

**STEVE MCQUEEN
CAN 'T DO AS YOU ASK**

by

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2/12/10

FADE IN:

EXT. VALET - BEVERLY WILSHIRE HOTEL - NIGHT

Christmas lights refract off back to back Rolls Royces.
Behind them sits a dusty, 1964 Triumph Thunderbird.

SUPER: BEVERLY HILLS, CA - DECEMBER 31ST, 1977

A TAXI rolls to a stop in front of the valet. Seconds later,
the door opens and a long, elegant leg steps out onto the
cobblestones, followed by a brunette in a red dress.

DOORMAN
Evening, ma'am.

INT. EL PADRE ROOM - BEVERLY WILSHIRE HOTEL - SAME

A WAITER delivers a bottle of champagne to a table of THREE
FANTASTIC WOMEN and ONE VAGUELY FAMILIAR LOOKING GENTLEMAN.

WAITER
Moet Chandon, 1956.

He sets the tray down in the middle of the table.

FAMILIAR GENTLEMAN
I'm sorry, did we order this?

WAITER
Compliments of the house, Mr. Beatty...
for your excellent patronage.

WARREN BEATTY slips the man a greasy palm, winks.

WARREN BEATTY
Happy happy to the house then...

The waiter nods graciously, leaves without loitering.

That's when a shaggy looking DERELICT of sorts shuffles past
the table, head down, book under his arm.

WARREN BEATTY
Hey, Steve, how bout a little bubbly?

"Steve" barely looks up, grumbling from beneath an animal
like beard and moustache. Might as well be Chewbacca.

MCQUEEN
Next year.

He keeps on moving towards the back of the bar where he
settles into a dark, anonymous corner with his book.

Neighborhood bum? Barfly? Not at the El Padre room. Beatty leans in and whispers to his lady friends.

WARREN BEATTY
That's Steve Mcqueen.

The three ladies whip around in awe.

ONE OF THE LADIES
That's Steve Mcqueen?

ANOTHER OF THE LADIES
Get out!

THIRD LADY
What happened?

INT. EL PADRE ROOM - BEVERLY WILSHIRE HOTEL - SAME

In his dark, anonymous corner, "Steve Mcqueen" opens his dog eared copy of HENRIK IBSEN'S ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE.

Between the corduroy jacket, the elbow pads and the classic literature, this is not the Steve Mcqueen many have come to know. But make no mistake. This is still the king of cool.

At the front of the house, A GORGEOUS BRUNETTE stops at the bar to consult the bartender. She's tall and thin and wears a red dress probably sewn right onto her body.

Her eyes follow the bartender's finger to the unkempt creature in back. A moment of confusion before she nods and quietly cuts across the room towards his table.

Her long, immaculate legs pass Beatty's table where despite his company, he whips around and gawks.

In their own special way, Mr. Mcqueen just bested him.

The LADY IN RED arrives at Steve's table, hovers for a moment without his noticing. Is she a date? A pro?

LADY IN RED
Hello.

She says softly. Steve looks up.

LADY IN RED
I'm Barbara.

He studies her closely, doesn't reply - then pulls out a folded MAGAZINE from the breast pocket of his corduroy jacket and examines the cover. *COSMOPOLITAN, December, 1977.*

CLOSE ON the cover: on the cover model of the month. Then at the lady in red standing over him. Back at the cover. At the lady in red. Cover. Lady in red. They're the same.

INT. ELEVATOR - BEVERLY WILSHIRE HOTEL

THE LADY IN RED watches the numbers climb. Steve lurks in the corner, drinks her in like a lion to his prey.

INT. MCQUEEN'S SUITE - BEVERLY WILSHIRE HOTEL - NIGHT

A luxuriously appointed suite for a certain class of patron. Steve McQueen passes the lady in red a glass of Chablis as she lingers by a window overlooking Wilshire.

LADY IN RED

Thank you.

She gestures to the expanse of the suite behind them.

LADY IN RED

So is this where the audition is?

MCQUEEN

Yes, ma'am.

LADY IN RED

How does it work?

He sits on the edge of the bed, lights A JOINT. Exhales.

MCQUEEN

Well, for starters... I thought we'd have you count down from ten to one.

LADY IN RED

Count down from ten to one.

MCQUEEN

That's right. Can you do that?

LADY IN RED

I believe I can.

He starts to COUGH. It starts out slow and shallow. Evolves into something deeper and raspier. After a beat, it settles.

MCQUEEN

Scuse me.

LADY IN RED

When would you like me to start?

He holds up a finger, eyes his watch - waiting... waiting...

MCQUEEN

Annnnnnd... now.

He drops his finger, giving her the green light. But just as she opens her mouth, VOICES collaborate through the walls...

LADY IN RED AND VOICES
Ten... nine... eight...

VOICES IN THE WALLS
Seven! Six! Five!

This is the final countdown to New Years 1978. Every guest in the hotel is counting down the big moment.

LADY IN RED AND VOICES
Four... three...

At three, the lady in red brings both of her hands to her shoulders, never breaking the director's stare...

LADY IN RED
... two ...

Celebrations start early...

LADY IN RED
One.

Kazoos and laughter and revelry ripple throughout the hotel.

But as the clock strikes midnight in the presidential suite, the red dress slips to the floor with impeccable timing.

The lady formerly in red is wearing nothing underneath.

LADY IN RED (CONT'D)
 So... ? Shall I do it again?

CUT TO:

EXT. AN INTERSTATE HIGHWAY

A GREYHOUND BUS rumbles across flat, dry farmland. The horizon extends as far as the eye can see.

ROLL OPENING CREDITS OVER:

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - MOVING - SAME

A YOUNG WOMAN, 19, cradles AN INFANT in her arms, stares out the window at the passing landscape. Tears pour down her cheeks. Her makeup runs. Her shoulders tremble.

EXT. SLATER FARM - DUSK

A taxi kicks up dust as it bounces down a long, arid driveway. A barn passes on the left, a pen of rowdy HOGS on the right, a dilapidated Victorian home lies ahead.

SUPER: SLATER, MISSOURI - 1930

EXT. PORCH - SLATER FARM - DUSK

The woman, **JULLIAN MCQUEEN**, 19, passes the infant to an **OLDER MAN**, 60's, amidst flashes of judgment and shame.

EXT. PORCH - SLATER FARM - MOMENTS LATER

The infant wails into the older man's arms as he watches the taxi disappear down the driveway in a cloud of dust.

INT. KITCHEN - SLATER HOME - MORNING

THE BOY, now 4, piercing blue eyes and a faraway look, takes a gargantuan breath and blows out four candles sunken into a tin cup of chocolate pudding. This is the heartland.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SLATER FARM - MORNING

The boy beams at a **RED TRICYCLE** with a bow tied around the handlebars. The older man - **UNCLE CLAUDE** - looks on proudly.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - SLATER FARM - DAY

The tricycle picks up speed, the boy's legs kicking with an abandon verging on panic, his face lit with joy. Here comes the old man, huffing and puffing, chasing him down.

UNCLE CLAUDE
Goddamnit, boy! Get back here!

But even at 4, the boy don't stop for nothin.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Now 8 years old, there he is again, young **TERRENCE STEVEN MCQUEEN**, this time on A **BICYCLE**, wind in his face, flying down a country road, pedaling like he's got E.T. on board.

He peeks over his shoulder as Uncle Claude bears down on him in A **BEAT UP JALOPY**, leans out the window.

UNCLE CLAUDE
Goddamnit, boy! Get back here!

EXT. TWO WAY INTERSTATE - DAY

THE BEAT UP JALOPY weaves across the yellow line, vehicles honking and swerving to avoid a collision.

A COP CAR edges up to the driver side window, sirens blaring, sees 10 YEAR OLD MCQUEEN at the wheel. Barely able to see over the dash.

COP
Goddamnit, boy! Pull over!

END CREDITS.

EXT. HOG PEN - SLATER FARM - DAWN

In a crisp morning chill, 12 YEAR OLD MCQUEEN refills the trough, shovels shit, hoses down the unruly animals.

EXT. MAIN STREET - SLATER - MORNING

A strip of commerce as American as they come. Luncheonette, Pharmacy, General Store, Bank, Jailhouse, Saloon, Feed shop.

Uncle Claude and Steve emerge from THE FEED SHOP, each with a 50 pound sack of hog feed. Steve lags behind.

UNCLE CLAUDE
Throw em in the back and be sure it
don't break this time.

Claude drops a gargantuan bag of feed in the back of a 30's era Ford T pick-up. Steve hangs back, catching his breath.

SHERIFF (O.S.)
Make way, make way!!! We got 'im,
yessiree, we got 'im indeed! A real
life outlaw! Have a looksee at public
enemy number one!

Action on Main Street comes to a sudden, grinding halt. Kids come running. Store owners peer out windows.

SHERIFF
John Herbert Dillinger! In the flesh,
people, under God's light!

AN ARMED DEPUTY clutching either arm, his wrists cuffed behind him, his ankles shackled together, **JOHN HERBERT DILLINGER** is led across the street towards the jailhouse.

As he goes, clanking with every step, the outlaw shows no shame, holds his head high, nods courteously at the women.

But in front of the feed shop, he happens upon a young boy staring at him with blue eyes the size of the moon.

The outlaw stops, taken by the boy, and nods, as if to say, *I know you. You're one of us. I believe in you.* But like that, he's gone, shoved through the doors of the jailhouse.

Time stands still for the boy, staring at his point of departure. Until a hand suddenly slaps his head.

UNCLE CLAUDE
Let's go?! You think he's gonna help
you with them handcuffs?

INT. FORD T PICK UP - MOVING - MORNING

Claude at the wheel, Steve riding gun.

STEVE
Where they takin him?

UNCLE CLAUDE
To the lock up. Unless he break out
again, that feller aint gone see
daylight for a long time now.

STEVE
How come?

UNCLE CLAUDE
How come? Cuz he's an outlaw, that's
how come.

STEVE
What's an outlaw?

UNCLE CLAUDE
Means he don't respect no laws like
the rest of us.

Steve considers. Remembers his eyes.

STEVE
Didn't seem so bad, you ask me.

UNCLE CLAUDE
Well aint nobody ask you, boy.

EXT. SLATER FARM - A LITTLE LATER - MORNING

The pick-up pulls up to the house. There's A WOMAN sitting quietly on the porch. She's familiar, if not aged since we last saw her. It's **JULLIAN MCQUEEN**. Ten years older.

UNCLE CLAUDE
Go on upstairs. Get yourself ready
for supper.

Steve hops out, runs up the steps, stops before the unfamiliar woman, tips his hat, sprints inside.

INT. KITCHEN - SLATER FARM - EVENING

A stark American dinner table. A bleeding roast flanked by drab green beans. Uncle Claude, Steve, and Jullian eat in virtual silence. Note Jullian's bracelets, earrings, makeup, last year's flapper haircut. This is no country bumpkin.

JULLIAN
Have you ever been to the big city,
Steven?

Steve doesn't look up.

UNCLE CLAUDE
Go ahead, boy, answer her.

STEVE
No, I aint been to no stupid city.

JULLIAN
Well. I think you're just gonna love
Indianapolis.

He suddenly throws his fork down. Startles the others. **EVA**, 32, a Polish housemaid with an attitude, stares down at Steve. Note the tattoo on in the inside of her forearm.

EVA
Don't think *I'm* picking that up now.

EXT. STEVE'S ROOM - SLATER FARM - A LITTLE LATER

A small room at the top of the stairs with a slanted ceiling only a kid could find the charm in.

STEVE
I don't wanna go!

Steve's sitting on his bed, staring up at Uncle Claude.

UNCLE CLAUDE
A boy needs his mama.

STEVE
She aint my mama!

UNCLE CLAUDE
You got to be strong now, Steven, you
understand me? You got to be strong.

Tears come fast and hard now. Claude gets down on one knee.

UNCLE CLAUDE
There aint no room for sissies and
criers, you hear now?

Steve falls forward into his arms. Claude sighs, holds the boy, a display of emotion neither man is used to.

UNCLE CLAUDE

Now, listen.

Claude digs into his pocket, pulls out A POCKET WATCH.

UNCLE CLAUDE

I wantcha to take this time piece
with you. You understand?

Steve takes the watch, turns it over, sees the inscription engraved on the back: "*TO STEVE. WHO HAS BEEN A SON TO ME.*"

He looks up, tears still pouring down his cheeks, nodding...

CUT TO:

EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - BEVERLY HILLS - DAY

Bright and sunny and blue. A Ferrari stops at a light.

MCQUEEN (O.S.)

Never met a woman I could trust,
Sammy.

SUPER: BEVERLY HILLS, CA - 1970

INT. FERRARI - SAME

MOVIE STAR MCQUEEN is at the wheel, 40 years old, shirt open, bronze tan, silver shades glistening in the California light. This is the man in his golden prime. **SAM PECKINPAH**, 45, scraggly, unshaven, mirrored shades, rides gun.

MCQUEEN

Then again, I never thought I'd be
divorced.

SAM PECKINPAH

Most don't.

MCQUEEN

You think a man can love twice?

SAM PECKINPAH

Considering I fall in love a good
three, four times a day? Yessir I do.

Over Mcqueen's shoulder, A DATSUN pulls up to the redlight.

Takes a beat for THE HOUSEWIFE to realize who's in the lane next to her. Green Ferrari. Sunglasses. Steve Mcqueen.

MCQUEEN

Afternoon.

Her eyes widen. Her mouth opens. Just as the light turns green. Mcqueen peels out, fat tires burning on hot cement.

The Datsun doesn't budge. Cars honk behind her. The driver's hand is shaking over her lips.

EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - FERARI - MOVING - DAY

Mcqueen weaves in and out of traffic, one hand on the wheel. This is his town. Peckinpah buckles his seat belt.

MCQUEEN

I can't afford another flop like Le Mans, Sammy. Lost everything on that one. Lost my wife. Lost my company. Lost my partner. Nearly lost myself.

SAM PECKINPAH

Still here, far as I can tell.

MCQUEEN

Yeah but a guy like me doesn't get but one more shot in a town like this. Folks see you stumble, they'll knock you right off the throne.

SAM PECKINPAH

One way to look at it.

MCQUEEN

All I'm saying is, this film's gotta have real grit. Real *quality*. I don't know about some East Coast boarding school tight ass playing an outlaw.

Peckinpah whips out a flask. Takes a hard pull.

SAM PECKINPAH

Just take the meeting.

MCQUEEN

I'm gonna tell you right now, I think that brawd Canyon's the right call.

SAM PECKINPAH

Cannon. Diane Cannon.

MCQUEEN

Say what you will, Love Story mighta been a smash at the box office, but that was one candy-ass picture.

Peckinpah doesn't blink. He points to a driveway.

SAM PECKINPAH

Turn in here.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - ROBERT EVANS'S HOUSE - DAY

Down a long private driveway, past a tennis court, under a canopy of trees, past a pool where Warren Beatty is busy splashing around with a couple of gals in bikinis.

INT. LIVING ROOM - ROBERT EVANS'S HOUSE - DAY

Dark, mirrored and immaculate. House of luxury, house of sin. MCQUEEN, PECKINPAH AND **ROBERT EVANS** recline over a chilled bottle of white wine. Evans pours Mcqueen's glass.

ROBERT EVANS

As you know, we're tremendous fans of yours over at Paramount, Steve.

MCQUEEN

Appreciate that.

A beat. Evans never rushes, never breaks a sweat. The consummate host. He calls to the other room.

ROBERT EVANS

Oh, Ali, dear? Come join us, won't you? Steve and Sam are here.

Time slows as **YOUNG ALI MCGRAW** emerges from a bedroom, her hair pulled back, her form slender and lithe, her breasts untethered by a brassiere, porcelain skin, eyes like gems...

In 1970, this is the most beautiful woman in the world.

She takes a seat on the couch next to Evans. Elegantly crosses her legs. Steve Mcqueen just fell in love.

ALI MCGRAW

Hello.

SAM PECKINPAH

Howdy.

Mcqueen doesn't offer anything in the way of greeting. It's all in the eyes: desire, intrigue, prey.

ROBERT EVANS

Ali, dear, we were just discussing *The Getaway*. Why don't you tell them what you thought of the script?

Stealing her eyes away from Mcqueen:

ALI MCGRAW

Oh, it was such a pleasurable read.
Thank you for sending it to me.

ROBERT EVANS

You can speak freely here. Steve and
Sam are friends. We can trust them.

ALI MCGRAW

Of course. I enjoyed it, but... to be
honest... maybe it's just me... but I'm
not sure I followed the narrative
exactly. It felt... disjointed.

SAM PECKINPAH

You and me both.

(chuckling)

In all seriousness, though, with
Steve on board, we think we have an
opportunity to do something new here.
Something different. Something more
about look and feel than plot.

ALI MCGRAW

Well, that certainly sounds exciting.
I was a tremendous fan of Bullitt.

Evans leans forward. Gives them the real.

ROBERT EVANS

Ali's concerned about credibility.
She's worried the audience won't buy
an Ali McGraw in a role like this.
That an Ali McGraw can handle a
pistola or a getaway vehicle.

SAM PECKINPAH

We can teach you that. Steve knows a
lot about firearms, don't you, Steve?

But Steve's not listening. He's just devouring Ali with his
eyes. And she hasn't been devoured in a long, long time.

CUT TO:

EXT. INDIANAPOLIS - DUSK

Grey. Dreary. Establishing.

SUPER: INDIANAPOLIS, 1941

INT. JULLIAN MCQUEEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

In a decrepit one bedroom littered with wine bottles and
nylons hanging from a clothes line, **11 YEAR OLD STEVE** plays
solitaire on a chaise lounge. The walls shake violently.

A few moments later, a bedroom door opens and a BEEFY FELLOW in military slacks and an undershirt appears.

BEEFY FELLOW
I'm gonna go ahead and leave this for
you right here.

The beefy fellow holds up a BLUE ENVELOPE. **JULLIAN MCQUEEN** appears in the doorway in a sheer negligee.

JULLIAN
Don't be a stranger now.
(then, per his stare)
Steven, Howard's a soldier. He's
going off to fight for the U.S. Army.

HOWARD/BEEFY FELLOW
Marines.

He drops the BLUE ENVELOPE on the table, stops at the door.

HOWARD/BEEFY FELLOW
See you in a couple months, Sugar.

INT. BATHROOM - JULLIAN'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Still in her revealing negligee, Jullian washes off her eye liner. Note her wide selection of perfumes. She shuts the mirror, sees a face staring back at her.

JULLIAN
Don't you know better than to look at
a woman before she's good and ready?

STEVE
Was that my daddy?

INT. JULLIAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Steve and Jullian sit on the edge of her bed, sheets bunched up behind them, the air thick with the smell of sex. Steve stares into A BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO OF JULLIAN, PREGNANT, her arm around the waist of A NEBULOUS LOOKING FELLOW.

JULLIAN
His name was Bill. Bill Mcqueen. He
flew airplanes for the United States
Army. Your daddy was a war hero.

STEVE
If he was a hero, how come he aint
around?

JULLIAN
Well because he had to fly airplanes,
that's why.

STEVE
Was he an outlaw?

JULLIAN
A what? Now where would you get an
idea like that?

He shrugs, holds the photo closer. Closes one eye for better focus. She realizes she's in over her head. Gets an idea.

JULLIAN
You ever been to the picturehouse?

STEVE
The what?

JULLIAN
Terrence Steven McQueen, you mean to
tell me you aint never been to the
picturehouse before?

CUT TO:

THE SILVER SCREEN:

CASABLANCA - BERGMAN AND BOGART, movie stars of the highest order, glowing off the screen, vulnerable and in love.

ILSA
*I can't fight it anymore. I ran away
from you once. I can't do it again.
Oh, I don't know what's right any
longer. You have to think for both of
us. For all of us.*

RICK
*All right, I will.
(then)
Here's looking at you, kid.*

IN THE AUDIENCE:

Steve peeks over at his mother. She's sobbing, dabbing her eyes with a handkerchief.

INT. BAR - POOL HALL - NIGHT

Steve and Jullian settle in at the bar of a seedy lounge for old timers and transients. Jullian sips a high ball.

JULLIAN
Play it for me one more time, won't
you, Sam? That Humphrey Bogart is
just the bees knees. I can barely
stand it. Oh, I could just cry.

But Steve's focused on A SHEEPISH LOOKING FELLOW loitering behind her now, hat in hand. Call him **FRANK**.

FRANK
Howdy, ma'am. Nice to see you again.

JULLIAN
Do I know you?

FRANK
Matter of fact you do. We seen each other just a few months back.

JULLIAN
We did? Silly me! Must be the weather. All this rain makes me forgetful. You'll forgive me, won't you?

Frank looks her up and down suggestively.

INT. APARTMENT - A LITTLE LATER

The walls shake from Jullian's bedroom. Steve stares at the door from the couch. Moments later the door swings open and Frank emerges in boxer shorts, spots Steve on the couch.

FRANK
Helluva lay. Helluva lay.

Frank shakes his head, shuts the bathroom door. That's when Jullian emerges in garters and a robe. It dawns on her:

JULLIAN
Steven?! What in God's good name are you still doin here?

Off his shrug, she digs into her purse, finds the BLUE ENVELOPE, pulls out some CASH. Courtesy of "Howard."

JULLIAN
Go on and get yourself some supper, silly boy. And don't you cause any trouble now, you hear? Last thing I need around here is trouble.

INT. BAR / POOL HALL - NIGHT

Same bar. Same crowd. New hour.

MALNOURISHED DRIFTER
Nine ball, side pocket.

A MALNOURISHED DRIFTER with a mouthful of rotten teeth and a country twang finishes off a geezer with a pegleg. The nine ball falls and a dirty hand swipes the cash off the table.

MALNOURISHED DRIFTER

Who's next?

A dollar bill lands on the table.

VOICE

I am.

He looks down. There's 11 year old Steve, nary a blink. Malnourished shares a look with another drifter.

MALNOURISHED DRIFTER

Son, that money touches felt, it's house money. You understand that?

STEVE

I know it.

The older folk share a look.

MALNOURISHED DRIFTER

Rack em up then.

INT. POOL HALL - LATER

Balls fall. Bumper shots. Combos. Perfect leaves. Curious transients gather round to watch THE KID in action. The cue strikes the five, dances back to the middle of the table.

STEVE

Nine. Corner pocket. Off the six.

Slow and controlled and down she goes. Nine ball off the six. Game over. The malnourished drifter none too pleased.

MALNOURISHED DRIFTER

Where'd you learn to shoot stick like that, boy?

STEVE

My uncle.

Steve looks up. Takes A PILE OF CASH off the table. A RED HEADED KID with the devil in his eyes watches in awe.

RED HEAD DEVIL BOY

Wish I had me an uncle like that.

INT. JULLIAN'S APARTMENT - MIDDAY

Steve and Jullian and **NORM**, another gentleman caller / customer, sit over a late breakfast. Jullian's ruffled hair, smeared eyeliner, cigarettes suggest a long night.

JULLIAN
Aint this nice? Like a little family.

NORM
The boy don't eat his greens?

STEVE
I aint hungry for my greens.

NORM
Where I come from, it don't matter
what you're hungry for.

STEVE
I aint seen you eating em?

Norm drops his fork and WACK! -- before anyone saw it
coming, BACKHANDS the kid across the face. Quick and clean.

Steve flinches, cowers, tears well up. He looks across at
his mother for help, support, defense, anything.

JULLIAN
Now, Steve, Norm here sails ships for
the United States Army.

NORM
Navy, baby, Navy. How many times I
gotta say it? United States Navy.

JULLIAN
If a Navy sailor man tells you to eat
your greens, I think you better eat
your greens, don't you think now?

But before he can respond, there's A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. All
heads turn. Another knock. This one louder.

NORM
Who is it?

HARSH VOICE (O.S.)
Police. Open up.

NORM
You better not be conning me, woman.
I aint paid you yet, you hear?

Norm gets up, opens the door. There's A POLICEMAN and a
FAMILIAR FACE staring back at them through the chain.

NORM
What can we do for you, Officer?

PATROLMAN
Sorry to disturb you folks, but I got
a fellow here says that there boy of
yours been stealing his money... ?

It's the MALNOURISHED DRIFTER who lost his shirt to a 10 year old kid the night before. He points squarely at Steve.

MALNOURISHED DRIFTER
That's the little shit right there.

Norm looks back at Steve - so does Jullian.

STEVE
He's lying! I won it fair and square!

CUT TO:

CLICK! FLASH! JULLIAN AND STEVE ETERNALIZED ON A PHOTO STRIP, ONE OF THEM SMILING WIDE, THE OTHER FLAT AND BLANK.

EXT. GREYHOUND STATION - MORNING

Jullian pulls THE PHOTO STRIP from a photo booth. Behind them, hundreds of soldiers are shipping off to war.

JULLIAN
Goshdarnit, why didn't you tell me my lipstick was all screwy, Steven?

She looks down. Bag at his feet, Steve's retreated inward, a tear falling down his cheek. She drops to a knee.

JULLIAN
I'm sorry, Stevie, had I known how much a fuss you'd be I never woulda made you leave. We can both learn a lesson from this, can't we now.

She kisses him on the cheek - leaves a mark. Over her shoulder, he's already developing that long, hard stare.

CUT TO:

EXT. SANTA PAULA AIRPORT - AFTERNOON

A YELLOW STEARMAN BIPLANE noses up for a 3 point landing on a small air strip just off the Pacific Coast. As his back wheels touch down, then the front, a SMALL CROWD OF ONLOOKERS on the ground erupts into applause.

SUPER: SANTA PAULA, CA - NOVEMBER, 1978

EXT. RUNWAY - SANTA PAULA AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

The plane taxis to a crawl, turns and stops. In goggles and a bomber jacket, the pilot is A THIN, BEARDED STEVE MCQUEEN, now 48 years old. Could probably pass for 60.

Mcqueen rips off his goggles, lets out a howl. **BARBARA MINTY**, 23, THE LADY IN RED, is running to his side.

MCQUEEN

Hey, Baby!

BARBARA MINTY

You were great!

He hops out of the cockpit. Barbara envelops him in a hug.

SAM MASON (O.S.)

Brought her in nice and clean!

Over his shoulder, **SAM MASON**, a gentle fellow in his 60's, extends a hand. Mcqueen pulls him into a hug.

MCQUEEN

You kidding me? To hell with racin',
I shoulda been doing this all along!

EXT. AIRPORT HANGAR - SANTA PAULA - DUSK

A sign slung across the open hangar door reads:
CONGRATULATIONS, STEVE! Pilots and grease monkeys loiter
around a keg of beer. This is a simple crowd.

MCQUEEN

Don't know where she came from, but
she sure came at the right time.

Steve sips a beer with Sam Mason and watches as Barbara Minty laughs easily with one of the ladies.

SAM MASON

It takes a grown man to recognize a
good thing, doesn't it.

MCQUEEN

Shit, I'm not sure I've ever felt
this good before. Be honest, I keep
waiting for the other shoe to drop.

SAM MASON

You don't trust in much, do you?

MCQUEEN

Man trusts what he knows.

SAM MASON

If you don't mind my asking, have you
ever thought about Jesus Christ?

MCQUEEN

Only a matter of time before you
asked me that, wasn't it.

SAM MASON (CONT'D)

Probably.

MCQUEEN

I been a shit for 48 years, Sam.
Don't imagine Jesus Christ is gonna
take an interest in a shit like me.

SAM MASON

Oh, the Lord's seen a lot worse than
Steve Mcqueen. That much I do know.

Mcqueen suddenly starts COUGHING. It's sharp and raspy. It
settles just as Barbara Minty saunters over.

BARBARA MINTY

What do you two boys look so serious
about?

CUT TO:

EXT. BOYS REFORM SCHOOL - CHINO

A sprawling compound in the desert. Cactus and brush, all
washed out and grey and bright. Next stop: Folsom Prison.

SUPER: CHINO, CALIFORNIA - 1945

EXT. BOYS REFORM SCHOOL MONTAGE - CHINO

A montage of boys in uniform doing manual labor. Amongst
them, STEVE MCQUEEN digs ditches - chops wood - cleans
urinals - mops floors - eats alone - lies awake in the dark.

INT. BOYS REFORM SCHOOL - CHINO - MORNING

In a communal bunk, kids of all shapes and size slip into
their reform school best. A wreath hangs from the wall:
MERRY CHRISTMAS! At one of the bunks, STEVE MCQUEEN buttons
his shirt, shines his shoes, combs his hair. He's 15.

EXT. PARKING LOT - BOYS REFORM SCHOOL - CHINO - THAT DAY

Cars line up in the parking lot, reform school boys waiting
anxiously for their families.

TIME LAPSE: 75 kids becomes 35 - 35 kids becomes 18 - 18
becomes 7 - 7 becomes 2. One of the 2? Mcqueen.

Suddenly a familiar looking BEAT UP JALOPY takes the corner
at a fast clip and turns into the parking lot. Mcqueen's
eyes light up. Uncle Claude? All the way from Slater?

RED HEAD DEVIL BOY
Merry Christmas, pal!

He turns, sees A RED HEADED DEVIL BOY, second to last kid racing off to meet his parents in the beat up jalopy. Uncle Claude from Slater? No. Mcqueen's the last man standing.

INT. REC ROOM - BOYS REFORM SCHOOL - CHINO - A LITTLE LATER

In a dingy rec room with a dinged up pool table and a pathetic Christmas tree in the corner, Mcqueen chalks up his stick and breaks a perfect diamond. Nine ball. Solo.

EXT. PARKING LOT - BOYS REFORM SCHOOL - CHINO

Grey clouds drift towards a distant mountain range. Mcqueen emerges from the building into the parking lot and drops his duffel at his feet. An American flag flaps lazily above.

SUPER: 14 MONTHS LATER

He's wearing a pair of ironed Levis, jean jacket, chamois shirt. 17 years old. A man on the outside, child on the in.

He scans the horizon. Like The Getaway. Only this time there are no cameras. This time there's no Ali McGraw.

RED HEAD DEVIL BOY (O.S.)
Hey, Mcqueen.

He turns, sees his red headed, freckled friend.

RED HEAD DEVIL BOY
Whatcha gonna do now?

Mcqueen turns back to the desert spread out before them.

MCQUEEN
Damned if I know.

I/E MONTAGE - DAY AND NIGHT

A LONESOME DESERT HIGHWAY - duffel slung over his shoulder, Mcqueen throws up a thumb, starts off down the road.

VEGAS - on the back of a pickup, Mcqueen passes downtown Vegas, past Binion's, the Flamingo, past the Desert Sands, starring the one, the only, SINATRA! THIS WEEKEND ONLY.

A TRAIN - in a box car, staring out at the Rockies.

AN INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - in a mile long ditch, Mcqueen's covered in muck, laying a five foot diameter pipe.

LOGGING IN CANADA - surrounded by stacks of forested trees, chainsaw in hand, having at the base of a gargantuan spruce.

AN OIL RIG - fifty miles off shore, boots, gloves, goggles, Mcqueen twists a mega ton valve with a co-worker.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - CONTINUOUS FROM THE ABOVE

Sweating in jeans, no shirt, body lean, chiseled, think Brad Pitt, Thelma and Louise, Mcqueen stands over a commercial size WASHER / DRYER, stack of sheets and towels behind him.

Suddenly, A SLIM, FAIR BLONDE, **LINA**, slips in behind him in a bathrobe, drops a small sack of undergarments in a separate bin, brushes a hand across his cheek.

LINA

Mornin, Stevie.

He salutes her in passing, watches her slink out the door... as ANOTHER GIRL crosses in, this one with jet black hair.

MONA

Hi, Cutie.

MONA does as Lina did, drops a bag of undergarments in the personals bin, kisses him on the cheek. She turns and goes, passing a CURVY BLONDE, **VICKI**, with a thick Texas accent...

VICKI

Well aint you a sight for sore eyes.

Vicki winks on her way out, making room for a dark skinned LATINA WOMAN, **MARISOL**, to slide in beside her.

MARISOL

Buenos Dias, Estaban.

She drops her bag in the bin, holds his face, kisses him on the left cheek, then the right... just as an older, weathered mother hen of a woman, **MS. MAY**, ducks her head in the door...

MS. MAY

How we making out on detergent?

MCQUEEN

Gonna need more tomorrow.

She nods her head. Wipes her forehead. Hot in here.

MS. MAY

You making out alright?

MCQUEEN

Making out just fine, Ms. May.

INT. DINNER TABLE - BROTHEL - DUSK

A mess hall table, overpopulated with young, beautiful, damaged WOMEN, ALL OF THEM SINGING:

WOMEN
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

At the head of the table, Steve Mcqueen stares at a birthday cake with two flickering candles, a ONE and an EIGHT.

WOMEN
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DEAR STEVIE... HAPPY
BIRTHDAY TO YOU!!!

He leans in, makes a wish, blows out the candles. Cheers erupt. Someone drops a needle on a turntable. Music swells.

LINA
What'd you wish for?!

MONA
What's he got left to wish for? It
all came true last night!

Laughs ripple across the table. But suddenly the needle drags across the record. Heads spin. The music cuts out.

It's MS. MAY. Hands on her hips.

MS. MAY
Let's go, girls. Playtime's over.

The girls shuffle out. After a beat, Ms. May looks up. Steve's sitting alone in front of a birthday cake.

MS. MAY
Don't you have any family you wanna
call, Stevie?

MCQUEEN
You're looking at it.

INT. STEVE'S TINY ROOM - BROTHEL - NIGHT

Under a night light, Mcqueen stares at THE PHOTO OF PREGNANT JULLIAN AND BILL MCQUEEN. The bed shakes. Grunts echo through the walls. Moans. The house is open for business.

INT. STEVE'S TINY ROOM - BROTHEL - LATE NIGHT

Mcqueen lies awake in the darkness, alone. Suddenly, his door creaks open, dark red light steals in from the hallway.

He turns, sees LINA sneaking into his room. She takes off her robe and slides under the covers, takes his arm and places it around her waist. Lina wants to spoon.

Moments later, the door opens again. Mcqueen looks up. It's MONA. She quietly closes the door, drops her bathrobe on the floor and slides in behind him, her arm around his waist.

And we leave him like that, one lady in front, one lady behind, both of them quietly purring in their sleep.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - EL PASO PRISON - DAY

40 YEAR OLD STEVE MCQUEEN emerges from the outer walls of a maximum security prison into a desolate parking lot. He's a free man. He looks up at the endless expanse of blue sky.

VOICE

Hey, Mcqueen?

He turns. There's the RED HEAD DEVIL BOY from Chino Reform.

RED HEAD DEVIL BOY

Whatcha gonna do now?

He looks up. An American flag flaps lazily in the breeze. When he looks back down, Devil boy is nowhere to be found.

SAM PECKINPAH (O.S.)

Cut!

Mcqueen opens his eyes and returns to the present. A FILM CREW scurries about. An operator in a lift. A boom. Sam Peckinpah rising from a director's chair.

SAM PECKINPAH

Let's go again.

SUPER: EL PASO, TEXAS - 1971

EXT. EL PASO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

A small international airport. Bienvenidos a El Paso.

MCQUEEN (O.S.)

Who's playing Doc? You or me?

INT. EL PASO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - SAME

Mcqueen and Peckinpah make their way through the terminal, walking and talking. Peckinpah draws on his flask. Passersby stop and gawk as word gets around it's Steve Mcqueen.

MCQUEEN

So how are you gonna tell me Doc
Mccoy cares more about the money than
the girl? I'm telling you - if he
aint a romantic, no one's gonna care.

SAM PECKINPAH

You're not understanding the
rudimental motivation of the outlaw.
It's the money. It's always about the
money. That's what motivates Doc.
That's what makes him an outlaw.

MCQUEEN

I been an outlaw my whole life, Sam.

Mcqueen suddenly freezes. Peckinpah follows his line of
vision. Time slows. ALI MCGRAW is making her way towards
them, bag over her shoulder, the air of the ethereal.

MCQUEEN

And all I ever wanted was the girl.

Ali spots them in the crowd, a nuclear smile mushrooming
across her face as she draws closer.

SAM PECKINPAH

Christ. Don't do it, Steve.

MCQUEEN

It's already done.

EXT. HIGHWAY - EL PASO, TEXAS

Pick up trucks and big rigs cut through rugged desert. In
their midst, a Porsche dodges in and out of lanes.

INT. PORSCHE - MOVING - SAME

Mcqueen grips the wheel, pushing a hundred, glancing up and
down at the rearview. Peckinpah rides gun. In the backseat,
ALI MCGRAW's eyes are glued to Mcqueen's in the mirror. The
tension in the car is flammable. She adjusts the giant
ENGAGEMENT RING on her finger, inadvertently turns it upside
down. Peckinpah nips from his flask, mutters:

SAM PECKINPAH

Shiiiiit.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

A hand raps on a door. Moments later the door opens and a
SHORT, ANGRY WOMAN in a nightgown stares back at us.

SHORT ANGRY WOMAN

Yes?

A handsome face steps forward. This is **MARK RYDELL, 22.**

MARK RYDELL

Hello, Ma'am, have you ever pondered
the origin of the universe?

Off her look, **21 YEAR OLD STEVE MCQUEEN** steps forward.

MCQUEEN

Do you ever wonder about the onset of
electricity?

MARK RYDELL

How bout the many species of birds
out your window?

MCQUEEN

With this special collector's edition
Encyclopedia Britannica, now you can
answer all these questions and more.

She stares at the two of them -- and slams the door.

EXT. WHITE HORSE TAVERN - NIGHT

Establishing.

SUPER: GREENWICH VILLAGE, NYC - 1951

INT. WHITE HORSE TAVERN - NIGHT

Smoke and gin and Ginsburg and Kerouac and Cassidy... and in
the corner, Rydell and McQueen suck back a cool one as they
battle out a game of gin rummy, pennies and smokes the ante.

MCQUEEN

This encyclopedia thing aint cutting
it, man. I need to make some bread.
Only so long a fella can count on
poker hands and bike races.

MARK RYDELL

You can count out poker hands as long
as I'm playing.

MCQUEEN

Pal of mine from the service says
they're hiring tile layers like
banshees over in Spain.

But before he can respond, the front door swings open and
two dolled up VILLAGE GALs step in.

MARK RYDELL

You want to go lay tiles in Spain, be my guest. I'll be laying something else right here in Greenwich Village.

Mcqueen turns, watches the ladies approach.

MCQUEEN

Where'd you find them?

MARK RYDELL

Drama class.

MCQUEEN

Drama class? What are you? Some kinda candy ass?

The ladies arrive at the table, all jovial and loose.

MARK RYDELL

Ladies.

Kisses and hellos are exchanged.

MARK RYDELL

Ladies, this is Steve. Steve, meet Annie B. and Ms. Eva Marie. I was just telling Steve here he ought to try out a drama class or two.

One of the ladies, **ANNIE B.**, likes what she sees.

ANNIE B.

I'm looking for a new scene partner...?

MARK RYDELL

How bout that, Mcqueen?

EVA MARIE

Come on, Annie, I need to freshen up.

As they walk away, Rydell and Mcqueen ogling their backside...

MARK RYDELL

That's what I call candyass...

EXT. DIRT RACE TRACK - DAY

FIFTEEN BEAT UP MOTORCYCLES, junkyard hybrids, throttle towards a straightaway. On a used K model Harley, MCQUEEN digs in around the turn, jockeying down the stretch with another racer. But the bike on his flank makes a sudden kamikaze-like cut in front of him and takes the flag.

EXT. ORGANIZERS DESK - DIRT RACE TRACK - LATER

A RACE ORGANIZER counts out 35 dollars, slaps them into the hands of a good looking cat in leather chaps who just snatched victory out of Mcqueen's hands. Guy rides big.

ORGANIZER
32, 33, 34, 35 dollars.
(looking up)
Second place! Mcqueen!

The winner, A BLONDE HAired, BLUE EYED, FAMILIAR LOOKING GUY, throws a competitive grin at Mcqueen.

BLUE EYED WINNER
That'd be you, kid.

Mcqueen stares him off and steps forward.

MCQUEEN
No need to rub it in.

ORGANIZER
Better'n third, son.

MCQUEEN
Not in my book, it aint.

He slaps 15 bucks into Mcqueen's filthy palm.

INT. STAIRWAY - 5TH STORY WALK-UP - DUSK

Muddy, sweaty, Mcqueen shuffles up a dark east village stairwell. When he arrives at the top floor, a door suddenly opens and A BALD ANGRY MAN emerges from A COMMUNAL BATHROOM.

LANDLORD
Well, look what the cat dragged in.

MCQUEEN
I aint ducking you, Ed. I got your money right here.

LANDLORD
I hope so. Cuz it ain't your lucky day if you don't.

Mcqueen digs into his pocket, pulls out his winnings. Counts em out. 12, 13... 14. The Landlord looks up from his hand.

LANDLORD
That's five short. This month alone.

MCQUEEN
Gimme another month. I'll make it up.
I swear. I got a beat on something.

LANDLORD
Next month. Paid in full. Understand?
Otherwise you're out.

MCQUEEN
Next month. Paid in full.

LANDLORD
Don't be a bum, Mcqueen. I don't rent
to bums.

INT. MCQUEEN'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Mcqueen keys into his cold water flat. He drops his helmet on the floor. Not much in the way of decoration here. This is old school, Ellis Island style, immigrant living.

GIRL (O.S.)
What took you so long?

He turns. There's ANNIE B. in nothing but her bloomers.

MCQUEEN
I was out making some bread.

ANNIE B.
So are you ready to rehearse or what?

He winks as she hangs on his shoulder.

MCQUEEN
Baby, I'm always ready.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYHOUSE - DAY

East 54th, a five story townhouse, a sign on the front door reads: NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYHOUSE SCHOOL OF THE THEATER.

ANNIE B. AS EDNA (O.S.)
That's what I say!

INT. PROSCENIUM - NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYHOUSE - SAME

A handful of actors stare up at a stage where STEVE MCQUEEN and ANNIE B. rehearse a scene from Odet's WAITING FOR LEFTY.

MCQUEEN AS JOE
DON'T CHANGE THE SUBJECT!

Annie B.'s comfortable, familiar with the material while her scene partner seems to be growing increasingly volatile.

ANNIE B. AS EDNA

This is the subject! Your boss makes this subject. I never saw him in my life, but he's putting ideas in my head. He's giving your kids that fancy disease called Rickets and he's making a jellyfish outta you!

Mcqueen's turning red, living this part with seething rage...

MCQUEEN AS JOE

I'm not so dumb as you think! But you're talking like a goddamn red!

Amongst the audience, there's MARK RYDELL and there's a MIDDLE AGED FELLOW with stature and grace watching closely. This is **SANFORD MEISNER**. Acting coach. Mentor. Sage. Legend.

ANNIE B. AS EDNA

When a man knocks you down you get up and kiss his fist... you gutless piece of baloney!

And that's it. MCQUEEN BOILS OVER AND SUDDENLY SLAPS HER ACROSS THE FACE. The sound echoes off the walls. Annie B.'s cheek turns bright red. The class is stunned. Paralyzed.

A DARK HAIRED, SWARTHY LOOKING GUY with a plethora of energy comes in from the side to play the gallantry card.

SWARTHY EXCITED ACTOR

Whoa, whoa! What are you doing, Mcqueen? That's a lady, man?!

But the guy takes one step too many and Mcqueen hauls off and CRACK! BARE KNUCKLES him in the eye. The actor drops to a knee, holding his face. Blood drips through his fingers.

A collective gasp rises from the class.

Sandy Meisner doesn't move... taken by this "performance"... not at all quick to wrangle the bull raging on his stage.

INT. PROSCENIUM - NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYHOUSE - A LITTLE LATER

Annie B. holds an ice pack to her cheek. The swarthy actor does the same. Sandy Meisner paces the stage while the fate of Steve Mcqueen's acting career hangs in the balance.

ACTRESS

He's a thug!

ACTOR

He should be expelled!

SANDY MEISNER

Should he?

Quiet descends for the master. He turns and points at A BLACKBOARD sitting on the side of the stage.

SANDY MEISNER
What does that say?

A rolling blackboard reads: **ACTING IS LIVING TRUTHFULLY
UNDER IMAGINARY CIRCUMSTANCES**

SANDY MEISNER
Annie? Tell the class what that says.

ANNIE B.
Acting is living truthfully under
imaginary circumstances.

SANDY MEISNER
*Acting is living truthfully under
imaginary circumstances.*
(beat)
You may not like Mr. McQueen's
interpretation of his character, you
may be frightened by his violence...
(then)
But I would argue that he's been the
most truthful one here today.

INT. SANDY MEISNER'S OFFICE - LATER

McQueen sits before the master. A quote from Goethe is framed on his desk: "*I wish the stage was as thin as a tightrope so only those skilled would dare step on it...*"

SANDY MEISNER
Do you believe that's how your
character would have reacted?

MCQUEEN
I don't know about my character, but
some half a fag gets in my kitchen
like that, I'm gonna bust him a new
lip. That's all I know.

Meisner nods faintly. Right.

SANDY MEISNER
Listen. Something brought you into my
studio, Steven. You have something
nobody else in that room has.
Something raw and real and terribly
valuable. I can see it in your eyes.
It's a light. An essence. A truth, if
you will. But if I had a dime for
every actor who came in here in a
storm of authenticity and left in a
cloud of artifice, I'd be a rich man.
Authenticity isn't taught, Steve.
(MORE)

SANDY MEISNER (CONT'D)
 But it also doesn't last forever.
 Next time punch a wall if you have
 to.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY/DESERT ROAD - THE GETAWAY - DAY

White sun, flat land dotted with trees. In a men's Burberry rain coat, ALI MCGRAW leans against a white station wagon with fake wood paneling parked haphazardly on the shoulder.

SAM PECKINPAH (O.S.)
 Annnd... action.

Steve Mcqueen suddenly walks into frame and faces Ali in a classic two shot. Note his black suit, white shirt, black tie, 10 years before The Blues Brothers ever existed.

Mcqueen looms menacingly, then suddenly - SLAP - he backhands her across the face. She gasps, flinches. Again. SMACK. Slap - slap - slap - Ali shrieks, ducks, cries.

He throws her against the car. This is real. No kid gloves. Ali's face is red, raw, her nose running, eyes tearing...

REVERSE ANGLE:

SAM PECKINPAH hovers over a camera and operator. **DAVID FOSTER**, producer, takes a step towards the frame - *the action is shockingly real*. But Peckinpah pulls him back.

ON CAMERA:

Doc Mccoy won't stop smacking Carol across the face.

DOC MCCOY
Stupid...! (slap) Why didn't you tell me?!(slap) Why didn't you tell me?!

CAROL MCCOY
There wasn't any way to explain it!
(through sobs and tears)
You sent me to him, you know...
(a whimpering mess)
What the hell do you want anyway?!

The question of the film. What does Doc Mccoy want? The money or the girl? He stares at her vulnerably. He wanted the girl. But the girl betrayed him. Like they always do.

He suddenly springs at her again - startles her - shoves her back into the front seat of the car, slams the door shut.

SAM PECKINPAH
 And cut!

FIRST A.D.

Cutting!

The scene immediately breaks down. Grips and assistants descend. But Steve and Ali linger. Ali staring at him through tussled hair. McQueen panting and sweating.

SAM PECKINPAH

Print 1 and 3! Moving on!

Off their looks, two animals sizing each other up -

EXT. ALI MCGRAW'S TRAILER - DUSK

In jeans and a t-shirt, freshly showered, wrapped for the day, McQueen knocks on the door. Moments later, McGraw appears in the doorway - in a bathrobe. She feigns surprise.

ALI MCGRAW

Hi...

MCQUEEN

Hi... mind if I come in?

She hesitates, pulls her robe tighter, opens the door wider.

INT. ALI MCGRAW'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

McQueen steps in and surveys the interior. Ali hovers by the door. Tension percolates.

MCQUEEN

Nice trailer.

ALI MCGRAW

Not as nice as yours.

A beat. He shrugs, bringer of peace.

MCQUEEN

I wanted to apologize.

ALI MCGRAW

For what?

MCQUEEN

For today.

He notes a PHOTO OF ALI AND A TWO YEAR OLD BOY.

MCQUEEN

Sometimes... sometimes I get a little lost.

ALI MCGRAW
I didn't realize you were the type to apologize.

MCQUEEN
No? What type did you take me for?

ALI MCGRAW
The unapologetic type.

MCQUEEN
Yeah? Well, maybe I am then. Maybe I just wanted to see you.

ALI MCGRAW
So... ? Which is it?

He moves closer. Closer. And then suddenly - it's on. He kisses her hungrily on the mouth - as she throws him back onto the couch... rips his t shirt over his head - her robe falls to her ankles... her legs clamped around his waist...

EXT. ALI MCGRAW'S TRAILER - SAME

A P.A. approaches the trailer with a cup of coffee in hand. He stops at the door. Realizes the whole thing is ROCKING.

CUT TO:

EXT. WEST VILLAGE - NIGHT

The Blue Note and the Village Vanguard. Introducing the Miles Davis 5. And around the corner...

INT. LOUIS' ITALIAN RESTAURANT AND BAR - SAME

A raucous scene of actors, directors, poets and painters, all jockeying for attention and adoration. At a table in the back, Mcqueen shovels back a bowl of spaghetti while the SWARTHY EXCITABLE ACTOR he punched rattles on next to him.

MCQUEEN
You aint sore about it?

SWARTHY EXCITED ACTOR
You kidding, man? That's the most alive I've ever been on stage, man. No script. No emotional arc. Just the action and the reaction. Naturalism, man. Being in the moment. The rest, man, the rest is just a lie!

Mcqueen grunts as he shoves a giant spoonful of pasta down his throat. This is a man who's eternally hungry.

MCQUEEN

Pass me that cheese, wouldja?

Suddenly THE COCKY BLUE EYED WINNER from the motorcycle race appears over Mcqueen's shoulder.

BLUE EYED WINNER

Here you go, kid. That's for keeping up with me.

He slips a cold beer in front of Mcqueen. The excitable actor with the black eye throws out an enthusiastic hand.

SWARTHY EXCITED ACTOR

Hey, John Cassavettes, how you doin'?

The blue eyed winner shakes his hand, never looks at him.

JAMES DEAN

James Dean.

Dean's fixated on Mcqueen. Like maybe he likes him.

JAMES DEAN

Call me. We'll go ridin sometime.

He winks and struts off towards the back.

JOHN CASSAVETTES

That guy fuckin queer or what? You see the way he was lookin at you?

Suddenly, Mcqueen's eyes land on A GAL COMING THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR. She's got short dark hair, a thin, firm dancer's body, sharp eyes set into the face of a possum.

The door closes behind her, just as MARK RYDELL slips his hand around her waist and leads her to the bar. Mcqueen's fork hovers over his lap... then drops, spaghetti and all.

JOHN CASSAVETTES

Outta your league, brother.

He watches as Rydell pulls out a seat for her at the bar.

JOHN CASSAVETTES

She's on Broadway.

And that's all he needs to know. He shoves his chair back --

AT THE BAR:

Mcqueen leans in next to the young gal, unbeknownst to Rydell who's busy flagging down the bartender.

MCQUEEN

Steve.

He throws out a hand. **NEILE ADAMS** eyes it, look up into the owner's blue eyes. Leaves him hanging.

NEILE ADAMS

And?

MCQUEEN

I like the way you look.

No angle. No guile. Just head-on intensity.

MARK RYDELL

What the hell you doing, Mcqueen?

MCQUEEN

Stealing your girl.

NEILE ADAMS

I beg your pardon?

Rydell steps between them.

MARK RYDELL

Go change your oil, Mcqueen, huh?
She's spoken for.

Mcqueen stands down, but over Rydell's shoulder, he and Neile Adams can't steal their eyes away from each other.

UNCLE CLAUDE (O.S.)

Yep, she cooks real good and she aint
half bad to look at neither.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SLATER FARM - DUSK

THE BEAT UP JALOPY bounces down the hardened driveway.
TWELVE YEAR OLD STEVE sits next to Uncle Claude.

UNCLE CLAUDE

Yep, a couple changes round here
since you gone away...

INT. STAIRWAY - SLATER FARM - LATER

Steve follows **EVA** (formerly the housemaid) up the stairs.
It's hard to miss her makeover. A ring on every finger. A
mound of silver around her neck. Dress with lace and frill.
None of it, though, can hide the tattoo on her forearm.

EVA

You watch those boots there, Steven.
Don't be tracking mud up and down my
stairway. We got rules around here.

He stops in front of his room, turns the knob. It's locked.

EVA (CONT'D)
That aint your room no more.

Suddenly the door swings opens. A sharp eyed **15 YEAR OLD GIRL** stares back at them, frown and all.

EVA (CONT'D)
Jacqueline, dear, this is Steven Terrence. Pa Claude's fourth nephew removed or something or other. Steve, this is my daughter, Jacqueline Rose.

JACKIE
Nobody calls me Jacqueline.

She slams the door shut. Steve flinches.

INT. TINY ROOM IN THE ATTIC - MOMENTS LATER

Steve sits alone on a creaky bed. He pulls out THE BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO OF HIS "PARENTS": PREGNANT JULLIAN AND A WAR HERO NAMED BILL - and tapes it to the wall over his head.

INT. DINNER TABLE - SLATER FARM - NIGHT

Jack Benny on the turntable, Eva and Claude sip syrupy wine and eat in silence. 15 YEAR OLD JACKIE stares across the table at Steve. When he finally looks up, she opens her mouth to reveal A MOUTH FULL OF MUSH. He doesn't blink.

EXT. YARD - SLATER FARM - DAY

Hands blistering, Mcqueen takes a hack at a monstrous log. His axe sticks in the wood. He kicks the stand in frustration. Behind him is a pile of logs 12' high. PAN UP TO A WINDOW to find JACKIE STARING DOWN AT HIM..

INT. TINY ROOM - SLATER FARM - NIGHT

Upright in bed, Steve sketches a motorcycle in a studybook. Suddenly there's A KNOCK at the door. He looks up. The door opens. It's JACKIE. She shuts the door behind her.

JACKIE
What are you doin?

STEVE
Social studies. What do you want?

JACKIE
Nothin.

STEVE

Well why you standing there like that then?

JACKIE

No reason.

But clearly that's not the case. She suddenly lifts her nightgown up over head and drops it to the floor.

STEVE

Whatcha do that for?

He takes her in. She's buck naked.

JACKIE

You don't like how I look?

INT. KITCHEN - SLATER FARM - NIGHT

Uncle Claude sips a whiskey in front of a fire, listens to a wind up radio broadcasting news from the front. Behind him, Eva stops to note a trail of MUDDY FOOTPRINTS up the stairs.

EVA

Goddamnit with that boy of yours! I done told him not to go traipsin through my house with all that mud!

UNCLE CLAUDE

Leave him be, woman. He's just a boy.

EVA

Well he's a boy in my house now and he's got to understand we got rules around here.

Off Uncle Claude muttering something indistinguishable, Eva frowns and starts off towards the stairs.

INT. STAIRWAY - SLATER FARM - CONTINUOUS

Eva charges up, frowning at the footprints along the way.

INT. HALLWAY - SLATER FARM - CONTINUOUS

Eva marches down the hallway, comes to Steve's door - and doesn't knock. She just turns the knob and barges right in.

INT. TINY ROOM - SLATER FARM - CONTINUOUS

What she sees will scar her for life. Jackie, stark, raving nude, riding young Steve McQueen, his hands on her waist. A 12 year old and a 15 year old. Mid coitus. She screams.

EXT. BEAT UP JALOPY - DAWN

The beat up Jalopy bounces down a bumpy road, Uncle Claude at the wheel, Steve pleading from the seat next to him.

STEVE

Please, don't make me go back to her!
I'll be good, I swear. I'll be good!

Through the windshield, a desolate GREYHOUND STATION comes into view. Uncle Claude stares straight ahead.

UNCLE CLAUDE

I'm sorry, son. We just aint got no
room for you here no more.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - MOVING - MORNING

Steve wipes a tear away, stares at THE TIME PIECE in his hand. The inscription reads: *"TO STEVE. WHO HAS BEEN A SON TO ME."* He opens the window, squeezes his hand through the slot and releases. The time piece slips out onto the road.

CUT TO:

EXT. BROADWAY - NIGHT

A glitzy billboard reads: **THE PAJAMA GAME.** With NEILE ADAMS.

INT. ST. JAMES THEATER - BROADWAY - NIGHT

A 50's dance number with women in a pajama factory singing and dancing in their PJ's. The gal in front? Neile Adams.

EXT. ST. JAMES THEATER - BROADWAY - NIGHT

Under the billboard, Neile emerges with a couple friends. Suddenly A THROTTLE IS REVVED. Neile and her friends whip around to identify the noise pollutant. Guess who.

MCQUEEN

Hey!

She whispers to her friends. Approaches McQueen on a Harley.

NEILE ADAMS

Hey? That's what you have to say for yourself?

MCQUEEN

Hop on. I'll take you for a ride.

NEILE ADAMS

Hop on? Do I even know you?

MCQUEEN

The other night. At Louie's downtown. You were hanging out with Rydell.

NEILE ADAMS

What are you doing here?

MCQUEEN

I think you're sexy.

NEILE ADAMS

You think I'm sexy. You don't even know my name.

He steps back, looks up at the billboard: **NEILE ADAMS!**

MCQUEEN

Lemme guess. Neile Adams?

A beat. She's getting flustered.

NEILE ADAMS

And where are you proposing to take me? Back to your place, I presume?

MCQUEEN

Considering I'm in a cold water, five story walk up? I was thinking something more like your place.

NEILE ADAMS

And what makes you think I'm the kind of girl who gets on some stranger's bike and takes him back to my place?

MCQUEEN

Can't blame a guy for asking.

She turns back to her friends. Back to Mcqueen. Looks at the bike. She's breaking. If nothing else, she's game.

NEILE ADAMS

This thing even safe?

Mcqueen's never been as cool as he is now - young and wild, jeans, t shirt, smoke in his lips, Harley between his legs...

MCQUEEN
Depends who's riding it.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

On his bike, Neile clings to McQueen's back as they weave in and out of Saturday night traffic.

INT. CAFE FIGARO - VILLAGE - NIGHT

Espresso and chess and disillusioned Trotskyites. McQueen and Neile Adams smoke cigarettes in a dark, romantic corner. McQueen devours a piece of pie. Neile's is barely touched.

NEILE ADAMS
My father left before I was two. I
only know him from the photos.
(off his look)
After he left, my mother married a
man who took us to the Philippines.
Just in time for the war. We spent
two years in an internment camp.

She looks up. Internment camp? Not in his vocabulary.

NEILE ADAMS
When the war ended, my mother married
another man I didn't much care for. I
guess you could say he didn't have
much trouble hitting a woman.
(off his look)
The only thing good about him was he
signed me up for a dance class.

MCQUEEN
What'd you do after the war?

NEILE ADAMS
As soon as I was old enough, I split
on my own. Wandered my way through
Europe, took some odd jobs, met some
odd people along the way - until I
landed right here. On Broadway.

He stares at her with those eyes. She's basically telling him his own story.

NEILE ADAMS
Why are you looking at me like that?

MCQUEEN
Like what?

NEILE ADAMS
Like you're gonna eat me?

Off his look - desirous and intense:

CUT TO:

EXT. VENTURA COUNTY CHURCH - DAY

A humble church set against the Pacific Ocean.

SAM MASON (O.S.)
Sweet Jesus, Lord, Christ, open to us
the doors of repentance...

SUPER: VENTURA, CA - 1979

INT. VENTURA COUNTY CHURCH - SAME

Sam Mason leads a packed house from the pulpit. Faithful eyes stare up from the floor and down from the balcony.

SAM MASON
O Jesus, Lover of men, accept us as
we throw ourselves at Thy feet, O
Lord, and fervently implore the
forgiveness of our sins. Amen.

CONGREGATION
Amen.

A loud, sharp COUGH pierces the serenity.

ON THE BALCONY:

Steve McQueen, 49 years old, thin, pale, cleanly shaven now, COUGHS into his arm. Next to him, Barbara Minty rests a hand on his knee. Note the ENGAGEMENT RING on her finger.

SAM MASON
If you would all please rise now and
join me in a celebration of the Lord...

A shuffling as the congregation rises to its feet. Steve and Barbara follow suit. Hands land on AN ORGAN somewhere. A CHOIR rises. AVE MARIA swells to the rafters.

Barbara lowers her head. But McQueen's eyes wander until they land on the STAINED GLASS WINDOW behind the pastor.

MOVE IN on the stained glass, a simple depiction of *THE PIETA* - glowing brighter and brighter -

MOVE IN on McQueen, mesmerized by the light - ON *THE PIETA* - ON MCQUEEN - ON THE GLASS - ON MCQUEEN - ON THE LIGHT...

DISSOLVE TO:

A BLINDING LIGHT BEATS DOWN ON A WASHED OUT DESERT BASIN

Cactus and dirt and rock as far as they eye can see.

EXT. MOJAVE DESERT - DAY

A PICK-UP TRUCK bounces across the desert, TWO CROSS COUNTRY MOTORCYCLES tied down to the truck bed.

SUPER: MOJAVE DESERT - 1974

INT. PICK UP TRUCK - MOVING - SAME

Mcqueen adjusts his shades as he stares out the passenger side window. Santana's *Singing Winds, Crying Beasts* distorts from the shitty analog speakers. A hand hits his chest.

BUD EKINS

You do this every year?

He turns. **BUD EKINS**, 40's, passes him a joint from the driver's seat. Both sport dirty white Triumph t-shirts.

MCQUEEN

Every year, same time.

Mcqueen drags deep and hard, exhales into the cabin. Through the smoke, small circular structures appear on the horizon.

MCQUEEN

Slow up.

EXT. NAVAJO RESERVATION - DAY

The pick up truck pulls into the epicenter of a Navajo Indian reservation. Children excitedly circle the truck.

Mcqueen and Ekins hop out and start throwing PROVISIONS down from the flatbed - boxes of food, water, blankets. It's a one man humanitarian effort. Thousands of dollars worth of relief. A feeding frenzy ensues. Women smile. Men carry off cases of water. Children laugh and chase and tease.

NAVAJO ELDER (O.S.)

I thought you were going to bring the blonde one this time?!

Mcqueen turns as **AN ELDER NAVAJO MALE** in a jean shirt and cowboy boots approaches. He grins. They embrace.

MCQUEEN

Ugly sonofabitch right here's gonna have to do. This here's my pal Bud.

NAVAJO ELDER
Well, any friend of Mr. McQueen is a
friend of the Navajo.

The elder reaches for Bud Ekins' hand. Shakes it heartily.

NAVAJO ELDER
The full moon welcomes you both.

CUT TO:

EXT. STUDIO CITY - NIGHT

Just over the hill. Establishing.

SUPER: STUDIO CITY, CA - 1958

INT. STUDIO CITY HOUSE - NIGHT

Neile Adams looks up from a kitchen table, SCRIPT spread out
in front of her.

NEILE ADAMS
Well, well. Josh Randall. We meet
again.

McQueen paces around the kitchen, no shirt, script in hand.

MCQUEEN
If you're lookin for trouble, Tyson,
I reckon you just found it.

NEILE ADAMS
Oh yeah? Well what about them? You
reckon they just found trouble, too?

A beat. McQueen stares into the imaginary distance. Squints
like an actor playing a tough guy.

MCQUEEN
You're gonna have to come up with
more than a buncha pony boys to scare
me off...

He suddenly grabs A BANANA, points it at Neile and shoots.
Neile tries to stifle a laugh. Snorts through her hand.

MCQUEEN
What the hell are you laughing at?

NEILE ADAMS
Nothing... nothing... I just...

MCQUEEN

What, you think you're an expert?
What the hell would you know?!

NEILE ADAMS

I know you're not coming off the way
you should, that's what I know.

(off his look)

Everyone's trying to be Dean or
Brando out there. Everyone's doing
the brooding tough guy thing. So what
makes you any different?

MCQUEEN

You calling me a copy?

NEILE ADAMS

No, I'm telling you to be *real*,
Steve! I'm telling you to be *you*! You
got the tough guy thing all locked
up, but can you be vulnerable? Can
you be silly? You do it with me,
baby. You do it all day. Do it on
camera and you're gonna go places.

He looks away. Finding his breath.

MCQUEEN

Yeah?

NEILE ADAMS

Yeah.

MCQUEEN

I just... I aint... I never had anybody
look out for me like that.

NEILE ADAMS

But, baby? I'm your wife... ?

Off his look, his face raw and revealed -

INT. CASTING OFFICE - MORNING

Mcqueen poses in front of a couch in a cowboy hat and jeans.
A director and a producer sit behind a table.

PRODUCER

Alright, Steve. You know the story.
You're Josh Randall. Feared bounty
hunter. Tough guy extraordinaire.
You're out in the field, suddenly,
the guy you been tracking appears on
a hill and he aint alone. He's got
back up. Five stiffbs on saddleback.

MCQUEEN

What about me? I got heat?

DIRECTOR

Sure, whatever you like, Steve. And feel free to go off script. Do whatever comes natural. Shoot em dead. Fight em with the fisticuffs, mano a mano. One on five. Lasso, maybe. Whatever you see fit.

PRODUCER

Shall we? You ready?

He turns away. Digs into a knapsack. A beat, back turned -

MCQUEEN

Ready.

DIRECTOR

Annnnd... *action*.

Mcqueen spins around. He's got A BANANA in one hand, UMBRELLA in the other like a shot gun. Props.

ON MCQUEEN: BALLED UP ENERGY ON THE BRINK OF EXPLOSION, EVERY MUSCLE ENGAGED, EYES BURNING WITH INTENSITY. HE SPOTS HIS COLLAR ON THE HILL. HANDS TIGHTEN ON HIS WEAPONS.

DIRECTOR

Well, well. Josh Randall. We meet again.

MCQUEEN

Hold it, fool! 'Nother step and I'm gone make me some Tyson stew!

The Director looks down at the script. Tyson stew?

MCQUEEN

Nice and chunky!

DIRECTOR

Oh yeah? Well what about them? You reckon they just found trouble, too?

IN THE IMAGINARY DISTANCE, FIVE HORSES COME OVER THE HILL, RIDERS ARMED TO THE HILT. MCQUEEN'S EYES WIDEN. MOMENT OF TRUTH. PRODUCER AND DIRECTOR WATCHING HIS EVERY MOVE.

MCQUEEN

Now *that's* a good question.

AND SUDDENLY, LIKE A CAT OUT OF A BUSH, HE SPRINGS FOR THE DOOR, THROWS IT OPEN AND DIVES OUT INTO THE HALLWAY.

The door slams shut behind him. Director and Producer laugh. Probably what most of us would've done.

CUT TO:

INT. SET: THE GETAWAY - MORNING

THE BREAKFAST SCENE: *in a blue robe, Mcqueen as Doc Mccoy hovers over a stove, cooks an omelette. Suddenly, Carol Mccoy appears in a white robe. Doc sighs, rolls his eyes.*

DOC MCCOY

Oh, she's here.

Carol (err, Ali) laughs, slides in behind him, hugging his waist, rips the tag off his bathrobe.

CAROL MCCOY

Hey, I was gonna fix you breakfast.

DOC MCCOY

Ah, you were sleeping.

A beat, as she quietly turns him around so they're face to face, nose to nose. They study each other intimately...

PULL BACK TO FIND CREW MEMBERS WAITING TO POUNCE. LIGHTS, CAMERA, THE WHOLE NINE. WE'RE ON SET.

DOC MCCOY

Thank you.

CAROL MCCOY

For what?

DOC MCCOY

For getting me out.

CAROL MCCOY

It was a pleasure.

There may be a camera and a crew here, but this isn't acting. Mcqueen peels back the shoulders of Ali's robe and starts to kiss her. The intimacy verges on uncomfortable.

SAM PECKINPAH

Annnnnd... CUT.

FIRST A.D.

That's a cut on rehearsal!

Grips falls in, microphone, boom, best boy...

But the actors don't stop. They just keep going at it, making out feverishly, Ali's leg now wrapped around his waist, smoke burning from the skillet behind them.

PECKINPAH sits back in his director's chair, crosses his legs, cracks open his flask. Might as well enjoy the show.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

Ali stares out the floor-to-ceiling window at the sun rising over the desert. She smokes a Merit, clings to a sheet over her naked body. McQueen sits up in bed, watching her.

MCQUEEN

What's wrong?

ALI MCGRAW

You know what's wrong.

MCQUEEN

I wanna hear you say it.

ALI MCGRAW

Say what?

She moves back to the bed, sits next to him.

ALI MCGRAW

That I'm crazy about you?

(off his look)

That's what you needed to hear?

MCQUEEN

You said it, not me.

She punches him the shoulder. He pulls her back down onto the bed, rolls over on top of her.

ALI MCGRAW

I thought you were supposed to be a ladies man. Don't you know when a lady says she's crazy about you, you return the favor?

MCQUEEN

I'm not crazy about you.

(off her look)

I'm in love with you.

A beat. Off the morning light stealing through the window -

ALI MCGRAW

Fuck, Steve.

(then)

What am I gonna tell Bob?

MCQUEEN

The truth.

She shakes her head, turns away.

ALI MCGRAW
I don't even know what that is...

CUT TO:

THE OPENING CREDIT SEQUENCE OF WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE

JOSH RANDALL AND HIS MAIRE'S LAIG SAWED OFF SHOT GUN.

Starring television's hottest new star: STEVE MCQUEEN

EXT. SET - WANTED: DOA - CONTINUOUS FROM THE ABOVE - DAY

On his horse, MCQUEEN trots out of frame, slows to a walk on the set of *WANTED*. Cameras and lights and trailers and grips scurrying about. **A MOUSY WARDROBE ASSISTANT** approaches.

MOUSY WARDROBE ASSISTANT
Mr. Mcqueen, would you mind trying
this on for size?

He looks down from his saddle as she passes him a HAT. He studies it dubiously, stares down at the girl.

MCQUEEN
Let me ask you something? You ever
seen a real live cowboy?
(off her terrified look)
Well, I have. And I can tell you
this: they don't wear shiny new hats.

He flings the hat off into the dirt.

MCQUEEN
Can somebody get me a hat that
doesn't look like a Halloween
costume, please?!

A BEARDED DIRECTOR rolls his eyes near a camera.

DIRECTOR
It's just a hat, Steve. She's just
trying to do her job.

MCQUEEN
Just a hat? That's all it is?

DIRECTOR
Just a prop, Steve, that's all.

MCQUEEN
That's *Mr. Mcqueen* to you! And lemme
tell you something! Maybe on some
other show you can shoot a cowboy in
a goddamn party hat but as long as
I'm Josh Randall, we do things right
around here. We do things authentic!

DIRECTOR

Boy, don't go raising your voice at me! I'm old enough to be your Daddy. Course if I was, you wouldn't be acting like a goddamn child. Your Daddy know what kinda man you are?!

Mcqueen stares down at him. Then turns to a A PRODUCER.

MCQUEEN

Get him off my set.

DIRECTOR

You can't fire me.

MCQUEEN

(to the producer)

You let me know when he's off the lot. And when I say off the lot, I mean OFF THE LOT! Til then, we aint shootin nothin. Heeeya!

He yanks on his horse's reins, but she doesn't respond.

MCQUEEN

I said, HEEYA!!

Again, with a kick to the flank and a yank on the reins. But the horse isn't listening. Mcqueen hops off. Rage boiling over. He kicks the dirt like Billy Martin arguing a call.

MCQUEEN

Get this goddamn horse off my set!
And don't let me see her again!

PRODUCER

Steve, come on, man, you can't fire the horse.

MCQUEEN

The horse is fuckin fired! You hear me? The horse is *fuckin* fired!

And with that he stomps off towards his trailer. Hundred people, grips, electricians and the like watching him go.

EXT. MCQUEEN'S TRAILER - SET OF WANTED: DOA - DUSK

HILLY ELKINS waits at the door of Mcqueen's trailer and knocks. Some rustling but no response. He knocks again. Moments later, the door opens and A YOUNG WOMAN appears.

HILLY ELKINS

Afternoon.

The woman nods quietly, her face flushed, and scurries off onto the lot. Hilly Elkins (manager) shakes his head.

INT. MCQUEEN'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Elkins finds Steve in front of a mirror - jeans and boots - naked from the waist up - practicing his draw. The maire's laig off the hip, into the mirror. You talkin to me?

HILLY ELKINS
You're getting good.

MCQUEEN
Got fans now, Hill. Gotta stay on top of my game. Only one way to go from here and it sure as shit aint down. I seen what that looks like.

HILLY ELKINS
Listen. Those names you asked me to track down. I think I found him.

Mcqueen stops with the gun. Stares at him in the mirror.

HILLY ELKINS
Bill Mcqueen. Lives in Covina. About 45 minutes from the lot. Can't tell you much else, but I got the address right here.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A beautiful day, and there's a brand new XKSS BRITISH RACING JAGUAR, licorice black, racing down the highway.

I/E JAG - MOVING - SAME

Mcqueen at the wheel, wind in the cabin, Neile riding gun. The odometer inches up. 91, 92, 93... Mcqueen looks over at Neile. She's busy filing her nails. He downshifts, the engine roars, he steps on it. But Neile doesn't bite.

Suddenly... SIRENS. A COP CAR emerges in the rear view. He's doing 98mph on the 10 East. He frowns, looks over at Neile.

NEILE ADAMS
Don't look at me.

EXT. HIGHWAY SHOULDER - MOMENTS LATER

A familiar moment. Mcqueen and Neile wait quietly as a cop approaches in the rear view. THE COP arrives at the window.

COP
Nice car you got here, sir.

The cop flips off his Ray Bans, glares down at the driver. Does a doubletake. Mcqueen grins up at him.

COP (CONT'D)

Well, I'll be...

(over his shoulder)

Hey, Hank! It's that Josh Randall fella! From that show you watch!

HANK hurries over. Lights up at the sight of Mcqueen.

HANK/COP 2

Aw, man! Mr. Mcqueen, you're just about my favorite actor on the TV!

Neile rolls her eyes.

MOMENTS LATER:

Neile's still filing her nails. As traffic whizzes by, Mcqueen gives the boys a lesson on spinning their weapon.

MCQUEEN

It's just like this. Like it's part of the hand.

Mcqueen takes Cop 1's pistol, looks away, in character, and suddenly draws from his hip, points the gun at Hank/Cop 2. Hank throws his hands up high. Loving every second of it.

HANK / COP 2

You got me! Yassir! You got me!

Mcqueen spins the gun like Josh Randall, pockets it in his hip. His audience couldn't be more thrilled.

EXT. COVINA STREET - DAY

The Jag rolls searchingly down a hot desert street.

EXT. JAGUAR - COVINA HOUSE - SECONDS LATER

The Jag pulls into the driveway of a carbon copy, ranch style, track house. A wind chime swings lazily from the front door. Steve and Neile stare through the windshield.

NEILE ADAMS

You okay?

MCQUEEN

Not what I pictured.

She takes his hand.

INT. COVINA HOUSE - DAY

A frazzled woman, 60s, in an ankle length gown straight from the closet of Mrs. Roper, emerges from a hallway with a PHOTOGRAPH. Shag carpeting abounds. A framed illustration of Dwight E Eisenhower looms over a plastic dining room table.

MRS. BILL MCQUEEN

This is Bill here. He'd just finished
up a stunt show out in Victorville.

Mcqueen frowns as she passes the photo to him and Neile. He stares into the photo, sees: a young man in flying gear.

NEILE ADAMS

How did he die?

MRS. BILL MCQUEEN

The cancer. God bless him. Gall
bladder. He fought it tooth and nail.
Just wasn't enough this time.

NEILE ADAMS

I'm sorry.

MRS. BILL MCQUEEN

It sure is something, though, all he
could talk about these last few
months was his boy. I wonder what in
god's good name ever became of little
Terrence Steven, he'd say.

Mcqueen looks up. Photo in his lap. His eyes are troubled.

MRS. BILL MCQUEEN

Every Friday night he'd set right
there and watch you on the TV and
wonder. Can you imagine that, he'd
say? My boy? A television star?

(wistful)

If only you'd shown up a few months
earlier. But aint that God's way.

A beat. Aint that God's way. Mcqueen suddenly springs up off the couch, bee lines for the front door, swings it open and disappears outside. Neile sighs. Rises after him.

NEILE ADAMS

I'm sorry. He's just... well... you can
imagine. Thank you.

MRS. BILL MCQUEEN

I understand.

A polite hug between the women at the front door.

MRS. BILL MCQUEEN

And congratulations to you both.

NEILE ADAMS

For what?

MRS. BILL MCQUEEN

Well... you are pregnant, aren't you?

EXT. JAGUAR - HIGHWAY - MOVING - DAY

Mcqueen stares straight ahead, hand firmly on the shift. Neile looks over - he's retreated inside himself. She takes his hand off the shift, places it on her belly - lays her hand over his. Never mind the fact he's doing 110.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HANGAR - SANTA PAULA AIRPORT - NIGHT

Labored grunts echo through the darkness. A digital clock throws a hint of light on Mcqueen's naked back as he thrusts in and out of Barbara Minty. Suddenly, the action stops. He falls off to the side. A quiet beat. Barbara whispers:

BARBARA MINTY

It's okay.

But it's not. He pushes himself off the bed, nude, and retreats into the bathroom, SLAMMING the door behind him.

A moment later, THE COUGHING starts up from the bathroom. It snowballs into something hideous and painful.

Barbara gets up, shuffles to the bathroom door.

BARBARA MINTY

Steve? Are you okay?

(off his silence)

Steve, can I come in, please?

A beat. Until the door unlocks from within.

She turns the knob, steps up behind her husband, naked and thin in the light. She looks down over his shoulder.

The sink is covered in blood.

CUT TO:

EXT. NAVAJO RESERVATION - NIGHT

A blue moon glows above. Mcqueen and Bud Ekins huddle around a bonfire while the Navajo men serenade the full moon on animal skin drums. The tribal elder passes them each a cup of broth from a fiery cauldron, gestures for them to sip.

Mcqueen sips his special tea and stares into the fire pit as the flames dance up and away. A TRANCELIKE BEAT SWELLS AS...

WE DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JUNKYARD - SLATER, MISSOURI - DAY

12 YEAR OLD STEVE and UNCLE CLAUDE unload a heap of junk from the back of the pick up. As Steve lifts THE OLD RED TRICYCLE from the flatbed, something catches his eye amidst the sea of refuse: an old, rusted out, INDIAN "CAMEL BACK SINGLE" MOTORCYCLE, production date circa 1906.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - SLATER FARM - DAY

12 year old Steve teaches himself how to ride. The engine revs, the front wheel kicks out and he spills to the ground. The bike lands on top of him, back wheel splattering mud.

Back in the saddle, knees scuffed, elbows ripped, he goes for it again. Lightens up on the throttle, lets her go. But he forgot the break. He flies up and over the handlebars.

Again, he's back up now, feet barely touching the ground, fighting for balance, gritting his teeth, engine puttering...

He carefully throttles up... gets off to a crooked start, front wheel jerking back and forth, nearing disaster...

But as the bike accelerates, his balance settles, and so does a rhythm, puttering down the driveway...

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Steve motors away from the house, the first unmitigated smile since he rode a bicycle down this very same road.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

Face full of wind, Steve races an endless row of box cars carrying livestock, his eyes lit with joy and freedom.

BACK TO:

EXT. NAVAJO RESERVATION - DAWN

Sounds of wretched heaving. Mcqueen opens his eyes, lifts his head, surveys his surroundings. He's in a sleeping bag next to the fire pit. The sun emerges on the horizon. Across the way, Bud Ekins is vomiting his brains out. It's dawn.

CUT TO:

EXT. MGM LOT - DAY

Now Sony. Establishing.

SUPER: MGM LOT - CULVER CITY, CA - 1962

A BLACK PORSCHE stops at the curb. McQueen hops out the passenger side, runs around to the driver's side. Neile looks up, A TODDLER IN HER LAP: TWO YEAR OLD **TERRY MCQUEEN**.

MCQUEEN
Wish me luck, baby.

He leans in, kisses her on the lips.

NEILE ADAMS
Break a leg!

He winks, waves, turns out of frame. Then suddenly... he ducks back in and kisses little Terry's head.

INT. HALLWAY - STUDIO - SAME

McQueen follows **A SECRETARY** to an office door - she steps back, ushers him in.

SECRETARY
They're ready for you.

McQueen quietly follows her into --

A SMALL, UNEXCEPTIONAL OFFICE:

Where A MAN behind a desk rises and extends a hand. Note his jaw - it's the jaw of a conqueror.

JOHN STURGES
John Sturges. Good to meet you.

MCQUEEN
Likewise.

JOHN STURGES
You know who this guy is, I presume.

Steve turns to the other man in the room - leaning back in a chair, feet up on the desk - a desk that clearly isn't his. Toothpick in his mouth. No mistaking THE CHAIRMAN.

MCQUEEN
Mr. Sinatra. It's a pleasure.

SINATRA
Call me Frank.

Sure enough, it's **FRANK SINATRA**. In movie star prime.

JOHN STURGES

Have a seat, Steve. Thank you, Cindy.

The Secretary retreats into the hallway. McQueen takes a seat on the couch. A beat. Sinatra chomping on a toothpick.

SINATRA

Johnny here says you're the next big thing. ... On television.

MCQUEEN

That's right.

SINATRA

I don't watch television.

A beat. Both men eyeing each other warily.

SINATRA

So, you read the script? You know what the hell we're doing here?

MCQUEEN

Ringa's a great part, sir.

SINATRA

You're damn right it is. Only reason you're here is cuz a dear friend of mine - maybe you know him - he's a spook Jew if that gives you any idea - his head got so big we don't have no room for it on the plane any more.

MCQUEEN

No room for big heads, sir.

Sinatra gives Sturges the nod, sits forward.

SINATRA

Just remember whose name's on that billboard, kid. If there's any film left when they're done shooting me, maybe you'll get a closeup or two.

(then)

But don't hold your breath.

MCQUEEN

Hey, it's your show, Frank.

Frank stares at him. Ole blue eyes.

SINATRA

That's Mr. Sinatra. Don't make me say it twice.

Sinatra rises and slowly takes his leave. A beat after the door shuts behind him. Sturges manages a faint grin.

JOHN STURGES
Welcome to the cast of *Never So Few*.

CUT TO:

VIEW THROUGH A CAMERA LENS:

MCQUEEN, BRONSON, SINATRA, LAWFORD IN AN INFIRMARY TENT.

JOHN STURGES (O.S.)
Little to the left, Peter.

PETER LAWFORD steps to his left.

JOHN STURGES (O.S.)
Little more...

He steps again - until he's almost out of frame.

JOHN STURGES (O.S.)
Little more ... one more step...

He steps entirely out of the picture.

JOHN STURGES (O.S.)
That's good. Right there.

EXT. SET - NEVER SO FEW - NIGHT

Pull back to find Sturges staring through the camera lens.

JOHN STURGES
Sycophant hack.

BOB RELYEA, 1st AD, sits on Sturges' shoulder next to the camera. Sturges nods, Relyea lifts his blowhorn.

BOB RELYEA
Annnnd ACTION!

Mcqueen strolls into frame in a tight military tank top and a pistol. He backhands the pistol into his belt.

MCQUEEN AS RINGA
You's a tough one, cappy. A real tough one.

SINATRA
Cut!

Sinatra turns, yells over to Sturges.

SINATRA
Hey, Johnny, what the hell you trying to do to me here?

JOHN STURGES
What's the problem, Frank?

SINATRA
We making a chick flick here or something? What the hell's he wearing with those muscles like that?

Mcqueen's chiseled and ripped - glowing for the camera.

EXT. SET - NEVER SO FEW - NIGHT

Mcqueen (now wearing a long sleeved shirt) and Charles Bronson listen to a scripted argument between Sinatra and Lawford. Off to the side, Sturges whispers to Bob Relyea.

JOHN STURGES
I can't keep the camera off this kid.

BOB RELYEA
He's gonna steal the whole picture if Frank doesn't step it up.

SINATRA (O.S.)
Hey, Johnny!

They both turn. Sinatra's approaching.

SINATRA
When the hell are we finishin? I got a couple birds flying in tonight, if you catch my drift.

Sturges pats Relyea on the back.

JOHN STURGES
That's why it's your job he never sees the rushes.

EXT. SET - NEVER SO FEW - A LITTLE LATER

A gaffer and a best boy argue about a broken light. Sturges and Relyea pour over a shot list. Mcqueen sits back in a monogrammed chair as a makeup artist touches him up. Three seats down, a hair guy sprays CHARLES BRONSON'S hair.

But the seats between them remain conspicuously empty. Note the names on the back: SINATRA and LAWFORD.

Suddenly, Bronson shoots up out of his chair. THE MAKEUP ARTIST tending to Mcqueen jumps away. Takes Steve a moment to put two and two together. But it's too late.

CRACK, CRACK, CRACK, CRACK, CRACK!

He springs up, hops and howls and rolls as A STRING OF FIRECRACKERS EXPLODE from his belt.

CRACK, CRACK, CRACK, CRACK, CRACK!

When it's finally over, Mcqueen immersed in a cloud of sulphur... Sinatra and Lawson come into view... tears in their eyes, bent over in asphyxiating laughter.

PETER LAWFORD
You see how high he jumped?!

SINATRA
Like a fuckin frog!

PETER LAWFORD
Like a fuckin frog!!!

Lawford and Sinatra stumble away in hysterics, Mcqueen left behind in a cloud of noxious smoke. He isn't laughing.

EXT. CRAFT SERVICE - NEVET SO FEW - MOMENTS LATER

Sinatra and Lawford smoke a couple cigarettes, pour some whiskey in their coffees. Lawford ogles an extra.

LAWFORD
Man, I haven't laughed that hard since Dino almost banged that transvestite back in A.C.

SINATRA
That was some funny shit. Funniest shit I ever seen, matter of fact.

A couple more chuckles, but then from off screen -

MCQUEEN (O.S.)
Hey, Frank...

They turn. It's Mcqueen, TOMMY GUN POINTED RIGHT AT THEM.

MCQUEEN
Pretty funny, huh?

A beat as they process. Sinatra doesn't blink.

SINATRA
Hysterical, you ask me.

MCQUEEN
I hear you like to dance.

The whole set just went dead silent.

PETER LAWFORD
You outta your mind, kid?

MCQUEEN
Maybe I am... or maybe I just wanna see
a cute little two step!

BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM!! He empties the chamber.

Smoke and dust kick up at their feet - SINATRA AND LAWFORD
HOPPING AND DANCING like the ground's on fire. It is.

When the dust finally settles, Sinatra and Lawford are in
shock. So is the crew. Sturges and Relyea are paralyzed.

PETER LAWFORD
You fucking lunatic motherfucker, you
have any idea what you just did?!
(then, incredulously)
You're a dead man, Mcqueen! D-e-a-d.
Fuckin dead man.

But more importantly, what's Frank gonna do? Sinatra
approaches Mcqueen - stops at his feet - blue eyes to blue
eyes - until he suddenly throws his arm around him.

SINATRA
This kid? You believe this kid?
(grinning ear to ear)
This kid's got a pair of brass so
big I could build a fuckin casino
right on top of his fuckin balls!

The crew exhales. He pulls Mcqueen in tighter, hugging him
in that maybe I'll wack ya later, maybe I won't kinda way.

SINATRA
Get in there, kid. Go get your
closeup!!!

CUT TO:

THE SCREEN: NEVER SO FEW - FINAL CUT

*Mcqueen helps Sinatra down from the wing of a military
biplane as Sinatra bombards him with baggage and artillery.*

MCQUEEN AS RINGA
Man, you got more weapons here than a
bank dick...

INT. THEATER - PREMIERE - SAME

AN AUDIENCE ERUPTS WITH LAUGHTER. Pull back to find Sinatra
in hysterics, arm around AVA GARDNER. Neile Adams turns and
sees Steve's face awash with the glow of his own image.

NEILE ADAMS (V.O.)
Never So Few is ultimately a middling effort in a myriad of World War II pictures being rolled out by Hollywood this year...

INT. SOLAR DRIVE HOUSE - MORNING

Neile reads from the morning edition of Variety while Steve devours a bowl of oatmeal. Terry grins from a high chair.

NEILE ADAMS
... Frank does Frank as well as he always does, but what makes this film watchable is the emergence of actor Steve Mcqueen, who quite simply, excites. Make way, Hollywood, your next big thing has arrived.

Neile looks up, exhilarated.

NEILE ADAMS
 Steve?! The Gossip Queen of Hollywood just called you the next big thing!

MCQUEEN
 What do you think she wants to talk to me about?

NEILE ADAMS
You, dummy!

INT. HEDDA HOPPER'S OFFICE - DAY

An impeccably dressed sixty-five year old ice queen stares across her desk at Steve Mcqueen. This is **HEDDA HOPPER**, gossip columnist, film critic, mover of markets.

HEDDA HOPPER
 So what's this I hear about you taking a part in Ocean's 11?

MCQUEEN
 How'd you know about that?

She smiles distantly.

HEDDA HOPPER
 Steve, do you want to be a movie star or do you want to be a Frank Sinatra groupie?

MCQUEEN
 Well, it's really more of an ensemble piece than a Frank Sinatra picture.

HEDDA HOPPER
 Let me give you a piece of advice.
 Next time you hear the word
 "ensemble," run for the hills.
 Anybody tells you they're making an
 ensemble is trying to pull something
 over on you. Turn it down.

MCQUEEN
 You want me to turn down Frank?

HEDDA HOPPER
 The only kind of picture you want to
 be in is a Steve Mcqueen picture. Do
 you understand what that means?

A beat. He considers.

MCQUEEN
 Wow. Well, I appreciate that. You
 supporting my career and all.

HEDDA HOPPER
 Don't bullshit me, Steve. Bullshit
 isn't your forte.

MCQUEEN
 How can I repay you? Can I buy you
 lunch?

HEDDA HOPPER
 I don't do lunch.
 (taking off her glasses)
 But you can take off your pants.

He looks up. She's not joking.

MCQUEEN
 Take off my pants.

HEDDA HOPPER
 That's right. Do you think you can do
 that?

A beat. Mcqueen quietly rises from his seat, never breaking
 her stare... and slowly but surely... drops his jeans to his
 ankles. Ms. Hopper's eyes widen. He's not wearing briefs.

HEDDA HOPPER
 James? Hold all my calls, please.

CUT TO:

EXT. AUTOBAHN - MORNING

A MERCEDES 300 SL burns down the autobahn at 180kmh. Moments
 later, FOUR GERMAN POLICE CARS whizz by in pursuit.

SUPER: MUNICH, GERMANY - 1965**INT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - AUTOBAHN - MORNING**

A GERMAN COP hands McQueen a ticket.

MCQUEEN

Danke.

McQueen turns to the passenger seat where Neile is staring straight ahead. He passes her the ticket.

MCQUEEN

You mind throwing that in the glove?

LITTLE CHAD MCQUEEN and TERRY look on from the backseat.

NEILE ADAMS

Not sure it'll fit... but I can
certainly try.

She takes the ticket, opens the glove compartment where THIRTY OR FORTY OTHER TICKETS promptly fall out. But as she reaches down, something else falls out that catches her eye.

It's A BRASSIERE. And it isn't hers. Her heart skips a beat.

She quickly stuffs it back into the glove compartment, then looks up at her husband, who's busy signing an autograph.

EXT. SET - THE GREAT ESCAPE - DAY

BOB RELYEA and JOHN STURGES approach A TRAILER. The name on the door reads: "HILTS." Relyea stops and knocks.

Moments later, the door opens and a TALL BLONDE GERMAN GAL appears in the doorway, cheeks flushed, hair wet.

GERMAN GIRL

Danke.

She slips past them in a pair of tight, bell bottom jeans.

Relyea watches her go, turns back - just as ANOTHER TALL BLONDE GERMAN GAL steps out, cheeks flushed, hair wet...

SECOND GERMAN GIRL

Entschuldigen sie.

Which means *excuse me* - and slips off the other direction.

EXT. MCQUEEN'S TRAILER - GREAT ESCAPE - CONTINUOUS

Wearing a robe, McQueen sees Relyea and Sturges in the doorway. A roach burns in an ashtray.

BOB RELYEA
You wanted to see us?

He gestures for them to sit. Sturges takes a seat, crosses his legs. Relyea the same. A beat. McQueen lights a smoke.

JOHN STURGES
Everything alright, Steve?

MCQUEEN
Let me ask you something. If I said
what's my thing, what would you say?

JOHN STURGES
What's your thing in what sense?

MCQUEEN
Well, Garner's got the turtleneck and
Coburn's got the thing with the
gadgets. What's *my* thing?

They share a look. Trick question?

BOB RELYEA
You're the Cooler King, Steve.

MCQUEEN
What the hell *is* a cooler king?

JOHN STURGES
Steve, who else could sit in a cell
all alone like that and carry a
movie? You're the anchor here, man.

BOB RELYEA
The anchor in a great *ensemble*.

A beat. Ensemble? McQueen looks up.

MCQUEEN
Ensemble? Since when is this an
ensemble? I don't do ensembles. And
I'm sure as hell not about to let
these fuckin neophytes here try to
steal this movie out from under me.

JOHN STURGES
No one's stealing anything from
anybody, Steve.

MCQUEEN
Just so we're clear, this is a Steve
Mcqueen picture, right? Starring
Steve Mcqueen... ?

JOHN STURGES
How the hell else do you think we got
this thing funded?

Mcqueen looks away. Lights a smoke. Settles.

MCQUEEN
I got an idea then.

JOHN STURGES
Well lay it on us, man. We're in the
good idea business here, aren't we?

MCQUEEN
What if Hilts didn't escape on a
train?

JOHN STURGES
How would he get away?

MCQUEEN
On a motorcycle.
(off their looks)
The allies used to do this thing.
They'd rig a wire across a road... tie
it from one tree to another...

THE GREAT ESCAPE - FINAL CUT

A mobile Nazi brigade spans the width of the road...

MCQUEEN (V.O.)
*Then when a Nazi would come along on
his bike, he'd hit the wire and,
poof, he'd get knocked right off.*

EXT. MCQUEEN'S TRAILER - GREAT ESCAPE - CONTINUOUS

All eyes on Mcqueen.

JOHN STURGES
So you want to use a trip wire?

MCQUEEN
Exactly. We have Hilts rig a trip
wire across a road. Then this Nazi
cycle rider comes along, hits the
wire and goes flying.

THE GREAT ESCAPE - FINAL CUT

The Nazi brigade motors down the road. A MOTORCYCLE RIDER in back hits the wire and goes flying off his bike.

MCQUEEN (O.S.)
*Hilts rushes out, grabs the guy's
 bike and takes off cross-country,
 with the Germans riding his tail.*

Hilts rushes out, grabs the bike and hightails it... Germans giving chase. A barbed wire fence looms in the distance.

MCQUEEN (O.S.)
*Then when he finally comes to this
 big barbed wire border fence, it
 looks like he's trapped for sure.*

Hilts approaches the fence. Looks back. No choice.

EXT. MCQUEEN'S TRAILER - GREAT ESCAPE - CONTINUOUS

All eyes back on Mcqueen.

MCQUEEN
 He's got no choice. Turn back and
 he's toast. Take the fence, though,
 and maybe he's got a shot.

JOHN STURGES
 You're talking about jumping the
 fence on a motorcycle?

MCQUEEN
 Bingo. How's that sound?

A beat. All eyes turning to Sturges.

EXT. SET - GREAT ESCAPE

A familiar looking BARBED WIRE FENCE comes into view with a spoon like ditch dug out in front of it.

JOHN STURGES
 No way. Absolutely not.

Pull back to find Mcqueen and **BUD EKINS** dressed identically, each sitting on 1961 650 CC Triumphs painted Nazi green to match the historically correct Nazi BMW'S.

MCQUEEN
 You don't think I can clear it?

Sturges looks up from a clipboard, Relyea next to him.

JOHN STURGES

I don't give two shits if you can clear it. What I care about is finishing this picture and I can't do that if you have a broken fuckin leg.

BOB RELYEA

The studio was firm in their language, Steve. They forbid you to do the jump. It's an insurance thing.

JOHN STURGES

You're not doing it. That's final.
(then)
You ready, Bud?

BUD EKINS

Does Pinnochio have wooden balls?

Off his look - **BUD EKINS** looks over at McQueen, grins, and gives him a crisp military salute.

EXT. THE SET - GREAT ESCAPE - MOMENTS LATER

On Sturges and Relyea. On the masses of the crew, all quiet on the set. On Neile and the kids, now inching up closer to the action. Camera ready. Sturges mutters:

JOHN STURGES

Action.

BOB RELYEA

And ACTION!!!

And with that, THE ENGINE REVS. All turn. Here comes BUD EKINS on his Triumph... digging in hard...

He guns it for the fence, dips down into the spoon ramp... and launches high off the lip... 15 feet up, bike and all...

The famous image - Virgil "The Cooler King" Hilts clearing the fence on his bike - only it isn't McQueen... it's Bud Ekins clearing the fence with plenty to cover...

He finally lands safely on the other side. The crew erupts into hoots and hollers. Sturges and Relyea exhale.

JOHN STURGES

We get that?

DP

Every foot.

JOHN STURGES

Great. That's the one.

He grabs THE BLOWHORN from Relyea. Yells out to Bud Ekins.

JOHN STURGES
That's gold, Buddy!

Bud Ekins kick-turns on the other side, raises a fist with a triumphant grin. Salutes from afar. The crew is electrified.

But suddenly, there's THE FAMILIAR GRIND OF ANOTHER BIKE BEING REVVED. Takes a moment for anyone to notice. Neile's the first. Relyea's next. Sturges now turning to see:

MCQUEEN... ACCELERATING ON HIS OWN BIKE... NO HELMET... NO CAMERA RUNNING... THROTTLING HARD... GUNNING FOR THE FENCE...

BOB RELYEA
Mcqueeeeeeeen!!!

But off he flies into what should have been the camera frame, dipping into the spoon... launching high into the sky...

FREEZE ON: MCQUEEN - THE FAMOUS IMAGE - CLEARING THE FENCE - DOING HIS OWN STUNT - THIS TAKE NEVER CAUGHT ON CAMERA -

REVIEW (V.O.)
Run don't walk to see The Great
Escape...

CUT TO:

GRAUMANN'S CHINESE THEATER BILLBOARD: **STEVE MCQUEEN** in *THE GREAT ESCAPE* - *indeed this is no ensemble.*

REVIEW 1 (V.O.)
... in which the most provocative
single impression in recent cinema is
made by American actor Steve Mcqueen.

EXT. GRAUMANN'S CHINESE - THE RED CARPET - NIGHT

PRESS, LIGHTS, CAMERAS, SCREAMING FANS. A SHINY NEW LIMOUSINE pulls up to the curb. Fans erupt.

REVIEW 2 (V.O.)
For sheer bravura, whether it's
solitary confinement or stomping
cross country on a motorcycle with
scores of Germans in pursuit...

MCQUEEN AND NEILE ADAMS STEP OUT OF A SHINY NEW LIMOUSINE -

REVIEW (V.O.)
... Steve Mcqueen takes top honors.

MOVIE STARS turn as Steve and Neile slowly make their way down the carpet: PAUL NEWMAN - NATALIE WOOD - AUDREY HEPBURN - BURT LANCASTER - ELIZABETH TAYLOR - KIRK DOUGLAS...

REVIEW 3 (V.O.)
 Mcqueen has an individuality, a sense
 of authenticity that is profoundly
 rare in film these days...

ON THE RED CARPET, JOHN STURGES SPEAKS TO A REPORTER:

JOHN STURGES
 Steve's a great actor, but he's also
 an attitude. He's a tone. He's unique
 that way. The way Cary Grant is
 unique. The way Brando's unique.

HEDDA HOPPER adjusts her hat and addresses a reporter.

HEDDA HOPPER
 With his portrayal of The Cooler
 King, Steve Mcqueen has officially
 vaulted into Hollywood movie royalty.

Mcqueen and Neile are mobbed by adoring fans and press. Down
 the red carpet, finally disappearing into the theater...

INT. SET OF JOHNNY CARSON - CONTINUOUS FROM THE ABOVE

Carson stares into camera with his familiar smirk.

JOHNNY CARSON
 Ladies and gentlemen, here now, the
 one, the only... Steve Mcqueen!

Pull back to find Steve Mcqueen humbly entering stage left,
 waving to the audience. The crowd goes nuts.

THE INTERVIEW:

Mcqueen fidgets with his shoe. Carson holds up a copy of
 LIFE MAGAZINE. Mcqueen and Neile Adams grace the cover.

JOHNNY CARSON
 There you are with your wife. That's
the cover of Life Magazine, people.
 (off applause)
 So how's the missus handling all this
 attention? I mean, Life magazine.
 That's sex symbol status right there.
 Trust me. I should know.

MCQUEEN
 Aw, she's just fine, Johnny. I'm a
 one lady kinda guy. My wife knows
 exactly where to find me.

JOHNNY CARSON
 And where's that?

MCQUEEN

Either on a movie set, or fixing up one of my cars.

JOHNNY CARSON

So, tell us, Steve. Is that really you jumping that fence or did you have a stunt driver double for you?

MCQUEEN

Johnny, I like to do my own stunts. You know that. Sometimes, though, the studio just won't let you take the risk. I did some of my own driving, but that sequence there, I gotta be honest, that's my pal Bud Ekins.

The crowd applauds lightly. Steve turns to the camera.

MCQUEEN

Buddy boy... ? That's for you, hoss.

And salutes him on the airwaves.

JOHNNY CARSON

What's up next then? We all know you're a big racing fan. Any plans to suit em up and hit the brickyard?

MCQUEEN

I'm working on it. We got a script cooking right now all about Le Mans.

JOHNNY CARSON

You're speaking of course about the famous 24 hour race course in France.

MCQUEEN

That's right. But it's gotta be right. You can't rush something like that. It's gotta be real and it's gotta be authentic and it's gotta be fun, man. You know what I'm saying?

CUT TO:

STEVE MCQUEEN AND BOB RELYEA SMILE FOR A CAMERA:

POP! GOES A FLASH - THE IMAGE FREEZES: Mcqueen and Relyea in a staged publicity shot - COLOR FADES TO BLACK AND WHITE -

DISSOLVE TO:

THE FRONT PAGE OF VARIETY - THE HEADLINE:

STEVE MCQUEEN'S SOLAR PRODUCTIONS SIGNS MULTI MILLION DOLLAR, SIX PICTURE DEAL WITH WARNER BROS.

INT. SOLAR OFFICES - DAY

The above VARIETY sits on Steve Mcqueen's desk, right next to a screenplay titled **MUTE WITNESS**.

PAN UP, to STEVE MCQUEEN IN A KARATE GEE - the bottom half anyways - bare chest, taking karate lessons from **BRUCE LEE**.

Mcqueen's an animal, albeit an undisciplined one, and far less skilled than the master of all masters. He charges his mentor, each time swiping at air...

A door opens behind them, BOB RELYEA quietly slips into the office, watches as Mcqueen throws a wild round house kick -

But Master Lee sweeps the plant leg and Mcqueen hits the deck hard. Lee drops his foot into Mcqueen's neck.

BRUCE LEE

You too angry, Steve. Your anger give away your move.

BOB RELYEA

Careful. That's an expensive neck.

They look up. Mcqueen rolls out from under Bruce's foot.

MCQUEEN

What did he say?

BOB RELYEA

It's done. We got the green light.

MCQUEEN

We did?

BOB RELYEA

As long as we change the title, principle starts in 3 months.

MCQUEEN

What do they wanna call it?

BOB RELYEA

Bullitt.

MCQUEEN

I'm gonna play a cop, Bruce. You believe that?

BRUCE LEE

You gonna play an *angry* cop.

HESITANT VOICE (O.S.)

Sir?

They all turn. Another face has appeared in the door. It's slightly overweight, terrified ASSISTANT/PA **MARIO ISCOVICH**.

MARIO ISCOVICH
It's your wife... she said it's urgent?

EXT. ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL - SAN FRANCISCO - NIGHT

Establishing. A limousine pulls up to the curb.

INT. ST. MARYS HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Mcqueen and Neile and the two kids listen to A DOCTOR.

SAN FRAN DOCTOR
She suffered an aneurism to the brain
which caused massive cerebral
hemorrhaging.

MCQUEEN
How bad is it?

The doctor's tone softens.

SAN FRAN DOCTOR
We've been waiting for you to arrive.

Mcqueen looks at Neile - and then his kids...

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - SECONDS LATER

Alone, Steve Mcqueen crosses into a dark, still room. A heart rate monitor blips in a corner. There's a figure in the bed, tubes extending from her mouth and nose.

He slowly approaches her side. When he comes upon the patient, it takes him a moment before he can really look.

It's **JULLIAN MCQUEEN**. 56 years old now, bloated, barely recognizable. Still wearing shiny lipstick, hair died a cheap blonde. Breathing only with the help of a machine.

Steve drops to his knees, takes her hand in his, the color draining from his face. That's when a hand lands on his shoulder. He looks up. It's his wife, kneeling next to him.

Neile takes his other hand in hers, holds it tightly. Move in on Mcqueen, staring at the mother he never really had.

EXT. HAIGHT ASHBURY - NIGHT

Home to the Grateful Dead and Merry Pranksters. Rows of colorful Victorian homes and a plethora of peace banners.

INT. HAIGHT ASHBURY APARTMENT - DAY

Jullian McQueen's apartment. Steve and Neile step in together and survey the space. Peace tapestries line the wall. God's eyes, candles, concert prints, records...

Steve's gaze lands on the far wall. A wall that gives him pause. Twelve MOVIE POSTERS have been carefully mounted.

Note the titles: *THE BLOB*, *NEVER SO FEW*, *MAGNIFICENT SEVEN*, *THE GREAT ESCAPE*, *BABY THE RAIN MUST FALL*, *LOVE WITH THE PROPER STRANGER*, *SOLDIER IN THE RAIN*, *THE WAR LOVER*, *HELL IS FOR HEROES*, *THE CINCINNATI KID*, *NEVADA SMITH*...

NEILE ADAMS

Look.

Neile's voice jars him from his trance.

NEILE ADAMS

It's you.

He turns and looks down at what she's holding.

It's A PHOTO STRIP, weathered and worn, but there's no mistaking the images. We've seen them before.

It's 10 YEAR OLD STEVE and 30 YEAR OLD JULLIAN, taken in the train station right before he was sent away. He takes the photo and stares into it. Really loses himself in it.

NEILE ADAMS

Why don't you take it?

But he can't look up, can't reveal his face. Neile hugs him from behind, closes her eyes. And we leave them like that, Neile rising and falling with the rhythm of his heart.

CUT TO:

EXT. LANDFILL - SET: THE GETAWAY - DAY

Garbage and refuse as far as the eye can see. Sam Peckinpah and David Foster pour over the day's shot list.

DAVID FOSTER

What do you think? You think it's a makeable day?

But something over Foster's shoulder just stole Peckinpah's attention. He wipes his forehead.

SAM PECKINPAH

Shiiiiit.

DAVID FOSTER

What?

Foster turns. AN IMMACULATE BLACK LINCOLN is snaking through the mountains of garbage, glistening in the Texas sun.

DAVID FOSTER
Where's Steve?

SAM PECKINPAH
Probably balls deep in the boss's
cunt, if you ask me.

They both watch as the car makes its final approach.

DAVID FOSTER
Great. The star of our movie is off
tapping the studio head's wife in
between takes. This should be good.

The car slows to a stop. The door opens. **ROBERT EVANS** steps out with all the majesty of a king touring his crops.

SAM PECKINPAH
Bobby! How the hell are ya?!

EXT. MCQUEEN'S TRAILER - THE GETAWAY - A LITTLE LATER

Ali and Steve and David Foster stare each other down. A heated conversation is underway.

DAVID FOSTER
He's on set right now, Steve! And
he's looking for his wife!

MCQUEEN
Don't get your panties all in a
bunch. I got it under control. Here's
how it's gonna go down. Ali and I are
gonna drive the Porsche back to L.A.

ALI MCGRAW
We are?

DAVID FOSTER
That's a three day drive! We're in
the middle of production here?!

MCQUEEN
Hey! Love's love, man!

Ali's heart melts. This man is pure animal.

MCQUEEN
While we're on the road, you're gonna
tell Evans where we went.
(then staring at Ali)
*Tell him we're getting hitched on the
way and that she loves me now.*

Foster stares at him incredulously.

DAVID FOSTER
What planet do you live on?

Ali and McQueen's eyes are locked. Two teenagers in love.
Does it get more romantic? The real life getaway.

ALI MCGRAW
What about the kids?

MCQUEEN
They'll get used to it.

DAVID FOSTER
What about production?!

Ali looks away. Her life flashing before her eyes.

ALI MCGRAW
No. I should tell him.

DAVID FOSTER
Can't it wait til after we wrap?

INT. MCQUEEN'S TRAILER - LATER

Alone, McQueen devours a cigarette, paces the trailer.
Suddenly, footsteps from the outside. The door opens. Relyea
ducks into the trailer, Peckinpah on his heels. No Ali.

MCQUEEN
What happened? Where is she?

DAVID FOSTER
Evans is putting her on a plane.

MCQUEEN
To where?

DAVID FOSTER
Doesn't matter, Steve. You're not
following her. We're gonna shoot
around her for a few days.

SAM PECKINPAH
That was his only request. That she
have the space to make up her own
mind. It's only fair, Steve.

His heart starts racing.

MCQUEEN
Who's taking her to the airport?

DAVID FOSTER
She's gone, Steve.

INT. AIRPLANE - FIRST CLASS - NIGHT

Boarding. Ali McGraw settles into her seat. Passengers doubletake as they pass. Is that the girl from Love Story? She sits back, closes her eyes, breathes long and hard.

GUY NEXT TO HER

Wake me when we get there, wouldja?

She frowns. Then doubletakes herself.

ALI MCGRAW

Steve?

Her neighbor tips his hat up, grins, winks...

MCQUEEN

That'd be me.

Tears start to fall down her cheeks, and off her look, thrilled and terrified and devastated -

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO

A DODGE S440 CHARGER screeches around a turn, smoke curling out from the tires. It fish tails, rights itself, then plummets down a steep hill.

Seconds later, A GREEN FORD MUSTANG FASTBACK does the same...

INT. MUSTANG FASTBACK - CONTINUOUS

Mcqueen wrenches the wheel hard right. Through the windshield there's nothing but blue sky and The Golden Gate Bridge - then suddenly - the car drops - and he's staring down the barrel of a 45 degree slope, picking up speed.

EXT. STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO - SAME

At the base of the hill, THE CHARGER bottoms out, cuts hard left, fish tails out and slides across the intersection, narrowly avoids THE LINEUP OF PARKED CARS across the street.

INT. MUSTANG FASTBACK - CONTINUOUS

Barrelling towards the intersection, Mcqueen cuts hard left... but the chassis bottoms out with a violent THUD, throwing his grip on the wheel. He fights for his balance, leans right, pulls left... but he can't recover the wheels in time...

EXT. STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO - SAME

THE FASTBACK SLAMS SIDEWAYS INTO THE ROW OF PARKED CARS...
FLIPS BACK THE OTHER WAY, LANDS ON ITS SIDE, hovering
precariously, until it finally falls back onto all 4 wheels.

INT. MUSTANG FASTBACK - CONTINUOUS

Mcqueen's hands still on the wheel, smoke and fluid spraying
out from under the hood, he turns to the backseat --

MCQUEEN

You alright?

PETER YATES, director, Brit, cad, rises from the seat well,
camera in hand. He's ghost white, trembling.

PETER YATES

You're a bloody mad man.

MCQUEEN

Just like things that go fast.

SUPER: SAN FRANCISCO, CA - FEBRUARY, 1968

INT. MCQUEEN'S OFFICE - PRODUCTION OFFICE - BULLIT - DAY

Mcqueen's got his feet up on his desk, beer in hand,
spinning a loaded pistol on his finger. Sitting across from
him on a futon couch are BOB RELYEA and PETER YATES.

BOB RELYEA

The studio wants to cut the car
chase.

PETER YATES

Cut the car chase? Are they out of
their bloody fucking minds?

BOB RELYEA

Kenny Hyman called me himself. We're
a week behind schedule and half a
million bucks off budget.

MCQUEEN

Price of authenticity, man.

BOB RELYEA

Steve, we're out two Mustangs already
and we have 12 days left to shoot
this sequence alone. If we refuse,
Hyman wants Bud to drive the Mustang.

A beat. Mcqueen's blood rising.

MCQUEEN

Why don't we just have Bud say my lines, too? I'm sure the audience won't notice. This picture's about what's happening out *there*, man! It's about what's happening on the *street* - where if you aint for real, you aint alive! Tell *that* to Kenny Hyman!

A beat. Stares bouncing back and forth. But before he can finish, **THE TERRIFIED P.A. (MARIO ISCOVICH)** suddenly pops his head into the room. He's 22 at best. Overweight. Greasy.

MARIO ISCOVICH

I'm sorry, sir, it's Mrs. Mcqueen on the phone?

MCQUEEN

Do I look like I'm available?

MARIO ISCOVICH

I'm sorry, sir. She insisted I interrupt.

MCQUEEN

Tell her I'm otherwise engaged.

MARIO ISCOVICH

I did, sir.

MCQUEEN

You told her I was engaged?

MARIO ISCOVICH

Yessir. Oh. Sorry, should I have --

MCQUEEN

Who's gonna tell her she's not invited to the wedding now?

Mcqueen stares at the kid. The kid's frozen, crumbling inside. Until Mcqueen breaks into a silver screen grin. He's fucking with him. Relyea cracks up. Yates cackles.

The Terrified PA picks up on it: laugh when the movie star makes a joke. Even if you don't feel like it. So he does.

INT. MCQUEEN'S OFFICE - PRODUCTION OFFICE - SECONDS LATER

Door shut, Mcqueen's on the phone now.

MCQUEEN

Why you twistin my melon, Nell? It's gonna be a heavy location this time, I told you that.

(MORE)

MCQUEEN (CONT'D)

I can't be distracted... Of course I wanna see the kiddies... Yeah, I wanna see you, but I'm making a picture here... It's different because I'm the head honcho - I'm the cat in charge of the whole shebang this time... Fine - but don't get in my way. Not this picture.

He hangs up. Rubs the bridge of his nose.

ACCOUNTANT (O.S.)

Hiya.

He looks up. An **ACCOUNTING GIRL'S** at his door with a stack of checks. Number cruncher by day. Flower child by night.

ACCOUNTANT

Bob said you would sign these?

INT. PRODUCTION OFFICE - BULLITT - CONTINUOUS

Relyea and Yates huddle over a couple cups of Sanka as THE ACCOUNTANT DISAPPEARS INTO MCQUEEN'S OFFICE. Moments later, THE BLINDS SUDDENLY GO DOWN on his window. A lock clicks.

PETER YATES

Quite an appetite on that one.

BOB RELYEA

You have no idea...

(then)

We gotta find a way to keep him off the set. Another Mustang down and they'll call in the National Guard.

Yates stirs his coffee. Amused by the whole thing.

PETER YATES

Is this how all American movies are made?

BOB RELYEA

How's that?

PETER YATES

In an utter panic over an actor?

BOB RELYEA

More or less.

EXT. RESTAURANT SET - BULLITT - NIGHT

In patented black turtleneck, shoulder holster, **DETECTIVE FRANK BULLITT** stares across the table at his love interest played by **JACQUELINE BISSET**. Lights up, camera rolling.

FRANK BULLITT
*In your nomenclature, I guess that
 would mean something else then, huh?*

Bisset manages a suggestive smile, flips her luxurious hair.

JACKIE BISSET AS CATHY
Oh, so now I have a nomenclature?

A beat. McQueen suddenly breaks, turns into camera.

MCQUEEN
 Cut the roll.

FIRST A.D.
 Cutting!

PETER YATES
 What's wrong, Steven?

MCQUEEN
 What's with this nomenclature rap?

PETER YATES
 You don't like how it sounds?

MCQUEEN
 For starters, what the hells it mean?

PETER YATES
 It's a... a vernacular, a jargon, if
 you will... a specific parlance.

MCQUEEN
 Well, which is it? I'm trying to make
 a movie people can *connect* to, man.
 If I don't know it you can sure as
 hell bet the audience won't either...

PETER YATES
 Would you like to say something else?

A beat. He looks around. Fifty crew members staring back.

MCQUEEN
 Why do we even need this dialogue?
 It's all phony anyways. I can nail
 this thing in a single closeup.
 (then)
 Let's shoot it outside - through the
 window. Nice lighting. Lay in some
 track of plates and glasses... and din...

Yates and Relyea share a quick look.

MCQUEEN
 I mean, all you gotta know is we're
 breaking some bread, right?

EXT. STREET - RESTAURANT - A LITTLE LATER - NIGHT

The crew's now out on the street. Two STAND-INS are seated at a table in the window. McQueen reclines in a director's chair while a hairdresser combs his hair.

MCQUEEN
So, tell me something. When are we
goin out to the desert?

JACKIE BISSET doesn't turn. A hairdresser touches her up.

JACKIE BISSET
Is that a formal invitation?

MCQUEEN
It's whatever you want it to be. I
know this Navajo cat out on a
reservation. A real stand up guy.
Real salt of the Earth. We could pack
up my bike, go pick up some primetime
peyote and go bark at the moon for a
couple days. How's that sound?

JACKIE
Not necessarily my cup of tea...

McQueen suddenly takes the HAND HELD MIRROR from his
Hairdresser. Studies his hair from every angle. Frowns.

MCQUEEN
What are you doin? You trying to make
me look like a queer? Come on, man.

A beat. All stop. The girl working on Jackie's hair shrugs.

HAIR GIRL
I think it looks pretty groovy
actually.

MCQUEEN
Well they don't photograph you, do
they?!

She recoils. Doesn't know how to answer. She steps away.
Leaving Jackie Bisset with her HAIRBRUSH in her hand.

JACKIE BISSET
Why do you have to be so mean?

He pauses for a beat to flash her the blue eyes.

MCQUEEN
That's a nice brush.

And it is. IT'S STUDDERED WITH RUBIES. Hard to miss.

JACKIE BISSET
It was my grandmother's.

MCQUEEN
You won't need it in the desert.

PETER YATES
Can we have First Team please?

BOB RELYEA
Let's go. First Team!

FIRST A.D.
First Team on its way.

INT. RESTAURANT SET - BULLIT - MINUTES LATER

A MCQUEEN LOOKALIKE and A BISSET LOOKALIKE - **THE STAND-INS** - make small talk across the table while a DP AND GAFFER make their final calculations. **A SECOND A.D.** approaches.

2ND A.D.
First team walking. Thanks, guys.

THE STAND-INS rise from their seats just as MCQUEEN AND BISSET are led to the table. But **BISSET'S STAND-IN** doesn't leave. Her eyes meet Mcqueen's as he arrives at the table.

MCQUEEN
Evenin.

But she doesn't respond - staring him down - until she suddenly SLAPS HIM ACROSS THE FACE. The sound reverberates.

BISSET'S STAND IN
You know what that's for.

Off his surprise, off the stunned crew - she marches off. The real Bisset looking on. He rubs his cheek, grins.

MCQUEEN
Betcha she's nothing like the real thing.

JACKIE BISSET
Shame you'll never know.

He grins, tilts his head back, starts *HOWLING* at the moon.

EXT. SET - BULLITT - DAY

Neile Adams is sitting on set, legs crossed, reading a book called *THE GETAWAY*, occasionally looking up at the vortex of the set: A MUSTANG WITH A GAGGLE OF GIRLS SURROUNDING IT.

BOB RELYEA (O.S.)
 Neile. I'd like to introduce you to
 our studio executives.

Neile turns in her seat, smiles broadly. **TWO GENTLEMEN IN SUITS** flank Bob Relyea, each carrying briefcases.

NEILE ADAMS
 Hi! Neile Mcqueen. Pleasure.

INT. THE MUSTANG - SAME

Mcqueen holds court in full wardrobe, turtleneck, shades, holster, pistol, badge. Five or six COEDS crowd the window.

MCQUEEN
 I respect a man who knows how to
 handle a firearm, but nowadays I'm
 into the martial arts. Maybe you know
 my friend Bruce?

BRUCE LEE smiles from the passenger seat.

BRUCE LEE
 Hello, ladies.

Suddenly, MARIO ISCOVICH ducks in Bruce's window.

MARIO ISCOVICH
 Sir? Mr. Relyea needs you.

MCQUEEN
 I'm rehearsing here.

MARIO ISCOVICH
 It's the studio.

MCQUEEN
 What do they want now?

MARIO ISCOVICH
 They're here.

He gestures over his shoulder to BOB RELYEA AND NEILE ADAMS chatting up A COUPLE DUDES IN SUITS. His eyes narrow.

INT. SET - BULLIT - MOMENTS LATER

The TWO SUITS and Relyea huddle by Yates and the camera.

MCQUEEN (O.S.)
 What can I do for you boys?

They turn - there's Mcqueen. Glowing with star power. And an edge of violence, chest blown out, eyes narrowed.

SUIT 1
Good afternoon, Mr. Mcqueen. David
Zuckerberg.

SUIT 2
Great location here.

He shakes their hands. They're clearly star struck

MCQUEEN
You boys up here location scouting?

SUIT 2
Sir, we're here to oversee
production.

Suit 1 glares at Suit 2. Wrong language.

SUIT 1
Well, really more to lend our
support. We're certainly not here to--

But that's as far as he gets. Mcqueen cuts him off abruptly.

MCQUEEN
You see this line? Right here?

He points to A LINE IN THE CONCRETE SIDEWALK. The Suits and
Relyea all look down. Note the line. Look up.

MCQUEEN
Anyone who works for Kenny Hyman who
steps over that line gets the shit
knocked out of them.

They look up. He's not kidding. One of the suits pulls his
loafer back so it's clearly on the safe side of the line.

With that, Mcqueen spins on his heels and marches off. Bruce
Lee bows politely and falls in after him.

INT. SET - BULLITT - SECONDS LATER

Keeping up with Relyea and Steve and Bruce Lee, walking and
talking towards the row of trailers.

BOB RELYEA
You can't just talk to them like
that. They're gonna shut us down.

MCQUEEN
Why? Is that what they're telling
you? You hiding something from me?

BOB RELYEA
What? No! These are our partners,
Steve! They're paying for the movie!

MCQUEEN
They won't shut me down. They
wouldn't dare shut me down.

And with that, he rips the door open and disappears inside.
Moments later, **THE FIRST A.D.** approaches Relyea.

FIRST A.D.
I need approval on tomorrow's call
sheet?

He passes him THE CALL SHEET. Relyea inspects.

BOB RELYEA
Push Steve's call back to noon.

FIRST A.D.
Sir?

BOB RELYEA
Just fucking do it.

INT. MCQUEEN'S APARTMENT - DUSK

TERRY AND CHAD MCQUEEN, 9 and 7 now, respectively, team up
against their pop, wrestling him on his king size bed.
Squeals of delight reverberate through the bathroom door.

INT. BATHROOM - MCQUEEN'S APARTMENT - SAME

Towel around her torso, Neile Adams Mcqueen emerges from the
shower and reaches for the toothpaste. Only thing is,
there's none left. The tube's been squeezed clean.

She reaches up and opens the medicine cabinet. And sitting
right there... front and center... next to some spray deodorant...

... is JACKIE BISSET'S RUBY STUDDERED HAIRBRUSH.

Her heart sinks deeper as she stares into it. The tangle of
hair that clearly didn't come from Steve Mcqueen's head.

MCQUEEN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Nellie, baby, what are you doing in
there? I gotta get goin... !

She quietly sits on the toilet, Jackie Bisset's hairbrush in
her lap, and stifles a desperate sob into her towel.

NEILE ADAMS
Just a minute...

EXT. SET - BULLIT - A LITTLE LATER

THE MUSTANG COMES BOUNCING OVER A HILL, skids out in front of the camera, smoke curling out from the tires.

PETER YATES

And cut!

FIRST A.D.

Cutting!!!

PETER YATES

Gorgeous! Just spectacular!

Mcqueen appears on set - sees the mustang - sees the crew - the action - and marches over to the camera. Yates, Relyea, a DP, and other attendant camera personnel mill about.

MCQUEEN

What the hell's going on here?

PETER YATES

Did you see that, Steven? Dynamite footage. Just dynamite! I daresay we might have something here!

Mcqueen looks at his watch, then up at Relyea.

MCQUEEN

What time did you start?

BOB RELYEA

Call time, I believe, was 6am?

MCQUEEN

6am? It's noon. What the hell am I just getting here for now then?

BOB RELYEA

We didn't need you til after lunch.
With Nellie and the kids here, we
figured we'd let you sleep in... ?
(off his murderous look)
Buddy's been covering you.

Relyea points over at the Mustang where BUD EKINS is talking up a couple ladies in the window. Not quite the crowd a Steve Mcqueen draws, but not bad for a stunt driver.

Bud Ekins turns, sees Steve across the set, grins as big as he can and salutes him through the driver's side window.

CUT TO:

INT. CEDARS SINAI HOSPITAL - DAY

A DOCTOR in requisite white coat slowly click clacks his way down a desolate, linoleum hallway. At the far end of the hall he stops at a door, takes a breath, turns the knob.

SUPER: LOS ANGELES, CA - 1979

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CEDARS SINAI HOSPITAL

Seated by a hospital bed, THE DOCTOR looks up from his lap. Supine, gaunt, wan Steve McQueen stares back at him.

DOCTOR
I'm sorry, it certainly isn't what
we'd hoped for.

Tears well up in Barbara Minty's eyes.

BARBARA MINTY
How can this be?

DOCTOR
We don't know - it could be anything.
Pesticides in the air. Cigarettes.
Asbestos exposure. We've seen this
with people who work with machinery.
Cars, trucks, tanks. Same with
firement - flame retardant equipment
and clothing. Commonly found in
firemen and race cars drivers.
(off her look)
We just don't know.

BARBARA MINTY
Can it be removed surgically?

DOCTOR
Unfortunately, his body isn't strong
enough to sustain the kind of trauma
attendant to a surgery like this.
(then)
Steve, we need to get you started on
treatments right away.

MCQUEEN
What kind of treatments?

DOCTOR
Chemotherapy and radiation.
(off their looks)
I'll let you have some privacy.

The doctor stands, nodding softly before he slips out the door. Quiet descends on the room. Steve turns to the window.

MCQUEEN
The shoe always drops, doesn't it.

CUT TO:

AN AERIAL VIEW OF THE DESERT:

A storm of activity in the middle of nowhere. Hundreds of trucks and motorcycles and tents.

EXT. MOJAVE DESERT - ON THE GROUND - SAME

Mcqueen and Bud Ekins pull in next to a long line of dinged up pick-up trucks. Hot dust swirls in the desert wind.

EXT. MOJAVE DESERT - ON THE GROUND - MOMENTS LATER

Mcqueen and Ekins unstrap their bikes from the back of their truck. Mcqueen takes a moment to look around. It's like Mad Max out here. Bikes and riders as far as the eye can see.

BUD EKINS
Peyote aint sitting right with me.

MCQUEEN
It'll ease up. Takes a couple days.
Drink water, man. Lots of it.
(per the sky, the mountains,
and everything else)
Man, I'll tell you something. Doesn't
get any better than this, Bud.

BUD EKINS
You see a crapper out here, you just
let me know.

MCQUEEN
Come on. Let's get these puppies
rollin. See what comes first.
Motorcross cup or an Oscar.

Mcqueen lights a smoke, winks -

CUT TO:

INT. STAGE - DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION - NIGHT

BALANCHINE'S BALLET RUS swells with intensity. Three dancers move to the side while a lead dancer steps into a spotlight.

IN THE AUDIENCE:

THE CULTURAL ELITE watch with rapt attention. Suits and ties and pearls (and a smattering of ascots) blanket the crowd.

Sitting front and center, there's ALI MCGRAW in her seven sisters, horn rimmed glasses and a shiny new engagement ring. Next to her sits A BEARDED, TUXEDOED STEVE MCQUEEN.

SUPER: DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES, 1976

INT. LOBBY - DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION - NIGHT

Intermission. Steve and Ali loiter with a small crowd. Steve's unusually quiet, sitting on Ali's shoulder. Looks like this might not be his crowd. Or is it.

GUY IN AN ASCOT
I'm teaching Ibsen this semester.

ALI MCGRAW
Which play are you reading?

GUY IN AN ASCOT
Enemy of the People.

ALI MCGRAW
Oh, I adored that one.

Mcqueen is marginalized. Nothing to add.

GUY IN AN ASCOT
It's quite something how relevant it remains, what with Watergate unfolding as it has.

WOMAN IN PEARLS
And Steve, what are you working on these days?

Steve clears his throat. For a guy who's the highest paid actor in Hollywood, he just became a wallflower.

MCQUEEN
I'm doing *Towering Inferno*.
(off their looks)
It's about a burning skyscraper. I play the fire chief.

Off their silence -- and the volumes it speaks:

ALI MCGRAW
It's a genre piece, but it's actually quite elevated.

FRIEND
Who else is starring?

He looks up. Who else is starring?

MCQUEEN
 There's only one name on the
 billboard if that's what you mean.

INT. STAGE - DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION - LATER

As the lead dancer takes the spotlight again... Mcqueen suddenly shoots up out of his seat and marches up the aisle. Ali turns in confusion. So does the bulk of the crowd. How do you miss Steve Mcqueen publicly snubbing Balanchine?

EXT. PLAZA - DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION - NIGHT

Tie undone, can of beer in hand, Steve and **TWO CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL OFFICERS** inspect their motorcycles.

MCQUEEN
 What's this thing run on? Bout 750?

CHIP 1
 On the dot.

MCQUEEN
 Chip the engine?

CHIP 2
 Not a bad idea.

ALI MCGRAW (O.S.)
 What are you doing?

He spins around. CHIPS' eyes linger on Ali McGraw in a form fitting dress. She doesn't look happy.

ALI MCGRAW (CONT'D)
 You don't just get up in the middle
 of the performance.

MCQUEEN
 Why not?

ALI MCGRAW
 Because it's rude.

MCQUEEN
 Rude to make me sit through that
 crap.

ALI MCGRAW
 That crap happens to be my favorite
 ballet.

MCQUEEN
 Doesn't mean it's not crap.

ALI MCGRAW
It's *Balanchine*, Steve. Have a little culture for chrissakes.

MCQUEEN
If you think that's culture in there, you got another thing coming.

She frowns. Reangles.

ALI MCGRAW
Do you feel like those people in there don't respect you because you didn't have an education? Is that what this is about?
(off his look)
What more do you need? Do you need to be the king of ballet as well?

And with that, no response forthcoming, Mcqueen turns and marches off down the steps of the pavilion. The two cops linger uncomfortably. Ali turns, finds them still staring.

ALI MCGRAW
What the fuck are you looking at? Why don't you go fuck each other?!

CUT TO:

INT. CEDARS SINAI HOSPITAL - DAY

A sign above an hallway reads: OUTPATIENT CANCER WING.

INT. EXAM ROOM - CEDARS SINAI HOSPITAL

In a patient gown, thin, tired, Mcqueen sits back as **A NURSE** prepares his arm for insertion of a cannula -- rubber strap, alcohol, needle, cannula - boom - in it goes, nice and easy.

Mcqueen flinches, stares down at his forearm, flexed. Behind him, The Nurse prepares A NEEDLE to inject into the cannula.

NURSE
The injection shouldn't be too uncomfortable. You may experience a chilly sensation. Or a slight tightening of the muscles.
(then)
We do have to be extra careful with the connection however. If any of the medication drips out on to your skin, it's going to burn for quite a while.

She moves closer with the needle, dripping from the tip. Mcqueen's neck veins pulsing, his eyes widening.

MCQUEEN

Wait.

She stops, needle inches from his arm.

MCQUEEN

If it's gonna burn my skin, what the hell's it gonna do to my insides?

NURSE

The therapy is designed to eliminate any unusual cellular activity...

Their eyes meet. A beat. Until he suddenly rips the cannula out of his arm, unstraps himself from the seat.

MCQUEEN

Fuck that.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CEDARS SINAI HOSPITAL - MOMENTS LATER

Barbara Minty flips through a fashion magazine when the door kicks open. She looks up. There's McQueen, IV hanging from his arm, robe wide open, already gathering his stuff.

BARBARA MINTY

What are you doing?

MCQUEEN

We're getting outta here.

BARBARA MINTY

We're what? Is the treatment over?

MCQUEEN

They already told me I'm a goner, Barb. I'm not gonna sit here and let these crooks poison me for a profit.

CUT TO:

INT. LE BISTRO - BEVERLY HILLS - NIGHT

A table full of fashionable friends sing a hearty rendition of HAPPY BIRTHDAY as a waiter places an elegant cake with a handful of flickering candles in front of ALI MCGRAW.

SUPER: BEVERLY HILLS, CA - 1977

ALL

... Happy birthday dear Ali! Happy birthday to you... !!!

Every table at Hollywood's restaurant du jour joins in a round of applause. But despite the glamor, Ali McGraw seems preoccupied. Note the empty chair next to her.

CANDACE BERGEN

Make a wish!

Ali considers her wish, holds her hair back, leans in and blows out the candles. Another round of applause. When the applause settles, **CANDACE BERGEN** leans in...

CANDACE BERGEN

Is there any way you can call him?

ALI MCGRAW

He said he'd be here. I don't know.
Maybe rehearsal was running late.

GAY FRIEND

I can't believe Steve's adapting Ibsen. Is this a sex symbol's version of a mid-life crisis?

Some chuckles around the table. Wine in hand, Ali snaps.

ALI MCGRAW

Why, you don't think he's smart enough?

GAY FRIEND

No. No, I just - he's Steve Mcqueen. He does guns and fast cars. Not classical literature. That's all.

ALI MCGRAW

Yeah, well, he has a real sophisticated side, too, but you wouldn't know it because all you do is read those trashy magazines and believe what you see in the movies!

GAY FRIEND

Oh, come on. That's not fair. I love Steve. We all do. But let's be honest here, Ali. I wouldn't exactly call him *sophisticated*. Hot? Ummm, hello? Sophisticated? Not so much.

But it's all moot because an APOCALYPTIC NOISE ERUPTS from the front of the house. Everyone whips around...

VVROOOOOOomm, VROOOOOOom!!!!

AS A PLUMP, OBSCENELY BEARDED MAN ON A MOTORCYCLE DRIVES RIGHT THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR OF THE RESTAURANT...

People gasp, scream, scatter, as a barely recognizable, drunken STEVE MCQUEEN (in Chewbacca phase) throttles up and weaves in and out of tables on a thunderous Harley Davidson.

He pulls right up to Ali's table and kickstands the bike.

One hand on a bottle of booze, he grabs A CAKE BOX tied down to the back of the bike and opens it for all to see. It's not only too late, it's smeared into the cardboard top.

MCQUEEN
Anybody order a cake?

CUT TO:

EXT. RACETRACK - DAY

From overhead - TWENTY FORMULA ONE RACE CARS tear around a track. Thousands cheer from the bandstands.

SUPER: LE MANS, FRANCE - JUNE, 1970

INT. PORSCHE - MOVING (FAST) - SAME

MCQUEEN white-knuckles the wheel, helmet, goggles, anti-flammatory race gear, as his Porsche takes the straightaway. Note THE CAMERA MOUNTED ON THE HOOD.

ON A BLACK AND WHITE MONITOR:

Mcqueen downshifts. Pull back to reveal JOHN STURGES and BOB RELYEA hovering over a direct video feed.

JOHN STURGES
Can't even tell it's him.

BOB RELYEA
Biggest movie star in the world and
he wants to cover his face. Great.

INT. PORSCHE - LE MANS - CONTINUOUS

Mcqueen punches out in front, when suddenly... A GRIP TRUCK appears at the turn - doing 45mph - LEISURELY CUTTING ACROSS THE TRACK... Mcqueen's doing 180... and he's bearing down fast...

MCQUEEN
What the fuck? Did we cut?!

He swerves, barely avoids rear-ending the truck, swipes the side rail, fish tails... and just manages to right itself before disaster strikes. A Ferrari roars past him. Mcqueen slams the dash as the rest of the crew whizzes by.

EXT. VIDEO VILLAGE - LE MANS - SAME

Sturges jumps out of his seat.

JOHN STURGES
Cut! Cut! What the hell is that truck
doing out there!?

BOB RELYEA
God help this production.

EXT. SOLAR VILLAGE, LE MANS - AFTERNOON

Production offices, housing units, trailers, garages, craft service tents, race cars - a small village created solely for the crew. Flags from various countries flap in the wind.

At a long table under an open tent, a swarm of PROFESSIONAL RACE CAR DRIVERS are in the midst of a hearty lunch.

MCQUEEN (O.S.)
What the hell is this?

They all turn, take in McQueen as he hovers over a Lotus in nothing but racing pants, 70's abs and a golden tan.

MCQUEEN
I wanted real bugs on the windshield!
Real bugs. Not this fake Halloween
crap! It's gotta be *authentic*, man.
How many times do I gotta say it?

The **PROPS MASTER** frowns as he stares at the windshield.

PROP GUY
(French accent)
Miseur, how do you intend for me to
get the real bugs on the windshield?

MCQUEEN
I have to produce, act, write, and
tell the director where to place the
goddamn camera and now you want me to
do props, too? Is that what you want?
Figure it out, man! Figure it out!

He throws up his hands, starts off towards a production office. THE DRIVERS TABLE all turn back from the incident - ONE OF THEM RUBBING HIS EYES LIKE A BABY. Laughter erupts.

A handful of European ladies, early 20s, if that, all glowing suggestively, swarm him from the side...

FRENCH GIRLS
Bon jour, Stephan!

EXT. TRAILER - LE MANS - DAY

MARIO ISCOVICH, weathered assistant at this point, stops at the door of McQueen's trailer. Breathes deep. Then knocks.

INT. TRAILER - LE MANS - CONTINUOUS

Iscovich pokes his head in the door. FIVE NAKED WOMEN are doing blow on Mcqueen's couch. Mcqueen smokes a joint, towel wrapped around his waist, sideburns and a 70's mop of hair.

ISCOVICH

Umm, Steve, they're waiting for you
in John's office?

Mcqueen doesn't blink. Doesn't try to hide anything anymore. He bends down and bangs out a line. Clears his nostrils.

MCQUEEN

I'll be there after lunch.

ISCOVICH

The meeting was set for half an hour
ago. What should I tell them?

INT. PRODUCTION OFFICE - LE MANS - A LITTLE LATER

A dark, smoky room. JOHN STURGES, BOB RELYEA, A WRITER AND AN EXECUTIVE are in a heated conversation. Note the ashtray in the middle of the room spilling over with buttes.

JOHN STURGES

No one's twisting your melon, Steve.

BOB RELYEA

We got 96 hours of race footage and
not a single line of dialogue.

They're all staring at the naked back of the man in charge around here. STEVE MCQUEEN IS PISSING OUT THE WINDOW.

MCQUEEN

Racing aint about talking, man! How
many times I gotta say it?!

JOHN STURGES

It's one thing to be laconic and
terse, but you can't go through a
movie and not say anything.

Mcqueen spins back, zips up.

MCQUEEN

You gonna use that language just to
fuck with me?! Is that what it's come
to? You in on this, too?

He stares at Bob Relyea, partner.

BOB RELYEA

In on what? All we're saying is we
need a script, Steve.

MCQUEEN
The script's up *here*, man.
(points to his head)
I got it all right *here*.

EXECUTIVE
Maybe if you took some time off the track and sat with Harry then, you could help flesh this thing out?

HARRY nods politely.

MCQUEEN
Who the fuck is Harry?

JOHN STURGES
Our writer.

MCQUEEN
I told you a hundred times. It's me behind the wheel or we lose our sense of authenticity. I don't know about you, but I'm trying to make something with some goddamn integrity here!

BOB RELYEA
You're wearing goggles and a helmet, Steve. No one's even gonna know.

He whips around. Lowers his eyes on Relyea.

MCQUEEN
I'll know!

He whips around - MCQUEEN'S POV: Through the window - NEILE ADAMS AND THE KIDS COME INTO FRAME. NEILE IS TALKING TO A COUPLE OF THE DRIVERS - laughing, smiling, easy and loose...

Suddenly, MARIO ISCOVICH, pokes his head in the door again.

MARIO ISCOVICH
Neile and the kids are here... ?

Mcqueen shoots up. Holds up his hand. His ring finger.

MCQUEEN
See this? That's called the brass ring. You don't get it by being a fake or a phony.

With that, he marches out, slams the door behind him. Looks bounce around the room. Sturges sighs. Morale is low.

JOHN STURGES
Well, I don't know about you all, but I've just about had enough.

Sturges shuts his folder, rises from the couch.

BOB RELYEA
Where you going?

JOHN STURGES
Arizona.
(off their looks)
It is what it is when he's just a
star. But this? Steve Mcqueen in
charge? No thank you.

EXT. FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE - MOVING - AFTERNOON

A car winds through rolling hills and vineyards.

NEILE ADAMS (O.S.)
How's the shoot been?

INT. CAR - MOVING - SAME

Iscovich is at the wheel. Mcqueen in front - Neile in back
with the kids.

MCQUEEN
No one seems to care about
authenticity the way I do.

NEILE ADAMS
How bout John?

MCQUEEN
John? I don't know. I think maybe ole
Johnny boy's gone Hollywood on me.

A beat. Neile takes in the countryside. Eyes hidden. He
turns back - reaches for her hand. Holds it tightly.

MCQUEEN
Just happy you're here, baby.

NEILE ADAMS
Yeah?

MCQUEEN
Yeah.

Through the windshield a GIANT CASTLE EMERGES as they cross
over A MOAT into a grandiose driveway.

MARIO ISCOVICH
Voila. Chateau Mcqueen.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - CHATEAU LAUNAY - DAY

Steve and Neile and the kids step out into the driveway of a 14th century chateau. A couple turrets. Lush gardens. Surrounded by rolling hills and champagne vineyards.

A T-SHAPED POOL glimmers off to the side. The kids catch sight of it and race off.

NEILE ADAMS

Don't go too far, kids!

Mother and Father watch as they go... something sad... something nostalgic in their eyes... as if these were the days...

INT. BEDROOM - CHATEAU LAUNAY - DUSK

Mcqueen's sitting in a window seat, smoking a joint, staring down at the kids below. Behind him, Neile's busy unpacking.

NEILE ADAMS

Chad's just so excited to be here.

MCQUEEN

Yeah, how about Terry?

NEILE ADAMS

You know how much she adores you.
She's Daddy's little girl.

She waves the smoke out of her face, keeps moving into the bathroom. A beat. He exhales, stares down at the kids.

NEILE ADAMS (O.S.)

Steve? What's this?

She reappears behind him. He turns. She's in the bathroom doorway, her face blank, HOLDING UP A BOX OF TAMPONS.

MCQUEEN

I don't know, what's it say?

NEILE ADAMS

Whose are they?

A beat. He turns back to the window, exhales again.

MCQUEEN

If you're gonna be stayin here, you
should probably know something.

(then)

There are, uh, there are going to be
a lot of women coming to visit me.

NEILE ADAMS

What the hell does that mean?

MCQUEEN

It means... this is a real
international scene we got goin here.
There are gonna be a lot of
international women comin to see me.

Neile pauses to consider. Blood rushing to her neck.

NEILE ADAMS

I'm sorry. Let me understand
something. I just flew 8 thousand
miles on two different planes with
our children and you're telling me
you're going to be fucking a bunch of
"international women" while I'm here?
(off his look)
Is that what you're saying, Steve?

Tears are already forming. Humiliation, pain, betrayal...

MCQUEEN

Nellie, what do you want me to do?
I'm the highest paid actor in the
world?

He turns back. She stares at him. A beat. Until she suddenly
WHIPS the box of tampons at his head. He ducks.

NEILE ADAMS

I gave up everything for you.

And with that, she marches out of the room. He stares at her
point of departure, his eyes blue and cold.

INT. CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Iscovich at the wheel again, Mcqueen sits next to him. It's
dark and quiet. Something heavy in the cabin.

MARIO ISCOVICH

Why do you hurt her like that?

Mcqueen doesn't turn. Two men afraid to face each other.

MCQUEEN

When every woman and her mother wants
a piece of you, what are you gonna
do? Say thank you, no thank you, I
got an old lady already? I love
Nellie. I love her more than anybody
I ever met. She knows that. But I'm
the highest grossing movie star on
the planet. The planet, man.

Up ahead, the racetrack comes into view.

EXT. RACETRACK, LE MANS - CONTINUOUS

Headlights illuminate a deserted track. Except for one lonely figure in the stands. It's Neile.

INT. BEDROOM - CHATEAU LAUNAY - THAT NIGHT

Neile's curled up in bed, turned away from McQueen who's sitting up next to her, no shirt, drawing on A JOINT.

MCQUEEN

I'm sorry I hurt you. You know how much I love you, don't you?

Her back is turned, her voice reserved.

NEILE ADAMS

Don't worry about it, Steve.

A long, quiet beat. Her eyes are red and swollen.

MCQUEEN

What about you? Did you ever have an affair?

NEILE ADAMS

Good night, Steve.

MCQUEEN

I wouldn't blame you, you know. I've certainly given you enough reason to.

NEILE ADAMS

No. I haven't. Now good night.

Another beat. He exhales from a joint. Releases a smoke ring, watches it curl upwards.

MCQUEEN

It's just amazing you haven't even been tempted to fool around.

NEILE ADAMS

I didn't say I've never been tempted. Will you shut the light, please? I haven't slept in two days.

He considers. Tempted? He passes her the roach.

MCQUEEN

Here. Try some of this.

NEILE ADAMS

You know I don't like that stuff. Please, can I go to sleep now?

MCQUEEN
It'll make you feel good. It'll help
you relax. Help you sleep.

NEILE ADAMS
Will it make you shut up?

MCQUEEN
Yeah, baby.

She sighs, rolls over, takes the joint and draws long and
hard. Exhales. They both watch it float to the ceiling.

MCQUEEN
Well, what do you think?

NEILE ADAMS
Not bad.

MCQUEEN
See?

NEILE ADAMS
Can I go to sleep now?

Off his look, she rolls over again. Another beat.

MCQUEEN
It's just... it's just really amazing
you've never had an affair, what with
all the shit I've put you through. I
would've understood, you know.

A long silent beat. This is going to hell... quickly.

MCQUEEN
So did you?

NEILE ADAMS
Did I what?

MCQUEEN
Have an affair?

NEILE ADAMS
Well... since we seem to have broken
new ground here tonight... Yes... as a
matter of fact I did.

Maybe it's the grass. Maybe it's the look on his face. Maybe
it's revenge. But there's something funny about this to her.

NEILE ADAMS
You're not the only movie star who
fools around, you know.

Color rapidly drains from his face.

NEILE ADAMS

He even has an Academy Award. For
best actor. If you win one one day,
maybe he'll even present it to you...

Mcqueen looks like he just swallowed something large and
whole. He suddenly shoots up, disappears into the bathroom.

NEILE ADAMS

Honey?

Some fumbling from the bathroom. Then... moments later... he
returns. His face ghost white. His voice trembling.

MCQUEEN

Who was it?

She looks up. AS A GUN IS THRUST INTO HER FACE.

MCQUEEN

Who was it!!!???

NEILE ADAMS

Steve--

MCQUEEN

Who was the motherfucker?!!!

NEILE ADAMS

Put the gun down, Steve.

He takes her by the neck, shoves her up against the
headboard, his face menacingly close, the gun by her head...

MCQUEEN

Tell me his fucking name!

NEILE ADAMS

Steve, put the fucking gun down!

MCQUEEN

Tell me his fucking name!

She hides her face, gasps of fear. He suddenly pistol whips
the headboard, inches from her face.

MCQUEEN

I'm gonna find out! I promise you
I'll find out and when I do, I'm
gonna kill the motherfucker! I swear
to god I'll kill the motherfucker!!!

A long painful beat. His lips quivering. He suddenly
explodes again, punches the headboard right next to her ear.
Then falls back, his head in his hands, gun in his lap.

MCQUEEN
 You're all I got, Nellie... And now I
 don't even got that.

His heavy breathing. Neile sobbing into a pillow.

TERRY MCQUEEN (O.S.)
 Daddy?

He whips around. There's TERRY AND CHAD in the doorway in their pj's. Mcqueen quickly hides his face, pockets the pistol, springs up and marches past his kids...

The kids rush to the bed, envelop their mother. Moments later, Chad whips around at the SOUND OF AN ENGINE ROARING.

Down below, a high end sports car peels out into the night.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOJAVE DESERT - DAY

A THOUSAND MOTORCYCLES are lined up half a mile wide. 500 miles. 110 degrees. Exhaust and chaos as every rider teases his engine. This is The Mojave Desert Motorcross Cup.

Mcqueen adjusts his goggles. A couple bikes down, Ekins leans forward, makes eye contact, salutes his pal down the line - which Mcqueen returns - both of them turning back...

Waiting... waiting... waiting... til... BOOM! *The starter gun.* A STORM OF DUST explodes as Mcqueen sets off into the light.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH HOUSE - MORNING

Overlooking The Pacific, private, magical, befitting of a movie star. A grey sky floats overhead. Steve Mcqueen lounges in a CEDAR HOT TUB built into the deck.

SUPER: TRANCAS BEACH, MALIBU - SEPTEMBER, 1977

His beard has grown. As has his hair. As has his belly. He's fat, out of shape, indistinguishable from a bum on the street. He's the guy we met in the beginning of the film.

He sips from a can of Milwaukee's Best, drags on a joint and sifts through A PILE OF SCREENPLAYS. Note the titles:

FIRST BLOOD - APOCALYPSE NOW - BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE
 SUNDANCE KID - DIRTY HARRY - FRENCH CONNECTION - THE LONG
 GOODBYE - PLAY MISTY FOR ME - HEAVEN'S GATE ...

He systematically slips a FORM LETTER inside each script.

MOVE IN on the letter: "THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUBMISSION.
UNFORTUNATELY, STEVE MCQUEEN CAN'T DO AS YOU ASK."

He's passing.

ALI MCGRAW (O.S.)

Steve?

He doesn't turn. Doesn't see the look on his second wife's face as she approaches. Careful, hesitant, quiet.

ALI MCGRAW (CONT'D)

Can I talk to you?

He looks up, simultaneously skimming through First Blood.

MCQUEEN

You're up early...

ALI MCGRAW

Couldn't sleep... You remember that script Sam sent me? Convoy?

MCQUEEN

Barely. Piece of crap, if I remember.

ALI MCGRAW

I don't agree, necessarily, but... more importantly, they offered me the role. I'm taking it.

He looks up. First Blood falls into the hot tub.

MCQUEEN

How much are they offering?

ALI MCGRAW

How much? Two-fifty.

MCQUEEN

I'll give you seven-fifty.

ACTOR

For what?

MCQUEEN

Not to do it.

ALI MCGRAW

You're joking, right?

(off his silence)

Why are you so opposed to me working?

MCQUEEN

Because you're my wife. And no wife of Steve McQueen is going off shooting movies on some movie set and sleeping around with other actors.

ALI MCGRAW
It's a job, Steve. Not a fucking
orgy. Why can't you trust me?

MCQUEEN
You did it with me, didn't you?

A beat. She shakes her head.

ALI MCGRAW
This is your problem. Not mine.

MCQUEEN
If you take the job, you can consider
it a divorce. Decision's yours.

He holds his stare. So does she. Time passes.

ALI MCGRAW
I'm calling my lawyer.

A beat. He turns back, slowly rises from the hot tub, and
starts off towards the stairs, dripping wet.

ALI MCGRAW
Where are you going?

He looks back for one cold moment.

MCQUEEN
Where I'm appreciated.

And with that, he waddles off and disappears down the stairs
to the garage. Moments later... A MOTORCYCLE FIRES UP from
down below... then speeds off into the distance.

EXT. VALET - BEVERLY WILSHIRE HOTEL - DUSK

Establishing. Two Rolls Royces and a Triumph Thunderbird.

INT. SUITE - BEVERLY WILSHIRE HOTEL - DUSK

Late day light slices through the blinds of a luxury suite
we've seen before. Labored grunts emanate from the bed.

SUPER: BEVERLY HILLS, CA - DECEMBER, 1977

Steve McQueen is sweating profusely, all flab and hair, as
he thrusts in and out of a woman beneath him. After a beat,
he moans like a beached whale and falls off to the side.

The woman beneath him stares up at the ceiling, unimpressed -
and unmoved. It's NEILE ADAMS. She reaches for a cigarette.

NEILE ADAMS

So... this is what it feels like to be
the other woman.

She exhales. Something removed about her. Stronger.

NEILE ADAMS

How does it feel to cheat on your
wife with your ex-wife?

MCQUEEN

Not sure if Ali and I are gonna be
staying together actually.

NEILE ADAMS

Really? I'm sorry to hear that.

A beat. McQueen turns. An idea is born.

MCQUEEN

Why don't you move in with us? Out in
Trancas. Get some fresh air. That
could work, couldn't it?

She stares at him incredulously, then laughs.

NEILE ADAMS

You're serious, aren't you?

MCQUEEN

Probably be hard for Ali at first,
but she's a tough gal - about some
things. I'm sure she'd adjust.

NEILE ADAMS

And where would I sleep?

MCQUEEN

What do you mean, where would you
sleep? With us.

She laughs again. Looks away.

NEILE ADAMS

Steve, I met somebody.

He doesn't respond. After a beat, he pushes himself up off
the bed and shuffles to the bar, fills a glass with ice and
cracks a can of beer and pours it to the top. Texas tea.

When he turns around, Neile is putting her clothes on.

MCQUEEN

Where are you going?

NEILE ADAMS

I have dinner plans.

MCQUEEN
Stay. Please.

NEILE ADAMS
I can't, Steve.

When she's fully dressed, purse and scarf, she looks up.

MCQUEEN
I tell you I'm adapting an Ibsen
play? Enemy of the People.

NEILE ADAMS
You are?

MCQUEEN
Is that so surprising?

NEILE ADAMS
No, I... I just...

She considers her words - sees it in his eyes. It's a set-up. Not her business anymore.

NEILE ADAMS (CONT'D)
I hope it goes well.

She starts for the door, leans in, kisses him on the cheek.

NEILE ADAMS
Chad's birthday's next week. Don't
forget to call him.

And with that, Neile Adams quietly leaves the room. Mcqueen stays glued in place, staring at the blinds.

Heavy silence descends. A clock ticks. The voice of a housecleaner drifts in from the hallway. The bar sink drips.

After a moment, he sighs, falls back onto the bed, reaches for A MAGAZINE on the floor. Anything to distract him.

It's *COSMOPOLITAN*, DECEMBER 1977. Note the cover model. A very familiar brunette. He studies her face. Until...

He reaches for the phone, dials a number. After a beat, someone picks up. Mcqueen mumbles into the receiver.

MCQUEEN
Yeah, it's Mcqueen. I need Josephson.
(a long beat)
Yeah, Marvin, I need an introduction.

He looks down at the magazine.

MCQUEEN
Cosmopolitan.
(then)
(MORE)

MCQUEEN (CONT'D)
 Yeah. The girl on the cover. Get me a
 number. Just tell em I got an
 audition for her. You know the drill.

He hangs up. Turns to the window. A thousand yard stare.

EXT. EL PADRE ROOM - BEVERLY WILSHIRE HOTEL - NIGHT

In a corduroy jacket, Mcqueen passes a table of ladies
 sharing some champagne with what looks like Warren Beatty.
We've been here before. It's New Years Eve, 1977.

WARREN BEATTY
 Hey, Steve, how bout a little bubbly?

MCQUEEN
 Next year.

A stunning LADY IN RED appears at the front of the house,
 stops at the bar, then starts towards Mcqueen's table. This
 is Barbara Minty. Cover model. Third wife. Final companion.

When she arrives at the table, she speaks softly.

BARBARA MINTY
 Hello... I'm Barbara.

Mcqueen looks up. He already knows. The part is hers.

EXT. VENTURA BOULEVARD - NIGHT

Strip malls and donuts.

M.C. (O.S.)
 It is my great honor to present a
Lifetime Honorary Membership to...

SUPER: TOLUCA LAKE, CA - JANUARY, 1978

INT. BANQUET ROOM - NIGHT - SAME

A rugged **M.C.** in an ill fitting suit and tie, bald head,
 goatee, leans into a microphone on a makeshift podium.

M.C.
... actor, friend... fiercest damn
motorcrossover I ever seen...
 (then)
STEVE MCQUEEN!

APPLAUSE ERUPTS - people stand, hoot, holler, scour the room
 for the recipient. Note the audience. Not your black tie,
 Academy Awards crowd. This is a simpler bunch.

After a moment, the applause dies out. Murmurs spread. Heads whip back and forth. The honoree is nowhere to be found.

INT. STALL - LADIES ROOM - SAME

Bearded, wookie Mcqueen lays his head back against the cold bathroom tile, his eyes closed, savoring the blow job that A FAMILIAR BRUNETTE on her knees is kindly administering.

INT. LADIES ROOM - SAME

Empty, save for the grunts and groans coming from the last stall. Suddenly the door busts open and in walks **BUD EKINS**, lighting a smoke, checking himself out in the mirror.

BUD EKINS

Hey, Mcqueenie. You better clean off that dipstick and get your ass back out there before they start rioting. Less of course you want me to double for ya. Wouldn't be the first time.

MCQUEEN (O.S.)

I heard that.

INT. STALL - LADIES ROOM - SAME

Mcqueen looks down at the brunette on her knees. She looks up, reveals her face, smiles serenely. It's **BARBARA MINTY**.

MCQUEEN

Man, where did you come from.

He stares down into her big crushing eyes. She smiles.

BARBARA MINTY

Idaho.

INT. BANQUET ROOM - NIGHT

Mcqueen comes ambling down the aisle. Applause swells again as he takes the stage, studies his award, hugs the presenter. The applause fades as he steps up to the podium.

MCQUEEN

Sorry about that, folks. Little trouble gettin the engine started.

Chuckles from the audience. Some whistles. A catcall.

MCQUEEN

This award, believe it or not, means a helluva lot more to me than an Oscar... When you're a major motion picture star, people turn you into something maybe you're not. The daddy they never had. The husband they've always wanted. They expect things outta you maybe you can't give em. Just part of the job, I guess. Workplace hazard. But folks like you, you all keep a guy like me honest. When you're out there putting your neck on the line, the last thing you're worrying about is *that's Steve Mcqueen, movie star.*

BUD EKINS

Who's that?!

Laughter from the audience. Mcqueen looks up.

MCQUEEN

Bud Ekins everybody. Guy's got more script notes than all the studios put together...

(off more laughter)

But seriously, at the end of the day... I'm just a guy who likes to go fast...

Pull back to reveal THE BANNER hanging behind the podium. It reads: *STUNTMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA*

MCQUEEN

And I wanna thank you all for recognizing that.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - GOING SOUTH - DAY

A pickup truck rolls south on the 5, Barbara at the wheel, Mcqueen staring distantly out the window.

EXT. HIGHWAY - PICKUP TRUCK - DUSK

The sun sets into the ocean. The pickup truck slows to a crawl in a line of traffic. Barbara's eyes widen. Next to her, Steve Mcqueen doesn't stir from his sleep. Up ahead is A CUSTOMS CHECKPOINT: *BIENVENIDOS A MEXICO*

EXT. PLAZA SANTA MARIA - DAY

A gorgeous compound high above the Pacific. A smattering of haciendas constitute an alternative therapy cancer center.

SUPER: ROSARITO, MEXICO - 1979

INT. HACIENDA - PLAZA SANTA MARIA

Steve sits up in a hospital bed, cheeks sunken into his face, belly distended beneath a blue gown. Barbara sits next to him on one side, long faced **DR. KELLEY** on the other.

DOCTOR KELLEY

After extensive blood work and a thorough examination of your bodily systems...

He looks up over his shoulder at a distinguished looking Mexican man standing behind him. This is **DR. SANTOS**.

DOCTOR KELLEY

... Dr. Santos and I believe you are capable of surviving the surgery.

(off his look)

But of course, we want you to be aware of the risks. This is by no means a simple procedure.

MCQUEEN

Back in Hollywood, they gave me a few months to live. The way I see it, I'm already ahead of the game.

DOCTOR KELLEY

Well, you know my thoughts on the cancer community up there. But that's for another day. Steve, if you're prepared to go ahead with the procedure, we are as well... I'll leave you two to discuss.

He rises, nods at Dr. Santos and the two of them quietly leave the room. Steve turns to the hacienda window.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOJAVE DESERT - DAY

A blur of riders comes into focus. Four motorcycles in the lead, all of them running straight across the desert. Behind them, hundreds of bikes are peppered across the landscape.

Up ahead, the lead bike suddenly launches off an invisible lip and drops down into a steep basin. One by one, the next three riders launch, drop, disappear. Launch drop disappear.

A hundred yards back, A FIFTH LEADER crosses into frame. He's riding all alone, the next rider a hundred yards back.

Closer on the man and his machine. His boots. His goggles.
His gloves. The muscles of his face soft and relaxed.

SAM MASON (O.S.)
What do you see?

INT. HACIENDA - PLAZA SANTA MARIA - DAY

Mcqueen stares distantly out the hacienda window. SAM MASON
now sits next to him with A BIBLE in his lap.

MCQUEEN
I'm all alone - it's just me and a
bike and the clean blue sky... wind all
around me ... the cactus and the
sagebrush... man, it's pure out there...
(a long beat)
It's freedom, Sam. Maybe the only
real freedom I've ever known.

SAM MASON
Amen, Steve.

Sam starts to rise. Steve turns back.

MCQUEEN
I was just a hick in the city and
greaser in the country...
(as he sits again)
I've been in jail and reform school,
I've danced with the president's
daughter and had tea with the Queen
of England. I've been on the cover of
Life magazine and I've been nominated
for an Academy Award. I haven't done
bad for a kid from nothing, have I... ?

SAM MASON
You've had an extraordinary life.

MCQUEEN
It doesn't feel extraordinary when
it's your own.

SAM MASON
You've touched many, many people.

MCQUEEN
But it's over, isn't it.

SAM MASON
That's in God's hands now.

Sam reaches out, places the bible in Steve's lap.

SAM MASON

I brought the picture you asked me
for. You'll find it under Psalms 17.
I'll get Barbara and the kids.

He turns and goes. For a moment, McQueen is alone again. He
looks down at the Bible - and opens it to Psalms 17.

Between the pages is a WEATHERED BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO, a
photo we've come to know quite well. It's Steve McQueen's
parents: *PREGNANT JULLIAN* and "*A WAR HERO*" *NAMED BILL*...

Suddenly, THE DOOR OPENS. CHAD AND TERRY, young adults now,
appear in the doorway with Barbara Minty.

TERRY MCQUEEN

Daddy?

McQueen tries to hide his face. He's crying.

Terry and Chad come to his side and embrace him. Barbara
sits back against the doorway, tears falling silently.

CUT TO:

A MEDIA MONTAGE INTERCUT WITH ACTION:

Magazine covers and news programs from around the globe -
Spanish, Japanese, French, Italian... all of them parsing out
snippets of information about McQueen's condition.

NEWS ANCHOR 1

Is actor Steve McQueen dying?

NEWS ANCHOR 2

Has mega movie star Steve McQueen
retreated to Mexico for an
alternative cancer therapy...?

A LONG HALLWAY:

A gurney is wheeled down a hallway, nurses and doctors on
its flank. Steve McQueen is on his way into surgery.

NEWS ANCHOR 3

... a treatment purportedly consisting
of coffee enemas and apricot pits...

OPERATION ROOM:

A bright light illuminates McQueen's face as a team of
doctors work behind a curtain. His eyes flutter.

NEWS ANCHOR 4

Experts call Dr. Kelley a hack and a
scam artist...

MAIN STREET, SLATER, MISSOURI:

JOHN DILLINGER stares into frame.

NEWS ANCHOR
... his license revoked by the American
Medical Association...

SLATER FARM, STEVE'S ROOM:

UNCLE CLAUDE gives young Steve the engraved time piece.

NEWS ANCHOR 4
The man who brought you countless box
office blockbusters...

GREYHOUND BUS STATION:

Jullian Mcqueen leans down and kisses Steve on the cheek.

NEWS ANCHOR 6
The biggest movie star of the last
two decades...

BROADWAY:

Steve calls out to NEILE ADAMS under her billboard.

NEWS ANCHOR 7
A sex symbol non nonpareil...

HOTEL ROOM IN SAN FRANCISCO:

Steve wrestles with his two kids in bed.

NEWS ANCHOR 8
A legend of style and attitude...

EL PASO FREEWAY:

Steve and ALI MCGRAW eye each other in the rearview mirror.

NEWS ANCHOR 8
A cultural icon...

SOLAR PRODUCTIONS OFFICE:

Shirtless Steve spars with Bruce Lee.

NEWS ANCHOR 9
The epitome of the American male...

BEVERLY WILSHIRE HOTEL SUITE:

In her red dress, BARBARA MINTY places her hands on her
shoulders and counts down from ten to one...

NEWS ANCHOR 10
... sources tell us actor Steve McQueen
underwent a controversial surgery...

SLATER, MISSOURI TRAIN TRACKS:

Young Steve McQueen races a box car on his refurbished
Indian Motorcycle, his face lit with joy...

NEWS ANCHOR 11
... surgery tonight to remove a
cancerous tumor from his lung.

MOJAVE DESERT:

Surrounded by clean blue sky, Steve McQueen hums along on
his bike. Up ahead, the four lead riders suddenly disappear
over a lip. He strains his eyes to see the drop.

NEWS ANCHOR 12
... known for his iconic style and his
penchant for women, Steve McQueen has
always done things his own way.

As he draws closer, A GIANT CRATER APPEARS BELOW, a half a
mile long, 45 degree ramp down into it...

NEWS ANCHOR 13
What may be his final act of
rebellion is certainly no exception...

Like the riders before him, there's only one way to take it.
McQueen hunches down, throttles up... and as his bike hits the
lip, he launches high into the sky -

NEWS ANCHOR 13
What more would you expect from the
undisputed... *king of cool*.

FREEZE FRAME: ON STEVE MCQUEEN SUSPENDED IN MID AIR,
SURROUNDED BY BLINDING DESERT LIGHT AND CLEAR BLUE SKY...

**CARD: AFTER A YEAR LONG BATTLE WITH MESOTHELIOMA, STEVE
MCQUEEN DIED OF A MASSIVE HEART ATTACK. HE WAS 50 YEARS OLD.**

**SECOND CARD: HIS PRODUCTION OF HENRIK IBSEN'S AN ENEMY OF
THE PEOPLE WAS NEVER RELEASED BY THE STUDIO.**

FADE OUT.