SPEED RACER

by

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1st Draft
1-4-07

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY - PAST

A battered sneaker tattooed with doodles of speeding cars and checkered flags and the words "Start Your Engines!" Beats up and down, a sewing machine needle of anxious, restless, adolescent energy.

A pencil fills in the oval of a standardized test form, then hesitates, twitching with the speed of a humming bird wing caught between two fingers, then is quickly erased as a different answer is chosen.

The form sheet is filled with smudges of uncertainty.

A ten year old boy stares at the next question.

TEST QUESTION

Grace buys a bag of 240 jellybeans. There are 35 yellow ones, 52 red ones, 63 green ones, 26 white ones, 41 blue ones and 40 black ones. If Grace wants to eat one of each while keeping her eyes closed, what is the minimum number she will have to eat?

His mouth tries to makes sense of the question but it's not working.

He looks around at the other students quietly, diligently filling in their ovals while he fidgets, his leg beating, his pencil fluttering, a pot jiggling its lid, about to boil over.

He reads the question again. Greek. Chinese. Meaningless.

He looks up at the clock. The second hand sweeps towards the 12. Then back at the test.

Something suddenly clicks.

He stares at the clock, pencil poised, waiting until the second hand hits the 12 and he's off-

Filling in the ovals faster than it seems he could possibly be reading the questions.

INT. TEACHER'S OFFICE - DAY - PAST

Mrs. Racer sits across the desk from Speed's teacher.

MOM

Distracted

CONTINUED:

TEACHER
No, that's not exactly right. Your son seems to be interested in only one thing.

Mom knows what's coming.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
All he talks about, all he seems capable of thinking about is automobile racing.

MOM
Well you know, his father designs racing cars.

TEACHER
And where is your husband?

MOM
He's...working. He couldn't make it.

TEACHER
Perhaps the apple hasn't fallen very far from the tree.

Mom is uncomfortable with that truth while the Teacher glances back to her records.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
Is your husband's name Rex?

MOM
No, Rex is his older brother. Why?

TEACHER
This is the test he turned in last week.

She holds up the Scantron test that Speed was working on. The bottom half of the ovals are filled in to spell out: "GO REX GO!"

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY - PAST

Speed has finished filling in the test and is now drawing pictures in the corner of the test booklet.

He is drawing little race cars. He flips a few of the pages and we see a quick moment of his animation as two cars collide.

CONTINUED:

He continues to draw as the background of the classroom fades to white behind him, becoming the black corner that he is drawing on.

We watch the race going on in his head as hand-drawn cars battle each other heading for a photo-finish. Speed makes the car noise himself including the jumping sound as two cars try to block the Mach 5, smashing into one another as --

The Mach 5 jumps over and through the fiery crash, crossing the finish line still in the air.

Speed is lost in slow-motion revelry, making the sound of the roaring crowd.

The teacher hears him and looks up, frowning as she sees him lost in his fantasy world.

A little girl with a pink barrette also hears him turning to watch him, a smile creeping across her face; there is no one in the entire school like him.

The teacher is about to say something when the bell rings.

Speed snaps out of his fantasy and leaps up, in motion before anyone else.

TEACHER
Alright, pencils down, bring your tests--

Thwack! Speed slaps his down and is already heading for the door.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
--to my desk.

Bam! The door slams open and Speed shoots out.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
Speed Racer, slow down!

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Speed slides down the railing on his butt, a perpetual motion machine as he scans the street, smiling as he sees-

Across the street, leaning against his hot rod, his big brother, Rex Racer.

CONTINUED:

He pauses crossing the street letting two impossibly cool cars pass by.

Here we begin to see the unique and individualized nature of the automobile in the world of Speed Racer. In this world, the grocery store parking lot looks like a car collector show; vintage and concept cars are as ubiquitous as the Camry is in our world.

Speed dashes across the street, a tight parabolic arc around the car, his little head sticking up like a shark fin circling until--

The car door pops open and snaps shut.

The seat-belt clicks into place before Rex even has a chance to move. He leans over and looks in the window.

Speed smiles.

REX
...I take it you're ready to go?

Speed nods. Rex climbs in beside him.

REX (CONT'D)
So, who was school?

YOUNG SPEED
Fine. Are you going to the track? Mom said you were. You don't have to drop me off, I could just go with you.

REX
No way.

He starts the car and roadster growls to life.

YOUNG SPEED
Oh, come on, take me with you. Come on, please.

REX
I can't, Speed. Pops would kill me.

YOUNG SPEED
He doesn't have to know. I won't say anything. Nobody will know. Come on, please, Rex, pleaseplease pleasepleasepleeeease.

Rex sighs, knowing there's no way he can with this.

CONTINUED: (2)

REX
Are you wearing the socks?

Lickety-split, Speed sticks his sneaker up against the dash board and pulls back his pant leg revealing--

A bright red sock.

REX (CONT'D)
You roll us again and this'll be the last time? Deal?

A ten year old's grin spreads ear to ear.

YOUNG SPEED
Deal.

INT. THUNDERHEAD LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT - PRESENT

A lone figure sits on a bench away from us; his racing suit is unzipped to the waist and he sits with his head down as though he was praying.

He is wearing a pair of bright red socks.

After a moment, he pulls his boots on, zips up his suit and stands looking into the locker.

Propped against this gloves is a photo of Rex.

This is Speed ten years later. He takes the photo and slides it into one of the zippered pockets of his suit.

He grabs his gloves and slams the locker shut.

EXT. THUNDERHEAD RACEWAY - NIGHT - PAST

The first gen T-180 screams along the metal raceway.

INT. CAR

Speed sits in Rex's lap, wearing a too-big helmet, giggling with a child's mad glee as he steers.

EXT. THUNDERHEAD RACEWAY - NIGHT

The car banks up a wall and roars down, swooping past.

INT. CAR

Speed screeches as though riding a roller coaster.

REX
Feel that shimmy? That's your hind legs trying to outrun you're front.

SPEED
What do I do?

REX
Stop steering and start driving.

Speed gets serious, his lips tightening the way a hand knots into a fist.

REX (CONT'D)
This ain't no dead piece a metal. A car's a living breathing thing. She's alive. You can feel her talking to you, telling you what she wants, what she needs. You just gotta listen.

Speed tries to listen.

REX (CONT'D)
Close your eyes and listen.

Speed does.

REX (CONT'D)
They say that Ben burns drove the last lap of the '68 Vanderbilt Cup with his eye closed.

SPEED
No way!

REX
No? Well maybe you can't hear it then. Maybe you ought to start hitting those books--

SPEED
No! I hear it!

REX
That so? Okay Mr. Burns, you tell me when to gas it for the jump.

CONTINUED:

Speed concentrates.

REX (CONT'D)
Now?

SPEED
Uh-uh.

The jump glides towards them as the tires seem to whisper to Speed.

SPEED (CONT'D)
Now!

Rex smiles, hitting the gas, launching the car into the air where it seems to hang for a moment before rushing down at us as we cut--

EXT. THUNDERHEAD RACEWAY - NIGHT - PRESENT

The modern T-180's come flying overhead, slamming down against the metal track, scattering bright bursts of shooting sparks in their wake.

INT. MEDIA ROW

A long stretch of identical glass cubicles that look down at the raceway, where announcer's from all over the globe provide color commentary for race fans.

Thunderhead is a relatively small track and the media-row should reflect that while it's big enough to be covered in several different languages, it is not nearly as important as the majors.

LOCAL ANNOUNCER
--local fan favorite, Speed racer is just gobbling up this track, slipping car after car--

HAROLD LEDERMAN ANNOUNCER
--no one seems able to lay a glove on this kid--

AUSTRALIAN ANNOUNCER
--clearly a rising star, with several big wins since turning pro, though he remains without a major sponsor--

CONTINUED:

CHINESE ANNOUNCER
--a win tonight could put him within range of qualifying for the Grand Prix--

FRENCH ANNOUNCER
--let us hope he does not make the same mistakes that his older brother made--

INT. CAR

Inside the cockpit of a racing car that feels more like a fighter jet, Speed does the thing he was born to do.

Though the vibrations are enough to rattle molars loose, there is a calmness, a preternatural ease in Speed's manner that suggests this maelstrom of velocity is where he belongs.

He hears a voice in his headset.

SPARKY
Head's up, Speed! Seven o'clock. I got Snake drafting Pitter-pat.

Speed looks into his mirror and sees a car with orange and black markings, stacked up tight behind another car.

SPEED
I got him.

EXT. TECH PIT

It is smaller than a typical crew pit since the cars don't really pit. There is a panel like a sound mixing board filled with needled gauges and green-barred light meters.

Sparky is watching through binoculars.

SPARKY
I figure he'll slingshot after you in the next turn.

SPEED
I'm ready.

EXT. THUNDERHEAD RACEWAY - NIGHT

The cars explode into the next turn when Snake uses the draft to slingshot by the car ahead of him--

Hurling like a bullet straight at Speed as--

Speed thumbs a button on his steering wheel causing jacks to shoot out of the bottom of the car and sending it up into the air just as--

Snake flies under it, careening into the bottom of the turn too tightly, bouncing of the rail, out of control, ricochetting back at Speed as--

He turns his wheels, catching a part of Snake's car with the grace of a bull-fighter, sending it spinning away towards the other cars while--

Speed rockets free--

Eliciting a huge roar from the crowd.

EXT. TECH PIT

Sparky smiles.

SPARKY
Great move, Speed. Careful on the butterfly coming up. You may wanna ease up--

SPEED
Not this time, Sparky.

EXT. THUNDERHEAD RACEWAY - NIGHT

Speed careens through a butterfly turn like there was a slot-guide in the track causing another crowd roar.

They can feel that something special might be happening.

EXT. TECH PIT

Sparky checks his stop watch.

SPARKY
Holy canoli, Speed, You know who you're racing?

CONTINUED:

He can see him.

SPEED
Yeah...

Just ahead, the ghost of his brother's car launches up the second jump and when ti comes down we are back in the past.

EXT. THUNDERHEAD RACEWAY - NIGHT - PAST

Rex drives the older model T-180, a man on a mission, dominating the race exactly like Speed.

EXT. GRANDSTANDS

Pops stands watching the race through binoculars Young Spped is beside him.

YOUNG SPEED
Rex's gonna win, ain't he, Pops?

Pops checks his watch but almost can't believe it. He goes back to his binoculars.

YOUNG SPEED (CONT'D)
He's gonna win it. He's gonna set the course record. Nobody's gonna catch him.

POPS
Quiet, Speed! There's a lotta race to run.

YOUNG SPPED
No way. It's over. My brother's the best racer in the world. Everybody else is running for second.

The cars rocket through the twisted mobius of steel.

EXT. CREW PIT

Blackjack Benelli grabs one of the crew chief, knotting his fists in the fabric of the path-covered cover alls.

BLACKJACK BENELLI
I told you to take him out!

CONTINUED:

CREW CHIEF #1
We're trying, sir. He's just too fast.

EXT. THUNDERHEAD RACEWAY

Rex blazes by, the track rattling like a metal roller-coaster, opening an even bigger lead.

As we move around Rex's car, we see suddenly there is someone right behind him, a ghost car--

Speed.

As Speed makes his move, he pulls us back into the present.

INT. MEDIA ROW - PRESENT

The buzz is palpable.

LOCAL ANNOUNCER
--it's unbelievable folks, no one's seen moves like this, since that remarkable night eight years ago--

HAROLD LEDERMAN ANNOUNCER
--there's no doubt in my mind, he's gunning for it--

AUSTRALIAN ANNOUNCER
--driving like a man possessed, a man haunted by his past--

CHINESE ANNOUNCER
--a record that has stood for eight years set by his older--

FRENCH ANNOUNCER
--he is not alone out there, he is chasing someone, he is chasing the ghost of Rex Racer--

EXT. GRANDSTANDS

In the glass of Pop's binos we can see the dim reflection of the two brothers racing.

CONTINUED:

Pops stands beside Mom. He is still watching the race with his trusty binos though he is now a little older, plumper and balder.

He clicks his stopwatch, checking it at the same time that Sprittle checks his. Sprittle stands on the chair next to him.

SPRITTLE
Jeepers, he could do it, Pops. He could really do it, couldn't he?

Pops goes back to his binos.

SPRITTLE (CONT'D)
What if he does? What if he does it, Pops?

POPS
Sssh!

SPRITTLE
I don't know if I can watch this...

He holds the binos as though afraid to look when--

A hairy hand comes in and takes them away.

Chim-chim, sitting on the chair next to Sprittle, puts the binos to his eyes.

Speed flies through a piece of tricky track drawing another cheer.

Sprittle grabs the binos back just as the beautiful young woman, standing on the other side of Pops, lowers her.

Trixie chews at her lip, feeling a knot twist into her gut.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET- DAY - PAST

The little girl wearing the pink barrette is walking with a pack of girls, their little mouths as sharp as razors.

In the distance we hear a high-pitched motorized whine.

BLONDE PACK LEADER
My Daddy told me he used to work for the Mishida Motorwerks but he quit.

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

BLONDE PACK LEADER (CONT'D)
My daddy said that was a completely crazy thing to do. He says the whole family is crazy.

TRIXIE
Speed's not crazy.

BLONDE PACK LEADER
No, he's just dumb. Probably the dumbest kid in class. Ms. Waterstraat had me alphabetize the IRB tests and you wouldn't believe what that retard did--

Sock!

Trixie decks her to the shock of the rest of the pack just as the whine grows very loud and--

Speed comes rounding the bend on a little go-cart, wearing his too-big helmet making his big head seem ridiculously enormous.

Zipping past, he suddenly notices the girl in the pink barrette standing over another girl; there is something about her--

Maybe it's way she's got her fists up, like a boy, or maybe it's the way her jaw is set, ready to take on anyone--

Whatever it is, when their eyes suddenly meet, he finds he is unable to look away--

Staring at her, as he drives off the road, crashing through a hedge and tumbling down a hill.

TRIXIE
Speed!

She runs to help him.

He is laying sprawled out, his car on its side, wheels still spinning.

TRIXIE (CONT'D)
Are you alright?

He's a bit groggy.

SPEED
...who are you?

TRIXIE
I'm Trixie. I'm in your class.

CONTINUED: (2)

SPEED
...oh ...yeah.

He stares at her for a minute, powder-puffs of clouds floating about her head.

SPEED (CONT'D)
He, would you like to see my car collection

She smiles.

TRIXIE
I'd love to.

INT. POP'S GARAGE

Pops and Rex are working on the T-180. Rex is in a wife-beater, up to his elbows in axel grease.

The sound of an angry bee hive fills the room as Speed drives up through the big open door.

SPEED
Hey, Rex. Hey Pops.

REX
Hey, Speedy.

POPS
Who's your friend?

SPEED
Her name's Trixie. She's in my class.

TRIXIE
Hi.

POPS
Pleasure to meet you, young lady.

SPEED
Hey pops, a guy wanted me to give this to you. He said he was a big fan.

He hands him the package and Pops smiles.

POPS
A fan, is it? Not often we get someone with such good taste around here. Where is he?

CONTINUED:

SPEED
He was in a hurry. Driving a '68 Fendersin. Sweet set of wheels.

The car description rings a bell for Rex.

REX
Let me see that.

He grabs the box, then holds it to his ear.

It's ticking.

He jams it into the go-cart, against the pedal and slaps it in reverse.

The go-cart shoots out of the garage and down the driveway until--

It explodes, an enormous fireball ballooning up past the tree tops.

Trixie's eyes flash with excitement.

TRIXIE
Cool beans!

EXT. THUNDERHEAD RACEWAY - NIGHT - PRESENT

Feeling the storm of emotions that she knows Speed must be feeling, she takes a deep breath and raises the binos back up.

Through the magnifying lenses we see Speed flying around the track.

INT. MEDIA ROW

They are riding the story like Speed is driving the track.

LOCAL ANNOUNCER
--no one from these parts will forget the tragic story of Rex Racer--

HAROLD LEDERMAN ANNOUNCER
--he nearly ruined racing--

AUSTRALIAN ANNOUNCER
--single-handedly tried to save racing--

CONTINUED:

CHINESE ANNOUNCER
--one of the greatest scandals in the history of the sport--

FRENCH ANNOUNCER
--it is always the brightest star that burn out the fastest--

EXT. THUNDERHEAD RACEWAY - NIGHT

Speed blister through the high-banked slalom and it seems at first that he is all alone but then we see the trace effect as we realize that the two cars are making perfectly identical moves until--

They bank into a straightaway, splitting apart, like a shadow suddenly cut free as both cars accelerate--

Neck and neck, the past a mirror of the present.

YOUNG SPEED (V.O.)
Can I go with you, Re

INT. REX'S ROOM - NIGHT - PAST

Young Speed watches as Rex packs his bags.

REX
Not this time, Speedy.

SPEED
When are you coming back?

REX
I don't know. I don't know.

He snaps the bag shut.

REX (CONT'D)
Look, Speed... one day people might say things about me. No matter what they say, I hop... I just hope you never believe them.

SPEED
I won't.

He hugs his little brother, knowing it might be for the last time.

INT. RACER LIVING ROOM

Rex heads for the door but Pops is waiting for him.

POPS
So, you're quitting?

REX
I have to.

POPS
No you don't. This is a choice. You're selling out, walking away from everything we've built here.

REX
I'm done arguing with you Pops.

He turns back towards the door.

POPS
Don't you walk away from me!

REX
You can't tell me what to do. It's my life to live.

He takes hold of the doorknob.

POPS
If you walk out that door, you better not ever come back!

The door slams in response.

EXT. THUNDERHEAD RACEWAY - NIGHT - PRESENT

Speed and the ghost of his brother cross, switching positions as the memories come faster and faster.

INT. RACER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - PAST

Speed sits on the floor, glued to the television, watching a big race that Rex is in. Mom and Pops are on the couch behind him.

All of them sit in a suspended state, a fist of tension squeezing the breath out of them. One the screen, is a cloud of smoke billowing from a tangle of metal.

CONTINUED:

RALLY ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Rex Racer riving the black and red Uniron car, got in a tangle with Richenhbach, who had been favored to win--

COLOR ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
That was no tangle, he took Richenbach out--

RALLY ANNOUNCER
We don't know that but I imagine the WRL will be reviewing this crash.

COLOR ANNOUNCER
That's the third DNF crash Racer's been involved in! Review it? Heck, the oughta just suspend him.

POPS
Turn it off, Speed! I don't want you watching this anymore.

EXT. THUNDERHEAD RACEWAY - NIGHT - PRESENT

Speed tightens his grip on the wheel.

INT. YOUNG SPEED'S BEDROOM

Speed is hidden beneath the blankets, the sound of a small portable television barely audible.

RACE ANNOUNCER
Rex Racer almost took Yokima's head off wit that jump!

RACE COMMENTATOR
There's absolutely no doubt in my mind that Rex Racer is the dirtiest driver in the world.

Lit by the soft glow of the small tv, Speed blinks and the first tears slip silently down his cheeks.

EXT. THUNDERHEAD RACEWAY - NIGHT - PRESENT

His jaw locks, as he remains trapped between two different forces.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - DAY - PAST

Young Speed is clobbering a kid who is twice his size. A teacher finally pulls them apart.

BIG MOUTH
I just told him the truth! His crum-bum brother doesn't belong on a racetrack-- he belongs in jail!

Speed tears free and torpedoes Big Mouth again.

EXT. THUNDERHEAD RACEWAY - NIGHT - PRESENT

The two cars continue to dance around each other.

INT. MEDIA ROW

LOCAL ANNOUNCER
--the trial of Rex Racer shook the World Racing League to tis very foundation--

HAROLD LEDERMAN ANNOUNCER
--once a rat, always a rat and in my book Rex Racer's nuthin' but a rat--

AUSTRALIAN ANNOUNCER
--the indictment brought down perennial racing powerhouse Uniroyal--

CHINESE ANNOUNCER
--Uniroyal was linked to the notorious fixer Blackjack Benelli--

FRENCH ANNOUNCER
--still in prison to this day, Benelli was rumored to be behind the Casa Cristo tragedy--

The two cars swerve, heading for a collision as we cut--

INT. RACER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - PAST

Mom, Pops, Sparky, Trixie and Speed are all watching the race on the television.

CONTINUED:

Something happens and Mom drops her glass. It shatters but no one seems to notice.

Young Speed is transfixed by the horror of what is playing out, the images of fire and flashing lights, reflecting in his eyes.

CASA CRISTO ANNOUNCER
This has to be one of the worst crashes I have ever seen--

CASA CRISTO COMMENTATOR
Terrible, just terrible--

CASA CRISTO ANNOUNCER
There is still no sign of the driver, Rex Racer.

EXT. THUNDERHEAD RACEWAY - NIGHT - PRESENT

Speed presses down on the accelerator and starts to gain, fighting the emotion welling behind his eyes.

INT. YOUNG SPEED'S BEDROOM - PAST

Held by his mother, Speed sobs and sobs while Pops stands helplessly at the door.

EXT. THUNDERHEAD RACEWAY - NIGHT - PRESENT

Speed again pulls even with Rex as the finish line comes into view.

INT. MEDIA ROW

LOCAL ANNOUNCER
--he's comin'hard, it's gonna be close--

HAROLD LEDERMAN ANNOUNCER
--forget the past, he's sayin', this is my night--

AUSTRALIAN ANNOUNCER
--there's a new Racer in town--

CHINESE ANNOUNCER
--poised to wipe the slate clean--

CONTINUED:

FRENCH ANNOUNCER
--escaping the dark shadow of his older brother--

The checkered flag goes up, ready as the two cars come screaming towards the finish line--

The large digital clock seemingly synchronized with the past as--

Speed looks over at the ghost car, the faintest smile on his lips as he sees his older brother and then--

Takes his foot off the accelerator, letting Rex's car surge ahead, crossing just before Speed.

The time is just over the record causing disappointment to ripple through the crowd except for--

The Racer family who seem both relived and happy.

SPRITTLE
Come on, Let's go! Victory Lane!

INT. MEDIA ROW

They seem exhausted.

FRENCH ANNOUNCER
Zut alors! What a race!

CHINESE ANNOUNCER
--by a cat's whisker--

AUSTRALIAN ANNOUNCER
--the record still stands--

HAROLD LEDERMAN ANNOUNCER
--looked like he pulled up to me--

LOCAL ANNOUNCER
--Folks, I knew Rex Racer and if he's up there somewhere watching this race, you can bet your ass, he's damn proud of his little brother.

INT. RACER X'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Walls of glass overlooking a galaxy of twinkling cityscape; a penthouse created as a diamond is created, every face a perfect stroke of precision.

CONTINUED:

A beautiful woman wearing nerdy-glasses sits watching the television from the leather banquette. She has a body made of the same kind of lines that a sports car or a high-heel has, lines that make your head turn.

This is Minx.

Beside her is a brooding, muscled man, his attention riveted as Speed pulls into Victory Lane. Though we don't see his face, this is Racer X.

MINX
He' going to be very good.

RACER X
No. He's going to be the best.

The crowd swarms around Speed's car.

RACER X (CONT'D)
If they don't destroy him first.

EXT. RACER HOUSE - MORNING

The phone is ringing.

INT. KITCHEN

Mom is cooking breakfast. Before she can get to the phone, Sprittle grabs it.

SPRITTLE
Racer residence.

CORPORATE AGENT
Good morning, I was hoping to speak with Speed racer.

SPRITTLE
He's not interested.

He hangs up.

MOM
Sprittle!

SPRITTLE
It's true!

MOM
That's not for you to say.

CONTINUED:

SPRITTLE
Speed's gotta drive for Pops!

MOM
That's for Speeed to decide.

The phone rings again. Sprittle grabs it quickly.

SPRITTLE
Hello?

CORPORATE AGENT #2
Is this the Racer residence?

He glances at Mom.

SPRITTLE
Nope.

He hangs up. Shrugs.

SPRITTLE (CONT'D)
Wrong number.

INT. PARENTS BEDROOM

Pops is doing his exercises in his gray sweats.

INT. SPEED'S ROOM

Speed now sleeps in Rex's old room. The poster of Ben Burns is still tacked to the wall above the bed.

Mom opens the door.

MOM
Come on, Champ. Rise and shine.
Breakfast's ready.

Speed's hair seems to remain asleep, still molded to the pillow as he tries to push himself up.

SPEED
...I'm up, I'm up.

INT. KITCHEN

Mom spatulas another short stack of pancakes from the griddle and shovels them like coal into the blazing maw of a locomotive, dumping them onto the plates of Sprittle and Chim-chim.

CONTINUED:

They eat ravenously, trying to secretly steal food from each other's plates while Pops reads from the Racing News.

POPS
"It was a virtuoso display of talent, the likes of which has not been seen at Thunderhead since Racer the elder dropped jaws eight years ago. Now, as we once again, pull our collective jaws up from the floor, we have to ask, will it be different this time, or will tragedy--

MOM
That's enough of that, Hon.

Pops puts down the paper and Sparky picks it up.

SPARKY
I just can't believe there wasn't one mention of Racer motors in there.

POPS
That's because the Sponsors run the media, Sparky.

Trixie enters through the back door.

TRIXIE
Mornin' everyone. Is Speed up yet?

Speed stumbles in the door.

SPEED
...in spirit anyway.

TRIXIE
Hey superstar, did you see the papers? They're all in love with you.

SPEED
Really?

He sits, grabbing the paper.

SPARKY
Yeah, but there sure is a lot of speculation about which team's going to pick him up .

CONTINUED: (2)

SPEED
...really?

Speed starts to read and suddenly the room begins to rumble, glasses shaking, plates rattling.

POPS
What the--?

SPRITTLE
Earthquake!

He and Chim-chim begin wailing in panic.

SPRITTLE (CONT'D)
Quick, under the table! Into the door-frame!

POPS
Sprittle calm down!

SPEEED
Pops the kitchen's the most dangerous room in a house during an earthquake!

The whole table shivers and it seems the hanging ceiling light might shake free when the tremor begins to subside.

Sprittle and Chim-chim, wearing a pot and a metal colander for protection, look around, expecting something bad to happen.

The house becomes pin-prick quiet when--

The doorbell rings.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Pops opens the door to a face full of turbine exhaust from the private K-Harrier jet parked on their front lawn.

On their doorstep is an extremely well dressed older man carrying a bouquet of flowers and box of cigars.

His smile is as bright and shiny as a surgeon's scalpel.

He says, "Good morning, Mr. And Mrs. Racer" but no once can hear him over the howl of the turbines.

He gestures, asking permission to come in. Pops lets him by and closes the door, immediately reducing the noise.

CONTINUED:

WELL DRESSED MAN
Mr. And Mrs. Racer, I hope you will forgive this imposition.

He hands her the beautiful bouquet of flowers.

WELL DRESSED MAN (CONT'D)
These are Blue-belles from EDEN Inc. I'm told the will bloom at least three times, each time a different color.

Mom "ohhhs" her appreciation, while he hands over the box of cigars.

WELL DRESSED MAN (CONT'D)
And Mr. Racer these are for you, straight form the Isle of Kamut. Hand-rolled. Premium blend.

They glance at each other, a bit takenaback.

POPS
Uh, thanks but... who are you?

He seems to rise up an inch taller as he introduces himself.

WELL DRESSED MAN
I am E.P. Arnold Remmingtonton Esquire, President and Chairman of Remmington Industries and it is my honor to meet you both.

He reaches for Pops' free hand.

REMMINGTON
Mr. Racer, I have been an ardent admirer of your work for years. I remember the first time I saw the prototype for the Mach-1, I told everyone that it didn't belong on a race track, it belonged in an art museum.

Pops chuckles.

POPS
Yeah, she was a beaut.

REMMINGTON
No, sir. She was a revelation.

He suddenly smells the pancakes.

CONTINUED: (2)

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
Oh, dear. I interrupted your breakfast. Is that pancakes, I smell?

MOM
Are you hungry, Mr. Remmington?

REMMINGTON
A figure like mine requires constant attention, Mrs. Racer.

MOM
Do you like pancakes?

REMMINGTON
When I was a child we used to say, "pankuken zin liesben."

Neither of them speak German.

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
Pancakes are love.

INT. KITCHEN

Remmington stuff another forkful into his mouth and moans his appreciation.

Sprittle and Chim-chim sit on either side of him, their gunsel eyes train on his every move.

REMMINGTON
Gorgeous, Mrs. Racer. Superb density. Hints of vanilla. Cinnamon. Absolutely gorgeous.

MOM
I'm glad you like them.

REMMINGTON
Like them? I want to buy your recipe.

He takes out his hand held computer and beings making notes.

MOM
I can give you the recipe, Mr. Remmington.

CONTINUED:

REMMINGTON
Nonsense. Cenestro Foods, a sub-division of Remmington Industries is planning a new range of home-cooked meals for travelers and this is just the kind of magic we're looking for. I'll have my attorney draw up the paperwork.

Mom looks at Pops feeling flattered but again a distinct discomfort.

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
Now, then. We all know the reason I'm here is because of you, Speed. I was watching last night and I have to tell you young man, you gave me goosebumps. I know at once, this was no mere driver I was watching. This was an artist.

Speed's ears go a bit red.

SPEED
Driver's only as good as the car.

REMMINGTON
I appreciate modesty, Speed but I do not exaggerate when is ay that you are a genius. Watching you reminded me of why I love racing and I am grateful for that. Thank you.

SPEED
You're welcome, I guess.

REMMINGTON
I imagine the phone has been ringing off the hook.

SPRITTLE
Speed's not interest in driving for you or any other sponsor.

REMMINGTON
Is this your manager then?

MOM
He's our youngest. Sprittle.

REMMINGTON
Nice to meet you, youngster.

CONTINUED: (2)

Remmington offers his hand but Sprittle doesn't take it.

SPRITTLE
We got out eye on you, Mister.

REMMINGTON
Excellent. The first thing I want to make perfectly clear is that I have no intention whatsoever of trying to get Speed away from Racer motors. What you have here is what teams spend years and millions of dollars trying to achieve: chemistry. Car designer, mechanic and driver all coming together in perfect harmony. I wouldn't dare touch a thing.

SPEED
Well, excuse me for asking, but what do you want?

REMMINGTON
To help. I want to make sure you have access to whatever resources you need to continue doing exactly what you are doing.

POPS
I assume, Mr. Remmington that you are not talking about philanthropy.

Remmington chuckles.

REMMINGTON
I like when my partners have a sense of humor. And that's what I'm talking about. A partnership. An alliance between your amazing family and mine. That's exactly what Remmington Industries is to me, a family. Like yours. Just a little bigger.

Pops isn't exactly buying it.

POPS
No offense, Remmington but Racer Motors runs as an independent.

REMMINGTON
None taken. I completely understand. I sympathize.
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (3)

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
Strike that-- I sympathize. You may think of R. I. As a huge corporate conglomerate but I will have you know sire, that I still remember working all night on a Commodore 64 in the basement of my foster parents' home. I build R.I. From below the ground up. So while Remmington Industries may look like a Major Sponsor to you, it remains in my heart as independent to me as the first day I quit my job at GloBocom to work for myself.

They're 're stunned into silence, while Remmington presses on.

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
Now I've had this wonderful opportunity to meet your family. All I am asking is for you to please give me the chance to introduce you to mine.

EXT. COSMOPOLIS - DAY

The K-Harrier drifts through the polygonal mountain range where glittering minarets of steel and glass crown towering cathedrals of commerce.

Helicopters swarm like pollinating bees in summer field.

The vista is filled with the icons of every conceivable business in very conceivable language. It is a landscape that merges the pop-art sensibility of Warhol with the urban sprawl of Blade Runner.

INT. K-HARRIER

Wood paneled elegance surround the family who sit in overstuffed seats as soft and padded as clouds.

They can't help but gawk out the windows as they float through the city.

MOM
I've never flown so low through the city.

REMMINGTON
Special permit. Only six of them are granted a year.

CONTINUED:

Sprittle and Chim-chim are gawking at something else: the vertical pull-out drawer lined with every kind candy in the world.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Take whatever you like.

He looks at her for a moment like is in love, then turns back to the drawer where he and Chim-chim lunge for it, pushing each other back.

POPS
Sprittle!

SPRITTLE
She said we could!

Pop growls at him, his eyes telling them they'd better not take more than one piece.

Hang-dogged heads, they each grab one piece of candy?

POPS
What do you say?

SPRITTLE
Thank you.

She closes the drawer, their eyes seen through the racks, watching paradise disappear as though a mirage.

SPARKY
Hey, there's the Grand Prix Coliseum!

Sprittle and Chim-chim rush to Sparky's window. They can see the entire track and even from this height it seems enormous.

Sprittle turns to Remmington.

SPRITTLE
My brother's going to win the Grand Prix one day.

Remmington's eyes glint.

REMMINGTON
No doubt in my mind, young man. Given the right circumstances, I have no doubt whatsoever.

EXT. REMMINGTON INDUSTRIES

Power gleams off every surface and line of the strata-scape.

The K-Harrier glides gracefully down to the private landing pad.

INT. HANGER/FOYER

An entourage of assistants wait like puppies at the door. Among them is a gorgeous woman with the kind of smile that puts people immediately at ease.

REMMINGTON
This is Gennie. She's our Talent Manager. Ask for anything, her job's to make it come true.

GENNIE
Hi, Speed. Welcome to Remmington.

He shakes her hand while she signals to another man who immediately begins scanning speed with an electronic measuring device.

SPEED
What's this?

REMMINGTON
To make an informed decision you'll need to understand how we take care of our drivers.

The tailor finishes quickly as an electric cart, the kind designed for a group tour pulls up.

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
All abroad.

SPRITTLE
Cool!

They climb on and the driver pulls into the tramway.

INT. TRAMWAY

These well lit hallways are extra wide with lots of colored guide lines on the floor like in a hospital.

CONTINUED:

There are a lot of signs, directional and advertisements hawking the widely varied Remmington products.

The red lines lead to doors emblazoned with "Restricted Access."

There is a fair bit of hustle and bustle, like a busy street as golf carts, seg-ways and motorized scooter zip to and fro. No one walks.

REMMINGTON
Remmington Tower is the crown jewel among the properties that I control. It functions as the corporate headquarters for he top twelve divisions of our parent corp. One big industries family.

The turn a corner heading for a large set of doors with the double "R" logo of Remmington Racecars.

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
Of all the 143 companies that I control, none of them is as dear to my heart as the T-180 division.

The door opens as they enter--

INT. REMMINGTON CAR MUSEUM

Cars from the golden Age through to the present surround the pathway, dangling in midair or mounted in situ-dioramas, each carefully lit with spotlights like works of art or precious gems.

REMMINGTON
I've always felt that it is impossible to peer into the window of Tomorrow without a clear view of the Past.

SPRITTLE
That's the Crystal Horse with the Apache Super-Charger!

REMINGTON
Winner of the Grand Prix in '69, '70 and '73.

CONTINUED:

SPRITTLE
No. Wrong. '72. '71 was the Vundervopper with the K-2 twin turbine and '73 was the Kenobe Motorstar re-built with a VC triple chamber.

Remmington considers arguing.

SPEED
Don't bother. He's never wrong.

They pass out of the museum.

INT. TRAMWAY

The hall widens allowing a special lane that leads out onto an observation deck that over looks the main T-180 factory.

The bank of windows overlooks the enormous facility. It is a state of the art assembly line that rises vertically, instead of horizontally. The chassis arrives at the bottom and is born up by a mechanical arm, rotating as each platform assembles the next piece.

The far wall is nothing but glass providing a sun-drappled vista of Cosmopolis.

REMINGTON
Our vertically integrated plant is the fastest in the world. From initial carbon bond to finished car in 36 hours. How long does it take at Racer Motors?

SPARKY
Several weeks at least.

Remmington turns to Pops.

REMINGTON
This kind of production facility could be at your disposal, Mr. Racer.

The cart motor hums and slides back onto the tramway.

INT. ENERGY-CELL THEATRE

The next viewing stage is a window into the vacuumed-sealed laboratory where they construct the "engine" that powers the T-180's turbine.

It looks like an operating theatre with several robotic arms and a cluster of auto-surgeons operating inside sealed perspec chambers.

REMMINGTON
This is our operating theater where our patented Refusion Energy Distributor Network is installed in the turbine drive.

Sparky's eye light up.

SPARKY
Is that an inner-positive transponder?

REMMINGTON
It is indeed.

Sparky shoots a look at Pops.

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
We control the only transponder foundry in the world outside of Mushi Motors in Taiobi.

The window suddenly turns into a mirror.

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
Oops. Sorry. Trade Secrets.

INT. TRAMWAY

The cart arrives at an elevator station, and the driver presses a signal control the doors opening immediately.

INT. ELEVATOR

The driver punches in a floor and door direction code (north, south, east, west) and the elevator begins to rise while the dais in the floor begins to spin aligning them with a different door.

CONTINUED:

REMMINGTON
Now, I'll take you up to the Team Remmington training facility.

The west door opens and the cart glides out into a new tramway which is not as industrial feeling as the first one, decorated with a vinyl wainscotting and slightly up-graded lights.

The higher you go in the Remmington Tower, the nicer the halls are decorated.

INT. TRAINING AQUARIUM

The cart glides by a series of windows that reveal the rigorous training systems invented to test the drivers.

The first is a multi-level, state-of-the-art fitness facility in which the far wall again looks out into Cosmopolis. Beyond the standard health club fare, there is a Martial Arts gymnastics group in a standing pyramid.

There is also a range of strange devices ranging from the retro steamer boxes, medicine balls and vibrating belts to the hyper-modern triple axis gyro harness.

REMMINGTON
As you know, a T-180 driver's got to be in peak physical condition.

Across from the gym is a smaller window where the typical anaerobic test is being conducted on a female driver. She is running on a treadmill with lost of wires hooked up to her while several doctors not their approval at the read-outs.

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
No expense is spared to make sure that when our driver's suit up they are as perfectly tuned as the machines they are controlling.

The next window is a massive centrifuge; a huge mechanical arm whipping around a small capsule that blasts past the window.

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
The best driver must be able to withstand over 4-Gs of force in a typical race.

CONTINUED:

On the opposite wall is the vibration chamber. A man is strapped to a chair that is vibrating so hard you expect his eyeballs to rattle out.

The next window is an underwater tank where a man is driving in a mock up cockpit, executing peddle maneuvers and gear shifts.

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
The will to win is nothing without the will to prepare and at Team Remmington we prepare our drivers for any eventuality and every possible condition.

The final window is the weather chamber where a driver is again in a mock cockpit, blue-lipped and shivering while snow and wind buffet him.

INT. ELEVATOR

The doors open and the craft glides in.

REMMINGTON
I hope I didn't care you, Speed with how hard we push our team. I just wanted you to see how serious we are committed to winning.

SPEED
I get that.

REMMINGTON
Good. But also understand that R.I. Isn't all work and no play.

The door opens revealing the Drivers' Club.

INT. DRIVERS' CLUB

A swanky Playboy-style casino club where, stylishly dressed male and female drivers are catered to by beautiful male and female "hostesses."

Sprittle's eyes almost pop out.

SPRITTLE
That's Cannonball Taylor!

Speed urns and sees the Captain of the Remmington Team.

CONTINUED:

REMMINGTON
Stop the cart. Jack! Jack, come here. There's someone I want you to meet.

Cannonball saunters over, wearing his two goiter-sized, diamond-encrusted champion rings.

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
Speed Racer allow me to introduce two-time Grand Prix Winner, five time WRL Champion and future Hall of Famer, Jack Cannonball Taylor.

SPEED
Honor to meet you.

CANONBALL
Caught that Thunderhead replay. Nice piece of work.

SPEED
Wow, thanks.

CANONBALL
There was a rumor you might be visiting.

SPEED
It's pretty impressive.

CANONBALL
Only thing I cared about was that wall over there.

He gestures to a special wall fitted with the trophies and medals won by team Remmington through the years.

CANONBALL (CONT'D)
That' what sold me. You want to win in this league, you're talking to the right guy.

Remmington beams.

REMMINGTON
Thanks, Jack.

Jack nods and the cart pulls away but not before Jack shoots a backward glance at Speed that feels like a shank in a prison yard.

INT. PENTHOUSE

The doors open and Remmington leads the family into the penthouse suite leaving the cart behind. Standard jaw-dropping view, decorated in an upscale masculine aesthetic.

Sparky whistles and whispers to Speed.

SPARKY
Long way from Nob Hill, eh?

REMMINGTON
We treat our thoroughbreds the way they deserve to be treated.

He guides them into the room gesturing or demonstrating all of the amenities.

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
There's full maid service of course with a personal chef and a masseuse available 24/7.

The staff arrives, wheeling in several racks of clothes: daywear, sportswear, racing uniforms and stylish evening wear.

Gennie holds up one of the suit to Speed.

GENNIE
Should be perfect. Try it on.

TRIXIE
Mmm hmm!

SPEED
...okay.

He heads to the bathroom.

Taking Mom by the elbow, Remmington gestures to the sitting area over-looking Cosmopolis.

REMMINGTON
So Mrs. Racer, what do you think about my family? Impressed?

MOM
You could say that.

CONTINUED:

REMMINGTON
Good. I want you to understand the possibilities that exist for your son right now.

Pops furrows his brow.

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
What's wrong Mr. Racer?

POPS
To be honest, Remmington, I'm feeling more intimidated than impressed. This kind of company scares me. People like you have way too much money and when someone has this kind of money, they start thinking that the rules everyone else is playing by don't mean squat to them.

Remmington remains skillfully unfazed.

POPS (CONT'D)
However, my sons are the most important thing I've ever done in my life, besides marrying my best friend and if Speed wants us to figure out some kind of... "alliance" then you can bet your ass we'll be in business.

Speed steps out of the bathroom. His boyishness has faded away as he suddenly seems very much a man. Gennie smile approvingly.

TRIXIE
Hubba hubba.

He walks over to the sitting area.

MOM
Oh honey, you looks so handsome.

SPEED
Yeah?

REMMINGTON
Very sharp, Speed. Suits you perfectly. Regardless of what happens, I want you to have all of it. A gift.

CONTINUED: (2)

SPEED
Thanks, Mr. Remmington.

REMMINGTON
So, how are you feeling Speed?

Speed isn't sure. He looks at Trixie and Sparky and then at his parents.

SPEED
It's very... impressive.

Remmington smiles.

REMMINGTON
You think that maybe there's something that could work out here?

Everyone waits, staring at him.

SPEED
I guess I'd like to think about it, if I could.

Remmington's a fisherman not sure if the hook has really been set.

REMMINGTON
This isn't the kind of offer I go around making ever day, son.

SPEED
I understand that, sir...

He looks to Pops then takes a deep breath as though trying to find his resolve.

SPEED (CONT'D)
So if I had to give an answer now then, to be honest--

REMMINGTON
Stop. Right there. You're right. You should think about it. I'm sure you're feeling a bit overwhelmed. You should take a little time. Think about what you saw and heard here and we'll get together early next week. Deal?

He reaches his hand out and Speed takes it with some obvious relief.

CONTINUED: (3)

SPEED

Deal.

INT. CRUNCHER BLOCK'S OFFICE

WHACK! WHACK! WHACK! A thug soundly slaps the face of a handsome Japanese man.

When the beating is over, the Japanese man slumps forward, his arms behind his back.

CRUNCHER
I thought we had a deal...

When he hears the voice, he lifts his head and we see a huge man with a body like a cement-lined safe, sitting behind a desk, lighting a cigar.

This well-dressed fixer is Cruncher Block.

CRUNCHER (CONT'D)
I thought we were friends.

He blows a cloud of smoke and watches it float up to the chandelier which is jiggling steadily.

CRUNCHER (CONT'D)
Maybe where you come from, this is how you treat your friends, but 'round here we don't take to kindly to this kind of thing, do we fellas?

Thug #1 steps in and wails away on him again.

THUG #1
You hurt our feelings!

CRUNCHER
Problem is, I like you Katsu.

Cruncher grins, his teeth like stacked dice.

CRUNCHER (CONT'D)
And I got a real soft spot in my heart for that sister of yours.

He begins opening a large package wrapped with butcher paper. Inside is a bloody rack of ribs.

CONTINUED:

CRUNCHER (CONT'D)
Normally in a situation such as this we would be pouring you a nice comfy pair of cement shoes, but...

He stands and goes to the large glowing fish tank that is behind the desk.

CRUNCHER (CONT'D)
I think I got another solution.

He dips the bloody meat into the tank filled with piranha. The water foams as the carnivorous fish shred flesh from bone.

CRUNCHER (CONT'D)
How're my babies doing? Huh? Hungry? Ready for seconds? Boys!

They grab Katsu and haul him to the fishtank.

KATSU
No!

THUG #2
Hope dem fishes like Japanese.

KATSU
No, please!

THUG #1
Gonna be hard to drive with skellie hands.

Cruncher takes hold of Katsu's jaw.

CRUNCHER
You even think about turning rat and next time it's your sister going in there.

They begin forcing his hand into the tank when suddenly a red light begins flashing.

Everyone freezes.

Cruncher grabs the phone on his desk.

CRUNCHER (CONT'D)
What?!

INT. TRUCK CAB

We realize that Cruncher's office is in the trailer of a semi-truck which is cruising down an empty rural highway.

TRUCK DRIVER
Someone's tailing us.

INT. CRUNCHER BLOCK'S OFFICE

Cruncher signals to the man at the far end of the room who is guarding the door. The guard slides open a peek-a-boo slot and sees a pair of headlights.

CRUNCHER
Is it him?

DOOR GUARD
It could be.

Cruncher goes to the phone.

CRUNCHER
Can you see him yet?

TRUCK DRIVER
Here he comes--

The car pulls up even with the cab and the driver feels his gut clench as he recognizes the infamous car of Racer X.

TRUCK DRIVER (CONT'D)
Oh God...

CRUNCHER
Get him!

Everyone leaps into action, shoving Katsu back into a chair. Filling their fists with guns, sliding open murder holes slots at a variety of heights. Cruncher barks into the phone.

CRUNCHER (CONT'D)
Crush him!

INT. TRUCK CAB

The driver screws his jaw tight and throws the wheel to smash into the smaller car--

CONTINUED:

But the little black tinted bug flits away with effortless ease, dancing out in front of the truck.

INT. CRUNCHER BLOCK'S OFFICE

Cruncher flips over the top of his desk revealing the controls for a mini-machine gun located on the bottom of the truck.

He grabs the controls which are linked to an infrared sighting camera.

CRUNCHER
Where is he?

INT. TRUCK CAB

The driver watches the red tail-lights glowing like demon eyes.

TRUCK DRIVER
He's out front.

INT. CRUNCHER BLOCK'S OFFICE

Cruncher, hits another button and he front grill of the truck opens, dropping the lower half like the double-hinged jaw of a snake.

An Apache helicopter-style rocket launcher thrusts out of the darkness.

Cruncher sights the car.

CRUNCHER
Gotcha.

He fires a mini-rocket straight at the manta-finned car--

But with a quick feint left the rocket skims by, exploding further down the highway.

Something flashes on the back car as hidden tubes iris open and the barrels of several weapons extend out.

TRUCK DRIVER
Here he comes!

Cruncher fires again, the red rocket just missing, rending open the tree line with a fireball.

CONTINUED:

The little car drops back alongside the truck and fires, bullets bursting tires and puncturing through the walls of the truck. The truck lurches as the thugs fire wildly at the black car.

Cruncher tries to site the machine gun but just as he opens fire--

The black car slows, drawing the chasing gun fire until Cruncher shoots his own tires.

CRUNCHER
Aww, I thought you fixed that!

The black car fires again, bullets ricocheting inside, puncturing a hole in the fish tank.

THUG #1
Boss!

CRUNCHER
My babies!

He runs to the fish tank and tries to stop the water pouring out of the hole. He sticks his finger in and the fish immediately attack.

He shrieks withdrawing his finger.

CRUNCHER (CONT'D)
Vinny put your finger in there!

Vinny doesn't want to.

CRUNCHER (CONT'D)
Do it!

INT. TRUCK CAB

The truck swerves as the driver struggles to control the behemoth wobbling on its blown tires.

TRUCK DRIVER
We can't take another hit boss!

INT. CRUNCHER BLOCK'S OFFICE

Cruncher thinks fast over Vinny's screams. He looks at Katsu and immediately knows what he has to do.

CONTINUED:

CRUNCHER
Pull over but don't stop.

EXT. LONELY HIGHWAY

The truck slows, easing onto the shoulder as the black car follows.

The back of the truck slides up and the gangsters toss Katsu out, leaving him behind with a spray of gravel.

Katsu looks up into the glaring lights of the black car.

A car door opens. Boots crunch gravel as someone walks toward us silhouetted by car lights. It is the masked racer himself--

Racer x.

INT. RACER X'S CAR

Katsu is in the passenger seat as the car hums quietly down the empty highway.

KATSU
Thank you. You saved my life.

RACER X
I didn't save anything worth saving unless you get smart. Real fast.

Racer talks without looking at him.

RACER X (CONT'D)
You thought you could take on the Cartel. You can't. Not without help.

KATSU
I don't know what you're talking about.

RACER X
You won the Cortex Invitational and you weren't supposed to. You did it to save Okamoto Engineering.

KATSU
It has belonged to my family for five generations.

CONTINUED:

RACER X
And now someone else wants it. The only way you can stop it from happening is to talk to the authorities.

KATSU
There is nothing to talk about.

RACER X
You have been on cruncher Block's leash for so long maybe you forgot how it feels to stand up and be a man. The only way you'll ever stop these people is to bring them to justice.

KATSU
Justice/ That's a commodity I don't waste money on.

Racer X immediately pulls his car over.

RACER X
Get out.

Wearing his smirk like a cheap suit, Katsu gets out.

KATSU
I'll see you at Fuji.

RACER X
You won't finish. When you lose, if you can still dial a phone, call this number.

He hands him a card. The card reads; CHIEF INSPECTOR DETECTOR.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM

Sprittle is working hard on a test when he hears the kid behind him whisper.

DANNY
Hey monkey-lover, show me your test or I'll kick your ass after school.

SPRITTLE
Sorry. Cheaters never prosper.

The kid to the left chimes in.

CONTINUED:

MALCOM
Spriiiitle, when Chim-chim's bad, do you spank the monkey?

SPRITTLE
No, your mother does it for me.

Malcom almost swallows his tongue as several other kids snicker.

TEACHER
All right! Malcom! Danny! Sprittle! To the Principal's office. March!

There is a chorus of, "I didn't do it, awwww, not fair."

TEACHER (CONT'D)
Now!

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

The same school that Speed attended but now where Rex used to wait, Speed is leaning against the Mach-5. Chim-chim is sitting next to him.

The bell rings and the students begin piling out. When the last few tumble down the stairs, Chim-chim emits a small, sad whine.

SPEED
Looks like someone's in trouble again.

INT. MACH 5

It's later and they're driving home. Sprittle stares out the window, mumbling, identifying make, model, and engines of passing cars.

SPEED
Want to talk about it?

Sprittle shakes his head.

SPRITTLE
K-W Integral 4-door with twin-cam turbine...C-foster-K 1200, modified split-rail and supershocks...

CONTINUED:

SPEED
Was it that Stanton kid again? Did he say something? If you want to kick his butt--?

He shakes his head again.

SPRITTLE
...it doesn't seem fair that I get in trouble when they always start it.

SPEED
It's not fair. But that's what bullies do. They make the world unfair.

SPRITTLE
That sucks.

SPEED
Yes, it does.

SPRITTLE
What can I do about it?

SPEED
You ignore 'em when you can, fight 'em when you can't.

SPRITTLE
Those choices suck too.

SPEED
Yeah, but just try to keep one thing in mind.

SPRITTLE
What?

SPEED
Bullies come and go but a family can torture you forever.

Chim-chim gives Sprittle a wet-willy.

SPRITTLE
Heeeeeey!

Speed laughs as Chim-chim howls and then puts his arm around Sprittle.

CONTINUED: (2)

SPEED
But no joke, you just say the word, little brother and we got your back, right Chim-chim?

Chim-chim grunts.

SPRITTLE
Thanks guys.

INT. REMMINGTON INDUSTRIES T-180 FACTORY

Remmington watches a GRX rolling off the assembly line. With him is Mr. Mushi, a businessman with eyes as sharp as broken glass.

REMMINGTON
The new GRX has a super charged inner-positive transporter and will be capable of speeds in excess off 800 kilometers an hour.

Mushi nods.

MUSHI
If such a car were to win the Grand Prix this year, one would expect the demand for transponders to increase dramatically.

REMMINGTON
One would expect.

MUSHI
And if a single company gained control of all the transponder foundries in the world, one might expect that company to do very well for itself.

REMMINGTON
You know what I want and I know that for the last few years you have been trying to buy out your main rival Tetsua Okamoto. The question is, can we make a deal?

The car rotates, rising up on its mechanical arm, a cybernetic giant, exercising its might.

CONTINUED:

MUSHI
Deliver Okamoto at that price and the Taiobi Transponder foundry is yours.

REMMINGTON
Done.

Remington smiles as they shake hands.

INT. MACH 5

Speed and Trixie lie with seats all the way back, watching the sinking sun tye-dye the sky behind the car-scape of freeways.

TRIXIE
You're really considering signing with Remmington.

SPEED
I just said it was tempting.

TRIXIE
Why?

SPEED
Well, they got a really good team. Cannonball Taylor, Markie Manifold. They win a lot of Majors.

TRIXIE
Since when did winning become so important?

SPEED
It is important. You gotta win if you want to keep driving and that's what I want to do. It's the only thing I really know how to do. When I'm driving, I feel like that's the only time my life makes sense.

She moves closer to him.

TRIXIE
You mean, this doesn't make sense to you?

SPEED
Okay, besides being with you.

CONTINUED:

TRIXIE
So you like being with me?

SPEED
You know I do.

TRIXIE
Sometimes I do, sometimes I'm not so sure.

SPEED
What?

TRIXIE
Sometimes around your family, you seem distant, not like this and I wonder why.

SPEED
Come on, you know how I've felt about you since I was ten years old.

TRIXIE
I guess so, I just wish you weren't so shy about it.

SPEED
What do you want me to do? Kiss you in front of everyone at the end of a big race?

TRIXIE
Would that be so terrible?

SPEED
I don't know. Maybe we should practice first.

TRIXIE
Maybe we should.

They start to kiss when they hear a muted voice.

SPRITTLE
Oh God! I'm gonna hurl! Huuuurrrl!

TRIXIE
Sprittle?

SPEED
No!

CONTINUED: (2)

Speed jumps out of the car.

SPEED (CONT'D)
He did not!

He throws open the trunk, revealing Sprittle and Chim-chim who shrieks.

SPEED (CONT'D)
Sprittle!

SPRITTLE
It wasn't my idea!

SPEED
Oh no?

SPRITTLE
It was his!

He points at Chim-chim who shakes his head wildly, pointing back at Sprittle.

TRIXIE
Wait till we tell Pops.

SPRITTLE
No! Don't do that! We're sorry. We couldn't sleep. We just wanted to hang out. We didn't know you were going to In-spew-ration Point. By the way, Cootie-shots.

Sprittle and Chim-chim immediately cover one shoulder giving themselves a cootie-shot.

SPEED
I'm taking you home.

SPRITTLE
Wait, wait, wait--

Speed slams the trunk shut so we hear Sprittle voice muffled.

SPRITTLE (CONT'D)
Can we stop for ice cream first?

INT. RACER GARAGE

Close on a curving piece of bodywork that Pops is sanding. When he looks up, Speed is in the room.

CONTINUED:

He is carrying a brown paper sack.

POPS
Morning, Speed.

SPEED
Pops.

POPS
So, today's the big day.

Speed nods. Pops puts down his tools.

POPS (CONT'D)
I know this is a tremendous opportunity for you.

SPEED
It could be for you too.

POPS
Could be, could be. But, regardless, this is really all about you. It' your decision and I want you to know, no matter what you decide, I'm behind you.

SPEED
Thanks, Pops.

The room begins to shake.

POPS
I think your ride's here.

INT. K-HARRIER

Speed stares out the window, chewing on his decision like a dog worrying a bone.

INT. REMMINGTON INDUSTRIES LANDING DOCK

Gennie greets Speed as he debarks from the plane. He is carrying his brown sack.

CONTINUED:

GENNIE
Speed, so nice to see you again.

Her eyes and the softness of her touch elevate flirting to something that is equal parts art and science.

GENNIE (CONT'D)
Mr. Remmington is so excited about this meeting. He hasn't talked about anything else all week.

Speed sighs.

INT. K-HARRIER

The cabin is dark and still. Slowly, almost supernaturally, a drawer begins to slide open.

Two heads pop up. Sprittle and Chim-chim are wearing cat-burglar clothes with matching ski-masks.

The coast is clear, so they sneak over to the galley. They stare at the drawer like a safe-cracker eyeing the dial of a combination lock.

Sprittle carefully pulls back the latch springing the drawer. It slides open, lit internally, candy gleaming like jewels.

The breath rushes out of them.

INT. REMMINGTON'S OFFICE

The office sits atop the strata-scraper, surrounded by commanding views of Cosmopolis.

Speed arrives via the elevator and Remmington breaks into a beaming smile.

REMMINGTON
Speed!

Gennie leaves Speed, returning to the elevator, as Remmington crosses to him.

He hugs him

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
Welcome back! Come. Sit. Sit.

CONTINUED:

In the center of the room is a small cluster of extremely comfortable chairs in which they sit.

Above them a multifaceted skylight glitters like a cut gem under the streaming rays of sunlight. In the center of the sky light is the R.I. Logo casting a great shadow on the floor.

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
Can I get you something to drink? Water? Bubbly? A shot of rye?

Speed smiles sheepishly.

SPEED
No... I'm okay.

REMMINGTON
So, I can see you have given some serious thought to this thing.

SPEED
I have, yes sir.

REMMINGTON
Good. That means that you understand that we are talking about not just your future, but your family's future.

SPEED
...my family means a lot to me.

REMMINGTON
I know. I can tell. That's why this is so important. Because you can help them. All you have to say is yes. That is all I need to hear and I can make so many things happen for you, and your family. Are you ready for that? Are you ready to say yes, Speed?

INT. K-HARRIER

Candy wrappers are scattered everywhere as they lay motionless in an overdose coma.

When they hear someone coming Sprittle manages to lift his head and crawl to the window.

CONTINUED:

A cleaning man is rising up on a cherry picker with a cart full of cleaning supplies.

SPRITTLE
Uh-oh.

He looks back at their mess.

SPRITTLE (CONT'D)
Jig's up.

A moment later the door opens and the cleaning man enters.

CLEANING MAN
Holy moly!

He grabs for his radio.

CLEANING MAN (CONT'D)
Hey, this is Marvin down at the landing pad. I think we got mice again.

As he talks, two shadows slip quietly out the door behind him.

INT. REMMINGTON'S OFFICE

Speed realizes that this is the threshold.

SPEED
This isn't an easy decision for me, Mr. Remmington. For my family, racing is everything. We eat, drink, think and breathe racing. There is nothing more perfect than a picnic at Thunderhead. I mean, I was taught to drive before I could walk. But when my brother died, all that went away. I can't tell you how painful that was. It nearly killed all of us. Especially Pops. He didn't set foot in his shop for over a year.

As the memory comes to life, we see the images in flashback.

CONTINUED:

SPEED (CONT'D)
But one night when I was still pretty young. I couldn't sleep and I went into the living room and there was Pops, in his beat up robe, watching some old race recordings.

The blue tv light of Speed's memory fills his eyes.

SPEED (CONT'D)
So I sat with him watching ol' Ben Burns coming round the last turn of he '43 Prix and all of a sudden Pops started screaming, and then I started screaming, and as Burns and Dugazi duked it out, heading for the finish, we were cheering our heads off and the second the black and white came down, we looked at each other and right there we realized the naked truth; racing is in our blood.

Flashback ends.

SPEED (CONT'D)
But for Pops, it isn't just a sport. It's way more important than that. It's like a religion and in our house, the Major Sponsors are kinda like the devil.

The coldness in Remmington's eyes belies his smile.

SPEED (CONT'D)
I don't mean to offend you sir and I do appreciate your offer, it's just, I guess I understand his point of view and after all we've been through, I don't think this kind of deal is for me.

Remmington chuckles.

REMMINGTON
You poor, naive, chump.

He chuckles again.

CONTINUED: (2)

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
I'm going to pretend I didn't hear that load of sickening schmaltz and I am going to give you a bit of an education. At the end of it if you're smart, you'll thank me and hen you'll sign that contract.

INT. TRAMWAY

Sprittle and Chim-chim are joy riding in the maintenance cart, weaving back an forth, wiping people out.

Chim-chim screams with glee.

INT. REMMINGTON'S OFFICE

They stand before an enlarged black and white photograph of five tycoons, smoking cigars, dressed in turn of the century tycoon finery, their well-fed faces bright with fatuous, self-satisfied smiles.

REMMINGTON
Look. There is the true spirit of the golden age of racing. Benjamin Braddack, Diamond Dave Tweksbury, Reginald White, Oliver Potter, and George Wheeler. The five most powerful men in the world at the turn of the last century.

As he talks we flash back to jittery old footage and photographs of the golden era.

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
For all intensive purposes they created the modern automotive industry. But the true stroke of their genius was the invention of the WRL, the world's first racing league.

Remmington leads Speed past several personal mementos including the first motor of his first car, the first milk bottle from victory lane, a black and white from an important race.

In front of an enlarged picture of Ben Burns from the infamous '43 Prix is a twisted and scorched piece of metal set on a pedestal like a gorgeous piece of art.

CONTINUED:

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
Interesting that you and your father were so moved by the '43 Prix. One of the great finishes in the history of racing, right? Everyone remembers Burns and Dugazi slugging it out, but who remembers Carl Potts? Driving a rebuilt Wittigan for Iodyne Industries, Potts spun out in the second lap and went down as a DNF. A forgettable and pathetic finish. So bad, that afterwards Iodyne stock dropped six points.

Again we see the history told in flashback.

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
Meanwhile, Ben Burns sat guzzling cold fresh milk in victory lane, a thousand cameras taking his picture, Sirrus Aeronautics saw almost a twelve point gain which immediately block Penninsula Power Cell from being able to afford the price of a complete take-over. This put Joel Goldman, the CEO of Iodyne Inc. in the exact position he wanted to be in. By first buying controlling interest in his own company at a devalued price, he then brokered a merger with Sirrus that immediately sent Iodyne into the gains record book--the only record book that matters. Look out that window, there isn't a single plane or helicopter or K-Harrier that isn't powered by Iodyne fuel cells. That's what racing is about. It has nothing to do with cars, or drivers. All that matters is power and the unassailable might of money.

His greed is as tangible as any drug.

INT. TRAMWAY

A security guard glides out of one of the red secured area doors on a segway.

CONTINUED:

His radio buzzes "perps last seen tramway four, driving a maintenance cart."

The doors start to close when Sprittle and Chim-chim jump out and sneak inside.

INT. REMMINGTON'S OFFICE

Speed doesn't want to hear any more of this, but Remmington is far from done.

REMMINGTON
Do you understand? Burns knew he was going to win. It was already decided. A week before the Prix, Goldman and Sirrus met with several other major players at the Carlyle Hotel. They met there as they had for years, just as their fathers had met, and as their sons and heirs will still meet. They met to negotiate the finish order of the Grand Prix. No race is more important and no race is more controlled. That year Goldman was supposed to win, but he knew if he sold his win to Sirrus, whatever that win might be worth, was nothing compared to what could be gained.

He turns back to the twisted piece of crash metal.

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
That's why I paid three million dollars for this burnt and twisted piece of metal. Because it reminds me of what really matters. This is the true heart of racing boy! This is my religion!

Speed is aghast.

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
You don't know how many times I have seen that same cow-eyed "say it isn't so" look of disbelief. Every bumpkin who comes in from the sticks looks exactly like you do now. I won't bother proving it to you.

CONTINUED:

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
If you walk away from me, if you walk out of this deal, you'll know how true it is soon enough. So, last chance. What's it going to be, Speed? Your father's little fantasy bubble? Or are you going to join the rest of us adults, here in reality?

INT. TRAMWAY

Several technician carts and trollies carrying auto parts pass by a single lab technician who staggers, drunkenly up to a red restricted area window.

Sprittle peaks out of the lower half of the lab coat, Chim-chim wearing the helmet, balances on his shoulder.

In the window they see a lab where they are testing a "spear-hook;" a secret attacking device that shoots out from one car and grabs hold of the undercarriage of another car.

As they realize what they are looking at, a security goon comes gliding up behind them on his seg-way.

INT. REMMINGTON'S OFFICE

Speed hands him the brown paper bag.

REMMINGTON
What's this?

He looks and sees the shoes and suit.

SPEED
If that's your idea of racing, you can keep it.

REMMINGTON
Listen to me and listen good kid, because I'm going to give you one more history lesson. You're going to go to Fuji--

In quick, collage cuts we see --

EXT. FUJI HELEXICON

A gorgeous blimp shot of the race track which takes up an entire island of Hawaii-like archipelago.

The track weaves in and out of the lush tropical landscape set against the ocean shimmering with sequins of sunlight.

EXT. STARTING LINE

Speed grips the steering wheel, revving the engine which rattles the car like thunder shaking the sky as-- The countdown finishes and as the cars explode forward, we cut back--

INT. REMMINGTON'S OFFICE

REMMINGTON
But you won't win. You won't place.

More collage cuts--

INT. FUJI ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

FUJI ANNOUNCER
Speed Racer's making his move, gunning for the lead--

EXT. HELEXICON TRACK

The Ghost sees Speed rushing up behind him.

GRAY GHOST
We got ourselves a real race here!

The two cars start dancing around each other; like two boxers sizing each other up.

GRAY GHOST (CONT'D)
Here we go, here we go.

Wham. Ghost throws the first punch which Speed tries to slip but, the Ghost anticipates his move and slams Speed hard.

CONTINUED:

GRAY GHOST (CONT'D)
Come on! Show me something! Show me what you got!

Speed ducks down the bank, working each wheel into a hyper drift, reversing their position--

Locking the Ghost up and sending both cars spinning.

GRAY GHOST (CONT'D)
Ohhhh yeah! Yeeeeeahhhhh!

INT. FUJI ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

FUJI ANNOUNCER
The Gray Ghost unloads a round-house, Speed counters, smashing, banging, bumping-

EXT. HELEXICON TRACK

Weaving back and fourth behind Speed, the Gray Ghost attacks with phantom punches that come out of nowhere.

GRAY GHOST
Here I come, kid! Watch out. Here I am! Nope--I'm over here!

Wham! Wham! Speed tries to counter punch and the Ghost slips under.

GRAY GHOST (CONT'D)
You can't touch me! I'm here! I'm gone!

Speed is thrown back into the pack of cars that quickly swallow him up where he is--

Crunched into the wall by the Zokeo Communications car, pinned until--

Racer X slams into the Zokeo car, freeing Speed but causing several cars tp swerve wildly at which point--

The Three Roses car torpedoes Katsu's car--

Bursting into a blizzard of metal snowflakes while--

INT. LUXURY BOOTH

Horuko jumps up, terrified for her brother as--

EXT. HELEXICON TRACK

Racer X roars past the debris and the bouncing rubber cocoons.

EXT. UPPER BOX GRAND STANDS

Cruncher accepts the congratulations of the goon beside him.

INT. REMMINGTON'S OFFICE

REMMINGTON DRIVER
I guarantee you right now, you won't even finish the race.

EXT. HELEXICON TRACK

Another molar-cracking hit as Speed avoids the concrete pylon but is then slammed by the Zokeo car--

Underneath both cars, a spear-hook shoots out from a hidden sleeve, harpooning the under-carriage of the Mach 5--

SPARKY
Speed, get out of there!

SPEED
I can't! I can't move!

The two cars head toward the final jump, locked in some strange embrace--

They lunge awkwardly, crashing on top of one another as--

Inside Speed's car, his face plate seals and the kwiksave-foam explodes, swallowing him, as the car tumbles--

Disintegrating into a cloud of smoke and glittering debris.

EXT. GRANDSTANDS

The Racer family is frozen. Their faces awash with fear and disappointment while--

INT. HELEXICON PENTHOUSE

Remmington eases back, a fatuous, self-satisfied smile spreading with a crocodile's grace.

INT. REMMINGTON'S OFFICE

REMMINGTON
Soon after that there will be litigation against some of your father's designs.

EXT. RACER HOUSE

It is pouring rain as a large cab pulls up to drop off the entire Racer family still wearing their island clothes.

A dour-faced man beneath an umbrella is waiting for them.

DOUR FACE
Are you Pops Racer of Racer Motors-

POPS
Yeah, but I'm still on vacation-

DOUR FACE
You are hereby served a summons.

POPS
What?

DOUR FACE
You are being sued for IP infringement by Janus Automakers.

SPEED
That's ridiculous!

DOUR FACE
That's for a jury to decide.

INT. REMMINGTON'S OFFICE

REMMINGTON
The legitimacy of the lawsuits won't matter. They will be enough to discredit his company. Whatever contracts he has, he'll lose. Within a year he will be filing for bankruptcy. After that, you and the rest of your pathetic family will be history.

The threat hangs in the air like a loaded gun between them.

SPEED
Pops was right. You are the devil.

The elevator suddenly opens with the security goon carrying Sprittle and Chim-chim by the scruff of their necks.

SPRITTLE
Speed!

SPEED
Sprittle?

SECURITY GOON
Mr. Remmington I caught these two snooping in a restricted area.

REMMINGTON DRIVER
Get this Racer trash out of my building.

SPEED
I'll see you at Fuji.

Speed turns and heads for the elevator.

REMMINGTON DRIVER
Yes and then you'll realize that you just made the biggest mistake of your life!

INT. RACER KITCHEN -MORNING

Close up on The Racing News that Sparky is reading from. The main headline: ANOTHER DIRTY RACER?

CONTINUED:

SPARKY
"...controversy surrounds Racer Motors now embroiled in IP litigation and while evidence remains inconclusive whether or not Speed used an illegal device, the Fuji Helexicon seems destined to become another mark of shame added to the notorious Racer family legacy, a legacy that has forever tainted the integrity of this beloved sport."

MOM
Sparky. That's enough.

SPARKY
Sorry ma'am.

SPRITTLE
I'm going to send that guy some Chim-chim cookies.

Chim-chim guffaws.

POPS
You'll do no such thing.

SPRITTLE
We gotta do something, Pops.

Speed steps into the doorway.

SPEED
This is exactly what he said would happen if I didn't drive for him.

SPARKY
You mean Remmington?

SPEED
He said it'd get worse and worse and by the end of the year you'd be filing for bankruptcy, Pops.

SPRITTLE
Okay, he's definitely gettin' some monkey cookies.

MOM
Sprittle!

CONTINUED: (2)

POPS
He was just trying to scare you, son. They tried the same thing with Rex. If it's a fight they want, it's a fight they'll get.

SPEED
How? What can we do? How can we fight this?

He tosses the newspaper.

POPS
The truth will come out.

SPEED
The truth? Don't be naive, Pops.

He leaves.

INT. SPEED'S ROOM

The Ben Burns poster is ripped from the wall. Speed wads its up and throws it into the garbage.

He sinks down to his bed, a sense of powerlessness crushing the life out of him.

Mom taps and then cracks the door.

MOM
Speed? Are you okay?

SPEED
...I don't know.

She comes in and sits beside him, putting her arm around him.

MOM
It'll be okay. We'll get through it.

SPEED
I don't know, mom. I might have really messed things up.

MOM
How?

SPEED
By not joining Remmington.

CONTINUED:

MOM
Don't be silly. You'd have never been happy driving for that terrible man.

SPEED
But maybe racing isn't about being happy. Maybe Remmington's right and it's all about business and anyone who doesn't understand that is just a chump.

MOM
Now you listen to me, young man. What you do behind the wheel of a racecar has nothing to do with business. Before you could even talk, you were making noises that sounded like a car engine. We used to tell people you were speaking car-ese. We used to try to take you to the park but you never wanted to get out of the car.

SPEED
...I loved that old wagon.

MOM
And do you remember the time Rex took you out to Thunderhead and let you drive--

Speed smiles.

SPEED
And I turned it over.

MOM
My heart still pounds just thinking about it.

SPEED
Rex told me the only reason we survived was because I was wearing red socks.

MOM
I thought your father was going to have a stroke when you walked in the door with that crazy smile.

INT. RACER LIVING ROOM - PAST

Ten year old Speed comes in the door, leading Rex, wearing a small bandage on his forehead, smiling, a big black gap where his two front teeth should be.

MOM
I don't think I ever saw you as happy as you were telling anybody who asked, how you lost your two front teeth in your first crash.

INT. SPEED'S ROOM - PRESENT

MOM
Speed, when I watch you do some of the things you do, I feel like I'm watching someone paint or play music. When I go to the races, I go to watch you make art and it's beautiful and inspiring and everything that art should be, even though there are times when I have to close my eyes. But then there are other times, when you just take my breath away and it's at those moments, when I feel your father's chest swell and I know he's smiling, trying to pretend he doesn't have tears in his eyes, I just go to pieces.

SPEED
Why?

MOM
Because I am so impossibly proud to be your mother. And even though your father doesn't say it, he is too.

She puts her arms around him.

MOM (CONT'D)
Don't worry. We'll figure this out. We just have to stick together. Something good will happen. You'll see.

Ding dong. The front doorbell chimes.

INT. RACER LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sprittle opens the door revealing Inspector Detector of the Corporate Investigation Bureau who looks older and harder than when we saw him in the flashbacks

Behind him is Racer X.

Sprittle sees the masked racer and screams.

Chim-Chim screams. They look at each other screaming and then slam the door.

They begin running around, flailing like Chicken Little, waving their arms in panic.

SPRITTLE
RACER HEX! THE HARBINGER OF BOOM!
RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!

Pops storms into the room.

POPS
What are you two squawking about?

They dive behind the couch but peek out as Pops heads for the door.

SPRITTLE
Pops, whatever you do, don't open the door!

EXT. RACER HOUSE

Racer X doesn't like it.

RACER X
This is a bad idea.

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
If it was any other driver, you'd be here.

Pops opens the door and Racer X sets his jaw.

POPS
Inspector Detector?

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
Good morning, Mr. Racer. I know it's been a long time--

CONTINUED:

He extends his hand and Pop shakes it.

POPS
Ten years.

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
Yes. I'm sorry for this intrusion, but I was hoping to have a word with you and Speed.

Pops eyes the masked racer.

INSPECTOR DETECTOR (CONT'D)
It's important.

INT. RACER LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mom serves coffee and cookies.

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
We've been after Remmington for years for dozens of capital corporate crimes including WRL fixing but we haven't had the evidence we need to convict him. Until now.

Sprittle and Chim-chim peek up from behind the couch as Mom offers the masked racer a cup of coffee.

MOM
Here you are, Mr. X.

Sprittle points at Racer X.

SPRITTLE
What's he doing here?

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
Racer X works closely with our WRL corporate crimes division, helping us recruit drivers like you, Speed. Most of the media, which you are now seeing is controlled by the Major Sponsors and they have done their best to paint him as a menace to the sport. The truth is he's our most valuable weapon against these villains.

SPEEED
Why does he always wear that mask?

CONTINUED:

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
If any of you actually knew his identity, you would become targets for his enemies which include some of the most vicious Fixers in the world.

Gulp. They both sink back down behind the couch.

SPEED
What do you want with me?

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
You're familiar with the driver Katsu Okamoto?

SPEED
Of course.

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
For years he has been contracted by a Fixer named Cruncher Block who we know works for Remmington. Recently, Katsu has been forced to lose races that have led to a droop in the stock price of Okamoto Engineering. We believe this is a part of a corporate strategy to allow Mushi motors to buy control of Okamoto. Katsu doesn't want this to happen and he began resisting, thinking that he could do it on his own. After Fuji, he realized he needed help.

POPS
Why help him?

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
Because he has a file with enough information to connect Block to Remmington which could put both of them behind bars for the rest of their lives. The problem is, he won't give us the file unless we help him stop the take over of his family's company.

SPEED
How?

CONTINUED: (2)

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
There is an up-coming race that Katsu believes if he can win, it will catapult Okamoto Engineering back into the spotlight and double the cost of the buy out which should kill it.

SPEED
But there aren't any more races left except for the Grand Prix and we both failed to qualify.

Inspector takes a big breath.

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
There aren't any track races. This is a cross-country rally.

SPARKY
You mean The Crucible?

POPS
What?!

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
I know it seems cruel of me to ask, but Katsu made it clear that he had to have Speed an X on his team or there would be no deal.

POPS
Absolutely out of the question.

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
You'll have the support of the entire C.I.B--

POPS
No! Rally racing is a back alley sport full of jackals, head-hunters and thugs! I'm sorry, Inspector but I lost one son to that death-trap. I won't lose another.

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
I understand. If you change your mind--

He starts to take out his card.

POPS
Keep your card, Chief Inspector.

CONTINUED: (3)

Speed looks at Pops, then realizes that Racer X is staring straight at him.

EXT. INSPIRATION POINT - NIGHT

It is raining, the cockpit bubble smeared with the distant traffic lights.

SPEED
And the way he was looking at me, I don't know...I just gotta do something.

TRIXIE
But Pops will never let you go.

SPEED
He won't if I ask him.

TRIXIE
Speed Racer what are you thinking?

SPEED
You weren't in Remmington's office, Trix. You don't know what it was like. It felt as though he had his hand inside my chest and he was trying to crush everything in my life that mattered to me.

TRIXIE
I hate him. I'm picturing his heart clogging with cholesterol right now.

SPEED
No joke, Trix. If you could have been in that room, you'd want to do anything you could to take this guy down.

She looks straight into his eyes and he doesn't have to say anything else.

TRIXIE
All right. Let's do it. You're going to need an alibi. We'll say we're going skiing.

SPEED
What? No way!

CONTINUED:

TRIXIE
You're going to need my help. Casa Cristo is a rally. I can spot from a 'copter.

SPEED
Trixie, this isn't a game. These people play rough.

TRIXIE
I know. That's why I'm coming with you. And if you even try to argue with me, I'll tell Pops right now and he won't let you out of his sight.

SPEED
You would, wouldn't you?

He looks into her eyes and knows the answer.

SPEED (CONT'D)
Well...I guess we're going skiing.

She smiles.

INT. REMMINGTON'S OFFICE

Remmington sits surrounded by the legal equivalent of knights, bishops and rooks while Mr. Mushi sits across from him supported by his own retinue.

Behind them, Cannonball Taylor blasts through the test course fast enough to coax a low rumble from the sound barrier.

REMMINGTON
As I'm sure you're aware, the Okamoto stock fell another four points yesterday. In the next few days it will hit bottom and they will have to sell.

The car roars through its elliptical path like a circling electron binding the two tycoons together.

MUSHI
This could be a most profitable year for Remmington.

Remmington can't hide the glow.

CONTINUED:

REMMINGTON
Mushi won't do too badly either.

Mushi nods.

Cannonball circles, everything in apparent harmony until Gennie leans in and whispers.

GENNIE
I know this is terrible timing sir, but I've just received confirmation of several last minute entries to the Casa Cristo 5000.

REMMINGTON
Who?

GENNIE
You're not going to like it.

INT. CASA CRISTO BLIMP

The two announcers beam into the camera.

ANNOUNCER
We're just minutes away from the start of the 82nd annual Casa Cristo Classic, the grand dame of cross-country, the second oldest rally race in the world, spanning two continents, three climate changes and five thousand kilometers of the most winding and treacherous roads ever raced.

He turns to his colleague.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
With me again is five time Casa Cristo champion, Johnny "Goodboy" Jones.

JOHNNY
Always great to be here. Such a beautiful city.

ANNOUNCER
One of the most romantic cities in the world.

INT. HOTEL

A bell man carefully unloads a cart. On top of the stack of suitcases is a gold fish bowl with a single ugly piranha.

Cruncher stands at the window balcony looking out over the white-washed city.

BELLMAN
Is there anything else I can do for you, sir?

CRUNCHER
Yeah...I wanna send someone a present.

INT. CASA CRISTO BLIMP

ANNOUNCER
Safety has been the primary concern for Casa Cristo officials, especially the last few years.

JOHNNY
That's right Bob. There were a number of fatalities several years ago. It really had a bad reputation for a while.

ANNOUNCER
Fans started calling it "The Crucible."

JOHNNY
Most of the T-180 drivers wouldn't come near it.

ANNOUNCER
But you look today, we've got some major names like Millie "the mouse" Manno, Snake Oiler and Katsu Okamoto as well as the young rising star Speed Racer. Not to mention, the shadow that seems to hang over every major race these days, the masked racer that some fans call the Harbinger of Boom. What's your take on Racer X?

CONTINUED:

JOHNNY
Obviously he is an extremely talented and disciplined driver.

ANNOUNCER
But is he a head hunter?

JOHNNY
I think he drives like he is not always interested in winning.

ANNOUNCER
Nuff' said.

JOHNNY
But remember Colton, these are standard road cars, not T-180s. I know a lot of T-180 drivers who I raced against who expected to win but found out racing a few laps on a track is a totally different animal than a cross-country rally.

ANNOUNCER
The marathon as opposed to the sprint?

JOHNNY
Exactly. This isn't just about going fast. It's about endurance. More than anything, winning Casa Cristo is a test of will.

INT. MACH 5

Speed grips his steering wheel like it was the handle of a weapon.

INT. INSPECTOR'S OFFICE

Inspector extends his hand which Speed grips tightly.

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
Speed, I want you to understand how much the C.I.B. appreciates your help on this.

SPEED
I'm not doing this to help C.I.B. I don't know anything about corporate crimes and honestly, if I did, it wouldn't really matter.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

SPEED (CONT'D)
I'm doing this because someone is trying to hurt my family and I'm going to do everything I can to hurt him back.

The masked racer is unable to mask his smile.

INT. CASA CRISTO BLIMP

ANNOUNCER
The reason T-180 drivers have always come to Casa Cristo is because the winner is automatically offered an invitation to the Grand Prix next week. A hold over from the days when rally racing was far more popular then track racing.

JOHNNY
Gosh how things have changed.

INT. KATSU'S CAR

The leather of his gloves creak as he wrings his steering wheel.

INT. HOTEL SUITE

The doorbell rings and Katsu goes to it.

A hotel bellman surrounded by Katsu's bodyguards is smiling.

SECURITY GUARD
He says it's for Horuko, from an admirer.

Katsu looks at the ribboned box as the guard runs his metal detector over it.

HORUKO
You see how we have to live?

He ignores her, turning away as she starts to open it.

She screams.

Inside the goldfish bowl the piranha shreds a piece of meat that could be a finger, staining the water red.

INT. CASA CRISTO BLIMP

JOHNNY
To compete in this race, you really have to have a killer instinct. Any sign of weakness or timidness is like blood in the water and you'll see how fast this race turns into a feeding frenzy.

INT. RACER X'S CAR

Racer X calmly checks his car's vitals as he revs his engine.

INT. C.I.B. DESIGN LAB

Racer X leads Speed and Inspector Detector through the lab to where Minx is working.

RACER X
We're going to need some insurance for this race.

Minx clicks away at a keyboard while a digital Mach 5 rotates on a screen.

RACER X (CONT'D)
Minx builds my cars.

SPEED
Nice to meet ya.

She purrs in response.

Racer X nods and she uses the computer to illustrate her modifications.

MINX
Their cars will probably be equipped with secret weapons so we have modified your car to try to counter their attacks. The "A" button will operate your normal jump-jacks.

The Mach 5 flips over on the screen highlighting the newly installed jump-jacks.

CONTINUED:

MINX (CONT'D)
"B" will seal your cockpit, which we've fortified with a bulletproof polymer.

Gun-bots fire digital bullets at the Mach 5 which ricochet off the blueprint glass.

MINX (CONT'D)
"C" will inflate an emergency hexadyno spare after any blowout.

Avatar vandals slash the Mach 5's tires, which explode then re-inflate.

MINX (CONT'D)
"D" will activate these zircon tipped saw blades that will cut through anything that tries to attach itself to you.

The Mach 5 opens like a Swiss army knife.

MINX (CONT'D)
"E" will project the tire crampons.

The image zooms in on the newly equipped cat-claw tires.

MINX (CONT'D)
And "F" will launch a remote control homing bird that is capable of transmitting QTVR footage anywhere you are.

A final click demonstrates the capabilities of the Mach 5's homing bird.

INT. CASA CRISTO BLIMP

ANNOUNCER
Every race fan has heard the rumors of spearhooks, tire shanks and battery boosters.

JOHNNY
The league has done a tremendous job to clean rally racing up. While it's true there have been a few bad apples, on the whole most teams stay within league rules.

He winks into the camera.

CONTINUED:

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
Or at least try not to get caught.

EXT. STARTING LINE

We glide through the lines of race cars with x-ray vision cam, revealing hidden weapons; spring loaded Ben-Hur tire shredders, all manner of grabbers and grapplers as well as bladders filled with oil or grease.

INT. RACER DEN

Sprittle and Chim-chim are settling in on the couch; a big bag of potato chips and ice filled glasses of coke.

The Casa Cristo is about to begin.

POPS
Sprittle!

Faster than a blink Sprittle grabs the remote and changes the channel to "Unser Charly," a German sitcom starring a monkey.

POPS (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

SPRITTLE
Just watching a little TV, Pops.

Pops looks at the TV suspiciously, then back at his son.

SPRITTLE (CONT'D)
It's his favorite show.

POPS
It's in German!

SPRITTLE
Not the monkey parts.

Chim-chim smiles.

POPS
Oh no you don't. You are not watching that race. Out you go. Outside. Get some exercise. You're too pale.

INT. CASA CRISTO BLIMP

ANNOUNCER
The moment the Queen of Casa Cristo sees the sun, she'll signal the start of the race.

EXT. DESERT VISTA

The horizon glows brighter, whispy clouds slowly soaking up the blood-orange light.

INT. HOTEL SUITE

They speak in Japanese.

HORUKO
This is wrong what you are trying to do.

KATSU
I have no choice. Their price is an insult to four generations of our family.

HORUKO
And if you die? Will then the price be high enough?

EXT. RAMPART

The Queen sees the sun about to break.

INT. MACH 5

Speed revs his engine, a bomb ready to blow.

EXT. CASA CRISTO MEMORIAL

A large memorial commemorates all the drivers who died during this race: "In memory of those who gave everything for their love of this sport."

Trixie stands beside Speed, both of them staring at the name carved into the bronze plaque; Rex Racer.

CONTINUED:

SPEED
I understand it now, Trix. I know why he left us.

She looks at him.

SPEED (CONT'D)
He was trying to change this rotten business and they killed him for it.

EXT. RAMPART

The Queen raises a starter's pistol.

INT. CRUNCHER'S HOTEL ROOM

Snake Oiler and his two HydroCell team-mates meet with Cruncher and his gang, including Vinny "Three-Fingers," his hand still bandaged.

SNAKE
This is supposed to be my race! I'm supposed to win! I got the green light! They promised I'd get to go to the Grand Prix! For eight years I've played by the rules! This is supposed to be my race!

CRUNCHER
Enough! I can't stand the whining!

VINNY
Like a baby needing its diaper changed.

Snake works his jaw looking for the right comeback.

CRUNCHER
It's simple. We have a team of wild cards. The problem is these wild cards are better drivers than you.

SNAKE
Like hell they are!

CRUNCHER
Prove it. Take out Katsu. The other two will quit.

CONTINUED:

Snake seethes.

SNAKE
You just watch me. Come on!

He and his boys storm out, slamming the door behind them.

EXT. RAMPART

The sun cracks the horizon and the Queen fires the gun.

All at once tires explode into a wail of rubber burning agony, smoke billowing from the sound of their screams.

The cars shoot down through the corridor of the small streets like shotgun pellets through a barrel.

EXT. CASA CRISTO

The cars roar through the streets to the cheers of the locals, while above, team helicopters circle with the industriousness of bees.

INT. HELICPOTER

Trixie speaks into her headset.

TRIXIE
Katsu, HydroCell's coming up on your left.

The HydroCell cars jostle their way towards Katsu, Speed and Racer X.

INT. RACER X'S CAR

RACER X
I got him.

INT. HOTEL SUITE

Racer X and Speed are escorted by Okamoto security into the room.

Speed notices Horuko standing on the balcony and is struck by her beauty.

Katsu bows.

CONTINUED:

KATSU
It is such an extraordinary honor to have such talent on my team.

RACER X
Let's skip the niceties and cut to the chase.

Katsu arches an eyebrow.

RACER X (CONT'D)
The only reason we're here is because you needed two outsiders and because the Chief Inspector believes you'll turn over your file on Remmington and Block.

Racer X eyes him.

RACER X (CONT'D)
I don't believe it. I don't trust anyone who needs this kind of deal before they'll bring a criminal to justice.

The accusation hangs in the air.

RACER X (CONT'D)
But I'm willing to take a chance that you'll prove me wrong.

KATSU
You won't regret your decision.

RACER X
We'll see. Until then you have my word that I will do everything I can to make sure you checker at Bartimaeus.

Katsu smiles.

EXT. CASA CRISTO

Racer X smashes into one of the HydroCell team, knocking him into a series of billboards.

Katsu again smiles.

KATSU
Arrigato, X. Arrigato.

INT. HOTEL SUITE

They stand around a GPS map of the race.

SPEED
If they're so desperate, why not just use some kind of sniper? There's a million places someone could hide if they were really trying to kill you.

RACER X
Any obvious crime would allow the Chief Inspector to shut the race down. That kind of scrutiny would only hurt the business. They'll do as much as they can to make it appear legit.

Speed nods.

RACER X (CONT'D)
The real problem we'll have is after the first leg. Cortega is going to be extremely dangerous. Take my advice, keep your family away from Cortega.

Speed again looks out at Moruko on the balcony.

EXT. CASA CRISTO

Katsu roars out of the city onto the desert road.

INT. CASA CRISTO BLIMP

ANNOUNCER
They're out of the city and heading into the Zunubian Desert.

EXT. ZUNUBIAN DESERT

The chain of cars weave along the ribbon of concrete while the desert dunes raise up around them.

A red bearded driver named Billy Steel-belted, his team covered in the Manecks' logo, begins sliding up next to Speed.

EXT. SQUARE

A cobra peeks his head out of a basket, charmed by a gorgeous woman playing her flute.

In the audience, Cruncher moves up behind Billy.

He hands him a small black velvet bag.

Billy pours out a fistful of star-dust; the glint of diamonds glitter in the greed of his smile.

EXT. ZUNUBIAN DESERT

Billy smiles revealing his diamond studded teeth then swerves at Speed.

INT. HELICOPTER

Trixie sees the attack coming.

TRIXIE
Speed, jump!

INT. MACH 5

Speed does, just as Billy's car plows through, passing under him.

RACER X
He's not alone.

EXT. ZUNUBIAN DESERT

The Manecks team attacks, their cars flying at Katsu even as a second team, the Atomic Injectables led by Tyrus Tropp also attacks.

RACER X
This surprises me.

SPEED
Why?

RACER X
Tyrus is a good man. I wouldn't expect him to turn head-hunter. They aren't pulling any punches.

INT. BASEMENT

Cruncher sits, shadows drawn around him like the folded wings of a bat, across from a stoic looking Tyrus. Cruncher slides an envelope across the table.

Tyrus looks at the goons surrounding him, then picks it up.

Inside are the photographs of a beautiful girl playing in a park. The hard edge in Tyrus' expression immediately softens turning to fear.

Cruncher smiles like a snake that has just found an egg.

INT. CASA CRISTO BLIMP

ANNOUNCER
Things have started heating up, as the cars head out across the desert flats.

EXT. DESERT FLATS

The swerving, weaving chain of cars churns up a massive cloud of dust in their wake.

Attacking cars are caught and spun out by Racer X and Speed.

A hurricane of sand and dirt swirl around Katsu who sits calmly in the eye of the storm while--

His guardian angels go into overdrive.

Racer X and Speed seem like they have been driving together all their lives.

RACER X
Lead him--

SPEED
Here ya go!

Speed leads an attack straight into Racer X's counter.

RACER X
Wing left.

SPEED
Flying in!

CONTINUED:

He jumps one car and blocks the attack on X.

As their cars merge in and out from one another, something seems perfectly clear to Speed--

He is back at Thunderhead with the ghost of his brother, dancing around each other until--

TRIXIE
Speed!

Wham! Billy slams up against him--

Throwing a lever, a grappler locks on to the Mach 5.

SPEED
He's got me! I'm locked up!

Another lever is pumped like a tire pump and a sheaved blade begins stabbing at Speed's tires.

Racer X watches unable to leave Katsu unprotected.

Speed hits the D button and the zircon saw blades start gliding through the grappler.

RACER X
Get out of there!

SPEED
I'm trying!

The knife slashes the tire which explodes just as the grappler is cut--

Speed flips away free, hitting the "C" button causing a new tire to inflate while he's upside down--

Landing on a new tire, without missing a beat.

Tyrus rushes into the opening, but this time it's Katsue who works a hidden lever and--

A Katana-like blade flashes, a samurai slash across the front tire--

Bowing it out, flipping the entire car, which tumbles back straight at Speed, forcing him to try a split-jack jump--

Firing only the rear jump-jacks, launching the back end of the car while--

CONTINUED: (2)

The front end of the Mach 5 clips against the Atomic Injectibles car--

Sending Speed flipping end over end but landing with strangely beautiful grace.

INT. CASA CRISTO BLIMP

JOHNNY
Oh my god! Did I just see that!?

ANNOUNCER
A rear single set jump into a forward flip!

JOHNNY
I know he blew up at Fugi, but this kid is flat out magic!

EXT. RACER BACKYARD

Sprittle and Chim-chim are laying in lounge chairs wearing bathing suits and tanning goggles, holding tanning mirrors under their chins.

Pops walks up.

POPS
I've got to go into town for some parts. I'll be back for lunch.

SPRITTLE
Sure thing Pops.

Pops looks at them, shakes his head and walks off.

Sprittle slowly lowers his tanning goggles to watch him go.

SPRITTLE (CONT'D)
Let's go!

They drop their mirrors and bolt for the house.

INT. RACER DEN

They're back with chips and cokes clicking on the tv as the cars storm across the desert.

They start crunching away, oblivious to the sound of the front door opening.

CONTINUED:

POPS
Honey, I can't find my wallet--

Pops enters the room expecting to find Mom but catches them red-handed.

POPS (CONT'D)
Sprittle!

He sees the race on tv.

POPS (CONT'D)
You two are in--

SPRITTLE
Wait! Pops, before you get mad at us--Look!

Sprittle points at the tv eyes wide.

POPS
I'm not falling for that--

SPRITTLE
It's Speed!

POPS
Speed's skiing.

SPRITTLE
Then who's driving the Mach 5?

Pops turns and indeed, there's the Mach 5 barrelling across the red baked earth of Zunubia.

POPS
Oh no.

INT. CASA CRISTO BLIMP

ANNOUNCER
We're nearing the end of the first leg of the Casa Cristo as Snake Oiler, lead driver for the HydroCell team, roars through the streets of Cortega, heading for the finish.

EXT. CORTEGA

The HydroCell team rear through the cobblestone streets of the medieval city crossing the finish line to a cheering crowd.

INT. CASA CRISTO BLIMP

ANNOUNCER
The HydroCell team jumped on the lead early and would not give it up.

JOHNNY
They made excellent time. Okamoto is still a couple of minutes behind them.

ANNOUNCER
They have their work cut out for them tomorrow.

INT. LUXURY CORTEGAN HOTEL

A medieval estate renovated into a hotel.

Katsu smashes a buffet laid out for the Okamoto team.

KATSU
If we drive tomorrow like we drove today we will lose!

He points at the masked racer.

KATSU (CONT'D)
You will get nothing! All of this will be meaningless!

SPEED
Relax. Snake's weak on turns. We'll catch him in the mountains.

KATSU
We might if you stop showing off.

SPEED
Hey, all I was doing was saving your ass.

Katsu raises a fist, but Racer X catches it.

CONTINUED:

RACER X
Don't fall apart yet. There's still a lot of race to run.

Katsu jerks free of Racer X and storms towards the door immediately enveloped by his security team.

Speed looks at Racer X as though he can suddenly see through the mask.

RACER X (CONT'D)
A C.I.B. Man will be posted outside your door. We got their attention today. You and Trixie should be very careful tonight.

Speed nods as Racer X heads for the door.

SPEED
Racer X--

He stops.

SPEED (CONT'D)
I thought we made a good team today. It felt like we'd been doing it for a long time.

He hesitates.

RACER X
If you say so.

He turns away leaving Speed alone.

INT. REMMINGTON'S OFFICE

Remmington wrings the phone as if it were a chicken's neck.

REMMINGTON
Ineptitude? Is this what I pay you for?

CRUNCHER
They ain't checkered yet.

REMMINGTON
If they do, I assure you it will be a very costly mistake for everyone.

He hangs up.

CONTINUED:

ASSISTANT
Mr. Remmington, you have Mr. Mushi on line two.

Remmington was dreading this call. He hits the button.

REMMINGTON
Mr. Mushi--

MUSHI
So, is this what guarantee means to you, Mr. Remmington? Perhaps your dictionary has a different definition.

REMMINGTON
I understand there is a problem, but I assure you there is no need to panic.

MUSHI
I am not calling to panic. I am calling to inform you that we will be addressing the problem ourselves, as your assurances and guarantees leaves much to be desired.

He hangs up leaving Remmington to stew in his juice.

INT. RACER HOTEL ROOM

Speed and Trixie are eating a room service dinner.

SPEED
It was very weird, Trix. I knew every move he was going to make and he knew mine. It was so familiar. Maybe I'm crazy but Racer X first showed up two years after Rex's death.

TRIXIE
But Speed, Rex was cremated.

SPEED
A body was cremated. Remember it had already been badly burned in the crash. Even if it was Rex, no one could have recognized him.

CONTINUED:

TRIXIE
So you think he faked the crash with a different body in the driver's seat?

SPEED
Somehow the kwik-save was disconnected. Inspector Detector suspected foul play but nothing could be proved.

TRIXIE
Okay, let's say it's all true. Why would we do it?

SPEED
I don't know. Maybe the same reason I'm here.

Ding dong.

Speed goes to the door.

C.I.B. SECURITY MAN
I'm sorry to disturb you sir, but do you know these people?

Speed sticks his head out and there they are--

INT. HALLWAY

His family, Pops in front like a kettle ready to boil.

SPEED
Yeah...

INT. RACER HOTEL ROOM

Pops rages while Sprittle and Chim-chim pick through their dinner.

POPS
Is this the kind of driver I have? Someone who disobeys? Someone who lies to me? Is this the kind of son I have raised? And you, Trixie, you know what this race did to this family. Did either of you stop to think about us? Huh? Speed, did you think about your mother? Or your brother?
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

POPS (CONT'D)
What it would do if something happened to you?

SPEED
That's all I've been thinking about, Pops. You, Mom, Sprittle, Sparky.

Chim-chim shouts.

SPEED (CONT'D)
Yeah, you too, Chim-chim. We are in serious trouble, Pops, and it's all my fault.

POPS
This is not the place or the race to do anything about that.

SPEED
Why not?

POPS
Because it won't do any good?

SPEED
You don't know that.

POPS
You think you can drive a car and change the world?! It doesn't work like that!

SPEED
Maybe not. But it's the only thing I know how to do and I gotta do something.

POPS
That's unacceptable! This is over. Pack your things. We're going home.

Speed has never directly disobeyed his father.

SPEED
I can't. I'm sorry, Pops.

POPS
What?!

SPEED
I'm staying.

CONTINUED: (2)

TRIXIE
So am I.

POPS
No you're not! You're coming home, right now!

SPEED
I'm not a child, Pops. You can't tell me how to live my life. If you want to fire me as your driver, then fine, do it. But it won't change the fact that I am going to finish this race.

Pops looks ready to have an aneurism.

POPS
God, you sound like Rex. Do you want to die like him too? Will that make you happy?

SPEED
Don't take it out on me because you feel guilty for what happened to Rex.

MOM
Okay, you two. That's enough. Pops, if they're staying, then we're staying.

SPRITTLE
All right, room service!

MOM
I suggest we try to do everything we can to make sure we go home together.

Pops fumes working his jaw, standing toe to toe with Speed.

POPS
Where's the Mach-5?

SPEED
Logged with security.

POPS
You added something to it?

SPEED
Some defensive modifications.

CONTINUED: (3)

POPS
The whole thing's out of balance, isn't it?

SPEED
It pulls left, rides a little stiff.

POPS
Sparky.

Pops and Sparky leave to do their work.

Speed feels terrible. He looks at his Mom.

SPEED
I'm sorry, Mom.

MOM
Your father loves you Speed. He's just afraid that--

SPEED
I know. It's gonna be okay.

MOM
You wouldn't lie to your mother would you?

SPEED
Never again.

She hugs him.

INT. HALLWAY

It is later.

A burly C.I.B. Man stands guarding a door when he feels a bee sting on his neck.

The dart's poison acts quickly dropping the agent to the floor as a ninja emerges from the shadows.

INT. HOTEL SUITE

Katsu sleeps soundly.

Above him, in the shadows of the vaulted ceiling there is a flash, as a piece of metal glints against the moonlight.

EXT. HOTEL

Another ninja crawls like a spider down to an open window.

INT. RACER HOTEL ROOM

The sheer curtains undulate in the open window of Speed's room as a masked face lowers into view.

The men of the Racer family lay scattered about the room in cots and on the couches. Mom and Trixie are in the connecting room.

INT. HOTEL SUITE

A liquid travels down a wire that hangs poised about Katsu's lips.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

A ninja enters Racer X's bedroom and sees him asleep in his bed.

INT. RACER HOTEL ROOM

The ninja creeps past the sleeping men to Speed's bed.

INT. HOTEL SUITE

The oil drips onto Katsu's lips.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

A blowgun is raised.

INT. RACER HOTEL ROOM

Standing over Speed, the ninja withdraws a syringe from his hidden chest pocket.

INT. HOTEL SUITE

Katsu licks his lips as--

INT. HOTEL ROOM

The blowgun is fired, burying itself into the mound of pillows.

Racer X, his face shrouded in shadows, emerges from the darkness where all marked men sleep, behind the couch.

The ninja realizes he's been tricked and spins just as Racer X attacks.

INT. RACER HOTEL ROOM

The syringe moves towards Speed's neck when--

Sprittle rolls over, knocking chim-chim with his arm, waking him up and as soon as he sees the ninja--

He screams.

Sprittle screams.

The ninja attacks stabbing at Speed who just barely catches the needle. The ninja tries to wing-chun the hypodermic free but--

Speed is too quick and he forces the needle into the headboard as--

Sparky jumps onto the ninja's back.

SPARKY
I got him! I got hiiiyow--

The ninja throws Sparky across the room and tries to bolt but Speed is up and throwing a quick combo.

The ninja stumbles, but a manages a spin-kick that knocks Speed back as--

Pops grabs the ninja from behind.

POPS
You attack my family?! You try to hurt my son?!

Pops twists the squirming ninja through a series of wrestling moves--

Finishing the ninja in a spinning over head helicopter--

CONTINUED:

Launching him out the window.

Trixie and Mom burst in from the adjoining room.

TRIXIE
Oh my god? Was that a ninja?

Pops cracks his knuckles.

POPS
More like a non-ja. Terrible what passes for a ninja these days.

She looks out the window and smiles; this family's still got it.

TRIXIE
Cool beans.

There is a hurried knock at the door.

POPS
I'll get it.

It is Horuko, surrounded by security.

HORUKO
Oh, I am sorry. I was looking for Speed Racer.

Speed moves to the door.

SPEED
Horuko? Are you all right?

HORUKO
No. Something terrible has happened.

INT. HOTEL SUITE

Katsu can barely sit up, his arm draped over Horuko, his head lolling from side to side.

The family is gathered around them and Racer X, who is again wearing the mask.

Racer X tastes the needle of the blow dart.

RACER X
Narcolyte Benzamine. A highly effective and debilitating drug.
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

RACER X (CONT'D)
Stays in the system for hours, but leaves with no trace.

KATSU
I'll be...fine...by morning...

RACER X
No you won't. You can't drive a car. You can barely stand up.

Katsu leaps to his feet.

KATSU
You do not tell me what I can do--

He suddenly collapses to the floor.

HORUKO
Katsu!

She tries to help him, but he is unconscious.

SPEED
What are we going to do?

They all look to each other for an answer, but no one seems to have one.

INT. MR. MUSHI'S BEDROOM

The phone wakes him and he grunts into the phone in indiscernible Japanese.

MUSHI
...I have been assured that our problem has been solved.

REMMINGTON
Perhaps your definition of "solved" is different from mine.

EXT. CORTEGA

In the distance, the medieval walled city sinks behind a hill as the sun rises, the sound of rolling thunder swelling as--

The race cars come flying over the hill, exploding past us.

INT. CASA CRISTO BLIMP

ANNOUNCER
The second leg of the Casa Cristo is under way. And the stage is set for what might be one of the most ferocious rallies we've seen in years.

EXT. HIGHWAY

Crowds lining the road cheer as the cars scream past.

Already starting to nudge and buck, trying to force an early mistake, Speed and Racer X are immediately forced into their aggressively defensive driving.

Speed seems particularly wired.

SPEED
Watch your line!

Okamoto adjusts.

SPEED (CONT'D)
Cut left! Now!

Speed flies into block for Okamoto, but Okamoto doesn't create enough space.

SPEED (CONT'D)
Watch it!

They kiss with the shriek of crashing metal.

INT. HELICOPTER

Pops and Trixie ride in the helicopter with Sparky spotting.

SPARKY
Packs leaning left, look for a slingshot on the right!

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD

Almost on cue, the Medius Rez team launches at Okamoto, who feints left and jumps, allowing Speed to smash-block to the inside.

CONTINUED:

RACER X
Speed, you're too tight!

The cars bounce and Speed takes a hit, spinning for moment before he regains control.

Speed mumbles to himself.

SPEED
This is completely--

INT. HELICOPTER

And Pops mumbles finishing Speed's thought.

POPS
Absolutely crazy.

INT. HOTEL HALL

The security guard receives confirmation.

GUARD
The chopper is ready ma'am.

Horuko is escorted out, surrounded by her security detail.

EXT. HOTEL

Cruncher's thug watches through binoculars as Horuko exits the hotel, then reports through his Bluetooth.

THUG
She's leavin' da hotel now.

INT. HELICOPTER

Sparky scouts the upcoming terrain.

SPARKY
Wicked sidewinder coming up.
Watch the inside-out. Could get ugly.

EXT. HELIPAD

Horuko is escorted to her waiting helicopter.

INT. THUGMOBILE

The crew of thugs negotiates the winding crowded streets.

THUG
Yeah, boss. Signal's loud and clear.

On the dash is a GPS map with a blinking signal.

EXT. SWITCHBACK

The chain of jostling cars weave up the switchback with the violence of clattering pachinko balls.

INT. POLICE CAR

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
They're airborne? You're sure? Good. Double the guard for her arrival in Bartimaeus. I gave my word nothing would happen to his sister and I mean to keep it.

The Inspector gets another call.

INSPECTOR DETECTOR (CONT'D)
Inspector Detector...Mrs. Racer? What kind of emergency?

INT. HORUKO'S HELICOPTER

The helicopter races across the scenic landscape. Inside the cockpit, the pilot sets the auto-pilot on and releases the stick.

He stands and pulls out a gun. It is Cruncher Block.

EXT. SWITCHBACK

Speed is driving like a maniac.

SPEED
Left! Drift tight! Tight!

Okamoto looks like he's about to go over the edge.

CONTINUED:

SPEED (CONT'D)
No!

INT. HORUKO'S HELICOPTER

The pilot opens the door to the posh passenger cabin. The two security men go for their guns but Cruncher has the drop.

CRUNCHER
Don't do it!

They raise their hands.

CRUNCHER (CONT'D)
On the ground! Now!

They get on the floor.

Horuko stands and Cruncher whips his gun around to her.

CRUNCHER (CONT'D)
Gotcha--

But suddenly, something is wrong, his eyes going wide as he realizes--

Horuko is not Horuko.

Horuko is Katsu.

CRUNCHER (CONT'D)
What the--

Katsu snatches Cruncher's gun and the Fixer is too stunned to do anything to stop it.

CRUNCHER (CONT'D)
You...cheater.

The security team seizes hold of him.

CRUNCHER (CONT'D)
But if you're here, who's--?

EXT. SIDEWINDER ROAD

Katsu's car swerves wildly back into the middle of the road.

INT. KATSU'S CAR

Trixie has had enough. She yanks up the dark visor on the helmet.

TRIXIE
That's better. Couldn't see anything.

She gains control and eases the car into the slot.

SPARKY
That's it. Nice line, Trix.

INT. HELICOPTER

Horuko sits beside Sparky, wearing Trixie's clothes.

SPARKY
Top of the hill's coming. Snake's got at least a quarter mile on ya.

TRIXIE
Well, let's go get him.

SPEED
If you'd been a little more careful, he wouldn't be ahead of us.

TRIXIE
I told you I couldn't see outta this dang helmet. It's too big.

SPEED
I can't believe you talked us into this ridiculous idea.

TRIXIE
What's ridiculous about it? You're the one always telling me I'm a better driver than most of the WRL.

SPEED
Now's not the time to prove it!

TRIXIE
Why not?

SPEED
It's too dangerous!

CONTINUED:

TRIXIE
Too dangerous for me but not for you?

RACER X
Children, focus! If we're going to have a chance we're going to have to pass Snake before the rendezvous.

TRIXIE
I'm ready. Let's roll.

She floors it, pulling out, leaving Speed shaking his head and trying to keep up.

They smear through a hairpin turn and as they close on the nearest cars it is immediately apparent that they are no longer driving protectively or defensively--

They are attacking.

Racer X leaps at the bumper of one car, corner-checking him into the rail while--

Trixie hits like a cue ball on the break, scattering several cars--

Leaving Speed little to clean up.

INT. HELICOPTER

Sparky cheers.

SPARKY
Wahoo! Go get 'em, girl!

INT. SNAKES'S CAR

He sees them in the rear view mirror.

SNAKE
Here they come! Pick it up!

INT. BLIMP

C.C. ANNOUNCER
Here comes the Okamoto team, making their move.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD

Every winding turn is another click on a fishing rod as they slowly reel the HydroCell team in.

The Okamoto team moves with synchronized grace while Snake and his team struggle to hold their line.

SNAKE
Watch it! What're you doin'?!

The mountains undulate, the cars dip and rise caught in the current of this concrete river--

Flowing one way then another, the cars sawing across the belly of one bend, drifting into the curve of another until--

The Hydrocell emerges over the crest of a hill with the Okamoto team tight to their bumpers.

SNAKE (CONT'D)
Just try it! Try to pass! Just try it!

Racer X knows they're ready.

RACER X
Take 'em.

SPEED
With pleasure.

Speed slingshots from the back position, hurling alongside the HydroCell team until--

Snake blocks him, setting up an attack by one of his team but this just allows Racer X a hole to punch through.

The cars continue to slug it out still weaving up the mountain road, climbing it seems to helicopter or blimp height.

INT. BLIMP

ANNOUNCER
Now the gloves are off and they are pounding one another, bumper to bumper, rail to rail!

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD

It remains at one level of intensity until--

Snakes bashes Trixie hard into the rail, driving her almost over the edge, causing her to shriek from the force of the blow--

And Speed loses it.

His jaw clenches, shifting into a whole new level of intensity.

He becomes a cyclone, a whirling dervish, enveloping the HydroCell team in a cloud of chaos--

Throwing, rending, ripping through them until only Snake is left.

Speed is not kind; battering him until he's not sure if he's going forward or backward.

In a panic, Snakes reaches for a hidden lever but before he can take hold of it, Speed clobbers him again, causing him to shriek louder than Trixie and then--

Recede quickly away like a dog with its tail tightly tucked.

INT. HELICOPTER

SPRITTLE
Oh yeah!

Pops can't help a flash of delight.

POPS
...that's my boy.

INT. BLIMP

C.C. ANNOUNCER
The Okamoto Team roars into the lead behind some very aggressive driving by Speed Racer.

JOHNNY
You kiddin' me? He just tore Snake a new tailpipe!

INT. KATSU'S CAR

SPEED
Trix? You all right?

She's obviously shaken up.

TRIXIE
Yeah, sure. 10-4 and ready for more.

Speed shakes his head, wanting this to be over.

RACER X
Then let's move it. We got some time to eat up.

INT. HORUKO'S HELICOPTER

Cruncher is buckled into a seat with his arms tied behind him. He glares at Katsu who is changing into his racing leathers.

CRUNCHER
Haven't ya heard? Cheaters never prosper.

SECURITY GUARD
Sir, we've got the lead! They're heading for the rendezvous, now!

Katsu looks back at Cruncher and smiles.

KATSU
Excellent.

INT. THUGMOBILE

No answer. The thug hangs up.

THUG
Somethin' ain't right.

INT. HELICOPTER

They head down towards the rendezvous which is a hidden alpine nook, surrounded by mountains.

CONTINUED:

HORUKO
You're sure, no cameras here?

POPS
Checked it this morning. Quite a few dead spots in these mountains.

EXT. RENDEZVOUS

The Okamoto team roars up to where everyone is waiting.

Speed climbs out of the Mach-5 and heads straight for Trixie.

SPEED
I told you--

She turns ready to fight, if that's what he wants.

SPEED (CONT'D)
You are one helluva driver.

She smiles.

TRIXIE
You're not so bad yourself.

Sparky and Pops go to work, changing fuel cells and starting to pound out some of the serious dents.

Racer X sees Cruncher guarded by the security team.

RACER X
What's he doing here?

KATSU
Stowaway. Weren't sure what to do with him.

RACER X
Do what he'd do; break his legs and let him walk back.

Horuko bows to Trixie.

HORUKO
Thank you so much.

TRIXIE
It was a blast.

SPARKY
Cells reloaded!

CONTINUED:

SPEED
Let's go!

They start to turn until machine gun fires objects.

THUG
Nobody move!

The thugs emerge from the surrounding wood.

POPS
What is this?!

He strides towards the nearest goon but bullets spit up the earth and snow at his feet causing him to freeze in place.

CRUNCHER
This is called a change of plan.

Now freed, one of the thugs tosses him a gun.

THUG
Yeah, that's right. We're changing your plan that changed our plan to change your plan...right boss?

Cruncher decides to ignore that.

CRUNCHER
The new plan-- what was it, again? Break your legs, make you walk back? I like that.

He stands smiling in front of Racer X.

CRUNCHER (CONT'D)
But first, I think it's time to play a little peek-a-boo, I-see-you.

INT. BLIMP

C.C. ANNOUNCER
We are still waiting for the Okamoto team to come out of the pass.

JOHNNY
Those roads can really ice up. Very dangerous.

EXT. RENDEZVOUS

One of the thugs pins Racer X's arms back as Cruncher goes for the mask while--

Unnoticed by anyone, the trunk of the Mach-5 pops open and four eyes peek out.

Cruncher starts to peel back the mask when a rock clips him on the side of his head.

CRUNCHER
Ow!

SPRITTLE
Monkey cookie!

He turns just as--

Whap! A monkey cookie in the kisser.

SPRITTLE (CONT'D)
Nice shot!

Chim-chim howls as Sprittle reloads his sling-shot.

POPS
Sprittle?!

CRUNCHER
Get that monkey!

The goons are confused, distracted, and before they can control it, the fight is on--

Racer X throws the thug holding him--

Speed and Trixie dish out equal measures of chop-socky and good ol' American slug-fu as--

Pops grapples and wrestles his goon into a head-lock.

Racer X hammers Cruncher to the ground where he sees his gun, scrambling for it but just as he reaches for it--

Katsu steps on his hand.

It's a short quick turn around and--

RACER X
Looks like another change of plan.

CONTINUED:

The security guards herd up Cruncher and the thugs while Pops turns his attention to--

POPS
Sprittle! Get over here!

SPRITTLE
Ahhhh!

He and Chim-chim run behind Speed.

SPEED
Sprittle this isn't a game. You could've been killed in there.

SPRITTLE
I know it was bad! I know we shouldn't have done it. But Chim-chim was really really scared.

SPEED
Chim-chim?

SPRITTLE
Okay, I was a little scared too.

TRIXIE
Scared of what?

Sprittle clings to his big brother.

SPRITTLE
I didn't want what happened to Rex to happen to you.

Racer X and Pops feel a hidden wound open.

SPRITTLE (CONT'D)
We just thought if you got into trouble, maybe we could help and it's a good thing we did.

Speed looks at Pops as if Sprittle is making a good point.

POPS
Oh no, you're not getting off that easy. If your mother hasn't had a heart attack already, I'm sure she'll know what to do with you two.

The last of Pops line is lost to the squeal of tires and roar of engines as the HydroCell team flies by.

CONTINUED: (2)

KATSU
Go! Go! Go!

They rush to their cars, Speed leaping into the Mach-5.

Engines growl, tires spin and gravel spits as the three cars shoot back into the race.

INT. BLIMP

C.C. ANNOUNCER
First out of the pass is... the HydroCell team?

JOHNNY
Uh-oh. They better send the emergency trailer--

C.C. ANNOUNCER
Wait! Is that--

Like eagles dropping from the sky, the Okamoto ream soars out of the mouth of the pass.

INT. BLIMP

JOHNNY
Here we go again.

C.C. ANNOUNCER
Whatever happened in that pass has left Okamoto back where they started but now only one obstacle stands between Snake Oiler and victory--

JOHNNY
The Maltese Ice Caves.

INT. HELICOPTER

Trixie notices as Pops begins to bite his lip. She whispers to Sparky.

TRIXIE
This is where Rex...

Sparky nods.

EXT. MALTESE ICE CAVES

Moon-white sheaves mottled against coke-bottle colored ice floes rise up, a glistening wall of glacial plates surrounding the thin ribbon of road.

Speed enters the first series of caves bored through earth and ice, a stroboscopic oscillation of light and dark, ads and no ads as--

The memory of watching Rex disappear down the throat of one of these caves haunts him.

KATSU
Speed?! What are you doing?

SPEED
Sorry.

RACER X
Are you all right?

SPEED
I'm fine.

Ahead, the HydroCell team grows from small silhouettes flashing in and out of sight, closer and closer, larger and larger until--

Once more the three chase cars lock onto their rear bumper.

INT. RACER X'S CAR

RACER X
The next cave's a rattler.

KATSU
What is that?

SPEED
Double S.

RACER X
We'll make our move in there.

EXT. MALTESE ICE CAVES

The open maw swallows the segmented train of cars, each one slipping down into an underworld--

CONTINUED:

Where there is no purchase for advertisements--

Only the cold, wet darkness where white lights chase after red ones.

Speed tries to shake his fear when X calls for the attack.

RACER X
Now.

The cars split apart, Racer X leading the charge as--

Sparks flash as with the cross of swords, metal striking metal and--

The ice-crusted walls sparkle with star-bursts of violence--

The cacophony ringing through the first bending curve.

It is obvious that the conditions are much more difficult, a sword fight on a frozen lake--

Each of the drivers, skidding, wobbling, drifting farther then they anticipated, but--

The Okamoto team are just too good, eliminating one and then the other HydroCell cars until--

Speed again has Snake in his sights.

This time, though, Snake is ready.

SNAKE
Not this time, punk!

He throws the lever and beneath his car--

A violent spray of freezing gas immediately skim coats the road with a fresh shimmering glaze of ice that--

Speed hits going full throttle, immediately spinning wildly out of control.

He screams trying to hold on as he spits out the end of the cave--

Smashing through the rail, separating from the earth--

Hanging for a moment against the soundlessness of the open sky--

Before dropping like a stone.

CONTINUED: (2)

RACER X
Speed!

INT. BLIMP

JOHNNY
Oh no!

C.C. ANNOUNCER
Speed Racer's gone over the edge!

INT. HELICOPTER

Everyone feels the same stomach-lurching terror as Pops' eyes go wide with the terror that he is about to lose another son.

EXT. GLACIER CLIFF

Speed falls and from inside the cockpit it looks impossibly far to the bottom but--

The wall of the cliff is not completely vertical and the Mach-5 begins to rub against the ice.

Speed reacts immediately, hitting one of the control buttons and--

Crampons shoot out of his tires, giving him just enough of a hold to try--

A split-jack jump, the front jacks firing, throwing the car into a somersault across the open ravine--

Slamming against the far side which has slightly more slope, allowing the crampons to dig in as--

He drive straight up the wall of ice.

INT. BLIMP

JOHNNY
He did not! He did not just do that!

C.C. ANNOUNCER
Speed Racer is driving straight up a cliff face--are we getting this?

CONTINUED:

JOHNNY
This kid is unbelievable!

INT. HELICOPTER

They all cheer.

SPRITTLE
Go, Speed, go!

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD

Speed jumps again, vaulting violently back into the winding road just behind a disbelieving Snake.

SPEED
Hi. Remember me?

Speed roars up after him and Snake grabs for his lever again but now it's Speed that's ready--

Jumping over the ice, he body slams Snake, sending him hard into the rail as Speed shoots into the lead.

SNAKE
Not again! Not again!

He grabs at an ankle holster, yanking out a gun.

INT. BLIMP

Their cameras zoom in as Snake aims.

JOHNNY
Oh my god, he's got a gun!

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD

Speed doesn't notice until it seems his entire family screams into his ear--

FAMILY
GUN!

Snakes fires just as--

Speed hits the cockpit bubble and the bullets smack against it like a sledgehammer into a brick wall.

CONTINUED:

He swerves knowing he won't be able to take many hits as Snake chases after him, firing as--

Speed hits the crampons again and runs up the side of the mountain then--

Flips off the wall just as the cliff face drops off, switching sides as--

Snake now finds himself on the outside as Speed bashes him out through the guard rail.

Snake tries a similar move to Speed but Snake is no Speed--

And his car bursts apart as he miss-times the flip, sending a bouncing cocoon to the distant snows below.

INT. BLIMP

C.C. ANNOUNCER
Snake Oiler completely going out of his mind--

JOHNNY
Could have been altitude sickness, it gets crazy up there--

CASA CRISTO ANNOUNCER
Whatever it was, Speed handled it beautifully and with less than 250 kilometers to go, nothing seems to stand between Okamoto--

EXT. FINISH LINE

The cars weave through the Byzantine streets of San Bartimeaus.

C.C. ANNOUNCER
-- And victory!

The checkered flag comes down, hundreds of flashbulbs capturing the moment as Katsu leads Speed and Racer X across the finish line.

INT. REMMINGTON'S OFFICE

Remmington smoulders like the cigar worries between his fingers as he watches the effect of the race happen almost immediately.

CONTINUED:

The stock of Okamoto engineering climbs two points.

REMMINGTON
Get me... Tetsuya Okamoto.

EXT. VICTORY LANE

Katsu poses with Speed and Racer X for photographers. Racer X is clearly not interested.

KATSU
We make a good team.

RACER X
We did our part. Make sure you do yours.

Racer X stares at Katsu whose face is as expressionless as a mask but it feels as though Racer X can see right through it.

KATSU
Of course.

INT. REMMINGTON'S OFFICE

REMMINGTON
Congratulations Mr. Okamoto. Very impressive race.

INT. OKAMOTO'S OFFICE

OKAMOTO
Yes, thank you. You are very generous, Mr. Remmington.

EXT. VICTORY LANE

REPORTER 2
Speed, does this mean you've signed with Okamoto?

SPEED
Uh, no. This was... a mutually beneficial opportunity.

KATSU
Yes, well put.

CONTINUED:

REPORTER 3
Katsu, does this mean you will be running in the Grand Prix this weekend?

KATSU
We'll see. Right now I'm just going to enjoy this victory.

INT. REMMINGTON'S OFFICE

OKAMOTO
The price is 78 a share.

REMMINGTON
That's outrageous! The price is barely above 50! This is extortion! Blackmail! I'll sue you! Tie up every asset you own up for the next 20 years!

OKAMOTO
As you wish Mr. Remmington. Have a nice day.

REMMINGTON
Wait!

He grinds his molars until they are smooth.

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
Seventy-eight a share. I'll have the papers drawn up.

OKAMOTO
A pleasure doing business with you.

INT. OKAMOTO'S OFFICE

Okamoto hangs up the phone. Katsu and Horuko sit across from him. He smiles.

OKAMOTO
You have done very well for us, my son.

Katsu smiles the same smile as his father. The only person not smiling in the room is Horuko.

INT. RACER FAMILY GARAGE

Speed kicks over a tool box giving voice to his rage with a cacophony of clattering metal.

He jumps into the Mach 5. The engine guns the wheels screech as he peels out and away leaving--

Inspector Detector standing with this hat in hand, his frown mirrored by Pops.

SPARKY
I don't get it. What just happened?

POPS
Okamoto played us for chumps. All he wanted was our help to drive up the stock on his family's company. Even if there was a file, he had no intention of turning it over.

SPARKY
You mean that whole race was for nothing?

INT. MACH 5

Speed screams as loud as he can strangling the steering wheel as he rockets through a series of familiar with curves.

EXT. THUNDERHEAD

Without the lights or banners or crowds, the race track echoes with the same quiet portance as a cathedral. It is here that Speed has always found himself.

But as he sails through neck snapping turns with reckless abandon, it becomes clear that he is chasing something that he has lost.

He seems ready to cry for all the frustration and anger, wanting so badly to undo the last few weeks of his life.

Suddenly in his rearview mirror there is an answer to his prayer, a miracle--

His brother.

CONTINUED:

For a moment he believes that he is again driving beside the ghost of his brother but when the two cars kiss up against each other, Speed realizes this is no ghost--

It's Racer X.

The masked Racer suddenly becomes the focus of all his anger and Speed swings his car, wielding it like a club, trying to clobber him.

Racer X dodges the first blow and swings back, the two have at one another, banging, shoving one another into the wall--

Until Speed can't take it anymore and he goes at X as ferociously as he can, throwing him into a tailspin--

Crashing him into one of the grand stands.

Silence embraces the track.

Speed climbs out of the Mach 5.

SPEED
X? Racer X?

There is a small movement in the car, a shuddering as though in pain and Speed realizes he may have gone too far.

SPEED (CONT'D)
Racer X?!!

He runs to the car but immediately stops when he realizes the masked man is not in pan; he is laughing. He practically falls out of his car.

RACER X
Jeezus, kid. You can drive. I haven't been thrown like that in years.

SPEED
What are you doing here?

RACER X
The inspector told me what happened. I came looking for you.

SPEED
Why?

RACER X
Thought you'd take it hard and maybe do something stupid.

CONTINUED: (2)

SPEED
Why would you care?

RACER X
Because you're a fighter. And a friend.

SPEED
Why don't you just tell me the truth?

Racer X stares at him hard.

SPEED (CONT'D)
You're Rex, aren't you?

RACER X
You mean your brother?

SPEED
You first appeared two years after Rex died. You drive just like him. You knew I'd be here because this is where he always used to take me. Just tell me the truth.

After a long hard moment, Racer X pulls off his mask.

He is not Rex. Speed is stunned.

SPEED (CONT'D)
You're... not Rex.

RACER X
No. I'm sorry Speed but your brother is dead.

He pulls his mask back on.

SPEED
I'm sorry.

RACER X
Don't be. I'm sure where ever your brother is, he is immensely proud of you.

SPEED
For what? Making the same mistakes he did?

CONTINUED: (3)

RACER X
For trying to make a difference. From what I've read, that's all he tried to do.

SPEED
And what good did it do? He got killed for nothing. Racing hasn't changed and it never will!

RACER X
It doesn't matter if racing never changes. What matters is if we let racing change us. Everyone of us has to find the reason to do this. You don't climb into a T-180 to be a driver. You do it because you're driven.

SPEED
I don't know why I'm doing it anymore.

RACER X
That's obvious. At Fuji, you were trying to prove something. At Cristo, you were looking for justice. Neither are the reason you belong behind a steering wheel.

SPEED
If you know so much, why don't you tell me why I should keep driving?

RACER X
Sorry. That's for you to figure out.

He climbs back into his car.

RACER X (CONT'D)
I just hope when you do, I'm there to see it.

He roars away leaving Speed alone.

INT. SPEED'S ROOM

Speed is furiously packing. There is a knock on the door but he ignores it.

Sprittle opens the door, Chim-chim following him in.

CONTINUED:

SPRITTLE
Hey watcha doin?

SPEED
What's it look like?

SPRITTLE
Where ya goin?

SPEED
I don't know. I just gotta get away from here.

SPRITTLE
Why?

SPEED
Because.

SPRITTLE
Because why?

SPEED
Because I have to.

SPRITTLE
Can we come with you?

Speed is struck by an odd sense of deja vu.

SPEED
What?

SPRITTLE
Can we come with you?

SPEED
No.

SPRITTLE
Why?

SPEED
You'll understand when it's your turn.

He shoulders his bag and shoves out the door.

INT. RACER FAMILY LIVING ROOM

Speed crosses to the door but Pops is already there, sitting, waiting, a heaviness in his limbs.

CONTINUED:

POPS
Speed, before you go, I'd like to say a few things. Will you sit with your old man for a minute?

Speed chafes a bit but drops his bag.

SPEED
Don't try to stop me.

POPS
I won't. I made a mistake trying to tell you what to do at Cortega. You were right. I was wrong. I won't make that mistake again.

Speed sits.

POPS (CONT'D)
I want you to know that I acted rashly. I said things I wish I hadn't. Your mother usually protects me from making an ass out of my self but I was determined to do it this time and I guess I did a pretty good job of it. I wanted to make sure you understood how sorry I was.

SPEED
Thanks.

POPS
The truth was, I couldn't have been more proud of you son. Not because you won, but because you stood up, you weren't afraid and you did what you thought was right.

SPEED
So? It didn't amount to anything. It was completely meaningless.

POPS
How could it be meaningless? I saw my son become a man. I watched him act with courage and integrity and drive the pants off of every driver on the road. This is not meaningless. This is the reason for a father's life.

Pop's eyes begin to twinkle with tears.

CONTINUED: (2)

POPS (CONT'D)
I admit I went to Cortega because I was afraid that what happened to Rex was going to happen to you. And I just couldn't take that. I couldn't loose another one of my boys like that again. But what I realize in Cortega was that I didn't lose Rex when he crashed, I lost him here. I lost him when he walked out of this house and I let him go without telling him how proud I was of him and how much I loved him. I let him think that a stupid motor company meant more to me than he did. You'll never know how much I regret that mistake, but it's enough that I'll never make it again.

He puts his big bear arms around him and hugs him.

POPS (CONT'D)
I love you Speed. I understand that every child leaves home but I want you to know that door is always open and you can always come back.

SPEED
I love you Pops. I'm just so confused right now. I don't what I'm doing or why I'm doing it. I'm locked up in some kinda tailspin and no direction makes sense.

POPS
I know what that's like. When Rex died I didn't even know if I wanted salt on my eggs, let alone if I wanted to keep building cars. Then, do you remember when we sat here, that night, watching old Ben Burns and Dugazi? You remember that?

Speed nods vaguely.

POPS (CONT'D)
Sittin' here, cheering with you, something just clicked, like a light being switched on inside of me and after that, I never had trouble remembering how I liked me eggs.

CONTINUED: (3)

SPEED
Jeez Pops. That's just it. That's part of my problem.

POPS
What?

SPEED
That race. The '43 Prix. Burns and Dugazi? It was fixed. Remmington told me the whole story. It was all about some DNF names Rotts. They've known the winner of every Grand Prix for the past 50 years. It's always fixed.

That's a tough pill for Pops to swallow.

POPS
I don't believe that. Remmington's a crook. You can't believe a crook.

SPEED
I don't think he was lying, Pops.

POPS
The Grand Prix? A sham?

Ding dong.

POPS (CONT'D)
Who could that be?

Speed opens the door. She seems to glow, radiating with her own incandescence.

SPEED
Horuko?!

HORUKO
Forgive me for intruding but I had to come before it was too late.

Speed eyes her for a moment wondering if this is another set-up.

HORUKO (CONT'D)
This is not a trick. I swear to you. I am not my brother.

POPS
You going to ask the lovely lady in?

CONTINUED: (4)

SPEED
Yeah, sure. Come on in.

She steps in, looking somewhat out of place in the suburban living room.

POPS
Can I get you something to drink?

HORUKO
No. My security man believes I am still at the opera, so I only have a moment.

She turns to Speed.

HORUKO (CONT'D)
I am very sorry for what happened. What my father and brother did was not right and I am ashamed.

SPEED
It's fine. Just another lesson learned.

HORUKO
No. It is they who are in need of a lesson.

She pulls an envelope out of her bag and gives it to Speed.

HORUKO (CONT'D)
This rightfully belongs to you.

He opens the envelope and his eyes immediately light up.

SPEED
An invitation to compete in the 91st annual Grand Prix?

HORUKO
My brother was planning to decline anyway but I studied the rules very carefully and as a member of the Okamoto team, if you present this invitation on the day of the race, they must allow you to compete.

Pops bursts into a smile and slaps Speed on the back.

CONTINUED: (5)

POPS
Whaddya think of that, Mr. Its-Always-Fixed?

SPEED
I...

HORUKO
You do not have to say anything. I only hope you drive as you did in Casa Cristo and you wipe the smiles from their faces.

POPS
We don't have a car. Sparky!

SPARKY
Right here Pops.

Sparky steps out of the kitchen doorway.

POPS
What're you doing in the kitchen?

SPARKY
Same as everyone else.

Behind him the entire family peeks out.

SPEED
I don't believe it. You were listening the whole time?

Trixie goes to him.

TRIXIE
We were worried about you.

HORUKO
I would say good luck Saturday but you do not need it. You are already very lucky to have such a family.

SPEED
Goodbye and thank you.

He closes the door.

POPS
Come on! We got work to do.

CONTINUED: (6)

SPARKY
But Pops, the race is less than 36 hours away.

POPS
Isn't that how fast Remmington said he could build that tin can with all his fancy machines?

SPARKY
Yeah.

POPS
Then we'll do it in 32. Let's go!

He heads for the garage, Sprittle leaping after him.

SPRITTLE
I want to help.

POPS
Well come on.

SPRITTLE
Chim-chim too?

POPS
We need everyone.

INT. RACER FAMILY GARAGE

The family gets to work, bolting, welding, drilling, cutting, and grinding.

The framework of a car begins to materialize, assembled it seems out of thin air, human will made manifest as--

INT. REMMINGTON INDUSTRIES LABORATORY

A car is covered in a sheet bearing the RI logo. Remmington speaks before Mushi and his cadre of lawyers and assistants.

REMMINGTON
I swear to you Mr. Mushi when the GRX is revealed at the Grand Prix and then captures the black and white checkers the demand for our transponder engines will go through the roof.

Mushi smiles.

INT. RACER FAMILY GARAGE

The Racers continue to work, Sparky beginning to fall asleep just as Mom brings him a big, steaming cup of coffee.

The car is further along, but still a long way from finished.

INT. REMMINGTON'S OFFICE

Papers are signed. Hands are shaken. Pictures posed for. The harmony of the corpratocracy complete as--

INT. RACER FAMILY GARAGE

The entire family, covered in sweat, blood, and grease, refusing to quit even as the sun rises on--

EXT. THE GRAND PRIX

Nothing we've seen compares to the staggering scope of this track. It feels like an entire city; grand stands rising up like can-opened sky scrapers surrounded by clover leafs of track that seem like origami folded highways.

Preparations are well under way, ads being positioned, lights being checked, make-up being applied to Ben Burns and his announcing partner, Cass Jones.

INT. RACER FAMILY GARAGE

The Racers gobble handful of potato chips, stuffing quarters of P,B, & J sandwiches into their mouths, rushing to finish while--

INT. GRAND PRIX PENTHOUSE

Caviar, shrimp and lobster are being set out on trays of ice beneath a glistening ice sculpture of the GRX.

INT. RACER FAMILY GARAGE

The car is nearly finished,Pops spraying on the paint as--

EXT. GRAND PRIX GRANDSTANDS

The crowds have already begun to arrive.

At the players entrance, fans swarm after Cannonball Taylor who arrives in his gorgeous sports car.

INT. RACER FAMILY GARAGE

Sparky slams the access panel shut.

SPARKY
Alright, fire it up!

Everyone holds their breath as Speed hits the ignition.

The car makes a sick baying rattle and smoke begins pouring out of the engine.

SPARKY (CONT'D)
Kill it! Kill it!

EXT. GRAND PRIX

Remmington stands ready to reveal the GRX.

REMMINGTON
Ladies and gentlemen, behold the future.

It's black, shiny, and beautiful in a malefic way.

INT. RACER FAMILY GARAGE

The clock continues to tick, everyone watching anxiously over his shoulder as Sparky works.

SPEED
Sparks, it's getting late.

SPARKY
I know, I know. Okay. Give it a try.

Everyone braces as Speed hits the ignition.

It is the sound of an explosion held in the palm of your hand.

CONTINUED:

SPEED
Sounds beefy Pops.

POPS
It gives you a little something extra.

SPEED
Let's get it loaded!

INT. GRAND PRIX ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

CASS JONES
This year marks a new record as the Grand Prix will be broadcast in eighty-four different languages.

The camera pans over the multitude of ethnic broadcasters.

CASS JONES (CONT'D)
Just gets bigger every year, doesn't it Ben?

BEN BURNS
Seems like it.

INT. GRAND PRIX PENTHOUSE

The elite hobnob, champagne flutes flashing between feathered hats and waxy smiles.

The Okamotos raise their glasses to Mushi.

INT. GRAND PRIX ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

CASS JONES
We've got an incredible lineup this year. Some major competition. We got a few fan favorites like the Gray Ghost, Sonic "Boom-boom" Renaldi and Prince Kabala. We got perenial powerhouses like Nitro Venderhoss, Gary "Gearbox" Kalinkov, and Mori Minimoto.

BEN BURNS
Not to mention C ball.

CONTINUED:

FUJI ANNOUNCER
Cannonball Taylor, fastest Grand Prix seed in history, driving the new ORX from Remmington Racecars.

BEN BURNS
She looks mighty tight.

FUJI ANNOUNCER.
There is an odd numbered field today, nineteen, one shy of a full boat as Katsu Okamoto declined his automatic invitation after winning the Casa Cristo.

BEN BURNS
Hey there's something going on down there.

CASS JONES
We're seeing some kind of commotion down at the trailer entrance.

EXT. TRAILER ENTRANCE

A large group of security officials are gathered, staring at the invitation in Speed's hand.

One of them starts to shake his head when he hears--

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
Is there a problem here, officer?

INT. GRAND PRIX PENTHOUSE

Remmington is in his element, everything seeming to go exactly as planned until Gennie comes up behind him and whispers in his ear.

GENNIE
Sir, we have a problem.

INT. RACE OFFICIAL'S ROOM

The doors burst open as Remmington charges in. His eyes flash as though seeing ghosts when confronted by the entire Racer clan.

REMMINGTON
What madness is going on here?

CONTINUED:

SENIOR RACE OFFICIAL
Mr. Remmington, this is a legitimate invitation. We have verified it.

REMMINGTON
Where did you get that?

SPEED
I was on the Okamoto team remember? I won it fair and square.

REMMINGTON
This is preposterous! He can't be allowed to race. It's too late.

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
The ruling on this is quite clear. Try to stop it and you'll be in blatant violation of the WRL charter, leaving me no option but to shut this years Prix down until a full investigation can be completed.

REMMINGTON
What?! Do you have any idea what that would cost? Are you insane?

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
Try me.

Remmington stews then spits a threat at Speed.

REMMINGTON
You'll regret this.

SPEED
Doubt it.

INT. GRAND PRIX ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

CASS JONES
Something big is going on because every race official has been-- wait, wait. An announcement is being made. A new driver is being added to the field.

BEN BURNS
Holy sh--

CONTINUED:

BLEEP.

Ben Burns gets bleeped by the network censors.

EXT. BIG BOARD

A name flashes on as the driver is added.

FEMALE ANNOUNCER VOICE
Now driving in the twentieth and final position, Speed Racer.

The roar from the crowd shakes the windows of--

INT. GRAND PRIX PENTHOUSE

Concerned, knitted brows search the room in quiet panic while in private--

Horuko allows herself the faintest smile.

INT. PRIVATE OFFICE

Remmington meets in secret with Cannonball Taylor.

REMMINGTON
A million dollars to the driver that takes Racer out.

CANNONBALL
He won't get out of the blocks.

REMMINGTON
I prefer him to not even make it out of the locker room.

Cannonball smiles as Remmington starts to turn.

REMMINGTON (CONT'D)
We're installing a spear hook on the GRX.

CANNONBALL
I don't need one to beat that punk.

REMMINGTON
A precaution.

INT. LOCKER ROOM

Speed begins laying out all of his things while the other drivers move around him, wolves stalking prey.

In a mirror, a Yakuza tattooed driver eyes Speed while drawing a straight razor up his neck.

Speed tries to ignore him, digging through his bag, getting more and more flustered until he realizes--

He forgot the red socks.

SPEED
Oh no...

EXT. GRAND PRIX GRANDSTANDS

The Racer family finds their seats.

INT. LOCKER ROOM

The Yukuza man moves up behind a despairing Speed, straight razor flashing as--

The Gray Ghost cuts him off.

GRAY GHOST
Hey kid--

SPEED
The Gray Ghost...

GRAY GHOST
Just wanted to say good luck.

He reaches out to shake, then whispers.

GRAY GHOST (CONT'D)
There's a million dollar bounty on your head.

SPEED
A million dollars? Wow. Maybe I should take myself out.

GRAY GHOST
Watch yourself. Your ruffling some pretty major feathers here.

CONTINUED:

SPEED
Why aren't you after the bounty?

GRAY GHOST
Our little dance at Fuji--that's how it should always be.

INT. GRAND PRIX ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

CASS JONES
As the cars take to the field you can feel the anticipation mounting in the audience. Something is different. There is an electricity in the air. The presence of Speed Racer has completely changed the equation.

INT. LOCKER ROOM

Speed is sitting, still not dressed. The broken ritual has him confused, not sure how to begin.

A dressed and helmeted driver heads straight at him but is diverted by--

RACER X
Speed Racer?

Speed turns, taking a moment to realize the handsome millionaire playboy in the tux is unmasked Racer X. He glances down at Speed's belongings and sees a picture of Rex.

SPEED
Oh, yeah.

PLAYBOY/RACER X
I'm quite a fan of yours and just wanted to say how glad I am to see you here.

As they shake hands, Racer X realizes that something is wrong.

PLAYBOY/RACER X (CONT'D)
Is something wrong?

SPEED
I just... I got this thing... its stupid, I know, a superstition, but I guess all of us got one.

CONTINUED:

PLAYBOY/RACER X
Can I help?

Speed suddenly notices the red trim of his tuxedo and his red tie. He looks down and heaves a sigh of relief.

Red socks.

INT. PLAYER'S TUNNEL

Speed rushes out of the darkness of the tunnel into the brightly colored, awe-inspiring venue that is the Grand Priz Coliseum.

There is a dizzying onslaught of giant advertisements and jumbotrons while the enormous crowd roars in lapping waves like the surrounding ocean.

INT. GRAND PRIX ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

CASS JONES
There he is now, Speed Racer, perhaps the biggest wild card in Grand Prix history.

EXT. GRAND PRIX STARTING LINE

Floating camera blimps seem to hover everywhere including right next to Speed--

Catching him unawares with a gaper's mouth.

The image of Speed looking overwhelmed is immediately broadcast onto the jumbotrons eliciting a laugh from the crowds.

EXT. GRAND PRIX GRANDSTANDS

Trixie sees Speed on the big screens.

TRIXIE
Look! There's Speed!

INT. GRAND PRIX ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

CASS JONES
Speed Racer gets his first eyeful of the Coliseum.

CONTINUED:

BEN
This ain't Kansas baby!

EXT. STARTING LINE

The gorgeous Prince Kabala struts for the crowd while a team of beautiful female mechanics push his jewel encrusted car into place.

He sees Speed helping Sparky push the Mach 5 into place.

PRINCE
Hey, mouth-breather, get used to this--

He shows Speed his ass.

PRINCE (CONT'D)
'Cause that's what you're going to be looking at all day!

Speed tries to ignore him and the other driver's staring at him like a fox staring at a chicken.

SPARKY
Howya feelin'?

Speed takes a breath as he dares to look around again.

SPEED
...it's big.

SPARKY
Hey, this cockpit is the exact same size it was at Thunderhead.

SPEED
Right.

SPARKY
Just wanted to say, thanks, for what could be the most exciting moment of my life.

SPEED
Couldn't have gotten here without you.

He hugs him.

CONTINUED:

SPARKY
I'm looking forward to that cold milk.

SPEED
Me too.

Speed climbs in as the speaker system blares--

FEMALE ANNOUNCER VOICE
Ladies and gentlemen, start your engines.

The engines erupt, crashing against the waves of the roaring crowd but--

Inside the Mach 5 everything goes completely silent. Nothing exists now for Speed except the track as he loses all separation between himself and his car.

He takes a deep breath and closes his eyes as the countdown begins.

INT. GRAND PRIX ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

CASS JONES
The final countdown has begun and a stillness has fallen over this stadium as all eyes turn to one car.

BEN BURNS
This ain't a race. It's a showdown.

EXT. GRAND PRIX

Again we cut to the many varied expressions of anticipation: Trixie, Mushi, Okamoto, Sprittle, and Chim-chim, Katsu and Horuko, Mom and Pops, Remmington and Racer X who no longer has any socks, until--

The gun sounds--

The cars become bullets hurdled forward, except for the car in front of Speed which barely moves blocking his path--

He tries to avoid it but can't, rear-ending him while the car behind him slams into the back of the Mach 5.

INT. GRAND PRIX ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

CASS JONES
Trouble at the start, a misfire traps Speed Racer, causing a collision--

BEN BURNS
Uh-oh. Look out!

EXT. GRAND PRIX STARTING LINE

A car to the side swerves aiming straight at Speed who manages at the last second a slip-jack jump--

Flipping over the car as it slams into the pile-up while--

Speed guns his engine in the air so that when he hits the track there is a scream of burning rubber and the Mach 5 rockets out of the start to the cheering crowd.

INT. GRAND PRIX ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

CASS JONES
I don't know how he got out of that one--

BEN BURNS
That kid's wiley.

EXT. GRAND PRIX TRACK

The first lap of the Grand Prix is Ben Hur brutal as car after car takes a shot at Speed but--

He uses their aggressiveness throwing them into each other--

Littering the track with flaming debris and bouncing cocoons.

INT. GRAND PRIX ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

They try to keep up but Speed is even too fast for them.

CASS JONES
Speed fakes left, jumps right--

BEN BURNS
Nice, nice--

CONTINUED:

CASS JONES
He slips in behind Gearbox--

BEN BURNS
Here comes over under--

EXT. GRAND PRIX TRACK

Speed executes another beautiful maneuver sending Gearbox crashing into Boom-Boom--

Both cars going boom-boom, their rubber cocoons bouncing free.

INT. GRAND PRIX ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

Ben Burns is giddy with glee.

BEN BURNS
I told you! I told you!

CASS JONES
Speed Racer seems unstoppable, moving up from dead last, nearing the leaders as they head into the slalom with the Gray Ghost battling Prince Kabala and Cannonball Taylor for the lead.

EXT. GRAND PRIX TRACK

The Prince tries to sight the Ghost in his mirrors but the Gray Ghost seems to vanish.

GRAY GHOST
Where am I? Where am I? I'm here. I am over there. I'm Savior Faire!

The Prince tries to block the Ghost but he can't seem to locate him.

GRAY GHOST (CONT'D)
I'm everywhere, baby!

Wham! The Ghost is on him, pouncing, slipping into what feels like a shoulder throw that sends the Prince spinning out of control onto the onrushing Nitro--

Shattering the Prince's car like a mis-struck diamond reduced in one hammer stroke to twinkling dust.

CONTINUED:

The two more cocoons bounce onto the road as the other cars roar past.

INT. GRAND PRIX ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

CASS JONES
A spectacular crash as the Prince's jewel-covered Gigerbon worth an estimated 22 million dollars is scattered over a quarter mile of track.

BEN BURNS
I'd like to work clean up on that crash.

They chuckle.

CASS JONES
But look out, as they approach the Big Drop, here comes Speed Racer!

EXT. THE BIG DROP

The cars head over as though falling off the end of Niagara and while other drivers cling to their steering wheels just trying to hang on--

Speed presses the accelerator, making his move--

Banking higher than anyone up the big wall and when he dives back down there are only three cars left ahead of him--

The green Mushi motors car, the Gray Ghost, and the Black GRX.

INT. GRAND PRIX ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

CASS JONES
Speed Racer is knocking on the door of the new GRX driven by Cannonball Taylor.

BEN BURNS
You hoo! Anybody home?

INT. MACH 5

SPEED
Ok Mr. Two Time Grand Prix, Five time WRL, future Hall of Fame, teach me something.

EXT. GRAND PRIX TRACK

Speed makes a move and Cannonball blocks, but it is clumsy and Speed quickly counters--

Bouncing Cannonball into the wall.

SPEED
Come on! Is that it?

He swerves back and the two cars begin to battle but it is immediately clear who is the better driver, as--

Speed throws Cannonball from one side of the track to the other.

INT. GRAND PRIX ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

CASS JONES
Cannonball Taylor is in trouble.

BEN BURNS
Tear 'em up kid!

INT. GRAND PRIX PENTHOUSE

The knuckles of Remmington's fist crackle as he wrings the tension.

REMMINGTON
Do it. Stop him. Stop him now.

INT. MACH 5

SPEED
Lesson's over. See you at the finish line.

Speed slides into Cannonball to throw him but as he does--

CONTINUED:

Cannonball throws a hidden switch and under the two cars a spear hook shoots out and locks onto the Mach 5 undercarriage.

Speed feels it and knows what happened immediately.

SPEED (CONT'D)
No!

SPARKY
What is it?

SPEED
Spear hook! He's got me!

Cannonball slows driving both cars into the wall, grinding against the Mach 5 while the trailing cars shoot post.

INT. GRAND PRIX ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

CASS JONES
Cannonball has Speed pinned as they grind through the butterfly turn.

INT. GRAND PRIX PENTHOUSE

Remmington relaxes as Speed falls further off the leader pace.

EXT. GRAND PRIX GRANDSTANDS

Sprittle understands immediately what is going on.

SPRITTLE
That cheater! He's using a spear hook! SPEAR HOOK! SPEAR HOOK!

The surrounding crowd becomes uncomfortable.

POPS
Sprittle, we don't know that.

SPRITTLE
I do! Cannonball Taylor is nothing but a big cheater!

EXT. GRAND PRIX TRACK

They exit the butterfly turn and head into the slalom, both drivers fighting hard to force the other into the onrushing concrete pylons.

The paint is scraped first from the outside of the Mach 5 and then the GRX as they barely avoid one pylon and then another, neither car gaining an advantage until--

The Mach 5 begins to rattle, the stronger GRX taking advantage as they head for the final pylon--

Where the camera that is broadcasting the two cars onto the jumbo-tron is positioned.

INT. GRAND PRIX ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

BEN BURNS
This is going to be ugly.

EXT. GRAND PRIX TRACK

At the last second, Speed hits the two outside jacks causing both cars to rise up onto the two outside wheels of the GRX--

Revealing the undercarriage and the hidden spear hook to the camera.

The crowd gasps.

SPRITTLE
Told you so!

Chim-chim high fives him.

SPRITTLE (CONT'D)
Cheaters never prosper!

EXT. GRAND PRIX TRACK

The Mach 5 flips down, pancaking the GRX, while the Mach 5 crashes free, leaving the exposed spear hook to hang limply from the front of the GRX.

INT. GRAND PRIX ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

CASS JONES
Cannonball clearly using a spear hook.

BEN BURNS
That could cost him the Hall of Fame.

CASS JONES
Not to mention what it might do to Remmington Industries.

BEN BURNS
Shame on them.

INT. GRAND PRIX PENTHOUSE

People begin drifting away from Remmington as he feels the walls close in around him.

EXT. GRAND PRIX TRACK

Speed tries to start the Mach 5. He hits the switch but the starter only grinds.

EXT. PIT STOP

SPARKY
Oh no, come on, don't do this.

EXT. GRAND PRIX GRANDSTANDS

Pops watches through his binoculars.

POPS
Don't quit on us now baby.

INT. GRAND PRIX LUXURY BOXES

Racer X is watching with Minx.

RACER X
Careful. Listen to it. Don't kill the starter.

EXT. GRAND PRIX TRACK

Speed takes a deep breath and it seems the entire stadium takes it with him. He closes his eyes and tries to listen to the car.

SPEED
What do you need?

Something makes him put the car in second gear. He steps on the accelerator, then hits the starter and--

And the Mach 5 roars to life.

The crowd screams to the wail of burning rubber.

INT. GRAND PRIX ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

CASS JONES
He's back in it, but less than a lap and a half, I don't know what kind of chance he has.

BEN BURNS
Come on kid! Move it!

EXT. GRAND PRIX TRACK

The red socks flash as Speed stomps on it, jamming the accelerator to the floor.

He's a half-lap behind the entire field but every eye in the stadium is on the white and red streak of lightening as it--

Thunders by, rattling the elaborate lace work of concrete and steel--

Gaining, inch by inch, foot by foot.

INT. GRAND PRIX PENTHOUSE

People abandon the televised images, wanting to watch this miracle, to see it with their own eyes.

INT. GRAND PRIX ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

CASS JONES
Look at the split! He's shattering the lap record.

BEN BURNS
Don't mean a thing without those checkers.

EXT. GRAND PRIX TRACK

Speed comes out of the spiral, glimpsing the back of the trailers as they go over the Big Drop.

Where they ease over the edge, Speed hurls out, going airborne, free-falling past two trailers, as--

The grade of the slope reaches up and gently eases the Mach 5 back onto the track, to the delight of the crowd.

The Mach 5 surfs up the big bank, weaving through another pair that try to stop him with spectacularly disastrous results.

Outside the Mach 5 a maelstrom of violent chaos churns while--

Inside, Speed is perfectly at pease.

INT. GRAND PRIX ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

CASS JONES
No hesitation, nothing fazes him, no one seems capable of stopping him.

BEN BURNS
This kid ain't just driving--he's on a mission.

INT. GRAND PRIX PENTHOUSE

Remmington can't take it, losing all pretense of decorum.

REMMINGTON
Stop him! Stop him!

EXT. GRAND PRIX TRACK

Speed weaves through the butterfly cloverleaf, taking each turn at such intense speeds that the cars he passes seem to be moving in slow motion.

By the end of the slalom, he is back where he left off, with two cars left ahead of him--

Mushi Motors and the Gray Ghost.

GRAY GHOST
Welcome back kid. Been lonely up here without you.

INT. GRAND PRIX ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

CASS JONES
With a quarter lap to go Speed Racer is back, two cars beneath him and destiny.

INT. MACH 5

Speed suddenly feels the weight of everything that has brought him to this point.

He sees images and hears voices, flashing through his head, as though at his own death.

The montage finishes with the image of Speed as a ten year old boy, drawing pictures of race cars, making all the noises, lost in a dreamworld that has become reality.

He sees the finish line and makes his move.

The Gray Ghost sees it coming first.

GRAY GHOST
Oh yeah, here we go, here we go.

Speed flashes one way, then another, moving in ghost-like feigns, here there, and everywhere.

GRAY GHOST (CONT'D)
What's this? What's this? Hey now! That's my move!

Before Ghost knows where to go, Speed ducks past--

CONTINUED:

Sling-shotting down alongside the Mushi motors car. The Yukuza driver tries to block but--

Speed jumps, dodging the hit, causing the Mushi car to swerve and then wildly correct--

Swinging back as Speed hop-scotches over him again, just as--

The Ghost flies in, taking a broadside hit from the Mushi car, both of them exploding just feet from the finish line, as--

Speed launches up and through the cloud of smoke and fire, crossing into history with the flashing wave of the checkered black and white--

Fluttering softly in the silence as the crowd begins to rise to their feet.

The Mach 5 slides to a stop and for a moment Speed catches his breath, then, slowly pulling off his helmet he begins to let it all in--

The thunder of the crowd can be felt through his chest straight to his heart.

INT. GRAND PRIX PENTHOUSE

Remmington screams, overturning a table of caviar and lobster, crashing the elaborate ice sculpture of the GRX at the feet of Mushi who turns and walks away in disgust.

EXT. GRAND PRIX GRANDSTANDS

Pops' chest is out, tears running down to his moustache as he wraps his arms around Mom, who goes to pieces as Chim-chim and Sprittle leap up and down, hugging Trixie as--

INT. GRAND PRIX PENTHOUSE

The smiles of Katsu and his father are gone giving Horuko no end of secret joy.

EXT. FINISH LINE

The crowd storms over the barriers, swarming Speed and the Mach 5.

INT. GRAND PRIX ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

CASS JONES
It's a pandemonium! People have gone completely crazy! In fourteen years we've never seen anything like this!

BEN BURNS
It's a whole new world baby, a whole new world.

EXT. FINISH LINE

The crowd lifts Speed up onto their shoulders as we collage-pan to--

INT. LUXURY BOXES GRAND PRIX

Racer X watching his brother, a smile on his lips.

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
He did it.

Racer X lowers his binos and turns to the inspector.

RACER X
Yes, he did.

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
This could change everything.

RACER X
It already has.

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
My men are bringing the family down. Do you want to go with them?

RACER X
...no.

He turns and takes Minx by the arm.

INSPECTOR DETECTOR
Can I ask you a question? Do you ever think you made a mistake, hiding the truth from them?

CONTINUED:

There is a flash of images as we glimpse the truth; images of Rex watching his car explode in the ice caves, his funeral, then the facial surgery, then the mask of bandages as one face is lost in a mirror and another is revealed.

RACER X
If I did, then it's a mistake I have to live with.

He walks away while--

EXT. VICTORY LANE

Several of the other driver's led by the Gray Ghost applaud and salute Speed as--

The Racer family is led through the swarm of photographers and fans.

TRIXIE
Speed!

She pushes towards him and he sweeps her up into his arms and kisses her, surrounded by the sparkle of camera flash as--

Sprittle covers Chim-chim's eyes.

SPRITTLE
Danger. May cause cookies.

Mom and Pops both hug Speed, their eyes bright with joy as--

We rise up, up, and away.

Roll snazzy credits.