

*THE LAST*  
**ACTION HERO**

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FADE IN:

A SEA OF LIGHTS

Flashing blue. Flashing red.  
The BUBBLE LIGHTS of FIFTY L.A.P.D. patrol cars,  
BUMPER TO BUMPER. Filling the street.

COPS run every which way. Padded vests. Kevlar body armor.  
SWAT TEAMS in military fatigues. From the expression on faces,  
we get the idea there's some SERIOUS SHIT HERE –  
centered on the roof of an ELEMENTARY SCHOOL,

A POLICE LIEUTENANT shivers in his trench coat: this is DEKKER.  
Black.Tough. Not only eats nails for breakfast, but likes them...

POLICE LIEUTENANT DEKKER  
Helluva way to spend Christmas.

Turns to a nearby ROOKIE:

DEKKER  
Secure the sidewalks. No one in or out.

He's cut off as a BURST OF GUNFIRE STRAFES the cars.  
Glass shatters. Cops dive for cover.  
The gunfire abruptly CEASES -- bits of shrapnel PINGING to the ground –  
and a VOICE issues from the roof:

VOICE  
HO HO HO, GOT A PRESENT FOR YOU, PIGS!

A semi-automatic rifle sails over the edge of the roof.  
Clatters to the ground. It's followed by the corpse of a SWAT SNIPER.  
It lands on the roof of a police car. The windows blow out.  
Flying glass cuts faces of policemen around the car.

VOICE  
I WARNED YOU, NO CUTE STUFF.  
(beat)  
NOW BRING ME MY HELICOPTER--OR I START  
THROWING KIDS NEXT!!!!

DEKKER, staring up at the roof. Face contorted in rage.

DEKKER  
Let the children go!! Goddamn you, Ripper!

Silence meets his request. A ROOKIE COP steps up to him.

ROOKIE  
Perimeter's secure, sir. An armored division  
couldn't get thru it--

CUT TO BOOTED FEET

Trudging forward, relentless, powerful. They aren't walking on pavement. There's no sidewalk beneath the boots. They're walking on police cars.

A lone figure strides ACROSS ROOFS, wading thru a SEA OF FLASHING LIGHT like a juggernaut. Dressed casually in a bomber jacket and jeans. T-shirt with a slight tear near the shoulder. Cigar. Three-day stubble. A .44 Ruger Blackhawk, the BIGGEST GUN EVER MADE, perches in his hand like an old friend.

SERGEANT JACK SLATER is in a bad mood tonight.

EXT. POLICE BARRICADES - SAME

SLATER steps from the hood of a patrol car. Heads for the barricades, never breaking stride. DEKKER glares at SLATER, moves alongside...

DEKKER

Don't even think it, Slater. You hear me? You're gonna sit and wait for the real hostage negotiator.

SLATER keeps walking, eyes front.

DEKKER

Goddammit, Jack, I am TALKING to you. Last time you pulled this shit, people lost body parts!

SLATER walks.

DEKKER

If you go in there it's your BADGE!

SLATER takes out his badge, throws it at DEKKER, keeps on walking. DEKKER stops, watches as

TWO EXTREMELY WELL-DRESSED MEN move into SLATER's path...

SLATER

(not stopping)

It would be best for everybody if you got out of my way --

THE MAYOR

(moving backwards as he talks)

Jack -- I know as Mayor of this great metropolis, you and I have had the occasional little tiff --

(backwards)

-- but this is the Lieutenant Governor -- he's flown in personally to monitor the situation -

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR  
 -- SLATER -- here's what I think --

SLATER SOCKS HIM. The guy goes over backwards.

SLATER  
 When the Governor gets here, call me.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - FIRST FLOOR - SAME

A SWAT COP stands at the base of the stairs. Listens to his walkie-talkie:

VOICE ON WALKIE-TALKIE  
 (Dekker's)  
 Slater is attempting to enter. Do not let him in.  
 Repeat, DO NOT LET HIM IN.

SWAT COP  
 Piece of cake.

A FINGER taps the SWAT cop on the shoulder:

SLATER  
 Hey. You wanna be a farmer?

The guy spins, alarmed --

SLATER  
 Here's two achers.

SLATER kicks him in the crotch.  
 From behind, we see the guy pop THREE FEET IN THE AIR.  
 He comes down, bam -- ! Wonders what those things in his mouth are.  
 SLATER CATCHES the walkie-talkie. Speaks into it--

SLATER  
 Dekker -- The next one, I'll hurt.

He crushes the instrument in his fist. Drops it. Walks.

Up the stairs. Past BODIES. Teachers. Janitors. Flung like rag dolls.  
 SLATER seems not to notice. Loads his gun. Chambers a slug, KA CHUCK!

EXT. ROOFTOP OVERLOOKING CITY - NIGHT

The door FLIES FROM ITS HINGES -- SLATER stands like a judgment from God.

We can't see the villain he's facing... but we do see a FIRE AXE clutched in the guy's hand. It enters frame in the foreground. Suddenly. Shockingly.

POV SLATER: Huddled in a corner, a dozen frightened 5th graders.

Presiding over his hostages, a feral madman in a TELEPHONE LINEMAN'S outfit. Complete with plastic helmet. THE RIPPER, arch-nemesis of tough cop, JACK SLATER.

Right now, he's pressing the axe against a BOY'S THROAT...

YOUNG BOY

Dad...!

The hostage is SLATER's son.

Big mistake.

RIPPER

(he speaks with a slight,  
but unmistakable lisp. If  
no one called Siegel  
"Bugsy" you don't chat up  
the RIPPER about speech  
impediments)

Jack, what kept you --  
(to the boy)

Andy here's been getting worried. I promised  
him you'd come -- I gave my word of honor he  
could watch you die.

(beat)

Lose the cannon.

SLATER'S face is a mask of stone.

SLATER

Has he hurt you, Andrew?

THE BOY, terrified, shakes his head.

RIPPER

Can't say the same about you, though, can I,  
Jackie boy? -- YOU PUT ME IN A CAGE. They  
threw away the key for ten years.

SLATER

You should have gotten the death penalty.

RIPPER

Yes. I should've. Except your illegal search  
rendered the blood stained axe inadmissible,  
remember?

(beat)

Lose the gun.

He presses the axe to the kid's throat. A pause -- SLATER drops the gun.

SLATER

All right, I'm unarmed. Now let the boy go.

RIPPER

One weapon, Jack? Who you kidding?

SLATER shrugs. Lifts his shirt. Three more guns, tucked in his waistband. He loses them. A DAGGER, taped to his calf, joins the guns.

RIPPER

Is that all, sport... ?

SLATER

Yup. That about does it, except for, well...

(beat)

Unless you call this a weapon.

With that, he fishes out a GRENADE.

Pulls the pin and casually tosses it to the madman's feet.

Sits there, as time stands still. The killer eyes SLATER speculatively -- and applauds...

RIPPER

Brilliant. I surrender.

SLATER shrugs. Says calmly:

SLATER

That's a live grenade.

RIPPER

(shakes his head)

You wouldn't kill your own son. But let's find out.

The killer locks eyes with SLATER. Says:

RIPPER

Andy...pick up the grenade. Have a close look, why don't you?

Scared, Andrew does. Holds it up so the killer can see. Fairly convincing -- but a dummy nonetheless.

RIPPER

Your toy can't hurt the kid.

(beat -- raising his axe)

But mine can --

At which point, Andrew touches a STUD on the bogus grenade -- A three-inch BLADE shoots out with a sharp SHHICK!

The kid PLANTS IT IN THE RIPPER'S LEG.

The killer HOWLS in pain.  
 SLATER sees his chance -- dives for the big .44.  
 THE RIPPER THROWS his axe --  
 It whooooooshes not two inches over SLATER.

Andrew makes a break for it, but THE RIPPER GRABS him by the arm.  
 Yanks the grenade KNIFE from his own leg --  
 SLATER raises the gun --  
 THE RIPPER brings the knife down toward the kid's heart --  
 SLATER TAKES HIS SHOT, BLAM -- !

At which point, friends and neighbors,  
 the film, for no reason whatsoever, goes completely OUT OF FOCUS.  
 This doesn't stop the ACTION, you understand. Because even though  
 we CAN'T SEE what's happening, we can HEAR it.  
 Shots. Screams. Pounding music. Surely the best  
 action sequence we've never seen.

Suddenly, a VOICE shouts "Focus!"

And lo and behold, we slowly PULL BACK...  
 to realize that we've been watching a MOVIE WITHIN A MOVIE.

INT. NEW YORK MOTION PICTURE PALACE

Welcome to the PANDORA THEATRE. 42nd Street west of Broadway. Once  
 glorious, long since faded. Of 850 torn seats,  
 maybe ten contain people. Mostly SLEEPING as...

IN THE TENTH ROW, thirteen-year-old DANNY MADIGAN looks on.  
 Frustrated. Annoyed. No one messes with his Action Movies.  
 He glares up at the projection booth. Taps his foot.

DANNY  
 Come on... FOCUS!

GROGGY WINO  
 Hey, where your manners, kid? --people are  
 trying to sleep!

CUT TO

THE LOBBY OF THE PANDORA as DANNY hurries out of the dark theater.

And now we can see him. Here's what he doesn't know:  
 that in not too many years, he's going to be a terrific young man.  
 With friends and admirers and schools chasing after him, girls too.  
 Here's what he knows now: that weird things are going on with his body,  
 that he's scared all the time, that he's friendless and thin and poor.

Here's what he fears most: that nothing is ever going to change.

The ticket-taking popcorn seller is half asleep. Opens his eyes briefly,

but could care less. DANNY dashes up the stairs toward the balcony...

IN THE PROJECTION ROOM,  
NICK THE PROJECTIONIST has also dozed off.  
He won't see seventy again but there's a kindness in his face.  
And strength -- he must have been something in his prime.

DANNY  
(OVER)  
Nick? -- Nick, you o.k.?

NICK blinks as DANNY rushes in.

DANNY  
The climax is on the fritz.

NICK stares out the little hole, makes a quick adjustment --

ON THE SCREEN. Credits are rolling.

NICK  
(embarrassed)  
I never used to do that, Danny.

DANNY  
It's o.k., I've seen this Slater six times. I just  
got worried.

CUT TO

NICK. Sweet smile.  
These two both love movies and they like each other a lot..

And this projection booth is different -- not a movie poster in sight ---  
Instead, POSTERS OF MAGICIANS -- old ones. Thurston is coming, Houdini too  
and all the giants stare down from the walls -- Merlin Jr., Corky Withers,  
Blackstone and Hermann and Kellar and Leipzig -- legends all.

NICK  
(looking at the KID)  
You o.k.?  
(DANNY nods -- NICK takes  
his hand --)

CUT TO

THE KNUCKLES. Raw.

NICK  
Another scrape?



DANNY

I'm just so tired of getting robbed -- I feel like I'm walking around with a "please mug me" sign on my back.

NICK

It's just a phase.

DANNY

O.k., fine -- but why am I the only one going through it?

CLOSE: NICK. He speaks confidently...

NICK

I can make you smile...The new Slater's opening at the Astor Friday.

DANNY

Oh, like I didn't know that -- "They killed his Second Cousin -- Big Mistake." Jack Slater IV.

NICK

I have to check the print tonight.  
Midnight. Just me.

(casual)

I can arrange for you to gain admittance, if that kind of thing has any interest for you.

DANNY'S wild --

DANNY

Are you serious? -- See it before it opens?

(beat)

-- who do I have to kill?

NICK

(glancing at his watch)

Get to school now -- if you hurry you'll only be four hours late.

(As they exchange salutes)

INT. PANDORA LOBBY - SAME

On the way out, DANNY passes a STANDEE for Jack Slater IV. A three-foot Arnold in an action pose. Also featured is a GIRL, about 16 and achingly beautiful. Beside her the words: AND INTRODUCING MEREDITH CAPRICE. DANNY stares longingly. Sighs.

EXT. PANDORA THEATRE - 42ND STREET - DAY

A sign proclaims: COMING SOON - MANN'S MULTI-PLEX 18!  
Along with a construction company logo.

DANNY pauses. Surveys the sagging old movie house.  
Shakes his head sadly, and heads for the subway.  
Thru a gauntlet of dealers, junkies, and hookers.

INT. P.S. 75 - HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Class is well underway. Without DANNY. A young, bearded, energetic  
TEACHER lectures on Hamlet.

TEACHER

Ghosts! Sword fights! Sex! And everybody dies!  
Shakespeare's Hamlet couldn't be more  
exciting!

The kids in this class remain unconvinced.

DANNY slips into the room. Sits alone in the rear. Quickly opens his notebook.  
No one pays any attention. He might as well not be there.

TEACHER

Despite his inability to act, Hamlet is still an  
inspiration. You might call him one of the first  
action heroes.

(the students yawn)

But I think you'll see all this in the clip, so why  
don't we just roll it.

DANNY perks up. The lights go down.

TEACHER

This is the Laurence Olivier version. Some of  
you might remember him as Zeus in Clash of  
the Titans.

The clip from Hamlet begins rolling. On the classroom screen, CLAUDIUS  
kneels before the altar....

CLAUDIUS

What if this cursed hand were thicker than  
itself with brothers' blood? Is there not rain  
enough in the sweet heavens to wash it white  
as snow?

Sir Laurence, as HAMLET, steals into the chapel. DANNY sits up, rapt. What will  
Hamlet do?

HAMLET

Now might I do it pat, now 'e is a prayin', and  
so he goes to heaven. And so am I revenged.

DANNY grows frustrated, disappointed.

HAMLET

A villain kills my father, and for that, I, his sole son, do the same villain send to heaven.

DANNY

(sotto)  
Don't talk, DO IT.

Back in ELSINORE, Claudius still prays at the altar. Hamlet steals up behind him.

Hamlet, however, looks a little different. He's still got the black turtleneck, the gold medallion, but his BACK, his SHOULDERS... they're huge.

The Prince emerges from the darkness, and hey, this isn't Laurence Olivier... it's Jack Slater. And he looks pissed.

SLATER

Claudius. You killed my father.

The deep-voiced announcer from the trailer kicks in:

DEEP BASS ANNOUNCER

SOMETHING IS ROTTEN IN THE STATE OF DENMARK...

SLATER HOISTS Claudius OFF THE GROUND.

SLATER

Big mistake.

DEEP BASS ANNOUNCER

AND HAMLET IS TAKING OUT THE TRASH!!

SLATER chucks Claudius out the STAINED-GLASS WINDOW. Colored shards follow him down to the raging waters below.

MONTAGE--

JACK SLATER's theme BLASTS as we see shots of SLATER, still with the turtleneck and medallion.

Running through the brooding, moody castle of Elsinore. UZIS spitting in both hands as GUARDS fall right and left.

Brooding in the graveyard with Yorick's SKULL, then spinning around – throwing it with deadly accuracy. THUNK! The skull's teeth IMBED in the guard's head. Taking him out.

SLATER

Heads up.

Rising in slow-mo from the MOAT, Rambo-style, shooting up, THROUGH the drawbridge, faking out more guards.

Yanking back a curtain to reveal POLONIUS.

POLONIUS

Stay thy hand, fair Prince. The lovely Ophelia is even now our captive. Should you exact thy vengeance, the maiden shall unto you be delivered, portion by bloody portion.

SLATER thinks it over.

SLATER

Who said I'm fair?

He BLOWS Polonius away.

DEEP BASS ANNOUNCER

NO ONE'S GONNA TELL THIS SWEET PRINCE, "GOODNIGHT."

SLATER stands outside, the castle Elsinore behind him.

SLATER

To be, or not to be?

He takes out a cigar. Puts it between his lips. Flips open his Zippo.

SLATER

Not to be.

And as he flicks his lighter, the castle explodes into a cloud of fire. Splinters. Pieces fly -

--and suddenly we're back in class. DANNY stares at the screen. The lulling whirr of the projector mixes with the glorious sound of OLIVIER.

DANNY sighs...

CUT TO

DANNY'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON.

DANNY'S MOM, IRENE MADIGAN squeezes into a pair of worn flats. Forty-ish, attractive once, she's now a tired waitress getting ready for work. DANNY is watching TV. She studies him--

--no question, she's worried about the boy. The phone doesn't ring for him. There's no money and she's just a good woman trying her best. She crosses to him...

DANNY'S MOM

Zip me and regale me with your life story starting 8:30 AM, first period American History and make it good. Like something along the lines of, Ma, I cut so I could donate a kidney.

(He zips her, but offers no explanation)

You were at the movies again, weren't you?  
And that crazy old man is an accessory!

DANNY

Nick's not crazy!

She sinks down in a chair, out of steam. He feels terrible.

DANNY

Sorry.

DANNY'S MOM

(grimly)

I know it's hard, coming here, leaving your friends. But what was I going to do in Green Castle, Pennsylvania after your father died? Pick green beans at fifty cents an hour? I didn't plan it, Danny. I didn't plan to be a widow by forty.

DANNY

I know that.

DANNY'S MOM

Hug me.

DANNY

(hugs her)

I won't cut again.

DANNY'S MOM

Let me hear the P word.

DANNY

Promise.

DANNY'S MOM

Listen, I've gotta work double shifts this week --

DANNY

When I get a little older, I'll do that too.

DANNY'S MOM

Not while I'm around, kiddo -- I'm looking at a college man. But -- Friday night I'm off -- maybe me and you and your friends could hit a flick --

(he gives her a look--)

-- o.k., just the two of us then. How about seeing a good foreign film, like Seventh Seal.

DANNY

Mom, I like ACTION movies.

DANNY'S MOM

So this has Death in it. He wears a big hood.

DANNY

A big hood?? My God, let's go!

DANNY'S MOM

I'm telling you, you'd like this--people kicking off all over the place.

DANNY

I heard he sits around and plays chess.

DANNY'S MOM

So? Between slaughters, he relaxes a little.

DANNY

(he has to smile)

Keep trying, Mom.

(As she kisses him on the forehead -- )

CUT TO

DANNY, ALONE. NIGHT NOW. He halfheartedly does homework as he watches TV. (The apartment is small, one bedroom. DANNY sleeps on the couch.)

He works the clicker, is changing channels idly...

He eyes the clock: 11:05.

He thinks about it.

Tries to go back to his homework.

That lasts maybe five seconds.

He looks up again. Knows he shouldn't but --

Bang, he closes the book, jams on his sneakers, snatches his coat, fishes out his keys, undoes the police lock and starts to open the door --

There's a guy passing in the hallway.

DANNY steps back, pushing the door closed.  
 Waits a couple of beats for the hall to clear.  
 Then slips out and turns to put his key in the dead bolt--

AND SUDDENLY HE'S SLAMMED FROM BEHIND,  
 BASHED BACK INTO THE APARTMENT AND PINNED AGAINST THE WALL!

The guy passing by...turned out to be a --

PUNK  
 (with a switchblade)  
 Tell me a lie, I take an eye. You alone?

DANNY nods. Frightened.

PUNK  
 O.k., the bathroom. Move it.

The Punk rams him across the apartment and into the bathroom.  
 Tosses him a pair of handcuffs --

PUNK  
 Do yourself to the drain.

DANNY  
 You gonna rob us?

PUNK  
 Ohh, there's an idea.

DANNY fingers the handcuffs. He's scared, humiliated.  
And filled with rage.  
 He locks eyes with the Punk.

PUNK  
 (apologetic)  
 Hey, don't get upset, I didn't realize I was in  
 the ring with such a tough guy.

He takes his switchblade and puts it on the sink...

PUNK  
 Your move.

DANNY hesitates, does nothing.

PUNK  
 I'll make it easier for you.

He turns his back.

DANNY's so torn. He wants to be brave but he can't. It's risky. It's stupid.  
 Tears of frustration well, making it all worse.

THE PUNK turns, eyeing DANNY...

PUNK

You'll never forget that. As long as you live.  
(And as he grabs his  
switchblade -- )

TIME CUT - MINUTES LATER

The PUNK re-enters the bathroom. DANNY's handcuffed under the sink.

PUNK

What is it with you?! You got junk! No jewelry,  
VCR. A shit TV that'll get me ten bucks! Shit!

Takes out the handcuff key. Drops it in the toilet.

PUNK

Go fish, amigo.

He exits. DANNY fights tears. HOLD...

CUT TO

INT. 87TH PRECINCT - MUSTER ROOM - NIGHT

A study in gloom. The MUSTER CLERK slumps at his desk, talking on the phone.  
A one-finger typist in the background. Peck. Peck.  
DANNY sits with an ELDERLY DETECTIVE who is finishing his report.

DANNY darts an anxious look at the WALL CLOCK: 11:52.  
He holds the handcuff key in one hand, then pockets it.

DETECTIVE

Remember now -- your mom says you go  
straight home -- she'll be there when the shift's  
over.

DANNY

Yessir.

DETECTIVE

Can you get home o.k.?

(DANNY nods)

Been mugged before?

(nod)

My kids have too. It's the world,  
If we find the guy, I'll call.

DANNY

But you're not gonna find him, are you?



DETECTIVE  
 We do what we can.  
 (Meaning "no" As he and  
 DANNY rise -- )

CUT TO

TIMES SQUARE. NIGHT. Raining. Scary.

DANNY sprints along.

THE PANDORA...  
 looks just as crummy as before. Crummier, maybe.

DANNY wheezes up to the front. Soaked.  
 Tries the door. Locked. Damn.

THE GIRL in the ticket kiosk is closing out, says without particular interest:

GIRL  
 ...you looking for Nick.

DANNY nods.  
 She shakes her head, apparently disgusted with the old coot --

GIRL  
 Try the side.

He rockets to the alley, up the fire escape and bangs on the side door.  
 Waits. Huffing. Is about to knock when

NICK OPENS THE DOOR --

NICK  
 -- I about gave up on you.

DANNY  
 -- Sorry.

NICK  
 So...? How do I look?!

He's dressed in the uniform of a 1920's usher: spats, white gloves, pillbox hat.  
 He turns for DANNY to check him out. It's verrry snug.

DANNY  
 (tactful)  
 I've never seen anything like it.

NICK  
 Not too tight?

DANNY  
That's the style these days.

NICK. Excited. The words pour out.

NICK  
I always wanted to be a magician, except I had these tiny hands. But I still knew it was show business for me. First job; ushering right here when it was a vaudeville house.  
(proud)  
Less than twenty years later I was the best projectionist in New York.

DANNY. It's touching and he smiles, starts in.

NICK  
(barring his way)  
Aren't we forgetting something?  
(DANNY'S confused)  
A ticket, Danny, you've got to have a ticket to see a movie. And have I got just the one --

With grand magician's flourish -- and some clumsy sleight-of-hand -- he produces...

AN ORNATE GOLDEN TICKET. Outsized & odd.

DANNY stares -- it's like nothing else.

NICK  
(awe in his tone)  
Harry Houdini himself, gave me that, Danny. I was your age and my pop, he took me backstage after a show.  
(beat)  
And he made a gesture, Mr. Houdini did -- and this was in his hand. And he whispered to me --  
(whispering now)  
-- "This is a magic ticket," he said. "The greatest magician in India gave it to me and the greatest magician in Tibet gave it to him. It's a passport to another world. It was mine and now it's yours."  
(normal voice)  
And now it's yours.

DANNY  
What does it do, Nick?

NICK  
 (embarrassed)  
 Never had the courage to use it.  
 (sad smile)  
 I kept it all these years and I wanted to try -but  
 I was so afraid it wouldn't work. Y'see, Houdini  
 was like a God to me -- what if he was  
 faking?

As Nick moves to shut the door --

NICK  
 He said one other thing : "This ticket has a  
 mind of it's own, young man. It does what it  
 wants to do.  
 (Closing the door)  
 That always made me a just little edgy.

DANNY.  
 Well there's only one way to find out, right?

Nick nods, a sudden gleam in his aging eyes.  
 He holds out the ticket. Holds his breath and --  
 Rips it --  
 And for a moment, just a moment, mind you... we think we perceive ...  
 what? A SPARK..? A flash..? A trick of light, gone as quick as it came--  
But we had the impression the ticket had been, well... **activated**.

Nick hands half to DANNY. Drops the other half in an old-fashioned ticket  
 box. Says solemnly:

NICK  
 Please retain your stub.  
 (And on that)

CUT TO

DANNY's in Heaven, seated dead center, alone in this once-great movie  
 palace. Big bucket of fresh-made popcorn. NICK'S voice booms:

NICK  
 Shall we see if Mr. Slater wins this time?

DANNY  
 Jack Slater can't lose. Never has, never will.

The lights dim and the credits for Jack Slater IV roll --

DISSOLVE:

MINUTES LATER. DANNY, transfixed, watches:

ON THE SCREEN:

A HELICOPTER SHOT OF THE CALIFORNIA COASTLINE.  
Mansions perched on the cliffs above the Pacific.

ONE GIANT HOUSE, totally secluded, is of some interest --  
-- not for it's ostentatious architecture either.

ON A MONSTROUS STONE VERANDA, A SHIRTLESS MAN,  
battered and bruised, is strung up to a potted tree. His face near the trunk --

And on that trunk... is a small round target.

ANOTHER MAN, ANTONIO VIVALDI (TONY) paces back and forth.  
A flamboyant, expensively dressed and not overly literate Sicilian.  
He hasn't read more than the racing form in twenty years -- but he heads one  
of the biggest mobs in California. And he didn't inherit it -- tough, street smart  
as they come. He's pretty much convinced he's immortal.  
He leans in to the bound man...

VIVALDI

Frankie, Frankie, Frankie, why you keep on  
with the insults!

FRANK

(Scared)

I would never insult you, Mister Vivaldi.

VIVALDI

(he has an accent)

When you lie, that's an insult -- I know you. Jack  
Slater's favorite second cousin in all the world.  
You alla time talk to to each other. An' I gotta  
know what Slater knows.

(Big)

So you tell me -- does he know that my mob  
and the Torelli mob have signed a secret pact  
to control all drugs in Southern California?

FRANK

...uh...we mostly talk muzzle velocities...

VIVALDI moves away, snaps his fingers -- just once -- but the instant he does --

A SHOT RINGS OUT and the center of the TARGET by Frank's face ...  
Disappears.. Bug-eyed, FRANK looks from the target to...

A LONE FIGURE, WAAAAY ACROSS THE PATIO,  
seated with SMOKING GUN in hand --

Who calmly resumes reading the Wall Street Journal. Sets down the gun,  
absent-mindedly spoons a grapefruit. Meet MISTER BENEDICT, a great  
assassin. He never even looked up, the shot was that easy.

Oh and one more thing: He's got a GLASS EYE. Made even more conspicuous by the bright BULLS-EYE on its surface. He casually takes it out, polishes it.

VIVALDI

Meet Mr. Benedict. The genuine article, you better believe it. Sometimes he likes to bake while he's shooting people. One time, I seen him put together a spinach lasagna, alla while he's shootin' kneecaps offa these union guys. Then he makes them taste the lasagna. What I'm sayin', Benedict can take you out, easy as cake.

ACROSS THE LAWN, BENEDICT silently corrects VIVALDI.

BENEDICT

(to himself)

Easy as pie, you Sicilian schmuck

VIVALDI

Mr. Benedict, is a great shot, but he can do more than kill you. He can let you live five minutes or fifty before you die -- the man is a surgeon. Now: you want for me to have him operate on you?

FRANK

(near tears)

..I swear I don't know...

VIVALDI

(so sad)

Have it your way.

MOMENTS LATER,  
VIVALDI approaches the seated BENEDICT.

VIVALDI

We dump him at his place. Let him live a couple minutes.

(smiles)

He bought it. He actually believes me and Old Man Torelli are banding together. Beauty part is, nobody's gonna know different. Not 'til the funeral. Then everybody knows, eh?

CUT TO

DANNY in the Pandora caught up in the magic.

DANNY  
 (as VIVALDI'S smile fills the  
 screen)  
 You're gonna pay... oh... are you gonna pay...

BACK ON THE SCREEN:

A SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD. DAY  
 Quiet. TWO UNIFORMED COPS, MONOGHAN AND MONROE, draw their guns  
 and move stealthily toward a small, stucco house. Wary.

MONOGHAN  
 You sure this is the right number? -- doesn't  
 look like a crack house to me.

MONROE  
 What do you want, sixty guys dancing on the  
 lawn throwing cocaine at each other? Kick  
 the door in.

At that precise moment, however, they are interrupted --

AS A SQUEAL OF TIRES announces ... the single most awesome '66  
 BONNEVILLE CONVERTIBLE ever abused by its action-movie owner.

The car screeches to the curb.

IN THE PANDORA

DANNY moves to the edge of his seat. Beams.

DANNY  
 Yessss. Here come da man.

ON THE SCREEN

The Bonneville's door opens. A BOOTED FOOT hits the asphalt. A glimpse of  
 jeans. Bomber jacket. The trademark cigar. T-shirt with a slight tear near the  
 shoulder, three-day stubble. JACK SLATER:

But something's wrong. See, SLATER's not cradling a carbine, or even his  
 Ruger street cannon -- instead he's got two bags of GROCERIES.

SLATER  
 (to the cops)  
 What's up, guys?

MONROE  
 Quiet! This is a drug bust.

SLATER  
 Drug bust.  
 (beat)  
 My second cousin Frank lives here.

SLATER indicates the groceries.

SLATER

The only drugs you'll find in there are aspirin,  
and if you touch that front door, you're gonna  
need 'em.

Now Monaghan and Monroe are really confused. Still walking toward the house, but slowly. Darting glances back and forth.

MONOGHAN

Look, maybe there's been a mistake. We got  
an anonymous tip...

SLATER stomps to the front door, pounds hard --

SLATER

Frank? Frank?  
(no reply)

He puts the groceries down, starts to kick the door down --  
Decides to give the knob a try -- it turns. The door swings and we find...

SECOND COUSIN FRANK tied helpless to a chair, bleeding.  
SLATER rushes to him --

FRANK

(dying)  
Jack... Tony Vivaldi and the Torelli mob are  
joining forces...  
(dies)

SLATER'S moved. Anger begins to build --

-- then, he sees a note with his name on it pinned to FRANK'S shirt.  
He unpins it. It's a stack of cards. MONOGHAN AND MONROE are nearby.  
He looks at the first card: it reads: 5.  
He flips to the next: 4... flip... 3... flip  
Holy shit.  
SLATER drops the cards and BOLTS --

SLATER

BOMB!

Everyone DIVES --

THE ENTIRE HOUSE INCINERATES.  
A TOWER OF FIRE climbs sky high.  
Windows shatter down the street. Cars overturn.

IN THE PANDORA,  
DANNY'S prediction:

DANNY

He's o.k. Minor wound. Both cops dead.

ON SCREEN:

SLATER dusts himself off. Ignores a bloody gash on his forearm. Looks up at a huge FLAMING PALM. Monaghan and Monroe hang there. Dead.

IN THE PANDORA

DANNY is pleased with his prediction.

ON THE SCREEN

Monroe's isn't quite dead. Hanging upside down, he croaks:

MONROE

Two days... to retirement...

And dies. SLATER turns, face a mask of stone.

AND HERE COMES A PICKUP TRUCK,  
patented SQUEALING TIRES (tm) as it careens around a corner.  
Rocketing toward SLATER.

THREE IN BACK: Leather jackets. Sunglasses. MP-5 Czech machine-guns.  
DYNAMITE in bundles.

TWO UP FRONT: Driver and passenger. Total of five. Piece of cake.

SLATER vaults into the Bonneville and PEELS OUT, tires smoking. Pickup in pursuit. The Ruger appears in his iron fist. An old friend.

THE CHASE IS ON

A STICK OF DYNAMITE is lit. In the bed of the pickup. A scar-faced KILLER heaves it. Forward, toward SLATER's car.

SLATER SWERVES, just in time... the dynamite BOUNCES off the trunk of his car -  
- flies upward, DETONATES in midair.

INT. PANDORA

DANNY is ecstatic. So much so, he DOESN'T SEE, BUT WE DO -

THE TICKET STUB

The one Nick gave him... the stub that's peeking out of his shirt pocket...  
It's GLOWING.

A brief pulse. And then it fades, as -

ON THE SCREEN

Another stick of dynamite LOFTS through the air. SLATER sees it over his  
shoulder. FIRES the Blackhawk, a thundering WHAM --!



SLOW MOTION:

The dynamite sails end over end, then SPING -- ! SLATER's shot NICKS it. Alters its trajectory, as --

IN THE PANDORA

The deflected dynamite LANDS IN THE BACK OF THE THEATRE.

Lays there. In the aisle. Still lit.

DANNY finds this very interesting. He turns. Looks up the aisle. It simply refuses to register. He eats a piece of popcorn, frowning.

What if your mother suddenly grew three heads, and they all started fighting over bridge scores? You get the idea.

DANNY

Um... Nick... ? Hello... ?

The dynamite begins to roll down the aisle.

IN THE PROJECTION BOOTH,

Nick can't hear over the noise of the car chase and gunfire.

THE DYNAMITE

rolls slowly at first. Then faster. Gaining momentum. Fuse sputtering.

DANNY, in a burst of fraudulent inspiration, slams his POPCORN TUB over it. Then realizes his stupidity --

DANNY

SHIIIT!

And BOLTS. Down the aisle. Too little, too late --

The blast is tremendous. SNATCHES DANNY from his feet. HURLS him like a rag puppet. Sailing, screaming -- The world goes PURE WHITE. Spinning away. Fading...

Until he LANDS, whump! A rude shock. Jolts him back to reality.

Sort of.

There is wind in his face. That's good. Trees going by, overhead -- nice, nice... Hmm. Wait. Something's wrong here, some small detail...

Like the fact it's suddenly DAY, maybe... ?

Suffice to say, DANNY is in California, in the back of JACK SLATER'S BONNEVILLE CONVERTIBLE.

He still doesn't know this. He gets his first big clue when he tries to sit up

AND A HUGE GUN APPEARS. Right in front of him. Pointing past him. It THUNDERS, three times, sounds like a damn CANNON.

Inches from DANNY.

DANNY YELPS. Hugs the cushions, eyes squeezed shut. Above him, SLATER'S STARTLED FACE appears, over the seat. Staring.

SLATER  
(stunned)  
Who are You?

DANNY  
Don't shoot me, I'm Danny Madigan, I'm a kid.

SLATER darts a look in the rear-view --

THE PICKUP TRUCK

is right behind them. Guy on the passenger side leaning out the window. .44 Magnum in his fist.

SLATER  
How did you get here?

DANNY  
I'm not quite sure where "here" is, sir, but I don't think you wanna know.

SLATER  
Stay flat. Close your eyes. Don't move.

DANNY  
Would you like me to shut up too?

SLATER  
That would be nice.

CRACK -- ! CRACK ! -- Flat echoing shots from behind.

CUT TO

SLATER, swerving madly, ducking bullets -- slugs whine overhead. As stray bullets hit parked cars, they immediately burst into flame.

In the back seat, DANNY opens one eye, sees the chaos, dives back down, hugging the seat. He's confused, panicked; you name it, he's suffering from it.

SLATER swivels in his seat. Sights down the barrel with both hands. Precise. Deadly. DANNY squints up.

DANNY  
 (trying to keep it together)  
 You're driving with no hands --

SLATER  
 You think it's easy, try it sometime --

DANNY  
 Nossir, I was just, oh, kind of wondering if it was safe.

SLATER  
 You have to practice a lot -- and never do it in heavy traffic --  
 (As SLATER fires -- )

CUT TO

THE PICKUP TRUCK.

The bullet lifts a guy from the truck, blows him backward. Still clutching dynamite as --

In slow motion, he sails thru the windshield of a parked ICE CREAM TRUCK. Shatters it. Disappears inside.

The DRIVER bails out. KIDS dive for cover. Beat. Beat. I scream, you scream --

THE TRUCK BLOWS TO PIECES.

A STAGGERING blast, showering an inventory of frozen treats. Moving at deadly velocity.

EXT. PICKUP TRUCK - SAME

A goon is JOLTED from behind. Gasps. Claws the air. Pitches over dead --

Revealing a frozen DRUMSTICK CONE (Nutty Buddy to you Easterners) sticking out of his neck.

INT. SLATER'S BONNEVILLE - SAME

SLATER driving. Determined. He looks back, mutters:

SLATER  
 What do you know? Iced that one.  
 (beat)  
 To Cone a phrase.

And in the back seat DANNY's eyes go wide, as he recognizes an oft-imitated SIGNATURE LINE.

He sits bolt upright. Oblivious to danger.

DANNY

Oh my God, that voice, the bad puns... it's  
him.

(beat)

Wait a minute... How did I get --?

(swallows)

Oh, boy...

The Bonneville SHRIEKS around a corner, doing fifty plus --

AND THRU THE MAGIC OF MOVIES, WE'RE SUDDENLY DOWNTOWN.  
Gone are the suburbs. In their place, city streets resembling Long Beach.

DANNY

Hey, we were just in the suburbs, what  
happened?

A lit stick of DYNAMITE sails into the car. DANNY watches, dazed. Numb.  
The explosive rolls under the seat.

DANNY

This is not happening. Repeat. This is not  
happ--

SLATER'S hand enters frame, reaches down, this way, that way, finally locates  
the dynamite ... and snuffs it, all of a quarter inch from detonation.

ANOTHER ANGLE

An OIL TANKER backs into the street. It looms ahead, BLOCKING THEM. SLATER  
takes a deep breath --

And corners. Doing fifty.

Pops up on TWO WHEELS. Skates around the bend, laughing at gravity --  
bullets RICOCHETING off the exposed chassis --

Thumps back down, bam! Plunges forward -- Straight down a DEAD END.  
Brick wall. NO exit.

SLATER

Boy, does this suck weenie or what?

He hits the brakes -- THROWS A SMOKIN' 180°. Careens to a shuddering stop,  
INCHES from the dead end. Facing back the way he came.

A pale-green DANNY wipes his mouth on his sleeve.

DANNY

I booted. Sorry --

(beat)

-- I thought I was gonna die.

SLATER

Sorry to disappoint you -- but you're going to live to enjoy all the glorious fruits life has to offer--shaving, acne, premature ejaculation --

CUT TO

THE PICKUP TRUCK at the mouth end of the alley. The two machine-gun toting thugs jump down from the truck bed. Grinning.

CUT TO

THE BONNEVILLE.

DANNY

(it's starting to dawn)

I know why they're smiling -- this is a movie set -  
- that's how the scenery changed.

SLATER gives DANNY a weird look. Then he's back to the business at hand. SLATER stares ahead. Eyes dead. Lifeless, the eyes of a shark. He revs his engine. A second time. The PICKUP revs back.

DANNY

You're gonna play chicken, aren't you? Just like Jack Slater.

SLATER

Fasten your seat belt, please -- do you have fingers?

(DANNY nods)

Cross as many as you can --

He stomps the gas pedal...

The two vehicles cook rubber.

Flying toward each other. Drivers intent. Second by second. Pushing it. Nobody swerves. Nobody flinches. Trash flies in their wake. Buildings hurtle by. Then, at the LAST POSSIBLE SECOND --

The pickup FLINCHES. Swerves. Clipping SLATER's car, forcing the Bonneville into a dumpster, WHAM!

And the pickup... ah, yes. See, there's this stack of PALLETS. They're sort of... well, ramp-shaped, actually. And I'll be darned, when the pickup hits, doing fifty, it GOES AIRBORNE.

Flies the length of the alley. Heading for the BRICK WALL at the end. Just before it gets there, however, it BURSTS INTO FLAMES for no apparent reason.

INT. REHEARSAL SPACE - ONSTAGE - SAME

AN UTTERLY SEXIST PHOTO SHOOT FOR VICTORIA'S SECRET

Stunning would-be's in skimpy LINGERIE. Posing lasciviously as, without warning --

A FLAMING CAR BURSTS THRU THE WALL in a shower of bricks. Models dive for cover. The car HITS. Ruptures. A FLAMING MAN stumbles out.

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE RANCH --

Two thugs remaining. SLATER AND DANNY crouch behind the Bonneville as it is RAKED by gunfire -- and SLATER's out of bullets,

CLICK!

Doesn't miss a beat. Reaches in the Bonneville. Grabs the stick of dynamite. As the FLAMING MAN runs by, SLATER holds it out. Takes a light off the guy, hurls it --

KA-BLAM! Both thugs are BLOWN UPWARD thru second story windows. Glass rains. SLATER holsters his gun and says:

SLATER  
Couple of second story men.

In a trance, DANNY swallows hard, whispers:

DANNY  
I'm in the movie. Holy shit, I'm in the movie.

Dumbstruck, he yanks the TICKET STUB from his pocket. Stares at it with dawning realization:

DANNY  
Nick -- Houdini wasn't faking...  
(Now from that --)

EXT. L.A. POLICE STATION

SLATER leads DANNY inside.

CUT TO

INT. L.A. POLICE STATION.

Remember the 87th Precinct station that DANNY was in earlier? That was a parked car. This is the Indy 500.

The first thing you notice is the CHAOS. Hookers, pimps, every form of low-life, YELLING, being PUSHED AROUND by cops. Angry citizens complain. Every phone in the place RINGS.

Next you'll notice is the station itself. High-tech. Way too clean. Full of movie SMOKE, catching all the blue-tinted SHAFTS OF LIGHT, coming from nowhere.

SLATER shepherds DANNY through the hubbub. DANNY gawks...

DANNY

I was just in a real police station and this is much nicer.

COP

Jack. Your ex-wife on two.

SLATER grimaces. Goes over to his desk. Picks up the phone.

SLATER

(suddenly all smiles)

Sweetheart, how are you? Uh huh...yeah... yeah... uh huh...

DANNY's attention drifts over to the WATCH COMMANDER'S DESK. The Watch Commander is doling out partnership assignments.

WATCH COMMANDER

Oiler! You're partnered up with Waterman.

Oiler, a fat slob of a man, beer belly, cigar... meets Waterman, a neat, prim, handsome woman. They walk off.

WATCH COMMANDER

Kraus! You're teamed up with Rabbi.

The tall blonde Kraus meets the Rabbi. They walk off.

BACK WITH SLATER

SLATER

Uh huh... yeah... yeah...

He opens a desk drawer. Take out a CASSETTE TAPE RECORDER, as well as some CASSETTES. He flips through them, reading the labels: CREDITORS, INTERNAL AFFAIRS...aha!

THE SHREW.

He pops the tape in, hits PLAY. From the recorder we hear:

SLATER'S VOICE ON TAPE

Yeah... how much money?... Uh huh...

He places the phone receiver next to the tape recorder. Walks over to get some coffee. A figure steps up behind him.

VOICE

How do you get to Carnegie Hall?

SLATER

Practice!

SLATER turns to see JOHN PRACTICE, FBI. A good friend.

SLATER

John Practice, you old S.O.B. What are you doing away from Washington?

PRACTICE

The bureau thinks something strange is going on between -- this is top secret --

SLATER

-- Tony Vivaldi's mob is joining forces with the Torelli's --

PRACTICE

(shakes his head in wonder)

-- you are amazing.

(leaves)

Gotta call D.C.

CUT TO

DANNY, watching him go.

DANNY

(F. Murray Abraham is playing PRACTICE)

Watch it -- he killed Mozart.

SLATER

In a movie?

DANNY

Amadeus. It won eight Oscars.

SLATER

I saved his life in Nam, so I'll be sure to be on the lookout, thanks -- now no more movies.

ANGLE ON A DOOR.

THE NAME ON THE GLASS READS, "LT. CORNELIUS DEKKER." From behind the door, this HUGE voice screams --

DEKKER

(OVER)

SLATER!!!



THE GLASS SHATTERS. Revealing DEKKER -- the big black cop we met at the beginning. When DEKKER is calm, he is apoplectic.

DEKKER  
IN MY OFFICE. NOW!!!

INT. DEKKER'S OFFICE. You know this scene. DEKKER chews out SLATER who impassively takes it.

DANNY has moved along with SLATER; stands almost unnoticed in a corner, watching. *He is the reverse of upset.*

DEKKER  
Goddammit, Slater! I got the city council chewin' my eggs off for that plane you crashed, I got the mayor scheduling parades up my Lincoln Tunnel for that stunt you pulled at the beach. Everyone's linin' up for a chance to dingle my berries, and it's all because of you.

SLATER  
Just doin' the job.

DANNY sits, staring at the TICKET STUB. Thinks. Puts the stub into his wallet for safekeeping. Now he glances out toward the WATCH COMMANDER.

WATCH COMMANDER  
Ratcliff! You're pulling duty with the Animated Cat.

Yup. A four foot ANIMATED CAT walks up to the desk. Partners with Ratcliff, who is an attractive woman. THE CAT gooses her. She slaps him. They move off.

DEKKER  
You've given this department the worst reputation in the country: I've got the Chamber of Commerce doing cartwheels in my cocoa factory, and I got the ACLU white water rafting up Fudge River Canyon! Do I make myself clear?

Just then, DANNY interrupts --

DANNY  
Wait -- I can prove this is a movie!

DEKKER  
Who the hell are you?

DANNY  
Look out there, there's a cartoon cat!

SLATER

So? He's supposed to be back on duty. He was only suspended for a month.

SLATER turns to the Lieutenant, makes a "crazy" gesture.

DANNY

A four foot cartoon cat!

SLATER

Kid, we waived the height requirement years ago.

DANNY

You say this is a real police station? An animated cat just walked in.

SLATER

And he'll do it again tomorrow, what's your point?

DEKKER

That cat is one of the best men I've got --

(to Slater)

-- who is this twerp? --

(DANNY can't help smiling)

-- and why is that smile on his face?

DANNY

I just love the way you two fight, knowing how you really feel about each other.

DEKKER

Pray tell, how do I feel about this weird-looking sack of shit?

DANNY

You're dearest friends -- after your wife left you for the circus midget and Jack told everyone he drove her to New England to the diphtheria clinic, when he came back you said, "You saved me from public humiliation Jack, you're my dearest friend."

CUT TO

DEKKER. Stunned. Horrified. He closes the door.

DEKKER

(whispering, accusingly,  
to SLATER)

And you promised me you'd never tell.

SLATER  
 (just as stunned)  
 I swear I never did.

DEKKER  
 (huge)  
 Then how did he know?

DANNY  
 Jack Slater II.  
 (As they stare at him --)

CUT TO

A BLINDING LIGHT. Dead in DANNY'S FACE.

PULL TO REVEAL... AN INTERROGATION ROOM.  
 SLATER AND DEKKER stand over the kid:

DEKKER  
 You know the good cop/bad cop routine?  
 (DANNY nods)

SLATER  
 Only bad cops in here -- verrrry bad ones.

DEKKER  
 Who are you?

DANNY  
 Danny Madigan. 355 West 40th Street. New  
 York City. 212-288-1113.

DEKKER grabs a phone, dials, listens to a mechanical voice.

DEKKER  
 No such number, no such name.

SLATER  
 How did you get in my car?

DANNY  
 (wants to tell the truth,  
 hesitates)  
 -- I slipped off a walkover bridge, fell, and you  
 saved my life.

DEKKER  
 Truth at last.  
 (turns to SLATER)  
 Why were they after you?

SLATER

My second cousin Frank found out some crucial drug information --

DANNY

I wouldn't put too much faith in what Vivaldi told him--

SLATER

--how do you know Frank mentioned Vivaldi?

DANNY

I know a lot about what's going on --and if you'd just listen to me --

DEKKER

(to DANNY)

Son, I've got the perfect listener for you--

(to SLATER, indicating DANNY))

Meet your new partner.

SLATER

Better to die

DEKKER

Let me just shuck this down to the corn cob for you, Slater -- your job is to wet nurse this half-pint twenty-four hours a day 'til I say otherwise. We got to find out everything he knows.

(before SLATER can answer)

Now, both of you get your sandy cracks out of here because I'm having a horrible time holding my temper.

CUT TO

INT. L.A. POLICE STATION as SLATER AND DANNY move across.

DANNY

(so excited)

You'll learn to love it, Jack, we're perfect buddy movie material. We'll learn from each other -- I'll teach you to be vulnerable, you'll teach me to be brave.

(to a passing COP)

Hi, I'm Slater's new partner --Jack and I will be working together for the duration of the film.

SLATER picks him up, carries him quickly out of the office.

EXT. L.A. POLICE STATION

SLATER storms down the steps, DANNY, like a puppy, trails happily at his heels.

DANNY

Come on, Jack, you know I'm right. In the real world, they'd assign me to a social worker.

(SLATER keeps walking)

Here's one: tell me how I know they tortured Frank and stashed him behind his front door.

(beat)

Because I saw it onscreen, because this is a movie.

SLATER

(scowls)

You're very clever.

(it deepens)

But the reason I'm not roaring with laughter is because someone killed my favorite second cousin. Bi --

DANNY

(cutting in)

Big mistake.

SLATER is thrown.

DANNY

That is what you were gonna say, right? Gee, how could I have known that?

SLATER

Nobody likes a smart-ass.

DANNY

(beat)

O.k. Shoot me. That's right. Point your gun at my head and pull the trigger. Come on. Do it. I double-dare you.

SLATER just stares at him.

DANNY

You're not gonna, are you? And you know why? Because people like you don't kill kids in movies. 'Cause, believe it or not, you're the good guy, Jack.

SLATER

You really believe you're in a movie, don't you?

DANNY

YES!!!!!!

SLATER looks at his watch. Then back to Danny.

SLATER

O.k. You have ten minutes to prove this to me.  
After that, I shoot you.

INT. VIDEO RENTAL STORE - SAME

Lots of videos and displays. The usual. Except the girl behind the counter is far too good-looking to be working there.

Danny rushes in with SLATER in tow. Runs up to the girl -

DANNY

Quick, where are your Schwarzenegger films?

VIDEO COUNTER BABE

Foreign films are in the back.

DANNY

No! Action! The guy's an action star.

VIDEO COUNTER BABE

Oh, action star, why didn't you say so? Right over here.

She points. DANNY turns, following her finger.

Here's what he sees: A HUGE STANDEE for Terminator 2, except it's not Arnold in the black leather jacket, with that one red eye, his face half machine -- it's SYLVESTER STALLONE.

DANNY is stunned.

DANNY

No... It's not possible...

SLATER

He was fantastic -- absolutely his greatest performance ever.

DANNY

But... that was you. You were in that movie...

DANNY stares at the standee, lost. SLATER turns his attention to the girl. Flirting shamelessly.

VIDEO COUNTER BABE

You were in a movie?

SLATER

Yeah, it was called The Girl of My Dreams. I think it starred you.

(she blushes)

In fact, there was this very romantic scene where we had dinner together.

VIDEO COUNTER BABE

Is this your kid?

SLATER

(shakes his head)

Mental patient. Taking him downtown.

Frustrated but not down, DANNY snaps into another approach.

DANNY

What about this girl right here? She's way too attractive to be working at a video store.

SLATER

I agree. She should be working with us. Undercover work.

THE GIRL giggles.

DANNY

Look, the point is -- there are no unattractive women here.

(GRABS SLATER)

Come with me.

EXT. STREET - SAME

DANNY drags SLATER from the store. Gestures to the people on the sidewalk. All the women are beautiful.

DANNY

Where are they? Where are the ordinary everyday women? They don't exist because this is a movie.

SLATER

No, this is California.

DANNY

O.K. I'll take you to the house where your second cousin Frank was tortured -- I can do that because I saw it -- on the screen --

(now quickly)

CUT TO

SLATER and DANNY driving along. The area is familiar -- we're near where the house was, but not there yet. You get the feeling they've been at this awhile.

SLATER  
(gesturing)  
How about that one?

DANNY  
It can't be because the house we want has an ocean view -- it's on the other side of the road.

SLATER  
(gesturing to a little place  
on the other side)  
That one looks promising.

DANNY  
No--I told you, we're looking for a big house,  
and I'll know it when I see it --  
(Beat)  
--see, there's something you don't  
understand--  
(takes out the ticket,  
shows it to Slater)  
--this ticket is magic and it really works.

SLATER  
Of course it does -- all of mine do.  
(As he drives on)

EXT. ELEGANT SUBURBAN STREET - THE PALISADES - DAY

SLATER's car cruises slowly. DANNY leans out the window, searching for the familiar house.

DANNY  
(suddenly pointing)  
Stop -- there -- that's the place --  
(beat)  
-- no it's the wrong color.

SLATER  
(slowing the car anyway)  
Maybe they painted the whole house  
overnight, let's go investigate --



DANNY  
(turns to SLATER)  
-- You're my partner, your job is to give me  
confidence.  
(SLATER drives again )

SLATER  
No. My job is to get you out of my life as soon  
as possible --

DANNY  
It was a Spanish style house --  
(and now he's got it)  
-- like that one.  
(and now he points)  
Just like that one.

CUT TO

A SPANISH STYLE HOUSE. IT'S VIVALDI'S MANSION.

CUT TO

THE CAR.

DANNY  
The bad guys are in there.

SLATER  
(moved, takes off his  
badge, hands it over)  
I'm sorry, Danny. You're the one should be  
wearing this.

DANNY  
(unsure, but touched)  
I don't think I've earned it yet.

SLATER

Earned it? Don't you understand? You've revolutionized the entire history of police training. All those years I spent at the Academy, studying human character, learning the art of fingerprint analysis, the courses I took in hostage negotiation, the year at Harvard studying the psyche of the terrorist -- the semester at Oxford probing the psychology of evil --when all the time..

(now huge)

ALL I HAD TO DO WAS POINT A FINGER AND SAY, "THE BAD GUYS ARE IN THERE."

(soft again)

Oh me, the years I've wasted.

DANNY

(scowls)

You think you're funny?

SLATER

I know I am. I'm the famous comedian, Arnold Braunshweiger.

DANNY

Schwarzenegger.

SLATER

Gesundheit

They exit the car. Approach the house. Overhead, palm trees sway in the ocean breeze.

SLATER

What the hell kind of name is that, anyhow?

DANNY

Austrian.

SLATER

Yeah? Well, I was born in Newark, so there.

DANNY

Newark, huh? Where'd you pick up the accent?

SLATER

What accent?

He hammers on the door. Pause -- and the ornate panel is opened by a tough-looking Chinese man.

CHINESE MAN

May I help you?

SLATER

Yes, can I speak to the drug dealer of the house?

CHINESE MAN

I beg your pardon.

SLATER

It's a beautiful day and we're out killing drug dealers, are there any inside?

CHINESE MAN

(inscrutable, leaving)

I'll have a look, sir.

He shuts the door. Pause. DANNY is edgy.

DANNY

Be ready for anything.

They stand there. DANNY taps a foot. Then SLATER abruptly starts off --

DANNY

Where you going?

SLATER

(whirling).

I'll be back.

(triumphant)

Didn't know I was going to say that, did you?

DANNY

(as if to a child)

That's what you always say --

SLATER

-- I do?

DANNY

Everyone keeps waiting for you to work it in -- it's your calling card.

SLATER

(muttering)

Shit.

At which point the front door opens -- and there stands MR. BENEDICT. Dark sunglasses. White linen shirt. Voice a sibilant hiss. In short, Alan Rickman.

BENEDICT

I understand you're interested in drug dealers?

DANNY whispers excitedly.

DANNY

Jack, that's him. The henchman with the glass eye. But go easy --he almost nailed Bruce Willis and Kevin Costner.

SLATER sighs. Takes a deep breath and says:

SLATER

Sir, are you a henchman?

BENEDICT

No, I only got as far as lackey. Will there be anything else?

SLATER

Yeah, take off your sunglasses.

BENEDICT

Who's asking?

SLATER flashes his badge:

SLATER

The tin man.

BENEDICT

Well, tin man, suppose you hit the bricks.

SLATER

They're the wrong color.

BENEDICT

Are they? By all means, let's change them. I think the bright red of arterial blood would go nicely, don't you... ?

SLATER and DANNY turn -- they are now SURROUNDED by a perfect semi-circle of SIX ROTTWEILERS. Silent. Stock still.

BENEDICT

Make no mistake, these dogs obey my every whim.

He snaps his fingers. SLATER and DANNY look again. The dogs have formed a PYRAMID. Balancing on each other's shoulders.

SLATER

If they start tap dancing, run for it.

BENEDICT

Take Toto and go back to Oz. Any questions?

SLATER lights a cigar, frowning:

SLATER

Yeah, two of 'em.

(takes a drag)

Why am I wasting my time on a dime store putz like you, when I could be doing something more dangerous, like re-organizing my sock drawer, that's one...

BENEDICT stiffens. His face colors with anger.

SLATER

And two: how exactly are you gonna snap your fingers if I rip both your thumbs off?

Big time tension. CRACKLING. DANNY takes a half step closer to SLATER.

Then BENEDICT does something scary – he smiles. And removes his sunglasses.

The left eye's real. The other one, the glass one, has a bright yellow HAPPY FACE painted on it. SLATER stares.

BENEDICT

Have a nice day.

(as he starts to go into the house)

DANNY

(to SLATER)

He was wearing one with a bulls eye target--

CUT TO

BENEDICT. Frozen.

CUT TO

DANNY AND SLATER as they start off.

DANNY

And he hates his boss VIVALDI --called him a "Sicilian Schmuck" --

CUT TO

BENEDICT. HUGE CLOSE UP. The earth just moved -- what the KID just said is impossible for anyone to know. HOLD. Then --

CUT TO

VIVALDI'S living room. Immediately after.

VIVALDI, agitated, stares out a window, watching SLATER and DANNY drive off.

BENEDICT enters -- trying to hide his shock.

VIVALDI

How did Slater find out? I would give anything to have him join up with me -- but he's so nuts, he keeps going after bad guys --

(big)

-- where is it written I am a bad guy?

(gnawing on a thumbnail)

We gotta find out who talked -- and him we kill, then Slater.

(looking at BENEDICT)

What's with you?

BENEDICT

That kid spooks me. This mean we change the funeral arrangements?

VIVALDI

Are you outta your mind? -- once Tony Vivaldi plans a bloodbath, guess what, there's a bloodbath.

BENEDICT, CLOSE:

BENEDICT

I want to check out Slater's short friend --

STAY ON HIM as he turns. Then --

CUT TO

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD - TWILIGHT

SLATER's car limps to the curb. He and DANNY get out. Walk.

DANNY

Come on, Jack, that guy's for sure guilty of something.

SLATER

He's guilty of acting like an asshole. If I arrest him, I gotta arrest the Vice President.

DANNY

Why did we park back there?

SLATER

In case my ex-wife is around.

DANNY

Don't worry, she's not. Her name wasn't in the credits.

IN THE DRIVEWAY, is a truck with flames and monstrous tires --

DANNY

WOW! Is that what you drive on weekends?!

SLATER

(offended)

No. 'S my little girl's car.

DANNY goes to the door. Knocks. Waits. No answer.

SLATER lingers a little distance away.

The door opens...

MEREDITH CAPRICE, in a BATHROBE, looking beautiful, stands there.

She smiles, cups DANNY's face with her hands, pulls him closer --

AND KISSES HIM. No tongues or anything. Just a satisfying, teasing, boner-inducing kiss. DANNY never wants it to end.

DANNY

Meredith?

WHITNEY

Meredith? I hope you mean Whitney.

Because, see, it's not the actress, it's the CHARACTER, JACK SLATER's sixteen-year-old daughter, WHITNEY.

DANNY

(realizing)

Sorry; Whitney.

WHITNEY

You're not Skeezy, are you?

SLATER moves next to DANNY. His face lights up when he looks at her. She throws herself into his arms, hugs him as we

CUT TO

INT. EX-WIFE'S HOUSE

A modest two bedroom bungalow. Hardwood floors. A FIRE crackles in the fireplace. WHITNEY closes the door.

DANNY

Hi, I'm Danny Madigan and I realize I haven't had that long a life yet, but I just want you to know from now on, it's all got to be downhill.

WHITNEY

(to SLATER)

He's cute.

SLATER

No, no, he is not cute, he is hopelessly insane. Pretty soon he'll start telling you he loved you in Gone With The Wind.

DANNY

(shaking his head)

This is her first movie.

SLATER

See?

(beat)

Who's this Skeezy?

WHITNEY

It's just a sorority thing. They assign you a freshman and when he comes to the door, you kiss him.

WHITNEY starts to go --

WHITNEY

Grab the phone -- if it's for me, I'll be done showering in, oh, less than an hour for sure.

DANNY watches her go. He stands near a desk -- a wad of bills on top. DANNY looks puzzled.

SLATER

Old evidence. Counterfeit case.

(holds up money)

Looks real but it turns funny colors when you burn it. I tried using it for alimony.

He opens the desk drawer, tosses the money in --  
-- but there, staring at him is a PHOTO OF HIS SON, ANDREW.

SLATER for a moment is off balance. The picture shows the boy laughing on SLATER'S shoulders. He drops the money, slams the drawer shut. Looks at DANNY, stricken.

DANNY

What is it?



SLATER

(soft)

You don't happen to have a cigar, do you?

(DANNY shakes his head.

SLATER quickly goes to  
the door)

I'll be back.

DANNY

You don't want to overdo it.

But SLATER is gone.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - EARLY EVENING

Santa Ana wind rakes SLATER as he walks, head down, to the corner store.  
Lost in thought. Eyes bleak...

MEMORY FLASH

We're back on that roof. Three years ago, that fateful night... as SLATER's son  
ANDREW stabs THE RIPPER in the leg... SLATER triggers the .44, BLAM!

Now we see what happened, when the film went OUT OF FOCUS...

SLATER's shot takes THE RIPPER in the shoulder.  
SPINS him to the roof edge. Teetering....

He goes over.

But in that moment, he manages... to latch a hand on Andrew's collar –  
SLATER watches, thunderstruck – as both go over.

THE RIPPER plummets. With SLATER's son. Into a SEA of police light.  
Flashing blue. Flashing red.  
SLATER watches them fall, screaming as

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - BACK TO PRESENT

SLATER walks. Head down. Stares. Suffers.  
Around him, Santa Ana's swirl.

INT. EX-WIFE'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

DANNY has opened the desk drawer, is staring at the photo.

WHITNEY

He would have been your age.

DANNY turns. WHITNEY is dressed now. To die for.

DANNY

I know. The Ripper killed him. Three years ago.  
Pulled him down. Your dad saw everything.

She stares at him. Puzzled.

WHITNEY

How do you know all that stuff?

DANNY

Your pop gets in the papers a lot --  
(shrugs)

-- I'm interested in true crime.

She studies him. Fascinated.

KNOCK, KNOCK.

The moment is broken. WHITNEY frowns, annoyed.

WHITNEY

It's Skeezy.

DANNY

I'll get rid of him.

DANNY crosses to the door, opens it -- and guess what? It's MR. BENEDICT, replete with five-man entourage, all armed to the teeth.

BENEDICT

Hello, Toto.

DANNY tries to shut the door. A THUG shoves -- DANNY flies backward. WHITNEY SCREAMS!

BENEDICT'S MEN fan out. Cover the room. One of them frisks DANNY, flips his wallet to BENEDICT who sits, removes his sunglasses. He is wearing an eye-piece with words on it, but we can't quite make out what they are.

BENEDICT

(going through DANNY'S  
wallet--casually)

Jack around?

DANNY

(thinking fast)

Mr. Slater's off tracking a lead somewhere.

WHITNEY won't stop screaming. Blind panic. The reverse of her father.

BENEDICT

(to the HENCHMAN  
nearest WHITNEY)

Take her inside and teach her how to shut up.

DANNY takes a step forward --

DANNY

Benedict! --

BENEDICT looks up, startled.

DANNY

If you so much as harm a single hair on her head...

BENEDICT rises, goes to WHITNEY. Reaches out -- plucks a SINGLE HAIR from her head, goes back to his chair, snaps the hair in two.

BENEDICT

(smiles)

You were saying...?

He LAUGHS as the THUG drags WHITNEY off to the bedroom.

BENEDICT

(indicating wallet)

I believe it was Sherlock Holmes who felt that if you got rid of all logical explanations, the illogical, however impossible, was true.

(Beat)

I know your name is Daniel -- how did you know mine?

DANNY

Slater showed me a mug shot. We made your face easy.

BENEDICT

(calculating)

Didn't anybody ever tell you it was impolite to make faces?

(the wallet again)

Daniel from New York City -- aren't you a long way from home? When did you get here?

DANNY

Just.

BENEDICT

Then, pray tell, how did you know what was spoken in Vivaldi's back yard?

DANNY

(too quickly)

I heard it.

BENEDICT

My voice travels 3,000 miles? Why do I doubt that?

DANNY

I heard a recording.

BENEDICT

There are microphones in the trees then?

DANNY

You wouldn't believe how many.

BENEDICT

And the glass eye I was wearing?

DANNY

I saw it --

BENEDICT

-- the truth at last -- you were, of course, hiding in the trees along with all those microphones.

DANNY

-- I saw it in a movie --

(quickly)

-- there are micro-cameras in the trees.

BENEDICT

I've killed people younger than you --I'd try to remember that.

CUT TO

THE WALLET as BENEDICT pulls out the PANDORA TICKET STUB. DANNY's eyes widen, fights the urge to say, "Don't touch that!" BENEDICT is fascinated with it. As he turns it over and over --

DANNY

Look, -- whatever this is, it's between you and Slater, there's some money in the desk --take it and leave me and Meredith

(correcting)

...Whitney -- alone.

BENEDICT looks at DANNY. Smiles. Folds the wallet with the stub inside. Puts it in his pocket. Gestures -- A THUG crosses to the desk. Yanks open the drawer - finds himself staring at two thousand dollars.

THUG

Holy shit, boss. Looks like two K.

## ANGLE ON DANNY

We catch a GLEAM in his eye... which alerts us that somehow, in some way -- he's pulling a fast one.

The thug is pocketing the money when suddenly BENEDICT holds up a hand --

BENEDICT  
WAIT. Give me that money.

The thug reluctantly hands it over.

BENEDICT  
The money is marked. Isn't it...  
(leans in)  
Isn't it, Daniel? You were trying to sucker me  
with marked bills now, weren't you?

DANNY shrugs his shoulders.

BENEDICT  
Don't try playing with grown-ups, kid; you get  
hurt that way.

And tosses the money in the fire...

EXT. NEWSSTAND ON THE CORNER - SAME TIME

SLATER is buying a cigar. Plunks down a fin.  
His gaze wanders toward his house...

There is RED SMOKE pouring out of his chimney.

INT. EX-WIFE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Her captor BACKHANDS the hapless WHITNEY, SLAP! She bounces off a wall.  
He does it again, SLAP! She flies backward --

WHITNEY  
Big mistake

With that, she rebounds off the bed, comes up --

And plants a STILETTO HEEL THROUGH THE GUY'S FOOT.

Because, see, she's not really that hapless after all, and the whole screaming thing has been an ACT. She's not the reverse of her father, she's exactly like him.

She wrenches the guy's neck, CRACK! He tumbles to the bed, deceased.  
And do you know what ... ?

WHITNEY KEEPS SCREAMING-. Slapping the lifeless corpse, simulating her OWN distress with one hand --

While the other calmly boosts the guy's gun from its holster. Cracks the cylinder. Spins it, snaps it shut.

She is slick. She is cool. And totally unafraid.

INT. LIVING ROOM

BENEDICT

I'll hurt you a little bit, so you'll see what I mean.

BENEDICT removes a KNIFE from his jacket. Approaches DANNY. And that's when WHITNEY steps into the room. Gun leveled.

WHITNEY

FREEZE!

Everything stops. BENEDICT stares, aghast. WHITNEY's .38 is pointed straight at his head.

WHITNEY

Tell them to lose the guns or I redecorate in Early American Brains.

DANNY stares, shocked. What more could a wholesome, red-blooded boy want in a woman?

BENEDICT presses the knife into DANNY's throat.

BENEDICT

You kill me. I kill him.

KNOCK, KNOCK.

The front door. WHITNEY looks away, startled --

A thug LUNGES. Slaps the gun from her hand. It skitters into the KITCHEN. She clutches her wrist as bad guys surround her. BENEDICT smiles.

BENEDICT

Now, then. Let's see who's at the door, shall we?

Two heavy hitters move to the door. Guns up. Position themselves -- A look. A nod. The door is FLUNG OPEN --

And there stands a terrified SKEEZY.

THUG #1

Who the hell is this guy?

Skeezy sputters helplessly.  
The thugs look at each other. Confused. Off balance.

And that, my friends, is when the PATIO DOORS EXPLODE INWARD with a sound like a thousand volcanoes --

And Jack SLATER joins the party.

To say that he is lethal is to call Lake Michigan damp.  
He's a MACHINE programmed for carnage --And he proceeds to play the room. Circulating, meeting his guests. Killing each, then moving on.  
Let's look at some highlights:

BAD GUYS 1&2:

SLATER's left arm snakes out. Grabs one by the gun hand. SLATER's right hand snakes out. Grabs the other, same way.

SLATER crosses his arms.  
Then SQUEEZES, pulling both triggers. The two men drop.  
Each shot by the other one's gun.

One flops in a chair. One SMASHES thru a glass coffee table.

BAM! BAM! Someone firing at him. SLATER dives to the ground, rolls...  
He's dead meat. The guy's got him in the crosshairs --

SLATER acts without thinking: RIPS THE LAMP CORD in two.  
Touches the exposed wire to the CORPSE in the chair.  
The body JERKS and TWITCHES. Spastic. FIRES THE GUN.  
Puts five neat holes in Bad Guy #3.

BAD GUY 4:

SLATER knocks aside the guy's shotgun. They CLASH in hand to hand , as --

BENEDICT raises his knife, poised to throw -- until DANNY TACKLES him.  
They both hit the floor, oof! Knife skitters away...

BENEDICT breaks free, bolts out the door.  
DANNY's amazed at what he's done.

SLATER & BAD GUY 4, are still trading blows, as  
DANNY confidently decides to help: he snatches the fallen KNIFE and flings it

Bonks SLATER in the head.

Meanwhile, Bad Guy#4 dives for his shotgun. He spins and uncorks BOTH BARRELS, KA-BLAM! SLATER leaves his feet. Blown backwards. Thru the living room wall... onto the kitchen floor, and SLIDES --

Scoops up WHITNEY'S .38 on the way past. Spins, FIRES!

Blows his opponent OUT THE FRONT WINDOW.

A shower of glass! And just like that it's over. SLATER slides to a stop. Silence. Plaster dust sifts down.

SLATER scrambles to his feet, BULLET-PROOF VEST visible thru shredded clothing. Looks at his daughter's purple SHINER.

SLATER

I've got to catch the red-eye.

And takes off like a rocket out the door after BENEDICT.

DANNY. He hesitates, then follows SLATER --

CUT TO

-- OUTSIDE: it'd be more accurate to say DANNY wants to follow SLATER. But no man alive could keep up with JACK SLATER now.

He's a study in single-minded obsession.

He sprints from the house. Arms pumping. Legs churning.

Across the street. Motoring. FLYING.

SMASHING through fences. PLOWING through back yards.

Down the Hollywood hillside, he is finally leaping from ROOF TO ROOF, drawing ever closer to the FREEWAY, as --

INT. BLACK SEDAN - DRIVING - SAME TIME

The escaping BENEDICT, sunglasses on, stares out the rear window. The TOUGH CHINAMAN drives.

BENEDICT

Punch it! We've got to beat him to the freeway!

He scans the roadway ahead, looking for trouble --

ANOTHER ANGLE

JACK SLATER stands in the road.

Dead ahead. Feet planted. The Blackhawk appears like magic in his fist -- vomits 240 grains of screaming death at the sedan.

The driver throws a 180, FISHTAILS as SLATER blows big raw CHUNKS OF CAR onto the roadway.

The car gets rubber. SHRIEKS OFF, wounded. Back the way it came.

SLATER calmly holsters the Blackhawk. Starts running.

CUT TO

DANNY. ON A STREET. SAME TIME.

He is pedaling a hot pink GIRL'S BICYCLE, complete with colored streamers and a Smurf book-basket.



DANNY

Jack, where'd you go?

(shakes his head)

I don't believe it. I'm in the movie, and I'm missing the best action!

And that's when DANNY hears, from quite nearby, the shriek of TIRES ON ASPHALT...

As BENEDICT'S SEDAN flies around the bend, retracing its steps -- Heading straight for DANNY.

O-boy.

DANNY stares at the onrushing vehicle. Down-range, half a mile and closing. He swallows hard. Thinks it over. Hands clenching. Unclenching.

Finally says:

DANNY

Chicken it is.

He begins, slowly at first, to pedal.

Then a little faster. And faster yet.

*Determined. Not realizing how utterly ridiculous it looks, because --*

ANOTHER ANGLE

We're talking a TWO-TON SEDAN versus a GIRL'S FIVE SPEED. With Smurfs.

They race toward each other. Collision imminent.

DANNY is sweating. Teeth gritted. Eyes squeezed nearly shut.

DANNY

This is gonna work... it's a movie, I'm a good guy, this has got to work...

The headlights LOOM in front of him. Blinding. RUSHING FORWARD.

And it hits DANNY like a thunderbolt:

DANNY

I'm the comedy sidekick. Oh, shit, I'm the comedy sidekick. IT'S NOT GONNA WOOOOORRRK!

Needless to say, he swerves, jumps the curb, doing fifty, races for the edge of a hillside as we

CUT TO

SLATER appearing, huffing and puffing --

-- way in the background, a TINY SCREAMING DANNY can be seen on a bicycle as he goes through a second story window.

Shouts. More breaking glass. Curses in Yiddish.

SLATER turns, sees DANNY falling out of another window, lying on the grass.

CUT TO

DANNY, groggy, as SLATER reaches him.

DANNY  
(a whisper)  
I think I scared 'em pretty good.

SLATER shakes his head, reaches down, tosses the kid effortlessly over one shoulder, grabs the bike, . moves off down the street.

DANNY  
Benedict's got the ticket...

SLATER  
(totally unconcerned)  
That's a shame -- I wanted it for my collection.

CUT TO

BENEDICT'S SEDAN, screeching to a halt in front of VIVALDI'S mansion.

BENEDICT vaults out.

CUT TO

BENEDICT racing into the house and

CUT TO

BENEDICT'S ROOM, as he enters, shuts the door. He is deeply disturbed. Mindlessly, he flicks on the tube, takes out DANNY's wallet. Goes thru it--

--stops, takes out the GOLDEN TICKET

It's glowing.

BENEDICT stares at it.. He shakes his head, confused, leans against the wall to think --

- and his hand goes thru the wall.

BENEDICT yanks his hand out, panicked. Looks at it -- it's okay.

Looks at the TICKET again. Still glowing.

On the TV now, THE START OF TWILIGHT ZONE. The familiar theme, the voice of Rod Serling; ..."travel to another dimension, a dimension of mind..."

BENEDICT. CLOSE UP. Staring at the TICKET, at the TV set, back and forth. Doo-doo/ doo-doo/doo-doo...

INT. EX-WIFE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Later. Cops scurry to and fro in the living room. Bodies are carried out. SLATER AND DANNY are there. Bruised. Beaten. SLATER stops a passing stretcher. Rummages in a corpse's pocket. Swipes a cigar. He sits next to the single unbroken window. Silent, sullen. DANNY sees his mood -

He spots a pad of paper and a pen. Gets an idea. We see him write an "F," then "U," then "C," then we cut away. He finishes. Holds the paper out to SLATER. We can't read it.

DANNY

Say this.

SLATER glances at the paper.

SLATER

Grow up.

DANNY

Just say this one word.

SLATER

Is this another of your movie proofs?

DANNY

Maybe.

SLATER

Kid, I don't want to say it.

DANNY

Say what?

SLATER gives him a look:

DANNY

You can't. You can't possibly say it because this movie is PG-13. Admit it --

VOICE

Officer Slater?

At the window is our friend SKEEZY. WHITNEY beside him. He solemnly says:

SKEEZY

The guy with the missing eye? I saw his license plate.

SLATER

Good for you.

(frowns)

You mean the guy with the glass eye.

SKEEZY

(puzzled)

When he was running for the car, it was missing.

ACROSS THE ROOM -- A cop stoops to examine the tiny ORB on the carpet.

COP

(staring down)

It's got words -- "Vengeance..."

(as he starts to reach for it)

CUT TO

THE ORB. It reads "VENGEANCE IS MINE."

COP

What is this?

Too late, SLATER shouts:

SLATER

DON'T TOUCH THAT!

EXT. EX-WIFE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Wide shot of the neighborhood from maybe a mile away.

All of a sudden the nineteenth house on the left... BLOWS SKY HIGH.

SLAM CUT TO:

INT. L.A. POLICE STATION - DEKKER'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

SLATER and DANNY stand before the enraged Lieutenant. Dekker is so angry, his skin color is no longer black.

DEKKER

Goddammit Slater, I've got the Governor's Office babysitting my furry walnuts, I've got the California Raisin Council doing an all-male production of The Diary of Anne Frank in my fuzzy pumper. Tiny Tim is tiptoeing through my tulips!

SLATER  
(to DANNY)  
Does this make sense to you?  
(DANNY shakes his head,  
"no")

DEKKER  
(in a frenzy)  
Shut up, you ball-peen jack-amenace! I've  
slurped about all the cock toasting I can take  
from you poncey poon fuckers! You take the  
shingles off the monkey-stick!

DANNY  
(whispered)  
I'm almost sure it's English.

DEKKER  
(huge)  
See if this is plain enough --gimme your  
badge.

SLATER is stunned.

DEKKER  
Hand it over! And I swear, this time you'll  
never get it back!

SLATER slams his badge on DEKKER'S desk, whirls as we

CUT TO

THE POLICE STATION. SLATER storms to his desk, DANNY with him, starts  
emptying the contents. For a moment, the squad room stops its activity. Then  
it returns to business as usual.

WATCH COMMANDER  
Wohlschleager -- you're partnered up with the  
black-and-white digitalization of Humphrey  
Bogart as Sam Spade.

That's right, via the computer technology used in the Diet Coke commercials,  
the actual HUMPHREY BOGART steps up, meets his partner, they head off. As  
they go --

WATCH COMMANDER  
Mitchell, you're working with Watson.

Up step MITCHELL AND WATSON. Both black. They stand there, looking at  
each other awkwardly. Then MITCHELL turns --

MITCHELL  
Uh, Sarge... ? We're both... uh...

WATCH COMMANDER

Oh. Sorry. Wasn't thinking.

CUT TO

PRACTICE, walking up to SLATER'S desk.

PRACTICE

I'm working the funeral, you too?

(SLATER shakes his head)

Wouldn't miss this one -- heard Torelli spent a bundle -- got a damn helicopter circling the building. A rooftop service, how's that for taste.

SLATER

(can't resist)

Who died?

PRACTICE

Leo the Fart was shot yesterday. Someone was trying for Torelli and missed.

SLATER

(impressed)

Leo was tough.

PRACTICE

You change your mind, I'll be at the gate.  
(and as he goes --)

SLATER

(almost done cleaning  
out)

Leo could do everything but sneak up on you.  
(As he slams all the desk  
drawers --)

CUT TO

A HUGE UGLY CEMENT APARTMENT BUILDING. NIGHT

SLATER pulls up, he and DANNY go in. SLATER carries his cop's belongings in a duffel bag. As they enter --

A TOTALLY FEATURELESS STUDIO APARTMENT. Nothing on the walls. No books, no stereo, no tv. A mattress on the floor.

DANNY gapes --

DANNY

Where are we?

SLATER

This is home.

DANNY

You never go home in your pictures.

SLATER's weary. Opens a small closet. Lined with jeans. And a row of hanging T shirts, all the same color, all with a slight tear. Dumps stuff inside.

SLATER

Danny -- it's not funny anymore. What you find entertaining --

(beat)

-- it's my life.

(beat)

And I'm not even a cop now.

(shuts the closet door)

DANNY

(getting upset)

I promise you, you'll get your badge back -- he was just pulling rank 'cause you've been destroying more of the city than usual. Jack, I swear -- you're not just my hero, you're everybody's and it's all gonna be great again.

SLATER shakes his head slowly.

SLATER

It's getting harder, Danny. I never started out to be anything but a decent cop. Then I kept getting involved in these crazy adventures -- but the craziest thing was this: I kept surviving.

DANNY listens. Upset growing.

SLATER

Last month these two virgin nuns were trapped in a burning building and Dekker said, "Slater, climb the outside and rescue them." So I did.

(beat)

I never climbed the outside of a building before. I almost fell half a dozen times. I was exhausted when I got home. Took six Advil to make the pain stop throbbing.

DANNY

You've got a great daughter, your ex-wife wouldn't keep calling if somewhere deep down she didn't want you back.

SLATER

Do you think I'd be married to someone so stupid they couldn't tell a real voice from a tape that keeps going, "uh-huh"? I pay the cashier at my drugstore to phone me.

(beat)

My wife is very happily remarried to an orthodontist. And she never calls.

(Louder)

And Whitney. If she could just be like other teenagers -- but no, she only enjoys pistol practice and karate class. She can beat up every boy she dates -- and they all know it. So they don't call, cuz they're afraid she'll hurt them.

(sad sigh)

She's going to die a young maid, I just know it. I'm going to buy it soon too.

DANNY

You can't die 'til the grosses go down.

DANNY's doing his best.

DANNY

Listen, we all get blue -- I get mugged, I get depressed. You, you haven't hurt anybody for hours, you feel a failure, but it'll pass --

(big)

-- that guy VIVALDI-- I heard him say something was going to happen at a funeral. And now this Leo the Fart is gonna have one.

SLATER

(piqued just a little)

He didn't say what?

DANNY

I couldn't watch long enough to tell.

SLATER shows a hint of energy....



SLATER

What if you're right?

(starts to dial on his phone)

...what if they fed second cousin Frank the wrong information? --

(into phone)

-- Slater -- read me the list of break-ins in the last 24 hours--

(listens)

--no, no, no, no, no yes!

(energy is returning as he slams down the phone --)

DANNY

What?

SLATER

There was a break-in at Tofutti's mortuary last night --

(racing for the door)

DANNY

(trying to keep up)

So?

SLATER

Leo the Fart was at the mortuary!--

(And he is out the door and gone as we)

CUT TO

SLATER AND DANNY, roaring across the city in SLATER'S car.

SLATER

Check this out: Someone tried to kill Old Man Torelli, right? Missed and shot Leo the Fart by mistake.

DANNY

Right.

SLATER

Uh-uh. Wrong. Who took the shot? Was it Benedict? Probably. Would he miss? No way. Unless he wanted to miss.

DANNY

You're saying he meant to kill Leo? Why?

SLATER

Because, amigo... Leo the Fart is very, very FAT. Get it?

DANNY

No, I don't.

SLATER

They broke in last night. Cut Leo open like a turkey and stuffed him with TNT. He goes off at the funeral, he takes out the entire Torelli mob. ALL AT ONCE. Vivaldi owns the town.

DANNY

Oh. Oh, wow.

He sifts possibilities. Mind racing. Shakes his head.

DANNY

No... no, it wouldn't be just a bomb... We've already had a dozen explosions in the movie...

SLATER

Don't start, Danny --  
(now a realization hits)  
--nerve gas.

DANNY

What?

SLATER

Three canisters of nerve gas were stolen from military trucks night before last. They could have stuffed those inside him.

(looks at DANNY)

You know what that means...?

(Danny doesn't)

Leo the Fart is going to pass gas one more time.

EXT. HOTEL ROOFTOP - ABOVE DOWNTOWN - DAY

An OPEN AIR PAVILION decked with banners and streamers. Enough FLOWERS to start a business.

Overlooking the sprawl of LA, twelve stories below. High overhead, Torelli's private HELICOPTER circles, ever watchful.

OLD MAN TORELLI, flanked by bodyguards, nods solemnly as people pass by. Someone approaches him. He cracks a warm smile.

It's TONY VIVALDI and MR. BENEDICT. BENEDICT wears sunglasses.

VIVALDI

Mr. Torelli, I hope it's alright with you that I'm here. I wouldn't want to be a fourth wheel.

BENEDICT

(to himself)

Fifth wheel, moron.

OLD MAN TORELLI

Nonsense, Antonio, you honor me with your presence. Now that we're partners, we are family.

VIVALDI

(smiles broadly)

You hear that, Benedict? Family.

(he bats him)

Go pay your respects.

BENEDICT forces a smile as he walks to the Fart. Leo lies, tub-like, in an outsized coffin.

BENEDICT leans over the coffin. Kisses Leo's dead hand. Then, surreptitiously, does a peculiar thing:

He pulls Leo's finger.

A faint CLICK-! followed by a BLEEP. The bomb in Leo is ACTIVATED.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

SLATER and DANNY pull up in the Bonneville.

SLATER

Stay in the car.

DANNY

No way. I'm coming with you.

SLATER

Kid, say this is a movie. How many times have you heard someone say, "Stay in the car," but the guy doesn't. What happens?

DANNY

He saves the day.

SLATER

Or gets killed.

DANNY

Good point. I'll stay in the car.

(SLATER gets out)

Wait. What if staying in the car is what gets me killed?

SLATER

There's a gun in the glove compartment.

SLATER runs off. DANNY opens the glove compartment. Out pour all sorts of WEAPONS, guns, knives, brass knuckles, grenades, etc. He picks up a GUN.

EXT. HOTEL - MAIN ENTRANCE - SAME

SLATER heads for the door. Sees his old friend PRACTICE.

SLATER

Hey, Practice.

PRACTICE

Makes perfect. Decided to join me, huh?

SLATER

The Fart is a bomb. Gonna take out the whole Torelli mob. We gotta stop it.

PRACTICE

(quickly getting it)

That explains the break-in at the mortuary. Jesus, that's brilliant.

(snaps into action)

Come on! We'll use the service elevator in the back.

SLATER and Practice take off around the corner.

CUT TO

AN EMPTY ALLEY. A dead end.

SLATER

Who're you working for, John?

(Practice offers a puzzled look)

There's no side entrance on this building.

PRACTICE pulls a gun -

PRACTICE

Sorry, Jack. I didn't want it to go down this way.

SLATER

DANNY said not to trust you -- said you killed Moe Zart.

PRACTICE

(struggling to place the name)

I kill a lot of people, I can't remember half of them.

Suddenly a voice rings out from behind --

VOICE

How do you get to Carnegie Hall?

PRACTICE turns, keeping his gun on SLATER. There stands DANNY, his gun aimed at PRACTICE.

DANNY

In a boay bag, if you don't drop that.

PRACTICE moves fast, toward DANNY, still keeping the drop on SLATER.

PRACTICE

Doubtful.

DANNY's hand vibrates. He stands frozen

--PRACTICE rips the gun from his hand.

By the barrel.

PRACTICE

Thanks for the fingerprints, kid.

(chuckles)

You're about to murder Jack Slater.

Takes a pair of HANDCUFFS from his pocket. Tosses them to the kid.  
Nods toward a wall PIPE.

PRACTICE

Chain yourself to the pipe.

WIPE TO:

MOMENTS LATER

Satisfied that DANNY is cuffed securely, Practice removes a HANDKERCHIEF.  
Picks up DANNY's gun with it. Tucks his own gun in the back of his pants.  
Aims DANNY's gun at SLATER.

PRACTICE

See, Jack, these drug guys... they got more  
money than the U.S. Government.

DANNY looks on helplessly. Then remembers something. Checks in his back  
pocket. There it is...

The HANDCUFF KEY. The one the punk from the real world tossed in the toilet.

His attention is on SLATER, his back to DANNY. DANNY silently UNLOCKS the  
cuffs. Rises. Creeps forward.

SLATER

So you cut a deal with a Sicilian Scumbag like Vivaldi --

PRACTICE

-- right you are -- I'll explain it all to you, it doesn't matter, since you're going to die anyway. You see, Vivaldi made up with Torelli but it was false -- he's going to destroy him -- so in exchange for letting him alone, he gives me a profit percentage. I'll be rich, Jack -- I'll be rich and you'll be dead.

And that's when DANNY grabs the gun from PRACTICE's pants.

DANNY

Freeze!

PRACTICE is momentarily thrown. In a split second, SLATER slaps the gun from his hand, twists his arm behind his back, rams him against the wall.

SLATER

Toss me the cuffs.

DANNY throws the cuffs to SLATER, keeps the gun on PRACTICE.

DANNY

(to PRACTICE)

God, are you an idiot -- you made the classic movie mistake -- don't explain so much. You had us. You could have just killed us, but no, you had to tell us everything -- you had to get in those last words -- if you'd just fired, you'd have won, but no, you're just a typical villain -- dumb.

MAN'S VOICE

(OVER)

You ain't no genius yourself, kid.

It's VIVALDI. Shit. DANNY lowers the gun.

VIVALDI

You just made the same mistake.

MOMENTS LATER

SLATER and DANNY up against the wall. PRACTICE once again has the draw on them. Benedict checks his watch, says to VIVALDI:

BENEDICT

The Fart goes off in seven minutes.

VIVALDI

Go get the car. Move it, chop chop.

BENEDICT stares coldly at VIVALDI... then obeys orders. VIVALDI turns to SLATER and DANNY, says:

VIVALDI

Well, I'd love to stay and watch the fun, but I have to go establish my alibi. Arrivadercci.

He goes down the alley, around the corner. Gone.

SLATER

(to DANNY)

Is this the day you talked about saving?

DANNY

I don't see you doing anything.

SLATER

Wouldn't want to steal your thunder.

EXT. HOTEL - SAME

VIVALDI's LIMO. The CHINAMAN driving. BENEDICT holds the door for VIVALDI. Starts to follow him into the car.

VIVALDI

No, you stay here. Makes sure everything goes as planned. You've had Slater in front of the eight ball before, but you always screwed it up.

He SLAMS the door. The Limo takes off. BENEDICT watches it go.

BENEDICT

That's behind the eight ball, you imbecile.

He takes off his sunglasses. His GLASS EYE is a cheerful Christmas SNOWMAN, complete with top hat.

BACK IN THE ALLEY

PRACTICE

Gentlemen, someone once told me that I talk too much.

(he aims)

No more words.

BANG-! BANG-! Two shots. They echo down the alley.

JOHN PRACTICE falls over. DEAD. Revealing -

THE ANIMATED CAT, his gun still smoking.

SLATER  
(checks his watch)  
Whiskers! Where the hell were you?

ANIMATED CAT  
Sorry, Jack. Animated mouse.

The cat tosses SLATER a GUN

SLATER  
Thanks, Whiskers. I owe you one.

ANIMATED CAT  
Forget it - you saved my fur plenty of times -

SLATER frisks PRACTICE. Takes a cigar. His gun. And FBI badge.  
Starts to move fast, barking to the cat:

SLATER  
Seal off the area, we got a possible  
chemical explosion in five minutes.

For DANNY, he gestures at the HUGE CRANE in the construction site next door.

SLATER  
That hook needs to be at the roof in two  
minutes. Go.

DANNY  
How do I get them to do that?

He hands DANNY the gun he lifted from PRACTICE.

SLATER  
Persuade them.

SLATER takes off into the building.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

A burly guy works the controls of the crane. He looks down in time to see a kid running at him with a gun.

DANNY  
MOVE THAT CRANE OVER TO THE ROOF.

The BURLY GUY takes off -- scared -- as do all the other workers. 90,000 kids have guns in L.A. Why wait around?

DANNY IS ALONE NOW.



DANNY  
 WAIT! HOW DO I WORK THIS THING??  
 (Looks at the absurdly  
 complex controls...)  
 ...I don't even know how to drive...

MEANWHILE, SLATER rides the glass elevator toward the fifteenth floor...

WHILE AT THE CONSTRUCTION SITE –  
 DANNY wrestles levers. The machine shudders. Groans. Begins to ROTATE.  
 The SKYHOOK starts to move

BACK WITH SLATER: he sees the HOOK heading his way. Bingo.  
 He falls in line with the mourners. Totally out of place. Jeans. Baseball cap.  
 Begins to PUSH his way ahead in line, muttering:

SLATER  
 'Scuse me, pardon me... Pardon me, 'scuse  
 me...

Shoulders his way forward. People gripe. He BOWLS forward, relentless.  
 Until he stands looking down at Leo's cherubic face...

SLATER  
 (sighs)  
 He was a good man... A flatulent man...

Suddenly he frowns. Leans down, looking BEWILDERED...  
 Makes a pip-squeak noise, from the corner of his mouth.

SLATER  
 (gasps )  
 Did you hear that?

Stares, dumbstruck, at the bloated corpse.

SLATER  
 (sotto)  
 Help! Get me outta here, hey, get me outta  
 here!

He stands BOLT upright. Turns to the crowd and SHOUTS:

SLATER  
 My God, THIS MAN'S NOT DEAD!!

A FUROR erupts among the thugs. SLATER wastes no time – already prying  
 Leo OUT OF THE CASKET.

SLATER  
 Quick, OUT OF MY WAY, THIS MAN NEEDS A  
 DOCTOR!!

He wrestles the 300 pound bulk to his shoulders. Starts to run...

*THRU THE CROWD -- they part, gasping. Faces contorted in shock.  
(A man just walked in & stole the corpse...)*

THE SKYHOOK dead ahead. Coming around. Approaching the roof.

SLATER makes for it at a dead run...

SLATER  
I NEED A DOCTOR!

He knocks PEOPLE aside. SHOUTS. Pandemonium.  
GUNS begin to appear. AN OLDER MAN steps in front of Slater--

OLDER MAN  
I'm a doctor.

SLATER stops. Thinks. Oh, shit.

SLATER  
Look at his chin.

The doctor bends to look. SLATER delivers a lightning jab.  
Puts the doc out like a light. Reacts in horror:

SLATER  
THE DOCTOR'S FAINTED!! Somebody help this  
man! I'll take the corpse -- I mean --  
patient..uh--  
(beat)  
LOOK! AN ELEPHANT!

He bolts.

100 MOBSTERS (including Wives, Old Ladies & Kids )  
*draw guns as one, training them on SLATER's exposed back.*

GUNMAN #1  
Easy! Don't shoot, he'll drop Leo!

Indeed, SLATER teeters on the edge, reaching for the HOOK...  
Which sails up to him --  
And CONTINUES RIGHT PAST...

INT. CABIN OF CRANE - DANNY  
fights the controls. Tries to reverse the mechanism.

UP ABOVE: THUGS DIVE  
for cover as the hook whooshes thru their midst.  
SLATER chases as...

DOWN BELOW: DANNY,

desperately slams a lever FORWARD.  
The crane DIPS.

SLATER, running from the hook, sees it disappear over the edge--  
He swears violently. Then hears ONE-HUNDRED GUNS COCK...

SLATER freezes at roof edge, turns slowly...  
Then throws his arms in the air --

SLATER  
Don't shoot!

A HORRIFIED GASP!! (Because in raising his arms,  
SLATER'S DROPPED LEO -- off the edge!)  
Rubberneckers at a crash site, everyone rushes to the edge,  
peering down...

LEO'S ON THE HOOK.  
Head lolling. Dead as a doornail.  
The crowd murmurs...

Meanwhile, SLATER ACTS. Punches a stomach. Kicks a knee. RUNS -

GUNFIRE ERUPTS. A leaden storm chases him, nowhere to run --  
So he JUMPS OFF THE BUILDING --

FROM INSIDE THE ELEVATOR:  
He plummets (to camera), hits the top, BAM! SAFETY GLASS spiderwebs. He  
starts to slide off, catches himself one-handed and-- , .  
-- THE CHOPPER'S COMING AROUND!! --

With the Blackhawk, he blows the lock off the roof HATCH.  
Somersaults down in, bashes the "Open Door" button--

-- THE CHOPPER LINES UP, CHAIN GUNS LOCK ON --

SLATER, punching buttons, get me outta here!  
The elevator goes "Ding". Doors open, SLATER lurches forward  
AND STOPS --

THE CORRIDOR'S FILLED WITH THUGS!  
Thirty guns pointing, more spilling from the stairs--

SLATER THROWS HIMSELF FLAT as --

--THE CHOPPER OPENS FIRE, full auto, guns BLAZING --

-- GUNFIRE WHIZZES over SLATER's head --

-- CHOPPING UP thugs in the corridor  
(and spewing bullfitts out the far side of building).

Shouts. Screams. Elevator door, punched to a sieve, sliding shut --

SLATER begins to DESCEND--  
 Chopper rotates nose down, aiming--  
 SLATER prepares to die --  
 Pilot's finger ON THE TRIGGER --

ANOTHER ANGLE  
 --When DANNY'S CRANE APPEARS (dangling Leo)  
 -- AND CLIPS THE TAIL ROTOR!!! --

CHOPPER STARTS TO SPIN.  
 Pilot knows he's bought it -- JAMS THE TRIGGERS --  
 He misses SLATER, BUT SAWS A LINE IN THE FACE OF THE BUILDING  
 JUST ABOVE THE ELEVATOR.

The chopper spins from sight: Detonates.

As SLATER waves bye-bye...

CRRAAAACKKKK!!!! Torn metal lets go--  
 THE TOP OF THE ELEVATOR DISENGAGES FROM THE BUILDING!  
 Opens like a flower petal, spilling SLATER...

...OUT INTO SPACE.  
 He plunges, hunk of broken railing in hand, until...

...He catches Leo the Fart's ankle!  
 Collides in mid-air. Swings wildly but manages to hang on.  
 Dangling eight stories up, he shouts to DANNY:

SLATER  
 STOP THE CRANE WHEN I TELL YOU!

He starts to CLIMB LEO. Scaling his way up the behemoth.  
 Pauses, startled --  
 Because Leo's TICKING.

He grips the CABLE above the hook. Climbs. Hand over hand.  
 Digital watch ticking down: 28... 27... 26...  
 SLATER looks below, desperate. Checking left... checking right --

THERE IT IS! A sickly black pool, and cheesy stuffed dinosaurs.  
 AND PAINTED ON A ROOFTOP --

THE LA BREA TAR PITS  
 SLATER SCREAMS TO DANNY:

SLATER  
 NOW, DANNY! FULL STOP!

DOWN IN THE CRANE: DANNY  
 throttles down. The crane shudders to a STOP.

SLATER hangs from the cable. Starts to KICK THE CORPSE--

bashes Leo's lolling head, trying to dislodge the tub of lard.

THE WATCH keeps ticking: 12... 11... 10...

And Leo's going nowhere.

Turning lazy circles, dead face leering at SLATER. Who kicks harder.

9... 8... 7...

The hell with it.

With an angry cry, SLATER lets go -- falls, grabbing Leo and YANKING BACK AND FORTH like an animal --

SLATER

Come on, you gasbag, COME ON!!

There's an abrupt RIP!! --

They fall. Tumbling. One alive and kicking. One dead and ticking.

AN ASTONISHING SPLASH as they hit tar.

An impact that'd kill a lesser man -- only PISSES OFF Jack SLATER.

Leo plunges from sight. Sinking deep below the surface.

SLATER comes up with a growl, tar bubbling off his lips.

Swims for shore. Thru goo.

DANNY runs into the park. Firing his gun in the air like a madman.

DANNY

Everybody out! Now, Goddammit, NOW! Get those kids out, EVERYBODY OUT!!

People run screaming.

DANNY races to the POOL OF TAR as SLATER wrestles to shore.

Before either can speak, however --

There's an ominous GURGLING. Down in the tar.

Rumbling. Getting louder.

They watch, horrified... as GIANT TAR BUBBLE rises from the lake, like some resurrected animal, struggling to be free.

The bubble ripples... wavers... A good TEN FEET across.

Ready to BURST... But then, before their eyes, it SUBSIDES.

Imprisoned in tar.

SLATER heaves a sigh of relief...

SLATER

Silent but deadly...

SLATER snatches paper towels from a convenient nearby dispenser, Goes to work on his face.

SLATER  
 (To DANNY)  
 Bring the car around.

DANNY  
 The helicopter landed on it.

SLATER  
 I hate it when that happens.

SLATER's face is now clean...

DANNY  
 You know far actually sticks to some people.

WHITNEY roars up in her truck --

WHITNEY  
 Dad, I heard you were here, so I figured you  
 could use some clothes.

DANNY  
 (aghast)  
 Nobody finds this a little convenient?  
 Nobody's bothered by this amazingly  
 inconceivable coincidence?

SLATER  
 --Kid, you've been saying it's a movie--

DANNY  
 But your others at least made sense!

SLATER  
 So this was probably tampered with by studio  
 executives...  
 (And as he takes off,  
 DANNY in pursuit --)

CUT TO:

THE GIANT VIVALDI HOUSE AS BENEDICT drives up fast.

THE CHINAMAN opens the front door as BENEDICT steps into the foyer.  
 From deep in the house comes:

VIVALDI  
 (over)  
 Come on, move your butt.

BENEDICT hurries past the CHINAMAN, turning a corner.  
 Alone, he stops -- and takes out the GOLDEN TICKET.

It's glowing again.  
Hesitantly, BENEDICT pokes a finger at the wall...

VIVALDI

(over)  
I'm dyin' out here... How'd it go?!

The finger goes in.  
He withdraws it, and with an odd confidence in his tone, answers...

BENEDICT

Splendid...It went splendidly.

Moving on, he finds VIVALDI at the In-Pool BAR:

VIVALDI

I want to know it all. Was it perfect?

BENEDICT

(smiles ironically)  
Without a flaw.

VIVALDI

The gas went off okay?

BENEDICT

Like clockwork. You should have seen it.  
Men, women, children. Dropping left and  
right. Writhing, screaming. Leaping to their  
doom to escape the pain.

VIVALDI

(near orgasm)  
Really?

BENEDICT

No, not really. I'm lying.

He pulls his gun. Aims at VIVALDI.

BENEDICT

Everything went to hell. In fact, I'm having a  
terrible day. Largely because of you.

He cocks the gun.

VIVALDI

Benedict, what is this? One minute you're my  
friend, then you do a total 360 on me.

BENEDICT

One eighty, you stupid -- !! One eighty, if I did a three-sixty I'd go completely around, I'd be BACK WHERE I STARTED!

VIVALDI

(long pause)

What?

BENEDICT shoots him. Dead.  
Holsters the gun--

BENEDICT

Finally. No more toadying for second rate Sicilian thugs. No more fawning for fools who can think off nothing better to do with money than buy bimbo's and ludicrous houses!

(He looks for a moment at the faintly glowing ticket, puts it back in his pocket)

Now I possess real power, the power to control..

(And now, voice building, he stares directly into camera)

If that little turd Daniel Madigan can move thru parallel worlds, I can move thru parallel worlds. In and out. In -- steal whatever I want - and out -- impossible to catch.

(a peak)

I knew if I said my prayers long enough, someday they'd be answered.

THE TOUGH CHINAMAN appears --

CHINAMAN

You want me vacuum now?

BENEDICT

No, but I suspect the pool could use some attention...

The CHINAMAN nods and --

SLATER AND DANNY DRIVE THRU THE WALL ABOVE HIM !! --

In WHITNEY's truck, they blast thru the balustrade and drop to the main hall, squashing a statue flat --

Up pops SLATER. Gun up -- The Chinaman silently raises his hands.

SLATER

DON'T MOVE!!



BENEDICT freezes. His hand on his gun. Inside his jacket.  
He decides to live. Slowly he pulls his hand out. Shows SLATER empty palms.

BENEDICT  
All right, Slater I'll go quietly.

SLATER holsters the Blackhawk. Advances.

SLATER  
The hell you will.

He PUNCHES BENEDICT in the gut. The villain doubles over.

SLATER  
That's for blowing up my second cousin's house.

He straightens BENEDICT up. Then slaps him lightly on the wrist. A mere tap --

SLATER  
That's for blowing up my ex-wife's house.  
(leans in)  
But this one...

*And friends, we've never seen SLATER madder...*

SLATER  
This is for my daughter's black eye.

He grabs BENEDICT and with a Herculean grunt, hurls him at the CHINAMAN --  
--they smash against the nearest wall-- and disappear thru it...

SLATER.  
(beat, beat)  
Usually when I do that, it leaves a hole.

DANNY goes to the wall -- puts his hand against it -- it ripples, as if it were jello. His fingers sink in. He pulls his hand back, turns to SLATER.

DANNY  
He has the ticket, Jack.  
(Beat)  
That's the key to everything --it's magic.  
(o shit)  
My world -- he's gone over to MY WORLD.  
(Pushes again--it still ripples)  
The doorway must still be open. Come on.

SLATER looks at the wall. Hesitant.

SLATER

(the first time he's said this)  
I'm not worried that you're crazy anymore,  
Danny -- I'm worried that you're right.

(Beat)

If I go, how do I get back?

DANNY

Jack, you can't go thru life nit-picking every  
little thing...

They step toward the wall. SLATER takes a final look around.

SLATER

The hell with it.

HE AND DANNY leap into the wall --

--falling, falling--

--landing hard -- it hurts --

--they're on the floor of THE PANDORA THEATRE--

--and BENEDICT & THE TOUGH CHINAMAN are tearing out an exit door --

DANNY

(staggering to his feet)  
C'mon--I oughta see if Nick's o.k.--

SLATER

(tearing off toward the exit  
door)

No time -- c'mon!

They race for the exit.

CUT TO

SLATER AND DANNY outside. For an instant, SLATER looks around.

SLATER

(confused)  
We're in New York?

DANNY

Jack, it all makes sense, I'll explain it to you  
(thinks)  
--no, it makes absolutely no sense, but I'll  
explain it to you anyway. Later. Meantime,  
be careful. Things work different here.

CUT TO

EXT. 42ND STREET - NIGHT

BENEDICT AND THE CHINAMAN race to flag a cab .  
BENEDICT sticks a gun in the cabbie's face --

BENEDICT

Get out.

The exchange is made. BENEDICT piles in, the Chinaman drives, as

SLATER and DANNY race into view.

As the cab pulls away, SLATER hefts the Blackhawk -- Targets the gas tank --

SLATER

Here's another explosion for your movie, kid.

He FIRES... and PLINK! A tiny hole appears in the car.  
It roars around the corner. SLATER glares at DANNY --

SLATER

Not a word. Not one word.

He sees an ACURA LEGEND. Parked at the curb. Smashes the window,  
climbers inside -- a man possessed.

With BENEDICT and the CHINAMAN,  
weaving thru traffic. BENEDICT darts a glance at the rearview mirror --

THE ACURA, behind them. Coming up fast.

IINT. ACURA -DRIVING SAME

SLATER glances from the road to his hand --

SLATER

My hand... it really hurts.

DANNY

See? Things work different. You can't smash a  
car window with your bare hands and not  
have it hurt.

SLATER

Thanks for sharing, you couldn't say this  
earlier?

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - NIGHT

The two vehicles race thru nighttime streets. Faster and faster --  
except it's amazingly bumpy, with huge potholes --

Two WORKMEN carry a gigantic pane of GLASS across the street.

A PAINTER on a ladder strings Halloween banners.

A MAN balances a towering WEDDING CAKE from bakery to car.

They all look up briefly as two cars go rocketing by...

PAINTER

Damn kids.

They go back to what they're doing. We never see them again.

WITH SLATER AND DANNY - DRIVING

SLATER screeches around a bend. Following a taxi. He suddenly swears. STOMPS the brake, slues to a halt...

EXT. STREET SCENE - SAME

It's a DEAD END STREET.

And the cab waits at the end. Half a mile away. Facing SLATER. The Chinaman REVS his engine. Once. Twice.

DANNY

(groans)

No way. Slater, please listen to me. It won't work, you hear me? You can't play chicken in real life, you'll crash!

SLATER REVS his engine. Once. Twice.

SLATER

Out of the car, amigo.

DANNY

This isn't the movies anymore! Here you've gotta reload guns and car crashes can kill you. You hear me...You. Are. Going. To. Crash.

They hear a screech of tires -- HERE COMES BENEDICT'S CAR --

SLATER

Go.

He shoves DANNY out. DANNY stumbles from the car as SLATER FLOORS IT.

DANNY

You're gonna DIE!

Two vehicles. Racing forward. Forty miles an hour. Closing the gap. No one swerving. Forty-five. Fifty!

They crash.

Head on. Metal shears. Glass explodes. The impact is thunderous. They lurch SKYWARD for a moment. Locked together...

The CHINAMAN flies THRU his windshield -- across the intervening space -- THRU SLATER's windshield. Lands in the front seat. Broken.

The cars SLAM back down. Rock to a halt.

DANNY runs toward the accident as fast as he can.  
Dashes to the driver's side, fearing the worst...

INSIDE THE CAR, SLATER 'S stunned by the impact. He breathes heavily.  
In pain. This hasn't happened to him before. As he manages to get out --

SLATER  
(soft, surprised)  
That hurt.

DANNY  
You're lucky you're alive, you dumb --

SLATER  
(cutting him off)  
'89 Acura Legend. Standard driver-side air  
bag. Checker cab. No air bag.  
(taps his temple)  
Who's dumb?

He makes his way to the cab, manages to pull a door open --

INSIDE. It's empty. No one.

SLATER  
(stunned)  
He couldn't have jumped.

DANNY.  
Maybe the ticket's on all the time now.

SLATER, confused, tired, shaking his head --  
-- but that's nothing compared to what happens next --.

CUT TO

A HUGE FORTY FOOT BILLBOARD. Bright. Dynamic. His face ten feet tall,  
accompanied by big bold lettering:

**ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER IS JACK SLATER!!!**

DANNY watches as reality begins to hit SLATER. Crush him, more accurately.

SLATER  
(whispered)  
What... is... this... place... ? Where... am... I...  
now... ?

He can't tear his eyes away. DANNY watches as the big man visibly crumbles.

SLATER  
 (reaching for the boy)  
 ...Do you know somewhere I can sit down...?

LONG SHOT:

SLATER AND DANNY, tiny beneath the billboard.  
 They pass what looks like a corpse -- SLATER reaches, as always, for a cigar --  
 -- only it's not a corpse, it's a HOMELESS MAN, furious at being disturbed.

SLATER'S shocked the guy's alive.  
 Right now, anything might shock him. Hold a beat--

THE HOMELESS MAN falls back in a stupor,  
 DANNY leads SLATER away....

CUT TO:

THE STAIRS OF THE PANDORA THEATRE, DANNY racing up two at a time:

DANNY  
 Nick-Nick--

NICK hurries out of the projection booth.  
 SLATER stays in the background for this next, watching --

NICK  
 Omigod, I was so worried; you're o.k.

DANNY  
 DID YOU SEE WHAT HAPPENED?

NICK  
 (embarrassed)  
 Aw, kid, I slept the sleep of the dead in here.  
*Four in the morning when I woke, you'd gone home--*

DANNY  
 I wasn't home Nick--I was in the movie, --the ticket works.

There is a pause while NICK digests this bit of information.

NICK  
 I'm getting on in years Danny --define "in."

DANNY

(his excitement is  
contagious --the words  
pour out)

-- I played chicken against some killers,  
Whitney kissed me right on the mouth, I drove  
one of those giant cranes and dropped Leo  
the Fat into the La Brea Tar Pits --

(big)

I was with Jack Slater every step of the way.

NICK CLOSE UP. No question, he's a believer now. He's also near tears...

NICK

All the years I've wasted...been too  
frightened, but it's not too late -- I can still go  
visit Garbo in Camille, Jean Harlow, I had such  
a crush -- Monroe in Bus Stop --

NICK stops as he sees SLATER --

NICK

--excuse me for going on like that, sir.

(sincerely)

I'm a great fan of your work.

DANNY

(whispers)

Nick, it isn't who you think.

NICK

(not an instant's doubt,  
holds out his hand to  
shake)

This is a wonderful moment for me Mr. Slater --  
I've never met a fictional character before.  
How new and exciting this all must be.

SLATER, over the initial shock, but not entirely himself. Battered. Weary.

SLATER

New? Exciting? I just found out I was imaginary-- How would you feel if you found some Hollywood putz made you up? His name is Roger, he drives an Audi. Your marriage? Your *two kids*? Sorry, he thought them up, too. Good ol' Roger. You were supposed to have three kids, but he ran out of TYPEWRITER RIBBON! And oh, yeah, almost forgot: Roger's throwing your son off a building, give you nightmares, but hell, you're fictional, WHO CARES??

(big)

I'm sorry, but I don't find it new and exciting to discover *my life is a goddam movie*.

NICK goes to SLATER, instinctively putting an arm around the other's shoulder.

NICK

You're young, you're impressionable, but listen to me -- there are lots worse things than movies -- there's politicians and wars and forest fires and famine and sickness and pain and politicians and

SLATER

(cutting in)

You said them already.

NICK

I know I did, they're twice as bad as anything--

SLATER smiles in spite of himself. The mood begins to pass.

NICK

(to DANNY)

Theatre's shut now -- I'm all that's left -- be clearing my stuff from the projection room, and then the wrecking ball takes over.... but now I got a second chance

(smiles holds out his hand)

Can I have my ticket back please?

DANNY'S does his best to try to put a bright face on things --

DANNY

Uhm -- we've got this one little hiccup to overcome first...

(Beat)

--Benedict's here too, and he's got the ticket.



NICK

The madman with the glass eye?

(DANNY nods. NICK is  
appalled.)

You know what that means?

(DANNY doesn't)

He could bring anybody else out that he  
wants to...

(HOLD, then--

CUT TO

INT. A COFFEE SHOP, 4 AM -

BENEDICT is reading the movie section of a paper, speaking as he does.  
At first, we can't tell who he's talking to...

BENEDICT

This should be fun for you -- I realized, after  
the car crash, that no matter how often I  
moved between worlds, I could never rest  
until Slater was stopped. And I can't seem to  
do it.

(and now he takes out a  
photograph of ARNOLD  
from his coat pocket.)

Now I realize you've never heard of this man,  
but his name, believe it or not, is Arnold  
Schwarzenegger and...

(We can see now that he  
is talking to THE RIPPER.  
Who holds a package  
wrapped in paper. Axe  
shaped.)

CUT TO:

INT. DANNY'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Just outside DANNY's apartment. He turns to SLATER, says:

DANNY

Just follow my lead...

SLATER nods as DANNY puts the key in the lock.

Before he can turn it, however --

DANNY'S MOM opens it. She's still in her uniform...not pleased

DANNY'S MOM

(fast and furious)

Don't you ever do this again, do you know  
what time it is? It's four in the morning --

DANNY  
 (tries to quiet her)  
 Mom, I'm sorry, okay, shhh --

DANNY'S MOM  
 -- Don't "shh" me, young man. The police call  
 me at the restaurant, we've been robbed,  
 then you're gone, I don't know what to think --

DANNY  
 -- okay, Mom, I'm fine, okay --

DANNY'S MOM  
 Where have you been?  
 And get *in* here, now --

DANNY hovers in the doorway.

DANNY  
 Um, Mom..? You know how you always say  
 you wish I had more friends...?  
 (beat)  
 Well...

She looks up as a WORLD FAMOUS MOVIE STAR (so far as *she* knows) appears  
 in the doorway. Holds out his hand:

SLATER  
 Um... hello, Mrs. Madigan. Arnold  
 Braunschweiger.

She looks at him like he's grown a tail.

INT. DANNY'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

DANNY in a blanket on the couch. Wakes up. The clock reads: 1:58 p.m.  
 He stretches. Walks out to see:

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

SLATER and Danny's Mom, sitting at the table. Still wearing their clothes from  
 the night before. A RADIO plays in the background.

DANNY'S MOM  
 Well, good morning/afternoon to you. Eggs?

DANNY  
 Scrambled. Have you been up all night?

DANNY'S MOM

Why didn't you tell me Jack was a cop on loan from California.? And you were looking at mug shots until late.

DANNY snaps a look at Jack --

SLATER

And why didn't you tell me you didn't have any friends? And what's this business going to the movies at midnight when you knew your mother would worry?

DANNY's Mom gives him a pointed smile as she rises to fix him breakfast. DANNY looks from her to SLATER to her.

DANNY

Mom ... you turned him into a wimp.

DANNY'S MOM

He's just more three dimensional. Toast?

DANNY

No thanks. Jack, are you okay...?

SLATER

We talked. I've never just... talked ....to a ....woman

DANNY squints at him. Goes into bathroom. Gets toothpaste, starts brushing... looks in mirror and grumbles:

DANNY

Wimp.  
Next they'll be doin' that mushy stuff.....

DANNY returns to the sound of SLATER and his mother laughing. Plops himself at the table. Announces:

DANNY

Me 'n Jack are going out today. I'm helping him. On a case.

DANNY'S MOM

Your license to kill is grounded, young man.

DANNY

Mom, I have to help, I'm a witness

DANNY'S MOM

You'll need a witness! I get off the night shift at four AM and you're not home?! What're you trying to do...kill me?

SLATER

Irene...

DANNY's eyebrows shoot up: It's worse than he thought.

SLATER

(soothing her)

Don't worry. It's won't be hard. There are only  
eight million in this city...and I'm very good at  
catching people.

DANNY

Yeah...and the future of the world may be at  
stake! And maybe--

Jack holds a hand up for silence --

He's listening...

The radio is playing some classical music (the Elvira Madigan theme).

SLATER.

Could you turn that up please...

Irene does.

The theme plays, the three of them listening...

SLATER

What's that?

(looking from Danny to  
Danny's Mom)

MOM

Mozart.

SLATER

(to DANNY)

The guy Practice killed?

DANNY

(about to explain, then,  
gently)

That's right, Jack.

SLATER

(moved)

Pretty.

MOM

You like music?

SLATER listens. Then -- quietly --

SLATER

...I don't know...

(Beat)

...I think I will...

DANNY

(eyes roll)

We gotta get you outta here.

The theme blossoms, and

CUT TO

A GASPING SHOT FROM WAY ABOVE NEW YORK.  
Magnificent and kind of overwhelming.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL: SLATER AND DANNY  
on top of the Empire State Building...

DANNY

You really expect to catch him?

SLATER

(peering down)

I always catch everybody.

DANNY

You think you're just gonna spot him from up  
here?

SLATER

Look -- you're from Pennsylvania, I've never  
been anywhere real; I'm getting my bearings.

(And now he's off)

C'mon.

(As DANNY follows him)

CUT TO

EXTERIOR OF A LARGE GUN STORE. It's starting to drizzle.  
SLATER AND DANNY stand watching from across the street...

DANNY

He's just going to tap us on the shoulder, that's  
your plan?

SLATER

Probably not -- but he must know my gun  
doesn't work as well here -- so he must know  
his doesn't either -- he might try trading up.

BEHIND THEM, is a florist.

SLATER is caught -- distracted even -- by the beauty of the flowers.

A KID in a Halloween costume stops, stares --

CONAN  
Omigod, Arnold.

SLATER  
Bug off.

DANNY  
(whispered)  
Jack, kids here idolize you--

SLATER sighs, nods.

SLATER  
Sorry.

CONAN  
'Okay -- Total Recall was awesome.

SLATER turns to DANNY

SLATER  
Total Recall?

DANNY  
Secret Agent on Mars.

SLATER nods, glances once more at the gun shop, then moves quickly off,  
DANNY pursuing as we

CUT TO

TIMES SQUARE. LATE AFTERNOON. It's raining.

SLATER AND DANNY watch a SHOP THAT SELLS IN GLASS EYES.  
Nearby, an art store specializes in reproductions -- Van Gogh -- Monet --  
SLATER studies them, rain dripping off his baseball cap.

DANNY  
I thought we were supposed to look for him,  
find, him and finish him.

SLATER  
(Holding two fingers close  
together)  
I'm this far away from capturing him.

TWO MORE HALLOWEEN KIDS approach, a Terminator and an Arnold from  
Commando.

COMMANDO  
I liked Predator.

DANNY  
Alien in the Jungle.

SLATER  
Alien in the Jungle? That sounds terrible.

DANNY  
They made a sequel.

SLATER  
Was I in it?

DANNY  
No.

SLATER  
Smart move.

As the kids get paper out for SLATER to sign-

CUT TO

DANNY. It's his first real day of detective work and it's boring.  
He yawns, watches the glass-eye shop, then turns away--

--and at that precise moment, who should come out of the shop  
but BENEDICT, still carrying his paper under his arm.

He hops into a waiting cab, drives off --which is the precise moment when  
DANNY spots him -- no, it couldn't be -- then MY GOD, IT'S HIM.

DANNY  
(Pulling at SLATER. Yelling)  
Jack!

And as he points --

SLATER sees the cab with BENEDICT driving away--

--and a look hits his face -- the look he had at the start of the movie--  
CLOSE UP as his body bursts into action --  
--A MAN IS CHASING A CAB --

--But it's afternoon, Times Square, it's raining --

--and traffic is slow.

CUT TO

SLATER, racing across the sidewalk, jumping on top of the first cab by the  
curb -- he stands a moment, looking --

CUT TO

THE WIDE STREET -- choked with cabs -- all looking the same.

CUT TO

SLATER. Here's the thing, he always does get whoever he's after, he knows that, and now in the middle of this madness, he takes off again, running from cab roof to neighboring roof, to the next after that --

-- and there's honking and hollering and cursing but nothing in the world bothers JACK SLATER when he's like this --

DANNY stares: that's his hero up there, taking this amazing journey, and

CUT TO

BENEDICT, unaware, calmly in his cab, reading the paper, and

CUT TO

SLATER, closing in, getting nearer to BENEDICT's cab --

-- he vaults to the next roof top --

-- then the next --

-- then suddenly he loses balance, fights to get it back, can't and

-- crashes down hard in the middle of the street --

-- tries to get up --

THE NEAREST CAB slams its brakes -- no good --

-- his bumper hits SLATER, not enough to maim, but a helluva wallup --

-- SLATER'S knocked onto the trunk of the cab in front, taking the blow well as he can and

CUT TO

DANNY cries out, bolts into traffic, dodging this way, that way and

CUT TO

SLATER, staggering on his feet, climbing painfully from the trunk-- DANNY, coming up behind --

CUT TO

BENEDICT's CAB as they reach it.

SLATER throws the door open --

--empty.

A newspaper is all that's left.

SLATER slams the door in blind fury.

BUT DANNY reaches in, retrieves the paper from the back seat...



CUT TO

THE FAR SIDEWALK AS THEY REACH IT.

DANNY

Jack? Look --

CUT TO

THE PAPER. It's the movie page and a big ad is circled. It reads:

TONIGHT: IN PERSON

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

IN THE WORLD PREMIERE OF

JACK SLATER IV

Thunder rumbles as we

CUT TO

OUTSIDE THE PREMIERE OF JACK SLATER IV . NIGHT

Flashbulbs popping. A throng of people. A limo door opens --  
AND JACK SLATER steps out with a big smile and a tuxedo...

No, that's not right --

ARMY ARCHERD (or similar scribe) a miked platform, straightens us out --

ARMY ARCHERD

...YES, ladies and gentlemen, Mr. ARNOLD  
SCHWARZENEGGER, with his lovely and  
talented wife, MARIA SHRIVER!

Smiles and a million flashbulbs. The line of limo's moves up...

WHILE ACROSS THE STREET,

in the rain, in the crowd behind the police line, we find DANNY & SLATER.  
SLATER has a dark look. He understood there was a man with his face, but  
until this moment, he hadn't seen him. Besides, his shoulder hurts from the taxi  
and he's been standing in a cold rain for four hours.  
He shakes it off, snaps his face away.  
DANNY looks worried about him:

DANNY

Shouldn't we be inside?

SLATER

Benedict wants me -- where I am is what matters. He's a Shooter...we watch the rooftops and work the crowd...  
And lstay in the open.

CUT TO

ARNOLD AND MARIA, as they approach the miked area. BOTH are smiling as she whispers --

MARIA

Please -- don't plug the restaurants - --I hate it when you plug the restaurants --  
Or the gyms --it's so tacky it's humiliating--  
(she is about to continue  
as we

CUT TO

SLATER weaving thru the crowd, eyes raking. He misses nothing! He's pulled his cap down so as not to be bothered by people who think he's ARNOLD.

CUT TO

ARMY ARCHERD, steps forward to interview ARNOLD. MARIA stands alongside, smiling away but watching him very closely.

ARMY ARCHERD

Tell us about Jack Slater IV, Arnold -- I know you're proud of it, but how is it different from the first three?

ARNOLD

Oh, night and day. This one goes much deeper. It has many more philosophical implications, a much more religious aspect. We only kill twenty-two people in this one compared to an average of over sixty in the others.

(beat)

"Deeper, deeper, deeper," that's my motto.

ARMY ARCHERD

And what can we look for next?

ARNOLD

My next movie is a biography of Sigmund Freud. I wrote the screenplay myself. Playing a tiny psychiatrist will be an acting stretch for me, I know, but if you keep repeating yourself, the audience finds you out.

(beat)

Freud was Austrian too, you know.

ARMY ARCHERD

(starting to lead  
applause)

Just a wonderful Hollywood success story -

ARNOLD

(leaping at the opening)  
--and speaking of Holly--

But MARIA yanks him away from the mike before anything else can be heard.

MARIA

(whispering as they smile  
and leave)

You're just hopeless - you shouldn't play a tiny psychiatrist, you should see one.

CUT TO

OUTSIDE. SLATER and DANNY work the crowd, searching faces in the rain.

CUT TO

ARMY ARCHERD looks up as a new celeb approaches along the red carpet runway: Big guy. Carrying an axe.

ARMY ARCHERD

Oh dear, look who's turned out to celebrate. It's The Ripper from Jack Slater III. Scary! Let's AXE him a question, shall we?

He leans down, speaks to the axe murderer.

ARMY ARCHERD

Hello, Rip, what are you up to tonight?

RIPPER

(he's never been  
interviewed)

I -- I thought I might kill someone.

Army laughs good-naturedly. Pats him on the back.

ARMY ARCHERD

How about that, folks, what a cutup. Oh, look,  
it's JAMIE FARR!!

THE RIPPER moves on. Approaches the entrance. Just then a SECURITY  
GUARD accosts him:

GUARD

I'm sorry, sir, I can't let you in dressed like that.

The killer turns his baleful GLARE upon the suddenly squeamish guard. Before  
anything happens, however, an IMMACULATELY DRESSED MAN with a tan  
overcoat rushes up and says:

IMMACULATE MAN

It's okay, officer. This man's an actor, I'm his  
agent.

He leads THE RIPPER into the theatre lobby.

BACK OUTSIDE - WITH ARMY ARCHERD

An actor approaches. Army speaks into the microphone.

ARMY ARCHERD

And here's a late arrival... ah, yes, Brad  
Conners, the actor who played...

(falters)

The Ripper... but I thought -

INT. THEATRE LOBBY - SAME TIME

The immaculately dressed man speaks imploringly to THE RIPPER.

IMMACULATE MAN

Jesus H. Christ, Brad, are you nuts? You wanna  
play axe killers the rest of your life?? Come on,  
let's get you cleaned up.

He motions to a nearby usher. Holds out a fifty dollar bill.

IMMACULATE MAN

I need to use the manager's office for five  
minutes.

CUT TO

THE LOBBY. PACKED NOW.

ARNOLD & MARIA moving toward the auditorium.

INT. THEATRE MANAGER'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

The immaculate man (still wearing a gorgeous tan overcoat) is hunched over a desk. On the phone:

IMMACULATE MAN

I need a tux as fast as you can get it to me.  
What? What do you mean, you can't?!

He doesn't see the axe rise but he FEELS it when it FALLS.

EXT. PREMIERE THEATRE - NIGHT

SLATER AND DANNY. DANNY seems increasingly upset. SLATER watches the crowd. His eyes never seem to blink.

CUT TO

THEATRE LOBBY:

PEOPLE file in for the movie. Among them is a tall man with a elegant tan overcoat. Beneath it, we get a glimpse of bloodied steel.

CUT TO

OUTSIDE. JACK AND DANNY.

DANNY

(He means this)  
I'm getting scored -

SLATER

-- don't be -- BENEDICT is afraid of me, I've  
seen it in his eyes -- he knows he cannot stop  
me --

DANNY. CLOSE UP. He eyes the film poster.  
A light bulb is going on...

DANNY

Jack... he can't stop you but ...  
what happens if he stops ... HIM...

He lays a finger on the poster, on the word SCHWARZENEGGER.

PUSH IN ON SLATER as the implications blossom in his head -

BANG! He whirls, flashes a badge (PRACTICE's) to the nearest cop,  
and races inside, DANNY right with him -

CUT TO

TWO GIRLS WORKING THE CANDY COUNTER. SLATER tosses away his cap.

SLATER  
 Where am I sitting?  
 (they exchange looks,  
 flustered, uncertain.)  
 Where?

CANDY GIRL  
 (pointing a trembling  
 finger)  
 Um... there's two balconies,  
 I think you're in the lower one.

SLATER spins on his heel.

SLATER  
 (to DANNY)  
 You stay -

DANNY  
 --Yeah, I know. I stay here.

SLATER  
 And be careful.

ON THE 2ND FLOOR LANDING, THE RIPPER  
 sees the door to the Lower Balcony and the stairs to the Upper.  
 Hesitates. Then moves for the stairs.

IN THE LOBBY,  
 DANNY stews, walks in a circle, obviously debating.  
 Decides:

DANNY  
 I should be checking the other balcony.  
 Definitely.

He pushes his way into the crowd on the stairs, using his small size to  
 scoot past people.

ON THE LOWER BALCONY,  
 SLATER comes thru the curtained doorway. Hand on the grip of his gun.

He darts looks around the balcony, in all the dark corners. Scans the people  
 crowding the aisle. Takes a deep breath. Nothing dangerous.

His eyes settle on the unfathomable image of SCHWARZENEGGER.  
 Seated in front. So elegant in his tux. The gorgeous wife.  
 SLATER stares. An alter ego from another world...

SLATER  
 (whispers)  
 I'll be a son of a bitch...

ON THE STAIRS TO THE UPPER BALCONY, DANNY

squeezes thru the crowd.

Up ahead, he spots a man in an elegant tan overcoat.

With a large cut in the back and what appear to be... blood stains.

He pushes, angling to see the face... it's... omigod -- IT'S THE RIPPER.

And the giant senses him staring, AND LOOKS DOWN AT HIM!

DANNY snaps his face away, but he can't do anything!

He's four feet tall, squeezed in a crowd, next to a child-murderer with an axe under his coat!

THE RIPPER eyes the boy carefully...then looks away...

They move, like cattle penned in a chute --

*if he can just to the aisle, if he can break out, if somehow he can get to Jack*

ON THE LOWER BALCONY, SLATER

scanning the crowd, suddenly hears DANNY's voice ring out in the theatre-

DANNY

JACK! IT'S THE RIPPER!

HE'S BROUGHT BACK THE RIPPER - !!

SLATER careens to the front of the balcony, looks up and --

There, above him ... is a reincarnated nightmare from his past...

THE RIPPER, axe high, ready to throw --

For an instant they lock eyes, lost together in time and space--

Then all hell breaks loose --

THE RIPPER dives from sight.

SLATER draws his gun. Leaps up, one foot on the balcony rail, one on a seat, assumes a firing stance and yells:

SLATER

EVERYBODY DOWN!! NOW!!

THE RIPPER flees across the front row of the upper balcony.

Screams and panic spread. SLATER shuts it out. Targets the coat. A nice big bulls eye --

And that's when ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER tackles SLATER to the ground.

The gun bounces away.

SLATER

Get off me, you jackass!

SLATER watches, helpless, -- As THE RIPPER leaps from the balcony,

plants the blade in the wall curtain and rides it down, fabric tearing --

-- then flees down an aisle and is gone.

SLATER's still struggling as Schwarzenegger roll's him over -- Gets a good LOOK.  
SLATER scowls:

SLATER

Yeah, yeah, I look like you. Now get off me --

DANNY, MEANWHILE, goes flying out of the top balcony, finds the stairs jammed with people, spots the huge ornamental banister, says why not? Hops on and goes flying down.

SCHWARZENEGGER & SLATER are getting to their feet:

ARNOLD

--the Studio should tell me when they're planning a stunt--

(studying SLATER)

You know, you are definitely the best celebrity look-alike I've ever seen --

(Slater starts to move up the aisle, Arnold hangs right with him, friendly)

-- there is one man in Idaho who is better than you in the face, but --

At the second floor landing, DANNY flies straight off the end and drops ten feet to the ground floor.  
(Kids can do that stuff)

He springs to his feet, unhurt and quite proud of himself and discovers what his stunt has gotten him -- HE'S FACE TO FACE WITH THE RIPPER!

BACK WITH SCHWARZENEGGER & SLATER:

ARNOLD

Call my office next time you're in L.A. I can get you lots of work, birthday parties, bachelor dinners -- the money really adds up--

SLATER turns on him:

SLATER

Look -- I don't really like you, all right?  
You've brought nothing but me pain.

JUST THEN THEY HEAR DANNY SCREAM FROM THE LOBBY --

SLATER is off like a shot--

EXT. THEATER - BACK EXIT - NIGHT

MOVIEGOERS SWARM from the exit, panicked.  
SLATER bursts from the crowd. Squints through the downpour --



A CRUDE MESSAGE has been scrawled on the box office in THE RIPPER's blood:

THE ROOF?

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - HIGH ABOVE THE CITY - NIGHT

The stairway door is rudely KICKED OPEN --  
And Jack SLATER emerges onto the rooftop. Gun up. Ready for anything.

HIS POV: The roof lashed by rain and lightning--  
And the too-familiar sight of....

THE RIPPER

with an axe at a kid's throat. DANNY's throat.  
They stand in tableau, pelted by rain. Lashed by forty-mile-an-hour WINDS.

THE RIPPER SHOUTS above the storm:

RIPPER

Welcome, old friend!

(beat)

I knew you'd come.

He GRINS... and we're right back at the beginning of the movie. A replay --  
Only it's not SLATER's son, it's DANNY -- and the poor kid's terrified.

SLATER stands, in wind and rain and lightning. Eyes dead. Like a shark's.

SLATER

Are you okay, Danny?

DANNY

(bravely)

Y--yes, sir...

RIPPER

Lose the piece, Jack.

(beat)

I mean it, Jack, I'll kill the boy, now LOSE THE  
GODDAMN PIECE!

FIERCE. PAIN in SLATER's eyes --

Tosses the gun off the roof. It drops from sight.

SLATER

There. It's between you and me. Let the boy  
go.

RIPPER

(chuckles)

We've played this number before, haven't we, Jack..?

He scratches his chin with the axe blade. Thoughtful:

RIPPER

Now let's see, what comes next? You throw away the gun, we did that part... You tell me to let the boy go...

(shrugs)

Ah. I'm getting bored, let's just skip to the end.

And with that, he grabs DANNY --

And throws him off the building.

HE THROWS HIM OFF THE FUCKING BUILDING.

The kid falls from sight.

Oh. My. God. To call JACK SLATER SHOCKED is to call Lake Michigan...  
He looks at the RIPPER --

The son of a bitch is LAUGHING. Standing in the rain, laughing.

RIPPER

That's called revenge, Jack!

SLATER. Trembling. A whisper:

SLATER

...that was...a mistake...

THE RIPPER's too overcome with laughter to hear.  
Hoists the axe in one hand, shouting:

RIPPER

Part one, Jack. Here's two!

He throws the axe at SLATER.

Throws it? Try SLINGS IT. The blade WHISTLES straight for SLATER's neck as

--SLATER FLINGS himself aside -- the axe THUNKs into a wooden pole. Sticks.  
SLATER darts a look upward: from the pole runs a POWER LINE.

The big guy doesn't miss a beat. Yanks free the axe -- CUTS THE CABLE.  
The line falls, HISSING AND SPITTING --

As SLATER LEAPS upward, hugs the pole. Feet clear of the roof as --

You guessed it. The cable hits the roof. SPARKS..!

Erupting everywhere, each puddle suddenly CRACKLING --

THE RIPPER JITTERS MADLY, doing the Saint Vitus' dance, as

BEHIND HIM, AN ENTIRE CITY BLOCK BLACKS OUT.

The premiere's CLOUD LAMPS are all that's left.

As the electrocuted maniac manages to scream:

RIPPER  
I'LL BE BAAAACKKKK!!!!

SLATER kicks the cable from the rooftop. The current subsides.  
THE RIPPER collapses. Face down in a puddle. Scorched and smoking.

SLATER wearily drops from the pole. Sinks down on a ventilator.  
Lifeless. Purposeless. Looks at his latest kill with no emotion but SADNESS:

SLATER  
I'll be waiting.

And that's when SLATER hears a very tiny voice -- barely audible --  
but... **yes...**!

SLATER races to roof's edge.--

THERE'S DANNY, TWENTY FEET DOWN--

Clutching a stone gargoyle by the SNOUT.

Dangling above a twenty story drop, Jesus..!

DANNY  
Jack! Help!

SLATER  
Hang on, I'll be right there!

EXT. SIDE OF SKYSCRAPER - SAME

He goes over the side like a spider. All confidence. Feet searching for  
toeholds -- except this is reality:  
HE CAN'T FIND ANY.

SLATER  
SHIIIT!!

His arm SHOOTS OUT, last second -- arrests his fall..!  
Now he's clutching a stone outcropping.  
Face to the brick. Breathing hard.

SLATER  
Danny..? This is really, really HARD.

DANNY  
Tell me about it, please HURRY!

SLATER  
Hang on, I'm finishing a magazine, OF COURSE  
I'LL HURRY.

He looks down. Wind. Darkness. Closes his eyes.

SLATER

God, please don't let him die.

He moves laterally. Toward the kid. Stops -- Clinging to a ledge.  
Above DANNY. Hangs with one hand. REACHES with the other...

SLATER

Okay, kid, Plan A: you grab my hand and we get out of here.

DANNY

That's your plan?

SLATER

Plan A, yes.

DANNY

What's Plan B?

SLATER

We fail twenty stories.

DANNY shoots him a look.

SLATER

It's not a great plan, I'll grant you.

(beat)

Come on, grab my hand.

DANNY

Jack, you can't support both our weights, we'll fall!

SLATER

(deep sigh)

Danny, you can't go through life nit-picking every little thing...

DANNY swallows hard. Reaches, trembling... Grabs SLATER's hand.  
LETS GO OF THE GARGOYLE.

SLATER takes the weight.

His face is a mask, tendons BUNCHED like steel cable. Straining.

DANNY's astonished...

SLATER is LIFTING him.

DANNY

Jack... what you're doing... is not POSSIBLE.

SLATER has bitten through his lower lip.

SLATER

You're right.

(beat)

Now shut up while I do it.

He throws DANNY UP ONTO THE ROOF.

A ROAR of effort, and a one-handed toss lands DANNY in a puddle of water. Roof's edge. He rolls over. Sucking wind. Can't believe it.

SLATER hauls himself over the edge -

Collapses beside him.

BRUISED. BEATEN. BLOODY.

SLATER

This hero stuff has it's limits.

He climbs to his feet. Swallows, says:

SLATER

Now get me to a hospital, my shoulder's out of the socket.

At which point, A VOICE chimes in:

VOICE (O.S.)

Will the morgue suffice?

Their heads snap around as

ANOTHER ANGLE

The ubiquitous MR. BENEDICT lounges amiably in the stairway door. He raises a REVOLVER.

SLATER

Danny, DOWN--!

SLATER SLAMS DANNY behind an ELEVATOR HOUSING.

They hit the deck. Jack HOWLS--! Broken shoulder as

BANG--!

BENEDICT's first shot KICKS UP SPLINTERS - !

SLATER AND DANNY. Out of sight behind the brick housing. Unarmed. Helpless. SLATER calls out:

SLATER

Give it up, Benedict. The lobby's swarming with cops.

BENEDICT

Precisely why I'll avoid the lobby. And if I should by chance encounter any law enforcement personnel --

He taps his glass eye:

BENEDICT

I've another explosive surprise for them.

He begins, casually, to walk toward SLATER's position. FIRES again, BANG--! Blows out a chunk of wall.

BENEDICT

(affected voice)

"Gentlemen, since you're about to die anyway, I might as well tell you the entire plot."

He chortles. Fishes out the TICKET STUB. Turns it in his fingers. Speaks rapidly, madness in his eyes:

BENEDICT

Think of villains, Jack. Go ahead, it's easy. You want Dracula? Hang on, I'll fetch him. Dracula, hell, I'll get KING KONG.

BANG--! Another shot. SHOWER of brick dust.

BENEDICT

I'll dine with Freddy Krueger, shop for chainsaws with Leatherface! Plan a party for Hifler, why not? Invite Dr. No and Hannibal Lecter and we'll all have a christening for Rosemary's baby, think of the villains, Jack!

BANG--! The shot RICOCHETS into the night.

BENEDICT

All I need do is snap my fingers and bring 'em out.

(beat)

And they'll come, oh, yes... they're lining up to get here, and you know why..?

(intense)

Because here, Jack, in this world -- the badguys can win.

SLATER

I know. Look who they elected in November.

BENEDICT

(smiles)

I'll miss you, Jack. But you see, as long as you're alive I'll never be safe.

(beat)

So let's have done with it, shall we?

BENEDICT, relentless. Lines up a shot --

Pulls the trigger AGAIN, *Click--!*

Everything stops. "Click..?" BENEDICT GAPES at the revolver. Seemingly amazed --

JACK SLATER rises, leaves cover. Smiles through pain:

SLATER

Gee, did you make a movie mistake?

Forget to reload..?

(shakes his head)

Reality's a bitch, pal, you gotta replace the damn bullets.

And that's when BENEDICT changes expression --  
No longer amazed, it was an act --

BENEDICT

Jack, please, I didn't forget...

(beat)

I just left one chamber empty.

He shoots SLATER in the chest.

The biggest moment in the movie, folks.

The hero just got shot THROUGH THE LUNGS.

It takes us utterly by surprise. SLATER is blown back. Hits the roof like a felled redwood. On his back. Spread-eagled.

DANNY stares, thoroughly SHATTERED --

The unbeatable Jack SLATER -- on his back in a pool of bloody rain. DYING. SLATER meets DANNY's eyes... Tries to speak -- *Coughs up blood.*

DANNY freaks.

He bursts from cover.

Goes for BENEDICT. Punching. Kicking. Flailing.

DANNY

You son of a bitch!

And BENEDICT..? He's laughing. SWATS DANNY. Across the face. Sends him sprawling, DANNY hits the wall, CRACK-!

DANNY

My arm! You broke it, you broke my arm!

He begins to sob in pain.

Contemptuous, BENEDICT turns to SLATER. Calmly reloads the revolver. Overhead, a crack of LIGHTNING RATTLES -- BENEDICT levels the gun at SLATER, whispers:

BENEDICT

See, Jack..? The badguys win.

SLATER looks into the gun barrel. Unflinching. Ready to die. Behind them, DANNY is sobbing uncontrollably --

Which brings up an interesting question:

Why are his eyes utterly devoid of tears..?

Because he learned a trick from WHITNEY, he is in fact FAKING --

And Mr. BENEDICT just OFFERED DANNY HIS EXPOSED BACK.

DANNY's had this chance before: the PUNK in the bathroom scene... *that* time he was too frightened.

This time..?

ANGLE ON BENEDICT

The killer's knuckle is white on the trigger as DANNY BROADSIDES HIM. Like a locomotive. Everything he's got.

The gun goes flying.

BENEDICT leaves his feet --

Comes DOWN ON SLATER, wham-!

Who, to his credit, DOES NOT PASS OUT, instead goes for the THROAT..!

FACE TO FACE, NOW, They fight to the death.

The end takes three seconds:

SLATER gets a boot between them, SHOVES.

BENEDICT reels backward, off balance as

ANOTHER ANGLE

DANNY

Jack..!

In slow motion, DANNY TOSSES THE REVOLVER...

It arcs through the air, tumbling end over end...

BENEDICT. Out comes the KNIFE, raised to throw --

SLATER, CATCHING THE GUN, the last of his strength --

SLATER

No sequel for you.

He targets BENEDICT's GLASS EYE. Fires.

ANOTHER ANGLE

BENEDICT explodes.

A TOWER OF FIRE. Shooting skyward.



The corner of the building is BLOWN TO SMITHEREENS --  
Debris rains down. Flame. Smoke. Sound and fury as

ANOTHER ANGLE

A stone GARGOYLE HEAD hurtles earthward...  
and then something else enters frame:  
A CHARRED GOLDEN TICKET STUB  
Wafting on the night breeze... WE FOLLOW IT as it descends...

BACK WITH SLATER AND DANNY

SLATER

There's your... damn explosion...

DANNY

-- We've gotta get you help --

He struggles to bring SLATER to his feet --

EXT. SIDEWALK, FAR BELOW

The golden ticket stub alights on the sidewalk. Outside a movie house.  
GLOWS, briefly...

We PAN UP to the marquee, which reads:

**TONIGHT ONLY -- THE SEVENTH SEAL**

INT. MOVIE HOUSE - SAME TIME

Onscreen, Max Von Sydow plays chess with DEATH .  
Without fanfare, Death GETS UP -- Leaves not only the game,  
BUT THE WHOLE DAMN MOVIE -- Walks off the screen.

The crowd stampedes for the exits, shrieking.  
Among them...DANNY'S MOM.

INT. A SPEEDING AMBULANCE - DRIVING - NIGHT

The AMBULANCE careens thru midtown, siren WAILING.  
In the back, DANNY watches two PARAMEDICS minister to Jack.  
Terse. Professional. This is all very REAL.

MEDIC #1

Shortness of breath.

MEDIC #2

Diaphretic, the lung's collapsed.

MEDIC #1

(suddenly)

Fluid challenge, shit! Do a bilateral I.V. Full  
open --

EXT. TIMES SQUARE NIGHT

DEATH sweeps out of the theatre, as frightened moviegoers spread a minor panic.

INT. THE AMBULANCE

SLATER's head lolls to one side... meets DANNY's gaze...

And what DANNY sees cuts him to the quick:  
In SLATER's eyes... the sadness ... of a wounded animal... lost in civilization.  
Cut off from his native forest. Confused and betrayed.

DANNY must get SLATER home .

He looks up to see one medic give the other a silent THUMBS DOWN.  
Mouthing the words, "We're losing him."

DANNY  
You can't save him.

MEDIC #2  
We're doing all we can do.

DANNY  
(intense)  
It ain't enough. He needs to get back home.  
Back where it's just a flesh wound, where he  
does ten sequels, don't you understand, we've  
got to TAKE HIM TO THE MOVIES!

The medics regard DANNY as if he's sprouted antennae.  
The kid makes a decision. Takes a deep breath --  
And pulls BENEDICT's REVOLVER from his jacket --

DANNY  
Turn around. We gotta go back.

In response, the driver screeches to a halt... and BOLTS from the car --

DANNY  
Hey! Get back here, you can't --

He turns -- The PARAMEDICS, booking out the back doors.

DANNY  
Great. Just great! They always run away!

Swearing, DANNY scrambles behind the wheel +

DANNY  
Hang on, Jack.

He hits the gas. FISHTAILS. Executes the clumsiest U-turn in screen HISTORY --

ANGLE ON SLATER

Fighting to live. He cranes his neck, staring in perplexity --

DANNY pilots the WAILING AMBULANCE --

SLATER

Do you... know how to drive..?

DANNY

Sure, I watched you do it.

SLATER reacts in terror.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE, NIGHT.

DEATH moves at a leisurely pace down the sidewalk.

TWO COPS exit a hot dog stand.

One chain-lights a cigarette from the butt of another --

As DEATH passes, he lightly sweeps a finger across the smoking Cop's shoulders. And continues on. Nothing in particular happens.

But twenty feet later, the Smoking Cop starts to cough...

And just then, AN AMBULANCE with open back doors screams by.

DEATH stops, stares. Seems ... fascinated ...

IN THE AMBULANCE: DANNY

fighting tears, lays into the horn,  
hangs a hard left across four lanes of traffic,  
and goes flying, straight at the Pandora - !

He jumps the curb, flattens the COMING SOON - MANN'S MULTI-PLEX 18 sign --  
TAKES OUT the entrance doors in a spray of glass --  
screeches to a halt in the LOBBY --

And flies out the vehicle, shouting:

DANNY

NICK! NICK -- !!Fire up the projector!  
Hurry, SLATER'S DYING!

Caught halfway down the stairs, the horrified projectionist reverses course --  
Scrambles for the projection booth. No questions asked.

DANNY drags SLATER out, starts down the aisle, half-carrying him.

UPSTAIRS, NICK frantically hits switches --

DOWN IN THE AISLE, the kid drags SLATER. Adrenaline pumping --

NICK BASHES A SWITCH and --

THE PANDORA SCREEN glows with movie light.

As they reach it, SLATER collapses to his knees.

DANNY PUSHING at the screen, feeling around frantically --

DANNY

Door's gotta be here, Jack -- Just hold on --

Pounds the screen with his fists.

DANNY

It won't open, Jack -- We need the ticket stub,  
it won't open..!

SLATER

No sweat, kid... You tried....

His head falls back.

He coughs blood. He's fading.

The two of them, in tableau, as

A SHADOW

looms over them. Extinguishing light. Snuffing hope.

DANNY cradles his friend, looks up --

It's Death.

Standing in the aisle. Looking at SLATER.

No hesitation. DANNY snatches the REVOLVER --

DANNY

Back off -- you can't have him--

(beat)

-- I've had it up to here with you, Mister, who  
stays, who goes--

(big)

-- well, I'm telling you, this one stays!

DEATH. CLOSE UP. He speaks like what he is: Doom.

DEATH

I...was...only...curious -

he's...not...on...any...of...my...lists...

(beat)

..though you are, Daniel.

DANNY

Now?

DEATH

...oh no...you die a grandfather...

He turns, begins to proceed up the aisle --

DANNY

-- HEY! Wait a minute!  
 Help us -- You've gotta get him back.  
 You can do it, I know you can -- !

DEATH

...I don't do fiction...not my field...sorry...  
 (He looks at them now)  
 ...you're a very brave young man...someone  
 must have taught you...  
 (a pause)  
 ...unfortunately, you're not very bright...if I  
 were in you...I'd be looking for the other half  
 of the ticket...  
 (And this time he does  
 turn, as)

DANNY blinks. Then his EYES GO WIDE --

DANNY

YESSS!!!

-- AND HE'S OFF LIKE A ROCKET --  
 UP THE AISLE, ACROSS THE LOBBY --

HE THROWS A BODYBLOCK ON THE TICKET BOX --  
 SCATTERING THE CONTENTS --  
 SCRAMBLING ON THE FLOOR TO FIND THE RIGHT ONE --  
 THERE!! --

-- only it's not glowing.

DANNY grabs it, spins for the theatre, blasts down the aisle,  
 waving the ticket this way, that way --but it doesn't glow.  
 He rubs it, slaps it-- but it will not glow --

DANNY

I've got it Jack --  
 (fighting to keep control)  
 --I'll get you home, you'll see.  
 (He drops on his knees  
 beside SLATER)  
 You can't die.

SLATER  
 (barely able to whisper --  
 he tries to smile)  
 I know...not til the grosses go down...

DANNY holds out the ticket --

DANNY  
 --This is gonna save us

SLATER  
 ...throw that...silly thing...away...  
 (and on these words)

SLATER manages to reach out, take the ticket into his hand--  
 --and the instant he touches it, it glows.

DANNY screams with joy --

DANNY  
 Holy shit!  
 (And on that cry--

CUT TO

NICK in the projection booth -- he's heard it -- looks out and sees --

The screen erupt in radiance ....

NICK  
 (eyes wide)  
 Let's hear it for Houdini!

Iridescent color floods the whole front of the theatre  
 and at it's center --

A GIANT EYE APPEARS -- very grainy --  
 and as the camera pulls away -- IT'S DEKKER. IN HIS OFFICE.  
 Pacing and yelling --

DEKKER  
 DAMMIT, WHERE'S SLATER?? GODDAMMIT, I'VE  
 GOT THE SAVE THE --  
 (and so on --)

As camera rockets away down AN EMPTY CORRIDOR, discovering --

DANNY lowering SLATER to the floor in the foreground --

DANNY  
 (calling out)  
 Help. Somebody.

AT THE END OF THE CORRIDOR THE ANIMATED CAT BOUNCES INTO VIEW,  
STOPS, STARES --

ANIMATED CAT

(Big)

They got Jack --

(bounding out of sight--)

-- Doctor -- Hey Doc, Moovooove! --

The screen's brilliance is fading. SLATER thrusts the ticket back into DANNY's hand.

SLATER

Hurry. You've got to go back.

DANNY

No, I'm not gonna leave you.

SLATER

Danny, I'm just an imaginary action hero.  
You've got a real life.

DANNY

You're real to me. Don't you see.  
You're the best thing in...  
I need you...to...

SLATER

(finishing for him

To be here where you can always find me.  
And I need you to be out there to believe in  
me ...and ....

(A BEAT)...

to take care of your mother for me because ...  
(cutting it off)

Look -- you've got A WHOLE LIFE AHEAD of you

DANNY

(nods)

AND pimples and premature ejaculation, I  
heard.

(beat)

(can't say it)

SLATER

What?...

DANNY

I'm just scared you'll forget me...

DOWN THE CORRIDOR the ANIMATED CAT appears, leading others --

SLATER. CLOSE UP --

SLATER

...anyone who thinks that...would be making a  
BIG mistake...

DANNY grins --

THE CAT AND THE COPS, swarm over SLATER.

DANNY is shunted aside, backs away --

and with a last eye-contact with SLATER -- slips back thru the screen..

MANS VOICE

Outta my way...You want a doctor? I'm a  
doctor.

THE DOCTOR examines SLATER --

DOCTOR

Is this a goddam joke? I wouldn't even call  
this a flesh wound. Whiskers, wash him up  
good, he'll be fine.

WHISKERS

Thanks, Doc.

And as the cat hoists SLATER to his feet --

CUT TO

DANNY back-peddling slowly up the aisle, watching --

CUT TO

ON THE SCREEN: DEKKER'S OFFICE as the door comes flying off its hinges.

Guess who?

SLATER, huge cigar, torn T-shirt, stands there --healed  
--he looks fabulous.



DEKKER

Goddamit, where the hell have you been? The cost of that door is coming straight out of your meager but undeserved paycheck, on account of I've got the Save the Eagle Foundation doing the funky tango up and down my Hershey Highway --

(opens his desk drawer,  
takes out a bunch of  
guns -- the stuff we saw  
SLATER wearing in the  
opening scene -- and  
shoves across the desk)

--now hit the streets.

SLATER

Make believe you have a brain, I'm saying this once: I want twice my salary and extra for every virgin I save -- I want a CD player, the works of Mozart and an apartment with a terrace I can plant flowers on -- I want a real bed. Kingsized --

Dekker's stunned but submissive.

DANNY in the theatre. NICK behind him now, watching as --

SLATER, IN CLOSE UP, turns, looks straight at DANNY, winks, then goes back on the attack --

DANNY smiles, as

SLATER

--and furthermore, what's all this garbage with guns?--There's 90,000 kids with guns on the streets as it is, why don't we have other things, programs. I know what real violence is now and I don't want some Hollywood genius dictating my life any more --

SLATER and DEKKER go on and on, their voices grow FAINTER as...

DANNY heads for the exit with NICK.  
With a trace of regret, DANNY hands him the ticket.

DANNY

You got to be a magician after all, Nick  
It really does work...

With a bittersweet smile, Nick declines the offer.

NICK

No. The ticket is yours, Danny.  
And I think maybe the magic was, too...

DANNY's eyes glow.

Almost reverently, he puts the ticket in his back pocket.  
Nick throws a fond arm across the kid's shoulder  
as they head for the door...

OUTSIDE--DANNY sees his mother-- pushing thru the crowd, calling his name--

DANNY

Mom!

She turns, looking for him--he goes running to her--she suddenly sees him--  
she's been crying--he runs into her arms.

DANNY'S MOM

(holding him)

I'm not going to ask you what happened.  
I'm not going to ask you where you've been.  
Maybe, on my death bed, you'll tell me  
everything and it'll all sound perfectly  
reasonable. Oh, God, Danny, I thought I'd lost  
you, too.

DANNY

(like the parent)

It's okay, Ma. Everything's okay now.  
I took care of it.

DANNY'S MOM

The future of the world?

(She pulls back, looks at  
him--

Maybe even the future of Danny Madigan?

DANNY

Maybe.

He puts his arm around her--they start to walk--

DANNY'S MOM

(a beat)

So ... um, where's Jack?

DANNY

He had to go back to LA.

DANNY'S MOM

Oh.

DANNY peers at her.

DANNY

...Why...?

DANNY'S MOM

...Nothing... I just thought maybe the three of us might have dinner...Y'know... once in a while...

DANNYS SMILE BROADENS --

DANNY

I think I got a way to arrange it...Y'know... once in a while....

And as they walk off in a sleeping city,  
we notice the ticket in his pocket.... is glowing like a beacon.

FADE OUT.