

EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF L.A. STREETS AND FREEWAYS - NIGHT.

Car lights glitter down below, flickering across the endless network of streets and freeways that span the L.A. basin. From above, the city looks like an electronic grid. Or a maze. The tiny pinpricks of red and white light move in different directions, but never seem to find their way out. Over these images, we hear a man's voice:

DRIVER V/O

...Hundred thousand streets in this city, you don't need to know the route. You give me a time and place, I give you a five minute window. Those five minutes, I'm yours. Whatever goes down, I'm yours. Minute either side, we're on our own...

INT. LOW RENT APARTMENT/ KOREATOWN/ L.A. - NIGHT.

A map of downtown L.A. is spread out on a bed, dozens of different routes marked in pencil. The voiceover continues.

DRIVER V/O

...One more thing. You won't be able to reach me on this number again...

DRIVER hangs up the phone. He folds his map of LA and slips it in his suitcase. His clothes are also packed, immaculately. He zips the suitcase shut and takes one last look at the cheap TV set. On screen, the L.A. Clippers are taking a pounding from the New York Knicks. Driver's more interested in the scoreboard clock than the game itself. He studies it a moment, then switches off the TV.

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING LOT/ APARTMENT/ KOREATOWN - NIGHT.

The apartment block's laundry room is next to the parking lot. Driver walks with his head down, carrying his suitcase, not even glancing at the handful of NEIGHBOURS who are busy with their washing. He enters the dimly lit car park and heads towards a black Chevy Impala.

INT/EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ ALVARADO - NIGHT.

The Clippers-Knicks game plays on the radio now. Driver is only half listening, focused on the road. We see his face in the passing neon lights. Feline good looks. Impassive blue eyes. All ice. He drives carefully, letting other cars overtake.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Driver pulls into the parking lot of another low-rent apartment block.

INT. STAIRWAY/ APARTMENT BUILDING/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Clutching his suitcase, Driver heads up the stairs. Hurrying down in the opposite direction he sees a pretty LATINA GIRL wearing a waitress's outfit under her coat. Their eyes meet briefly, a hint of mutual curiosity, then they both look away.

INT. APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Driver unlocks the door to his new apartment. It's not all that different from his last one. Clean, sparse, and anonymous. He doesn't even bother to walk in. He just leaves his suitcase inside and locks the door again.

INT/EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - NIGHT

Driver's back on the road, the basketball game still playing on the radio. He drives past a row of brightly lit Mexican food shacks on Silver Lake Boulevard and turns into a run down garage called *Shannon's Lube 'n Tune*.

INT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - NIGHT.

An OLD MAN with ruffled white hair and a sleepy smile opens the garage door in his vest.

DRIVER

I wake you up?

OLD MAN (SHANNON)

I fell asleep in front of the TV.

DRIVER

Anything good?

SHANNON

Spanish novella. There's this girl I'm in love with...

Shannon's pet cat, "Miss Dickinson", sidles up to Driver affectionately as they head through the garage.

SHANNON

You want something to eat?

DRIVER

I already ate at Denny's.

SHANNON

You call that food. Even Miss Dickinson eats better than you...

The cat follows them past rows of beautiful vintage cars - Fords, Dodges, Buicks, Chevys.

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SHANNON

...I spent all afternoon under her hood and she still drives like a goddamn mango...

Shannon leads Driver to a plain looking hatchback.

SHANNON

...Pearl white Honda Civic. Most popular car in the state of California...

Driver casts his eyes over the unimpressive vehicle.

INT/EXT. HONDA CIVIC/ TOY DISTRICT/ DOWNTOWN L.A. - NIGHT.

The basketball game is approaching the end of the third quarter now. Driver cruises past rows of dingy toy stores on 3rd Street, glancing at his watch. It's 9:50. He checks his rear view mirror, then turns into a side street.

INT/ EXT. HONDA CIVIC/ ELECTRONICS SUPERSTORE/ DOWNTOWN - NIGHT.

A vast electronics superstore dominates the deserted street. Under the pale yellow glow of the street lamps, Driver sees signs advertising a '*huge blow out weekend sale*'. He pulls over, making sure he has a good view of the entrance. On the radio, the basketball commentator is getting more and more excited.

BASKETBALL COMMENTARY

...This is some comeback from the Clippers! Only a few minutes ago they looked dead and buried!...

Satisfied with his vantage point, Driver reaches under the seat and pulls out a small hand-held scanner. He switches it on, tuning it to the right frequency. Crackling police dispatches are interspersed with the basketball commentary now.

POLICE SCANNER

...9 Adam 81, what is your current location?...Repeat, what is your current location?...

BASKETBALL COMMENTARY

...Another unbelievable three pointer from Cassell and the Clippers are within five!...

Inside the store, everything is dark and silent for a moment, then suddenly the alarm screams to life. Driver doesn't show a flicker of emotion, his eyes fixed straight ahead.

BASKETBALL COMMENTARY

...Time out Knicks...

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Two masked MEN burst out of the building. One covers the door with a sawn-off shotgun, while the other strides out, carrying a bulging hold-all.

Driver hits the gas. In one smooth movement the Honda sweeps towards the entrance. Driver steers with one hand, then reaches behind the seat and pushes open the back door with the other.

The masked men slide into the back seat and he floors the gas, taking off at speed. In his rear view mirror he sees a SECURITY GUARD running out of the building. He slaloms out of the gates before the man has a chance to get a look at his license plate.

INT/ EXT. HONDA CIVIC/ STREETS/ DOWNTOWN - NIGHT.

Driver eases his foot off the gas now, gliding over the 1st Street bridge towards Boyle Heights. In the back seat, the two armed robbers rip off their masks. They look like tough, uncompromising professionals, the kind you don't want to let down. Driver turns right on Mission Street as his police scanner crackles to life.

POLICE SCANNER

...Attention all units...211...Superstore
on Traction Avenue...Suspects headed
Eastbound on 1st Street...Driving a white
hatchback...

Driver swings right on 4th Street now, crossing the L.A. river again, heading back in the same direction he came.

POLICE SCANNER

...Airships dispatched...Downtown and Boyle
Heights...All units standby. Repeat, all
units standby...

Up ahead, the lights of Downtown L.A. glitter against the night sky. Suddenly among the static green glow of the skyscrapers, Driver sees the red and white glint of a police helicopter. He switches off his lights, turning left on Santa Fe Avenue.

INT/ EXT. HONDA/ ALLEYWAYS/ INDUSTRIAL AREA/ DOWNTOWN - NIGHT.

The armed robbers watch in tense silence as Driver weaves in and out of the industrial alleyways with his lights still off. It's as if he's trying to find his way out of the maze, or probing to see if there's anyone out there.

POLICE SCANNER

...1 Baker 11, headed south on Boyle
Avenue...No sign of suspects...Repeat, no
sign of suspects...

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The armed robbers look relieved, when suddenly a police car glides past at the end of the alleyway, with its lights also off. It's like catching a glimpse of a passing shark's fin. Driver taps the brakes gently, the car sliding to a silent stop. He stays there a moment, then eases the Honda forward, heading in the same direction as the black-and-white.

INT/ EXT. HONDA/ LA RIVER INDUSTRIAL AREA/ DOWNTOWN - NIGHT.

It's a high-risk strategy but Driver follows the black-and-white at a distance, hidden in the darkness, knowing other patrol cars won't be following the same route. The police car makes its way through the dimly lit industrial zone, unaware it's being followed. Driver turns his car radio up a whisper.

BASKETBALL COMMENTARY

...And for the first time in the game the Clippers have the lead. 71 to 69. Seven to go in the Fourth here at the Staples Centre...

Driver turns the sound back down. Up ahead, the police car swings left, disappearing from view. Driver slows down, trying to anticipate the cops' next move. He doesn't have long to wait. In the distance, he suddenly sees the piercing beam of the police chopper's search-lights, sweeping the area one more time.

Driver thinks a moment, then floors the pedal, speeding towards the approaching helicopter. The armed robbers are too stunned to protest. They just sit there, watching the sweeping searchlights getting closer and closer.

Then suddenly it becomes clear what Driver's doing. Up ahead, there's a small underpass below the 7th Street bridge. Driver slides the car under the safety of the bridge just before the chopper's searchlights catch sight of them.

INT/ EXT. HONDA/ UNDERPASS/ LA RIVER INDUSTRIAL AREA - NIGHT.

The roar of the helicopter thunders overhead. The underpass is crammed with dirty mattresses and shopping carts. Sleeping figures can be seen under dirty blankets. Driver waits for the echo of the helicopter to fade, then reverses out again.

INT/ EXT. HONDA/ OLYMPIC BOULEVARD/ DOWNTOWN - NIGHT.

Rows of delivery trucks are parked outside the meat-packing factories on Olympic. Driver heads cautiously down the deserted street. The crackling of the police scanner and the droning of the basketball commentary add to the tension. Up ahead, he sees car-lights streaming back and forth on Broadway.

DRIVER

You might want to lie down...

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The armed robbers crouch down on the back seat.

INT/ EXT. HONDA CIVIC/ BROADWAY/ DOWNTOWN - NIGHT.

There's a steady flow of traffic on Broadway. Driver makes sure there are no Black-and-Whites in sight, then falls in behind the other cars. On the radio, the basketball game is still playing.

BASKETBALL COMMENTARY

...Three minutes left. Dunleavy calls a time out and it's the Clippers by one...

The passing head-lights light up Driver's face. There's not a trace of emotion on his face. Even when he sees a patrol car heading towards him in the opposite direction.

BASKETBALL COMMENTARY

...Buckle up your seat belts Clippers fans. This game really is too close to call...

The two cars pass each other slowly. Driver senses the cops in the Black-and-White peering at the Honda, but they make no attempt to swing around. Not yet anyway. Driver turns down the basketball game and focuses on the police scanner.

POLICE SCANNER

...This is 1 David 16...White Honda Civic headed South on Broadway and Pico...Couldn't get a look at her license plates...Appears to be only one occupant...

In the back seat, the armed robbers wait nervously for the police dispatch to respond.

POLICE SCANNER

...1 David 16...why don't you check her out...

As soon as he hears this, Driver swerves sharply into the next street.

INT/ EXT. HONDA/ SIDESTREET OFF BROADWAY/ DOWNTOWN - NIGHT.

Driver guns around the block now, building up speed.

POLICE SCANNER

...This is 1 David 16...We lost the suspect somewhere between Broadway and Grand...Possible evasive action...Request airship and additional units...

INT/ EXT. HONDA/ WEST PICO BOULEVARD/ DOWNTOWN - NIGHT.

Driver bursts out onto Pico now. A squad car headed in the opposite direction slows down as it sees him, but is caught up in the flow of traffic, unable to turn round and give chase.

POLICE SCANNER

...1 David 11...suspect headed Westbound on Pico...

Driver threads his way through the vehicles in front of him, so smooth and effortless it's hard to tell how fast he's going. He glances up as he hears the dull rumble of a police chopper overhead. The helicopter is almost directly above him, swinging its search-beam back and forth to get a lock on his position.

Driver pushes the car as fast as it will go, but there's no way of outrunning the chopper. Blue light floods the asphalt around him as he guns down Figueroa.

POLICE SCANNER

All units...pursuit in progress...white Honda Civic...Headed Northbound on Figueroa...

Even now, Driver doesn't panic, turning his attention back to the basketball game.

BASKETBALL COMMENTARY

Maggette pulls up from behind the arc, misses. Rebound New York. One eighteen to play...

Driver swerves sharply towards the sparkling lights of the Staples Centre.

INT/ EXT. HONDA/ STAPLES CENTRE/ PARKING LOT - NIGHT.

The terraced parking lot looms up ahead. A sign above the barrier says '*Season Ticket Holders Only*'. Driver punches in his ticket and roars into the parking lot.

INT. HONDA/ STAPLES CENTRE PARKING LOT - NIGHT.

The Honda screeches from one level to the next. With a game going on, the parking lot is completely full. Finally Driver pulls into a free parking space.

BASKETBALL COMMENTARY

...Thirty seconds remaining and all the Knicks have to do is run out the clock...

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For all their professionalism, the armed robbers look tense, realizing they're cornered. Driver listens calmly to the overlapping basketball game and police scanner.

POLICE SCANNER

...Attention all units...suspect headed towards the Staples Centre...

BASKETBALL COMMENTARY

...Mobley steals. Passes to Cassell. Last chance for the Clippers...

Driver glances in his side mirror. Behind him, dozens of FANS are streaming out into the parking lot before the game has ended, hoping to avoid the post-match traffic.

BASKETBALL COMMENTARY

...Cassell back to Mobley...Mobley for three...This is unbelievable!...

The jubilant commentary continues, but Driver isn't listening anymore. The game has served its purpose. Hundreds of fans flood into the parking lot now. Dozens of cars pull out of their parking places. Within seconds the parking lot is a seething mass of blaring vehicles.

BASKETBALL COMMENTARY

...What a remarkable comeback...Outplayed for most of the game, the Clippers have shown incredible resilience...

Driver glances at the armed robbers, and nods. It's time. They climb out of the car without a word, merging in with the crowd, heading off in different directions.

EXT. STAPLES CENTRE/ DOWNTOWN L.A. - NIGHT.

Outside, the streets around the Staples Centre are clogged with traffic. We start on Driver's white hatchback, then slowly PULL OUT. Beneath us, we see that dozens of the other cars in the chaos are also white Honda Civics. As we continue to climb, we hear police sirens and glimpse flashing gumballs, but the endless walls of hemmed-in cars prevent the Black-and-Whites from getting anywhere near Driver. We keep climbing, gazing down at the hundreds of different shaped, different sized vehicles - and realize that somewhere below, Driver is making his getaway.

EXT. BUFFET TABLE/ FILM SET/ SAN PEDRO/ LOS ANGELES - DAY.

A SLOW DISSOLVE to a buffet table -- cold cuts, pizza, salads, doughnuts. Driver stands in line, carrying a tray, piling food onto two plates. To our surprise, he's dressed as a police officer. It's only when we see the cameras and lighting rigs behind him that we realize he's on a film set.

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All around him, the CREW are busy laughing and chatting, but Driver keeps himself to himself. As he reaches the end of the line, he smiles at one of the CHEFS.

DRIVER

Thanks for the tickets, Stu.

CHEF

First time I miss a game and look how they go and play. That Mobely three pointer must've really been something?...

DRIVER

Had my heart in my mouth...

Driver smiles again and heads off with his tray.

EXT. VEHICLE AREA/ FILM SET/ SAN PEDRO/ LOS ANGELES - DAY.

Shannon, the old garage owner we met earlier, lies under a police car on a lift, working on the suspension. Driver lays their tray of food down on the hood.

DRIVER

They're out of doughnuts.

SHANNON O/S

Bullshit...

Shannon slides out from under the car and limps up on his bad leg. He frowns as he sees the plate of healthy looking salads.

SHANNON

You putting me on a diet?

DRIVER

Don't want you having a heart attack. Who's gonna look after 'Miss Dickinson'?...

Shannon takes the plate of salad with exaggerated distaste when someone calls out to him from one of the trailers.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Hey, Shannon! Be with you in a couple of minutes!...

Shannon acknowledges the irritating AD with a wave.

SHANNON

Sure thing, Jimmy...

(Under his breath)

Asshole's been saying that for five hours...

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Driver smiles, gazing across the busy film set. The AD returns to a huddle with the DIRECTOR, a MOVIE STAR, and a STUNT DOUBLE who's dressed in exactly the same clothes as the movie star.

SHANNON

...I got a call from our friends. They like the way you drive. They wanna use you again.

DRIVER

You tell 'em we never work for the same people twice?

SHANNON

I told them you didn't. Said if I wasn't a crippled old stunt whore I'd do it myself.

DRIVER

How much do we still need?

SHANNON

The way you turn down work, I'll be long gone by the time we make it...

(Trying to make it sound casual)
I'm gonna see a friend about a loan.

DRIVER

What kind of friend?

SHANNON

Don't worry. He's a stand-up guy. I used to drive for him way back -

(Breaking off)
Sonofabitch, what does he want now?...

The AD comes running over like an eager errand boy, waving two toy cars.

AD

Change of plan, guys. We're gonna try something different. Gordon's had a great idea...

Shannon rolls his eyes. Driver looks over at the stunt double, GORDON LIGOCKI. He's busy impressing the director and the movie star. Meanwhile, the AD takes his toy cars and demonstrates the sequence on the hood of the black and white.

AD

...What happens is you drive outta the alleyway, swerve past a couple of obstacles, then screech to a stop like you're trying to block off Gordon's escape.

(MORE)

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AD (cont'd)

He keeps coming at you. You take out your gun and fire a couple of rounds at his car.

DRIVER

And miss from ten yards?

AD

(Missing the sarcasm)

Don't worry about that. He'll hit the pipe ramp and fly over you. Hopefully when he lands, his back wheels'll crush the hood of your car.

SHANNON

Or the roof.

The AD misses the sarcasm again.

AD

We wanna go first thing in the morning.
How's that sound?

SHANNON

Sounds dumb. You can't pull off a stunt like that in the dark.

AD

Gordon says it's a piece of cake.

SHANNON

Sure he does. All he has to do is hit a pipe ramp. We miss our mark, he's gonna crush us like a meringue.

AD

Director loves the idea. What do you want me to tell him, guys?...

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S POLICE CAR/ FILM SET/ SAN PEDRO - DAY.

Driver's black and white roars out of the alleyway, swerving erratically between several cones, then spinning out of control in a reverse 180' before it comes to a screeching stop. Shannon limps over to his window with a grin.

SHANNON

Good enough for me.

DRIVER

Not for me...

Driver reverses back to his starting point.

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SHANNON

(Calling after him)

Bet you a hundred bucks it winds up on the cutting room floor...

Now we see Driver repeat the same manoeuvre over and over again, trying different variations on the swerves and spins, a relentless perfectionist. Shannon watches him with an exasperated smile. He ends his last practice run with a 360' doughnut turn, stopping right on his mark.

INT. CORRIDOR/ APARTMENT BUILDING/ ECHO PARK - DAY.

Carrying a heavy mattress, Driver heads down the corridor of his new apartment. At the other end of the corridor, a door opens, and the pretty Latina girl he saw earlier walks out with a YOUNG BOY of 5 or 6. Driver leans against the wall so they can pass.

LATINA GIRL (IRINA)

You need a hand?

Driver looks at her, then at her little boy.

DRIVER

Thanks ma'am. I'll be fine...

The little boy is still staring at Driver as his mother leads him away.

INT. CHINA BELLE RESTAURANT/ CHINATOWN/ DOWNTOWN L.A. - EVENING.

A noisy restaurant. Shannon's busy tucking into a bowl of noodles, using a fork rather than his chopsticks. He's having dinner with his friend, BERNIE ROSE, a tough looking mobster his own age. Bernie Rose shakes his head as he studies the documents Shannon's given him to read.

BERNIE ROSE

I don't understand these numbers -- just tell me how much you need?

SHANNON

Let me talk you through it first.

BERNIE ROSE

That must mean a lot.

SHANNON

Doesn't have to. The big money teams burn through three, four million a year, but that's 'cause they're using half a dozen test drivers and a stable of cars.

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BERNIE ROSE

I don't know the first thing about racing but I assume there's a reason for that?

SHANNON

Sure, but it's not the only way. All we need is a hard-used stock car. They get rid of them all the time. We start off with the small-town action, then work our way up. There's close to 2000 events out there and once we make the Show we're talking millions.

BERNIE ROSE

'Millions'? Since when did you become a dreamer?

SHANNON

Since I bust up my legs. Look, I wouldn't come to you unless I was sure about this.

BERNIE ROSE

How can you be sure? What have you got these big shot teams don't have?

SHANNON

I got a driver.

BERNIE ROSE

You just told me they had half a dozen drivers.

SHANNON

Not like this one...

Shannon stares at his friend with quiet conviction now.

SHANNON

I've been looking after this guy a long time. I had enough money I'd back him myself...

(A beat)

I'm telling you, Bernie, put this kid behind a wheel there's nothing he can't do.

INT. DRIVER'S BEDROOM/ APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - EVENING

The TV plays in the background. Driver lies on his bed, studying a storyboard for his scene the next day, finding the cartoonish sketches absurd. A knock on the door interrupts him. He climbs off the bed and has a look through the spyhole. There's no-one there. Alert now, he opens the door.

INT. CORRIDOR/ APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - EVENING.

To his surprise, Driver sees the little boy from next door standing in the corridor, wearing a cowboy hat.

BENICIO
You got some eggs?

Driver stares back at him curiously.

DRIVER
What?

BENICIO
My mom wants to know if you got some eggs?

Driver still looks confused.

DRIVER
No...

Suddenly he hears the door across the corridor open. Irina steps out in an apron, her pretty face flushed and her hands covered in flour.

IRINA
I'm sorry, I had to keep an eye on the onions. You don't have any eggs, do you, I just broke the whole box?...

Driver stares at her in confusion now.

DRIVER
No, ma'am.

IRINA
I guess we won't be having cornbread then...

She gives him a friendly smile.

IRINA
I'm Irina, and this is Benicio...

Driver takes a moment to reply.

DRIVER
Nice to meet you...

He doesn't volunteer his name or try to pursue the conversation.

IRINA
How's the move going?...

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DRIVER

Okay...

He's as guarded as she is open.

IRINA

Well, if you're hungry we got plenty of food. You're welcome to join us...

DRIVER

Thanks, ma'am, I've already eaten...

Driver smiles politely, clearly trying to end the conversation.

INT. DENNY'S RESTAURANT/ EAST LA - NIGHT.

The noise of people chattering fills the busy restaurant. Driver sits at a corner table, eating on his own. Two pretty COLLEGE GIRLS sit at the table next to him, glancing over as they gossip, clearly interested. He doesn't hear a word they say, or even notice them, concentrating on his food.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - NIGHT.

The glare of passing neon signs rolls down the windscreen. Driver's cruising down Hollywood Boulevard, killing time. Outside, the HOOKERS have taken over the street, stepping out from the sidewalk and gesturing to him. We're not sure if he'll take up their invitations or not, but we sense this is his routine - bouts of insomnia relieved by all-night tours of LA's streets and neighbourhoods, waiting for morning to come.

EXT. FILM SET/ SAN PEDRO/ LOS ANGELES - DAWN.

Driver follows the irritating AD down the steps of the crew bus, chewing on a bacon and egg sandwich, dressed as a cop again. Shannon limps after them irritably.

SHANNON

...I still don't see why you can't shine a red-head on the pipe-ramp. You're gonna get rid of it in post anyway.

AD

Shannon, why don't you just stay warm in the bus and let me do my job.

SHANNON

'Cause I don't trust you or your golden boy. He gets it wrong, we're fucked.

DRIVER

You mean I'm fucked.

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AD

See, it has nothing to do with you.

SHANNON

It has everything to do with me. I'm the kid's agent. He's worth a lotta money to me...

They keep arguing as they head down to the set, huge flood-lights glowing up ahead.

INT/ EXT. POLICE CAR/ FILM SET/ SAN PEDRO - DAWN.

Driver sits at the wheel of the Black-and-White now while the STUNT SUPERVISOR checks his four-point harness is strapped on tight.

STUNT SUPERVISOR

(Signalling to the camera crew)

All set!...

Driver watches the Stunt Supervisor disappear in his rear-view mirror, then calmly unstraps his regulation safety harness, clipping on his seat belt instead.

2ND UNIT DIRECTOR O/S

Camera ready, sound ready...

Shannon stands among the safety crew, still looking pissed off.

2ND UNIT DIRECTOR

...And ACTION!...

Driver waits a few seconds, then floors the pedal, screeching out of the alleyway. He swerves between several oil drums, then spins dramatically in a 360' turn before he hits his mark.

For a split second, he almost forgets he's supposed to fire at the other car. It's only when he hears Gordon Ligocki's Charger roaring towards him, that he remembers, pulling out a replica handgun and pretending to fire it out the window.

Through the Charger's windscreen, he can see Gordon Ligocki's grinning face, but all he cares about is his angle of entry. The sleek black car gets closer and closer, then hits the pipe ramp at speed, taking off. Instantly, Driver's expert eye sees that Ligocki's hit the ramp a fraction to the left. He whips off his seat-belt and hurls himself into the passenger seat.

The Charger arcs downwards, its back wheels landing on the driver's side roof of the Black-and-White, before it bounces off the hood. The roof collapses like a crushed meringue. If Driver hadn't moved in time he'd be badly bruised at best.

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Up ahead, Gordon Ligocki's car skids to a showy stop.

2ND UNIT DIRECTOR O/S

...And CUT!...

Wild clapping and cheering breaks out. Driver wipes some of the fake 'candyglass' from the shattered windscreen off his face and clambers out of the battered Black-and-White. Only Shannon's there to check if he's okay. Everyone else is surrounding Gordon Ligocki, congratulating him on the stunt. Driver spits out some more candyglass stuck between his lips, when someone calls out.

GORDON LIGOCKI O/S

Hey, Officer!...

Driver turns around. Gordon Ligocki stands there with a smug smile, pointing his fingers at him like he's firing a gun.

GORDON LIGOCKI

Righteous work out there...

Driver would dearly love to wipe the smile off his face, but instead he nods coolly.

DRIVER

Yourself...

Ligocki's still grinning as Driver and Shannon turn and walk away.

INT. SUPERMARKET/ ECHO PARK - SUNSET.

Supermarket music plays in the background as Driver pushes his shopping cart down the aisle. He stops at the ready meal section, when suddenly he senses someone's watching him. He looks across and sees the little boy from next door, Benicio, staring at him fixedly from the other end of the aisle. Benicio's wearing his cowboy hat again, looking as if he's about to draw his toy pistol at any moment. Irina hasn't spotted Driver yet. Driver hesitates, then heads down another aisle before she sees him, keeping himself to himself.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ STREET/ ECHO PARK - SUNSET.

Driver slows down at a red light on his way home. As he stares out of the window, he sees Irina and her son again. They're walking back to the apartment with their groceries. Benicio seems perfectly content, but Irina's struggling with the heavy bags, putting them down for a rest before she picks them up again. Driver sets off as the lights change to green. For a second we think he's going to drive right past them, but at the last moment, he pulls over and reverses.

INT. KITCHEN/ IRINA'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - SUNSET.

Driver carries Irina's grocery bags into the kitchen for her.

IRINA
Thank you so much...

Benicio hovers by his mother, still staring at Driver.

IRINA
Go get ready for bed, honey...

The little boy leaves reluctantly.

IRINA
Would you like a beer?

DRIVER
No, I better get back.

IRINA
I'll make it easier for you. I'll be
offended if you refuse.

There's a playful charm to her directness. Driver finds it hard to say no.

INT. LIVING ROOM/ IRINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

Irina's living room is the same size as Driver's, but it's decorated in warm, vibrant colours, as distinctive as his is anonymous. She opens his bottle of beer for him.

IRINA
You just move to LA?...

DRIVER
No, I been here a while.

IRINA
And before that?

DRIVER
Here and there...

She hands him the beer, smiling.

IRINA
Too many questions, huh?...

Driver smiles back awkwardly, not sure how else to respond.

IRINA
How's your beer?...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

Fine.

IRINA

Soon as you finish it you're free to go...

It's only when she grins that he realizes she's joking. She looks at him a moment, then turns away as Benicio walks back in from his bedroom, wearing a pair of pyjamas with prints of cowboys and Indians.

IRINA

How come you never wear those pyjamas I bought you for your birthday?

BENICIO

I like these ones better...

The little boy looks at Driver now. Driver glances back at him, feeling like he should say something.

DRIVER

Can't decide if you're a cowboy or an Indian, huh?

BENICIO

I'm both...

Benicio stares at him with the same dark eyes and penetrating gaze as his mother.

DRIVER

Can't argue with that.

BENICIO

How old are you?...

Irina can't help smiling at Driver's discomfort. He's clearly not a natural around kids.

DRIVER

Twenty six.

BENICIO

No, you're not. My mom's twenty six.

IRINA

Benicio...

She smiles again, looking embarrassed.

DRIVER

All right, you win. I'm thirty three.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BENICIO

Then you shouldn't lie.

IRINA

Okay, interrogation over. Time for bed...

She wraps her arm around her son affectionately and leads him off to bed.

IRINA

I'll be right back...

Driver takes a long sip of beer now, anxious to leave. He glances around the room as he waits for Irina to return. Among the Spanish style prints and wall-hangings he notices a few photographs. One of them shows Benicio standing next to a wiry guy with gangbanger tattoos. From the way the man has his arm around Benicio's shoulder, Driver assumes it's his father.

IRINA O/S

Sorry about the third degree.

DRIVER

That's okay. He's a smart kid...

Irina hesitates as she realizes he's been looking at the photographs.

IRINA

That's his father...

DRIVER

Yeah, I guessed it was. What's he do?

IRINA

Lately he's been into charity work, helping provide jobs for state workers...

Driver doesn't understand.

IRINA

He's inside. They got him taking down a savings and loan...

DRIVER

I'm sorry...

She clearly doesn't like talking about it, changing the subject.

IRINA

So, what do you do?

DRIVER

I'm in the movies.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

IRINA
Sure you are.

DRIVER
I'm a driver.

IRINA
Like for limos, right?

DRIVER
No, a stunt driver...

She looks at him incredulously.

IRINA
You mean all those car chases and stuff?

DRIVER
That's me.

IRINA
Wow. You should have told Benicio. He
wouldn't have given you such a hard time.

DRIVER
He interested in that kind of stuff?

IRINA
Aren't all little boys?...

She smiles again, teasing. For all his instinctive reserve,
Driver can't help staring back at her. They're interrupted as
Benicio reappears at the bedroom door.

BENICIO
I can't go to sleep. You're talking too
loud.

IRINA
We're talking about the movies, honey. You
remember the Universal tour we went on last
year with all those guys falling off the
roof?...

She turns to Driver.

IRINA
You ever do tours like that?...

Driver feels put on the spot.

DRIVER
I don't have that kind of clout.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

IRINA

Oh, I didn't mean for you to ask. I meant
was there a number I could call or
something? Weekends it's hard to keep him
entertained...

Driver hesitates, both the mother and son looking at him now.

DRIVER

Usually they don't allow visitors on set...

Irina stares at him quietly, then shrugs, as if it's no big
deal.

EXT/ INT. VIEW OF STREET/ DRIVER'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - DAY.

Passing traffic roars past on the busy street. Irina and Benicio
are walking home again. They look like they've just come back
from the beach, Irina carrying a basket full of towels, Benicio
clutching a dusty soccer ball. Driver stares down at them from
the window of his apartment, blowing gently on a cup of coffee.

EXT. FILM SET/ SAN PEDRO/ LOS ANGELES - DAY.

The crew are busy setting up lights all along the waterfront.

INT. FILM SET/ LOCK-UP/ HARBOUR/ SAN PEDRO - DAY.

A racecar engine gleams under the hood of a souped-up car.
Benicio stares at the bewildering assembly of metal parts and
different coloured wires, still wearing his cowboy outfit.

DRIVER

(Pointing out the engine)

...See that, she's had a Holley carburettor
fitted. Power output's 385 horses at 4500
RPM. Floor the gas she'll go close to 160
miles an hour...

Standing behind them, Irina and Shannon can't help smiling at
Driver's awkward attempts to entertain the boy.

SHANNON

Can't you see the kid's a cowboy? He's not
interested in cars...

Shannon limps over to Benicio with a big grin.

SHANNON

Used to be a cowboy myself before they
stopped shooting Westerns. Doubled for all
the big stars. You ever heard of John
Wayne?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BENICIO

No...

SHANNON

Burt Lancaster?

BENICIO

No...

SHANNON

Clint Eastwood?

BENICIO

No...

SHANNON

Not even Clint, huh? You like roller coasters?

BENICIO

Uh-huh...

SHANNON

Then follow me...

Irina can't help smiling as Benicio falls in behind Shannon.

SHANNON

You might have to walk a little faster. I'm hard to keep up with on these legs...

Benicio quickens his pace now, responding to Shannon's challenge. Driver and Irina follow them out of the lock-up.

EXT. FILM SET/ HARBOUR/ SAN PEDRO - DAY.

Lights and reflector screens glitter all along the waterfront, ready for the next set-up. Driver and Irina walk side-by-side, watching Shannon entertain Benicio up ahead.

IRINA

How long you known him?

DRIVER

Since I was eighteen. I'd just arrived in LA, living out of a beat-up Ford. He gave me my first job and a place to stay.

IRINA

Sounds like you owe him?

DRIVER

He'd never see it that way.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA

But you do?

DRIVER

We're partners...

Up ahead, Shannon's introducing Benicio to some of the other STUNTMEN, making a fuss over him.

IRINA

What happened to his leg?

DRIVER

Car went over a canyon. One minute he was Hollywood's top stuntman, next minute they forgot all about him.

IRINA

Caring business.

DRIVER

That's why we're branching out.

IRINA

Doing what?

DRIVER

Racing cars.

IRINA

Is that your dream?

DRIVER

I don't have dreams. Put my head on the pillow, I'm out like a light.

IRINA

Not when you have company I hope...

She smiles softly. Driver isn't sure if she's flirting or saying it just like that. Up ahead, Shannon points them in the direction of a warehouse, guiding Benicio inside.

INT. FILM SET/ WAREHOUSE/ HARBOUR/ SAN PEDRO - DAY.

A cut-down car is attached to a spit-roast rig, a large cylindrical device that simulates a vehicle rolling over in a crash. Shannon helps Benicio and Irina buckle up in the back seat and calls down to Driver.

SHANNON

Come on, we can all fit in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

You go ahead...

He stands back as Shannon starts the rig. The cut-down car spins round and round like a washing machine, Benicio and Irina shrieking happily in the back seat. Driver smiles, enjoying watching them, but as always a little apart.

INT. BENICIO'S BEDROOM/ IRINA'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Cradling the sleeping Benicio in her arms, Irina lays him down on his bed. She gently takes off his cowboy outfit and slips on his pyjamas, trying not to wake him. Driver watches her from the living room, then turns away, uncomfortable with the intimate moment between mother and son.

INT. LIVING ROOM/ IRINA'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Irina walks out of the bedroom now, smiling at Driver gratefully.

IRINA

Thank you for today. He had a wonderful time...

(A beat)

So did I...

DRIVER

I'm glad...

He stares back at her in the silence, both of them looking a little uncertain.

IRINA

...And I'm sorry if I put you on the spot, you know, having to ask your friend to arrange the visit...

DRIVER

He's a big kid. He probably enjoyed himself more than Benicio.

IRINA

I appreciate it anyway...

Her eyes stay fixed on his, a charged undertone.

IRINA

It's not always easy to meet people when you're on your own with a child. Usually everyone runs a mile. I guess they think it's more trouble than it's worth...

Driver hesitates, sensing she's sounding him out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER
It's no trouble...

She smiles softly, reassured, then turns to the door. She opens it for him, then hesitates, touching his arm gently as he moves past. Driver knows he could kiss her, wants to, but something inside holds him back. Irina seems to read his mind, removing her hand discreetly, smiling goodnight.

EXT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAY.

The roar of machinery. A hauler drops off a second-hand race-car in front of Shannon's garage. It's painted fluorescent pink and covered in corporate signage -- Snickers, Cheerios, Domino's Pizza. Shannon stares at his new investment in subdued silence.

DRIVER
We supposed to drive it or eat it?...

INT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVERLAKE BOULEVARD - DAY.

Miss Dickinson, Shannon's cat, scampers around the colorful racecar, moving from Shannon to Driver. They're both absorbed in their work, highly skilled mechanics. Driver works under the hood while Shannon sweats and strains under the lift. Gradually, in a series of shots, the second-hand stock car begins to look like the real deal.

EXT. SPEEDWAY/ LOS ANGELES COUNTY - DAY.

Irina stands near the edge of the race track with Benicio, watching the transformed stock-car scream around the half-mile oval. Shannon joins her, holding a stop watch.

SHANNON
He's quite something, huh?...

Irina nods, watching Driver open up on the straight.

SHANNON
From the outside, you'd think there ain't a whole lot going on, but inside...
(He pauses meaningfully)
...That's what makes him so goddamn special. He keeps it all in, then lets it out behind the wheel.

IRINA
(Lightly)
Maybe he should get out more...

SHANNON
Or meet someone...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Irina smiles at Shannon's none-too-subtle match-making.

IRINA
Lucky he has you...

SHANNON
I'm not much comfort on those long,
lonesome nights...

Irina can't help laughing now, looking back at the track. The racecar is picking up speed all the time, a thing of awe and beauty. She and Benicio watch it swoop and surge around the high curves like a bird of prey.

INT. LIVING ROOM/ IRINA'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

On TV, the 'Flinstone's' prehistoric car scuttles along the streets of Bedrock, Fred and Wilma arguing in dubbed Spanish, the screen flickering from color to black and white. Driver and Benicio sit on the couch, watching the cartoon. From their relaxed body language, it's clear some time has passed, and they know each other a little better.

DRIVER
What's he saying?...

BENICIO
They're having a fight...

DRIVER
I can see that...

BENICIO
He wants to go bowling and she doesn't want him to...

Irina calls out from her bedroom.

IRINA O/S
I'm almost ready...

Driver looks back at the screen. Wilma's dropping Fred off at the bowling alley.

BENICIO
That's his friend, Barney...

Barney Rubble heads over to Fred now, stopping dead as he sees the stony look on Wilma's face. The color flickers again.

DRIVER
I'm gonna show you a trick...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Benicio watches curiously as Driver gets off the couch and kneels down beside the TV.

DIVER

Now this is pretty complicated. You watching?...

Benicio nods. Driver suddenly gives the TV set a hard smack, and the interference stops.

DIVER

Think you can remember that?...

Benicio grins. Driver smiles back, then looks away as he hears the phone ring. Irina walks out of her bedroom, dressed in her waitresses' uniform, and answers it.

IRINA

Hello?...Yes...Yes, this is she...

Driver sees the look of surprise on her face as she listens to the voice on the other end. The doorbell suddenly rings. Irina catches Driver's eye and asks him to open it. He heads over, checks the spyhole, then opens it. A friendly looking Hispanic lady in her 60's beams at him.

HISPANIC LADY (MRS GUTTIEREZ)

(In Spanish)

Good evening...

DIVER

(In faltering Spanish)

Good evening...

Mrs Guttierrez heads past him as if she's regular visitor to the apartment and scolds Benicio affectionately.

MRS GUTTIEREZ

(In Spanish)

It's 8:30. Teeth. Pyjamas. TV off.

BENICIO

(In Spanish)

It's not TV. It's a DVD...

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Driver's giving Irina a ride to work now, cruising past Echo Park.

DIVER

Everything okay?...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA

Yeah...

He glances at her, catching a brief glimpse of her discomfort, before she changes the subject.

IRINA

Why don't you come eat at our restaurant tonight?...

She doesn't look at him as she says it, still gazing out of the window.

DRIVER

I thought you were working...

IRINA

So? You're used to eating on your own...

She turns to him now with a smile.

IRINA

Come on, break the habit of a lifetime, give Denny's a miss...

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT/ BROADWAY/ DOWNTOWN L.A. - NIGHT.

There's only one other customer in the restaurant -- an OLD MAN with his napkin tucked in his shirt. Driver sits in a nearby booth. He takes a bite of his fish taco, then pulls a face at the hot chilli sauce, making Irina smile.

IRINA

Too hot for you, gringo?

DRIVER

You kidding? In Tucson hot's a way of life.

IRINA

See, now I know where you're from. Another bite and I'll get even more secrets out of you...

She glances over her shoulder, making sure her other customer's okay, then looks back at Driver.

DRIVER

You gonna stand there all night and watch me suffer?...

Irina checks her boss is busy in the kitchen, then takes a seat.

IRINA

No, I'm gonna sit and watch you suffer...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She folds her arms now, gazing into his eyes.

IRINA

So?...

DRIVER

So?...

Their eyes stay on each other, playing out the mock interrogation.

IRINA

So, how come you're not with anyone?...

DRIVER

I'm here with you...

IRINA

You don't get off that easy...

She slides a bowl of Jalapenos in front of him now, like a playful threat. Driver smiles, gazing back at her.

IRINA

I'm serious. Doesn't it get lonely?...

DRIVER

I don't think about it much.

IRINA

I don't believe you...

There's a quiet intensity about her now, eager to know more.

DRIVER

Old guy's waving you over...

IRINA

No, he isn't...

She smiles, calling his bluff, keeping her eyes fixed on his. Driver finally relents.

DRIVER

My line of work you spend a lot of time on your own. Anti-social hours, worrying about yourself the whole time. Won't be like this forever but for now I'm used to it.

IRINA

Nobody gets used to it. That's just a pose...

(She studies him closely)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

IRINA (cont'd)

It's funny - you smash up cars for a living, but you don't like taking risks...

Driver returns her smile, but doesn't say anything.

IRINA

Someone break your heart?

DRIVER

Not yet.

IRINA

Parents get divorced?...

He hesitates, then turns the question back on her.

DRIVER

How come you're so curious all of a sudden?

Irina looks uncomfortable now, glancing behind her, checking on the old man again. He's completely absorbed in his food, wiping his mouth with his napkin every time he takes a bite.

IRINA

He's been coming here every night for the past three years and I don't know anything about him. He orders, pays his cheque, then goes back to wherever it is he lives. That's what I hate about this city...

She pauses, then looks back at Driver.

IRINA

I'm curious because I don't have that long to get to know you...

She says it quietly, almost like an apology. Driver watches her a moment, beginning to understand.

DRIVER

Your phone call?...

She nods.

DRIVER

Was it from your husband?...

IRINA

His lawyer...

She stares into his eyes now with deep regret.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

IRINA

He cut a deal with the DA. They're releasing him next week...

The news hits Driver hard, but he recovers instantly, forcing a smile.

DRIVER

Well, that's good news, right?...

She hesitates.

IRINA

Yeah, I guess. Benicio really misses him...

There's a quiet longing in her eyes. Unable to stop herself, she reaches across the table and takes his hand. It's a tiny gesture, but the effect is electric, more passionate than any kiss. Driver lets his fingers linger between hers for a moment.

DRIVER

Old man really is waving you over...

Reluctantly, Irina tears her eyes away from him. Across the restaurant, the old man is signalling for his cheque.

INT. IRINA'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - DAY.

An eruption of laughter and celebration. A sign in Spanish over the door says, *Welcome home Papa*. Inside the apartment, there's a party going on -- Latin music, balloons and streamers, the roar of conversation. STANDARD GUZMAN's been released from jail and all his homeboys are here to celebrate. He stands among them, receiving congratulations and homecoming gifts.

STANDARD

Can I open it now?...

FRIEND

No, man, not in front of everyone.

STANDARD

You embarrassed? Bet it's a fucking t-shirt. You went and bought me a t-shirt from the one dollar store...

Everyone laughs as Standard hugs his friend. Across the room, Driver helps himself to a beer. He's surrounded by Spanish speakers, feeling out of place. He glances over and sees Irina standing next to her husband. Their eyes meet briefly through the crowd -- an awkward moment -- before Standard's voice interrupts again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STANDARD

...See, this is what I need...
(He holds up an envelope of cash
someone's just given him)
...Rina and I are gonna open a restaurant
in Silverlake next year. Best Salvadoran
food in LA. None of you are invited...

Hoots of derision.

STANDARD

What? You're looking at the Head Chef at
Chino. I make Papusas filled with pork and
yucca, better than even Rina...

Irina pulls away from him as she catches Driver's eye again.

STANDARD

...Now she's mad at me...

Everyone cheers as Standard kisses his wife adoringly. Driver
turns away, taking a long swig of beer. Irina sees his reaction
out of the corner of her eye. She also sees one of Standard's
friends giving Benicio a swig of beer.

IRINA

Hey Santi, cut it out...

STANDARD

Let the kid have a drink. Come here,
Benicio...

Benicio runs into his father's arms. Standard lifts him up and
gives him a sip of his own beer.

STANDARD

You like that?

BENICIO

Yeah.

STANDARD

Well, it's the last time you're having
any...

There's more laughter as Standard kisses Benicio and swings him
around. Irina takes her opportunity and slips away, joining
Driver. There's an awkward silence as they look at each other.

IRINA

You okay?...

DRIVER

Yeah. Fun party...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She stares into his eyes, feeling the distance between them.

IRINA
(Teasing him gently)
How's your Spanish?...

DRIVER
About the same as my Korean...

IRINA
I'll teach you if you like...

He doesn't respond to her flirtatious tone.

DRIVER
Your husband seems like a nice guy...

Her smile fades at his gentle rebuke.

IRINA
He's a good father, when he's around. I
don't know about a nice guy...

Her eyes stay on his, with genuine regret, when suddenly
Standard appears behind them.

STANDARD
This guy my parole officer?...

Driver and Irina turn around sharply. Standard laughs at his own
joke, clapping Driver on the back.

STANDARD
Good to meet you, man. Benicio's told me
all about you...

Benicio's holding his father's hand, proud as can be.

STANDARD
In fact he can't stop talking about you.
'Dad, this guy's so cool. He can do this,
he can do that, fix the washing machine,
mend the TV'. Man, I'm thinking, what did I
bother coming back for?...

Even though it's said light-heartedly, there's an edge to his
voice.

DRIVER
He's a great kid...

STANDARD
Takes after his mother...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Standard slips his arm around Irina now, his eyes still fixed on Driver.

STANDARD

So, I hear you drive for the movies?

DRIVER

Right.

STANDARD

Have to be pretty good?

DRIVER

I get by.

STANDARD

Not like a nine-to-five gig, huh? Lot of free time on your hands...

He's still smiling, but the insinuation is clear.

STANDARD

Rina cook for you yet?

DRIVER

I thought you were the cook.

STANDARD

(Grinning)

That's right. Come over one night I'll show you what I can do...

Again there's a hint of menace behind the easy smile. Irina senses the tension, but Benicio beams innocently, glad the two men in his life have finally met.

STANDARD

Help yourself to another beer, my friend.
I'm gonna dance with my wife...

He gives Driver another 'friendly' clap on the back, then leads Irina away. Driver watches them, finishing his beer, anxious to leave now.

EXT. FILM SET/ CLOSED OFF STRETCH OF HIGHWAY/ SAN PEDRO - DAY.

A long line of cars stretch across the freeway, evenly spaced. From above, the sight looks completely surreal.

2ND UNIT DIRECTOR O/S

...ACTION!...

The cars move off in waves, still keeping an even distance.

INT/EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ CLOSED OFF STRETCH OF HIGHWAY - DAY.

Driver sits in another stunt car at the opposite end of the highway, dressed like an FBI agent in a suit and tie. Up ahead, he can see Gordon Ligocki revving his Charger. The 1st AD receives a message through his ear-piece and calls out.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
...Stunt cars ready...Camera cars
ready...and ACTION!...

Gordon Ligocki sets off first. Driver leaves a safe distance between them, then follows.

EXT. AERIAL SHOT/ CLOSED OFF STRETCH OF HIGHWAY - DAY.

From above, we can see what's happening more clearly. Gordon Ligocki and Driver are doing a chase scene against the traffic. The army of slow-moving cars gets closer and closer to them.

INT. DRIVER'S CAR/ CLOSED OFF STRETCH OF HIGHWAY - DAY.

Up ahead, Driver sees Gordon Ligocki turn his wheel sharply and swerve past the first car. He does the same, picking his gaps carefully, weaving his way through the oncoming traffic.

EXT. AERIAL SHOT/ CLOSED OFF STRETCH OF HIGHWAY - DAY.

Looking down, we see how perfectly choreographed the scene is - the two cars slaloming their way through the oncoming traffic, causing carefully rehearsed mayhem in their wake.

INT. DRIVER'S CAR/ CLOSED OFF STRETCH OF HIGHWAY - DAY.

Inside the car, the scene doesn't look so simple. Driver has to react quickly, flicking the wheel to avoid the onrushing cars. Gordon Ligocki isn't making things easy, blocking his eye-line, leaving it until the last moment before he makes his turns.

EXT. CREW AREA/ CLOSED OFF STRETCH OF HIGHWAY - DAY.

Shannon looks uneasy as he watches the scene unfold in the monitor. He turns to the 2nd UNIT DIRECTOR.

SHANNON
You better tell Ligocki to put some
distance between them...

2ND UNIT DIRECTOR
What for? Scene looks incredible...

INT. DRIVER'S CAR/ CLOSED OFF STRETCH OF HIGHWAY - DAY.

Gordon Ligocki's playing games now, slowing down and narrowing the gap between them. All Driver can see is the ass end of the Charger blocking his view. Gordon Ligocki weaves left and right, fucking with him, then suddenly swerves out of the way of an onrushing truck. Driver sees it at the last moment, spinning the wheel hard to avoid a head-on collision.

EXT. CREW AREA/ CLOSED OFF STRETCH OF HIGHWAY - DAY.

Only Shannon seems to be aware of the duel that's going on.

EXT. AERIAL SHOT/ CLOSED OFF STRETCH OF HIGHWAY - DAY.

The cars are virtually touching now, swerving in and out of the oncoming traffic as if they're stuck together.

INT. DRIVER'S CAR/ CLOSED OFF STRETCH OF HIGHWAY - DAY.

Gordon Ligocki keeps slowing down, inviting Driver into the back of him. The cars finally touch, shooting off in different directions, narrowly missing the same vehicle.

EXT. CREW AREA/ CLOSED OFF STRETCH OF HIGHWAY - DAY.

On the monitor, the action looks spectacular.

SHANNON

You get on that radio or someone's gonna get killed...

The 2nd unit director still seems reluctant to intervene.

2ND UNIT DIRECTOR

Gordon, you're a little too close...

GORDON LIGOCKI ON THE RADIO

He's the one on my ass...

INT. DRIVER'S CAR/ CLOSED OFF STRETCH OF HIGHWAY - DAY.

Driver hears the exchange on his ear-piece, finally losing his cool. He floors the pedal now, weaving between two cars, driving right alongside the Charger. Gordon Ligocki's taken by surprise. He has only one direction to move to avoid the oncoming vehicles. He tail-slides sharply to the right, sliding past not one but two cars, straightening up at the last moment to avoid crashing into the barrier. It's an amazing feat of driving, but even more amazing is the fact that Driver keeps up with him, pulling off the same manoeuvre with perfect precision, then side-swiping the Charger.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Both cars go careening into the safety barrier. They bounce off each other violently, then go spinning round and round like they're locked in some kind of dance.

EXT. CREW AREA/ CLOSED OFF STRETCH OF HIGHWAY - DAY.

Watching the accident in the monitor, even Shannon looks stunned.

2ND UNIT DIRECTOR O/S

CUT!...

The SAFETY CREWS run over to the scene of the crash as the cars skid to a standstill and burst into flames.

EXT. CLOSED OFF STRETCH OF HIGHWAY - DAY.

Clouds of black smoke billow out of Driver's car. He rolls out of the window, picks himself up, then storms towards the burning Charger. Gordon Ligocki's also managed to get free, striding out to meet him.

GORDON LIGOCKI

You crazy son-of-a-bitch-

Driver grabs him by the collar before he can finish, almost lifting him off his feet. It's the first time we realize quite how strong he is. And quite how violent he can be. Gordon Ligocki tries to throw a punch, but Driver beats him to it, connecting with his jaw. It takes several members of the safety crew to pull him off before he kicks the shit out of Ligocki.

INT. FIRST AID TRAILER/ FILM SET/ CLOSED OFF HIGHWAY - DAY.

A NURSE dresses a small cut on Driver's forehead, the only mark on his face. Shannon walks in with a weary expression.

SHANNON

...Good news and bad news. Bad news is you got fired. Good news is you broke his jaw...

Driver allows himself a brief smile as the nurse finishes dressing his wound.

DRIVER

Ignore him, ma'am...

Shannon waits for her to leave, then turns back to Driver.

SHANNON

So, what was all that about?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

What?

SHANNON

Not like you to lose your cool over some
jerk-off?...

Driver looks back at him innocently.

DRIVER

Did I lose my cool?...

Shannon shakes his head in exasperation, knowing he won't get
any more out of him.

SHANNON

Well, if it's any consolation, I liked her
too...

INT/EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ MEXICAN RESTAURANT/ DOWNTOWN - NIGHT.

Through the window of the Mexican restaurant, we see Irina,
serving the same old man who's there every night. Driver watches
her from his car. He hesitates, conflicted, then drives off.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ APARTMENT BLOCK/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

The lights glitter up in the apartment building. Driver leans
out of his Impala and inserts a key to open the gates of the
underground car park. As they swing open, he sees bright head-
lights glowing down below. A black Lincoln town car is heading
up the ramp. Driver reverses, letting the other car out first.
As it glides past, he sees several tough looking MEXICANS
sitting in the back seat. He watches the Lincoln disappear in
his rear view mirror, then heads down the ramp.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ UNDERGROUND CAR PARK - NIGHT.

As Driver winds his way down the car park, he notices something
in the shadows. A figure lies sprawled against one of the
pillars. A smaller figure stands a few feet away, frozen to the
spot. Driver stops the car, climbing out to see what's happened.

The prone figure groans in pain, spitting out blood. It's
Standard. The smaller figure is Benicio. He stares down at his
father, then looks up at Driver, his eyes filled with tears.
Driver kneels down beside Standard, checking nothing's broken.

DRIVER

Can you move?...

STANDARD

(Nodding)

Where's Benicio?...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

Right here...

Standard raises his head painfully and looks at his son.

STANDARD

It's okay, Benicio. I'm okay. Stop crying like a baby, nothing's wrong...

The little boy nods, trying to hold back his tears.

STANDARD

Those guys were friends of mine. Friends fight, right? It's no big deal...

Driver watches Benicio struggling to be strong for his father.

STANDARD

Now, you don't say nothing to your mother, okay? Cause if you do, she won't let me hang out with my friends no more. This is between you and me, understand?...

He holds his son's gaze firmly, then turns to Driver.

STANDARD

Can I use your bathroom to wash up, man? I don't want Rina to walk in, see me like this...

INT. LIVING ROOM/ DRIVER'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Benicio sits in front of the TV, watching an adult comedy show he doesn't understand. Driver stares at him quietly.

DRIVER

You okay?...

The kid nods, determined not to cry. From the bathroom, there's the sound of running water.

INT. BATHROOM/ DRIVER'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Standard spits out blood in Driver's sink. As he checks his face in the mirror, he notices how neatly Driver's laid out his toothbrush, shaving cream, and razor.

INT. LIVING ROOM/ DRIVER'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Standard walks out of the bathroom, dabbing his mouth with a hand-towel, his swagger restored.

STANDARD

You got something to drink?...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

There's some beer in the fridge...

Standard heads into the kitchenette and helps himself.

DRIVER

You want something, Benicio?...

Benicio shakes his head, his eyes fixed on the TV, finding it easier not to look at them. Standard returns with a beer.

STANDARD

You ain't gonna mention this to Rina?

DRIVER

That you got your ass kicked?...

Standard grins, taking a drink.

STANDARD

Fuckin' punks took me by surprise.

DRIVER

Fuckin' punks didn't look like they needed to...

Standard hesitates now, looking back at him.

STANDARD

You saw them, huh?...

Driver doesn't say anything. Standard considers him quietly, wondering whether to trust him.

STANDARD

You ever been inside?

DRIVER

Why?

STANDARD

You got that look about you. The way you lay out all your shit in the bathroom. Man, this place even looks like a cell...

Standard's still sizing him up.

STANDARD

Those guys were connected to a prison gang in Chino...

DRIVER

You run up a tab in the yard?...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STANDARD

Yeah, and when I got out, I thought I left my debts behind...

(He glances at Benicio, then back at Driver)

What were you in for?...

DRIVER

(A beat)

Juvie rap. Borrowing cars...

STANDARD

You ever drive for anyone?...

DRIVER

(Deliberately obtuse)

You mean like a chauffeur?...

Standard grins again, convinced there's more to Driver now than meets the eye.

STANDARD

You know, I got a sweet score lined up...

If it's an invitation, Driver isn't interested.

DRIVER

Looks like you need it.

STANDARD

Yeah, I'm way out in the water. I don't pay up, they gonna come after my wife and kid.

Driver stares back at him impassively. Standard holds his gaze for a moment, then finally turns to Benicio.

STANDARD

Come on, Cowboy. Time for bed...

INT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAY.

The engine of the racecar gleams under the garage lights. Driver's busy working on the carburettor. He looks up as he hears Shannon.

SHANNON O/S

Hey, kid, someone here I want you to meet...

Shannon heads over with his friend, Bernie Rose. Driver wipes his palms on his coveralls as he waits for them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHANNON

Bernie, this is the driver I been telling you about...

Bernie Rose holds out his hand.

DRIVER

My hands are a little dirty.

BERNIE ROSE

Don't worry. So are mine...

He gives Driver a big grin and a powerful handshake.

BERNIE ROSE

(Admiring the racecar)
So, this is where all my money's gone?

SHANNON

Looks like a car, but she's really a cash machine.

Bernie Rose grins again.

BERNIE ROSE

You as confident as he is?

DRIVER

Have to race her first.

BERNIE ROSE

Cautious man. I like that. Where you from?

DRIVER

Arizona.

BERNIE ROSE

Helluva place. Even if it does look like God squatted there, farted, and lit a match to it...

Driver smiles back softly.

BERNIE ROSE

Shannon's got a lot riding on you. So have I now. Don't let us down...

SHANNON

He won't...

BERNIE ROSE

So, when we ready to race?...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DRIVER

Next season, all being well...

BERNIE ROSE

Well, anything you need, anything at all,
call me. Shannon has my number...

They're interrupted by the honking of a horn outside.

DRIVER

I'll get that. Nice to meet you...

Driver shakes hands with Bernie Rose again and heads outside.

EXT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAY.

A beat-up looking Oldsmobile waits in the forecourt of the
garage. Standard climbs out, greeting Driver.

STANDARD

Hey...

Driver doesn't respond, gazing at the dents and scratches on his
car.

STANDARD

You got a minute?...

Driver thinks about it, then pulls off his work gloves.

EXT. PORCH/ FOOD SHACK/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAY.

Standard watches Driver polish off his beef and bean burritos
with a healthy appetite.

STANDARD

You like the food, huh?...

DRIVER

Not enough to change my mind...

Standard makes sure no-one's listening, then leans closer.

STANDARD

Look, it's a simple bank lick. Six figure
cash score, we're in and out in two minutes
tops. All you have to do is wait outside.

DRIVER

If it's that simple why don't you ask one
of your homies to drive?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STANDARD

Guy cookin' up the score wants a *professional* crew. I got everyone else lined up, but the only wheelmen I know are ram-raiders and carjackers. One look at them and he's gonna take his action some place else.

DRIVER

Could be the best thing that ever happened to you.

STANDARD

Just meet the guy, okay? Hear what he has to say. You don't like it, walk away, no hard feelings.

DRIVER

I don't like it.

STANDARD

(Wearily)

Listen, man, I wouldn't come to you unless it was a last resort. These Chicano pricks, they're fuckin' animals. You saw what they did to me in front of my kid and that's just the start...

Driver looks up now as he hears the desperation in Standard's voice.

STANDARD

...I owe these putas thirty thousand dollars. Last night they call my home, threaten to stick my son's hand in a meat-grinder unless I pay up...

Driver stares at him quietly, trying to figure out if he's telling the truth.

DRIVER

Why don't you take your family and leave town?

STANDARD

You think Rina would come with me? She found out about this she'd get rid of me in a second. Or is that what you want?...

Driver looks at him calmly, then gets up to leave. Standard grabs his arm, more out of desperation than anger.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STANDARD

Look, you don't know me. You don't owe me nothing, but Rina and Benicio, they love you, man.

DRIVER

Don't try and play me, Standard.

STANDARD

It's the only way I know to protect my family...

Standard holds his gaze now, unapologetic. Driver stares back at him, then leaves twenty dollars on the table, walking off.

INT. CORRIDOR/ APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Driver rings the buzzer of Irina's apartment. A moment later Mrs Guttierrez opens the door.

DRIVER

...Buenos noches. Is Rina in?...

Mrs Guttierrez answers in Spanish, calling over Benicio to translate. The little boy is still wearing his cowboys and Indians pyjamas.

BENICIO

She's downstairs in the laundry room. Our washing machine broke again and Papa doesn't know how to fix it...

Driver gazes at him quietly.

DRIVER

You didn't show him?...

BENICIO

I couldn't remember how...

DRIVER

I'll have to teach you again...

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM/ APARTMENT BLOCK/ ECHO PARK - DAY.

Wet clothes and foam tumble around in a washing machine window, something ominous about the image. Driver arrives at the door of the laundry room, then stops as he sees Irina.

DRIVER

Hey...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA
(Looking up)
Hey...

She seems surprised to see him, but pleased.

DRIVER
I was on my way to the car park and I...

Suddenly he trails off as he realizes there's someone else in the room. A tough looking MEXICAN, with prison tattoos on his arms, sitting on a bench in the corner, waiting by one of the other washing machines. Irina doesn't pay him much attention, but Driver looks wary now, wondering if he's one of Standard's creditors.

IRINA
You okay?...

DRIVER
Yeah...

Driver glances at the Mexican's wash-load, trying to figure out if he's for real.

DRIVER
You almost done?...

IRINA
No, I got another load. Don't worry if you have to be somewhere...

The Mexican is staring at Driver now. It may be paranoia, but Driver wonders if he's waiting for him to leave.

DRIVER
I don't have to be anywhere special. You mind if I sit down?...

IRINA
Sure...

Driver walks into the laundry room now, still studying the Mexican. He could be just another neighbour, but Standard's words are prey on Driver's mind, making him paranoid. He sits down next to Irina protectively, holding the Mexican's gaze. Behind him, the washing machine spins faster and faster.

EXT. PARKING LOT/ HOLLYWOOD/ SUNSET AND HIGHLAND - DAY.

A gang of KIDS in baggy jeans and baseball caps hang around the car park, grinning at Standard's Oldsmobile as he climbs out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STANDARD

What the fuck you looking at?...

He glares at them as he walks alongside Driver, feeling ten feet tall again.

INT. LOW RENT BAR/ HOLLYWOOD/ SUNSET AND HIGHLAND - DAY.

COOK, the guy organising the score, fits right into the seedy bar -- designer t-shirt, gold wristwatch, slicked back hair.

COOK

...Getting harder and harder all the time
to step around the amateurs...

Standard and Driver sit facing him. Driver looks unimpressed, while Standard's all nerves and eager smiles.

STANDARD

...I told you, man, this guy races cars for
a living. You asked for pros, that's what
I'm bringing to the table.

COOK

This ain't like driving round an oval, my
friend...

Driver doesn't bother to reply.

COOK

You hard to work with?...

DRIVER

Not if we understand each other...

COOK

What's to understand? It's my score. Either
you sign on or you don't...

DRIVER

Then I don't...

COOK

(Turning to Standard)
I got a dozen other crews I can farm this
out to -

STANDARD

He didn't mean it like that, man. Just hear
him out...

Standard looks nervous, worried about his deal, but Cook smiles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COOK

All right, enlighten me?...

DRIVER

I drive. That's all I do. I don't sit in while you're planning the score or running it down. You tell me where we start, where we're headed, where we'll be going afterwards. I don't take part, I don't know anyone, I don't carry weapons. I drive...

Standard seems surprised by Driver's professional patter.

COOK

Attitude like that must cost you a lot of work.

DRIVER

It's not attitude, it's principle...

COOK

I'm okay with the rest, but if we're going in heavy, so are you.

DRIVER

No deal.

COOK

What are you, anti-gun lobby or something?

DRIVER

I need to start shooting, I figure you don't know how to do your job...

Standard's really sweating now, but Cook smiles again, unable to resist the challenge. He writes a figure down on a piece of paper and slides it across the table. Driver barely glances at the numbers.

DRIVER

This is a joke, right?

COOK

You don't want to participate, there it is. Fee for service. We keep it simple...

Driver throws back his shot and stands up.

DRIVER

Sorry to have wasted your time.

Standard's about to have a heart attack.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STANDARD

Hey, sit down, man. You and I can work this out later...

Driver sees the desperation in his eyes and hesitates. Cook senses this, and intervenes.

COOK

He's right. Sit down. I'm just fucking with you...

Driver's still hesitant, all his instincts telling him to walk away, but he finally sits down again.

COOK

Five on the team, we split six ways. Two shares for me, one for each of the rest of you. That work?...

DRIVER

I can live with it...

COOK

Then we got ourselves a deal...

Standard can barely contain his excitement.

EXT. KOREAN BUTCHER'S/ DOWNTOWN - DAY.

The squawking of dozens of chickens. Over the noise we hear Standard's jubilant voice.

STANDARD

Man, the way you nailed that guinea motherfucker. You shoulda been my fuckin' attorney...

A poultry van is making a delivery outside a Korean butcher's.

STANDARD

...You choose your chicken just like in a fish restaurant. They kill it right in front of you...

(He slaps Driver on the back,
leading him into the butcher's)
Choose a big fat one, my friend. Tonight we're celebrating...

INT. LIVING ROOM/ IRINA'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Driver sits at the dinner table with Standard, Irina and Benicio. Standard's in high spirits, drinking heavily.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STANDARD

...Man, I was such a jerk the first time we met. I walked over to Rina and I said, 'Hello Miss, my name's Standard Guzman'. She takes one look at me and asks, where's the deluxe version?'...

(He laughs out loud)

It took me like a minute to get it...

Irina smiles awkwardly, glancing at Driver, curious what he's doing here with her husband. Benicio smiles too, not understanding the joke, but eager to please his dad.

STANDARD

You don't get it either, do you, Benicio? I hope you didn't inherit your Papa's brains...

He reaches over the table and ruffles his son's hair affectionately. Irina turns to Driver.

IRINA

More chicken?

DRIVER

Thanks...

Their eyes stay on each as she serves him.

IRINA

So, where did you guys run into each other?

STANDARD

(Intervening)

At his buddy's garage. I went to get the Olds fixed. Fuckin' piece of junk...

Irina's still staring at Driver, not believing her husband for a second. Standard sees the intimate look between them, but his only reaction is to keep drinking.

STANDARD

Now this is what I call a deluxe chicken. I think we should copy the Koreans and rear goats and chickens in our back yard. Just like in Salvador. Turn this whole fuckin' city into a third world shithole.

IRINA

Standard, not in front of Benicio.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STANDARD

Why not? Benicio knows hundreds of words like that, don't you, cowboy? What do you think we send him to school for?

IRINA

(Changing the subject)
How's the movie going?...

Driver looks a little uncomfortable.

DRIVER

I'm not working on it right now.

Irina looks at Standard now, then back at Driver, her suspicions growing.

IRINA

So, what are you working on?...

DRIVER

The stock car.

STANDARD

You're making him uncomfortable, Rina.
Can't you see he doesn't like talking about himself.

IRINA

(Caustic)
Then why don't you go ahead and talk for all of us.

STANDARD

All right, I will. This time next week, I'm gonna take you and Benicio away with me...

Irina stops and looks at him in surprise.

IRINA

Take us where?...

STANDARD

Where you wanna go, cowboy?

BENICIO

Disneyland.

STANDARD

Fuck Disneyland. I'm gonna take you away from this bullshit city, somewhere real.

IRINA

Benicio, it's time for bed -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

STANDARD

You'll see cowboy. Your Papa's got it all figured out -

IRINA

Benicio, you heard me -

STANDARD

It's okay. I'll take him...

Standard lifts Benicio in his arms now and carries him to his bedroom. Driver watches them. Standard may have drunk too much but he means every word he says, completely devoted to his son.

IRINA

You have any idea what he's talking about?

Driver hesitates, finding it hard to meet her gaze.

DRIVER

...Guess he had too much to drink...

Irina stares back at him, unconvinced.

INT/ EXT. TAXI/ LANKERSHIM BOULEVARD/ STUDIO CITY - DAY.

Rows of used car lots line Lankershim boulevard, hundreds and hundreds of shiny vehicles on display.

EXT. USED CAR LOT/ LANKERSHIM BOULEVARD - DAY.

A slick looking SALESMAN approaches Driver as he casts his eyes over a 92 Dodge Spirit.

SALESMAN

...She's a classic American muscle car, sir. Electronic fuel injection, twin balance shafts, single turbo-charger. You just tell me when to shut up...

Driver ignores the well-oiled patter, still examining the car.

SALESMAN

...Seriously, I been a gear-head all my life. Know every vehicle on this lot. Wouldn't sell you one unless I wanted it myself.

DRIVER

Can I take a look inside?...

The Salesman can't believe his luck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SALESMAN

Twist my arm, I'll even give you a demo...

INT/ EXT. DODGE SPIRIT/ STREETS/ STUDIO CITY - DAY.

The Salesman sits next to Driver in the passenger seat, buckling up with a smug smile as the car cruises down Lankershim Avenue.

SALESMAN

You might wanna take it slow till you get a feel for the car...

Driver ignores him, his eyes fixed on the road.

SALESMAN

...These Spirit RT's got specific chassis tuning and handling suspension. Corner like a dream...

Driver isn't listening to a word he says, checking out the car for himself. The Salesman reaches over and turns on the radio.

SALESMAN

We can replace the radio if you like, no extra charge, but personally I prefer the old fashioned sound -

DRIVER

You mind turning it off. I can't hear the engine...

The Salesman's smile fades a little. He switches off the radio, observing Driver more closely now.

SALESMAN

Everything okay?...

DRIVER

Little too much play in the transmission and the clutch needs to come up some...

SALESMAN

(Sounding less sure of himself)
We can take a look at that...

The Salesman notices Driver's wheelwork now, and his rapid footwork, beginning to realise he isn't so green afterall. He's about to say something, when suddenly Driver swerves into a sidestreet at the last moment, catching the salesman by surprise, making him gasp.

DRIVER

See what you mean about her cornering like a dream...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

For once, the Salesman's lost for words.

INT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - NIGHT.

Shannon listens to the Dodge's motor as Driver revs the car.

SHANNON
(Over the noise)
...It's gonna take us a couple days...

He slams the hood down as Driver cuts off the engine.

SHANNON
Rather be working on our own car...

Driver ignores the pointed remark, climbing out of the Dodge.

DRIVER
We can work on both...

Miss Dickinson looks up from her food as Shannon limps after Driver.

SHANNON
You know, the whole point of me going to Bernie Rose was so you and I didn't have to take these risks anymore. The loan covers expenses too.

DRIVER
I know.

SHANNON
But you're not doing this for the money?...

Driver finally turns and looks at him.

SHANNON
I checked this guy Standard out. He's got a rap sheet the length of my arm. Every time he walks out his front door he gets busted -
- you don't need that kind of luck.

DRIVER
I thought you said luck had nothing to do with it.

SHANNON
That's right. You find a new apartment yet?...

They both know what he's getting at.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHANNON

Luck has nothing to do with it because you're disciplined, you stick to the rules. You tired of them, you wanna regular life, I understand, but then don't get mixed up with this bum...

He stares at Driver with a mixture of concern and exasperation.

SHANNON

A lotta guys fall for other mens' wives, but you're the only one I know robs banks to make it up to the husband...

Driver smiles back, wiping his hands on a cloth.

SHANNON

Hell, why can't you just make a pass at her...

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

The Bank of America building glitters in the sunlight. Driver's parked across the street, studying the ebb and flow of the traffic. He looks up at the traffic lights, checks his watch, then times how long they take to change.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ STREETS/ WOODLAND HILLS - DAY.

Driver turns off Topanga Canyon Boulevard into the steep winding roads around Woodland Hills. His brain is working fast, memorising street names, distinctive houses, stretches where the road is uneven, even the foliage before a turn.

EXT. AERIAL SHOT/ STREETS/ WOODLAND HILLS - DAY.

From above, we see the Dodge Spirit negotiating the complex maze of streets.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver's back on the open road again, judging the hair-pin bends around an ominous stretch of Topanga Canyon Boulevard.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ ROUTE 27/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - DAY.

Topanga Canyon Boulevard flows into the Pacific Coast Highway. Driver hits the gas now, turning the car loose.

INT/EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ SANTA MONICA - DAY.

More reconnaissance. Passing street signs. Pearl Street. Cedar Street. Pine Street.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Driver slows down as he spots a police car parked on Maple Street. He drives past it slowly, avoiding the speed trap.

INT. DRIVER'S BEDROOM/ APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

A map of Tarzana is spread out on the bed. Driver is going over his escape route one more time, memorising every street name. He looks up as he hears a knock on the door. He heads over, checks the spy-hole, then opens it. Irina stands there.

IRINA
Can I come in?...

DRIVER
Sure...

She walks past him into the spartan room.

DRIVER
You want something to drink?...

IRINA
No thanks...

She crosses over to the window now, gazing out at the glittering lights of downtown L.A.

IRINA
Standard's come home late the past few nights. I thought maybe you knew why?...

Driver doesn't enjoy lying to her.

DRIVER
No...

IRINA
Every time he makes that speech about taking me and Benicio away from here, giving us a better life, he's got something lined up...

She turns and looks at Driver now, letting him know she knows.

DRIVER
Maybe you should talk to him...

IRINA
I gave up on him a long time ago. All I care about is my son...

Her eyes are fixed on Driver accusingly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA

His father winds up in jail again, all of a sudden he'll be twelve, thirteen, hanging around street corners, getting into trouble. I don't know if I can keep control of a kid that age in this neighbourhood...

Driver stares back at her in silence.

IRINA

You have any idea what's going to happen if they take him away from me?

DRIVER

I was state-raised myself. I ran away from six different foster homes before I wound up in Juvie hall. I got some idea.

IRINA

Then talk some sense into Standard...

She gazes at him imploringly, appealing to whatever feelings he still has for her, but his eyes give nothing away.

IRINA

You know, the funny thing is, him I understand. Him I can read like a book. But you...

She sounds deeply disappointed.

IRINA

Why would you get involved with someone who's gonna fuck up every time?...

Driver can't tell her it's because of her. She stares at him a moment, then turns away.

INT. VIEW ON STARBUCKS/ ENCINO - DAY.

Through the windows of a crowded Starbucks we see Standard sitting at a table with his 'crew.' There's a striking looking girl with short blonde hair, (BLANCHE), and a rugged looking cowboy type, (DAVE), who wears a suede jacket with tassels.

INT. DRIVER'S CAR/ STARBUCKS PARKING LOT/ ENCINO - DAY.

Driver's watching Standard and his crew from the car window. They stroll out of the Starbucks together, still talking animatedly. Standard spots the Dodge and says goodbye to the others. Driver starts the engine as he heads over.

INT. DRIVER'S CAR/ VENTURA BOULEVARD/ ENCINO - DAY.

Standard's eyes are fixed ahead, looking tense now.

DRIVER

You sure you wanna go through with this?

STANDARD

(Forcing a smile)

What the fuck are you talking about, man?

DRIVER

Your dipshit crew for one. You couldn't pick somewhere more private to meet than a Starbucks?

STANDARD

Cook arranged the meet.

DRIVER

I notice he wasn't there.

STANDARD

That's part of the plan. It's the way you wanted it, bro, 'what you don't know, can't hurt you'...

Up ahead, Dave and Blanche's car overtakes another vehicle.

DRIVER

You and your friends fuck up, you're looking at twenty years.

STANDARD

What's the matter? You losing your nerve?

DRIVER

No, your wife came to see me. She's worried about your son.

STANDARD

Yeah, well I'm doing this for them...

Driver slows down at the lights, staring out.

STANDARD

She ask you to watch my back or is this part of the limo service?

DRIVER

Frankly, I don't think she gives a fuck what happens to you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STANDARD

Yeah, but she's still my wife...

His smile softens.

STANDARD

Relax, man. You're dealing with pros. Cook already sent in a crew to bypass the alarm system last night. We just stroll in, take our time, like shopping at Gucci's...

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

The crackle of a police scanner. Driver's stopped the car a hundred yards from the bank. Standard looks even more nervous now, staring at his objective.

DRIVER

...I'll be waiting on the corner. Thirty yards to your right as you leave the building. You want the door open?

STANDARD

That part of the service too?

DRIVER

Your call.

STANDARD

Let's do it. VIP treatment...

He smiles again, trying to calm his nerves. Out of his window, he sees Blanche cross the street and walk into the bank. It's almost time. He pauses, then turns to Driver.

STANDARD

...You know, back there I was just fucking with you. I really appreciate what you're doing for me...

(A beat)

For Rina and Benicio too...

He looks at Driver gratefully, slips on his sunglasses, then opens the door and hurries out before he loses his nerve. Driver watches him cross the street with a strong sense of foreboding.

INT. BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ TARZANA - DAY.

Standard enters the bank, his heart beating even faster now. From his point of view, everything looks threatening. The Customers standing in line. The Tellers' hard set faces. The Security Guards' weapons. He looks relieved as he spots Blanche talking to one of the Tellers, playing the dizzy blonde.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLANCHE

...Is there any way I can speak to the manager?...

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver casts his eyes around the street, observing the smallest details -- the number plates of other parked vehicles; passersby on the sidewalks; the windows of overlooking buildings. Across the street, he sees Dave the cowboy stroll into the bank.

INT. BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ TARZANA - DAY.

Dave joins a line at one of the Teller's windows, also wearing his sunglasses. Standard waits in the line next to him. Both of them keep their heads down, hoping no-one gets a good look at them. They needn't worry. The bank's too crowded for anyone to pay attention to anyone else. The only exception is Blanche, who's sitting at the MANAGER's desk, charming him with her naive questions.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

A sleek black Lincoln Continental glides past Driver's car and stops outside the bank. Cook climbs out, dressed in a business suit, carrying a large briefcase. Driver watches the Lincoln drive on, disappearing down the street.

INT. BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ TARZANA - DAY.

There's only one CUSTOMER left between Standard and the Teller now. Standard glances at the guards nervously. One of them looks like he should have retired a long time ago, but the other one is young and fit. The YOUNG GUARD stares at him briefly, then turns away as Cook finally strolls through the door.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver checks his watch. 8:55. He starts the car.

INT. BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ TARZANA - DAY.

Cook joins Standard in the line, glancing at his watch, playing the part of the impatient businessman in a hurry.

STANDARD

You wanna go ahead. I don't think I filled this form out right...

Cook nods gratefully and takes Standard's place in the line -- just as the CUSTOMER in front finishes with the Teller.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver cruises slowly past the bank now, glancing through the windows, heading for the street corner where he told Standard he'd be waiting.

INT. BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ TARZANA - DAY.

Cook leans in close to the Teller's window, blocking her view for a second. Standard and Dave spring into action now, slipping stocking masks over their faces and pulling out their weapons. Standard grabs Cook around the throat and spins him around in the direction of the security guards, shoving a .45 to his head.

STANDARD

One stupid move and I blow his fuckin' head off!...

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver stops the car on the street corner, eyes still alert. Suddenly he notices something. Parked a hundred yards down the road, he sees another vehicle glinting in the sunlight. To the ordinary eye, it's no different from the other vehicles parked on the street, but to Driver it stands out. For one, it's a Roush Mustang. Secondly, it has tinted windows.

INT. BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ TARZANA - DAY.

Everyone's lying face down on the ground except Standard and Dave. Dave trains his .45 on the security guards, while Standard drags Cook over to the manager's desk.

STANDARD

Where's the vault?

BANK MANAGER

It's on a timer-lock.

STANDARD

Yeah, and it's set for nine...

He pistol-whips Cook brutally, knocking him to the floor.

STANDARD

Fuck with me again, I'll splatter his brains over your face!...

Cowering next to the manager, Blanche starts to cry.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver takes a closer look at the Mustang. As well as tinted windows, it has reinforced bumpers and racing tyres.

INT. VAULT/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ TARZANA - DAY.

Still holding a gun to Cook's head, Standard watches the bank manager unlock the vault. As soon as it swings open, he cracks his .45 across the manager's skull, knocking him unconscious. Cook takes over now, switching from hostage to mastermind, stepping into the vault. Standard watches as he drills into one of the safe deposit boxes. He finally wrenches the deposit box door open and takes out a handful of documents. He checks them, then hands them to Standard.

COOK

Let's go...

STANDARD

What about the cash?...

COOK

Fuck the cash...

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver checks his watch again -- 9:05 -- his eyes still fixed on the mysterious Mustang.

INT. BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ TARZANA - DAY.

Dave wanders among the trembling Tellers and Customers, brandishing his gun. Blanche is still pretending to be one of them, whimpering quietly. Only the young security guard seems unafraid, watching Dave closely, waiting for his opportunity.

Standard strides back into the main room, treating Cook like a hostage again.

STANDARD

Down on the fuckin' floor!...

Clutching his bleeding head, Cook lies down on the floor.

STANDARD

You, on your feet!...

He's talking to Blanche now. When she doesn't react, he pulls her up roughly by her hair and drags her towards the exit.

STANDARD

Rest of you motherfuckers, stay down!...

Dave keeps his gun trained on the terrified customers. Behind him, the young security guard starts to reach for his ankle holster.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver finally sees Standard and Blanche emerge from the bank. Standard has his arm around Blanche's waist, guiding her towards the car, clutching Cook's briefcase in his hand.

INT. BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ TARZANA - DAY.

Cook is still lying on the floor with the other customers, pretending to be a hostage. Dave retreats towards the exit. He's so relieved, he doesn't see the young guard unclasp his ankle holster, take out his gun, and aim at his head.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Standard and Blanche are only a few yards from the Dodge when suddenly they hear the crack of gunshots behind them.

INT. BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ TARZANA - DAY.

The young security guard fires another shot into Dave's chest, then runs outside.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Standard sees the guard appear on the street and reaches for his .45. A moment too late. Crouching low in an expert firing position, the guard squeezes off several shots. The force of the bullets send Standard flying. Driver sees him hit the sidewalk, blood pumping from his neck and his chest. Blanche screams, grabbing Cook's briefcase and leaping into the back of the Dodge. Driver hesitates, takes one last look at Standard's lifeless body, then hits the gas.

EXT. TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

As the Dodge Spirit roars down the street, the Roush Mustang suddenly comes to life, pulling out of its parking place.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ TARZANA - DAY.

Driver glances in his rear-view mirror and sees the Mustang on his tail. It doesn't seem to be trying to close the gap, taking its time. In the back seat, Blanche is hysterical.

BLANCHE

There's no fucking money in here!...

Driver hardly hears her, his eyes flicking from the rear-view mirror back to the road. Up ahead, at an intersection, the lights blink red. Driver thinks about running them, but decides against it, braking sharply. The Mustang draws up beside him, its tinted windows glinting in the sunlight.

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BLANCHE
Drive for Chrissakes!...

Driver ignores her, still watching the Mustang out of the corner of his eye. The lights change to green. Neither car moves. Behind them, people start honking their horns. The Mustang stays where it is, inviting Driver to go first. It's a game of chess. A game of cat and mouse. Finally Driver sets off.

EXT. TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ WOODLAND HILLS - DAY.

Topanga Canyon Boulevard gets steeper and steeper as the two cars head up into Woodland Hills.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver glances at the passing street signs. Velicata Street. De La Osa Street. Providencia street. The Mustang is still hovering patiently in his rear view mirror. Blanche looks dazed in the back seat. Dumetz Road. Viscanio Street. Buena Ventura Street. And suddenly Driver swerves left.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BUENA VENTURA/ WOODLAND HILLS - DAY.

And now we see why. Half the street is blocked off by roadworks. Driver bumps his way onto the sidewalk, grinds his way along the uneven surface, then veers back on the road. The Mustang has made the turn too, but Driver's got a start on it now.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ STREETS/ WOODLAND HILLS - DAY.

Driver takes the steep and winding turns at speed, trying to put as many corners as he can between himself and the Mustang.

EXT. AERIAL SHOT/ STREETS/ WOODLAND HILLS - DAY.

From above, we see the chess game more clearly, the Dodge leading the Mustang deeper and deeper into the maze, giving it more choices to make at every turn.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ STREETS/ WOODLAND HILLS - DAY.

A quick glance in his rear-view mirror and Driver sees that he's lost the Mustang. He turns sharply into the open gateway of a million dollar home.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ DRIVEWAY/ HOUSE/ WOODLAND HILLS - DAY.

Driver stops the Dodge in the driveway, among a cluster of other parked cars. Blanche looks totally bewildered. On a stretch of lawn on the other side of the house, she can see a swimming party going on. It's a surreal sight, but Driver isn't interested. His eyes are fixed on his mirror, watching the street.

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For a moment, there's no sign of anyone, then suddenly the Mustang glides past. Driver stays where he is, not sure if the Mustang saw them or if it's going to turn back. He waits a moment, then turns the car around, edging back out of the gates.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ STREET/ WOODLAND HILLS - DAY.

There's no sign of the Mustang. Driver turns cautiously back into the street.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ STREETS/ WOODLAND HILLS - DAY.

Driver's heading downhill now, beginning to weave his way out of the maze of streets. He checks his rear-view mirror, when suddenly he sees the Mustang reappear on the crest of a hill. This time it means business, looming larger and larger in his mirror. Driver floors the pedal and the chase resumes.

INT/EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver roars back onto Topanga Canyon Boulevard, turning the wheel hard to stay on the road. The Mustang carries out the same manoeuvre with inch-perfect skill.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

The game of chess has turned into a high speed pursuit now, the two cars taking the hair-pin bends at incredible speeds, the ravine stretching out beneath them.

INT/EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

In the back seat, Blanche looks terrified, buckling herself in with trembling fingers. Driver finally sees some other cars up ahead. On speed and power his vehicle may be no match for the Mustang, but in traffic the odds are even. He weaves his way past the slower cars, trying to put obstacles between himself and the Mustang. The pursuing car matches him move for move, but doesn't attack, simply staying on his tail.

Up ahead, Driver suddenly spots a huge truck approaching. He swings onto the other lane, bearing down on the behemoth. Instinctively the truck shifts into the middle of the road. Instead of trying to avoid it, Driver floors the pedal, keeping his line. The truck starts to drift into the wrong lane now. The Mustang has to brake sharply to avoid a head-on collision. Driver takes his chance, mashing the gas and swerving past the truck on the outside, gaining a few vital seconds.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - DAY.

Topanga Canyon Boulevard flows into the Pacific Coast Highway, hundreds of vehicles visible down below.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - DAY.

The tactics have changed as well as the landscape. Driver slaloms past the cars in front of him, faking left and right to shake the Mustang.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - DAY.

The two cars are nose to tail as they weave through the traffic.

INT. DRIVER'S CAR/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY/ SANTA MONICA - DAY.

Driver sees an exit sign for Santa Monica, but keeps to the fast lane. It's only when he sees the Mustang fall in behind him, that he suddenly drifts across the entire width of the freeway, narrowly avoiding the onrushing cars, screeching into the Santa Monica exit. The Mustang has even less time to react, but somehow pulls off the same manoeuvre, staying on his tail.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ STREETS/ SANTA MONICA - DAY.

More street signs. Bay Street. Grant Street. Pacific Street. Driver leads the pursuing Mustang through the narrow routes he's memorised a dozen times. In the back seat, Blanche looks petrified. Pearl Street. Cedar Street. Pine Street. And suddenly Driver hits the gas. The Mustang stays in his mirror. Responding. Exactly what Driver wants. He taps the brakes once, twice, then slows down to twenty as he crosses Maple Street.

The Mustang comes charging in, falling right into his trap. Driver shoots a glance in his rear-view mirror as a police car suddenly swings out of Maple Street and signals for the Mustang to pull over. He's led his pursuer into the speed trap he'd discovered on his dummy run. He watches as the Mustang finally pulls over, forced to abandon the chase.

INT. DRIVER'S CAR/ OCEAN PARK BOULEVARD/ SANTA MONICA - DAY.

Driver heads calmly down Ocean Park Boulevard now, Blanche still looking shaken in the back seat.

DRIVER

Give me the briefcase...

He takes it from her and opens it, steering with his free hand. One look at the documents and he knows exactly what they are. Negotiable Treasury Bonds. In \$20,000 denominations. He flicks his thumb through them like a pack of cards.

DRIVER

Know what these are?...

BLANCHE

No...

(CONTINUED)

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Driver looks at her in the rear-view mirror. She seems to be telling the truth.

DRIVER
How much did you expect to net?

BLANCHE
30,000.

DRIVER
Yeah, well there's close to 2 million here...

Blanche looks genuinely shocked.

BLANCHE
Oh, shit...

EXT. MOTEL/ VENICE - DAY.

Purple neon spills onto the forecourt of a seedy motel.

INT. MOTEL ROOM/ VENICE - DAY.

Blanche sits on the bed, answering Driver's questions in a trembling voice.

BLANCHE
...My job was to ask for the manager. So the others could identify him...

DRIVER
The guy running the show - Cook - he ever mention anything about ripping off treasury bonds?

BLANCHE
He said it was just cash...

Driver studies her a moment, then switches on the cheap TV set with a remote, flicking through the news channels. There's no mention of the robbery yet.

DRIVER
Stay here. Don't answer the door...

Blanche nods, still looking shaken.

EXT. MOTEL/ VENICE - DAY.

It's getting dark. Driver wanders around the parking lot of the seedy motel, talking on his cell phone.

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DRIVER

... '05 Roush Mustang. Wasn't cops or Feds either. Didn't make a move till we were clear of the scene...

EXT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAY.

Shannon leans against the racecar, looking like he's had the wind knocked out of him.

SHANNON

...Someone must've found out about the score and tried to rip you off...

EXT. MOTEL/ VENICE - DAY.

DRIVER

I don't think so. I think whoever's behind this planned it from the start. Standard told me they sent in another crew to bypass the alarm system last night...

EXT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAY.

Miss Dickinson stares up at Shannon.

SHANNON

How big's the take?...

EXT. MOTEL/ VENICE - DAY.

DRIVER

Two Million. Negotiable bonds. Probably from the same deposit box...

EXT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAY.

SHANNON

...Jesus Christ. You think Standard was in on it?...

EXT. MOTEL/ VENICE - DAY.

Driver hesitates, still feeling guilty about Standard's death.

DRIVER

No, but I'm not sure about the girl...

EXT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAY.

Shannon's still reeling, all his dreams for the two of them hanging by a thread.

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SHANNON

I'll see what I can find out. You okay
where you are?...

EXT. MOTEL/ VENICE - DAY.

DRIVER

For now. I'll call you in an hour...

Driver hangs up, hesitates, then dials another number, listening
with quiet apprehension. Finally someone answers.

BENICIO'S VOICE ON THE PHONE

Mama?...

Driver hears the anxiety in Benicio's voice, as if he's just
snatched the phone, waiting for news. Driver can't speak. He
listens in silence as he hears Mrs Gutierrez talking to Benicio
in Spanish, taking the phone off him.

MRS GUTTIEREZ'S VOICE

Si?...

DRIVER

Is Irina there please?...

There's an awkward pause.

MRS GUTTIEREZ'S VOICE

She's not home...

DRIVER

You know where she is?...

Another uncomfortable pause.

MRS GUTTIEREZ'S VOICE

She's gone with the police...

INT. MOTEL ROOM/ VENICE - DAY.

Driver walks back into the seedy motel room. Blanche lies on the
bed, looking more relaxed now, watching a soap opera on TV.
Driver picks up the remote and flicks through the channels until
he finally finds a breaking news story on the robbery. There are
police mug-shots of Standard and Dave on screen.

TV REPORT

...The second armed robber was also
pronounced dead at the scene of the crime.
He was identified as Standard Guzman of
Echo Park, Los Angeles...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Driver listens to the report in silence. Blanche looks upset again, forced to confront the reality of what's happened.

TV REPORT

...Other details are still unclear, but the eyewitness account of Security Guard, Leo Biaggio, seems to indicate the two robbers had no accomplices, and bank officials have now confirmed that no money has been reported missing from the vault so far. In other news...

Driver switches off the TV, staring at the blank screen curiously, then turns to Blanche.

DRIVER

Guard saw you grab the bag and jump in the car, but he didn't he say anything. Why?...

BLANCHE

I've no idea.

DRIVER

Any idea there'd be another car waiting?

This time she takes a fraction of a second too long to answer.

BLANCHE

I already told you -

DRIVER

You heard the report -- no accomplices, nothing taken from the vault. Someone's trying to make this story stick and right now you and I are a big inconvenience!...

Blanche looks frightened now.

DRIVER

The other two are dead, you understand? Now either you're part of the set-up or you're next in line...

She finally meets his gaze, trembling.

BLANCHE

...Cook told me another car would hold us up...He said nothing about anyone getting hurt...

Driver stares at her quietly, beginning to put the pieces together.

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DRIVER

You were gonna rip us off and split the take?...

She nods guiltily.

DRIVER

How long you known this guy?

BLANCHE

Couple months. We were fooling around. I've never been mixed up in anything like this -

DRIVER

You know his real name?

BLANCHE

He told me it was Chris, but I just called him Cook...

There are tears in her eyes now. Driver's fairly certain she's telling the truth.

DRIVER

Ever hear him discuss the job with anyone else?

BLANCHE

No. He said it was just the two of us...

Her tears are flowing freely now, her cheap eye-liner running down her face.

BLANCHE

Can I go wash up?...

Driver nods. Blanche climbs off the bed and walks over to the bathroom. As she disappears inside, Driver notices something on the bed where she's just been lying. It's her cell phone. Still open. Like she's just called someone.

Driver reaches for the cell phone, when suddenly he hears the sound of glass smashing in the bathroom, and a dull thud, like someone falling over. At the same time, there's a loud hammering on the motel room door, as if somebody's trying to kick it open.

Driver makes his mind up in an instant, rushing towards the bathroom door. He has to barge it open with his shoulder, something obstructing the way.

INT. BATHROOM/ MOTEL ROOM/ VENICE - DAY.

Driver almost trips over Blanche's sprawled body as he bursts into the bathroom.

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CONTINUED:

One quick glance and he knows she's dead - half her head blown off. Another quick glance and he sees her killer, a big burly HITMAN, trying to climb through the same window where he just shot her.

Driver moves like lightning, grabbing the man's arms before he can get off another shot and pulling him through the window. The hitman lands heavily in a sea of broken glass, cutting his forehead open, blinded momentarily by the blood in his eyes.

Driver takes his opportunity and slams the man's face back into the glass strewn floor, stunning him for a few more seconds as they struggle. Looking around, he grabs the largest shard of glass he can find and buries it in the shooter's neck.

INT. MOTEL ROOM/ VENICE - DAY.

In the bedroom, the 2nd HITMAN finally kicks the door open. Driver bursts through the bathroom door at the same time -- aiming the 1st shooter's .45 -- squeezing off three shots through the silencer. The force of the bullets picks up the 2nd hitman and flings him against the wall like a rag doll.

The explosion of violence is over as suddenly as it began. Driver slumps to the floor in exhaustion, his hand and his arm ripped open by the broken glass, trying to comprehend the enormity of what's happened. There's blood splatter all over the wall. Neon lights flashing on the dead man's face. But no panicked footsteps or sirens. The assault was as silent as it was deadly.

Driver crawls over to the dead hitman and rifles through his pockets. All he finds inside are a pair of electronic car keys.

EXT. MOTEL/ VENICE - NIGHT.

It's dark outside, all the cars in the parking lot looking like ghostly shadows in the gloom. Still clutching his wounded arm, Driver presses on the electronic car keys he found on the dead killer. The lights of a sleek black Eldorado flash on and off.

INT/ EXT. ELDORADO/ PACIFIC AVENUE/ VENICE - NIGHT.

Driver's in the Eldorado now, steering with one hand as he talks to Shannon on his cell-phone.

DRIVER

...No papers in the car either. These guys were pros.

SHANNON'S VOICE ON THE PHONE

Jesus. Got any good news?...

(CONTINUED)

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DRIVER

I'm gonna need a doctor to patch me up...

SHANNON'S VOICE ON THE PHONE

1157 Penn Street. El Segundo. I'll meet you there as soon as I can...

Outside the window, we can see passing junkyards under the gleaming street-lights.

EXT. DOC'S HOUSE/ EL SEGUNDO - NIGHT.

An OLD MAN in a t-shirt and boxer shorts opens the door, looking Driver up and down with booze glazed eyes.

DOC

That arm doesn't look so good...

DRIVER

You think?...

The underworld doctor grins through a set of yellowing teeth, ushering Driver inside.

INT. DOC'S HOUSE/ EL SEGUNDO - NIGHT.

Scissoring Driver's blood soaked shirt away, the doctor squints at his wounded arm, tiny shards of glass still embedded in his flesh.

DOC

Eyesight ain't what it used to be...

(His hand shakes as he probes the wounds with a hemostat)

But then again, what is?...

Driver looks up at him warily from the cloth covered sofa.

DOC

(Grinning)

Relax. Just having my fun with you...

He picks up a bottle of bourbon from among his bowls of peroxide and betadine, takes a drink, then offers it to Driver.

DOC

Take a hit off that, boy. Chances are you'll need it...

EXT. GARDEN/ DOC'S HOUSE/ EL SEGUNDO - NIGHT.

The city lights glitter all around. Driver stands next to Shannon in Doc's garden, his arm patched up now.

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SHANNON

This guy Cook got a real name?...

DRIVER

Maybe Chris. Probably not...

SHANNON

Well, whoever he is, he's got the weight to put a security guard on the inside, hit a safe deposit box he knows no-one's gonna report missing...

(A beat)

Maybe it's better if you lie low till I find out more, see if I can cut a deal...

Driver doesn't take long to think about it.

DRIVER

Just find out who he is...

Shannon looks concerned at the determination in his eyes.

SHANNON

You were on a slab right now, your friend Standard wouldn't give you a second thought...

Driver doesn't reply. Shannon stares at him a moment, then turns back to the glittering lights.

SHANNON

Hell...And just when I thought we were outta' here...

EXT. CEMETRY/ BOYLE HEIGHTS/ EAST LA - DAY.

From a distance, we see a funeral party gathered around a grave. Irina and Benicio look out of place among the homeboys and gangbangers who've shown up for Standard's funeral.

INT. DRIVER'S CHEVY IMPALA/ CEMETRY/ BOYLE HEIGHTS - DAY.

Driver watches Irina from his car. As the coffin is laid to rest, she hugs Benicio, trying to comfort him. Standard's buddies try to pay their respects, but she ignores them.

INT. VIEW ON MEXICAN RESTAURANT/ DOWNTOWN L.A. - NIGHT.

Passing cars flow past on Broadway. Through the windows of the Mexican restaurant, we see Irina, talking to some CUSTOMERS. For all her pain, she makes an effort to smile.

EXT. BROADWAY/DOWNTOWN LA - NIGHT.

Her shift over, Irina heads down Broadway, walking towards her bus stop. Suddenly she feels a gentle hand on her shoulder. She turns around and sees Driver standing there. She stares back at him as the crowds stream past on the sidewalk.

IRINA

Were you with him?...

He can't lie to her. She keeps staring at him, then turns and walks away. Driver hesitates, then pursues her down the crowded street. He finally catches up with her, grabbing her arm. Irina wheels around, erupting now.

IRINA

Get your hands off me!...

All her pent-up emotion pours out, half fighting him, half collapsing in his arms.

IRINA

...Goddamn you! Why?!...Why?...Why?...

Slowly the tears overwhelm her and she stops struggling, sobbing in his embrace.

INT. DRIVER'S CHEVY IMPALA/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Driver and Irina ride in his car now, the street lamps and neon signs lighting up their faces. Irina seems distant again, staring out of the window.

DRIVER

...He was into one of the prison gangs for a lotta money. They threatened to come after you and Benicio...

She says nothing.

DRIVER

He thought he was protecting you...

IRINA

Good job. His kid finally gets to see him on TV...

Driver slows down as they approach a red light.

DRIVER

How's he doing?...

IRINA

How do you think? His father's dead...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She stares out bitterly.

IRINA

Every kid in the barrio wants to hang out with him now. They all think Standard's some big hero...

DRIVER

What are you gonna do?...

IRINA

Move as far away from this city as I can...

Driver sets off again as the lights change to green.

DRIVER

I've got some money saved up. Anything you need, I'll take care of it.

IRINA

What are you, the bank? I work for a living. I don't need your widow's pension...

She turns away now, close to tears, then looks down at a silver bracelet on her wrist.

IRINA

This is the one thing Standard ever bought me. Fifty bucks. Left the price tag on so I'd know. He would've pawned it too only he gave it to me when Benicio was born...

She refuses to cry for her husband.

IRINA

He had more heart than brains. That's the only good thing I can say about him...

INT/ EXT. CHEVY IMPALA/ APARTMENT BUILDING/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Driver stops the car outside the apartment block, glancing at the other parked vehicles. Irina notices his caution.

IRINA

Is anyone looking for you?...

DRIVER

Probably...

IRINA

Cops?...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIVER

No...

She can't help feeling concerned for him.

IRINA

Where are you staying?...

DIVER

In the car for now...

IRINA

The Lone Ranger and his trusty steed...

Driver smiles softly as he gazes back at her.

DIVER

I need some stuff from my apartment, some clothes...

IRINA

(Ironic)

Want me to iron them for you too?...

Her eyes are filled with quiet regret.

IRINA

Just tell me one thing...

She pauses.

IRINA

How did he talk you into it?...

Driver takes a moment to reply.

DIVER

He didn't talk me into anything. I've been doing this my whole life. It's what I do...

She stares back at him sadly.

IRINA

Stupid me...

She holds his gaze, then climbs out of the car.

EXT. GARDEN/ BERNIE ROSE'S HOUSE/ MULLHOLLAND DRIVE - DAY.

A beautiful Spanish-style house overlooking the great expanse of the city. Sunlight glitters on the pristine lawn.

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CONTINUED:

BERNIE ROSE O/S
...Fuckin' blue skies and palm trees
everywhere I look, I'm going nuts in this
city...

Bernie Rose and Shannon walk together in the lush garden. Behind them, a BUTLER is preparing lunch by the pool.

SHANNON
Wait till you get to Paradise...

BERNIE ROSE
What the fuck would I be doing in Paradise?
I'm from Brooklyn...

They both smile as they wander past some orange trees in bloom. In the background, we see a couple of suited BODYGUARDS, beginning to get an idea of Bernie Rose's power.

BERNIE ROSE
Talking of heaven, you never told me you
had an interest in titty bars?

SHANNON
What?

BERNIE ROSE
That's what your guy Chef does. Runs a
strip joint on La Cienega.

SHANNON
Cook?

BERNIE ROSE
Right...
(A beat)
So, why you curious about him all of a
sudden?...

Shannon senses the question isn't entirely casual. Even though they're friends, he's wary of giving away too much information.

SHANNON
Friend of mine owes him some money. I
wanted to see if I could get a knockdown.

BERNIE ROSE
Good luck. From what I hear, he isn't in
the charity business...

Bernie Rose is still observing Shannon as they walk.

BERNIE ROSE
How's our race team?...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SHANNON
(He hesitates)
Great. We're almost ready...

BERNIE ROSE
That's what you should worry about...

Bernie Rose sees the hint of concern behind Shannon's smile.

BERNIE ROSE
This friend a close friend?...

SHANNON
Yeah...

BERNIE ROSE
That's too bad...

He throws a friendly arm around Shannon's shoulder.

BERNIE ROSE
You want my advice?...

Shannon looks at him anxiously.

BERNIE ROSE
Don't take pills for other people's
headaches...

INT. LIQUEUR STORE/ LA CIENEGA - DAY.

Driver places a large bottle of beer on the counter.

STOREOWNER
Two dollars, please...

EXT. STRIP JOINT/ LA CIENEGA - DAY.

Driver walks across the street with his open bottle of beer now. At the end of a large parking lot he sees an ugly building advertising, *Girls, Girls, Girls*. As he approaches the strip club, he pours the beer from his bottle onto the tarmac. At the same time he takes out a cigarette.

And now we see why. A STRIPPER sits on the steps at the back entrance to the club, smoking away. She looks up warily as Driver approaches. He holds up his cigarette and smiles.

DRIVER
Got a light?...

She hands him her lit cigarette.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER
Cook upstairs?...

She nods, relaxing a little. Driver hands back her cigarette, then walks calmly through the back door.

INT. HALL/ STAIRS/ STRIP JOINT/ LA CIENEGA - DAY.

Through the 'stage' door, Driver glimpses a bunch of half-naked STRIPPERS at the bar. There's a handful of CLIENTS watching a pole dance, but otherwise the place is empty. Driver puts out his burning cigarette on the wall and heads upstairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR/ STRIP JOINT/ LA CIENEGA - DAY.

Driver heads down a long corridor now. A couple of STRIPPERS emerge from their changing room, looking surprised to see him, but he puts them at ease with another friendly smile.

DRIVER
Cook moved office again?

STRIPPER
It's that one over there...

Driver smiles gratefully, then heads towards an office at the end of the corridor. He hesitates at the door, then turns the handle, as if he can't get in. A voice finally calls back.

COOK O/S
It's open...

Driver keeps turning the handle.

COOK O/S
It's open, goddamit!...

He hears Cook heading impatiently towards the door now. He waits, then suddenly kicks the door open, right in Cook's face, knocking him back.

Before Cook can recover, Driver storms into the office, smashing the empty bottle of beer across his skull. Cook collapses in a heap. Driver walks calmly to the door, locks it, then heads back to Cook, hauling him up from the floor.

He's about to slap him around some more, when suddenly he stops. Cook's bleeding from the fresh cut on his forehead, but he also has some other cuts and bruises on his face. Someone's clearly given him a beating since the robbery. As Driver stares at him curiously he begins to understand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER
Should've figured you for a shill. Who were
you fronting for?

COOK
Fuck you...

Driver slams his head against the wall.

DRIVER
Whose money am I holding?...

COOK
(Spitting out blood)
Don't worry. They'll come get it...

Driver slams his knee in Cook's crotch, watching him crumple to the floor. He thinks a moment, then bends down, rifling through the groaning man's pockets. Finally he finds what he's looking for. Cook's cellular phone. He scrolls down the recent calls he's made and finds the same number appearing again and again.

INT. NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

The kitchen is busy, several PIZZA CHEFS taking out steaming pizzas and slicing them up in takeaway boxes. In the empty restaurant, a burly man in short-sleeves, NINO, sits eating a chocolate croissant, washing it down with sips of tea. The phone is ringing, but he doesn't seem to hear it.

INT. BACK ROOM/ NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

An impeccably dressed MAN IN A TAN SUIT answers the phone.

TAN SUIT
'Nino's...I'm afraid we're closed. Could
you call back after eleven...

EXT. PARKING LOT/ BURGER KING/ SUNSET BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver's on the other line, leaning against his Chevy Impala, talking on Cook's cell phone.

DRIVER
Your boss might not be too happy when he
finds out you've kept him waiting...

INT. BACK ROOM/ NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

Tan Suit looks curious now.

TAN SUIT
Can I ask what this is about?...

EXT. PARKING LOT/ BURGER KING/ SUNSET BOULEVARD - DAY.

DRIVER

I have something that belongs to him.

TAN SUIT O/S

And that would be?...

DRIVER

Two million dollars in bearer bonds.

There's a pause on the other line now.

TAN SUIT O/S

Please hold...

INT. NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

Tan Suit walks over to Nino's table respectfully, murmuring something in his ear. Nino gets up, finishing his tea.

EXT. PARKING LOT/ BURGER KING/ SUNSET BOULEVARD - DAY.

A heavy chesty voice comes on the line.

NINO O/S

Nino here. You have something of mine?...

Driver hesitates, sensing the quiet power and authority in the other man's voice.

DRIVER

Seems that way...

INT. BACK ROOM/ NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

Nino betrays no emotion.

NINO

And you're calling me why? You expect me to buy my stuff back from you?...

EXT. PARKING LOT/ BURGER KING/ SUNSET BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver's framed against the Hollywood hills.

DRIVER

I'm not selling. I give you a time and place, you come collect your stuff...

INT. BACK ROOM/ NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

Nino seems a little surprised now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NINO

What do you get out of it?...

EXT. PARKING LOT/ BURGER KING/ SUNSET BOULEVARD - DAY.

DRIVER

Just that. Out of it. Once the bonds are in your hands, we're even. You put a muzzle on Cook, forget your zombies at the Motel, forget we ever had this conversation...

INT. BACK ROOM/ NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

NINO

Your partners happy with that?...

EXT. PARKING LOT/ BURGER KING/ SUNSET BOULEVARD - DAY.

DRIVER

I don't have partners...

INT. BACK ROOM/ NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

Nino seems to relax now.

NINO

Boy, you really aren't very good at this, are you?...

EXT. PARKING LOT/ BURGER KING/ SUNSET BOULEVARD - DAY.

DRIVER

At what I do, I'm the best. This isn't what I do...

INT. BACK ROOM/ NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

NINO

Then I guess I'll be hearing from you some time soon, with instructions...

EXT. PARKING LOT/ BURGER KING/ SUNSET BOULEVARD - DAY.

DRIVER

Any time in the next 24 hours...

Driver switches the cell phone off, throws it in a trash-can full of burger wrappers, then climbs back in his car.

INT. BACK ROOM/ NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

Nino hangs up. Behind him we see that Tan Suit is also in the room.

INT. BATHROOM/ IRINA'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Irina kneels by the bathtub, dressed in her waitress's uniform, lathering Benicio's hair with shampoo.

BENICIO

It stings...

IRINA

It's non-sting. Hold your nose...

She eases him under the water, rinses the shampoo out of his hair, then lifts him gently out of the bathtub. As she starts to towel him dry, she hears a knock on the doorbell.

INT. LIVING ROOM/ IRINA'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Irina opens the door and stops in surprise. Driver stands there.

DRIVER

You got a minute?...

IRINA

No, I have to go to work...

Driver stares at her a moment, then glances over her shoulder.

DRIVER

Hey...

Benicio's emerged from his bedroom to see who it is. He looks pleased to see Driver.

BENICIO

Hey...

DRIVER

How's it going?...

BENICIO

Okay...

Reluctantly, Irina moves out of Driver's way. He takes a couple of steps into the room, then stops, gazing at the little boy.

DRIVER

Mrs Guttierrez late again?...

BENICIO

(A hint of a smile)

No...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

Don't tell her I said that. You'll get me in trouble...

Benicio's smile widens.

BENICIO

I'm gonna tell her...

DRIVER

Then I can't give you this...

Benicio stares at him curiously as he fishes something out of his pocket. It's a small Swiss Army Knife.

DRIVER

It belonged to your father...

Driver glances at Irina, checking if it's okay to give him the penknife. She hesitates, then nods. Driver kneels down to Benicio's level, and opens the tiny blades for him one by one, showing him what they do.

DRIVER

...Can opener, regular blade, nail file, and this here's the screwdriver, just what you need to fix a washing machine...

Irina stares at Driver and her son.

DRIVER

(Pulling out another blade)
And last but not least, the saw...

Benicio examines the tiny saw curiously.

BENICIO

What can you saw with that?...

DRIVER

Anything if you spend long enough...

Irina looks moved as she watches them, but hides her emotions as Driver glances up.

DRIVER

You need a ride to work?...

INT. CORRIDOR/ APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Driver and Irina stand in the corridor now, waiting for the elevator to arrive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA

It was nice of you to give him your penknife...

DRIVER

I hope you didn't mind the...

IRINA

(Finishing his sentence)
White lies?...

Driver smiles, catching her gentle rebuke. Irina keeps her eyes fixed on the elevator lights.

IRINA

I thought it wasn't safe for you to come here?...

DRIVER

I bought myself a few hours. I'm leaving in the morning...

We sense her disappointment, even though she tries to hide it. The sound of the elevator bell is almost a relief. The doors open, revealing a single passenger inside.

Neither Driver or Irina recognises him, but we do - at once. It's TAN SUIT. He takes one look at them, then hesitates, as if he's not sure whether to stay in the elevator or get out.

TAN SUIT

Sorry, which floor is this?...

IRINA

Fourth...

TAN SUIT

(With a friendly smile)
I thought it was going down...

He steps back in the elevator, making room for them. Driver follows Irina inside, then reaches for the elevator buttons.

DRIVER

Which floor did you want?...

Tan Suit has to decide quickly.

TAN SUIT

Lobby...

Driver presses the lobby button, then presses the car park button for himself and Irina.

INT. ELEVATOR/ APARTMENT BLOCK/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

The elevator starts to descend.

IRINA

Have you decided where you're going?...

DRIVER

Not yet...

Driver feels a little awkward talking in front of Tan Suit. Irina doesn't seem to care. All she can think about is the fact that he's leaving.

IRINA

Wherever it is, I'm sure it'll be nicer than here...

DRIVER

I like it here...

IRINA

You didn't stay long enough...

Even though it sounds like a casual conversation, we feel the deeper undercurrents. Driver glances at Tan Suit, exchanging a polite smile, then looks back at Irina.

DRIVER

How come you're working on the weekend?...

IRINA

(Ironic)

You know how busy it gets...

The elevator bell rings as they reach the lobby. Tan Suit hesitates, smiles goodnight, then walks out.

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING LOT/ APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

The elevator doors open onto the underground car park. Driver leads Irina past dozens of shadowy vehicles, their footsteps echoing in the gloom.

DRIVER

Maybe you should think about getting a car...

IRINA

I can't even afford a bicycle...

Having just seen Tan Face, all the empty vehicles seem ominous. Driver opens the door of his Impala for Irina.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

I'll talk to Shannon, see if he can fix you up with something...

IRINA

I get a car, Benicio gets a pocket knife, what do you get? A clear conscience?...

She looks into his eyes now, half accusing, half disappointed. Driver holds her gaze, close enough to kiss her.

IRINA

(As the moment becomes too intense)
Anyway I can't drive...

She looks away and climbs into the car.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

The Impala heads out of the underground car park, sweeping past more parked vehicles outside. We still have no idea where Tan Suit's gone.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ STREETS/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Driver glances at Irina as he heads down Sunset Boulevard.

DRIVER

How come you never learnt to drive?...

IRINA

I did. I just never passed my test...

DRIVER

You should try again...

IRINA

I tried already. Five times...

Driver looks at her incredulously.

IRINA

See, we don't have that much in common...

She keeps her eyes fixed ahead, finding it hard to look at him, the pain of their imminent separation etched on her face. Another car hovers by her window, then overtakes.

IRINA

What's the big deal about driving anyway?...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

The freedom. To go anywhere, do anything...

IRINA

Do what? Run away every time things get complicated?...

DRIVER

(He smiles)

That too...

IRINA

Some life. Where do you see yourself in twenty years?...

DRIVER

In a bigger car...

She smiles weakly, despite herself, the brief glimmer of humor making things even harder. Driver feels it too, staring out.

DRIVER

You could always come with me...

We feel the impact of his words on her -- the tiniest reaction on her face -- a thousand thoughts rushing through her mind.

DRIVER

You said you wanted to take Benicio away from here. What's stopping you?

She stares out in confusion.

IRINA

I don't even know you...

DRIVER

You will. Once I straighten out this thing, I'm getting out for good. We'll go some place. Anywhere you want....

Irina shakes her head, resisting the thing she wants most in the world right now.

IRINA

This is just talk -

DRIVER

You don't believe me, we'll turn the car around, go pick up Benicio -

IRINA

It doesn't work like that -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DRIVER

Why not?...

She still won't look at him, arguing against her own emotions.

IRINA

Because people like you never get out. Even
if you want to...

(A beat)

And I don't want my son to grow up like
that...

Driver doesn't say anything now. The one argument he has no
answer to. He looks back at the road.

DRIVER

What time's your shift start?...

IRINA

I'm early...

The silence resumes. More car lights passing. The two of them
lost in their separate thoughts. Irina can't bear it to end like
this.

IRINA

I could use a drink...

INT. BAR/ TACO SHACK/ STRIP MALL/ EAST LA - NIGHT.

A large shack with blazing Mexican murals and crowds of hip
young hispanics shouting over the music. Driver and Irina make
their way through the crush.

IRINA

...I didn't realize it would be this
noisy...

She points to a menu board on the wall.

IRINA

You want something to eat? They do a great
fish taco with hot sauce...

Driver smiles softly.

DRIVER

You really got it in for me tonight...

Their eyes stay on each other now, the conversation in the car
still hanging between them, both of them oblivious to the noise
and chaos all around them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA

What we were talking about before...

(She hesitates)

I need some time...

Driver doesn't say anything, encouraged by her change of heart, willing to give her all the time she needs. The noise of the bar fades back in.

DRIVER

What kind of beer do you want?...

IRINA

Whatever you're having. I'll get a table...

She smiles again, a sense of optimism in her mood now. Driver finally tears his eyes away from her and heads off. We follow him as he edges his way through the crowd, arriving at the bar.

DRIVER

Two Coronas please...

He glances at the crowd as he waits for his drinks, taking in the carefree faces, the happy couples, the groups of noisy friends. Suddenly someone knocks into him. We're startled for an instant, but it's a false alarm, just somebody trying to get to the bar.

BARMAN

Nine dollars...

Driver pays and takes the plastic cups of beer, heading back to find Irina. He spots her through the crowd, shaking her head as if she can't find a table. Driver holds up his beers as he weaves his way through the crush. We follow him now, something unsettling about the way we hover over his shoulder, brushing past other people to keep him in our sights.

Irina smiles as he approaches. They get closer and closer, when suddenly she spots a familiar face in the crowd.

It's TAN SUIT. She doesn't look alarmed, no idea of the danger to Driver, just surprised by the coincidence. One moment he's there, the next he's disappeared back in the crowd.

Driver sees the puzzled expression on her face and turns...

A beat, then suddenly a DRUNKEN GIRL crashes into him, knocking over one of the paper cups in his hand. Instinctively he bends down to pick it up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

As Driver's head moves down, out of frame, TAN SUIT surges through the crowd, his .45 already pointed, his finger squeezing the trigger, too late to stop the shots. The bullets miss Driver and tear into Irina's heart, sending her crashing to the floor.

Time seems to stop.

Driver is still at floor level, seeing Irina lying immobile a few feet away from him.

Tan Suit turns back, abandoning the botched hit, pushing his way through the crowd.

One look at Irina and Driver knows she's dead. He scrambles over to her side, cupping her face in his hands, feeling how limp and cold she's gone.

All around there's chaos. People calling the police and emergency services on their cell-phones. Others heading over to see if they can help. And somewhere in the commotion, TAN SUIT is making his escape.

Driver looks paralysed, still fumbling at Irina's neck, feeling for a pulse that isn't there. People are shouting and sobbing all around him, but he hardly seems to hear them, all alone in the world again. Finally he pulls away from her, rising to his feet. He looks dazed at first, then slowly grief gives way to anger. He starts to push through the crowd, setting off after Tan Suit.

EXT. PARKING LOT/ TACO SHACK/ STRIP MALL/ EAST LA - NIGHT.

The sound of running feet. Tan Suit bolts across the vast parking lot, silhouetted against the flood lights. Driver pursues him, still a long distance away. Suddenly he hears the screech of tyres.

He stops abruptly and changes direction, running towards his Impala.

And now we see why. A getaway car appears out of a corridor of parked cars, drawing up beside Tan Suit. It's the same Roush Mustang that chased Driver after the bank robbery. Tan Suit leaps in the passenger seat and the Mustang roars off.

EXT/INT. CHEVY IMPALA/ STRIP MALL PARKING LOT/ EAST LA - NIGHT.

Across the car park, Driver jumps into his Impala. He slams the car into gear and roars off at speed. Ice has turned to fire. Calculation into fury. This is personal now.

EXT. WEST SUNSET BOULEVARD - NIGHT.

The Mustang has a big start on Driver, thundering along West Sunset Boulevard, neon lights blurring all around it.

INT. CHEVY IMPALA/ WEST SUNSET BOULEVARD - NIGHT.

It takes enormous concentration for Driver to make up the lost ground. We're close on his face first. A frightening intensity. Then his hands. Slamming the shifter around. Then his feet. Gas on-gas off. Pushing the car harder and harder.

EXT. WEST SILVER LAKE DRIVE - NIGHT.

The Silver Lake reservoir gleams in the background as the Mustang and Impala streak past like shooting stars.

INT. CHEVY IMPALA/ SILVER LAKE DRIVE - NIGHT.

Inside the car, the noise is deafening, the souped up V8 engine howling as Driver pours on the gas.

EXT. GLENDALE BOULEVARD - NIGHT.

There's traffic on Glendale Boulevard as the two cars approach the Golden State Freeway.

INT. CHEVY IMPALA/ GLENDALE BOULEVARD - NIGHT.

Driver ought to slow down, but instead he weaves his way through the traffic at dizzying speed.

EXT. ENTRY RAMP/ GOLDEN STATE FREEWAY - NIGHT.

If the Mustang outpowered Driver the first time, it's a different story now. From above we see Driver bully his way past one car after another on the circular loop.

INT. CHEVY IMPALA/ GOLDEN STATE FREEWAY - NIGHT.

Out on the freeway, Driver cuts loose, the chaos all around him telescoping into a tunnel of speed. The cars on either side become insignificant specks of light. The roar of the engine and the vibrations of the car soften into something almost peaceful. For a moment, the outside world no longer exists, then suddenly the Mustang appears up ahead.

EXT. GOLDEN STATE FREEWAY - NIGHT.

The Impala moves like lightning now, reeling in its prey, but instead of trying to get away, the Mustang slows down.

INT. CHEVY IMPALA/ GOLDEN STATE FREEWAY - NIGHT.

Driver hits the brakes, trying to figure out the Mustang's strategy. Suddenly he spots the ruse. The Mustang tucks in behind a black-and-white, forcing Driver to slow down, neutralising the Impala's speed advantage.

EXT. GOLDEN STATE FREEWAY - NIGHT.

The hunt has turned into a game of cat and mouse, the Mustang following the unwitting police car, the Impala trailing them both like a hawk.

As the traffic thickens, the Mustang suddenly makes it move. Picking a gap, it slides into the next door lane. Driver is hemmed in on both sides, unable to force his way across without alerting the black-and-white. Taking advantage, the Mustang edges into another lane, putting more distance between them.

INT. CHEVY IMPALA/ GOLDEN STATE FREEWAY - NIGHT.

Driver begins to lose sight of the Mustang's tail lights. A few more seconds and it's gone. Suddenly he sees the black-and-white speed up, overtaking another car. He takes his chance and slides across two lanes, back in the same lane as the Mustang.

EXT. GOLDEN STATE FREEWAY - NIGHT.

But the Mustang has the advantage now. Pouring on speed, it surges towards the Burbank exit.

INT. CHEVY IMPALA/ GOLDEN STATE FREEWAY - NIGHT.

Driver floors the gas in response, swerving past the vehicles in his way.

EXT. AERIAL SHOT/ GOLDEN STATE FREEWAY EXIT/ BURBANK - NIGHT.

The strong clean lines of the freeway turn into a maze of suburban streets.

INT. CHEVY IMPALA/ STREETS/ BURBANK - NIGHT.

Driver glimpses the tail-lights of the Mustang swinging from one street into another, using the same tactics he used himself in Woodland Hills, putting more and more corners between them.

EXT. STREETS/ BURBANK - NIGHT.

The Mustang begins to pull further and further away from the Impala at every intersection.

INT. CHEVY IMPALA/ STREETS/ BURBANK - NIGHT.

One wrong turn and Driver finally loses sight of his prey. There's nothing in front of him now except flickering house lights and an empty street. He hesitates, then continues down the same street.

EXT. AERIAL SHOT/ STREETS/ BURBANK - NIGHT.

The Mustang is nowhere to be seen now, just the lights of the Impala turning from one street into another.

INT. CHEVY IMPALA/ STREETS/ BURBANK - NIGHT.

Driver seems to be searching in vain, taking his foot off the gas. He slows down to a crawl as he turns into yet another dimly lit street, when suddenly we see a pair of headlights up ahead. And realize he knew what he was doing all along. Anticipating the Mustang's every move. Hunting it down.

The two cars finally face each other. There's a tense stand-off, then Driver calmly unbuckles his seat-belt and hits the gas. The Mustang doesn't have the time or the space to turn back. It takes up Driver's challenge, powering towards him.

EXT. STREETS/ BURBANK - NIGHT.

The two cars pick up speed, howling down the residential street.

INT. CHEVY IMPALA/ STREETS/ BURBANK - NIGHT.

Driver's eyes are fixed straight ahead. The Mustang looms larger and larger in his windscreen, but he has no intention of giving way. The powerful head-lights blind him, but he only mashes the pedal harder, steering into the eye of the storm.

At the last moment the Mustang loses it's nerve, veering away. Driver aims his Impala headlong into the exposed side of the other vehicle. At the same time he throws himself into the back seat and braces himself for the collision, an old stuntman's trick.

EXT. STREETS/ BURBANK - NIGHT.

The front of the Impala tears into the side of the Mustang like a shark ramming its victim, metal shredding and folding in on itself, glass shattering and exploding all over the street.

INT. CHEVY IMPALA/ STREETS/ BURBANK - NIGHT.

Driver protects his head as the Impala caves in all around him.

EXT. STREETS/ BURBANK - NIGHT.

The two cars are tangled in a fatal embrace now, the driver's side seat of the Mustang almost non-existent, everything silent except the dying hiss of the two vehicles.

INT. CHEVY IMPALA/ STREETS/ BURBANK - NIGHT.

Slowly Driver regains consciousness. He's dazed for a moment, then his instincts take over.

EXT. STREETS/ BURBANK - NIGHT.

Driver crawls out of the wreckage. All along the street, house lights have come on. He knows he doesn't have long. He stumbles over to the mangled Mustang and peers through the shattered window. The other WHEELMAN is slumped in the driver's seat. Neck broken. Mouth filled with blood. He's the same age as Driver. With the same rugged good looks. Driver could almost be staring at a mirror image of himself.

He finally looks away and checks the passenger seat. It's escaped relatively unscathed. The battered door has been forced open and there's no sign of Tan Suit. Driver glances down the street, but there's no sign of him there either. He knows he doesn't have time to search. People are already starting to wander out of their houses. He turns away from the wreckage and walks painfully down the street, casting his eyes over the parked cars. His eyes finally settle on the oldest model, the easiest one to break into.

INT. SHANNON'S BEDROOM/ GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - NIGHT.

A quiet knock on the door. Miss Dickinson looks up from her basket, purring in response. Shannon reaches out and switches on the bedside light, rubbing his eyes.

SHANNON

Who is it?

DRIVER O/S

Me...

Shannon limps out of bed and hobbles to the door in his boxers. Even in the dim light, we can see how badly scarred his legs are. He opens the door with a sleepy smile.

SHANNON

Mia casa e sua casa...

Driver walks past him into the shabby room.

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CONTINUED:

SHANNON

I was just about to have sex for the first time in years and you woke me up...

Driver doesn't seem to hear him.

SHANNON

You set the meet?...

DRIVER

There isn't gonna be a meet...

He turns around now, and for the first time, Shannon sees the cuts and bruises on his face.

DRIVER

Your pals were more interested in covering their tracks than getting their money back.

SHANNON

(Confused)

What are you talking about? What pals?...

Driver stares back at him unapologetically.

DRIVER

They paid me a visit. Only they fucked up. Whacked Rina instead of me...

It takes Shannon a moment to absorb the news.

SHANNON

...Jesus Christ...I'm sorry...

Driver doesn't take his eyes off him.

DRIVER

They were watching the apartment...They knew I'd go see her...

Slowly Shannon begins to grasp what he's saying.

SHANNON

(In quiet disbelief)

...What are you...You think I had something to do with it?...

DRIVER

Who did you talk to?

SHANNON

Why would I do something like that? You're my partner, you're the only friend I got -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DRIVER

Who did you talk to?...

The old man looks winded by the accusation. He stares at Driver, then shakes his head slowly, trying to defend himself.

SHANNON

I spoke to Bernie Rose, that's all...I told him you were in trouble, asked if he could help...He knows these people...I told him you weren't interested in keeping their money, that you only did it for her...

Driver doesn't reply.

SHANNON

...I wanted to make sure once you returned the bonds that'd be the end of it. I swear I didn't know they'd come after you...

Miss Dickinson sidles up to Driver now.

SHANNON

Why would I sell you out? What have I got to gain?

DRIVER

You borrowed a lotta money. Maybe you were trying to protect your investment.

SHANNON

You think that scrap of metal means anything to me? I could tear it down and build a hundred others like it. You're my investment. You're the only thing I was trying to protect...

He stares at Driver with heartfelt conviction now.

SHANNON

Look at me. Look at these legs. Look where I live. I don't have a wife. I don't have a family. I'm seventy years old, my life is almost over...

Their eyes stay on each other in the silence.

SHANNON

You were my last shot. I'm not gonna pretend I got noble motives -- I'm a selfish sonofabitch -- but betraying you would be like betraying myself...

Slowly Driver's expression begins to soften, believing him now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SHANNON

...Let me talk to Bernie Rose again. These guys probably didn't listen to his advice. We can still find a way outta this -

DRIVER

It's too late...

Miss Dickinson gently slips away.

DRIVER

...I need you to do something for me. Benicio's staying with a neighbour. Couple days they're moving him to a home. Rina wouldn't have wanted that...

Shannon stares back at him quietly.

SHANNON

What about you?...

INT. BARBER SHOP/ EAST LA - DAY.

The grating sound of an electric razor. Driver sits in a barber's chair, having his hair buzzed to the scalp, changing before our very eyes.

EXT. NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

There are tables outside Nino's pizzeria, but no customers, just a couple of BUTTONMEN drinking espresso's.

INT/ EXT. BUICK REGAL/ NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

Driver sits behind the wheel of a new car, wearing a pair of shades, almost unrecognisable with his cropped hair. As he watches, he finally sees Tan Suit emerge from the restaurant, still limping from the crash. The two BUTTONMEN stand up respectfully. Tan Suit gestures for them to sit back down, then crosses the road to his oversize Cadillac Fleetwood.

INT/EXT. BUICK REGAL/ BEVERLY HILLS - DAY.

Driver tails the Cadillac through the swanky streets of Beverly Hills. Tan Suit stops outside a clothing store and honks his horn. A moment later, a SEXY YOUNG GIRL sashays out with a couple of bags of shopping, jumping in his car. Driver watches them kiss, before Tan Suit sets off again.

INT. PARKING LOT/ APARTMENT BLOCK/ BEVERLY HILLS - DAY.

Tan Suit and his girlfriend climb out of the Cadillac. He's so busy fondling her, he doesn't notice the Buick Regal parking silently behind him.

INT. BUICK REGAL/ PARKING LOT/ BEVERLY HILLS - DAY.

Driver opens the dash and pulls out a long strip of razor wire.

INT. CORRIDOR/ APARTMENT/ BEVERLY HILLS - DAY.

Down the empty corridor, we hear laughter from one of the apartments. A moment later, TAN SUIT emerges, dragging his naked girlfriend after him.

GIRL
(Giggling)
Stop it, I got neighbours...

TAN SUIT
I want 'em to know what a whore you are...

He starts to kiss her tits before she finally pulls away from him and disappears back in her apartment. Tan Suit looks pleased with himself as he limps back to the elevator. He presses the call button and waits.

INT. ELEVATOR/ APARTMENT BLOCK/ BEVERLY HILLS - DAY.

The elevator doors open and Tan Suit steps in, pressing the parking level button. The doors start to close, when suddenly a young man with dark glasses and a buzz cut steps inside. Tan Suit looks a little surprised. There was no-one in the corridor just a moment ago.

TAN SUIT
Which floor you want?...

DRIVER
Lobby...

Tan Suit doesn't make the connection or recognise Driver yet. He presses the lobby button and the elevator starts to descend. Driver leans against the elevator wall, staring at the cuts and bruises on Tan Suit's face from behind his shades.

DRIVER
Girlfriend scratch your face?...

Tan Suit isn't sure he heard right, turning around.

TAN SUIT
What the fuck did you say?...

And suddenly he sees the cuts and bruises on Driver's own face. Finally making the connection. A moment too late.

INT. ELEVATOR/ PARKING LOT/ APARTMENT BLOCK - DAY.

The elevator doors open and Driver strides out, rifling through Tan Suit's wallet. Behind him, we see Tan Suit's body slumped on the elevator floor, his suit covered in blood, the razor wire still wrapped around his neck.

INT. NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

Bernie Rose twists a spoonful of spaghetti around his fork and shoves it in his mouth.

BERNIE ROSE

...I already gave you my advice, you shoulda' taken your bonds back and left this guy alone. You didn't listen...

Nino and Cook sit across from him, the only other people in the restaurant.

NINO

It's not that simple.

BERNIE ROSE

Not now it's bounced up in your face...

Cook interrupts, addressing Nino respectfully.

COOK

Mr. Paolozzi, I owe you this guy. Just give me the word and I'll -

BERNIE ROSE

(Contemptuously)

You like taking orders, go shut the blinds.

Cook looks taken aback.

BERNIE ROSE

Sun's in my eyes...

Nino doesn't look at him either, a clear indication he should do as he's told. Cook stands up, humiliated, and walks over to the windows. Bernie Rose carries on eating his spaghetti. Nino hesitates, watching him quietly.

NINO

...The bonds belonged to a half assed wiseguy from Philly. I had a tip-off he was gonna invest the money here in LA, try to run a rival operation. I wanted to teach him a lesson...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bernie Rose stops eating now, the light in the restaurant fading as Cook shuts the blinds.

BERNIE ROSE

You stole from our own people?

NINO

I told you, he's just a punk -

BERNIE ROSE

And where did this punk find two million dollars? You ever consider he may have consulted some higher-ups? You even bother to check?

NINO

I don't give a fuck who gave him their blessing. This is my city.

BERNIE ROSE

Your city? This is a big city, pal, and last time I checked we were partners -

NINO

We are partners -

BERNIE ROSE

Then why the fuck didn't you come to me before you set up your mock robbery or before you decided to rub this guy out?!....

Bernie Rose's eyes blaze with anger. Cook sits back down at the table, having shut the blinds, pissing him off even more.

NINO

This was off to the side, Bernie. I didn't wanna involve you.

BERNIE ROSE

Well, now you fucked up I am involved. You have any idea what kind of heat you're gonna bring down on us? You steal from the family, you hold out on them, that's a death warrant for both of us.

NINO

What family? These fucks still call me a kike to my face. I'm sixty three years old, they pinch my cheek, treat me like a fuckin' kid. They're the reason I left New York in the first place. Decrepit old men waving us over to their dinner and domino tables to complain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BERNIE ROSE

Those old men gave us the funds to move out here.

NINO

And I made them a lotta money. I made you a lotta money too.

BERNIE ROSE

The money always flows up, Izzy. You know that...

He calls Nino by his childhood name now, emphasising the fact that they're both outsiders in this organisation.

NINO

...That's why this driver has to go. He's the only one who can tie me to the robbery...

For the first time Nino's tough guy act slips and he looks vulnerable.

BERNIE ROSE

What about this prick?

He doesn't even look at Cook.

COOK

Mr. Paolozzi -

NINO

Shut up...

The two friends stare at each other as if Cook didn't exist.

NINO

I shoulda' come to you before, I know.
We're a team...

He holds Bernie Rose's gaze apologetically.

BERNIE ROSE

...All right, I'll take him down, but it's on my dime, nothing to do with you...

Nino nods in gratitude.

BERNIE ROSE

(Turning to Cook)
Pass the salt...

Cook hesitates, tired of taking orders from the old man, but thinks better of saying no and reaches for the salt shaker.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Quick as lightning, Bernie Rose drives the stainless steel fork into the back of his neck, the force of the blow almost slamming Cook's face into the table. Bernie Rose twists and grinds the fork deeper for good measure, then with one powerful sweep of his arm clears Cook off the table.

Cook's not dead yet, just writhing on the floor, choking on his own blood. Bernie Rose keeps his eyes fixed on Nino.

BERNIE ROSE

Your turn to clean up after me...

EXT. DENNY'S RESTAURANT/ EAST LA - NIGHT.

Denny's is packed with families. Through the windows we see Driver, Shannon, and Benicio, sitting in a booth.

INT. DENNY'S RESTAURANT/ EAST LA - NIGHT.

Benicio's taking tiny bites of his burger, trying to avoid the salad and tomatoes. Driver watches him as he listens to Shannon.

SHANNON

...I told the Guttierrez woman to play dumb, tell social services his cousin came and took him away.

DRIVER

Think they'll go for it?

SHANNON

I doubt it, but with a Hispanic kid it may take them longer to chase up. By then I figured you'd have a better plan...

It's more a question than a statement -- what are they going to do with this kid? Driver stares back at him quietly, then turns to Benicio.

DRIVER

How's your burger?...

BENICIO

I don't like the tomatoes...

DRIVER

Then take 'em out...

Benicio takes out the tomatoes and salad leaves, keeping his eyes lowered. Shannon looks at him in quiet sympathy.

SHANNON

Any real family he can stay with?...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

An uncle in San Quentin...

Shannon sighs wearily.

SHANNON

You know, foster homes have probably changed a lot since your time...

DRIVER

Yeah, but kids haven't...

SHANNON

So he's going to live with you in the Buick, help you fight the mob?...

DRIVER

I was kinda hoping you'd think of something...

SHANNON

I was kinda afraid you'd say that...

They stare at each other, then Shannon glances at Benicio.

SHANNON

Friend of mine owns a ranch near Monterey. I'll take the kid there for a couple weeks, but after that, you don't show up, he's going to a home...

DRIVER

Thanks...

Benicio's still concentrating on his burger, pretending not to listen. Shannon turns back to Driver ruefully.

SHANNON

Hell, what are we doing in Denny's? We should be in Charlotte or Daytona, drinking champagne out of a trophy and getting kissed by Winston girls...

DRIVER

Nextel girls. Winston's stopped sponsoring the show...

SHANNON

Then it's all gone up in smoke...

Their eyes stay on each other, with quiet regret.

DRIVER

I'm gonna need a piece...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Shannon stares back at him with heartfelt concern.

SHANNON

You know, you can't win this thing. Every time you chop off a head, another one's gonna grow in its place...

Driver doesn't say anything.

SHANNON

I'll make the call...

Shannon squeezes out of the booth now, heading out into the parking lot. Driver stares after him, then turns to Benicio. There's an awkward silence, then the little boy looks up.

BENICIO

You cut your hair...

DRIVER

What do you think?...

Benicio nods weakly, then lowers his eyes again, close to tears.

DRIVER

...He didn't mean that stuff about sending you to a home. You can stay with him as long as you like...

BENICIO

Are you coming too?...

Driver hesitates, then answers confidently.

DRIVER

Sure. I just got a couple things to take care of first...

Benicio looks reassured, taking another bite of his burger.

DRIVER

You meet Miss Dickinson yet?...

BENICIO

Uh-huh. She doesn't like me...

DRIVER

She doesn't like anyone to start with. Then when you get to know her, you'll wish you hadn't. She never leaves you alone...

Benicio's smile brings back his tears. Driver feels his pain, and shares it. He tries to think of something comforting to say, but the words don't come easily.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DRIVER

You ever need to talk to anyone, you know,
about your mom or dad, Shannon's good at
that kinda thing. Much better than I am...

Benicio nods, keeping his eyes lowered. Driver can tell he's crying. He finds it just as hard to deal with as the little boy. He looks away, gazing out at the car park where Shannon's talking on his cell-phone. In the window, he can see his own reflection, sitting close to the little boy. The charged silence is interrupted as a WAITRESS arrives to clear the table.

WAITRESS

Can I get you anything else? Coffee?
Dessert?

DRIVER

Coffee, please...

He pauses, then turns to Benicio.

DRIVER

You want something else? You didn't eat
much of that burger...

Benicio nods, waiting for Driver to tell him what there is.

DRIVER

(Reading from the dessert menu)
Ice cream, blueberry cheesecake, chocolate
brownies, or Pecan Pie?...

Just for a moment, they're like any ordinary father and son.
Benicio takes his time to decide, a child again.

BENICIO

Chocolate Ice cream...

Driver sees a trace of a smile on his face now. The waitress gives him a big grin, then looks out of the window at Shannon.

WAITRESS

How about for grandpa?...

EXT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - NIGHT.

The sign for Shannon's *Lube'n'Tune* glitters in the cold blue light. A car pulls up silently on the street outside.

INT. SHANNON'S BEDROOM/ GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAWN.

The dull metallic clang of the garage door downstairs wakes Shannon. He looks over at Benicio.

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CONTINUED:

The kid's still asleep, wearing his cowboy and Indian pyjamas, Miss Dickinson lying nearby. Shannon climbs off the sofa, slips on a dressing gown, then heads downstairs to see what's going on.

INT. STAIRS LEADING TO GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAWN.

It's dark on the stairway. Shannon looks a little anxious as he pushes open the garage door.

INT. GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAWN.

The vintage cars are silhouetted in the gloom. Shannon glances at the main garage door. A crack of blue light peeps through where it's been left ajar. Someone's clearly broken in. Shannon casts his eyes around the garage, then suddenly stops. Leaning against his race-car, he sees a familiar figure.

BERNIE ROSE O/S

All this priceless junk, you should get better locks...

SHANNON

Door's always open to you...

Bernie Rose walks out of the shadows now, his hands in his pockets.

BERNIE ROSE

I'm looking for your driver...

SHANNON

You break in like this, I figure it's bad news.

BERNIE ROSE

It's bad luck. Two thousand bank licks in this city a year, he had to pick the wrong one.

SHANNON

He tried to put it right.

BERNIE ROSE

Picked the wrong guy for that too. My partner's a belligerent cocksucker with his back against the wall...

He stops now, standing face to face with Shannon.

BERNIE ROSE

Guess we won't be going to the races after all...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHANNON

Guess not...

BERNIE ROSE

Any idea where he is?...

SHANNON

You know me better than that...

Bernie Rose smiles softly.

BERNIE ROSE

You know how long Izzy and I been partners?
Since we were six years old. Only Jewish
kids in a neighbourhood of wops. Long as I
can remember I been getting him outta
scrapes...

Shannon stares back at him quietly.

BERNIE ROSE

I guess what I'm saying is that in this
business you don't have too many friends go
that far back...

He looks at Shannon with regret, as if he has no choice.

BERNIE ROSE

Anyone else I'd take your side...

Shannon meets his gaze, as if he has no choice either.

SHANNON

Anyone else I'd do the same...

Bernie Rose considers him a moment, then nods, as if he expected nothing less.

BERNIE ROSE

I won't lie to you. There's nothing I can
do for him, it's too late for that, but you
call him off, maybe I won't look for him so
hard...

Shannon shrugs sadly.

SHANNON

I already told him that...

INT. DRIVER'S CAR/ STREET/ MALIBU - NIGHT.

Driver's eyes are fixed ahead, ice, cruising slowly towards a
black Lincoln Continental.

EXT. STREET/ MALIBU BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT.

The Lincoln is parked outside a beach house. A BODYGUARD smokes out of the window as he listens to a ball game on the radio. He's so absorbed, he doesn't hear the Buick draw up beside him -- window to window. Driver's hand moves up before the Bodyguard can react -- his silenced 9mm spitting out two shots.

EXT. DRIVEWAY/ MALIBU BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT.

Palm trees and rose bushes are lit up by the garden lights. As he walks unhurriedly down the drive, Driver sees the beach-house up ahead -- big glass windows, lights on in most of the rooms.

EXT. FRONT STEPS/ PERIMETER/ BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT.

Keeping to the shadows, Driver moves silently up the steps, and skirts the perimeter of the house. Through the kitchen window he sees two BODYGUARDS having supper. In the living room, another BODYGUARD is watching TV. Driver continues, silent as a ghost.

EXT. DINING ROOM/ BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT.

Using a tool pick, Driver unlocks the glass doors.

INT. DINING ROOM/ BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT.

The curtains billow as Driver slips into the dining room.

INT. LIVING ROOM/ BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT.

Bodyguard 1 is watching a movie on TV, eating from a tub of ice cream. Driver watches him, hidden in the dining room. We're not sure why he's taking so long to strike. If his eyes weren't so focused, we'd think he'd lost his nerve.

On TV, an emotional character scene gives way to a rip-roaring action sequence -- pounding music and booming sound effects. This is Driver's cue. He walks calmly into the living room, raises his 9mm, and fires, the noise of the TV drowning out the pop of the silencer.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE KITCHEN/ BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT.

Driver edges towards the kitchen door now and peers inside. In the reflection of the window, he can only see one of the two bodyguards eating his supper. The other one's disappeared. Driver's mind works quickly, his eyes focusing on the missing bodyguard's plate. There's still some food left on it and his wine glass is full.

Driver starts to edge away now, glancing at the other doors in the corridor. He's broken into enough houses in his life to know which one's the bathroom door. He waits outside, listening.

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Sure enough he hears the toilet flush. Then the sound of running water. And finally the click of the door being unlocked.

Driver doesn't give it time to open. As soon as he catches a glimpse of BODYGUARD 2, he moves in, pushing the man back into the tiny bathroom, firing twice. This time the thud of the body falling is much louder.

Driver swings back into the corridor, waiting for Bodyguard 3. A moment later, the confused man appears, clutching his .38. Driver fires two more silenced shots into his chest. As the man hits the ground, his gun goes off, the sound echoing all around the house.

INT. STAIRS/ BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT.

Driver heads up the stairs quickly now, past framed black and white photographs of LA in the 70's. He hears the noise of footsteps on the landing and stops, backing up against the wall. The footsteps stop too. Driver aims his 9mm at the corner of the landing where the wall meets the stairs. The toe-cap of a shoe appears, another bodyguard preparing to round the corner and fire down the stairs. Driver fires first, blowing the man's foot off. BODYGUARD 4 collapses on the landing in agony, his head exposed. Driver shoots him on the move.

INT. BEDROOM/ BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT.

One quick feint, and Driver bursts into the bedroom, his 9mm pointed. The TV's still on, but there's no sign of Nino. Driver has a quick look around. Cupboards open. Bathroom door ajar. Curtains billowing through the balcony doors.

EXT. BALCONY/ BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT.

Driver strides out onto the balcony and sees steps leading down to the beach.

EXT. BEACH/ OCEAN/ MALIBU - NIGHT.

Isaiah 'Nino' Paolozzi stumbles through the sand, running for his life in his elegant silk pyjamas. He looks behind his shoulder and sees Driver calmly pursuing him. He keeps running, but he's overweight and out of breath, slowing all the time. He panics now, no way of outrunning this guy. Fear clouds reason and he sprints towards the crashing waves.

Driver slows down as he watches the gangster wade into the ocean, a pathetic last attempt to evade him. The crashing waves and the undertow are an impenetrable wall. Every time Nino tries to wade out further, the ocean drags him back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Driver stares at his trapped prey, Nino's attempts becoming more and more feeble as the ocean exhausts him and snuffs out any hope of escape. Finally he retreats back into the shallow water, barely able to keep his footing.

Driver's eyes are cold and unforgiving. Nino turns slowly and faces him now, the waves still slapping him on the back, his soaked pyjamas clinging to his skin.

The two of them stay like that for a long time. Gazing at each other. Driver silhouetted against the white sand. Nino trapped in the ocean. Driver slowly raises his 9mm and fires.

EXT. BLUE FLAMINGO MOTEL/ WEST SUNSET BOULEVARD - EARLY MORNING.

A strip of red neon runs all the way around the motel. Over the monotonous drone of traffic, we hear a phone ringing.

INT. DRIVER'S ROOM/ BLUE FLAMINGO MOTEL - EARLY MORNING.

Driver reaches across the bed and picks up his cell-phone.

DRIVER

Yeah?...

There's a brief pause, then a weary voice comes on the other line.

BERNIE ROSE'S VOICE

Shannon tells me you're ready to talk...

DRIVER

I'm ready to listen...

BERNIE ROSE'S VOICE

You see any reason it should go on?...

DRIVER

Doesn't have to...

BERNIE ROSE'S VOICE

Then we should meet. You know a place called Warszawa? Polish joint, corner of Santa Monica and Lincoln...

INT/EXT. BUICK REGAL/ LINCOLN BOULEVARD - DAY.

From across the street, Driver watches a blue Honda Prelude pull into the parking lot. Bernie Rose climbs out. Alone. Driver watches him head towards the restaurant, then starts his own car, heading towards the same parking lot.

INT. WARSZAWA RESTAURANT/ LINCOLN BOULEVARD - DAY.

A typical 1920's bungalow transformed into a fancy restaurant with several rooms. Driver heads into the last room and sees Bernie Rose sitting at a corner table, pouring himself a glass of wine. He spots Driver and stands up, holding out his hand. Driver shakes it, then sits down.

BERNIE ROSE
Care for a glass?...

DRIVER
Thanks...

BERNIE ROSE
Thanks for coming...

Bernie Rose pours him a glass of red wine from the bottle, then passes him the menu, looking completely relaxed.

BERNIE ROSE
I can recommend the duck. Hell, I can recommend everything. Hunter's stew with homemade sausage, Pierogi, Borscht...But the duck's to die for...

He says the last line with a thin smile.

DRIVER
Duck sounds good...

Bernie Rose smiles again, then calls over their WAITRESS.

BERNIE ROSE
The duck, please. For both of us. Pink.

WAITRESS
Anything else?

DRIVER
Not for me.

BERNIE ROSE
Me neither...

He waits for the waitress to leave, then turns back to Driver.

BERNIE ROSE
You've been on a roll. Cut yourself quite a swathe out there.

DRIVER
I never asked for any of it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERNIE ROSE

We usually don't. But it comes down on our heads anyway. Ask my friend 'Nino'...

Driver stares back at him quietly, the tension palpable.

BERNIE ROSE

Shannon tell you how long we were partners?...

DRIVER

I'm sorry...

Bernie Rose takes a moment, holding back his feelings.

BERNIE ROSE

Water under the bridge now. Question is where does that leave us?...

DRIVER

That's up to you...

BERNIE ROSE

You bring the bonds?...

Driver nods.

BERNIE ROSE

I've never known anyone wanna get rid of money so fast.

DRIVER

What's the point if you don't live long enough to enjoy it?

BERNIE ROSE

I don't think that's the issue. I don't think it means that much to you...

He holds Driver's gaze, then butters a piece of bread with his knife.

BERNIE ROSE

So tell me, how does someone with no interest in money become a thief?...

DRIVER

I joined the family business...

BERNIE ROSE

Your old man a driver?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DRIVER

Burglar. Time I was four I rode around with him so it wouldn't look suspicious. Time I was six there wasn't a house I couldn't break into.

BERNIE ROSE

Fine education. Still see each other?

DRIVER

He ain't around. Hit my mother one time too many, she shot him with his own gun...

Bernie Rose smiles.

BERNIE ROSE

So you get your talent from both sides of the family...

DRIVER

What about you?...

BERNIE ROSE

Nothing so glamorous. Nice Orthodox upbringing. Only there was a lotta namecalling at school and I was good with my fists...

He takes a sip of wine, still staring at Driver.

BERNIE ROSE

You think we choose our lives?...

DRIVER

If we do, I really fucked up...

BERNIE ROSE

Me too. This thing I'm in, this racket, there's no way out. I wanna retire, they retire me first. It's a golden cage. I had my life again I'd be an angel...

DRIVER

Bad things happen to them too...

There's a hint of emotion in his eyes now. Remembering Irina.

BERNIE ROSE

Yeah, I heard about that. I'm sorry. But like they say, you can't put the shit back in the donkey...

Bernie Rose stares back at him, reflecting on his own loss too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BERNIE ROSE

These people I have the misfortune to be involved with, they don't mind Nino being gone, but they want guarantees there's no loose ends...

DRIVER

Sounds like we have a problem...

BERNIE ROSE

And just when we were getting to know each other...

Their eyes are fixed on each other, deadly enemies but kindred spirits of a kind.

BERNIE ROSE

...We shake hands today, say goodbye, walk away, it's the beginning of your new life. They're gonna come after you no matter what. No end to it. Someone gets tired, somebody else takes their place. It goes on and on. Whatever dreams you have, whatever plans, you might as well forget 'em, because this is what it's gonna be like till the day you die...

(A beat)

I just thought you should know...

DRIVER

What do you suggest I do?...

Bernie Rose shrugs.

BERNIE ROSE

First time I heard about you, Shannon told me you drove. Fast. That's a start...

He keeps staring at Driver, then smiles coolly.

BERNIE ROSE

Either that or you choke on the duck...

EXT. PARKING LOT/ LINCOLN BOULEVARD - DAY.

The Buick is parked at the back edge of the parking lot, half hidden by a fenced area for garbage. Driver pops the trunk, taking out the briefcase with the bearer bonds. Bernie Rose doesn't even look at them, still admiring his car.

BERNIE ROSE

How much does something like this cost?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

Five, six thousand. If you can find one that still runs.

BERNIE ROSE

Maybe I'll take yours. Part of our deal.

DRIVER

Wouldn't recommend it. She handles like an ox cart. Every time you turn the wheel it's a fight.

BERNIE ROSE

I got enough of those on my hands...

He looks at Driver, smiles, then holds out his hand for the briefcase.

BERNIE ROSE

Guess we won't be seeing each other again...

Driver nods, then reaches out to give him the briefcase. Suddenly Bernie Rose's free hand snakes out of his jacket, twisting a knife deep into Driver's gut. He pulls it out, ready to shank him again, but this time Driver catches his wrist, forcing the knife all the way up to his throat.

Their eyes are fixed on each other for a moment, with something like regret, then the blade pierces Bernie Rose's neck, sinking deeper and deeper until it severs his throat. Driver holds the older man in his arms as he dies. They stay like that, locked in a fatal embrace, then Driver lowers him gently to the ground, out of sight.

Blood seeping through his shirt, Driver picks up the briefcase and puts it back in the trunk, slamming the door shut.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF A MUCH LARGER PARKING LOT/ LA - DAY.

We're looking down on an enormous parking lot somewhere in LA, hundreds of different coloured vehicles gleaming below. Driver's Buick pulls into the lot, searching for a place to park.

EXT. LARGE PARKING LOT/ LA - DAY.

Driver climbs out of the Buick, wearing a jacket over his blood-soaked shirt, the tiny beads of sweat on his face the only visible signs of discomfort. He dials a number on his cell-phone as he walks through the endless maze of cars.

EXT. RANCH NEAR MONTEREY - DAY.

It's first time we've left LA. In the background we can see Benicio watching some horses in an enclosure as Shannon takes the call.

SHANNON

Yeah?...

EXT. LARGE PARKING LOT/ LA - DAY.

Driver walks through a long corridor of cars.

DRIVER

It's me. I've left the Buick in a parking lot, corner of Lincoln and Culver. Can you pick her up?...

There's a pause on the other line.

SHANNON'S VOICE ON THE PHONE

Sure. What happened?

DRIVER

Bonds are in the trunk...

Another pause. All around Driver, the Chevys, Dodges, and Fords sparkle in the sunlight.

SHANNON'S VOICE ON THE PHONE

Bernie Rose?...

DRIVER

Gone...

EXT. RANCH NEAR MONTEREY - DAY.

Shannon stares out quietly as he realizes what's happened. He can hear Driver's painful breathing in the silence now.

SHANNON

You okay?...

EXT. LARGE PARKING LOT/ LA - DAY.

Blood seeps through Driver's shirt, dripping on the Tarmac.

DRIVER

Yeah. Just looking for a ride...

He keeps walking through the lot, casting his eyes from one vehicle to the next, looking for the perfect one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER
How's the kid?...

EXT. RANCH NEAR MONTEREY - DAY.

Shannon looks over at Benicio now, standing by the enclosure, looking completely absorbed by the horses.

SHANNON
He's having a great time. Hasn't asked
about you once...

EXT. LARGE PARKING LOT/ LA - DAY.

Driver smiles painfully, realizing he's lying.

DRIVER
Just promise me one thing. You won't teach
him to drive yet...

EXT. RANCH NEAR MONTEREY - DAY.

Shannon smiles sadly, knowing they'll never see each other again.

SHANNON
(Affectionately)
Screw you. You run out on me like this, I'm
gonna need a new driver...

The old man finds it hard to say goodbye.

SHANNON
You take care...

EXT. LARGE PARKING LOT/ LA - DAY.

Driver winces from the pain in his stomach.

DRIVER
You too...

He switches off his cell-phone reluctantly, then continues past the endless rows of empty cars. From above, we see the maze stretching out forever -- Chevys, Fords, Chryslers -- the history of America on wheels.

Driver's skin looks deathly pale in the bright sunlight, his eyes a haunting shade of blue. Finally he spots a sleek black Camaro in the distance and heads towards it.

INT. BLACK CAMARO/ LARGE PARKING LOT - DAY.

Driver climbs into the front seat of the Camaro, catching his breath. He sits there for a moment, sheltering from the world outside, then pulls out a pocket knife like the one he gave Benicio, opening the blades until he finds the screwdriver. He starts with the left side of the steering column, then gets to work on the section below the turn signal. His face shows the strain, but his fingers are as nimble and graceful as ever. A master at work. Finally he breaks into the ignition device, leaning back in the seat to take a rest.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW/ LARGE PARKING LOT - DAY.

We're gazing down at the black Camaro from above, waiting for it to move.

INT. BLACK CAMARO/ LARGE PARKING LOT - DAY.

Driver's face is completely still now. So are his eyes. He looks almost at peace for once. There's a long pause, then slowly he leans forward and turns on the ignition. As the engine comes to life, we CUT TO BLACK.