

SCREAMING STEEL

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From a treatment by
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Based on a story by
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FADE IN:

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

Aerial approach of the future, 2017. A vast urban ruin devastated by decades of neglect, poverty, riots and finally complete anarchy.

We fly between skyscrapers of broken glass. On the streets below are burnt out cars. Faded billboards covered with graffiti. Dead street lights. Scattered fires. ✓

Ahead, a concrete temple stands so decayed and deserted it could have been built in ancient Greece. But the Greeks didn't build Art Deco skyscrapers. This was city hall. This is downtown Los Angeles. Or what once was.

Flashes of movement ahead. Like hornets exploding from a nest. Hornets with jet engines. Coming at us.

We've been watching through the eyes of our hero, MALCOLM GARRET, a handsome kid of eighteen with unruly hair and a sharp grin. We focus on his face as he hovers above the earth on some kind of flying machine similar to the ones now roaring toward him. He knows what will happen next. He's ready for it. It'll be fun.

He seems to have a strange idea of fun, since the horde racing at him looks like someone rang the dinner bell and Malcolm is the main course. A DOZEN CRAZED BIKERS, barbarian berserkers with long hair streaming in the wind, fly toward him on stripped-down VTOL jump-bikes. They resemble motorcycles with no wheels. A vectored-thrust jet engine keeps them in the air. Mini-Harrier jets with no wings, no tail, no cockpit. Like having a rocket between your legs.

Malcolm twists the throttle of his own jump-bike and blasts ahead, straight toward them. In a blur of speed he roars toward a collision with the LEADER OF THE BIKERS, a vicious looking scum with missing teeth and an eye patch. Closer, closer, until it looks like Malcolm is going to ram right down the leader's throat.

At the last second Malcolm twists his bike's vector control and zips below the leader, roaring right under the pack.

He flies low through the streets at a dizzying speed. The bikers quickly recover and roar after in pursuit.

Malcolm zips around street corners and blasts between buildings to try to lose them, but they're gaining on him.

As the bikers approach we see their wild costumes of armor, leather and animal hides. They produce an assortment of weapons that include swords, nets, shotguns and frisbee-like razor-edged disks.

A biker rockets up and raises a large sword to decapitate Malcolm. He whips into a turn and barely escapes.

He zooms for a narrow alley and zips through. Two bikers try to follow on each side, but the alley is too narrow. They catch against the walls, lose control and CRASH AND BURN.

Malcolm grins, two down.

He comes out of the alley and turns. He's been cut off. Two more bikers ahead. They BLAST shotguns in his direction.

Malcolm throttles down, spins, throttles up and shatters through the glass storefront window of an old building. His bike rips through the wreckage of an old department store.

Like a mouse traveling a hundred miles per hour through a narrow maze, Malcolm navigates a complex obstacle course of doorways, alleys, and finally, stairwells.

The bikers try to follow, but it's impossible to keep up with Malcolm's twists and turns. Another SMASHES into a pylon and CRASHES AND BURNS.

Malcolm navigates his bike through the building with such speed and precision it almost seems as if he has traveled this same path a hundred times. He has.

Dozens of floors up, his bike roars down a hallway, out through a busted window and into the night sky.

The remaining three bikers spot him and jet in pursuit shouting unrecognizable obscenities at him.

(We start^{to} suspect something about this is "off." Most of the scene is Malcolm's POV or directly over his shoulder. Our few glimpses of Malcolm himself are tight on him and his bike. And though he is clearly being shaken, his hair isn't moving in the wind. Moreover, the bikers are weirdly one dimensional, like evil characters out of a comic book.)

Two bikers gain on Malcolm. They fly on each side, moving in for the kill. A VICIOUS LOOKING WOMAN BIKER prepares to throw a razor discus while a MALE BIKER readies a net. Malcolm waits till the last possible second and...

The discus is thrown. Malcolm's bike roars straight up.

The biker with the net is hit by the discus. Slices his arm clean off. His bike loses control. CRASH AND BURN.

Malcolm's bike spins, drops, and smashes on the head of the woman biker. The jet wash throws the biker into a spin. It's over for her. CRASH AND BURN.

Malcolm laughs triumphantly. Roars toward the final biker. The leader. The leader raises a shotgun. Malcolm is ready. Suddenly a clear voice over his shoulder:

PITMAN (O.S.)
Still playing kid's games.

Malcolm glances toward the sound for a split second. Big mistake. The Leader is on him. He raises his shotgun and FIRES. Malcolm swerves to avoid the shot. He loses control and heads right for an old street lamp. Hits it square on.

SMASH! KABOOM! Flames engulf him.

INT. VIDEO ARCADE - DAY

Malcolm sits limply on the fake jump-jet. "GAME OVER" flashes on the giant wrap-around screen in front of him. (The screen we have been viewing this sequence on.)

He has just finished playing *Screaming Steel*, a sophisticated video game that uses a high res screen combined with a jump-jet simulator that bucks and pivots with the action. The screen changes to show scenes from the game and a subtitle reads. "INSERT UNI CARD FOR NEW GAME."

PITMAN
Figured I'd find you here.

He turns to see PITMAN STOKES, Malcolm's age, glasses, kinda nerdy, but in that destined to be a rich bond trader way.

MALCOLM
Thanks, Pitman, I was about to win.

PITMAN
You always win. Don't you get bored?

MALCOLM
With life, yes. With this no.

Malcolm slides off the simulator and they wander through the video game hall. They pass other kids, most of them younger than Malcolm, playing off their uni cards. (A combination, credit, identification and key card.)

PITMAN
I'm off tomorrow. Wanted to say bye.

MALCOLM
Harvard Business school, huh? Follow in your father's footsteps.

PITMAN
Only richer.

The room is filled with other high-tech games of the future. Some have 3-D holograms or sensory helmets instead of video screens, but all seem to deal with the same theme. Fighting scuzzy gangs and low lifes in a burnt out city.

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PITMAN

What about you? Summer's almost over.
Have you applied to any colleges?

MALCOLM

With my grades?

PITMAN

Who needs grades when you've got Winston
Garret for a father.

MALCOLM

You can have him.

He pauses to stare at a television over the front counter.
It is airing a news program.

NEWSCASTER

... Curry Jard, leader of a gang known as
"Banshees" has been captured by police in
the Non-Secured District.

On the screen a handcuffed CURRY, a big thug in his late
twenties, is drug off to prison by half a dozen officers.

PITMAN

Jump bike gangs. Why don't they just
nuke the whole N.S.D.?

Malcolm waves for quiet. Picture changes to an interview
with POLICE CHIEF MILTON CADE, a tall, powerful looking man.

MILTON

This scum, Curry, is a major instigator
of violence against the poorer members of
our community. This arrest should
silence critics who say we haven't been
doing enough to keep crime under control
in the outer zone. I won't stop until
these gangs are wiped out.

The picture shifts again to shots of police officers in a
shabby neighborhood standing with smiling dirty faced
toddlers. The police officers hand the kids loly peps as a
medical technician gives them vaccinations.

NEWSCASTER

In related news, city medical officials
launched a new disease vaccination program
for outer children. Police provided
protection from gangs that see the
project as violation of their turf..

✓

✓
✓

✓

10th pgs.

EXT. MALL / SECURE ZONE - DAY

Malcolm and Pitman emerge into a posh shopping mall in the heart of the secured zone. Dozens and dozens of shops line the five levels. As pleasant music floats though the vast expanse, well dressed shoppers wander with arms loaded with packages or sit at open cafes.

Something about Malcolm gives the impression that he finds this world incredibly boring. Downright suffocating. ✓

MALCOLM

So what do you suppose it's really like in the N.S.D.?

Let's see
PITMAN

Who cares? *Lely*-pops. *Vacinations*.
Wasting tax money on lowlives. Look.
Chrissa Cade and company. ✓

He points over to SEVERAL PRETTY GIRLS standing at a *Cappuccino* bar. The prettiest of the bunch is ~~CAPACINO~~ CHRISSA CADE, eighteen, beautiful, a sexy blond cheerleader. ✓

PITMAN

They called me Pizza Face in high school. When I get back from Harvard it's going to be: Mr. Stokes, tell me about your beach house again.

Malcolm's eye is caught by a sign over a food counter.

MALCOLM

Look. Twenty kinds of cappuccino. Ten kinds of espresso. In twenty years we'll have a hundred different names for fucking coffee.

PITMAN

Economics, Malc. Make people think they have a choice and they're happy.

EXT. WALKWAY - SUNSET

The sky is awash with warm red and orange colors.

Malcolm rides on a motorized walkway through the glittering buildings of the secured district. Around him everything in its place, perfectly maintained. Even the people that pass by are manicured, almost manufactured.

The only hint of the world outside are the armored tilt-rotors that hover overhead on patrol.

Malcolm watches one fly by and his eyes drift to the huge wall of buildings and fortifications that seal off this slice of the good life from whatever lies beyond.

His eyes rest on the sky beyond this paradise. Wondering.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - SUNSET

Malcolm stands at an elevator station of ^{the}immense building. An exposed glass elevator, riding on a guide system outside the building, arrives silently in front of him. The doors open and Malcolm steps inside. ✓

INT. ELEVATOR - SUNSET

The doors close and a pleasant voice intones:

ELEVATOR

Please type in I.D. or insert card.

Malcolm inserts his uni card and the elevator quickly [✓]responds. The world outside blurs as the elevator rises upward at an amazing speed. But inside the elevator is as quiet as the interior of a Mercedes. ?

Reaching close to the top of the building the elevator shifts and roars horizontally to the correct apartment.

Malcolm's eyes again search for the outer city. From this high view he can almost peek beyond the barriers. Almost. Snatches of old buildings. Greys, blacks. Hard to make out anything for sure. Just police tilt rotors on patrol.

The elevator stops quickly, but without any jarring motion. The doors slide to the interior apartment.

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

Malcolm steps out into a small greeting room. The elevator doors close behind him. Ahead an ornate wood door leads into the apartment beyond. It is open. He crosses inside.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Malcolm steps into a huge, luxurious living room with a gorgeous view of the inner city. SEVERAL MAIDS are preparing for an elaborate party, laying out food, flowers, tidying up. Classical music plays on hidden speakers.

Malcolm ignores it all, slumps onto the couch and picks up a remote control. He clicks off the music and turns on a video screen which lowers from the ceiling.

He clicks through a few news channels and pauses on the climax of an action film. DRAKE BANNOX, a handsome muscular police officer, guns down dozens of SCUMMY PUNKS. One punk grabs a poor WOMAN WAIF and puts a knife to her throat.

PUNK

Hold it, pig, or I'll slit her open.

Drake smiles and takes aim with his machine pistol.

DRAKE

Eat it, punk.

A clean auto burst blasts the punk's head. The dead punk falls away from the waif. She runs into Drake's arms.

New scene. Drake smiles at waif. A little BOY in tattered clothes stands near her side. He looks up at Drake in awe.

WAIF

How can I thank you, Officer Bannox?

DRAKE

By going to the nearest work center. You'll get clean clothes and a hot meal

WAIF

But what about Pinkie?

DRAKE

(laughing)

Take Pinkie with you. They'll vaccinate him against disease. And put him in a program to learn a valuable trade...

Malcolm flips channels.

NEWSCASTER

... stock market closed higher today on news of rising corporate profits...

A woman's hand takes the remote away from Malcolm and shuts off the video. It disappears back into the ceiling.

It's Malcolm's mother, IRIS GARRET, a pretty society matron. She glances at Malcolm's slightly tattered clothes.

IRIS

Malcolm, guests are arriving any moment. What are you wearing?

MALCOLM

This. I figured I'd hide in my room.

IRIS

No, you are not. Your father's throwing a party for the new police recruits. They'll be young people your age. Girls too.

MALCOLM

Maybe I should just go out tonight.

IRIS

No, you'll put on some decent clothes and mingle. Put on one of those silk shirts I bought you. Everyone is coming including the mayor. Chief Cade and your father made peace. This is important.

MALCOLM

I should definitely hide in my room.

IRIS

Malcolm, do I really ask so much from you? Do I really ask so much?

Malcolm sighs and drags himself from the couch.

INT. MALCOLM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Malcolm's room is like most teenager's, those with maids who clean it daily and who's mother inspect it regularly. He automatically goes to the waste can to find out what has been tossed. He rescues a couple faded and comfortable shirts. Favorites. He hides them under the bed.

Malcolm opens up his closet. Inside are dozens of new silk shirts, price tags still attached. He flips his fingers through them, marveling at the stupidity of it all.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The party is in full swing. Dozens of well dressed dignitaries mingle and chat while maids scurry about with trays filled with snacks and glasses of champagne. Several of the guests are young L.A.P.D. cadets wearing shiny new dress uniforms, circa 2017. The uniforms have been updated to be more militaristic, with a hint of Hitler youth.

We catch snatches of conversation.

BUSINESSMAN

... look, robots handle all our unskilled labor. Why throw money into pointless work programs...

PRETTY WOMAN

... there's skiing and then there's skiing.
Aspen is nice for shopping but if you
really ski, it's Europe...

SUIT

... the moon. Very pro business...

Chief Cade is talking loudly to two POLICE COMMISSIONERS.

CADE

... they'll approve my budget alright.
Every God damned penny. They'll moan and
groan, but this city would be burnt to *burned*
the ground ten minutes after my men
stopped protecting it.

WINSTON GARRET, a classy, Yale educated businessman, joins
them.

WINSTON

Everything fine, Chief? Another drink?

CADE

Third time you've asked, Garret. Want to
pee for me too?

Winston forces a smile at this cut.

WINSTON

I'm glad you're enjoying yourself.

He nods to the others and continues through the crowd.

COMMISSIONER

Don't push him too hard, Chief. You
still need him.

CADE

Not as much as he needs me.

Winston crosses the room, finds Iris and pulls her aside.
His anger at Cade surfaces in his voice.

WINSTON

Where's Malcom? He should be mingling...
His future is in this room.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Malcolm sits on the kitchen counter neatly cutting stems out
of mushrooms and handing them to THERESA, a warm middle aged
cook. She stuffs them and lays them on a tray for baking.

MALCOLM

Theresa, marry me and take me away from
all this.

THERESA

Because I am already married.

MALCOLM

You could have two husbands. I don't mind sharing you.

THERESA

You need a young girl of your own. Handsome boy like you. Get down before your mother sees you. You don't belong in here.

She scoots him off off the counter and picks up the tray. As she puts it in the oven, Malcolm wanders to a window with a view of the inner city.

MALCOLM

Ever notice that all the windows look inside the city. Not outside.

THERESA

Of course they do. Who wants to see the outside?

MALCOLM

What was it like out there? You weren't that young when...

THERESA

It was different then. Before the riots. Before the wall when up. I'm glad to be inside. I don't like to talk about it.

MALCOLM

Sometimes I think about running away...

Theresa takes Malcolm by the arm and looks at him seriously.

THERESA

Malcolm, don't be foolish. You're a very lucky boy. You don't know how...

IRIS

Theresa!

Iris storms in.

IRIS

What are you two doing? You should be working and Malcolm...

MALCOLM

Lay off, mom. It was my fault.

IRIS

Get out and mingle.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Iris drags Malcolm back into the party. She spots Chrissa, who is wearing a sexy low-cut party dress and a small diamond necklace. Iris points to her. ✓

IRIS

Why don't you talk to Chrissa? Now that your fathers are friends again, you should be too.

MALCOLM

Sure.

Malcolm takes a couple steps but as soon as Iris moves on he ducks in the other direction. He almost crashes into JACK VERDUN, a tall blond police cadet in an immaculate uniform. ✓

MALCOLM

Jack, so you made it through boot camp?

JACK

Go into flight training tomorrow. Real jump-jets. No more video games for me.

MALCOLM

How grown-up we must feel.

JACK

So why don't you join up, huh? We could go out and kick real gang butt.

MALCOLM

Medical disability. I don't have enough spit for the boots.

JACK

Tim and Greg joined. We could have the whole gang from high-school. The Rowdy Rebels would be together again.

MALCOLM

Yeah, you look like a hell of a rebel.

CHRISSA

Jack! Jack!

Chrissa approaches Jack with a big smile and gives Malcolm a cool glance. These two don't like each other. She carries a clip board with a small card reader.

JACK

Hi, Chrissa, that's a pretty dress.

CHRISSA

It's an Arie's original. So Jack, congratulations on getting out of the academy. Before you spend all your paycheck, I'm doing fund raising...

MALCOLM

To buy accessories for the poor?

JACK

Malcolm. Let her talk..

CHRISSA

Malcolm, the malcontent. Do they still call you that?

JACK

Chrissa, the fund raising?

CHRISSA

(staring at Malcolm)

... for a soup kitchen for outers. A lot of people are going hungry out there and it's up to us to help.

JACK

Sure, put me down for fifty..

CHRISSA

... two hundred. That's what all the graduates are donating.

Jack winces and hands over his uni card. Chrissa swipes it through the reader. She gives him a kiss on the cheek.

CHRISSA

Thanks, Jack. Could you get me some punch?

Jack nods and heads off.

MALCOLM

What a racket. The captain's daughter hitting up uniforms for money.

CHRISSA

I'd ask you but I know you don't care about anyone but yourself.

Chrissa and Malcolm stand without looking each other in the eye. Chrissa's voice deepens and lowers.

CHRISSA

My father's apartment is empty. We could sneak off. It's been awhile..

MALCOLM

It's not an act, Chrissa. I really don't like you.

CHRISSA

I don't like you either. That makes it more fun.

MALCOLM

No thanks.

He's about to walk off when his father approaches, pleased.

WINSTON

There you are! I should have known the young people would be talking together.

Chrissa steps in front of Malcolm, a hurt pout on her face.

CHRISSA

We're not talking. Malcolm hates me.

Chrissa's hand secretly slips behind her back and slides her uni card deep into Malcolm's front pants. In his underwear.

CHRISSA

If you'll excuse me, Mr. Garret.

She takes off. Malcolm nervously adjusts his pants. Winston glowers at him.

WINSTON

What did you say to her? Can't you even try to be nice?

MALCOLM

No. I can't.

WINSTON

Don't you walk away from me..

MALCOLM

I've got to go to the bathroom.

Malcolm walks away. Winston stands furious.

As Malcolm walks to the bathroom he passes by Chief Cade. Cade is staring at Malcolm. He doesn't seem very happy.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Malcolm steps into the quiet marble room and swings back the heavy door. He quickly unzips his pants and digs out the card, tossing it into the trash can. The door opens.

MALCOLM

Occupied!

But this doesn't stop the intruder. Chief Cade pushes into the room and shuts the door behind him.

CADE

You don't mind if I wash my hands?

He steps to the sink and turns on the hot water. Malcolm zips up his pants.

MALCOLM

Go ahead, I was just leaving.

Malcolm starts to go but Cade flips the lock on the door to keep it closed.

CADE

Not yet. I want to talk. What were you doing with my daughter back there?

MALCOLM

That's a joke. You daughter was... ✓

Suddenly, Cade viciously sucker punches Malcolm in the stomach. Malcolm doubles over in serious pain. Just to make sure, Cade holds the back of Malcolm's shirt and knees him again hard in the same spot. Malcolm gags for air.

Cade grabs Malcolm in a head lock and drags him over to the sink. Steam rises from the faucet as Cade pushes his face toward the burning hot stream.

CADE

Don't you look at my daughter, don't you talk to my daughter, don't you touch my daughter, you filthy little brat. You do and I'll kill you. Understand?

Malcolm nods; his eyes just inches from the scalding water. Cade lets him go.

Malcolm straightens, choking, trying to catch his breath.

Cade shuts off the hot water. He calmly adjusts the stunned Malcolm's shirt front.

CADE

There, there. We don't want you looking messed up at the party.

MALCOLM

(horse)

... why don't you think I'll tell my father?

CADE

Go ahead. I'll tell him with you. Who do you think runs this city, boy? I can do anything I want to you and make him thank me for it.

Malcolm stares at Cade, pondering.

MALCOLM

What is it about me that is so endearing to you, Chief?

CADE

You were born, Garret. You were born.

He exits. Malcolm watches as Cade smiles and walks back into the party as if nothing happened. Malcolm goes over the waste basket and retrieves Chrissa's card. He pockets it.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Malcolm steps out of the bathroom, having trouble walking. Feels like something in the stomach area is busted. His father and mother approach him.

WINSTON

Malcolm, there you are. Chief, Chief, you know my son.

Cade returns, all smiles. Two CITY COUNCIL MEN are with him.

CADE

Of course. The young man and I had a nice talk earlier.

WINSTON

Malcolm, I mentioned to the chief that you weren't interested in college. He suggested you join the force. He could get you into flight school. I knew that would excite you.

MALCOLM

Really?

CADE

I might pull a few strings. I could keep an eye on you then.

Malcolm and the Chief exchange knowing smiles.

IRIS

What do you say, dear?

MALCOLM

I say, hot damn!

Malcolm grabs the Chief's face and kisses him on both cheeks. Everyone stares as Malcolm raises his voice.

MALCOLM

I can't wait to get myself a gun and start shooting down outer punks. I'll bust heads, kick ass...

WINSTON

Malcolm!

MALCOLM

That's what it's about, dad! Protecting our city from the evil that threatens our beautiful lifestyle!

IRIS

Malcolm, there's blood in your mouth...

Malcolm wipes his hand over his face and discovers his mouth is filling with blood from his stomach.

MALCOLM

Blood of victory! I can taste the defeat of Chief Cade's enemies. I...

WINSTON

Malcolm! I think you've humiliated me enough. Go for a walk.

MALCOLM

Thank you, dad, I will.

He exits. Cade is amused. Winston glances at the crowd, hoping at least some missed this spectacle. No such luck.

CADE

Fine boy, you have there, Winston. Chip off the old block.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Malcolm steps into the elevator. He takes Chrissa's card and slides it into the slot. The elevator responds. Malcolm stares out at the city walls again. They seem closer every day. Like a shrinking cage.

INT. CADE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Malcolm steps into Cade's apartment, similar to his parent's but filled with police paraphernalia, pictures of Cade shaking hands, presenting medals and speaking to crowds.

Chrissa poses on the couch in a skimpy nightgown, sipping her father's scotch. Her sexy curves fill out the black silk.

CHRISSA

I was afraid you wouldn't show up.

MALCOLM

Your father talked me into it.

CHRISSA

My father? He hates your guts.

MALCOLM

That's how he talked me into it.

Malcolm crosses and sits beside her. He takes her glass. She slides her hand over his leg. He stares at her, not particularly interested. He takes a long sip.

His stomach burns. He winces.

MALCOLM

Not that I care much, but why is it your father hates me?

CHRISSA

(shrugging)

He hates your father.

MALCOLM

That's something we have in common.

CHRISSA

You know what would be really naughty?
If we did it in his bed. Want to?

Malcolm takes another sip.

MALCOLM

Why the hell not?

INT. CADE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Malcolm follows Chrissa into the room carrying a fresh drink. Inside is a large bed, more pictures of Cade (clearly the man never tires of looking at himself) and a plate steel wall.

Chrissa rips the covers off the bed and stretches out on it seductively. Malcolm stares at the steel wall.

MALCOLM

What's that?

Chrissa reaches over to a remote and presses it. The huge wall rises to reveal a thick glass window. Outside is a clear view of the outer city. The war zone.

Malcolm is aghast. He crosses to it.

MALCOLM

It's the outside.

Malcolm stares, soaking it all in. Decayed burnt buildings. Fires, darkness. Police patrols zipping by. Just like in *Screaming Steel*. Only worse.

CHRISSA

The slums. He likes to look at it.
Can't imagine why. Gives me the creeps.

Chrissa hits the remote and the wall lowers.

CHRISSA

Come to bed. I'm feeling wicked.

She grabs him by the arm and pulls him onto the bed.

MALCOLM

Chrissa, what do you really do with the money you extort from cadets?

CHRISSA

(giggling)

I buy designer dresses.

She kisses him on the neck. As she unbuttons his shirt, Malcolm is torn between throwing her off, and wanting to give in. He really does hate her, but she's a very pretty girl. And with the alcohol kicking in, what the fuck?

As her head rises, his lips meet hers.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CADE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Malcolm, wearing only his pants, stands at Cade's bar making a new drink. Chrissa comes in frantically and tosses him the rest of his clothes.

CHRISSA

Hurry. I changed the sheets. Get dressed. He'll be back soon.

MALCOLM

I thought you liked being naughty..

CHRISSA

I don't like to get caught. I'll change in my room. Don't touch anything!

MALCOLM

Does he dust you for finger prints?

CHRISSA

It isn't funny, Malcolm.

WINSTON

What does this have to do with silk shirts and cappucino?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. VIDEO ARCADE - DAY

Malcolm flies the jump-jet on Screaming Steel with a vengeance. It's the same game, same punks. Malcolm is at his best. And he's good.

This time we see the game from a new perspective. We see the machine rock and jerk Malcolm in concert with the video.

Malcolm reaches the point where the Woman Biker is about to kill him. He is about to fly out of her path when for some reason he pauses. Something catches his eye.

She isn't half bad looking. Kind of pretty eyes.

But in Screaming Steel you don't pause to enjoy the scenery. The Woman Biker zips off her discus and Malcolm is hit. Crash and burn.

Malcolm sits on the machine. Debating whether to play again. Hell, maybe he is getting bored with it.

EXT. SHOPPING MALL / SECURED ZONE - DAY

Malcolm wanders through the mall almost choking with boredom.

Suddenly a piercing security alarm goes off. At the end of the plaza there's a disturbance. People scream and scatter.

Way off, through the crowd Malcom sees a STRANGE WOMAN running toward him. Not strange like he doesn't know her, strange like he's never seen anything like her in his life.

She's tall, beautiful and dressed in skin-tight leathers held together with lacings and metal studs. Eagle feathers are tied into her long hair. Her narrow waist is belted with a double wrap of heavy chain an inch thick. She wears leather boots that come up almost to her knees, with steel cleats that clack on the tile floor.

Maybe he has seen something like her before. She looks like one of the biker-barbarian women in the Screaming Steel game.

Malcom is mesmerized. Like turning a corner at the supermarket and seeing a deer standing in the aisle. She moves in long strides, fast and agile as a panther.

And she's really moving, hammering through the crowd, knocking down anyone who gets in her way. Leaping over planters and benches like a hurdler. Behind her HALF A DOZEN COPS clatter along with nightsticks and tazer-guns out.

They're gaining on her. One of the cops reaches for his side arm. Another stops him.

ANOTHER COP

There's too many people around. You might hit somebody. Use your tazer.

Just as the girl comes abreast of Malcom she slows to unwind the chain from around her waist--not a belt but a weapon. She swings it in a whistling arc at nearest cop. ✓

It slaps him in the chest, folding ^{the} him in two.

The next cop fires his tazer. She spins, dodging. The dart zings past her and hits a fat guy in the crowd, who jerks around like an epileptic whale when the current hits him.

She spin kicks, dropping that cop, and lays the chain across the two behind him, never stopping, spinning again to wrap the chain-whip around cop number five's legs, then jerking the rug out from under him.

The cop's tazer flys from his hand and slides across the floor. It ends up at Malcolm's feet. Malcolm stares, his mouth open wide. It's as if he suddenly stepped into a living version of the Screaming Steel game.

The last cop grabs the chain. A brief tug of war ensues. He's a big guy, twice her weight, but she almost gets the best of him. She lets go and he flies backward.

She turns to run, but by that time one of the cops has recovered. He gets behind her with a night stick. Crashes it against her back. She flies forward, wincing in pain.

She stumbles right up to Malcolm. Face to face. A foot away. She is in serious pain, trying to recover her balance.

Two cops grab her from behind. Rip her arms behind her back.

As they get control of her, her eyes focus on Malcolm, handsome, clean, nicely cut hair and a silk shirt.

Malcolm is entranced by her. But Reo's face shows something else. She finds Malcolm disgusting. He represents everything she hates. She spits on his shirt front.

The cops roughly spin her away from Malcolm. As she struggles to free herself, another cop comes up and smashes her knees with his nightstick. As she buckles, the cop knees her in the stomach. He knees her again, and again.

She stops fighting but the cops continue to beat her. All six of them seem to want a turn on her.

MALCOLM

Hey, stop! She's stopped fighting! Stop hitting her!

Another onlooker, a wrinkled old lady in a very nice cashmere sweater, has a different view.

LADY

She's got it coming, the little slut.

A couple of the cops start directing the crowd away.

COP

Okay, everyone! Shows over. The situation is under control. Move on.

But the other four cops are still beating on her.

MALCOLM

Tell them to stop hitting her.

COP

This is a police matter. Move on.

The cop reaches down to take the tazer in front of Malcolm's feet. Malcolm impulsively kicks him hard across the face. The cop flies.

Malcolm grabs the tazer and fires at a cop about to take another swat at her with a nightstick. The cop shakes with electricity and falls.

The other cops look at Malcolm, amazed. Malcolm realizes he's in big trouble. The four cops start toward him.

The cop whose face he smashed in lies moaning in front of him. Malcolm grabs his side arm: a twenty first century Glock high capacity full auto pistol. He raises it up.

MALCOLM

Freeze.

ANOTHER COP

(freezing)

Kid, drop the gun. You don't know what you're getting into.

MALCOLM

All of you lay down on the ground or I'll start firing. Now!

The cops reluctantly obey.

The girl is beginning to recover from the beating. She glances at Malcolm, wondering what the hell is going on.

MALCOLM

Come here. Quick.

GIRL

What the...

But she does what he says. Stumbling in pain.

GIRL

Now what?

MALCOLM

Ummm, I don't know. Maybe... maybe we should hand cuff them...

But suddenly on the other end of the mall come another dozen police, this time in riot gear with shot guns and assault rifles. The crowd splits to give them a free path.

GIRL

Maybe we should run.

MALCOLM

Yeah.

They do. Hauling ass, running through the crowd at breakneck speed. The girl is recovering from her blows and like a wounded tiger she soon begins to outrun Malcolm.

MALCOLM

Wait, this way.

Malcolm leads her to the espresso bar. They leap over the counter, sending two workers running.

Malcolm aims over the counter and fires above the heads of the riot police. A rapid fire burst rips through the air.

The cops running toward them hit the deck behind planters.

Malcolm ducks down and the two run for the back door.

MALCOLM

That should slow them down.

The girl grabs Malcolm's gun. The slide's back.

GIRL

Good move, slick. You emptied it.

She tosses the gun and they escape out the back door.

INT. SERVICE CORRIDOR - DAY

The door opens into a dim service corridor. Crates and boxes line the walls. Malcolm pauses. The girl quickly jumps on a small forklift and turns it on. With Malcolm standing dumb struck she drives it straight toward him.

GIRL

Move!

Malcolm leaps out of the way just as the girl crashes the forklift into the door, effectively pinning it shut.

GIRL

(leaping off)

Which way to truck depot Four A?

MALCOLM

Truck depot?

She picks a direction at random and takes off like a bullet down the corridor. Malcolm runs after her.

INT. ANOTHER TUNNEL - DAY

They leap down stairs and sprint through the maze of service tunnels running under the city. The girl seems to know approximately where she's going, but this is unexplored territory for Malcolm.

Down a long tunnel they suddenly dead end at a heavy door marked AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY. The girl tries it. It's locked. She throws her shoulder against it. No way.

Malcolm pulls out his uni card and tries swiping it through the lock. Nothing. Behind them, they can hear the faint but growing echo of approaching cops.

GIRL

Get ready to fight.

Malcolm realizes he has another card. Chrissa's. He pulls it out. In small print it reads: Milton Cade. He smiles.

MALCOLM

She stole her father's card.

Malcolm swipes it through the door. Bingo. It opens. They slip through.

Soon it becomes clear that this card will open any door, and they zip through several as they make their way onward.

EXT. LOADING DOCK - DAY

They sneak out onto a deserted open air loading dock.

MALCOLM

What's your name?

GIRL

Reo.

Reo moves quickly amongst the hulks of retired trucks to a gleaming object hidden in the shadows. She jumps onto its saddle-like seat and rocks it over on its kickstand.

It looks like a motorcycle with no wheels.

Malcom watches in awe as Reo kicks the turbojet engine to life and with a deafening roar it rises into the air.

It's Malcolm's first look at the real thing. The bike is a chrome monster with an iridescent green tank and faring the color of a bluebottle's back. Blue fire lives in the maw of the turbine exhaust and it vibrates with tremendous power.

Malcom reaches his hand out, as if to stop her. We know what he wants to say... wait, take me with you.

He is blasted by the jetwash as the beautiful biker woman rears and pivots her machine in place, tossing her hair as she snaps her head around for a last look at him.

REO

Thanks. You'll be okay?

MALCOLM

Yeah. ...I'll think of something.

She smiles and twists the throttle wide open. The afterburner cuts in with an eight foot tongue of violet orange fire out the back. She blasts into the sky.

At that second, a dozen cops crash out onto the loading dock. Some fire after the disappearing bike and one calls for air backup. The rest grab Malcolm. They throw him up against the wall and start to beat the snot out of him.

Those firing give up and lower their guns. It's like shooting after a rocket. They turn their attention to the show: the kid, whoever he is, getting what he deserves.

Suddenly, like a bolt of lighting coming to smite them, Reo's bike reappears.

Before they know it, the bike is spinning over their heads, sending a blast of fire and air that throws everyone and everything up against the walls.

Malcolm, like the cops, is lost in a swirl of papers, dust and flames. He spots something. A hand. He grabs it.

Before he knows it, he's airborne.

EXT. SKY - DAY

With Malcolm dangling by one hand, Reo's bike roars into the sky. Within seconds the truck depot is a distant dot.

REO

Grab on. I need both hands.

Malcolm's free hand manages to catch hold of a riding peg and Reo lets go. Malcolm makes the mistake of looking down. For a second we think he's going to lose his lunch. If he were to fall, there wouldn't be any large pieces to clean up.

MALCOLM

Shit! Shit!

REO

Hold on tight.

Malcolm catches hold with his other hand and hangs on for dear life. Looking back he spots:

Two tilt rotors are coming after them. Fast.

Reo begins evasive moves, zipping back and forth, diving, rising. The tilt rotors fire tracer bullets from their machine guns.

REO

Can't shake them. You're slowing me down!

MALCOLM

What do you want me to do? Let go?

REO

Get behind me. Less wind resistance. When I free fall, pull up!

Reo's bike drops fast, and Malcolm's legs rise over his head as he hangs on. He climbs up using Reo's leg as a ladder and slides on the seat behind her.

REO

Hit the air and say a prayer.

BOOM. Reo spins her bike, jerks the throttle all the way and takes off like a bullet in a new direction. It becomes a blur. The tilt rotors are quickly lost as she souped up, stripped down jump jet taps all its reserved power.

The expression "bat out of hell" comes to mind.

EXT. OUTER CITY - DAY

Malcolm's playing Screaming Steel again. But this time it's real. Real jump jet, real buildings, real wind, real G-force. Almost enough to rip your checks right off your face. ✓

Reo zips her bike into the heart of the outer city, which looks quite a bit like Screaming Steel. Only grungier.

To make sure they don't follow her, she zips between buildings and down alleys kind of like Malcolm did in the arcade. But this time if they hit, the game's over for good.

INT. ALLEY - DAY

Reo flies into a dead end alley and throttles down. The bike slows, then hovers. Malcolm catches his breath.

MALCOLM

We lose them?

REO

Better have. We're out of gas. She can go like hell when I want her to, but not for long.

Reo sets the bike down in the corner of a junk filled alley. They step off. Malcolm is still reeling from the incredible ride. Reo stacks some garbage over the bike to hide it.

MALCOLM

Thanks for saving me back there.

REO

We're even.

MALCOLM

Why were the police after you?

REO

They always are. Come on, let's go.

MALCOLM

Where?

REO

This is Nomad turf. We have to get to the Banshees nabe.

It's beginning to sink into Malcolm's head how deep he's in. Reo looks at him, amused, curious.

REO

So why'd you grease me?

MALCOLM

... help you? I don't know. I've got a soft spot for women who spit on me.

REO

That how all you talk inside?

MALCOLM

Like how?

REO

Like Prince Charming or something. Even say spit nicely.

MALCOLM

I'm glad you find me amusing..

REO

There you go again. What's your flag?

MALCOLM

Name? Mal...
(sighing)
Malcolm.

REO

Natch. Mallllcoollmm. How classy.

Malcolm is starting to wonder himself why he helped this person. He rubs a bruise on his arm.

REO

Better stay sharp, Class. This isn't fairyland.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

It isn't.

Malcolm and Reo trek down a street that looks like it was the battle ground for a war. A war fought until both sides realized there wasn't anything left to fight for.

At first Malcolm assumes it must be deserted, but then his eyes pickup signs of life. People so ragged they blend in with the surroundings.

Up in the burnt out buildings, small children, with thin dirty faces, stare down from broken windows. They disappear the moment he spots them.

A frail old man sits in aⁿ open door, too worthless to hide. He half raises a hand toward them for food, not really expecting to get any. ✓

At a building not quite so torn up, a girl stands in the doorway. She wears a short skirt and midriff top. The harsh makeup on her face can't obscure the fact that she isn't much ~~more~~ older ✓ than thirteen. Her hair is dirty but her eyes are sharp. She gives Malcolm a stare so intense he looks away. At a window above an older pimp guards with an assault rifle.

An older woman, filthy beyond description, sleeps in a burnt out car with a old dog. The dog wakes as Malcolm approaches and barks at them viciously. The woman doesn't move. ✓

Malcolm is clearly affected in stark contrast to Reo's total indifference. He wants to get home.

MALCOLM

Look, I got to get back inside. Is there a police station near by?

REO

We've been running from flics all day and you're going to walk into a cop shop?

MALCOLM

My father's... got connections. He's bailed me out of things almost this bad. If I can talk to...

REO

Class, out here civs get shot for going near a cop shop. They don't look at your ID card. They don't care who your daddy is.

MALCOLM

What about the vaccination centers? Or the soup kitchens? Surely I can call my father from one of... ✓

REO

Soup kitchens? Vaccination centers? Is this your first visit to Earth? ✓

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

The sun is low overhead as Malcolm spots an old church in the distance. Part of the roof is caved in, but there seems to be signs of activity.

MALCOLM

Maybe there's someone there I can talk to. Or a phone...

REO

You really don't get it, do you?

MALCOLM

I'm going to go check it out.

Reo just shakes her head as Malcolm determinely^d heads for the church. She is about to go retrieve him when she hears a sound in the distance. Something is approaching, fast. ✓

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Malcolm enters through the large front doors to find himself in a sea of people.

In every space on the floor, every corner, every nook, dozens of tattered families are camped.

As Malcolm pushes through the crowds, he notices a gathering of children in a nook. An old man is reading to them.

In other places some people lay too sick to move. Many pray in front of what's left of the altar.

Malcolm quickly realizes that it is hopeless, utterly hopeless. These people don't have water or heat, let alone a phone.

Suddenly there is a lot of shouting from ^{the} entrance. A dozen police officers in riot gear storm into the room, roughly pushing people out of their way. ✓

POLICEMAN

(through a bullhorn)

Attention, attention! This building is condemned. Everyone must evacuate now! We have a demolition permit. We blow the building up in five minutes. Those of you who wish to, may take the transports to the work centers.

Police move through the crowd poking people with billy clubs. Before long, the crowd starts to stand. A team of men carry in a large explosive device. The crowd begins to run, and then, to panic.

Amidst the screaming and shouting, Malcolm is swept up in the crowd, being shoved toward the doors. People are trampling other people. Malcolm is crushed into the masses around him.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Malcolm pours out of the church with the rest of the pathetic humanity that surrounds him.

Outside, another few dozen police stand in riot gear, keeping people moving out into the street. Not far away, two giant tilt-rotor transports are parked. Bodies are packed into them like cattle.

POLICE

Those who wish transport to the work centers may now board.

Malcolm stumbles to the ground and tries to catch his breath. He can't grasp this insane world around him.

After shoving out the last able bodies from the church, the demolition squad exits. The church EXPLODES, what's left of the roof collapses. The demolition squad laughs.

A cop kicks Malcolm.

JACK

Keep moving!

Malcolm looks up to see Jack staring down at him.

MALCOLM

Jack.

JACK

Malcolm.. what. What are you doing?

MALCOLM

(exploding)

What the fuck are you doing?! There were sick people still inside that thing! Children! What is this!

JACK

Now calm down, Malcolm. Calm down.

Jack helps Malcolm to his feet.

JACK

We'd better talk to someone about you. What the hell are you doing out here?

MALCOLM

Just get me back.

JACK

(unsure)

Yeah. Yeah we can do that.

EXT. TRANSPORT - DAY

Malcolm leans up against a transport watching as ragged people are packed in tightly. ANOTHER COP stands watch on him as Jack talks with a SERGEANT in the distance.

A few of the crowd bolt and run, rather than enter the transport. The cops let them go. Malcolm looks at the cop.

MALCOLM

Why do they run? What's so bad about the work camps? What's worse than this?

COP

They're just lazy. Don't want to work for a living.

MALCOLM

Where are the work camps?

COP

You ask too many questions.

Out of Malcolm's hearing range, Jack and the sergeant speak. The sergeant stares at Malcolm coldly.

JACK

... he saw everything.

SERGEANT

He looks like an outer to me.

JACK

But I know him. His father is a Police Commissioner...

SERGEANT

He's an outer. And a trouble maker.

Jack swallows and nods.

JACK

What if someone knows he's out here?

SERGEANT

It's a dangerous place to be walking alone. Gangs, maybe, who knows? Take him out of sight.

JACK

Me? But...

SERGEANT

You with us, Verdun?

JACK

Yes, sir.

As the Sergeant turns his attention to other matters, Jack stalks over to Malcolm. Jack and the other cop exchange glances silently. He gets it. And wholeheartedly agrees.

MALCOLM

What?

JACK

Let's go talk over there.

The cop pushes Malcolm forward. They walk toward an alley.

MALCOLM
Talk about what? You arresting me?

COP
Again with the questions.

JACK
In there.

As they near the alley, Malcolm gets it.

MALCOLM
Jack... Jesus. What an asshole you are.

JACK
I tried, Malc.

Malcolm spins, to kick, hit, run... we'll never know because Jack's gun is already out. And in his face.

JACK
Go on in.

INT. ALLEY - DAY

Jack backs Malcolm into the alley. The other cop stands guard, mildly interested.

JACK
Turn around and I'll give you one in the back of the head. You won't even feel it.

MALCOLM
How would you know, you asshole?

JACK
Turn around!

MALCOLM
Fuck you!

COP
What is this? A debate. Just shoot him!

Malcolm stares at Jack ^{defiantly} definitely. Jack raises his gun, hesitates. ✓

COP
Pussy. I'll do it.

The cop raises his pistol to fire. BAM!

Something falls on him. A girl. Reo, specifically. Boots first, right on the cops head. Snaps his neck.

They fall to the ground. Jack spins, trying to figure out what's happened. He fires blindly, hitting the brick wall.

Malcolm leaps on his back, grabbing his gun arm. Jack elbows Malcolm in the chest. He spins and punches Malcolm across the face. Malcolm falls back.

Jack aims his gun at him.

A bullet hole appears on Jack's forehead. He was shot from behind. He falls to reveal Reo with the cop's pistol.

Malcolm comes to his feet. He picks up Jack's pistol and stares down at him, still pissed off.

MALCOLM

I see you found out whether it hurts.

Reo picks over the other cop for anything interesting. Money, spare mags, handcuffs, knives. Malcolm follows suit.

REO

Set your's to single fire. So you won't blow the mag on the first trigger... you listening?

MALCOLM

Yes.

EXT. CITY - SUNSET

Malcolm follows Reo as she carefully picks her way through the city taking back alleys and less traveled routes.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

We hear that incredible ROAR OF MACHINES that sound halfway between Harleys and aircraft engines. Reo and Malcolm peer out from the rubble of a demolished building.

On street are three dozen PUNKS on jump bikes having a loud party. Some land their bikes to join up, other's take off to who knows where. Lots of talking, yelling, drinking and a little brawling. There are some hanger's on, BABES, and few YOUNGER KIDS that want to be bikers when they get bigger.

MALCOLM

Nomads?

REO

Nope, we're out of Nomad turf. That's Rampart Dukes.

MALCOLM

They don't like the Banshees either?

REO

Why should they? We took half their nabe last year.

MALCOLM

Why?

REO

Got to fight for something. Come on.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - NIGHT

Malcolm is weary as they make their way into yet another gutted stretch of city. But Reo lights up. She points to a skyscraper in the distance. Lights flicker at one^v the upper most floors. _{of} ✓

MALCOLM

Who's that?

REO

Amigos. This is my nabe. We'll climb up and fly the rest.

INT. BUILDING - NIGHT

She leads him into a burnt out building. Malcolm is startled to find more huddled bodies in the shadows. Women, men, kids. They stare at Reo and Malcolm with blank eyes.

MALCOLM

Who...

REO :

Don't worry. Civs. They see my colors. They won't mess with me.

Reo leads him to a staircase and they go up unmolested.

MALCOLM

How do they live? What do they eat?

REO

Don't know. Ummm... They're not like my friends or nothing. It's just our turf, you know. I guess they scrounge for things. Beg. Hook for the cops. There's a black market where you can buy things if you get money.

MALCOLM

And your gang? How to you live?

REO

We steal.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

They emerge from a doorway onto the rooftop. Reo pulls a small signal flare from her boot and fires it into the air. It rockets into the sky and burns brightly for a few seconds.

Moments later flashes of lights and shapes fly from the Banshee skyscraper. Jump bikes are coming toward them, fast. Reo waves her arms and hoots triumphantly.

Soon they are surrounded by hovering jump bikes piloted by Reo's gang, THE BANSHEES. They're dressed similar to Reo, with individual touches. Heavy metal leather with a medieval accent: chain mail vests, breast plates, biker boots.

HOVER LEE, the oldest member, touches down next to Reo.

HOVER LEE

Almost gave up on you. Curry?

REO

Didn't even get close.

RUNACRE, a tough-jawed girl with mean eyes, lowers her iron and glares at Malcolm.

RUNACRE

What's with the civ?

REO

He's from inside. Take him back to the eyrie. Hover Lee, let's get my hornet. I ran out of juice.

Reo leaps onto the back of Hover Lee's bike and they take off like a shot. Malcolm is left alone with the gang circled around him like a pack of wolves eyeing a deer.

Runacre grabs him roughly by the arm.

RUNACRE

Come on.

MALCOLM

Hey, I'm a friend. Not a prisoner. Ask Reo.

RUNACRE

Sure, friend. Let's get friendly. Climb on.

She tugs him on board behind her. The gang flies off.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

Once again, Malcolm flies on a machine that disregards gravity like a Ferrari disregards inertia. Even in this increasingly strange situation, Malcolm can't help but feel exhilarated. But to Runacre it's as natural as walking down the street.

They reach the Banshee eyrie, at the top of a once beautiful glass tower. It was created by breaking out the glass from the top floors of the tower and building up steel and sand-bag fortifications. Openings are left for the bikes to enter or leave. M-60 machine guns poke out of jerry-rigged gun turrets, and there are a couple bunkers on the roof.

INT. EYRIE - NIGHT

The openings yield into a large stabling area, a crude flight-deck. The gang lands.

Around the room are tools, other jump bikes of various ages and stages of assembly, weapons, ammo, fuel. Doorways lead to food storage and living areas. Portable generators provide electricity. A crudely sophisticated operation.

With the bikes shut off, the gang shifts attention to Malcolm again. They examine his clothes, his watch, his shoes.

RUNACRE

So that's how they dress inside. I always wondered. Get the shoes.

TURBO, giant and vicious looking, pokes him.

TURBO

What's it like inside?

BABY RAT, Turbo's shorter brother, pipes in.

BABY RAT

Don't you know. They sleep on white sheets. Take baths every day with hot water and eat on gold plates. Right?

MALCOLM

Yeah. Actually, that's correct.

BABY RAT

See, Turbo. I'm actually correct.
(to Malcolm)

Let me see your gun.

Malcolm hesitates, but hands over his pistol in the interest of staying on good terms.

BABY RAT

Cop's gun. You kill a cop?

Malcolm reaches back for it, but Baby Rat doesn't return it.

MALCOLM

Reo did. I guess I helped.

BABY RAT

I'm sure you were very helpful. Tough guy like you. Sure Reo wouldn't know what to do without you.

They all laugh.

TURBO

Hey, insider, you look like you had a bad day. I bet you want a drink.

MALCOLM

I'm fine.

RUNACRE

What? You too good to drink with us?

MALCOLM

Why don't we wait till Reo..

TURBO

I said you want a drink. You calling me a liar?

BABY RAT

I think he is calling you a liar.

Malcolm senses where this is going.

MALCOLM

Alright, alright. I'll have a drink.

BABY RAT

A tall one.

The gang grins as Turbo goes to a homemade still and pours sinister clear liquid into a tall dirty glass. He hands it to Malcolm, who wipes the grime off the rim.

TURBO

Don't worry. There ain't any germs that can live in that.

Malcolm smells it. From the reaction on his face, the stuff must be pure alcohol.

MALCOLM

What is this, jet fuel?

BABY RAT

It works in a pinch. But you have to cut it down. Burns hot. Go for it.

Malcolm takes a tiny sip. He chokes on it. The gang laughs loudly.

RUNACRE

Maybe he'd like warm momma's milk.

Malcolm, tired of being the butt of their jokes, lifts the glass and begins to drink. To the gang's amazement he downs the whole glass without a single pause.

Afterwards he can barely speak. But manages a wisecrack.

MALCOLM

Tastes... like... water.

The gang laughs again, but with him, rather than at him.

TURBO

Hey, maybe he isn't a jay after all.

RUNACRE

Bet he can't do it twice.

BABY RAT

Fifty says he can. You can, can't you insider?

Malcolm's face falls. He swallows.

MALCOLM

Sure.

Runacre gets him another drink. Malcolm looks at it queasily, but he lifts the glass and quickly swallows.

RUNACRE

Without a breath!

Malcolm finishes off the glass without a pause. He shatters it on the floor. Baby Rat throws his arm around Malcolm's shoulder and squeezes him a little too tight.

BABY RAT

Alright! You're okay, guy. You're going to be dead in five minutes, but you're okay.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

Reo, on her refueled bike, and Hover Lee fly to the eyrie.

INT. EYRIE - NIGHT

Reo and Hover Lee land. The rest of the gang hangs around, nervously. No sign of Malcolm. Reo eyes them suspiciously.

REO
Where is he?

BABY RAT
Who?

REO
The insider!

BABY RAT
Oh, he... well, he...

TURBO
Wanted a drink.

RUNACRE
And then he wanted another.

BABY RAT
We tried to stop him, but the guys like
got a serious drinking problem...

REO
Right. Is he dead?

BABY RAT
No. No. I don't think so. He... well,
after he stopped throwing up, we put him
in the corner over there.

TURBO
He was breathing. Kind of.

Reo finds Malcolm in a dark corner, passed out, looking
pretty miserable. She lifts his head to see if he's alive.
He is, kind of. She drops him back down.

REO
Jesus, I leave you guys alone for ten
minutes and you almost kill the poor
bastard.

RUNACRE
Some loss.

INT. CORNER OF EYRIE - MORNING

Malcolm opens one eye with difficulty. Reo kneels over him.

REO
You're a sad sight.

MALCOLM
You don't look so good thru this eye
either.

With even greater effort he opens the other eye and manages to half sit up. Reo hands him a cup of coffee.

Malcolm smells it. Takes a sip. Swishes it around in his mouth and swallows. It isn't good, but it'll do.

REO

Sorry about last night. The gang didn't know about you saving me. They won't give you any more shit.

She hands him a brown bar that must be army rations, because no one else would be so cruel. Malcolm is so starved he actually eats it.

MALCOLM

Delightful bunch. So, why am I here?

REO

You don't remember?

MALCOLM

(rubbing his head)

Remember how I got here. Don't know why. You didn't save my ass twice out of the kindness of your heart. What do you want out of me?

REO

Our Prez, Curry, is caged. Diablos caught him and traded him to the police for one of their guys. I tried to grease him yesterday, but I don't know the inside. But you do, and with that card of yours...

Malcolm reaches in his pocket and hands her Chrissa's card.

MALCOLM

It's yours. But as for me, my life of crime is over...

REO

Think again, Class. You saved me ~~once~~, I saved you twice. The card makes us square. But by now the flics know you greased me, and they know you helped dust two of them. As I see it, you've got three choices, jail, civ, or us. You saw how civs live. And us, we're not a soup kitchen. You'll have to prove you can pull weight. And that starts with greasing Curry. ✓

MALCOLM

What makes you think I can help?

REO

I don't know for sure. But if you can't,
I can always dump you.

MALCOLM

Nice to know we have an understanding.

REO

I'll introduce you to the gang.

INT. EYRIE - DAY

The Banshees are tuning and polishing their iron. Reo points them out one by one. First she introduces the guys.

REO

Shortcut, Shreeve, Torquer, Bennie,
Switch, Turbo and his little brother Baby
Rat...

BABY RAT

We're already pals.

REO

And Billboy, the tall one's Slow Martin,
then Flasher, Zeroline Paul, Philly and
Hover Lee. He's the wrench. Can fix
anything that flies.

She then points out the girls.

REO

That's Shivie, Mouse, Roxie, Conejo,
Stace, Jato, True-Dee, Annabella, Luger,
Pocket Rocket and Runacre.

RUNACRE

And I still think you're a jay.

BABY RAT

She's pissed cause I won a hundred on
you.

MALCOLM

I thought it was fifty.

BABY RAT

And I bet her you'd live through the
night.

REO

Hover Lee will teach you how to fly.
Probably take you a couple weeks.

MALCOLM

I already know how.

This raises the eyebrows of the entire gang.

RUNACRE

This I got to see.

MALCOLM

Well, it was mostly on a simulator, but the controls look the same.

BABY RAT

A stimulator? How come we don't got no stimulators?

TURBO

You got one, your right hand.

RUNACRE

Let's see him fly.

Reo glances at Malcolm, who nods.

MALCOLM

I haven't let you down so far.

REO

I haven't given you a chance. Alright. We'll try a experiment.

Reo, Turbo and Hover Lee drag out a doggy old beat-to-hell bike and start it up. They tether it between two girders with rope.

MALCOLM

How can I fly it like that?

REO

I want to see you hover, first. Then you'll fly. No point in losing some good iron when you crash land.

MALCOLM

Glad you're concerned for my safety.

BABY RAT

I'll lend you my boots.

Baby Rat tosses Malcolm his boots with special flying cleats. Malcolm puts them on. Pretty good fit.

Malcom gets on the bike and Baby Rat shows him how to anchor his feet to the footpegs using the cleats. Gang flyers use the cleats, locking in their feet before each launch, to keep from falling off the bikes in high-G maneuvers.

REO

Alright, let's see what you can do.

He stares at the controls. They're where they should be. Just like Screaming Steel. Excitement swells inside him as he realizes his dream is to become reality. He throttles up gingerly and raises the machine to a wobbling hover.

Then he promptly rolls upside down.

His cleats keep him suspended to the still running jump bike. His fingers hit the floor.

Hanging head-down, as the gang splits their sides and hoots derisively, Malcom realizes there is a tremendous gulf between the abstract of a simulator and real life.

He reaches up for the controls, but the bike rolls away from him. He struggles to free his boots from the footpegs, but they seem to be stuck. The gang continues to laugh at him.

BABY RAT

I'm getting stimulated just looking at him.

REO

(disappointed)

Alright, help him down.

Without warning, all hell breaks loose.

They are attacked, air-raid style, by the Rampart Dukes. The ground around them is chewed up by bullets from assault rifles, shot guns, pistols.

Rather than aiming for the Banshees per se, the Dukes target the most valuable objects: jump bikes. Take them out and the Banshees are worse than dead, they don't exist as a gang. Bodies are cheap on the outside. Iron is everything.

LOUIS "SHOTGUN" DE LANE, the leader of the Dukes, flies out front. He shoots Baby Rat's bike. Bullets rip up its engine. Baby Rat runs to try to rescue it. De Lane blasts across his body. He falls.

REO

Save the iron!

The Banshees scatter to their machines and take to the air. It's an explosion of motion, Banshees rocket from the Eyrie and pick up speed. Rampart Dukes fly in and out after them, and in the middle of it all is Malcolm. Defenseless and locked to his machine. Upside down.

Desperately he struggles to get upright, succeeding just as two Rampart Dukes roar behind him with guns blazing. With no other choice, Malcom twists full throttle and the bike slams forward, snapping the ropes tethering it.

He's launched off the top of the building.

EXT. CITY - DAY

He finds himself flying... sort of.

Screaming and flailing with the controls, he barely manages to pull out of a vertical dive just above the street and tears off on an erratic course across the city.

Three Rampart Dukes, including De Lane, bank and weave in pursuit. They figure he's an easy target.

Meanwhile, Reo and the Banshees recover in the air, and prepare for a counter attack. Hover Lee points out Malcolm. The three Dukes are gaining on him. Reo shakes her head.

REO

Nope, he's a goner.

She directs Hover Lee and the rest of the Banshees to reclaim the Eyrie. They turn back on the Dukes and hit them hard.

Part rumble and part dogfight. The weapons are varied: chains, nets, something that looks like a bolo, the ever-popular axe-handle, and of course shotguns and pistols.

The emphasis however is on flying skill. Outmaneuvering the other guy or girl. Getting the angle. Getting on the other guy's tail and riding him down.

EXT. SKY - DAY

Back on Malcolm it's three after one. Bullets rip past him on both sides as he inadvertently bobs and weaves.

But they can't hit him. He's flying too wild. He's re-inventing the term evasive action, and not on purpose.

He's all over the sky, wobbling and veering from side to side, almost clipping the buildings as he passes.

Yet to the Dukes chasing him, he's amazing and insulting. In a world where one's worth is measured by one's flying skills, he's making them look like fools.

When it seems he could get away, the kid flies in a big loop and returns to taunt them some more. Of course it's the last thing he intended to do. He's not flying, he's flailing.

Totally out of control. Barely saving himself at each turn.

As they follow in hot pursuit, JOHNNY HATCH calls to De Lane.

HATCH

This guy's good! We'd better let him go and help out the rest of the club.

DE LANE

Nobody out flies a Duke! We stay on him until he's down.

We can see the determination in De Lane to get him. It's a challenge to his manhood.

Malcolm gets out in front, rounds the corner of a high-rise and finds another one right in his path. He jerks into a screaming climb, later than any sane pilot would, and just clears the top. Sparks strike from the underbelly.

De Lane and Hatch, close on his ass, barely make it over in time. But the third Duke cuts it too close. He hits just enough building to rip off a fuel pipe. He spins out of control and then catches fire. Big fireball. What's left arcs down across the city like a drunken meteor.

De Lane and Hatch hover as they watch their friend go down. Nothing to rescue. They spot Malcolm escaping.

DE LANE

He's gonna go down hard.

They roar after him.

EXT. MALCOLM'S BIKE - DAY

For a moment Malcolm thinks he's lost them. And he's getting the hang of how to fly this thing. He rises, tilts to one side, to the other. A smile comes to his face.

MALCOLM

I think I've got it!

Then he becomes aware of a beeping sound he's been ignoring. It beeps in time with a flashing light marked "Fuel."

MALCOLM

Shit! Doesn't Reo ever fill up a tank?

Malcolm clicks on the computer display and hits a key to see how much flight time he has remaining. Ten seconds. Fuck.

He's pretty high up, it'll take him that much to time to land cleanly, even if he knew how to land cleanly. And to make things interesting, he hears the roar of Dukes coming up behind him. Double fuck.

Malcolm glances down. Long drop. Glances back. They'll be on him in a second. Glances at fuel. Eight seconds left.

MALCOLM

Wish I had a parachute.

Ironic thing is just then his right boot finally slips off the footpeg. (Not just luck, they're designed not to come off upside down.) Malcolm slips off the left foot. He bites his lip. He's got a crazy idea, and it's his only chance.

De Lane comes up behind him. He raises a customized .45 auto with laser sight. The beam flies around for a moment, past Malcolm's head, aims and then...

Malcolm spots the beam on his shoulder. He shifts right and drops back as De Lane fires. The bullet zips past.

Malcolm's bike falls back as De Lane's roars forward. In half a second Malcolm blasts after De Lane's ass. The fuel gage reads: two seconds.

De Lane turns back and tries to take aim. Malcolm is accelerating right along side him. It'll make the shot even easier, right between the eyes.

But suddenly Malcolm does something unexpected. Using the momentum of his sudden acceleration, Malcolm leaps off his bike and onto De Lane's. De Lane fires into blank air. The engines on Malcolm's bike cut off and it drops like a stone.

Malcolm lands on De Lane, knocking the pistol free. The bike flies wildly. Malcolm grabs for the controls. De Lane elbows Malcolm in the face. Malcolm almost flies off, but hangs onto De Lane's back for dear life.

Hatch follows behind them. He has a reasonably good shot at Malcolm's back with his own .45, but chances are the bullet would cut through them both. He keeps up his pursuit.

As the bike free falls, De Lane is forced to shift attention to piloting. He slowly climbs and aims for clear sky.

MALCOLM

Look, lets make a deal so we don't both die. Just drop me off someplace safe and we'll call it even.

DE LANE

Sure. No point in both of us biting it. How's I drop you on that roof over there?

De Lane nods to the Western building near by. As Malcolm glances at it, De Lane's pulls a switchblade, clicks it open and jabs it at Malcolm's face, hoping to take out an eye.

He comes close, slicing across Malcolm's cheek. As blood flows from his face, Malcolm explodes with adrenalin and anger. With one hand he grabs De Lane's switchblade arm and twists it up. With the other he smashes De Lane's face into the bike's controls. He smashes it again.

Meanwhile, Hatch has managed to come along side, just a couple yards away, and he's aiming for a clean shot at Malcolm's head. De Lane spots him.

DE LANE

Shoot! Shoot!

De Lane's bike is rocking from the struggle on board. Hatch fires at Malcolm and misses. He fires again. A miss.

Malcolm grabs De Lane by the throat and pulls him in as a shield. Hatch fires again, this time connecting. But not with Malcolm, a bullet rips through De Lane's head.

De Lane's bike spins toward Hatch, forcing him to take evasive action away.

As the bike spins out, Malcolm has to get De Lane's dead body off. He flings it free and grabs the controls.

By now, Hatch is coming back at him again, firing like mad.

Malcolm spins the bike around and gains control of it.

Hatch's pistol is empty and he grabs for a new magazine.

Malcolm, blood running down his neck and into his clothes, is ready for anything. He pulls a sawed off, double barrel shot gun from a sling on the bike. He takes aim, rockets his bike into position and fires.

He misses. He fires again. Bingo!

Most of the blast hits the engine on Hatch's jump bike. A couple shots rip into his leg. The bike starts to waver and lose power. Smoke fumes from the engine.

Hatch, in serious pain, loses his pistol as he tries to stop the bike from losing control. It's clear he's going to have to land it while he can.

Like a wounded bird, he makes an easy target for Malcolm. And Malcolm's going to get him. He reloads the shotgun.

Malcolm blasts his bike up along side the Hatch's crippled bike and takes aim. Like shooting fish in a barrel.

Hatch glances into the shotgun aimed at his head. He struggles at his controls. The engine is catching fire. Either way it's over. Hopeless.

Malcolm hesitates. He's close enough to see Hatch's face, a young man about his own age.

HATCH

Just do it! Get it over with Banshee!

Malcolm lowers the gun. He puts it back in its holster. He flies the bike in close to Hatch's. He reaches out his hand.

Hatch stares in amazement. His bike is gone, burning up inside. He grabs for Malcolm's hand.

Malcolm pulls him free, just as the bike blows. Fireball.

Hatch grabs onto a peg. They fly free for a moment.

EXT. WESTERN BUILDING - DAY

Malcolm lowers his bike until Hatch can touch his feet to the building. Hatch grabs onto a tattered art deco ledge. Malcolm hovers nearby and they exchange glances. Hatch doesn't know what to make of this.

MALCOLM

Good luck.

Malcolm roars off on De Lane's bike, leaving Hatch to find his way home.

INT. EYRIE - DAY

The Banshees are securely back in the Eyrie, relaxing by their bikes, telling war stories.

SHORTCUT

Crash and burn, man, got up on his ass, filled his back with lead..

RUNACRE

That's nothing, fuck, I..

Reo sits alone, watching the others, apprehensive. She notices Switch heading for the still.

REO

Stay sober till dark. They might be back.

SWITCH

Relax, Reo, we kicked their ass. You saw them running.

BENNIE

They'll never be back. Fucking wiped them out.

Turbo glances at Reo. He doesn't want to celebrate either.

TURBO

I'll man the M-60 on the roof.

Reo nods. Before Turbo can move they hear the sound of a jump bike rapidly approaching.

Twenty three weapons leap out and take aim. It's a single bike, moving slowly. They let it come closer.

HOVER LEE

That's Shotgun De Lane's bike. Maybe they want a truce.

BENNIE

Let him land and then blow his brains.

REO

It's not De Lane... it's...

Malcolm lands De Lane's bike in the eyrie with the grace of a pro. It's a grace that comes from weariness. The gang stares at him. His face is a bloody mess. His eyes bloodshot and glassy. He looks like he's been to hell and back. And he feels like it too.

The gang cheers. They hoot. They grab Malcolm from the bike and toss him onto their shoulders.

ROXIE

Fucking Aye!

SHORTCUT

Alright, man.

Reo stares. She figured he was long dead. To her surprise, she's really glad to see him, but she's not going to let on.

REO

Class, what the... there were three Dukes on your tail. What happened?

ROXIE

Look what happened. He stole De Lane's iron! The fucking leader's hornet!

REO

What happened to De Lane?

Malcolm fights his way down from the gang's shoulders. He's not really proud of what happened.

MALCOLM

Dead.

REO

And the other bikes?

MALCOLM

... down. Both of them.

HOVER LEE

That makes you the top scorer. Three down, unassisted.

MALCOLM

What about Baby Rat? Is he..

RUNACRE

We burn him at midnight. And Stace. She hammered out at five hundred.

Reo, suddenly happy, goes to Malcolm and puts an arm on his shoulder. Malcolm is somber.

REO

You surprised me.

ROXIE

You're a one man killing squad.

MALCOLM

So that's it. All these people dead for.. what? What was the point?

SHORTCUT

The point? The point is we won!

TURBO

Malcolm, I'll get you a drink.

MALCOLM

I don't want a drink.

Reo looks at Malcolm seriously.

REO

It's okay, Malcolm. We're okay. They came after us, but we were too tough for them. We won. All of us.

MALCOLM

Great. We accomplished a lot.

INT. EYRIE - SUNSET

Malcolm stares out at the city as Reo prepares to stitch up his face. She hands him a bottle of their homebrew.

REO

You'd better have a drink. This is going to hurt like a motherfucker.

Malcolm takes the bottle, his hands are shaking.

REO

Got nerves? I got them after my first blast. You'll get over it.

Malcolm forces the bottle to be still. He takes a long swig. Reo takes the bottle and soaks a cloth with the contents. She wipes down Malcolm's face. He winces.

REO

Good for everything. Fuel, booze, antiseptic.

Reo cleans a needle and thread. She grabs Malcolm's head and starts to stitch shut the cut.

REO

Went clean through your mouth. You'll have a nice scar. I always thought scars were kind of sexy.

MALCOLM

At the rate we're going, in a week you'll find me irresistible. Oww, shit that hurts! So why did they attack us?

REO

The Dukes? That's what we do out here. Strong gangs attack the weak ones. Either you get iced, or you get stronger. Law of the land. That's why we need Curry. He's the toughest fucker on the outside. Dukes figured we were an easy hit without him. I'm the temp Prez till Curry gets back. Some gangs think having a woman leader makes you weak.

MALCOLM

You're a great leader.

REO

But Curry. He's mean. Strong. He'll blast other gangs for the fun. Everyone was afraid of him. He doubled the Banshee territory.

MALCOLM

Maybe he's the problem. He attacks the other gangs. No wonder they hate you. If you tried to talk to them..

REO

You just don't get it. You don't make friends out here. You kill your enemies or they kill you. This isn't a popularity contest. We need Curry.

She pulls the thread hard. Malcolm winces.

REO

And he's my boyfriend.. I love him.

MALCOLM

Oh.

He takes the bottle and downs some more liquor.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

On the roof the Banshees have set up a funeral pyre, a wooden platform on which Stace and Baby Rat have been laid. They douse them with gasoline. Reo watches with Malcolm.

REO

We'll burn them. We say a few words.
And then have a wake till sunrise. It'll
get kind of wild.

MALCOLM

Everything's been so sedate so far.

Hover Lee approaches Reo.

HOVER LEE

They're ready. You're acting Prez.

Reo nods. She crosses to the funeral pyre and stares at her two friend's bodies. The rest of the club gathers around.

Hover Lee stands next to Malcolm. For some reason he opens up to him and begins to talk in a low voice.

HOVER LEE

When I first saw Reo she was this high.

Gestures to indicate a small child.

HOVER LEE

Her parents were dead in the street,
disease or something. She was keeping
the birds from them. She came running up
to me and Curry on our iron, totally
unafraid, and demanded that we bury them.
She was too small to.

Reo pulls out a Zippo and flicks it open like a pro. She lights it, touches it to a trickle of gasoline and sets off the pyre. It explodes with flames.

HOVER LEE

We buried them, and brought her back with
us. She was a wild one for awhile. She
was flying as soon as she could reach the
pegs. Got her colors at fifteen. She's
a hell of a woman.

Malcolm nods. Hover Lee looks at him.

HOVER LEE

She's Curry's woman.

Malcolm nods again.

As the pyre burns, sending galaxies of sparks swirling into the darkness, Reo turns and speaks to the gang.

REO

Baby Rat was a good flier. A good fighter. And I liked his jokes. He told great jokes. I'll miss him. And Stace was beautiful but tough as any man. And she rode her iron the whole way down. I know she'll come back next time as an eagle.

She steps away and someone else speaks. Malcolm watches as each gang member goes forward and says something about their two comrades. Mostly good things, but honesty is the rule.

BENNIE

I didn't like Baby Rat much because he smelled bad. But I wouldn't want anyone else covering my back on a raid. Cept Reo or Hover Lee... or Turbo. He was funny sometimes. And Stace was the best lay I've ever had. Sorry Roxie. You'd be second.

ROXIE

No problem.

Switch steps up.

SWITCH

I liked Baby Rat, even though he kept stealing from me, and I'm sorry he ate it. And Stace was the best lay I've ever had too.

Couple other guys nod in agreement. Hover Lee steps forward.

HOVER LEE

I'll miss them both.

Turbo goes up. He's almost about to cry. But he'd cut off his own arm first.

TURBO

I liked Stace. She one of the best fliers here. And I don't think my brother smelled that bad. Not as bad as Bennie anyway and... I wish it had been me first.

He walks off. Hover Lee motions to Malcolm.

MALCOLM

But I barely..

HOVER LEE

Everyone says something. It's the rules.
Just say what you're thinking.

Malcolm steps up.

MALCOLM

Stace had pretty eyes. And I didn't know
Baby Rat much but... I liked him.

Malcolm walks away. Everyone stares as the fire burns.

SWITCH

Reo, let's break out the good keg.

REO

Alright. No one sleeps till dawn!

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Hours later the pyre continues to burn. Rock music blares out of a serious twenty first century boom box. Everyone is drinking beer from a keg and they dance around a bon fire which also serves as a fire for roasting food.

Malcolm sits off to the side, fascinated but not quite comfortable taking part. He's still an outsider.

He watches as Reo dances provocatively, the sheen of firelight flashing off her tightly-laced riding leathers, her hair flying out as she whirls. Everything is wild and free and primal, an elemental way of life so alien on the inside.

Malcolm suddenly notices Turbo looming over him.

TURBO

You're still dressed like a jay. 'Cept for the boots. Those are his boots.

Malcolm remembers he's wearing Baby Rat's boots. He reaches down and pulls them off.

TURBO

Take off your clothes.

MALCOLM

I... but...

In a flash Turbo has a switchblade to his throat.

TURBO

I said take off your clothes.

As the club watches with amusement, Malcolm obeys, stripping off his pants and shirt and socks.

TURBO

What the fuck is that?

MALCOLM

Underwear.

TURBO

Take it off. Who wears underwear?

Malcolm obeys. He's buck naked in the firelight (in tasteful PG-13 angles). The girls unabashedly check him out and don't seem disappointed. Turbo turns Malcolm's pants upside down and empties the contents. Turbo then takes Malcolm's clothes and tosses them into the fire. He comes back with a bundle of biker leathers and dumps them at Malcolm's feet.

TURBO

These are Baby Rat's clothes. Normally we burn 'em, but he would have liked you to take them. De Lane dusted him and you dusted De Lane. He would have liked that someone squared it for him.

Malcolm is touched. He pulls on leather pants and puts the boots back on. Turbo picks up a leather vest with Banshee colors blazing across the back. He holds it up.

TURBO

I nominate Class to become a Banshee!

ROXIE

I second it!

RUNACRE

What about Curry? He's the Prez. The Prez has to vote to make a new member.

TURBO

Fuck that. Curry may never come back. Hover Lee? What's the rule?

HOVER LEE

Reo's acting Prez.

TURBO

Reo?

REO

Has to be unanimous. Of all present.

Turbo stomps to Runacre. She meets his stare. Try to force me asshole. But he doesn't. Instead his voice softens.

TURBO

I ain't ever asked anything from you,
Run. But this is for my brother.

She can't stand seeing him be nice. She spins angrily.

RUNACRE

It's fucking unanimous!

INT. EYRIE - NIGHT

They have the initiation ceremony, supervised by Reo. They pass around a cup and each member of the Banshees spits into it in turn.

Finally the cup comes to Malcolm and he about to add in his own bit when Hover Lee shakes his head. He motions that Malcolm is suppose to drink it.

Malcolm looks at the cup. Mistake. He looks up. Takes a breath, and drinks. The gang cheers. Now he's one of them. Reo presents him with Baby Rat's vest, his colors.

TURBO

Roxie, he still looks like a jay. Pierce his ear and give him a tattoo. A big one. Right here.

Motions to his upper arm.

MALCOLM

I don't know about a tattoo..

Turbo puts his arm around Malcolm.

TURBO

You're not going back, man. Don't worry about what fucking jays on the inside are going to think. You're a Banshee now.

Malcolm realizes he's right. He looks to Roxie.

MALCOLM

Give me a big one.

ROXIE

(suggestively)

You've already got a big one. But I'll give you a tattoo.

The gang laughs. Reo finds herself suddenly jealous, but as usual, she hides it.

INT. EYRIE - MORNING

The wake is almost over. Some members are passed out on the floor. Some couples are disappearing together into private rooms. Reo dozes off in a corner herself, exhausted.

Malcolm sits up with Roxie, who is the artist of the group. She's already pierced his ear and is finishing an elaborate tattoo on his arm.

Malcolm watches Reo sleep. She looks different somehow. More like the little girl Hover Lee was talking about.

ROXIE

Almost done.

MALCOLM

Sorry to keep you from the party.

ROXIE

I don't mind. Now part of me is going to be part of you forever. I wanted to do a good job.

She wipes the blood and checks out her design. Flames and war birds. She holds a mirror so Malcolm can see it.

MALCOLM

It's beautiful. ...if my mother could see me now. She'd die instantly.

ROXIE

You like it?"

MALCOLM

Yes. A lot.

She kisses him on the cheek.

ROXIE

Want to make love?

Malcolm is taken aback by the directness of the question.

MALCOLM

I'm pretty tired. I'll just crash here. Maybe...

ROXIE

Some other time. The offer's there. Sleep good, Class.

Roxie packs up her tattoo supplies and heads for her room. Malcolm lays on the floor and finds something for a head rest. He stares at Reo, as if taking in a last breath, and closes his eyes.

INT. EYRIE - DAY

A tape deck blasts out an old Beach Boys number from the heyday of the California machine dream: "She's so Fine, My 409" Hover Lee works on De Lane's bike as Malcolm watches. He's got it half disassembled and talks as he works.

HOVER LEE

Rolls Royce Aircraft Two Thousand. Rolls are great bikes. Strong engines. Tough. The new Yamahas are faster on the top end. But these babies have torque to spare. And a Two Thousand, couldn't ask for a better bike. I'll teach you how to take care of it.

Hover Lee is polishing parts, oiling them. Showing Malcolm the ins and outs of the machine.

HOVER LEE

You shouldn't think of your bike as a super complicated machine. You'll get afraid of it. You should think of your iron as if it was...

MALCOLM

(sensing the cliché)
... a woman?

HOVER LEE

Fuck no. A woman is a hundred times more complicated. Think of it as a sword. You want to keep your sword clean, sharp and oiled. That's it. That's just about all you have to do with a jump bike. Everything else is just assembly.

He hands Malcolm some parts and points where they fit and how. Before long Malcolm is up to his armpits in grease, and loving it. The shop lights flare against the chrome and reflect on his face.

EXT. SKY - DAY

Malcolm's bike roars through the sky. He's a new man now, a pro. He flies with with unwavering confidence.

Reo's bike rockets past. Showing him up. He blasts after her. Just as he catches up, she shows him up again.

She does a barrel roll. Malcolm does the same.

She does a loop. He follows.

A free fall and recovery. He keeps up with her.

EXT. ANOTHER SKYSCRAPER - SUNSET

They're parked on the roof of a Bunker Hill skyscraper. A nice vantage point. Reo points out the sights.

REO

Our nabes, up to Western. Past that, Dukes. Behind us, Diablos and Ronin. Hammers are that way, Nomads South.

MALCOLM

What's over there? Over the hills.

REO

Work camps.

MALCOLM

I want to see them.

REO

What for? What do they matter?

MALCOLM

Reo, I know this is hard for you to believe, but what's going on out here is illegal. The people inside don't know about it. The police lied to us.

REO

So what? It's not going to change.

MALCOLM

If I could talk to my father, tell him what's happening, he's on the police commission. He could..

REO

Look, I don't want to save the world. I don't give a shit about it. You should be thinking about how to grease Curry. If he was here yesterday, Stace and Baby Rat would be alive.

MALCOLM

I'm working on a plan.

REO

We don't need a plan. Let's just blast him out tonight.

MALCOLM

Last time you went for him you didn't even get close. If you want him out, we need a real plan. Meantime I'm checking out the work camps.

He hops on his bike and flies off. Reo, irritated, flies after him.

EXT. WORK CAMPS - DAY

Malcolm flies low over miles and miles of dull looking concrete warehouses. Chain link fences with barbed wire tops surround everything. Trucks are moving to and fro. Unlike the desolate non-secured district, this area is completely secured and bursting with activity.

Malcolm lands on the roof of a warehouse. Reo lands by him.

REO

We've probably been spotted. They'll be tilt rotors after us.

Malcolm goes to the skylights and looks down. Inside is a sea of people, working on crude assembly lines. The atmosphere is frightening bleak, the workers gray faced and thin, like a Nazi slave labor camp.

REO

They go in, they don't go out. They sleep on the floor and work eighteen hours a day. You meet your work quotas, they might move you into a camp where you get a bed or a room. You fall behind, they've got worse places.

MALCOLM

Slaves.

REO

No. They're free to go. Once they've paid off their debt. For clothes medical, food. Only thing is, they don't make enough money to keep up.

MALCOLM

They said all the work was done by robots. There was no need for human labor. That's why there were no jobs.

REO

Yeah, guess what? They lied. Everyone's been lying to you. Big surprise. I can't believe you were stupid enough to believe them.

Malcolm stares fixedly into the distance. Tilt rotors can be heard approaching.

MALCOLM

Yeah, I can't believe it either.

Reo pulls Malcolm out of his stare. They run to the jump bikes and blast off. As they do we see what Malcolm was staring at. A gigantic sign that is attached to several of the warehouses: GARRET ENTERPRISES.

INT. EYRIE - EVENING

Malcolm is cleaning a pistol. He throws a magazine in and chambers a bullet. He stuffs it in his pants and picks up another. His eyes are cold, thoughtful.

Reo checks her weapons. Hover Lee approaches.

HOVER LEE

What's with Class? He's been acting strange since you got back.

REO

He's just nervous about breaking Curry out. That's all.

Hover Lee nods. Reo looks over at Malcolm. Why is he so quiet? She crosses to him.

REO

You ready?

MALCOLM

Yeah. Leave your colors.

REO

I don't go anywhere without my colors.

MALCOLM

Tonight you do.

Malcolm takes off his own jacket and tosses it in a corner. Reo reluctantly follows suit.

Malcolm hops on to the back of Turbo's bike. Reo hops on the back of Hover Lee's. Turbo starts his up. The rest of the gang does the same. Turbo looks back at Malcolm.

TURBO

You sure this is going to work?

MALCOLM

No.

They roar off.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

The Banshees ride in full force across the night sky.

EXT. LOADING DOCK - DAY

A truck pulls up at a different loading dock as security guards look on.

Like lightening, the Banshees strike. Before the guards can move, a score of jumpbikes have landed and shotguns, swords, and pistols are at their throats.

The Banshees dismount and throw the guards against the wall.

TURBO

Hands on the wall. You know the drill.
Keep them up.

They steal their weapons and wallets. They swing open the truck doors and toss out boxes. It's a standard gang heist.

Except the real purpose is to allow Reo and Malcolm to slip through an open doorway unnoticed. They disappear inside.

Turbo and Runacre smash open some boxes and examine the contents.

RUNACRE

Shirts. Fucking shirts. What do they do with so many fucking shirts?

Once Hover Lee is confident that Reo and Malcolm have been allowed enough time to get inside, he nods to Bennie who has been watching the guards carefully.

Bennie deliberately looks the other way and one of the guards slips his hand down to his belt and hits a security beeper.

A load alarm goes off. The Banshees rush for their bikes.

TURBO

Shit! Let's split!

BENNIE

Go, go, go!

They fly off almost as fast as they arrived. The guards run to secure the area. One of them grabs a phone.

GUARD

Yeah, we just got hit by a jump gang.
No, no. They're gone. Ran scared when they heard the alarm go off.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

The Banshees fly by, laughing their heads off.

INT. CORRIDORS - NIGHT

Malcolm and Reo sneak through a series of service corridors, hiding in the shadows, dodging behind boxes. They duck behind a corner as they hear someone approaching.

A guard rounds a corner and Reo knocks him out with the butt of her pistol. The two stash his unconscious body behind some crates and continue on.

EXT. WALKWAY - NIGHT

They emerge into the walkways and parks that line the inner city. They hide behind some bushes.

MALCOLM

We're not going to get far dressed like this. Follow me.

They dash through the park areas, keeping behind trees and benches.

They watch as a couple exits one of the elevators on Malcolm's apartment building. They wait until it's empty and no one is watching and then dash inside.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Malcolm closes the door.

ELEVATOR

Please type in I.D. or insert card.

MALCOLM

Now lets check what I already know.

He pulls out Cade's card inserts it into the panel. It is immediately spit out.

ELEVATOR

This card has been deactivated.

He does the same with his own card. It's also spit out.

ELEVATOR

This card has been deactivated.

MALCOLM

I'm now officially persona non grata.

REO

So how is the plan coming so far?

MALCOLM

As expected. Let's see if we're dead.

He types in a code on the panel.

ELEVATOR
Maid's combo activated. Garret
residence.

The elevator roars off.

REO
How'd you do that?

MALCOLM
Our maid's code. I weaseled it from her
so I could sneak out when I didn't want
my father to know. Problem is it'll only
takes us one place.

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

Malcolm and Reo step out of the elevator. The apartment door
is closed. Malcolm tries it. It's locked. He presses the
door bell and he and Reo spring to either side, guns ready.
The door opens slowly.

THERESA
Yes...

Malcolm throws his hand in to keep the door open.

THERESA
Malcolm! What are you...

MALCOLM
Theresa, are they home?

THERESA
No, but they'll be back soon.

MALCOLM
Let us in. Please. Please...

Theresa and him exchange glances. She's never been able to
deny him anything. She opens the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Reo and Malcolm step inside and Theresa closes the door.

THERESA
Malcolm, your picture has been on the
video. They say you're a criminal.

MALCOLM
For once they're right. If anyone comes,
say we forced you by gunpoint. I need
clothes for both of us.

He gestures to Reo. Reo, meanwhile, is spellbound by the opulent surroundings. It's so foreign to her. She wanders around the room, examining nick-nacks.

Theresa studies her, strangely approving.

THERESA

Is she a girlfriend? Are you two...

MALCOLM

You're hopeless. We have to hurry.

INT. GARRET'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Theresa directs Reo toward the shower.

THERESA

Take off your clothes. Get in the shower. Use soap. I'll find something that will fit you.

Reo takes off her clothes and glances around the room, lost in all the fixtures. Theresa directs her to the shower.

INT. SHOWER - NIGHT

Reo gets inside, but doesn't have a clue how it works. Theresa turns it on.

THERESA

Use soap.

Theresa shuts the door and Reo picks up a bar of soap. She smells it.

INT. MALCOLM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Malcolm enters his old room. It's completely empty. He stares at it and shakes his head, more amused than angry. Theresa comes in behind him, embarrassed.

MALCOLM

It didn't take long to be disowned. I worried they were grieving over me.

THERESA

I'm sorry, I tried to...

MALCOLM

It's not your fault. They never...

He falters. Even as an adult he can't say it. There was no love in their relationship. None at all.

THERESA
(breaking the silence)
Malcolm... they weren't your parents.

MALCOLM
What?

THERESA
They bought you. You were an infant.
Mrs. Garret couldn't have children. They
bought you from the outside.

MALCOLM
(exploding)
From who?!

THERESA
It doesn't matter.

MALCOLM
It does to me!

THERESA
I don't know. There are no records. I
never saw them. Just you.

Malcolm stands dizzily, shocked and yet somehow unsurprised.

MALCOLM
I guess they bought the wrong one, huh?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Malcolm is in one of his father's suits. His hair is slicked back. With his scar and hardened expression, he looks more like a gangster than a businessman. Pistols bulge under his jacket.

Reo appears from the hallway in a stunning dress. She looks completely unlike herself, more like a pampered debutante than a woman warrior. Except for the .38 auto she's slipping into her matching purse. Theresa stands behind her.

THERESA
It was your mother's dress. She can't
fit it anymore. I could have done more
with her hair if I had time but...

MALCOLM
We're not going to the prom, trust me.

REO
People actually wear this shit, huh? How
do they walk?

Reo takes a few steps forward, shakily on the high heels.

MALCOLM

You'd better learn fast.

They hear the sound of elevator doors opening in the hall.

THERESA

Quick, hide in the kitchen...

Malcolm doesn't move, he pulls his gun and aims at the door.

Winston and Iris Garret enter from the hallway, arriving from another social event. Winston stares down the barrel of Malcolm's gun, surprised, but only mildly so. Like the bit owner of a pet that always was a little neurotic.

WINSTON

Hello, son.

MALCOLM

Want to rephrase that?

Winston understands. He steps further into the room.

WINSTON

Hello... Malcolm. I didn't expect you back. I see you brought a date. Would you like to introduce us?

MALCOLM

Reo, this asshole pretended to be my father. That woman over there barely tried to be my mother. I was a disappointment to them both.

IRIS

What do you want from us?

MALCOLM

Why don't we start with where my real parents are? Or where they were.

WINSTON

Lord knows where or who your father was. Your mother died in a shelter after giving birth to you.

MALCOLM

You mean work camp. A work camp with Garret Inc. plastered over it. Was that to be my inheritance? An empire of slave camps. You wanted a son to carry on the good work after you.

WINSTON

What do you know? Nothing. Crime and poverty ate out the heart of the city. It was a breeding ground for revolution. There were food riots. Five million starving people marching into our neighborhoods. Everything we had was threaten. We had no choice.

MALCOLM

Except to give them food!

WINSTON

They must work! It's economics. Most people on this world are starving. Starving. They are grateful to be fed. Grateful! But in this country we gave people unreasonable expectations. Business people like myself, realized we had to lower their expectations or there would be civil war.

MALCOLM

So you built a wall around them. Cut them off from everything until their expectations had dropped enough. Then you could control them.

WINSTON

It's the model for the rest of the country. New York, Detroit, Chicago, they're following our example.

MALCOLM

And once the masses are safely tucked away in your factories, what do you plan for the wasteland you've created?

WINSTON

In another five years it will all be bulldozed. Reclaimed for new projects.

MALCOLM

Happy workers, new real estate opportunities, what progress.

WINSTON

I won't apologize to you. You, you'd be dead if I hadn't brought you in. You never starved. You've never wanted for anything. I brought you in from nothing and gave you everything.

MALCOLM

Yes, you did. Give me your wallet.

Winston tosses it to Malcolm. Malcolm looks over at Reo.

MALCOLM
Tie them up. And the maid.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Reo finishes binding and gagging Winston and Iris tightly together on the floor. Theresa is tied to a chair.

MALCOLM
You're good at that.

REO
Comes in handy.

Malcolm nears Theresa who is bound out of the Garret's sight. He gives her a kiss on the cheek. Her eyes smile at him. He and Reo exit.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

They step into the elevator. Malcolm inserts Winston's card and presses the lobby button. The elevator responds. Malcolm is quiet. Reo glances at him.

REO
That must be freaky. To hear that about your parents, all of a sudden. My childhood was a crap hole, but at least I always knew who I was.

MALCOLM
I guess I knew inside. When I came outside, it was strange... I couldn't shake the feeling that I was home.

EXT. WALKWAY - NIGHT

They emerge from the elevator and stroll off with forced casualness. Reo is still trying to get the hang of her high heels. They walk quietly for a moment.

REO
It's nice inside. Safe. Quiet.

MALCOLM
Boring.

REO
Maybe, but's nice not to worry if someone will shoot you in the back.

Another couple passes by. Reo stiffens, half expecting to be caught. They go right on. Reo glances at her dress.

REO

So how do I stack up to insider chicks?

Malcolm eyes her. She looks beautiful.

MALCOLM

Very nicely.

REO

So how's it work. What would we do?
What do people do inside? Couples.

MALCOLM

Let's see... I'd pick you up at home. That
is, unless your father didn't like me,
and most didn't. We might meet at the
mall. Have dinner...

REO

Would people serve us? Like at a table?

MALCOLM

Yeah. And we might go to a party or go
dancing and then...

REO

Then what?

MALCOLM

Go for walk, I'd put my arm around you.
(he does)

Then I'd try to get up the nerve to kiss
you.

REO

Bullshit, you would. If you wanted to,
why not just do it?

Malcolm looks at her, trying to decide whether he should kiss
her. Reo looks in his eyes. Neither know what she would do
if he did. But he hesitates too long and she turns away.

REO

So, Curry. What's the plan?

MALCOLM

The plan. Well, the only way we'll get
Curry is if they bring him to us. We
need something to bargain with.
Something in the shopping mall. It
closes in twenty minutes and she never
leaves until they shut it down.

EXT. SHOPPING MALL - NIGHT

Malcolm and Reo stand by the entrance to the Mall.

MALCOLM

It's bright inside. Someone will recognize me. You'll have to find her. She'll either be at the cappuccino cafe, or more likely at one of the dress shops. Screaming at a clerk.

REO

How will I know what she looks like?

MALCOLM

This is her.

Malcolm points to a poster in the display case. It's a picture of Chrissa, looking sincere and thoughtful. Underneath is a caption: Every night a child goes hungry. Please give generously to the Policeman's Emergency Aid Fund.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - NIGHT

Reo walks through the mall. This time is quite different from her first. Young men smile at her, young women look away, jealous. But all of them accept her presence.

This time she looks at the sights. Shops filled with things, things and more things. Crystal and gold. Silk and wool.

A WOMAN holds a tray out in front of a gourmet food store.

WOMAN

Would you like a free sample?

Reo glances around, it takes her a second to realize the woman is talking to her. She gingerly picks up a skewer of something tasty. She tries it.

WOMAN

Do you like it?

REO

Yeah. That's fucking great.

Reo grabs a dozen more skewers, emptying the plate. She walks off. The woman stares after her. Reo munches happily.

REO

This is the life.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WOMAN'S DRESS SHOP - NIGHT

Reo searches for Chrissa. What's difficult is how many girls look somewhat like her. Blond fluffy hair. Petite bodies.

REO

Blond. Everyone inside is blond.

CHRISSA

Do I look like an eight! I'm a six!
Six! Six! Six!

Reo looks over. There Chrissa is, browbeating a frantic SALESGIRL. The salesgirl finds the right dress and Chrissa drags it off to a dressing room in the back room.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Chrissa enters the dressing room and unzips her dress. Reo slips in behind and whips the .38 up to her head.

REO

Make a sound and I'll blow you away.
We're going to leave together and if you
try anything you're dead.

Chrissa looks at Reo. Then the gun.

CHRISSA

Can I try on the dress first?

Reo cocks the gun. Chrissa pouts.

CHRISSA

Guess not.

EXT. SHOPPING MALL - NIGHT

Chrissa walks out with Reo at her side, gun concealed in her purse. Chrissa spots Malcolm.

CHRISSA

I thought it would be you. Malcolm the
malcontent. Now you're Malcolm the cop
killer. And kidnapper. I always knew
you were scum.

MALCOLM

Shut up and walk.

Chrissa holds her head up proudly and struts off.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Malcolm and Reo lead Chrissa inside and the doors shut.

MALCOLM

Pop in your card.

She obeys. Chrissa gives them both a long look.

CHRISSA

What... are you two going to do to me?

Something indicates that she is intrigued with the deviant possibilities. Malcolm rolls his eyes.

INT. CADE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Chrissa stands before a video telephone. Malcolm has a gun to her head. Reo is behind them. Cade's picture appears on the screen.

CADE

Chrissa, I have work to do, what is...

He catches the picture on his screen. Complete with Malcolm and the gun.

MALCOLM

It's me, Cade. You didn't think I'd go away for good. I have a deal. Your daughter, for Curry Jard.

CADE

No, deals!

MALCOLM

Then you've got a dead daughter. Either's fine with me. I want Curry here in fifteen minutes. And a Tilt Rotor waiting on the roof to take us all out. I want to see him here first. I release Chrissa on the roof.

CADE

I can't do all that in fifteen minutes.

MALCOLM

I'll give you sixteen.

He shuts off the video and lowers the gun. Chrissa eyes him.

CHRISSA

You look good in a suit.

MALCOLM

Shut up.

CHRISSA

You look really sexy right now, all dangerous and in command.

(whispers)

It's making me hot.

MALCOLM

Jeez, you don't quit, do you?

CHRISSA

We've got fifteen minutes. For old times sake...

Reo turns in amazement. Malcolm shakes his head, in disgust.

Chrissa kicks him in the balls. Right on target. Malcolm buckles. She smacks him across the face with the back of her fist. She's no weakling.

Malcolm fumbles the gun. Chrissa rips it from his hands, and then elbows his head. Malcolm falls. Chrissa spins and begins firing wildly in the direction of Reo. Reo leaps behind a couch and rolls, losing her purse and pistol.

Chrissa fires rapidly through the couch, barely missing Reo. As Malcolm stirs, Chrissa spins and aims at him.

Malcolm looks up the barrel. Chrissa pulls the trigger. Click. The slide is back. It's empty.

CHRISSA

Fuuuuck!

She throws the gun at Malcolm's face and he just barely dodges it. Reo leaps up and grabs the back of Chrissa's hair, ripping her head back hard.

CHRISSA

Oww! Don't hurt me!

Reo spins Chrissa around and punches her across the chin knocking her out on the floor. Reo looks at Malcolm.

REO

And you used to date that thing?

EXT. WALKWAY - NIGHT

Cade has a command post set up at the foot of the apartment building. Tilt rotors and police jump bikes fill the sky.

Half a dozen officers drag CURRY JARD, an enormous, vicious looking character up to him, hands cuffed behind his back.

CURRY

I told you they'd get me out, Cade.

CADE

Enjoy this moment while you can, scum. It won't last long. Take him up.

The cops drag Curry to the elevator. A LIEUTENANT approaches.

CADE

Is their tilt rotor ready?

LIEUTENANT

We just finished wiring the explosives.

CADE

And the SWAT team?

LIEUTENANT

Ready to bust in from the apartment next door. One way or another, they're not going anywhere alive.

Cade smiles. He steps over to a portable video phone.

INT. CADE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Cade is on the screen. Malcolm talks to him.

CADE

Curry's on his way up. But you'll have to release the girl before you get him.

MALCOLM

No. On the roof. You release Cade here. I'll release her on the roof. End of deal.

CADE

Now listen you little bastard...

Malcolm fires a couple shots into the video. It dies.

EXT. WALKWAY - NIGHT

The screen goes dead.

LIEUTENANT

Let him release her on the roof. We'll blow them by radio when they take off.

CADE

No. He's no dummy. He's got something planned. But I don't know what.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

FOUR BURLY OFFICERS escort Curry up in the elevator. It stops on the correct floor. The doors open into the hallway of Cade's apartment. An officer unlocks Curry's handcuffs.

OFFICER

I guess this is your lucky day, Jard.

CURRY.

It isn't yours.

With the shocking violent furry, Curry grabs the officer's head and twists it until his neck breaks.

Before the others can move, Curry uses the first officer's body as a projectile to smash other. He then throws himself backwards and crushes another against the glass wall, cracking it. He rips that officer's pistol from his holster and he proceeds to empty it into all the bodies around him.

It's over almost before it began. Curry relieves them of their weapons and tucks them into various pockets.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Curry steps out of the bloody elevator and into the hallway. It's some entrance. Malcolm stares at this creature, he and Reo had the honor of witnessing this vicious display.

But before Malcolm can move, Curry has a gun pointed to his head and is about to shoot him. Reo leaps between them.

REO

No! No! He's with us.

Curry half lowers the pistol. He eyes Malcolm like a badly cooked steak.

CURRY

Why?

REO

He got you out.

MALCOLM

Why did you kill them?! They were going to let you go.

CURRY

Why shouldn't I kill them. Who is this joker?

MALCOLM

You've just invited them in. So much for escaping before they knew. Let's move fast! To the back.

CURRY

I'm not taking orders from you asshole. I'm in charge now.

EXT. WALKWAY - NIGHT

Cade watches from below. An officer runs up.

OFFICER

They attacked the officers in the elevator. Killed them all.

CADE

And my daughter?!

OFFICER

We can't see her through the telescopes. She doesn't appear to be in the room.

CADE

Send in SWAT! Now!

INT. CADE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Malcolm moves to the back of the apartment. Curry paces.

REO

Curry, listen to him. He got you out.

CURRY

I got me out! I don't take orders from anyone. Where is Cade's brat?! There's a tilt on the roof.

MALCOLM

If you would just shut your mouth for half a second, I'll tell you how we're going to get out.

Curry grabs Malcolm by the collar.

CURRY

No body tells me to shut up, you piece of shit!

Curry tosses Malcolm off like a doll. Reo runs to him.

REO

Curry, please. Listen for a moment.

Curry looks at Reo and smiles. He grabs her hard by the back of the neck and kisses her roughly.

CURRY

I missed you Reo, you know what I mean.

He then glances down at Malcolm in a heap on the floor.

CURRY

Alright, jerk, tell me the plan.

Malcolm looks at Reo and shakes his head.

MALCOLM

And you wanted this psychopath out?

CURRY

He's dead.

Curry raises a gun to shoot Malcolm. Malcolm would be dead, but once again all hell busts loose.

The side wall of the apartment explodes. Dozens of SWAT officers burst into the room.

Rather than panic, Curry is in his element, delighting in the sudden turn of events. With a pistol in each hand he blasts away with amazing bravado and precision.

Malcolm and Reo recover from the shock and join him in firing at the SWAT team.

A bullet rips through Reo's shoulder, sending her flying. Malcolm runs to her side.

By now Curry's turned the tables, actually charging the incoming army. One thing this guy is good at: killing.

While Curry fights, Malcolm drags the reeling Reo toward Cade's bedroom. Reo looks after Curry.

REO

Curry... Curry...

This hits Malcolm harder than a bullet would, but he can't refuse her.

MALCOLM

Curry! This way! That's just the first wave. We've got a way out!

Curry now has two of the SWAT team's assault rifles in each hand and he is laying down a deadly stream of fire that is wiping out what remains of his ill fated attackers.

MALCOLM

Curry!

Curry is mopping up the rest who are now fleeing. Malcolm gives up on him and drags the barely conscious Reo into the other room.

Suddenly another wave bursts in from the hallway, apparently having smashed through the elevator, and leaping off of tilt rotors. Curry fires at them, but it is beginning to become obvious, even to him, that this is a no win situation.

He reluctantly retreats after Malcolm.

INT. CADE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Malcolm drags Reo across the bedroom. Curry joins him, shutting the door and locking it. He spins.

CURRY

This is a fucking dead end!

Before Curry can threaten to kill him, which would have happened, Malcolm hits the switch and the wall starts to rise. Curry eyes it. Maybe this kid does know something.

MALCOLM

Toss me a rifle!

Curry hesitates, but then tosses Malcolm one.

Malcolm aims to fire through the glass. He notices with disappointment that his "Fuck you, Cade" message is untouched and therefore hasn't been seen.

He blasts the glass apart with his assault rifle. He throws an end table through it to finish the job. He fires one of Reo's flares out through it.

Bullets suddenly rip through the door. Curry blasts back through it.

There is a ROARING SOUND of jumpbikes. Curry turns to see the gang is hovering right out the window. Malcolm carries Reo to the window and hands her off to Hover Lee.

More bullets rip through what's left of the bedroom door. A grenade blows it apart. Curry fills the now open doorway with a stream of bullets until his magazine is empty. He then fires from his remaining pistol.

Malcolm leaps onto the backseat of Turbo's bike.

MALCOLM

Curry! Come on!

But Curry wants to finish off his magazine. As the slide locks back he runs, leaping out and grabbing hold of a hovering bike. SWAT officers flood the room.

EXT. WALL - NIGHT

The Banshees fly away as SWAT teams futilely fire after them.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

Curry is on the back of Runacre's bike. He's cheering at the top of his lungs. What a great night!

CURRY

YEEAAHHH! Fucking bars can't hold me!

INT. CADE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Cade picks through what's left of his apartment.

OFFICER

We have a patrol in pursuit, but in the darkness they could be anywhere by now.

Cade stops, looks down sadly at a dead officer. He picks up a broken picture of himself next to the body. It becomes clear he is more upset about the picture, than the officer.

CADE

Scum.

ANOTHER OFFICER

Chief! We've found her!

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

An officer unties a sobbing Chrissa as Cade enters.

CHRISSA

Daddy! Look what they did to me!

Cade stares dumbfounded as his pathetic daughter. They shaved her hair into a mohawk.

INT. EYRIE - NIGHT

The gang is back. Curry hops off Runacre's bike excitedly.

CURRY

I must of killed twenty fucking flics back there.

Reo is on Hover Lee's bike, dizzy and weak. Malcolm runs to her and helps her off. Blood covers her dress.

REO

Guess that ruins my party dress.

MALCOLM

Hover Lee! She needs a doctor. She's bleeding to death.

HOVER LEE

Easy, easy. Short Cut's getting one.

REO

Relax, Class, I'm tough.

Reo's tone calms Malcolm and draws Curry's attention. He eyes Malcolm suspiciously. He doesn't like him touching her.

CURRY

Roxie, Mouse, put a dressing on Reo until the knife comes.

Roxie and Mouse take over from Malcolm and go to work, cutting off her dress and wrapping a bandage on her. Curry grabs Malcolm by the back of the jacket and pulls him away.

CURRY

Give them some air.

Malcolm pulls away from Curry defiantly. Curry thinks about hitting him, shooting him, tossing him out the building, but finally just stares at him. Time for all that later.

CURRY

Would somebody tell me who the fuck this jay is? And what the fuck he's doing in my building?

MALCOLM

Man, you sure know how to say thanks.

Roxie looks up from Reo.

ROXIE

He busted you out. He's joined the gang. His flag's Class.

CURRY

Nobody joins unless I okay it and I don't recall okaying it.

TURBO

He's in. We all voted on it, Curry.

Curry walks over to Turbo, the only member big enough to even try to take him on, but still unlikely to win. As Curry's vicious eyes stare at him, Turbo starts to back down.

CURRY

You think you're running this gang now, Turbo? You think you can take me?

TURBO

No... I just said we all voted.

HOVER LEE

Right or wrong. He's a Banshee. You can't take that away. It's the rules.

CURRY

You too, Hover Lee? What the fuck happened to you guys? This jay's no, Banshee. He couldn't wipe his own ass.

HOVER LEE

He took down Shotgun De Lane. And two other Dukes. And he busted you out.

Curry looks around. It's clear that support for Malcolm is strong and growing. Curry decides it's a losing battle. He can get rid of him later.

CURRY

Alright. So he's a Banshee. Put it there, Class.

He holds out a hand. Malcolm takes it. Curry crushes it, looking for a reaction. Malcolm tries to deny it but his eyes register the pain. Curry smiles and lets go.

CURRY

Thanks for busting me out.

Short Cut flies in and lands. On his back is a doctor, ELTON, a tired middle-aged man who obviously could live without some bike-rat dragging him out for a moonlight ride.

CURRY

She's over there, Doc. You can work on her in my room

INT. EYRIE - NIGHT

The rest of the gang is beginning to crash, but Malcolm keeps a vigil up for Reo. He's dressed back in his leathers. Finally ELTON comes out. Malcolm grabs him.

MALCOLM

Is she going to be okay?

ELTON

She'll live to be shot again. Meantime she needs rest. Hover Lee?

Hover Lee approaches. It's clear the doctor thinks he's the only one worth talking too.

ELTON

I was wondering about some food. For the children.

HOVER LEE

We can spare a couple cases of beans.

CURRY

(emerging from his room)
One case. Fuck it was only one bullet.

ELTON

Curry, I've got sick families to feed.

CURRY

Then think about feeding yourself and not wasting what we give you. One case. Be glad I give you anything.

Elton knows he'd better not argue. Curry looks at Malcolm.

CURRY

Class, since you're the new boy, you can play taxi for the doc.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

Malcolm flies Elton home on his jump bike. A case of canned beans is strapped to the back.

ELTON

Down there. In that building.

Malcolm throttles down his iron and begins to land.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

They lands. Elton climbs off and struggles with the case.

MALCOLM

Here, I'll carry it. Where's it going?

Elton looks at him, surprised.

ELTON

You're new, huh? Just joined the gang?

MALCOLM

That obvious?

ELTON

I've never seen one offer to help anyone with anything.

Elton leads them into a doorway of a crumbling building.

INT. SHELTER - NIGHT

Elton leads him down a basement staircase. Inside is a shelter filled with people and efforts have been made to keep it clean and fix it up. Oil burning lamps light the room. Dozens of families sleep in makeshift beds and on the floors.

ELTON

Down here. We have to keep hidden or the police will shut us down.

MALCOLM

You run this place?

ELTON

A few of try. There are so many who need help. It's pretty hopeless.

Malcolm sets the case down on a table. Elton's wife MARY appears, she seems to be suffering from endless fatigue. She looks at Malcolm disgusted.

MARY

What? One lousy case of food. How many of your gang has he saved? Couldn't you help us for a change? Don't you see what's going on down here. Look at all these people..

ELTON

It's not their fault.

MARY

They're as bad as the police. They don't care about anything.

ELTON

(to Malcolm)

Thanks. You'd better go now.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Malcolm flies back, thinking, looking at the wreckage below.

INT. EYRIE - DAY

The next day is overcast and brooding. A cold wind blows through the open girders of the eyrie.

Malcolm works on his bike. Curry approaches him.

CURRY

Not a bad bike. Two thousand. I used to fly one. The Three thousand "ST" is better. Next model. I've got an "ST."

MALCOLM

Lucky you.

CURRY

But the two thousands are kind of rare. Not better, just rarer. They fly a little strange. Hard to operate. Maybe I should trade you my three thousand. You're new to flying an all, it would be safer for you to fly a three thousand.

MALCOLM

I'm kind of used to this one. Thanks.

Curry stares at Malcolm, trying to think up another angle. He can't and it makes him mad.

CURRY

Alright, keep your piece of junk. But don't cry to me when you spin out on a dive and hammer in.

He walks off. Hover Lee leans over and whispers.

HOVER LEE

Would have been a bad trade.

MALCOLM

(sarcastic)

No?

Reo emerges from Curry's room and stretches her feet. Her arm is in a sling.

Malcolm can't help but stare at her. Reo notices and looks away. Curry also notices, and he doesn't like it, not at all. Hover Lee pokes Malcolm in the back with a wrench.

HOVER LEE

Soak that in the grease. Meantime, we'll have a couple beers in my room.

He pokes him again, just to make sure he gets the point. Malcolm nods and tosses the part into a can of grease. They exit toward Hover Lee's suite of rooms.

INT. HOVER LEE'S ROOMS - DAY

Hover Lee's room is filled with weird and wondrous paraphernalia. It's the gang's unofficial museum. Malcolm peruses the photos, nicknacks, and holograms of Banshee life.

Hover Lee gets a couple beers from an old fridge, circa nineteen fifty, but with a high tech ion cooling unit wielded to the top. He hands one to Malcolm who stares at a picture of a teenage Hover Lee sitting at top a Harley motorcycle.

HOVER LEE

That's when it I first joined the gang. Back then we went on wheels. That was before they boxed us in. Before we got our hands on iron that could fly.

MALCOLM

Why'd you name the gang Banshees?

HOVER LEE

Cat Tyan named the gang. She was the first Prez. Must have weighed about five hundred pounds. Meaner than Curry, and that's saying something. But she was a good Prez. Got nailed by the cops trying to stop them from putting up the wall.

Malcolm looks over the pictures, and they sip their beers.

HOVER LEE

Class, I've seen this gang go from wheels to wings, but one thing never changes. You don't hot eye another man's old lady. Specially when he's the Prez. And double when he could fold you up in places where you aren't suppose to bend.

MALCOLM

I'm that obvious, huh?

HOVER LEE

You're just missing drool running from your lips. Better back off. What about Roxie? She likes you. She's great in the sack.

Malcolm notices a thick yellowed hand written document.

MALCOLM

What's this?

HOVER LEE

Original club charter.

Malcolm flips through the dozens of pages. It reads like a congressional budget report written by Ice T.

MALCOLM

For a bunch of freedom loving anarchists you sure have a lot of rules. Why'd you vote Curry as Prez?

HOVER LEE

Didn't. We vote on most things, but not the Prez. The Prez has to be the toughest member of the gang. You can only become Prez by beating the old Prez in the challenge.

MALCOLM

What's that?

HOVER LEE

Paragraph twenty three, section C. Any member of the gang can at any time challenge the Prez to "run the slot."

MALCOLM
(intrigued)
What's "running the slot?"

Hover Lee knows what he's thinking and he doesn't like it.
He pulls the charter away.

HOVER LEE
Something you don't even want to think
about.

INT. EYRIE - SUNSET

The Banshees are listening to music, eating and drinking.
Malcolm still has his eye on Reo and, though he tries to hide
it, Curry can tell. And it's making him madder by the
minute. He stands up and throws his glass across the room.

CURRY
Alright Banshees! Enough sitting on our
asses! Time for payback.

BENNIE
Payback?

CURRY
Diablos. You forget how I got caged?
Let's hit them tonight. Hard.

HOVER LEE
Curry, last time we hit them we lost
Tango, Pete and four good bikes. Now
we've lost Baby Rat, Stace and Reo is out
of commission. We can't take the
Diablos.

CURRY
Yeah, but now we've got Mr. Brains,
killing machine. He can lead us in.

Curry points to Malcolm.

CURRY
You're with us. Right, Class? You're a
fucking Banshee, right? You'll put your
neck on the line for your club.

MALCOLM
If there's a reason.

CURRY
I'll tell you the fucking reason. Right
now some other gang is planning to hit
us. If we don't prove that we're tough,
they'll move on our territory. Like the
Dukes tried.

MALCOLM

Tried. We beat them.

CURRY

That's last week's news.

RUNACRE

Curry's right. Everyone knows we're down a few, if we stop fighting..

MALCOLM

So we hit the Diablos and we lose a few. Then what? He hit the Hammers and lose more? Why don't we do something that makes us stronger, rather than weaker.

CURRY

Like what, Brain?

MALCOLM

Let's hit the port. That's where everything comes in, and goes out. The loading docks you highjack are cheap change. We can get weapons, food, fuel, bikes.

TURBO

He's making a lot of sense, Curry, we could use some more supplies. We're almost out of fuel.

BEANIE

And if we make a big score the other gangs will know. Word spreads..

Curry looks around the room. Once again he senses his gang isn't with him. He gives them a big stupid grin.

CURRY

Great idea, glad I thought of it.

The gang laughs. Curry steps over to Malcolm and towers over him. His friendly grin has frozen into a grimace.

CURRY

We'll go tonight. You can show us the way. Out front.

EXT. PORT OF LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

MONTAGE:

Panicked security forces fire machine guns into the air.

Banshee jump bikes attack, guns smoking. Malcolm is out front, firing wildly.

Guards scatter. Fuel tanks explode. Curry blasts apart one guard after another.

EXT. WRECKAGE - NIGHT

Flames burn everywhere as Malcolm picks through the wreckage. The gang cheerfully loots the dozens of containers on the docks. Malcolm stares pensively at the body of a guard on the ground.

Turbo runs toward Malcolm with a brand new Steyr AUG-P rifle.

TURBO

Look at this, Class. Cases of them, brand new. Fucking cases! Hover Lee's hot wired a tilt rotor container carrier. We're loading it up.

Malcolm nods. Suddenly Turbo chambers a round in the Steyr and aims toward Malcolm. Malcolm flinches, and then realizes Turbo is aiming beyond him.

Malcolm spins and sees the guard on the ground struggling to aim his pistol at Malcolm. A shot rings out.

From Malcolm's face we can tell the guard was hit and it wasn't a pretty sight.

Turbo blows the smoke off his barrel.

TURBO

Ain't she a beauty.

EXT. TILT ROTOR - NIGHT

Curry, Hover Lee and the rest of the gang load up a tilt rotor used to offload shipping containers from ships. As Malcolm and Turbo approach, Bennie calls out to him.

BENNIE

You were right, Class. This our biggest score ever. And the easiest. We should hit this place every week.

MALCOLM

Next time they'll be ready for us. So we'll hit the airport.

Curry glances over at Malcolm, not so happy.

CURRY

We've got enough of this shit. Let's get out of here.

MALCOLM

There's another tilt rotor over there.
Let's take it.

CURRY

We got enough stuff.

MALCOLM

Not for us. Let's take some food for the
doc and his people.

CURRY

Who care about them? Let's go.

MALCOLM

You go. I'll catch up.

Turbo and Roxie approach.

TURBO

I'll help you, Class. It's a good idea.
The doc fixed my arm once.

ROXIE

I'll help out too.

CURRY

Who the fuck do you guys think you are?
Robin Hood?

MALCOLM

Sure, why not?

CURRY

Then fuck you. Don't expect us to help
if you get hit by cops.

Curry jumps on his bike and blasts off. Hover Lee raises the
tilt with the gang's score and flies away. Most of the gang
follows. A couple more stay with Malcolm.

MALCOLM

Let's get to work.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Malcolm's tilt rotor has landed and he and the others unload
food, clothes and heating fuel. Elton watches dumbfounded.

ELTON

But why? I don't understand.

MALCOLM

Don't ask questions. Just get everyone
out to help unload. We need to ditch
this thing far enough away that they
won't come after you.

ELTON

Right. Right.

He runs inside. In seconds, dozens of people, from young children to old women, rush out to unload the goodies. The children quickly find that in some of the boxes are toys.

MALCOLM

Keep moving. You can play with them later. Move!

Mary appears and sees this surprise "Christmas." She crosses to Malcolm, stunned. She gives him a big kiss on the cheek.

MARY

I don't know why you did this, but thank you.

INT. EYRIE - NIGHT

The gang sits around a new bonfire. Turbo is all smiles.

TURBO

You should of seen the looks on their faces. Shit, it could have been raining beer.

Reo, still recuperating, smiles at Malcolm.

REO

That was a nice thing to do.

Curry is annoyed with the conversation.

CURRY

Since when do we share our take with civs?

ROXIE

Wasn't any skin off us. We would have left it. They need it.

CURRY

So you'd had your fun. But tomorrow since we got fuel and new rifles, we'll hit the Diablos.

Malcolm shakes his head in disbelief.

MALCOLM

Why?

CURRY

I've had enough of you!

Curry grabs Malcolm and throws him up against a steel girder. If Malcolm flinches, he would kill him. But Malcolm doesn't flinch. He just looks at Curry defiantly.

TURBO

He's right. What's the point?

Curry lets go of Malcolm and spins on Turbo.

CURRY

What are you, his pussy?

REO

Enough. Let's vote on it. All in favor of hitting..

CURRY

I'M THE FUCKING PREZ! I'll say it! All in favor of kicking the fucking butt of those fucking bean eating Diablos raise your hands.

No one raises a hand. They stare at Curry, a little embarrassed. Finally, Runacre raises hers as a show of support. Curry explodes.

CURRY

Then fuck you all!

Curry goes to his room and slams the door.

RUNACRE

We're going to have to hit the Diablos.

TURBO

Yeah, but let's wait till Reo's better..

MALCOLM

Why hit anyone? We have the power to do something positive. To help people..

TURBO

Listen, Class, tonight was fun and all, but Curry's Prez. If he wants to hit the Diablos then sometime we'll have to hit them. Not tonight, but sometime.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Malcolm walks alone on the roof. He comes upon the ashes of the funeral pyre. Of Baby Rat and Shreeve and countless other Banshee's before them. Reo steps out of the stairwell and approaches behind him.

REO

You want to be alone?

MALCOLM

Why aren't you with Curry?

REO

He's just getting drunk. You really pissed him off back there. You're going to have to be careful...

Malcolm turns and stares at her, depressed.

MALCOLM

I don't know what I'm doing in this gang. I don't know what you're all doing it in. What is the point?

REO

The point? We're Banshees, that's...

MALCOLM

We're Banshees! We're Banshees! All you talk about is how you're Banshees! But it means nothing!

REO

Maybe you don't care about being a Banshee, but it's all I've got! What do you know of nothing!? When I was a little I had nothing. Really nothing. Nothing to live for. Now that I'm a Banshee I have something. Down there with the gang. And inside me. A reason to live. A reason to fight.

MALCOLM

You're fighting against yourself. You've squatted on a rotting spec of land and spend your time killing other people that are doing the same. Meanwhile, on the inside they're planning what to do with this land after you've helped them destroy what's left. Reo, what about the other little girls like you that are still down there? Why not help them? Give them a reason to live.

REO

First you wanted to tell everyone on the inside so they would fix things. But they don't care! Now what do you want us to do? Feed everyone? Attack all the cops? What could we do? They'll never let us change things.

MALCOLM

We could try. We could at least try. That's worth fighting for. Worth dying for. If we don't fight them, then we're helping them.

Reo turns away, frustrated, confused.

MALCOLM

You know I'm right. You know that all of this is going nowhere. Just like you know you don't love Curry.

REO

(painfully)

I do love him.

MALCOLM

You don't. But you're acting like that little girl, tough on the outside, terrified inside. You needed to believe in something, anything, even if it's wrong. He made you feel safe, and you wanted to believe that was love. But you're not a little girl anymore. You're strong enough to take care of yourself. You don't need him. You're better than him.

Reo has a tear in her eye. She wipes it off quickly.

REO

You sure talk good. But it's all words, Class. Just words. I need more than words.

She starts to walk back to the stairwell. As she passes him he grabs her by her good arm and pulls her into an embrace. She looks at him, surprised, waiting for the next step.

But instead of a rough, macho kiss, Malcolm touches her face very gently. He then kisses her softly on the lips. Reo is quite taken by this, the sensitivity of it. It's not what she's used to.

MALCOLM

Three last words. I love you.

Reo grabs the back of Malcolm's head pulls him into a hot long kiss. They kiss so long that when they finally pull out, they are both breathless.

REO

I... love... you.

Hold on their figures from further back, locked together in a timeless silhouette against the city lights beyond. Camera tracks slightly to reveal a shadowed figure watching from the stairwell doorway.

Reverse: it's Runacre, holding a small video camera with an infrared attachment. Home-video circa 2017. She has a big satisfied grin as the tape hums away, getting it all.

Reo and Malcolm hold each other, finally relaxing. It's an amazing relief to be finally holding each other.

REO

I want to fly. I feel trapped here.

MALCOLM

You're can't fly with that arm.

REO

Take me. Take me with you.

Malcolm nods and gives her one last kiss. As they start to move toward her, Runacre disappears down the stairs.

INT. EYRIE - NIGHT

Runacre hides in the shadows as Malcolm and Reo go to his bike. They both hop on and fly away. Runacre smiles and heads for Curry's room.

INT. EYRIE - MORNING

A noisy, monochrome video image fills frame, an infrared night vision shot of Malcolm and Reo talking on the roof. The image breaks up, fast forwarding, then resumes real-time. We see Reo return his kiss, the two of them locked together.

Curry lowers the video cam-corder through which he was watching playback in the eyepiece monitor. His expression is tight and cold. Finally he turns to Runacre, who looks smug.

RUNACRE

She was never good enough for you, Curry.

CURRY

I'm going to kill him.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

Malcolm flies with Reo's head on his shoulder.

MALCOLM

In my dreams, I can fly. I mean me, not on a bike but just me. I guess this is as close as I'll get.

REO

I have dreams like that. But in my dreams I'm an eagle.

MALCOLM

That's why you wear feathers.

REO

I found them in a nest. I'd never kill one of them. I won't let anyone in the gang touch them.

MALCOLM

They have eagles here?

REO

Yeah. They're coming back. They have nests in some of the big deserted buildings, in the girders at the top. I'll take you sometime.

MALCOLM

If we live. We have to tell Curry.

REO

I don't want to talk about it. Let's not spoil this. Let's just fly.

Malcolm agrees. They spin through the sky.

INT. EYRIE - NIGHT

They land, in more ways than one. The second Malcolm's iron touches the ground, they know something is up.

The gang is gathered, looking uncomfortable. Runacre looks like the cat that ate the canary. Curry looks very dangerous. He stands by the eyrie's big screen video system.

Malcolm and Reo slowly approach. It's clear what's taken place. Curry runs the tape, and the machine automatically plays over and over their kiss.

MALCOLM

We know what's on it. So what?

CURRY

So this.

Curry grabs Malcolm by the throat, lifts him off his feet and begins to strangle the life out of him.

REO

No!

Reo runs at Curry and throws herself against him. It's like hitting a tree. Curry flings Malcolm away and backhands her. Reo goes flying.

CURRY

Stay out of this, Reo!

Malcolm lays on the ground, gasping for air. Curry kicks him in the solar plexus with one of his big G.I. boots.

Reo pulls herself up to save Malcolm but Turbo grabs her from behind and pins her.

TURBO

No, Reo, it's between them.

REO

He'll kill him!

TURBO

He's got it coming. You don't mess with a guys woman.

REO

I'm not his woman! He doesn't own me.

Curry kicks Malcolm again, sending him across the floor.

Malcolm rolls onto his feet and desperately stands, struggling to stay alive. As Curry approaches Malcolm punches him in the chest, a couple times. Kind of pointless. Curry slugs him across the face. Malcolm falls.

He lands near Hover Lee and looks up at him, pained. Hover Lee just shakes his head.

HOVER LEE

I warned you, Class. You're on your own.
That's the rules.

Curry grabs Malcolm by the shirt front and lifts him up.

CURRY

Say goodbye, brain.

Curry pulls an arm back to give Malcolm a killing punch. Malcolm screams out.

MALCOLM

I CHALLENGE YOU! I challenge you to run
the slot! I want to be Prez!

CURRY

Fuck you!

He punches Malcolm hard. Malcolm's face starts bleeding. But he keeps yelling.

MALCOLM

I challenge you! What are you afraid of?

CURRY

Not you!

He punches him again. He's about to do it again, when Hover Lee steps forward and stops him.

HOVER LEE
He challenged you, man.

CURRY
Fuck that! He's trying to weasel out.

HOVER LEE
He can challenge you anytime.

TURBO
That's right, Curry. It's the rules.

Curry throws Malcolm off. He lands in a heap.

CURRY
If he wants it. Dawn tomorrow.

Hover Lee helps Malcolm up. He's a mess. Curry laughs as Hover Lee carries him off.

CURRY
You should have quit while you were ahead kid. Before, I was just going to mess you up. Now I'll get to kill you.

Malcolm calls back with bravado. Remarkable since he can barely stand.

MALCOLM
Only if you win, Curry! And I'm going to beat you!

Curry just shakes his head, amused. Malcolm leans over to Hover Lee and whispers.

MALCOLM
What's running the Slot?

As Malcolm is carried off into Hover Lee's room, Curry walks over to Reo, who Turbo releases.

CURRY
Come on.

He reaches for her, but Reo slaps his hand away.

REO
Don't touch me!

She marches off after Malcolm. Curry yells at her.

CURRY
We'll see how you feel after your new boyfriend gets sliced into pieces!

Curry marches off to his room. Runacre runs to him but he roughly pushes her away.

EXT. THE SLOT - DAWN

The Slot is a narrow flood control, about eighteen feet wide, that curves around like a snake, with one long straightaway in the middle. Orange cones are set up about a quarter mile apart on the floor of the canal to mark off the course.

In the predawn light, Malcolm and his iron are on the edge of the canal. Hover Lee helps tape his hands, like a player before a game. He puts on shin guards, shoulder pads, and a kidney belt. Ties a bandana around his forehead to keep the sweat out of his eyes.

HOVER LEE

Remember, leave the bike and you lose.
Pull up out of the Slot and you lose.
Here's your weapons.

He hands him a long axe-handle and a disc-launcher.

HOVER LEE

Only three discs each. Mount up.

As Malcolm steps onto the iron, Hover Lee shows him a pair of cylinders welded to either side of the frame.

MALCOLM

What are those?

HOVER LEE

JATO. Jet Assist Take Off. A little army surplus. I fixed them up for you last night. Hit this toggle switch and get ready for a big kick in the ass. Lasts four seconds. One shot only. Make damn sure you're holdin' on.

Reo walks up and Lee fades back.

REO

You don't have to do this..

MALCOLM

I'm under the impression that I do.

Malcolm checks out his disc-launcher and pulls the cocking lever, fumbling it, not really sure how it works. Reo grabs it out of his hands, cocks it and hands it back.

REO

He's not just playing to win. He's going to kill you.

MALCOLM

He would have killed me before. This way I have a chance.

REO

I could talk to him. I'll talk to him.
Call this whole thing off.

MALCOLM

No. I'm going through with it.

Reo sighs and hands him a beat-up helmet.

REO

Here, use this. It was worn by the last
guy that challenged Curry. He doesn't
need it any more.

Malcolm glances at the dried blood all over one side, then
puts it on.

MALCOLM

You've got a great presidential election
process.

He swings his leg over the bike and kicks the engine to life,
revving the turbine. Reo steps back as he throttles up,
lifting off the ground in a swirling blast of dust.

He vectors the thrust to move forward over the canal, then
drops down and gets into position beside the marker, facing
east down the channel.. toward Curry.

INT. SLOT - MORNING

Curry revs his bike, building up thrust, waiting. He's
riding with no helmet or armor, just his colors-vest over his
bare torso. And a pair of aviator shades. Cocky, confident.

The sun peeks over the concrete skyline. Hover Lee fires a
flare pistol and a streamer of fire leaps into the sky,
exploding into a bright flash high over their heads.

The two bikes launch.

They build speed, moving through the curves toward each
other. Malcolm can't see Curry but he knows he's coming. He
hits the straightaway and the other bike is two hundred feet
in front of him, closing at a combined speed of over ninety.

Malcolm fires first. The razor-edged disc spins toward the
other bike. The shot is wide.

It hits the wall in front of Curry's bike with a loud KCHING!
Ricochets across the channel, passing just behind the Banshee
leader's shoulder, and hits again. KCHING! KCHING! It
zigzags down the channel striking sparks each time it hits
the wall until disappearing around the curve.

Curry fires at twenty feet, an eyeblink before he roars past. His disc slams into the faring inches in front of Malcolm's eyes, skips into the air and punches through the chain-link fence bordering the channel, narrowly missing Turbo and Annabella who are ringside.

A cheer goes up as the two opponents pass.

Malcolm hits reverse thrust and slews, throwing up a curtain of spray from the filthy water at the bottom of the channel. His bike is broadside to the slot as he stops, then pivots and heads back.

Curry makes his turn and starts the run back. The two bikes roar toward each other, the riders raising their weapons.

Reo watches, her expression grim. Her knuckles are white where she grips the chain link fence.

Curry and Malcolm fire simultaneously.

Their discs cross in mid-air in front of them, hitting the walls with a ringing crack, ricocheting off, crossing again.

Malcolm sees the sun glint on razor steel and jinks hard right, slamming the wall, scraping along on his shin-guard and leg-leathers.

The disc slashes through the air where his head was a moment before.

Malcolm's disc is way off, passing under Curry's bike to skip across the muddy bottom of the slot.

Curry dives toward Malcolm as they are about to pass.

Malcolm ducks and slams his bike onto the deck, throwing up a curtain of water. The impact almost throws him over the bars.

Curry passes over him, singeing the back of his neck with his jetwash.

The Banshee leader executes a stylish turn and starts back while Malcolm is still struggling to regain control. He makes a sluggish turn as the other closes, and raises his disc-launcher unsteadily.

He fires too early. It's a wild shot, zinging off the wall beside Curry and clanging off around the bend.

Curry passes without firing, a wolfish grin across his face. He turns and starts for Malcolm, raising the disc-gun, taking his time. Malcolm throws away his empty launcher and slows his bike. He brodies in the muddy water, making a sharp turn away from Curry as the other is about to fire his last disc.

At the last possible moment Malcolm twists full throttle and throws the toggle switch which cuts in the JATO.

Twin columns of blue fire leap from the side-mounted solid-fuel boosters. The back-blast explodes the mud and water behind the bike into a rushing wall of filthy steam which fills the channel, obscuring Malcolm's bike completely. The kid's bike leaps forward as if shot from a catapult, almost pulling his hands off the bars, snapping his head back.

Curry fires reflexively as he hits the wall of spray and his shot goes wild. He punches through the cloud to find Malcolm far ahead of him and still accelerating. He cranks the throttle in pursuit.

The JATO cuts off, completing its burn, and Curry starts to gain, closing up the distance between them. As Curry comes up behind Malcolm he pulls the axe-handle from clips across his handle-bars and swings it around his head.

Malcolm grabs his axe-handle, riding with one hand, with his weight on the pegs like a motocrosser. He bobs and weaves, cutting Curry off as he tries to move up.

Curry slams into the back of his bike. As Malcolm falters, Curry jets up alongside. He unleashes a mighty backhand swing.

It catches Malcolm across the shoulderpads and helmet. He lashes back, but Curry parries, then bores in with a sideways slam, bike to bike, that sends the kid into the wall, scraping leather through to the skin, throwing sparks.

As Malcolm rebounds off the wall, barely flying, Curry swings again. Hard. The axe-handle is jerked right out of Malcolm's hand as he tries to block the hit. It drops behind the bikes.

Curry follows through, cracking the handle down across the wrist of Malcolm's riding hand, tearing it off the handgrip.

Staccato hits... one, two, across the chest and down across the back of the head. Malcolm folds up, totally out of control. Slams the wall. Veers and dips, scraping across the bottom of the channel to slam into the other wall.

He lays the bike down in a fountain of water. And spins to rest, half on and half off the machine.

Curry makes a leisurely turn a hundred feet further on and pulls to a stop. He taps the axe-handle in his palm, then places it back in the clips across the handle-bars.

He revs the bike. Starts forward.

Above, beside the canal, Reo yells to Hover Lee, who holds the flare pistol to signal the end of the duel.

REO
He's lost! Call it off!

HOVER LEE
It's not over. He's still on the bike."

And Malcolm is on the bike, sort of.

He's trying groggily to pull it upright, slipping in the mud, falling back. He revs the engine, blasting mud and water up all around him and the big machine heaves itself up like a gutshot hog and lumbers forward.

Malcolm looks up, blinking, half blinded by blood and muddy water. Curry is howling toward him.

He's crouched over the bars like a predatory animal, his grin transformed into something animalistic and terrifying.

Malcolm hovers in place. He's out of weapons and luck. He takes off his helmet.

Shakes his head, clearing his eyes.

Curry closes the last few yards, straight at him, going to suck him in and spit him out the back through his turbine.

Malcolm hurls the helmet with all he's got and twists the throttle. His bike leaps out of the way as the helmet slams Curry square in the face, flipping him backward.

Curry and his bike slam the ground side by side and tumble in a heap, twisted up together. The bike catches fire. Curry, dazed, struggles weakly to free himself from under the big machine. Burning fuel drips onto him.

Malcolm grounds and jumps off, running to Curry. The Banshee leader sees him coming and grabs for his axe-handle. Malcolm beats him to it.

He jerks it away and drops on Curry, putting his weight on his chest, pushing the axe-handle down with both hands against his throat.

Curry looks into Malcolm's eyes and sees the intensity there. And in this we see confusion. How did this happen? For the first time we see a hint of fear in Curry's face.

MALCOLM
Done?

Malcolm leans on the axe-handle. Curry weakly nods yes.

MALCOLM
Say it! Loud enough for everyone!

CURRY
I give up!

Malcolm tosses the axe away. He drags Curry away from the burning wreckage of the bike.

Burning fuel ignites around the gas-tank and the machine explodes, showering the two warriors with flaming debris.

The other Banshees walk forward from their bikes.

Malcolm half carries the heavy Curry far enough to safety and the two collapse. Malcolm gets to his feet as Reo approaches. She puts an arm on his shoulder and sees that he's basically okay.

REO

I'd better help, Curry.

Malcolm nods and Reo moves toward Curry, who's trying to rise. The man does not look good and she's the last person he wants to see him like this. He throws her off with a strong arm.

CURRY

Don't touch me.

He struggles to stand, painfully... proud. He probably has some broken bones. His hand slides down his right leg, past his knee, clutching his calf. We think he's going to go down again.

But instead he whips up a viscous little .380 auto pistol from a boot holster and aims it at Malcolm's head.

CURRY

I lied, Brain, you'll never beat me.

Malcolm is paralyzed. Curry's going to do it.

Except a thick shank of chain whistles through the air, cracking the gun out of his hand and wrapping around his arm.

Reo hauls on the chain, swinging him into the wall, taking the wind out of him. Curry rebounds, coming off the wall... into a snap kick from Reo's boot right to his groin.

Curry goes down and stays down, barely able to draw breath.

She stares at him for a few seconds, then turns to Hover Lee.

REO

It didn't have to go down like this, Curry. But you wouldn't have it any other way. Hover Lee, what's the rule?

HOVER LEE

Attempted murder of a club member, the new Prez, in fact. Grounds for banishment. Let's vote. All in favor of kicking Curry out of the club.

Hover Lee and Turbo shoot up their hands, quickly followed by most of the gang. Malcolm and Reo slowly raise theirs and finally even Runacre raises her hand.

HOVER LEE

It's unanimous.

Curry stares at them with pure hatred. Turbo steps forward.

TURBO

Your colors.

Curry doesn't say a word as he strips off his vest. He throws it at Malcolm, who catches it before it hits him in the face. Curry limps off, he's a civ now, but something tells us he'll be back.

Malcolm turns the bloody vest in his hands, gazing at the patch blazed across the back, a special version of the Banshees crest with the word PRESIDENT stitched at the top. He tosses it onto the bonfire which used to be Curry's bike, and watches it burn.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EYRIE - NIGHT

The gang is gathered around a bonfire.

BENNIE

... who gives a shit about Civs?

MALCOLM

It's our turf. We should protect them.

SHORT CUT

And the cops?

MALCOLM

We take out the stations. Hit and run.
Burn them faster than they rebuild them.

TURBO

Hover Lee, what do you think.

Hover Lee takes a moment to answer, it's clear he's been thinking about this a lot.

HOVER LEE

Hydroponics.

TURBO

What the fuck?

HOVER LEE

Build farms in the basements.
Underground. Solar generators on the
roof. And there's a hot spring on
Western and Beverly. We could pump fresh
water into some of the old system.

SHORT CUT

Underground farms? How far are we going
to take this?

MALCOLM

As far as we can.

TURBO

Reo, what do you think?

REO

(smiling)

I think it's a great idea.

INT. SHELTER - NIGHT

Elton and Malcolm walk together through the shelter. In the
background the most of the gang are checking things out.

ELTON

We need clothes and blankets.

MALCOLM

Okay.

ELTON

More food, water, cooking implements.

MALCOLM

Alright.

ELTON

Medical supplies.

MALCOLM

Okay.

Elton stops and stares at Malcolm dumbfounded.

ELTON

Where are you going to get all this?

MALCOLM

We steal.

Turbo is harassed by a little TYKE who pulling on his leg.

TURBO

Look, Brat, I am not your fucking mother.

The Tyke stares at him annoyed. He then punches him in the leg. Pretty hard. Turbo is impressed.

TURBO

That's a pretty good punch you got there.

Turbo leans over to the kid.

TURBO

But look here, you want to close your knuckles so your fist is flat...

Reo has a young GIRL on her shoulder as she approaches Malcolm. She smiles and nods. Malcolm smiles back.

EXT. SUNSET TOWER - DAY

Reo and Malcolm have parked their bikes on the mid floor of burned-out high rise tower on Sunset Boulevard at the foot of the Hollywood Hills. Reo gestures above them.

REO

Golden eagles. Their eyrie is up above.

They make their way along the blackened girders.

REO

They hunt out in the hills. The whole area was swept by a firestorm during the riots. Now it's gone back to wild.

They crouch in the burntout structure, watching the sky.

REO

There!

Reo points and Malcolm sees one of the great birds circling patiently over the hills nearby. Soon it returns to the vicinity of its eyrie.

Another one spreads its wings and emerges from the shadows of the girders, swooping down toward the first.

As it joins the other bird, the two of them drive upward with powerful strokes, spiralling around one another in a curious pattern.

They climb and climb, toward the sun. At the top of the climb they clash their wings together in a flurry of feathers and break apart, diving in a full delta tuck toward the ground. Pulling out, they bank together first one direction, then the other, cutting hard-carving turns effortlessly.

Then they climb again, spiraling tightly around one another, to repeat the maneuver.

MALCOLM

What are they doing?

REO

What do you think they're doing?

MALCOLM

Oh.

He smiles and Reo sits crosslegged, shielding her eyes as she watches the birds' graceful precision.

REO

I came here a lot, by myself. I watch them for hours. I've even tried flying with them. It's weird, like they don't mind this loud machine moving up near them while they're gliding around. They're not afraid of us. Maybe they feel a sorry for us, trying so hard, when for them it's so easy.

MALCOLM

What do they do?

REO

They kinda check you out at first, but cool, like this.

She gives a look, over her shoulder, aristocratic and bored.

REO

You can get pretty close to them, fifteen feet, twelve feet. But move in one more foot... they have this line, if you cross it, it's later. Zip, they're gone. Full tuck and dive, you can't follow em.

Malcolm just nods. He's not watching the eagles any more, he's watching her, fascinated.

REO

They're better than us. Purer. They don't fight among themselves, or kill each other. Why should they? They know how big the sky is. And they mate for life, that's better than most of us do. They choose, and then they live by it. You remind me of them. You see clearly, you make a choice and you live by.

MALCOLM

I chose you.

REO

And I choose you.

They kiss.

INT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

At least a cathedral by L.A. standards, a large church in the old style, with huge stained-glass windows. One of the windows has been destroyed and a shaft of late afternoon light streams in.

The shaft of light looks like a spotlight aimed down at the nave, splashing across the altar. There is dust and trash everywhere, but the place still has majesty.

Malcolm and Reo climb the steps to the altar, which is still dressed with its silk draping and various sacramental ornaments. Pools of rainwater cover the floor in places, sending ripples of light pulsing across the stone pillars and walls. It seems an ethereal, mystical place.

Malcolm sweeps the altar with his hand. He leaves only the white cloth, now like a table cloth covering the big marble slab. Reo takes out her switchblade, clicks it open, and sets it in the middle of the cloth.

Malcolm picks it up and gently turns her left hand palm up. He draws the blade slowly across her skin, following her life-line. Blood wells up along the shallow cut, running slowly down her wrist.

He hands the knife to her and she repeats the procedure on the palm of his right hand. Then she sets the blade down on the white silk.

They stand face to face. Malcolm lets the blood flow for a few seconds and then, holding his hand up like he's being sworn in as a witness, he presses his right palm to her left palm. They move them gently against each other, a small circular movement, mixing the two bloods together.

They hold this for a few seconds, saying nothing. A few drops of blood drip onto the cloth on the altar, red on white silk. Then they lower their arms, hands still joined, and move together into a slow, deep kiss.

CATHEDRAL - MONTAGE

Malcolm and Reo sitting on the altar, slowly unbutton and unlace each other's clothes. His jacket and her vest, with their bright red Banshees crests, fall together to the floor.

They are backlit by the light from the shattered stained-glass window. Malcolm runs his fingers over her smooth shoulders, through her long mane of hair, down the small of her back. He bends to kiss the hollow of her neck.

They gaze at each other in their island of light in the gloom. She slowly pulls him down on top of her.

Above the window is a jagged patch of fierce light surrounded by the shards of brilliant colors.

INT. CATHEDRAL - LATER

Malcolm and Reo, dressed again, climb onto their bikes, which are parked in the aisle of the church.

The stillness is blown away by the rising thunder of their jets as they lit off and turn in the air, arcing gracefully in the vast dark church.

With a whoop of wild abandon Malcolm and Reo punch it, roaring down the length of the long chamber, climbing, and shooting through the center blown-out window.

EXT. SKY - EVENING

Outside, they climb into the evening sky, their machine flashing golden as the sun sets. They stand the bikes on their tails, hitting afterburners in a glorious vertical climb... a pure expression of the exultation of flight.

As they thunder skyward Reo spirals around him. He sees it and starts his own corkscrew, a spiral within a spiral.

Like mating eagles.

INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

A starkly plush room. The mayor, Winston, Cade and several other suits are gathered. Winston is screaming.

WINSTON

Burned it down, Cade! Burned it down!
That's the fifth factory! You're suppose
to provide protection from those gangs.

CADE

Fuck your factories. I have my own
problems in the N.S.D. They've hit six
police stations. I need the military
hardware I've requested.

WINSTON

We need to control the area, not burn it
to the ground.

CADE

Why not?! It's time.

WINSTON

Not yet. The public hasn't forgotten the
food riots. If we wait five years...

CADE

Wait! With you it's always wait! No one cares what's happening in the N.S.D.! We could bulldoze it tomorrow and no one would blink an eye!

WINSTON

That's not enough. We need the public to demand that we bulldoze it. If we act too soon...

CADE

If we don't act now, we'll lose the whole area! I have reports that their repairing the public works in some areas. They've got power and water. They're building tunnels and fortifications.

WINSTON

Exactly. This is organized. And so they must have some kind of new leader. All you have to do is cut him down and...

CADE

And what! What leader?!

Winston is silent. He knows. And in that second Cade knows too. He laughs.

CADE

Your brat! Your scummy little brat! He's leading them. He's hitting your factories! Ha!

MAYOR

Who?

WINSTON

(thoughtfully)

I think I know how to handle this.

INT. SHELTER - DAY

The shelter is transformed. Electric lights hang from the ceiling. Plants are everywhere, some in sophisticated hydroponic tanks, some open air. People work on projects: tunnels to other buildings, teaching children, repairing old appliances and equipment. The atmosphere of the place has changed from depressing to warm and hopeful.

Here and there Banshees are integrated into this new world. Hover Lee in particular seems excited to have something challenge his intelligence and skills. He dances among several different projects.

Malcolm is up to his armpits in gook as he uses an electric snake to try to clean out an old pipeline.

MALCOLM
It's useless. This isn't working!

HOVER LEE
(passing by)
Keep at it, but watch out, the water will
come under pressure.

MALCOLM
You must have connected to the wrong
piping system. There isn't any...

Water blasts out of the pipe and shoots in Malcolm's face.
Hover Lee runs up and caps it. Malcolm is drenched.

REO (O.S.)
Class, quick!

INT. SHELTER - DAY

Malcolm comes out of the shelter and finds Reo, pointing into
the sky. Looks like it's raining paper.

Police tilt rotors are blanketing the city with fliers. Reo
hands Malcolm one. It reads.

Malcolm,
We need to talk. We can reach a
compromise. I will meet you on top of
the Western building at sunrise tomorrow.
I will be alone and unarmed.
WINSTON GARRET

Malcolm tosses it away and looks off into the sky.

REO
It's a set up.

MALCOLM
I don't know. If it's on the level it
could help everything. We're almost self
sufficient. If they'd just agree not to
interfere with us... I've got to go.

REO
Then the whole gang is coming with you.

MALCOLM
No, if it is a trap I don't want to lose
you, or the others.

REO
No, way, Class...

MALCOLM

Reo, I've got to take the chance. Don't worry, whatever it is, I'll talk my way out of it. You know I'm good at that.

Reo isn't so sure.

EXT. BUILDING TOP - PRE-DAWN

Malcolm and the rest of the gang have landed on a building top in sight of the Western Building. They are waiting, looking through binoculars.

MALCOLM

Police tilt rotor. Dropping someone off. He's alone.

REO

That doesn't prove anything. It could still be a setup. Anything happens, we're blasting in.

MALCOLM

No. That may be exactly what they want. I'm not risking the whole gang. This is between me and him.

Malcolm gives Reo a hug. She holds him tightly for a moment. Malcolm gets on his bike and flies off.

EXT. WESTERN BUILDING - DAWN

Malcolm lands on the rooftop. He steps off his bike. Winston Garret is nearby, weak in the knees out of nervousness from the height, clinging to a concha.

MALCOLM

Here I am, what do you want?

WINSTON

It is you, isn't it? You're the one that's raiding our factories.

MALCOLM

Freeing prisoners.

WINSTON

Stealing. Attacking police stations. What do you think you are doing? Organizing a class war?

MALCOLM

Your class started it. So what's your deal?

WINSTON

I don't deal with criminals. I leave that to the chief.

Chief Cade steps out from around the building behind Malcolm. He has a pistol raised.

WINSTON

You had such an opportunity, boy. But you threw it away. Now you'll pay.

Almost instantly dozens of cops appear from every nook and cranny. Police Tilt rotors roar up from all around.

EXT. BUILDING TOP - PRE-DAWN

Reo lowers her binoculars.

REO

Fuck! I knew it! I never should have let him go. Let's get him!

HOVER LEE

Reo, they've got the entire police force there. It's suicide.

REO

I'm going.

Turbo grabs her from behind.

TURBO

No. It was his choice. He's going to have to talk himself out, like he said.

EXT. WESTERN BUILDING - DAWN

Winston shakes his head at Malcolm's stupidity.

WINSTON

You really think we would have bargained with you? Your tiny operation is just an annoyance. That's all. And without you it won't be even that.

Cade steps closer and takes aim.

WINSTON

Just get it over with, Chief. I'm sick of looking at him.

CADE

As you wish.

Cade fires. A bullet rips through Winston's forehead. He falls over dead.

Malcolm stares at Cade.

CADE

You don't seem surprised.

MALCOLM

You're very predictable.

CADE

And what I'm going to do next?

MALCOLM

Let me go and blame his murder on me.

CADE

Why not kill you and blame his murder on you?

MALCOLM

I'd already be dead.

Cade laughs.

CADE

I suppose you're right. Now smile for the camera.

One of the police officers is taping Malcolm with a video imagining device.

CADE

The tattoo is perfect. And that lovely scar. It's those realistic touches that are so important to doctoring video.

OFFICER

We've got him.

CADE

Good.

As the officer steps back Cade fires at Malcolm.

A bullet rips through his right leg and as Malcolm screams Cade fires another into his left foot.

Malcolm falls to the ground in agony. Cade steps over and kicks him in the face.

CADE

You smug little punk. I guess you aren't so cocky now. I am going to let you live. Just long enough to see me burn down this shit hole you seem to love so much. I'm going to use your face to get enough military hardware to blow this slum apart block by block. And there isn't a thing you and your gang of slime can do about it.

Cade kicks Malcolm in one of his wounds.

CADE

Goodbye, scum.

Cade exits to a tilt rotor. Some of the other cops drag Winston's body away. They all fly off in the tilt rotors as Malcolm clutches his bloody legs.

EXT. WESTERN BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Malcolm has propped himself up against a vent. A smeared trail of blood leads away from him to the spot he fell.

The Banshees land nearby and Reo runs up to him. Malcolm smiles at her sheepishly.

MALCOLM

See, I talked myself out of it.

Reo slaps him hard across the face. Malcolm is stunned.

REO

You fucking jay! I'm never going to let you out alone again.

She throws her arms around him and holds him tightly, showering him with kisses.

REO

I couldn't live if you died. I couldn't. Never again. You stupid jerk. You stupid stupid jerk.

INT. EYRIE - DAY

Elton is working on Malcolm's legs. Sticking them together.

ELTON

What do you think he meant?

MALCOLM

Exactly what he said. He's going to declare all out war. It was just a question of time anyway.

ELTON

When will it begin.

MALCOLM

I don't know.

ELTON

What can we do?

MALCOLM

I don't know. I really don't know.

INT. VIDEO ROOM - DAY

Cade is watching as a VIDEO OPERATOR plays with Malcolm's image. He pastes Malcolm's face and body on top of the video of Cade shooting Winston and blends it in. He plays it back. It appears as if Malcolm lands and shoots Winston.

CADE

Good. Very good. But now, break it up and make it look like we got it from a camera far away.

INT. VIDEO ARCADE - DAY

The TV screen over the counter is playing a news story.

TV ANNOUNCER

And in this shocking footage from a remote police camera, we see gang leader Malcolm Garret murdering his own father who was desperately trying to negotiate a cease fire in gang related attacks on the outer citizens. Reaction from police officials was swift.

Cade appears before a nodding reporter.

CADE

Winston Garret was a close and dear friend. His only fault was helping a son with sorry history of heavy drug use and violence. It's time to face the fact that these slums are poisoning our own city, our own youth, our entire way of life. I demanded to the mayor's office that he authorize emergency measures to rid this city of the stinking sewer that lies in the heart of it.

REPORT

And what would these measures entail?

CADE

We're going to evacuate the citizens remaining in those areas to shelters in the outer zone and simply destroy, building by building this blot on our community. In the process, if the gang members refuse to come forward, they will be dealt with...

EXT. NOMAD TURF - NIGHT

Moonlight on the empty basin of the L.A. River. The sound of turbojet engines, growing louder, becoming a rolling thunder.

A great dark shadow moves across the broad channel. It passes over the spray-painted words on the concrete bank: THE NOMADS. It covers the words, leaving only inky blackness.

Nearby, the Nomads are partying at their HQ. The stereo is cranked way up. Frenzied dancing, beer and a big bonfire.

The sentries sound an alarm and somebody kills the beat box. They look up at the sound of turbojet engines. Lots of them.

Over a line of buildings a dozen cops on jump bikes appear. Behind them is something else, a massive dark shape rising up into view.

Its black form glints in the moonlight like a bloated beetle, a hundred feet long, forty wide. It is an enormous tilt-rotor aircraft unlike anything we've seen so far, armored and ugly and bristling with weapons.

Spot lights burn down on the amazed Nomads as they scramble for their bikes.

Flanking the juggernaut, rising up on either side, are over two dozen tilt rotors moving forward in a wide pincer formation. Their searchlights come on as well, lighting up the target area bright as day. A maelstrom of swirling dust and debris howls before the advancing line of gunships.

Close on the command ship, we see ball turrets, like those on WW II bombers, swiveling to track targets on the ground. The 'rotors, the bike cops and the command ship all open up simultaneously in a hellfire rain of automatic weapons.

Rocket pods, mounted on stub-wings on either side of the command ship, unleash a fusillade of red streamers which arrow to the ground and explode into fireballs.

We see nothing of the effect on the Nomads, only the ongoing blossoming of flashes and fireballs reflected in the front canopy of the command ship.

Behind the canopy, lit by the hellfire, is Milton Cade, his lips pursed with grim satisfaction.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CITY - DAY

Black smoke blows across the rising sun.

The Banshees walk forward from their grounded bikes into the ruins of the Innocents' HQ.

There is no movement except for low guttering flames and the smoke, which billows and swirls, turning the sky dark.

The place looks like Dresden after the firestorm.

Reo and Malcolm step carefully through the wreckage, staring around, saying nothing. Malcolm's legs are considerably better, but he still is still limping.

Here and there are glimpses of the Innocents' fates. Nothing too graphic... a pair of booted feet emerging from a pile of concrete rubble, a limp hand in the foreground amongst the debris, the club banner, torn and half burned, caught in a tangle of reinforcing rods and flapping in the wind.

MALCOLM

It's begun.

INT. EYRIE - DAY

Malcolm sits stunned. The rest of the gang argues.

REO

We hit them. Before they hit us.

TURBO

We don't have the firepower. Especially with that new thing he's got. We'll be dead in ten minutes.

REO

Better than waiting here for them to come. If we're going to go, lets go out on our terms. Right, Class?

BENNIE

(miserable)

It's over, it's fucking over!

HOVER LEE

We could run. Head for the desert.

REO

We won't get far. They'll hit us the minute we fly by the wall. We have to make our stand here. Right, Class?

Everyone stares at Malcolm, who is staring ahead silently.

REO

What do you think?

MALCOLM

Why did he only hit the Nomads?

REO

They're closest to the city walls. They were first in line.

MALCOLM

But why stop? Why not keep going through the rest of the city?

REO

To get donuts. What does that..

HOVER LEE

They probably had to refuel. Re-arm.

MALCOLM

They couldn't take us all in one night. They were afraid to.

BENNIE

What are you talking about. They could take us and spit out change!

MALCOLM

I don't mean the Banshees. I mean all of us. All the gangs. They aren't sure they beat us all at once. So they're go one at a time. Reo, is it possible to call a meeting of the leaders of the other gangs in the city?

REO

Hasn't been done in years. It can't be just the leaders, because each one will think it's a trap to grab them. They'll have take along the whole gang. You're talking about all the bikes in the city.

MALCOLM

It's the only way.

HOVER LEE

You can't get the gangs to fight together Malcolm. Too many blood feuds. They won't even show up to talk about that.

MALCOLM

What if we tell them we need to meet to divide up the Nomads, turf, since they won't be needing it any more?

HOVER LEE

That'll get them in. It'll have to be after dark. Midnight. Some place big.

EXT. COLISEUM - NIGHT

The Banshees hold the east end of the oval, their bikes grounded in the row below the scoreboard. On a platform behind them are a row of dark forms.

The other gangs arrive, entering over the high walls and thundering down the stands to take up positions around the field. In the darkness all we see are formations of lights moving, pouring down the bleachers from all directions. They form up in groups, leaving the center of the field open.

The thunder of combined engine noise is like no sound on Earth, shaking the ground. It fades away as the bikes are shut down, leaving only wind and the click of cooling metal.

Light appears in the center of the field as three figures ignite torches, placing them on stands. Malcolm, Reo and Hover Lee.

The leaders of each gang, accompanied by a lieutenant or two, walk forward from their respective groups toward the center where the Banshees are standing.

SURGEON, the punked-out leader of the Orphans, steps forward.

Hammer's leader MACE, looking surly, unslings his five pound sledge and hands it to his old lady, then trudges forward with two seconds. Behind him the Hammers stand, clutching their weapons, looking alert and ready for action if something unexpected should come up.

From the ranks of Los Diablos comes HECTOR, snappily dressed and strutting, followed by two vatos. Behind him Los Diablos close ranks, holding their shotguns at casual ready.

Hatch, representing the Rampart Dukes, walks forward alone. He gives Malcolm a nod. It doesn't seem to surprise him that the kid is now Banshee prez.

KENJI 'KAMI' OKADA steps forward from the Ronin, who stand in a perfect line at parade rest. They look sharp in their one-piece racing leathers and kamikaze scarves. Their bikes are all cafe-style Suzukis and Yamahas, faster than greased lightning, and stylish with lots of decals and full-body fairings. Very high-tech. Okada slips his 'katana' samurai sword, with its sheath, out of his belt and lays it on the ground, stepping over it to approach the center of the field. The other Ronin also carry the swords, presumably more for ceremony than anything because they also have lots of assault rifles and machine pistols.

As they all meet in the center their eyes fall on Malcolm.

MACE

So you're the new Banshee prez? What a fucking bunch of losers.

SURGEON

I hear they're building little shelters for civs. Ain't that sweet.

OKADA

You're wasting my time. We claim all Nomad territory east of Broadway.

HECTOR

Fucking try and we'll waste you!

OKADA

It's ours and we will fight for it!

MALCOLM

It doesn't matter.

MACE

(laughing)

If it doesn't matter to you then we'll take your share.

MALCOLM

In a week you'll all be wasted anyway.

That shuts them up for a second.

HECTOR

What are you talking about?

MALCOLM

You think Cade's going to stop with the Nomads? Did you see what he did? He's going to do the same thing, gang by gang, turf by turf.

MACE

Until he hits us and then we'll kick his butt.

MALCOLM

He will kill you in less than an hour.

OKADA

Ronin can protect itself.

MALCOLM

Not against a full strike. You know that. You aren't stupid. He wants to take us out one by one. The only way to stop him is to fight together.

SURGEON

I ain't fighting with no beaners.

HECTOR

Eat my dick!

OKADA

You can all talk, I'm leaving. Ronin fights alone.

MALCOLM

IF WE DON'T FIGHT TOGETHER WE'LL ALL DIE!

He throws his hand up, signalling.

A row of torches are ignited in the shadows where the Banshees are standing. The torches are touched to the dark shapes we saw earlier, which have been doused with gasoline.

Flames whoosh up, engulfing the shapes. Twenty six separate fires.

Twenty six funeral pyres.

They burn in a long line across one end of the Coliseum, lighting up the night.

HATCH

What's all that?

MALCOLM

The Nomads. All of them. That's how we'll all end up. We can't fight eachother anymore. There's only one enemy. Cade.

This seems to be having an effect. But Hector is still unwilling.

HECTOR

We won't fight with Banshees. You people killed my brother. I won't...

Malcolm pulls off his colors.

MALCOLM

I'm not a Banshee anymore. We don't have time for this bullshit. We're all the same. We fight together.

Reo and the everyone else present watch in horror as Malcolm tosses his colors into the fire.

REO

Malcolm! You can't...

MALCOLM

It's bullshit! Bullshit to keep us apart. They want us to fight eachother because they know together we're strong! Reo, burn your colors!

REO

I can't!

MALCOLM

Burn them!

Reo takes a deep breath. It's against everything she's lived for. But she loves Malcolm more than anything. She takes off her colors and throws them into the fire.

Hover Lee follows suit. And Turbo. The other Banshee's do the same, painfully, but unanimously.

HECTOR

You're nuts! You're all nuts! So you think nothing of your gang, but we are a family, we...

He falls off when he spots Hatch stripping off his colors. Hatch looks Malcolm in the eye and tosses them in the fire.

HATCH

I don't want to die. We'll fight with you. Let's get, Cade.

He motions for his gang to do the same. They reluctantly obey.

MALCOLM

Now we're twice as strong.

MACE

Enough, I'm leaving..

MALCOLM

Go ahead, Mace, because the Hammer's turf is next in line. Tomorrow night you'll be up there and then I'll get the other gangs to join. I just hope we'll be able to bet them without you.

Mace stares at Malcolm for a moment. Almost in a daze, he strips off his colors and tosses them in. The Hammers all follow suit.

MALCOLM

Now we're three times as strong. When we win we'll fly right over the wall.

As the momentum builds, it becomes almost impossible to stop. The peer pressure is for once working in the right direction.

The Orphans toss their colors in. And even Ronin.

Hector and the Diablos are last. Hector stomps around, furious, but now afraid not to be a part of this rapidly growing army.

HECTOR

You're fucking nuts!

He strips off his colors and tosses them in.

Malcolm puts out a hand. Hatch lays his on top. Then Mace, Surgeon, Okada and finally Hector.

HECTOR

Nuts!

INT. EYRIE - DAY

At Banshee HQ the preparations for battle are under way. The place is a hive of activity.

Quick cuts as they gird up for the confrontation: Engines are tuned, revving aggressively. Weapons are field-stripped, cleaned and checked... Shotguns, pistols, assault rifles, disc-guns, grenades, tire irons, bolos, nets, axe-handles, knives.

Hover Lee is constructing some kind of bomb. Bennie watches.

BENNIE

What's that?

HOVER LEE

Home made fuel air bomb. First charge goes off and fills the air with gasoline. Second detonator ignites the gas air mixture.

BENNIE

Big explosion?

HOVER LEE

You don't want to be too close.

As the time grows near, the warriors draw on their boots and leathers, zipping and lacing methodically. Kevlar ballistic body-armor is strapped on by some.

Malcolm and Reo are suiting up near their bikes. Malcolm checks his machine thoroughly, including the twin JATO boosters, which Hover Lee has repacked. Malcolm is wearing a communications headset, which he tests next. We notice that most of the other Banshees are wearing them as well.

He hands one to Reo.

MALCOLM

Welcome to modern military communications. Wear a armor vest too.

He hands her a vest. She takes the thing from him, looks at it, looks at him.

REO

No, those things are bad luck.

She throws the vest on the ground.

EXT. EYRIE - DUSK

The Banshees take off into the blood red sky, their chrome gleaming like cold fire. They rise and peel over, arcing down across the broad canyon between high-rises and taking up their positions in a perfect delta formation, with Malcom and Reo at the head of the V.

At this moment they somehow transcend themselves, becoming no longer just a gang in a squalid urban graveyard but, as if from legend, proud warriors flying through an Olympian landscape of mirrored cliffs... the ride of the Valkyries.

As they thunder along, silhouetted against the horizon, the music rises to a heroic crescendo.

EXT. L.A.P.D. AIR OPERATIONS - EVENING

On the flight-line the 'rotors are lined up, being fueled. Pilots, gunners and bike cops move about with purpose, their black jumpsuits gleaming under the florescences.

In the background, Cade's flagship broods over the scene.

INT. FLIGHT OPERATIONS ROOM - EVENING

Cade is in the flight operations room, wearing a flightsuit over his shirt and tie. He watches as a recruit points out gang territories on a map of the city. To our amazement... it's Curry Jard, practically looking like a school boy in a tidy police uniform and clean shaven with a crew cut. The months have certainly changed him.

CURRY

Banshee headquarters are right there.

CADE

And this?

CURRY

Hammer's. Headquarters right there. But we should hit the Banshees this time.

CADE

I didn't recruit you for your piss filled brains, Jard. Answer my questions and kill the people I point at, get it?

CURRY

Yes, sir.

CADE

We're hitting the Banshees last.

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

From far off comes the sound of turbojet engines. It builds quickly to a rolling thunder.

Over the top of the great wall of the city comes Cade's armada. Dozens of tilt-rotors and bikes spread out in a line right across the sky. It looks like Apocalypse Now.

It's a nightmare of flashing red and blue lights and xenon searchlights slashing the night. Cade's military command ship, its engines thundering, lifts up from behind a row of buildings ahead, black and terrifying.

EXT. HAMMER'S HQ - NIGHT

The Hammer's headquarters are somewhat similar to the Banshee's. Located in the once revolving dinning room of the the Holiday Inn in Hollywood.

Cade's air force quickly surrounds on the building.

INT. COMMAND SHIP - NIGHT

Cade watches with approval as his pilot brings them closer.

PILOT

Look's pretty quiet.

CADE

Let's wake them up.

EXT. HAMMER'S HQ - NIGHT

Given the word, the police force begins to fire into the headquarters. Within seconds they've ripped it apart.

Silence falls.

Curry is on his own jump bike with the other police bikes. He radios in.

CURRY

Nothing has stirred. We might have killed them all or maybe they're out.

CADE (O.S.)

Then check it out you moron!

CURRY

Yes, sir.

EXT. HAMMER'S HQ - NIGHT

Curry lands his jump bike inside with a dozen other officers. Tilt rotors hover near by. Curry picks his way through, looking for bodies.

EXT. ROOF OF EGYPTIAN THEATER - NIGHT

Malcolm, Reo, Hover Lee, Surgeon, Hatch, Okada, Mace and Hector watch from on the roof of the Egyptian Theater.

MACE

You were fucking right. They went for us.

MALCOLM

He's predictable.

HOVER LEE

I wish they'd fly that command ship closer. It's going to be a bitch to take her down.

MALCOLM

In a second they're going to figure out
it's empty. Better take out what we can.

HOVER LEE

You're the boss.

INT. HAMMER'S HQ - NIGHT

Curry kicks through the rubble.

CURRY

There's nothing here. Someone tipped
them off.

Another officer notices a low series of cylinders with a box
wired to them. The box is blinking.

OFFICER

Hey, there's a... !

BOOM. The blast rips through the room. Curry falls to the
ground. Mist fills the room and rains down on him.

CADE (O.S.)

What in hell was that?

CURRY

I'm okay! I'm okay!

CADE (O.S.)

I don't give a shit! What happened?

Curry notices that the mist covering him smells funny.

CURRY

Gas...

BOOM. BIG BIG BIG BOOM.

EXT. HAMMER'S HQ - NIGHT

A good fuel air bomb is almost as effective as an atomic
bomb. Hover Lee's homemade concoction isn't nearly that
effective, but it's more than enough to blast the entire top
of building to smithereens.

The fireball's first shockwaves and flames take out most of
Cade's armada. Jump bikes are eaten up in fire and the tilt
rotors spin out of control.

INT. COMMAND SHIP - NIGHT

Cade's ship rocks from the blast.

CADE
What in Christ?

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

But the gunship quickly stabilizes, completely unhurt. The surviving tilt rotors and jump bikes scramble to regroup.

Before they even have a chance to realize what's happening, the sky is suddenly filled with a new sound.

The sound of a hundred souped up jump bikes attacking.

Malcolm and Reo are in the front, the rest of the gangs are blasting along with them. All are screaming warcries that would make Geronimo proud.

What follows is Armageddon. Streamers of rocket-trails and tracer fire crisscross the darkness, punctuated with explosions. Machines and men arc, dive, and spin through the urban maze in a hightech frenzy of aerial combat.

In the first few minutes the gangs take out another fourth of Cade's entire fighting force. With the element of surprise they slice and dice most of the jump bikes and take out several tilt rotors.

INT. COMMAND SHIP - NIGHT

Cade is screaming.

CADE
Fire! Fire you morons!

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

Cade's warship spews pure death. The gun turrets are ablaze and rockets burst out. Several gang bikes are hit.

With the help of this death machine, Cade's forces recover.

Rising slowly, the command ship glides, blocking out the moon. Its searchlights pick out targets in the skirmishes below and its turret gunners surgically pick them off.

INT. COMMAND SHIP - NIGHT

Cade is smiling.

CADE
There we go. This is real power.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

Kami Okada leads a charge of Orphans and Ronin at Cade's ship but they are driven back by the hellacious fire from its guns. Ronin and Orphans bikes tumble flaming from the sky.

Malcolm's shot gun easily takes out a cop on a jump bike. But it's becoming obvious to him that the real problem is Cade's ship. And he has no solution.

Gang member's are throwing everything they have at it, and just getting killed in the process. It seems undefeatable.

Malcolm watches breathless as Reo decides to make a charge. She blasts forward at it, emptying her disc gun at the turrets. The discs spin off harmlessly.

But the machine guns on the ship have better luck firing at her. Several rounds rip into her bike and a fire breaks out on her engine. She starts to go down.

Malcolm roars after her. He can't make it in time. He's too far away. She's going straight for the ground.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

At the last minute Reo manages to get control of her bike and avoid an all out crash. She vectors the jets to soften the landing and hits with a hard thud but at least not a boom.

She's thrown off the bike and tumbles across the pavement. Like a cat she ends up on her feet.

Malcolm roars up to her to see if she's alright. She is pretty much on the outside, but inside she's about to have her heart ripped out. She watches in horror as...

Her beautiful iron blows. Total takeout.

REO

NO!

Malcolm looks up above. The battle isn't going well. It's clear that Cade's gunship needed the escort only for show. It can handle just about anything on it's own.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

Roxie and Turbo fire wildly at it with an assault rifles.

A gunturret spins and gets Roxie in its sights. Turbo tosses a grenade at it.

Boom. No good. The turret fires. Bullets rip up through Roxie's body. She spins out and hammers in.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Malcolm watches helplessly.

TURBO (O.S.)

The fuckers got Roxie!

MALCOLM

Everyone, retreat. We'll regroup.
There's no stopping that thing.

TURRO (O.S.)

Fuck retreat! I'm going to take that
sucker out personally.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

Turbo is flying like a bat out of hell. He grabs grenades in both hands and pulls the pins. With a banzai scream he blasts straight toward Cade's gunship and tears into it at a hundred miles an hour.

The explosion rains debris for two blocks.

But when it's over Cade's gunship is still very much intact. One of the turrets is cracked. But that's pretty much it.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Malcolm watches helplessly.

MALCOLM

Everyone, get the hell out of there.
Scatter! We'll regroup later. No point
in getting killed.

He watches as his army scatters to the wind. Cade's few remaining jump bikes and tilt rotor's give chase. The gunship slowly continues on, hunting down targets.

Reo steps up to Malcolm

REO

We can't lose this.

Malcolm nods.

REO

It's you and me, ace. We have to do it.
Somehow.

Malcolm nods slowly, staring up at the monster ship.

REO

Hold on. I got an idea.

Reo runs to the crumpled wreckage of a downed tilt-rotor.

Reo rummages through the 'rotor's equipment boxes until she finds what she's looking for. She loads up her jacket pockets with tear gas cannisters. She jumps on the back of Malcolm's bike.

REO

Let's rock.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

They are airborne seconds later, chasing after the gunship, like a Chihuahua after a Rottweiler.

REO

Just get me close enough to fire one of these inside.

MALCOLM

Fire through what?

REO

Oh, and punch a hole in it too.

MALCOLM

Sure. Simple. Guns and grenades don't work. I'll use my fist.

The gunship fires a blast of machine gun fire. Runacre is hit. She goes down in flames.

Malcolm and Reo swallow, but continue on their mad mission.

INT. COMMAND SHIP - NIGHT

Cade is clearly enjoying the calmer fox hunt this has become. He zooms one of his powerful night-vision scopes in on the two Banshees approaching.

Their faces fill the CRT screen, blurry but bright and clearly recognizable. Cade's mouth tightens in that scary little smile of cold satisfaction as he recognizes Malcom.

CADE

I want those two. Stay on them no matter what they do. Fire the rockets.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

Malcolm and Reo blast onward. The gunship is getting bigger. Tracer fire is everywhere. God damn that thing is big!

MALCOLM

I'm chickening.

REO

Thank god! Me to. Let's run.

Malcom spins the bike and kicks into gear just barely in time. The rocket pods on Cade's ship launch a brace of air-to-air right at them.

He cuts and runs as the rockets explode around him, buffeting the bike. He dives for cover down a narrow side alley, sixty feet off the deck and accelerating on full afterburner.

Hellfire blasts into the alley mouth behind them. Looking up he sees the black ship cut across the gap of sky and turn with a scream of turbines to follow above them.

There follows a chase so intense it makes the previous action seem soft. Like a juggernaut the big VTOL stays with them no matter how Malcom twists and turns.

He flies low, between the buildings, turning, cutting back, but Cade's machine pursues relentlessly.

It cuts across the tops of the high-rises, its searchlights slashing down mercilessly, probing, catching sight of the fleeing bike and losing it, then catching it again.

And all the while the gunners are trying to hit them. Malcom flies through a shitstorm of hits, explosions, fire.

EXT. L.A. RIVER - NIGHT

They howl down the bed of the L.A. River, zigging and zagging radically to avoid hits.

The big ship drops in behind them, its nose down, picking up speed. It blasts up a tornado of water spray behind it as it hugs down, just above the deck.

INT. COMMAND SHIP - NIGHT

Cade is like Ahab after the white whale.

CADE

Stay on them!

EXT. L.A. RIVER - NIGHT

Malcom punches under a bridge, through the pillars, then shoots through another. Cade's ship heaves up, clearing the bridges and drops back in behind them, firing.

MALCOLM

I'm gonna try something! Hold on tight!

He pulls his machine into a sharp vertical climb, hitting full afterburner, then hits the toggle switch for the JATO booster.

Standing on its tail the bike vaults skyward like a missile, a column of fire thirty feet long blasting out behind it.

Cade's turret gunners swivel to track it and can't as the big machine thunders up after Malcolm.

Malcom loops over and twists upright, flying straight and level and very damn fast as the black ship rolls out behind him. He looks back and sees Cade's flagship still with him. Rocket trails whip past them, one on each side, much too close.

He noses into a gut wrenching power dive straight down. The concrete maze of the city rushes up into their faces.

He pulls out and tears across the deck. The black ship roars down behind them.

Another series of bridges ahead. Malcom can go under but the big ship can't.

He dives into the shadows under the overpasses as Cade's pilot pulls pitch and vaults his ship over the obstacles.

The instant Malcom disappears from their sight under the bridge he pulls his airbrakes in full and slams reverse-thrust. He and Reo are thrown forward by the intense deceleration as his bike screams to a stop

He hits the throttle again and jumps up between the two bridges into the tail vortex of Cade's command ship.

When Cade's pilot sees that Malcom hasn't emerged as expected from under the bridge he slows to make a turn back, but Malcom is already riding right up his tail pipe.

The top turret gunner sees the bike coming over the tail of the ship and tries to turn around but there isn't time.

He ducks at the last instant.

Malcom slams his skid-plate into the turret canopy that Turbo already cracked. It smashes it open like an egg. He hits the brakes and the bike comes to rest on top of the black ship's broad back.

The flagship is moving very slowly, scanning with its searchlights for the bike they think is lying beneath them, so it actually presents a fairly stable platform, at least for the moment.

Reo leaps off the bike, and quickly tosses grenades through the hole in the canopy...one, two, three, in quick succession.

INT. COMMAND SHIP - NIGHT

Inside, the effect is devastating.

Just as Cade is realizing what's going on, the cannisters fill the entire central passageway and flight deck with gas. It gets so thick in just a few seconds, and is so rapidly debilitating, that the crew can't even find their own gas masks.

Cade rips one out of a locker for the pilot and dons one himself. The flight deck is so full of smoke that the pilot can't see diddly. At the last second he realizes that his forward drift has taken him toward some nearby apartment buildings.

A wall looms right in front of him and he has no time to correct. Everyone is slammed forward as the command ship tears a corner off the building, ripping open its fuselage.

CADE

Hold it steady, goddamit.

He opens a locker and takes out two nasty little Beretta machine-pistols, handing one to his left-forward gunner.

CADE

Come with me.

He starts unlatching the overhead service hatch behind the cockpit. The pilot meanwhile knows he can't land on these uneven roof tops, even if he could see anything, and is going for altitude, applying power to rise straight up... Trying to void any more buildings that might be around.

EXT. COMMAND SHIP - NIGHT

On the ship's broad back, Reo and Malcom have been tossed around by the collision. They can see the gunship rising and drifting toward another tower nearby.

They don't see Cade and the gunner coming out of the front hatch because the forward gun turret nacelle blocks it from their view. Cade gets to cover, stalking them across the top of an aircraft flying three hundred feet above the city.

Reo gets an idea.

REO

Help me.

She goes over to the shattered gun turret and pulls at one of the fifty caliber machine guns that is now loose. Malcolm runs to her aid and they drag it onto the surface.

REO

In there.

MALCOLM

Good idea!

Between the two of them they toss it into the big intake cowl of the left-front turbine rotor.

They leap away as the turbine lets out a godawful shriek and comes apart in an explosion of shrapnel.

The ship lurches radically, heeling over hard to that side. Cade is slammed sideways just as he is about to fire and his first burst goes wild.

Reo, scrambling for a hand-hold, hears the shots and spots Cade. The pilot fights for control as the ship slews, its nose dropping. It picks up forward speed and slams head-on into the radio mast on top of an office building.

INT. COMMAND SHIP - NIGHT

The collision caves in the nose of the ship, reducing the cockpit to junk. The pilot unbuckles and scrambles out of his seat, diving into the passageway and yelling to the remaining crew.

PILOT

Everyone out!

EXT. COMMAND SHIP - NIGHT

The force of the impact has thrown Cade's sidekick, the gunner, clean off the top of the fuselage. He falls about twenty five feet, the thickness of the ship, to the roof of the office building which is just underneath.

He lands in a pile of trash and rolls aside as the command ship scrapes across the rooftop, tearing off anything which projects upwards.

The ruined engine pod is engulfed in flames, which are spreading to the fuselage.

The side loading-door slides open and the crew leap out, making it to the rooftop below. The command ship roars on, an out of control engine grinding its way blindly forward.

Reo makes it to the bike and powers it up, lifting off a couple of feet. She yells to Malcom as she moves toward him.

REO

Let's book!

Cade lurches around the turret nacelle and unleashes a burst from the Beretta. The nine millimeter slugs rake the side of the bike just as Malcom reaches it.

It crunches down, slamming the black hull. It skids past the point of no return and slides off the fuselage, tumbling to the roof below.

Reo has rolled clear, and struggles to her feet, clutching her leg. There's blood there, one hit at least, maybe two.

Cade raises the pistol.

Reo raises her eyes, filled with pain, seeing him. Malcom watches the gun come up in slow motion. Sees the fire, hears the concussion, all in slow motion. Reo takes the entire burst in the chest.

It rips open her jacket, and catapults her backward through the air, arms flung wide... like wings, like she can fly... and she does fly.

Backward and down, off the curving back of the ship, disappearing from view.

MALCOLM

NOOOOOO!

The ship grinds over the edge of the building, into open space. It lurches and drops, slewing radically. Cade is thrown down and struggles for a handhold with his free hand.

Malcom gets a single quick glimpse of Reo's body, spreadeagled on the rooftop as they pull away.

He staggers up with a surge of energy fueled by rage. He runs along the lurching hull to Cade, who is struggling to raise the machine pistol again.

Malcom viciously kicks the piece out of Cade's hand as the other is coming up. Cade lashes out and the fight is on.

The two fight for position and balance on the heaving hull. The entire left side of the ship is on fire.

Cade grapples with Malcom, trying to hurl him over the edge. He almost succeeds.

They reel across the deck and Cade flings Malcom bodily across the curving hull. Malcolm slides almost to the intake of the right front engine.

Cade sets upon him, trying to force him backward into the maw of the turbine intake. The rush of air past them is awesome, threatening to suck them both in.

By force of will Malcom hurls Cade off him and rolls away. Cade struggles to rise just as the forward fuel tanks by the burning engine explode.

The ship heaves up and tilts over. Cade is tossed backward, sliding, toward the big howling jet intake. He slides over the hull, down the curving lip of the maw, caught irrevocably by the vortex.

Desperately he clings to a projection on the hull as his feet are drawn close to the spinning blades.

His eyes come up, meeting Malcolm's.

Pleading. One human to another at the brink of the pit. Malcolm's hand reaches out, instinctively..

Then slowly draws back.

Cade's grip fails and he vanishes into the howling maw.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

The black ship thunders through the space between buildings, twenty stories above the street. Its course is aimless.

EXT. COMMAND SHIP - NIGHT

Malcom is driven back by the flames, which have engulfed almost two thirds of the massive gunship.

It drifts toward a structure, one of many unfinished high-rises in the dying city.

Malcom gauges the distance as the VTOL ship drifts alongside. It will pass closest at the corner.

He sprints the width of the ship's back and leaps, flying over open space.

EXT. HIGH RISE - NIGHT

He clears the edge of the nearest floor, tumbles and rolls. He comes up, covered with plaster dust, and goes to the edge.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

The command ship looks like the Hindenburg as it moves away.

Another auxiliary fuel tank explodes and the ship drops in a slow deathspiral. It slams into a nearby building and explodes... main fuel tank, ordnance, the works.

The streets are lit up orange for six blocks in all directions by Cade's funeral pyre.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Malcom walks out onto the street from the unfinished office building.

The night is suddenly quiet as Malcom walks along the street. He hears only the blowing of the wind and the distant whooping of some bikers on a rooftop. Some bikes can be heard, several blocks away. We hear distant voices shouting.

VOICE

Cade's dead! His ship went down!

Malcolm's features are blank as he walks.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Reo lies on the rooftop as Malcolm emerges from the stairwell and crosses to her motionless form. He kneels beside her, extending his hands, taking her by the shoulders and gently turning her over.

Her head lolls back limply as he takes her up in his arms. Her face is unmarked, peaceful, her eyes closed. Malcolm's eyes burn with tears he can't stop.

They spill over and run down his cheeks.

He crouches over her, crying quietly and rocking her a little in his arms. His sobs are almost silent, wracking his body with little tremors.

Reo's eyes flutter open.

REO

What's the matter? You cryin'? What's going on?

Malcom gapes at her. He looks down at the front of her jacket. No blood. He pulls it open... revealing the Kevlar vest. It's churned up by the five flattened rounds lodged there, but none of them made it through.

MALCOLM

You wore it. I thought you were...

REO

Yeah, well I told you... I'm tough.

A wave of exultation passes over him. He grins like a moron. They pull toward each other into a long deep kiss, which Reo finally has to break.

REO

Ow, watch the leg. I wasn't wearin' no bulletproof vest on my leg, you know. Jeez, Malcom.

He helps her up and she limps with him, supporting her weight on his shoulder and her good leg to the edge of the roof.

They look out together across the city.

Fires burn here and there in the aftermath of the battle. They hear bikes moving, several blocks away, and the whoops and laughter of the victorious gang members down on the street and on the roofs of other buildings.

Other than that, it's quiet.

REO

Now what?

MALCOLM

Time to visit my old home.

EXT. WALKWAY - MORNING

Inside everything is peaceful as usual. Well dressed people are walking to work.

We recognize a distant sound, even if the insiders don't. A thunderous roar that soon becomes the high pitched turbine scream we know so well.

In the sky, Malcolm and Reo, on separate bikes, are leading the combined force of Banshees, Orphans, Hammers, Ronin, Dukes, and Diablos over the wall and into the secured district.

The downblast from their lifting-jets whips up a whirlwind around them, swirling debris like a hurricane, whipping their hair, making them look wild.

Cade's remaining security officers don't know what to do. Their Chief went off into the night with all his top men and nothing's been heard since. In the absence of orders and in the face of overwhelming odds, they do the wise thing: nothing.

They roar through the parkways, ripping up shrubbery as they pass, and head straight for city hall.

As they reach the steps, a frightened Mayor comes out with several sheepish looking officers.

Malcolm dismounts, as do Reo, Hover Lee and the other gang leaders. They march right up the steps and Malcolm stares down the Mayor.

MAYOR

Where is Chief Cade?

MALCOLM

Where he belongs. In hell.

The Mayor looks around, troubled. His men are hopelessly outnumbered.

MAJOR

What is it that you want from us?

Malcolm looks at him coolly.

MALCOLM

Nothing. We can take care of ourselves. Just leave us alone. The outer zone is our territory now. If you don't bother us we won't bother you. But if it happens again we won't be so nice.

The Mayor quickly nods in agreement.

MALCOLM

Be thankful that we don't burn this city down.

The Mayor stares at Malcolm and then says sincerely.

MAYOR

Thank you.

Malcolm and Reo go back to their bikes. All the gangs rev up their engines and they fly away.

FADE OUT:

THE END





