

L.A. Rex

by
Will Beall

Based on his novel

THE PARAMOUNT LOGO SLATHERED IN GANG GRAFFITI.

An LAPD Black & White *WIPES* across it, DRIVER'S SIDE DOOR filling our world: LA CITY SEAL and "TO PROTECT AND TO SERVE"

EXT. BLACK AND WHITE - DAY

AND RESTING ON THAT DOOR: a blue LAPD uniform SLEEVE *packed tight* with working MUSCLE that you can't get in a gym. Belongs to the original *vaguer*, Police Officer III **MIGUEL MARQUEZ**, urban samurai, masterless and mean. Looks 45-55, but his eyes are 100. Rodin sculpture, non-regulation Zapata moustache, cheek distended with a mouthful of Red Man chaw.

Next to him, Officer I **ARCADIO RAMOS** (21) in the passenger seat. Marquez's wide-eyed rookie, clueless, worshipful. Marquez spits chaw out the window, direction of the VAN.

MARQUEZ	RAMOS
Cargo van at 2 o'clock, across from the bank. See it?	Yes, sir.

EXT. BANCO POPULAR - CONTINUOUS

A primered **Van** parked across from the bank.

MARQUEZ
Sitting low on its shocks, see?
Probably at least five guys inside
it. In this fuckin' heat?
(beat)
We're looking at a 211-in-progress.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE - CONTINUOUS

Ramos scared and excited, thrumming like a whippet.

MARQUEZ	RAMOS
Well, <u>officer</u> , you gonna call it in or what?	(shakey) 12A45. We are code six on a possible 211 in progress - (deep breath) - at the <i>Banco Popular</i> . Manchester and Broadway ...

INT. BANCO POPULAR - CONTINUOUS

The SECURITY GUARD facedown on the floor: hyper-oxygenated BLOOD pumping from GSW to his head. 12 mid-day bank PATRONS stone-still, watching SMOKE curl from the Scorpion Pistol. The **SHOT-CALLER** now aims his Scorpion at cowering patrons. Just his EYES behind a black balaclava, Kevlar tactical vest, black fatigues. A nasty MILKOR M32 slung across his chest.

SHOT CALLER
 (re: dead guard)
 Glad I could clear that up.

They're terrified. Good. Shot Caller touches his earpiece through the balaclava. **Ramos' broadcast** over his SCANNER.

RAMOS
 (crackling over scanner)
 ... 12A45 - I say again, we have a possible 211 in progress at the Banco Popular ...

His 5-MAN ROBBERY CREW: #1 covers the patrons with an assault rifle. #2 on the bank tellers behind the counter. #3 and #4 are inside the open vault, stuffing bundled cash into their duffles. Identical BLACK GEAR, professional training.

RAMOS (O.S.) (over radio) ... Requesting backup and an airship for a 211 in progress.	RTO (over radio) All units 12A45 is Code 6 on a 211 in progress at Manchester and Broadway. Requesting backup and an airship.
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Shot Caller POUNDS the counter, fist RAISED.

SHOT CALLER
 30 seconds, people.

The 211 CREW finishing up.

DETECTIVE (O.S.) (over radio) William 14. En route.	OFFICER (O.S.) (over radio) Adam 73. En route.
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Sirens. The Shot Caller pulls a cellphone, dials a 7-digit number - his gloved THUMB now hovering over the **SEND** button.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE - CONTINUOUS

Marquez and Ramos, eyes on the VAN. Sirens getting closer.

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

It's not 5 guys in the van, but (4) 50-gallon barrels - all wired to a cellphone - on LED SCREEN: **INCOMING CALL** and ...

A SERIES OF ANGLES

... **KABOOM!** The entire van is swallowed by a FIERY EXPLOSION, shattering storefronts - the BLAST seen for blocks.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE - CONTINUOUS

Their windshield IMPLODES. Peppered with GLASS, Marquez & Ramos shield their eyes. FLAMING DEBRIS lands on the hood.

MARQUEZ
(into radio)
12A45! Officer Needs Help!
Manchester and Broadway!

RTO (O.S.)
(broadcasting)
*All units and all
frequencies. Officer needs
help at Manchester and
Broadway.*

EXT. BANCO POPULAR

The black-clad 211 CREW fires to SHATTER the front windows *charges* out through them, expertly turning their ASSAULT WEAPONS on Marquez's black & white, BLAZING full-auto!

INT/EXT. BLACK AND WHITE - CONTINUOUS

Marquez & Ramos HUNCH below the dash as high-velocity rounds CHEW through the car. Under fire, Marquez throws the car in REVERSE, blindly FLOORS it. Flames licking the pocked hood, the black & white LEAPS backward over the curb and reverses right through the glass front of the **99 CENT STORE!**

INT. 99 CENT STORE - CONTINUOUS

CASHIERS and CUSTOMERS scrambling of the way of Marquez's Black & white REVERSING through two checkout stands, SMASHING an aisle of merchandise. The ceiling SPRINKLERS activate.

EXT. BANCO POPULAR - CONTINUOUS

Chaos. BACKUP now arriving on scene. A column of LAPD black & whites rolling CODE 3 to the sound of the guns. The Shot-caller unslings his MILKOR M32, lines up the LEAD BLACK & WHITE in the Milkor's SIGHT and FIRES!

FWUMP! The 40mm HELLHOUND GRENADE strikes the GRILL of the lead black & white, a steel-toed boot to its teeth. **KA-BOOM!** The grenade DETONATES, *up-ending* the black & white, spewing smoke, twisted metal, cart-wheeling on to its own hood. Siren dying. More Black & Whites STACK UP behind the wreckage.

EXT. BANCO POPULAR - CONTINUOUS

Rotors slice the air now. AIR 18, an LAPD A-Star helo, SWOOPS in over the scene, its prop SWIRLING smoke.

TACTICAL FLIGHT OFFICER'S POV:

The 211 crew firing control bursts as they move, like a SWAT team, commando unit, heading straight for the 99 CENT STORE.

TACTICAL FLIGHT OFFICER (V.O.)
 (over radio)
*Officer Needs Help. Air 18 to
 responding units: be advised, we've
 got multiple suspects -*

On their way into the 99 Cent Store, the 211 CREW FIRES on AIR 18, rounds STITCHING its fuselage, windshield. AIR 18 *panic-peels* away, banking back over low buildings.

TACTICAL FLIGHT OFFICER (CONT'D)
-and they are armed to the teeth!

The Crew enters the smashed front of the 99 Cent Store.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE (INSIDE 99 CENT STORE)

Marquez woozy, but SEES them coming. He grabs Ramos' shoulder, SHAKING him.

MARQUEZ	RAMOS
(hurt)	(dazed; blinking)
Ramos? Rise and shine,	Yeah, sir. Okay. I'm okay-
partner. We gotta move. NOW.	

-But then **BUDABUDABUDA!** Everything north of Ramos' jaw suddenly disappears in a misty-red explosion, spattering the interior (and Marquez) with his blood and brain matter.

EXT. BLACK AND WHITE (IN 99 CENT STORE) - CONTINUOUS

BUDABUDABUDA! Gunfire strikes the black & white. Horror/rage on Marquez's blood-flecked face. The 211 crew fans out, a firing squad blasting into the stalled black & white. Marquez SHOULDERS open the door, ROLLS out on to the wet floor.

INT. 99 CENT STORE - CONTINUOUS

From behind the car's engine block, Marquez FIRES back at them. BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! Smith .45 coughing thunder. Shell casings clatter on the wet floor around him. The Crew ADVANCES, steps over/around sobbing civilians prone roach-tight to the floor. Marquez FIRES to slide-lock, crouches behind the car, bullets SPARKING off the hood as he drops his empty mag/slams in a fresh one/slide SNAPS forward. Ready.

Marquez POPS up to FIRE back, LOCKS EYES with the Shot Caller. Even at this distance, **Marquez recognizes those eyes** behind the black balaclava and it just *fucking crushes him*. He HESITATES for a split second. But the shot caller doesn't. He fires --***slishkt!***-- his round pierces Marquez's neck!

MARQUEZ

BLOOD glugging through twin dime-sized punctures in Marquez's neck. Marquez's palm on it: Blood spurting between fingers.

BACK TO SCENE:

FIRING back at them, Marquez LUNGES down the aisle, CUTS left. Sprinklers RAINING. The Shot Caller's on point now, HUNTING Marquez through the aisle MAZE, following his BLOOD TRAIL even as it's obliterated by the sheeting sprinklers.

Lurching and STUMBLING, Marquez SEARCHES the aisles for some FIRST AID, eyeing the *paper towels*? No. *Superglue*? No. *Fuck*. Marquez snatches a roll of **DUCT TAPE** from its peg, TEARS it open with his teeth, hastily TAPES over his own NECK, covering the wound, some blood still flowing. *Sirens* closer.

SHOT CALLER

Shot Caller raises his fist, HAND SIGNAL stopping his disciplined crew. More sirens: calvary's on its way.

MARQUEZ

His eyes FLUTTER, world SPINNING, fingers slacken, losing his grip on the .45. *Passing out*. He WRAPS tape round his fist. Taping his .45 there so he won't drop it, even in death.

MARQUEZ

Come on, you fuckers.

MARQUEZ'S SHAKEY POV:

A **.357 revolver** appears in Marquez's vision, the weapon angled low, gripped by two chubby fingers. Wedding band. Someone stepping into the aisle, leading with the .357. Tremors along Marquez forearm, strength flagging. But it's LAPD Detective **BAE CHUIN** (40s) a wry Buddha with a comb-over.

BACK TO SCENE:

Their eyes meet. Old friends. Marquez collapses. Chuin KNEELING, palm CLAPPED over Marquez's wound.

CHUIN

Aw, Miguel. Looks like you mighta pissed yourself here, man.

(voice husky with effort)

Now, come on, brother, you really wanna die with a lapful of piss?

TATTOOED & SPRAYPAINTED CALLIGRAHIC CREDITS TEAR-ASS OVER THE FOLLOWING: *Less montage than EXPLOSION. These images FIRING FULL-AUTO to the tune of "Bitterblue" by Cat Stevens.

Clumps of **FRESHLY-CUT HAIR** falling to the floor.

SEPIA PHOTOS: OLD L.A. pre-freeways, *STAGECOCHES* on the *CALLE DE LOS NEGROS/Sonoratown/Chavez Ravine/Barefoot kids/Squalid shanties*. **1870 PHOTO:** A *LYNCHING* at the LA Jail, corpse hung on a corral gatepost. Mob staring at us. Ken Burns on Angel Dust. Photos *BURN, blacken, peeling away to REVEAL:*

ACADEMY BARBER SHOP: Clumps of fresh-cut HAIR plop on to a BARBER's checkered linoleum. CLIPPERS plow **BEN HALLORAN's** head down to bare scalp. OUR FIRST LOOK AT BEN: (20s) softish, surfer kid, but get a look at his EYES. Something barely contained there, stalking behind the bars of its cage.

NEWSREEL FOOTAGE: 1943 ZOOT SUIT RIOTS. White soldiers/sailors wielding bats, brutally attacking PACHUCOS, BLACKS. Footage blisters, ulcerates, **BURSTS to REVEAL:**

LA POLICE ACADEMY: Ben's 1st day of the Academy. 60 RECRUITS scrambling to attention. Buzzcut kids = deer-in-headlights. DRILL INSTRUCTORS prowling the line of new recruits, sniffing for weakness, culling the WEAK from the herd, in their brink-of-tears faces. A Drill Instructor orders Ben to drop, berating him as pumps out PUSHUPS. Sweating. His arms wobble.

DOCUMENTARY FOOTAGE: 1965 WATTS RIOTS. Molotov cocktails. Fire. LA POLICE mercilessly clubbing black RIOTERS. NATIONAL GUARDSMEN man machine gun nests on Central Avenue.

ELYSIAN PARK: Ben runs mid-pack through rippling LA heat, sweat-drenched but holding his own up the punishing hills. Beyond Dodger Stadium, LA skyscrapers sheathed in particulate haze. OTHER RECRUITS stagger, fall out of ranks, vomit.

FOOTAGE: A defiant BLACK PANTHER DEMO. Black-power fists raised against a line of LAPD's FINEST in FULL RIOT GEAR.

ELYSIAN PARK: Weeks later. Fewer recruits (only 40 remain) run in a platoon formation. The DI calling their military cadence. And Ben's RIGHT OUT FRONT/Ben's knocking out pull-ups easier. Ben's leaner, stronger, somehow distilled/Ben scales WALLS, Cyclone FENCES, dashes through TIRES.

NEWS VIDEO: 1974 LAPD'S SHOOT OUT with the SYMBIANESE LIBERATION ARMY. Reporters cower behind patrol cars. Uniformed COPS and SWAT pour THOUSANDS of ROUNDS into 1466 East 54th Street. Black smoke. Fire. Camera REELS drunkenly.

PT FIELD: Recruits face off like Kendo Warriors. "Officers" wield batons, "Suspects" hold axe handles. Ben SWINGS his BATON savagely, smashes his OPPONENT's axe handle in half!

1980'S NEWS VIDEO: Ham-fisted LAPD GANG SWEEPS. Black kids indiscriminately HAULED out of cars, SLAMMED into walls, FORCED prone in the street. A COP even attacks the CAMERA.

ACADEMY COMBAT RANGE: Ben's on the firing line. The targets swivel to face him. Ben smoothly draws his Beretta, squeezes the trigger through the COMBAT Course of Fire. Methodically.

VIDEO: THE 'WAR ON DRUGS' HEATING UP. SWAT raids. Flash grenades. LAPD'S BATTERING RAM TANK demolishing a South Central Home/1st LADY NANCY REAGAN and DARRYL GATES touring the wreckage/followed by GATES in a series of surreal TELEVISION CAMEOS/playing himself on the TV Show 'Hunter.'

ACADEMY GAS HOUSE: the DI and recruits crowded into a windowless room - all wearing gas masks. DI pops a tear gas grenade, gas filling cramped space. The DI nods. They all remove their gas masks. Gas hits like a fist. Ben staggers outside, eyes crimson, snot ribbons. Ben falls, gasps, pukes.

1990's HOMEBOY HOME VIDEO: GHETTO HOUSE PARTIES and GANG BARBEQUES. CRIPS and BLOODS (faces digitally-obscured) throwing GANG SIGNS, brandish WEAPONS/ACTUAL VIDEO OF A GANG 'JUMP-IN': Viciously POUNDING one kid with FISTS, FEET, blurring seamlessly into HOLLIDAY'S VIDEO: the RODNEY KING BEATING followed by FOOTAGE of the apocalyptic 1992 RIOTS.

ACADMEMY DOJO: Recruits grappling/2 parts Jiu-Jitsu/1 part street fight. Ben in a go-for-broke match, leaving everything on the mat. Winner graduates. Twist locks. Punches. Kicks. Ben slips his ARM around a larger OPPONENT's throat, applying deadly CAROTID RESTRAINT, choking him out cold - cheating. The DI sees Ben's fighting dirty ... and LIKES it.

AERIAL FOOTAGE: The SLOW-SPEED BRONCO CHASE/COURTROOM VIDEO: OJ pretending to try on his Isotoner gloves, shrugging. Spectacular LAPD PURSUITS: Captured by leering NEWS CHOPPERS. NEWS FOOTAGE: Earthquakes. Wildfires. God waging war on LA.

ACADEMY GRADUATION: Ben's recruit class marches past the mayor, the CHIEF, and other department BRASS. The platoon halts, left face. Attention. Spit shined and polished. Ben's BADGE and his HALLORAN nameplate gleam in the sun - a formidable, newly-minted a LOS ANGELES POLICE OFFICER.

END CREDITS

INT. 77TH DIVISION ROLL CALL ROOM - DAY

Crude letters on a wood plaque over the Roll Call room read:

ABANDON HOPE ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE

BEN HALLORAN, rookie, street candy, sits ramrod straight, first row. Ben's 1st day, as a new probationer - or boot.

Behind Ben sit the 77th **P2 DOGS** - hardcore South-end gunfighters, unreformed lifetime street cops - their uniforms patched - torn going over fences, in brutal street fights. They KICK their scuffed boots against the back of Ben's chair, taunting him. *Think High School homeroom with guns.

Doors pushing open. Heads turn to watch **MARQUEZ**, striding alone into roll call. Marquez holding his BADGE & shine rag.

Even other old-timers give Marquez distance. The stink of failure is on him. An archipelago of fresh **SCAR** on his neck. All their EYES on Marquez as he takes his seat in the back corner, under the FLAG. Holding his badge like the Blessed Sacrament, fingers methodically polishing it with a rag.

After decades of polishing, Marquez's BADGE is almost featureless. The LA City hall on his badge has been rendered windowless, his badge now resembles a medieval coat of arms.

The P2s PELTING Ben with wadded Winchell's napkins and paper airplanes. But Ben know's better than to turn around. Ben's face neutral, eyes front - *Don't let them rattle you.*

PII DOG 2

I know they couldn't exactly tell you guys 'No Fags' in the academy, but seriously, dude, No Fags.

PII DOG 1

Hey, college. Don't ignore this officer when he's addressing you.

LIEUTENANT VINTNER enters, carrying the lineup, rotator. He's a Buffalo Soldier in LAPD blue. Black, 60s, walked a beat in Nickerson Gardens for 20, never lost his feet in a fight.

LT. VINTNER

Alright, people. Roll call.

Without a word, the entire watch straightens for him. Vintner dons his half glasses, takes a brief look at Ben before addressing the watch.

LT. VINTNER (CONT'D)

You know, the Chinese have a saying; 'Shit rolls down hill.'

PII DOG 2

(under his breath)

Stand the fuck by.

LT. VINTNER

Division's on modified tac alert. We're max deployed. All vacations - (groans from the watch) -all vacations are cancelled until further by order of the Chief. Anybody tries to bang in sick will answer to me.

(more grumbling)

Now, listen up, for as long as I've been on this job - which is longer than most of you slaps have been on this planet - they've been predicting the black-brown rivalry in this city would turn red.

(glancing down at the perforated Hot Sheet)

Well, it has.

FLASH CUT TO:

INT. PRISON SHOWER

A 260-pound, Black Guerilla Family WARLORD, lathering his muscles when a SURENO lunges at him out of the steam.

Warlord goes down for good, head cracking the tile, a
'bonecrusher' shank driven into his brain through his eye.

LT. VINTNER (V.O.)
*Corcoran, Chino, even Tehachapi all
report a sudden spike in
interracial violence.*

FLASH CUT TO:

PELICAN BAY (NIGHT VISION)

Through night-vision gear: Green-tinted chaos. Brutal
bezerkers clashing, slashing with cell-made weapons, their
eyes glowing vampyric in the greenish night-vision. Nocturnal
predators unleashed. Fists crushing bones. Teeth tearing
flesh. This makes Thermopylae look like Pop Warner. Guards
open FIRE now, and these are not warning shots.

LT. VINTNER (V.O.)
*Four dead in a race riot up in
Pelican Bay.*

FLASH CUT TO:

STREETS OF SOUTH CENTRAL

An 18th Street PISTOLERO with a sawed-off gauge leans out the
passenger window of a slow-rolling G-ride and fires both
barrels - BOOM! - the blast lifting a CRIP off his feet.

LT. VINTNER (V.O.)
*And most of you know we've had an
increase in brown-black bad
behavior right here in the hood.*

Tattered yellow crime scene tape. Spontaneous sidewalk murder
SHRINES. Family pictures. Melted candles. Wilted flowers.
Sagging mylar balloons. Offerings of Corvoissier.

LT. VINTNER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*South Bureau Homicide's on the
ropes down here people.*

BACK TO:

77TH DIVISION ROLL CALL ROOM

LT. VINTNER
Our beloved media - in its infinite
wisdom - is calling this a 'race
war' either because they don't know
what else to call it or they're
lookin to get one started.
(beat)
(MORE)

LT. VINTNER (CONT'D)
 Either way, there's a lot of blood
 in the water now.
 (to Ben)
 So be careful where you swim.

PII DOG 1
 Any idea what set them off, LT?

LT. VINTNER
 None. RHD says the truce fell apart
 over some kind of dope dispute.
 Sheriff's Homicide says they heard
 there was a disagreement on the
 yard somewhere upstate. But we've
 still got no *actionable*
intelligence on the source of their
 beef.
 (**eyeing Marquez** over his
 half-glasses)
We could use some.

Marquez offers Vintner the barest nod of acknowledgement;
message received. Vintner closes the rotator, glasses off.

LT. VINTNER (CONT'D)
 (sarcastic)
But where are my manners? We've got
 a brand new probationer here with
 us tonight. All the way from ...
 (motioning to Ben)
 Okay, Son, you've got one minute,
 one second.

Ben stands, stiffly addressing them in clipped Academy-ese.

BEN
 Thank you, sir. There's nothing
 much to tell, I guess. Except to
 say that I feel lucky to be here in
 the 77th. And I'm eager to learn.

Marquez eyes Ben with sheer contempt. *Fucking worthless.*

LT. VINTNER
 How bout telling us your name, son?

A few chuckles. Headshakes.

PII DOG 1
 Fucking retard.

BEN
 Ben Halloran, sir.

Ben stumbles on the name, almost like he's not used to it.

LT. VINTNER
 Halloran? You're going to be
 working with Officer Marquez.

Silence. The P2 Dogs are suddenly somber. Marquez's pissed.

LT. VINTNER (CONT'D)
Dismissed.

Everyone stands. Marquez heading straight for the Lieutenant.

INT. CORRIDOR - SECONDS LATER

First out the door, Ben rushes eagerly down the corridor, past framed pictures of 77th Officers killed in the Line of Duty over the years, heading straight for the KIT ROOM.

INTERCUT WITH ROLL CALL ROOM

Cops filing out. Marquez and Vintner stand off to the side.

MARQUEZ	LT. VINTNER
This is bullshit.	No, this is the Officially Deployment. Out of my hands.

Ben checks out all the standard LAPD patrol equipment. The KIT ROOM OFFICER hands Ben the items one-by-one across the counter: 2 Motorola Rovers, Remington 870 Shotgun, Ithaca Bean Bag Shotgun, Taser. Almost more than Ben can carry.

The Kit Room Officer hands MARQUEZ his **M-16A2** Urban Police Rifle. Marquez slings the rifle and grabs his black nylon WARBAG. And Ben counts about thirty kerchiefs tied off to the warbag's handle, like Comanche scalps. Blue bandannas. Red bandannas. Trophies taken from vanquished gangsters.

Marquez heading to the parking lot - past the **last photo in the corridor** without looking at it. Ben follows Marquez out - the new apprentice like a Sherpa laden with gear - struggling keep up with Marquez. Ben pauses, eyes the **PHOTO** of the most recent cop killed in the Line: baby-faced **RAMOS**. Ben's age.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE - MOMENTS LATER

Tires SQUEAL. Marquez Steve-McQueening them straight to the top of the 77th Parking Structure.

MARQUEZ
We need to get a few things
straight before we hit the street.
(throwing it in park)
Get out.

EXT. TOP OF THE 77TH PARKING STRUCTURE

Below the sizzling palm trees lies the WILD WEST, the sprawling, brawling camptown that is **South Central** - birthplace of the Crips and Bloods. Home of the quick and the dead. Rippling LA heat. Sirens. Squalor. Faint gunfire.

Marquez looms over Ben, sneering at Ben's LAPD-issue BERETTA.

MARQUEZ
(re: Ben's Beretta 9mm)
Well, that nine suits you, not
worth a pinch of dry shit.

Marquez wears a big SMITH & WESSON .45 - stainless steel, sandalwood grips, in a swivel holster like an old gunslinger.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)	BEN
Tell me you at least carry a backup?	Yes, sir. Five-shot .38 Airweight in my left rear pocket.

Marquez reaches across his own chest to pull open a hidden VELCRO SLIT running down the left seam of his uniform shirt. Ben sees Marquez isn't even wearing a Kevlar vest under there - just a t-shirt and a hidden shoulder holster. Marquez now draws a giant **.44 revolver** from his secret holster, definitely not Department-issue. **MARQUEZ'S HIDDEN BACKUP.**

BEN	MARQUEZ
I wasn't aware the Department had approved-	It's not a throwdown piece. It's a weapon of last resort.

Marquez re-sheaths the .44, closes the Velcro.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)
Go home alive and apologize later.
Or play nice and go home in a box.

Marquez pulls a bag of Red Man from his pocket, JAMS a load of CHAW into his mouth, works his jaw around some. Gross.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)	BEN
Better to be judged by twelve than carried by six. Get it?	(noticing Marquez's scar)
	Yes, sir.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)
Well, muy bueno.
(Marquez spits expertly)
Now, get in the fuckin' car.

EXT. STREETS OF SOUTH CENTRAL - MOMENTS LATER

Ben watches TAGGERS spray the shit out of an MTA bus while it's stopped for a red light. Marquez ignores them, drives through another country, a Demi-America. Discount Liquor Markets shoulder-to-shoulder with storefront *iglesias*.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE - CONTINUOUS

Ben wide-eyed, his head on a swivel, taking this all in.

MARQUEZ
Lemme guess, the acting Sir?
didn't work out.

Older BLACK MEN porch-playing penny dominos in the shade lift their beers to salute Marquez. He nods back, not unfriendly.

MARQUEZ BEN

What did you do before you came on the job? Nothing, sir.

Black and brown KIDS. Some barefoot. Some in diapers, chasing each other with surveyor's stakes, riding double on a rusty Schwinn. Several giggling BOYS pee on an unconscious WINO.

MARQUEZ

Nada, huh? That I believe. No, sir.

You got no prior military -

no way.

(spits out the window)

You look soft. You a queer?

MARQUEZ BEN
Play any sports in school? (hesitant)
I was on the fencing team,
sir.

MARQUEZ
Hey, great. That'll come in fucking handy if, you know, if we run into any pirates out here.

Haggard BASEHEADS - advanced crack addicts push wobbly shopping carts full of crushed cans up and down the street. One basehead has a DEAD DOG lashed to his cart like a deer.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)
(re: dead dog)
Ghetto elk.

Up head, A dozen FAMILY BLOOD SWANS defiantly throw up gang signs at a crew of Hispanic STREET VILLAINS hanging right across the street from the Swans. Tribal tension palpable, mounting. Marquez keys the radio handset, switching to PA.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)
(over PA system)
You boys play nice now.

Stops the black & white, staring down both factions. The 2 groups reluctantly break up, drift away. Marquez drives on.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)
Let me give you a piece of advice,
Officer Nada.

Feral PIT BULLS nosing garbage at the mouth of an alley.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)
Go home. Town's about due for
another riot.

Marquez window-SPITS chaw on to a pit bull. It YELPS, runs.

EXT. CORNER OF 76TH AND CENTRAL - MOMENTS LATER

Marquez pulls their black and white to the curb in front of a grimy Korean liquor store. The middle-aged wino **TONY TEIRASIAS** AKA Tony T slumps in his rusty wheelchair in front of the liquor store, drinking from a paper bag. Dreadlocks, filthy beard. Just looking at him, we can smell piss.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE

MARQUEZ	BEN
There's your first customer.	Yes sir.
Just frick him for drinking	
in public and hurry the fuck	
up. Think you can handle	
that?	

EXT. LIQUOR STORE

Ben exits the car and Marquez watches him approach the wino. Ben assumes the textbook academy stance, his gun-leg back.

BEN	TONY
Afternoon, sir. I'm Officer	(death-grips his booze)
Halloran? And if you don't	Whose talkin, Harry Potter? I
mind I'm going to have to ask	ain't talkin to nobody.
you to place that beverage on	
the sidewalk while we talk.	

BEN	TONY
Do you have any	Do you?
identification, sir?	

Ben sighs, flipping open his brand new ticket book. He pulls the pen from his breast pocket, and thumb-clicks it.

BEN
Last name -

Ben takes his eyes off him and Tony LAUNCHES to his feet, DRIVES a BODY SHOT into Ben's gut, lifting Ben off his feet, smashing his wind out. Ben drops his pen, ticket book, FALLS to his knees. Wheezing, Ben reaches for his baton, but Tony BURIES a bowel-shattering kidney PUNCH. ANOTHER. Agony. Tony grabs collar, hauls Ben upright, COCKS HIS FIST and ...

MARQUEZ
Not his face, Tony.

...Tony reluctantly lowers his fist, not even breathing hard.

TONY

Hope you kept the receipt for this one, Marquez. Get your money b-

-Tony suddenly GASPS, eyes bulging in pain! He looks down to see Ben's FIST CLOSING on the piss-stained crotch of his pants, crushing Tony's balls. Tony crumples forward as Ben THROWS his shoulder into him, judo FLIPPING Tony on to the sidewalk. Still gasping, Ben rolls Tony over, HANDCUFFS him.

Ben staggers to his feet, gut-KICKS Tony, hard! Ben leans on the black & white, catching breath. Marquez wasn't expecting this from a rookie. *Just who the hell is this kid anyway?*

MARQUEZ

(spits)

Fencing, huh?

Off Ben's watery eyes telling Marquez to get fucked.

CUT TO:

EXT. MACARTHUR PARK - AFTERNOON

Packed sidewalks. Park-soccer. Cash-&-carry *dentistas*. Street vendors. Gangsters selling heroin. Hustlers hocking *micas*.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE - CONTINUOUS

LAPD officers **CABE RISLEY** and **ARNOLD MAPES** cruising Alvarado, Risley whistling *Macarthur Park*. Badasses in blue uniforms. If you encountered RISLEY on the street, he'd impress you as a model officer, projecting both sophistication and street cunning. But his partner MAPES is pure muscle.

CORNER OF ALVARADO & WILSHIRE

SHEENA, stacked, redheaded hooker in a faux-leopard miniskirt. She fidgets. Risley CHIN-BECKONS Sheena to his black & white. She clicks over on wobbly heels, leaning in Risley's open window, tits in his face. Now, we see Sheena's just a kid, a black-talkin' white runaway - 16 max - with a big terrified smile for her 'Daddy.' Risley plucks a wad of bills from Sheena's bra, thumb-counts them absently.

SHEENA

That councilman went to the bathroom on me again.

RISLEY

Hey, that's my *soljiah*. But next time you call me first, hear? Blackmail that sickass chester.

Sheena scratching herself, licking her lips. Risley pulls a baggy of Mexican Brown from his sun visor, PASSES it to her. Relieved, Sheena tucks the smack into her bra.

RISLEY

Vice doin' a sweep tonight.

SHEENA

I'll spread the word.

RISLEY
See that you do.
(scanning the street)
Where's Bambi at?

SHEENA
You didn't hear? Bambi fucked
around and died. Deadeye sold
her some bunk; fuckin'
poisoned her.

RISLEY
Mother-fucker.
(beat)
Girl, what I tell you 'bout
goin' outside the family?

SHEENA
(terrified)
I'm already knowin, Daddy.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. MACARTHUR PARK PUBLIC RESTROOM - MINUTES LATER

NAVIDAD "**DEADEYE**" MENJIVAR (30) walrus moustache, 180 pounds
of gristle, shank scars, calligraphic tattoos - LUNGING to
PANIC-FLUSH his HEROIN BINDLES. Fast, just not fast enough.

Risley's on DEADEYE, snarling like a cougar.

RISLEY
That girl was my little cash
machine, made Jodie Foster look
like fuckin' Judy Dench! She
brought in a thousand a night.

Risley's gun to Deadeye's head. Mapes watches the door.

DEADEYE
So I'll make it right with
you. I pull twice that on a
good day.

RISLEY
Yeah, servin' stomped-to-fuck
rat poison to Brad Renfro?
How long you gone last out
here killin' your own
customers, dummy? These hypes
get wise and you're outta
business.

DEADEYE
It was Wizard. Stomped the
shit out of it. Gettin' high
on supply.

RISLEY
Lemme get this straight.
Wizard's free to eat off any
tree in the garden and you're
tellin' that 12-steppin'
motherfucker tasted cartel
dope?
(off Deadeye's nod)
You send that up to the Mesa?

DEADEYE
Naw. Wizard was my celly.
Took a shank for me at chow,
dog. Carcosa finds out he's
usin again, Wizard's dead. If
I snitch, they'll send me to
do him. And I ain't up for
it.

RISLEY
Well, you got a problem then.
But I got the solution. You
move my product and only my
product.
(off Deadeye)
Don't even spit in it. I take
50 percent. Get clever or
greedy, and -

DEADEYE
-You'll kill me, I know. Dog,
I'm-

RISLEY
-No, I will set fire to your
twins.

(Deadeye aghast)
Your given name is Navidad
Menjivar. *Jersome* and *Paula*
go to St. Cecilia's. On
scholarship.

DEADEYE
Please.

RISLEY
You still owe me for the dead
girl.

(beat)
Which hand you use? To pass
my baby girl your poison
shit, fool. Which was the
offending hand, *Sahib*? Hand
you actually killed my little
sacred cow with?

DEADEYE
My left.

RISLEY
Ooh, you lyin' your ass off,
boy.

DEADEYE
No, on the reals, dog.
(pantomiming a dope
transaction)
I take the money with my right
hand, pass the dope with my left.

Risley draws his side-handle baton from his gun belt, and
motions to two stainless steel sinks on the wall.

RISLEY
Get your right up there anyway.

Risley waits. Deadeye sighs, resting his right FOREARM across
the two stainless steel SINKS, his arm making a bridge
between them - like a board waiting to be karate chopped.

Risley raises his baton, about to ...

DEADEYE
Hang on. Hang on.

Deadeye pulls an ornate leather WALLET. BITING down on the
wallet, he lowers his head, squeezing his eyes shut- just as
Risley's baton **CHOPS** savagely down through his arm - the
compound fracture FOLDING the arm like wet wood splintering.

RISLEY
You know me. You know what's comin.
Don't be on the wrong side of it.

CUT TO:

EXT. ON THE 'SHAW - AFTERNOON

Marquez and Ben back in their black and white, cruising CRENSHAW BOULEVARD, South Central's elementary canal; a hip-hop Babylon. No-tell motels, Afrocentric salons, barbers.

INT/EXT. BLACK AND WHITE - CONTINUOUS

Ben is fucking pissed. Marquez looks relaxed, almost bored, scanning the boulevard for quarry. He spits chaw into a Styrofoam cup. Driving with his Smith .45 resting on his lap.

BEN
You actually pay some old
juicer to pummel all your new
probationers?

MARQUEZ
Not all of them.

BEN
Cause that is, that is
seriously fucked, dude. I
mean, Jesus Christ, what
planet are you from?

MARQUEZ
(spits chaw out window)
Planet Mexican.

Traffic heaves with salvaged junkers, *JORNALERO*-trucks. Tricked-out SUVs, pimpmobiles. Lowriders rear on hydraulics. FRUIT OF ISLAM, dark suits bow ties, selling bean pies.

BEN
Well, I just spent the last 6
months here on Earth, taking
their unmitigated shit at the
Academy. And I graduated top
of my class.

MARQUEZ
Congratulations.

BEN
I'm not a dilettante and I'm
not a tourist. I run a 7-
minute mile. And I shoot 400
on the bonus range.

MARQUEZ
Paper targets.

BEN
What's your point?

MARQUEZ
My point, dipshit, is this is
South Fucking Central. You
catch a producer gobbling
cock in a public shithouse
out in West LA? Fine, you
might be able to talk him
into the hooks. But down
here? These assholes'll make
you work for it.

Zacatecas STREET VENDORS, drenched in sweat, dash in and out of traffic, hocking bags of oranges, pistachios.

BEN
I wouldn't be here if I wasn't
willing to work? But I didn't sign
on for your bullshit tough love.

Marquez turns to Ben, his eyes will brook no more bullshit. His preternatural authority almost subsonic, like a dog-whistle promising violence. Ben glimpses the man he's partnered up with here. *Ethan Edwards. Ahab. Kurtz.*

MARQUEZ

That'll do, pig.

(off Ben; chastened)

You're still jacked on adrenaline.

So I let you run your lip awhile to get some of that poison out.

(spits)

But you're done now.

EXT. CRENSHAW CAR WASH - MOMENTS LATER

Their black & white rolling up on a dozen BOOT HILL MAFIA CRIPS are out playing speed craps - jackals around a carcass.

Their black & white in plain view. Marquez eyeing them.

MARQUEZ

Okay, look I've been ... off for awhile. I'm just checkin' in on some old playmates here. You can log it as 'Community Outreach.'

(off Ben)

The LT wants us to gather some *actionable intelligence* while we're out here and this car wash ain't a half-bad place to start.

Seeing Marquez, the Boot Hill Mafia snatch their ducats off the deck, throw defiant 'Boot Hill' signs, lifting their shirts to display BH tattoos. Flash their winnings, cackling, beckoning the *po-po*, just daring them. Gold grills. No fear.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)

(meeting each stare)

It's not the ones eye-fuckin' us you gotta worry about. The bold ones are usually clean.

(beat)

Gimme a homey can't hold his mud, studyin' his kicks instead of staring you down? He's packin' a guilty conscience, packin' a strap if we're lucky.

Sure enough, DEANDRE, 20s, hangs back a little - his eyes everywhere but on their black and white. Blue converse.

BEN

Blue kicks, sir.

MARQUEZ

He'll do.

Deandre sidles away from his homies, hops into a puke-green pig-iron Bonneville, and pulls out of the car wash. Deandre trying to look casual with his eyes glued to the rearview.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)
 (calling out the plate)
 Four. Sam. Young. Frank. Six.
 Seven. Two.

Ben punches the Mobile Data Terminal. Beep! CODE 6 CHARLES.

BEN (reading the screen)	RTO
Inglewood stolen, sir. Taken	12A45: Code Six Charles
in a carjacking this morning.	indicated. Verify your
	location.

Ben reaches for the handset.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)	BEN
Keep it below the dash,	12A45. We're following a Code
dummy. Don't let him see you	6 Charles vehicle northbound
broadcast.	Crenshaw from ...

Ben craning his neck to check a STREET SIGN.

MARQUEZ	BEN
From <u>Florence</u> , come on!	... From Florence. Requesting
	backup and an airship.

TACTICAL FLIGHT OFFICER (over radio)	RTO
Air 18 en route from Newton.	Air 18 has a two minute ETA.
ETA about two minutes.	

The Bonneville subtly picks up speed, putting some distance between them. Deandre getting ready to make his move.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)
 Testing us. Asshole doesn't figure
 the ride's hot just yet or he
 wouldn't have hopped in it.

Marquez gently accelerates with the flow of traffic, working the gas pedal the way an angler works a reel. But Deandre panics, smoke boiling from the tires as the Bonneville LURCHES across traffic into southbound lanes up the curb to sidewalk-plow newspaper machines, garbage cans. PEDESTRIANS flatten against storefronts, DIVING over parked cars.

BEN	MARQUEZ
He knows, sir.	Oh, ya think?

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - CONTINUOUS

The Bonneville cuts east on to train tracks, across a NARROW TRELLIS spanning the LA RIVER. A FREIGHT TRAIN coming fast. Marquez CRANKS the wheel, FLOORS it on to the trellis.

BEN'S POV:

The Bonneville makes it across the trellis and CUTS left out of the train's path. Now the train bears down the black &

white, closing the distance to the trellis, AIR HORN blaring.

INT/EXT. BLACK AND WHITE - CONTINUOUS

Marquez's foot to the floor, playing chicken with a train!

BEN

Trying to scare me into quitting?

Marquez crossing the trellis at the last possible second, tires spitting gravel as they SKID out of the train's path - not quite - cowcatcher *SHEERING* off their REAR BUMPER!

MARQUEZ

Crossed my mind.

EXT. SLAUSON AND CRENSHAW - CONTINUOUS

The Bonneville FISH-TAILING, spirograph skidmarks as it spins, peeling up Slauson. Marquez weaving through traffic.

BEN

(broadcasting)

12A45. We are now eastbound Slauson from Crenshaw.

MARQUEZ

(re: Deandre)

He's gonna bail.

EXT. SLAUSON AND DENKER

Deandre DIVES and rolls out of the moving car as the rudderless Bonneville floats across the intersection and smashes through the front of an open-air *tienda*. Deandre, skinned up, but now scrambling into a full SPRINT.

BEN

I'll take it from here, sir.

Ben THROWS open his door, CHARGES out after him.

MARQUEZ

Hold up, goddamnit! Don't separate!

But Ben ignores him. And we're jamming with Ben through the intersection - dodging traffic - *sprinting with him in a hand-held balls-to-the-wall foot pursuit* - *Ghetto Parkour.

BACKYARDS

Deandre goes over after fence after fence, but Ben's right on his ass - the 2 of them SPRINTING through backyards past black KIDS on a rusty swing set. Deandre VAULTS a wobbly WOODEN FENCE. Ben STUMBLES on the swing set and CRASHES right THROUGH the fence, gaining on Deandre. Ben tries it again, RUNNING full-speed at the next wooden fence - BASH! Ben's knocked on his ass by a CINDER BLOCK WALL behind that one!

BEN
Oww! *Fuck!*

INT. BLACK AND WHITE - CONTINUOUS

Marquez behind the wheel, heading east on 58th, PARALLELING Ben. Between the houses, Marquez can see Deandre going over fences and he keeps pace with Deandre in the black and white.

MARQUEZ
Son of a bitch can move.

EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Deandre lands hard in another backyard, toppling a MEXICAN WOMAN hanging her laundry. The woman goes fetal, rape-screaming. Panicked, Deandre disappears into the next yard.

And now, Ben VAULTS the fence into the yard -- just as the woman's ursine sons - two hardcore **FLORENCIA GANGSTERS** charge out the back door to rescue their Mom with aluminum BATS. Rage-blinded, the men CHARGE the cop to take him apart for mom's honor. Still running, Ben brings his GUN up at them.

BEN
Whoa! Timeout. Guys. GUYS!

MEXICAN WOMAN
No, no lo hizo!

The gangsters LOWER their bats almost reluctantly. Ben holsters up, JUMPS in the next yard -

EXT. NEXT YARD - CONTINUOUS

- LANDING, suddenly facing two **PIT BULLS** charging him! The first dog LAUNCHES at Ben. Ben JUKES and DODGES across the yard, dashing for the far fence with dogs snarling at his heels. Ben topples LAWN FURNITURE. The dogs LEAP at Ben just as he DIVES over the fence, tearing Ben's uniform pants.

EXT. OVER NORMANDIE AVENUE - CONTINUOUS

The sound of rotors biting the air as an LAPD helo SWOOPS in like a bird of prey, prop-wash rippling the trees below.

PILOT'S POV:

Deandre desperately scrambles over the last fence on the block, SPRINTING out across Normandie Avenue.

TACTICAL FLIGHT OFFICER	RTO
Air 18 over the foot pursuit.	<i>All units, Air 18 has suspect</i>
I have your suspect eastbound	<i>running eastbound Normandie</i>
across Normandie at 58th	<i>at 5-8 Place.</i>
Place.	

We can see other BLACK & WHITES on Slauson, 57th and 58th, converging on Deandre. 12A45 skidding to a stop as it drifts past Deandre, throwing it in reverse. Marquez driving backward up Normandie to stay with the sprinting Deandre. Deandre now RUNS up on the sidewalk, past stucco apartments, the laundromat, past the liquor store-

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - CONTINUOUS

Ben coming from out of nowhere to open-field TACKLE Deandre, the two of them **CRASHING** through the liquor store WINDOW.

INT. LIQUOR STORE

Glass, neon beer signs IMplode as Ben and Deandre fly through the obliterated front window, TOPPLING a rack of chips. The 2 men rolling, grappling. Broken glass. Cheetos Ben tries to HOOK his arm round Deandre's throat (CHOKE HOLD). Deandre answers with a swift ELBOW to Ben's face = bloody nose.

Deandre scrambles away from Ben and **BOOM!** The refrigerated beverage case DETONATES, a geyser of glass and foam covers Ben and Deandre. The perma-frowning KOREAN proprietor tracks Deandre from behind the counter with his sawed-off 12-gauge!

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - CONTINUOUS

Marquez running to the liquor store, his .45 coming up.

MARQUEZ

Shots fired! 54th and Normandie!

INT. LIQUOR STORE

Deandre DIVING behind a candy aisle as the proprietor fires again. BOOM! The candy aisle explodes like a *pinata*. The Korean breaks open his shotgun, plucks out the smoking shells, RELOADS. While the guy's reloading, Deandre SPRINTS out the emergency exit - daylight pouring in from the back alley. Ben follows, slipping in spilled beer on his way out.

MARQUEZ

Marquez arrives in front of the store, his gun up, just in time to see Ben sprinting out after Deandre.

KOREAN

[Shouting in Korean]

MARQUEZ

Yeah, no shit!

EXT. BACK ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Chasing Deandre out of the alley, across GRAND AVENUE on to a PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE spanning the HARBOR FREEWAY.

EXT. PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Deandre's running HARD on the bridge, huffing now. Traffic roaring under him in both directions. AIR 18 swoops in next to the bridge, the chopper hovering over heavy traffic.

TACTICAL FLIGHT OFFICER

(over radio)

Air 18. I have suspect running eastbound on pedestrian bridge, south of Vernon. Over the harbor freeway.

EXT. VERNON AVENUE OVERPASS - CONTINUOUS

Marquez back in his black & white, heading across the Vernon Avenue overpass - parallel to the pedestrian bridge. Pacing.

RTO

(over Marquez's radio)

All units. Air 18 has suspect south of Vernon Avenue, eastbound on pedestrian bridge over the Harbor Freeway.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE (MARQUEZ'S POV)

Ben's RUNNING on the bridge now, relentless, closing in on Deandre, all those Academy runs now paying off in extra wind.

EXT. BLACK AND WHITE - CONTINUOUS

Marquez PULLING AHEAD of them, fishtailing on to FLOWER ST. on the other side of the Freeway, screeching to a stop.

EXT. PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Marquez taking the stairs two at a time, reaching the elevated span, CUTTING Deandre off. Waiting, huffing. Deandre running right at Marquez, stopping dead when he sees him. TRAPPED on the bridge between Ben and Marquez. Throwing a look back at Ben, Deandre CLAMBERS up the chain-link barrier and Ben watches Deandre LAUNCH himself off the bridge - 50 feet down - to the land on CONCRETE MEDIAN.

TACTICAL FLIGHT OFFICER

(over radio)

Be advised, suspect now running southbound on the median of the Harbor Freeway. Notify CHP.

Ben locks fuck-you eyes with Marquez.

With that, Ben suddenly monkey-climbs the barrier and - before Marquez can grab him by the belt - Ben JUMPS.

MARQUEZ
Wait! Wait! You little-

Marquez running back to his black & white.

INT. AIR 18 (PILOT'S POV):

Ben chasing Deandre south on the freeway's narrow median.

TACTICAL FLIGHT OFFICER
What's he think he's doing?

EXT. HARBOR FREEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ben barreling after Deandre like a man possessed. Traffic roaring on either side of him. Deandre shoulder-throws a desperate look at Ben and CUTS ACROSS THE FUCKING FREEWAY! Horns BLARE. Cars SWERVE. SCREECHING. Ben winces, but Deandre makes it, scrambling up the ice plant embankment.

Ben high-dive MEASURES, breathes, and RUNS. *Fuck. Fuck.* A suicide-dash across the freeway. *Holy-fucking-shit.* Traffic SLASHING the air around Ben. HORNS. Ben Frogger-stops, pin-wheeling arms like a man at a cliff's edge. A SEMI passing INCHES from his face. Ben lunging across the final lane.

Scrambling up the embankment after Deandre. Deandre looking back, loving this cop. Deandre clambers up a cyclone fence, JUMPING from the fence to the ROOF of a swaybacked house.

EXT. ROOFTOPS - CONTINUOUS

Deandre's desperately Peter-Panning it across the rooftops of 55th Street with Ben right behind him, LEAPING house to house Rotor blades. Deandre sees AIR 18 circling overhead, the black and whites keeping pace with him, mid-block on 55th and 54th. The net closing. Deandre breathless, weighing options. Suddenly, Ben TACKLES Deandre from behind. The two men roll down the sloping roof to CRASH through a SKYLIGHT into ...

INT. WIZARD'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ben and Deandre land in a heap. BLOWFLIES swirling around them, clouding the squalid air like a storm of raisins. Flies cover Wizard's bloated **CORPSE** slumped over the sink, like bees on a Guinness freak, distorting the corpse's shape and size - the dead man looking almost like a bear.

BEN AND DEANDRE

The ungodly smell of decomposition hits them both like an invisible fist. And Ben and Deandre scramble over each other, stumbling through the blinding swirl of flies, groping for the back door. Deandre panic-fumbling with the dead bolt.

BEN

Come on, man. Hurry the fuck u-

Ben PUKES on Deandre's back. Deandre PUKES on the door.

EXT. WIZARD'S BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

The kitchen door bangs open, Ben and Deandre stumble out into the yard, both dry-heaving.

DEANDRE

You threw up on me.

BEN

On the ground.

(coughing)

Hands behind your back.

Ben CUFFS him and, for a second, they both look relieved.

MARQUEZ

Helicopters. Marquez charging into the backyard now to find Ben standing over Deandre. Ben grinning, stoned on adrenaline, proud of his catch. But Ben's triumphant smile fades fast. Marquez grabbing a fistful of Ben's uniform shirt and slamming Ben against the house.

MARQUEZ

Either you don't *habla ingles* or you're lookin' to die out here. So which is it?

(off Ben)

When I tell you 'don't separate' it means do not separate, read me?

BEN

Yeah, okay. I read you. *Shit.*

Deandre squirms on the lawn. Marquez stomps on Deandre's back. And Ben winces for Deandre in spite of himself.

MARQUEZ

(to Deandre)

And don't YOU fucking move.

(back to Ben)

You better believe that I will paperfuck you all the way back to Brentwood before I'll write up another dead probationer.

(off Ben's look)

You want to impress me, Nada? Want to keep your job? Follow my instructions and step where I st-

(MORE)

Chuin scans framed PHOTOS: teens by a tricked out lowrider, throwing up *Florencia*.

A photo of Wizard on the Corcoran yard. Recent photos of Wizard marching alongside Edward James Olmos behind a TAKE BACK THE NIGHT banner. Another photo of Magic Johnson handing Wizard a check the size of a bus bench.

CHUIN (CONT'D)
(turning off recorder)
Wait, I *knew* this guy. Wizard. He
ran this Gang Intervention Program,
but, you know, it's just a front.

Marquez squats to sift through the scattered contents of an overturned desk drawer. He picks up a dog-eared **LEDGER**, opens it - the pages a jumble of Spanish, Nahuatl and numbers.

CHUIN (CONT'D)
Yeah, this guy was Joe
Carcosa's-

MARQUEZ
-tax collector.

CUT TO:

INT. 77TH DETECTIVES BUREAU - LATER

Crowded BULLPEN: Detectives on phones, at computers. Chuin places Wizard's ledger on his desk among mountainous three-ring 'murder books.' Marquez thumbs the dog-eared ledger.

CHUIN
Can you read any of it?

MARQUEZ
(nodding)
Looks like Deadeye from 18
was light last week.
(flipping pages)
And the week before.

Ben eyes the ledger, wheels turning, as he takes this all in.

CHUIN
Okay, but there ain't nobody from
18th Street dumb enough to fuck
with the *Mexican Mafia*, right?

Off Ben.

INT. DETECTIVES BUREAU INTERVIEW ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Fluorescent lights. Two-way mirror. Chuin sitting opposite Deandre at a scarred Formica table. Deandre slumps, petulant.

DEANDRE
Why y'all still fuckin' with me?

CHUIN
Well, see, the Prison Industrial Complex provides me their master list of black men to harass. So, you know, I just go alphabetically.
(off Deandre's blank look)
Try carjacking, felony evading, ADW on a Peace Officer. Oh, and murder.

DEANDRE
Uh huh, *what* murder?

CHUIN
How 'bout the stinker in that house, your buddy Wizard?

DEANDRE
(laughing)
You can't put that on me.

INT. OUTSIDE DETECTIVES BUREAU INTERVIEW ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Standing on the other side of the mirror, Marquez WATCHES Chuin place the RD MAP on the table in front of Deandre.

CHUIN
Well, here's the route you took after you ditched the G-ride. Across the freeway? Come on. You had a destination in mind. I'll bet my pension SID pulls your prints out of that house.
(off Deandre's stricken look)
And not just from the kitchen either. I'm thinking maybe the bathroom. Hell, they might even get DNA from saliva you left on one of those beer bottles in the trash.
(beat)
Come on, you've been to that particular briar patch before haven't you, Br'er Rabbit?

DEANDRE
That don't mean I killed him.

CHUIN
Okay, but I can make a twelve people believe this was you returning to the scene of the crime. Juries love that shit.

DEANDRE
Why the fuck I'm gonna lead cops to a corpse, cuz? I didn't even know Wizard was dead. I just thought he could hide me out.

CHUIN
Okay, but how does a Neighborhood Crip know Joe Carcosa's taxman?

DEANDRE
(swallowing dryly)
I want a lawyer.

Damn. Sixth Amendment coming down like a portcullis. And here ends the interview. Chuin hiding the frustration on his face.

CHUIN

Well, that's your right of course.
Your decision to make.

Chuin gathers his papers and leaves.

INT. DETECTIVES BUREAU INTERVIEW ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Marquez steps into the interview room now, smiling, holding the YELLOW PAGES out to Deandre.

MARQUEZ

Heard you were askin for a lawyer.

THUD! THUD! THUD! Marquez swings the YELLOW PAGES like a cudgel, expertly slamming the big book against Deandre's chest, shoulders, and the back of Deandre's head. *Damn.*

CUT TO:

INT. 77TH STATION LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

NRA bumpers stickers and Penthouse spreads decorate lockers. Ben standing at his open locker, draping his gunbelt over the locker door while he changes out of his torn, filthy uniform. PII Dog #1 walks out of the weight room, pumped, the guy bumping Ben as he passes him. Ben shoots him a look.

PII DOG 1

He introduce you to Tony yet? You mean the *Kobayashi Maru*?

PII DOG 1

(laughing)

I was pissin' blood for a week after that. Yeah, Marquez is craziern a 3-peckered goat.

Roger that.

PII DOG 1

But he's still the best TO in the South End. Bar none. Don't listen to those fuckin' haters upstairs. Too many Monday-morning quarterbacks in 77th. Shit wasn't his fault.

What wasn't?

PII DOG

Ramos.

(off Ben; blank)

Nobody told you? Marquez buried his rookie six months ago.

CUT TO:

INT. DETECTIVES BUREAU INTERVIEW ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Marquez phone book-THUMPING Deandre, pauses for breath.

MARQUEZ
Lemme rephrase the question.

Marquez cocking back for another swing. Deandre winces.

DEANDRE MARQUEZ
Hold up. Hold up. How can you I'm nostalgic.
come at me like this, dude?
Ain't 1991.

DEANDRE MARQUEZ
Naw, naw, fuck that. This is Wait, wait, you're what?
some bullshit. I'm combat
veteran, man.

DEANDRE MARQUEZ
82nd Airborne. Two tours in (stunned)
Iraq. Airborne, huh? And I bet you
know how to handle
explosives. IEDs.

DEANDRE
I get by.

Marquez drops the book, CLAMPS his hand on Deandre's throat.

CUT TO:

INT. DETECTIVES BUREAU - CONTINUOUS

Chuin returning to his empty desk. **But the Ledger's gone.**
Chuin throws open drawers, stands, shouts across the bullpen.

CHUIN
*Okay, which one of you assholes
removed property from my desk?*

Blank stares. Shrugs. Head shakes. Nobody knows.

INT. DETECTIVES BUREAU INTERVIEW ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Marquez SLAMS Deandre against the WALL. Crazy now.

MARQUEZ
How many of you in his crew?
Where'd he come up with that
hardware?
(Deandre gags)
Come on, war hero. Answer up.

Deandre's eyes bulge and flutter. Suddenly, Chuin BURSTS into
the room, grabs Marquez's arms.

CHUIN

Miguel! Jesus! Not this way, man.

Marquez lets go, eyes still wild with rage. Deandre GASPS, slumps forward, his forehead resting on table. Coughing.

INT. OUTSIDE DETECTIVES BUREAU INTERVIEW ROOM - SECONDS LATER

CHUIN

Just take a minute. Lock it up. Jesus, Miguel. IA's been known to wire these rooms. It's Day Watch for Christ's sake. What if somebody'd walked in on you?

MARQUEZ

He was at the bank.

CHUIN

Shit, the guy invoked, man. What do you want from me?

(off Deandre;

recovering)

Listen, I'll book Deandre. Let him marinate in Men's Central overnight and we can eat him tomorrow.

MARQUEZ

He'll have his mouthpiece by then.

CHUIN

No way can this asshole afford a pay lawyer and the PD won't see him until his arraignment. We'll hit Deandre up in County. Let sheriffs know it's about Ramos. They'll give us some privacy and we can come at him as hard as we need to. Okay?

(beat)

We got more *immediate* problems.

INT. DETECTIVES BUREAU - MOMENTS LATER

CHUIN

It was right there on my desk. And then it wasn't.

MARQUEZ

Any theories, Detective?

CHUIN

Just one, but, brother, you're not gonna like it.

(beat)

Where's your new boot?

MARQUEZ

Locker room. I sent him down there to change his uniform.

(off Chuin; suspicious)

What would he want with the ledger? He can't even read the damn thing.

CHUIN

How do you know? You don't know anything about this kid. Maybe he's Internal Affairs, lookin to gaslight you.

(MORE)

CHUIN (CONT'D)

I've heard Beachamp harvests recruits right out of the Academy now. And he has a peppermint hard-on for you. You know this.

(beat)

Look, I'm not asking you to take a dive here. Just ease up a little.

(Ben entering the Bureau)

And keep an eye on Junior.

CUT TO:

INT. BLACK AND WHITE - NIGHT

BEN

Can I ask you something, sir?
Detective Chuin thinks I took
Wizards ledger, doesn't he?

MARQUEZ

Did you?

BEN

Of course not.

MARQUEZ

Then it's not your problem.

BEN

Can I ask you something else,
sir?

MARQUEZ

Depends.

BEN

What happened to your last
partner?

MARQUEZ

You ever hear the story of
the Frog and the Scorpion?

(off Ben)

Scorpion's riding on the
frog's back and the little
bastard keeps asking
questions way above his
paygrade, just won't shut the
fuck up. Until finally, the
frog gets so sick of his
college mouth that he kicks
the scorpion out of a moving
police car in the middle of
South Central.

(spits)

The End.

EXT. FLORENCE AVENUE - MINUTES LATER

A NEON SHARK sign over Florence Avenue traffic. Marquez pulls their black & white into the alley across from CLUB TIBURON. Ben and Marquez step into the jagged SHARK'S MOUTH entrance to the gloomy nightclub. *Los Tigres Del Norte* on the juke.

MARQUEZ

Deadeye hangs here.

BEN

Guy from the ledger?

INT. CLUB TIBURON - CONTINUOUS

Marquez chest-plowing the packed crowd. GANGSTERS and WHORES red-sea parting for Marquez. Ben travels in Marquez's wake.

MARQUEZ

Watch your back. These guys get
kinda stabby after a few cervezas.

Ben trying to look everywhere, as they move past the BAR, where SINALOAN COWBOYS (cartel mules) drink mescal, each one giving Ben and Marquez the murder-eye in the BAR MIRROR. Ben notices the Sinaloan Cowboys are all packing huge HANDGUNS in their waistbands, behind ornate belt buckles.

BEN

Dudes at the bar are armed,
sir.

MARQUEZ

Go to the head of the class,
professor. Nobody walks into
this shithole without a
cohete.

INT. BACK OF THE CLUB - CONTINUOUS

On the back wall: a sumptuous mural of *Santa Muerte*, *Jesus Malverde*, *Zapata*, *Aztecs*, *Cheyenne Cadena* - worthy of Rivera. Below the mural, CHUPA, PELON & SNIPER (the 18th Street Crew) leaning at the mine-shaft mouth of the STAIRWELL. Deadly casual sentries guarding the stairs. They sip *Modelo*, brazenly eye-fucking Marquez and Ben as the cops approach.

MARQUEZ

Looking for Deadeye.

CHUPA

No hablo ingles.

MARQUEZ

(to Pelon)
What about you?

PELON

No, no hablo.

Marquez shrugs. Then his right arm FLASHES, a HALF-FIST like the head of a brown viper striking Chupa's throat, knocking the seeds from Chupa's Adam's apple. Marquez PIVOTING before they can react, his reversing right ELBOW bashing Pelon's unsuspecting temple with ball-peen force. Chupa on his knees, eyes gushing water, gagging, coughing. Pelon falls in a heap, cold-cocked. Elapsed time: 3 seconds.

Ben gapes, awed by Marquez's speed and savagery. Then Ben HEARS movement behind them, bar stools scraping the floor. Ben WHIRLS, DRAWING his Beretta, facing the Sinaloan Cowboys getting up from the bar, *pistoleros* spoiling for a gunfight.

BEN

*Quien quiere ser a el primer
muerto?*
[Which one of you dies first?]

And Marquez registers Ben's flawless SPANISH.

Ben's nervous finger on his trigger. Beat. Reluctantly, the Sinoloans return to their stools. Relief flooding Ben.

Marquez's big hand now wrapping Sniper's throat, Darth-Vadering this little *pendejo* right up to his tip-toes.

SNIPER
(gulping)
He's upstairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS STOREROOM - SECONDS LATER

Sniper leading Marquez and Ben through the shadowy storeroom, past cobwebbed kegs and dusty cases of booze.

MARQUEZ	BEN
(suspicious)	You didn't ask.
You didn't tell me you spoke my language?	

Sniper KNOCKING on a **STEEL DOOR** at the far end of the room. Ben and Marquez stand off-set from the door, out of view of the speak-easy **EYE PANEL** SLIDING open on the door. We can't see who's behind the slot, just the strip of **LIGHT** from the officer spilling out through the panel across Sniper's face. And we hear a series of **LOCKS** turning and popping. As the door opens, Marquez **SHOVES** Sniper aside and **KICKS** the door.

INT. DEADEYE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The door **FLIES** open, knocking **NAVIDAD MENJIVAR** (AKA **DEADEYE**) backward. Ben and Marquez charge in through the open door. Marquez grabs Deadeye, **WRENCHING** his left arm behind his back. Marquez sees Deadeye is wearing a **CAST** (sharpied with gang scrawl) on his freshly-broken right arm.

MARQUEZ	DEADEYE
(re: cast)	Police brutality, dog. Know
What happened to your arm?	how many Los Angeles Police
	Officers it takes to break a
	guy's arm?

Marquez **SHOVES** Deadeye. Deadeye spilling on to his couch.

MARQUEZ	DEADEYE
None. Suspect fell down the	Don't know any Wizard.
stairs.	
(beat)	
Tell me about Wizard.	

Marquez **KICKS** Deadeye, his **BOOT** hitting with Deadeye's knee like a croquet mallet. Ben winces in involuntary sympathy.

DEADEYE (CONT'D)

Arrgh. Damn.

MARQUEZ

Guy collects your taxes every week, only his ledger says you came in a little light for the last two.

DEADEYE

Bullshit. I render unto Cesar what is Cesar's, which is 10 off the top, to the penny. Last week. Every week. Coin of the damn realm, dog.

MARQUEZ

See, I figure Wizard caught on to your skim and you had to zap him before he could go to Carcosa.

DEADEYE

Well, Wizard's little book's wrong. I'm Horton the fuckin Elephant. His ledger says different? I don't know. Maybe that that fool's skimmin' his damn self.

MARQUEZ

(to Ben)

Hey, mystery solved. But if Wizard stole from Carcosa? Shit, I'm inclined to rule it a suicide.

Ben and Marquez watch genuine grief flooding Deadeye's face.

DEADEYE

(in shock)

Wizard didn't have a Green Light on him, Marquez. I'd a heard about it. I mean, off the record? I'm the guy they send to clean house down here.

(beat)

Naw, this wasn't us, Marquez.

MARQUEZ

Okay, then who the fuck was it? Who's gonna take on *La Eme*?

DEADEYE

Maybe **MS**? I mean, everybody knows those motherfuckers are crazy.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - AFTERNOON

Deandre, now clad in his county-issued orange jumpsuit, punches sticky numbers on the shock-proof County phone. Sullen ARRESTEES feign sleep, ceiling-stare. One sits on an exposed steel toilet, pants on ankles, having a splashy time.

INT. GET SOME'S CRIB SOUTH CENTRAL - CONTINUOUS

Gethsemane Guyton AKA **GET SOME** (30s) lounges on his couch, sucking a cobra hookah, sucking *doujiah*. The phone rings, and RINGS. Blue glow of UV lamps, hydroponics. Indoor WEED forest. The house furnished in late-century ghetto.

Get Some's an OG Boot Hill Mafia Crip; shirtless, tatted-down, wearing only plaid pajama bottoms.

BOOT and HILL tattooed under his eyes. Get Some's pit bull, CHRONIC, sits at Get Some's feet, gnawing on a football.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - INTERCUT AS NEEDED

GET SOME	DEANDRE
Yeah?	Yo, I'm up here in county, man. Get me up outta here. This ain't the business, homie.

GET SOME	DEANDRE
Who's this?	Deandre, nigga.

GET SOME	DEANDRE
Who?	Shitty.

Get Some sets the hookah aside GLUGS a bottle of Boone's.

GET SOME	DEANDRE
What they got you for?	Carjacking. Evading. ADW on a cop. But this detective talkin' bout puttin' this murder on me.

GET SOME	DEANDRE
Shit, they <u>always</u> say that. They just tryin' to scare you, cuz. (enjoying himself here)	Wizard's.
Who's murder?	

Get Some coughs Boone's on to the dog. It stands, shakes.

DEANDRE	GET SOME (O.S.)
(hissing into the phone) That's what I'm sayin,' nigga. These <i>eses</i> hear I'm a suspect in that shit, I'm a motherfuckin ghost. Real talk.	Now, listen. I'm on handle this. Stay off the fuckin phone. You gone be up outta that motherfucker by sunup. On <u>hood</u> , cuz.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT. BLACK AND WHITE - SUNSET

Ben & Marquez head into **MS-13 hood**; dogs biting their tires. Think Central America, but this is MS-13 Country - the dark heart of LA's poorest Salvadoran neighborhood. Ben notes **MS-13 TAGGING** like lamb's blood on every surface in sight.

Their black & white parallels the **LA RIVER**, down an industrial arroyo of hulking warehouses. Ben watches a BLUE HERON stalking black carp among the bamboo shoals, rusted shopping carts in the LA RIVER. A FREIGHT TRAIN rumbles by.

MARQUEZ
So where'd you learn Spanish?

BEN
The Peace Corps, sir.

MARQUEZ
What're you, a pinko?

BEN
No, but now that you mention
it, we might at least
consider the *Das Kapital*
question here, sir.

MARQUEZ
You are a fuckin' communist.

BEN
No, I'm just wondering, I
mean, who might actually
benefit from Wizard's murder?

EXT. LOS ANGELES RIVER - SUNSET

Brown CHILDREN splash naked along the shore while their MOTHERS bend over buckets, laughing, gossiping, WASHING their clothes in the river, and spreading them to dry on the graffiti-covered cement banks. Power lines sizzle overhead.

MARQUEZ

Well, seeing as you've been out of the Academy all of four minutes, I think I'll file 'who benefits' under 'who the fuck asked you?'

BEN
You're very unpleasant, sir.

Ben and Marquez exiting their car now among SHANTIES forming an off-the-books OPEN-AIR MARKET of corrugated steel & particle board along the river. MEN selling mangoes, coconuts, fresh-caught fish. A makeshift CARNECERIA: PIGS & GOATS hang upside down, their blood draining into basins.

MARQUEZ
Deadeye might be on to
something. About MS-13.

BEN
Okay, so how would Mara Salvatrucha benefit from Wizard's murder?

The BUTCHER hacks the head off a CHICKEN. Ben winces. Headless chicken flops, runs. Children laugh, chase it. FLATBED SEMIS, hauling equipment from nearby warehouses, blow by at irregular intervals, kicking DUST. Ben coughs as he & Marquez cross an overgrown lot; jungle of Arundo and Bamboo.

MARQUEZ
I don't know yet. The *Eme*
taxes every Mexican gang
south of the Kern river. But
MS-13's not Mexican. They're
Salvadoran.

BEN
I'm surprised it didn't work
out. Maybe your ex-wife
killed Wizard.

(spits)
You ever been with a
Salvadoran woman? I was
married to one. They're into
torture.

MARQUEZ
 Naw, she woulda cut his balls off. But I know this crazy sumbitch from MS-13. Sombra? He's into some diabolical shit. All kinda torture.

BEN
 Bitchin. And I suppose the *Marquis De Sombra* hangs in this Haunted Mansion here?

They're heading for the sclerotic, 4-story **ABANDONED BUILDING** like a doomed colonial outpost reclaimed by the jungle.

MARQUEZ
 Sure does.

BEN
 And what makes you think he'll talk to you?

MARQUEZ
 Kid. Everybody talks to me.

EXT. ABANDONED BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Marquez nods, indicates a KID perched in the basket of an old AIR RAID SIREN TOWER with a cellular phone; Sombra's lookout.

MARQUEZ
 He already knows we're here. Awesome.

BEN
 Marquez pushes aside vines hanging over the darkened doorway and Ben follows him inside. It's like entering a troll's den.

FLASH TO:

GAS CANS emptied into buckets. Pouring in SUGAR. Mixing **ghetto napalm**. ROAD FLARES lined up on a scarred table.

BACK TO:

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Something wet falls on Ben's shoulder. Ben brushes it away, smells GUANO on his fingertips. Looks up. BATS clinging to the ceiling like black suede oysters quivering in the shadows. They stretch their wings, yawn, baring needle teeth.

Ben follows Marquez up the rotted, garbage-strewn stairway to-

INT. 2ND FLOOR LANDING - CONTINUOUS

Finger to his lips, Marquez POINTS to a TRIPWIRE stretched across the rotted 2nd FLOOR LANDING, tied to the trigger of a SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN - **Booby trapped**. Ben's eyes: *Jesus Christ!*

FLASH TO:

MS-13's *ESCUADRON DE LA MUERTE* (Death Squad); more Mayan than Mara. Bandy-legged bezerkers gather around **SOMBRA**: all sinew and savagery, scrimshawed by Gothic MS-13 tattoos, even on Sombra's face, giving him an almost Maori look. Warriors heft BUCKETS of NAPALM. Sombra passes ROAD FLARES out to his men.

SOMBRA
(Spanish)
[For Wizard.]

BACK TO:

INT. 2ND FLOOR LANDING - CONTINUOUS

Ben gingerly STEPS over the TRIPWIRE, but Marquez **GRABS** Ben before Ben's BOOT can land on a yellowed sheet of NEWSPAPER. Marquez squats, delicately LIFTS the newsprint to reveal the steel jaws of a BEAR TRAP! **Their booby trap is booby trapped.**

Side-stepping the bear trap, Ben & Marquez MOVE silently upstairs. Passing the 3rd FLOOR now, reaching the ...

INT. 4TH FLOOR - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Guns drawn, Ben & Marquez heel-toe their way down a dark hallway. Rats scuttle. Whole SECTIONS of FLOOR piss-rotted away. Fading sunlight slanting in through HOLES in the roof.

EXT. ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

Sombra & his warriors stalk wraith-like across roof with Buckets. Flares. Peering down through holes at Ben & Marquez.

INT. 4TH FLOOR - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ben SEES a **SHADOW** PASS quickly over a hole in the roof. He touches Marquez's shoulder, POINTS upward. *I saw something.*

Marquez swiftly shifts position, finding an angle, gun raised craning his head to see up through the hole. AND ... **SPLASH!**

Marquez suddenly DOUSED with SUGARED GASOLINE. [Arrgh!]
Marquez blinded. Ben SMELLS the gas, sees Marquez's GUN blind-pointing up, Marquez's FINGER instinctively *squeezing* ...

BEN
NO!

Ben TACKLES Marquez out of the way just as the first FLARES drop down through HOLES in the ceiling. Marquez & Ben CRASHING together down through ROTTED FLOOR just as the FLARES land in the 4th Floor HALLWAY. Fire spreading quickly.

INT. 3RD FLOOR - ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They CRASH LAND on the 3rd floor. Ben drywall-dusted. Yanking Marquez to his feet. Marquez gags, coughs, eyes gushing. Ben's hand over Marquez's, easing his .45 into its holster.

BEN

No. Holster up, man. No sparks.

Ben SHOVING Marquez out into the 3rd FLOOR HALLWAY just as SOMBRA'S WARRIORS ceiling-DROP into the room. They draw MACHETES, each blade with an edge measured in molecules.

BEN (CONT'D)

(shoving Marquez)

Go! GO!

INT. 3RD FLOOR - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Marquez staggers, stumbles, FEELING his way along walls. Ben DRAWS his Winchester telescoping ASP BATON from its breakaway scabbard. He FLICKS his wrist/SNAP!/Telescoping ASP extends, *tripling in length*. And Ben turns to FACE their pursuers.

BEN

(to Marquez)

Keep going!

WARRIOR 1 HURLS his MACHETE, blade hissing air, seeking Ben. Ben YANKS open a DOOR to shield himself. CRUNCH! A *burst* of splinters and the BLADE of the machete STICKING right through the door - steel *vibrating* inches from Ben's face! *Holy Shit!*

Now from behind that door, from the shadows inside that room, CHARGES WARRIOR 2, HATCHET raised Norman-Bates style, RUSHING Ben. Panicked, Ben quickly SLAMS that SAME DOOR on the guy, forcing the Warrior 2 right into the machete now imbedded in the door. Warrior 2 IMPALES himself, pinned against the door.

WARRIORS 3, 4 ATTACKING feral-fast, upright hyenas from the last great Blade Culture, handling their machetes the way Darth Maul wields a lightsaber. Ben FENCES them off with his BATON. Blades glint, whistle. A close-quarters battle backing Ben to the stairs. Picture 3 guys sword-fighting in a phone booth. Ben KICKS Warrior 3! The guy falling backward, CRASHING through the splintered bannister INTO the STAIRWELL-

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

-tumbling AIRBORNE past the staggering Marquez to LAND -

INT. 2ND FLOOR LANDING - CONTINUOUS

- right across the TRIPWIRE and the BEAR TRAP; JAWS SNAPPING on his HEAD as the SHOGTUN BLOWS him in half! Startled BATS take wing as Ben VAULTS stairwell, GRABS Marquez, running.

INT. 2ND FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ben & Marquez now stumble-RUNNING through the bat-cloud, down the hall, CRASHING out through graffiti-blackened WINDOW-

EXT. ABANDONED BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

-LEAPING across open air to the ROOF of a WAREHOUSE. Looking back - warriors in PURSUIT, Ben keeps going, pulling Marquez off the roof to LAND on to the bed of MOVING FLATBED TRUCK!

EXT. FLATBED TRUCK (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Marquez rolls, ALMOST falls off, Ben pulls him back on the truck bed. Ben looking back to see SOMBRA & more warriors sprinting in pursuit, taking an angle across the overgrown lot, two of them SCRAMBLING up on to the flatbed, stalking toward Ben & Marquez. Sombra RUSHING for the cab, HOPPING on to the running board, throwing OPEN the PASSENGER door.

INT. TRUCK'S CAB - CONTINUOUS

The TRUCK DRIVER takes one look at the tattooed SOMBRA climbing into his cab and decides to abandoned ship! He jumps out, rolling away from the moving truck.

EXT. LOS ANGELES RIVER - CONTINUOUS

Truck drifts off course, toward the SHANTY MARKETPLACE. Sombra grabs the free-floating WHEEL, but he's too late.

BEN

Hang on to something!

Panicked people and animals scramble out of the way as the truck PLOWS through the marketplace. Shanties BURSTING one after another, shattered against the truck's Peterbilt GRILL. And, like a train jumping the tracks, the truck BARRELS down the cement slope riverbank, TUMBLING over on two wheels -

Ben watching the world turn on its side as the truck TIPS OVER, spilling Ben & Marquez & the warriors off its bed as it **SPLASHES** like a breaching whale into the shallow LA river.

Ben LANDS facedown in the water, comes up sputtering. He sees one warrior TRAPPED against the crushed cab. Another PINNED under the overturned truck bed, his face underwater blood BUBBLING from his slack mouth. *No sign of Marquez.*

Ben struggling to his knees to find SOMBRA *standing over him*, MACHETE raised high! Ben REACHES for his 9MM, but his holster's EMPTY!

Sombra draws back, about to take Ben's HEAD OFF! but Sombra sees BEN'S FACE (washed clean by the river)-freezes in mid-stroke. Checking his swing. **HE RECOGNIZES BEN!**

SOMBRA

You!

BOOM! A .45 Caliber hollow-point BLOWS wet confetti out of Sombra's chest, spattering Ben. Sombra's machete DROPS and Ben watches as Sombra rag-doll FACEDOWN into the river.

Bloodied, stunned, Ben looks over to see MARQUEZ soaked & red-eyed. Smoke curls from his 45. Marquez just saved Ben's life!

Ben's blood-flecked face, gasping, taking this all in.

Marquez SPLASHES to Sombra, HAULS him up by the scruff of his neck. Sombra maniacally laugh-coughing blood, water.

MARQUEZ (CONT'

Just zap a couple of cops?!? Are you fuckin' shittin' me? This ain't prison, Sombra! *Hay reglas.* [There are rules.]

SOMBRA

(coughing)

Rules have changed, dog. *Luz verde a toda la policia.* [Green light on all cops.]

MARQUEZ

Bullshit! Since when?

SOMBRA

Since Wizard. Since you cops crossed the motherfucking line.

Sombra blood-laughs, dies. Off Ben & Marquez. *Holy Shit.*

CUT TO:

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - NIGHT

Tap. Tap. *Bruno Magli* loafers. Attorney **BIG BEN KAHN** (50s) walks the cement corridor of to the LA SHERIFF'S CHECK-IN, with regal confidence, moving like a shark through water. Beautiful Italian Suit. Watch. Manicure. Evenly tanned. Aware of SHERIFF'S DEPUTIES watching him, whispering, Big Ben smiles, minding it not a bit. He's used to the spotlight. Big Ben's LA's answer to both the Devil AND Daniel Webster.

INT. SHERIFF'S CHECK-IN - CONTINUOUS

Big Ben presents his laminate IDENTIFICATION to the DEPUTY. A formality. Big Ben's a celebrity here. Charming, magnanimous. DEPUTIES love him even though Big Ben reps the bad guys.

BIG BEN
George, how's your son?

DEPUTY
Great, Mr. Kahn. He's playin
short this year.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL (ATTORNEY'S ROOM) - MOMENTS LATER

DEANDRE
I can't afford you, man.

BIG BEN
It's been taken care of.

Big Ben across from Deandre, briefcase open. Legal pad.

BIG BEN
So what do they call you?

DEANDRE
Shitty. So when I'm gettin up
outta here?

BIG BEN
Wait, they really call you
Shitty?

DEANDRE
It's not like they let you
pick your own, you know.

BIG BEN
No. Yeah, sure I know, but
Jesus, how did you ever end
up with-

DEANDRE
-Look, can we just drop it?

BIG BEN
(clearing his throat)
In light of your
distinguished military
service, the judge has agreed
to a reduced bail.

DEANDRE
How much?

BIG BEN
It's been taken care of.
(off Deandre's surprise)
Now, if we're going to beat
this it's imperative that I,
as your attorney, find out
exactly what the cops know.
Anything you haven't already
told me? Anything at all?

DEANDRE
After they said they were
gone put that murder on me,
that Mexican cop - the one
with the scar - he's the one
gave me the phone book
massage, like I told you.
(beat)
And that's when he come at me
about that bank.

Big Ben scribbling notes; his pen stops. He looks up.

BIG BEN
What bank?

CUT TO:

EXT. LA RIVER (AFTERMATH) - LATER

LAPD & NEWS Helicopters. LAFD FIREFIGHTERS hose the burning
building to keep the FIRE from SPREADING to other structures.
Paramedics finish with Ben. Marquez waves them off him.

CHUIN
I thought you were gonna hit
up Deadeye down on Florence.

MARQUEZ
I did-

CHUIN
-What were you even thinking,
poaching down here, man?

MARQUEZ
I already cracked Deadeye
open. He didn't even know
Wizard was tits up. He
thought maybe MS-

CHUIN
-So you just rolled on into
San Salvador on that
asshole's word?

MARQUEZ
We came down here to poke
around-

Chuin reacts to the pronoun 'we.' Eyeing Ben suspiciously.

CHUIN
-without any backup?

MARQUEZ
-thought maybe we'd shake
something loose.

BEACHAMP (O.S.)
(re; wreckage)
Well, I'd say you succeeded beyond
your wildest expectations, Miguel.

DEPUTY CHIEF DWIGHT BEACHAMP (50): a Political Predator with a
glacial, game-show smile strutting over to Marquez, clapping
sardonically. Chuin sneers. Ben straightens for a superior.

BEACHAMP (CONT'D)
Five bodies in, what? 8
hours? You must be going for
a personal best here.

MARQUEZ
Night is young, Dwight.
(to Ben)
Officer Halloran. Meet the
Acting Head of Internal
Affairs Division.

BEN
Sir.

MARQUEZ
Deputy Chief Beachamp and I
were in the Academy together.
And now he's next in line for
the Throne. Ain't that
somethin?

BEACHAMP
I'm afraid you've hitched
your wagon to a falling star,
Officer Halloran, so take
care. At this rate, Officer
Marquez may not be long for
this department. Or this
world.

BEN (CONT'D)
I'll take it under advisement, sir.

BEACHAMP
See that you do. In the
meantime, perhaps you can
explain to me how you managed
to mislay your city firearm
on your first day of duty.

MARQUEZ
Lay off the kid, Dwight.
(to Ben)
You don't have to talk to him
without a league rep, you
know?

BEN (CONT'D)
 No, I'm fine. I've got nothing to
 hide, sir.

Ben follows Beachamp out of earshot. Chuin watches.

CHUIN
 Little boot's probably downloading
 your whole day for his boss there.

MARQUEZ
 Bullshit. Kid did alright today.
 This one's got some medicine in
 him. Likes to do dumb things.

CHUIN
 Where've I heard that before?

MARQUEZ
 Yeah, about that. Just before
 Sombra cashed out? He told me it
 was cops that killed Wizard.

CUT TO:

EXT. DARIUS' MANSION - NIGHT

The **LETHAL INJECTION RECORDS** logo (a grinning skull and phallic syringe) on the bottom of Darius' **POOL**, shimmering as a huge PIT BULL paddles across the pool's surface - a pair of bikini bottoms in its jaws.

And that's about the only bathing suit in sight as we FOLLOW **Big Ben** through the Caligulan tableau of Crazy D's 'pool party' (read: orgy) at his stately pleasure dome up on Mulholland Drive. Hardcore CRIPS, pro ATHLETES smoke blunts, do lines, drink Krug with MODELS, ACTRESSES. Livin the dream.

EXT. GAZEBO - CONTINUOUS

Guarded by PRISON-BUFF BALLERS with ASSAULT WEAPONS, Darius & his ROAD DOGS are bellied to the VIP TABLE, ravenously eating a sumptuous BBQ. Red sauce like blood.

DARIUS

Holding court at the head of table: **DARIUS WASHINGTON** (CRAZY D) (20s) *l'enfant terrible*. ABOUT DARIUS: OG Boot Hill Mafia Crip who fought and shot his way out of South Central to become President/CEO of Lethal Injection Records. Hip-hop Hammurabi. Sean Combs meets Idi Amin. He's mid-story ...

DARIUS
 (re: DJ POSTMORTEM)
 Boy got more damn pussy than any
 natural man has a right to.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

Fine pussy. Fat pussy. Freaky pussy. Rainy day pussy. Model pussy. Actress pussy. Madonna's pussy. Motherfucker needs an offsite storage facility for unused pussy.

Laughter AROUND THE VIP TABLE from:

JAX (50): Darius' hoary bodyguard. Soft-spoken murder machine. 1/2 Black & 1/2 Mescalero Apache. Packs a wicked BOWIE KNIFE. Jax loves Darius, never leaves his side.

POWAY CHARLIE (20s): They says this brown brother can put a bullet through a flipped peso at thirty yards.

SLEEPY LOC (20s): born & raised in South Central. So soothed by the sound of gunfire, he falls asleep to it.

DADDY PYTHON (30): Kodiak Bear. Terrifying 3rd striker with a prison-honed taste for Pelian Bay Poonanny.

And tonight's GUEST OF HONOR, **DJ POSTMORTEM** (20s): Double-platinum gangsta-rapper. Lethal Injection's Golden Goose.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

But the depraved motherfucker needs to have his teenage pussy. Nigga films himself pissin on a 13-year-old.

(off Postmortem)

Shit winds up on the net. And you won't believe what it took to bury his Humbert-Humbert shit.

More laughter. Even Postmortem loving this story.

DJ POSTMORTEM

I'll never forget what you done for me. Never. But this new manager? He's sayin - *Hey, where the hell is my manager, anyway?*

JAX

He around here somewhere.

DJ POSTMORTEM

Well, my manager's sayin' I can have my own label at Sony. And I, Darius, I just can't pass that up.

A silence stretches. Big Ben stands by, watching this.

DARIUS

Ain't no slave ship. You hereby emancipated, negro. Free at last.

DJ POSTMORTEM

On the reals? No hard feelings?

DARIUS
None. This your graduation.
Enjoy.

DJ POSTMORTEM
(relief flooding)
Damn. This is some mad
barbecue, D.

DARIUS
Jax cues a mean swine. Fact, he
saved you some his choicest cuts.
(motions to Jax)
For the road.

Jax lays a steaming, COVERED BASKET down in front of
Postmortem. Postmortem takes a long *whiff*, smiles, LIFTS the
LID. *We can't quite see what's inside, *but Postmortem can*.
So can Big Ben, who turns away, sickened. Postmortem
perfectly still, willing himself not to puke.

DJ POSTMORTEM
On second thought, D. You
know I think my eyes were
bigger than my stomach.

DARIUS
Damn right they were, nigga.

Darius reaches in the basket, WRENCHES a BAKED APPLE away
from whatever's in there. Bites it. Juice on his chin.

DARIUS (CONT'D)
Jax'll keep this in the Subzero in
case your eyes get big again.

EXT. DARIUS' BALCONY - MOMENTS LATER

Big Ben & Darius share a private drink, surveying the party
losing steam, breaks up. LA shimmers beyond.

DARIUS
Don't know how much longer I
can hang on to all this. All
their tails waggin down
there, but I ever fall? Shit,
those niggas'll climb over
each other to tear my black
ass apart.

BIG BEN
I'm not lookin to tear you
apart, but someone killed
Carcosa's tax collector. And
you're probably the only guy
in town with the juice to
take him on. I'm trying to
protect you here.

Darius crosses reaches in his RABBIT HUTCH, packed with
bunnies, white fur presses through chicken wire. Darius
selects a lop-eared RABBIT, heartbreaking pink eyes. Darius
carries the bunny by its neck-skin.

DARIUS
Sure you are. Shit. Each of us is a
motherfuckin Judas, brah. Loyalty's
just a matter of silver. Damn,
that's a song right there. I need
to be writing this shit down.

BIG BEN
Are you listening to me? Carcosa's
already done the arithmetic.

Big Ben following Darius back inside.

INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - CONTINUOUS

DARIUS

Wasn't me, counselor. Swear on my hood.

BIG BEN

That's not going to be good enough. We need to get out in front of this. Give him something. We have to find out who killed Wizard.

Outside Darius' bedroom, a live **JAGUAR** lounges on an ottoman, chained to the floor. Tail snaking through the air, the big cat regarding them with imperious contempt.

BIG BEN

Can't believe you still keep that fuckin' thing.

DARIUS

Well, any nigga can have a guard dog. But check this shit out.

Darius beckons Big Ben around the edge of the landing to an X of BLUE TAPE on the floor. Darius sets the BUNNY down on the X. The cat's eyes fix on the rabbit. Waitiing.

DARIUS

Uлага.

The jaguar LAUNCHES too swiftly for our eyes to track. It's as if the rabbit is suddenly enveloped by dense, spotted smoke. Then the cat is back on its ottoman, feeding. Nothing left on the X but a few tufts of FUR.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

Means 'kill' in Swahili.

(beat)

Benji used to think that was fuckin hilarious. Me teachin a South American cat to speak Swahili.

Big Ben reacts to the mention of Benji.

BIG BEN

Cute. But that thing won't protect you from Carcosa. You have to find these guys.

(beat)

Put your cop on it.

DARIUS

Risley's hard to control.

BIG BEN

So? Throw him a barbecue.

CUT TO:

INT. 77TH STATION LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

After his End-of-Watch, Ben at his locker changing out of his ruined uniform, his second of the day, soaked and torn.

Ben sees Marquez down the row at his own locker, easing out of his uniform. Marquez winces. Sore. Ben sees Marquez's body remains powerful, but this job's aging him hard and it shows.

BEN

I suppose this was just a typical day for you, sir.

Marquez pulls a cloth-wrapped *something* from his locker, weighs the object in his hand. Pain locked behind his eyes.

MARQUEZ

Better than some.

Marquez crosses to Ben, unwraps the object, holds it out to Ben. It's a gently-used **GLOCK .45** with the slide pulled back.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)

Look, you need a gun. And Ramos - he can't use his anymore. So ...

(dry)

Welcome to 77th.

Ben takes the weapon from Marquez's hand, solemn, touched. Ben wasn't expecting this from Marquez. An almost moment.

BEN

Uh, thank you, sir. I ...

But Marquez has already about-faced. And Ben watches the big, graying wolf stalk back to his locker. Solitary and forlorn.

MARQUEZ

And you can knock off that 'sir' crap from now on.

And Ben's face holds something for his Training Officer that wasn't there before. A grim respect that adumbrates fealty.

CUT TO:

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Ben (civilian clothes) limps into his little apartment, stiff. Grabs a beer from the fridge, slumps into his couch, hits the remote. Quavering television light on Ben's face.

Ben draws Ramos' GLOCK, places it on his coffee table. Beat.

Then Ben pulls **WIZARD'S LEDGER** from his waistband. Ben considers the LEDGER, Ramos' GLOCK, at war with himself.

INT. BEN'S BEDROOM - SECONDS LATER

Ben dragging a chair to his closet. He stands on the chair, SHOVES aside an ACCESS PANEL in the ceiling of his closet.

ANOTHER ANGLE:

Ben HIDES Wizard's LEDGER up in the ATTIC CRAWLSPACE,

DING-DONG!

Ben reacts to his doorbell, quickly replacing the access panel. And closes his closet door. Returning the chair

Ben approaches his front door cautiously, holding his GLOCK.

BEN
Who is it?

IGNACIO
(behind door)
It's me, Benji.

Ben sighs, tucks the Glock in his rear waistband. OPENS his door for **IGNACIO BAROA(30)**: Hired killer for the Mexican Mafia. Leathery face bathed in orange glow of his cigarette.

BEN
What if I'd shot you?

IGNACIO
You always were funny guy, Benji.
(exhaling smoke)
He wants to see you.

CUT TO:

INT. DARIUS' MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Risley handing his firearm over to JAX. Darius lounging on his California King. On the walls: ANCIENT WEAPONS, framed movie posters: Cotton Comes to Harlem and Black Belt Jones. Darius' projection TV playing *Dolemite*.

DARIUS
What've you heard about Carcosa's tax man, Wizard?

RISLEY
Just jungle drums, Bwana. Natives down there all swear it was the CIA. *El Chupacabra*. Cops.

DARIUS
Cops?

RISLEY
Yeah, but all that's just like South Central *menudo*. You know. Can't tell what's in it 'til it backs up on you. Nobody knows.

DARIUS
Somebody's out there movin pieces around the board and I don't play Battleship with the Mexican Mafia.

Risley admires the ancient weapons mounted on Darius' wall, whistling *Macarthur Park*. The SABER labeled NAT TURNER'S.

BIG BEN
That saber really Nat
Turner's?

DARIUS
So the dealer told me. Shit,
thing could've been Ike
Turner's for all I know.
Maybe I'll take it on
Antiques Roadshow, find out.

Darius following Risley's hungry eyes to the ZULU SWORD.

DARIUS (CONT'D)
But you like that one, huh?
(to Jax)
Man's got good taste anyway.
That's *iKlwa* - belonged to
King Shaka Zulu. Know
anything about Shaka?

RISLEY
Assassinated by his brothers,
right?

DARIUS (CONT'D)
Shaka was betrayed by homies he
thought he could trust.

Long, pregnant beat between Risley and Darius.

DARIUS (CONT'D)
Bring me the shit-stirrer who
killed Carcosa's tax man . Alive if
possible. I'd like a word or two
with him. So would my cat.

RISLEY
So shall it be, *Effendi*.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARCOSA'S MANSION - NIGHT

Spanish Mission + Venetian Palace, his mansion is roughly the size of Rhode Island. Armed SENTRIES with automatic weapons.

POOL:

DON JOSE CARCOSA reclines in the moonlight on a foam raft, floating like a crocodile with a *mojito*. From his infinity pool, Carcosa commands a panoramic view of his *ranchito*: Los Angeles. The smog-shrouded basin sprawls below him with the downtown skyline rippling mirage-like in the warm night air.

CARCOSA:

Mexican Mafia's *Dracula*, the ageless, deathless Source Creature. Imagine the result of an evil experiment fusing the genetic material from Pacino in *Scarface* and Alan Rickman in *Die hard*. With a word, Carcosa can grant your fondest wish or have your balls cut off, stuffed into your mouth.

Ben stands at the edge of the pool. Ignacio's behind him.

IGNACIO

In you go, Benji. He said He wants
to talk to you.

Ignacio shoves Ben INTO THE POOL. Ben slogs awkwardly over to Carcosa. Carcosa's voice carries across the dark water.

CARCOSA

I am sorry, *mijo*. Of course,
I know you would never wear a
wire to my home. But police
work is like malaria. Gets in
your blood. And it can give
you a bad fever.

(beat)

I ever tell you about the
time I walk into this little
tittie bar in Tijuana?

BEN

No, but it sounds like the
beginning of a joke.

CARCOSA

I was just a *chiclero*, you
understand? And here is Ochoa, of
Arellano-Felix, *encargado de la*
Plaza de Baja. I tell Ochoa I want
to mule for him. Ochoa laughs.
Because he has all the mules he
wants and he does not need me.

(beat)

The one next to him in the booth
stands to throw me out and I open
his throat with a straight razor.

A breeze stirs the eucalyptus, scimitar-leaves wafting to
float on the surface, and Ben looks suddenly cold.

CARCOSA (CONT'D)

The man's on his back, gurgling,
and I tell Ochoa: *Ya me necesitas*.

(laughing)

Now, you need my help. True story.

BEN

Okay, is that your way of telling
me you need my help? Cause I mean,
that's, that's pretty fuckin'
creepy, Joe.

CARCOSA

(deadly)

You forget yourself, Benji.

BEN

Lo siento. I'm just, I guess I've
had a pretty rough day. I mean, you
know Sombra just tried to kill me,
right?

CARCOSA

Yeah, well everybody's emotional about Wizard. He was an honorable man and they butchered him like he was an animal.

(crosses himself)

I'll talk to Sombra.

BEN

No, don't bother. It's, well, it's water under the bridge. I'm fine.

(beat)

Marquez already talked to him.

CARCOSA

Is that what's on your mind?

BEN

Man saved my life.

CARCOSA

Good. That's his job, Benji.

(beat)

And this is yours.

Long beat.

BEN

Claro que sí.

CARCOSA

Wizard kept a book, a ledger.

Ben's face betrays nothing.

BEN

We didn't find any ledger.

CARCOSA

You're sure? It's important.

BEN

Positive.

CARCOSA

I need you to find these men for me, Benji. And find that book.

CUT TO:

INT. LOS ANGELES COUNTY CORONER'S AUTOPSY ROOM - NEXT DAY

Marquez, Ben, and Chuin - all wearing plastic gloves, aprons, and filtered 3M masks to protect them against airborne pathogens - all (3) men peering down **at a half-eaten CORPSE**. We recognize the corpse as that of **DEANDRE**, their arrestee from last night.

Though we just get GLIMPSES of Deandre's sightless EYES staring back at us. Lips torn away from his TEETH. His limbs gnawed to the bone. RIBS exposed. Savaged.

CHUIN

Well, this was no boating accident.

SIZZLE. Witchy purple light flickers; FLINTROL Insect Electrocutors. This ain't CSI. Less a lab than a medieval dungeon, or abattoir. Blood on the floor. We can practically smell the cloying decay. Ben's eyes dart; he looks woozy.

Deandre's and (3) other autopsies are all underway at once. DEPUTY CORONERS in masks and bloodstained aprons bent over tattooed BODIES with Y-sutures, holes in them that shouldn't be - white spots on backlit X-RAYS where bullets reside.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

(re: Deandre)

Antemortem wounds. Probably defensive. But this kind of tissue loss? Hard to tell when he died.

MARQUEZ

Not as soon as he would have liked.

(beat)

They took him to the Spook House, put the dogs on him. That's no way for a man to die.

Jewels of cold sweat form on Ben's forehead. Deputy Coroner at a nearby examination table uses garden clippers to cut through a body's rib cage. Ben sucking air through his mask.

BEN

The Spook House, sir?

The deputy coroners remove the organs from their bodies, drop the organs - one by one - into hanging scales, then place the organs into steel pans. Yellow gloves marbled with blood.

MARQUEZ

Yeah, they say the Boot Hill Mafia Crips have a warehouse somewhere in the hood.

(beat)

With a pit full of dogs.

Ben closes his eyes, tries to normalize his breathing.

A deputy coroner holds a man's heart, wriggles his gloved finger through a bullet hole in the left ventricle. Ben sways on his feet. But Marquez and Chuin don't notice.

CHUIN

They didn't waste any time getting him there. Deandre just bailed outta Men's Central last night. Twenty large. Cash on the barrel.

MARQUEZ

Cash? Anything on the actual bills?

CHUIN
 You mean did the money come
 from that bank robbery?
 (off Ben's look)
 Got SID at the bondsman's
 lookin for traces of dye.

MARQUEZ
 So who put up the money?

Chuin opens his folder, hands Keith's CCHRS (Consolidated Criminal History Report) with Keith's recent MUGSHOT.

CHUIN
 A Boot Hill nobody by the
 name of KEITH WALLACE. AKA C-
 Love.

MARQUEZ
 (softly)
 I know Keith. I put his dad
 in San Quentin about ten
 years ago. Keith turned out
 alright, considering he was
 raised by wolves. He's no
 bank robber. He's somebody's
 errand boy.

CHUIN
 There's something else.

Chuin's eyes tell Marquez this is for his ears alone.

MARQUEZ
 (to Ben)
 Go on and get some air, professor.
 Mommy and Daddy need to talk.

Ben looks incredibly relieved, RUSHES from the autopsy room.

CHUIN
 (whispering)
 So I took a peek at your boot's
 personnel file this morning. You
 could eat off it. Ben Halloran's
 never had so much as a speeding
 ticket. Nobody's that goddamn
 clean. Take a look under his
 uniform. Your partner's probably
 got a zipper down his back.

Bone flakes waft as the ME's whirring bone saw does its work.
 But Marquez and Chuin don't seem to notice the ME remove
 Deandre's brain. He might as well be changing a flat tire.

CHUIN (CONT'D)
 You already know Beachamp's wants
 your tin in his trophy case. He
 practically told us last night.

INT. LOS ANGELES COUNTY CORONER'S (CORRIDOR) - CONTINUOUS

Pale, Ben lurches down the drab, cavernous corridor - lined
 with BODIES, and more bodies, lying on wheeled steel tables,
 some draped in opaque plastic sheets, others naked. Decayed.

CHUIN (V.O.)
*Get rid of the kid, Miguel. Fire
 him. Shit, tell Vintner you want a
 new partner. I'll back you up.*

Ben's almost running now. A dead Yakuza covered in exquisite tattoos. A drowned child. One that doesn't look like a body at all, but an uprooted tree stump - a burn victim.

INT. CORONER - RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ben rushes into the restroom, tears off his mask and gloves, lunges to the sink. Splashes cold water on his face.

MARQUEZ (V.O.)
*No, if you're wrong, I'm fangin'
 the kid without cause. If you're
 right I want the little prick right
 where I can keep an eye on him.*

Ben takes his hands from his wet face, staring at his own pale reflection in the smudged bathroom mirror. And we ...

FLASH BACK TO:

INT/EXT. CARCOSA'S MANSION - NIGHT

In the past ... a PARTY you could see from space. Carcosa's daughter's QUINCEANERA: Hundreds of GUESTS. Thousands of Christmas lights. The Godfather wedding.

BENJI AND DARIUS

Benji with a mop of blonde hair, two friends SLAMMING tequila, people watching, having the time of their lives.

Gyrating on a temporary STAGE is SASPARILLA WHISKEY - underwear model turned white rapper & teen heartthrob. Ridiculous. *Think Vanilla Ice; Buster Crabbe jumpsuit, hair gelled straight up. Girls scream, giggle. Dancing.

BENJI	DARIUS
How the hell did Carcosa get	He asked. As a favor to me.
The Death of Hip Hop here for	I'm gone sign that fool here.
a private performance?	Tonight.

BENJI	DARIUS
I thought he was with Certain	Well, the Cracker's about to
Death now.	trade up.

INT. CARCOSA'S MOTOR COURT - LATER

In the bowels of Carcosa's mansion. Away from the party. Dozens of CLASSIC CARS high-gloss gleaming everywhere.

Benji, Darius, Jax, Ignacio & Sombra gather around SASPARILLA: now Bound, hanging upside down by his ankles from an ENGINE HOIST. Rag in his mouth. Sasparilla's eyes PLEADING with Benji. Benji looks away as Ignacio and Sombra finish wrapping Sasparilla in RED CREPE PAPER.

To his credit, Sasparilla still has some *fuck-you* left in his eyes - defiant, even now. But that's about to change.

CARCOSA flows in, flush from the party, WRAPPING Benji and Darius in his rib-cracking, avuncular bear hug. Love.

CARCOSA
Ah, mis hijos.
 (kissing Benji)
Mis unicos hijos. [My only sons.]

Carcosa turns to Sasparilla. Becoming something deadly.

CARCOSA (CONT'D)
 (to Sasparilla)
 You know who I am.

Not a question. Sasparilla game-fish TWISTS on the hoist.

CARCOSA (CONT'D)
 When the mayor dines here in my home, I sit at the head of the table. And do you know why? Because I am the Alpha and the Omega. I am He Who Must Be Obeyed.

Carcosa removes his coat, hands it to Ignacio. Carcosa cuffing up his sleeves. The other men smile knowingly.

CARCOSA (CONT'D)
 And you know what today is. Today is my daughter's Birthday.

Ignacio hands Carcosa an aluminum BASEBALL BAT. Carcosa taking a few PRACTICE SWINGS. Warming up. Benji watches.

CARCOSA (CONT'D)
 Since she was small, every year she has a *pinata* on her Birthday.

Carcosa allows Ignacio to carefully BLINDFOLD him. Ignacio and Sombra spin Carcosa, disorienting him.

CARCOSA (CONT'D)
 I'm traditional that way.

Now Jax KICKS Sasparilla, causing him to swing on the hoist. And Carcosa SWINGS blind. SMASH! The bat MISSES Sasparilla by inches, DENTING a 1970 Olds 442 Coupe.

CARCOSA (CONT'D)
Mierda!

SOMBRA
 Choke up on it, *Jefe*.

Laughter. Sasparilla bug-eyed, panic-pissing. Benji looks like he's going to be sick. Then Benji catches Carcosa's eyes, just PEEKING out from under the blindfold. Carcosa can SEE exactly what he's doing. *And he's missing on purpose.* Carcosa WINKS at Benji. Benji smiles. And Carcosa SWINGS again, 'MISSING' again. His bat SHATTERING the windshield of his own 1995 Porsch 911.

SASPARILLA

(spits the rag out)

Please! PLEASE! Jesus! I'll do it.

I'll sign with him. Fuck.

CARCOSA

Claro. Conveniently, my attorney has the papers for you to sign.

INT. CARCOSA'S DEN - LATER THAT NIGHT

His sanctum sanctorum, away from the party. Roaring fire. Painting of Old California: Bullfights. Bear baiting.

Carcosa, drinking from a huge snifter, watches Big Ben FLIPPING contract pages, indicating SIGN-HERE TABS.

BIG BEN

Here. And *here*.

Sasparilla, badly shaken, hastily signs his life away.

INT. CARCOSA'S DEN - MOMENTS LATER

Big Ben and Carcosa having a quiet drink. Alone.

BIG BEN

Benji wasn't supposed to be part of this. My son, Joe.

CARCOSA

I know, but listen to me.

BIG BEN

You stood here and told me we'd keep my son clear of it.

CARCOSA

Listen to me, right now Benji's a bird standing in the crocodile's mouth. Picking shit out of his teeth for him. But tell me something, what are you gonna do when Darius gets tired of holding it open for him? Who's going to protect Benji then? You?

BACK TO:

EXT. STREETS OF SOUTH CENTRAL - DAY

PRESENT: Ben & Marquez cruising in their Black & White. Some tension between them. Marquez scanning the hood, hunting.

BEN
You alright?

MARQUEZ
Fine.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE - CONTINUOUS

Up ahead, Marquez spies Keith Wallace, AKA **C-LOVE**, a reedy Crip in a North Carolina jacket. Pedaling a girl's BIKE.

MARQUEZ
Have I shown you how to
conduct a proper
investigative stop on a
narcotics suspect riding a
bike?

BEN
No sir.

EXT. BLACK AND WHITE - CONTINUOUS

Marquez drives alongside C-Love and THROWS his baton like spear out his open window - into C-Love's front spokes. And C-LOVE goes ass-over-handlebars, flopping in the street like a stunned fish. Marquez and Ben step out of the car, cuff him.

MARQUEZ
You okay, Keith?

C-LOVE
Marquez? Shit. Like to kill my ass, shit.

MARQUEZ
You know you're deep in the
Eight-Trays here, *mijo*?

C-LOVE
I know it, but my girl stay over here.

MARQUEZ
So I hear. How many times I
gotta tell you pussy's the
leading cause of death in
these parts, Keith.

C-LOVE
Yeah, I know, I know, but I'm
like a *ninja*, walkin through
walls and shit. They can't
touch me.
(beat)
So, ah, can this be, like, a
lesson learned? Marquez? I
mean, ain't like I was out
here servin' or anything.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)
It ain't, huh?

C-LOVE
I mean, yeah okay, earlier?
Yeah, but when you hemmed me
up I was just on my way to my
girl house.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)
Yeah? Hope she's worth it.

C-LOVE
See for yourself.

C-Love tilts his chin toward his breast pocket. Ben reaches in, pulls out his MTA bus pass with the RAYNEECE's **photo** tucked into it. Soft focus. Satin dress. Rayneece (17) resting her delicate chin on her fist. Trying to look older only accentuates Rayneece's youth.

BEN
She's lovely.

C-LOVE
She's havin' my baby.

Ben and Marquez share a brief look.

C-LOVE
And that's why I'm actually
glad this happened, you know?
I'm feelin, I'm really feelin
the hand of God right here,
Marquez.

MARQUEZ
(grinning)
His will be done.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE - MOMENTS LATER

Marquez driving with C-Love handcuffed in the backseat, talking to Marquez's through the open plexiglass window that separates the black & white's backseat from the front.

C-LOVE
I ain't no snitch, okay?

MARQUEZ
No paperwork. Look -

C-LOVE
-'cause of the nature of
...-'cause a nigga could get
himself merked tha fuck out
behind this shit.

MARQUEZ
Hey, hey, we're just guys
talkin.
(to Ben)
Isn't that right, partner?

BEN
It doesn't leave this car.

C-LOVE
'Cause that shit was *fucked*
up, okay? I mean, Deandre ...
(about to lose it)
...that, that dude, I *know* he
done wrong, okay? But
Deandre? I mean, that was my
play-cousin right there. And
if I'd known, if I'd known
they were gonna ... I never
... I swear to God, I didn't
know they were gonna do my
boy that way.

MARQUEZ
I believe you.

C-LOVE

I just thought, you know, I just heard Deandre was locked up in the county. An those eses in county will creep with a *quickness* on a nigga. So when he gave me the money to bail Deandre out, I just thought-

MARQUEZ

-when who gave you the money?

C-LOVE

-I swear I didn't know. I just wanted to bail my boy out of county.

MARQUEZ

I need a name.

C-LOVE

Get Some.

(beat)

But he's a trapdoor spider, Marquez. You won't get near him.

CUT TO:

INT. RISLEY'S GARAGE - DAY

Risley's home garage serves as his workout room and Dojo. Free weights. Mats. *Muk Yang Jong* - a Wing Chun wooden training stand. Jiu-Jitsu grappling dummy. A set of Katana, self-help books on the shelf. *Bogu* - Kendo armor. THUG MAGAZINE covers pinned on the walls. News Clippings from the ROBBERY OF THE BANCO POPULAR IN LOS ANGELES.

Big Ben sips a beer, watching Risley (in workout clothes) expertly wield a *Shinai*. The bamboo sword hissing the air.

BIG BEN

What'd Deandre tell them?

RISLEY

(out of breath)

Deandre? You mean Shitty? He was by the time I put the dogs on him.

(off Big Ben)

No, we cool. Marquez yellow-paged him. But Deandre's a good soldier. Didn't tell Marquez a damn thing.

BIG BEN

Nor will he?

Risley triking, slicing invisible opponents.

RISLEY

Need a Ouija board to interrogate him now. But Marquez ain't about to let go of this thing.

(beat)

(MORE)

RISLEY (CONT'D)

Right now, I'm more concerned about
Senor Carcosa. You talk to him?

BIG BEN

Yeah, and I think he's got somebody
inside the department. Somebody
chasing this thing down for him.
Maybe it's this guy Marquez.

RISLEY

No fuckin way. Marquez is a mean
son of a bitch, but dirty he aint.

BIG BEN

Well, if I were you I'd full-court
ferret this fucker, whoever he is.
(Off Risley)
Darius wants you to bring him the
guy who killed Wizard? Fine. Bring
him Carcosa's mole in the LAPD.

CUT TO:

EXT. 10TH AVENUE - DAY

Kids scatter as their black & white pulls to the curb in
front of C-Love's apartment building. Ben opens the door,
pulls C-Love out of the back of the car, uncuffs him.

MARQUEZ

C-LOVE

You still got that auntie out in Barstow? What the hell for?

(off C-Love's nod)

Okay, listen up. You and your
girl just won yourselves a
fun-filled Barstow vacation,
my treat.

MARQUEZ

C-LOVE

You're a loose end, Keith. I hear you.
You hang around the hood,
somebody's gonna tie you off.
Hear me?

MARQUEZ

C-LOVE

We need to get you the hell What time?
outta Dodge, bro. Tonight.
You and your girl be out here
at seven and I'll pick you
up, take you to the train
station myself.

MARQUEZ

C-LOVE

Seven. Sharp. Not hood-time, No.
either. You got a watch?

Ben watches Marquez peels off his own Timex and hand the
watch over to C-Love. C-Love puts the watch on, liking it.

MARQUEZ

Little hand on the seven. Big hand
on the twelve. Comprende?

C-Love rolls his eyes, nods. Marquez and Ben back to the car.

C-LOVE

Marquez?

(Off Marquez)

Thanks, man.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE - MINUTES LATER

BEN

Don't you guys have some kind
of witness protection or
something?

MARQUEZ

Yeah, the DA'll relocate a
witness if they agree to
testify in court. But Keith
ain't about to take the
witness stand. So we're it.

Beat.

BEN

What'd he mean about Get Some
being a trapdoor spider?

MARQUEZ

He mean's Gethsemane Guyton's
a Boot Hill Mafia shot
caller. And he's gonna have
eyes up and down the block.

(beat)

Means we're gonna have to get
creative.

Off Ben's look.

EXT. GRAVEL ROOFTOP OF 2-STORY APARTMENT BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Ben and Marquez stealthily Comanche-crawling to the edge of
the flat gravel roof, two stories up.

BEN

I thought we were going after
Get Some, sir.

MARQUEZ

Patience, grasshopper.

Calliope music, the *Turkey in the Straw* from an ice cream
truck PA system. Prone on the roof, Marquez props himself up
on his elbows, peering through binoculars at Brynhurst Ave.

BEN'S POV (THROUGH BINOS):

The ice cream truck stopped mid-block on Brynhurst. A line of
Rollin 60s CRIPS (20s and 30s) forming at the ice cream
truck's open window. Hardcore riders dressed down in powder
blue Yankees caps, oversized bone-white Hanes Beefy Ts and
North Carolina (Neighborhood Crip) jackets.

BEN
No kids. I'm guessing he
ain't sellin' ice cream.
Dope?

MARQUEZ
Yeah, that's what I thought
at first. But watch.

The Crip in front of the line draws a .357 from his
waistband, hands it butt-first through the truck's window.

BEN
I don't get it. He BUYS guns?

MARQUEZ
Guy's a ghetto gunsmith,
replaces broken firing pins,
sands out barrels to foul
ballistics. He rents
refurbished burners out of
his truck.

BEN
Rents them? Are there late
fees?

MARQUEZ
You rent a piece, blast away,
trade it in for a clean one.
Ice Cream Man's a real
entrepreneur, serves every
hood in the South End. Black,
brown, Crip, Blood ...
(backs from the edge of
the roof)
You ready?

BEN
For what? To arrest him? Now?

MARQUEZ
We're not going to arrest
him, dummy. We're going to
borrow his truck.
(beat)
We have a saying on LAPD. You
can wear a badge for thirty
years, but you're not really
a cop until you break the
law.

CUT TO:

EXT. GET SOME'S CRIB (DENKER AVE) - LATER

Like a lot of the homes in South Central, Get Some's Queen Anne-style two-story would be on a historic registry if it weren't rotting here in the hood. The house looks *haunted*, a crumbling beauty - surrounded by a spear-topped bedlam fence - the yard a riot of crabgrass, chickweed, El Camino on blocks.

Four BOOT HILL MAFIA CRIPS hanging out on the porch, passing a blunt from man to man. Gunslingers. Watchful and laconic.

We hear the *Turkey in the Straw* and few Crips crane their necks to see the **ICE CREAM TRUCK** approaching. They wander out to the curb to meet the truck. Chronic, Get Some's pit bull chained to the porch.

The screen door OPENS. Gethsemane Guyton, AKA GET SOME, stands in the doorway. BOOT and HILL tattooed under his eyes. Get Some calling out to his homies.

GET SOME

Hold up.

Get Some beckons, BIG TRIG, one of his homies, back to the door. Get Some draws a Tec-9 from his waistband, passes it to Trig, who tucks the weapon under his sweatshirt.

GET SOME (CONT'D)

That one's ready to go back.

BIG TRIG jogs back out across the lawn to meet the ice cream truck, clutching his sweatshirt. Big Trig opens the iron gate. The truck slows to a stop. Chronic growls.

INT. ICE CREAM TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The stricken ICE CREAM MAN (Hispanic 30s) handcuffed to the wheel. Marquez and Ben crouch in the cargo space behind him.

MARQUEZ

(whispering)

See? There you go, carnal. Just stay cool.

Ben's trembling next to him, clutching the Bean Bag Shotgun.

EXT. ICE CREAM TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Get Some watches from the doorway. Chronic's really going nuts, barking, straining against the chain. Get Some kicks the dog.

GET SOME

Shut up.

The other Crips milling in the yard as Big Trig approaches the truck's window, pulls the Tec-9, and hands it butt-first through the window. Suddenly, Marquez's hand lashes out, clamping down on Big Trig's wrist.

INT. ICE CREAM TRUCK

Ben watches Marquez YANK the struggling Big Trig halfway into the truck and PEPPER-SPRAY him point blank in the face.

BIG TRIG

Aaargh! Fuck! Fuck!

EXT. ICE CREAM TRUCK

Big Trig stumbles backward away from the truck, rolling on to the lawn, palms pressed over his eyes.

BIG TRIG

My eyes!

One of his panicked homies rushes to Big Trig, two others turning on the truck. But the cargo door slides open and BOOM! BOOM! Ben flattens them both with his BEAN BAG SHOTGUN. They crumple to the lawn, one clutching his belly, the other gasping - wind knocked out of him. The remaining Crip bolts.

EXT. DENKER AVENUE - CONTINUOUS

Get Some and Ben lock eyes across the lawn. Get Some turns, disappearing into the house. Ben SPRINTS after him, slinging the Bean Bag shotgun across his chest, and drawing his GLOCK as he runs past Trig, dodging the snarling dog. Marquez running across the lawn, right behind Ben.

But Big Trig reaches out, blindly catching Marquez's ankle, and Marquez goes down on the lawn. Big Trig on top of him now, a blind fury of gouging and desperate punching.

BIG TRIG

Kill you. Motherfucker!

INT. GET SOME'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

We're right at Ben's shoulder [first-person shooter] with the adrenalized Ben as he RUSHES headlong into the house with his GLOCK up, moving swiftly through the darkened living room into the hallway, trying to look everywhere at once.

HALLWAY

Get Some CHARGES out of the bathroom, slamming Ben against the wall, Get Some's hands - honed by years of streetfights and speed craps - already on Ben's wrists. Ben and Get Some grapple for Ben's gun - a stumbling waltz - the two men CRASHING through bead curtains into the bedroom.

BEDROOM

Rolling on the floor now. BOOM! Ben's Glock goes off and the bean bag chair EXPLODES in a snow-globe blizzard of Styrofoam beads. They grapple, roll and BOOM! Another wild shot and the huge fish tank SHATTERS, spilling water and writhing, snapping SNAKEHEADS across the floor.

Ben loses his grip on his gun, the Glock slipping away in the water. But now Get Some takes hold of the BEAN BAG SHOTGUN, using its nylon sling to CHOKE Ben. Gagging, Ben reaches for his gun. Just beyond his outstretched fingers.

MARQUEZ

Marquez KNOCKS Get Some off his feet with a John Wayne haymaker. Get Some splashing down into shallow water.

BACK TO SCENE

Gasping, Ben unslings his bean bag shotgun, grabs his Glock, holsters it. Marquez rolls Get Some over, his handcuffs biting deep. Marquez pauses a half-moment, appraising the hydroponics, marijuana plants.

MARQUEZ
(out of breath)
Well, give a man some weed
and he'll smoke for a day.
Teach a man to grow weed ...

GET SOME
Yeah, just treatin' my
glaucoma and shit here,
Officer.
(looking around)
I got a prescription card
somewhere up in here.

MARQUEZ
Cultivation with intent to
distribute. Plus ex-con with
a gun. Plus Attempt Murder on
a PO.

GET SOME
Hey, that's fuckin'
hilarious, but look here:
what's your probable cause,
bitch?

(stomping on Little
Quiet with each 'plus')
Plus. Plus. Plus. See you
after we've colonized Mars,
homey. Your grandkids flying
around with personal
jetpacks, everybody eating
Soylent Green and shit.

MARQUEZ
You arranged bail for your
homie last night. Twenty
grand.

GET SOME
So what?

MARQUEZ
So that's a lot of money. What'd
you do, rob a bank?

Marquez's boot PRESSING down on the back of Get Some's head, letting the guy know he isn't talking to himself here.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)
Somebody wanted Deandre back
out on the street, back out
where they could get to him.
Somebody wanted to shut him
up before he could talk about
the fuckin bank.

GET SOME
Well, Office Fuhman, I guess
this is the part where I tell
you to get fucked.

(Off Get Some's look)
Same thing that happened to
Wizard, right? Inquiring
minds want to know.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)

Hey now, I'm offering you a one-time special here. Open your hymnal and we'll all forget you danced with Opey here.

BEN

Hell, we'll even roundfile that nine. You'll just be looking at a chickenshit cultivation charge.

Get Some's bluff and bluster gone for this moment.

GET SOME

I'd be lookin at a death sentence.

Marquez takes this in, his eyes finding Ben's.

GET SOME (CONT'D)

Look here, everything you need's there on the night stand. Ev'ry motherfuckin' thing.

(beat)

I want a Sergeant out her to take pictures of my face. Naw, scratch that. Get me your fuckin' Ca-pee-tan, dog.

Marquez plucks the dog-eared business card off the night stand next to his cell. Recognizing the logo, Ben blanches.

BENJAMIN KAHN ATTORNEY AT LAW

MARQUEZ

No shit. Big Ben really your lawyer?

GET SOME

You damn right. Racial profiling. Plus the civil rights violation. Plus excessive force.

(doing the math)

You know, Marquez, I really ought to thank you for the settlement I got comin. Big Ben'll have your tin behind this bullshit.

Marquez drops the business card on the bed.

GET SOME (CONT'D)

City of LA's gone buy this nigga a house in Baldwin Hills and you'll be fixin' my frappacinos at the Magic Johnson Starbucks, motherf-

-Marquez unzips his trousers and Get Some stops mid-rant as Marquez turns his back to Ben and Get Some and pisses on the bed, all over Big Ben's business card. Ben gapes.

GET SOME (CONT'D)
 Aw, now that shit is foul!
 (to Ben)
 Your partner's off the rez, Opey.
 You strapped to a motherfuckin
 bomb, you know that, right?

Off Ben, his own voice PRELAPPING:

BENJI (V.O.)
*So you don't approve? You rather I
 play tennis with those kids from
 Crossroads? Is that it?*

As we ...

FLASH BACK TO:

INT. WILTERN THEATRE - NIGHT

In the past ... The star-studded LAUNCH PARTY for THUG,
 Darius' hip-hop lifestyle magazine: The venue redecorated in
 CRIP BLUE. Packed with enough beautiful people to put the
 Fire Marshall into cardiac arrest. Music BLARES.

Big Ben and Benji at the bar, arguing.

BIG BEN
 Listen. It's not a matter of
 my approval. You know you
 always have my approval.
 Always. It's-

BENJI
 Good, because you made it
 happen.

BIG BEN
 Made her leave, you mean?
 Christ, you got a mean streak
 on you, kid.

BENJI
 I come by it honestly.

BIG BEN
 Yeah, yeah. I know I'm the
 son of a bitch who named you
 Sue and all that jazz, but
 I'm also the son of a bitch
 who stayed. Because you're my
 son and the life I wanted for
 you? This ain't it.

BIG BEN (CONT'D)
 You're the one who introduced
 me to Darius. He's your
 client. So is Carcosa. I grew
 up calling him Uncle Joe for
 shit's sake. And that's on
 you, Dad.

BIG BEN
 It was different when I hung
 my shingle out here. LA was
 different. People were scared
 of Daryl Gates and the LAPD
 was all these Hoss
 Cartwrights who'd choke you
 out being black in Brentwood.

BENJI
 Well, you've come a long way,
 baby.

BIG BEN

You're old enough to know
life's a scholarship to clown
college, kid. And that's if
you're lucky. If you're lucky
you just wind up with seltzer
and banana cream pie in your
face. If you're not so lucky,
it'll make an example of you.
And your accomplishments.

BENJI

Accomplishment? I guess
that's the real opiate of the
masses isn't it? The good
sportsmanship trophy.

(off Darius)

But see? Boom! Now, that's
real power, Dad. The power
to unmake, the power to tear
it down.

Big Ben throws up a sardonic Black-Power fist.

BIG BEN

Power to the People, huh?
(beat)
Look, what if I told you I
was working on my own killer
app?

BENJI

I'd say it sounds like more
of your Pet-Rock bullshit.

BIG BEN

No bullshit. You and me could
change the whole equation
here.

BENJI

Yeah, sorry. I know the Cat's
in the Cradle and all that
shit, but I think we're past
it, you know. Whatever you've
got in the hopper, leave me
out of it, okay?

INT. WILTERN - VIP TABLE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Benji, Darius, Jax toast. They're all pretty tight by now,
but Sasparilla's totally shit-faced.

DARIUS

Fragrances. Video games.
Last week, I talked to some
Saudis who want to bankroll a
hip hop theme park in Dubai.

BENJI

Right next to Michael
Jackson. He'd love your pet
jaguar. More Jesus Juice?

DARIUS

(laughing)
Fuck you, man. I want out.
I'm goin legit here.

BENJI

So you can grow out your
nails, start saving your
urine in jars?

(sobering)

Jesus, you're serious?

A moment between friends.

DARIUS

Serious as a drive-by, brother.

EXT. WILTERN THEATRE - MINUTES LATER

Paparazzi FLASHBULBS. The four of them step out on to the red carpet. Jax leads the way, making a hole. Behind him, Sasparilla stumbles with one arm draped around Darius' shoulders and another draped over Benji's - heading for Darius' HUMMER, parked right in front. SECURITY holds back a human wall of rabid FANS. WANNABEES thrusting demo CDs at Darius. WOMEN in stylish cocktail dresses begging to be let into the party.

Then a HAND GRENADE rolls under the ropes and everything slows way down ... Benji, Darius - the whole crowd - holding their breath, bracing for an explosion. The grenade HISSES, leaking dark RED SMOKE.

DARIUS (CONT'D)
(drawing pistol)
Get to the car.

ANOTHER hand grenade lands on the red carpet in front of Benji. *Hiss*. Then ANOTHER. *Hiss*. Roiling RED SMOKE. The crowd panic-surges through the velvet ropes, stampeding security guards. Fire alarm BLARING. Guests bustling out the exits. Chaos. People trampled. GUNFIRE ERUPTING. Benji hits the deck. Incendiary TRACERS slicing through particulate smoke around Benji, leaving red CONTRAILS - torpedoes through deep water.

Sasparilla suddenly COLLAPSES in front of Benji, convulsing. White phosphorous smoke pouring from the hole in Postmortem's chest. He's on fire. Benji tries to put it out, burns his hands. Darius hauls Benji to his feet.

DARIUS (CONT'D)
Leave him, Benji. He's all done.

Ghostly FIGURES stalk them through the swirling red smoke. Appear. Disappear. Gas masks, carrying AK-47s.

Darius, Ben, and Jax running for the Hummer. Jax FIRING his twin pistols to cover their escape. Jax throws open the Hummer's back door, SHOVES Darius in the back seat, COVERS him like a secret service agent. Benji SCRAMBLES over the hood, into the driver's seat.

JAX
Go! Go!

Benji SLAMS the gas, squealing west down Wilshire.

INT. CERTAIN DEATH'S HOTEL SUITE - LATER

CERTAIN DEATH, kneels in front a glass coffee table. A naked CALL GIRL across the coffee table. Certain Death SNORTING rails of coke from the girl's flat belly. She sees Darius before Certain Death does, the coke demanding his concentration. But she knows better than to scream. Certain Death comes up for air, pushes his dreadlocks out of his dilated eyes and sees Darius standing over him.

CERTAIN DEATH
(sniff)
What's up?

DARIUS
You're a bitch, brah. With
pigtails and shit. Serious.

CERTAIN DEATH
He was mine. Fuck you.

DARIUS
Fuck you.
(to Benji)
This Little girl'd tear the
head off her own dolly before
she'd let another kid play
with it.

Certain Death REACHING for something under the bed and Darius KICKS him full in the face. His head SNAPS back, mouth-blood rooster-tailing. Certain Death goes down. The call girl gathers her clothes, slips out the door. Quick.

BENJI
Whoa! Whoa! I thought we were
going to negotiate here.

DARIUS
This is how Israel
negotiates. Thought you'd
appreciate that.

Jax CUTTING the nylon cord from the blinds, letting them FALL to cover the window. Bowie knife between his teeth, he straddles Certain Death, WRAPPING the cord around the man's hands and feet like a champion calf roper. Benji watches Jax stuff a SOCK into the man's bloody mouth.

BENJI
Darius, you have to stop this.

And, in this moment, everything changes between them.

DARIUS
What did you just say?

BENJI
You told me you wanted out.

Jax circles stealthily, ready to take Benji out.

DARIUS
There is no out. There's just
this. And the ride doesn't
stop long enough for anyone
to get off.

BENJI
I can't let you do this.

Darius dips his shoulder, catching Benji's chin with an UPPERCUT that lifts Benji off his feet. Benji falls backward, CRASHING down through the glass coffee table.

DARIUS
You don't even know what this is!
What the fuck do you know about the
life? You like all the parties and
pussy. Grand Theft Auto. One big
fuckin videogame. You don't know
me. You don't know shit, Benji.
You're a fuckin' tourist.

(MORE)

DARIUS (CONT'D)

(beat)

Me and Jax. We were born to this.

Dazed, Benji sees Jax SLIDING his BLADE behind Certain Death's ear. Certain Death screaming into the sock -

BENJI

No!

-Jax surgically PASSING the blade around Certain Death's head in a single practiced motion, SCALPING him! Now Jax OPENS his throat. Blood soaks the sock in Certain Death's mouth until looks like he's swallowed a rose. Dead. Jax gets up, blade in hand, stalking toward BENJI now.

Benji turns his head. Under the bed next to him, Benji catches sight of Certain Death's .44 COLT DESERT EAGLE. Benji rolls, grabs the Colt, angles it up at Darius.

DARIUS

Oh, you gone shoot me?

Jax grips the blade of his Bowie knife, ready to throw. Benji moves quickly, putting his back to the wall.

BENJI

I'm going to shoot Jax first. See where it goes from there.

The three of them in a close-quarters Mexican standoff.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

SECURITY GUARD

(behind door)

Hotel Security.

Jax and Darius exchange panicked looks. Jax throws the bedspread over Certain Death's body.

BENJI

CALL THE POLICE!

Darius LUNGES for Benji's gun. Jax YANKS open the door, expertly drives his knife into the first SECURITY GUARD'S chest, pulls it out and SLASHES the second SECURITY GUARD'S throat, killing both men instantly. While Benji & Darius viciously GRAPPLE for the Colt, Jax hurriedly drags the bodies into the room. Grim. Efficient.

Darius and Benji stumble, CRASHING through the window, TUMBLING out through 10 stories of empty desert air.

EXT. HARD ROCK HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Darius and Benji SPLASHING down into the pool.

Darius surfaces, stroking to the side. Benji's gone. And we HEAR Carcosa's voice PRELAPPING:

CARCOSA (V.O.)

This isn't good for anyone. There is a natural order in this city. A delicate ecosystem. And these savages have upset the balance.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. CARCOSA'S DEN - THE NEXT DAY

BENJI & CARCOSA in high-backed leather chairs, watching NEWS FOOTAGE: the daring **ROBBERY of the BANCO POPULAR.**

CARCOSA

There will be blood in the streets now. Needless blood, Benji. Unless you and I can restore that balance.

BENJI

Look, it's not that I don't care, but what the hell am I supposed to do about it? Darius has a god damned price on my head. I'm Salman Rushdie here, Joe. I can't go home. Can't even go out. I'm fucked.

CARCOSA

Well, this unfortunate business with Darius and has presented us with a unique opportunity. I believe I have a way to solve both our problems. If you're willing.

With a flourish, Carcosa presents Driver's License, credit cards, Birth Certificate: fanning the documents out on the table in front of Benji.

CARCOSA (CONT'D)

The Driver's License corresponds to your actual fingerprints. You have excellent credit, by the way.

BENJI

So this is your big plan? Not that I'm ungrateful or anything, but, what? I mean, I just *run*? Where?

CARCOSA

Tomorrow morning, Ben Halloran will take the LAPD written exam. I have assurances he will pass his background examination without difficulty.

BENJI

You want me to become a cop?

INT. ACADEMY BARBER SHOP

Ben settles into the barber's chair. One after another, CLUMPS of freshly-cut hair hit the checkered linoleum.

CARCOSA(V.O.)

*I need another pair of eyes inside
the LAPD for this, miyo. Someone I
can trust. But no one can know,
Benji. Not even your father.*

BACK TO:

INT. DETECTIVES BUREAU - NIGHT

PRESENT: Marquez and Ben sit in Chuin's cubicle. They've been stuck waiting here a while. From here, we can see through the window into Lt. Vintner's office. Chuin and Vintner inside the office, having a 'heated discussion' (read: shouting match). Profanity leaking out through the thin walls. The other detectives chuckle, shake their heads.

Chuin suddenly charges red-faced out of Vintner's office, slams the door shut behind him.

CHUIN	MARQUEZ
Get Some's gonna walk.	You better be fuckin' with me.

CHUIN	MARQUEZ
He's a CRI.	Bullshit. <i>Bullshit.</i>

BEN
CRI?

CHUIN	MARQUEZ
'Confidential Reliable Informant.'	Who's runnin' him?

At the moment, the doors to the corridor swing open.

CHUIN
Guess.

Risley and **Mapes** swagger into the bureau, two dark-blue gunfighters stepping into a saloon. The bureau falls silent.

MARQUEZ

As soon as he sees Risley, Marquez bolts up from his chair.

CHUIN (CONT'D)
Miguel, Miguel! Wait! Jesus!

Chuin grabs his arm, but Marquez YANKS it away, charging at Risley. Ben rushing to his partner's side.

Risley giving Marquez his homicidal, hail-fellow smile, even as Marquez bunches his fists, consuming the distance between them in long strides, just steps away from a fist fight.

CHUIN (CONT'D)

Hey, hey! Officer needs assistance!

Other detectives see Marquez about to throw blows (and throw his career away). They're instantly out of their cubicles, rushing to intercept Marquez before he reaches Risley.

DETECTIVE 1

Easy, Miguel.

RISLEY

Yeah, Miguel. *Easy*.

Two detectives hold Marquez back, but Marquez BULLS them forward, reaching for Risley. A third detective locks his arms around Marquez, holding on for dear life.

DETECTIVE 2

He's not worth your badge, brother.

Marquez's blood is up, rage thickening his features.

MARQUEZ

(growling at Risley)
Take that badge off, Cabe.

RISLEY

Maybe you think you can take
it from me, old man. Come on.

Ben steps forward, SHOVING Risley hard. Risley stumbles, a death for Ben in his eyes now.

Mapes steps in, CLAMPS his left mitt around Ben's throat and cocks his right FIST, ready to put his knuckles through the back of Ben's skull. Ben unflinching.

LT. VINTNER

Enough. All of you. Stand down.

Mapes releases Ben. Nobody dares let go of Marquez, still seething.

RISLEY

(re: Ben)

Whoa, they let you have another
boot, Marquez? Damn. I mean, after
what happened to Ramos I figured
they'd have you ridin' the pine.

MARQUEZ

Next time, I will not hesitate. Not
for a second, hear me?

LT. VINTNER

I said that's enough. Goddamnit.
(to Chuin and Marquez)
You two. In my office. Now.

Marquez and Chuin head into Vintner's office like two hangdog kids going to see the principal. Ben remains.

LT. VINTNER (CONT'D)
(to Risley and Mapes)
And you two. Out of my station.

Cold stares from the other detectives. Risley and Mapes are not welcome here in 77th, but Risley doesn't give a fuck.

Risley lingers, taking a moment to return each of the detectives' hostile stares with a smug *fuck you* in his eyes.

And one by one, the detectives lower their eyes. Afraid. No one in the bureau holds up to Risley's alpha-wolf glare.

No one, that is, until Risley's gaze settles on Ben. The two men face each other for a long moment, Risley realizing *there's more to this rookie than he first suspected*.

RISLEY
See ya 'round, Mayonnaise.

BEN
Yeah, count on it.

And Risley does a slow turn, like a banking shark, Risley giving Ben a runway-model exhibition of his sleeve-bursting arms. Risley's lupine grin telling Ben - *the better to eat you with* - then Risley stalks out the door with Mapes in tow.

CUT TO:

INT. LT. VINTNER'S OFFICE - SECONDS LATER

Vintner behind his big desk. Chuin sitting across from him on Vintner's leather couch. Marquez still pacing back and forth.

LT. VINTNER
Sit down, Miguel.

MARQUEZ
I'll stand, LT.

LT. VINTNER
Maybe you didn't hear me. I said
sit your ass down.

Reluctantly, Marquez slumps into the couch next to Chuin.

LT. VINTNER (CONT'D)
You want to tell me why you two
were harassing -
(consulting his notes)
- one Gethsemane Guyton, who
happens to be Officer Cabe Risley's
Confidential & Reliable Informant?

MARQUEZ
Harassing? Listen-

LT. VINTNER
 -No, you listen. Guyton says you asked him about a bank robbery. And Miguel? I love you, and you're my boy, but brother if you do not let go of that goddamned bank -

CHUIN
 (rescuing)
 -Marquez was assisting me on a homicide investigation, LT.
 (Off Vintner; skeptical)
 Marquez and his partner jacked a Boot Hill shooter yesterday. This kid they called 'Shitty.'

LT. VINTNER
 (to Marquez)
 Shitty?

Marquez shrugs.

CHUIN
 Kid leads them right to a week-old stinker named Cesar Salcido, AKA Wizard.
 (beat)
 In life, Wizard was tax collector in the employ of - wait for it - the *Mexican Fucking Mafia*.

LT. VINTNER
 (reacting)
 And what'd this 'Shitty' have to say for himself?

CHUIN
 Stonewalled us in the room. We booked him and *right away* someone posts a cool twenty grand to spring him outta County.

MARQUEZ
Cash.

CHUIN
 Next morning, Shitty comes up all kinds of dead.

MARQUEZ
 They put the dogs on him, Paul.

Beat.

LT. VINTNER
 Who posted his bail?

MARQUEZ

Nobody named Keith Wallace. We jacked him up this afternoon and Keith says he got the bail money from Get Some.

CHUIN

AKA Gethsemane Guyton.

Vintner takes a serious moment; careers, lives on the line.

LT. VINTNER

Okay. Here's how we are going to proceed: I'm going to personally download all this for Commander Jackson at RHD-

MARQUEZ

-Paul, Come ON!

LT. VINTNER

-Shut UP! Both of you. Not another word about this. To anyone. Read me? Not to your wife. Not to your girlfriend.

(to Marquez)

And certainly not to your *boot* out there.

CHUIN

People are getting eaten out there. LT, and you still don't wanna close to goddamned beaches.

LT. VINTNER

(to Marquez)

What the fuck is he talking about?

MARQUEZ

RHD's too goddamned slow. That fat-ass Jackson'll take a month to form one of his bullshit blue ribbon committees -

CHUIN

(grumbling)

-*yeah, the Committee to Reelect the President*-

MARQUEZ

-that get absolutely nowhere. Just like he did after the bank robbery.

CHUIN

Meanwhile, you've still got a feral cop running wild out there.

LT. VINTNER

And you don't want to be anywhere
near him when Internal Affairs
finally brings him down.

(to Marquez)

You don't think IA already knows
all about your history with Risley?

MARQUEZ

Paul, how long we been friends?
Man, if know something you're not
sayin?

LT. VINTNER

I don't know a goddamned thing
except I got a new probationer on
the deployment this DP and orders
on a stone tablet, straight from
Mount Sinai, to put this kid on a
car with Officer Miguel Marquez.

CHUIN

(to Marquez)

Told ya he worked for Beachamp.

Off Marquez's reaction.

CUT TO:

EXT. 77TH STATION - NIGHT

Their black & white pulling out of the parking lot, past the
guard shack, making a sharp left, FLOORING it down an alley.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE - CONTINUOUS

Marquez at the wheel, hyper-alert. Rage barely contained.

BEN

When were you planning to let me in on this?

MARQUEZ

On what?

BEN

Your crusade. This isn't about
Wizard. It's about Ramos. You don't
handle radio calls. You don't take
reports, don't write tickets. You
pretty much just drive around a
beat people up. Shoot them.

MARQUEZ

Hell, stick around. I'm just
getting warmed up here.

(spits tobacco)

Look, you wanna take issue with the
way I do police work, professor?
Take a number and get in line.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)

Shit, your buddy Beachamp's been
after my badge for years now.

BEN

My buddy?

CUT TO:

EXT. 10TH AVENUE - NIGHT

C-Love and his girlfriend RAYNEECE, their bags in hand, are waiting under the porchlight in front of C-Love's apartment building. C-Love cranes his neck to see an LAPD BLACK & WHITE rolling slowly up the block.

C-LOVE

Here he come now.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE (DRIVER'S POV) - CONTINUOUS

The driver pulling his black and white to the curb, as C-Love and Rayneece rush out with their bags to approach the car.

C-LOVE

You're early, man.

But as C-Love and Rayneece get closer, C-Love's expression suddenly changes and he stops in his tracks.

RAYNEECE

What is it?

C-Love stepping in front of Rayneece. His hands up.

C-LOVE

No, wait, wait. NO!

Rayneece SCREAMS.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. BLACK AND WHITE - CONTINUOUS

Ben and Marquez are still arguing.

MARQUEZ

Bring him my badge on a plate
and Beachamp makes you a
Lieutenant, right?

BEN

Whoa, whoa, wait a minute. Do
you think I'm IAD or
something?

MARQUEZ
Internal Affairs.
Professional Standards.
Whatever you fuckin pogues
are callin yourselves now.

BEN
Jesus. You know, Wallace was
right about you. You are off
the reservation. You're right
off the edge of the fucking
map.

Their radio suddenly squawks.

RTO
(BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!)
*All Units and 12A45: an ADW
SHOOTING just occurred at 6814
South 10th Avenue. Two victims
down. No suspect description. Code
3 Incident 113457.*

Ben and Marquez share a look. Marquez checks the time on the
dash-mounted Mobile Data Terminal. **6:53 P.M.**

BEN
(into radio)
12A45 responding Code 3.

EXT. 10TH AVENUE - MINUTES LATER

Running hot: Lights and Sirens. Ben and Marquez heading
straight into the chaotic scene of the drive-by.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE - CONTINUOUS

Just ahead, is a MINI-RIOT - a dozen NEIGHBORS and a handful
of BOOT HILL MAFIA CRIPS (late teens to early 20s) block the
street, child soldiers looking to form the avenging war
party. They're shouting and pushing each other in the middle
of street - men and women frenzied with rage and grief. *

MARQUEZ
(into radio) *
12A45, we're Code 6 on that ADW
shooting. Requesting additional
units for a major 415 Group at the
crime scene.

A 40-ounce BOTTLE suddenly sails out of the crowd, SHATTERING
on the hood of their black & white.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)
Better make that a backup.

A hunk of CINDER BLOCK flies into their windshield, making a
spidery crater in the safety glass.

BEN
Jesus!

EXT. 10TH AVENUE - CONTINUOUS

Ben and Marquez exit the car. Chaotic screams and wailing. A dog barks from somewhere, deep and throaty. Two VICTIMS are down in the yard in front of the apartment building, but Ben and Marquez can't get to them through the raging and GROWING crowd.

RTO (O.S. - OVER RADIO)
All units: 12A45 is requesting a
backup for a 415 crowd at 6814 10th
Avenue. Units to handle identify.

Two MEN suddenly rush out of the crowd at Ben and Marquez.

415 MAN 1	415 MAN 2
Fuck tha Po-lice!	Murdering MOTHERFUCKERS!

One TACKLES Ben, as their rolling and struggling, the other launches himself at Marquez, but Marquez lays the guy out with a John-Wayne haymaker. Marquez KICKS the guy off Ben.

Ben scrambles to his feet and both officers draw their BATONS to face another WAVE of angry attackers. ROCKS and BOTTLE raining down on them.

MARQUEZ	BEN
BACK!	Get BACK!

The crowd SURGES to encircle Ben and Marquez. A guy with an aluminum BASEBALL BAT comes at Ben from behind, HITTING Ben across the shoulder blades. Ben stumbles forward, dropping his baton, almost losing his feet.

Marquez sheaths his baton and DRAWS his PISTOL in one practiced samurai-like MOTION. The crowd reacts.

MARQUEZ
 DROP THE BAT!

The guy hangs on to his bat, but melts swiftly back into the crowd. Marquez swings his pistol around, backing the crowd up with the business end of his .45. Ben draws his gun and the two men stand back to back, totally surrounded by hostiles.

ANOTHER ANGLE:

Rotors slice the night air now. AIR 18, an LAPD A-Star helo, swoops in, its NIGHT SUN spotlight playing over the crowd.

TACTICAL FLIGHT OFFICER
 (over radio)
Air 18 is over the 415 Group of
10th Ave.

TACTICAL FLIGHT OFFICER'S POV:

Other black & whites are screaming up 10th Avenue with LIGHTS and SIRENS. UNIFORMS exiting their vehicles, CHARGING at the crowd with their RIOT HELMETS and BATONS.

MARQUEZ AND BEN

TACTICAL FLIGHT OFFICER (CONT'D)
(over radio)
Stand by one, guys. Calvary's here.

Standing back to back as the cops charge. The crowd surrounding Marquez and Ben breaks apart, cursing them, scattering in every direction.

EXT. 10TH AVENUE - CONTINUOUS

The uniforms FAN out to form a PERIMETER as Marquez and Ben rush to the bodies the front lawn.

Marquez squatting over them. C-Love has thrown his own body over Rayneece's to protect her. The face of Marquez's Timex watch is flecked with his blood. 7:03

Marquez gently turning C-Love over.

The helicopter's SPOTLIGHT sweeps over C-Love's eyes staring sightlessly from his slack face. Blood everywhere.

Marquez checks C-Love's pulse, shakes his head at Ben. Dead.

The helo's rotors RUSTLE the jacarandas, kicking loose a cascade of pale purple BLOSSOMS - wafting down, the blossoms anointing C-Love's body. Marquez taking a moment with C-Love.

Off Ben, seeing Marquez for the first time.

Marquez touches his fingers to Rayneece's neck. Two LAFD PARAMEDICS approach.

MARQUEZ (to paramedics) He's done. But she's still got a weak pulse. Maybe pregnant.	PARAMEDIC 1 Got it.
--	------------------------

The paramedics unceremoniously grab Rayneece's arms and legs, placing her roughly on the gurney.

EXT. LAFD AMBULANCE - SECONDS LATER

The legs of the gurney folding as the paramedics SHOVE Rayneece into the back of the ambulance.

MARQUEZ
Ben, you go with her.

INT. LAFD AMBULANCE (MOVING) - MINUTES LATER

Sirens. Ben watching the paramedics working on Rayneece.

CUT TO:

EXT. 10TH AVENUE - LATER

HOMICIDE SCENE: Uniforms, in riot gear, barely holding the raging, restless crowd back from the yellow tape. News Helicopters hovering over the crime scene like carrion birds. DETECTIVES drop NUMBERED PYLONS to mark pieces of evidence: a CELLPHONE. C-Love's BACKPACK. Rayneece's PURSE.

CROWD

(chanting)

NO JUSTICE! NO PEACE! NO JUSTICE!
NO PEACE!

Marquez and Chuin stand off to the side, watching the SID photographers snapping C-LOVE from different angles. FLASH! His slack face. FLASH! Bloody gunshot wounds. FLASH! Marquez's Timex watch, still hanging on C-Love's wrist.

CHUIN

I got angry wits sayin' drive- Well, yeah, no shit.
by.

MARQUEZ

CHUIN

*Suspects are described as two
cops in an LAPD Black &
White.*

(Marquez reacts)

Two rounds to the body. One
to the head. Standard
Mozambique.

MARQUEZ

Bastard might as well have
signed him for us.

CHUIN

They're also sayin they saw
you and your boot drop the
male vic off in front of his
apartment earlier.

MARQUEZ

(reeling)

I was supposed to get them
both to his aunt in Barstow.
He was supposed to meet me
here at seven.

(beat)

That's my watch he's wearing.

CHUIN

Aw, Jesus, Miguel. You really
fucked this up, man. I mean,
Beachamp's on his way here. You
know what he's gonna say, right?

(Off Marquez, spinning)

Because Risley'll have an alibi,
Miguel. Guaranteed. Just like the
bank.

(Off the mob chanting)

(MORE)

CHUIN (CONT'D)

By tomorrow, the whole goddamned
city'll be screaming for your
blood. Fuck, man. *Fuck.*

(beat)

Who else knew you were meeting them
here? Your partner, he knew, right?

A phalanx of riot-gear METRO OFFICERS wedge through the crowd to make way for **Deputy Chief Beachamp**, who strides into the crime scene wearing a triumphant smile for Marquez.

CHUIN (CONT'D)

(whispering to Marquez)

Get outta here, Miguel. Just go.

Marquez ducks under the tape and slips away, like a suspect.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAUMA CENTER AT CALIFORNIA HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Ben awkwardly trying to stay out of the way of a efficient scramble of TRAUMA SURGEONS bustling around Rayneece, intubating her. Giving her a syringe full of ADRENALINE.

FLASH CUT TO:

INT. TRAUMA CENTER AT CALIFORNIA HOSPITAL - SECONDS LATER

CRACKING the girl's ribs, gloved hands REACHING into her open chest cavity to massage her heart. No response.

FLASH CUT TO:

INT. TRAUMA CENTER AT CALIFORNIA HOSPITAL - SECONDS LATER

The bloody SHEET comes up over Rayneece's open, beautiful eyes. The girl's delicate HAND hangs limply from the operating table, dangling out from under the sheet.

Ben notices her glitter fingernail polish. Blood drops from her thin fingers on to the linoleum floor.

Plip. Plip. Plip.

FLASH CUT TO:

INT. TRAUMA CENTER LOBBY - LATER

Plip. Plip. Plip.

Ben facing RAYNEECE'S MOTHER, the woman herself is so young that she and Rayneece could have been sisters.

And the woman's eyes, desperate with hope, finding Ben's BADGE under the fluorescents. His nameplate: HALLORAN. Her EYES closed to shut out what Ben has to tell her.

RAYNEECE'S MOTHER

Oh, my dear Jesus Lord! Not my baby girl! Please, God, not my baby!

She COLLAPSES under the weight of it, falling against Ben. Ben just holds her. He doesn't know what else to do. And now the other PEOPLE milling around the lobby STARE at them.

EXT. TRAUMA CENTER LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Marquez standing alone in the dark PARKING LOT, just outside the window, looking into the lighted lobby at his partner. The effect is like a two-way mirror. Marquez can see Ben, but Ben can't see him. Marquez watching this young cop holding the utterly broken mother while her sobs shake them both.

INT. TRAUMA CENTER LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

RAYNEECE'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

BEN

Promise. Promise me you'll find the ones who did this. Find them. Stop them. *Please.* I ... I'm not. I can't. I'm not what you think I am. I can't just ... I can't.

Ben catches sight of his own spectral REFLECTION in the night-black lobby WINDOW. And Ben doesn't even recognize himself at first, the COP staring back at him. Because somehow, in spite of all the lies, Ben's not pretending to be a cop anymore.

RAYNEECE'S MOTHER

You wear that badge. That gun. You can do anything. Promise me you'll make them pay for what they did.

BEN

I promise.

SMASH TO:

EXT. OLD LAPD ACADEMY CONFIDENCE COURSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

The wooded hills of Elysian Park: **Ben and Marquez** standing atop a gallows-like structure, overlooking DODGER STADIUM. Marquez drinks from a flask, passes it to Ben. Shaken.

MARQUEZ

BEN

You saw it's face tonight, didn't you? I saw ... something, sir.

MARQUEZ

I remember my first time. Seeing it's face, I mean.

(MORE)

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)

Bitch of it is once you've seen it, you can't unsee it. Not ever. It's not just theirs anymore. It's yours now. So what're gonna do with it, cowboy.

BEN

I promised her. I promised her I'd make them pay for what they've done. So, fuck, I don't know. That seems like a place to start.

MARQUEZ

You really don't work for Beachamp, do you?

BEN

No, Miguel, I don't.

Around them silhouetted against the night sky like the bones of some dead leviathan, rise the rotting timber remnants of the original LAPD CONFIDENCE COURSE. Ladders, climbing walls, balance beams and the famed rope climb. Overgrown with vines.

MARQUEZ

This place used to be my old man's barrio. When he was a kid, the LAPD came into Chavez Ravine and relocated our family so the O'Malley's could build their new stadium.

(taking a swig)

When I told him I was coming on The Job, he cursed me. My own father. Spat on my shoes. You believe that?

BEN

He ever come around?

MARQUEZ

Nope.

The Los Angeles skyline shimmering beyond. Planes backing up from LAX to Barstow, like planets falling into tacit alignment. LAPD helicopters orbiting the city. The GOODYEAR BLIMP like a whale sounding in the distant clouds.

BEN

Risley killed C-Love, didn't he?

A ragged coyote pads out of the wild oleanders, its muzzle painted with blood, eyes glowing like coins. Portent.

MARQUEZ

Best boot I ever trained. Fucking courageous. Cunning. If he couldn't hit 'em head on, he'd flank them, tunnel under them. Smoke em out.

(beat)

He transferred to Rampart. And, you know, you'd hear these rumors. But I didn't buy it.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)

Assholes talk all kinds of shit
about the cops they're afraid of.

(his scar)

I was training a new boot. Ramos.
Good kid. About your age. It was a
bank robbery. Risley and his crew.

Ben absently touches Ramos' holstered Glock.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)

-I had him, Ben. He was less
than twenty feet away from
me.

BEN

That's bullshit. If you saw
him, actually saw him, how
the hell is Risley still out
here? How come he's not
already in Pelican Bay?

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)

Because an aggressive cop
like Risley makes, I don't
know, hundreds of Felony
arrests. In a year, maybe
twice that many assists.

BEN

What are they kidding? Who
gives a shit how many arrests
Risley makes if he's a
goddamned murderer?

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)

Welcome to the LAPD.
Department takes Risley down
now it taints every arrest
he's ever made. Every case
he's ever touched. So you're
talkin' hundreds of
murderers, rapists out on
appeal. So to get one man,
you've turned a fuckin' army
of assholes loose on the
city. Oh, and then come the
lawsuits.

BEN

It's not supposed to be like
this.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)

No, it's not. But I'm the only
witness and I ain't exactly a
reservation Indian myself. So the
Department's official line is Post
Traumatic Stress Disorder. But I
know what the I saw. I recognized
him. His eyes.

(beat)

I fucking hesitated.

Now Marquez draws his .45. Ben reacts.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)

I won't hesitate again.

BEN

Miguel-

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)

So I want you to think hard before
you answer me.

(MORE)

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)

Because it's lookin like one way or
another my 20-year career with the
LAPD ends tonight and I am all
about dumping a dirty cop. Now...
(thumbing the hammer)
... **Who the fuck are you?**

Crickets. Ben's almost relieved to unburden himself now.

BEN

My name's not Ben Halloran.
(beat)
It's Benjamin Kahn. Junior. Big Ben
Kahn is my father.

Marquez rejects it at first. Takes a minute.

MARQUEZ

What are you supposed to be, some
kind of goddamned mole?

BEN

I was. Up until yesterday I was.
But I don't know. I don't know what
I expected, but ... Not this. It's
like something happened to me once
I got out here. Christ. Once I
actually saw it. Everything's
different now. Maybe I'm different.
I don't fucking know. I guess I
can't explain it. I sound crazy.
(beat)
I don't know what I am anymore.

MARQUEZ

You're a cop. You get used to it.

Ben's lost. They both are. The radio suddenly CRACKLES,
interrupting them.

12L90

(on Marquez's radio)
*12L90 I need all available
units to respond to the
command post at Florence and
10th Ave. Code 2 high.
Respond southbound only.*

RTO

*All available 77th units
respond Code 2 High to the
command post at Florence and
10th Avenue. See Incident
113457. Per L 90, units
respond SOUTHBOUND ONLY.*

THESE BROADCASTS FROM 10TH AVENUE CONTINUE TO ESCALATE.

Marquez re-holsters his gun. He looks out over the basin,
taking in the city, his city, one last time.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)

They're going to burn this city
down tonight, Ben. By sunup, I'm
out of a job. Or worse. If I'm
gonna take him down, it has to be
right now.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)

And I don't think I can do it alone. So you're it, partner. Cowboy the fuck up. Because at this point I don't give a shit who you were working for when you joined up. I just need you to decide, right now, whose side you're on.

BEN

Yours.

CUT TO:

INT. GET SOME'S CRIB (LIVING ROOM) - MINUTES LATER

Television light flickers over Get Some's face. He's alone, watching the aftermath of C-Love's murder. On the TELEVISION: live aerial footage of angry crowds on 10th Avenue, pushing against a skirmish line of cops in full riot gear. A car tipped over. Another car engulfed in flame.

Get Some's front door suddenly SPLINTERS, kicked open. BEN and MARQUEZ charge into the house. Marquez's .45 evident in his fist. Ben carries a Remington 870 12-gauge shotgun.

GET SOME

What the fuck?!? What is this bullshit? You can't do this, man. I work for LAPD, remember?

Marquez adjusts his aim, putting the muzzle of his .45 between Get Some's eyes.

MARQUEZ

Ask me if I give a shit.

Ben handcuffs Get Some, patting him down. Nothing on the guy but a cellular phone. Marquez nods to Ben: *Check the house*. Ben heads into the hallway, leading with his shotgun.

GET SOME

Call your boss. I'm a registered informant. So you're makin' like a major mistake comin' here, Marquez.

Marquez pulls a rickety wooden chair from the kitchen table, SLAMS the chair into the backs of Get Some's legs, forcing his knees to bend - *Oww* - Get Some slumps into the chair.

MARQUEZ

Made 'em before.

Marquez opens the fridge, grabs a cold BUDWEISER, pops the tab, lifts the foaming can to his lips. Pausing to savor it. Get Some watches Marquez suck the whole can down. Marquez looks at Get Some, crushes the can in his fist, tosses it on the kitchen floor. Belches.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)
 What the hell? All your
 homies out there looting
 already?

GET SOME
 Niggas took my dog with'm
 too. What the fuck kinda
 loyalty is that?

ON THE TELEVISION, aerial footage of the mob on 10th Avenue
 swarming over an LAPD black and white, rocking and tipping
 it. Fire spreading to C-Love's apartment building. Chaos.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)
 Rats from a sinking ship.
 (tut-tut)
 'Cause you're next on
 Risley's hit list. You know
 that, right?

GET SOME
 I don't know shit. Ain't done
 shit. Ain't sayin' shit. Just
 take me in and give me my
 phone call, officer.

Marquez peels the stained pillowcase off a pillow, then takes
 the wooden fruit bowl from the counter and dumps the flyblown
 oranges into the pillowcase.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)
 Really? You sure that's how you
 wanna play this?

With a flick of his wrist, Marquez expertly twists the end of
 the weighted pillowcase, winding it around his fist. The
pillowcase full of oranges now swings like a mace and chain.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)
 Think about it. Risley already
 killed Wizard, Deandre, and Keith-

SWINGING the weighted pillowcase with precision. Oranges THUD
 bluntly into Get Some's solar plexus - stealing his breath.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)
 No way does he leave you alive.

INT. GET SOME'S CRIB (BEDROOM) - CONTINUOUS

Ben searches the house. On Get Some's dresser: a FRAMED PHOTO
 of Get Some with Deandre and Keith at Magic Mountain - all
 three of them throwing up Boot Hill. Ben pauses.

RTO
 (on Ben's radio)
*All units, the City is on Tactical
 Alert due to a Major Incident in
 77th Division. Proceed to your Code
 Alpha Location per the Incident
 Commander at Scene. TAC 2 CHANNEL
 38 is reserved for this incident.*

Ben checks the closet, finds a BARNETT QUAD 300 CROSSBOW. Ben
 slings his shotgun, hefts the wicked-looking crossbow.

INT. GET SOME'S CRIB (LIVING ROOM) - CONTINUOUS

Plip. Plip. ... Juice from the broken oranges already seeping through the cotton pillowcase, dripping on to the carpet.

MARQUEZ

What are these, Valencia? *Who the fuck keeps juice oranges?*

Marquez swings UNDERHAND, like a softball pitcher, DRIVING the weighted pillowcase deep into Get Some's GUT. Get Some folds over in his chair. Get Some LAUGHING through his agony.

GET SOME

(laughing)

Dunno. Bought 'em from a Messican.

Laughing in spite of himself, Marquez swings OVERHAND, bringing the pillowcase DOWN on Get Some's KIDNEYS. Orange splotches on Get Some's t-shirt. Marquez pauses, hearing Get Some's guts CHURN. Marquez leans in. Sniffs theatrically.

MARQUEZ

(sniffing)

Shit your pants? No? Man, I must be losing my touch.

(exasperated)

Fucking juice oranges.

Marquez unwraps the pillowcase, tosses it aside. He fishes another Bud from the fridge. He cracks the Budweiser, Marquez getting a little tight, this one going down easier.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)

That's thirsty work. Bro, why don't you just take a minute and get right with Jesus?

Get Some coughs, laughs.

GET SOME

Mex, I am right with Jesus. And I was playin Good-Cop-Bad-Cop back when Michael Jackson was black.

INT. GET SOME'S CRIB (HALLWAY) - CONTINUOUS

Ben walking up the hallway. Get Some's laughter carrying.

GET SOME (O.S.)

I know you the buck-wild BAD COP. In a cool minute Poindexter be back in here like he my buddy, talkin' bout he can't control your crazy ass so why don't I just talk?

INT. GET SOME'S CRIB (LIVING ROOM) - CONTINUOUS

Ben walks back into the living room, holding the **BARNETT QUAD 300 CROSSBOW** - weighing the weapon in his hands.

BEN You've got it ass-backward, <u>yo</u>. (nodding to Marquez) He's the good cop.	MARQUEZ Hijole. Bet that thing shoots right through Kevlar, don't it? (to Get Some) You know something I don't, bro?
---	---

Ben digs a \$20 out of his breast pocket.

BEN Twenty bucks says I can shoot a that beer can off homie's grape.	MARQUEZ You're on.
---	-------------------------------

Marquez digs a \$20 out of his own pocket, places it on the table next to Ben's, grabs a fresh Bud from the fridge.

MARQUEZ
Hold still, fuckface.

Get Some pitches his head like a horse dodging a bridle. Marquez CLAMPS his fist around Get Some's throat and SLAMS the back of Get Some's head against the wall - hard enough to crack the plaster. He balances the can atop Get Some's head - William Tell style. Ben shoulders the crossbow, takes aim.

GET SOME I wanna see my lawyer?	BEN 'Course you do.
--	--------------------------------

Ben squeezes the trigger. *Thwack!* And the can balanced on Get Some's head RUPTURES, jagged lobes of aluminum peeling back like flower petals - the arrow embedded to its fletching. Beer foam CASCADES down Get Some's face. He sputters, coughs.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)
BULLSHIT! Beginner's luck, rookie.
Double or nothing says you can't
put another one in that can.
(to Get Some)
You wanna piece of this action?

GET SOME
Fuck you, motherfucker!
(giving up)
Okay, uncle. Fuck it. UNCLE!

Ben wags eyebrows at Marquez.

MARQUEZ (to Get Some) Talk to me.	GET SOME This shit is deep, Marquez.
--	---

MARQUEZ
How deep?

GET SOME
Down there where the
motherfuckin' fish glow in
the dark.

Get Some opens his mouth, words just spilling out.

GET SOME (CONT'D)
Risley found out Wizard was
skimmin from Carcosa. He
threatened to rat him out.
Wizard tried to pay Risley
off with dope. Wasn't enough.
So Wizard offered Risley the
bank where Carcosa washes all
the dirt off his money.
Risley put a crew together.
And we hit it.

MARQUEZ
No wonder the Mexicans are
beefin' with you. You robbed
their bank.
(beat)
Where'd Risley come up with
that crew? They had training.
Equipment.

GET SOME (CONT'D)
Different world since the war. Last
few years, ballers with somethin'
on the ball send their young
busters off to *Fallujiah Finishing
School*. Bush just needed the bodies
so, shit, it was like a graduate
program in urban warfare. Some of
'em snuck equipment home with 'em.
James-Bond type shit. Economy's in
the toilet and you got all these
homies with Rambo skills just
gettin' high an playin Xbox.

BEN
So I guess the midnight basketball
didn't cut it?

MARQUEZ
But it ain't like you pinched a B
of A, bro. What're you gonna do
when Carcosa comes for his money?

BEN
Pin the bank robbery on Darius.
Serve him up to Carcosa, right?

GET SOME
Ain't as dumb as you look, Opey.
See, it ain't just money. It's
Regime Change. Fuck Darius.

MARQUEZ
The Mexicans put D in the ground.
And, what? Risley takes over?

GET SOME
He's got D's lawyer straining the
money through his Cayman accounts.

Ben reacts. He and Marquez share a look.

GET SOME (CONT'D)	BEN
Big Ben dumps the money in D's account just long enough to convince Carcosa. Then he kicks down our shares.	And you bought that bullshit?

And we HEAR the rumble of a big engine outside.

BEN
You've been had, amigo.

Ben LEAPING over the couch. He PARTS the curtains with two fingers - just enough space for one eye.

THROUGH THE CURTAINS:

We see an LAPD Black & White cruising slowly up the darkened street like a crocodile through muddy water.

BEN (CONT'D)	MARQUEZ
One of ours.	Markings?

A white 02 stenciled over the vehicle's black trunk.

BEN (CONT'D)
(grim)
Rampart.

Marquez DASHES around the house, shutting off the lights, TV, plunging them into darkness.

GET SOME	MARQUEZ
Don't let him in, Marquez.	(hissing)
Please.	Shut up!

EXT. DENKER AVENUE - CONTINUOUS

The Black & White parks diagonally in front of Get Some's house. TWO G-RIDES pull in behind it. FOUR MEN in each car - all wearing black balaclavas. Practiced professionals.

INT. G-RIDE - CONTINUOUS

Risley black-clad Crip assassins hastily screwing sound-suppressors on to their COMPACT ASSAULT WEAPONS.

Each donning NIGHT-VISION goggles. One of them throws the toggle on the hand-held BLACK BOX in his lap. CLICK!

INT. GET SOME'S CRIB (LIVING ROOM) - CONTINUOUS

Both Ben and Marquez's RADIOS suddenly emit a high-pitched WHINE and then go SILENT. Ben keys his radio, keys it again.

Dead. BEN GET SOME
It's them. They got this EMP
thing.

(to Marquez) BEN GET SOME
Electromagnetic Pulse. Like a *jammer*.

Marquez tries Get Some's cell. Dead.

MARQUEZ
Damn.

EXT. GET SOME'S CRIB - CONTINUOUS

Risley and Mapes step out of their Black & White, taking a few cautious steps toward the house.

RISLEY
You GET SOME!

No answer. Risley holding a SILENCED SCORPION MACHINE PISTOL slyly behind his back - the weapon definitely NOT LAPD-issue. Risley CALLING out to the house.

RISLEY (CONT'D)
Lemme holla atcha a minute, cuz.
Get Some, it's me. Riz. GET SOME?

Then from inside.

MARQUEZ (O.S.)
(shouting)
Ain't nobody in here but us
chickens.

Risley starts, then SMILES warmly as he and Mapes move to cover behind the engine block of his black and white.

RISLEY
Hey, Marquez!

INT. GET SOME'S CRIB (LIVING ROOM) - CONTINUOUS

MARQUEZ
(whining)
Who's MAR-QWEZZ? My name's Brad.
I'm a Jehovah's Witness.

INT. GET SOME'S CRIB (HALL CLOSET) - CONTINUOUS

Ben's hurriedly removing Get Some's handcuffs, quietly pulling up the ACCESS PANEL in the floor, so Get Some can slip down into the crawl space under the house. Safe.

MARQUEZ (O.S.)
(stalling for time)
I tried to talk to these men about
the Lord, but the made me smoke
reefer and drink malt liquor and
now I can't go back to my wife
because her butt is too narrow!

Get Some's WTF look. Ben puts his finger to his lips and closes the panel, then Ben tosses some clothes over the panel to camouflage it. Ben closes the closet door.

EXT. GET SOME'S CRIB - CONTINUOUS

Risley crouching behind this Black & White.

RISLEY
(laughing)
Man, you crazy.

Silently signalling his troops. The Crips in black exit their cars and quickly surround the house, moving like a SWAT team.

INT. GET SOME'S CRIB (HALLWAY) - CONTINUOUS

Ben heading back out toward the living room, keeping low. He GLIMPSES the DARK SHADOWS moving past the windows outside.

RISLEY (O.S.)
Hey, Marquez? You got the rookie in
there with you?

Off Marquez.

EXT. GET SOME'S FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

RISLEY
'Cause that'd be a damn shame to
lose another one like this.
(beat)
Tell you what, Marquez. You come on
out the front door, assume the
position, and we'll let your little
boot just hoof it back to the
station. Like Cornel Wilde.

INT. GET SOME'S CRIB (LIVING ROOM) - CONTINUOUS

RISLEY (O.S.)
No need for him to die too.

Ben picks up the crossbow, crouching next to Marquez.

MARQUEZ
(whispering)
He's right.

BEN
*He's also lying. They've
already surrounded the house.*

EXT. GET SOME'S BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

An ENTRY TEAM of Crip Commandos crouched at the back door, keyed-up, locked and loaded, ready to storm the place.

INT. GET SOME'S CRIB (BACK DOOR) - CONTINUOUS

Ben with the crossbow and Marquez with the shotgun waiting on the other side of the door.

RISLEY (O.S.)
What do say, Miguel?

INTERCUT:

The LEAD MAN, stands, kicks the back door open and - *thunk* - an ARROW goes through him like a hot knife through butter - the bloody point bursting out through his back to PIERCE the man directly behind him, PINNING the two of them together!

They crumple in the doorway, exposing the Crip behind them. Marquez FIRES the shotgun, obliterating that guy's goggles and most of his skull. Bodies falling, blocking the door.

The bad guys answer Marquez with the unholy BZZZZT of silenced AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRING, chewing through the house.

CRAWL SPACE: Get Some curling fetal, palms over his ears.

BEN AND MARQUEZ RUNNING AND GUNNING

Marquez DRAWS his .45 as he TOSSES the shotgun to Ben.

And the SHOTGUN seems to *FLOAT*.

Two CRIPS hard-charging through the door, WEAPONS BLAZING. Geysering splinters and powdered sheetrock - bands of mote-filled moonlight slotting in through big bullet holes.

The SHOTGUN FLOATS through bands of moonlight. End over End.

Ben CATCHES the shotgun, TROMBONES the slide, FIRING out his window, BLASTING two CRIPS backward off their feet.

More coming. Marquez firing as he shoves Ben out of the way. Stitching the walls as Ben and Marquez hustle up the stairs.

OUT FRONT:

RISLEY (CONT'D)
Fuck it. There's a riot on anyway.
Just burn it down around them.

The CRIP crouching behind the G-RIDE, pops the trunk, pulls a pre-made MOLOTOV COCKTAIL from a plastic crate FULL OF THEM.

RUNNING UPSTAIRS:

Reaching the top of the stairs, MARQUEZ topples a DESK, to form a barricade, FIRING down over it at their PURSUERS.

OUT FRONT:

FLICK! The Crip LIGHTS the gas-soaked rag, COCKING back to THROW the bottle ...

BEN UPSTAIRS:

Ben putting the stock of the SHOTGUN to his shoulder. From the upstairs window, Ben takes careful aim at the THROWER.

The guy at the top of his WIND-UP when Ben FIRES, buckshot hitting the BOTTLE itself - **WHUUMPPFF!** The bottle EXPLODES, instantly turning the guy into the HUMAN TORCH. Arrgh!

RISLEY (CONT'D)
God damn it-

Totally engulfed in flame, the guy SLUMPS over the trunk - and over his CASE OF PRE-MADE MOLOTOV'S.

RISLEY (CONT'D)
Oh, fuck no.

KA-BOOOM! Like a cherry bomb under a giant coffee can, the whole G-RIDE lifted and spun by a BALL OF FLAME!

UPSTAIRS

Ben and Marquez seize the moment, running and CRASHING out through the upstairs window -

-AIRBORNE, FLAILING, SAILING OVER THE SPEAR-TOPPED FENCE-

- landing HARD on the neighbor's single-story ROOF, rolling off and ...

... RUNNING like hell through BACKYARD after BACKYARD with a wolf-pack of swift SHADOWS stalking them. FZZZT! Banners of fire flickering from their muzzles, chewing through fences.

NEXT BLOCK:

Their Black & White, discretely parked on the dark street mid-block. Ben and Marquez SPRINTING for the car like it's a life raft, Ben duke-sliding the hood, JUMPING into their seats ...

INT. BLACK AND WHITE - CONTINUOUS

Ben grabbing the Convertacom MIKE, keying it HARD. Hoping.

BEN
 (into radio)
 12A45, OFFICER NEEDS HELP! Harvard
 and Slauson!

Marquez turns the ignition. Click! DEAD.

MARQUEZ
 EMP must have killed the -

FROM OFF SCREEN:

Something RAMS us, shattering glass, SPINNING the black and white 360 degrees. Ben's stunned, glass in his hair, blinking, trying to get his bearings. A spidery BULGE in the windshield. Marquez's gashed head bleeding on to his airbag.

And now *the world slows WAY down* ... Marquez's lips are moving, shouting orders at Ben, but there is no sound.

Ben reaches around his airbag, fumbles for his gun, but he's BLINDED by halogen high beams - whiteness filling the world as the TRUCK charges up the street to RAM us head-on.

Squinting against the supernatural glare, Marquez raises his big Smith .45, FIRING soundlessly out through the windshield.

Ben's in shock, mesmerized by each spent .45 casing SLOW-MOTION ejecting from Marquez's weapon as he fires. One after another, the brass casings flip like coins on to their dash.

BEN'S POV:

The oncoming truck's left headlight WINKS out. And now - *all at once* - all the *SOUND and SPEED come flooding back* into the world with the bone-shattering **HEAD-ON COLLISION** that folds the front of their black and white like a piece of tinfoil.

EXT. BLACK AND WHITE - CONTINUOUS

The big TRUCK comes on like a bulldozer, SHOVING the black and white backward. The black and white shudders and jumps, rear wheels hopping the curb, the back bumper shearing a city FIRE HYDRANT from its bolts. A SUDDEN GEYSER pounding the underside of the car. The engine sputters and stops.

INT. BLACK AND WHITE - CONTINUOUS

Ben looks down to see the frothy water somehow SPURTING up through the floor, boiling up to float the floor mats, now churning up over their seats. Ben struggles, but he's pinned to his seat by the buckled dash. Sizzling SPARKS as the water FRIES their radio, RISING to chest level.

Out the windows, Ben sees shadows stalking around the car, the Boot Hill Mafia surrounds them.

BEN

Miguel, I can't reach my shit, man.
You gotta hand me your gun.

Marquez groans, his head lolling forward, nose split open. Blood covering his mustache like paint on a brush, pouring down the front of him to cloud the churning water.

BEN (CONT'D)

Miguel?

MARQUEZ

(groggy)
*Kill me ... don't let them
take me.*

Now Timberline BOOTS stomp out our shattered windshield. Glass raining down on us.

Ben draws his KNIFE. Claw-like hands reaching down through broken glass, grabbing the semi-conscious Marquez, hauling him out. More hands tearing at Ben's uniform shirt. Ben twists away, stabbing desperately until the knife is yanked from his hand. A big HAND clamping down on Ben's wrist. Crazy, Ben BITING down through brown fingers, blood filling his mouth. Yowling screams.

EXT. BLACK AND WHITE - CONTINUOUS

CRIPS working with the practiced efficiency of firemen, forcing crowbars between the posts and buckled doors. The doors groaning, POPPING open - and a sudden, sucking WATERFALL carries Ben tumbling out into the street.

BEN

Hands and knees, trying to find his feet; Crips surround him, dark shapes blotting the night sky. Ben tries to scramble away, but BOOTS smash down on scrabbling fingers, cave in his ribs, stealing his breath. HOWLING LAUGHTER. A bottle explodes against the back of Ben's head ...

.. and our world goes **BLACK**.

INT. SPOOKHOUSE - NIGHT

Ben blinks, eyes adjusting to **eerie torchlight**, his wrists handcuffed in front of him. Marquez slumps next to Ben, unconscious. Or worse. They're curled on the dirt floor of a long-abandoned QUONSET WAREHOUSE: verging on collapse, supported by sagging struts. Rock pigeons among the rotting beams. SNEAKER FRUIT hanging by laces from the crossbeams. The only light in the warehouse comes from a ring of bamboo Tiki torches around a **LARGE PIT** in the center of the floor.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Ben staring in horror at the wispy scraps of FLESH and HAIR hanging from fishing line in front of him. **Dried scalps**.

Wooden pallets and olive drab CRATES of MA-27 Light Antitank Weapons. Grenades. A Vulcan MINIGUN on a tripod. An arsenal.

THE BOOT HILL MAFIA CRIPS

30 gangsters STARE back, anxious to get this party started. A young CRIP approaches Ben. Ben closes his eyes, feigning unconsciousness, as the Crip, unzips, PISSING on Ben's head.

CRIP

Rise and shine, Onetime.

Echoing laughter. Crips crowd, encircling Ben & Marquez. Rough hands forcing them both to sit upright. Marquez's bloody head hanging. Still out cold. Or dead.

BEN

(sardonic)

Alright, fuck it. You're all under arrest. Hands behind your heads.

Roaring LAUGHTER. A kid (15) wearing a WAVE CAP, tears off Ben's BADGE, proudly holds it up for the others like he's caught a fly. They snatch at it, but the kid twists away. POWAY CHARLIE pushes through the crowd, wearing both Ben's & Marquez's GUN BELTS bandolier-slung across him. He rips off Ben's **HALLORAN** nameplate, turning it to catch the torchlight.

Poway Charlie pockets Ben's nameplate, SNAPS his fingers. Someone tosses him a SPRAYCAN. Ben struggles to turn away while Poway Charlie covers Ben's face in **BLACK SPRAY PAINT**.

POWAY CHARLIE

Uh huh. There now, you the nigga.

Laughter. [*String him up! Hang that nigga!*] Ben gasps, blinded for a moment, crying caustic paint from his eyes.

ANOTHER ANGLE:

Crips PART for **Risley** and **Mapes**. Risley HAULS Marquez to his feet. Mapes yanks Ben up. Risley twirls his SIDE-HANDLE BATON -LAPD's infamous 24" Monadnock. *see under Rodney King.

RISLEY

So, gentlemen. Here's the \$64,000 question: Where you hidin' Gethsemane Guyton, AKA *Get Some?*
(beat)

I know you damn sure didn't book his ass. I checked. He's not in County. Not at 77th. *Donde esta?*

Marquez stands as if at attention - Aslan before the stone table - his handcuffed wrists crossed in front of him. Risley circles Marquez, a prowling wolf, his baton prodding.

MARQUEZ

This is between us, Cabe. Leave the kid out of it, huh?

RISLEY

You're kidding, right? Hey, I'm not the bad guy here, Marquez.

(to Ben)

You know he's the one taught me proactive policing. But I take it to another level and now he comes at me like I'm Pol Fuckin' Pot?

MARQUEZ

Because you crossed the line, Cabe.

RISLEY

Yeah? And just who the fuck are you to tell me where the line is? Who made you Pope of the Popo, huh?

Risley SWINGS at the backs of Marquez's legs. Marquez goes down. Laughter. Ben struggles, can't break free of Mapes.

MARQUEZ

(husky with pain)

Fucking pimp. Dope dealer.

RISLEY

Grow up. You know as well as I do somebody's always going to supply that demand. Simple economics, Miguel. Magic of the marketplace.

Marquez painfully regains his feet to FACE Risley. Bloody but unbowed. Risley gets nose to nose with him, serious.

RISLEY (CONT'D)

You're telling me you'd rather 18th Street run Rampart? MS 13? They're animals, Miguel. With me *en cargado* the trains ran on time and shit wasn't poison. I impacted crime. I saved lives. I kept the peace. I brought Jesus to those Indians. And you're all up in my shit for it.

Risley STRIKES - a vicious underhand blow - the BATON deep into Marquez's solar plexus. Ben practically feels it.

BEN

(struggling)

STOP!

RISLEY

(to Ben)

You can stop me anytime, hero. Just tell me where I can find Get Some.

MARQUEZ

Don't tell him shit. He hits like fuckin' a girl, anyway.

MARQUEZ (CONT'D)
 (spitting blood)
Pinche covado.

RISLEY
 I'll be damned if I'll apologize to
you for doin' what had to be done.
 Can't break an omelet without blah-
 blah-blah. You taught me that.

Risley cocks back to swing. Ben RAKES his boot heel down
 Mapes' shin, twists from him and LAUNCHES at Risley's back.
 But Risley's ready with a spinning BACK KICK that knocks Ben
 on his ass. CRIPS pinning Ben down, kicking, grinding his
 face into the dirt. Daddy Python draws his Colt.

RISLEY (CONT'D)
Now where was I? Oh, right.

Risley catches Marquez in the TEETH his baton. Marquez falls.

RISLEY (CONT'D)
 Ramos was your responsibility,
 Miguel.
 (re: Ben)
 Just like he is.

Risley NODS and Daddy Python digs the muzzle of his Colt into
 Ben's cheek, thumbing back the hammer. Ben closes his eyes.
 Beat. Then Ben laughs. And LAUGHS. All eyes on him.

BEN
 (laughing)
 You assholes still don't know who
 you're fucking with.

DADDY PYTHON
*Ooh, right, the po-lice. Yeah, I'm
 shittin' my pants here.*

BEN
I work for Joe Carcosa.

The room goes silent. The oxygen gone. The Crips look scared.
 And Ben's eyes find Marquez. Marquez looks crushed, betrayed.

BEN (CONT'D)
 Carcosa sent me after the people
 who robbed his bank.
 (staring down Risley)
 He sent me after you.

RISLEY
 It's bullshit. Filibuster. He's
 desperate. Right now, he'd tell you
 he could bring back the sun if he
 thought you'd turn him loose.

BEN

You'll be lucky to see another
sunrise, actually. You're looking
at a Green Light here, supercop.
(to the crowd)
All of you fuckers. *Poof.*

Risley raises his baton, rushing at Ben. But Marquez rolls, catching Risley's ankle, TRIPPING him. Risley rage-swarms over Marquez, savagely clubbing his skull. Marquez goes limp.

INT. SPOOKHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Ben's handcuffs are now hooked to a long CHAIN, the chain fed through a pulley high above, and the other end of the chain hooked to Marquez's handcuffs. Marquez in bad shape.

Sleepy Loc and Daddy Python haul Ben to the edge of the PIT. Ben struggles, his heels plowing furrows in the dirt as they drag him forward. Two Crips drunk-hold Marquez upright next to Ben. The two of them standing at the edge of the pit.

Ben peers down into the darkness.

THE PIT

Gnawed bones litter the dirt. Movement. Ben's eyes adjust to the black. Battle-scarred PIT BULLS staring back at him; pig-eyes glittering. Inbred ferocity. Lips drawn back over bright fangs. They leap and snarl, jaws snapping wetly.

MARQUEZ

Swaying on his feet, eyes half-mast. Murmuring something.

RISLEY

(leaning in close)
What's that? Ready to give?

Marquez comes ALIVE all at once, savagely HEAD-BUTTING Risley. Risley's head snapping backward, nose bloodied.

*Now quickly - while they're distracted - Marquez turns and SPITS a blood gob on to Ben's **right wrist** - on the handcuff.

Marquez gotcha-SMILES at Risley. Mapes grabs Marquez, the muzzle of his .45 pressed against Marquez's forehead.

MARQUEZ

I got something for your
bitch-ass.

RISLEY

No! He's lookin' for the
emergency exit, nigga. Don't
give it to him.

Crips hold them at the edge of the pit. Ben & Marquez stand shoulder-to-shoulder, facing execution. Risley behind them.

RISLEY (CONT'D)
 (whispering to Ben)
 Now, Marquez's a bit heavier. And
 that means you get a few minutes to
 watch him die.
 (letting that sink in)
 You want to tell me where I can
 find Get Some, I'll put a magic
 bullet in your head. As my gift.
 (snapping his fingers)
 To say thank you for playing.

And Risley SHOVES them both over the edge. They drop,
 handcuffs yanked over their heads, hanging there.

INT. PIT - CONTINUOUS

Ben and Marquez dangling side by side, the dogs below crazed
 by the sight of them hanging just out of reach. They snarl
 and leap like dolphins, jaws closing just short.

The Boot Hill Mafia Crips crowd the edge of the pit, jeering
 at them, spitting and pissing. Bloodthirsty laughter.

BEN	MARQUEZ
I'm sorry.	For what?
	(Off Ben's look)
	It doesn't matter, hear me?
	It doesn't what you were
	before. You're a cop now.

The pulley above them creaks slowly. Marquez's body weight
 pulling him DOWN into the pit as Ben is pulled UP. Marquez
 locks eyes with Ben. *The last words he'll ever speak ...*

MARQUEZ
 Remember our first day out.
 (Off Ben's look)
*Better to be judged by twelve than
 carried by six.*

Ben nods. He understands. *Thank you.*

Suddenly, a speckled bitch (with a misshapen snout resembling
 a bat's) vaults the pack. Her jaw sinking deep into the meat
 of Marquez's left calf - pulling him down ever faster.

Marquez kicks and twists, but he can't shake the dog off. She
 hangs there, jaws locked in place, Marquez's blood filling
 the crinkles in her snout.

BEN
 No! NO!

Ben watches - helpless - as the dog, short legs splayed like a
 gator's, pulls Marquez down into hell. Laughter.

DOGS

Savaging Marquez now, but - amazingly - Marquez does cry out. They're tearing the meat from his legs, but the man does not make a sound. Blood-painted muzzles rooting the bowels from Marquez's belly. Fighting each other over his guts.

MARQUEZ

Now, Marquez turns upward in a final act of defiance. His eyes find Risley's: MARQUEZ'S BROWN EYES ARE ALMOST ECSTATIC, BLAZING RIGHTEOUS HATE. And for that moment, Ben sees that Risley is actually frightened. Even the blood-drunk Crips are chastened, somehow respectful of Marquez's courage.

Then Ben watches Marquez's eyes cloud over, sightless, and his head slumps. **Dead.**

The pulley overhead CREAKS again. *Marquez outweighed Ben by 40 pounds, but the dogs have now torn that away from him.

And now, like some grotesque Ascension, Marquez dessicated body is pulled UPWARD as Ben DESCENDS toward the slavering, blood-crazed dogs.

RISLEY

Last chance to dance, mayonnaise.

BEN

As Marquez's body rises past Ben, Ben KICKS off the wall of the pit, SWINGING to WRAP his legs around Marquez's ruined body. The pulley STOPS turning.

RISLEY (CONT'D)

What the fuck?

Risley peers down at Ben With Ben's ankles locked around Marquez's body, they're both suspended over the snarling pack. Even if Risley wanted to shoot, Marquez's body blocks his shot. Marquez still protecting his rookie, even in death.

The Boot Hill Mafia shouting down at Ben.

RISLEY (CONT'D)

Shit, shake him loose.

Sleepy Loc leans out over the pit, grabs the chain, trying to RATTLE Ben loose.

BEN

Ben wriggles his right wrist against the handcuff - slick with Marquez's bloody spit - finally TWISTING his right hand free.

Ben slides his hand into the velcro slit in Marquez's torn uniform for the shoulder holster, pulling out the big bore .44 REVOLVER - Marquez's secret weapon.

Ben FIRES up at Sleepy Loc. BLAM! Catching him in the neck.

RISLEY

Risley sees Sleepy Loc shot through the throat. He watches Sleepy Loc pitch forward, grabbing Marquez's chain as he falls into the pit. The pulley SPINS - *whirrr* - sawdust trickles and the lattice of rotting timber struts GROANS under the combined weight. About to collapse. Crips scatter.

INT. PIT - CONTINUOUS

As Sleepy Loc's weight pulls him down, Ben's ROCKETED up out of the pit. Ben comes up firing, BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

HITS Poway Charlie in the face, blowing most of it off.

HITS a tiki torch. The bamboo torch EXPLODES, spattering three Crips with BURNING FUEL.

CRIPS ON FIRE, panicked, running, stumbling against the pallets. FIRE SPREADS, climbing the walls of the warehouse. Others chase them, trying to beat the flames out.

RISLEY

Out of my fuckin way!

Risley shoulders aside panicked Crips, raising his pistol to take aim at Ben - dangling in there his sights.

BEN

Ben SWINGS to the edge of the pit just as the rotting timber struts above him finally SNAP!

Risley FIRES - just as the crossbeam holding his pulley BREAKS and Ben's chain goes slack. Risley's shots fizzing over Ben's head as he drops to the edge of the pit, rolling away.

Risley adjusts his aim, about to fire again when the whole lattice of timber COLLAPSES, crashing down into the pit. Risley dives clear of a roiling cloud of dust and splinters.

INT. PIT - CONTINUOUS

The fallen beams form a kind of Jacob's Ladder. The DOGS instinctively use it to scramble up and out of the pit.

INT. SPOOKHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Dust. Smoke. Chaos. Silhouetted by flames, Ben takes Marquez's pistol in hand, and turns to face the Crips.

Behind him, blood-maddened pit bulls pour out of the pit, like demons escaping hell. Some of the gangsters actually run. The dogs tear into the Boot Hill Mafia. Stampeded gangsters fall.

The dogs savage these gangsters, tearing their throats and faces. It's almost as though the dogs, having consumed Marquez's flesh are infused with his essence.

BEN

Ben shoots and pistol-whips his way across the warehouse.

RISLEY

Raises his pistol, tracking Ben. A snarling PIT BULL charges Risley. Risley whirls, shooting the dog mid-leap. He turns back, trying to reacquire Ben, but Ben's gone.

The fire spreads to the weapons crates. Mapes grabs Risley.

MAPES

We gotta move! NOW!

EXT. SPOOKHOUSE - SECONDS LATER

Ben's running like hell from the warehouse, across a vacant lot, toward the train tracks.

A violent EXPLOSION rips the warehouse in half like an aluminum can, the blast knocking Ben off his feet.

EXT. VACANT LOT - CONTINUOUS

Debris and burning bodies landing in the lot around him. Hot ash falling like snow. Fire spreads across the dry grass of the lot. Ben lying there, empty-handed, catching his breath.

We hear the AIR HORN of a SOUTH PACIFIC FREIGHT. The train coming, its HEADLAMP piercing the smoke as it barrels down the track. Ben struggles to his feet, limps for the tracks. Risley & Mapes pursue him, firing wildly with the train's blinding HEAD LAMP. Bullets buzzing around Ben's ears.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - CONTINUOUS

Ben lurches across the tracks right in front of the ONCOMING TRAIN. Diving out of the way as the train ROARS past him, cutting off Ben's pursuers. Their bullets sparking off the train cars.

Ben's up and moving, using the train as cover. In the spaces between the moving freight cars, Ben can see Risley and Mapes tracking him - like looking into a zoetrope. Ben sees THE END OF THE TRAIN IS COMING. He's about to lose his only cover.

Ben works up to a jog, hurling himself at the ladder on the side of one of the passing cars. Grabbing the ladder, his feet dragging near the grinding wheels. Pulling himself slowly up the ladder, rung by rung.

MAPES (O.S.)
Motherfucker's on the train!

BLAM! BLAM! Shots winging off the iron ladder around Ben.

EXT. TOP OF THE TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

Ben hauls himself to the top of the train. He turns, looking back over his shoulder, and sees Risley & Mapes have climbed up here to pursue him. Ben jogging, leaping from car to car as the train clanks along through RIOTING South Central.

Scudding smoke. An apocalyptic, **NIGHTMARE LANDSCAPE** flashing by Ben on both sides of the moving train. GANGSTERS weilding baseball bats, tire irons, swarming over streets choked with empty cars. Overturned. In flames. A MAN SAWING through a telephone pole with a chain saw. An LAFD FIRETRUCK engulfed in flame. A MAN in a barbecue apron with a bloody fire axe, HOWLING at the passing train. Ben just keeps running.

Risley and Mapes nimbly gaining on Ben, pistols in their hands. Risley pausing to take aim, FIRING, his rounds WHANGING SPARKS off the car around Ben as he JUMPS to the next car. BLAM! -schnikt!- Ben falls, reaches his hand down to his ribs. Graze wound.

EXT. TRELLIS - CONTINUOUS

The train crossing a graffiti-covered TRELLIS that spans the CENTURY FREEWAY. Risley and Mapes closing in on Ben. Trapped, running out of train, Ben looks over the side of the car and sees HEAVY FREEWAY TRAFFIC passing beneath the trellis as the train rattles across the freeway.

Ben sees a MODULAR HOME approaching on a long FLATBED, the OVERSIZE LOAD traveling slower than the other freeway traffic. Measuring, Ben turns, actually RUNNING back toward Risley and Mapes just to stay in position on the trellis.

Risley plants his feet to take aim, the train's motion carrying him right toward Ben. Ben's running at him, stumbling, running to stay in position as the modular home passes under the trellis. Risley's trigger: CLICK!

ANOTHER ANGLE:

Ben JUMPS off the train, falling, tumbling through the air, finally CRASHING down through the modular home's flimsy roof -

INT. MODULAR HOME (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

- Ben crashing down through drywall, punching through heavy plastic sheets to THUD on the floor inside the moving house.

EXT. TOP OF THE TRAIN (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Risley helplessly watches the house lumbering up the freeway.
He cop-memorizes the LICENSE PLATE on back of the flatbed.

RISLEY
(out of breath)
Change of plan.

INT. PREFAB HOME (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Coughing dust, Ben rolls on to his side, hurt, but alive.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. CENTURY FREEWAY - MINUTES LATER

An LAPD BLACK & WHITE slaloms through traffic at 90 MPH,
sliding in behind the flatbed carrying the PREFAB HOUSE.

INT. PETERBILT SEMI-TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Siren WAILS and the TRUCKER checks his side-view mirror.

IN THE SIDE-VIEW MIRROR:

An LAPD Black & White offset behind the truck, flashing its
TAKEDOWN LIGHTS.

TRUCKER
Shit.

EXT. CENTURY FREEWAY - CONTINUOUS

The lumbering flatbed tractor trailer pulls slowly to the
shoulder of the freeway. The Black & White slides in behind.

INT. PREFAB HOME - CONTINUOUS

Ben stirs, opens his eyes, realizing the truck has STOPPED.
Ben scrambles for the door, puts his shoulder to it, FORCING
the door open.

EXT. PREFAB HOME - CONTINUOUS

Ben lurches out through the door, falling to his hands and
knees on the shoulder of the freeway. He scrambles to his
feet, only to be BLINDED by the BEAM of a STREAMLIGHT shone
right into his face. Ben squints at the two COPS approaching
him, their guns drawn.

*Ben looks like a madman. His uniform is unrecognizable, torn, singed and bloodstained. His face is still covered in black spraypaint - streaked with vertical rivulets of sweat.

RISLEY (O.S.)
STOP! Lace your fingers behind your head.

Ben begins to comply, then recognizes the voice.

RISLEY (CONT'D)
Do it NOW!

BEN
How about you go fuck yourself?

Risley raises the TASER, laser-target dots dancing on Ben's chest. Risley FIRES. Twin darts THUNKING into Ben's chest. BZZT! Blue lightning actually ARCS between the Tasers wires. And Ben goes down, his body bucking and seizing.

ANOTHER ANGLE:

The trucker watches from the shoulder, rapt by this real-life episode of COPS. Mapes SWARMS Ben, wrenching Ben's arms behind him, his handcuffs BITING deep into Ben's wrists. Ben ROARS, twists, and kicks, but he's caught. Risley JUICES him again - BZZZT! - and Ben goes limp.

TRUCKER
Holy Jesus.

Mapes roughly hauling Ben to their black and white.

RISLEY
Yeah, well, the guy's on PCP, sir.
(smiling)
You're lucky we caught up with you.

INT. DARIUS' MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

LIVE FOOTAGE of what they're calling the 10th AVENUE RIOTS on Darius' projection television. Homes in flame.

Risley and Mapes drag Ben (handcuffed) into Darius' room, the way you'd bring a spy before a king.

Jax moves to intercept them.

DARIUS
What the fuck is this?

RISLEY
Yeah, turns out those drums were right, D. It was cops zapped Carcosa's taxman.
(prodding Ben with his gun)

RISLEY (CONT'D)
This is one of the fool's right
here. Other one's dogshit.

Ben & Darius face each other. Smiling in spite of themselves.

BEN
Yeah, I'd shake hands but ...

DARIUS
I heard you were dead.

BEN
Well, gimme a minute.

Risley's off-balance now, trying to catch up.

RISLEY
Hold up, D. You know this fool?

Darius ignores him.

DARIUS
Hell yeah, we used to be road dogs.
His daddy's my lawyer.

Ben reels a little, seeing the truth of it. The way it all
fits together. Risley and Mapes looking panicked. Priceless.

RISLEY
(to Ben)
Wait. Wait. Big Ben's your daddy?

BEN
Well, the results are in, Officer
Risley, and you're a fucking
genius. No wonder my dad used you.
(Off Risley)
He gave you the idea to take down
Carcosa's bank, right? Then lemme
guess, my dad holds the money. You
dipshit. You were dead the minute
you cut a deal with Big Ben.

MAPES
(nervous)
Cabe, let's get outta here, man.

RISLEY
In a minute, boo.

Risley comes across the carpet at Darius, his GUN up. Jax
moves to intervene, but Mapes SHOVES his .45 into Jax's
abdomen, stopping Jax mid-stride. A standoff. Risley grill to
grill with Darius, shoves his gun under Darius' chin.

RISLEY
Open the goddamned safe.

DARIUS
Not gonna happen.

Risley savagely pistol-whips Darius across the face. Darius goes down, then slowly gets up. With Mapes' gun pressed to his gut, Jax doesn't move, but there's murder in his eyes.

BEN

A chickenshit home invasion? Are you fucking kidding? What're you gonna do next, make a run for the border? You stole from Carcosa. You might as well kill yourself, you asshole. 'Cause you're done.

MAPES

Shut the fuck up!

Mapes take his eyes off Jax. Jax's arm moves like a striking cobra - an underhand THROW - the BOWIE KNIFE making one full rotation as slices through the air before sinking to the HILT in Risley's THIGH. Risley spins on Jax, raising his Glock -

BLAM!

Darius wheels toward the sound of the gunshot and sees Jax SLUMPED against the stereo, hugging himself where hollow-point round punched through his abdomen.

DARIUS

Daddy?

As Darius rushes to Jax, Risley PIVOTS, angling his pistol at Darius' back and BLAM! Darius drops like a marionette with all his strings cut.

Darius struggles to his hands and knees - a superhuman effort - with a mean-ass entry wound in his back that looks big enough to drive a toy train through.

Risley struggles to pull the knife out. Agony.

And Ben LUNGES, SLAMMING his shoulder into Mapes, FORCING Mapes against the wall. Ben's knees jerking up into Mapes groin. But Mapes instinctively blades his body (jiu-jitsu) and Ben's knees just glances off Mapes' wide hip.

Ben's all over the much bigger man, cheek-to-cheek with Mapes. With his hands cuffed behind him, Ben must draw on every resource. He's gone mad, rabid, savage to survive this. Ben cants his head, getting his teeth around Mapes nose, and CRUNCHES down through cartilage. Blood. Mapes yowling.

Risley finally YANKS the knife out, sinks to the floor YANKS a cord out of a LAMP and WINDS the cord tight around his bleeding thigh.

Mapes PISTOL coming up in Ben's peripheral vision, aimed at his head. Ben PUSHES off Mapes, DIVES over the sofa. BLAM! BLAM! Bullets punch holes in the wall behind Ben as he scrambles over the bed. BLAM!

Rolling off the bed as pillows EXPLODE in a flurry of wafting feathers - obscuring Mapes vision for a moment. Mapes fires to slide-lock.

Cornered. Ben curls on the opposite side of the bed, tucks his legs, bringing the handcuffs under his feet. Still cuffed, but at least now his hands are in front of him.

Mapes drops his empty mag on the carpet, slams a fresh one into the weapon. Ready to rock. Mapes steps around the bed, blood coming from his nose. The Glock aimed straight at Ben.

MAPES

Motherfucker. You're done.

Nowhere to go. Ben braces himself.

Mapes doesn't see Darius staggering behind him, doesn't see NAT TURNER'S SABER. Darius DRIVES the blade. *SHICK!*

And Mapes suddenly looks down with something like curiosity at the blood-slick BLADE sprouting from his sternum. *That shouldn't be there.* Then his eyes roll and he crumples forward on to the bed. Done indeed.

Darius DROPS the sword on the floor, unable to hold it anymore. Gasping, Darius leans against the wall and SINKS to his knees - eye level with Ben. The ghost of a smile.

With some effort, Risley regains his feet. He looks at Mapes' body, then at Darius and Ben.

Eerily calm, Risley pulls the iKlwa - King Shaka's sword - off the wall. Risley walks stiffly into the center of the room, holding the sword. He just stands there, eyeing Ben.

RISLEY

Well? You ready to do this?

Panting, Darius nods to the SABER there on the floor. Ben HEFTS his sword, finding a two-handed grip that works with his handcuffed wrists. Ben stands, facing Risley.

BEN

Okay, motherfucker. Okay. Let's go.

Risley bring his blade down hard, blade hissing. Ben sidesteps, parries, swings awkwardly at Risley's head. Risley ducks Ben's swing, driving his shoulder into Ben's chest, knocking the wind out of Ben, and toppling Ben off his feet.

Risley stabs down at Ben as he falls, his blade sticking into the floor just as Ben rolls away. Risley yanks his sword up out of the floor, slicing Ben across his shoulders as he scrambles to his feet.

Ben cries out, staggers against the wall. Ben pulls a tall BOOKSHELF crashing down in Risley's path. Risley comes over the bookshelf, bringing his sword down on Ben.

Ben raises his blade to meet Risley's. CLANG. Ben and Risley leaning drunkenly into each other - their blades locked - shifting their footing, nose to nose.

Ben shifts his weight suddenly, Ben's ELBOW-STRIKE catching Risley under his eye. Risley pirouettes, the iKlwa coming around to slice deeply into Ben's side.

BEN (CONT'D)

Arrgh!

Ben's sword spins out of his grip and falls to the floor as Ben stumbles out on to the marble landing. Ben trying desperately to regain his feet, slipping in his own blood.

Risley limps through the doorway, sees Ben panting there on his knees with his cuffed hands in his lap. Ben looks exhausted, utterly defeated awaiting his execution.

Risley smiles as he moves across the landing to stand over Ben. Triumphant, Risley raises the sword high over his head.

RISLEY

Any last words, mayonnaise?

Risley's standing on the X of blue duct tape.

And perched like a gargoyle on the ottoman behind him, the JAGUAR lowers its head, churning its shoulders in anticipation.

BEN

Ulaga.

Risley's eyes widen and he WHIRLS around, warding his sword up too late. The jaguar practically explodes from the ottoman. Risley's SCREAM instantly silenced by the MASSIVE IMPACT of the cat's pounce - Risley's body folds sickeningly. Risley's useless sword clatters on the floor as the big cat lands astride him, claws kneading Risley's chest.

Ben struggles back to his feet, keeping his back against the wall to stay out of the creature's reach as Ben picks his way back to the bedroom. The jaguar GROWLS at Ben, jubilant as its jaws close over Risley's throat. Risley's limps flop weakly, no fight left in him now.

Risley's eyes roll to Ben, blood bubbling from Risley's nostrils. He's trying to speak, but Risley only gurgles as the jaguar backpedals, dragging Risley to the ottoman.

INT. DARIUS' MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ben staggers into the bedroom, falling to his knees when he finds the two of them together.

Darius has crawled to where Jax slumps against the stereo. Darius now hugging Jax's neck, his shoulders shaking.

He sobs, nuzzling Jax's cheek. Their commingled blood soaking the carpet. Jax's eyes unfocused now, far away.

DARIUS	JAX
Daddy. Please don't leave me.	(whispering)
	Don't you ever let me see you
	cry like a bitch, <i>bwoy</i> . Get
	mad. Get-

Jax voice trails off, head slumping to his chest. Darius hugs him, crying into Jax's still chest until his hands fall away and Darius sags into Jax and they die in bloody *Pieta*.

INT. DARIUS WASHINGTON'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Ben limps down the stairs.

EXT. DARIUS WASHINGTON'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Limps out to the veranda, where there is a spectacular view of the Los Angeles Basin.

AND SOUTH LOS ANGELES IS ON FIRE.

The apocalypse strangely beautiful. Ash flakes waft down to float on the surface. Orange flames reflected on the water As Ben steps into the pool, up to his chest - the soot and blood lifting away from him in the water, dissolving like smoke.

Ben finally DUNKS his head under the cool water, closing his eyes like a man being baptized. Purified.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. FOREST LAWN CEMETARY - A WEEK LATER

An LAPD Funeral. The pipe bands plays the procession - proud retirees in feathered caps and kilts, playing mournful bagpipes as they head up the winding road to his plot. They're followed by his hearse, a limo for the family, another for the Mayor and The Chief. And here comes a squadron of Black & Whites, all their light bars flashing.

MOTOR COPS on big LAPD Harleys and the MOUNTED UNIT on horseback. The rest of US march in formation, a river of dark blue wool; all in Class A dress blues - long sleeves and ties, caps. Every spit-shined boot hits the deck in rough unison - two hundred badges catching the light.

MARQUEZ'S GRAVE

The LAPD HONOR GUARD stands with ceremonial rifles at port-arms. LAPD's brass: The CHIEF, DEPUTY CHIEFS (including Beachamp), ASSISTANT CHIEFS, COMMANDERS and CAPTAINS all stand at attention behind Marquez's flag-draped coffin.

At the podium, Lt. Vintner speaks.

LT. VINTNER

Miguel Marquez came up hard right here in Rampart Division. When I met him he was just a kid playing soccer Macarthur Park. 18th Street controlled the park then, but they didn't want him. Because Miguel was too damned crazy for them.

Knowing laughter and some tears from a sea of blue.

LT. VINTNER (CONT'D)

But hell we like 'em crazy, at least we did back then. So we took Miguelito into fellowship, into our family.

Ben stands at attention, we follow his eyes to ...

MARQUEZ'S PARENTS

Marquez's MOTHER is a handsome, sturdy Mixtec woman in a black dress and black veil. A Rosary moving through her fingers throughout the service. Marquez's FATHER has Marquez's same Easter Island brow, same masonry cheekbones, the same prideful eyes. Black cowboy boots. Black suit.

Vintner slipping into revival-tent mode.

LT. VINTNER (CONT'D)

Courage is pleasing to the Lord and, brothers and sisters, Miguel had more natural courage in him than any man I know. Retrograde? Yes. Recalcitrant? Yes. Rough? Oh, hell yes. The man never donned a pair of kid gloves in his career.

More laughter. Applause. Beachamp looks abashed, ashamed.

LT. VINTNER (CONT'D)

It's no secret we didn't always see eye to eye, but I always respected Officer Marquez, always will.

(beat)

Vaya con Dios, brother.

Ben watches a formation of LAPD helicopters soar over the ceremony. Now, one chopper peels away - the Missing Man.

A mariachi band softly plays *Mision Cumplida de Mi Padre* as the flag over Marquez's coffin is folded into a neat triangular parcel. The Chief presents the flag to Marquez's mother. A 21-gun salute as Marquez's coffin is lowered into the earth.

Now, crazed with grief and guilt, Marquez's father charges the grave, falling to his knees. Ben can only watch as the man TEARS up the grass, POUNDS his fist, HOWLING in anguish.

EXT. MARQUEZ'S GRAVE - LATER

Ben lingers while the crowd thins, breaking up to wander back down the slope overlooking the San Fernando Valley.

Alone at Marquez's grave, Ben places a smooth river rock on Marquez's headstone. Quietly, clearly, Ben says *Kaddish*.

BEN

(flawless Hebrew)

*Yis'ga'dal v'yish'kadash sh'may
ra'bbo, b'olmo dee'vro chir'usay
v'yamlich malchu'say, b'chayaychon
uv'yomay'chon uv'chayay d'chol bias
Yisroel, ba'agolo u'viz'man koriv;
v'imru Omein.*

Big Ben sidles over to stand behind his son Ben. Big Ben's head bowed in respect, or perhaps in a sarcastic pantomime of mourning. Big Ben speaks the part of the congregation.

BIG BEN

*Omein. Y'hay shmay rabbo m'vrorach
l'olam ul'olmay olmayo.*

Hearing his father's voice, Ben pauses, closes his eyes.

SMASH TO:

INT. MACARTHUR PALMS HOTEL - NIGHT

Last Night ...

The hotel's Grand Ballroom packed, overrun with big ballers and shot callers from every barrio south of the Kern River.

PRELAPPING:

BEN (V.O.)

*Y'isborach v'yishtabach
v'yispoar v'yisroman
v'yismasay, v'yishador
v'yis'aleh v'yisalal, shmay
d'kudsho.*

BIG BEN (V.O.)

B'rikh uh.

As Ben stalks through a sea of LATINO GANGSTERS, heading straight for the courtyard. Waters part for Ben, the way they once did for Marquez. As if everyone can smell death on him. Even the worst want no part of this new Ben. Gangsters having an instinctive respect for any battle-tested warrior.

EXT. COURTYARD MACARTHUR PALMS HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Ben walks into bloodthirsty roar. Temporary bleachers packed for the cockfights. Fighting cocks slash and peck each other. The birds crashing breast against breast with a dull thud.

CARCOSA

The unquestioned Master of the Universe sits on a raised dais with a beautiful WOMAN on his arm. BODYGUARDS around him. As Ben draws closer, Carcosa's bodyguards reach into their suit jackets. But Carcosa recognizes Ben and waves his bodyguards off the dais. Carcosa cheerfully beckons Ben to the seat next to him on the dais - opposite the girl.

CARCOSA Gameness, Benji. You see the cock does not fight over a hen, does not fight over territory. He fights because it is in him to fight, because 'fuck you I don't like your face' is why he fights.	BEN My dad calls that <i>chutzpah</i>.
--	--

All around them, gamblers shout across the bleachers, waving bills in their fists. Signalling odds. The odds men scratching house figures on a chalkboard.

CARCOSA

Claro. Your father is game, Benji. He does not fight for money or pussy. Not for headlines. Your father fights because he has fuck you in his soul.

(beat)

You father could not stop even when his life depended on it. I'm sorry, but there's no help for him now.

Ben understands Carcosa has sentenced Ben's father to death, but his face betrays nothing. Carcosa uncaps a bottle of *Patron*, fills two shot glasses, lifts one, Ben the other.

CARCOSA (CONT'D) <i>Salud</i>.	BEN <i>L'chaim</i>.
--	-----------------------------------

They drink together.

CARCOSA (CONT'D) What's on your mind, Benji?	BEN I came to tell you I'm through. I'm not working for you anymore.
--	--

The COCKERS sweep up their bloody birds. One of the cockers actually licks the blood from his bird's eyes - the bird's head pecked down to the skull in places.

CARCOSA

BEN

I see. Knocked from our horse on the road to Damascus, were we?

The cocker blows up the bird's neck in an attempt to revive it, rippling its blood-glossed feathers. Then he works his thumb into the bird's beak, gives the bird mouth to mouth.

CARCOSA (CONT'D)

Listen to me, *joven*. When I had to put you in a car with this man Marquez, I'll admit I was concerned for you. He had big Mexican balls, that *charro*.

(Carcosa crosses himself)

But I knew my Benji was too smart
to fall in love.

(beat)

Was I wrong?

And now the cocker puts the bird's entire head inside his mouth, puffing his cheeks like Dizzy Gillespie to force air into his bird. With each breath, the bird's limp body swells like a bellows.

CARCOSA (CONT'D)

Did you fall in love, Benji?

BEN

(dry)

I guess 'I have chosen to stay and fight.'

The cocker gives up, discretely twists the bird's head off.

CARCOSA

Fight? Please. Fight for what, *mijo*? I am very concerned for you, Benji. You're not yourself.

BEN

You shouldn't have sent me down there, Joe. But you did. And I can't unsee it what I've seen.

CARCOSA

Please, you don't know what you've
seen, Joven.

(beat)

You see this lovely girl beside me?
It's alright, Benji. She is *muy*
paisa, this girl. Speaks no
English. Not a word.

Ben leans forward to surreptitiously take in the girl. She's very young and very beautiful. Carcosa rests a proprietary hand on the girl's tan thigh. Her smile almost imperceptible.

CARCOSA (CONT'D)

Her husband washes dishes at the Jonathan Club and he loves his wife beyond reason. And yet here she sits ... because no one has told him the secret I tell you now.

The next bout begins: Another pair of birds leaping, slashing, pecking each other to death - their spilled blood Jackon-Pollocking the dirt pit.

CARCOSA (CONT'D)

Benji, love is just a lie we tell our children because fucking is ugly.

As he speaks, Carcosa caresses the girl's cheek. She lowers her eyes coquettishly. Oblivious to their conversation.

CARCOSA (CONT'D)

And if she moans for you, be assured she will moan still louder for another. Scream for him as you have never heard her scream.

(Off Ben)

So please, do not fall in love, *mijo*. The world is older, uglier than you suppose. There are no countries, just as there are no marriages. The United States, the War on Drugs, the LAPD - all just lies we tell to spare ourselves the ugliness of fucking.

(beat)

Do you know what you do after you fall off that horse on the Road to Damascus? *You get right back on that chingada horse and ride.*

BEN

Look, I came to give you fair warning. I owe you that much.

CARCOSA

He came to give me fair warning.

Ben gets up to leave, turns back.

BEN

Tell me something. How many heads do you have inside the department?

CARCOSA

Oh, *bastante*. Jesus, more than enough. How do you think I got you past backgrounds? Membership has its privileges, Benji.

BEN

Then why? For Christ's sake, Joe.
Why me?

CARCOSA

After the bank, I asked myself, who in this town would have the *chutzpah* to move against me? Not those *mayates*. Not the Russians. And certainly not the cops.

(considering)

Of course, I could have killed him outright. Were I a younger man I would have killed him, on suspicion alone. But I am not a young man, and I suspected, yes, but I didn't know.

(beat)

I thought there was a certain poetry in this, in you. Like scripture. Who better to bring the man down than his own blood, his prodigal son?

Ben considers this. Digs something out of his back pocket. This guards surrounding them draw their weapons - laser sights finding Ben's chest and head. Carcosa waves them off.

BEN

This is yours.

Ben hands Carcosa Wizard's ledger.

BEN (CONT'D)

Wizard was skimming from you.

CARCOSA

Bullshit.

BEN

See for yourself.

Carcosa thumbs through it, fingers carefully tracing numbered columns, swift calculations.

BEN (CONT'D)

You're organization's been rotting from the inside, Joe. Right under your nose. You've lost control.

Off Carcosa, the barest glimmer of doubt in his eyes.

EXT. MACARTHUR PALMS HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Palms CLACKING dryly over Macarthur Park as Ben steps out on to Park View Boulevard and into the passenger seat of the waiting plain-wrap CROWN VICTORIA.

BIG BEN
What's the charge?

BEN
Racketeering. Conspiracy. Robbery.
Conspiracy to commit murder.

BIG BEN
Yeah, well, good luck with that.
This is what I do, remember? Turns
out you need evidence to convict.
(to Ben)
Who's going to testify?

BEN
Get Some swore out a statement.
(beat)
So did I.

Father and son lock eyes.

BEN (CONT'D)
Carcosa knows, Dad.
(Off Big Ben)
On the street, you're dead by the
end of the week. You're going to
prison. Maybe WITSEC. But this way,
this way at least you have a chance
to live, you son of a bitch.

And Big Ben understands.

CHUIN
*You have the right to remain
silent. Do you understand?*

One of the plainclothes detectives approaches Big Ben with
his handcuffs.

BIG BEN
No.
(nodding to his son)
Let him do it.

The detective hesitates. Chuin nods approval.

Ben takes the cuffs, steps forward to face his father. Big
Ben offers Ben his upturned wrists. A moment. Ben handcuffs
his father. Their eyes meet over the cuffs. Big Ben beams at
Ben. He's both broken and redeemed by his son. Bitterly,
tenderly proud of the man his Benji's become.

BIG BEN (CONT'D)
Me too, kiddo. With all my heart.

And we pull up and away. Across a sea of headstones.

THE END