

"LIVING ON VIDEO"

Pilot Episode

FADE IN:

INT. AN OFFICE - DAY

Facing camera is ROBBY BIGGS, 22, in suit and tie. He is earnest, determined, a touch naive. Out the window behind him we see a busy Hollywood studio lot.

ROBBY

You're going to think this sounds crazy, but when I heard there was an opportunity here, I dropped out of college. I dropped out, packed my bags and moved to Hollywood. Swear to God! I got here yesterday! *That's* how much I want this.

We pull back to reveal Robby is flanked by all sorts of drawings and storyboards for his dream project: a SCI-FI EPIC called "AN AVOWED SILENCE". We see NO HUMANS. It's a planet populated SOLELY BY ROBOTS. We see a SOLDIER ROBOT, A CORRUPT POLITICIAN ROBOT and one that looks like a STRIPPER ROBOT.

ROBBY (CONT'D)

With me you're gonna get energy, enthusiasm... Not to mention, all this...

He gestures at the storyboards with a self-effacing smile.

ROBBY (CONT'D)

I drew all these by the way. Not that I expect to get to direct this right out of the gate. But this is what's in store. I'm an idea man.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

Why are you here, exactly?

ROBBY

I'm glad you asked me that. Robert Wise.

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

Who?

ROBBY

Robert Wise. He took Oscar home four times. 'Sound of Music'? 'West
(MORE)

ROBBY (CONT'D)

Side Story'? He did sci-fi, horror, he did it all. And you know how he started? Doing odd jobs around the RKO lot. He learned it all from the ground up. That's what I want to do.

We finally reveal the INTERVIEWER. He's a totally unimpressed stoner guy, maybe five years older than Robby, in a Hang Ten shirt. Behind him a roomful of GUYS sorts mail.

INTERVIEWER

I like the tits on that robot.

ROBBY

(ruffled)

That's not a-- That's a Synth-U-Bine pleasure unit.

INTERVIEWER

Whatever it is, nice tits. Alright, you're too fuckin' perky to be near execs, but you pass the typing test, I can squeeze you in back there.

He motions to the mail room.

ROBBY

Typing test?

INTERVIEWER

Yeah. I need somebody to bang out shipping invoices.

ROBBY

But... When I called about an opening, nobody mentioned typing.

INTERVIEWER

Invoices beneath you?

ROBBY

No, it's just-- I don't want to be on a desk. I want to be where the action is, *doing* something. Just tell me what you need, I'm your guy.

INTERVIEWER

(measured)

I need to know if you can *type*, guy.

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

Robby's at a pay phone outside the Paramount studio lot, his car parked in a loading zone behind him. A TRUCK pulls up and stops in the middle of the street.

ROBBY

(into phone)

You guys are never going to guess
where I'm standing right now.

His dad GREG is a cheerful dreamer. His mom SHARON is a sour realist.

SHARON (O.S.)

You're not in your apartment. I
called there yesterday and your
little Indian friend told me you
moved out. What the heck is going
on, Robby?

The Truck HONKS. Robby holds up a finger, "one minute".

ROBBY

You know how I've been talking
about moving to Hollywood and
taking my chances?

SHARON

No...

ROBBY

Well, I have been. And...
(takes a deep breath)
I'm here.

SHARON (O.S.)

You're what?! Where?!

ROBBY

I'm in Hollywood, right now!

GREG (O.S.)

Thatta boy, Robby!

ROBBY

I figure why pay for school when I
can learn on the job?

SHARON

What job? No one is going to hire
you without a degree.

ROBBY
 I just had an interview at
 Paramount studios, they didn't even
 ask if I went to college, mom.

The Truck HONKS again. Robby waves, apologetic.

GREG
 (excited)
 Paramount studios, huh? How 'bout
 that!

SHARON (O.S.)
 Stop encouraging him, Greg! Robby?
 I don't even know where to begin!
 Where are you staying? Are you
 sleeping in your car?

A GUY IN A SUIT comes up to Robby.

ROBBY
 Ho-Hold on a second, mom.
 (to the Guy)
 Can I help you?

GUY IN A SUIT
 Keys. I'll move it for you.

ROBBY
 That's okay, thanks.

GUY IN A SUIT
 They're delivering to my store,
 man. Don't make me call the cops.

The Truck HONKS impatiently. Robby gives the man his keys and
 the Guy gets into Robby's car.

ROBBY
 (into phone)
 Sorry. I'm staying with Vicki's old
 boyfriend. That guy Clem?

The Guy pulls out, and the truck moves to the curb.

SHARON (O.S.)
 That degenerate with the leather
 pants? After what he did to your
 sister?!

ROBBY
 It's just 'til I find a place, mom.
 Believe me, I don't want to be
 there any longer than-- Uh--

Robby's car doesn't stop. He watches it race up the boulevard.

ROBBY (CONT'D)
Sonofa--bitch!

GREG (O.S.)
What's that, pal?

ROBBY
Nothing, dad, uhh... Listen, I
gotta go. I-I love you both.

Robby hangs up absently and walks a few steps, watching his car disappear into the distance.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - NIGHT

The Hollywood sign has been altered to read "HOLLYWeeD".

SUPER TITLE: "1983"

EXT. DELONGPRE AVENUE - NIGHT

An exhausted Robby walks down the street, banks left to an apartment building.

It's a two-story dump. He climbs a flight of stairs to a landing. Now he can see the "HOLLYWeeD" sign for the first time.

ROBBY
(not impressed)
Assholes.

He goes to an apartment door and just as he's about to knock... a ruffled PROSTITUTE steps out of the apartment, looks Robby over and heads down the stairs. Robby watches her leave, then...

CLEM
He's back! Thought maybe you were
dead.

CLEM is older than Robby. He's sinewy, garrulous and wound tight as a snare drum - and he's naked. He clocks Robby's shocked look at the Prostitute.

CLEM (CONT'D)
What? Got something against
rentals?

Robby quickly plays it off, and steps through the door - maneuvering around Clem's half-boner to get in.

INT. CLEM'S STUDIO APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

It's tiny - one room with a kitchenette and a bathroom with no door. There's horror movie posters on the walls and crap piled everywhere. Clem grabs underwear from a filthy laundry mound and pulls them on.

CLEM

How was your big, gay job interview?

Robby sits on his sleeping bag covering the disgusting couch.

ROBBY

(deflating)
Desk job.

CLEM

Ha! Figures. How much does it pay?

ROBBY

Don't know, didn't take it. I laid it all out for the guy, too. My project, how I'm not afraid to work my way up - he didn't want to hear it.

CLEM

Wait. Whoa. You told him about your fuckin' robot thing?

ROBBY

Yeah.

CLEM

No wonder, dude. You think that guy wants to hear about your *aspirations*? He wants a nine-to-fiver. He doesn't need some wanna-be Spielberg fuckin' around.

ROBBY

I thought he'd appreciate someone with initiative.

CLEM

Clem's Number One Rule: take all your big dreams and ambitions and bottle them up deep down inside where no one can *shit* on them.

(MORE)

CLEM (CONT'D)
That's how you survive in this town.

Clem tears the SHOWER CURTAIN off his bed and balls it up.

ROBBY
AND my car was stolen.

CLEM
What the fuck, man?!

ROBBY
I know. I was distracted, guy asked me for my keys... He looked honest enough.

CLEM
You gave someone your keys?!

ROBBY
I'm screwed. No job, no car...

Clem takes a beat, feels for the guy.

CLEM
Damn it. Stop the sad sack bullshit. Come to work with me tomorrow.

ROBBY
(perks up)
Really?

CLEM
Don't blow a load. No guarantee it'll even happen.

ROBBY
The fact that you'd try is awesome, Clem. Wait, what *is* your job?

Clem points to the television, which has been silently playing MTV.

CLEM
That.

ROBBY
You work for MTV?

CLEM
I work on music videos, dingus. MTV is in New York. Where you been?

ROBBY
Twin Falls? We still don't have
cable.

Robby stares at the screen with interest.

CLEM
Alright, so tomorrow's a prep day.
We get up early, hit the office,
see what I pull off. Let's go quiet
time.

Clem turns off the light. Leaves the TV on.

ROBBY
Hey, Clem? Thanks.

CLEM
Whatever.

Robby slides his shoes and pants off, crawls into his
sleeping bag, watches the quick cut MTV promos with interest.

He sees a pizza box. Starving, Robby lifts the lid to see
half a pizza and a used condom, deflated and still
glistening, dangling from inside the lid.

ROBBY
(sotto)
Come on, man...

The MTV logo flashes on screen. We move in on the rapid-fire
imagery and--

ROLL TITLES

The title sequence is a compendium of early music video
cliches: a white horse runs through fog, a table overturns in
slo-mo, lasers shoot from a man's eyes, rats on a bed, multi-
colored paint splashes a white wall, a rocker chick crawls on
the floor, a cow in a formal dining room, a creepy butler
looking through a peep hole...

END TITLES

INT. THEO'S HOUSE - SUNRISE

The video for Journey's "Separate Ways" plays on a front
projection TV.

The house is expensive but trashed. There's crooked Nagels
(with holes in them), a shattered vase with flowers
everywhere...

We see a hilltop view of LA through a cracked sliding glass door.

Finally we land on THEO BARLEY (40s, English, a chain smoker). He's on the floor, his back to the crushed velvet couch. He lights a cigarette, downs a tequila shot.

He's still in the (stained, torn) clothes from last night. There's a welt under his eye.

He's absently watching the video. On screen, Steve Perry and the boys play invisible instruments. None of it makes much sense, but neither does Theo's life right now.

Theo reaches into a bowl of decorative marbles, loads one into a Wrist-Rocket. On the mantle is a series of framed photos of his ex-wife MARISOL.

Marisol is a dark-skinned Spanish beauty. She's a model, and the pictures are all unabashed nudes. Theo pulls back the elastic and let's loose.

CRASH! A Marisol photo EXPLODES off the mantle.

EXT. MANHATTAN BEACH HOUSE - MORNING

A bachelor pad on the beach. Surfboards and a weight bench on the balcony, Porsche in the driveway. ASHLEY TASSONI, 25, a cross between Adele and Stevie Nicks (beautiful face, flowy clothes), bursts out the front door.

ASHLEY
GUESS WHAT, EVERYBODY?! I'M DATING
THE WEATHERMAN FROM CHANNEL 6!
THAT'S RIGHT, ME! BUT YOU WOULDN'T
KNOW THAT BECAUSE I HAVE TO SNEAK
IN AND OUT OF HIS PLACE LIKE SOME
KINDA SLUT! OH HIS REPUTATION IS
SOOOO IMPORTANT! GOD FORBID ANYONE
KNOWS I EXIST!

She's shouting for everyone to hear, but to further her humiliation, there's nobody around.

WHAM! The impossibly handsome (though older) WEATHERMAN slams the door shut behind her. Lip trembling, she watches him close the curtains. This didn't turn out how she'd hoped.

Once inside her car, Ashley bursts into tears. She jams it into gear and lurches down the block.

EXT. GEFFEN RECORDS - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Overlap conversation.

ELLIOT (O.S.)
(enthused)
Congratulations!

MARCY (O.S.)
Go fuck yourself, Elliot.

INT. GEFFEN RECORDS - CONTINUOUS

ELLIOT (an erudite man in a sweater vest) and flinty industry vet MARCY DUMONT walk away from DAVID GEFFEN'S OFFICE, heading through a maze of cubicles.

ELLIOT
I meant what I said in there,
Marcy. This is a huge opportunity,
for both of us.

MARCY
Yeah? You get to head Creative
Services and I get to be your
lackey. Twelve years I've worked
for David. He brought me over from
Asylum. You've been here, what,
two?

ELLIOT
Two and a half.

MARCY
This is a cock and balls promotion
and you know it.

ELLIOT
No, I do not know that. And I
really don't understand this anger.
Thanks to me, you're heading up
your own department!

MARCY
You buried me, and you want me to
thank you for it? Fucking music
videos... I hope you die on that
corporate jet.

ELLIOT
Marcy, I desperately do not want us
to be adversaries. Here...
(hands her a folder)
(MORE)

ELLIOT (CONT'D)

This one shoots tomorrow. I set it up, but after this, it's all you. Okay? Believe it or not, I do respect you.

She snatches the folder from him.

MARCY

I remember everyone who's ever fucked me, Elliot. And they remember too, believe me. I am one vindictive - fucking - bitch.

She leaves Elliot exasperated, shaking his head.

INT. MARCY'S OFFICE - DAY

Marcy slams her door and FREAKS OUT. She throws the folder on her desk, tears off her jacket, flings it across the room.

Panting, she looks down at that folder with a logo for "GRAND MAL PRODUCTIONS"

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. GRAND MAL PRODUCTIONS - DAY

We see the same logo, "GRAND MAL PRODUCTIONS", in a second story window of this 1920's building on Hollywood Blvd. The first floor is a shitty Chinese restaurant.

Clem's Chevy Caprice pulls to the curb, he and Robby get out. They walk down a driveway, pass a small sign with an arrow that reads "GRAND MAL", head up the stairs.

CLEM

Okay, I'm sticking my neck out for you, so don't fuck me on this. Got it?

ROBBY

You got it, man.

INT. GRAND MAL - MORNING

Nothing here to impress clients. Just barely functional. Fluorescent lights, an empty reception area, four offices and a two desk bullpen.

Right now, Phones RING. Several people scurry around. It doesn't look like much but it's buzzing for this office.

Clem and Robby enter, head for the desk of JENNIFER WALSH, 26, the production coordinator.

Jennifer is pretty, super efficient, and probably more conservative than most in Hollywood. Not noticing Clem, she finishes a call, writes something down.

CLEM
The beautiful, the stunning, the
Jennifer!

JENNIFER
(face in her work)
Where's my truck, Clem?

CLEM
On my way to pick it up. Just
dropping my man Robby off. He's
ready to work.

ROBBY
Hi.

JENNIFER
(now she looks up)
Who?

CLEM
My buddy, Robby. From back home.
He's cool. He'll work for free.

Robby starts to protest the "free" part. Clem elbows him to shut-up.

JENNIFER
(to Clem)
If he's one of *your* buddies, he's
definitely *not* cool. Now go get my
truck. Grip, electric and
expendables in that order. Call me
after every stop in case there's a
change. Hear me? *Every* stop.

CLEM
10-4.
(to Robby)
Do whatever she says. She's the
boss.
(to Jennifer)
You have a gorgeous day.

JENNIFER
Don't kiss my ass.

Clem is out the door.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Now you.

Robby snaps to.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

You know Clem from back home?

ROBBY

A little bit. He dated my sister.

JENNIFER

Oh my God. Is she okay?

ROBBY

Yeah...

JENNIFER

Huh. Now, why do you want to work for free?

ROBBY

I just want to work. Get my foot in the door. I'm a fast learner, I'm also an illustrator and I make short films, so if I can help there...

JENNIFER

(incredulous)

Seriously?

ROBBY

(back peddling)

But that's, not... I'll sweep, carry stuff, whatever...

She eyeballs him.

JENNIFER

Okay look... You're a Production Assistant. A PA. That means you do whatever I tell you. You get coffee, you pick up trash, whatever. You slack or talk shit to anybody, you're fired. Can you handle that?

ROBBY

Absolutely. I'm ready to do it to it.

(off her look)

(MORE)

ROBBY (CONT'D)
To get-- started. Sorry. I'm pretty
jazzed.

JENNIFER
Okay. Now, I'd have you grind
through this mess...

She indicates a chaos of papers on a table behind her.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Copy the call sheets, draw a map...
But since you have no clue...

Ashley bumbles in, arms loaded with garment bags, her face
red from crying.

ASHLEY
I'm so sorry I'm late! Where am I
setting up?

JENNIFER
(pointing to an office)
First one. Are you crying?

Ashley doesn't answer - makes her way to the first office.

Jennifer snaps her fingers and Robby immediately rushes over
to help.

ROBBY
Are there more clothes outside?

ASHLEY
Yeah, like a ton.

She hands Robby her keys.

ROBBY
Be right back, ma'am.

ASHLEY
Ew. Don't fucking call me that.

ROBBY
Sorry. I don't usually call anyone
that. Nerves, I guess.

Robby hurries out.

ASHLEY
(to Jennifer)
That fucker just called me "ma'am".

EXT. GRAND MAL PARKING LOT - DAY

Robby grabs the clothes and slams the trunk on Ashley's car. His arms full, he's heading back inside when he hears someone THROWING UP.

He looks behind a dumpster and sees a scraggly, long-haired, young dude bent over, puking.

ROBBY

You okay?

The puker is HARLIN CROSS, about the same age as Robby. He wipes spittle off his chin.

HARLIN

Some privacy, please?!

INT. GRAND MAL - DAY

Robby comes in with the clothes.

ASHLEY

Hang those on the racks and tape up the price tags. I need to return those after the shoot. And these coats? Put a maxi-pad in each armpit. I hear this chick sweats like a horse. If they get stained I am fucked royal.

Robby gets to work.

ROBBY

This is exciting, huh?

ASHLEY

What is?

ROBBY

I dunno. Hollywood?

ASHLEY

Hollywood's exciting? Another rube to the slaughter.

She wipes away more tears.

ROBBY

Are you alright?

ASHLEY

My boyfriend. Don't even ask.

ROBBY

Okay.

ASHLEY

He's lead weatherman on News Team Six. You know, the News Breakers? They're on every bus bench. Don't say anything, but he's getting ready to "level up". That's what he calls it.

(sotto)

Game shows!

ROBBY

Awesome. Like a host?

ASHLEY

A presenter. It's so competitive. He has to cultivate this whole persona. His is "suave ladies man." Technically I'm not even supposed to say I'm his girlfriend.

ROBBY

Why not?

ASHLEY

If people find out, he could lose half his fan base. Does that sound crazy? It does, right?

ROBBY

Honestly?

ASHLEY

I know, I know. It's so stupid. That's why we had a blowout this morning. AND my roommate just moved out. No warning - suddenly all her stuff's gone. My life is such shit right now.

Then Robby sees Harlin enter Grand Mal.

ROBBY

Whoa, I just saw that guy throwing up behind the dumpster out back.

Ashley turns to see Harlin head for his office.

ASHLEY

That guy? He was throwing up in the parking lot?

ROBBY

Yeah.

ASHLEY

That's the *director*. I gotta tell Jennifer.

ROBBY

What? No! Wait. I don't want to get anyone in trouble.

ASHLEY

If he's a junkie, she's gotta know.

Ashley heads off to tell Jennifer.

ROBBY

(sotto)

Shit!

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - DAY

Theo drives his Austin-Healy down from the hills. He's cleaned up, wearing a cool sports jacket with his 501s and some kind of Euro loafers. Ray-Bans hide the bruise under his eye. "Puttin' On The Ritz", by Taco, pumps from the radio.

INT. GRAND MAL - DAY

Theo arrives. He's met by Jennifer. They head for his office.

JENNIFER

Theo, we have what may be a situation.

THEO

Let me get through the door first, please, Jennifer. I can't handle a disaster before--

She hands him a mug.

THEO (CONT'D)

Coffee. Thank you.

JENNIFER

What happened to your eye?

THEO

Nothing.

Theo never lets people inside. It's a constant stick & move - nobody gets too close and never expose the desperation. But Jennifer knows him too well... They enter Theo's office

JENNIFER

You went to see Marisol last night, didn't you? The body-builder do that?

THEO

He's not a body-builder, he teaches aerobics.

JENNIFER

Why do you torture yourself?

THEO

It's my wife, my house. I've got half a mind to sue that twat.

JENNIFER

Did he let you in or did you jump the wall? Cause if you jumped the wall he's *allowed* to beat the shit out of you.

THEO

No one beat the *shit* out of anyone! I slipped. And it was a glancing blow.

JENNIFER

(knows the drill)

I'll send Clem and the new PA to your house? Do some clean-up?

THEO

Who's the new PA?

JENNIFER

(pointing Robby out)

He's over there. Helping Ashley.

Theo checks out Robby across the office then stares at Jennifer. Angry at himself, ashamed...

THEO

(quietly)

Yeah. But tell them it was a robbery, or something.

JENNIFER

Of course. Also, Bill wants to see you in his office ASAP.

That gets Theo's attention.

THEO
ASAP? What for?

The phone RINGS. Jennifer grabs it.

JENNIFER
Grand Mal? Hold please.
(to Theo)
Marcy Dumont from Geffen? It's the
second time she's called.

THEO
Who?

Jennifer shrugs. Theo shoos her out, drags the phone into the bathroom and closes the door.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Theo loads his coke bullet and snorts a shot in each nostril. He takes the call off hold.

THEO
Good morning, Marcy, to what do I
owe the pleasure?

Intercut with Marcy in her office.

MARCY
Theo Barley?

THEO
The very one.

MARCY
Have I worked with you before? Your
name sounds very familiar.

THEO
Dunno. Do you work for Elliot?

MARCY
(bristles)
Elliot is a colleague. I have just
been put in charge of music video.

THEO
Oh! That's lovely! Good for you!

MARCY

Yes. And I see you're shooting something for me this week.

THEO

I guess I am. That's right - tomorrow, in fact.

MARCY

Well, we need to get together and discuss your director's concept for this video over lunch today.

THEO

(stumbling)

Oh? What exactly will we be discussing?

MARCY

The fact that it's garbage. And we're changing it.

THEO

(panicked)

B-but Elliott already signed off!

MARCY

I'm not Elliott. One o'clock sound good?

THEO

I-I suppose-- But--

MARCY

Marisol Anduvar! That's why I know your name. You're the Brit producer who married that crazy supermodel!

THEO

Yes, well, "super" is a bit of a stretch...

MARCY

That was going to kill me. I am so glad I figured it out. One o'clock it is.

She hangs up.

THEO

Can't wait.

INT. THEO'S OFFICE - DAY

Theo stumbles back into his office.

THEO

Jennifer!

Jennifer hurries over.

THEO (CONT'D)

Clear me for lunch. Harlin as well.
Got an emergency meeting with the
label.

JENNIFER

Actually, Harlin's what I wanted to
talk to you about.

They can see Harlin in his office staring off into space.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

That new PA saw him out in the
parking lot throwing up.

THEO

This day's getting better and
better...

INT. HARLIN'S OFFICE - DAY

The walls and windows are covered in a collage of seemingly random images: crude sketches attempting to be storyboards, stills from various film noir movies and beautiful models from fashion magazines. There's even wadded up balls of paper suspended from the ceiling by lengths of dental floss. It looks like the work of a mental case.

Harlin stares into the middle distance.

We go close on his eyes, and then... swing around and we're over his shoulder, *seeing things from his POV* - that's when something magical happens.

Various bits and pieces of the collage float off the walls and begin gathering in the center of the room.

Harlin's head leans in as he concentrates.

The images and drawings form a moving diorama on the table in front of him.

It's all fairly crude, everything's made with paper cut-outs.

The wadded paper balls become clouds...

The crude sketches become animated people...

The bits and pieces coalesce into an impressionistic European city, all in grayscale...

Harlin watches, amazed, as a steam train puffs along...

A gorgeous FEMME FATALE, in trench coat and fedora, walks across an old bridge over a river...

A handsome SOLDIER on leave watches her go by...

The Femme Fatale approaches her CHEATING LOVER, who is making out with a FLOOZY. Femme Fatale pulls out a GUN...

Just as she's about to pull the trigger--

THEO

Harlin?

--the pieces fall to the ground, Harlin's panicked. He snaps out of his vision.

HARLIN

What?! WHAT THE FUCK?!

THEO

Sorry to startle you, mate.

HARLIN

(flustered)

You didn't startle me, man, I was in the middle of something. Just knock next time.

THEO

I did.

HARLIN

Oh.

THEO

How are you feeling?

HARLIN

I'm fine, why?

THEO

It's just, you know, your first big video. We're all under a bit of pressure, aren't we?

Harlin sees Robby out in the office. When they make eye contact, Harlin gives him a "fuck you" look.

HARLIN

I had a bad omelette. I'm fine now.

THEO

Ah. Very well.

HARLIN

What's with your eye?

THEO

Car door. It was stupid. Listen, we've got a problem--

HARLIN

(looking at the clock)

Ah, Jesus Fuck. I gotta pre-light.

Harlin gathers his things.

THEO

Harlin, your DP will handle that. We need to talk.

HARLIN

No he won't. I fired him this morning.

THEO

You fired Peter?! Your cameraman?! Who's going to shoot it?

HARLIN

Me.

THEO

That was *Bill's* director of photography. You can't fire him!

Harlin heads for the door.

HARLIN

Already did.

Theo chases him across the bullpen.

THEO

Harlin-- Harlin! Bill is my investor! We can't alienate him! Listen to reason, mate, I have my company's livelihood at stake here!

Harlin stops, puts a comforting hand on Theo's shoulder.

HARLIN

Theo, I get it. You wanted me to use that old, tired cameraman as a safety net. That way you could hedge your bets and play it safe.

THEO

Yes!

With that Harlin smiles, pats Theo's shoulder and turns to Jennifer.

HARLIN

(to Jennifer)

Which way's the stage again?

Jennifer points.

HARLIN (CONT'D)

Thanks.

Harlin leaves.

THEO

Harlin!

Jennifer stops Theo.

JENNIFER

Bill said ASAP.

THEO

God bless it. The fuck's happening?

Now he's really stressed. He pats his pockets.

Jennifer points to his desk. He scampers over, grabs his cigarettes, and heads for the door.

THEO (CONT'D)

I should pay you more.

JENNIFER

Just saying that doesn't count.

EXT. GRAND MAL - CONTINUOUS

Theo lights a smoke as he hurries down the stairs into the parking lot. He crosses the driveway and pauses at the back of a beautiful two story, art deco building. A small sign next to the door reads "Bill White Films..."

Theo takes another life-saving drag off his cigarette and throws it away.

INT. BILL WHITE FILMS... - CONTINUOUS

The place is clean. Tastefully restored. Buttoned up. It feels more like an ad agency than a film production company.

Theo turns a corner, sees a closed door marked "BILL WHITE - SHOOTER". He leans down to an ASSISTANT who's on the phone.

THEO
(whispering)
I should come back, yeah?

She shakes her head and points to the door. Theo knocks gently and steps inside.

INT. BILL WHITE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The office is lined with Clio awards. Some old stage lights hang in a corner and vintage movie cameras stand on tripods.

BILL WHITE is in his fifties, always in a cardigan and his signature black framed glasses.

He's engrossed watching VHS dailies of smoking cop car tires.

THEO
How goes it on the posh side of the drive, Bill?

BILL
(doesn't look up)
Got a call from Peter. Know what he told me? Some wet-behind-the-ears punk just fired him off your music movie.

THEO
Yes, I am so sorry. I've only just found out. I'm about to call Peter and--

BILL
Oh, he's not coming back. Your Boy Wonder is on his own. For your sake, let's hope he doesn't land with his dick in the dirt.

THEO
To God's ears. It won't happen
again, that I guarantee.

BILL
You talked me into this music film
thing, and you promised me a
healthy return.
(peers at him over his
glasses)
But you get too cavalier over there
and there's gonna be a gelding.

THEO
(feigning earnestness)
Definitely. Yeah. Cheers...

He slinks out.

INT. GRAND MAL - COSTUME ROOM - DAY

Jennifer enters. Robby's working by himself.

JENNIFER
Robby-- Where the hell is Ashley?

ROBBY
She needed a quick break. I said
I'd cover for her.

JENNIFER
You're covering for her?

ROBBY
She wanted to call her boyfriend.
They had a fight. I got all the
coats finished.

Jennifer checks. All the costumes are neatly hung up and
ready. Hm.

JENNIFER
Look, this thing with the director?
You see something like that, you
come to me. Got it? I don't need
the crew blabbing about it.

ROBBY
Sorry. I didn't know he was the
director.

Clem comes through the door holding his pager.

CLEM

What's going on? I got your 911 page.

JENNIFER

We got storm damage. Take your buddy to Theo's. Clean up.

CLEM

Right, "storm damage". We're on it.

Robby and Clem head out.

JENNIFER

Anything goes missing, it's both your asses!

Jennifer returns to her desk. Stops. Notices her chaos of papers is GONE. In its place a neat pile of CALL SHEETS, all collated and stapled. On the front page is a nicely hand-drawn MAP to the set.

INT. YAMASHIRO RESTAURANT - DAY

High above Hollywood at this Japanese watering hole, the view is amazing. Marcy is at a table, mid-conversation with Theo.

She knocks a bit of cocaine into an ashtray, dips her cigarette in it, and lights up.

MARCY

We're giving them free programming. We pay for the videos, and *they* rake in advertizing revenue. Does CBS get M*A*S*H for free? No. It's a shitty business model. So I have to do things cheaply, which, frankly, is the *only* reason you're on this video.

THEO

Hey, listen, just happy to be here.

Harlin enters the restaurant.

THEO (CONT'D)

There he is!

Marcy sees Harlin for the first time.

MARCY

Jesus and Joseph. *That's* my director?

THEO
(ignoring her)
Harlin! Thank you for joining us.
Marcy, *this* is the very talented,
Mr. Harlin Cross.

MARCY
What is he doing this for, a class
project?

THEO
There's no age limit on talent.

Harlin takes a seat.

HARLIN
Actually, I didn't go to film
school. I don't believe in it.

MARCY
I was thinking high school.

THEO
(changing the mood)
Uhh, Marcy, here, has just been
made Commissioner of Videos at the
label.

MARCY
Video Commissioner.

HARLIN
That sounds like a made up title.

MARCY
(bites back the fury)
Well, it's not. And from now on,
everything goes through me. Like
your concept for this video? It's
cute. I get it. Cocteau meets Jean
Pierre Melville. But really, who
fucking cares?

HARLIN
I don't know who those people are.

MARCY
And the band only sings two words
on camera? What is that?

THEO
That's different, isn't it? No one
has really done that before. It's
cool.

MARCY

Don't tell me what's cool, Theo.
All this band has going for them is
a fuckable lead singer with a great
body and you want to put her in
trench coats. People want to see
the singer sing. Not act.

HARLIN

I don't understand. You know we're
shooting tomorrow, right?

MARCY

I do know that. I also know this is
the first video shot under my
tenure, and I reserve the right to
alter it as I see fit.

THEO

(calming)

Okay. Just so we're clear, Marcy,
what is it you're looking for,
exactly?

MARCY

A performance video. Just the band
against a white wall with smoke and
colored lights and the *singer*,
looking hot, *singing* - simple.

THEO

(looks at Harlin)

Well, that would certainly make our
lives easier, eh, Harlin?

HARLIN

I was very specific with Elliot,
I'm only interested in shooting--

MARCY

Fuck Elliot Landsberg. He has no
say anymore. And he's on a plane to
Sydney. So forgive me if I don't
give fuck one about what you're
"interested in shooting." What I'm
telling you is, if you want to
continue making videos at Geffen
Records, you'll do it my way.

Theo looks helpless.

HARLIN

(calm)

Marcy, I appreciate you feeling the
(MORE)

HARLIN (CONT'D)
need to mark your territory, but
your company has already committed,
and we're shooting *my* concept
tomorrow. The sets are built, and
in spite of the fact that you're
acting like a complete asshole, I'm
gonna do my best to make you look
good. So if we're done here...

Harlin gets up and leaves.

MARCY
Whoa. We're not done here. Where's
he going?!

Harlin exits the restaurant.

MARCY (CONT'D)
What the fuck just happened?!

She's furious, yet somehow intrigued.

THEO
It's his first go-round. I'll speak
to him, make him see the light.

Marcy forcefully dips her cigarette in the cocaine, takes a
drag.

MARCY
Do that.

INT. THEO'S HOUSE - DAY

Open on Robby staring at the pictures of Marisol naked.

ROBBY
She is so pretty.

Then he takes in the spectacular view. On Theo's balcony,
Clem tapes plastic over the broken sliding-glass door.

ROBBY (CONT'D)
This place is incredible!

CLEM
Dude, It's a rental. And she's a
total bitch. Theo owned a house but
she took it. I saw her punch him in
the face, once.

Robby joins Clem on the balcony.

CLEM (CONT'D)
Hey, check it out. Naked chick in
that pool down there.

Robby sees the NAKED CHICK floating on a pink raft in the
pool down the hill.

ROBBY
Whoa! She's rad.

CLEM
She's always like that. Every time
I'm here.

Clem pulls a lemon off a tree and heaves it. It lands like a
depth charge in the pool, startling Naked Chick. She falls
off her raft.

Clem ducks down, laughing. Naked Chick pops to the surface,
cursing at Robby.

NAKED CHICK
Asshole!

ROBBY
No! I-- It wasn't--

Clem, cracking up, hurries into the house. Robby follows.

CLEM
Holy shit! You see her jump?

ROBBY
I'm gonna get nailed for that, man!

CLEM
Ahh. You're fine.

Clem rummages through the liquor cabinet, pulling out several
bottles.

CLEM (CONT'D)
Theo's always got the good stuff.
(off Robby's look)
Trust me, he'll think he drank this
last night.

Then Clem digs under the couch cushions.

CLEM (CONT'D)
Help me look, man, I found a bundle
of coke down here once.

Robby glances down, sees a rolled up \$50 BILL behind a cushion. He grabs it without Clem seeing and tucks it in the pocket of one of Theo's coats hanging by the door.

CLEM (CONT'D)
Fuck it, it's dry. Let's bolt.

INT. CLEM'S CAPRICE - DAY

Clem drives Robby back to the office. Robby suddenly sees something out the window.

ROBBY
Hey! Look!

CLEM
Is that your car?!

On the side of the street they see a parked Subaru Brat, Idaho plates, snow tires...

EXT. FRANKLIN AVENUE - DAY

Clem pulls over, parks, watches the car.

CLEM
Surveillance.

Just then, A MAN walks to Robby's Subaru, unlocks the door.

CLEM (CONT'D)
Shit! Come on!!

Clem flies out the door and sprints across the avenue.

Robby gives chase. Clem's on the guy in a flash. He SLAMS the car door on him, pinning The Man.

CLEM (CONT'D)
Got you now, shithead! Guess we'll take that car back, huh?!

MAN
Ow! What the hell are you talking about?! Get off me!

Robby runs up, sees it's NOT THE SAME GUY who stole his car. It's a meek, family man.

ROBBY
Clem, that's not the guy.

CLEM

The fuck it's not! We got him red-handed!

Suddenly they see a teary-eyed BOY at the curb.

BOY

Daddy?

MAN

It's okay, Tad. That's my son.
Would you get off me?!

Robby pulls Clem off The Man.

ROBBY

Clem, it's not the guy!

CLEM

Then where'd you get this car,
asshole?!

MAN

I just bought it! I paid five
hundred dollars for it!

CLEM

Bullshit!

MAN

I did! We're trying to get back to
Phoenix! Start over!

ROBBY

Curly-haired guy, right? That's who
you bought it from?

MAN

(rightly suspicious)
Yeah...

ROBBY

That's the guy who took it from me.
Yesterday. That's my car. Got my
college parking pass, right there,
see?

(points to the window)

It's got my name on it.

Robby shows the man his ID. It matches the parking pass.

MAN

Wait a minute. How do I know you're
not working with that guy? This

(MORE)

MAN (CONT'D)
whole thing's a scam, isn't it?!
How about I call the cops.

CLEM
How 'bout I beat your ass.

ROBBY
Hold on. You *know* you bought a
stolen car. You get a pink slip?

The Man doesn't answer.

ROBBY (CONT'D)
Exactly. Now you really want the
police to come - find you in
possession of stolen property?

MAN
(realizes he's beaten)
So I'm out five hundred bucks, with
no way to get home?

BOY
Is he taking our new car, Daddy?

Robby looks at the Boy on the curb.

ROBBY
Look, we both got burned by the
same guy. I don't want to leave you
stranded, so how about I give you a
hundred bucks, you can take a bus,
or something?

MAN
(frustrated)
Dang it.
(then)
Thank you.

Robby pulls out his checkbook. The Man comforts his son.

CLEM
What the fuck is wrong with you?
Why do I even bother?

Clem walks away, disgusted.

EXT. GRAND MAL ROOFTOP - SUNSET

Theo sits in a lawn chair, watching the sun go down. Jennifer
steps onto the roof, refills his Mai Tai.

JENNIFER

I left word for Elliot. He really
is on his way to Australia.

Theo nods, says nothing, takes a mighty drag on his
cigarette.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

I told the crew to paint a wall
white, just in case.

Jennifer leaves Theo sitting above Hollywood Boulevard like a
sad gargyle and we push in on the orange sun slowly fading.

CUE MUSIC. It's The Alan Parsons Project doing their
melancholy "Eye In The Sky". And we begin...

A MUSICAL MONTAGE

...done in the spirit of early music videos.

MATCH DISSOLVE:

INT. CLEM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

From the orange sun, we pan off an orange MTV logo flashing
on a screen. Robby is watching TV when Clem comes through the
door with a new HOOKER. Clem points to the door, ordering
Robby out.

EXT. CLEM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Robby sits in his car, looking at his robot drawings. One
features two robots having a candlelit dinner. We push in on
the candle and we...

MATCH DISSOLVE:

INT. ASHLEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

We pan off the flame of a burning candle to a TV set where
CLIVE WEATHERS is doing "The Weathers Report", flirting with
the ASIAN ANCHOR GIRL.

Pull back through the bathroom door to find Ashley in a
bubble bath. She's watching her "boyfriend" on TV,
masturbating angrily (it's like a hate fuck, but she's
alone).

She convulses in thunderous orgasm, water sloshing onto the bathroom floor.

Then Clive Weathers WINKS from the TV and Ashley can't help herself. She blows him a kiss.

We move up to a kitschy photo of a polar bear, and we...

MATCH DISSOLVE:

INT. HARLIN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

There's a full-sized stuffed polar bear in Harlin's bedroom, it's claws painted pink, a Rubik's cube in it's mouth.

Harlin sets up some Barbie and Ken dolls against a blank wall, where little instruments are set up. He switches on a strobe light and contemplates this tableau. Can he make it work?

Then suddenly he runs to the bathroom and PUKES his guts out.

Covering the bathroom walls is a vintage nudie picture collage. We push in on a cutie bathing in a giant martini glass and we...

MATCH DISSOLVE:

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A martini glass sits on the bar. Theo lifts and drains it, throws a smoke in his mouth and looks for a light as we hear obnoxious laughter from the back of the room. Drunk Theo furrows his brow. He cranes his neck around some indoor plants and sees...

MARISOL, sitting at a corner booth, cackling over dinner with her very fit BOY TOY (the aerobics guy we heard about) and some INDUSTRY TYPES.

Theo slides off his stool and heads for the door, defeated. Still looking for a light, he reaches into his jacket pocket, pulls out the \$50 BILL Robby hid there. He unrolls it, licks the COCAINE RESIDUE off it and looks at Marisol over his shoulder.

Tired of being stepped on, Theo suddenly turns and heads right for Marisol's table. Their conversation stops. Marisol, the Aerobics Guy, the whole booth looks up at him.

Theo grins and unzips his fly. They lean back in shocked disbelief and Theo *pisses right on their table.*

EXT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Theo is tossed to the concrete. Now BOTH of his eyes blackened, he gets up unsteadily, pants torn, both knees bloody. He staggers away, a defiant smirk on his face.

END MUSICAL MONTAGE

FADE TO:

INT. SOUND STAGE - MORNING

Robby walks onto a soundstage for the first time in his life. Mouth agape he stares at the catwalks high above, the lighting rigs... There are way more people working on this than he imagined.

On one side of the stage, the bizarre, monochrome set Harlin designed is bustling with activity. On the other side, a stark, white wall with a drum kit has zero activity.

Marcy walks through the elephant doors and takes in the scene. She is not happy. She sees Theo standing in between the two sets and makes the long, angry walk to him. The CREW takes notice.

MARCY

THEO!

THEO

(pleasantly)

Good Morning, Marcy!

MARCY

Fuck you. Why is nobody working on my wall?

THEO

It's not what the director wants to shoot.

MARCY

I don't care what he *wants* to shoot, *I'm* in charge here!

Now all work has stopped. Everyone watches the mounting conflict.

THEO

Yes, but you see, the checks have already been signed, love. Your label approved the concept, and the

(MORE)

THEO (CONT'D)
band is waiting in the green room.
So short of you setting fire to the
set, I can't imagine a reason why
we'd change what we've already been
paid to shoot.

Marcy is steaming mad but there is no way this guy makes her
crack in front of everyone. She keeps her voice calm.

MARCY
Fine. I'm gonna let you idiots bury
yourselves. Have fun on this one,
Theo. Because it *will* be your last.

Marcy storms out.

Jennifer brings Theo his coffee.

JENNIFER
You okay?

THEO
Never better, my dear, never
better.

The wicked witch now gone, work resumes.

Robby sees Harlin adjusting pieces of the set. He hurries
over. Harlin hesitates, eyeballing him.

ROBBY
Um... Can I help?

Harlin takes a beat and then...

HARLIN
Yeah. We need to counter-clock all
these a couple inches.

ROBBY
Okay.

They start moving the set pieces, then Harlin blurts out...

HARLIN
I throw up when I get nervous,
alright?

ROBBY
Sure. I didn't mean to cause
trouble.

Harlin nods and they get back to work.

INT. STAGE - MORNING

The stylized set is lit. There's a surrealistic Paris city scape painted on the cyc but so far the set still looks like a confusing jumble.

Off to one side, Ashley helps the BLONDE LEAD SINGER put on a trench coat and fedora.

Jennifer walks with Robby.

JENNIFER

I know Clem said you'd work for free, but I'm gonna pay you anyway.

ROBBY

Wow, Jennifer, that means so much. Thank you.

JENNIFER

Don't get too excited. It's seventy-five bucks a day. No overtime. Probably be twenty hours today.

ROBBY

I'm okay with that.

She leads Robby to the First AD, JERRY "THE SHERIFF" PUTTERIDGE, 40. He wears a sheriff's star on his jean jacket. He stands next to Harlin on the camera dolly.

JENNIFER

Sheriff, this is Robby. He's the new guy. Beat him up.

She walks away.

SHERIFF

First shoot?

ROBBY

First, any of this.

Sheriff writes something on the camera slate.

SHERIFF

When I tell you, hold this up in front of camera. I point, you get the hell outta there.

ROBBY

Do I clack it?

SHERIFF
No--

HARLIN
Sheriff, let's burn one!

SHERIFF
(to Robby)
Welcome to Hollywood, brother.

With that, Sheriff jumps into AD mode.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)
OKAY, HERE WE GO! CLEAR THE SET!

The minions quickly scatter.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)
LET'S ROLL CAMERA!

HARLIN
Camera's rolling!

SHERIFF
(looking at Robby)
SLATE UP!

Robby nervously holds the slate in front of the camera...

HARLIN
Slate's good!

Sheriff points and Robby runs out of frame.

SHERIFF
ROLL PLAYBACK!

The click track goes BEEP, BEEP, BEEP, BEEP and the music BOOMS over the speakers.

It's BERLIN - "THE METRO".

And just then, something MAGICAL HAPPENS. On cue, pieces of set are rolled into place... walls rise on unseen ropes... smoke drifts across the floor...

Just like Harlin's fantasy, the set transforms like a giant pop-up book into something undeniably cool...

What's more, we've seen this before. *It's the real-life version of what Harlin saw in his office.*

The camera slowly dollies as the blonde lead singer, TERRI NUNN, enters through the rear of the set.

Robby is in heaven.

THEO
(in pleased disbelief)
Bloody hell...

FADE OUT.

THE END