

"RICOCHET"

by

Fred Dekker

REVISION

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"RICOCHET"

FADE IN

EXT. SAN PEDRO NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Rusty tricycles lying in driveways.
SOUNDS of K-Mart lawnmowers and afternoon soap operas.
Peaceful, low-rent suburbia.

A KID comes into frame, wielding a plastic Uzi.
He moves cautiously. Every nerve taut.
Like a trained commando, or a professional CIA operative.

BEGIN MAIN TITLES

A HISPANIC WOMAN yells at the kid from a porch.
She sits, nursing a BABY. The kid ignores her. Moves on.
Continuing his ruthless manhunt.

He accidentally walks into something. Make that someone...
Whoever it is GRABS the toy Uzi. The kid looks up.
Catches a glimpse of a real gun in a shoulder holster.

Standing over him is A MAN in a dark suit.
The man examines the toy gun. Holds it up to show:
An IDENTICAL-LOOKING MAN, across the street.
The second man nods.

THE FIRST MAN hands the toy back to the kid.
Adjusts a tiny, fiber-optic headset. WHISPERS into it.
MOVES in step with the other man across the street.
WE HEAR a low, ominous BASS RESPONSE.

Curious NEIGHBORS emerge from their houses.
The slack-jawed KID turns to look up the street.
The BASS RESPONSE rattles our bones, AS --

A BELL 206 POLICE ESCORT HELICOPTER

appears in TELEPHOTO like a flying, vengeful beast.

Below the chopper are two pairs of CHP MOTORCYCLE ESCORTS.
Behind them, are four nonedscript grey cars.
They lead and follow a BLACK STRETCH LIMOUSINE.

RESIDENTS watch as the motorcade cruises past.
A little American flag flutters on the limo's antenna.
ON ITS DOOR is a familiar round emblem:

The SEAL OF THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

EXT. VINCENT THOMAS BRIDGE - DAY - HELICOPTER SHOT

The motorcade moves onto the bridge.

END MAIN TITLES.

INT. LEAD CAR - DRIVING - DAY

A SECRET SERVICEMAN driving.
Brooks Brothers three-piece, crewcut, sunglasses.
His exact CLONE sits in the passenger seat.
Tell a joke, neither of them will smile.

DRIVER'S POV - THROUGH FRONT WINDSHIELD

A car length between him and the lead motorcycles...
Suddenly, he SLAMS ON THE BRAKES, and SPINS THE WHEEL --

EXT. BRIDGE - MOTORCADE

-- CAUSING the car to SKID into a SCREAMING SLIDE right in
the center of all lanes, blocking traffic. Cars SHRIEK to
avoid collisions. Most fail.

INT. LEAD CAR - SAME

The clone in the passenger seat recovers from whiplash...
and allows unregulation concern to enter his voice.

SECRET SERVICEMAN #2
What the fuck are you doing -- ?!

The driver calmly draws a Browning BDA from his shoulder
holster, and BLOWS HIS PARTNER'S BRAINS against the
passenger window.

EXT. MOTORCADE - SERIES OF SHOTS

The OTHER CARS in the motorcade CRUNCH into one another,
JERK to abrupt halts. All of this happens very quickly.

INT. VICE PRESIDENT'S LIMO - DAY

The AGENTS inside all pull guns, and go for the doors.
The DRIVER keys a radio mic:

SECRET SERVICEMAN #3
All teams, we have a problem --
(drops the mike)
Stay here, Mr. Vice President.

INT. LEAD CAR - SAME

The IMPOSTER SECRET SERVICEMAN reaches under a felt drop-cloth in the back seat, and pulls out a nasty-looking British IW XL70 bullpup full-auto machine gun.

EXT. MOTORCADE - ON LEAD MOTORCYCLE ESCORTS

The helmeted CYCLE COPS have stopped. They turn to see the driver of the lead car step out, RAISE the machine gun -- and BLOW THE LIVING SHIT OUT OF THEM with a hail of automatic gunfire. He WHIRLS, AND --

STRAFES THE SECRET SERVICEMEN emerging from the other vehicles. Windshields EXPLODE, bullets CHOP UP paintjobs, and every agent in the vicinity goes down hard.

EXT. VICE PRESIDENTIAL LIMO - SAME

The agents who just got out LIE DEAD on the asphalt. The Vice President pulls the door closed, and locks all the doors. Remember, kiddies: takes brains to be Vice President.

EXT. BACK OF MOTORCADE

Civilians cars shift into reverse, while the four TAIL MOTORCYCLE ESCORTS pull their guns and hit the ground, crawling commando-style.

As they crawl PAST the tail Government car, its DRIVER emerges. Regulation crewcut and sunglasses, but instead of a suit, he now wears a khaki army jacket.

He raises an XL70 just like the other imposters', and -- OPENS UP on the four cycle cops, RIDDLING THEIR BACKS WITH MACHINE GUN FIRE.

Between the two gun-wielding moles, EVERYONE IN THE MOTORCADE IS NOW DEAD, except for the man in the limo.

A second IMPOSTER SECRET SERVICEMAN gets out the passenger side of the car. Army Jacket tosses the used XL70 to him.

INT. POLICE CHOPPER - FLYING

The PILOT and OBSERVER survey the havoc below.

OBSERVER

Jesus Christ. Where's the
Goddamn ground support?!

EXT. STREETS - SERIES OF SHOTS

Squad cars and SWAT VANS SCREAM through traffic.
Light bars FLASH, SIRENS WAIL.

EXT. THE BRIDGE

The two terrorists open the trunk of the tail car. One begins to pull out the pieces of a ground-mount, .50 caliber anti-aircraft submachine gun, while:

Army Jacket slings an ammo belt filled with small rockets across his chest. He buckles it, then takes out a megaphone and a ROCKET LAUNCHER. WE MOVE WITH HIM AS

He strides toward the limousine. Tries the door. Locked. He knocks politely on the window. When there is no response, he AIMS the rocket launcher at the tinted glass. After a beat, the window rolls down.

TERRORIST

(winks)

See? You're not so dumb.

EXT. BRIDGE TOLL PLAZA - DAY

Squad cars and SWAT vans JERK to halts.
ARMED POLICE bolt from the vehicles to cover positions.

EXT. SOUTH END OF BRIDGE

Terrorist #3 SNAPS the ammo-belt into place on his groundmount anti-aircraft gun.

EXT. NORTH END OF BRIDGE

Terrorist #2 COCKS his groundmount. Both sides covered.

EXT. TOLL PLAZA - SERIES OF SHOTS

A line of SWAT marksmen raise M-16s.
Their weapons CLATTER as they are COCKED and LOCKED.

MEGAPHONE VOICE (O.S.)
IT'S REAL SIMPLE, FOLKS...

The SWAT TEAM COMMANDER holds up a hand: "Wait".

THE LEAD TERRORIST

holds his megaphone with one hand. With the other, he aims
the rocket launcher at the Vice President.

TERRORIST
(into megaphone)
You kill mine... I'll kill yours.

DETECTIVE BANKS is 62, married, owns three shirts, drinks
too much. DEPUTY POLICE CHIEF CIMINO is 46, blow-dried hair,
overdressed for a Mexican stand-off, could maybe USE a drink
once in a while.

The two of them move up behind the growing police battery.
Cimino yanks a megaphone from the SWAT TEAM COMMANDER.

CIMINO
(into megaphone)
This is the Deputy Police Chief...
Now nobody wants to kill anybody!
Just tell us what you want!

TERRORIST
We want PEACE!

Cimino looks at Banks incredulously.

BANKS
Right. And I'm Santa Claus.

EXT. CHOPPER - FLYING

The observer hoists an Anschutz sniper rifle into position.
The pilot looks at him with sudden concern.

POV THROUGH SCOPE-SITE

REVEALS the terrorist is too close to the Vice President
to make a clean shot feasible.

EXT. BRIDGE

The terrorist continues soap-boxing to the army of SWAT.

TERRORIST

(into megaphone)

We're supposed to believe that reductions in nuclear arms build-ups are going to make the world safer for our children? What's the difference if we can end life on earth five thousand times or only twelve times? Once is enough, don't you think?

CIMINO

Look, these are all important questions, issues, but can't we discuss it --

TERRORIST

I DON'T WANT to discuss it with you! Who are you? I want this man's boss!

Cimino looks helplessly at Banks.

BANKS

Sure gets rid of the middle man, don't he...?

The SOUND of the helicopter RISES. ALL LOOK UP at --

THE POLICE CHOPPER closing, and --

THE SNIPER hanging out the open side, rifle poised, and --

THE TERRORIST SEES this, and --

His finger tightens on the launcher trigger, and --

TERRORIST

(warning, into megaphone)

Baaad idea! Get 'em outa here!

CIMINO freaks.

CIMINO

What the hell are they doing!?

EXT. POLICE CHOPPER

A radio voice SCREAMS from the pilot's headset as the sniper locks the terrorist in his scope's cross-hairs.

OBSERVER/SNIPER
Nuke this, asswipe.

He FIRES.

EXT. BRIDGE - AT THE LIMO

as the shot RICOCHETS, KICKS a chunk of paint off the roof,
the terrorist CURSES, AIMS the rocket launcher, FIRES...
and a FIRE-TRAIL BLASTS into the sky.

THE CHOPPER EXPLODES in a MUSHROOM-BALL of FLAME, and --

THE LEAD TERRORIST is momentarily unarmed, grappling for
another rocket from his ammo belt, AS --

The SWAT TEAM COMMANDER SEES his opening, AND ----

SWAT TEAM COMMANDER
FIRE!!

But in that fraction of second between the order and the
reaction, THAT'S WHEN:

THE TERRORIST at the front of the motorcade pulls the
trigger of his ground-mounted machine gun, and --

THE WHOLE POLICE BATTALION is STRAFED WITH .50 CALIBER,
500-ROUNDS-PER-MINUTE HOT LEAD and the ones who aren't
killed instantly, which is few, HIT THE DIRT, AND --

THE GROUND MOUNT ceases fire, as --

THE LEAD TERRORIST, VERY pissed, aims his newly-loaded
rocket launcher at the Vice President of the United States.

TERRORIST
(into megaphone)
NO MORE BULLSHIT! I WANT THE
PRESIDENT! NOW!

EXT. NORTH END OF BRIDGE

Everyone slowly rises. The corpses of the front flanks are
dragged away. Cimino signals those armed to resume their
vigils, as --

CIMINO
This is getting out of hand.

Banks hides behind a squad car door.

BANKS

Getting?

And a '62 Corvette Stingray convertible SCREAMS to a stop.

A STRANGER gets out.

Worn jeans. Long, weathered rain coat.

Sharp-toed leather boots. Old west spurs.

We do not see his face.

Cimino is talking into a radio mike, when --

BANKS

(with recognition)

Partner.

-- he notices the stranger. He does not look thrilled.

CIMINO

Detective, you stay out of this.

This is not your jurisdiction, and
we DON'T need any heroes right now,
you hear me? Until more back-up
and Government authority arrives,
the team commander and I have this
under control --

BANKS

Oh, bullshit, Chief.

Cimino spins and glares at him.

BANKS

I mean, with all due respect, these
guys have breeched national security,
they're not exactly amateurs --

CIMINO

I'm aware of the situation, detective --

BANKS

The situation is innocent people
are dead and we're standing here with
our thumbs up our ass, so if Styles
here has even a stupid idea how to
deal with these fruit loops, I'd say
it's worth hearing, wouldn't you?

(an afterthought:)

Sir...?

Pause. Everyone is staring at this confrontation.
You can hear a pin drop.

Finally, Cimino turns to the mystery man...

CIMINO

Okay, Mr. Hot Shot. Go ahead.
Thrill us.

THE STRANGER puts a stick of gum in his mouth.
He is in his late 30's, ill-shaven, handsome.
Hair flecked with grey. Needs a trim.

Behind a pair of round wire-rimmed glasses are eyes that
seem hard to shock, and harder to impress.

Meet NICK STYLES. Our hero.

STYLES

I love you guys, but have you
thought about Decaf?

He pulls out a 9mm Llama M-87.
COCKS it, and shoves it into his belt loop.
He TAKES a 12 gauge bullpup from a COP standing nearby.

STYLES

Who's the hostage?

BANKS

Try the Vice President of the
United States.

Nick calmly flips down the sun-lenses on his glasses.

STYLES

Oh, good. For a second I thought
this was gonna be tough.

AT THE EDGE OF THE BARRICADE

Nick walks past SWAT cops with M-16s, PAST THE BARRICADE,
and out into the open, straight toward the terrorist at the
limo.

TERRORIST

Hey!

Nick keeps walking. The machine gunner at the ground mount
tenses up, looks nervously to his leader.

TERRORIST

STAY THERE! YOU! STOP!!

Nick doesn't slow, doesn't even break stride.
The lead terrorist NODS to the machine gunner who...

OPENS FIRE.

Nick TAKES A HAIL OF MACHINE GUN FIRE IN THE CHEST.
Not surprisingly, IT KICKS HIM BACKWARD onto the pavement.

The SWAT TEAM COMMANDER SIGNALS his men to hold back --
Everyone looks at Nick's body, lying sprawled on the ground.
The terrorist raises his megaphone.

LEAD TERRORIST
ANYONE ELSE WANNA GET CUTE?!

HOLD ON NICK. Lying in a heap.
Suddenly, he bolts up to one side.
Levels his gun with two hands.

The machine gunner sees this --
GRABS FOR ANOTHER AMMO BELT, BUT --
Too late. Nick FIRES: BLAM! BLAM!

The man flops backward, dead. Nick rises.. and walks toward
the limo, unbuttoning his shirt, and pulling out the KEVLAR
BODY ARMOR that protected him.

LEAD TERRORIST
NO WAY! STAY BACK! STAY!!

Nick keeps coming. Holsters the revolver in his belt loop,
tosses the shotgun left-hand-to-right, and PUMPS it one-
handed. Because of his sun lenses, we cannot see his eyes.

The terrorist grabs the Vice President's throat through the
window of the limo, and sticks the rocket launcher barrel
against his face. The Vice President murmurs with fear.

LEAD TERRORIST
I'M WARNING YOU. ONE MORE STEP AND
THIS MAN EXPLODES.

Nick stops. A beat.

STYLES
Hey. I didn't vote for him.

He fires the shotgun: BOOM -- !
The terrorist's knees EXPLODE with crimson.
He buckles. DROPS the rocket launcher. KLUNK.
He sinks to his knees with pain.

BACK OF MOTORCADE

The third terrorist backs away from his groundmount.
A DOZEN COPS AND SECRET SERVICEMEN immediately throw him to
the pavement and yank his hands behind his back, but he
probably doesn't even mind. At least he's alive.

BACK TO SCENE

Nick walks up, shirt open, and stands over the terrorist, shotgun aimed, one-handed, point-blank in the man's face.

STYLES

I want you to know I believe in second chances. So here's the deal: you have the right to shut the fuck up. If you give up that right, anything you say will be used by a Federal judge to nail your ass. You have the right to an overpaid shyster, who'll scramble for a legal loophole to allow you to suffer less than you deserve. If you say you cannot afford this counsel, you are a lying scumbag. Do you understand these rights as I've explained them to you? Good. Then here's what happens: you can lie down slowly, lace your fingers behind your neck, and be escorted to a hospital, and a jail, where you will spend the rest of your life regretting you got out of bed this morning. That's option one.

(a beat)

Option two is give me a reason to pull this trigger... and can I tell you a secret? I don't have a huge problem with option two. Think it over. You have one second.

The terrorist looks up with huge eyes. His face is bathed in sweat. His arms are wrapped fetally close to his chest.

TERRORIST

If I go... I'm taking HIM with me.

You can hear a pin drop. Nick looks down.

A PIN lies on the pavement. A round metal ring.

The terrorist smiles.

Then holds up the GRENADE HE HAS BEEN HIDING.

He tosses it into the window of the limousine.

Nick tosses the shotgun and YANKS OPEN THE DOOR OF THE limo.

He GRABS the Vice President and PULLS HIM OUT, dragging him away from the limousine. The terrorist's gunshot wound prevents him from running or even walking away.

Several yards from the car, Nick THROWS the Vice President to the ground, dives after him, covers his head, just as --

The limousine EXPLODES in a DEAFENING series of multiple white-hot FLAMEBALLS that sear your eyebrows.

Orange flames lick the wreckage. Nick rises unsteadily. The Vice President is mobbed by secret servicemen.

As Nick calmly pulls the pack of gum from his pocket, Banks appears beside him. The terrorist's blazing corpse seems to stare at them, its mouth still wide in a silent scream.

BANKS

You okay...? I know how you feel about hostage situations.

Nick spits out his gum and reaches into his coat. Produces a cigarette. Fumbles desperately for matches. Banks beats him to it, holds up a lighter.

BANKS

I thought you quit.

STYLES

I did.

AERIAL SHOT OF SCENE

The bridge, the flaming limousine, the corpses, the fire trucks and ambulances rushing to the scene, the cops dealing with the crowds, and the lone figure walking away, into the crowd, which parts for him like he's a Messiah, as he climbs into his '62 'Vette... and drives away...

DISSOLVE:

EXT. PRISON - DAY

Concrete buildings. Sentry towers.
Chain-link and razor wire.
You don't want to be here.

INT. PRISON CELL - OVERHEAD SHOT

A CONVICT lies on his bunk.
Brutal. Muscular. Bathed in sweat.
One eye is covered by a black EYE-PATCH.

A TEN-YEAR OLD NEWSPAPER CLIPPING

Yellowed. Edges curling.
A story about a bank robbery attempt/hostage situation.

A policeman is pictured:
Late 20s, clean-shaven, handsome.
Close-cropped, black hair. Vivid eyes.

A ten years younger "Officer Nick Styles".

THE CELL - OVERHEAD SHOT - CONTINUED

CAMERA SLOWLY ROTATES DOWN ON the convict as he breathes.
Like a lion, sleeping in a cage. His single eye is closed.
A CLOCK TICKS on the soundtrack.

MORE CLIPPINGS AND PAPERWORK

Trace the cop's life, career, reputation.
Photos and paperwork. Xeroxes of official documents.
Bills. Letters. All regarding 'STYLES, NICHOLAS'.

Someone has collected a record of the man's whole life.

THE CELL - OVERHEAD SHOT - CONTINUED

ROTATING DOWN on the convict. Closer. CLOSER.
The CLOCK TICKING grows louder. Almost deafening, until...
WE FINALLY HOLD -- VERY TIGHT ON THE CON'S FACE.

His single eye blinks OPEN. Looking directly AT US.
The clock STOPS. A chill goes up your spine.

Meet JESUS SLATTERY. The Bad Guy.

INT. CELL BLOCK - DAY

Slattery walks across the main floor.
Carton of cigarettes in one hand.
Other PRISONERS feel the vibes, and get out of his way.

A dangerous-looking LIFER walks toward Slattery.
Carrying a cylindrical object wrapped in a silk glove.
As the two men pass each other --
They TRADE OFF without stopping.

EXT. PRISON GATES - DAY

A Brinks truck pulls up to the guard station.
Two BRINKS MEN inside. The DRIVER shows his i.d.

INT. ADMINISTRATION ACCESS

Two sets of barred doors lead to civilian offices.
An armed GUARD stands here, a key-ring on his belt.

He unwraps a candy bar from his pocket.
Tosses the wrapper toward a wastebasket.
He takes a bite. Frowns with distaste. Stale.
He turns to toss the candy in the same wastebasket.

The wastebasket is gone.

SLATTERY is behind him.
He SHOVES the wastebasket over the guard's head.
GRABS his gun with a now-gloved hand.
JAMS it into the man's spine, as he --
SPINS him to face the barred door.

SLATTERY

Open it.

The wastebasket nods.

INT. ACCOUNTING OFFICE

A civilian OFFICE CLERK works a computer console.
The door handle rattles.

CLERK

It's open. Push.

The handle rattles again.
The clerk CURSES. Crosses to the door.

CLERK

For Chrissake, I said PUSH --

The door SLAMS open.
Catches the clerk squarely in the face.
Sends him crashing backward.
Immediately, Slattery is in the room.
He shuts the door, pulls the sentry in with him.
Pulls the cylindrical object from his pocket.

A silencer.

He quickly screws it onto the pistol-barrel.
The clerk groggily tries to get up.
Slattery SHOOTS him twice in the head. THUP. THUP.
He looks at his watch. On schedule?
WE HEAR VOICES from out in the corridor.

INT. CORRIDOR

The two BRINKS MEN stride down the hallway, CHATTING.

INT. ACCOUNTING OFFICE

Slattery PULLS the guard's body behind the a desk.
SHOVES the wastebasket guard into a corner.
The voices outside grow louder.

The door opens. The BRINKS MEN enter.
The First Man carries a large money satchel.
He SEES the slain clerk's feet sticking out.

BRINKS MAN

What the f -- ?

The Second Man starts to turn. THUP.
His head kicks and he DROPS out of frame, REVEALING:

Slattery. Standing behind him, holding the gun.
He touches the smoking barrel to the First Man's head.
Reaches down to unzip the satchel.

He pulls out a thick wad of cash.
The sweating Brinks Man glances toward a mirror.
SEES Slattery. Their gazes connect.

BRINKS MAN

Please don't kill me.

Slattery SHOOTS him in the head.

INT. CORRIDOR

Slattery SHOVES the guard into the corridor.
FREEZES. VOICES nearby. PULLS them both into an alcove.
TWO OFFICE WORKERS walk past. Slattery waits. MOVES.

INT. ADMINISTRATION ACCESS

Slattery SLIDES the doors SHUT with a hard CLANG.
WE HEAR ALERT CLAXONS throughout the prison.

Slattery quickly unscrews the silencer.
KNEES the sentry in the gut and DROPS the gun.
The guard drops to his knees, wastebasket on head.
And looking ridiculous.

TWO PRISON GUARDS come racing around the corner.

Pull the wastebasket off the guard. He looks around.
Slattery is nowhere to be seen.

SECOND GUARD
Did you see him?

The shaken guard catches his breath.

GUARD
He took my gun.

SECOND GUARD
You didn't see him?

GUARD
Shit, nobody robs a jail.

The guards look around helplessly. The CLAXONS WAIL.

CUT TO:

THE PILE OF CLIPPINGS

we saw earlier. A HAND drops the last of them.
A front-page story on the bridge incident:

VICE PRESIDENT SAVED FROM TERRORISTS
Rogue Cop in Daring Shoot-out

The silk glove used in the heist is produced.
LIT with a cigarette lighter.
And dropped onto the pile of clippings.
Not surprisingly, they go up like a Christmas tree.

INT. SLATTERY'S CELL

Slattery's brutal features are bathed in the firelight.
As the fire dies, he rises.
Drop the silencer into the toilet. Flushes.
A PRISON WARDER appears outside the cell.

WARDER
Makes a big stink...

Slattery says nothing. Does not move.

WARDER
Whenever somebody pulls a job
inside. A lot of people get
embarrassed. 'Specially if it's
an inmate.

WARDER (CONT'D)

'Course, somebody that smooth'd
already have people greased inside.
Kinda makes you wonder what he needs
with the money, don't it?

(goadng)

Unless, of course... he's planning
something on the outside...

The warder grins. Slattery finally turns.
His eye bores a hole in the man.
Who suddenly doesn't seem so cocky.

Slattery climbs into the upper bunk and lays down.
His CELLMATE is apparently asleep in the lower.

WARDER

(changing the subject)

What's with your cell mate?
Hard day?

Pause. Finally... Slattery speaks:

SLATTERY

Quiet type.

The warder stands there uncomfortably, as WE REVEAL...

SLATTERY'S CELL MATE.

Face pale. Mouth lax. Eyes wide, staring blankly.
A mucousy trickle of blood ropes down his cheekbone.

INT. POLICE SQUAD ROOM - DAY

COPS bustling, phones RINGING, computer consoles.
Cheesy decorations tell us it is around Halloween.

BANKS walks through the squad room, diligently dabbing his
tie with a wet paper towel. He passes a detective (HERB)
reading a copy of MAD magazine, and laughing his ass off.

Herb sports a spectacularly unconvincing toupee, but no-one
has the nerve to tell him.

Banks comes to a own desk, and sits. His nameplate is the
only recognizable item amidst a Hirsoshima-like pile of
debris. By contrast, the adjoining desk is immaculate.

Nick sits there with his boots up, eating a sandwich.
He notices Banks' activity.

STYLES

What happened?

Banks MUMBLES inaudibly. Continues scrubbing.

STYLES

(snickers)

You what?

BANKS

I peed on my tie, all right?
The seat fell down, I tried to
grab it --

(off Nick's amused
expression)

Gimme a break, will ya? Jesus.

Nick chokes on his sandwich as a young uniform, SGT.
McMILLEN, walks by, drops some paperwork on the desk.
You get the feeling that McMillen idolizes Nick.

McMILLEN

Hey, Nick, I figured it out --
The guy's found in his basement,
death by hanging. His feet are
three feet off the ground, except
there's nothing nearby he could
have stood on, all the doors are
locked from the inside and there's
a big puddle of water on the floor.

Nick starts to laugh again, about to say "Maybe Charlie did
it." Banks cautions him with a finger:

BANKS

Don't say it.

McMILLEN

It's simple. Suicide. He stood
on a big block of ice.

STYLES

(recovering)

See? You'll make detective yet.

McMILLEN

(as he moves on)

By the way, nice job yesterday.
Smells like a promotion to me.

Nick can't help himself. He breaks up.

STYLES

I think that's Charlie's tie.

Banks flips him off as an open newspaper lands on Nick's
desk. The cover story about yesterday's exploits.

DEEVY (o.s.)
Hey, aren't you Dirty Harry?

Standing over Nick is one LT. MIKE DEEVY, Vice Squad.

DEEVY
How 'bout an autograph for my kids?
Go ahead. Make their day.

Nick glares at him, no longer amused.

DEEVY
Then how 'bout lending me a few bucks?

Nick tosses the paper in his wastebasket.
Several other copies are already there.

STYLES
Mikey, I'm flavor of the week,
okay? You make that big arms
bust, you'll get your turn in
the spotlight.

DEEVY
Yeah, right. If Cimino'd let us
do our jobs, the son of a bitch --

CIMINO (o.s.)
Styles.

They both look up to SEE:
CIMINO, now standing in front of Nick's desk.

DEEVY
Chief.

Deevy exits. Cimino notices a stand-up framed photo on
Nick's desk. He picks it up:
A generic husband (NOT Nick), wife, little girl.

CIMINO
Nice picture. Family?

STYLES
It came with the frame.

CIMINO
(beat)
I see...
(pause)
Could I have a word with you?
My office?

He turns and heads away. Nick looks after him, confused.

He rises, to good-natured JEERING from his co-workers.
Across the room, McMILLEN gives him a thumbs-up.

INT. CIMINO'S OFFICE - DAY

Cimino enters, followed by Nick, who immediately notices
SEVERAL DISTINGUISHED-LOOKING MEN standing around the room.
Everybody's wearing a suit except Nick.

STYLES

Mr. Mayor. Mr. Commissioner.

CIMINO

Close it.

Nick closes the door. Cimino gestures to a chair, which
Nick declines. Cimino sits on the edge of his desk. Smiles.

MAYOR

Detective, allow me to reiterate
our thanks for what you did yesterday.
The President himself called me this
morning about a commendation.

Nick nods awkwardly. Eyes shift.
Cimino grins wider, trying to ease the tension.

CIMINO

Nick, I asked the Mayor and
Commissioner Lambeth here today
because... well, you've done a
lot of good work for this
department in only a few years of
service, and I want you to know
the actions I'm taking are strictly
probationary.

Nick looks confused.

STYLES

I'm sorry, is this closed-
captioned? You lost me.

The POLICE COMMISSIONER steps forward with a file folder.

COMMISSIONER

Detective, the Deputy Chief has
informed us that despite your
considerable bravery yesterday,
you and your partner displayed
a high degree of insubordination.
According to your file, this isn't
the first time, either.

Nick is speechless.

CIMINO

Nick, I'm sorry. I've cut you a lot of slack in the past, but this time I feel a suspension's warranted.

(pause; lighter)

Look, you've got a high profile right now, we were thinking maybe some PR work in the interim.

Nick looks to the Mayor incredulously.

STYLES

This is a joke, right?

MAYOR

Mr. Styles, if I didn't think a great deal of your value to the city, I wouldn't have taken the time to be here personally.

Nick is not impressed.

STYLES

Excuse me, your honor, but that's bullshit.

CIMINO

All right, let's watch the language --

STYLES

You're here to keep me from filing a grievance with the civil service board --

CIMINO

That's enough, detective. You overstepped your authority yesterday, it's that simple. You're a police officer, not a rodeo clown.

STYLES

What, you think I put my butt on the line for laughs?!

CIMINO

(rising)

I said that's enough.

STYLES

If you had technically given me an order, maybe --

CIMINO

All right, Mr. Technical. You want an order? Fine, how's this: I ORDER you to clean out your desk. Take your K-Mart family photo and your girlie magazines and whatever the hell else you've got in there, and shove 'em up your ass, but do it OUTSIDE because you are no longer an employee of this department. There. You happy now?

The veins in his neck and temple bulge. He is sweating. The Mayor and the Commissioner stare at him.

CIMINO

Sorry...

STYLES

(to the Mayor)
You're going to let him do this.

MAYOR

He's your commanding officer.

STYLES

You're his.

Nobody says anything. Eyes are averted.
Nick nods. Turns. Reaches for the doorknob.

CIMINO

Styles.

(Nick stops)
You want to leave the shield,
please?

Pause. Nick slowly turns, takes his badge from his jacket, and places it on Cimino's desk.

STYLES

You know something, Chief.
You remind me of a condom.

Cimino looks at him with confusion.

MAYOR

I'm sure what Mr. Styles means is that you protect the community from diseases, like crime and disorder.

STYLES

(after a pause)
No, your honor... I was thinking more along the lines of him being a scumbag.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY

Nick comes out of Cimino's office.
HERB stands nearby, looking sympathetic.

STYLES
Good hair, Herb.

Nick returns to his desk, where he SEES:
Banks's desk is now empty. Clean enough to eat off.
Banks stands beside it, carrying his belongings in a box.

BANKS.
Promoted?

STYLES
Fired. You were close, though.

BANKS
Don't tell me. "Insubordination".

A moment as they look at one another... and this sinks in.

BANKS
Look at it this way. At least we
don't have to break in new partners.

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The headlights of a PRISON TRANSPORT BUS cut through the rain, reflecting off oily colored slicks in the road.

INT. PRISON BUS - NIGHT

The DRIVER. Two ARMED OFFICERS.

And SLATTERY, sitting alone, hands and feet shackled in chains. Rain beats on the roof of the bus as dim, passing lights STROBE on his dark features, his single eye seeming to glow in the alternating darkness, staring at:

ONE OF THE TRANSPORT OFFICERS

Blinks awake, after nodding off.
A cigarette has burned out between his lips.
He re-lights it, looks toward Slattery.

TRANSPORT OFFICER
What's the matter, Slattery? You're
being awful anti-social back there.

Slattery says nothing.

TRANSPORT OFFICER

Kinda like that trick you pulled back in stir -- wacking your cell-mate like that? Very anti-social. But hey, where you're going, you'll get lots of privacy.

SLATTERY

Got any more of those?

The officer feels for a cigarette pack in his pocket.

TRANSPORT OFFICER

Yeah.

He makes no attempt to take out the pack, or offer one.

TRANSPORT OFFICER

Think I'm pretty stupid, don't ya?

SLATTERY

Yeah.

TRANSPORT OFFICER

Right. I go over there, you get cute, I get dead. What's the matter, you think I don't go to the movies?

He grins, pleased with himself, as rain continues to spatter the windows. Sodium lamps continue to go by outside... casting the killer's face in and out of shadow.

TRANSPORT OFFICER

No way, Slaterry. You're in a moving vehicle on an open road. You've got three armed men on you, and one driver. This is the closest you've been to freedom in ten years, so if you wanna get cute, do me a favor. Think twice.

The officer exchanges smiles with the SECOND TRANSPORT OFFICER, sitting toward the front of the bus.

SLATTERY

How many men...?

The officer's smile fades as he looks behind Slaterry.
SEES: No-one.
He looks down.

The THIRD TRANSPORT OFFICER is lying on the floor of the bus in a pool of blood, his body splayed in the seat behind

SLATTERY

Now wielding the dead officer's .38 in his chained hands --
The SECOND transport cop goes for HIS gun just as --

BOOM. Slattery nails him.

SLATTERY

Drop it.

The first transport officer drops his riot gun.
THE DRIVER breaks into a sweat, goes for HIS holster.

SLATTERY

You heard the man! THINK TWICE!
Out the window. NOW.

The driver tosses his sidearm out the side window.
Slattery keeps his gun trained on the first cop --
Indicates his shackles.

The transport officer moves forward, shitting perfectly
square bricks. He takes out a key-ring. Kneels. Begins
undoing the manacles securing Slattery's ankles to the
floor of the bus.

The third officer's corpse stares up at him.

SLATTERY

Guess he didn't go to the movies
enough.

ON THE DRIVER

Taut as a tightrope. He looks ahead.

HIS POV - SEVERAL HIGHWAY PATROL CARS

are blocking the road ahead due to an accident.

TRANSPORT BUS DRIVER

(under his breath)
Thank Fucking Christ.

But SLATTERY sees this, too -- looks around for options --

HIS POV - OUT THE BACK OF THE BUS

where oncoming traffic makes slowing or stopping risky, but

A PICK-UP TRUCK

is driving in the lane just right of the bus.
And accelerating. Which gives Slattery an idea.

He divides his attention between the roadblock ahead, and
the truck pulling parallel --

SLATTERY

Shotgun.

The transport officer throws it to him.

SLATTERY

Thank you.

And he puts a bullet in the officer's brain with the .38 --
Then SHOTS THE BUS DRIVER in the back, TOSSES the sidearm,
SEES: THE PICK-UP now pulling parallel with the bus, so --

He COCKS the shotgun, aims at a wire-mesh-reinforced
window, and --
BOOM! The window BLOWS OUT in a cascade of glass, and --
Slattery RUNS, hands still shackled, toward the opening --

EXT. PRISON TRANSPORT BUS - MOVING - NIGHT

Slattery DIVES out the window of the bus and --

EXT. PICK-UP TRUCK - MOVING

LANDS -- THUMP! -- in the back-bed of the pickup.
He scrambles to the cabin, raises the shotgun butt, and --
CRASH! SMASHES the back window in --

INT. PICKUP CABIN - NIGHT

And puts the shotgun barrel to the DRIVER'S temple.

SLATTERY

Turn around.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The pick-up does a SCREAMING full 180 on wet concrete --
Other cars SPIN OUT to avoid the truck as it rockets back
in the direction it came from, AS --

EXT. ACCIDENT SITE - NIGHT

A Highway Patrolman FLAGS the oncoming prison bus.

INT. PRISON TRANSPORT BUS - DRIVING - NIGHT

The dead driver stares blankly ahead, pedal-to-metal.

EXT. ACCIDENT SITE - AS BEFORE

The flagman blanches as he realizes the bus is not slowing.
HeYELLS -- And ALL the HIGHWAY PATROLMAN RUN FOR COVER AS

THE PRISON BUS CRASHES through the roadblock with a SCREAM
of CRUNCHING METAL and sparks --

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - DRIVING - NIGHT

Slattery is seated in the front cabin, holding the shotgun
on the driver. The driver keeps his hands on the wheel, and
his eyes on the road.

Slattery looks out the back, hearing the distant SIRENS.
When he turns to face front, we see the hint of a smile...

INT. PHIL'S BAR - THE NEXT DAY

Dim. Red lighting. Naugahyde upholstery.
PATRONS in Halloween costumes play pool.
A juke plays vintage Sinatra.

A used-looking WAITRESS carries a tray with a glass of
bourbon on it to where Nick and Banks are sitting. She
sets the glass in front of Banks. It joins several empties.

WAITRESS

Bourbon, straight.

(to Nick)

Get you another Coke?

He shakes his head. She shrugs and leaves. Banks kicks back
a slug while twirling his .38 by its trigger-guard.

BANKS

Hey, they want the badge back?
Fine. They can have it, but no
way they get the gun. No way. I
shot three people in the line of
duty with this.

BANKS (CONT'D)

That's like giving your mitt back
after eight seasons, you know?
It's personal. It's like... your
toothbrush or something.

STYLES

Who'd you ever shoot with your
toothbrush?

BANKS

What?

(Nick shrugs)

That made no sense. You don't
even drink and that made no sense.

Nick takes out a pack of cigarettes running on empty.

BANKS

Hey.

STYLES

I have no life. I'm allowed.

Resigned, Banks produces a lighter.
Tries to light Nick's cigarette with his right hand.
Failing, he switches hands, lights it with his left.
He absently flexes the muscles of his right hand.

BANKS

That's the thing about wars,
Nick. Always leave you something
to remember 'em by.

STYLES

You told Judy yet?

BANKS

About the war? I think it was
in the papers.

(off Nick's glare)

Tell Judy, are you kidding? She
throws a fit when I'm late for dinner.
Wait'll she gets a load of THIS.

STYLES

At least you won't be late for
dinner.

Banks snorts, and gets down to some serious drinking.
Seeing this, Nick takes the glass away, rises.

STYLES

Come on, Charlie. Let's get a cab.

BANKS
S'matter? Don't think I can drive?

STYLES
Sure. You can drive.
(Banks stumbles
as he gets up)
Walking's the hard part.

EXT. PHIL'S BAR - DOWNTOWN - AFTERNOON

They come out to the sidewalk. Nick flags a cab.

STYLES
So what d'ya say? Same again
tomorrow?

BANKS
What -- I got other plans?

The cab pulls up. Banks starts to climb in. Stops.
Suddenly somber, he turns to Nick with frightened eyes.

BANKS
I was six months from my pension,
Nick... Six Goddamn months...

Nick doesn't know what to say. Banks attempts a smile.

BANKS
Hey, don't sweat it. I'm the rock,
right? No, you're the rock. I'm the
dirt clod. I'll be swell, watch me.

He gets in. Nick slams the door behind him.
The taxi takes off down the street.

Nick looks around at the flashy strip joints and bustle of
oncoming nightlife. He has no plans... no job... no life...
Surrounded by people, he is completely and utterly alone.

A neon sign winks at him: NEWS AND LIQUORS.
After a beat, he goes in.

INT. NEWS AND LIQUORS - NIGHT

Booze. Tobacco. Porno magazines.
Say, Mom and Dad -- bring the Kids!

A row of men, some in uniform, stand thumbing through
shelves of colorful and informative reading materials.

Nick shuffles to the convenience section, and gets a can of cat food. Then moves to the counter.

STYLES

Marlboro lights, hard pack.

The CHECKOUT CLERK gets the cigarettes and rings up the purchase, as Nick begins emptying his pockets, placing the contents on the counter (loose change, receipts, etc).

As he does this, he looks up absently.
SEES: the rows and rows of LIQUOR bottles.
He wipes his mouth with his hand.

QUICK SERIES OF FLASHCUTS

Like STABBING KNIVES of imagery.
FLASHBULBS going off, harshly ILLUMINATING:
Mangled metal. A car wreck. Rain. A bloody teddy bear.
Glimpses of a dead WOMAN... and a dead LITTLE BOY.

BACK TO NOW

Nick snaps back to reality. Sweating.
The contents of his pockets strewn across the counter.
Among them is a key-ring attached to colored chips.
The cashier SEES this as he counts out the change.

CASHIER

You're sixty cents short.
(a beat, sympathetic:)
Fug it.

STYLES

No.

He pushes the cigarettes away with slow emphasis.
The cashier rings up the cat food, puts it in a bag.

CASHIER

Buddy, I'm in the liquor business
ten years. I know A.A. chips when
I see 'em...
(pause)
Maybe you wanna shop someplace else
next time, huh?

Nick nods. A hint of pain in his eyes.
He backs away from the counter.

And that's when he notices -- and WE see:

A GIRL standing near the racks of porno mags.
Mid 20's, tops. Beautiful. Long brown hair.

She is staring directly at Nick, but the second he looks up, she turns and pretends to look at magazines.

Nick moves to the racks... and picks up a magazine.
The girl pretends to peruse the magazines, until she is standing right next to him. They do not look at each other.

THE GIRL
(not looking up)
You know... personally, I find
this kind of filth repulsive.

After a pause:

STYLES
Yeah? Any kinds of filth you
DON'T find repulsive?

THE GIRL
That's very good. Did you make
that up yourself?

STYLES
I have a team of writers.
(a beat)
So how about explaining what you're
doing in a place like this, what
with it being repulsive and all.

She looks directly at him for the first time.

THE GIRL
Maybe I followed YOU in...

Big pause. He looks at her right back.

STYLES
Gee, I was kind of hoping you
were just a sex maniac.

She bats her eyes. God, she's adorable.

THE GIRL
Who says I'm not...?

And she exits, leaving Nick a killer smile.
As Nick watches her leave, a clearly GAY PATRON sidles up
beside him, giving him the once-over. Nick notices.

STYLES

How'd you like your testicles
wrapped around your neck?

The gay patron breaks into a huge grin.

STYLES

Oh, good.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

Nick comes out of the store, and heads up the sidewalk
looking for the girl. There is no sign of her. Zip. Zilch.
He stops and fishes for his last cigarette.

THE VOICE (o.s.)

You're gonna die...

Nick turns. Standing in the doorway behind him is THE GIRL.

THE GIRL

If you don't lay off those things.

STYLES

You know... if there's one thing
I can't stand, it's a girl that
plays hard to get.

GIRL

So go for broke. Ask me out.
Who knows? You might get lucky.

STYLES

Yeah, but how much will it cost me?

Without warning, the girl SLAPS him hard across the face.

GIRL

Maybe this is a bad neighborhood for
romance, Mister... but I happen to
take my flirting seriously, and I
don't appreciate that.

She turns and walks away, blending into sidewalk traffic.
Nick helplessy watches her go. Once again, alone...

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Blue slats of moonlight. Venetian blinds.
SOUND OF KEYS in a door. It OPENS.
Cockroaches scuttle into hiding.

WE SEE a sink full of dishes, not washed in months.
A layer of dust over everything in sight.

Nick enters, carrying his mail and the paper bag.
He sets them down, notices a small package among the
bills and the junk mail.

He tears it open, finds a gaily-wrapped present inside.
He checks the outer package. No return address. He shrugs.
Tears it open. A small box. Inside is a cheap digital WATCH.

He presses a button. The STOPWATCH element starts ticking
the seconds. Nick shrugs and puts it on his wrist as he
moves to a stereo console and flicks on a JAZZ station.

As the MUSIC PLAYS, he sheds his coat and takes his
revolver from his holster. He moves to a coat closet.

He takes down a SHOE BOX from the upper shelf, and...
Almost ceremoniously, he places the gun and shells in it.
He replaces the box in the closet, and closes the door.

He fishes for his cigarettes from his shirt pocket.
The pack is empty, so he crumples it into a ball.

He ruffles through the pockets of the dirty laundry laying
haphazardly on the floor. Nothing.

He moves to the kitchen and opens a cupboard.
Empty, except for dust-caked condiments and stale food.
He reaches atop the refrigerator. Nope.
Goes to a drawer and opens it. Nope again.

And then, my friends? Then the search REALLY begins...

Under the couch. Behind a dead plant. Behind books in a
bookshelf. Rummaging through the items from his desk at
work, including:

THE PICTURE.

The generic, Happy Normal FAMILY. Husband. Wife. Child.
A picture of love, stability, peace with the world.

As the search goes on, it becomes more frantic, more
reckless, until Nick is sweating, cursing to himself,
until FINALLY --

He FLINGS open a desk drawer. Kneels. Violently rips
through file folders. PULLS ONE OUT -- and FINDS in it --
flattened:

A single, bent cigarette.

As Nick kneels there, sweating, alone, holding the measly cigarette gingerly between thumb and forefinger, WE HEAR:

NICK'S CAT

Meow.

NICK'S CAT sits nearby, staring at him impassively.

STYLES

What the hell are you looking at?

And that's when the phone RINGS so loud you jump.
Nick grabs the reciever.

STYLES

WHAT?!

We hear a tiny phone voice.
The color drains from Nick's face.

EXT. BANKS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Squad cars. COPS. An AMBULANCE. PARAMEDICS.
Neighborhood RUBBER-NECKERS. Nick's 'Vette SCREAMS to a halt and he bolts from it. WE FOLLOW HIM into --

INT. BANKS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Paramedics are lifting a covered body on a stretcher. The sheet over the head is soaked with blood. Nick STOPS them to lift up the sheet. SGT. McMILLEN sees him --

McMILLEN

Nick -- !

But it's too late. Nick SEES what he had to see.

He blanches. Lowers the sheet.
Looks like the wind has been knocked out of him.
He sits unsteadily on the arm of a couch while the paramedics take the body away. McMillen moves beside him.

STYLES

... who found him...

McMILLEN

Judy. The gun was in his hand.

(pause)

I'm really sorry.

He grips Nick's shoulder. A wasted gesture.
Nick rises on weak legs. Looks down the hallway.

SEES Banks's wife, JUDY with two PLAINCLOTHESMEN.
Her eyes are red with tears, wide with disbelief.
She sees Nick. He moves toward her. HOLDS her.
The policemen look on helplessly.

EXT. BANKS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Nick comes out of the house, his face a grimace of pain and frustration. Stops in his tracks. SEES Cimino giving orders.
LT. DEEVY ventures tentatively up to Nick.

DEEVY

Listen, Ace... If you need anything...
Money. Anything at all. Just find me.

Nick gives him a thankful nod. Deevy leaves, awkwardly.
Nick thinks a moment... then moves to a police I.D. van
where McMillen is helping TECHNICIANS load up.

STYLES

Get the gun to Latent Prints and
ballistics. I want to see the report.

McMILLEN

Nick, it was a suicide. Don't
torture yourself.

STYLES

(patient, measured)
Just. Show me. The report.

Cimino appears behind him.

CIMINO

Excuse me.

Nick turns to him slowly.

CIMINO

My people have a lot of work to do
here... would you mind letting them
get to it?

Okay. Not only can you cut the tension with a knife... you
can cut a piece OFF, and take it home to put on the mantle.

STYLES

I'm only going to say this once,
so you might want to listen up...

Everyone on the scene has stopped what they're doing to
observe this confrontation.

STYLES

There's a lot of people you can fuck with. Phonies like you who think being a good cop is knowing what kind of clothes to wear or which politicians you brown-nose. Or you can fuck with old guys who trust the system because they've given their whole lives to it...

(pause)

But don't fuck with me, Chief. Because what happens next will make your head spin...

CIMINO

Is that a threat?

STYLES

Don't worry. When I threaten you, you'll know.

He turns... and walks away into the night. McMillen watches sympathetically, as Cimino frantically attempts to save face, waving and ordering people back to work... and as the police and paramedic teams return to their duties, WE...

DISSOLVE:

EXT. DOWNTOWN SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Nick stumbles aimlessly down the sidewalk amidst hookers and punks, neon and sleaze. A lit cigarette dangles from his lips. Let's put it this way:

Compared to Nick, shit looks good.

As he walks, he looks ahead. SEES:
A GIRL. Walking. Brunette. Raincoat.
She stops to adjust her boot.

As she does this, she looks back absently, and we see that it is not just any girl... It is THE Girl.

She rises, making no acknowledgement of having seen Nick, and moves on. Nick picks up his pace. Following.

She is half a block away.

The Girl looks back. SEES Nick. Again, no recognition. She picks up her pace. Nick follows suit. She turns a corner. He follows her --

EXT. PEEP SHOW - NIGHT

And finds himself looking up at gaudy, neon signs:
GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS - EXOTIC DANCING - ADULT FILMS 25 CENTS.
He goes in.

INT. PEEP SHOW - NIGHT

Dim. Red lighting. Sleazy PATRONS.
A row of booths with SOUNDS of porno loops from within.

Some of the customers stand in the shadows of open booths, giving Nick the eye. ONE is the GAY PATRON who was scoping him in the liquor store the night before. The guy smiles.

STYLES

Oh, good.

Ignoring the clientele, Nick moves down the row of booths. Through a curtain of colored beads, where:

Another row of booths face one wall. PATRONS loiter.
Cheesy ROCK MUSIC blares from within.
Nick eyes double doors with padlocked chains on them.
Clearly the only exit.

As Nick tries to figure how The Girl could have gotten away, an aging ATTENDANT appears behind him.

PEEP SHOW ATTENDANT

Tokens?

Nick looks toward the booths.
Fishes for some quarters, exchanges them for tokens.
He tentatively goes to a booth. Opens the door. Goes in.

INT. PEEP SHOW BOOTH

Tiny. Cramped. Filthy. A small window, covered by a sliding partition, and a grey metal coin box. Nick feeds a token into the coin box.

INT. PEEP SHOW STAGE

The wooden partition slides down, and Nick is looking through a greasy window at a rotating stage on which a naked, not unattractive BLACK GIRL is undulating for the benefit of shadowy faces behind the other windows.

The rock song ends, and the DANCER rises and leaves through a tattered curtain. A BORED VOICE comes from a speaker.

ANNOUNCER

That was the lovely Randi... And
now, our next enchanting lovely,
the beautiful and talented...
Whisper...

INT. PEEP SHOW BOOTH

A new SONG BEGINS and as the next enchanting lovely is
about to make her appearance, the partition in Nick's booth
SLIDES DOWN.

Nick fumbles for another token, inserts it, and the
partition slides down again to reveal:

THE NEXT DANCER

has taken the stage and begun her strip-tease.
Nick blanches.

It is THE GIRL.

She does not see Nick. She does not look at any of the
customers. Just keeps dancing, going through her paces.
Emotionless. Impassive. Like a robot.

NICK watches her with an expression that tells us:
If his life has ever reached a lower ebb, this tops it...

DISSOLVE:

INT. DINGY HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

LOOKING OUT A WINDOW at Long Beach, WE PULL BACK TO REVEAL
a series of grainy, telephoto 8 x 10s spread across a bed
and taped to yellowed walls...

BANKS' TAPE VOICE

That's the thing about wars,
Nick. Always leave you something
to remember 'em by.

They are all photographs of NICK; surveillance photos,
like the CIA or a private investigator might take...

STYLES' TAPE VOICE

You told Judy yet?

BANKS' TAPE VOICE

About the war? I think it was
in the papers.

AS WE HEAR Nick and his late partner talking in the bar, WE SEE a candid long-lens photo of the same scene...

BANKS' TAPE VOICE

Tell Judy, are you kidding?

WE SEE photos of Nick's apartment, taken through a window with a fire escape...

BANKS' TAPE VOICE

She throws a fit when I'm late for dinner, wait'll she gets a load of THIS.

STYLES' TAPE VOICE

At least you won't be late for dinner. Come on, Charlie. Let's get a cab.

WE MOVE TO a factory diagram of a '62 Corvette. The area under the hood has been circled in red ink...

BANKS' TAPE VOICE

S'matter? Don't think I can drive?

Next to the diagram is... a slab of gelatinite explosive, wrapped in plastic. Beside it, is a coil of wire and a TIMING DEVICE...

STYLES

Sure you can drive. Walking's the hard part.

WE FINALLY REST on a huge tape recorder, reels turning slowly. SNIK -- SNIK. We hear an o.s. KNOCKING -- and a beefy HAND reaches into frame to turn the machine OFF...

Again: KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

THE HAND reaches for a 12 gauge shotgun AND WE REVEAL:

SLATTERY, sitting on a cot, shirt off, back against the wall. His face is in shadow, eye glinting in the darkness. A lone ceiling fan turns overhead. WHUP WHUP WHUP.

Slattery COCKS the shotgun.

SLATTERY

Come in.

The door opens. A not unpleasant-looking MAN enters. Nice suit. Overcoat. Hair combed.

None of this fools us for a second.

The man carries two suitcases. He looks around the clearly low-rent digs, the piles of research... sets down his suitcases. He looks admiringly at Slattery's shotgun.

AVON CALLING

Nice gun. Looks like police issue.
Where'd you get it?

SLATTERY

Police.

AVON CALLING

That would explain it.

He opens a case, pulls out two machine guns.

AVON CALLING

Okay. This is your Ingram .45 caliber M-10... and your basic Uzi 9mm pistol. This is Israeli-made, by the way, not one of those cheapshit rip-offs they crank out in Tennessee. Now if we're talking long-range, you probably want the Ingram. The up-side to the Uzi is a folding stock, so you can put it in a duffel bag if you want. It's got an adjustable rear sight, but it's not exactly the kind of weapon you tap for a scope mount if you know what I mean.

Slattery looks at him from the shadows.

SLATTERY

Silencer.

The salesman grins proudly. He reaches into a bag... produces a large cylindrical object, which he proceeds to screw on the front of the Uzi.

AVON CALLING

This is the SG-9 with a vented Sten barrel. It'll reduce your report by 46 decibels. At least.

He hands the weapon to Slattery to get the feel of it.

SLATTERY

Cartridge.

The salesman hands Slattery a magazine.
Slattery JACKS the clip into place.

AVON CALLING

Look. I'm not gonna lie to you. If your heart's set on firing full auto, being mobile, and being quiet, this package will definitely deliver the goods. If you know what I mean.

He takes the gun off SAFETY, AIMS at the salesman.

SLATTERY

I'll take it.

And ZIPS HIM UP THE MIDDLE with 9mm artillery without even rising from the bed. The silencer renders the report a sharp but muffled BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA.

At this range, the salesman is virtually cut in half. The pieces fall to the floor in a bloody heap.

SLATTERY

IF you know what I mean.

Smoke rises. The ceiling fan turns. WHUP WHUP WHUP.

CLOSE ON A PHOTOGRAPH

One of the 8x10s spread out on the bed.
It is a photo taken outside the Liquor Store.
A photo of Nick... and THE GIRL.

The photo has been splattered with blood.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND PEEP SHOW - LATER THAT NIGHT

The Girl comes out the back way into an alley.
Her footsteps ECHO as she walks. She stops. Looks around.
Did she hear something? Naaaahhh.

She turns to move on. The perfect time for:
A MAN to step out of the shadows --

THE GIRL

Oh, Jesus!

But there is nothing remotely scary about the guy.
He's young-ish (early 20's), nice jacket, nice haircut.

MAN

I'm sorry.

He looks like he means it.

MAN

You shouldn't be walking alone
at night in a place like this.

The Girl moves on.

THE GIRL

Thanks.

MAN

I'll be glad to escort you.

THE GIRL

No thanks.

But SEES that her path is BLOCKED by two more nice-looking GUYS. She turns back, facing the first guy.

MAN

I should mention, we saw your
show in there. We're big fans.

His warm smile is suddenly scarier than a switchblade. Surrounded, outnumbered, the girl ponders options. She doesn't appear to have any. The punks close in...

PUNK #2

You're really pretty, you know?
I've PAID for worse than you.

The Girl reaches in her purse.

THE GIRL

Here. Take my money.

She quickly pulls a small automatic handgun --
The punk LASHES OUT, clipping her wrist.
The gun CLATTERS to the ground.
The two goons rush in and GRAB her. Tight.

MAN (PUNK #1)

We don't want your money, honey...
We wanna party.

CLIK -- ! The blade of a switchblade JUTS OUT. Gleams. The leader presses it against her creamy white throat.

VOICE (o.s.)

Excuse me -- ?

The punks all SPIN -- TO SEE:

NICK STYLES, silhouetted in the alley entrance.
Face in shadow. The glow of a cigarette.

STYLES

I was wondering if I could
interest you guys in a little
game of Balls and Jack.

The punks exchange confused glances.

STYLES

Here's how it goes: you drop
the knife, let go of the girl,
and walk away. And if you don't --
(takes a step forward,
into the light)
I kick you in the balls, Jack.

The lead punks CLIKS! the stiletto CLOSED again.
Takes it away from the girl's throat

PUNK #1

You're a pretty funny guy.

STYLES

Shucks, you mean it?

PUNK #1

But you just made a mistake.

STYLES

Did I? Damn.

PUNK #1

And I think you need to be taught
a lesson...

He smiles. Holds the blade back up. SNIK -- !

STYLES

Ooh. Bad idea.

The punk steps forward. Wielding the blade.

STYLES

Trust me. You wanna re-think this.

PUNK #1

Fuck you.

STYLES

(resigned)

Okay...

The punk moves forward. Eyes flashing.
Knife glinting. He thrusts. Parries.
And then he makes one fatal mistake.

He gets close to Nick.

Nick's arm SHOOTS out so fast it's a blur, and CRACK -- ! CLIPS the punk's wrist and the knife goes flying, and -- Without warning, Nick has a handfull of the punk's hair in his fist, and PULLS him into a KNEE TO THE GROIN, AND --

THWOOMP! The wind goes out of the punk just as -- CRACK! Nick's elbow sends a spray of blood, and CRUNCH -- ! The punk's nose shatters, and he DROPS in a heap.

STYLES

There now, wasn't that fun?
Who's next?

The three remaining punks trade glances -- and RUN.
Nick approaches the girl.

STYLES

You okay...?
(she nods, not sure)
I want to apologize about before.
I guess I get a little... cynical
sometimes. Anyway, if you're
willing to give a guy a second
chance... I'd like to make it up
to you.

The girl studies him. Hint of a smile.

THE GIRL

You could... ask to buy me a drink.

STYLES

Can I buy you a drink?

THE GIRL

I thought you'd never ask.

INT. PENTHOUSE BAR - NIGHT

Huge view windows look out over the twinkling lights of Long Beach. CHATTING PATRONS, piped-in MUSIC. Very romantic. Nick and The Girl sit by the window.

STYLES

So how long you been working there?

THE GIRL

Too long. Three weeks.
(shrugs)
Beats unemployment.

STYLES

I worked vice for a while. I thought the big money was between shows.

THE GIRL

Not me. I'm not that kind of girl.

STYLES

What kind are you?

THE GIRL

I do my number, okay? Three shifts, three times a day. That's it.

STYLES

"Whisper"??

THE GIRL

(chuckles)

Gimme a break, it sounded romantic. Anyway, beats my real name.

Nick stares at her probingly: "Which is --?" She relents.

THE GIRL

Estee -- all right? You happy?

Nick smiles. Raises a toast.

STYLES

Estee.

Their glasses CLINK together. She takes a drink --

STYLES

So, you live alone, or...?

-- and does a SPIT-TAKE, LAUGHING.

ESTEE

You sure ask a lot of questions.

STYLES

I'm a cop, I'm supposed to. It's in the manual. So, you live alone, or...?

ESTEE

I have a roommate, okay? What about you? You married?

If there is a jab of pain within him... and there is... he covers it extremely well.

STYLES

Just me and my cat. You still haven't told me why you were trying to shake me.

ESTEE

I didn't want you following me in there. Do you blame me?

STYLES

I guess not. It's just...
(looks out the window)
You're really too pretty to be doing that for a living.

She blushes.

ESTEE

Yeah, well... NASA is not exactly ringing my phone off the hook, you know what I mean? Anyway, I've kind of had your proverbial checkered past.

STYLES

Everybody's got something in their closet.

ESTEE

This is different. It was really bad.

Nick looks down. We briefly glimpse THE TRACK MARKS on her arms. She pulls her arms in. Folds them. Looks up sadly.

STYLES

Hey. I'll still go out with you.

She smiles, looks blessed.

ESTEE

Where the hell did you come from?

Nick looks at her seriously.

STYLES

New Jersey...?

They laugh and we see something in Nick's eyes we have never seen before. In the middle of grim acceptance... a glimmer of hope.

He reaches for his cigarettes... and Estee reaches out to stop his hand. Nick doesn't even look at the track marks. Just holds her hand. Very, very tightly.

WIDE SHOT - THE BAR

Closing down. The only patrons left, Nick and Estee, holding hands, silhouetted against the city lights...

EXT. ESTEE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - SIGNAL HILL - NIGHT

The Corvette pulls up outside a particular building.

ESTEE

Well, this is me.

STYLES

Yeah, I noticed.

ESTEE

(smiling)

No, this is where I live.
Number three?

STYLES

Can I walk you up?

ESTEE

It's our first date, silly.

Suddenly, an awkwardness worthy of high school sweethearts. Neither knows what to say, but then, they'd be happy saying nothing. They just don't want the night to end.

STYLES

So, about this roommate...
You wanna tell me about him?

ESTEE

Her.

STYLES

(the obvious question)
You're not, uh...?

She touches his cheek with her fingertips. Whispers:

ESTEE

Try me.

And they kiss. One of those kinds of kisses.
An OLD MAN applauds from across the street.
Their lips part and they acknowledge him.

STYLES

I'll take that as a no.

ESTEE

(into his eyes)

Do me a favor, Nick Styles. Next time I try to shake you... don't let me, okay?

STYLES

Haven't let you down yet, have I?

They kiss again, and she leaves him with that heartbreaking smile of hers, and heads into the building.

WE HOLD ON NICK... whose life seems to be looking up.

CUT TO BLACK

A phone RINGING breaks the stillness.
Then a door OPENS and lights COME ON.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Nick enters, goes to the phone.

STYLES

(into receiver)

Yeah.

INT. POLICE LAB - NIGHT (INTERCUT)

SGT. McMILLEN stands over a BALLISTICS TECHNICIAN who is holding a gnarled wad of .38 slug with a pair of tweezers.

McMILLEN

Nick, it's McMillen. You wanted me to call when we had something.

STYLES

Yeah. Go.

McMillen takes the bullet from the techie, and checks a clipboard sheet for the stats.

McMILLEN

Well, the slug checks. I'm looking at it right now. .38 lead semi-jacketed hollow point, muzzle velocity 915.

STYLES

What about the serial number on the gun?

McMILLEN

Also checks. And latent prints got a clean right index off the trigger and a thumb off the stock.

(a beat)

Looks like a suicide, Nick.
Ballistics don't lie.

Nick frowns.

STYLES

Did you say right finger and thumb prints?

McMILLEN

Yeah...?

STYLES

Jesus, I thought you wanted to make detective. Didn't you check Charlie's record?

McMILLEN

What? He was right-handed.

STYLES

McMillen, the nerves were shot. He couldn't pull a trigger with that hand since Korea.

McMILLEN

What are you saying?

STYLES

I'm saying the only way Charlie could have shot himself with his right hand is if somebody took his hand and did it for him --

Nick freezes. He is looking across the room at his window, which leads to a fire escape. The window is OPEN.

STYLES

Listen to me. Call me back in one minute. If I don't answer, send a squad car, understand?

He hangs up, and rises, moving to the open window. He looks out. Just a fire escape... He turns, and looks toward his bedroom. Dark. Beckoning.

He approaches it on cat feet. Slides along the wall toward his coat closet... where his gun is.

He quietly grips the knob, eyes never leaving the bedroom door. He opens the coat closet. Reaches for the shoebox containing his gun, and we SEE before he does, that THERE, hanging from one of the wire hangers in the closet...

Is NICK'S CAT. Dead.

Teeth frozen in a hideous snarl.
Entrails hanging from its slit-open gullet.

Nick SEES it -- and RECOILS, dropping the box with the gun, cartridge and shells.

The phone RINGS.

Nick recovers. Moves back to the phone, eyes flashing from the dead cat to the bedroom door. He takes his gun, a cartridge and a handful of shells.

Ashe cradles the receiver on his shoulder, he starts to load a cartridge. His eyes never leave the bedroom door.

STYLES

McMillen?

PHONE VOICE

Here kitty kitty kitty.

It is not McMillen.

STYLES

Who is this?

PHONE VOICE

You're looking at the bedroom.
You think I'm in there, don't you?

Nick STOPS loading the cartridge.
His pupils jerk around like pinballs.

PHONE VOICE

Don't worry. I'm not in the apartment.

STYLES

Who is this?

PHONE VOICE

Like what I did with your partner?
Cute, wasn't it? Speaking of cute,
I like the girl. I like her a lot.

STYLES

WHO -- IS THIS?

PHONE VOICE

The game's started, motherfucker.

Click.

Dial tone.

Nick slowly lowers the receiver... Every nerve tense.
The SECOND the receiver touches the cradle, it RINGS again.
Loud. Nick slowly puts it to his ear.

STYLES

Yeah...?

McMILLEN

Nick, it's McMillen, what the hell --

STYLES

Shut up and listen. I need three
black-and-whites. Corner of Todd and
Braswell. That's Signal Hill, you
hear me? Do it. Now.

McMILLEN

Okay, I'm on it --

Nick hangs up. Moves to the closet.
The sight of his cat halts him for only a moment.

He calmly reaches for his shoulder holster.
Straps it on. Returns to where he left the Llama.
Picks up the cartridge.
Finishes loading it, one bullet at a time.
His expression has firmed. He has been fucked with.

STYLES

I don't know who you are...

He CLICKS the cartridge sharply into place.

STYLES

I don't really give a shit...

Looks up. Eyes cobalt steel.

STYLES

But if you wanna play...

He COCKS the sucker HARD.

STYLES

Let's play...

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE NICK'S APARTMENT

Nick comes out, closes the door, doesn't notice that he has just kicked loose a TRIP-WIRE stretched across the doorway.

A trip-wire connected to A TIMER...
Which now starts TICKING.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - OCEAN BLVD. - NIGHT

Nick crosses the quiet street to his car.
His footsteps ECHO. He pulls out his car keys.

And he HITS THE PAVEMENT as his apartment EXPLODES behind him, the third floor windows BLOWING OUTWARD with a deafening BOOM and a mushroom ball of flame that lights up the night, showers the sidewalk with glass and debris, and virtually decimates the entire third floor of the building.

Nick rises, orange glow of off-screen flames, and we see in his eyes that whatever "home" he had... is history.

INT. POLICE SQUADROOM - NIGHT

Sparse activity. McMillen appears, goes to a phone.
Dials hastily.

McMILLEN
Dispatch, I need three units --

Cimino appears behind him, walking with some OFFICERS.

CIMINO
What's going on, Sergeant?

McMillen hesitates.
Like a kid with his hand in the cookie jar.

McMILLEN
Detective Styles, sir. He needs
some back-up.

CIMINO
Styles is no longer a police officer.
How can he need back-up?

McMILLEN
Fine, sir. As a CITIZEN, he's
apparently in some deep shit and
requires police assistance --

The phone receiver SQUEAKS.

McMILLEN
(into the phone)
Sorry, Dispatch, that's
three units to --

Cimino GRABS the phone --

CIMINO
Dispatch, this is Cimino. Cancel that.

And HANGS UP. McMillen is amazed.
Other cops in the room are watching.

McMILLEN
Sir, the man is in trouble, what the
hell are you -- ?

CIMINO
You watch your mouth, mister.
Remember who you're talking to.
(a beat)
Now apparently you never studied
child psychology. Styles doesn't
want back-up. He wants attention.
He put himself and his fellow
officers at risk when he was with
the department, and now he's trying
to do so from outside it... and if
you want to join him in this little
indulgent, reactionary banana-land
of his, that's your prerogative,
Sergeant, but don't expect to keep
your badge, do I make myself clear?
End of discussion.

McMILLEN
Sir --

CIMINO
END of discussion.

He walks away. McMillen just stands there helplessly.

EXT. ALLEY BESIDE ESTEE'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Nick's Corvette SCREAMS TO a stop, and he emerges, gun out,
looking around with caution. He looks up a fire escape...
reaches for it, pulls it down with a CREAK of iron.

INT. 2ND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nick opens the window. Enters the building.

He moves down the hallway. Cautiously. Gun up.
He comes to a door: # 3.

He knocks gently. At the pressure of the first knock, the door swings OPEN into darkness. Nick grips the M-87 with two hands... and steps in.

INT. ESTEE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Shadows. Nick silhouetted in the doorway.
He creeps into the room. Tense. Gun up.
Darkness. Beads of sweat on Nick's upper lip.
There is a RUSTLE behind him.
He WHIRLS. AIMS.

NICK

FREEZE!

The lights come ON abruptly, and Nick SEES:

He is aiming his gun point-blank in the face of a FIVE YEAR-OLD GIRL who is wearing a nightgown, and holding a huge stuffed toy dog by the leg....

For the record, meet SHALANE.

From nowhere, a leg SHOOTS OUT like a whip -- CRACK -- !
And KNOCKS Nick into a corner. Shalane SCREAMS, and begins CRYING. Nick looks up, SEES:

RANDI, the black dancer we saw in the Peep Show, standing there in a T-shirt and breathing hard after her Tae-Kwan-Doe demonstration. She is holding a huge kitchen knife.

ESTEE APPEARS in the doorway from the other room.

ESTEE

Nick?

She rushes to Shalane and comforts her.

RANDI

This is Nick?
(lowers the knife)
Jesus, girl, you sure can pick
'em, can't you?

And that's when SILENCED automatic GUNFIRE suddenly CHOPS THROUGH the windows, BLOWING IN SHOWERS OF GLASS -- !

Nick HITS the lights, DIVES, GRABBING Estee and Shalane, and hitting the floor. Randi follows suit as bullets SHATTER vases and BLOW chunks of plaster out of the wall --

ESTEE
What's happening!?!

SHALANE
(giggling like
this is a game)
We fall down, go boom.

STYLES
Grab some clothes -- we've gotta
get out of here --

INT. 2ND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nick opens the door, looks down at the doorway.
No trip-wire.
He emerges, gun up. Both hands: police stance.
Seeing the coast is clear, he gestures the others to come
out. They emerge, frightened, looking around.

STYLES
Which one's the roommate?

ESTEE
Both. Randi and I work together.

STYLES
(nodding hello)
Randi.

Randi extends a hand. Thinks better of it.
Both of Nick's hands are on his gun.

RANDI
Sorry to meet you. No offense.

STYLES
Do you have a car?

ESTEE
In the garage.

Nick hands Randi his keys.

STYLES
Take mine; he doesn't know you.
'62 'Vette, it's in the alley.
(a beat)
The police are on their way but
get 'em, anyway. Tell them Detective
Styles sent you, and there's someone
after me. You got it?

Randi nods dumbly.

STYLES
Where's the back way out of here?

INT. TAXI - DRIVING - NIGHT

A bored CABBIE cruises through the fog. Suddenly --

HIS POV

Nick runs out in front of the cab's headlights, SLAPPING a palm on the windshield.

EXT. STREET - SIGNAL HILL - NIGHT

The CABBIE hits the brakes. Nick goes to him.

CABBIE
Lighten up, pal, I'm done for the night, all right? I'm going home.

Nick points his gun in the man's face.

STYLES
Blue Moon Motel on Pacific.

CABBIE
Say, that's where I live! What a coincidence!

Nick waves across the street to a darkened doorway... from which Estee and Shalane emerge, running to the cab like this is a jailbreak. They climb in.

INT. TAXI - SAME

Nick hands a fifty dollar bill to the cabbie, who drools.

CABBIE
What's the catch?

STYLES
The catch is: nobody follows us.

Nick pales suddenly.

STYLES
The car --

ESTEE

Nick -- ?

STYLES

He booby-trapped the car --

He BOLTS from the cab, SLAMS the roof with his hand.
The Cabbie GUNS IT, as Nick spins and RUNS --

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Randi looks around with trepidation as she moves to the
Stingray, her footsteps echoing in the the night, and --

EXT. STREET - MOVING WITH NICK

as he RUNS like the wind, and --

EXT. ALLEY - BACK TO SCENE

Randi takes out the keys, inserts one in the lock, and...
No go. It won't turn.

Wrong key.

EXT. STREET - MOVING WITH NICK

Legs pumping, and --

EXT. ALLEY - BACK TO SCENE

Randi finds another key, inserts it.

CLOSE UP - THE LOCK

as she TURNS the key, AND...

Click. The lock POPS up.

Randi OPENS the door, climbs into the driver's seat, as --

EXT. END OF ALLEY - WITH NICK

as he BARRELS around the corner, SEES Randi in the Corvette --

INT/EXT. CORVETTE - NIGHT

Randi finds the ignition key...

CLOSE UP - IGNITION

Inserts it...

EXT. ALLEY - WITH NICK

still a block from the Stingray -- too far away --
He STOPS -- YELLS --

STYLES

RANDI! DON'T TURN THE IGNIT --

INT/EXT. CORVETTE - NIGHT

Oblivious, not hearing, Randi TURNS the ignition key, AND --
The engine starts.

Randi puts it in DRIVE, and accelerates out of the alley.

EXT. ALLEY - CLOSE ON NICK

Sweating. Out of breath. Realizing he over-reacted.
He looks around... backs off. Disappears into the night.

EXT. STREET - SIGNAL HILL - NIGHT

as the 'Vette comes out of the alley and PASSES a car, from
which McMILLEN is just now emerging. Alone. He watches the
car curiously as it disappears into the night.

He looks around the street.

Calm. Quiet. No sign of trouble.

Then there is a SCUFFLE, and McMillen turns to SEE:

A large, eye-patched man emerge from a building,
carrying a duffle bag. He stops and looks at McMillen.

SLATTERY

Evening, Officer.

McMILLEN

(absently)

Yeah. Evening...

Slattery walks off into the night as McMillen cases the street with confusion...

EXT. LONG BEACH STREET - NIGHT

The Corvette approaches an intersection.
The light turns RED.

INT/EXT. CORVETTE - DRIVING - NIGHT

Randi SEES the red light. Hits the brakes.
She frowns, stands on the pedal again.

The car is not slowing.

EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT

The car ZOOMS THROUGH the intersection against the light.
Two cars with Right-Of-Way SLAM their brakes, spin, and
CRUNCH into one another painfully.

INT/EXT. CORVETTE

Randi starts to panic. She keeps pumping the brake pedal,
then SLAMS the emergency with her other foot. Goose egg.
She freaks and checks the speedometer.

It is, of course, climbing.

EXT. LONG BEACH STREET - NIGHT

Car horns BLARE as the Corvette zooms crazily in and out of
traffic, CLIPPING fenders, SCRAPING paint, SPARKS flying --

INT/EXT. CORVETTE

Terrified, Randi WRENCHES the wheel back and forth to avoid
a collision. She takes a turn, then NOTICES:

A STREET SIGN

You know the one. The one that says: NOT A THROUGH STREET.
Not a street you want to take without brakes.

INT/EXT. CORVETTE

Randi TWISTS the wheel hard, AND --

EXT. FREEWAY EXIT - NIGHT

The tires SHRIEK as they lay rubber and the car CAREENS in a wide arc around the corner and up a ramp in the only direction allowed it at this speed, STRAIGHT UP a Freeway Exit.

That's right, "Exit".

The cars coming off the freeway HONK and SWERVE to avoid a collision, SLIDING into uncontrollable 180 degree spin-outs and sliding INTO EACH OTHER with nasty CRUNCHES.

One car swerves so severely, it does a barrel roll onto its side, and slides into traffic, providing a moving target for more hapless cars, which CRASH into it from three sides.

INT/EXT. CORVETTE - DRIVING FAST - NIGHT

as Randi grips the wheel with white-knuckled hands, and --

EXT. FREEWAY, 2ND LEVEL - NIGHT

The Stingray shoots UP the ramp and straight at five lanes of freeway traffic, cars forcing themselves into occupied lanes, and SMASHING into each other like a demolition derby.

EXT. TRAFFIC JAM - FURTHER UP THE FREEWAY - NIGHT

Stopped traffic. Highway flares. CHPs.

And one of those two story AUTO TRANSPORTS, stopped dead, with its upper level empty and its loading ramp down. A car lies on its back, IN FLAMES, beside the transport.

PATROLMEN try to douse the flames with their cars' fire extinguishers. A CHP talks into his radio mike:

CHP AT ACCIDENT

The vehicle apparently fell off an auto transport, there are no injuries, we are waiting for fire teams now.

He squints and looks toward the sound of SCREAMING HORNS.

INT/EXT. CORVETTE - ON RANDI (INTERCUT)

as she looks ahead through disbelieving, terrified eyes, AT:

EXT. TRAFFIC JAM - AUTO TRANSPORT - NIGHT

CHPs wave flares. Every lane is jammed with traffic being slowly guided past the stopped transport, so for the 'Vette, which is driving the WRONG WAY, there is only one option:

Randi WRENCHES the wheel, and --

The Stingray SIDESWIPEs THE FLAMING CAR --
Which SPINS like a revolving door, and --
The tail of the Corvette CATCHES ON FIRE, AS --
It SHOOTS STRAIGHT UP the ramp of the auto transport, and --
FLIES INTO SPACE, IN FLAMES, two stories in the air AND --
Randi's SCREAMS are swallowed by FIRE AND VELOCITY, AS --

EXT. FREEWAY OVERPASS - NIGHT

The flaming Corvette SAILS off the freeway, AND --

EXT. STREET - SERIES OF SHOTS - NIGHT

PEOPLE in the street gasp and point up as the FIERY CAR FLIES end-over-end like an Olympic diver, and FALLS two stories to the street below, WHERE --

It LANDS with a blood-chilling CRUNCH that instantly crushes the vehicle AND its contents. It lies there lifelessly, like a dead animal, spewing radiator steam...

EXT. BLUE MOON MOTEL - NIGHT (ESTABLISHING)

INT. MOTEL ROOM #1 - NIGHT

Shalane sits up in bed, finishing a glass of water while she watches a TV set across the room. Estee takes the empty glass and crosses to a small kitchenette to wash it.

Shalane grabs her stuffed dog and holds it tight, clearly thrilled at the novelty of tonight's adventure.

There is a knock on the door.

The girls look toward it. Shalane looks at Estee. Estee wipes her hands... cautiously goes to the door. Every conceivable latch and lock that could be on it IS.

ESTEE

Who is it...?

STYLES'S VOICE

It's me.

Estee unlocks everything but the latch... then opens the door as far as the latch will allow. She looks through.

Sure enough: Nick.

She undoes the latch to let him in. He enters, carrying a small grocery bag. Once inside, HE closes, re-latches, and re-locks the door. He holds up a key.

STYLES

I've got the room next door.

There is an awkward silence between them as Estee returns to the sink. Nick watches her wash Shalane's glass.

ESTEE

What's the matter, you've never
seen somebody wash dishes before?

From the bed, Shalane loudly clears her throat. Estee looks toward her. Embarrassed, she wipes her hands on a towel.

ESTEE

I'm sorry. Nick, this Shalane.
Shalane, this is Nick.

SHALANE

We already met, remember?
When you almost blew me away.

STYLES

Sorry about that.

SHALANE

That's okay. Mom has a lot of
weird friends.

Estee glares at her. Nick reaches in the bag and pulls out a toy COYBOY doll, straight from a supermarker five-and-dime section.

STYLES

Here, um... I got you a present.
A peace offering.

He hands it to her.

SHALANE

Thanks...

As Nick turns and crosses to the connecting door, Shalane examines the gift with total, open confusion. She looks at Estee with a "What the hell???" look. Estee shrugs.

Nick finishes unlocking the connecting door.

STYLES

I'm sorry about all of this.

SHALANE

That's okay. Mom says it's not your fault.

Nick nods uncomfortably, not sure what to say.

STYLES

Well... Goodnight.

SHALANE

'night.

(as he turns to
go in his room:

Psssst!

Nick turns back. Shalane puts up a hand by her mouth as if telling a BIG secret. She points to Estee.

SHALANE

(a HUGE whisper)

SHE LIKES YOU.

She giggles. Nick and Estee smile, then Nick goes into the adjoining room. Estee crosses to the TV, and turns it off.

ESTEE

Okay. Time for bed, blabbermouth.

Shalane giggles.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #2 - NIGHT

Nick is in the bathroom, putting cold water on his face. His shirt is off, but he is wearing his shoulder holster and gun. The paper bag sits on his bedside table.

Estee enters, leaving the connecting door open slightly. She sees Nick's shirt and wallet on the bed. She cautiously picks up the wallet, and ruffles through it:

Driver's License, Credits Cards, the usual.
Then Estee frowns, pulls out a folded-up snapshot.
She unfolds it, revealing lint in the creases.

It is a picture of a much-younger NICK.
Also in the picture are a beautiful WOMAN and a LITTLE BOY.

Nick turns off the water in the bathroom, and Estee quickly
palms the photograph. Nick comes out of the bathroom.

STYLES

"Mom," huh?

Estee looks uncomfortable.

STYLES

Is there a reason you didn't
tell me?

ESTEE

Hey, I don't exactly have the
monopoly on secrets here. Like,
why I'm in a cheap motel room
instead of home, asleep?

Nick looks at her. Goes to the grocery bag.
Takes out a pack of Marlboros, and unwraps it.

STYLES

Somebody's after me.

ESTEE

No kidding.

Nick sits on the bed, lights a cigarette.
He drags on the cigarette deeply, thoughtfully.

STYLES

I don't know who, I don't know
why. All I know is, whoever it
is, is watching me... and step
by step, he's trying to destroy
everything and everyone I give a
shit about.

Estee moves closer to him. Looks at him gravely.

ESTEE

So why are we here? Did we
make the list or something?

Nick looks at her affectionately.

STYLES

Right now you are the list.

He reaches for her hand. She pulls away.
He SEES she is holding the photo. Tenses.

ESTEE

I was snooping, I'm sorry.

Suddenly, there is a cold fire in Nick's eyes. Anger. Pain. For an instant, we think he's going to hit her. Instead, he exhales. Sits back against the headboard.

STYLES

ALL the secrets, huh...? Okay...
I'd been in uniform about a month.
This is back in Trenton. One day
we get an "all units" on some Vietnam
vet down on his luck or whatever --
anyway, he tried to pull a bank job.
It went sour, he freaked, took a
hostage. By the time my partner and
me showed, the place was a zoo --
must have been fifteen units there.
So here's thirty armed cops outside a
bank, and this one crazy guy with a
hostage, holding a gun to his head.
Well, let me tell you, it wasn't skill,
believe me, but for a second -- just
for a second -- I had a clean shot.
So I did my job; I took it. Clean shot,
all right.

(pause)

I hit the hostage behind the ear. Boom.

(pause)

Anyway, the robber hits the pavement,
our guys move in, they take him in...
Guy's still in jail, as far all I know.
I thought for sure they'd suspend me.
But nope. "Line of duty," they said.
Couple days off, couple visits to the
staff shrink -- boom, I'm back on
the beat.

(pause)

That's about when I started drinking...

Estée looks at him with compassion; a compassion she seems
somehow surprised to be feeling.

STYLES

You know what a 30 day chip is?

He fishes in his pocket.
Pulls out his key ring made of chips.

ESTEE

Like, A.A., right?

NICK

Right. They give you a chip for every thirty days of sobriety. I has seven of them when the car accident happened. Carried them with me everywhere, like a purple heart or something. God, I was proud of those things.

(pause)

Anyway, after the funeral, I came out here to get some sun, start all over. One night I'm playing poker with some guys, and I'm losing. I mean, bad. So here I am, dead broke, I'm thinking: God, I need a drink. All I need is to win enough for one drink. But I'm out of chips. So I pull out my thirty day chips, and I ask if I can use 'em. Dealer says okay, make 'em worth five bucks. So I ante. That's one chip. I get my cards, pair of queens. Not bad, so I'm in. Goes around the table, I draw three. Another pair. So I'm thinkin', piece of cake, right? Two pair, queens high? I could do worse, so I bet 'em all. Every last chip. I get called, I show: pair of queens, pair of sixes. Guy next to me? Three aces.

(pause)

I bet seven months of sobriety for one fucking drink... and I lost.

He reaches for the bag on the bedside table.

ESTEE

What car accident?

NICK

(distant)

Hm?

ESTEE

You said you had the chips when the car accident happened.

NICK

Did I?

He absently toys with whatever's in the bag.

ESTEE

Yeah, you did. Then you said something about a funeral?

There is a casualness in Nick's tone, a lack of emotion that is almost chilling.

NICK

Oh, that's right. Jeez, I almost forgot the point of the story.

(a beat)

My wife and son were killed in a drunk driving accident. I was okay, though. Just a couple of scratches.

ESTEE

You were in the car.

STYLES

I was driving.

Estee looks at him, stunned. Tears well in her eyes. In his, we see the pain surface, briefly. Then he recovers.

STYLES

Haven't had a drink since.

Estee looks at the bag in his hands. She GRABS it from him violently.

PULLS OUT the fifth of Jack Daniels.

She drops the bottle. And almost without thinking, holds him tightly.

STYLES

I'm really sorry I got you into this. Maybe we shouldn't have met.

A beat. She looks up at him... and they kiss.

ESTEE

Just do me one favor...

(they kiss again)

Considering the circumstances...

(and again)

Just promise me you won't make a pass at me...

(and again)

... At least until she's asleep.

He kisses her longer. Harder. Strokes her hair. Her breath short. Their mouths attack one another. The temperature in the room rises several degrees.

Suddenly -- she pulls away. Rises.

She goes to the connecting door. Looks in.
She closes it gently. Turns to Nick. Smiles.

ESTEE
Well, what do you know...

She unbuttons her blouse...

ESTEE
She's asleep...

And moves to the bed...

FADE OUT

Then a HARD CUT TO:

INT. POLICE SQUADROOM - MORNING

SGT. McMILLEN pours himself a cup of coffee.
Looks like he hasn't slept a whole lot lately.
He sits at his desk. Sips his coffee.

Looks toward a display case where:
A CLERK is stapling up 'Wanted' posters.

McMillen suppresses a yawn. Takes another sip.
Looks absently back toward the posters.
He squints with curiosity... Frowns.
Rises tentatively. Moves to the display case.
He examines a particular mug shot. His eyes WIDEN.

WE SEE the poster.
It is the man McMillen saw the night before.
It is Slattery.

INT. RECORDS DEPT - DAY

WHUMP! A huge file marked: SLATTERY, JESUS L.

McMillen ravenously sifts through it:

Prison homicide reports. Psychologist's records.
All giving us glimpses of Slattery's mental state.
Terms like "wackoid" are scrupulously avoided.
Finally, an I.Q. test score.
The phrase "borderline genius" hand-written in the margin.
McMillen looks up from the file, dissatisfied.

McMILLEN
Where's the original arrest
report?

RECORDS CLERK
Depends. When was the original
arrest? 'Cause anything before
1986 is on microfilm.

INT. MICROFILM ROOM - DAY

KA-CHUCK!

Records SCROLL past, reflected in McMillen's glasses.
WHHHRRRR! His face is bathed in the ominous glow of a
microfilm reader. Finally -- KA-CHUCK!
McMillen stops scrolling ON:

An ARREST REPORT, dated: 9/8/'80.
Suspect: Slattery, Jesus L.
Charge: Armed Robbery.

An exhaustive description of the bank robbery attempt.
Including a reference to the officer who fired the first shot.
"Officer Nicholas Styles".

A chill goes up McMillen's spine.

RECORD CLERK
You can photostat if you got
a requisition.

McMillen JUMPS -- then recovers from his coronary.

RECORD CLERK
The other guys got a photostat.

McMILLEN
What other guys?

RECORDS CLERK
Homicide. You're the fifth guy
today looked at this file.

McMILLEN
What are you talking about?

RECORDS CLERK
Are you kidding? There's a statewide
manhunt for this guy. He's the
fuckin' devil. Been leaving bodies
behind him up and down the state.
Nobody knows why.

McMILLEN
Who's in charge of the case?

RECORDS CLERK

That's a problem. They spend more time fightin' over jurisdiction than finding out where the fuck the guy is.

(a beat; sarcastic)

YOU don't know where he is, do you?

INT. POLICE SQUAD ROOM - DAY

McMillen makes a bee-line for Cimino's office, WHERE:

Cimino is emerging, tugging on his shoulder holster while conferring with several UNIFORMS as well as THREE PIECE SUITS. Something big is going on.

McMillen steps up to him, his tone intense.

McMILLEN

Sir, I've got to talk to you.
It's an emergency.

Cimino looks at McMillen like he just farted.

CIMINO

Can't you see we're busy, sergeant?
Talk to the watch commander.

He heads off with the others.

McMillen watches them go, incredulous.

An OFFICE RUNNER appears behind McMillen.

OFFICE RUNNER

Excuse me, where's Evidence?

McMillen absently starts to point...

When he notices the package the man is holding.

It is a plastic bag containing burned paperwork.

A tag on it identifies the case ("Slattery"), and adds:
"Found in suspect's cell".

McMILLEN

I was just going down there. I'll
be glad to take it for you.

OFFICE RUNNER

Hey, thanks.

McMillen takes the package.

Sits at a desk. Dials an extension.

INT. POLICE LAB - DAY (INTERCUT)

A female CRIMINALIST picks up the phone.

CRIMINALIST
Comparatives, Crawford speaking.

McMILLEN
Hi, this is McMillen up in homicide.
If I had some documents that were
pretty badly burned, would there be
any way to treat them so you could
read them?

CRIMINALIST
Well, we'd put them under glass,
try re-moisturizing them with
glycerin and water. That might work.

McMILLEN
Would you have time to do it now.

CRIMINALIST
I don't see why not, detective, uh --

McMILLEN
McMillen.
(he almost smiles)
Detective McMillen.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #1 - DAY

Estee has returned to Shalane's bed, and the two of them
are sleeping soundly. Estee stirs, looks up as Nick enters
from the other room, fully dressed, loading his Llama.

STYLES
Morning... Do you have the keys
to that car of yours?

Estee points to her purse. Nick fishes the keys out.

STYLES
You stay here, I'm gonna find a
a friend of mine for some money.
We should probably get out of town
'til the police nail this guy.

He kisses her. Shalane, watching, pretends to be asleep.
She is clutching her toy cowboy in one hand.

ESTEE
Be careful.

STYLES
Maybe they got him last night.

ESTEE
Be careful, anyway.

He nods. Leaves.
Estee watches him go, pain in her expression.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Estee's car comes around a corner, cruises up the street.

INT. ESTEE'S CAR - DAY

Nick at the wheel. He SEES:

HIS POV (INTERCUT)

A LINCOLN CONTINENTAL coming from the opposite direction.
Nick's friend, LT. MIKE DEEVY is at the wheel, ANOTHER MAN
riding shotgun. Recognizing Deevy, Nick YELLS --

STYLES
Mike! HEY, MIKE -- !

The Lincoln passes him.
Nick leans on the horn again. He hits the gas --

EXT. INTERSECTION - DAY

And SQUEALS into a full 180 to follow the Lincoln.
Other cars JAM their brakes to avoid collisions.

INT. DEEVY'S CAR - DRIVING - DAY

The shotgun guy hears the commotion, and looks behind them.
Deevy ignores this, his thoughts clearly elsewhere.

EXT. POSH NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

The Lincoln comes up the street and pulls up in front of
huge Art Nouveau wrought-iron gates. A Middle-Eastern-
looking GUARD approaches the car.

Recognizing the men, he waves for the gates to be opened,
and they drive in. As the gates close, Nick pulls up in
Estee's car. The guard looks at him with apprehension.

STYLES

I'm with him.

The guard cautiously signals for the gates to re-open.

POV - BINOCULAR MATTE - FROM ACROSS THE STREET

LOOKING TOWARD the gates as they close.

DIRTY TRICKS #1 (o.s.)

He's in.

A MAN (DIRTY TRICKS #1)

in a suit lowers the field glasses, and speaks into a Walkie-Talkie. A second MAN crouches behind him.

DIRTY TRICKS #1

All units stand by.

DIRTY TRICKS #2

Who's the other guy?

EXT. WRIGHTIAN HOUSE - DAY

Deevy and the other man get out of the car.
Deevy is holding a sleek briefcase.

They approach an ultra-modern, prairie-style home in the Frank Lloyd Wright mold. Low horizontal forms seem to grow out of the landscape and an inside deck expands to an outer bridge over a black-bottom goldfish pond.

In other words: somebody's loaded.

SEVERAL WORKMEN in white coveralls stand on scaffolding against one side of the house, sandblasting and detailing.

A MAN in a three-piece suit greets Deevy and Shotgun. They shake hands and he escorts them inside, as... Nick pulls up behind the Lincoln and gets out to follow them in. Some of the WORKMEN exchange glances.

INT. WRIGHTIAN HOUSE - DAY

DEEVY is just finishing an embrace with a patronly MIDDLE EASTERNER in a thousand dollar suit. Several younger, equally severe-looking MIDDLE EASTERNERS stand around.

They hear a commotion and look toward the entrance, WHERE:

Nick is arguing with a DOORMAN who is trying to search him.
He looks toward Deevy.

STYLES

Mike -- tell them I'm with you --

The Middle Easterners stiffen.

IRANIAN BUSINESSMAN

Who is this man?

Shotgun looks at Deevy, who pales, but hides his panic.

IRANIAN BUSINESSMAN

He seems to know you.

DEEVY

(pause)

I've never seen him before in
my life.

IRANIAN BUSINESSMAN

Perhaps we should do business
another time --

INT. FBI VAN - DAY

WHIP PAN FROM a large tape machine with reels turning --
TO AN FBI MAN as he COCKS an automatic weapon.

DIRTY TRICKS #3

That's it. Party Time.

A blast of sunlight as the van doors are OPENED --

INT. WRIGHTIAN HOUSE - BACK TO SCENE

The DOORMAN who's been patting Nick finds his wallet and
looks inside. He holds it up excitedly, suddenly YELLING in
vehement Fahrshi. Another of the Iranian men translates:

IRANIAN HOOD

He's a cop!

Deevy's shotgun pal pulls an automatic handgun.
In his other hand is a BADGE.

DIRTY TRICKS #4

Federal Agents! FREEZE!

The next few seconds are a doozy:

It's as if EVERYONE IN THE ROOM produces an automatic weapon, COCKS it, and begins FIRING simultaneously. Nick DIVES for cover.

EXT. WRIGHTIAN HOUSE - DAY

POLICE and FEDS appear out of nowhere, storming the grounds with weapons out. One of them stops to raise a bullhorn:

DIRTY TRICKS #1
DROP YOUR WEAPONS! THIS IS THE F.B.I.!

The workmen on the scaffolding pull their OWN WEAPONS -- And begin EXCHANGING ARTILLERY with the Feds and the cops.

INT. WRIGHTIAN HOUSE - BACK TO SCENE

GUNFIRE everywhere as the Feds attempt a seige --
A massive BARRAGE of artillery from every direction --
Glass EXPLODING -- BODIES flying --

Nick ROLLS under a table, SEES Deevy lying dead several feet in front of him, his gun beside him. He GRABS the gun, and FIRES. Then he notices:

THE LEADER

SCREAMING IN FAHRSI to a GOON holding the fort at the kitchen doors. The goon disappears, and

Deciding he has to follow, Nick swivels TO SEE TWO GOONS with AK-94s FIRING from the end of the table he's under. He grips the table with both hands, and PULLS DOWN --

Like a teeter-totter, the other end of the table GOES UP, CLIPPING the chins of the goons, and catapulting their weapons INTO THE AIR --

Nick CATCHES one of them, and RISES, backpedalling for the kitchen while SPITTING A WITHERING SWEEP OF ARTILLERY.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Nick BLASTS IN, looks toward the back door -- and is immediately greeted by a HAIL of GUNFIRE from the GOON he chased in here.

Nick takes cover as the goon YELLS out the back door.

EXT. BACK DRIVEWAY - DAY

Another GOON sits at the wheel of a nondescript VAN.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Nick FIRES the HK-94 with one hand, while he loads and cocks Deevy's automatic with the other. The machine gun CLICKS out of ammo as the goon at the back door MAKES A BREAK for the outside --

Nick dumps the machine gun, RUNS after him.

INT. VAN - DAY

The goon jumps into the van and YELLS at a DRIVER in Fahrssi. The driver puts the van in reverse, and ACCELERATES backward. The goon looks out the back, SEES:

POV THROUGH BACK WINDSHIELD

TWO SQUAD CARS SHRIEK into place, blocking them.

IN THE VAN

The goon SCREAMS again at the driver, who RE-SHIFTS --

EXT. WRIGHTIAN HOUSE - DAY

The front yard looks like the battle of Gettysburgh: A battery of armed FEDS and POLICE, aiming guns from every conceivable vantage point. Bodies everywhere.

COP WITH BULLHORN
POLICE! PUT DOWN YOUR WEAPONS!

Several of the baddies surrender.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

Nick steps out into the driveway and SEES THE VAN ACCELERATING DIRECTLY TOWARD HIM AT TOP SPEED. He pivots, spreads his feet. Police stance. Raises his weapon.

And FIRES, HITTING the windshield. The bullet WHINES OFF it impotently. Nick FIRES AGAIN, the van closing on him fast.

The second shot RICOCHETS and sparks, and Nick realizes: Bullet-proof glass. He DIVES to the side of the road, rolls and draws a bead on one of the tires. BLAM -- !

The tire BLOWS OUT, and the van SPINS OUT OF CONTROL, slewing toward up a landscaper's platform WAGON, which acts as a ramp, which the van SHOOTS UP, AND --

EXT. WRIGHTIAN HOUSE - BACK TO SCENE

Suspects lie on the sidewalk being disarmed and read their rights, when suddenly, EVERYONE LOOKS UP TO SEE:

THE VAN literally FLIES into the air, TIPS top-heavy to one side, HITS the lawn and SLIDES the last several yards before finally coming to rest.

POLICE and FEDERAL AGENTS dash to the van from all sides.

INT. VAN - DAY

The back doors are pulled open violently. Jaws drop.

COP

Holy shit...

WE REVEAL a sprawling heap of heavy artillery like you have never seen in your life:

Slide action shotguns. Rimfire autoloaders. Handguns. Revolvers. State-of-the-art Israeli submachine guns. Over/under grenade and rocket launchers. If it can kill somebody and has a trigger, it's here somewhere.

The term "Busted" springs to mind.

EXT. WRIGHTIAN HOUSE - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Nick lopes across the lawn, gun held loosely at his side. Suddenly -- it is GRABBED away, both arms JERKED behind his back, and handcuffs SNAPPED on his wrists. He turns, firmly held by two OFFICERS, to face a seething CIMINO.

CIMINO

Thirty-three thousand man-hours.
Hundreds of thousands of tax dollars,
and TWO... FUCKING... YEARS of police
work flushed down the toilet.

He points at the van.

CIMINO

You know what's in that van, Styles?
Shit. That's what's in that van. Oh,
it might have been gold. The tip of
an iceberg. The first hint of what
could possibly be the most extensive
privately-operated arms pipeline out
of the Middle East ever discovered
by an American police force. But
now...? Now the Task Force leader has
a bullet in his brain. Now, most of the
suspects have been blownsofullyaway
we can't IDENTIFY them let alone
question them. And the evidence? You
wanna ask me about the evidence?
INAD-FUCKING-MISSIBLE.

(pause)

And all of this... because a drunk,
psychotic loser walked into the middle
of it... and fucked it up.

STYLES

(low; measured)

I'm not drunk.

CIMINO

Fine. Read him his rights.

STYLES

You can't do this.

CIMINO

Watch me.

He turns to walk away.

STYLES

You're making a mistake.

Cimino stops. Turns.

CIMINO

Is that a threat?

Pause. Pause. Their glares bore into one another like
industrial drills with bits made of ice.

STYLES

Don't worry, Captain. You'll know.

The cops drag him away, and Cimino looks after him with an
expression of vindication... Maybe even a touch of... fear?

INT. COUNTY JAIL - DAY

LOOKING down a cell-lined corridor.

... CLANG -- !

BOOTS enter. STRIDE FORWARD. A uniformed JAIL GUARD.
He stops at a cell. Looks in. Pulls out a key-ring.

GUARD AT COUNTY JAIL

Nick Styles?

In the shadows of the cell, a haggard, broken-looking NICK
sits on a cold floor.

GUARD AT COUNTY JAIL

Your Chief wants to see you.
Like, yesterday.

INT. FRONT DESK, COUNTY JAIL - DAY

SGT. McMILLEN stands stoically, swinging a pair of cuffs.

A door opens, and the guard APPEARS with Nick.
McMillen steps forward, puts one cuff on Nick's wrist, one
on his own. A stern-looking SHERIFF and DEPUTIES watch.

McMILLEN

Thanks. I can take him from here.

The cops watch Styles like he is Charles Manson.

INT. CORRIDOR, COUNTY JAIL - DAY - STEADICAM

THEY WALK briskly. Nick looks confused. Starts to speak.
McMillen cuts him off in a low, firm voice.

McMILLEN

Shut up and listen... I've been
doing some detective work.

(VERY fast,
without emotion)

Slattery. Jesus L. Radio Operator,
148th Infantry Battallion. Returned
from Vietnam January, '72. Collared
in September 1980 for armed robbery
with an officer-involved shooting.
Any of this ring any bells?

We see by Nick's expression that it does.

McMILLEN

It should. The officer was you.

EXT. COUNTY JAIL - DAY.

BAM -- ! The double doors blast OPEN and they come out into the daylight, maintaining the official appearance of cop and prisoner. McMillen leads Nick to the parking lot.

McMILLEN

Slattery got three to five at Terminal Island but kept adding time by killing anybody who looked at him wrong, most recently two days ago. There's also evidence he pulled a payroll heist inside. State authorities decided this was getting old, so they shipped him to maximum security at Chino. Problem is... the transport bus never got there.

STYLES

Where did it get?

McMILLEN

Crashed through a police roadblock and into a 7-11 outside San Berdoo. There were four corpses on board. None of them were Slattery's.

They stop at a civilian car. McMillen's. As he speaks, he keeps looking behind him to see if they're being watched.

McMILLEN

Nick, I saw him last night.
At that address you gave me.

STYLES

Did you tell Cimino all this?

McMILLEN

The President of your fan club?
Yeah, right.

STYLES

Then why does he want to see me?

McMILLEN

He doesn't.

STYLES

Then why am I out?

Having decided the coast is clear, McMillen unlocks the door.

McMILLEN

'Cause I'm real good at forging
court orders.

He holds up the keys. And grins...

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Shalane watching a war movie on TV.
Behind her, Estee emerges from the bathroom.
She looks anxiously at her watch.

ON THE TV SCREEN: a wounded WWII soldier reaches for a
grenade lying in the rubble. He pulls the pin, and lobs it.

A hapless Kraut or Jap shrieks the traditional "Aaaaaiiiii!"
as he is blown to bits.

Estee frowns and turns the channel, WHERE:

The hapless COYOTE shoots off a cliff wearing ACME rocket-
skates. He plummets away from camera. After several beats,
the familiar, distant POOF of him hitting the desert floor.

SHALANE

(giggles)

He fall down, go boom.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

Estee and Shalane both look at the motel room door with
anticipation. Estee goes to it.

ESTEE

Who is it...?

STYLES'S VOICE

It's me.

Whispering "Thank God," Estee starts to lift the chain...

But before it is even unhooked, a large man with an eye-
patch SHOVS the door OPEN, and Shalane SCREAMS, as the
barrel of a .44 is shoved rudely in Estee's face, and the
voice of the Devil says, calmly:

SLATTERY

Trick or treat.

INT. CIMINO'S OFFICE - DAY

Cimino and some PLAINCLOTHESMEN confer.
The phone RINGS, and a UNIFORM picks it up.

UNIFORM

Deputy Chief's office... Wait,
I'll ask him.

(to Cimino)

Sir, it's County. They want
to know if you're going to be
sending Styles back this afternoon.

Cimino looks confused.

CIMINO

Send him back? He's supposed to
be there.

UNIFORM

The Chief says you're supposed
to have him.

The uniform listens for a few beats. Swallows.
Looks at Cimino nervously. Cimino stares back intensely.

UNIFORM

They say he went with Sergeant
McMillen.

(gulp)

They say you had him released, sir.

Cimino looks at him with utter disbelief.

EXT. PACIFIC AVE. - DAY

McMillen's car BARRELS across the railroad tracks.

INT. McMILLEN'S CAR - DRIVING FAST - DAY

Nick drives while McMillen sifts through photostats of the
burned Slattery documents, as well as the originals.

McMILLEN

Dates and postmarks go back as far
as '81 when he was incarcerated.

(shuffles through letters)

DMV, IRS, the phone company, Trenton
Police Academy -- Nick, the guy's
been working ten years on this; he
knows your fucking shoe size!

STYLES

What about this possible accomplice?

McMILLEN

There's some letters from some high school kid. Started writing to him in prison for a sociology class, and just kept writing. The more recent ones get pretty weird, like he turned into some kind of Svengali or something just through the mail. Like she turned into his groupie --

STYLES

What do you mean "she" -- ?

McMILLEN

Some girl, I dunno. I guess she's no kid, anymore. Slattery could have been passing instructions to her --

Nick tenses. He grips the wheel tighter.

STYLES

What's her name?

His intensity startles McMillen.

McMILLEN

I don't remember. There's a picture here somewhere --

He finds a partially burned photograph.
Hands it to Nick.

Who almost dies.

It is Estee's high school portrait.

EXT. BLUE MOON MOTEL - DAY

The car SHRIEKS DEAFENINGLY to a halt, haphazardly blocking the driveway entrance. Nick emerges from the car, an indescribable look in his eyes.

He looks up at second floor balcony.
At the closed motel room door.

McMILLEN

Nick --

Nick looks back at him.
McMillen pulls out a Virginian Dragoon .357 Magnum.

Tosses it to him.

A steaming MOTEL MANAGER storms into view.

MOTEL MANAGER

Hey, you're blocking the driveway!!
Get this piece of shit outta --

He SEES Nick checking the Magnum's chamber. Nick looks up.
One of the more priceless looks in recent screen history.

MOTEL MANAGER

Never mind.

He turns around and goes back the way he came.

Nick CLICKS the cylinder into place.
McMillen does likewise with his .38 service revolver.
They exchange glances... and PROCEED stealthily UP the
stairs to the second floor landing, WHERE...

They stop outside the door to Estee's room.
Flank the door on both sides.
Nick reaches out... KNOCKS.

Pause. No sound from within. He knocks again.

Still nothing. He tries the knob. Locked.
Looks at McMillen. Takes a step back.
Aims at the lock... FIRES, AND --

INT. MOTEL ROOM #1 - DAY

The lock EXPLODES and Nick KICKS the door in --
DIVES -- Tucks and ROLLS, and --

He's UP AGAIN, one knee, gun aimed, McMillen behind him in
the doorway, covering his ass, all of this one clean blur
of motion. The two cops freeze in tableau.

The room is EMPTY.

Nick rises slowly. Cautiously.
Moves through the room, gun out.
He and McMillen sweep the place, checking under the bed, in
the closet, in the bathroom...

Exchanging glances and moving to...

INT. MOTEL ROOM #2 - DAY

Nick's room. Again, nothing. No sign of life.
Again, the sweep. Under the bed. In the bathroom.

A sudden NOISE. Nick turns. Tense.

The closet.

He and McMillen both move toward it.
Slowly. Cautiously. Guns at the ready.
We HEAR THE NOISE again: soft scratching.
And something else. A kind of moaning. Almost human.
Nick takes the knob.

Throws a last look at McMillen, who draws a bead on the doorway, ready to blow away whatever's in there.
Nick's hand tightens around the knob... One. Two. Three.

And he VIOLENTLY TUGS IT OPEN, AND --

Inside, lying on the floor in a fetal ball, is ESTEE,
hair matted, face pale, bathed in sweat, eyes glazed and
yellowed with dark bags lining them...

And a little rubber hose is tied around her arm.
A hypodermic needle remains stuck into it.

ESTEE
(weeping, babbling)
I'm sorry Oh God I'm sorry I'm sorry...

Nick pulls the needle out. THROWS it across the room.
Looks back at her. Emotions battling within him.

ESTEE
(sobbing, in pain)
He made me Nick he said he'd kill
her if I didn't I couldn't tell
you I'm so sorry God help me I'm
sorry Nick I'm sorry I'm sorry...

We don't know if Nick wants to take her in his arms...
or kill her.

ESTEE
I don't blame you you shouldn't
believe me I don't blame you I
should die I know I should die,
but he was the only one who
understood... the only one...

slowly, Nick drops to his knees. Grips her shoulders.

STYLES
Just tell me one thing... How
much does the little girl know?
Huh? Is she part of it, too? Huh?
IS SHE PART OF IT, TOO!?!?

And then he realizes: he is SHAKING HER VIOLENTLY.
 He lets go.
 She continues to weep, tears sliding down her cheeks.
 Finally... overcome himself... Nick takes her in his
 arms... and holds her.

NICK

Goddamn you...

He rocks her like a baby...

ESTEE

I didn't want to fall in love with
 you I swear to God I didn't want to...

Her babbling degenerates into incoherence as Nick holds her
 tightly, looks into her glazed red eyes.

ESTEE

You can kill me Nick but save her
 oh God please save her...

And Nick stiffens. Realizes:

SHALANE IS NOT HERE.

And the phone RINGS so loud you cough up your popcorn,
 which if you are just going out for now, you are an
 asshole, thank you very much.

McMillen sees to Estee, as Nick moves to the phone.
 Picks it up. Speaks in a measured, controlled tone.

STYLES

You're dead. Do you hear me...?

SLATTERY'S PHONE VOICE

Oh, now, you're upset, Nick. Out of
 sorts. I understand. In fact, I'll
 give you a few minutes to calm down,
 get your act together before I call
 back... Just answer before the third
 ring.

(beat)

That's when the fun starts.

Click.

Nick stands there frozen, holding the phone receiver.

McMILLEN

What'd he say?

Nick is paralyzed.

McMILLEN
Nick, what did he say -- ?!

STYLES
He's got the little girl.

McMILLEN
(moves to the phone)
Goddammit! I'm calling for back-up --
His hand is inches from the receiver when --

STYLES
NO!
He recovers, and we see an icy steel in his eyes.

STYLES
(re: Estee)
Get her to a hospital...
(a beat)
This is between him and me.

McMILLEN
He's probably killed her already,
you know that, don't you?
Nick says nothing.

McMILLEN
Jesus, don't you think if he
wanted you dead, you'd be dead?
He's playing games, for Christ's
sake, he wants to run you on a
wild goose chase!
Nick says nothing.

McMILLEN
Nick, don't you get it? All he
wants is to fuck with you. That's
all he wants.

STYLES
I know.

Pause.

McMILLEN
All right. Fine. Just do me a favor.
I brought something for you. It's
in the car.
(a beat)
Just promise me you'll use it.

INT. POLICE SQUAD ROOM - DAY

And boy is Cimino pissed. He walks toward the dispatch station like a man possessed. Several COPS follow. A WATCH COMMANDER appears.

CIMINO

Is that A.P.B. on all channels --

WATCH COMMANDER

Yessir.

A PAPERWORK COP appears beside Cimino.

PAPERWORK COP

Excuse me, sir, your line's been busy. Evidence wants to verify this requisition you signed.

CIMINO

What requisition -- ?

He hands a xerox to Cimino, who looks at it.

And pales.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - DAY

McMillen moves to the trunk of his car.
Nick watches as he OPENS IT.

Remember the arms bust? The van loaded with artillery?

Well, as much of it as McMillen could jam into the trunk of this car -- IS JAMMED IN THE TRUNK OF THIS CAR.

Machine-guns. Rocket launchers. Grenades. You name it.
All with little I.D. tags hanging off them. Nick stares.

McMILLEN

Like I said, I'm REAL good at forging court orders.

INT. MOTEL OFFICE

The Motel Manager is on the phone, watching Nick begin to pull weapons out of the car.

INT. POLICE SQUAD ROOM - START ON DISPATCHER

as he turns to Cimino and several UNIFORMS.

DISPATCHER
We've got a sighting at the Blue
Moon Motel on Pacific. Report they
ARE armed.

CIMINO
No shit they're armed! I want every
available unit ON his ass! NOW!

The uniforms stand there incredulously.

CIMINO
Did I stutter??

UNIFORM
You want a collar on a #221?

CIMINO
I want you to shoot the son of
a bitch on sight, THAT'S what
I want, you pieces of shit!

The cops MOVE OUT. One of them whispers to another:

UNIFORM #2
(sotto)
All units? Who does he think
this guy is, Rambo?

SLAM CUT TO:

EXT. MOTEL - OBLIGATORY RAMBO MONTAGE

NICK.... prepares for battle.
An AMMO BELT. Jammed with M-16 clips.
It is SLUNG over his shoulder. Fastened at the chest.
-- CLICK.
GRENADE belt. Looped around the waist.
-- CLICK.
BERETTA AUTO... SLID into an ankle holster.
CHUK -- !
MACHINE GUN CARTRIDGE. Jammed home. COCKED.
KA-CHUK -- !

PULL BACK... to reveal Nick Styles, urban warrior, ready to
kick ass as a small crowd of BY-STANDERS watch from nearby.
He lights a cigarette, and stares right back.

STYLES
What are you looking at?

McMillen escorts a weak and trembling Estee to his car.
As she settles in the passenger seat -- a PHONE RINGS.

McMillen and Styles look up.

The motel room.

Nick BOLTS. The phone RINGS again.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #2 - DAY

It is the interval between the second and third rings. Nick appears in the doorway, and practically ATTACKS the phone as he grabs the receiver.

STYLES

WHAT -- !?

Pause.

STYLES

Hello.

MEEK PHONE VOICE

Is Judy there?

STYLES

What?

MEEK PHONE VOICE

Judy Carlsen? Is this Pinky's?

Nick SLAMS down the receiver, and holds it tight. He is breathing hard and it hasn't even begun yet.

Beat. Beat.

The phone RINGS. Nick GRABS IT.

STYLES

Yeah.

SLATTERY'S PHONE VOICE

Showtime. You got the little present I sent you?

Nick looks confused.
Then... slowly... he looks down at his wrist...

The STOP WATCH from Act One.

SLATTERY'S PHONE VOICE

Phone booth, corner of 6th and Laguna.
No vehicles. You've got three minutes.
And one more thing, hero...

SLATTERY'S PHONE VOICE

(a beat)

If you're late, I'll cut her ear off.

Click.

Nick drops the receiver.
Presses the button on the stopwatch.

The countdown has begun.

EXT. LONG BEACH POLICE STATION - DAY

12 SQUAD CARS shoot out of the lot.
Cherries flashing, SIRENS WAILING.

EXT. BLUE MOON MOTEL - DAY - MOVING WITH NICK

Fast. M-16 up. One hand.
MOVING PAST by-standers.
He looks toward McMillen's car.
McMillen looks at him pleadingly.
Estee in the passenger seat. Groggy. Out of it.
Police SIRENS in the distance.
He looks at his stopwatch: 47 SECONDS.
He moves into the street.
Face twisted with determination.
Breaks into a run.
Grenades and ammo jiggle in their holders.
Cars HONK and SHRIEK to halts.

Do not get in this man's way.

INT. McMILLEN'S CAR - SAME

as he turns the ignition, and shifts into 'DRIVE' --
The tip of a Mini-Uzi touches the side of his head.
He turns to SEE: Estee weakly holding the weapon on him.

ESTEE

Follow him.

EXT. 7TH STREET - DAY

Nick RUNS up the multi-lane street, armed to the teeth,
drawing amazed stares from pedestrians and drivers.
Traffic BLARES and weaves around him. Closing SIRENS.

He looks at his stopwatch: 1 MINUTE, 7 SECONDS.

EXT. BLUE MOON MOTEL - DAY

Several squad cars SHRIEK to halts outside the motel. The manager and BY-STANDERS gesture frantically in the direction Nick went. The cops follow.

EXT. 7TH STREET - DAY

McMillen's car SQUEALS around the corner.

INT. McMILLEN'S CAR - DRIVING (INTERCUT)

Holding the gun on McMillen, Estee SEES Nick up ahead. The police SIRENS behind them are DEAFENING. They turn to SEE:

FIVE SQUAD CARS SCREAM into view behind them.

McMillen looks in his rearview mirror, waits for the proper moment... then ACCELERATES -- and SPINS the wheel --

FISHTAILING DIRECTLY IN THE PATH OF THE LEAD SQUAD CAR. It SPINS out and CLIPS McMillen's car, sliding to a STOP.

The remaining cars CRUNCH one-by-one into the lead car like dominoes, except for the last one, which VEERS ONTO THE SIDEWALK to avoid traffic and keep up with Nick --

McMillen shifts into 'REVERSE' and hits the gas to escape the cops that are starting to swarm around the car. Meanwhile:

EXT. UP THE STREET - MOVING WITH SQUAD CAR

Pedestrians DIVE out of the way as the squad car shoots UP THE SIDEWALK in pursuit.

INT. PATROL CAR - DRIVING - SAME

One cop driving, one on the police band radio.

COP IN SQUAD CAR
Unit 90 in pursuit -- suspect is
heading south on 7th --

EXT. THE STREET - MOVING WITH NICK

as the black-and-white drives up the sidewalk behind him, he turns and FIRES HIS M-16 to hold them off -- ARTILLERY SPARKS and RICOCHETS off the car.

Pedestrians hit the pavement.

As Nick approaches Atlantic Ave, THREE MORE BLACK-AND-WHITES SHRIEK into the intersection in front of him, sirens WAILING, light bars FLASHING AS --

The PREVIOUS patrol car jumps off the curb, SLIDES into the intersection, and BASHES one of the patrol cars that has just joined the chase. The two surviving cars continue.

WITH NICK. RUNNING FAST. The squad cars behind him. He pulls a grenade from his belt. Bites the pin off with his teeth and LOBS the sucker behind him, WHERE --

The lead car SWERVES to avoid the EXPLOSION -- Which causes it to jackknife into the air -- And SLAM DOWN on its side, blocking the other car -- Which, of course, SMASH into the wreckage --

The unhurt but pissed cops climb out of their vehicles and OPEN FIRE on Nick's receding figure as he DUCKS into an alley.

EXT. ALLEY - MOVING WITH NICK

He KNOCKS over garbage cans, JUMPS to avoid them, etc. -- SLAMS into a burly WORKMAN at a loading entrance.

He looks at his stop watch:

2 MINUTES, 20 SECONDS.

EXT. LAGUNA STREET - DAY

Nick emerges from the alley, looks across the street:

There is the PHONE BOOTH, a block away.

Except between here and there is a SEA OF BUMPER-TO-BUMPER TRAFFIC, waiting for a green light.

Nick starts to RUN, when --

The now-angered WORKMAN FROM THE ALLEY blocks his way.

WORKMAN

(threatening)

Hey, man, what's your fuckin' hurry?

As the man notices Nick's ARSENAL, Nick delivers him a roundhouse across the chin that sounds like a WHIPLASH. The workman drops, and Nick looks at his stopwatch:

2 MINUTES, 43 SECONDS.

He BOLTS, leaping onto the hood of a car, and --
 He RUNS ACROSS THE TOPS OF STALLED CARS as their drivers
 HONK their horns --

Nick makes a particularly precarious leap between two cars
 -- but they are spread just too far apart, because --

Nick falls, SLAMMING to the street painfully, his shirt
 RIPPING as it catches on a rear-view mirror. He grunts,
 rolls over. Bleeding, he looks at his stopwatch:

2 MINUTES, 51 SECONDS.

BY-STANDERS REACT as he rises on unsteady legs.
 The phone booth is only a few more yards away.
 The phone inside RINGS.

An OLD GUY carrying a bag of groceries moves toward the
 booth to answer the phone. Nick lifts himself up --

STYLES

No -- !

And limps hard toward the phone booth...
 The phone RINGS again.
 Nick REACHES the booth, HURLS the old guy aside --
 Groceries SPLATTER the sidewalk and the booth.

Nick GRABS the phone --
 Looks at his stopwatch:

3 MINUTES turns to 3:01.

STYLES

(breathless)

I'm here, I made it...

SLATTERY'S PHONE VOICE

Wrong, cowboy... You're one
 second late.

And that's when Nick notices the gaily-wrapped PRESENT
 sitting on the metal shelf under the phone. Next to some
 broken eggs and a pomegranent.

The present is festive and colorful and just the right size
 for a little girl's EAR TO BE INSIDE.

STYLES

You son of a bitch...

He DROPS the receiver and TEARS OPEN the package --

But there isn't an ear inside. There is, instead, the crushed remains of the little cowboy Nick gave to Shalane. He fingers it for a moment, then picks up the receiver.

SLATTERY'S PHONE VOICE

Just kidding.

Nick squints, looking around at the surrounding buildings, knowing Slattery is watching him from one of them.

EXT. POV THROUGH SNIPER-SCOPE (INTERCUT)

of Nick in the phone booth.

SLATTERY (O.S.)

Okay, this time let's make it a little tougher. There's a newsstand at the corner of 2nd and Ocean. I want you to --

STYLES

NO.

Pause. Silence.

Nick continues to look around for Slattery's hiding place. Blood and sweat fill the creases in his brow.

SLATTERY'S PHONE VOICE

I don't think I heard you right, buddy. What was that again?

STYLES

You heard me. I said no.

(pause)

Game's over.

SLATTERY'S PHONE VOICE

You don't seem to understand, Nick --

STYLES

No, YOU don't seem to understand. You made a mistake, Slattery. You got rid of everything in my life that you thought I gave a shit about. Then, when you ran out of things... you had to come up with some new bait. That's what the girls are, right? Bait? So now I'm supposed to play hero? Save that little girl? Or her Mom... or even my own sorry ass...? But the whole game is based on a mistake, Slattery... It's based on the idea that I ever gave a shit in the first place...

STYLES (CONT'D)

You think I became a cop because I gave a shit? I became a cop because it was better than being like you. Except now I realize we're both the same. The only difference is, you still have something YOU give a shit about... namely me and this little game of yours.

(he unholsters

his Magnum)

Well, guess what, Slattery...?

(COCKS it)

Game's over.

(puts it to his temple)

And you lose.

He turns his back to camera, and BLOWS HIS BRAINS against the phone booth glass.

EXT. BUILDING - THIRD FLOOR WINDOW - DAY

WARP ZOOM ON SLATTERY as he lowers his sniper rifle and stares with disbelief. Behind him, Shalane cries, as --

Nick's lifeless body falls out of the phone booth to the pavement, guns CLATTERING beside it. Civilians SCREAM and swarm to crowd around the body.

SLATTERY continues gaping, frozen, stunned, unable to move or think as the reality of this sinks in.

It's the first time in the whole movie we have seen him NOT in complete control -- and it is scarier.

INT. CHEAP HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Slowly, lifelessly, Slattery turns, and drops his rifle to the floor. Looking like his world has shattered, he calmly takes Shalane by the arm and pulls her crying out of the room.

There is no sense of violence or malice in his actions. He moves, unarmed, like a zombie.

EXT. THE STREET - DAY

Police SIRENS WAIL in the distance as Slattery emerges from the hotel, expression glazed, dragging little Shalane across the street toward the crowd surrounding Nick's body.

The crowd parts to let him through.

He looks down on the corpse splayed on the concrete, surrounded by the spattered remains of the old man's groceries. Milk cartons. Vegetables.

Two pomegranents lie just outside the phone booth.

Slattery notices them, then looks up, inside the booth where Nick's brains ooze down the glass.

Slattery frowns. Looking at the brain matter carefully. It is surrounded by purplish goo and bits of deep pink hide, resembling orange peel...

Since that is virtually what it is.
Since it is not brain matter at all.
Since it is, in fact: the remains of a pomegranate.

And just when Slattery realizes this --
Nick's body COMES TO LIFE, and he GRABS the beretta from his ankle holster, and WHIRLS to Slattery, and --

STYLES

Just kidding.

BLAM -- ! A chunk of Slattery's leg is BLOWN AWAY before he GRABS SHALANE, and holds her up as a human shield --

The crowd SCREAMS and suck pavement, as Nick rises, gun up, facing Slattery, who backs off, holding Shalane up and making a clean shot impossible. The SIRENS are louder now.

Slattery is limping, grinning insanely.

SLATTERY

Nice move... but I take your pawn.

He moves to a car, whose OWNER fearfully backs away. His WIFE, inside, rolls up the driver's side window.

SLATTERY

Give me the keys.

Terrified, the man backs away, clutching his keys in one hand as Slattery grabs him by the back of the neck.

SLATTERY

I said: give me the keys.

And SLAMS the man's head THROUGH the driver's side window, SHATTERING the glass, all the while holding Shalane up to keep Nick at bay.

The unconscious or dead car owner slumps to the ground, and Slattery recovers the car keys.

SLATTERY

Thank you.

As he throws Shalane into the car and gets in himself, the car owner's WIFE -- needless to say -- gets the hell out.

Slattery hits the ignition, and takes off, ACCELERATING PAST NICK, who WHIRLS, looking for a vehicle HE can commandeer.

Like how about that TAXI CAB stuck in nearby traffic?
But it is not just any cab.
IT IS THE CAB NICK ACOSTED THE NIGHT BEFORE.

The CABBIE recognizes Nick, makes an "Oh no, not again" face, then SEES the artillery... and climbs out with his hands in the air.

CABBIE
(Jewish mother)
Fuck it. It's yours. Take it.
Go. Please. Be my guest.

Nick jumps in, KICKS the ignition, BACKS UP, CRUNCHES into another car, SHRIEKS forward, and TAKES OFF after Slattery.

CABBIE
My pleasure, don't mention it.
Give my love to the kids.

EXT. OCEAN BLVD. - DAY

Slattery's vehicle BLASTS UP THE STREET at 80 m.p.h.
Nick's cab appears behind it... Closing.

INT. CAB - DRIVING - DAY

Nick grips the wheel tightly.
His back windshield EXPLODES.
He cranes his neck to look out back.

MORE SQUAD CARS, of course, WAILING and FLASHING.
In the lead car, WE SEE a man in a three-piece suit riding shotgun. Literally.

EXT. WITH LEAD SQUAD CAR - DRIVING FAST

CIMINO himself pumps and FIRES a police 12 gauge.

INT. CAB - DRIVING - DAY

Nick ducks as the BLAST PEPPERS the back of the car. He unhooks a grenade, bites the pin off, and holds it out the open passenger window. He waits a few beats, then drops it in the street, like a mine.

EXT. OCEAN BLVD. - DAY

KA-BOOM -- ! The grenade EXPLODES and the lead car SWERVES out of the way. The cars behind it SHOOT through a cloud of smoke, as -- Nick drops another mine -- KA-BOOM -- ! AND --

EXT. SEASIDE BLVD. - DAY

Slattery's car SHOOTs toward the Vincent Thomas Bridge.

EXT. TOLL PLAZA - DAY

Traffic has slowed to pay toll. Slattery's car appears, tires SQUEALING, doing 70 easy. Not slowing, he VEERS between cars, sparks FLYING as he SCRAPES paint and metal off of them, finally JUMPING a concrete island, and --

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

CRASH -- ! He DRIVES STRAIGHT THROUGH a toll booth -- OBLITERATING it and CONTINUING ON to the bridge.

EXT. TOLL PLAZA - DAY

Nick's taxi SCREAMS TO A HALT behind blocked traffic, and he gets out holding the beretta. SIRENS make him WHIRL, and he SEES:

CIMINO, hanging out the shotgun side of the approaching lead car, 12 gauge AIMED AT NICK, and JUST AS HE IS ABOUT TO PULL THE TRIGGER --

ANOTHER CAR SQUEALS INTO A 90 DEGREE HALT right in front of the squad car, blocking its path AND Cimino's shot. In the driver's seat is... McMILLEN.

The squad car SLAMS on its brakes, as do SEVERAL OTHERS behind it.

NICK sees Estee stumble from McMillen's car with the Mini-Uzi, preparing to hold the cops off. She gives Nick a pained smile and a "Go nail the fucker" look.

Nick RUNS for the bridge and the ARMY OF COPS OPEN FIRE.
Nick FIRES BACK, as he backpedals through the toll plaza.

Using the car as cover, Estee and McMillen also RETURN
FIRE, hopelessly outnumbered. She turns to him, her eyes
bleary, her voice a pained croak:

ESTEE

I'm gonna make a run for it.
He may need some help.

McMILLEN

HE may need help?

And out of nowhere a bullet WINGS McMillen's shoulder --
He DROPS his gun, GRABS the wound, rising with pain and
disbelief, obviously stepping away from the car's cover
and that's when he is TORN TO SHREDS BY POLICE CROSS-FIRE.

Cimino is among those firing, as a CONCERNED OFFICER
behind him looks on, horrified.

CONCERNED OFFICER

Jesus Christ, STOP IT! STOP!

He GRABS a bullhorn from inside the car, and YELLS into it:

CONCERNED OFFICER

HOLD YOUR FIRE -- ! REPEAT: HOLD
YOUR FIRE -- !!

Cimino WHIRLS on him, insensed --

CIMINO

What the hell are you doing?!
I'm in charge he --

They fight over the bullhorn as the concerned cop continues
to YELL into the bullhorn:

CONCERNED OFFICER

HOLD YOUR FIRE -- !

And gradually... the GUNFIRE does indeed ebb, and everyone,
including Cimino, looks out AT:

McMILLEN, standing undsteadily in the middle of the
street, riddled with bullet wounds. He sways for a few
beats... then falls dead to the concrete.

Estee looks on, horrified.

Then rises. Uzi held defiantly.

And slowly, purposefully, she backs away toward the bridge, machine gun leveled one-handed at the cops, who all watch, speechless, their guns levelled right back at her.

EXT. THE BRIDGE - DAY

Nick RUNS between stopped cars, beretta tight to his chest, as he comes out into the open... and comes to a dead stop. The color drains from his face.

High winds WHIP Slattery's hair and BUFFET his balance as he stands holding Shalane BY HER HAIR out over the side of the bridge.

Shalane cries silently, eyes wide, paralyzed with fear. A four-story drop to the water below. Slattery grins.

SLATTERY

Deja vu, huh, cowboy? Feel familiar? Go ahead, shoot. Here's my hostage.

Nick lowers his gun.
Slattery gestures for him to surrender all his arms.
Nick unhooks his ammo belt. Drops it.
Unfastens his grenade belt. Drops THAT.
One or two grenade fall loose and roll several feet.
All that's left is his beretta.

SLATTERY

Slide it over...

Nick kneels, and does this.
Slattery bends to pick up the weapon.
Aims it at Nick.

SLATTERY

Stay on your knees.

Nick slowly obeys, kneeling. Slattery grins triumphantly.

SLATTERY

Thank you.

And he drops Shalane off the bridge.
Yes. You read that right.
But let's repeat it, just to make sure, shall we?

HE DROPS SHALANE OFF THE BRIDGE.

Nick reacts with terror and disbelief.
Starts to get UP, but Slattery COCKS the gun --

SLATTERY

Uh uh. No, no, no.

(pause)

You don't give a shit, remember?

He smiles, then backs up to look over the side, and --

A DIZZYING GYRO-CAMERA-MOVE REVEALS:

SHALANE, bruised, shivering, the wind knocked out of her, clinging to a lip of the bridge JUST OUT OF SLATTERY'S LINE OF SIGHT.

Satisfied, Slattery grins and turns back to Nick.

He aims the gun, point blank.

Steps forward, until the gun is inches from Nick's face.

SLATTERY

Now THIS... is what we call a clean shot. If that's one thing I learned in the Mekong Delta, always make sure you got a clean shot.

(a beat)

Like ten years ago, right, Nick? That bank job I tried. You had a clean shot, didn't you?

STYLES

I missed.

SLATTERY

Oh no you didn't.

STYLES

I hit the hostage.

SLATTERY

He wasn't a hostage.

(a beat)

He was my brother.

Nick reacts.

SLATTERY

He was helping me with the robbery... The shit hit the fan, you know how it is.

STYLES

You took your own brother hostage.

SLATTERY

Hey, I ran out of options.

His smile fades. His tone darkens. Fun-time is over.

SLATTERY

But don't tell me you missed,
you fuck. Don't tell me that.

(points to his eye-patch)

.38's got a lot of punch, Nick.
Little sucker went right through
my brother's head, ricocheted off a
light post, and didn't call it a
day 'til it took my eye out.

(a beat)

That's the thing about bullets.
Sometimes they ricochet. You pull
that trigger... you think all's right
with the world... you think you've
got a second chance... Next thing
you know, the bullet comes right
right back at ya...

His gaze bores into Nick's.

SLATTERY

You fucked up my second chance, Nick.

(smiles)

The least I could do was return
the favor.

Nick's gaze flicks away for a milisecond.
Just long enough to SEE that at the edge of the building,
DIRECTLY BEHIND THE OBLIVIOUS SLATTERY:

LITTLE SHALANE has managed to PULL HERSELF BACK UP onto the
bridge, and is beginning to slowly CRAWL THIS WAY...

STYLES

(stalling)

So what now?

SLATTERY

Well, I've been thinking about
that little speech you made.
About how all I have is this game
we've been playing...

Shalane crawls closer. Silently. One eye on Slattery.
Nick tries not to look at her and give her away.

SLATTERY

And you know, you're right...

Behind him, Shalane wraps her little hand around one of the
grenades that rolled away from Nick's belt.

SLATTERY

I mean, here we are. Two guys with nothing to live for, an army of cops on their way... Maybe game-time's over, know what I mean?

About to kill Nick, he suddenly LOOKS DOWN -- SEES that Shalane has looped the grenade on his belt. He DROPS the beretta to DISLODGE the grenade. Nick looks with astonishment at SHALANE. Who is holding the grenade PIN up in one hand.

And in that split-second BEFORE Slattery gets his hand on the grenade, Nick GRABS the beretta, levels it, and --

BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM!

Clean shot.

And as each SHOT NAILS Slattery in the chest, he stumbles backward, a look of disbelief on his face, until Nick's clip EMPTIES -- CLIK! CLIK! and Slattery is straddling the very edge of the bridge, another single shot could push him off, and that's when Nick HEARS a CLIK! behind him, and turns, and SEES:

ESTEE

wielding the Mini-Uzi in combat stance. She FIRES a BURST OF AUTOMATIC ARTILLERY -- Shredding Slattery and BLOWING HIM BACKWARD out into the air, where in a SERIES OF MULTIPLE CUTS:

Slattery EXPLODES in mid-air -- a fireworks display of sparks, flesh and blood, RAINING down into the main channel of Los Angeles harbor.

Estee DROPS the machine gun, RUNS to Shalane, and GRABS her very, very tightly... like she will never let go again. She strokes her daughter's hair... and sobs.

Shalane looks at Nick with a dazed expression

SHALANE

He fall down, go boom...

Nick looks up. Now SEES:

Nearly fifty POLICE OFFICERS aiming their weapons at them from behind stopped cars.

Nick and the girls just stand there, battered, bleeding, clothes torn, faces streaked with sweat, staring at the sea of police officers. Pause.

STYLES

Anybody got a cigarette...?

The police officers look at one another. Then...
One of them slowly lowers his weapon.
Then another. And another...

Until ALL the cops begins lowering their weapons.
Some lower their heads, too...

Nick limps forward unsteadily.
Several cops offer cigarettes...
Nick takes one. Lighters flame-up around him.
He stops. Looks at Estee. Then at Shalane.
Then at the cigarette.

After a beat, he crumples it up and tosses it to the ground.

EXT. TOLL PLAZA - DAY

PARAMEDICS help Estee and Shalane onto a gurney as --
Nick sees McMillen's body, being covered and taken away.

He he looks up, emotion in his eyes, and notices CIMINO,
standing near a sheriff's vehicle. His expression changes,
hardens... and he limps toward Cimino.

He stands directly in front of him.

STYLES

Chief.

CIMINO

Styles.

STYLES

This could hurt a little. You
might want to brace yourself.

CIMINO

(defiantly)

Are you threatening me...?

STYLES

Oh yeah.

And he BELTS Cimino in the face so hard YOU feel it -- a
right cross that a) makes one of the uglier CRACK sounds in
movie history, and b) promptly LAYS that sumbitch out.

But Cimino is up like a shot, holding his bleeding chin and
sputtering:

CIMINO

Arrest him! Arrest that son of a bitch! He hit me! Assaulting an officer! You saw him! You saw him do it! ARREST HIM! NOW!

Every policeman and woman in the toll plaza averts their eyes, whistles, yawns. As if all they're hearing is birds in the park.

O.S. VOICE

Detective...?

Nick turns... to face the MAYOR and the POLICE COMMISSIONER.

POLICE COMMISSIONER

We all make mistakes, wouldn't you say, Mr. Styles...?

Nick squints back contemptuously.

POLICE COMMISSIONER

What I mean is, sometimes we make the mistake of putting too much stock in the people to whom we delegate authority.

Nick continues to look at the guy like he's a rash.

POLICE COMMISSIONER

What I'm trying to say is that sometimes --

MAYOR

(interrupting)

Sometimes we make the mistake of hiring assholes.

Cimino bristles, but knows better than to argue.

MAYOR

Sergeant McMillen called my office. He explained the situation. Presented the evidence. I understand he was the only one who helped you in this matter... I'm very sorry.

Nick says nothing.

MAYOR

About him. About the deputy chief's behavior. About the hell you've been through in the past 48 hours.

MAYOR (CONT'D)

Your badge will be returned, and you can return to the streets whenever you feel up to it. The city would be very gratified. And so would I.

Nick looks at him blankly.

NICK

To tell you the truth, your honor...
I wouldn't mind maybe taking a desk job.

He looks toward:

AN AMBULANCE

where PARAMEDICS see to Estee, lying on a stretcher.
Little Shalane holds her hand. They both look at Nick.

MAYOR

I don't think I understand.

NICK

Well, your honor...

Nick does not take his eyes off the girls.
They do not take their eyes off of him.

The three of them... like a family almost.

NICK

The fact of the matter is, I've
been kinda thinking about...
settling down.

The girls smile weakly at him.
Nick smiles back. He starts toward them as:
Dinah Washington's "The Sunny Side of the Street" RISES.

ROLL END CREDITS.

THE END

But Nick Styles will return in

"THE SILENCER"