bad, kid.

10 EXT. - STREET - DAY

10

Max walks along the sidewalk. We FOLLOW in POV for a while, then pull back to see a LIMO with blackout windows following slowly from across the street. Max turns down a side street and the limo accelerates, cutting across in front of a truck, narrowly avoiding a collision. Max looks up at the sound of tires squealing; the limo stops a foot from him and just sits there. He glares at it.

MAX

Are you an asshole or do you just drive like one?

The back door opens and VEGA steps out. He is huge and wears a full-length duster, like something out of the Old West. There is something strange about his arms and shoulders, something stiff and out of proportion. He is suddenly next to Max. He puts a hand on Max's arm and a truly chilling smile on his face. His voice is hoarse and harsh.

VEGA

Time to talk... Max.

Max brushes his hand off and looks him up and down.

MAX

You want to talk to me, you keep your fucking hands to yourself. Now... who are you?

(CONTINUED)

con't

10

Vega just stares at him. His eyes are hot but vacant, nothing behind them but sick anticipation.

VEGA

You been asking questions about a girl named Rikki.

MAX

So what?

Vega suddenly backhands him, sending him flying into a dumpster near an alley. Max is sprawled out, dazed momentarily.

VEGA

So, I'm going to teach you not to ask questions.

Max's hand dives into his jacket and he comes out with a pistol. So fast we can barely follow, Vega slaps it out of his hand and slams him back against the dumpster. He coughs and wheezes, trying to get a breath. A back window on the limo WHIRRS down slowly and we see the face of an angel. She looks nineteen, perfect features, breathtakingly lovely... except for her eyes. There is something nasty and ...old about them. This is CHROME. Vega looks over at her, smiles.

VEGA (cont'd)

You want to watch, ma'am?

CHROME

Of course.

Vega takes a tiny green chip from a small pouch around his throat, reaches up and behind and slides it into something at the back of his neck, something covered by his duster. His hands suddenly stiffen and arch, as though receiving a shot of power. He smiles and looks down hungrily at Max. He squeezes his hands together... we can feel the strength in them, with him.

VEGA

Come here, Max.

Max charges him wildly and manages to jam a thumb into Vega's eye. He roars in pain, yanks Max up with both hands and slams him against the wall, one hand on his throat, the other wrapped around his wrist.

VEGA (cont'd)

This will hurt you.

(CONTINUED)

con't (2)

10

He tightens his grip and Max's wrist snaps sickeningly. Max howls and Vega jams his fingers into the terrified man's mouth. Chrome watches, her face gleaming, as Vega spreads his fingers open slowly... still inside Max's mouth. His eyes bulge obscenely as his jaw cracks; his screams are muffled as his facial bones start snapping from the inside. Vega's fingers widen more and one of them suddenly rips out through Max's cheek. Vega laughs and raises Max off his feet, holding him with the hand in his mouth. He brings his arm back, Max dangling at the end of it, and bangs his head against the wall, splattering the back of it to pulp. He yanks his hand out and Max slides to the ground, dead, leaving a trail of blood and brains on the wall. Vega looks proudly over at Chrome, then bends down **BELOW FRAME**. We hear the sharp cracking of bones being broken.

DISSOLVE TO:

11 INT. - LIMO - LATER

11

Vega sits in the back with Chrome.

CHROME

You weren't supposed to kill him.

VEGA

He hurt me. Nobody hurts me. You know that.

She gives him a priil kiss on the cheek.

CHROME

I understand. It was a good job, nonetheless.

(beat)

I'd give you more than a little kiss but, of course, as we both know... you're not equipped to handle it.

The arrogance drains from Vega's face and he nods weakly.

12 EXT. - HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - DAY

12

The limo pulls up in front of Chrome's headquarters. Street people hurry to get out of the way as th driver, **STYLES**, gets out and opens the door for Chrome. Vega steps out behind her and several **BODYGUARDS** emerge from the club, watching the street, sawed-off shotguns in plain view. Wrapped in a cloak, Chrome leads them inside.

3 INT. - HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - TOP FLOOR - VEGA'S ROOM -DAY

13

It is almost empty: an outsized, steel frame bed, a dresser with a mirror, a bathroom, a miniaturized sound system(tiny speakers velcroed to the wall). Vega splashes some water on his face in the bathroom, still wearing the buttoned duster, then catches a glimpse of himself in the mirror and straightens, staring at his reflection.

Almost perversely, he slowly unbuttons the duster and takes it off.... and we see the source of his size. A massive, anodized black and gold exo-skeleton supports his atrophied, puny, wizened body. At the back of his neck is a neural transducer, a small, flat box that is responsible for programming the exo-skeleton's different movements and muscle/ metal coordination. He is staring at himself when the door opens and Chrome steps in.

CHROME

Admiring yourself again?

Vega smiles confidently; Chrome moves close and runs a hand lasciviously down his sunken chest and BELOW FRAME.

CHROME (cont'd)

It's a shame you can't feel any of this.

Vega turns from the mirror to look at her.

CHROME (cont'd)

Don't pout. I'm having some company shortly. You're welcome to take a look.

She exits, smiling over her shoulder.

14 INT. - CHROME'S PENTHOUSE - DAY

14

We PAN through the front room of her place. It is lavishly, taste fully furnished... at first look. As we linger on some of the pieces, however, we notice the sculptured pieces that seem to be of ivory are really... human bone. We move into

CHROME'S BATHROOM

A giant heart-shaped tub set into a marble floor. The "water" is green beneath the bubble bath. Chrome leans against the back of the tub, engrossed in a little holo-game. She holds it at chest level and works the controls with her thumbs; bloodily realistic three-inch hologram figures of knife-fighters kick and slash at each other, ripping and gouging. She giggles in delight, like a beautiful child, then sets it down on the floor.

She picks up a plastic bottle of green fluid and pours a few more ounces into the bath. She swirls it around with her hand and sets the bottle back down. It reads: RECOMBINANT NUTRIENTS... 11% by VOLUME.

DISSOLVE TO:

15 INT. - CHROME'S BEDROOM - DAY

15

The lights are out. We can vaguely make out the shapes and hear the moans of three people writhing together on the enormous bed. We GO CLOSER on a mirror on the opposite wall and

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF IT

Vega holds a pair of image-intensifier night-vision goggles to his eyes. HIS POV shows Chrome, a man and a woman locked in sweaty embrace.

16 INT. - LOSER - NIGHT

16

The place is almost filled, smoke hangs in the air and the noise level is appreciable. 'Respectable' types from Uptown mix in with the regulars and money is exchanging hands. Jack is at the bar, drunk, looking out over the crowd. Bobby is talking with a girl and a guy, HARRY, a young, rail-thin jock. They are obviously friendly, nodding and smiling. A man next to Jack, dressed in the newest version of trendy, takes a sip of his wine and fixes Jack with a brilliant, bonded smile. His knockout GIRLFRIEND is next to him.

MAN

How you doing?

Jack looks over and fixes him with a rheumy eye.

JACK

I'm drunk as a pig.

MAN

I see. Look, I've never been here before. How do I get wired into the action?

JACK

See those guys with the red armbands?

The Man looks around and spots several young guys dressed in black pants, combat boots, white shirts and red armbands. He nods.

(CONTINUED)

con't

16

JACK (cont'd)
They're the bookies... they handle the action.

Bobby sees Jack talking to them and ambles over. He orders a milkshake with extra syrup, then eyes the man's girlfriend and gives her a charming smile.

BOBBY
How you doing?

GIRLFRIEND
Fine, thanks. This gentleman here was just explaining the game.

BOBBY
Good thing I came over. Jack's prone to memory lapses.

Jack shakes his head, smiles wanly and leaves. Bobby moves a little closer to the girl, directing his attention to her. He points to the far corner of the room. A low platform with a saddle sits in front of a computer deck. An electrode helmet is hooked over the saddle horn. A console with a slot on top and a chair are beneath a video scoreboard ten feet from the computer. People are clearing an area around a long holo-platform near the saddle. A man with a red armband takes his place at the chair near the console and Harry make his way toward the saddle. A buzz goes up and Harry smiles, waving and nodding.

BOBBY (cont'd)
The saddle and the deck is the simstim machine. You sit in the saddle, put on the trodes, the floor manager drops in the game chip and...bam!... you're jacked into the holo-reality. Once you're in, you can't take yourself out. You get points for how well you do. You bet for or against the rider scoring at a certain level. That guy who's getting into the saddle... Harry... he's one of the best. Not as good as me, of course, but he's a top rider. I'd bet the farm on him.

(beat)
Come on, they're going to start.

(CONTINUED)

con't (2)

16

He guides the girl through the crowd, her boyfriend following a little helplessly behind. People have begun to ring an area around the holo-platform. Harry is in the saddle, putting on the trode band. The crowd is anxious, exuberant as Harry looks over at the Floor Manager. He nods and we go

CLOSE

to see the Manager drop a red chip into the slot.

HARRY

freezes. His eyes go blank and the holo-platform comes to life in hyper-saturated color. The customers see a holo of a rat-infested midnight alley. Harry turns a corner and makes his way cautiously along the length of it. A Ninja appears suddenly in front of him. His hand flashes out and Harry is knocked back against a wall. The audience gasps, then cheers him on. At the deck, the real Harry is immobile, eyes darting side-to-side. In the holo, Harry springs easily to his feet, sidekicks the Ninja and follows it with a kidney punch. The Ninja spins, leg high... Harry grabs his foot, steps to the side and kicks him in the balls. As the man bends over, Harry puts a headlock on from the front and snaps his neck.

ON THE VIDEO SCOREBOARD

an ongoing tally is visible: points are recorded for form and lack of injuries sustained, as well as results. Most of the audience is rooting for him, although some are pissed off, obviously having bet against him.

Two more Ninjas drop into the alley from the wall. They attack simultaneously. Harry holds his own but takes some punishing shots. After a minute or so of brilliant, super-speed moves, he finally "kills" them both. His nose is broken, there is a deep cut on his cheek and one arm hangs useless at his side.

The holo instantly disappears and Harry whips the helmet off, unhurt, with a triumphant grin. He sees Bobby returning it and waves to him. Jack is next to Bobby, being jarred by the winning customers as they collect their money. Almost unnoticed, two Police Officers... LELAND and MASICK.. have entered and pick their way through the crowd. Jack glances up, not paying any attention until he notices they are coming his way. He looks behind him but they stop in front of him.

LELAND

You're Jack Sloan, right?

(Jack nods)

Come with us.

He gives Bobby a "How the fuck do I know what they want?" look and leaves between them.

7 EXT. - ALLEY - NIGHT

17

Police tape and barriers preserve the scene. A few bystanders are looking on but most people pass by uninterested. Jack stands with the two Officers, looking down at a covered body.

LELAND

Wino found him a little while ago.
Went to take a piss and fell over him.
Looks like every bone in his body's
broken and most of his organs are
jello. We didn't even bother to call
the harvesters. He had this scrap of
paper on him. No ID.

On the paper is scribbled: "Jack Sloan...noon...Loser." Jack looks at it, then down as the second Officer pulls back the rubber sheet.

LELAND (cont'd)

You know the guy?

JACK

Yeah. Max Lorre.

The Officer looks him over hard. Jack stays passive, doesn't flinch or blink.

JACK (cont'd)

I knew him a long time ago. He blew
into town and looked me up. We had a
drink. He left. End of story.

LELAND

You can go. We'll take it from here.

JACK

How about a ride back?

MASICK

We have to get to the station.
Paperwork.

Jack gives them a look, then turns and walks off.

3 INT. - LOFT - NIGHT

18

Bobby sits at his desk, feet propped up, rambling on.

BOBBY

Hey, what are you gonna do, Jack, right? One minute you're here, the next you're beaten to a pulp and you're deader'n shit. It happens. I mean, it's not like the guy was your best friend or anything, right? Right?

Jack has removed his myoelectric arm : it rests at one end of the workbench at which he sits. A cable leads from the two carbon studs in his stump to a miniature manipulator arm mounted on the bench. He is using the tiny gleaming hand to work on the exposed circuitry of one of Bobby's computers. He views his work through a magnifier, then sits back, finished. The letter is on the bench, in sight. Doris watches from a monitor.

DORIS

Very nice work, Jack.

He pulls out the letter and photo and really reads it for the first time.

BOBBY

Although that girl was sure fine.
(straightens in his
chair)

See, that's what I'm talking about, Jack. We start making some good money around here, we'll have stuff like that hanging from the ceiling.

DORIS

Bobby, your sensitivity is overwhelming.

BOBBY

Doris, this is none of your business. I'm having a conversation which you are not included into, okay?

He peeps over Jack's shoulder and reads the letter, his lips moving.

BOBBY (cont'd)

Poor Daddy's all upset his little girl ran away, eh, Jack? When are parents gonna learn to leave their kids alone? Shit, she's probably having the time of her life, banging everything in...

(CONTINUED)

3 con't

18

JACK
That's enough!

Bobby shuts up, surprised but unafraid. He looks at Jack curiously.

DORIS
Thank God.

Jack looks dead into Bobby's face. We see the hint of another man lurking inside... and maybe not as deep as even he thinks.

JACK
Somebody murdered Max Lorre and the cops don't seem to care. There's a girl working someplace she shouldn't be working, maybe doing some things she shouldn't be doing. She's somebody's kid. That means something to me.

Bobby, in spite of himself, is embarrassed. He looks down and nods sheepishly.

BOBBY
All right, Jack, you made your point.

Jack stuffs the letter back into his pocket.

JACK
Max was a good man. We saved each others' asses a couple of times. He gave his word and that meant something. I should have helped him when he asked. I should have and I didn't.

Bobby looks around, then lowers his feet to the floor. He rustles around in a drawer and comes out with some red licorice whips. He crams one in his mouth and a sudden bright smile breaks across his face.

BOBBY
If we got her... you think Dad'll still pay that thousand bucks?

JACK
(slow smile)
I don't see why not.

BOBBY
When are we leaving?

(CONTINUED)

3 con't (2)

18

JACK

Right now.

DORIS

Do my input scanners deceive me or is
Bobby Quine really going to do
something for somebody else?

BOBBY

Money's involved, Doris. Period.

DORIS

Sure, Bobby. I'm proud of you, anyway.

BOBBY

(winces)

Don't get all moist on me, Doris.
You're computer-generated, remember?

He reaches over and flicks off her monitor.

JACK

Hand me my arm.

INT. - BOBBY'S CAR - NIGHT

19

Bobby drives as Jack looks out at the human flotsam and jetsam
on the street.

V.O.

There were some good reasons to go
after the girl...Max, his promise, the
money, a mother and father scared to
death for the daughter they loved. I
remembered what it was like to lose
someone. I couldn't really feel it any
more. I couldn't feel a lot of things,
most times. But I could still
remember.

(beat)

What I couldn't understand was why I
was going to break the only real rule
I had: Stay away from anything to do
with Chrome.

(beat)

I was scared. But I knew, for the
first time in years, I was going to do
something real.

7 INT. - HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS CASINO - NIGHT

20

Rikki is filling an order at the bar.

CHROME (O.S.)
You look lovely tonight, dear.

Rikki spins around to see Chrome standing there, smiling. Though she looks younger than Rikki, her demeanor is almost motherly... but in a somewhat incestuous way.

RIKKI
(flustered)
Oh, hello, ma'am... I didn't see you standing... thank you..

Chrome steps in closer and strokes Rikki's arm.

CHROME
I can tell you have some ... very special qualities.

RIKKI
You think so?

CHROME
Certainly. That's why I allow you to work here. You know, quite a few of my girls have gone on to do quite well. Several have even become holo stars. Some of our regulars here are very prominent directors. And you are very beautiful.

Chrome fixes her with a look that makes Rikki squirm.

VOICE (O.S.)
Miss Chrome! You're needed upstairs.

She turns at the call, then gives Rikki a big smile.

CHROME
Let's chat again, yes?

She glides off. Rikki watches her go and a little shiver shoots down her spine.

21 EXT. - HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - NIGHT

21

A Security Guard dressed very uptown slouches on a stool at just inside the entrance. Jack and Bobby enter and we see their outline on a weapon scan screen next to the man. He nods and they go

(CONTINUED)

con't

21

INSIDE

where they stop and take a look. Jack looks nervous. Bobby is impressed with the sheer volume of gambling opportunities. He likes the colors and whistles and bells... and, of course, the women.

BOBBY

Jesus Christ on a stick, Jack, check out all the stuff! If those outfits were any skimpier, we could tell who the real blondes were.

Jack nods distractedly as he steps into the casino. Bobby follows, his head on a swivel, grinning. Jack spots something and heads across the floor. Rikki looks up, a smile forming, but starts at the sight of his arm.

JACK

You're Rikki, aren't you?

She nods and Bobby rolls up. Seeing her in person, he is suddenly vitally interested. He reaches out and pumps her hand.

BOBBY

Bobby Quine. Haven't we met someplace?

Jack glances around, nods subtly to Bobby, then gently takes her elbow and casually begins guiding her toward the door. Bobby keeps up a steady stream of conversation.

RIKKI

I don't think so. I'm new in town.

BOBBY

I could swear we had a couple of drinks together one night. You ever been to the Gentleman Loser?

(she shakes her head)

Loop Lounge? Dew Drop Inn? Notel Motel? Land of a Thousand Dances? You know a guy named Gort?... foreign guy, you know, klatuu barada nicto?

She shakes her head, trying to keep up with him. Jack is moving her a little faster, his eye fixed on the entrance. She suddenly notices the distance they have traveled.

BOBBY (cont'd)

You didn't used to sing backup for the Green Genes, did you?

(CONTINUED)

1. con't (2)

RIKKI
(to Jack)
Wait a minute, will you?

Jack moves her faster. She tries to resist a little but he doesn't slow.

RIKKI (cont'd)
Hey, stop it, will you? What are you doing?

JACK
Everything's all right. I'll explain when we get out of here.

RIKKI
(raising her voice)
I'm working! I'm not going anywhere!

They are almost to the door but Rikki's voice alerts the Bouncer and a couple of other Security Men in the area. They head toward them. Jack notices and tightens his grip on Rikki. A customer steps in front of Bobby and he falls a couple of steps behind. One of the Security Men grabs him. Bobby spins around, feigning outrage with the much bigger man.

BOBBY
Take your hands off me! You fuck with me and...

The Man pinches his voice off with a huge hand around his throat and pushes him toward the door. Simultaneously, Jack glances back to see it and the Bouncer gets up off his stool. Rikki is struggling to get free and we can see in Jack's face that this hasn't gone right. Jack turns and faces Bobby's guy, a weary look on his face. He relaxes his grip on Rikki... but doesn't let go. The Security Man reaches him, still holding Bobby.

MAN
What do you think you're doing, Ace?

Jack looks down sheepishly. Rikki has stopped struggling. The Bouncer is moving in from behind.

JACK
I'm sorry, I just got carried...

(CONTINUED)

con't (3)

21

His metal arm flashes up directly under the Security Man's chin and almost snaps his head off his shoulders. As he drops, letting go of Bobby, Jack wheels and, in one motion, slams the Bouncer along the side of the face, cracking his cheekbone. He grabs Rikki hard and pulls her through the entrance before she know what is happening. As Bobby passes the bouncer, he kicks him in the balls, grinning.

BOBBY

I told you not to fuck with me.

A SECURITY ALERT goes off and men start pouring from the woodwork.

22 EXT. - STREET - NIGHT

22

Jack and Bobby come running out, Rikki between them, her feet barely touching the ground. She is really pissed off, yelling, struggling. They dart across the street, narrowly missing two cars speeding in opposite directions. Close behind are several of Chrome's goons, unholstering weapons. Bobby jumps behind the wheel as Jack pushes Rikki into the front seat between them. As one of the goons draws a bead, another one slaps his pistol down.

GOON

Don't... you might hit the bitch.

A car has pulled close and parked behind Bobby since they arrived... he has no room to pull out. Gunning the car, he throws it back and forth, forward into reverse, banging the cars ahead and behind him. The goons can't make it across the street because of the traffic. As they hop up and down, waiting for a break, the limo pulls around the corner. Just then, Bobby's car bursts from between the parked cars and into a break in the traffic. One of the goons jumps out in front of it and Bobby slams on the brakes reflexively. The limo door opens and Vega gets out to see what is happening. Jack looks ahead and spots him... their eyes lock and Vega's face oozes hatred.

JACK

Hit it!

Bobby stomps the accelerator, veers hard left and pulls up on the sidewalk. Pedestrians scatter as he peels along for thirty yards, passing the limo pointed the other way, then clanks back down onto the road and OUT OF FRAME.

Vega deftly takes a black chip from his pouch and slides it into the transducer.

7 INT. - BOBBY'S CAR - NIGHT

23

Bobby is driving like a maniac, cutting in and out of traffic, never quite able to break away. He is grinning, having a hell of a good time. Rikki has stopped yelling... she is too terrified to speak. Jack looks up in the rear view mirror.

JACK

Oh, fuck me.

24 EXT. - STREET - NIGHT

24

Vega sprints along the road at about forty miles an hour, dodging cars, drawing disbelieving stares from motorists. Two of them, watching him, slam into one another. His legs are pumping like pistons... there is no sense of effort. He is gaining on Jack and Bobby.

25 INT. - BOBBY'S CAR - NIGHT

25

Bobby has seen it, too. He is bouncing in his seat, jacked up, trying to get clear. Rikki is just plain stunned.

BOBBY

Hey... you know this guy?

JACK

Just drive!

26 EXT. - STREET - NIGHT

26

Vega is only ten yards away and still gaining.... five yards... Bobby checks the mirror, looks ahead, checks the mirror... Vega is a yard away, he reaches forward... and Bobby slams on the brakes. Vega rams into the trunk, goes up and over and lands in the street in front of an oncoming car. He rolls and the car hits him hard. He is knocked across the lane and through a store front window. The car screeches to a halt, its radiator blown and left front fender crushed into the tire.

27 INT., CAR - NIGHT

27

Bobby gives himself a cheer and Jack looks back, smiling. Rikki has her face buried in his chest and her hands over her ears. We can see Vega getting up, inside the store... stiff but undamaged.

JACK

Didn't you just have those brakes fixed?

(CONTINUED)

7 con't

27

BOBBY
Yeah... they were a little mushy.

JACK
Seem fine now.

Bobby laughs.

28 INT. - LOFT - NIGHT

28

Jack and Bobby "escort" Rikki into the loft and sit her down. She tries to get up and Jack pushes her back down. His face is sweaty and he is beginning to wonder what the hell he's doing. Bobby sits at his desk and idly punches up Doris. Her eyes widen as she sees Rikki but she says nothing. Bobby raises his eyebrows as if to ask her what she thinks.

RIKKI
(to Jack)
Who are you?

Jack sits on a weathered stool across from her and takes a deep breath.

JACK
We want to help you.

RIKKI
You want to help me. So you kidnap me and almost get me killed. I probably lost my job, which means I won't be able to pay my rent or buy food or go anywhere, so I'll probably end up in skidtown, hanging around some trash barrel fire, trying to keep warm and drinking cheap wine because I can't stand to think of how my life is ruined.

(beat)
I hope you don't help too many people. There wouldn't be enough wine to go around.

Bobby breaks into laughter. Doris isn't amused... the beginning of computer jealousy. Jack just looks confused.

JACK
Bear with me a minute here. A friend of mine knows your father. Your father wanted you back home and my friend was going to... persuade you.

(CONTINUED)

9 con't

28

RIKKI

Is that what they call kidnapping now? That's not what they call it on TV. On "Ten Most Wanted Felons", they call kidnapping a class A felony. Period.

JACK

He was going to put you on a bus. Somebody killed him first.

RIKKI

So you and... this guy here decided to do it. For money, I bet. How much did my father say he'd pay?

BOBBY

(grinning)

A thousand bucks.

RIKKI

(to Jack)

You probably killed him so you could get the money.

Without thinking, Jack snaps his good hand out and slaps her. She jumps back, more surprised than hurt. Jack points his metal finger at her face.

JACK

Let me tell you some truth here, girl. You come to the big, bad city because you're pretty and bored and you think you're smart enough to get to know the right people and get 'discovered'. You grew up on TV and holos and concerts and cheap bullshit magazines and you think you know how it works. All it takes is looks and brains and some nerve, right?

Rikki looks away arrogantly, then back at him.

JACK (cont'd)

So you ask around and pretty soon, surprise!... some nice, friendly, good-looking girl comes up to you someplace and tells you she knows someone who might be able to help you. And she takes you to meet Chrome.

Some of the arrogance leaves Rikki's face. How doe Jack know this?

(CONTINUED)

3 con't (2)

28

JACK (cont'd)

She makes a fuss over you. Gives you a physical, helps you find a place to live, introduces you around, gives you a job as a hostess. Tells you you'll meet important people.

She is listening intently now as he leans forward to get close.

JACK (cont'd)

But you haven't met any important people, have you?

(she shakes her head)

And they haven't told you about the puppet line yet, have they?

RIKKI

The what?

BOBBY

Meat puppets. Use your imagination.

RIKKI

(frustrated)

You're confusing me!... I don't know what you're talking about.

JACK

I'm talking about using you every possible way, then getting rid of you! That's what she does with people!

RIKKI

She was nice to me!

Silence. Jack looks at her another moment, then leans back on the stool. His voice is softer.

JACK

How old do you think she is?

RIKKI

I don't know... maybe twenty.

JACK

Doesn't it seem strange that someone that young has so much... power?

RIKKI

I guess. How old is she?

(CONTINUED)

3 con't (3)

JACK
No one's really sure but the educated
guess is... between eighty and ninety.

RIKKI
(dumbstruck)
How can that be?

BOBBY
She's heavily into spare parts.
O.P.'s.

RIKKI
O.P.'s?

BOBBY
Other people's. She's a miracle of
modern medicine.

RIKKI
(glazed)
Other... people's?

BOBBY
She believes if the organ fits, wear
it.

JACK
She runs every illegal operation in
the gray zone and probably has most of
the cops on her pad. And she'll do
anything to stay young.

Rikki just looks off into space, trying to assimilate all this.

DORIS
Are you all right?

Rikki nods vacantly. Jack looks suddenly exhausted and rubs his
eyes.

JACK
You can stay here tonight. Bobby'll
give up his bed, won't you, Bobby?

BOBBY
Jack, man, don't forget my bad back...
on the other hand, I wouldn't mind
sharing it...

Doris gives him a disgusted look. He notices and flicks her off.
Rikki just shakes her head... another jerk.

(CONTINUED)

con't (4)

28

BOBBY (cont'd)
All right, all right, that's cool,
forget I said anything. Really.

RIKKI
I don't know.

JACK
Don't argue, okay? After all, you are
our prisoner, right?

She meets his weary smile with one of her own and nods.

DISSOLVE TO:

29 EXT. - HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - NIGHT

29

Vega gets out of the limo, nods and has a few words with some of
his goons, then enters the casino.

V.O.
I didn't know Vega worked for
Chrome... it must have been a pretty
recent thing. It didn't surprise me,
though. People like that always find
each other eventually. I knew now who
killed Max... I just wasn't sure how
Rikki fit into it.
(beat)
And the last thing in the world I
wanted was to go up against them.

30 INT. - HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - ACCOUNTING OFFICE - NIGHT

30

A large room with several computers, tote boards, a couple of
large desks. Chrome's financial nerve center. It is staffed by
one man, PELTZ, her accountant. She sits next to him at a desk.
Nodding, he stands and leaves the room, passing Vega on his way
out.

PELTZ
(to Chrome)
I'll have that information shortly.

CHROME
Come in, Vega.
(smiles)
Do you know Peltz has a photographic
memory?
(more)

(CONTINUED)

con't

30

CHROME (Cont'd)

As a matter of fact, he has to concentrate to forget things. The only completely reliable accountant I've ever had.

(smile fades)

Reliable. I wish I could say you had the same quality.

Vega looks straight at her, trying not to flinch.

CHROME (cont'd)

I can't even depend on my men to keep my girls from being hijacked. Where were you?

VEGA

You sent me to Skidtown to collect that money...

CHROME

(cold)

I know where I sent you. I'm not pleased, Vega. I can't have people thinking they can take things from me whenever they feel like it. Who took her?

VEGA

Cyberjock named Bobby Quine.

His face suddenly hardens and his voice drips poison.

VEGA (cont'd)

And a burnout from the Wars... Jack Sloan. We used to call him Automatic Jack.

Chrome looks slightly confused for a moment, as if trying to grab something just out of reach.

CHROME

That name... something about it...

(to Vega)

But you know him?

VEGA

I know him.

CHROME

Put the word out on the street I want her found. Peltz will supply you with plenty of money to spread around. I want this wrapped up fast.

INT. - CHROME'S MEMORY ROOM - NIGHT

A very small, plain room with soft, warm lighting. The walls seem to be made of mother of pearl and give it a wombl-like feel. A computer deck and chair are the only furnishings. Chrome sits at the deck and types into the computer. On the screen, she types: JACK SLOAN... MEMORY ACCESS. She waits a moment and the reply comes up on the screen: RELEGATED TO DEEP SUBCONSCIOUS...NOT TO BE ACCESSED. Chrome pauses, then types: OVERRIDE PREVIOUS INSTRUCTIONS... VERIFY CHROME I.D. 77SGD65. There is a pause, then the computer replies: VERIFIED...ACCESSING.

She stands, takes a ten foot cable from the table and hooks one end into a serial port at the back of the computer. She sweeps her hair away from the back of her neck. We GO CLOSER to see a cortical shunt at the base of her skull: it looks like a small socket that has been made a part of her. She takes the other end of the cable and plugs it into herself. She stands in the center of the room and her eyes get the same look the simstim riders get. In this state, when she recalls something, she experiences it. She shivers and color floods into her face.

TRANSITION EFFECT:

Chrome and a younger Jack embrace in the back of a limo. She looks the same. They kiss feverishly, devouring each other. They finally break, their hands all over one another.

CHROME

I have to go.

JACK

You've got at least five more minutes.

With that, he yanks her close and kisses her hard. Laughing, she pulls away.

CHROME

Jack, I have to go. He'll be home soon and I have to be there first.

His eyes burn into hers... she is all he wants.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE BALCONY OF A HIGH-RISE HOTEL

The city opens below them, Uptown brilliantly lighted. Jack stands with Chrome, shaking his head. She looks bitterly disappointed.

JACK

I won't do that.

(CONTINUED)

con't

CHROME

Why not? You've killed plenty of men
in your life.

JACK

That was war.

CHROME

Love is war, Jack. Don't you know
that? Or, at least, sex is. The flesh
is.

JACK

Chrome, he's your husband.

CHROME

(soft)

That didn't bother you when you were
inside me, did it?

Jack stares at her... she isn't lying. He shakes his head.

JACK

I can't do this any more.

He walks OUT OF FRAME. She watches him go, furious.

CHROME

(after him)

You're a coward, Jack! You're afraid
and you're weak!

The rage in her face drains, replaced by a sudden, ineffable
sadness.

CHROME (cont'd)

(a whisper)

Come back.

CUT TO:

THE MEMORY ROOM

as the transition fades to reality and Chrome rips the cable out
of her skull. Her face is icy in its determination.

CHROME

I remember now.

INT. - CHROME'S FLOOR - HALL - NIGHT

32

Chrome slams the memory room door behind her and steams down the hall. Peltz hurries to catch up with her, some spread sheets in his hand.

PELTZ

I need your okay...

CHROME

Not now!

(yells)

Vega!

Down the hall, Vega hurries out of his room, puzzled. Chrome strides right up to him, Peltz trailing her. She slaps Vega hard, a stinging blow, rocking him. Her eyes are blazing.

CHROME (cont'd)

I want that girl, you understand me!?

VEGA

I can find you another one right away.
She'll even be prettier...

She slaps him again, harder.

CHROME

That girl! Not some replacement a eunuch like you would find! Bring her to me... unharmed. But when you find Quine and... Jack Sloan, kill them. And make it ugly. I want everyone to understand what happens when I'm made unhappy.

(beat)

I want everyone to remember them. Now go do it!

Vega nods quickly and hurries off. Chrome catches Peltz in her peripheral vision and spins toward him.

CHROME (cont'd)

What!?

He rushes off in the opposite direction. She stands there, face flushed, breathing hard, her mind racing.

3 INT. - LOFT - DAY

33

Rikki's nose twitches as she catches a strong aroma. Her eyes open to see Bobby standing there, smiling, a mug in his hand.

RIKKI
Is that real coffee?

BOBBY
(nods)
Sixty- seven dollars an ounce but
worth every penny.

DORIS (O.S.)
You never gave a cup of coffee away in
your life.

RIKKI
What was that?

Bobby walks over by his cyberspace rig. He picks up what looks to be a credit card from the workbench. Doris's face is formed holographically on it. He holds it up for Rikki to see.

DORIS
I'm not a what. You're being rude.

RIKKI
(off-balance)
Sorry.

BOBBY
My D-Card. I can't bear to be out of
touch with Doris.

DORIS
(archly)
Bobby, I'm not interrupting your
somewhat clumsy attempt to get next to
Rikki here, am...

Bobby slips the D-Card into his pocket, immediately silencing Doris. Jack is still asleep in the corner, snoring raggedly and looking like shit. Bobby notices Rikki checking him out.

BOBBY
He's a good man... he's my brother
in-law and everything and he is a good
mechanic but...

RIKKI
But what?

(CONTINUED)

con't

33

BOBBY

Nothing. It's just... he's seen better days, know what I mean? Sort of from the old school... blood and guts, honor and glory, all that shit.

RIKKI

What school are you from, Bobby?

He fixes her with a cocky grin and pulls another chair over next to him. He motions for her to sit down.

BOBBY

I'm a gunslinger. As in outlaw.

She sits down, curious, a little charmed. Bobby strokes his chin, playing her.

BOBBY (cont'd)

Now, how should we tour? What would be fun to... ride through cyberspace in?

RIKKI

What are you talking about?

Bobby puts on a trode band and holds out another one.

BOBBY

Easier to show you. And I know just the thing.

He looks at her a moment, then slips a second band on her head. She doesn't stop him. He gives her a smile, his fingers start to fly across the keyboard and we are jacked into

CYBERSPACE

with Bobby and Rikki in the front seat of a dual-tone 1957 Chevy convertible, in cherry condition. They hurtle through the neon data, Bobby behind the wheel. A narrow road appears constantly in front of them, snaking past the data constructs, continually re-inventing itself. Behind the car, it disappears just as quickly, leaving no evidence of ever having been there. It is a roller-coaster ride with Bobby behind the wheel, driving like Errol Flynn, Rikki next to him holding onto his arm, her face flushed with awe and excitement. They dip and cut, barrel straight ahead, stop on a dime and jet off again. The colors blur together and the constructs are ever-changing. Just when Rikki thinks she is going to overload, we go

BACK TO:

(CONTINUED)

3 con't (2)

33

THE LOFT

as Bobby removes her trode band. She is dazzled, her eyes bright and shiny, grinning, trying to catch her breath. Bobby laughs good-naturedly, enjoying her pleasure.

BOBBY

How'd you like our first date?

RIKKI

I can hardly... I never saw anything like that! It was so deep and beautiful and it went on and on...! Do you spend a lot of time in there?

BOBBY

Every chance I get.

JACK (O.S.)

That's what's so dangerous about it.

They look over to see Jack get up from his futon and move over to them. He rummages around in a desk drawer and comes out with a pint bottle. He takes a big hit, winces and shivers. Some color flows into his face.

JACK (cont'd)

See, Rikki, when you jack into the matrix, it takes a toll on your brain. Lots of things can happen to you in there. Man's brain wasn't meant to be hooked into machines.

BOBBY

Jack, don't start, man.

(pointedly)

You should be the last person in the world talking about hooking into machines. Check yourself out.

(to Rikki)

Anyway, besides being the biggest kick there is, it's our business.

RIKKI

What do you do?

BOBBY

Jack rustles up the software and I'm the... operator. It's a real family deal.

(CONTINUED)

3 con't (3)

JACK

We steal.

RIKKI

Where I come from, people don't figure that's all right.

Bobby gives Jack a dirty look; Jack just smiles.

BOBBY

Not from people... from corporate entities. So it's not really stealing.

JACK

(takes a sip)

It's really stealing, all right.

BOBBY

Jack, goddamnit!

(to Rikki)

It's banks, big companies, so big they won't notice we're shaving a twentieth of a cent off every third transaction. Big enough for that to add up, see?

Rikki turns her attention to Jack. He is sipping from the bottle.

RIKKI

Do you always drink like that?

For some reason, the question throws him. He lowers the bottle.

JACK

(weak smile)

Habit, I guess.

RIKKI

I... I thought about the things you told me last night. I don't want to go back to work at that place.

(quickly)

But I'm not going back home. And you can't make me.

JACK

I know.

They smile at each other and Bobby zips in between them, grinning in a large way.

(CONTINUED)

3 con't (4)

33

BOBBY

Then it's settled. You'll stay here.

JACK

Until we can figure out what to do with you.

34 EXT. - STREET - DAY

34

Vega and Styles have a young, scared girl, LITA, corraled in a doorway. People pass them by, carefully ignoring them.

LITA

Look, other people know him a lot better than I do.

VEGA

You know him pretty good, that's what we hear, Lita. We hear you were fucking him... till he found some other hole.

She flushes, angry... but more scared.

VEGA (cont'd)

Funny thing is, people know him but nobody knows where he lives. Why is that, anyways?

LITA

He never took me there. I swear to God. He never took anyone home, is what I hear.

Vega holds out his hand and Styles puts a few bills in it.

VEGA

This is yours.

(curls her fingers
around it)

You tell me something could help me, you keep it. You don't, we're gonna make you scream and scream.

Lita starts to tremble visibly. She searches her brain for anything pertinent. Suddenly, her eyes open wide.

(CONTINUED)

con't

34

LITA

There's some round robin doubles tonight at the Loser. I think him and his buddy Harry are going to ride together, go for the record.

(nods fast)

Yeah, I'm pretty sure of that.

VEGA

Is that right? Bobby's quite the cowboy, huh? What about Sloan?

LITA

I don't know nothing about him, except he works with Bobby. I never had nothing to do with him.

Vega glares at her, his eyes burning a hole right through her. Finally, he backs up a step and puts a finger to his lips.

VEGA

Mum's the word, right, Lita. Old Bobby's gonna have a blue night and we wouldn't want anybody to ruin the fun.

He and Styles walk off. Lita sags in the doorway.

35 INT. - LOFT - NIGHT

35

Jack stumbles in, really drunk, to see Rikki checking herself out in the mirror. Her hair has been cut short, in the style of the cyberpunks who hang out at the Loser. Bobby looks her up and down.

RIKKI

I love it!

BOBBY

Yeah, it cooks. And you'll fit right in, draw less exposure.

JACK

(slurring)

What's going on?

He pulls his flask out, takes a long hit and almost falls over. He sees Rikki glance at him, then away... so he hits it again.

RIKKI

Bobby's taking me to watch him play.

(CONTINUED)

con't

35

Jack plops down on the futon and lies back down. He exhales loudly.

JACK

You can forget that.

BOBBY

Jack, come on. I know what you're thinking but look at her. Chrome herself wouldn't recognize her.

JACK

What... about you?

BOBBY

I'm famous there. No one would try anything in that crowd. Besides, if anything was shaking, I would have heard about it. I'm the man with his ear to the ground, right? And not a whisper. The whole thing's gonna blow over.

Jack has his arm over his eyes. His breathing is loud and wet.

BOBBY (cont'd)

Jack?

Jack starts to raise himself up to look at them but can't make it. He's flat once again; he waves a hand distractedly, his eyes closed and his face slack.

JACK

Rikki, you...
(loses it)
whatever... never mind...

He is just about out. Bobby signals Rikki to head for the door. She does and Bobby crouches down, his mouth close to Jack's ear.

BOBBY

(whispers)

Just trying to get laid, Jack. No harm in that.

Jack doesn't move. Bobby heads out with Rikki.

5 INT. - LOSER - NIGHT

36

It is party time. The place is almost full, lively, loud. Two cyberspace JOCKS, just finishing their run, slip off their trode bands to the mixed jeers and cheers from the crowd. A second saddle has been placed near the holo-platform; they were both hooked into the same game reality. The scoreboard shows they have scored over four million points. Money exchanges hands as bets are paid off. At the bar, Bobby and Harry are hanging out; they know people are talking about them, placing bets on or against them... they are a study in cool. Bobby glances across the room to see Rikki talking with a couple of other women. She looks over and gives him a small smile.

BOBBY

Well... should we kick some ass?

They head for the saddles.

37 INT. - LOFT - NIGHT

37

Jack is out on the futon. The phone rings... he stirs but doesn't open his eyes. It rings a couple more times, then the answering machine picks it up.

BOBBY'S VOICE

Leave it.

The beep, then Lita's panicked voice comes on the line.

LITA (O.S.)

Bobby... are you there? Pick it up!
Bobby, if you hear this, pick it up..
it's important!

CUT TO:

38 EXT. - PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

38

Lita hops about nervously, upset.

JACK (O.S.)

(coming around)

What? Who is this?

BACK TO:

3 INT. - LOFT - NIGHT

39

LITA (O.S.)
(on the verge of
hysteria)
Bobby's in trouble!

Jack sits up, clearing his head, alerted by her tone.

JACK
This is his partner, Jack. Bobby
already left. Talk to me.

LITA (O.S.)
I had to tell them or they were going
to hurt me. I had to...

JACK
Tell them what?

LITA (O.S.)
Vega. He knows Bobby's riding at the
Loser. I know he's going to do
something, I know it, he...

JACK
What did he say exactly. Think!

LITA (O.S.)
He said something about... about it
was going to be a blue night for
Bobby. A blue...

Jack slams down the phone and jumps up.

40 INT. - LOSER - NIGHT

40

Bobby and Harry are in the saddles. The crowd is ringing them
and the holo-platform. We can see Rikki edging her way forward,
catching some of the excitement of the others. The Floor Manager
stands next to the console, a red chip in his hand. Bobby waves
to the crowd and he and Harry put on the trodes. Bobby looks
over at the Floor Manager and nods. We go

CLOSE ON THE FLOOR MANAGER'S HAND

as he starts to drop the red chip into the console's slot...
then deftly palms it and drops in a BLUE ONE. No one catches it.

(CONTINUED)

con't

40

BOBBY AND HARRY

freeze simultaneously.

CUT TO:

JACK

as he runs down the street, dodging pedestrians, knocking a couple over. He spots a cab ahead and yells for it. It is stopped at a light... he comes within a few yards and it pulls away, not having heard him. Jack sprints after it, cutting into the street, cars blowing their horns at him.

BACK TO:

THE LOSER

Bobby and Harry's eyes are blank as the holo takes shape. We see them both standing on a ruined bridge. Rusty girders tower into fog and an orange lava river pulses below. The sky is spiderwebbed with soundless lightning. They look down as primitive swords materialize in their hands. The audience falls suddenly silent. Bobby and Harry start across the bridge, cautiously, watching.

CUT TO:

JACK

as he catches the taxi at another light. The Driver has his window rolled halfway down.

JACK

I gotta get to the Gentleman Loser,
you know where it is?

DRIVER

Off duty, Mac.

He rolls up the window all the way and starts fiddling with his radio. Jack slaps the glass with his real hand. The light is about to change. The man ignores him and finds his station. Jack drills his mech-hand through the window and grabs him by the shirt. The light changes and the guy hits the gas... but Jack drags him out through the side window as the car rolls forward. Horns blow around them as the car slams into some parked cars and stops. Jack drops the cabbie in the street and jumps into the cab... tearing sheet metal as he pulls out.

BACK TO:

(CONTINUED)

con't (2)

40

THE LOSER - IN THE HOLO

Bobby and Harry get halfway across the bridge. .. and two hideous, four-armed Spider Kings drop from the girders overhead. They are vaguely man-shaped horrors in tattered brocade robes decorated with sewn-on human eyes. They wear crowns of human jawbones and teeth and each have two swords. Bobby faces one, Harry the other. The audience roars as Bobby parries his foe's first swipe, then hacks away one of the King's arms. The other King thrusts at Harry... he dances back, then thrusts himself, nicking his King's abdomen. Bobby and Harry exchange excited, confident looks and the duel is on.

41 EXT. - LOSER - NIGHT

41

An ambulance -like vehicle pulls up in front and parks in the Loading Only spot. Written on the side is: INTERCITY COMMERCIAL ORGAN BANK.

42 INT. - LOSER - NIGHT

42

Bobby and Harry are fighting like maniacs. Both are untouched at this point. They parry, thrust, roll, jump out of the way... both Kings are bleeding freely from cuts and amputations. Harry scores again against his King. Overconfident, he looks over at Bobby. Just then, the King steps forward and plunges the sword through his thigh. He howls in the holo and, simultaneously, he howls on the saddle. A disbelieving, collective gasp shoots through the audience. They are instantly galvanized, buzzing. Money comes out and the bets are upped. A couple of men rush to the entrance and shout at passersby.

MAN

We got a lethal game here!

Hearing that, a dozen or so of the uptown types blanch and make for the door. They are muttering to themselves and each other... "I can't watch this"... "this is sick"... etc. From the street, hustlers pour in, grinning sadistically, trying to get bets down.

CUT TO:

JACK

in the cab, driving like a madman, blowing his horn, screaming at drivers to get out of his way.

BACK TO:

(CONTINUED)

? con't

42

THE LOSER

where Rikki looks around, confused at what she hears and the sudden electricity that crackles through the crowd. Everyone presses closer, jockeying for position, predatory faces gleaming. Rikki grabs a Girl next to her.

RIKKI

I thought nobody was supposed to feel anything.

GIRL

(excited)

They must be using a lethal chip.

RIKKI

What are you talking about?

GIRL

They're illegal but they're around. Supposed to be the ultimate kick... play for real. You get killed in the holo, your brain gets fried... and you die.

RIKKI

Why doesn't he take off the electrodes?

GIRL

(grins)

That's the great thing... he can't.

Rikki bolts for the holo... the Girl grabs her. Two or three men move close to cut her off, giving her dark looks.

GIRL (cont'd)

You try to stop them, these people'll tear you apart.

BOBBY AND HARRY ON THE HOLO

The tables have turned. The Kings are on the attack, smelling victory. Bobby is leaning back over the bridge, fighting off his opponent's two swords in a flurry of defense. A lucky swipe by Bobby and one of his sword arms drops into the lava. Bobby dives out of the way and comes up ready, out of breath, fading, facing his King. We can see the fear in his face.

(CONTINUED)

? con't (2)

42

BOBBY
(yells to Harry)
We been set up!... it's real! Can you
make it?

Harry is weak, trying to hang in. Terror is the operative word
with him.

HARRY
I'm fucking hurt, Bobby!

Bobby sees and tries to work his way over to give him a hand.

BOBBY
Hang on!

Abruptly, Harry's King sweeps his sword and Harry rolls under
it. He comes up inside the King's guard, lifts his sword for the
kill... and the King vomits square into his face. Bloody, acidic
gunk covers Harry's face, blinding him.

HARRY
Bobby.... help me!

The King drives his sword into Harry's heart, killing him
instantly.

ON THE SADDLE

Harry screams shortly, then flops off the saddle... really dead.
The crowd collectively gasps and drops back a couple of steps.

JACK

Jack jumps out of the cab and bursts into the Loser. He fights
his way through the crowd, throwing people out of his way.

IN THE HOLO

Bobby, enraged, rushes over and swings his sword, surprising
Harry's King, neatly severing his head. The other King closes in
on him, cutting his back deeply. Bobby whirls and cuts another
of his arms off.

JACK

is almost to the front now, screaming as he goes.

JACK
Pull him out!

Rikki hears him and struggles against those holding her.

(CONTINUED)

? con't (3)

42

RIKKI

Jack!

IN THE HOLO

Bobby raises his sword, his face a mask of fury... when the headless King grabs his ankle. Stunned, Bobby looks down... and his King plunges his sword right through his throat. Bobby drops, grabbing his neck, blood spurting in an arc into the air. He squirms on the ground, his life gurgling out onto the bridge, dying fast.

AT THE SADDLE

Bobby droops, starting to slide off. Jack slams his metal arm into the last man in his way. He rips the trode band off Bobby's head. The holo dissolves instantly but Bobby just stares up at the ceiling, his pupils fixed and uneven. Two Attendants with Intercity Organ Bank shirts on hurry through the crowd, black bags in their hands. One of them checks Harry's vitals... he is gone.

FIRST ATTENDANT

He's done. We can use him.

The Second Attendant takes Bobby's signs, then stands.

SECOND ATTENDANT

We gotta wait a couple more minutes on this guy to make sure.

Jack grabs him by the throat, his teeth clenched.

JACK

You revive him now, motherfucker.

The first Attendant produces two forms and shows them to Jack.

FIRST ATTENDANT

Can't do it. Both these guys signed donation releases. No interference clauses.

JACK

That's not Bobby's signature, asshole!

Jack pinches the second Attendant till he turns blue.

JACK

Where's the cardiac paddle?

(CONTINUED)

? con't (4)

42

The guy points to his bag. Jack dumps him, rummages around fast and pulls out a single palm-sized plastic oval with a chromium bottom and a microbattery attached on top. He flicks a tiny switch, there is a faint hum and he rips Bobby's shirt open and presses it on his chest. There is a WHUMP and Bobby's body jumps... but no change. Jack flicks the switch off, then on again.

JACK

Come on, Bobby.. help me.

He presses it down again... another WHUMP... a beat... and Bobby's eyelids flutter. Awareness floods back into his face and he sits up, groggy. Rikki appears next to them.

BOBBY

What... the fuck happened?

JACK

Someone substituted a blue chip. Come on, we have to move.

They stand and start to move through the crowd, Jack and Rikki supporting Bobby, who is still wobbly. Arguing has broken out about the betting results. Jack is trying to guide them out of the chaos when he spots three Cops enter. One of them is Ieland. They go directly to the Floor Manager and confer. There is a discreet exchange of money from him to them.

JACK (cont'd)

Fuck... those cops are bought and paid for.

(to Rikki)

You're going to have to get him out. They'll have the back covered, so go around the bar to the front door.

RIKKI

Where are you going?

JACK

Never mind. Keep your head down and don't look at anyone.

Rikki half-carries, half-drags Bobby off through the crowd. We STAY with Jack. He blends into everyone, moving in a different direction. We lose sight of him... until he appears right behind the cops.

JACK

Excuse me, Officer.

(CONTINUED)

? con't (5)

42

Leland turns and Jack almost takes his head off with his myoelectric arm. In one motion, he snatches the cop's gun out of his holster, cracks the second cop across the skull and jams the barrel under Leland's chin.

JACK (cont'd)
Looks like a bad day at Black Rock for
you boys.

He gives the floor manager a sudden, vicious snarl.

JACK (cont'd)
You dropped the blue chip, didn't you,
slick?

The man just shakes, nodding his head, then shaking it as fast as he can.

JACK (cont'd)
I might be back for you.
(to the cop)
Get down there with those other pieces
of shit. Don't get up for five
minutes.

Leland lays down fast on his stomach. Jack backs up slowly, then turns and bolts through the crowd.

43 EXT. - LOSER - NIGHT

43

Bobby and Rikki are there, Bobby somewhat revived and pissed off.

BOBBY
(groaning)
Some fucking thief stole my fucking
car!

Jack looks around quickly and spots some Low-Riders sitting on their car a half block away. He runs off toward them, Rikki helping Bobby keep up. Just then, Leland dashes out, firing after them. Jack slows up to grab Rikki's arm and pull her along. They reach the Low-Riders, who look beyond them to see the cop closing.

JACK
(showing the gun)
Need your ride, man.

LOWRIDER
You got it, homes.

(CONTINUED)

3 con't

43

Jack jumps behind the wheel as Rikki helps Bobby inside the car.

JACK
(as they pull away)
You can pick it up at the corner of
Gleason and Hope.

The car speeds off down the street. Leland finally rolls up and takes two more futile shots in its direction.

LOWRIDER
That's pitiful, man. You better re-up
at the Academy.

44 INT. - LOFT - LATER THAT NIGHT

44

Rikki sits on the sofa, not a little shell-shocked. Doris is on one of the monitors. Bobby, all right now, is pacing.

JACK
Will you stop!

BOBBY
Jesus, someone tried to smoke me
tonight, Jack...I'm supposed to be
pacing!

RIKKI
I have to get out of here.

DORIS
You're in no condition to travel.

JACK
You're not going anywhere.

She jumps up from the sofa, her fear translating into anger.

RIKKI
You don't tell me what to do! I was
fine until you came and... stole me!
Now, I'm in the middle of gunfights
and I'm staying in some... shithole
with two maniacs I don't know and some
face on a computer screen!

DORIS
It isn't necessary to get personal.

(CONTINUED)

con't

JACK
You're not going anywhere.

Jack grabs her as she passes him. She throws his hand off. he grabs her with his metal arm.

RIKKI
(recoiling)
Don't touch me with that!

We can see the hurt in Jack's face... but only for a second. He takes her back to the sofa and pushes her down none too gently.

BOBBY
Christ, Jack, take it easy!

JACK
(whirls)
You stay out of this!
(to Rikki)
Chrome wants you back in a bad way.
She's pissed off enough to want to
kill Bobby for grabbing you.

RIKKI
Why didn't she try to kill you?

JACK
She would have gotten around to it,
believe me. You walk out that door
now, you're alone. And until we find
out why she wants you so bad, you
don't want to be alone.

RIKKI
You're not the only people in the
world I know.

JACK
How do I get through to you? This is
real. Someone kills you, you die.
Someone makes you their property,
you're their property.

BOBBY
Jack, lighten up, all right? She's
scared enough.

Jack stares at them both a moment, then jams the gun into his belt.

(CONTINUED)

con't (2)

44

JACK
I'm going to see Finn. You both stay here.

BOBBY
Whatever you say, chief.

JACK
Don't fuck with me, Bobby. I'm not in the mood.

Jack exits. Bobby makes sure he is gone, then sits down next to Rikki. Close.

BOBBY (cont'd)
You all right?
(she nods)
What do you say we get a pizza?

45 EXT. - STREET - NIGHT

45

They walk along the mostly deserted sidewalk. He slides an arm around her shoulder. She doesn't respond but doesn't shrug it off, either.

BOBBY
You sure you're all right?

RIKKI
I'm all right.

He stops them under a streetlight and puts his arms around her. He is trying to use every bit of his greasy charm.

BOBBY
Since you're going to be my guest for a while, what do you say we get a little friendlier. Jack's right, you know... you shouldn't be alone while we figure this out.

We can see Rikki's temper rising as he speaks; he, of course, is too in love with the sound of his own voice to notice. As he leans in for the big kiss, she knees him in the balls. Hard. Doubling him up. Then, she sprints off down the street. The D-Card falls out of Bobby's pocket and Doris opens her eyes.

DORIS
Wowing them with the old charm again, eh, Bobby?

(CONTINUED)

con't

45

BOBBY
(grunts through his
pain)

Why don't you... kiss my ass?

He shoves the Card back into his shirt pocket.

46 EXT. - STREET - NIGHT

46

Jack walks along quickly, eyes scanning the street.

V.O.

Finn was a piece of work. One of those people you always mean to see more of but never do. But every time we connected, we were brothers. He was the information man... he could find out anything. And I needed some answers fast.

47 EXT. - FINN'S PLACE - NIGHT

47

A junkyard in an industrial wasteland. Chainlink topped by razor wire. Rust-streaked signs with bullet holes everywhere: "FENCE VOLTAGE LETHAL ", "ATTACK DOGS", "ARMED SECURITY". Behind the fence is a mountain of junk: wrecked helicopters, mainframe computers, lots of cars... some run, most don't. A video-cam mounted on the fence swings its gaze toward Jack and a motorized gate slowly rattles open.

He moves through the pile of wrecked machines as the gate closes itself behind him. Two huge Rottweilers suddenly sprint at him, barking fiercely. They bear down on him, salivating. He just smiles and they stop dead a foot in front of him. He reaches out and scratches their ears as they roll over on their backs.

JACK

What's happening, boys? Where's your Dad?

FINN (O.S.)

Quit torturing my animals, Jack.

Jack looks up to see Finn moving toward him in his motorized wheelchair. He has a blanket over his legs. He is in his forties, bald but very handsome. His arms are well-muscled beneath his shirt and he smiles wide. Jack comes over and they shake hands warmly.

(CONTINUED)

7 con't

47

FINN (cont'd)

Come on in.

Jack follows as Finn leads him through a maze of junk to what looks to be an enormous mound of old tires with a steel door in it. Finn touches a button on his chair arm and the door springs open.

48 INT. - FINN'S - NIGHT

48

All-white, sparkling clean, shiny metal and tile. There is a large workroom where Finn plies his trade: computer decks, video screens, file cabinets for microfiche, bookcases ceiling to floor. Living quarters branch off along a wide corridor... several small bedrooms plainly furnished, a surprisingly well-appointed kitchen with everything within his reach, even a little gym. Another room, locked and secured. Jack and Finn enter the workroom. Jack walks around, looking, drags a finger along a surface. No dust.

JACK

Still living like a slob, eh, Finn?

FINN

(smiles)

I just like things in their place.
You want something to drink?

JACK

Bourbon, if you have it.

FINN

I don't. How about some celery juice?

JACK

How about some icewater?

Finn nods and wheels into the kitchen, Jack following. Finn gets his water from a dispenser in the refrigerator door.

JACK

I need some help.

FINN

(laughs)

That's an understatement.

JACK

You know...?

(CONTINUED)

3 con't

48

FINN

Of course I know. That's my job... to find things out for people. Anything they want... if they can afford it.

JACK

I need to know why Chrome is so interested in this girl, Rikki. Why it's so personal.

FINN

Consider it done. Shouldn't take long.

JACK

I don't have much money right now but...

FINN

Jack, we go through this every time. I don't want your money. If it weren't for you, I'd be dead. Keep your money.

They are silent a moment as they both take a swallow of their drinks.

JACK

(softly)

You think any more about about prostheses?

FINN

For what?

JACK

In case you haven't noticed, you don't have any legs.

Puzzled, Finn looks under the blanket.

FINN

Now, where did those rascals go?

His smile suddenly goes gelid... it could freeze fire.

FINN (cont'd)

My legs got shot off in a fight with motherfuckers we were secretly making deals with. Only nobody told us that, did they, Jack?

(beat)

See, this way, I don't forget that.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

FINN (Cont'd)

Or get soft. Because every time I reach down to take a piss, I see there's nothing but air underneath me. That keeps me from forgiving and keeps me hating and that's what keeps me going.

JACK

I just got numb.

FINN

It's never too late to get pissed off, Jack. It gets your heart pumping.
(thinks a moment)

Come here.

He wheels out into the hall and stops in front of a locked door. He unlocks it and turns on a light inside.

THE COMBAT ROOM

is filled with weapons and ammo. Boxes stacked high but not out of reach for Finn, all labeled... grenades, mortar shells, boxes of rifles and handguns, nightscopes, laserscopes, tracer rockets... a small armory. He wheelsover to a four-foot long military gear case, like a small, olive-drab coffin. MARK 9 is stencilled on it in fading white letters.

FINN

I bet that sends a shiver down your spine, doesn't it?

JACK

I've had more than enough of that shit to last me.

FINN

Then why are you here? Why don't you just sneak out of town and let Chrome have the girl?

Jack looks at him for a long moment, then smiles.

JACK

Maybe I'll try some of that green phlegm, after all. Race you to back to the kitchen.

FINN

(smiles)

Asshole.

INT. - LOFT - NIGHT

49

Bobby is at his deck, trodes on, jacked into cyberspace. His fingers fly across the keyboard. He is hunched over, his body twisting in time with his run.

DISSOLVE TO:

50 EXT. - FINN'S - NIGHT

50

Jack is behind the wheel of an old car. He turns it on and the motor turns over smoothly... it sounds cherry.

FINN

I've been saving that one for when my legs grow back. So you can only borrow it till then.

JACK

I'll take good care of it.

FINN

No, you won't. I'll get in touch with you when I find out something.

Jack nods, waves and pulls away. He looks back at Finn in the rear view mirror and his face clouds over.

51 INT. - HALLWAY TO LOFT DOOR - NIGHT

51

Very dark. Figures shuffle quietly toward the door.

52 INT. - LOFT - NIGHT

52

Bobby is completely involved. we go

CLOSE ON INTERIOR SURFACE OF DOOR

It has an elaborate collection of locks. The glittering ceramic blade of a monomolecular cutter punches through the steel door. It soundlessly slices a quick, clean circle around the locks, like a knife through butter.. The blade is withdrawn, the circle of door tumbles inward and the door opens.

BOBBY

jerks his head up as a thick hand rips off the trodes. Vega backhands him hard, knocking him across the room. Styles is behind him.

VEGA

Maybe you can help us find somebody.

3 INT. - BAR - NIGHT

53

Jack is hunched over a drink at the end of the bar, fast on his way to being wasted. He is doodling on a damp napkin with the stub of a pencil. The clumsy drawings are of stick figures... with missing limbs.

54 EXT. - STREET - NIGHT

54

Rikki moves along fast, cold and obviously weary. Sidewalk denizens give her hungry looks that scare her; she is becoming increasingly panicky. She rounds a corner, slips in an icy puddle and goes down hard. Her elbow is bleeding and she just starts crying. A crusty hand touches her and she jumps back. A BAG LADY with amazingly kind eyes looks down on her... she cringes.

BAG LADY

You okay, little girl? Nasty fall there. Right on your little peach shaped butt. Say... you haven't seen Red Snapper around, have you?

She looks off and a beautiful smile floods her face.

BAG LADY (cont'd)

We sposed to get married sometime. Sure been waiting.

Reality suddenly grabs a foothold in her eyes and she pulls Rikki to her feet.

BAG LADY (cont'd)

If you got a home, get there. If you don't, find one. And hurry up before it's too late. You got no business out here.

Rikki looks at her, backing up. Something about the woman's face moves her; she reaches out and lightly strokes it.

RIKKI

Thank you.

The woman's eyes open wide; no one has touched her in a long time. She holds Rikki's hand against her cheek for another moment, closing her eye in pleasure, like a cat. When she opens them, we can see a tear.

BAG LADY

(a whisper)

Thank you.

Rikki turns and hurries off.

5 EXT. - LOFT - NIGHT

55

Jack parks the car... half on the sidewalk.

56 INT. - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

56

Jack climbs the dark stairs with difficulty. He reaches the top and heads for the door. He fumbles in his pockets for his keys. A look of drunken distress crosses his face.

JACK

Where the fuck are they?

He bangs on the door.

57 INT. - LOFT - NIGHT

57

Very slow PAN. The cyberspace rig is gutted, its circuitry dangling. The living corner is trashed, a mess... and Bobby stands on the other side of the door from Jack. He is hogtied and wearing nothing but his jeans. He is more or less upright, in an awkward, painful position, hands behind his back. Wrapped around him like barbed wire is a ten foot length of plastic explosive.

Wires lead from detonators in the plastique to a switch. It is stuck to the door and doorframe with some kind of adhesive. The same stuff has been used to glue the sliced circle of door back into position. Bobby's been badly beaten; his face is a mess. He is gagged with a rubber ball, clear surgical tape holding it in place. Bobby moves slightly and the door creaks; one of the ropes is looped tightly around the knob. He freezes, sweat breaking out on his forehead.

IN THE HALLWAY

Jack bangs on the door again, harder.

JACK

Bobby... Rikki... wake up! I lost my goddamn keys!

INSIDE THE LOFT

Bobby's eyes are squeezed shut. He opens them and tries to yell. The gag muffles almost everything. He glares at the switch.

(CONTINUED)

7 con't

IN THE HALLWAY

Jack is digging through his pockets again, mightily pissed off, muttering to himself.

IN THE LOFT

Bobby's eyes dart side to side. His hands are tied close to his ass; we see him begin to work a fingertip into a tight back pocket. There is a creak and we can see the contact points of the switch quiver as Bobby's movements are transmitted up the taut line.

IN THE HALLWAY

Jack smiles woozily as he pulls a keyring from a shoulder pocket in his jacket. He sorts through the keys; some look familiar, others are bizarre high-tech. He holds it close to his face to see it in the dark hall.

IN THE LOFT

We see Bobby's hand as he begins to work his Doris Card from his pocket with thumb and forefinger.

IN THE HALLWAY

Jack finally finds the key he wants. He starts to insert it in the lock.

IN THE LOFT

we hear the key rattling against the first lock. Bobby manages to ease the Doris Card out... and it drops onto the floor, face up. The holograph of Doris's face comes up; her eyes are closed. Bobby make some ridiculous noises behind the gag and her eyes open.

DORIS' POV

Bobby, from a weird angle, in digital computer vision. The arrangement of wires, switch and explosive snap into neon-red relief as Doris comprehends the situation.

IN THE HALLWAY

Jack is working on the third lock.

(CONTINUED)

7 con't (2)

57

IN THE LOFT

With a supreme effort, Bobby manages to extend his hand far enough to flick the D-Card under the door.

IN THE HALLWAY

Jack is intent on the locks. A faraway, tinny sound stops him suddenly. He looks around, see nothing. Starts again, hears it again, looks down. He clicks his lighter and bends down. He lifts up the D-Card. Doris' face is animated and her voice is a little louder as he brings it close.

DORIS

Don't open the door, Jack! There's a bomb... Bobby's wired!

The confusion flies from Jack's face... this is the kind of information that creates instant clarity.

IN THE LOFT

Bobby still can't relax. He holds himself rigid, sweat pouring off him, trembling. He sags for a moment, trying to adjust for comfort. The door creaks with his weight and his eyes snap wide with terror.

58 EXT. - ROOF OF LOFT - NIGHT

58

Jack scuttles through puddles to the skylight. City lights tower around him. A fat bundle of cables protrude from a section of the skylight that has been replaced with plywood, caulked with silicone. He forces the fingers of his mechanical hand between wood and frame. The metal arm complains; sparks shoot from the wrist joint. Jack winces, then levers up with the full strength of the arm. The plywood cracks, splinters, come up trailing streamers of caulk. Sparks tumble from the cuff of Jack's jacket and set the lining on fire. He beats at his coat sleeve with his good hand. Then, he climbs over the edge, gets a grip on a cable with the mech-hand and lowers himself into the loft.

59 INT. - LOFT - BELOW SKYLIGHT - NIGHT

59

Jack reaches the floor and starts in Bobby's direction carefully, sizing up the situation. Bobby rolls his eyes frantically in the direction of the switch. He can hardly stand erect at this point. Jack moves OUT OF FRAME, then returns with a pair of wire-cutters. He takes the D-Card out of his pocket. Doris's face rises on it and she opens her eyes.

(CONTINUED)

7 con't

JACK
Schematic.

He holds it out so she can "see" the way Bobby is wired. Her face melts back down into the card and is replaced with a schematic diagram of the bomb circuit. Animated scissors snip at a line representing one of the wires. He puts the D-Card down, face up, on a nearby table. Jack moves toward Bobby with the cutters. Bobby stares at him, willing him not to make a mistake. Jack leans forward.... and sees his hand is trembling. Bobby rolls his eyes disgustedly. Jack takes a breath... leans forward again... Bobby shuts his eyes tightly... so does Jack...and he snips a wire. Nothing happens. Bobby slowly opens his eyes. Jack yanks the detonators out of the plastic. As soon as Bobby's hands are free, he yanks the gag out.

BOBBY
Vega and another guy, I didn't even hear...

JACK
Where's Rikki?

Bobby looks around, trying to think how to phrase his lie.

BOBBY
Well... oh, fuck it. I hit on her, she got pissed off, kicked me in the balls and split.

Jack just stares at him in disbelief. Bobby smiles crookedly and shrugs.

BOBBY
Hey... I got the beating.
(beat)
They figured you'd come back
and...boom. Two birds with one stone.

JACK
What if she...

BOBBY
(shakes his head)
Some snitch of theirs spotted her a couple miles from here. And after I told them what happened, they knew she wouldn't be coming back...at least, before you would.
(beat)
Look, man, we got to get out of town.
(more)

(CONTINUED)

con't (2)

59

BOBBY (Cont'd)

These guys are gonna be waiting
somewhere, watching to make sure they
got us. We got to grab a bus, go to
Canada, Mars... some fucking place...

DORIS (O.S.)

No pussy, no help? Is that the deal,
Bobby?

Bobby shoots a look at the D-Card... Doris's face glares up at
him angrily.

DORIS (cont'd)

You are a selfish... superficial...
lying... male... who is led around by
his dick! You're ready to run, just
like that, aren't you? Just leave her
for Chrome.

BOBBY

Doris, I think you're being a little
hard on me...

DORIS

Hard!? That's your problem, Bobby!
Your dick's hard and your brain's
soft. You know whatever Chrome has in
mind for that girl, it isn't going to
be pleasant.

Bobby looks at Jack, stupefied.

JACK

You aren't known for your depth of
understanding and compassion.

BOBBY

You... really believe all that, Doris?

DORIS

Until you prove me wrong.

60 EXT. - STREET - NIGHT

60

Rikki hurries along the sidewalk.

61 EXT. ALL NIGHT SUSHI BAR - NIGHT

61

Vega and Styles shovel food into their mouths.

7 INT. - LOFT - NIGHT

62

Jack, crouching on the floor, gingerly inserts the detonators back into the length of plastique, now coiled and hung on the doorknob. He strips insulation from one of the wires with his teeth and twists it around another wire. Standing, he starts unrolling wire from a spool.

JACK
(smiles)
Time to die.

IN THE STAIRWELL

Jack and Bobby descend, Jack playing out wire from the spool.

63 EXT. - ENTRANCEWAY - NIGHT

63

They step outside, Jack still unreeling the wire. A few Passersby are on the street; Bobby shields Jack's actions from them as Jack takes a small battery pack from his pocket and twists a wire around it. They are now a half block away. Jack looks at Bobby, then touches the wire to the other battery terminal. A fireball thunders from the building, driving people to cover. Debris rains onto the street. Jack drops the battery pack and starts walking away quickly, Bobby hurrying to catch up.

64 EXT. - ALL NIGHT SUSHI BAR - NIGHT

64

Vega and Styles look up as flame rise in the distance. Vega smiles... if you can call it that.

65 EXT. - STREET - NIGHT

65

Near the loft. Rikki runs up as a crowd begins to gather. She looks around, panicky and scared, then takes off down the sidewalk.

ACROSS THE STREET

Jack and Bobby are admiring their handiwork.

JACK
That should give us a little breathing room to find her. We should hang out here a while, see if she comes back...

BOBBY
There she is!

(CONTINUED)

con't

65

RIKKI

runs down the sidewalk, turns a corner... and a thirty year old Buick jumps the curb and cuts her off, almost hitting her. It is tricked out to the gills and manned by three large, stupid PUNKS. Elaborate designs are tattooed on their bald heads. They jump out and quickly surround her.

PUNK #1

How about a ride, bitch?

PUNK #2

Yeah... first you ride
(points to the car)
that... then you ride...
(grabs himself)
this.

They all crack up at this clever remark... and start closing in.

PUNK #1

You know, I ain't been torqued in
almost three hours... stuff's starting
to back up on me.

Jack's car suddenly wheels around the corner and slams into the Buick's back end. Jack's radiator explodes as Jack and Bobby jump out. Before the Punks know what has hit them, Jack has nailed two of them with his mech-arm. The third's eyes bug out and he turns to run. As he does, Bobby clotheslines him, sending him to his knees, choking and gasping for air. Bobby looks at him disbelievingly, then recovers his cockiness. He leans down in the Punk's face.

BOBBY

Did you seriously think you were going
to get away with...

Jack is hustling Rikki into the Punk's car.

JACK

Come on, Bobby, the meter's running!

Bobby points a final reproving finger at the guy and jumps in the front seat with them. They screech away.

5 INT. - CAR - DAWN

66

The sun is rising, blazing red across the sky. Suspended particulates have their advantages. Rikki is between Bobby and Jack, sobbing, completely confused. Jack's tone is solicitous, almost fatherly. Bobby picks up on it and manages to not speak.

JACK

It's all right, Rikki, we're going to make it through this, okay?

We can see she wants to believe him but she is really frightened. Jack glances at Bobby... he shrugs his shoulders.

JACK (cont'd)

We're your best chance right now.
You're going to have to trust us.

DISSOLVE TO:

67 INT. - FINN'S - MORNING

67

They are all in the small living room. Rikki shakes hands with Finn, tentatively. He gives her a big smile.

FINN

A pleasure to meet you. You'll have to excuse me for not getting up.

She looks flustered. Jack gives Finn a reprimanding look.

JACK

Don't play with the girl, Finn. She doesn't know what an asshole you are... yet.

Rikki smiles a little at this and Finn nods his head.

FINN

Sorry, Rikki. I'm a little rusty around company.

BOBBY (O.S.)

Nice setup, Finn.

Jack, Rikki and Finn move into the workroom. Bobby is admiring his equipment.

BOBBY (cont'd)

Nice rig. You into jacking into the matrix?

(CONTINUED)

7 con't

FINN
(shakes his head)
I'm into preserving brain cells.

He fixes them with a sudden, serious look.

FINN (cont'd)
I called in a few favors and got a few answers.

He glances at Rikki... she catches it.

RIKKI
Whatever it is, I should hear it, too.

FINN
(nods)
Chrome's spreading a lot of money on the street trying to locate you. You're just lucky you made it this far. Half the cops in the Zone and Skidtown are in on it, too. I hear they even have a pool going down at the Twenty-First.

Jack sits down on one of Finn's desks.

JACK
What's the deal?

FINN
(after a beat)
She's biologically compatible with Chrome. Marrow, blood, skin... organs. Rikki's the perfect donor.

BOBBY
(whispers)
Jesus Christ.

Rikki tilts her head, as though listening to something far away. Her face clenches as the impact of what Finn is saying starts to sink in.

RIKKI
You mean she wants to use ... what's inside me?

A sudden shiver courses down her spine and she looks a little faint. But then she straightens and the red flush of anger creeps into her face.

(CONTINUED)

7 con't (2)

67

RIKKI (cont'd)

That bitch.

Bobby gulps and signals to Jack.

BOBBY

Uh, Jack... can I see you a minute here?

He and Jack walk out into the living room.

BOBBY (cont'd)

Well, I don't know about you but I'm too young to die. Would you consider letting her keep thinking we're dead and finding a new place to call home?

JACK

And Rikki?

BOBBY

Rikki... draws heat. Maybe we could give her a little bus money, put a wig on her, call a taxi...

He sees the look in Jack's face and his own expression sinks.

BOBBY (cont'd)

That's what I thought. Forget I ever mentioned it. Just a wild idea.

He smiles tightly. Jack goes back into the workroom.

BOBBY (cont'd)

(to himself)

Shit rolls downhill and I'm always in the valley.

68 INT. - CHROME'S PLACE - DAY

68

Chrome is on the phone. She is not pleased.

CHROME

What good is owning a police Captain if I can't count on him to find one little girl?

CAPTAIN (O.S.)

You don't help me when you blow up half a city block!

(CONTINUED)

3 con't

68

CHROME

It was a necessary form of trash removal.

CUT TO:

69 INT. - PRECINCT HEADQUARTERS - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - DAY

69

The Captain is pacing his office, a cordless phone in his hand.

CAPTAIN

Look, you have to hold up your end of our arrangement. I can shield certain of your... activities but you're supposed to keep things in line in Skidtown.

BACK TO:

70 INT. CHROME'S PLACE - DAY

70

She gets herself under control.

CHROME

All right. Some obstacles have been removed. The girl is out there alone and scared. Find her and it's business as usual.

She hangs up.

71 INT. - FINN'S - DAY

71

Rikki is in one of the tiny bedrooms, her eyes closed. Jack looks in on her and starts to leave. As he turns, she opens her eyes.

RIKKI

Will you sit down for a minute and talk to me?

(he does, pleased)

I could never sleep in the daytime.

(Jack nods, smiling)

How do you know so much about Chrome?

A question Jack wasn't expecting. He debates a moment, then decides to tell her the truth.

(CONTINUED)

1 con't

JACK

We were...lovers. Once. A long time ago. My marriage was over. I was always off fighting and my wife just got tired of it. She said I needed the action, like a junkie.

RIKKI

Did you?

JACK

(after a beat)

At one time, I think I did. Anyway, I came back and met Chrome. She was married then to the guy who ran everything down here. But that didn't matter. The only thing that mattered was tearing each other up in bed. I never felt anything like it.

There is silence for a moment as Rikki digests this.

RIKKI

What happened?

JACK

I found out how she stayed so young. And she wanted me to kill her husband.

RIKKI

Did she...?

JACK

(nods)

There was never any proof but he just disappeared one day. And she took over. She was sure up to it, too. I left for a while, then came back to work with Bobby. He can be an asshole but he's basically a good man. And he's the only family I have left.

RIKKI

What happened to your wife?

JACK

She got sick and died. Cancer. It was fast. Long time ago.

RIKKI

(looks down)

I'm sorry, Jack.

(CONTINUED)

con't (2)

71

JACK
Yeah, me, too.

He stands and looks down on her.

JACK (cont'd)
Try to get some rest. I'll see you
later.

He walks out.

72 INT. - HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - SURGICAL ROOM - DAY

72

A stark, antiseptic operating theater. Complete surgical equipment, operating table, scrub sinks. Vega has a terrified Lita on a leash next to him, waiting. The door opens and Chrome enters, her cloak just brushing the floor.

CHROME
So... this is Lita.

Lita nods uncertainly; she looks on the verge of hysterical collapse.

CHROME (cont'd)
Vega tells me you warned Jack Sloan
about our little surprise for Bobby
Quine.

LITA
No, no, no, no... I wouldn't...

Vega chokes her off with a yank on the choke chain around her neck.

CHROME
Sloan and Quine are dead. You have to
be punished but I'm inclined to be
charitable because it all worked out.
(icy)
But not if you continue to lie to me.
Understand?
(Lita nods)
So?

LITA
(quivering)
I... called Bobby. The other guy
answered and I told him.

(CONTINUED)

? con't

72

She looks down, breathing fast and shallow, still trying to get herself under control.

CHROME

You know you were wrong, don't you,
Lita?

LITA

(very softly)

Yes, ma'am.

CHROME

And you know you have to be punished,
yes?

LITA

Yes, ma'am.

Chrome moves in closer. This whole time, we have not seen her hands beneath the cloak.

CHROME

But you told me the truth and I said
I'd be charitable, didn't I? Look at
me, child.

Lita looks up, a smidgeon of hope forming.

CHROME (cont'd)

You believe me, don't you?

LITA

(after a beat)

Yes... ma'am.

CHROME

You shouldn't.

She lets her cloak fall open; she is wearing surgical gloves and holding a scalpel.

73 INT. - FINN'S - DAY

73

Jack, Finn and Bobby are in Finn's workroom. There is a three by five foot blank screen hung on the wall. Finn makes some adjustments in the back of one of his computers.

FINN

Try it now.

(CONTINUED)

con't

73

Bobby takes out the Doris-Card and slides it into a slot in back of the monitor. Doris's face comes up, smiling.

DORIS

Well, hello, everyone. Where am I?

BOBBY

This is Finn, Doris. We're his guests for a while.

DORIS

A pleasure, Finn.

BOBBY

Check this out, Doris. Finn's got some videos from the old days. Can you believe it... videos. These fucking guys are ancient.

IN THE BEDROOM

Rikki stirs and sits up. She gets her bearings and hears laughter from outside the room. Getting up, she exits.

IN THE WORKROOM

the lights are off and they are watching amateur videos of Jack and Finn's days in the Army. It is the typical stuff... goofy young soldiers clowning in front of the camera. Jack has his mechanical arm but Finn is walking. Rikki enters and they all say hello. Finn directs her to a seat.

FINN

Let's go back in time with the baddest motherfuckers ever served in Special Forces.

(points at the
screen)

There's Max. And Solly and Tree.
Jesus, he was huge, wasn't he?

JACK

Jesus, remember when he caught those two Guatemalan advisors selling our troop positions to the Venezuelans?

FINN

(grimaces in delight)

He brought them back to camp, told us all what had happened, then he taught them a lesson.

(CONTINUED)

3 con't (2)

73

BOBBY

How?

FINN

(grinning)

He cut them both open and strangled
them with their own intestines.

(shakes his head
admiringly)

The man was creative.

Jack's face goes ashen in recollection. Finn is oblivious but Rikki looks over and sees it. Jack glances up, sees her concerned look, then quickly shifts his eyes away.

BOBBY

You look really young, Jack.

JACK

I was. Young and stupid.

Finn's face changes... the smile leaves and hardness takes its place.

FINN

Yeah, we both were.

When Jack talks, it is as though it's to himself.

JACK

I was nineteen when I enlisted and,
man, I bought the whole thing. Gung
ho, win the war against drugs,
eradiacte the source, get the 'right'
kind of government in strategic
countries...

FINN

The rumble in the jungle.

JACK

(laughs shortly)

That's what we called it. Guns and
helicopters and fear and adrenaline
and power and being right... it was
fucking strong.

(beat)

That's where I met Vega.

(CONTINUED)

3 con't (3)

73

FINN

(bitterly)

Where we met him. He was just a man then, a mercenary, worked for the Cubans. They ambushed us on patrol one night. Shot my legs off and killed half the platoon. Jack saved my life and went to town on them. No survivors.

JACK

Except Vega. I thought he was dead. I was so pumped, I didn't make sure. Later, I heard he was found by some freelancers. They took him home, fixed him up and he volunteered to have himself turned into what he is now. They spent a lot of money to make a perfect killing machine. When the Wars ended, he knocked around as a contract killer. Then, I guess he found Chrome.

RIKKI

That battle... is that where you... lost your arm?

Finn thinks this is hilarious. He laughs as Jack smiles ruefully. Rikki just looks confused and embarrassed.

RIKKI (cont'd)

Did I say...

JACK

I didn't lose my arm, Rikki. I volunteered to have it removed.

RIKKI

What!? Why would you do that?

Finn stops laughing and his face tenses. He can go from one mood to another in an instant.

FINN

Because he believed. And because they offered him something no one else had. Come on.

Jack gives him a warning look; Finn shakes it off and wheels past her.

(CONTINUED)

3 con't (4)

73

FINN (cont'd)
Fuck it, Jack. She might as well know everything.

They follow Finn out of the workroom, down the hall to the combat room. Finn opens it and they all go inside. Finn enjoys Rikki and Bobby's reaction.

FINN
A guy should always be prepared.

He wheels over to the MARK 9 case.

FINN (cont'd)
Give me a hand.

Jack and Bobby pull it into the center of the floor... we can tell it is heavy. Finn begins to undo complicated vacuum seals. Air hisses as they release. He opens the case. Inside are fitted plastic foam trays that glitter with grenades, miniature missiles, cartridges, sharpened steel. He lifts out the trays and we see the Combat Arm. Rikki's eyes widen as she takes in the awful beauty of the steel weapon/ prostheses. It is futuristic, gleaming, perfectly counter-balanced.

FINN (cont'd)
Mark 9 Combat Arm. Far as I know, only one still in existence.

RIKKI
You... wore that?

JACK
I did more than wear it. I used it.

FINN
Fucking right you did. And it was beautiful to watch.

Jack looks suddenly, ineffably sad.

JACK
I told you to sell it.

FINN
Right. Who's going to want it? It's configured just for you... it's useless to anyone else. We go through this every time I see you. Why don't you just quit jerking off and dump it.

Pause.

(CONTINUED)

con't (5)

JACK
Just put it away, Finn, okay?

FINN
(smiles)
That's what I thought.

He puts the tray back on top, closes it, then wheels over to another box. He opens it and carefully unwraps a flat package, peeling back multiple layers of paper, plastic and bubble-pack to expose a dull rectangle of plastic.

FINN (cont'd)
I have something that might interest you, Bobby.

He brings it back and hands it to Bobby. He examines it with interest.

BOBBY
What is it?

FINN
Makarov Worm.

BOBBY
(eyes lighting up)
You're shitting me. This is a Worm?

FINN
Took it off some Cuban technical advisors in Monteverde. They were set to feed it into our command mode, take out our ground radar.

BOBBY
You just kept it?

FINN
Souvenir.

BOBBY
Jesus, I've heard about this but I never thought I'd see one.
(looks up)
Red Army strategic software, right?

FINN
Most potent penetration virus in the world. No telling what could happen with it in the wrong hands.

(CONTINUED)

con't (6)

73

Bobby hands it back reverently. Finn replaces it and grins broadly.

FINN

Okay, kids, show and tell's over.
Let's eat.

He wheels out first, Bobby behind him. Jack passes Rikki, gives her a weak smile. She can see the pain of recollection in his face.

DISSOLVE TO:

74 INT. - BEDROOM - NIGHT

74

Rikki lies awake in the darkness. She gets up and goes

75 INTO THE KITCHEN

75

for a glass of juice. She gets it from the refrigerator, then notices shadows thrown on the hall wall. It is silent. She walks

76 INTO THE LIVING ROOM

76

where Jack has attached the mobile screen to the wall. He is watching the army videos in the dark, alone, no sound. He looks lost in reverie. Rikki watches for a moment. He notices her.

RIKKI

How long have you been watching those?

JACK

Too long. I don't know why I do it... there's no point. That was another time and it's over and I can't change any of it.

Rikki just waits, listening, very still. Jack's face shows all the strain of the last ten years.

JACK (cont'd)

I did some bad things in the jungle, Rikki. I lost control. I convinced myself then it was my job... my duty... but that was bullshit. Because even when I found out we were just as bad as them, I still kept doing those things. I liked it. I liked being the one no one could stop.

(CONTINUED)

5 con't

RIKKI

They tricked you, Jack. There's no crime in believing in something.

JACK

Not if you believe in the right things. But I believed in the labels and the jingles. I had a woman and a son who loved me but I was too concerned with my 'duty' to believe in them.

RIKKI

You have a son? How old is he? Where is...

JACK

He's dead. I was still in Costa Rica when he ran away from home. I tried to find him when I got back. He got shot in some fucked up street deal before I could. I never really knew what happened.

Rikki reaches out and puts her hand on his.

JACK (cont'd)

(voice catching)

I don't know, Rikki, I just haven't been able to turn anything around since then. The last few years... I hustle a little, live in a shithole, get drunk, try not to remember things. Most of the time I don't feel anything... then every sad feeling I've ever had washes over me and I feel like I'm drowning. And it scares me to death.

Rikki moves over closer to him and takes his hand in both of hers. She looks into his face and he into hers... she leans slowly, carefully toward him... and he stands.

JACK (cont'd)

Goodnight.

He walks out, leaving her there staring after him, video soldiers laughing soundlessly on the wall.

7 INT. - BEDROOM - LATE THAT NIGHT

77

Jack is asleep in his clothes on top of the bed. Rikki appears at the doorway, looks in, then quietly enters and lays down on the bed next to him, still dressed. She closes her eyes and snuggles into him.

DISSOLVE TO:

78 INT. - BEDROOM - MORNING

78

Jack stirs and feels Rikki next to him. Somehow, she has insinuated herself under his real arm. He opens his eyes and looks down at her. She twists in her sleep, pushing herself tighter against him. He turns onto his side, staring at her face. She opens her eyes, startled... but only for a moment. She puts a hand behind his head and pulls his lips down to hers. They kiss softly at first, then with passion. She puts her hand inside his shirt and strokes his chest, unbuttoning as she goes. He pulls her closer with his good arm. She takes her hand away from him and unbuttons her own shirt. She is naked underneath it. She guides his face down to her breasts, small moans leaking out as he kisses and licks her. She squeezes his head harder against her, then pulls his lips off her. They stare into each others' faces, their eyes hot and impatient. Then, she very deliberately reaches out and takes his mech-hand in hers. He pulls back reflexively but she won't let go.

RIKKI
(softly)

It's all right. Everything's all right.

She places the metal hand on her bare breast. Closing her eyes, she shivers. Jack moves it slowly and she groans in pleasure. Holding it there, she turns on her side, kisses him hungrily... then rolls on top of him, smothering him with her body, digging herself into him.

79 INT. - KITCHEN - DAY

79

Bobby and Finn are eating some breakfast at the small table. They look up to see Jack and Rikki coming in, trying to be casual but not pulling it off in the least. Bobby takes one look at them and shakes his head. He glances at Finn, who is smiling like a maniac.

BOBBY
They did it.

FINN
Yeah they did.

(CONTINUED)

con't

79

BOBBY
(to them)
You did it, didn't you?

Jack and Rikki look at each other, mouth open... then just start giggling.

BOBBY
(winces)
They did it. And they're giggling about it. Jesus, Joseph and Mary.

80 INT. - WORKROOM - DAY

80

Bobby is sorting through a small plastic case. Finn is reviewing some documents on one of his computers. Doris's face is on another.

BOBBY.
Finn... you think your decks would be compatible with any of my software here?

DORIS
It all is, Bobby. I've already seen to that.

BOBBY
Well, thank you, Doris. Good thinking. And i use the term loosely.

DORIS
I am above responding to that, thank you.

Jack enters, Rikki next to him.

JACK
I'm going to talk to Chrome.

Finn and Bobby both swing around to face him. Even Doris looks upset.

JACK (cont'd)
I'm not going to run the rest of my life. I want this thing settled.

BOBBY
It'll be settled, all right. She'll have her goons flambe your ass and have it for dinner.

(CONTINUED)

con't

80

JACK

Not as long as she doesn't know where Rikki is.

FINN

What are you going to say to her?

JACK

I don't know. But we can't just hide here forever.

FINN

(to Rikki)

What do you think about this?

She moves over next to Jack and slides her hand into his. He looks really self-conscious about it.

RIKKI

I think it makes sense.

Bobby gapes at her disbelievingly.

BOBBY

Excuse me but it's getting a little sappy in here.

He exits.

FINN

Good luck, Jack.

81 INT. - CAR - DAY

81

Jack is driving, inching through traffic.

V.O.

I knew I needed more than luck. I didn't know what I was banking on to get through to Chrome... maybe some leftover connection between us, maybe some crack in her armor, some way in. I just knew I had to try.

? EXT. - HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - DAY

82

Jack pulls right up in front and parks. As soon as he gets out, he is spotted and surrounded by five or six surprised GOONS.

JACK
I want to see Chrome.

GOON
She sure gonna be surprised. You supposed to be dead.

JACK
Not yet.

GOON
(smiles)
Nothing lasts forever.

83 INT. - CHROME'S QUARTERS - DAY

83

Chrome comes out of her bedroom, wrapping her cloak around herself impatiently. Behind her, we can see a man and a woman naked on her bed. Vega stands there nervously. She notices him staring and slams the door shut behind her.

CHROME
This better be an emergency.

She strides into the living room. Jack is standing there, four goons circling him tightly, two with drawn weapons, ready. Chrome's face drains when she sees him, then quickly reddens with anger. She turns to Vega.

CHROME (cont'd)
You told me he was dead.

Vega starts to speak but know it would be useless. He just looks down. Chrome reaches up too his cheek and draws her nail slowly and deeply down his face. Blood wells up, following her finger. He makes no move to acknowledge it.

CHROME (cont'd)
You are pathetic.

She turns her attention to Jack. She moves in close to Jack. We can see that, even now, her sexual aura can affect him.

CHROME (cont'd)
You have got unbelievable balls to come here.
(smiles)
And I should know, right?

(CONTINUED)

con't

She presses closer, almost touching him. Looking into his face, she very lightly, slowly, brushes his crotch with her fingers.

CHROME (cont'd)
(whispers)

Right?

Laughing softly, she backs up a step. Jack lets out his breath slowly.

JACK
I want to talk to you alone.

CHROME
Not likely.

She snaps her fingers and the goons holster their weapons and exit. She motions Vega to a nearby chair. As he passes Jack, he spits in his face. It takes everything he has but Jack contains himself. Chrome raises an eyebrow.

CHROME
There was a time when you would have
killed a man for that.
(beat)
You wanted to talk, talk.

JACK
I know why you want Rikki.

CHROME
I guess that makes you quite the
detective.

JACK
Chrome, listen to me. This girl...
she isn't like you or me. She isn't
bitter or jaded. She doesn't look at
people the way we do. She deserves a
chance.

CHROME
Really? And what do you want me to do
about it?

JACK
I want you to call off your dogs and
leave her alone. Look, whatever you do
to stay young... how you do it...
that's your business. And I've stayed
out of your business for years.

(CONTINUED)

con't (2)

83

CHROME

How noble.

JACK

I know I can't change how you... do things. But Rikki can't be the only girl in the world you can ... use. There must be...

CHROME

She's the one I want!

Even Jack is taken aback by the force of her response. Vega smiles from his chair. She comes close again and hook one finger inside his belt. When she looks up at him, she looks ripe.

CHROME (cont'd)

I'll tell you what I will do, Jack. Take it or leave it.

She slowly begins undoing his belt as she talks.

CHROME (cont'd)

I won't put her on the puppet line. She can work as a hostess. In the meantime, I'll look for another compatible donor. Of course, if I need something right away, she'll have to... contribute. But maybe I'll get lucky and find somebody fast. But you have to do something for me.

JACK

(trying to
concentrate)

What?

CHROME

Go to work for me as my personal bodyguard... and my lover. Whenever I want you.

Jack looks down into her face and, God, does she look nasty. A pause, then...

JACK

No.

She stares into his face and knows that is his final word. She steps back.

(CONTINUED)

con't (3)

83

CHROME
(yells)
Come in here!

The goons rush back in and Vega moves up close to Jack.

CHROME (cont'd)
There's something I never got a chance
to tell you, Jack. I was saving it as
a surprise but there's no sense now.
Remember your son, Stoney?

Jack instantly tenses. Vega moves in behind and grabs him in a
bear hug.

CHROME (cont'd)
He was working for me, making some
deliveries. He let a couple of
hustlers rob him. I never allow that
to happen twice.
(beat)
I lost my merchandise but he lost his
life. Que sera, sera, eh?

Jack's face clenches hideously, Vega tightens his grip but
somehow Jack has the sense to maintain.

JACK
You cunt.

CHROME
Flattery will get you nowhere.
(beat)
Here's how it goes. You have twelve
hours to deliver her. After that, when
I find her... and I will... she's
going to take a week to die. I don't
care if she's compatible or not. And,
of course, you and Bobby Quine and
whoever else helps you are going down,
too.
(to Vega)
Give him something to remember.

Vega spins him around and the goons cover him as they drag him
out.

4 EXT. - ALLEY - DAY

84

Vega steps out first into the alley at the side of the building. Two of the goons plant themselves at either end, keeping a lookout. Finally, Jack comes out, a man on either side of him, their guns pressed to his throat. Vega reaches into the pouch and pulls out a yellow chip. As Jack watches, he slides it into the transducer at the back of his neck.

VEGA

Time to pay the piper, Sloan.

(laughs)

This proves there's a God.

The two men let go of Jack. Before he can even straighten, the chip kicks in and Vega is on him like a tornado. His body is a whirling, slashing weapon, barely giving Jack time to dodge a blow, let alone land any. He flat out kicks his ass, leaving him finally on his knees, gasping for breath, his face bleeding and lumpy. Vega stands over him, glowing with pleasure.

VEGA (cont'd)

You won't be needing this.

He reaches down, grabs Jack's mech- hand, puts a foot in the middle of his back... and rips the metal arm back and off. Jack roars and pushes himself to his feet. Vega, laughing out loud now, slams him across the head and ribs with the arm... over and over... until Jack collapses on the ground, unconscious. Vega stands over him, kicks him once hard in the side, then signals to his men and goes back into the building, Jack's arm still in his hand.

85 INT. - FINN'S - NIGHT

85

Finn is in the weapons room, inventorying everything with a portable computer that sits on his lap. Rikki and Bobby are helping him sort through the boxes.

BOBBY

Did you get these three boxes of gas grenades?

FINN

Synaptic dissolution, carcinogenic or paranoia- inducing?

Bobby reads the small print on one of the boxes.

BOBBY

Wow... multiple choice.

(CONTINUED)

5 con't

85

RIKKI

Are those really as horrible as they sound?

FINN

Worse. Of course, I've got some tailored viruses in the cryonics vault... genetically engineered to be really nasty.

(almost wistfully)

I wonder if I'll ever run into anyone terrible enough to use them on?

BOBBY

You can always hope, can't you?

JACK (O.S.)

Finn just talks a good game.

They all look up to see Jack standing there... no arm, ripped clothes, bruised, blood hastily washed off his face. Rikki jumps up, all the color draining from her face. She runs over and hugs him, asking him if he's all right, making a fuss. Even Bobby's at a loss for a wisecrack. He jumps up himself and helps Jack sit down.

BOBBY

What did they do to you?

JACK

Well, offhand I'd say they kicked the shit out of me, ripped my arm off and kept it.

(beat)

I was an idiot to think I could talk to her... she's too far gone. We've got twelve hours... maybe... before she throws everything she's got at us.

Bobby thinks hard a moment.

BOBBY

Suppose... suppose we run a probe? Doris might be able to find a way into her data... maybe we could fuck things up enough to buy some time.

Jack thinks about it, looks at Finn.

FINN

Fuck it... we got nothing to lose.

CUT TO:

6 INT. - FINN'S WORKROOM - NIGHT

86

Sections of Finn's computers have been laid bare and are gerry-rigged together. Jack is directing Finn as he finishes a final connection.

JACK

Good. That should do it.

Bobby slots the D-Card into the makeshift console. Doris's face pops up on all of Finn's screens.

BOBBY

Systems utilities probe, Doris.

DORIS

Chrome's data is secured with corporate grade ice.

Bobby types briefly into the keyboard, then waits, watching Doris.

DORIS (cont'd)

Utilities restructuring... running probe...

CUT TO:

37 INT. - HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - ACCOUNTING OFFICE - NIGHT

87

Peltz is working at a computer; his spread-sheet suddenly disappears from the screen to be replaced with flashing red letters: INTRUDER ALERT. He quickly types in: TRACING SEQUENCE 444, punches it in, then goes to the wall intercom.

88 INT. CHROME'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

88

She is just finishing dressing when Peltz's voice comes over her intercom.

PELTZ (O.S.)

Miss Chrome... we have an invasive run on your data, outside source.

CHROME

Damage?

PELTZ

None. Standard probe with a booster.

(CONTINUED)

8 con't

88

CHROME
 (smiles)
 I have an idea who's behind this.
 (smile evaporates)
 Trace it, then close it off.

BACK TO:

89 INT. - FINN'S WORKROOM - NIGHT

89

Doris shakes her head on the monitor.

DORIS
 Negative interface. Defense corridors
 unbreachable.

BOBBY
 Thanks, Doris.
 (to Jack)
 Like trying to shoot an elephant with
 a squirt gun.

CUT TO:

0 INT. - HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - ACCOUNTING - NIGHT

90

Peltz gets a short printout, looks at it, smiles and goes to the
 intercom.

PELTZ
 (into the intercom)
 I got it traced.

IN HER BEDROOM

Chrome smiles.

CHROME
 Send Vega up here.

91 INT. - FINN'S - NIGHT

91

The four of them sit around the living room, looking tired and
 spent. Jack catches Rikki staring at his stump.

JACK
 What are you looking at?

(CONTINUED)

1 con't

91

Rikki looks surprised, then hurt. Jack immediately feels like an asshole.

JACK (cont'd)

I'm sorry. I'm just... I don't know.

BOBBY

I think we should make a run for it.

JACK

To where? If she puts all her money behind finding us... and she will... we'll be found eventually. And it probably won't take too long.

FINN

I wouldn't mind loading up some of my extra special specialties in a van and going after her. I could use some fresh air.

JACK

(shakes his head)

No matter how much firepower we have, they have more.

(stands)

No, we're safe here for now. I suggest we all get some sleep and attack this fresh tomorrow.

They all nod their assent and break up.

DISSOLVE TO:

92 INT. - FINN'S - LATE THAT NIGHT

92

PAN through the place to see Bobby and Finn asleep in separate rooms. Jack and Rikki are intertwined in bed. It is absolutely quiet. Then...

All hell breaks loose. Alarms sound loudly and all the lights come on. In his bedroom, Finn wakes up instantly and reaches up for the trapeze over his bed. Jack and Rikki jump up and run into the hall. Bobby's already there, pulling on his pants.

Finn wheels out and into the workroom, the others following. He shuts off the alarms. All the monitors are tuned into the outside videocams... they cover different angles. We can see Vega and his men, just behind the electrified fence. Finn picks up a tiny mike and clips it to his shirt collar.

(CONTINUED)

? con't

92

FINN
Identify yourselves.

CUT TO:

93 EXT. - FINN'S PERIMETER - NIGHT

93

Vega steps closer to the fence and looks up into the videocam.

VEGA
You know who we are. Send the girl
out.

FINN (over a loudspeaker)
Go fuck yourself, freak.

Vega stiffens at the insult but maintains his cool.

VEGA
We know Sloan and Quine are in there,
too. You send her out or we take this
place apart... and all of you with it.

BACK TO:

THE WORKROOM

where Finn is getting increasingly irritated.

FINN
We just hand her over and you leave us
alone.. is that it?

VEGA (O.S.)
For now. Later, of course, I'm going
to kill Sloan and Quine. If you get
in the way, I'll kill you. Simple.

FINN
Here's something simple. That fence
has ten thousand volts humming through
it. And I've got enough munitions in
here to take you with us if I decide
to blow them.

Bobby looks at him sharply.

BOBBY
Hey, Finn... let's not get carried
away. Speak for yourself, all right?

(CONTINUED)

3 con't

93

On the screen, Vega thinks for a moment.

VEGA (O.S.)
Let me talk to Sloan.

Finn considers, then takes off the mike and hands it to Jack.

JACK
What do you want?

VEGA (O.S.)
I want you to use your head. Your friend's a little quick on the trigger. You bring the girl out and the rest of you live. That way, you get your shot at me later. Maybe.

JACK
He will blow it all if you force him.

VEGA (O.S.)
I believe it. Now, open the gate and we'll talk face to face.

JACK
I can't do that.

CUT TO:

94 EXT. - FENCE - NIGHT

94

Vega shakes his head as he pulls a purple chip out of the pouch. He slides it into the transducer.

VEGA
Then I'll let myself in.

He rubs his hands together and lightning crackles between them. Smiling, he grabs the fence with both hands. Ten thousand volts shoot into and through him, lighting him up like an incandescent bulb. HOLD... then there is a loud crack and the gate swings open, harmless now,.

BACK TO:

(CONTINUED)

4 con't

94

THE WORKROOM

BOBBY

Oh, Lord.

RIKKI
(suddenly)

Jack!

On the screens, Finn's two Rottweilers sprint at Vega.

FINN

No!

CUT TO:

95 EXT. - FENCE - NIGHT

95

They cover the ground between them and Vega in three seconds, snarling viciously... they leap... and Vega catches them by the throats, one in each hand. Electricity blasts into them and they are fried instantly. He drops their carcasses in front of him.

BACK TO:

THE WORKROOM

as they all look on in horror. Finn's face is white with rage.

VEGA (O.S.)

What's it going to be, Sloan? We can
end up with a lot of dead bodies here.

Jack covers his face for a couple of moments, then looks up at Rikki.

JACK

Do you trust me? Do you?RIKKI
(evenly)

Yes.

He looks at her another moment, then speaks to Vega.

JACK

I'm bringing her out. But Finn was for
real about those munitions. You fuck
up and we all go.

(CONTINUED)

5 con't

95

He yanks off the mike. Bobby is bouncing up and down, raving. Rikki just stares at him disbelievingly.

BOBBY

Are you crazy! I'm not gonna let you...

Jack wheels and nails him with a left hook. Bobby crumples, unconscious.

FINN

Good move. The last thing we need now is hysteria.

He pulls a pistol from under his lap blanket.

FINN (cont'd)

But you won't be taking her out, Jack.

He looks at the frightened Rikki.

FINN (cont'd)

(smiles)

Don't worry. Jack's the man. He knows what he's doing.

JACK

Finn...

FINN

(sharp)

I'm taking her. You got too much history with him.

(smiles)

You know when I'm serious, don't you, Jack?

(he nods)

Besides, I want to get a look at this motherfucker close up.

96 EXT. - FINN'S - NIGHT

96

Finn wheels out with Rikki through the maze of junk. Neither speak. They come out to the clearing by the fence and face Vega. Finn stops ten feet from him. Vega reaches back and removes the purple chip.

VEGA

Hey... a cripple.

(darkly)

You the guy who called me a freak?

(CONTINUED)

5 con't

96

FINN

I'm the guy who shot you dead.

He whips out the gun and fires, pushing Rikki out of the way. His shots ping off Vega's exoskeleton as he deflects them at an unbelievable speed. The goons behind him open up and riddle him with bullets. His wheelchair spins around crazily from the force of the fire until he is thrown out and onto the ground, almost dead. Rikki covers her ears, screaming.

IN THE WORKROOM

Jack watches, transfixed, holding onto the desk, knuckles white, every muscle clenched, willing himself not to run out.

AT THE FENCE

Finn pushes himself up on one arm, tries to aim the pistol again, blood running down his chin... but Vega steps forward and kicks him squarely in the face. A tiny moan escapes his lips and he crumples, dead. He grabs Rikki up and pushes her behind him to his men. He looks up into the videocamera and smiles... then walksoff.

IN THE WORKROOM

Bobby is coming to. He clears his head. Jack reaches down his hand but Bobby slaps it away and jumps up. Jack hurries past him and Bobby has to run to keep up.

BOBBY

You fucking creep! All that shit about honor and duty and friendship... you're a fucking coward! You gave her away like a lottery prize!

Jack has reached the combat room. He bangs open the door and goes in, Bobby right on his tail.

BOBBY (cont'd)

From now on, I don't even fucking know you! As far as I'm concerned...

Jack wheels around and pushes his face to within an inch of Bobby's. He wears a look we haven't seen before... icy, driven, excited, ready. It shuts Bobby's mouth instantly.

JACK

I need your help.

(CONTINUED)

5 con't (2)

96

He bends down and pulls out the case holding the Mark 9. Bobby quickly helps him open it. Jack lifts out the tray... the arm lies glittering in its padding. Jack shrugs off his jacket.

JACK (cont'd)

Lift it out.

Bobby complies, surprised at its weight. He holds it awkwardly, waiting for instructions.

JACK (cont'd)

Fit those two openings over my studs.

Bobby turns it around and lines up the carbon studs in Jack's stump with the holes. He gets within an inch and the arm leaps out of his hands as though sucked onto the stump.

JACK (cont'd)

Magnetized. It's on.

Bobby steps back as Jack slips the counterbalancing halter over his opposite shoulder, then punches in some numbers and letters on the tiny keyboard near where the Mark 9 joins his stump. There is a tiny whirr, then the combat arm shoots straight out, scaring Bobby half to death. Jack makes small adjustments, then flexes it as though it were part of him. He looks at Bobby, completely focused and confident... even arrogant.

JACK (cont'd)

It's time to go to work.

He begins slotting cartridges into the combat arm's wrist.

BOBBY

What about me?

Jack reaches OUT OF FRAME and back. He hands Bobby the Makarov Worm.

JACK

People always tell me how crazy you are. Is that for real or is that just bullshit? Are you crazy enough to run Red Army strategic software in civilian cyberspace?

An enormous, wild grin breaks out on Bobby's face as he takes the Worm.

JACK (cont'd)

Son, we are gonna burn her down.

7 INT. - HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - CHROME'S PLACE - NIGHT

97

Vega stands neaby as Chrome walks a small circle around Rikki. She is trembling but we can't tell if it is primarily anger or fear.

CHROME

Your little excursion hasn't seemed to have hurt you any. As I'm sure you've gathered, you're very important to me, Rikki. A little cooperation goes a long way.

She lets her hand trail down Rikki's breast. Rikki spins and slaps her. Vega can't believe it. Chrome doesn't even wince.

CHROME (cont'd)

I think some time on the second floor would be a good idea, don't you, Vega? Break a little of this... unbridled spirit.

VEGA

Yes, ma'am.

CHROME

Take her to surgery and have her fitted. I want her on the puppet line right away .

VEGA

Yes, ma'am. Right away.

98 INT. - FINN'S WORKROOM - NIGHT

98

Doris is on one of the monitors. Bobby is at the modified deck, looking nervous but excited.

JACK

Ready to rock?

(Bobby nods)

Just give me a little time to get inside.

He nods again. Jack reaches out his good hand and Bobby shakes it firmly.

JACK

You and me, partner.

BOBBY

(suddenly beaming)

Fuck 'em if they can't take a joke.

(CONTINUED)

9 con't

98

DORIS
Good luck, Jack!

Bobby gives her a pained look and Jack leaves. He arranges himself comfortably in front of the keyboard, the trode band next to him.

BOBBY
All right. Running preliminary sequences.

DORIS
Good luck, Bobby!

BOBBY
Doris, please. You're acting like Mary Poppins on speed.

DORIS
(furrowed brow)
Is that bad?

He starts typing in the sequence.

9 INT. - HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - BROTHEL FLOOR - NIGHT

99

The light is blue and dim. Lot of cigarette smoke. Rotating mirror balls on the ceiling help simulate cheap Las Vegas sleaze. Two dozen girls sit at individual cocktail tables. They are all young, pretty, vacuous, dressed in revealing costumes. Empty, spaced eyes focus on the middle distance. This is the Puppet Line... Meat Puppets for men. Several Customers wander around, looking them over. One of them approaches a Girl younger than Rikki. His proximity seems to activate her... she turns her face toward him and a weak smile fixes itself on her face.

GIRL
(haltingly)
Looking for a... good time, Mister...
you've come to the right place... you
can have it all here... no limits...
that's right no limits...no limits...
no limits...

The Customer stares at her and laughs. He looks over his shoulder to see one of Chrome's Employees approaching.

CUSTOMER
This one's fucked up...

(CONTINUED)

9 con't

99

The Girl continues to repeat herself. The Employee grabs her hair and pulls her head down; he yanks back the plastic material of her top and we see what looks like a glittering chrome spider.

EMPLOYEE

The neuro-control's down.

He takes a probe from his pocket and pokes it into the spider. The Girl goes silent and slumps across the table.

EMPLOYEE (cont'd)

Take an hour to fix it. Why don't you try another?

CUSTOMER

(smiles, ugly)

Better do that. You know how it is when you can't wait.

He walks away from the table and moves through the rest of the girls. He stops at a table in the corner; the Girl has her back to us. We catch just the slightest glimmer of metal at her neck. The Man slides into the chair next to her and she turns her face to him. It is Rikki.

CUSTOMER (cont'd)

Hi, sweetheart.

RIKKI

Hello. Are you... enjoying yourself?

CUSTOMER

I could enjoy myself a hell of a lot more, if you know what I mean.

RIKKI

I believe... I do.

He reaches over and strokes her breast. Her face doesn't change expression.

CUSTOMER

Let's have some fun.

0 EXT. - HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - NIGHT

100

Jack walks past the Blue Lights with his collar turned up. He sees sensor screens just inside the entrance. Pink neon flashes: FULL WEAPON SCREENING POLICY. Customers are handing over their hardware to be checked. He rounds a corner into an alley and looks up. There is a steel railing thirty feet up, strung with razor wire. He swivels back a narrow plate on the underside of the Combat Arm and a tube about an inch in diameter hisses down pneumatically, running under his forearm. He raises the Arm, aims and fires. A lead ball with a thin, indestructible cable shoots toward the railing. It whirls round it, securing itself. Jack tests it, then starts wall-walking up the side of the building. He holds the Arm with his good hand as the cable is automatically ratcheted up. Making it, he grabs the railing with his good hand, pushes the razor wire aside with the Arm and pulls himself over. He stands looking out over the city, then down at the Arm.

V.O.

I never thought I'd wear the Mark 9 again. It was something that belonged to the past, to a time I wanted to forget. I was a man, not a machine.

(beat)

But there was a difference this time. I was using it... it wasn't using me. And I'd taken just about enough shit.

101 INT. - FINN'S - NIGHT

101

Bobby is finishing up the preliminary sequences. He looks tense, wired.

DORIS

I'm very proud of you, Bobby.

BOBBY

You can't be proud, Doris. You're software.

DORIS

Nevertheless, I am. But I'm scared, too. This extremely dangerous.

BOBBY

(concentrating)

I'm a thrillseeker, what can I say?

He sits back and glances up at her.

BOBBY (cont'd)

Almost ready.

(grins)

We're going for a ride, Doris.

2 INT. - HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - SECURITY BULLPEN - NIGHT

102

A buzzer sounds. A Security man looks up, then jumps up when he sees INTRUDER flashing on the screen. He grabs a phone.

SECURITY MAN
Vega? We've got an unauthorized
visitor upstairs.

On the monitor, the word is replaced with a radar grid. A flashing pinpoint marks Jack... then the screen is suddenly filled with static.

SECURITY MAN (cont'd)
Shit... he scrambled it.

CUT TO:

JACK

in a stairwell upstairs. A tiny flashing gyroscope has popped up on the back of his wrist. He adjusts it as it spins, then heads down the stairs.

CUT TO:

3 INT. - BROTHEL FLOOR - NIGHT

103

Rikki leads the Customer to a privacy cubicle off the main brothel floor. He takes a credit card from his wallet, inserts it into a slot beside the cubicle door and it opens. He and Rikki go inside and it closes after them.

THE CUBICLE

is furnished with a futon and a series of restraints and bondage equipment attached to the floor and walls. The man's eyes gleam as he surveys the playroom.

CUSTOMER
Whatever you want me to do... I'll do
it.

104 INT. - FINN'S - NIGHT

104

Bobby looks up at Doris; he is wearing the trode band. He licks his lips.

BOBBY
Here we go.

He punches the ENTER button and we...

(CONTINUED)

4 con't

104

IMPLODE INTO CYBERSPACE

BOBBY
Jesus Christ!

Bobby is represented as a fusion of himself and the Makarov worm... his face and upper body, melding into a sleek, snake-like lower body. He shoots along at incredible velocity, the data landscape a neon rainbow blur. Doris' holographic face shadows him, even with his own. In front of them is an object apparently the size of a skyscraper, suspended among dozens of similar structures, each one a corporate database. Chrome's is marked with a vast CHROME Corp logo. Bobby screams toward it.

DORIS
Bobby!... Bobby!...

The screen goes black as they strike.

BOBBY (O.S.)
I think we got interface... but I
can't see shit...

DORIS (O.S.)
We're near her outer cores. Her
internal defenses are blocking iconic
recognition...

A point of light expands mid-screen... contracts... expands
again.

DORIS (O.S.)
We're cutting through...

The point explodes into a new world of data... Bobby and Doris
rush through an increasingly intricate jigsaw of data. HOLD on
glowing data-structure.

CUT TO:

105 EXT. - STREET - NIGHT

105

All the traffic lights turn simultaneously red, snarling
traffic. Horns start blowing and people lean out their windows
to see what is happening. In stores, people are caught in
automatic revolving doors that stop. Other automatic doors are
jammed, as well... people can't get off buses or in and out of
buildings. In stores, cash registers continue to ring up sales
uncontrollably, despite cashier's efforts to stop them. Radios
start changing stations on their own.

5 INT. - HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - CASINO LEVEL - NIGHT

106

The place is full. Chrome moves through her customers with Vega, nodding pleasantly, talking to him through clenched teeth.

CHROME

You and I both know who's in here.
Find him and kill him.

VEGA

(nods, after a beat)

Yes, ma'am. Peltz wants to see you,
ma'am. Says it's urgent.

107 INT. ACCOUNTING OFFICE - NIGHT

107

Peltz has three monitors running different equations in front of him. Chrome walks in.

CHROME

What's the problem?

PELTZ

We've got an intruder in the database.
Whoever it is is heading for the
datalith.

(turns to face her)

I don't have to tell you what that
could mean.

CHROME

What level of virus is he using?

PELTZ

Something stronger than I've ever
seen. Whatever it is... it's military.
And it's not ours.

Pause.

CHROME

(finally, quietly)

It's got to be Quine.

(smiles)

Get out, Peltz. And close the door.

He does as he is told. Chrome clears the screens, produces a key and unlocks a drawer in the desk's side. She takes out a trode band and a piece of software.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

7 con't

107

THE CASINO

where Jack walks fast through a crowded central area of the club, a coat draped over the Arm. The Customers are a little distracted because some of the lights and slot machines are behaving weirdly. He stops a passing Soldier, in uniform, slightly drunk.

JACK

Hey, private, where they keep the good pussy around here? You know, that real wirehead stuff...

SOLDIER

Right upstairs, can't miss it...

Jack's coat slips off a bit, just enough to expose some of the Arm. He pulls it back up but not before the Soldier gets an eyeful. He knows what it is.

SOLDIER (cont'd)

Hey... that's a...

Jack claps him on the shoulder with the Arm, nearly knocking him over.

JACK

Let's keep this between you and me, private, okay? I'm here in a strictly unofficial capacity.

He winks at the Soldier and walks off. The private doesn't know whether to wink back or salute.

IN THE STAIRWELL

Jack is hurrying up the stairs when he runs into two of Vega's Thugs coming down. He grabs the first one with his good hand, slams him face first into the wall and delivers a crushing blow to his spine with the Arm, snapping it. As the other pulls out his pistol, Jack flicks the Arm in his direction... and a two-bladed ballistic knife slides through the man's throat, pinning him to the wall behind him. Jack moves quickly past them and up.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

7 con't (2)

107

CYBERSPACE - BOBBY AND DORIS

Bobby and Doris rise smoothly between skyscrapers of intricate neon.

BOBBY

What is this? Where are we?

DORIS

This is all hers. Each tower represents an account.

BOBBY

Her money?

DORIS

Cashflow data.

BOBBY

There's got to be a central clearinghouse that connects them all. If we could...

His face fills with awe as they rise above one of the data skyscrapers and their view is cleared. In front of them, alternately expanding into infinity and contracting to a pinpoint, is the Datalith. Its colors are deep and rich, continually changing and moving... it seems almost alive. Chrome's financial heart. He and Doris just stare at it.

BOBBY

Doris?

DORIS

That's it.

BACK TO:

108 INT. HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - CHROME - NIGHT

108

Chrome slips the trode band on her head and drops a gold chip into a slot in the computer's console.

CHROME

You want to play, Bobby Quine? Let's play for real.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

9 con't

108

CYBERSPACE - CHROME'S DATABASE

Bobby and Doris are still staring. Bobby snaps himself out of his reverie.

BOBBY

Get ready to...

Cyberspace opens under Bobby like a trapdoor. He yells as he falls, tumbling down into infinite computer-graphic depths.

DORIS (O.S.)

Bobby! Where are you!

He falls, out of control...

109 INTO A BLACK SEA

109

under a gunmetal sky. He drops out of sight, then surfaces, gagging, flailing at the water.

IN THE WATER BELOW HIM

something vast and dark rises directly beneath him.

BOBBY

yelps as he finds the thing under his feet. The conning tower of a submarine rises in front of him, spilling seawater. He finds himself standing on the deck of a WWII German U-boat, foam boiling around him.

BOBBY

Are you shitting me?

He looks around, then scrambles up iron rungs. The hatch is open and he peers down it. He looks around again, then climbs down

110 INTO THE SUB

110

A gold glow; sea-worms writhe in puddles of water. Bobby crinkles his nose at a more than pungent odor.

BOBBY

What stinks...

(CONTINUED)

9 con't

110

A decaying ZOMBIE steps from the shadow of the bulkhead. It is a waterlogged, animated corpse in a German naval uniform, pea coat and peaked cap. The Zombie smiles and a hunk of his rotted cheek falls off. He raises a rusted, barnacle-encrusted Luger and fires. The bullet whangs off steel, inches from Bobby's head. It ricochets wildly the length of the sub. Bobby kicks out wildly, catching the thing in the knee. It goes down, its femur popping out through its skin, and starts to raise the pistol for another shot. Bobby kicks it again, then grabs a fire-ax off the bulkhead wall and hacks it to bits. The pieces continue to pulse and jump.

He takes off, deeper into the sub, axe in hand. Several more Zombies appear, cutting him off. They are armed with butcher knives, crowbars, broken bottles... Bobby swings the axe wildly, ripping them to pieces, somehow getting past them untouched. he reaches the next bulkhead and the gold glow is brighter. This time, a dozen of them are waiting. Bobby fires the axe at the nearest one, decapitating him. As they close in on him, he jumps straight up, grabs one of the pipes welded to the ceiling and goes hand over hand the length of the cabin, kicking chunks off their faces as he goes.

Past them, he drops and scurries into the next bulkhead, into the heart of the gold glow. Its source is a lever radiating intense golden light. He jumps at it... into the arms of the skull-faced Captain. The Captain slams him back against the bulkhead, rattling his head. He unloads a thunderous blow... but Bobby ducks and the Captain's arm disintegrates against the metal. Bobby dives between his legs, grabs the lever and pulls it.

A pause... then the game -reality unravels digitally and Bobby is catapulted back

111 INTO CYBERSPACE

111

where Doris is waiting. Bobby is once again fused with the Worm. They hang suspended among the data. Doris is beside herself.

DORIS

Bobby, are you all right? Where...

BOBBY

Never mind. Hang on.

The Bobby/Worm seems to coil, sit up like a cobra... then blazes straight for the Datalith. Just as it is about to hit dead center, the Datalith shifts and Bobby nicks a piece of it.

CUT TO:

112 EXT. - STREET - NIGHT

112

Six-foot TV screens on display in store windows suddenly tune themselves to porno channels. Police and ambulance car sirens and flashing lights are activated... even those of the two dozen patrol cars parked in front of a giant Winchell's. In people's homes, their phones ring even when the receiver is lifted. Streetlights blink on and off in some bizarre Morse code and kids are picking up police calls on their Walkmen.

113 INT. - HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - CASINO - NIGHT

113

Money pours out of the slot machines in torrents. In the men's bathrooms, condoms are loosed in an unending flow. People are diving to scoop up both of them. Bells are ringing nonstop and the teller's cages fly open, coin counters flinging money into the air.

ON THE BROTHEL FLOOR

the girls are at their tables, as usual. A sudden collective shiver runs through them. They blink and look around, their eyes clearing. A Customer is in the midst of proposing some strange delights to one of them, whispering in her ear. Her head snaps up angrily.

GIRL

You slime!

She spits in his face and we

CUT TO:

THE PRIVACY CUBICLE

where Rikki's Customer is standing naked, his back to her, arms above his head, his wrists loosely tied through two rings in the ceiling. Rikki is robotically slapping him lightly with a cat o' nine tails as he pretends to feel it.

CUSTOMER

Harder... harder!

Light comes into her face and she reaches back to pluck the spider off her neck and throw it down. Her face reddens at the sight in front of her; she draws back and smacks him hard across the ass. He jumps, screeching.

CUSTOMER (cont'd)

Hey! Stop it, goddamnit! What are you...

Rikki smacks him again, harder.

(CONTINUED)

3 con't

113

RIKKI

I'll give you harder, you fucking
creep!

She draws back her arm again... and Jack kicks in the door and
grabs it. Stunned, she stares at the him and the Arm.

JACK

We're leaving.
(to the man)
Nice ass.

Taking her hand, he leads her out

ONTO THE FLOOR

where the puppets are tearing the place up. Customers are diving
for cover as they rip up tables, chairs, smash bottles against
the wall... then turn their attention to the men present.
Instinctively forming search and destroy teams, they ferret them
out and start kicking the shit out of them. Jack and Rikki race
through the melee and

114 INTO THE CORRIDOR

114

Jack looks up and down the corridor. Noise from the casino below
is wild and loud. Deciding, he pulls Rikki down the corridor.
They reach the end, turn the corner fast ... and run into Vega,
Styles and another thug. Rikki jumps behind Jack. Styles and
the other man have shotguns. Vega looks on, grinning, as Styles
jams the barrel in Jack's face.

VEGA

Nice try, Sloan, but...

Jack pushes Rikki away with his good hand.

JACK

Run!

Simultaneously, the Arm snaps forward and its hand sinks into
Styles' belly... it makes a nasty squishing sound. As Jack lifts
him straight up, Styles triggers the weapon... Jack spins him
around and the blast almost cuts the other thug in two. Vega
leaps forward with a yell and Jack clubs him across the face
with the impaled man. Vega bounces off the back wall, dazed, and
falls down the stairwell. Jack sprints off in Rikki's
direction.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

4 con't

114

CYBERSPACE - CHROME'S DATABASE

as Bobby and Doris regroup for another run at the Datalith. They hang suspended, watching.

BOBBY

We have to hit it dead center or...

The bottom drops out of the universe and Bobby falls, screaming, to land....

ON THE BRIDGE

of the Spider King. He looks up at the rusting iron towers.

BOBBY (cont'd)

Not again.

A sword materializes in his hand. Vast goutts of hellfire rise from the gulf beneath the bridge. The Spider King steps from the shadow of the towers... except now, it is the Spider Queen. It has Chrome's malevolently- smiling face. Brown drool runs down her front. When she speaks, her voice is distorted; raspy, squeaky, like an insect. She has two swords.

CHROME

Did you really think I'd let anyone steal my money?

BOBBY

No. Did you really think you could stop me?

Chrome surges forward and the battle is on. They fight back and forth across the bridge, on the girders, on top of the bridge wall. Bobby is unbelievable, parrying her thrusts, fending her off, protecting himself. He manages to slice off one of her arms but she still has two swords. She is wearing him down, tired herself but aware it is a matter of time. She pins Bobby against a girder and delivers a flurry of slashes. He blocks all but one... a deep cut rises red along one thigh. He yells and, striking hard from pain, he hacks off another of her arms. A penetrating insect screech cuts through the air and she lashes out with the flat of a sword, cracking him across the face, slamming him back against the bridge wall. He is stunned, trying to focus and raise his sword. Chrome gasps for breath, then grins gelidly as she senses the kill. She steps forward and...

Doris shimmers into existence next to Bobby. She is gorgeous, bright with energy. She looks as surprised as Bobby; even Chrome is stopped for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

4 con't (2)

114

DORIS
I followed you...

Chrome lunges forward. Without thinking, Doris steps in front of Bobby and Chrome's sword sinks into her. Chrome tries to yank it out but Doris holds onto the hilt, giving Bobby time to jump to his feet.

BOBBY
Doris!

Using both hands, his face inflamed, he raises his sword high and slams it into Chrome's open mouth. The Spider Queen reels back, pawing at the sword helplessly, squealing. She finally drops to the ground, dying. Just as the final lifelight leaves her eyes, Chrome's face disappears and is replaced with the original Spider King's maw.

Bobby holds Doris close to him. Even though she is in great pain, a smile shows through it.

DORIS
Bobby... I had a body... I could
feel...

She starts to dissolve in his arms. She puts a hand behind his head, draws him toward her.

DORIS (cont'd)
I had... a body...

His lips are almost to hers... when she dematerializes completely.

DORIS (cont'd)
(very faintly)
I... love you...

The sword clatters to the ground and Bobby looks down at his empty arms.

CUT TO:

115 INT. - ACCOUNTING OFFICE - NIGHT

115

Chrome rips off the trode band, enraged. She punches an intercom button.

(CONTINUED)

5 con't

115

DORIS

Peltz!

CUT TO:

CYBERSPACE - CHROME'S DATABASE

where Bobby, tears running down his face, coils and aims at the Datalith. He gives a tortured scream and warps toward the shifting structure. His eyes are glued ahead... he gets closer... closer... on a direct hit line...but just before he connects, it shifts... it looks like he'll fly by... but he cranks himself hard at the last possible second... and slams it dead center. It shatters into a thousand sparkling pieces.

BOBBY

Yes! Time to pay!

CUT TO:

116 INT. - FINN'S - NIGHT

116

Bobby is at the deck, eyes glazed, his fingers a blur on the keyboard.

CUT TO:

117 INT. - ACCOUNTING OFFICE - NIGHT

117

Peltz huffs in, tie askew, glasses cocked, harried. Chrome regards him with a sneer.

PELTZ

The datalith's been violated... we've lost control!

CHROME

Get it back!

Chrome shoves him out of the room.

CHROME (cont'd)

Get back control or I'll have your fucking heart!

(CONTINUED)

7 con't

117

ON THE CASINO LEVEL

the gambling machines continue to spew money. Customers are beating each other up over it. It is complete madness.

ON THE BROTHEL LEVEL

the same chaos reigns. The fire sprinklers have gone on, drenching everyone. Several alarms combine in a deafening cacaphony. Customers and Employees run over and into each other, trying to get downstairs... a tangle of bodies block the stairs. Panic breeds panic. Jack muscled his way through the crush of people, screaming Rikki's name.

RIKKI

is squeezed into a corner, half-crushed. She hears Jack and struggles to be seen. She steps on a downed man's back and her head pops up above the crowd.

RIKKI

Jack! Over here!

Jack spots her and cuts a path through the others to her. His only intent is to get her... he moves anything in his way. Reaching her, he plucks her out of the press, knocks a couple of huge men away to give them some room and quickly surveys the situation.

JACK

We can't make it down. Let's hit the roof... I can lower us from there.

Using his body as a shield for her, he burrows his way through the mob.

IN THE CORRIDOR

Jack and Rikki dash for the roof stairwell. Two of Chrome's Security Men spot them. They raise their weapons and Jack splatters them against the wall with the arm's built-in automatic shotgun. He and Rikki reach the stairwell. He yanks the door open and she ducks in. Shots ring out; sparks fly off the Arm. Jack wheels and fires three wild rounds with the shotgun.

(CONTINUED)

7 con't (2)

117

THREE THUGS

duck back around the corner. Jack twists his wrist hard and a projectile port opens in the Arm. The three men stick the upper halves of their bodies around the corner, fire... and Jack looses a six-inch rocket. It explodes all three of them before they can move.

IN THE STAIRWELL

Rikki is running up the stairs as fast as she can. Jack is below her.

JACK

It's all right... hurry!

IN THE CORRIDOR

Vega and three others charge past the dead thugs.

ON THE ROOF

Rikki slams through the door into the open. She looks around, out of breath, wondering what the hell they are doing up there. Jack is a few seconds behind her. He presses his thumb and little finger together and two small gelatinous 'eggs' appear in his palm. He throws them down the stairwell and closes the door.

AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRWELL

Two of Vega's men have started up the stairs. The eggs hit the concrete and explode like grenades. Vega and the other man cover their heads, then climb over the bodies and up the stairs.

ON THE ROOF

Jack and Rikki are at the edge, looking down. They can see the city stretched out below them... abandoned cars in the street, still running, people looting stores, security alarms sounding everywhere, lights blinking on and off erratically, hollers and yells. The dozen Police Officers at Winchell's are being held inside at gunpoint while their patrol cars are trashed and burned. Jack can't help but grin.

JACK

Well, it is Saturday night.

RIKKI

How do we get down?

(CONTINUED)

7 con't (3)

117

Jack starts to answer when a bullet rips through his side and out. It spins him around and almost over the edge... Rikki grabs him and he catches his balance. In the same motion, he pushes her away behind a skylight, rolls and comes up firing the shotgun. Vega is hit twice with little effect. His partner splits off as Vega fires back.

JACK
(to Rikki)

Stay down!

Rikki edges further behind the skylight. She trips over some loose, scattered bricks and goes down hard. Vega fires in her direction, nicking the chimney next to her. Jack, hunched down behind an air conditioner, fires once at Vega, then spots his partner cutting between two smokestacks. He stands fast and triggers the shotgun... nothing. He looks down to see a digital readout on the Arm..."OO - reload".

He ducks back down, stabs a button at the Arm's shoulder and a hug caliber pistol drops from inside the Arm and slides on a runner right into his palm. He looks over at Rikki.

JACK (cont'd)
You all right?

Shots suddenly dance all around him... he is driven back and out from behind the cover. He fires as he runs. Vega draws a bead and blasts the pistol out of Jack's hand. Simultaneously, Vega's partner fires and Jack goes down, hit again. He doesn't move.

Vega's partner is between Vega and Jack. They both wait, motionless. Jack doesn't stir, a pool of blood forming beneath him. Rikki is torn between rushing out to him and staying hidden.

VEGA
Check him out.

PARTNER
You check him out!

Vega points his weapon at the man.

VEGA
Check... him... out. Now.

The man stares hatefully at him, then moves cautiously forward. His shotgun is trained on Jack.

(CONTINUED)

7 con't (4)

117

JACK

is on his stomach, face on the ground, forearms curled around his head. He reaches carefully with the fingers of his good hand to the plate on the underside of the Arm. In the darkness, the man doesn't catch it. He swivels the plate with a touch and the cable tube hisses down.

THE MAN

looks around quickly at the sound, swiveling the shotgun with him.

PARTNER

What was that?

Just then, Jack raises the Arm a few inches and the lead ball we saw earlier shoots out, the cable attached. It instantly wraps around the man's legs. Jack rolls and flexes the Arm, ripping the man off his feet as he fires. He yanks with all the Arm's strength and the man sails over Jack's head... off the roof. He falls, screaming. Jack snips the cable between two of his metal fingers as it trails through them.

Vega fires as Jack makes a run for cover. We GO CLOSE on the Arm to see the projectile port open as a shot skips by him. Jack dives behind a smokestack... and comes right back up, the Arm pointed at Vega. He fires a rocket... Vega hits the ground... and it misses him by an inch. Jack can't believe it. He aims again, fires... nothing. He sinks down and checks the digital display on the Arm. It flashes red and reads: MUNITIONS AT ZERO... RELOAD ALL WEAPONS.

JACK

Don't tell me that!

He raises his head carefully to take a look. Vega jumps out and fires... but his weapon clicks empty, too. He freezes a moment, exposed, expecting the worst but Jack does nothing. A slow, chilling smile spreads across his face.

VEGA

Don't tell me we're in the same boat,
Sloan? Out of ammo?

Jack stands slowly and comes out to face him. Vega tosses his pistol away.

(CONTINUED)

7 con't (5)

117

VEGA (cont'd)
I always hoped it'd come to this.
It's the way it should be...
(laughs)
cyborg to cyborg.

He reaches for the pouch at his neck... and Rikki runs up behind him, a brick in her hand. She slams it with all her strength into the back of Vega's head. He grunts, sags forward, then spins and backhands her, almost tearing her head off.

VEGA (cont'd)
Bitch!

She flies back, out; Jack's neck swells with rage and, with a cry, he leaps on Vega. He gets in a couple of strong shots with the Arm as they both go down. They roll a few times, clutching each other, then Vega tosses him off like a doll. Jack gets to his feet, still furious but controlled. He is measuring his opponent. Rikki doesn't move.

VEGA (cont'd)
After I kill you, I'm gonna rip her
apart... arms first, then legs.

Jack circles him cautiously, bleeding from his wounds... we can see he is weakening.

VEGA (cont'd)
Not gonna last too long, bleeding like
that.

Jack just keeps circling. He slows, looks faint, starts to sag. Vega moves closer, confident... and Jack catapults into him, driving the Arm into his chest. Vega's eyes bulge and he chokes... Jack has hurt him. Jack bangs him again. Vega, enraged and in pain, slams a vicious combination to his face and body. He grabs him, lifts him high and tries to throw him off the roof. Jack manages to get a hand on a smokestack as he flies by it... it slows him enough so he falls short. Vega is right on him. He grabs both of Jack's ears and starts slamming his head into the roof. Jack drives a metal fist hard into his ribs ... Vega grunts but doesn't let go. Jack, starting to lose consciousness, tries to work the Arm's hand up to Vega's face. He manages to get Vega's chin in the palm of the hand. Vega's possessed... he doesn't give a shit.

VEGA (cont'd)
(through his teeth)
Time for lights out, soldier.

(CONTINUED)

He squeezes harder, concentrating on strangling Jack. Horrible gurgling noises squeeze from between his lips. We can see Jack's good hand rising slowly, heading for Vega's face. It seems to take forever. Jack's face is purple and his eyes are starting to flutter.

His real hand reaches the other... a finger brushes the back of it... and a spray of gas shoots from the forefinger. Vega roars and both his hands fly to his face, fingers digging at his eyes. Jack clubs him square in the face and scrambles out from underneath him. He clubs him again... and again... and again... the blows reviving him, pushing him higher. For the first time, he has the upper hand. Vega lashes out, missing, tears streaming down his face. Jack winds up with the Arm and swings it like a baseball bat and breaks Vega's jaw. The cyborg screams... and Jack smiles malevolently. His wounds are forgotten. Vega struggles to clear his vision, his hands ripping bloody furrows in his face.

Jack suddenly slides in close, rips the pouch off Vega's neck and spins him around. He clubs him to his knees from behind, yanks several different colored chips out, jams them into Vega's transducer and jumps back.

Vega suddenly snaps upright, the gas in his eyes forgotten. His eyes bulge in horror as an awful shudder drives through his body. Jack backs up, trying to catch his breath, watching. Vega starts running in place, going faster and faster. He starts in one direction, spins, goes in another, spins again... as though he is banging into an invisible wall. The look on his face tells us he is at the complete mercy of his exoskeleton.

His arms shoot out in different directions, constantly moving, out of control. He is spinning now, whirling, like some dancing humanoid top, his arms and legs bending and twirling at impossible angles. There is a crack as a bone snaps... then another.... another... more and more, faster and faster. Every bone in his body is being broken and the splintered ends are piercing his organs as he literally dances himself to death. Finally, with a last, curdling scream, he is bent backward until his head touches the ground behind him... and his spine snaps sickeningly. Dead, his body crumples in a metallic heap.

Jack stares disbelievingly for a moment, then rushes to Rikki's side. She is coming to, a lump and a cut on her head but all right otherwise. He touches her cheek gently and she smiles weakly.

RIKKI

Is it... over?

A cold wind blows through Jack's face.

(CONTINUED)

7 con't (7)

117

JACK

Almost.

118 INT. - ACCOUNTANT'S OFFICE - NIGHT

118

Chrome is sitting slumped over her desk, her back to us. The monitor in front of her is turned off.

JACK (O.S.)

Chrome.

She straightens slowly in her chair. Jack moves into the room, motioning for Rikki to stay at the door. His face doesn't hold an ounce of anything but hate. As he walks up to her, she turns with a ghastly smile. We see a row of surgical instruments laid out in front of her.

CHROME

(indicating)

I'm going to use these on you.

Jack's Arm shoots out and grabs her throat. He squeezes hard.

RIKKI

Jack...don't!

JACK

(fierce)

Shut up! This between us! Right, Chrome?

Her lips stretch wide...it is hideous. Her eyes are wild and half-crazy; she has dropped over some unknown edge in the last few hours.

JACK (cont'd)

(squeezing harder)

Right!?

Chrome make no move to struggle. Even as tightens his grip, we can see the resolve fading from his eyes. She is almost unconscious when he suddenly releases his grip. She coughs a few times, then looks up at him with disgust.

CHROME

You were weak before and you're still weak. That's why I'll always win.

Rikki lets out a cry of surprise and Jack turns to look. What's left of Chrome's men enter the room, weapons ready. Probably about a half dozen of them.

(CONTINUED)

9 con't

118

CHROME (cont'd)

I'll give you a choice, Jack. It's only fair. Of course, I'll keep our sweet Rikki. But you... you can either be carved up or blown to pieces.

Jack instantly gauges the chance of taking them all out... none. They edge closer, fingering their triggers. Jack looks like he might leap... Chrome just smiles more crazily... and Peltz strides briskly into the room, ignoring everyone. He starts gathering up his personal effects. Chrome watches him for a few moments, as does everyone.

CHROME (cont'd)

(finally)

What do you think you're doing?

PELTZ

(without looking at her)

I'm leaving. I have to find a new job.

CHROME

You work for me... until I decide otherwise.

PELTZ

I'm afraid not.

He punches in a sequence on the keyboard and hits the "enter" button. On the monitor in front of her, we see a steady stream of information: UNITED RED CROSS...2 BILLION. GREENPEACE... 3.8 BILLION. PAN-AFRICA AIDS RELIEF...5.2 BILLION...etc.

PELTZ (cont'd)

You have received over sixty-five messages of thanks from various groups like those and more are pouring in. All your money has been given to charities.

(beat)

You are effectively without funds.

CHROME

What!? All my money?

PELTZ

All but 1.5 million that was transferred to a Swiss account opened on behalf of Robert Quine.

(CONTINUED)

9 con't (2)

118

Jack looks over at Rikki and a slow, lazy smile breaks out on his face. Rikki matches his grin.

PELTZ (cont'd)
Therefore, you can no longer pay me.
(looks over at the
thugs)
Or anyone. Ever again.

As this sinks in, the thugs simply lower their weapons, turn and walk out. Chrome stares after them, choking on rage, sputtering, finally running after them.

CHROME
Come back here this second! You all
work for me! I own you!

And on and on o.s., fainter and fainter. Peltz, his things under his arm, strides briskly past them.

PELTZ
No hard feelings, I hope. Strictly
business.

And he's gone. Jack and Rikki stare after him...at each other... then Rikki flies into his arms, laughing and holding him tight.

119 EXT. - STREET - NIGHT

119

The street is still in a state of tumult. Chrome's thugs pile into her limo at the curb as she comes running out of the House of Blue Lights, still yelling. When she sees them in her car, she starts pounding on the windows and door. It suddenly opens and two of them jump out. One reaches down the front of her top and pulls out her wallet. He opens it, takes her cash and throws it back in her face. Her outrage abruptly changes to fear... no one is afraid of her any more.

The other man leans close and grabs her by the back of her throat. She shuts her eyes tight, quivering. He opens his mouth and slowly, deliberately, disgustingly licks her cheek like a dog. Then, laughing, they jump back into her limo and take off.

120 INT. HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - NIGHT

120

The place is a shambles but money has stopped spewing, the sprinklers are shut down, the alarms are silent. It is over. Jack is on a pay phone, Rikki next to him.

CUT TO:

1 INT. - FINN'S PLACE - NIGHT

121

Bobby's head is resting on the deck. The phone rings and rings. Finally, he picks it up. He sits up slowly, his back still to us, as he speaks.

JACK (O.S.)
Bobby, you all right? Bobby?

BOBBY
(slowly)
I'm okay.

JACK (O.S.)
(ebullient)
We burned her, son. You burned her.
You did one great fucking job.

BOBBY
Not good enough. She got Doris.

BACK TO:

JACK

as he gives Rikki a strange look.

JACK
Bobby, you okay? What do you mean,
they got Doris? She's not real, how
could anybody get her?...

BOBBY
Never mind...

CUT TO:

BOBBY

BOBBY
...I'll explain it all when you get
back.

He hangs up the phone and stands wearily. He turns to face us and he looks like he has aged thirty years. His hair is white and receding and his face is wrinkled. But he smiles now and we see the old Bobby in it.

BOBBY (cont'd)
(shakes his head)
Wasn't real. That's a good one.

He walks toward us and we

CUT TO:

2 EXT. - SIDEWALK - NIGHT

122

Chrome slinks along the sidewalk, her head constantly twisting to lok around her. This is the first time in many years she has been out on the street alone. People look at her curiously, which only increases her furtiveness.

MAN (O.S.)

Hey... ain't you Chrome?

She whirls to see a MAN standing there, eyeing her with distaste. He is a hustler, dressed in worn, dirty clothes.

CHROME
(tentative)

Why?

The Man moves surprisingly quick and grabs her arm. She freezes with fear.

MAN

You don't look so high and mighty now,
do you?

He reaches up and touches her ear. When she cringes, he rips the large diamond earring out of it. He examines it and whistles, impressed. He whistles again but, this time, to someone o.s. Three mangy FRIENDS of his pop out from a doorway and head over, a feral gleam in their eyes.

MAN (cont'd)
(toothless smile)

We're gonna show you how the other
half lives.

They descend on her and we

CUT TO:

123 EXT. - STREET - NIGHT

123

Away from the House of Blue Lights. It is almost quiet, the noise fading in the background. No one else is on the sidestreet they've taken. They walk arm in arm. Rikki glances at the Combat Arm.

RIKKI

When are you gonna take that thing
off?

(CONTINUED)

3 con't

123

JACK

What thing?

(innocently)

Oh, this? I forgot I had it on.

(smiles)

Soon as we get back to Finn's. Then
we'll get our share of the money...

RIKKI

Our share?

JACK

Yeah, our. You and me. Ours.
Together. Nothing wrong with that, is
there?

RIKKI

(big smile)

Nothing wrong at all.

(sudden, childlike)

Could we go someplace, take a trip?

JACK

Absolutely. Where?

A million choices run through her head at once. She starts to
answer but puts her head on his shoulder instead.

RIKKI

I don't know. I just want to go
someplace.

(beat)

With you.

They turn a corner and they're gone.

THE END