

# **'Stretch'**

Original Screenplay by  
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Story by  
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THE SCREEN IS BLACK

STRETCH (V.O.)  
If you like stories about 'chance'  
and 'coincidence' and 'fate'  
(beat)  
*Then here's one you've never heard.*

SMASH UP ON:

BOOM-- A brutal, bomb-like, conscious-cancelling car accident  
seen from INSIDE THE IMPACTED CAR.

WE SLOW TO 1200 FPS as a CADILLAC T-BONES A LIMOUSINE.

STRETCH (V.O.)  
...boy meets girl...

Like the spin cycle of a particle smasher. Inertia versus  
gravity as a man and a man's vehicle experience the pure  
physical concussive shear of a 60mph, no-skid collision.

STRETCH (V.O.)  
...girl almost kills boy by running  
a red light...

An airbag deploys/explodes as our man is jettisoned from the  
open driver's side window and thrown free of the crash.

STRETCH (V.O.)  
...boy is struck sidelong, minus  
his seatbelt, at over 60 miles per  
hour...

He somersaults, end over end, his head miraculously missing  
the curb as he comes to a stop, on his ass, facing the crash.

STRETCH (V.O.)  
...and survives without a  
scratch...

He lifts his head, staring wide-eyed, blinking back the  
reality of what's just taken place. His name if you haven't  
put it together yet, is STRETCH...late's 30's but looks 60. A  
sour-faced BYSTANDER hovers overhead, staring down at him.

BYSTANDER  
Are you drunk?

Stretch staggers to his feet. An empty fifth of vodka falls  
from his torn pocket and shatters to the street. He wipes  
caked cocaine from his nostrils, sniffs and shoots his cuffs.

STRETCH

Not anymore...

He wobbles a step. Safety glass spills from his shoulders as he weaves back toward the scene of the accident.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

In the middle of La Cienega and Beverly, the steaming, crushed front-end of a crimson Cadillac Escalade is embedded/compacted into the side of Stretch's Limo.

In the driver's seat of the Escalade is a twenty-something WOMAN. Gorgeous. Goddess gorgeous.

STRETCH (V.O.)

...girl is the one he's been  
looking for his entire life...

She *smiles* and in a voice like a whisper across silk says...

CANDACE

...I didn't see the light.

STRETCH

...well, don't go towards it now.

She closes her eyes. Her trembling hands extend from the cab.

CANDACE

...take my hands...

Stretch takes them in his own. Still in shock.

STRETCH

I can't feel them.

She smiles again. Her eyes still closed.

CANDACE

...Let's wait until you can.

THE CAMERA PULLS AWAY SLOWLY, leaving the two of them, holding one another's hands as ambulances close on the scene.

STRETCH (V.O.)

...boy falls in love and like an  
fucking idiot...*destroys his entire  
life.*

Stretch collapses to the street and WE CUT TO:

INT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Stretch on the can, reading '*In Touch*' the shitty, weekly '*shutterbugs-catch-you-ugly-and-unmade*' showbiz rag.

INSERT PHOTO: Candace, the girl from the accident, laughing, holding the hand of some blandly handsome jock as they duck flashbulbs outside the shop of a famed Hollywood jeweler.

Headlines gloat: '**BRADY AND GAL PAL HEAR WEDDING BELLS!**'

STRETCH (V.O.)  
 Worlds better than I deserved.  
 (still staring)  
 I sobered up but she got smart and saw me for the *dumpster fire* I was and would *always* be and bailed.  
 (flips to another page)  
 That was almost a year ago.

A BLARING CAR HORN CUTS US TO:

INT. LIMO - DAY

Stretch brakes hard and barely avoids being sideswiped by a CAR blasting through the light change

**SUPER: TWO YEARS LATER**

STRETCH (V.O.)  
 She knocked my dick in the dirt.  
 She took my steam, my *mojo*. She took it like it was never bolted down to begin with...

He flips off the fleeing car.

STRETCH  
*FUCK YOU!*

STRETCH (V.O.)  
 ...and I gotta get it back because this is *killing me*...

Stretch stares after, scowling. His pupils pulsate with rage.

STRETCH (V.O.)  
 ...I still drive a limo for a living...

He snaps out it. Realizes something. Turns back. WE OVER PAN TO: His client, a well-heeled, ancient, BLUE-HAIRED WOMAN flanked by a pair of matching West Highland Terriers. She glares, aghast at his outburst. The dogs growl low.

STRETCH (V.O.)  
 ...and I still hate it...

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

Heavy-gelled hedonists and spray-tanned shitheads crowd the dancefloor. Sunglasses. Fist pumps. Distressed Jeans. Stretch slouches against a wall, miserable as a morgue attendant.

STRETCH (V.O.)  
 ...I hate the hours, I hate the clients...

The club banger 'MAKE IT RAIN' booms from the DJ booth. Some schmuck starts papering the crowd with singles from the VIP section above. Money rains down and mob rules as club-goers forsake all forms of dignity for a fistful of dollars.

STRETCH (V.O.)  
 ...and fuckin' hell do I hate this song.

INT. DRY CLEANERS - LATE MORNING

Stretch waits, produces a Zippo from his pocket, flicks it absently, lights it, closes it, repeats. A nervous habit he's picked up, post quitting smoking.

STRETCH (V.O.)  
 ...I gotta get my fucking shit together fast, I *know* I do...I just can't figure out the first step...

A plastic-sheathed suit lands on the counter in front of him. He pays and drags it off the counter like a corpse.

INT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS APARTMENT - DAY

Stretch surfs an INTERNET DATING SITE. Corresponding with an anonymous woman. He gets a message:

*'Let's just use e-mail instead of the site. Whadda ya say?'*

Stretch responds.

*'Sure.'*

Another moment. Then her response pings back.

*'No pictures and no names until we meet. I like mystery! ;)*

Stretch replies.

*'I do too. Let's figure out a place to hook-up. Sound good?'*

He gets another response:

*'Sounds good. But please, if you're fat, bald, out of shape or a combination of the three, please indicate.'*

Stretch smiles.

*'None of the above. Promise. See you soon I hope.'*

He waits another beat and then shuts the lid on his laptop.

He looks over. That dry-cleaned suit hangs off a door, still in its plastic sheath.

STRETCH (V.O.)

My life is nearly *half over* and I got exactly *jackshit* to show for it.

(beat)

Better men would've blown their heads off by now...

(beat)

...men like Karl with 'K'...

A FACE. Tan, masculine, smiling perfect veneers.

STRETCH (V.O.)

Karl with a 'K'...that's how he introduced himself...one of those rare individuals, where the word 'impeccable' actually applies.

He straightens his tie, buffs his teeth.

STRETCH (V.O.)

And fuck if you ever met a man, loved his job more than he did...

MONTAGE

Karl with a 'K' runs a chamois down the length of his car.

Karl with a 'K' scrubs and sanitizes the interior of his car.

Karl with a 'K' runs a small vacuum over his car's carpeting.

Karl with a 'K' arranges chilled bottles of Fiji just so.

Karl with a 'K' makes a elaborate seashell design out of Kleenex.

STRETCH (V.O.)

Karl with a 'K' was legendary. Karl with a 'K' lived to serve. Karl with a 'K' was the industry gold standard.

Karl with a 'K' totes bags and pushes luggage carts, smiling.

STRETCH (V.O.)

To Karl with a 'K' it was always '*clients*' and never '*passengers...*'

Karl with a 'K' stands in airport arrivals with a group of half asleep, slovenly, unshaven fellow drivers, holding hastily scrawled all-but-illegible signs.

Karl with a 'K' has '**Mr. Affleck**' stenciled on his sign.

STRETCH (V.O.)

And Karl with a 'K' knew his clients' needs down to sub-atomic levels.

Karl with a 'K' flips through a moleskein notebook, finds the name '**MR. DeNIRO**' and below it is a penmanship perfect list of wants and needs: Beverages. Periodicals. Radio stations.

Karl with a 'K' stocks the day's papers across the backseat in perfect order. Karl with a 'K' sets the temperature to an ideal 72 degrees as he vigorously works a martini shaker.

STRETCH (V.O.)

You like dry, two olive Bombay martinis with a shot of Chambord?

(beat)

Karl with a 'K' *knows you do...*

Karl with a 'K' offers that very martini to a chagrined Robert DeNiro as he climbs into the limo.

STRETCH (V.O.)

Karl with a 'K' was unfailingly polite and seldom without a smile. He was thoughtful, engaging and quick-witted.

Karl with a 'K' interacts with different clients. There's Liam Neeson, Meryl Streep, Bradley Cooper, Jessica Biel, Jason Bateman, Alicia Keys...

STRETCH (V.O.)

Karl with a 'K' was trim, tan, worldly, well-travelled and well-read. He was a marathon runner, a war hero and an accomplished amateur chef...

Karl with a 'K' greets a recently married couple, just returned home from their honeymoon. He ushers them into the back of the limo, shutting the door and snapping his fingers as he skips around to the driver's side, sliding in.

STRETCH (V.O.)

Karl with a 'K' was spoken of fondly by employers past and present. One former boss stated that Karl with a 'K' was simply quote: *The personification of my company's commitment to total client satisfaction.* Unquote.

(beat)

I'm sure this thrilled Karl with a 'K' to no end...

KARL WITH A 'K'

(to rear-view)

...Ah, you two look *so happy*...

Karl with a 'K' beams back at the lovebirds, then quickly and without provocation, sticks a gun in his mouth--

STRETCH (V.O.)

--right up until the day he sucked on a .38 snubnose--

--and shoots himself through the back of the head. The woman begins screaming as her new groom quickly raises the gore-covered partition to shield her eyes.

STRETCH (V.O.)

...it would mark the only time in nearly twenty years that someone *else* would clean his limo...

CUT BACK TO:

STRETCH'S DRY-CLEANED CHAFFUER'S SUIT

Hanging there in that plastic, like something asphyxiated.

STRETCH (V.O.)

...they buried him in one of those...

Stretch just stares.

STRETCH (V.O.)  
 ...and not one of his '*clients*'  
 showed...

INT. SELAHI LIMOUSINE - DAY

Stretch ambles toward the dispatch office, eyeballing a group of what appear to be ad-hoc PHONE TECHNICIANS rewiring the lines. They fire black-ringed, sleepless stares at him.

His cellphone buzzes. The caller I.D. reads: '**IGNACIO.**'  
 Stretch stares at the display before ignoring the call.

INT. DISPATCH OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A lithe, lovely, pony-tailed woman in her late-20's works a laptop. This is CHARLIE. Stretch proffers his standard:

STRETCH  
*Yes indeed.*  
 (beat)  
 What's up babe?  
 (thumb to the phone techs)  
 What's with these guys?

CHARLIE  
 Naseem wants you front and center.

STRETCH  
 Is he taking heads?

CHARLIE  
 Not yet. But whatever fears you  
 have are totally *founded*.

STRETCH  
 So he's freaking out.

CHARLIE  
 No. He's still. Like 'serial  
 killer' still--  
 (seeing his dishevelment)  
 C'mere. *C'mon*.

She straightens his collar and smoothes his tie.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
 Get it together grown up.

STRETCH

You think I'm fried? I mean, I know there's been some bad client feedback--

CHARLIE

--*Feedback!?* Sugar, You have blown all four tires and are running on rims right now.

(mocking)

*'Hi reality! Remember me? My name's Stretch? We met a looong time ago!'*

A beat. A loaded pause. Stretch about to shifts subjects. Charlie knows this routine backwards and preempts--

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

--Yes. I saw.

STRETCH

*Getting Married*. After a year--  
less than a year!

CHARLIE

It's Hollywood. It happens.

Stretch pulls that Zippo. Flicks. Lights. Closes. Relights.

STRETCH

What I wouldn't give to meet someone, take my mind off her. I don't know, maybe losing this job is part of that, part of some plan--

CHARLIE

--Whoa, wait a minute, this from the man who refuses to acknowledge that things happen for a reason--

STRETCH

--No, no, I'm not talking about fate. I don't believe in that.

CHARLIE

And yet you're a fatalist.

STRETCH

Not even.

CHARLIE

If stuff isn't falling down around your ears, on the brink of collapse, you can't function.

Stretch considers this. Snapping that Zippo repeatedly.

STRETCH  
...you really think so?

He's about to flick the Zippo again. Charlie stops him.

CHARLIE  
Yes indeed.

INT. OFFICE - LATER

Stretch is seated before NASEEM SELAHI, mid-50's, the company's Persian-born owner. He picks at a glazed donut.

After a long protracted silence between the two--

STRETCH  
--are you firing me Naseem?

Naseem chuckles. Proof that he's considering it.

NASEEM  
You have a past, eh Stretch? Lots of uh, drugs? Alcohol? Gambling?

STRETCH  
Addictions. Let's put 'em under the same roof. But I haven't placed a bet, taken a drink or done a drug in over a year.

NASEEM  
Do you believe you 'owe' something?

STRETCH  
Owe something? *To myself?* I guess. To the guys I gambled against? Yeah.  
(beat)  
I owe about six-thousand dollars.

NASEEM  
Six-thousand dollars? And you're presently paying this off?

STRETCH  
It was twelve, so I've cut it half.

Naseem nods. Seems pleased with this 'progress.'

NASEEM  
And do you believe that you owe me?

STRETCH

You've given me a lot of breaks so in that sense. Yeah. I probably do.

NASEEM

Good.

(beat)

Because I need the *old you* now. I need *the addict* in you. *Yes?* Your addiction. The part of you powered by pure *need*. By *uncontrolled urge*. When you must have something no matter what and that thing you must have, right now, *Is. This. Job.*

(leaning forward)

Be addicted to *us*. Like a junkie, sick and in constant need. You see these figures on television willing to accept a stranger's sex organs into their mouths, for a small taste of their temptations.

(suddenly miming fellatio)

*I'll suck you! Let me suck you down! Give me your diseased cock-!*

STRETCH

--Is that on Bravo?--

NASEEM

--Can you imagine such cravings!?

It's admirable in a strange way, this simple but *supreme* dedication. And *that's* what I want. What I need--

(points right at Stretch)

*-from you.* It's tight. The economy is shit. Other companies, like these cocksuckers at COSSACK are trying to steal our clients. So I need every driver to work as hard as they've ever worked

(beat)

Pick up new Motorola from Charlie. No more calls directly to dispatch.

(beat)

I hope I've been clear with you Stretch.

(for emphasis)

This is do. Or this is die.

STRETCH

Yes indeed.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. STRETCH'S LIMO - LATER

Stretch. Sound asleep. Snoring. Head back. Mouth agape. His cellphone buzzes, his eyes snap open...again the caller I.D. reads '**IGNACIO**' and again, Stretch ignores it.

He yawns. Checks his E-mail. A new message.

*'So how about a little drink later? You up for that?'*

Stretch smiles. E-mails back:

*'I could be. Where are you thinking? Hollywood?'*

He waits. The mystery woman responds.

*Great bar on Argyle. The Well?*

Stretch types: *'I know it. It's open late. Can you do late?'*

Another moment. Another E-Mail.

*'I can. I kinda like this mystery! Hopefully I won't disappoint. Let me know what time you're thinking...'*

Stretch responds: *'You got it.'*

His work phone, the new Motorola, chirps. He picks up.

STRETCH

Yes indeed.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

You P.O.B.?

Stretch rubs sleep from his eyes, scans the dash clock.

STRETCH

What do you mean? Pick-up's at 3.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

No! It's at 2pm! Are you joking around?

STRETCH

No, Wh-- I'm down the stre--

CHARLIE (O.S.)

--Oh my God, *seriously?* Please, if you're messing with me--

STRETCH

--Charlie, *I'm not messing with you, I swear--* what?

CHARLIE (O.S.)  
 --oh shit. shit, shit-- you're late  
 then, you're really late! This is  
 the first pick-up of the day  
 Stretch! How can you already b--

STRETCH  
 --relax, who is it?

THE FACE OF DAVID HASSELHOFF

Mute. Impassive. Glowering. Stretch stares back. Unsure.  
 Hasselhoff lifts his wrist, to show his watch, then goes back  
 to this unsettling, statue-like stillness.

HASSELHOFF  
 Has anyone ever referred to you,  
 either directly or in passing as a  
 '*punk ass motherfucker*'?

STRETCH  
 Not to my recollection.

HASSELHOFF  
 Positive?

STRETCH  
 Pretty much, but...

HASSELHOFF  
 But?

STRETCH  
 ...I'm sure I've had my days.

HASSELHOFF  
 ...and might this be one of them?

STRETCH  
 ...I wouldn't rule it out.

HASSELHOFF  
 You know what? Neither would I.  
 And I think regardless of whatever  
 personal feats preceded this day,  
 you could've been the straight 'A'  
 such and such eagle scout, saved so  
 and so from drowning...*today*, in  
 the most present of tenses...you,  
 are a *Punk. Ass. Motherfucker.*

(before Stretch can rebut)

(MORE)

HASSELHOFF (CONT'D)

Who's an hour late and at my age, when you find yourself making the most of even the *smallest* moments, the idea that you would swindle me out of an entire hour. That you would have the balls to vaporize 60 minutes of my waking life is contemptible. *It's criminal--*

STRETCH

--I'm really sorry--

HASSELHOFF

--C'mon son, If you're going to patronize me, then at least put your fucking back into it. You don't have any respect for me. All you see is this saggy, spray-tanned, botoxed douchebag who sells out stadiums in Dusseldorf. This c-list celebrity, content to pimp what's left of his pride to reality television and spend his declining years diving for table scraps with a cast of has beens...*am I right?*

Stretch, speechless. Hasselhoff is working up a lather.

HASSELHOFF (CONT'D)

You think I've never held a knife? That I'm unfamiliar with the taste of blood? That I took a shitty, sub-par show about '*lifeguards*' and turned it into the highest rated syndicated hit in television history because I got 'lucky?'

(long, disturbing beat)

I once forcibly sodomized a Viet Cong Colonel because he placed an ancestral curse on me while I was interrogating him...and I don't even *believe* in ancestral curses.

(beat)

But *that's* how deep I roll.

(another beat)

Now I see some shine in you son but overall you have the feel of a *from the womb* fuck-up who's always seconds away from stepping in shit or jamming his dick in the door. You want the finer things? Fame and fortune? You want to fuck runway models? Fly your own jet?

(MORE)

HASSELHOFF (CONT'D)

Then find that full length mirror  
and look into it long and hard  
until it finally reveals you, *for*  
*who you truly are...*

Stretch smiles he'd just swallowed something horrible but didn't want to disappoint the chef. A WHITE BENTLEY LIMO suddenly materializes in Hasselhoff's driveway.

Stretch's expression shimmers. A recognition as he realizes:

STRETCH

(to Hasselhoff)

Did you call another company sir?

HASSELHOFF

No...but me *likes* the looks of  
this.

Stretch looks back as the Bentley's driver's side door opens.

ANGLE ON: COWBOY BOOTS.

Eggshell white, Croc leather finish. Pricey. WE TRACK UP past Bootcut designer jeans. Wait...Acid washed? *Of course.*

STRETCH (V.O.)

If Karl with a 'K' represented the light of the limo industry, then it's black hole, it's bottomless pit, it's darkest dungeon, came in the form of a nameless, ageless eastern European immigrant known simply as 'The Jovi.'

CAMERA CONTINUES TRACKING UP, past a lit Sobranie Black Russian cigarette, stuck between a gnarl of thick, heavily calloused fingers. Rotting nails the color of custard.

STRETCH (V.O.)

Nobody knew where he came from. Fear about who he was only fueled his infamy. There was a rumor that he began his life as an aborted fetus but somehow survived and was shipped to a Soviet Military Academy. Another rumor had his salt-mine enslaved mother dying just before giving birth and the 'Jovi' punching his way out of her womb.

CAMERA CONTINUE OVER a diamond Rolex strapped to a heavily-scarred wrist stenciled with old Russian prison tattoos.

STRETCH (V.O)

There was the one about him being  
jumped in a Gulag and set on fire,  
then beating his attackers to death  
while fully engulfed in flames.

(beat)

Nobody ever laughed when they told  
these stories.

(beat)

They felt too much like the truth.

CAMERA CONTINUES OVER a tailored Ostrich leather coat,  
complete with quills, rolled to the elbows.

STRETCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Since his arrival in L.A. right  
after the fall of the Berlin wall,  
The 'Jovi' and his company  
'Cossack' had amassed a fleet of  
forty vehicles, Twelve tow trucks  
and three Learjets. He had no wife,  
children or family to speak of. The  
only thing he seemed to bestow all  
of his love and affection on,  
*outside* of his company...

THE CAMERA ARRIVES AT...the shoulders and beholds a 'White  
Snake' 86/87, frosted, dark roots to blonde tips David  
Coverdale-special. THE CAMERA BEGINS MOVING AROUND 'The Jovi'

STRETCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...was his hair.

(beat, with gravitas)

A magnificent almost monolithic,  
hot-ironed, heavily-teased 'Hair  
Band' style headdress that looked  
like the spawn of a skull-fucking  
between an Apache Chief and an  
ancient Egyptian Pharaoh.

THE CAMERA moves around the Jovi, his hair like a hood,  
casting his face in deep shadow.

STRETCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)

This blow-dried death shroud that  
encased the 'Jovi' in permanent,  
perpetual shadow...and made him  
seem indestructible.

The Jovi's features are too dark to discern. He brings the  
cigarette up and takes a drag, we see only the lit tip as he  
inhales...The rest of his face remains a mystery.

STRETCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 ...and I'll say it...*that hair*  
*scared the living shit out of me.*

A coterie of what appear to be Russian Hookers peekaboo from the backseat...and that's all the coaxing 'the Hoff' needs.

HASSELHOFF  
 Sorry kid. I'm a pig by nature and  
 that trough looks *filthy*.

Hasselhoff ambles toward the Bentley with a 'gotcha' grin and a little pageant wave for Stretch. The Jovi opens the rear door for him, never taking his shadowy gaze from Stretch.

He flicks the still-lit Sobraine cigarette in Stretch's general direction. It lands right at his feet.

The Jovi slides back into the Bentley and pulls away.

INT. STRETCH'S LIMO - CONTINUOUS

Stretch slams his door. Finds his angry reflection glaring back at him in the rear-view. Addresses it.

STRETCH  
*What in the FUCK, are you doing man!? You want to wind up back in Dogdick, Michigan, tending bar? Then get your head out of your ass and be on time!...And if anyone like David-Fucking Hasselhoff, ever runs some limp-dick, self-help rant on you again and you don't beat the GOD out of them, on the spot, then you and I are gonna fellate a fucking 12-gauge...TOGETHER! Deal?*

Stretch angrily keys the ignition and drops it into gear...he senses someone in the seat next to him, looks over and sees the deceased **Karl with a "K"** staring back at him.

KARL WITH A 'K'  
 I like that plan--!

STRETCH  
 --c'mon. Piss off--

KARL WITH A 'K'  
 --especially the part about the shotgun--!

STRETCH

--What do you want--!?

KARL WITH A 'K'

It's your conscience calling.

STRETCH

You're not my conscience. You don't even exist, I just need slept--

KARL WITH A 'K'

(mocking, laughing)

--you just need 'slept' nutsack?

STRETCH

Sleep! I need sleep!

KARL WITH A 'K'

I can see why you never made it as an actor. It's not like Brando made you look bad. You just let *Baywatch* wipe the floor with you.

STRETCH

Fuck off.

KARL WITH A 'K'

You remind me of me, right at the end and while my soul was rotting--

Karl unfurls this creepy, plastered-on grin and points to it.

KARL WITH A 'K'

--I wore *this*.

Karl winks. Stretch sighs, punches the gas and speeds off.

EXT. STRETCH'S LIMO - MOMENTS LATER

Snaking up Mulholland. The Motorola chirps. He's dreading this call.

STRETCH

Yes indeed.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Naseem's going nuts! What happened with Hasselhoff?! *The Jovi got him!*?

STRETCH

I need you to pick up a bat for your boy--

## INTERCUT

CHARLIE

--and do what!? Shatter your kneecaps?! Did you not get Naseem's '*Speech to the Troops*' today--?

STRETCH

--I did--

CHARLIE (O.S.)

--And did he not basically threaten to fire you if the company doesn't turn it around? This is the *fifth* client we've lost to the Jovi in the last month. Did you know that?

STRETCH

No. What? *Really?*

CHARLIE

He picked off Andy Cohen last week and got Seacrest yesterday. Flew him to Vegas *personally*.

STRETCH

The Jovi is a fucking pilot!?

CHARLIE

*With his own fucking planes!*

STRETCH

How is he--

CHARLIE

--Naseem thinks he's monitoring our dispatch calls.

STRETCH

Wait, is this why those guys were at the office today?

CHARLIE

Yeah, they're Naseem's old friends from Iran. His old 'Savak' friends.

STRETCH

What's a 'Savak?'

CHARLIE

Iranian Secret Police. They wired us up so we can eavesdrop on the Jovi's dispatch, tit for tat.

STRETCH

So we're stealing *his* clients too?

CHARLIE

It's so out-of-control, I can't even believe it, but *yes*.

STRETCH

Cool. I want in. The Jovi just jacked Hasselhoff--

CHARLIE

--after you were almost *an hour* late--

STRETCH

--let's not dwell, let's hit back.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Naseem wants to fire you right now.

STRETCH

And I wanna steal the Jovi's next client. Whoever it is.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Ok saboteur. I'll let Naseem know. Might buy you a stay of execution. I'll call you back.

Stretch clicks off. 'Karl With A 'K' appears.

KARL WITH A 'K'

Billy Big Balls and his *bad* ideas. I thought you hated this job.

STRETCH

Doesn't mean I can afford to lose it.

KARL WITH A 'K'

You need a drink-- *drinks*, plural. Or some blow. You're *boring*.

STRETCH

I need you to vanish. Vamoose.

KARL WITH A 'K'

What do you think you'll be doing when it finally dawns on you, the *catastrophic failure* of your life and career to date?

STRETCH  
Hopefully not holding a pistol!

Stretch laughs right at Karl.

KARL WITH A 'K'  
*Oooh, touche, douche!*

INT. STRETCH'S LIMO - DAY

Stretch eyeballs some empty curb and slides in.

INT. LIQUOR & MARKET - DAY

Stretch slogs in on auto-pilot, flicking that Zippo. He makes an immediate lab-rat right down the second aisle and snatches a pack of Alka-Seltzer and a bottle of water.

He heads up toward the counter, glancing out the window when he spies CANDACE, his ex, bounding out of a bridal shop across the street...carrying her wedding dress.

She has two beautiful BRIDESMAIDS in tow.

Stretch stops cold. Watching her. She laughs all the way to her car, loads her dress in and drives away.

STRETCH (V.O.)  
...I could have gone the rest of my  
life and not seen that...  
(beat)  
*...she looked really happy...*

Stretch moves away from the window. He rounds the aisle at the cash register...looks up...and finds:

A TWEAKER pointing a pawn shop revolver at the SIKH STORE CLERK, who points back with his own ordnance: An Eastwood-sized hand cannon...They both stare at Stretch.

Stretch takes a moment to piece the puzzle...a beat...a rapid realization...his face flashing a panicked '*FUCK ME...*'

He raises his hands...some vital part of himself short-circuiting at the sight of this standoff.

The TWEAKER moves sloth-slow toward the front door. The Owner's gun remains trained, following him out...as the clerk's aim passes by Stretch, he squats slo-mo awkward.

The Tweaker fumbles past a display of Toblerone near the entry. The Owner's eyes harden, his grip tightens: 'Don't do it.' The Tweaker's hand wraps around the Toblerone slowly.

The Tweaker and the Owner. Gunslinger stares. The Tweaker takes a step backwards and--

--**BOOM! BOOM!** The Owner FIRES. The display DETONATES. The Tweaker falls, Toblerone clutched, FIRING with his free hand. Stretch goes prone, face pressed to floor as the furious Owner leaps the counter and FIRES again, glass exploding.

The Tweaker, sprawled on the sidewalk, pulls the trigger to clicks-- looks on in terror as the owner grabs a pot of coffee and hurls it through the demolished front window.

The pot explodes, strafing the Tweaker with boiling decaf. The Tweaker squeals, scrambles to his feet and flees...The Owner follows at full sprint-waddle, tripping over Stretch and sprawling to the floor, the gun going off again.

The Owner lurches back up, limping off after the Tweaker, trying to reload on the run. His gun clatters to the pavement. He stops. Picks it up. Resumes his ragged pursuit.

Stretch army crawls quick to the front door. He has to traverse a downed display of SEAGRAMS GIN. That sweet waft of booze fills his sinuses and feels like an old friend.

He wipes gin off his hands like the blood from a murdered man. He gets to his feet and slips gingerly through the shattered entry way.

EXT. LIQUOR AND MARKET - CONTINUOUS

Fresh bullet holes leak smoke from the side of his limo.

STRETCH  
...sonofabitch...

INT. STRETCH'S LIMO - CONTINUOUS

Stretch climbs in. His Motorola chirps. It's Charlie.

INTERCUT WITH DISPATCH

CHARLIE  
They just got an ASAP in. Cossack.

STRETCH  
Babe, I just saw a *gunfight!*

CHARLIE  
Are you serious!?

STRETCH  
Shop owner versus crackhead. My  
ears are still ringing!

CHARLIE  
You alright?

STRETCH  
I'm revitalized. It's weird. The  
limo took a little damage.

CHARLIE  
What kind of damage?

STRETCH  
Bullets of the bullet hole variety.

CHARLIE  
*Seriously?*

STRETCH  
Little Turtle Wax. You'll never  
notice.

CHARLIE  
Shut up!

STRETCH  
So we boosting the Jovi or what?

CHARLIE  
Ray Liotta. Sony in Culver City.  
Going to LAX. The Jovi is still  
stuck with Hasselhoff and Liotta is  
one of his *personal* clients.

STRETCH  
Now he's a jump ball. Fuck the Jovi  
and his horrible head of hair.

CHARLIE  
Your voice cracked a little when  
you said that.

STRETCH  
My ass puckered too.

CHARLIE  
Ok, gross dude. T.M.I.

STRETCH  
I owe you babe.

EXT. SONY STUDIOS - CULVER CITY - DAY

Stretch arrives on set and parks. He climbs out and starts across the lot. His cell rings. He looks at it. The caller I.D. reads '**IGNACIO**'...he ignores it for the third time.

At that moment, a trailer door opens and out steps RAY LIOTTA, who's greeted by a poor, put upon ASSISTANT DIRECTOR.

RAY LIOTTA  
When?

A.D.  
7am.

RAY LIOTTA  
No, no, no, tell them to push my call. I'm not landing, then going straight to set.

A.D.  
And Wardrobe needs that suit back as soon as possible--

RAY LIOTTA  
--Monica, it's Monic--  
(correcting himself)  
Marcy, Marcy, I'm sorry, c'mon! I'm kidding! I knew it was Marcy.

Marcy shrugs then sloths back toward set.

Stretch takes his cue.

STRETCH  
Mr. Liotta? I'm Kevin, your driver.  
(beat)  
Can I take your bag?

Liotta unloads his shoulder bag. Eyes Stretch suspiciously.

RAY LIOTTA  
Where's 'whats-his-name'?  
My guy? The Russian.

Stretch hefts Liotta's bag and starts toward the limo.

STRETCH

He's not going to make it sir, he's travelling with another client. The car is right this way.

RAY LIOTTA

You work for him?

STRETCH

I work for a rival company sir. My company called after he couldn't make the pick-up personally. He's driving David Hasselhoff right now.

RAY LIOTTA

Who?

STRETCH

The guy from T.V....'Baywatch?'

Liotta. Deadpan. No reaction.

STRETCH (CONT'D)

'Knight Rider?' Back in the 80's.

Liotta. Still no reaction.

RAY LIOTTA

What movies has he done?

STRETCH

I couldn't name one off hand.

RAY LIOTTA

Then he's shit. He's a shitty t.v. actor, so I got bounced for some fucking fag t.v. actor who's hasn't been in one movie you can name!?

STRETCH

Well, no but he's made quite a bit of money off syndication-- still, it's really *shocking* to me, that you'd be treated this way.

Liotta regards Stretch for a moment.

RAY LIOTTA

Wait, you're not an actor, are you?

Stretch starts to get *hopeful*--

STRETCH

--actually--

RAY LIOTTA

--because that last line about it  
being '*really shocking to you*' I  
didn't believe that at all.

(beat, seems to realize)

Wait, you're not *really* an actor!?

Stretch opens the back door for him. Though clenched teeth:

STRETCH

No. I'm just driver. Your driver.

RAY LIOTTA

Thank Christ. That's all we need.  
Another wannabe Denzel, driving a  
fucking limousine.

INT. STRETCH'S LIMO - LATER

Stretch notices a TOW-TRUCK tailing him. Driving aggressive.  
Swerving. He tries to ignore it as Liotta raps 'Jovi' lore.

RAY LIOTTA

Guy's been with me for months.  
Sometimes flies me himself. I  
thought his name was 'Vlad' or  
'Val' something soviet-sounding.  
What was it you called him again?

STRETCH

We call him the 'Jovi' because of  
the hair. Y'know, 'Bon Jovi' that  
horrible band, back in the day...

RAY LIOTTA

The hair? His hair?

STRETCH

Yeah.  
(off Liotta's look)  
Have you never noticed?

RAY LIOTTA

What?

STRETCH

That he looks like Simba the lion  
by way of electroshock...

Stretch smiles in anticipation of a burst of laughter, or at  
least a titter from Liotta...but receives neither.

Instead, after a swollen moment, Liotta begins to cry. At first Stretch thinks it's some sort of optical illusion because *why in Christ would Ray Liotta be crying...?*

But he is. A lot. The kind of *open weeping* fit for a funeral.

RAY LIOTTA

I had a guy that drove me, my old driver, for years, he was the best. Got shot and killed a while back. We were *really close*.

Stretch says nothing. Liotta bites back tears. His cellphone goes off again but again, he refuses to answer it.

RAY LIOTTA (CONT'D)

...he was...*my friend*.  
(gazes out the window)  
...you might have run into him. Maybe you knew him.  
(beat)  
He had this way about him. If you met him once, you'd never forget him. His name was...  
(a new flood of tears)  
...Kyle...Kyle with an 'K'...

Stretch's expression contorts. Karl With A 'K' reappears, shocked and embarrassed--

KARL WITH A 'K'

COCKSUCKER! I GOT YOU PILLS!

RAY LIOTTA

...*man, do I miss him...*

Stretch stifles a smile as he returns his attention to the road, letting the bereaved Liotta grieve for '*Kyle with a 'K'*'.

EXT./INT. STRETCH'S LIMO - LAX - DAY

Stretch pulls to the curb. Liotta's phone goes off again.

RAY LIOTTA

Christ on a fucking rubber cross with these faggot-ass fist-fucks!  
(yelling into phone)  
WHAT! *What Marcy!* You've been calling since I left set--!!

--Liotta listens...and pure fury washes over his face.

RAY LIOTTA (CONT'D)  
 --Oh motherfucking CURLY CUNT  
 HAIRD MOTHERFUCKING TITTYFUCK--!

Stretch, halfway out the driver's side door, stops dead.

RAY LIOTTA (CONT'D)  
 No-no-no-no-no, not you Marcy, it's  
 me, it's me, it's me--ok, ok, ok,  
 ok-- uh, I'm sending it back with  
 the driver. Don't worry. They'll  
 have it back. I'll get it back. Ok.

Liotta clicks off.

STRETCH  
 Everything alright?

RAY LIOTTA  
 I need a favor.

Liotta pulls a police badge from his jacket pocket, revealing  
 a shoulder-holster with a 9mm Automatic tucked inside.

RAY LIOTTA (CONT'D)  
 (unfastening the holster)  
 ...I need you to take this back to  
 Sony and find Marcy, the A.D., that  
 little dyke that was annoying me  
 earlier? Can you do that?  
 (pulling the holster free)  
 Forgot I was fucking wearing this.

Stretch takes the shield and shoulder-holster from him.

RAY LIOTTA (CONT'D)  
 There's blanks in that gun so don't  
 be an asshole.  
 (extending two \$100 bills)  
 You can do this?

STRETCH  
 Of course. I'll have it back to  
 them inside the hour.

RAY LIOTTA  
 Good.  
 (hands over the \$200)  
 And watch your ass with this 'Jovi'  
 pal...You made a new enemy today.

And with that, Liotta is gone. Stretch watches after him  
 until he enters the terminal.

He checks his rear-view before exiting the curb. A Town Car that he noticed behind him earlier, sits a few car lengths back. Stretch pulls out into traffic. The Town Car remains.

EXT. LAX - DAY

Stretch pulls out onto Centinela, heading away from the airport. He keeps checking his rear-view as he stops at a light. He gets an E-mail message on his cell.

*'So any more thoughts on tonight? The Well? What time?'*

Stretch E-mails back:

*'Is 11pm too late? I think I'll be off by then.'*

He waits for a few moments. Another message arrives.

*'11 is perfect! See you then! Getting excited now!'*

Stretch starts to E-mail back when out of nowhere a Lincoln Navigator cuts in front of him. He brakes hard--

STRETCH

--what the fuck--!

The passenger side door swings open and IGNACIO 'IGGY' DOMINGUEZ climbs out. An old school Cholo gunhand for L.A.'s premier sports bookie, CARLOS 'EL TOREDOR' SANCHEZ.

IGNACIO

--I know you're getting my calls  
and fucking ducking 'em.

STRETCH

Iggy, what's up? What are you doin--

IGNACIO

--before you say anything else, I  
want you to know that I am  
*powerless* against this--

STRETCH

--oh, this is no good--

IGNACIO

--I can counsel you, y'can cry on  
my shoulder, commiserate, what I  
can't do is *change the unchangeable*--  
(beat)

-the nutshell is as follows: 'El  
Toredor' has sold the farm. New  
ownership. Old books.

(MORE)

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

They decided your juice was worth  
the squeeze.

(without a *speck* of irony)

So I need the six grand you owe by  
midnight tonight.

A beat. Watch Stretch '*process*' this.

STRETCH

Tell me we can laugh about this  
when you let me off the hook--

IGNACIO

--we can't.

STRETCH

Fuck me.

IGNACIO

Unfortunately, *yes*.

STRETCH

*You're serious?*

IGNACIO

I'm colon cancer.

STRETCH

I pay every month like clockwork!

IGNACIO

I know that.

STRETCH

Yeah but do *they* know that?

IGNACIO

They do and they *don't care*.

STRETCH

Iggy, I got a better shot of  
shitting out a full grown female  
giraffe than coming up with six  
grand in the next--

(checks watch)

--five and a half hours.

(beat)

Will they take half?

IGNACIO

Has to be in full.

STRETCH

Aw fuck, c'mon gimme a *glimmer* here man! Can I speak to the new owners?

IGNACIO

If you can speak Cantonese.

STRETCH

And Carlos can't help me out?

IGNACIO

Carlos is '*Mr. Money and Run*' right now. Carlos just made twenty million after taxes. That motherfucker'll either be Bel-Air or beachfront inside a month.

STRETCH

So if I can't get the cash...

IGNACIO

...why would you even ask that? What do you think Kevin?

STRETCH

Jesus, you start calling me '*Kevin*' and I really flip out.

IGNACIO

I'll have to leave a lot more than bruises behind. Between me and a bank?. Knock off the bank.

INT. STRETCH'S LIMO - MOMENTS LATER

Stretch slouches behind the wheel, gazing over at Liotta's prop 9mm in his passenger seat...his mind spins, plays out impossible scenarios. His Motorola chirps. He answers.

CHARLIE (O.S)

You get Liotta clear?

STRETCH

Tell Naseem to put out a dispatch call that has his flight arriving at La Guardia at 3:20pm.

INTERCUT WITH DISPATCH

CHARLIE

I like it.

STRETCH

The Jovi will try to send somebody ahead to La Guardia. Have one of our farm-outs card Liotta in Newark and he's officially a client.

CHARLIE

Nicely done. Naseem is still on the warpath though.

STRETCH

Steer him a little. I'll speak to him when he cools off. Right now, I need to go big babe.

CHARLIE

How big?

STRETCH

I need six-thousand dollars by midnight.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Well that's no fun.

STRETCH

I love how you're not the least bit shocked or surprised by that.

CHARLIE

Never a dull moment with you babe but are we talking about putting together a six-thousand dollar tip on top of service?

STRETCH

We are.

CHARLIE

What's the most you've ever made in a night?

STRETCH

Quincy Jones gave me a grand once.

CHARLIE

Ok, so roughly a *five-hundred* percent increase from your top tip.

STRETCH

Can it be done?

CHARLIE  
Dare to dream and oddly enough Mr.  
'*I don't believe in Fate*' we may  
have a whale on the horizon.

STRETCH  
Then I am Ahab, harpoon in hand.  
I'll be in Hollywood.

CHARLIE  
Don't go by there.

STRETCH  
I'm not.

CHARLIE  
I don't believe you. Do you really  
hate yourself that much?

STRETCH  
I'm the kid who picked at scabs.

CHARLIE  
That one's more of a mortal wound.

STRETCH  
Jesus, she wasn't that great.

CHARLIE (O.S.)  
...I agree. She wasn't. So don't go  
by there.

STRETCH  
Okay.

CHARLIE (O.S.)  
Don't.

STRETCH  
*I got it.*

EXT. HOLLYWOOD SIDE STREET - LATER

Stretch's limo pulls to the curb in front of condo complex.

INT. STRETCH'S LIMO - CONTINUOUS

He gazes up at one of the condo windows. Sits back. That  
Zippo appears. Flick. Light. Close. Repeat.

The ever-antagonizing *Karl with a 'K'* appears...

KARL WITH A 'K'  
 Could you be a bigger chump?

STRETCH  
 Probably not. Not right now.

KARL WITH A 'K'  
*Awww, waaaah... 'She broke up with  
 me, the loser limo driver to marry  
 a MILLIONAIRE ATHLETE and I never  
 saw it coming'*

(beat)  
 Seriously pal, did that 'Shocker'  
really sneak up on you?

Stretch stares. Sighs.

STRETCH (V.O.)  
 ...yeah...it did.

FLASH CUT TO:

EXT. INTERSECTION - PAST

Stretch staggers across the street, less than 60 seconds  
 after being ejected from his car. He's punchy-woozy-weaving.

The Cadillac steams and smokes, embedded in the rear quarter  
 panel of Stretch's Limo. In the driver's seat is CANDACE.

CANDACE  
 I didn't see the light.

STRETCH  
 ...well don't go towards it now.

CANDACE  
 ...take my hands...

Stretch takes them in his own.

STRETCH  
 I can't feel them.

She smiles again.

CANDACE  
 Let's wait until you can.

A beat before Stretch's eyes roll back and he pitches  
 forward, passing out.

BLACKNESS

FADE UP:

**SUPER: TWO WEEKS LATER**

INT. CONDO - DAY

WE HEAR the sounds of sex spiked with sharp yelps of pain.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

The small of a woman's back. She moves with a rough intimacy.

CANDACE

Oh, baby...*God that feels good...*

She rides Stretch, this intense, unbridled grind as she starts to climax...

STRETCH (O.S.)

(painfully)

...Okay...that's--

Candace stops, looks down at him, panting.

CANDACE

--Ooh baby, are you okay? You okay?

I'm *right* there--

THE CAMERA PANS AROUND AND FINDS STRETCH, confined to a full, medical head halo and torso harness.

STRETCH

(in spite of the pain)

I know you're right there-- don't stop-- just put your hands--

Stretch takes her hands and places them on the bar supports of the head halo...his hands envelop hers...She feels for new leverage and gently begins grinding again.

CANDACE

Better? Mmmmmmm...

STRETCH

--oh yeah, yeah that's--

She stares back into his eyes, her body finding its rhythm.

CANDACE

--*amazing.*

BACK TO PRESENT:

Stretch, still staring up at the condo.

Suddenly FLASHBULBS burst from his periphery. From out of nowhere, a half a dozen Nikon-wielding PAPARAZZI appear, surrounding his limo, skittering across his hood.

PAPARAZZO #1

(pressing camera to glass)

*You picking up Brady? What's up bro? You here to grab his bim?*

STRETCH

Get back from the car man! Get back! You're scratching th--

PAPARAZZO #2

*--Is he in the car?*

Stretch ignores them, starting the engine.

PAPARAZZO #1

(shouting to the others)

*--He's in here! Brady's in the car!*

PAPARAZZO #3

*Is he fucking her back there!?*

Stretch seethes, drops the limo into gear and peels away. Paparazzo #3, his camera strap looped around the side-view mirror, gets hauled to the ground and dragged half a block before the strap snaps. He shoulder rolls into a sitting position, cursing a blue streak at the retreating Stretch.

Stretch smiles at the day's only bright spot so far...

INT. STRETCH'S LIMO - LATER

He drives. His cellphone chirps.

STRETCH

Yes indeed.

CHARLIE (O.S)

You went by there, didn't you?

STRETCH

No.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Liar, liar. Some loser paparazzi just called to report you, said you dragged him behind your limo and he's filing assault charges.

STRETCH

Never leave a live witness.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Well, before you get led away in leg irons, I got you a booking. Our Great White Whale has surfaced. Roger Karos. Y'heard of him?

STRETCH

If he's cash rich, I don't care. He's my new best friend.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Huge, billionaire, hedge fund *head case*. He used to be Karl's regular and he thinks Karl is *still alive*.

STRETCH

I can be Karl.

Karl with a 'K' is suddenly in the passenger seat.

KARL WITH A 'K'

*Karos will be the end of you.*

Stretch shoos him away.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

He's nuts but I've heard of him tipping *thousands* for airport runs.

STRETCH

Where?

CHARLIE (O.S.)

I've got coordinates.

STRETCH

You've got what?

CHARLIE (O.S.)

*Coordinates*. G.P.S. He doesn't want to use locations. That's all he said. I have *no idea* what it means.

STRETCH

(remembers Liotta's stuff)  
-dammit, I gotta go back over to  
Sony and drop this stuff off for  
Liotta. I forgot all about it.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Then this run goes 'poof.' Karos  
has a list of goodies he wants to  
be met with too. Cordless razor,  
change of clothes and a rare bottle  
of scotch, so you'll have to grab  
that stuff fast.

STRETCH

Alright. I'll figure something out.  
Is this direct billed?

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Yes and he is 'As Directed.' Sounds  
like a total freakshow but I've got  
my fingers crossed for you.

STRETCH

You remain my queen.

Stretch clicks off and punches it through a light change.

EXT. DESERTED HILLSIDE - DUSK

Stretch leans against his limo and checks his watch. He holds  
a digital GPS DEVICE up to his phone to compare.

INSERT: PHONE & GPS SCREENS, side by side. The texted  
coordinates on the cellphone are the same as the GPS readout.

Stretch slides back into the driver's seat, laying his head  
back. He pulls the Zippo. Flicks. Lights. Shuts. Repeats.

He starts flipping through radio stations, battling boredom  
when suddenly a bare white ass, BOMBS IN from the clear blue  
sky, crashing down onto his windshield.

Stretch startles as a MAN somersaults across his hood, cabled  
to a parachute, which hauls him off the hood and drags him  
across the bramble and loose gravel to a rough stop.

Stretch. Shock still. Hands hovering over the wheel.

STRETCH

...what...the...fuck...

The chute envelops him, settling over his prone form. Stretch pulls the keys from the ignition, grabs a Target shopping bag and steps out of the limo.

EXT. DESERTED HILLSIDE - CONTINUOUS

Stretch approaches slow. The man is motionless for a moment then rears up suddenly, ripping the chute away from his face and revealing a heavily-bearded, homeless-looking man...

STRETCH  
...Mr. Karos?

The man studies Stretch as he untangles himself.

STRETCH (CONT'D)  
You're not Karl...*Who are you?*

STRETCH (CONT'D)  
Kevin. 'Stretch' if you prefer.

KAROS  
What I'd prefer is Karl.

STRETCH  
Karl passed away about three months ago sir.

Karos finishes unfastening his chute. It falls away. He's completely nude, save filthy sneakers and a small backpack. He's stares Stretch down. Suspicious. Distrustful. Then:

KAROS  
You brought the things I asked for?

Stretch nods, holds up the Target bag. Karos takes it from him, slides the backpack off his shoulder and sets about foraging through the bag for the cordless razor.

KAROS (CONT'D)  
My scotch?

STRETCH  
In the limo.

A beat.

KAROS  
He was young. Karl. Yes?

STRETCH  
Early 40's.

Karos begins shaving. Beard. Hair. No plan or pattern. The razor roams randomly over every surface, shearing everything off. His hair falls away in great, greasy clumps.

Stretch's eyes dart down. A huge tuft of scalp hair has someone landed on Karo's crotch...and become lodged there. Stretch waits a beat. Then feels it his basic social duty to:

STRETCH (CONT'D)  
(his eyes moving south)  
Sir...

Karos follows Stretch's gaze, glancing down at himself for an unusually long period of time...for a fucking ice age as far as Stretch is concerned.

Finally:

KAROS  
That's a helluva an erection.  
You skydive naked, the windshear  
alone, will get you rock hard like  
that. Forget whatever other arousal  
you might experience, free-falling  
like th--  
(examines himself closer)  
--Good God, that's really engorged,  
isn't it? You know I can't *remember*  
the last time it looked like that.  
I have a vague memory, unrelated to  
sex...that I'm, reminded of...

Stretch doesn't want to look back down but like a rubber-necker passing a multi-car pile-up, he can't help himself.

KAROS (CONT'D)  
S'funny with the hair too. The way  
it got stuck there like that.  
(beat, still staring)  
I could shave my head a hundred  
times and not have that happen.

Karos pulls the clump free, grinning down at it. He shows it to Stretch, who nods this horrible half-grin of appreciation?

KAROS (CONT'D)  
Towel.

Stretch hands him a towel. Karos clears away loose hair and hands it back. His fingers are *festooned* with stray pubes.

Stretch battles back the gag reflex surging up his throat.

KAROS (CONT'D)  
 What did he die of? Karl.

STRETCH  
 He took his own life. Unfortunately

Karos pulls a new track-suit and socks from the Target shopping bag. Does this slow burn before:

KAROS  
 Suicide is for pussies.  
 (beat, now the sweatshirt)  
 My old man gassed himself in '74. I found him face down in front of the oven in his boxers. He had a half-eaten, hard-boiled egg in his hand.  
 (beat, pulls on socks)  
 I laughed. I couldn't help it. He didn't have the decency or the dignity to put on a good suit for when his family found him. At the very least, leave a note? Fuck'm. Felt like it was on a whim. He's in the middle of eating an egg and decides he's had enough.  
 (slips on the sneakers)  
 Never a real plan, just wing the whole thing, life, kids, job. That was my dad...and he died like he lived...on his belly, like a dog...

...and before Stretch can summon just the right words to--

KAROS (CONT'D)  
 ---Ok kid, this is the last night on earth for yours truly so we're going deep and *depraved*. You got any religious compunctions? Hangups? You a 'Godhead?'

STRETCH  
 Not in this line sir. No.

Karos smiles. Picks up the backpack, shoulders it tight.

KAROS  
 Yeah, I'll bet. The things you've seen, y'could probably wallpaper Hell with, huh?

Stretch laughs uneasy. Karos turns toward the limo and Stretch hurls the towel as hard and as far as he can.

KAROS (CONT'D)

I need a driver, a confidant, a bag man and a protector.

STRETCH

I'm in.

KAROS

This time tomorrow I'll be a brand new face in a brand new place, so I got a *marathon* in mind. First stop. My tailor Enzo--

--Karos assesses Stretch's shabby, poly-blend suit--

KAROS (CONT'D)

--that suit looks like Death taking a shit. How far is Beverly Hills?

STRETCH

With traffic. Forty-five minutes.

INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS

Stretch settles in behind the wheel, checking on Karos through the glass partition. He's ensconced in shadows now, disappearing into the darkness.

Like he belongs there...Like he invented it.

He's digging through that backpack. Small. Secretive.

Karl with a 'K' appears.

KARL WITH A 'K'

You let him in. *You shared.* He's a sociopath. He's insane.

STRETCH

Insane like, imagining dead limo drivers giving him life advice?

KARL WITH A 'K'

I'm your subconscious mind pal. The part that *cannot* bullshit itself.

STRETCH

Relax, figment.

KARL WITH A 'K'

You will not live through this.

EXT. SANTA MONICA BLVD - EVENING

The limo glides through Beverly Hills, stopping at a light. Stretch sits, his mind drifting. A vehicle pulls up next to him. The company name is stenciled on the passenger door:

COSSACK TOWING COMPANY

Stretch glances over at a severe, chop-top, short-bearded, meathead of a MAN glaring back...His blood ices.

STRETCH (V.O.)

Boris. The Jovi's brother and head henchman. I once saw him body slam a three-hundred pound bouncer onto the hood a VW Cabriolet.

(beat)

He had plates in his head. He had murdered men with his hands...

Boris keeps staring. Stretch plays it cool, looking back at the light, *begging* for it to turn green.

STRETCH (V.O.)

...he knows about Liotta. He knows what I did...

When he hazards another look over, Boris is now sitting in the passenger seat of his tow truck, his massive, grizzly-sized head jutting through the window.

Stretch floors it before the light change. Brakes lock. Horns blare. He plows through the intersection, putting as much distance on Boris as possible.

INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS

Stretch compulsively checks the rear-view while Karos inhales lines of coke and chases them with shots of scotch.

As Stretch catches glimpses of Karos blow & booze tear in the backseat, his mouth begins to water and his brow beads sweat. His Motorola chirps. It's Charlie. He mops up the flopsweat from his forehead and answers with a rather weak:

STRETCH

Yes indeed.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

What's wrong? You sound weird? Is it him?

STRETCH

Yeah.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Is he as nuts as billed?

STRETCH

More so. He *skydived* in. Naked.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

*Naked?* Like *completely naked*?

STRETCH

Bare-assed except for his shoes and about 60 pounds of *beard*.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

If you're feeling funky, forget it. We'll lay him off on the Jovi.

STRETCH

Not a chance. I need that tip *tonight*. I think he's about to skip town too, like, *forever*. Do me a favor and go online, get me a bio.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Don't put yourself in a bad spot over money that might not be there.

STRETCH

If's he got it. I'll get it.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

That's a big gamble.

STRETCH

From a former Gambler. I know odds. He's sitting on my six-thousand.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Longshot.

STRETCH

Sure thing.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

I'm going on the internet now.

STRETCH

Call me back.

Stretch clicks off. The partition slides down. Karos aardvarks a rail of coke. Knocks back another scotch.

Neither seem to have much of an affect on him.

KAROS

What kind of man are you Stretch?

A beat. Stretch looks at Karos in the rear-view mirror.

STRETCH

What kind of man?

KAROS

Yeah, are you one of these eco-friendly, all-veggie douchebags who's devoted to crippled kids and the elderly? Or are you a *money-power-pussy*, holy trinity type?

STRETCH

Uhhh. I don't-- I haven't really--

KAROS

--Me. I'm about simple, succinct pleasures: Cocaine is my first and longest standing love but I'd be equally lost without good scotch whiskey and sadomasochism.

Stretch-- '*come again?*'

KAROS (CONT'D)

I did. I said *sadomasochism* and I'm gonna tell you something until you've devoted some *real* time and energy to beating the shit out of yourself, you are a *stranger*. That man in the mirror is a *mystery*.

(beat)

I want you to try this when you have a free moment, just make a fist and hit yourself in the face as hard as you can. You'll find it so, *freeing*-- I swear, it's like stepping off a cliff--

--And in mid-sentence, Karos rears back and rockets a closed fist into his still-exposed teeth. Stretch startles.

KAROS (CONT'D)

--HA! Whew! There it is! That bitterness! That metallic taste! It's *tremendous!*

Karos leaks blood into his scotch glass from a split lip.

STRETCH

Can I ask what do you get out of--  
*punching yourself in the face?*

KAROS

Clarity and the comfort in knowing  
that I can *take* that punch.

(beat, guzzles scotch)

What do you want Stretch? From  
life. What's the extraction?

STRETCH

Basics. Money. Be Happy. Contribute-

KAROS

'-Contribute?' Contribute what?

STRETCH

Well, I'm an actor, I'd love to--

KAROS

--You're an actor?. Then when are  
you doing driving me?

(this purposeful pause)

You know the movie you're starring  
in right now son? It's called  
'*Anonymous Asshole*' and its got a  
cast of thousands. If you got wiped  
out tonight, what's your legacy?  
Beyond your car getting repo'd,  
your bills going to your folks and  
your girlfriend fucking somebody  
else, what remains? Where's your  
monolith?

(beat, sitting back)

It's not enough. Banking on this  
belief that being a good guy and  
honest and decent and god-fearing  
is gonna deliver you. That's all  
bullshit...Boil it down.

(beat)

--Opportunity. And the ruthlessness  
required to make it a reality. The  
infliction of pain and the ability  
to persevere against it, is what  
separates you, in the front seat,  
from me, in the back.

(beat)

What do you make? Weekly? This line  
of work?

STRETCH

Depends. Base pay is, I don't know,  
twenty-five, thirty an hour--

(MORE)

STRETCH (CONT'D)  
 (in bold, block letters)  
 --plus tips.

KAROS  
 So take home? Total?

STRETCH  
 Not enough.

KAROS  
 To get by?

Stretch has his cue.

STRETCH  
 No...or to pay down six-thousand  
 dollars in gambling debt, that you  
 just found out is due in full.

KAROS  
 You a gambler?

STRETCH  
 I have-- *had*, a gambling addiction.

KAROS  
 That just means you lost a shitload  
 more than you won. What happened?

STRETCH  
 A bad Super Bowl bet. Owed twelve  
 grand total, cut down to six but my  
 old bookie sold his stake in the  
 business and the new ownership  
 called my marker.

KAROS  
 And if you don't pay? Then what?  
 Broken bones? Bullet-in-the-head?

STRETCH  
 That could be a coin toss.

Karos sits back, sips his scotch thoughtfully, then:

KAROS  
 Are you a firestarter Stretch?

STRETCH  
 A *firestarter*?

KAROS  
 Takes almost no imagination. Sounds  
 exactly like what it is.

(MORE)

KAROS (CONT'D)

(beat)

Are you a Firestarter?

STRETCH

Uh, sure. I guess.

KAROS

No. Don't say '*I guess*' '*I guess*' is some broad, doesn't know if she wants to be felt up or fucked. You say something that profound, say it with some fucking conviction man!

(beat)

I AM a firestarter.

STRETCH

I'm a...I am a firestarter.

KAROS

Good, so am I--

--And with that, Karos rockets his Scotch glass into the Limo's mini-bar, followed almost instantly by a match, which ignites and burns, *engulfing the entire wall in flames--*

KAROS (CONT'D)

--and now we're on fire!

STRETCH

*JESUS CHRIST!*

Stretch brakes/leaps from the limo, bashing through the back. Flames unfurl as Karos sits, calmly watching the blaze catch and burn, his arm draped protectively over that backpack.

Stretch grabs the champagne bucket, dousing the mini-bar. Flames persist. He hurls bottled water and handfuls of ice. Plastic and leather melt and ooze. Smoke fills the cabin.

STRETCH (CONT'D)

*Sir, I need you to--!!*

KAROS

--I'm not moving from this seat--

Stretch yanks off his tie and beats back the remaining flames till they flutter and die. Gassed, he collapsed, catching his breath. Karos rolls down his window to let the smoke clear.

A long beat before:

STRETCH

Did you say '*Firefighter?*'

Karos laughs this deep, disturbing laugh. Then:

KAROS

Do my bidding tonight Stretch and maybe I dig down, make six-thousand dollars worth of trouble *disappear*.

(beat, suddenly severe)

This is it. I've buying a one-way ticket out of town. After tonight Roger Karos will cease to be.

STRETCH

I understand.

KAROS

I'm not a charity, so this won't be a handout, it'll be *hard-earned*.

(with this grim delight)

I'm about to send you on your own little odyssey and you're about to finally meet yourself for the first time...You game?

STRETCH

Yes indeed.

INT. STRETCH'S LIMO - LATER - NIGHT

Stretch climbs into the front seat, still recovering from Karos' pyro turn. His phone signals an incoming E-mail:

*'Hey hon, looks like I'll have to cancel tonight. Gotta work late'*

Stretch looks disappointed. He e-mails back:

*'Funny...me too. Too bad. Was really looking forward to seeing you in the flesh.'*

He waits. Another E-mail arrives.

*'Bummed out now.'*

Stretch replies. Typing.

*'Can we reschedule? Maybe tomorrow?'*

The mystery woman responds.

*'Not sure what shape I'll be in. Can we play it by ear?'*

Stretch sighs, tossing his phone into the passenger seat.

INT. TAILOR - BEVERLY HILLS - NIGHT

Stretch stands on a tailor's block in a beautiful bespoke suit. An older Italian man, ENZO, measures him. Karos is finishing a call on the tailor's business phone.

KAROS

I ordered some 'companions' They'll be here within the half hour.

STRETCH

So where we headed tonight?

Karos fairly glints, this demonic flicker in his eyes.

KAROS

Have you ever heard of The Night Shade Social Club?

Enzo stops working. The store goes still.

STRETCH

I've heard of it.

KAROS

What have you heard?

STRETCH

That it's not a fixed address party. Constantly moving. Probably so the cops can't raid it.

Stretch hesitates. Karos nudges him along.

KAROS

Why would the cops want to raid it?

Enzo vaults to his feet as though he were privy to a murder plot he wants no part of. He strips the coat off Stretch--

ENZO THE TAILOR

--Gentlemen, I have everything I need. Give me ten minutes.

Karos' eyes *never* leave Stretch.

KAROS

Thank you Enzo.

Enzo beats a no-so-subtle retreat to the backroom.

STRETCH

In a nutshell?

(beat)

(MORE)

STRETCH (CONT'D)

I hear you can pay to have a coked out Snow Leopard sexually assaulted in one room and participate in an all 'all-amputee' orgy in the next.

KAROS

Drugs, sexual depravity, animal cruelty--

STRETCH

--I mean *me*, that's a slow night--

Karos roars that uncomfortable laugh of his.

KAROS

That's very good Stretch. Very quick. I like so few people, I'm trying to figure out how you endeared yourself to me so fast.

(beat)

I think fate brought us together.

(off Stretch's look)

Do you not subscribe to the cosmic?

STRETCH

I think it's overrated. Fate. Luck. To me, Life is nothing but 'timing.'

KAROS

I like that. 'Life is nothing but timing.' I'm gonna steal that one.

Stretch's phone begins vibrating. He checks it. A text from Charlie: **'CALL ME WHEN YOU'RE ALONE-- THIS GUY IS CRAZY!!'**

EXT. TAILOR'S SHOP - BEVERLY HILLS - LATER

Stretch shoots the cuffs on his bespoke suit as he opens the limo door for Karos, who nods his approval at the new look.

KAROS

Sharp.

(checks watch)

Sit tight. They should be here soon.

Stretch gently closes the limo door after Karos, pats himself down, finds his cell and speed-dials Charlie.

STRETCH

Talk to me.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Well, right now I've got someone named 'Marcy' from Sony on the line and she's in *complete* hysterics--

STRETCH

--aww shit. It's the stuff I was telling you about, the props Liotta wanted me to return.

INT. STRETCH'S LIMO - CONTINUOUS

Stretch climbs into the driver's seat, making sure the solid partition between he and Karos is closed.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

The woman is literally sobbing, saying she's going to get fired.

STRETCH

She's not gonna get fired.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

She's saying she has to stay put and so does the prop master. You have a registered firearm that could be used to commit a crime--

STRETCH

--Babe, forget it! Tell her it's not gonna happen tonight, I'm with a client. Speaking of which, did you find out anything--

CHARLIE (O.S.)

--Yeah, Karos is *bad news* babe. From what I'm seeing online, it looks like he's about to be indicted on major money laundering, bank fraud--

STRETCH

--*what*--?

CHARLIE (O.S.)

--like Bernie Madoff only *bigger*. These investment, pyramid schemes. Some shady Nigerian holding company he was involved with. Apparently he's into these Vegas developers for like half a billion dollars on this highrise deal that fell apart.

STRETCH

--Where are you seeing this stuff?

CHARLIE (O.S.)

The L.A. Times website!

(beat)

God, I feel horrible putting him  
the car with you.

STRETCH

(with this raspy whisper)

Well what do I do about it now?

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Kick him out!

STRETCH

What, 'kick him out' I can't--

--The solid partition comes down and there's Karos, right  
behind Stretch, who quickly clicks off his cell--

KAROS

--there they are...

Stretch looks out and SEES them disembarking a cab.

THREE HOOKERS. Almost identical in appearance. Long, sexy  
legs. Hairpin curves that narrow to gym-toned midriffs.  
Breasts that ripple and sway slightly with each step.

Are those bras?

No. They are not.

KAROS (CONT'D)

I'm shameless in that I pay for  
pussy but this is world class,  
*supernatural* snatch. Y'understand?  
And I love women. Love, love, love!  
So this is not me reducing them to  
pieces of ass, this is a level of  
appreciation one reserves for great  
art or fine wine or-- *whatever*.

(Karos points)

The one in the middle there, the  
things she can do with her mouth  
and throat will have you thinking  
one of her ancestors fucked a  
python at some point.

Stretch leaps out of the limo, smiling on reflex.

The woman, though stunning from a distance, now take on this shared plastic sheen. Like mannequins given mouth-to-mouth. These mute, unsmiling, mascara-lined death masks. They file into the back of the limo one at a time.

Karos pokes his head out.

KAROS (CONT'D)  
Benedict Canyon. The 10000 block.  
(handing him envelope)  
Entry fee.

Stretch nods. Karos ducks back into the limo and WE CUT TO:

INT. STRETCH'S LIMO - NIGHT

He drives. His personal cell signals an incoming E-MAIL. It's from the mystery woman.

*'Sorry. Got pulled away. Work is hectic right now. Let's play it by ear. You think coffee tomorrow morning is out of the question? Seems safe enough.'*

Stretch pulls to a red light and E-mails his response.

*'At the rate my night's going, I'll still be awake.'*

He wait. Another E-mail arrives.

*'I'm having the same kind of night. ;) '*

Stretch closes his phone, HEARING some weirdness emanating from the rear of the limo. Odd grunts and what sounds like *punching*. THE CAMERA PANS OVER revealing Karl with a 'K'.

KARL WITH A 'K'  
Where do you think Karos' fist is,  
right now?

Stretch doesn't respond.

KARL WITH A 'K' (CONT'D)  
I told you he was dangerous.

STRETCH  
He's got my six grand. Maybe *more*.

KARL WITH A 'K'  
Pipe dream pal. He's gonna jam you  
up and leave you holding the bag.

Stretch. This growing dread. *Don't let it linger.*

EXT. BENEDICT CANYON - NIGHT

The limo winds through the canyon's switchbacks.

INT. STRETCH'S LIMO - CONTINUOUS

A ZIPPER-MASKED FIGURE, dressed like an S&M version of a VALET, appears in the road ahead. Stretch brakes. Stares.

Zipper-Mask waves him forward. Stretch rolls down his window.

MASKED VALET

Night Shade.

STRETCH

Mr. Kar--

MASKED VALET

No names.

(holds hand out)

Entry fee.

Stretch hands over the envelope Karos gave him. Zipper-Mask tears it open, finger-tipping what appears to be thousands in cash.

Stretch SEES this...and likes his odds a lot now.

Satisfied, Zipper-Mask signals someone and a huge double gate opens out onto the Canyon road.

Stretch eases the limo up the drive.

EXT. MANSE - NIGHT

Massive. Marbled. And entirely black-lit. Everything glows Dentyne-white. Stretch climbs out. Opens the rear door.

HOOKER #1 climbs out, almost totally nude in a Lacrosse helmet and canary yellow stilettos. On her hips are holsters that appear to be carrying twin concrete dildos.

HOOKER #2 emerges next, day-glo face paint but dressed like an Ursuline nun, holes cut out of the habit in front and pasties made out of thumb-tacks, covering both breasts.

HOOKER #3 appears in an inflatable sex suit with suction cups, connected to clear rubber tubes running from her boobs.

On cue, A MIDGET in a motorized scooter, dressed like a Lucha Libre wrestler comes carting in from the shadows.

Hooker #3 scoops him up like a newborn and pops one of the clear rubber tubes in his mouth, carrying him up the drive.

STRETCH

(to himself)

...that one I actually get...

Karos stumbles out in full shock-Kabuki make-up, a giant, toga-like wrap. He's doing bumps of blow off his fist, this ghoulish, empty, gape-jawed gaze aimed at Stretch.

KAROS

Are you *completely* flipped out?

STRETCH

I drove Charlie Sheen for six weeks  
so...no.

Karos laughs. Coke plumes from his nostrils. Stretch notices that backpack, ever-present on Karos' shoulder.

KAROS

Alright. You. W Hotel. Hollywood.  
You ask for *Laurent*. This  
Frenchmen. He has a briefcase. You  
bring it back to me, *no matter*  
*what*. Under no circumstances do you  
fail in this endeavor or our entire  
night is null and void...

Stretch nods effusively as Karos removes his wristwatch.

KAROS (CONT'D)

...this is my extremely rare,  
ridiculously expensive watch and  
it's on a countdown. I've set it  
for ninety-nine minutes...which is  
exactly how long I'll be inside.

(beat, handing watch over)

Be back before it runs out and not  
a minute more.

STRETCH

(slipping on Karos watch)

Do you have a cell I can reach you--

KAROS

--no. I don't have a phone. Just be  
back on time. No excuses. There's a  
lot of money in this Stretch.

(beat, entre nous)

You understand?

STRETCH

I do. Enjoy yourself in there.

KAROS

Oh...*there's no joy in there.*

Karos lets out this primal shriek and clambers up the drive.

Stretch fights a briefest bout of panic as he fumbles for his cell, calling Charlie.

The phone is picked up on the first ring--

NASEEM (O.S.)

--HEY COCKFUCKER!

STRETCH

*Naseem?*

NASEEM (O.S.)

Bring the limo back!! *YOU'RE FIRED!*

STRETCH

***Fired!?*** I got us Liotta!

NASEEM (O.S.)

*--You got me a lawsuit! Liotta says he wants to KILL YOU! You don't return a registered weapon after he pays you to! And this pappar-zowie you run over says if I don't fire you, he sues my company!*

STRETCH

He can't sue y--

NASEEM (O.S.)

*YOU'RE FIRED! I gave you one last chance and you took a shit on my back!*

STRETCH

Nobody shit on anybody's back  
Naseem, we can work this out--

NASEEM (O.S.)

*--Bring the limo back or I call the police and report it stolen.*

Stretch glances down at the watch...*97 minutes remain.*

STRETCH

I'm with our client! Mr. Karos!

NASEEM (O.S.)  
*I'll send another driver to him!*

STRETCH  
 Naseem. I'm *begging* you now--

NASEEM (O.S.)  
 --NO! I told you. "*This is do or die*" well, you're dead. Bring the limo back to the shop or I call t--

Stretch clicks off. Climbs into the limo. Speeds off.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

His Motorola is ringing non-stop. He's ignoring it. He takes his personal cell. There's a text from Charlie. It reads:

***Naseem called cops!!! CAN'T BELIEVE THIS! Where R you?***

Stretch texts back:

***Where is the Lo-Jack at on the limo?***

No response from Charlie. Then:

***Lo-Jack!!? I have no idea!! WHY!?***

Stretch pulls over. Plots. He pops the glovebox. Finds a flashlight. Removes the keys from the ignition.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Stretch peers underneath the limo. Looks...looks...nothing.

He pops the hood. Gingerly separating coils of wire. Careful not to stain his new suit. Karl With A 'K' appears.

KARL WITH A 'K'  
 Are you looking for the Lo-Jack label?

Stretch ignores him.

KARL WITH A 'K' (CONT'D)  
 'Cuz that's how most car thieves defeat the system, they just find the wires labelled '**Lo-Jack**'.  
 (beat)  
 Right fuckface? *What are you doing?*

Stretch spots something with the flashlight. A small transmitter surreptitiously mounted near the manifold.

He locates the small swiss-army knife affixed to his key-ring and uses the flathead screwdriver to remove the transmitter. He pulls it free, showing it to Karl with a 'K' proudly.

STRETCH

That's what I'm doing dick!

EXT. 'W' HOTEL HOLLYWOOD - HOLLYWOOD BLVD - NIGHT

Stretch pulls in. A VALET motions for him to curb his limo near the front entrance.

INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS

Another text from Charlie arrives:

***'Cops said your limo lost its Lo-Jack signal. Naseem FURIOUS.'***

Stretch grins. Grabs Liotta's prop 9mm for moral support. Waistbands it. He grabs the badge too.

He checks the 'Countdown' watch...82 minutes remain.

EXT. 'W' HOTEL HOLLYWOOD - CONTINUOUS

Stretch exits the limo. Palms a \$20. Greases the valet.

STRETCH

Can the limo stay put?

VALET

We can arrange that.

STRETCH

Keys are inside.

The valet pockets the cash. Stretch heads toward the lobby.

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Stretch makes his way to the front desk.

FRONT DESK CLERK

Welcome to the 'W.' Checking in?

STRETCH

No, I'm here to see a friend.

The clerk goes to his computer.

FRONT DESK CLERK

And your friends name?

STRETCH

'*Laurent.*' No last name.

Stretch slides another \$20 across the counter.

FRONT DESK CLERK

--ahh, *there he is.* Penthouse level. Elevator around the corner.

Stretch nods and heads for the elevators. He passes a MAN loitering in the lobby near the concierge desk.

The man speaks quietly into a COMM-LINK attached to his ear.

LOBBY MAN

It's not Karos.

VOICE (O.S.)

*Who is it?*

LOBBY MAN

I don't know.

VOICE (O.S.)

*Find out!*

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Stretch rides up to the Penthouse. Nervous. He flicks the Zippo repeatedly. Karl with a 'K' manifests himself.

KARL WITH A 'K'

Billy Big Balls becomes Geisha Bitch Boy, running errands for a madman. Where will it all end?

STRETCH

With six grand in my pocket.

KARL WITH A 'K'

*You're not getting that money.* Then Ignacio is going to break every part of you that *can* be broken. Who but an absolute *asswipe* would bank on a six-thousand dollar tip?

STRETCH

--Shut up.

KARL WITH A 'K'

And what's the story with the gun and badge? Don't you remember that 'CSI' audition you blew? Playing the cop? The one where you thought you heard the casting agents laughing when you left the room?

(beat)

They were laughing.

(another beat, grinning)

But hey, I'm sure we got *nothing* to worry about here!

INT. PENTHOUSE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The elevator doors open. Stretch steps out.

A hulking SAMOAN awaits at one end of the hall.

Stretch starts toward him, fighting the softball-sized lump forming in his throat.

He reaches this monolithic, immovable-looking man.

STRETCH

I'm here to see Laurent.

These big ink-black eyes glower down at him.

SAMOAN

And I give a fuck. Why?

STRETCH

Roger Karos sent me.

SAMOAN

And I give a fuck. Who?

Something takes hold of Stretch--

STRETCH

--Because I give a fuck. *What--*

--And before he can work out the specifics, he has Liotta's fake badge out, his thumb covering Ray's photo.

STRETCH (CONT'D)

LAPD. Get Laurent *now*.

The Samoan responds post haste, pulling open the door for Stretch. Stretch maintains his 'cop' mien, staring the Samoan down as he passes...He makes the big man break his gaze.

EXT. 'W' HOTEL HOLLYWOOD - CONTINUOUS

The man from the lobby examines Stretch's limo on the sly. He spots the bullet holes from the liquor store shoot-out.

FRONT DESK CLERK  
Subject arrived in a Stretch limo.  
Bullet holes in the side panel...

The Samoan HEARS this through his headset.

FRONT DESK CLERK (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
...look recent. And a check on the  
license plates has the limo  
reported stolen.

The Samoan watches Stretch pad down the suite's main corridor...SEES a distinct gun bulge in his back waistband.

SAMOAN  
*Copy that...Be advised. Subject is  
armed. Repeat. Subject is armed.*

INT. PENTHOUSE SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Stretch rounds the corner into the main sitting area.

Draped across an expensive chaise, is a tanned, muscled type in his mid-40's wearing tennis whites. This is LAURENT. Best described as an atypical French playboy bon vivant douchebag.

STRETCH  
Laurent?

LAURENT  
Yes?

STRETCH  
Mr. Karos sent me.

LAURENT  
Mm-hmm.

STRETCH  
You have something for me?

LAURENT  
I have something for Mr. Karos.

STRETCH  
Well I'm here in his place.

LAURENT  
You've established this.

A beat. Stretch kind of half-nodding. Laurent doing the same.

STRETCH  
Is there something I'm missing?

LAURENT  
Besides Mr. Karos?

STRETCH  
As I said.

LAURENT  
As I heard. You're here in his  
stead.

STRETCH  
To pick up a briefcase and return  
it to him...  
(checking watch)  
...in exactly 78 minutes.

A beat.

LAURENT  
Is he *timing* you?

STRETCH  
He is.

LAURENT  
And *why* would he do that?

STRETCH  
You'd have to ask him.

LAURENT  
Would I have to ask him about my  
ledgers as well?

STRETCH  
I don't know anything about that.

LAURENT  
I imagine he has them on his  
person. A duffle or a backpack that  
he tends to keep very close. Yes?

STRETCH

I don't know about any ledgers.

Laurent studies Stretch. Then:

LAURENT

I believe you.

STRETCH

*Brilliant.* Now about *the briefcase--*

LAURENT

--this was to be an exchange. Was that not, *explained to you?*

(beat, French-prickish)

'Ledgers-For-Briefcase.'

(beat)

Where is Karos now?

STRETCH

I couldn't tell you.

LAURENT

I'm *certain* you could...

MEN step out from the shadows now. Heavily-armed. They surround Stretch.

LAURENT (CONT'D)

...he's put you in a very bad spot my friend. With some very bad men.

Stretch feels his balls retreating *north* but stands firm, girds himself, slips into character...and kills the scene.

STRETCH

Listen, '*low-rent*' do you want an LAPD tactical team up your ass in the next ten seconds!?

(shows badge to the room)

*THEN KEEP FUCKING WITH ME!*

(long beat, then)

I will *guarantee* those ledgers. I give you my word but right now you're gonna give me that briefcase or I'm gonna turn this penthouse into a fucking pig roast with more cops than you can count! And when the smoke clears and you're hip deep in hardened cons in L.A. County looking to double park their dicks on your ass, you're gonna be wishing you could have this moment back.

(MORE)

STRETCH (CONT'D)

Wishing that you would have taken the word of a heavily decorated, veteran police officer, instead of trying to play 'tough guy' in your tennis whites.

(beat, just *living it* now)

...so c'mon now, *Crayola*...

(beat)

...are we gonna color or what?

Laurent never breaks Stretch's gaze. He just stares back, eventually nodding and another huge BODYGUARD who approaches with the briefcase.

Stretch takes it. Feels its heft and feigns satisfaction. He gives the room one last glance.

STRETCH (CONT'D)

I'll get the ledgers you were promised and return here with them.

And with that. Stretch exits. WE REMAIN IN THE ROOM, listening as his footfalls echo away and door close behind him. Laurent *leaps up*, lightning fast.

WE TRACK HIM into an adjoining room.

INT. ADJACENT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

FEDS. Dozens of them. A TASK FORCE stationed around monitors showing the penthouse suite from dozens of hidden cameras...this was meant to be a major takedown.

LAURENT

(to no one in particular)

*Who the fuck was that guy!?*

Laurent isn't actually French at all. He's DAVE LINARES, a Federal Agent. He smashes one of the monitors in anger.

LAURENT-LINARES

*And where the fuck is Karos!?*

CLARK HANNA, 50's, another agent, tries to calm him.

HANNA

Dave, relax. We're gonna get him.

LAURENT-LINARES

We got tonight to land this guy or he's a ghost! Gone! Non-extradition country! The agreement was him in person, ledgers in hand!

(MORE)

LAURENT-LINARES (CONT'D)

This is *ten months* worth of  
undercover work! Another six months  
of Rosetta Stone learning French!  
*And I fucking hate the French!*

(beat, to a team member)

Tell the Justice lawyers downstairs  
to sit tight. Get 'em room service.  
*DO NOT* let them book flights home.

(into comm)

Tango. Tag that limo. That asshole  
can take us right to Karos...

EXT. 'W' HOTEL HOLLYWOOD - CONTINUOUS

The man from the lobby has slipped a MAGNETIC TRACKING DEVICE  
under the back bumper of Stretch's limo.

LOBBY MAN

...copy that.

RETURN TO:

INT. ADJACENT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Linares starts peeling off his tennis whites and strapping  
into Tactical gear. He points at a STILL FRAME of Stretch on  
one of the monitors.

LAURENT-LINARES

Put rotating parallels on the  
suspect. No straight tails, if he's  
a cop, he'll sniff 'em out.

(points at video monitor)

Run deep background on that cop  
with the LAPD. I want every detail  
known and *unknown* on this shithead!

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Stretch exhales like a free-diver breaking the surface.

STRETCH

Holy shit-shit-*shit!* I can't  
believe I just did that!

Karl with a "K" is on hand to critique.

KARL WITH A 'K'

I thought you were gonna shit the  
bed for sure, especially after that  
'Crayola' line? The worst! HAAAAHA!

INT. 'W' HOTEL LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Stretch exits the lift with the briefcase and starts through the lobby when he SEES Candace and her bachelorette party, boarding the elevator opposite.

He quickly turns away before she spots him. He looks back over and watches the elevator climb to the RT LEVEL.

He checks the watch again... '72 Minutes' remain.

EXT. ROOFTOP - MOMENTS LATER

Club Drais on the roof of the 'W.' Swimming pool covered with a pulsing dance floor. Hip-Hop booms. The place is packed.

A DOORMAN eyes Stretch as he cuts to the front of the cue. Stretch pulls the badge, his thumb covering Liotta's image.

STRETCH

LAPD.

(beat)

Guy rolled through here, looked a little like Diddy. Y'see him?

The Doorman shakes his head.

DOORMAN

No sir, officer.

STRETCH

(sharply)

Detective.

DOORMAN

Sorry.

STRETCH

I'm gonna look around. I don't want anyone knowing who I am. Got it?

The Doorman nods 'yes sir' Stretch is relishing this.

INT. CLUB DRAIS - CONTINUOUS

Stretch pinballs across the club crowd: A collection of Axe-spritzed, juiced-up jagoffs in embroidered tees keep company with vacuum-eyed, fake-bake blondes in bandage dresses.

'MAKE IT RAIN' fills the club. Someone begins the singles shower seconds later. Club-goers take temporary leave of their senses and try to snatch dollar bills like butterflies.

Stretch sneers.

STRETCH  
Fuckin' do I hate this song.

He's scanning the crowd when from behind him he HEARS.

CANDACE  
--Oh my god! *Kevin! Hey!*

Stretch. In that zone. Cooler than '*Cool Hand Luke*.' Any other moment, he'd be freaked out, fucked up, *finished*...but not tonight.

He turns around and sees **Candace**. That smile. That face. She's at crowded table, partying with her friends.

CANDACE (CONT'D)  
*How are you?*  
(suddenly self-conscious)  
Oh, it's-- I'm-- *It's my--*

STRETCH  
--Bachelorette party, if I was gonna guess.

Candace nods embarrassed, gives him the '*once over*'...twice.

CANDACE  
Great suit! You look good.

STRETCH  
You look better.  
(as if remembering)  
Congratulations, too.

CANDACE  
(blushing now)  
Yeah? *You mean it?*

STRETCH  
Of course. I'm happy for you.

CANDACE  
*Really* happy?

Stretch half-smiles. Checks his watch. 68 minutes remain.

CANDACE (CONT'D)  
Are you meeting someone or--

STRETCH  
--No, I'm on business.  
Unfortunately.

CANDACE

A client? Someone you're driving?

Stretch. *Fuck this. Time to build the big fat lie.*

STRETCH

I'm not driving anymore Candace...

Stretch moves his jacket like he's adjusting it but the gesture is designed to give Candace a glimpse of the gun.

STRETCH (CONT'D)

*...I'm being driven.*

CANDACE

What ar--? *What do you mean?*

STRETCH

I can't talk about it.

She draws close. Stretch can smell her perfume.

CANDACE

*Are you carrying a gun?*

Old memories flood in. Stretch's head gets light. *Fight it.*

STRETCH

Candace. I seriously cannot talk about it and I've really gotta go.

Stretch starts to leave.

CANDACE

Wait--

She trails him through the crowd to the elevators.

CANDACE (CONT'D)

We can't catch up for few minutes?

STRETCH

Minutes are money and I'm more or less a *mercenary* these days.

The elevator arrives.

STRETCH (CONT'D)

You can ride down with me if you like.

Stretch steps into the elevator cab. She follows him inside.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Stretch. Smooth. Confident. Poised. A *Killer*. A rock solid Rockstar. A clearly smitten Candace nods to the briefcase.

CANDACE  
So what's in there?

STRETCH  
I can't say.

CANDACE  
Can't?

STRETCH  
*Cannot*. No.

She crosses over to him. Smiles. More than a little tipsy.

CANDACE  
Is it money?

She leans in, her lips *inches* from his. Stretch is *nails*.

CANDACE (CONT'D)  
You're not mixed up in anything  
illegal are you?

He searches her eyes for a moment, buying time before--

STRETCH  
--Candace, listen.  
(*overly dramatic*)  
After you left, I dedicated my life  
to achieving a *singularity of*  
*purpose* and I know that sounds  
lofty and *totally* unlike me but  
it's been like a *rebirth*. I went to  
Tibet and studied the '*Karos*  
*Firestarter*' technique, an ancient  
Sherpa fighting style for three  
months. Then I travelled to  
Rangoon, Burma, where I learned the  
basics of telekinesis and free solo  
rock climbing before boarding a  
frigate for a Bavarian monastery  
where I trained day and night.  
Swords. Firearms. Foreign  
languages. I mastered most. Then I  
came back to L.A. last month.

Candace is awestruck.

CANDACE

My God.

STRETCH

I know. I can barely believe it myself. This last year just *flew* by. So much growth. So much *change*.

CANDACE

Well, what are you doing *exactly*?

Stretch shows Candace Karos' countdown watch.

STRETCH

...have you ever seen that movie 'The Transporter?'

CANDACE

With the robot cars?

STRETCH

No. With the guy. He's like a secret agent. He transports high value cargo. Diplomats. Bullion--

CANDACE

--Yeah. I think-- wait, is *that* what you're doing?

STRETCH

Well, that's kind of a *rough sketch* of my world right now. I can't say anymore than that, I'm bound by a host of strict non-disclosures and Geneva convention statutes, so...

Candace is turned on. You can read it in her slink; in the slightly cocked hips and the way she keeps twirling this tassel on her blouse. Stretch makes a show of sliding the watch back under his tailored cuff as he leans back...then delivers the haymaker he's been loading up for the last year.

STRETCH (CONT'D)

Thank you Candace. You have *no* idea how much you're leaving *did* for me. By breaking up, you gave me the greatest gift ever...The life that I've *always* wanted, I now have.

CANDACE

Wow.

STRETCH

"Wow" is right. 'Wow' is how I feel every second of every day thanks to you.

EXT. 'W' HOTEL HOLLYWOOD - MOMENTS LATER

P.O.V. as Stretch emerges from the hotel. A TWO-MAN FEDERAL SURVEILLANCE TEAM sit in a sedan across the street, watching.

FED #1 (INTO COMM)

Suspect is in front of the hotel, conversing with an unknown female.

EXT. 'W' HOTEL HOLLYWOOD - CONTINUOUS

Candace follows him outside to the valet stand...the very thing that Stretch was trying to avoid.

He's getting nervous.

STRETCH

Go back with your friends. Enjoy the rest of your night--

--Stretch's cell rings. It's Charlie. He answers right away.

STRETCH (CONT'D)

Hey baby.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

**Baby!??** Stretch! Listen to me! You are in serious trouble! Do you--

STRETCH

--No, no, I'll be home after 12. Let me call you from the car.

Stretch clicks off quickly, feigns embarrassment.

STRETCH (CONT'D)

I met a-- well, long story but a pretty great girl, she's just back from the Dior show in Paris.

CANDACE

Fashion?

STRETCH

Yeah, well, she does runway. International stuff.

(MORE)

STRETCH (CONT'D)

She's only twenty-three so I have  
no *idea* how long it'll last.

Candace nods. Just a glint of envy.

CANDACE

You seem *so* together and so, I  
don't know-- and you look great,  
better than I've ever seen you.

The Valet calls out to Stretch:

VALET

Ready for your car sir?

Stretch nods back to the valet, trying to keep the ruse  
intact. *Terrified* that he'll be found out.

CANDACE

Listen, we're gonna be out late,  
just club hopping y'know, maybe we  
could, see one another later?

STRETCH

No, I wish. Plus, you're life as a  
single woman is nearly over, right?  
Enjoy your last night of freedom!  
(closing the distance)  
You're gonna be a beautiful bride  
Candace and make a wonderful wife.

He kisses her cheek, moving down the steps with a little Gene  
Kelly glide, his eyes locked on hers as the limo arrives.

The Valet climbs out and is about to leave the driver's door  
open but Stretch intercepts him, imploring *quick-urgent*:

STRETCH (CONT'D)

--\$20 bucks if you drive me  
out of here--

VALET

--Make it \$40--

STRETCH (CONT'D)

--FUCKER. Done!

And just like that, in the most seamless slight of hand, the  
valet transforms into Stretch's driver, rushing to the rear  
of the limo to open the door for him.

Stretch give Candace a last glance, blowing her a kiss to  
confirm the kill. She smiles wistfully. Stretch slips inside  
the limo and rolls away.

INT. REAR OF LIMO - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Stretch watches her. She remains on the front steps of the hotel, looking after him. He exults.

STRETCH  
*HAHAHA! Gotcha!*

VALET  
 Who was that dog? An ex?

STRETCH  
 Dude, that was *the* 'ex.'

VALET  
 She dump you?

STRETCH  
 She *destroyed* me.

INT. 'W' HOTEL HOLLYWOOD - CONTINUOUS

A forlorn Candace is heading back toward the elevator.

LOBBY MAN  
 She's getting into the elevators now, you want me to brace her?

INTERCUT

LINARES  
 No. If we do, then she tips him off. Keep a set of eyes on her, he may try to contact her again.

RETURN TO:

INT. STRETCH'S LIMO - CONTINUOUS

The Valet cruises Stretch up Hollywood Blvd.

VALET  
*Payback* playboy! Damn. How long did you plan that?

STRETCH  
 I didn't. It just happened.

VALET  
 That shit was *diabolical* son!

Suddenly, the limo's engine dies and the interior lights dim.

VALET (CONT'D)

Uh-oh.

STRETCH

What's wrong?

VALET

*Your limo just lost power.*

Horns blare from behind. They've stalled on Hollywood Blvd.

VALET (CONT'D)

The On-Star light is blinking.

Stretch, to his horror...they've shut the car down remotely.

STRETCH

FUCK!

He checks the watch...*62 minutes remain.* He grabs his cell and dials Charlie. She answers.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

*I can't talk! The cops are here!*

STRETCH

*Did they use the On-Star to disable the limo--!*

CHARLIE (O.S.)

--YES!

The Valet hops out. Stretch leaps out after him.

STRETCH

--Wait! Bro! *Help me out here!*  
(into cellphone)  
*Charlie, I'll call you back!*

He clicks off. The Valet is heading back toward the 'W'.

VALET

Dog, the car's dead!  
(beat, pointing)  
Look, you're in luck. Tow truck.

Stretch turns-- SEES what he was hoping he wouldn't...BORIS. Like a Great White in a wading pool.

He glowers at Stretch as he rolls past 'Drive-By' slow.

STRETCH

(urgent now, to Valet)  
**BRO! HELP ME PUSH THIS TO THE CURB!**

VALET

Just grab the tow truck m--

STRETCH

--*I can't get it towed! I've got a client waiting on me! PLEASE!*

VALET

\$40 bucks bought you the lift. I'm out! Gotta get back to my real job.

Traffic is backing up quickly. Angry horns echo up the blvd.

STRETCH

I'll give you another \$40 to help me get it to the curb!

VALET

You'll give me another \$80!? *What?*

Stretch rips off his jacket and lays it across the trunk.

STRETCH

Fuck man! *Where's the professional courtesy!?*

VALET

Nothin' free in this world kid!

Boris is making a U-Turn. Heading back their way.

STRETCH

OK! \$80! Shit! *Hurry!* Get behind the wheel!

VALET

It's power-steering--!!

STRETCH

--*just crank it! We have to make it to the curb!!*

Stretch leans into the back bumper and shoves. His new shoes slip and slide across the asphalt.

Grime and trunk funk stains mar his custom shirt.

STRETCH (CONT'D)

*Awww, FUCK ME!*

He keeps pushing. The limo slogs forward as the Valet struggles sans power-steering, trying to guide the beast in.

Boris passes by once more, leaning out, leering at Stretch.

Flop sweat pours and veins pop as Stretch agonizes, pushing. As the limo nears the curb--

VALET  
--It's a red zone!

STRETCH  
*We can't leave it there then!*

Boris is once again turning his tow-truck around...a predator circling his prey.

VALET  
Dog, you don't have a choice!

The limo's front right tire scrapes the curbside coming to a rest, flush against a red zone.

The Valet sashays back toward Stretch with an outstretched palm. Stretch heaves, trying to catch his breath as he slaps balled up \$20 bills into the Valet's hand.

VALET (CONT'D)  
*Best'a luck my nigga!*

Stretch stands. SEES Boris has pulled the tow truck to the curb a block up. Smoke wisps from the driver's side window.

He's waiting.

Stretch hustles up to the limo's cab and climbs in, leaving his suit jacket on the trunk.

STRETCH  
(to himself)  
...think. Think. *Think.*

...as always, on hand to torment and taunt: Karl With A 'K.'

KARL WITH A 'K'  
Do they really rape your face in  
prison?  
(beat)  
Repeatedly?  
(with this naughty glee)  
*Somebody I know's gonna find out!*

Stretch's 'Spidey Sense' goes atingle. He looks up:

The Jovi's White Bentley has pulled alongside Boris. He's speaking with him. Stretch sees Boris' silhouette turn back.

The Jovi drives off a moment later. Boris's brakes alight.

Stretch checks his watch...59 minutes remain. Desperate, he punches the **On-Star** button...

*...and gets a fucking recording.*

ON-STAR RECORDING

*The vehicle you are presently occupying has been reported stolen and has had its engine functions temporarily impaired. If this is an emergency, please dial 911.*

Boris begins backing his tow-truck up to the limo.

KARL WITH A 'K'

I don't like where this one's headed Hoss. How 'bout you?

Stretch cranks the ignition frantically...it won't start.

KARL WITH A 'K' (CONT'D)

It's weird, I'm not a psychic so why do I keep seeing the word '**FUCKED**' in your immediate future?

The tow-truck stops at his front bumper. Boris lumbers out, all 6'5, 280 pounds of him. He stubs the cigarette out in his open palm, grinning solid gold replacement teeth.

He stalks toward the Limo. Stretch stops what he's doing.

A strange calm overcomes over him. Like a Death Row inmate being read his last rites. Comfortably conceding his fate...

*...Then, suddenly and shockingly--*

--Stretch punches himself right in the face.

KARL WITH A 'K' (CONT'D)

*Now we're talking!*

His head snaps back as his eyes flood with tears. He spits blood and a partial chipped crown but that blank, bovine-like look from before has been replaced by a brand new spark.

STRETCH

Holy shit. *That really works.*

Boris approaches the driver's door. His murderous, meathook-sized hands flex to over-sized fists. Stretch SEES truck keys jutting out from between his knuckles like blunt knives.

An idea seizes a hold of Stretch and he starts punching the **On-Star** button again-- over and over and over, until--

ON-STAR OPERATOR  
 --this is the On-Star Operator--

STRETCH  
 --Ma'am, this is Detective Raymond Liotta of the LAPD! I am occupying the stolen vehicle and am presently pinned down in a gun battle with the armed suspects who stole it!

Boris is ten feet away. Stretch can actually *smell* his approach.

ON-STAR OPERATOR  
 Uh-- Officer, I'm afraid I can't--

Stretch lets out a sudden, bloodcurdling SCREAM as Boris arrives, pulling Liotta's prop 9mm and FIRING it. Boris freaks, dropping his keys and bolting back to the tow-truck.

STRETCH  
 --MA'AM! I NEED YOU TO START THIS VEHICLE FOR ME! I'M--  
 (fires gun again)  
BILL GET DOWN! BILL!? BILL!? ARE YOU HIT!? NO! MY GOD! YOU'RE HIT!!  
 (fires gun)  
 MA'AM PLEASE FOR THE LOVE OF GOD! MY PARTNER HAS BEEN GUTSHOT!  
 (fires gun)  
 I'M GETTING YOU OUT OF HERE BILL! I'M NOT GONNA LET YOU DIE! OH GOD! HANG ON! HANG ON MAN!! THINK OF SHELIA AND THE KIDS! DON'T YOU DIE ON ME!!  
 (fires gun to clicks)  
 I'M OUT OF AMMO! I'M SORRY! I'M SORRY! I DID MY BEST BILL--

--and just like that, the limo starts. Stretch fairly leaps up, seizing the wheel, his hand raking the steering column.

STRETCH (CONT'D)  
WE'RE SAVED!! I'M GETTING YOU TO THE HOSPITAL! BUDDY! YOU'RE GONNA MAKE IT BILL! YOU'RE GONNA SEE YOUR NEWBORN SON! GOD BLESS YOU MA'AM!!  
 GOD BLESS Y--!!

--Stretch hits the **On-Star** button, disconnecting the call.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The limo lurches away from the curb. Stretch's tailored jacket goes flying off the trunk and lands in a heap.

He veers onto a side street, flipping Boris the bird as he passes by, SCREAMING OUT--

STRETCH (CONT'D)  
--**BLANKS DICK!**

Stretch laughs as he speeds away. A furious Boris scrambles back for his tow-truck keys but Stretch is long gone.

INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS

Stretch hammers the roof, celebrating

STRETCH  
--WOO-HOO!! HAHAAAAHA! How 'bout  
*that shit*, huh?! The kid comes  
through in the clutch! AGAIN!

Color Karl With A "K"...*impressed*.

KARL WITH A 'K'  
You may get that SAG card after all  
Princess!

EXT. 'W' HOTEL HOLLYWOOD - PENTHOUSE LEVEL - NIGHT

Linares paces, preoccupied, stuck on a call with his boss.

LINARES  
--Director Reed, forgive me sir,  
but in my opinion-- this is beyond  
'Bureau protocol' Karos is a *once-*  
*in-a-lifetime* takedown, if we're no  
longer able to employ the kinds of  
unconventional methods that we've--

--Linares is cut off. He steams. Then, fake contrite.

LINARES (CONT'D)  
...yes sir...I do...*completely*.

He clicks off and hurls his cellphone into a nearby trash can. Hanna walks in holding a computer printout.

HANNA  
Suspect was involved in a *shots*  
*fired* incident. Nobody was injured.  
Happened five blocks up Hollywood.

LINARES

When?

HANNA

Just now. Let's pick this clown up before someone gets hurt Dave.

Hanna retrieves his cellphone, taking a call.

LINARES

Unless he's killing people in the street, we don't touch him until he has Karos in tow.

(back to Hudack)

Did division get us anything back on this cop? The driver?

HUDACK

Can't locate his service record. He could be pensioned or injured in the line of duty and that's making it tougher to find his file--

LINARES

--C'mon! This is the fucking 21st Century. We're federal agents! We can't weed out one dirty cop!?

A concerned Hanna returns from his call. Takes Linares aside.

LINARES (CONT'D)

What's up?

HANNA

How did you get the money approved?

LINARES

--how did you know?

HANNA

Curtiz just told me.

LINARES

Did he tell the Director?

HANNA

Of course not.

LINARES

Did you tell him the money was mis--

HANNA

--No, I didn't tell him the money was missing. Where'd it come from?

LINARES

Evidence seizure from a blown bank job. I signed it out for 24 hours.

HANNA

Dave, that's three-hundred thousand real dollars!

LINARES

I couldn't put fake bills in front of Karos! It's FDIC insured anyway--  
(off Hanna's look)  
--we'll get it back when we bag Karos. Clark, let's just stay on the driver.

INT. STRETCH'S LIMO - NIGHT

The briefcase sits in Stretch's lap. He stares down at its contents. His jaw literally *unhinged*.

STRETCH

Holy. Shit.

\$300,000 in \$100 bills. Loose but neatly stacked inside.

Hiss cell buzzes. He checks it. It's Ignacio. Stretch steels himself, shuts his eyes and snags it on the fourth ring.

IGNACIO (O.S.)

*Que Paso! How's the hunt?*

Stretch gazes down at *all that money...*

STRETCH

Iggy. I am so close.

IGNACIO (O.S.)

*How close?*

STRETCH

*...staring at hundreds and thousands of dollars as we speak.*

Uproarious laughter...Iggy thinks he's being put on.

IGNACIO (O.S.)

Well just shave six-g's off of that and I'll see you in 30 minutes.

Stretch closes the lid on the briefcase.

STRETCH

I wish it was that easy.

IGNACIO (O.S.)

Wishing won't make it any easier.

(beat)

I'm trying to do right by you dog and spare you the 'torture-porn'-like levels of pain and suffering that will be visited upon your person, if you don't come correct.

(beat)

If six-thousand dollars aren't delivered to me by 12:01 a.m. or exactly 33 minutes from now, you will see some shit up close, that you will *never forget*...

(beat)

...because you won't be able to.

Iggy clicks off.

A KNOCK at the passenger window. Stretch startles. A club kid we'll call FAUX HAWK crowds the glass, motioning for Stretch to roll down the window, which he does.

STRETCH

What do you want?

Faux Hawk grins, all white-boy, wannabe, hip-hop swagger. Behind him, HOOCHIES huddle in fabric-deficient micro-minis.

FAUX HAWK

What up playa?

He shoots a look over his shoulder at the girls, then smiles back at Stretch like they're about to share an inside joke.

FAUX HAWK (CONT'D)

Tryin' t'get this fine set'a dimes up Sunset. My boy gots a table and the Goose is loose Crew! Y'feel me?

The girls CHEER in the background. Faux Hawk leans inside.

STRETCH

Get off the car, you're gonna scratch--

FAUX HAWK

(whispers desperate)

--C'mon! Hook me up Fam! I'm trying to Big Pimp this shit and spear one or two of these hos.

STRETCH  
 Grab a cab Yeezy. I'm busy.

EXT. SIDE STREET OFF SUNSET - CONTINUOUS

That two-man Federal surveillance team sits in their darkened sedan a block over, scoping the scene. From this distance it's impossible to tell Faux Hawk from Karos.

FED #2  
 Suspect is speaking with  
 unidentified white male who is  
 accompanied by three females.

INTERCUT WITH

INT. R.V. - CONTINUOUS

Linares is in the FBI'S MOBILE COMMAND UNIT, behind a computer displaying the tracking indicator on Stretch's limo

LINARES (INTO COMM)  
 Stay put. That sounds like Karos.  
 We are en route now.

RETURN TO:

INT. STRETCH'S LIMO - CONTINUOUS

Faux Hawk produces a hodgepodge fistful of wadded bills.

FAUX HAWK  
 C'mon Crew! Let me lace you! Got  
 some Benjamins here, some Franklins-

STRETCH  
 -Benjamin and Franklin are the same  
 fucking guy, Bernanke.

FAUX HAWK  
 It's a ten minute ride man! I just  
 want to Jigga Jay Z this mafucka!

Stretch, deliberating...checks his watch...*51 minutes remain.*

STRETCH  
 Fifty dollars, per block.

FAUX HAWK  
 It's ten blocks!

STRETCH

No, it's five-hundred dollars.

FAUX HAWK

Damn nigga! Why you gotta do me like that!? In a public place? With bitches present!?

STRETCH

Because you're a gigantic BAG, *that's why!* Look at you! Has your father *stopped* crying!?

(beat)

Five hundred to ride. Period.

Faux Hawk sucks his teeth, looks at the cash in his hand.

FAUX HAWK

Three hundy. Best I can do.

A beat before Stretch relents.

STRETCH

Give me the coke too.

FAUX HAWK

What coke?

STRETCH

That wasn't intended to be rhetorical cheesedick. Those five cluckers wouldn't get within spitting distance of you unless you had some Yay. Now Gimme.

FAUX HAWK

I'm not holding homey.

STRETCH

Goddammit, Kanye--

FAUX HAWK

--Ok, wait, wait, wait--

(pulling baggie)

I got this.

STRETCH

(snatching the baggie)

Corral your crew and behave back there 'cuz I'm gonna CSI that backseat once you vacate.

Faux-Hawk turns back to the hoochies, triumphant.

FAUX HAWK  
Let's ride shorties!

Stretch tucks the cash into his pocket and stares at that baggie of blow a beat longer than he should before sliding into character and stepping out to greet the skanks.

STRETCH  
Good evening ladies.

EXT. SUNSET - NIGHT

Stretch's limo glides past. The Fed sedan follows.

INT. STRETCH'S LIMO - MOMENTS LATER

Stretch's gaze is glued to the rear-view, watching the Hoochies bump and grind and douse one another in champagne. Faux Hawk is in fucking heaven, cranking the stereo full.

STRETCH  
(yelling back)  
Chill out back there!

Faux Hawk admonishes Stretch, annoyed.

FAUX HAWK  
We good nigga, mind the road! *Speed limit too fool!* Slow down! Damn!

Faux Hawk raises the solid partition. Stretch steps on the gas, taking up his cell and dialing Charlie.

INTERCUT WITH DISPATCH

CHARLIE  
*What is going on!?*

STRETCH  
Tonight got pretty interesting, didn't it?

CHARLIE  
*You are going to jail! The police put out a warrant for your arrest!*  
(beat)  
*Wait, where are you!?*

STRETCH  
About to grab Karos again. Making a little extra money on the way back.

Stretch pulls the limo to the curb.

CHARLIE  
HOW!? *Where's the limo?*

STRETCH  
It's driving down Sunset with me.

CHARLIE  
It's *running*? How?

Stretch debates for a moment before yanking the keys out of the ignition. The limo remains running. He smiles to himself.

STRETCH  
My friends at On-Star.

He lifts the passenger seat cushion. There's a compartment hidden beneath. He stashes the case and replaces the cushion.

EXT. STRETCH'S LIMO - CONTINUOUS

He hops out and heads toward the rear of the car.

STRETCH  
Listen, I'm gonna finish the night with Karos, collect my fee and hit restart. Love. Life. Career. *All of it*. All this weirdness I got sucked into tonight, it's like it *rebuilt* my mojo. It gave me *guts* again! I saw her Charlie. I saw *Candace* and it was *beautiful* what went down. Not payback but something *better*.  
(beat)  
And I got it back! Whatever she took when she dumped me *I got back*.

He kneels at the back of the limo and begins unscrewing the license plate with the swiss army knife on his key-ring.

CHARLIE (O.S.)  
*Stretch, you are a wanted felon right now! Do you not get what's going on here!?*

STRETCH  
Not only do I get it, I'm getting the better of it. I'm beating a game right now that *wrings my neck* on a regular basis. Remember, you said I was a fatalist?  
(MORE)

STRETCH (CONT'D)

That I can't function unless everything around me is turning to shit, well you were right because that's happening and *I'm flourishing!* It's like the worse it gets, the better I am. I feel like I'm five or six steps ahead of the gam--

--the limo suddenly screeches away from Stretch, the license plate clattering to the street in front of him...he remains there on one knee, exhaust fumes contrailing around him as the limo's tail-lights fade up Sunset.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Stretch...?

He stands. Scowls. Checks the watch...42 minutes remain.

STRETCH

Fuck.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. SUNSET BLVD - NIGHT

Stretch in full, lung-scorching sprint up Sunset Blvd. Giving chase in the general direction of the limo.

INT. R.V. - NIGHT

Linares leans into his comm-link, yelling.

LINARES

NO! NO! NO! Stay with the limo!

He comes away from his headset, redirecting the MCU's DRIVER.

LINARES (CONT'D)

*Sunset at Doheny!* Now!  
(to his team)  
Karos just stole the limo! The driver was removing the license plates and he took off!

HUDACK

Are we *positive* it's him?

HANNA

We grab him regardless. Dave, we don't want a high speed chase over surface streets through West L.A.!

LINARES

I want the CHP to block Sunset  
westbound at the 405. Sawhorses and  
spike strips.

HUDACK

What do we do about the driver?

LINARES

Have the LAPD pick him up.

EXT. CLUB ON SUNSET - NIGHT

Stretch arrives, doubles over, checks the watch again--

--36 minutes remain...

He struggles to catch his breath, sucking wind hard, he pulls  
his fake badge, flashing it at the club's DOOR MANAGER.

STRETCH

Did some wannabe Kayne West  
whiteboy come through? Shitty  
Mohawk? Half dozen bottle-rats?

DOOR MANAGER

He did. We wouldn't let him in.

STRETCH

You see him leave?

Stretch follows the Door Manager's finger as he points west.

STRETCH (CONT'D)

Ok. I'm gonna need your car...

DOOR MANAGER

...I don't think so bro.

Stretch stands full. Glares. The badge extended.

A beat before the Door Manager calls his bluff.

DOOR MANAGER (CONT'D)

Couple months back? You and I  
carried Charlie Sheen outta here?  
That hooker was snorting blow with  
her Chinchilla fur?

FLASH CUT TO:

INT. LIMO - FLASHBACK - MONTHS AGO

Stretch and the Door Manager load a wasted Sheen into the limo while a frazzled, coke-fried HOOKER shares rails with her fur, doing an impromptu puppet show in the process.

HOOKER

*You're naughty! You're dirty!*

The hooker inhales a line. Her fur quickly scolds her--

HOOKER AS CHINCHILLA

*--Leave some for me bitch!*

RETURN TO:

EXT. CLUB ON SUNSET - CONTINUOUS

Stretch. Glassy. Vague. Probably remembers this but...

DOOR MANAGER

...You were his driver?

(beat, nods to the badge)

So did you get promoted to

**Detective** or to...

(moving Stretch's thumb)

...**Ray Liotta?**

Stretch. Busted. Nowhere to take this now.

DOOR MANAGER (CONT'D)

You don't have any idea what to say right now, do you?

STRETCH

No, I do, it's just--

DOOR MANAGER

--not worth it. You thought the badge would be a slam dunk.

STRETCH

I did. Why wouldn't I? Right?

DOOR MANAGER

Delivery was good. Solid.

STRETCH

Well, I appreciate that.

(beat, a big sigh)

So, how often do you think you're gonna tell this story? *The-shithead limo-driver-impersonating-a-cop...*

DOOR MANAGER  
I'll get some mileage out of it.

STRETCH  
I don't blame you.

DOOR MANAGER  
You'd do the same.

STRETCH  
*In a second and since that's the case, let's at least give this story the ending it deserves--*

--Stretch pulls the gun on the Door Manager.

STRETCH (CONT'D)  
*--Give me your motherfucking car NOW or lose your liver--*

DOOR MANAGER  
*--HAHAHAHA! **GUN!***

The Door Manager shoves Stretch back, revealing ARMED SECURITY PERSONNEL rushing out of the club behind him.

Stretch bolts.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS - NIGHT

Stretch comes racing around the corner on foot. Three hulking silhouettes give chase, SHOUTING after him.

Stretch sprints across immaculately groomed grounds, trampling flower beds and plowing through topiary gardens.

He vaults a chain length fence, then another. Lands in someone's backyard. Keeps moving. Karl with a 'K' appears, running alongside.

KARL WITH A 'K'  
You run like a retarded kid after someone yelled '*pancakes!*'

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Stretch spills out onto a residential street, putting distance on his pursuit.

He sprints across an intersection. A car swerves to avoid him. He pulls the badge, intent on commandeering a vehicle.

Headlights hit him. Then highbeams. A horn BLARES.

He holds that badge up against the glare--

STRETCH

--POLICE!! I NEED YOUR VEHICL--

--Brakes squeal. A Ferrari fishtails into a flat spin.

It screeches past Stretch, missing him by millimeters. It strikes a curb and flips sidelong, going airborne and barrel-rolling multiple times across the grass median.

After five or six full rotations, it slams down upright, coming to a rest. Smoke and steam seep from its underside.

The car remains running.

Stretch stands there, agog, hand over his mouth. He breaks into a run, rushing over to the wreck just as the gull-wing door on the Ferrari's opens and a MAN collapses from the cab.

He rolls up on his back, groaning...

...Stretch recognizes him right away. He stops. Stoops down.

STRETCH (CONT'D)

Hey-- are-- Is your name Michael?

(beat, with disbelief)

*Are you Michael Bay?*

MICHAEL BAY nods and sits up slowly, still dazed.

STRETCH (CONT'D)

...are you okay?

Bay stares off in a deep, almost transcendental gaze and seems completely unfazed...the smallest trickle of blood leaks down from his hairline.

STRETCH (CONT'D)

....Bro?

Stretch, mindful of crash he's just caused, still scans the vicinity for his pursuers.

He rechecks the watch...31 minutes remain.

Then...

MICHAEL BAY

Y'know, I just left dinner with my agents and I'm driving home thinking, maybe it's time, maybe I've reached that critical point in my career, I should do a small indie drama or an intimate character study, something very low budget, performance-based, y'know, with lesbians or American Indians, *both*, maybe-- and just as I've made up my mind, just as I'm about to embrace the change, I find myself in mid-air, doing an *endo* with an air-bag exploding in my face...

(beat, this huge grin)

*So is that fucking fate intervening or what!*

(beat, pumped up)

*HOW DID IT LOOK!?*

STRETCH

How did--?

MICHAEL BAY

*The wreck dude! The crash! Was it sick? 'Cuz it was fucking retarded from inside, everything at like 1200 frames per second! Neg-G's! Must have been *bitchin'* to see.*

STRETCH

--It was-- yeah, I think you would've been impressed.

The distant wail of SIRENS has Stretch anxious as Bay acts out that fateful moment behind the wheel.

MICHAEL BAY

Man, I had to bang back-- *boom*, downshift and put myself into a spin just to avoid hitting you, best drivers in the world would have turned you into a hood ornament but I missed you *completely*.

STRETCH

What about your car though--

MICHAEL BAY

--Dude, it's a 2011! *Who cares!* It can be replaced.

(MORE)

MICHAEL BAY (CONT'D)

What cannot be replaced is the  
*three seconds* you just gave me you  
 crazy sonofabitch! Where'd you come  
 from!?

\*

The three silhouettes are a block back. Running hard toward  
 them. Stretch edges toward the still idling Ferrari.

STRETCH

Can I borrow your car for a bit?

Bay glances over his shoulder. SEES Stretch's pursuers.

MICHAEL BAY

Wait-- are those dudes chasing you?

(off Stretch's nod)

Oh fuck yeah! Take it! You kidding?

(beat)

But hey, if you haven't called an  
 ambulance, hook me up, huh? I got  
*jackshit* for feeling in my legs.

Stretch hops into the Ferrari, ripping the air bag free.  
 FOOTFALLS and SHOUTS echo from behind.

SECURITY PERSONNEL

*HEY!*

Stretch grinds the Ferrari into gear, peeling out along the  
 grass median and sending a big fantail of mulch into the air  
 before slamming over the lip of the curb, back onto Sunset.

INT. FERRARI - MOMENTS LATER

The engine rattles and wheezes. Stretch wrestles with the  
 steering wheel, struggling to keep the ruined car on the  
 road. Smoke pours in through the air vents, filling the cab.  
 He cracks a window, checks his watch: 28 minutes remain.

An incoming E-mail pings his cell. He checks it.

The mystery woman. Once again.

***Meet at Norm's. La Cienega. After work? What do you say? :)***

Stretch can't respond. Sighs. Tosses the phone onto the seat.

INT. MOBILE COMMAND UNIT - NIGHT

Hudack comes away from his headset, calling up to Linares.

HUDACK  
*They got the limo!*

Linares clammers back the rear of the M.C.U.

HUDACK (CONT'D)  
 Karos wasn't inside. It was some  
 dumb kid boosted it, had a couple  
 of coked up club girls in the back.

LINARES  
 They recover the case?

HUDACK  
 No, they haven't located it yet.

LINARES  
 Have the limo towed to the closest  
 impound and stripped to the chassis-  
 (beat, as if remembering)  
*-and find that fucking driver!*

EXT. SUNSET AT THE 405 FREEWAY - NIGHT

The Ferrari rumbles around the bend, trailing smoke. Its wheels wiggle-wobble off a cracked front axle. A torn slash of fender throws a shower of sparks off the passing pavement.

Traffic is beginning to back-up. The car shudders to a stop.

INT. FERRARI - SAME

Stretch SEES red and blue strobes ahead. SQUAD CARS and COPS crowd the westbound lanes. Barricades have been erected.

He coaxes the Ferrari over onto the shoulder and hops out, pressing ahead on foot.

EXT. SUNSET AND THE 405 FREEWAY - NIGHT

FAUX-HAWK openly sobs, dripping snot as he's handcuffed by the police. The HOOCHIES pitch fits as they're frisked and searched. Mascara streaks and big clown tears bubble.

A TRAFFIC COP reroutes the growing gridlock as a tow-truck arrives...BORIS'S TOW-TRUCK. Stretch watches as he confers with an OFFICER on scene and begins gleefully hooking the limo up to the tow-lift.

STRETCH  
*Shit...*

Stretch stays low, moving stealthily. He reaches a fitch-barrier near the freeway on-ramp and crouches behind it to conceal himself.

He checks his watch...*24 minutes remain.*

Boris finishes chaining and securing the limo to the tow-lift and begins filling out paperwork across the vehicle's hood.

Seeing Boris' back turned, Stretch bolts for the rear of the limo and slides in behind cover. He edges along the length of the vehicle, up toward the passenger-side door.

He reaches it. Tries the handle. It's locked.

STRETCH (CONT'D)

*C'mon-- Fuck!*

He remembers his key-ring. Digs through his pockets. Finds them, presses the remote entry...nothing happens.

He presses it again. Still nothing.

He sifts through the key-ring, finds the ignition key, slots it in the door lock, turns it slow...it unlocks.

He eases it open slowly, quietly lifting the passenger seat cushion. He has it halfway up, the briefcase in sight when Boris suddenly appears at the window--

--Stretch quickly returns the cushion and ducks back behind the passenger door.

WE CAN HEAR someone speaking with Boris.

Stretch waits. The driver-side door opens. Boris tosses his clipboard on the limo's dash and pad backs up to his truck.

Stretch acts fast, grabs the door. It's been re-locked.

He fumbles for his keys again. The tow-truck starts to pull out. Stretch has to shuffle alongside, playing *pin-the-tail* with the lock as he tries to guide the key in.

The tow-truck picks up speed, heading toward the 405 on-ramp.

Stretch breaks into a shuffling run to keep pace, the lock now a moving target as he stabs at it with the ignition key.

He manages to get it in, it sticks. The tow-truck accelerates and Stretch has to break into a full run, his arm outstretched, the keys eluding his grasp, stuck in the door.

He lunges for them, misses, trips, the rear end of the limo rumbles by. He grabs hold of the bumper with both hands and finds himself being dragged out onto the 405 Freeway.

EXT. 405 FREEWAY - NIGHT

Stretch hauls himself up onto the back of the limo, clinging to one of the suction-cup tow lights. Scared shitless.

He peers down the length of the car and SEES the keys jangling around and bouncing unsteadily inside the lock.

The tow-truck abruptly changes lanes, the inertia flinging Stretch across the trunk. He grabs onto the radio antenna to keep from sliding off altogether.

Karl With A 'K' lies on the limo's roof like he's sunbathing.

KARL WITH A 'K'

You're gonna die out here dickhead.

Stretch rights himself, pulls one of the suction-cup tow lights free and begins bashing on the rear windshield until it shatters.

He crawls through the opening and slips inside.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

Stretch. *Gobsmacked* by the state of his limo.

It's been totally and thoroughly trashed. Bottles broken. Lipstick scrawls. Mirrors smashed. Fixtures pulled free.

The mini-bar has been mangled. The glassware destroyed. The carpeting has been shredded. The seats stabbed up.

STRETCH

*...you gotta be fucking kidding me.*

Faux-Hawk and the Hoochies have done *disaster-level* damage.

Then Stretch sees a nebulous pile of something and if the accompanying smell didn't confirm it...Karl With A 'K' does.

KARL WITH A 'K'

That's a human dump.

(a big *harumph*)

*Someone took a shit in your backseat.*

Stretch leans closer.

KARL WITH A 'K' (CONT'D)  
 Very good, yeah, let's get a sample  
 to verify. *Can you not smell that!?*

Stretch checks the watch...20 minutes remain.

STRETCH  
 I can't go back to Karos with it  
 looking like this.

KARL WITH A 'K'  
 Not to point out the obvious Ace  
 but you're presently hooked up to a  
 tow-truck *on the fucking freeway!*

Stretch moves through the landfill-like remains of the limo  
 to the partition and shimmies into the front cab.

He needs those keys but can't roll the power windows down.

He looks down through the glass and SEES the ignition key  
 slowly coming loose, about to fall away from the lock.

He pops the passenger door open with his left hand and uses  
 his right to reach around and retrieve the keys.

INT. TOW-TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The humongous, humorless BORIS stares dead-eyed at the  
 approaching road when he notices something in his periphery.

ANGLE: SIDE-VIEW MIRROR...A HAND creeps around the barely  
 opened passenger-side door.

Boris's tattooed neck pops veins like bridge supports. Teeth  
 grind granite-like inside that great grizzly-sized skull--

--he swerves the tow-truck sharply, careening across five  
 lanes of crowded LA traffic.

INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS

The sudden shift slingshots Stretch through the passenger  
 side door. He snags the seat-belt on his way out.

It snaps taut--

--His face hovers a half inch above the passing freeway.

The tow-truck swerves wildly.

STRETCH

*FUCK!!*

Stretch turns himself over on his back, SEES the limo keys dangling from the lock above-- they fall-- he reaches, barely snagging his house key between a thumb and index finger, the whole ring held precariously between that pinch--

--Stretch senses something-- LOOKS UP--

--The bumper of a Land Rover hurtles right toward him.

He hauls himself back up into the limo with the seat-belt a split-second before as the passenger door is *sheared off*.

The tow-truck caroms recklessly, the limo bouncing off a traffic barrier, metal grinds concrete. Sparks spray.

Stretch. Shaken. Mind scrambled. Can't think straight.

Karl With a 'K' provides him with a most sound plan--

KARL WITH A 'K'  
--drive it off!

Stretch slides behind the wheel fast.

STRETCH  
Please start.

He jams the key. Cranks the ignition. The limo roars to life.

The tow-truck is now pulling onto the far shoulder.

Stretch drops the limo into 'R' and leadfoots the accelerator. The front tires spin. The tow-chains *strain*.

The truck comes to rough stop. Boris blasts out of the cab. Baseball bat in one hand. Russian-made Machete in the other.

STRETCH (CONT'D)  
*C'MON!! FUCKING FRONT-WHEEL DRIVE!*

The tach clips 7000 RPMS. Rubber bakes as smoke pours off the tow-truck's skid plates. One of the winch-chains gives out.

The limo's left side slams down onto the tow-fork.

*Boris breaks into a run.*

The other winch-chain pops free. The rear wheels catch. Stretch squeals off the tow-fork, smashing to the asphalt.

Boris leaps, landing on the limo's hood and head-butting the windshield.

It cracks. He head-butts it again.

Safety glass splinters/spiders. Another head-butt. Stretch punches the gas, cranking the wheel and whipping the limo around into a 180 degree spin, the force of which catapults Boris off the hood and over a steep construction embankment.

Stretch comes to a screeching halt along the shoulder, facing the flow of oncoming traffic along the 405. He leaps out of the limo, racing over to the embankment, LOOKING down.

Boris. Flat on his back fifty feet below. Out cold.

His eyes suddenly snap open. He glares up at Stretch. Stretch does a little half-salute down at him, smiling.

Boris seems to levitate to his feet, slasher-film fast and starts clawing his way back up the embankment.

Stretch rushes back to the limo. The Sepulveda off-ramp in less than 300 yards ahead.

He checks his watch...14 minutes remain.

He drops the limo into '**DRIVE**' and speeds away.

EXT. SUNSET BLVD - NIGHT

EMT's cart Michael Bay into the back of an ambulance. Linares walks alongside the gurney, getting regaled with--

MICHAEL BAY

--like that--

(makes steering gesture)

--then coming back around and I'm telling you bro, missing my man by *less than an inch*, if I didn't perfectly broadside the curb, I'd be wearing a sheet right now.

LINARES

And he took the car?

MICHAEL BAY

I told him he could. He was getting chased.

LINARES

So you gave him your Ferrari?

MICHAEL BAY

Bro, I've got *five of 'em* and if he got more than a few miles in that thing, I'd be amazed.

Hudack comes rushing up.

HUDACK

The limo was retaken!

LINARES

It was *what?*

INT. R.V. - CONTINUOUS

Linares and Hudack stare at the computer monitor. The transponder signal for the limo is once again active.

HUDACK

The tow-truck driver tried to stop him but was thrown off a fifty-foot embankment.

LINARES

Was he hurt?

HUDACK

Not sure. The man refused medical attention and disappeared.

LINARES

Alright, this cop is obviously on a schedule with Karos. We don't get to him fast, *Karos is gone*. I want ***everybody*** pulled on now. LAPD. LASD. CHP. Make 'em all task force loan outs. I want a chopper up too. As soon as Karos shows his face, we take the whole fucking thing down.

EXT. CAR WASH - NIGHT

Stretch turbo washes the inside and outside of the limo at the same time. Brackish black water seeps from the carpets.

He loads armfuls of debris, broken bottles and chunks of the limo's torn interior into the trash bins.

He tries to clean himself up but he's a mess. He stares at a distorted IMAGE of himself in a reflective towel dispenser.

His cell buzzes. He checks the CALLER I.D. It's Ignacio.

He ignores the call.

He glances at the countdown watch...7 minutes remain.

His cell buzzes again. He's about to hit 'Ignore' but SEES that it's Charlie.

STRETCH

Yes indeed.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Babe, *please stop*. You nearly *killed* a man! The Jovi's brother for godsake! This has gone *way past* a big tip. You could wind up going to prison for a long time!

STRETCH

I'm gonna beat this Charlie. I'm gonna beat it *because I can*. I couldn't say that a year ago. I was too hung up on Candace, too bent out of shape about everything. People spend their whole lives looking for *definition*. for that moment when they finally figure out who they are and what they're capable of *and this is that moment for me*.

(beat)

I feel like I cannot lose.

Stretch climbs back into the limo.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

I'm worried you've gone too far.

STRETCH

I have. I absolutely have and it feels fucking *great*.

He thunders off, the limo billowing black smoke.

EXT. BENEDICT CANYON - NIGHT

The rattle-trap limo crests the rise: This godforsaken scrap heap of a vehicle, salvaged from a 'Mad Max' nightmare.

He eases up the canyon road. No sign of the Zipper-Masked Valet...No sign of anyone or anything.

The watch's alarm starts BEEPING...time's up.

Karos is nowhere to be seen.

STRETCH

*C'mon man. Where are you?*

The mansion gates suddenly open and a crush of PARTY-GOERS spill out behind it. The scene is like a Fellini film on blotter acid: A mass exodus of freaks, power-players, sexual deviants, geriatrics and the generally insane.

Giant CROSSDRESSERS piggyback MIDDLE-AGED MEN in leather-gear

A nearly naked SHE-MALE peels out on a Segue.

A pack of GUARD DOGS swarm over a MAN adorned in nothing more than mylar balloons.

Exotic birds perched atop the heads of DWARVES at full wingspan, flee into the night, SCREECHING.

Stretch can hear VOICES across the stampede--

VOICES

**--RAID!**

The panicked procession swarms unabated over the canyon road.

Karos appears suddenly, his Kabuki make-up now a melted swamp of finger smears. He wears tattered, bloodstained bedsheets that barely cling to him--

--that backpack is tight to his shoulder.

He leaps into the limo through the missing passenger door.

KAROS

**COPS! GO!!!!**

Stretch stomps the gas, nearly running down a LEGLESS MAN in a bunny head, scooting across the street on a creeper board.

INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS

Karos. Coke-spackled nostrils. Mangled doll-hair. Fresh cigarette burns dot his arms like out-sized freckles.

STRETCH

You ok?

KAROS

You're late.

He reaches over, roughly stripping the watch from Stretch's wrist.

STRETCH

No si-- Roger, I was on time--

KAROS

--Not by my count.  
 (taking in limo's damage)  
 Did this thing get squat-fucked by Satan!?  
 (notices Stretch's sartorial woes)  
*Along with your wardrobe?* What in the patron-saint-of-shit happened?

STRETCH

Couple of twists and turns. Where are your, *companions*--

KAROS

--they didn't make it out.

STRETCH

They didn't--?

KAROS

--They might be dead. I don't know.  
 (beat)  
 Did you get the briefcase?

Stretch's gaze shifts to the backpack at Karos' feet.

STRETCH

Laurent mentioned some ledgers.

KAROS

Did you get the case?

STRETCH

I told him I'd bring 'em back to--

KAROS

--Last time I ask. Did you get--

STRETCH

--I got the briefcase. Yes.

KAROS

Where is it?

STRETCH

Roger, I gave my word that I'd return with the ledgers.

KAROS  
Did you give mine?

STRETCH  
Did I--?

KAROS  
*Did you give my word?*

Stretch gets it.

STRETCH  
No.

KAROS  
Then the problem is...?

STRETCH  
You were trading the briefcase for the ledgers. I walked in there without my half of the transaction.

KAROS  
And you walked out with the half that mattered. Crisis averted.  
(beat)  
Where's the briefcase?

Stretch can feel *fists* forming over the steering wheel.

STRETCH  
You're sitting on it.  
(pointing)  
It's under your seat cushion.

A cellphone begins ringing. It isn't Stretch's.

Karos pulls a phone from the bedsheets.

STRETCH (CONT'D)  
I thought you didn't have a phone.

Karos ignores him. Answering the call.

KAROS  
I'm here.  
(beat, listens)  
No. *Public*. That's not public. I want a big place with a bunch of people. We do it out in the open. Then it's just you and I to the air-strip and no one else.

Karos cups the phone. Turns to Stretch.

KAROS (CONT'D)

Kid-- uh, *what the fuck was your name again?*

Stretch seethes. His jaw tightening--

STRETCH

--Kevin.

KAROS

No, it was something else. Something cute. Slim? Shady?

STRETCH

...stretch.

KAROS

Right. Stretch. Clubs are letting out all over town, where's a hot spot, would have a couple hundred people piling out?

STRETCH

The closest would be 'Kite'. It's on La Brea.

KAROS

(into the phone)

There's a club called 'Kite' on La Brea. Meet me there in twenty.

Karos hangs up. Itchy. Annoyed. He fingers his nose.

KAROS (CONT'D)

You got any blow? By any chance?

Stretch forages for the baggie he took off of Faux-Hawk. Karos snags it. Digs out a pinky's worth. Snorts.

KAROS (CONT'D)

Ahhhhh...*now we're talking*. It's low grade crap but beggars can't be whatever the fuck beggars can't be--

STRETCH

Choosers.

Karos clocks Stretch's shitty mood.

KAROS

What's the problem? You get a thumb in the ass that I missed?

STRETCH

Pretty *rough night* Roger, I'm not sure the clothes or car paint an accurate enough portrait of the *fucking hell* I went through for you!

KAROS

Oh, wait, you mean you did something *other* than drive a limo while *slowly dying*? You went out and *risked something*. *Learned something*. *Felt something!*

(beat)

Is that what I did? *For shame!*

(beat)

Whadda you want? You want me to pull your dick out and pet it? Make you a homemade medal? Pin it on your chest?

STRETCH

How 'bout something that doesn't feel like a '*fuck you*' from you!

KAROS

You feeling unloved?  
Underappreciated? Fine.  
What do you wanna know?

STRETCH

Laurent. The Ledgers. Backstory.

KAROS

The ledgers contain hard financials i.e. *illegal activity*, of everyone I did business with and I did business with some *bad guys* that I am now *selling out*, to save myself.

STRETCH

Laurent bought the ledgers?

KAROS

He's a blackmailer. He paid 300k for them. He can make *ten times* that.

STRETCH

Then why not hang onto them?

KAROS

I'm short-selling them to purchase a very expensive plane ticket out of here tonight. One that gets me somewhere I can't be extradited.

(beat)

This contact I'm buying the flight from has his own fleet of jets and is willing to run the risk, provided he gets the ledgers.

STRETCH

What about Laurent?

KAROS

He let you walk out of that hotel room with *his* money?

STRETCH

Yes.

KAROS

Without getting *my* ledgers.

STRETCH

Yeah.

KAROS

Then he's a fucking idiot and since I just got done explaining to you that I did business with bad guys and *beat them*, that would make me--

STRETCH

--worse.

KAROS

Better. The *opposite* of a fucking idiot. Food chain pal. The slow and the weak get digested and shit out.

(beat)

So fuck Laurent.

(beat)

And your 'word.'

(beat)

Neither of which mean bupkis to me. What does is '*Finish Line*.' So, La Brea Boulevard *and step on it*.

Stretch swallows bile. Grins and bears it. Karos retrieves the briefcase and retreats to the back of the limo with that horrible laugh of his that trails off like a taunt.

Stretch's cell buzzes. He checks it. A text from Ignacio that reads like ransom note.

***YOU MISSED THE FUCKING DEADLINE...WHERE IS THE \$\$\$***

Stretch texts back: ***'KITE' on La Brea. 20 Minutes.***

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. 'KITE' - LA BREA AVE. - NIGHT

Club-goers collect their cars at Valet.

The drunk and the disorderly jam up traffic on La Brea, spilling onto the street.

Stretch idles the limo up into the parking lot. Getting catcalled and shit-talked from the rowdy crowd.

VOICE  
*Nice limo homey!*

YET ANOTHER VOICE  
*Dog, Miss Daisy fucked your  
shit up!*

ANOTHER VOICE  
*Yo bro, are you the chauffeur  
to the broke and homeless?*

STILL ANOTHER VOICE  
*Your whip got its ass  
whipped!*

Stretch steps out of the limo, tightens what remains of his tie. Adjusts his tattered cuffs and opens the rear door for Karos who exits slowly.

Karos has changed back into his sweatsuit and removed most of his make-up. He holds the briefcase tight and shoulders the backpack even tighter.

KAROS  
Stay close.

Stretch escorts him through the packed parking lot...

...the crowd parts gradually and they press ahead..

...wading through a teeming throng of drunken, bleary-eyed PATRONS...

...catching random jostles and shoves, as the mass of humanity migrates out from the club...

...they reach the rear of the parking lot and a sea of people seem to part on cue, as if choreographed...

...revealing the Jovi's White Bentley at the back of the lot.

Stretch stops and to his horror, *realizes--*

STRETCH

*--Oh no...*

Hands grab him, turning him bodily. He's brought around face to face with Boris. Bruised and battered. Smiling blood.

BORIS

*Hello budddeee!*

He lifts Stretch and slams him down on the hood of his limo.

KAROS

*Hey! Wait-- what are you doing!?*

The Bentley's door opens. Those croc boots emerge. Six Boris-sized THUGS materialize in cheap Czech silk suits alongside.

KAROS (CONT'D)

*Vladimir, what's going on? This is my driver!*

The Jovi rises, taking a drag off his Sobraine, blowing rings of smoke in lieu of a response. Boris answers for him.

BORIS

Now he is our victim...

A GUN ENTERS FRAME...resting against the back of Boris' head.

IGNACIO

*Chill Drago. You want to fuck this kid up, the line forms at the rear.*

Boris, his massive paw still planted on the back of Stretch's head, turns into the gun barrel.

Ignacio stares over it.

IGNACIO (CONT'D)

*He owes me six-grand. So before you stomp him out, I need to collect.*

Stretch. His face smashed into the hood. His words slurred.

STRETCH

*Mr. Karos, will you be requiring my services any longer this evening?*

Karos' eyes dart between Ignacio and Boris, then back to Stretch.

KAROS

No, I think this concludes our business.

STRETCH

*Fantastic.* Could we settle up then?  
(beat, up at Boris)  
Would you mind too terribly?

Boris reluctantly releases Stretch, allowing him to stand.

KAROS

I direct billed with your company?

Stretch massages his neck, rolling it to regain the feeling.

STRETCH

Correct.  
(a prophetic beat)  
All that remains is the gratuity.

Karos. This shitty little shark-smirk as he plows through his pockets with a free hand and pulls out a *single rolled bill*. A coke straw which he then hands to Stretch, who accepts it, despite being utterly fucking *bewildered* by its appearance.

He unravels it...revealing a \$20 dollar bill, then actually squints at it, as if he were reading the amount wrong.

KAROS

You were late getting back to me.  
You got the briefcase but you didn't get it in time and to quote you '*Life is nothing but timing.*'  
Right?

(a huge, *fuck-you* smile)  
Told you I was gonna steal that one...like I've stolen *everything* before it. But that's not really why you're getting fucked, I was just having fun, fact is, you were *always* gonna get fucked pal because you are a *Beta Male* and I grind guys like you down to nothing. I feast on your need and use your weakness and your willingness *against you*. The promise of six-grand was all it took to fit you for strings.

(beat)  
But take comfort in this. You got beat by the best son. By a bona fide, true, blue-blooded bad guy.

(MORE)

KAROS (CONT'D)

By an Apex Predator who *used you*  
like he's used the *thousands*  
preceding you and the thousands  
that will follow.

(beat)

I eat, sleep, fuck and earn, *ergo*,  
I survive and when this big old  
marble finally melts down and the  
roaches are running what remains,  
I'll be crowned their king, kid.

(beat)

Count on it.

(beat)

I'm am a firestarter Stretch.

(beat)

And you...are...not.

Stretch is still just deadpanning that \$20.

Ignacio scowls. Tightening his grip on the gun.

Boris forms fists. A sound like cattle ribs snapping.

The Jovi remains motionless, a menthol fog swirling over.

A search-light suddenly blasts down sunspot-hot as POLICE  
CRUISERS and UNMARKED BLACK SEDANS flood the parking lot.

LINARES and his team arrive en masse.

The CROWD disperses and scatters as AGENTS disgorge the  
vehicles. Guns drawn.

Stretch immediately spread eagles across the limo's hood.

A defiant Ignacio trains his aim on the TASK FORCE MEMBERS  
surrounding the scene.

Boris pulls his gun now.

Stretch freaks.

STRETCH

*Whoa! Whoa! Wait! Wait!*

The Jovi's henchmen follow suit.

The standoff goes from a simmer to a boil.

STRETCH (CONT'D)

*No! No! Wait! Hold on!*

A cacophony of VOICES collide. SHOUTS are exchanged.

LINARES

--FBI! EVERYBODY PRONE! DROP YOUR  
GUNS! DROP YOUR GUNS RIGHT NOW--!

Karos spins back to Linares. Enraged.

KAROS

*You sonofabitch! YOU'RE A FED!*

LINARES

KAROS PUT YOUR HANDS FLAT ON THE  
HOOD OF THAT CAR!

Karos doesn't budge.

LINARES (CONT'D)

*NOW!!*

He complies, turning around slowly and assuming the position.  
More SHOUTS. The Jovi's thugs refuse to lower their weapons.  
Stretch is a like a little kid, lost in a department store.

STRETCH

I'M NOT EVEN SUPPOSED TO BE HERE!

Tension mounts. Trigger-fingers tighten.

Hudack moves on Ignacio. Both point blank on one another.

STRETCH (CONT'D)

THIS IS A BIG MISUNDERSTANDING!!

Linares racks a pump gauge and approaches Karos from behind.

The chopper searchlight strafes the scene, hard glare from  
above hides faces and shadows intentions--

STRETCH (CONT'D)

I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING...!!

Karos is reaching for something on his waist...

...Stretch SEES it, it's Liotta's 9mm.

Linares draws closer, his aim trained tight.

Stretch bleats out for everybody's benefit--

STRETCH (CONT'D)

*--I SWEAR TO GOD! I'M INNOCENT!*

Hudack is ordering Ignacio to the ground. SCREAMING.

Karos is about to grab that gun and set it all off.

Stretch's panic overwhelms him as he WAILS shrill over the din--

STRETCH (CONT'D)  
 --*I'M JUST THE LIMO DRIVER!!*

--and almost *the instant* he utters this, he knows...

...He knows without turning around but does so anyway, slowly and painfully...

...and finds his ex, CANDACE, standing there, staring back at him, surrounded by her equally stunned bachelorette party.

The jig's up. Cover blown. Facade *fried*.

She now knows that he is a complete and total fucking fake...

...and she's rendered speechless by it. Regarding him with this lopsided look of pity and regret.

Stretch slips into a sort of fugue state and seems to float above the fray, almost disembodied, detached from it all...

...he glances down absently at the engine fluid, collecting at his feet...

...and HEARS '*Make It Rain*' pulsing from the club...

...finally, he looks over at Karl with a 'K' who is on hand with this friendly reminder:

KARL WITH A 'K'  
*Don't you fucking hate this song?*

...then suddenly the universe and all things in it, seem to make sense to Stretch for the first time, in very long time.

He turns to Karos.

STRETCH  
 Roger...you know...  
 (as Karos turns to him)  
 ...you're wrong.

Karos glares. His hand still hovering over Liotta's 9mm.

STRETCH (CONT'D)  
 ...I *am* a firestarter--

--and like a master magician, Stretch makes that Zippo suddenly appear in his right hand--

--he flips it, sparks it...

STRETCH (CONT'D)  
*...and now we're on fire...*

...and drops it.

The engine fluids combust and ignite.

The flames spread even faster.

FIRE roars up through the engine compartment, engulfing the entire front of the car.

Everyone FLEES. Fearing an imminent explosion.

Stretch grabs Karos and SLAMS a right cross into his jaw, knocking him senseless and relieving him of that backpack.

In the same motion, *he grabs the briefcase* and HOLLERS over at Ignacio:

STRETCH (CONT'D)  
*--Iggy! HERE COMES YOUR SIX-GRAND!*

Stretch spins like shot-putter and HURLS the case into the air, sending 300,000 dollars airborne across the parking lot.

'Make It Rain' indeed.

The confused crowd congeals behind the sight of \$100 bills fluttering like confetti above. Pandemonium spreads. Like a land grab from the late 1800's, people rush in to stake their claim in what devolves into a ratfuck of a rugby scrum.

The Cops and Task Force members are instantly overpowered by the stampeding mob as they try in vain to restore order.

Stretch turns. Facing Candace.

The two lock eyes...there seems to be something there, some understanding or truth...some feelings unrequited...

...and then her gaze deliberately drifts up to all that money falling around her...she's mesmerized by it.

...and so finally, Stretch has his answer...

*...no, she wasn't that great after all.*

He turns, running off through the crush of people, using their mad, mindless scramble as a means of escape.

SMASH CUT TO:

The sunrise rims the Hollywood Hills.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Stretch. Still running. Who knows how far. Miles maybe. The backpack sags off his shoulder. He pushes himself to the point of pure exhaustion. Doubles over. Winded. He spots a pay phone on the street. Starts toward it.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Stretch takes up the receiver and dials **911**.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

Stretch sinks into a booth, slinging the backpack off his shoulder and stuffing it into the seat next to him.

A WAITRESS sidles up skittishly. Put off by his appearance.

STRETCH  
Coffee. Black.

She scurries away, whispering to her MANAGER.

Stretch checks his cell. '4 MISSED CALLS' All from Charlie.

A bell on the front entrance jingles. A large group files in. SHADOWS fall over Stretch. He glances up.

Linares. Flanked by other FEDS and members of his TASK FORCE.

Stretch holds out the backpack. Linares takes it from him.

STRETCH (CONT'D)  
You're not French are you?

LINARES  
I'm as French as you are LAPD.

Stretch nods solemnly, surrendering Liotta's badge.

STRETCH  
I told you I'd get you those ledgers.

LINARES

Yeah, but what you didn't tell me was that you were going to *throw* away my 300,000 dollars to do it.

STRETCH

I thought Karos was gonna start shooting.

LINARES

With a blank-firing gun?

STRETCH

It wouldn't have mattered. Someone would have returned fire and maybe someone else would've gotten killed.

(beat)

I didn't know Karos was an FBI target. I figured he was a rich flake I could make a fat tip off of...

(picking at the table top)

...I don't even know how all this happened. Just kinda snowballed on me, one thing led to another.

LINARES

It doesn't take much, go from good to bad. It's the smallest, dumbest little twist of fate sometimes.

STRETCH

Shit, I didn't even believe in that, *at all*, before last night.

LINARES

You didn't believe in 'Fate?'

(chuckles)

My friend, all things happen for a reason. *Has* to be that way. Be too depressing otherwise.

Stretch stares at his filthy hands.

STRETCH

So am I going to jail then?

LINARES

If you are, I'm not taking you. Karos is locked up, hopefully for life and I'm going home to see if my wife still recognizes me.

(MORE)

LINARES (CONT'D)

Since you're now out of a job, have warrants outstanding and are likely the target of multiple lawsuits TBD, I'd say you're swimming in more than your fair share of shit.

(beat, with a nod)

You're on your own now pal.

Linares starts out of the diner, says, over his shoulder.

LINARES (CONT'D)

You should do it professionally.

Stretch looks up. A beat.

STRETCH

Sorry?

Linares turns back.

LINARES

Acting. You're damn good. You had me fooled. And if I'm you, the next time I'm sitting in a limo, *it better be in the backseat.*

Stretch. Too tired to smile. Gratified all the same.

Linares and his contingent exit.

The waitress arrives with Stretch's coffee a moment later. She smiles at him. His phone buzzes. He checks it.

An E-mail from the mystery woman.

*'Hey, read my last e-mail. Felt kind of stalker-ish. Sorry.'*

Stretch E-mails back.

*'I couldn't respond earlier, I'm sorry. A very long and strange night has finally come to a close.'*

He sips his coffee. Her response arrives a few moments later:

*'Mine too. I don't think they could get any weirder.'*

Stretch grins...but his grin fades fast for some reason.

He scrolls his cell to check her earlier E-mail. It reads:

*Meet at Norm's. La Cienega. After work? What do you say? :)*

Stretch looks at the menu on the table in front of him.

**NORM'S. 470 NORTH LA CIENEGA BOULEVARD.**

He whiplashes out the window to the **NORM'S** SIGN outside.

Holy shit...She's here. *What were the odds?*

Purely by chance...by fate.

He takes a moment to register the madness of this before typing and sending the fastest E-mail ever typed or sent.

*'You didn't wind up at Norm's by any chance?'*

He waits. Eons seem to pass. Her response:

*'Yeah, I'm just having some coffee, clearing my head. Waiting to hear from a friend.'*

Stretch slowly peers around the corner of his booth.

At the rear of the restaurant, a WOMAN sits alone. Her back is to us.

Stretch finds himself standing and moving tentatively in her direction. He stops. Considers something. Then keeps going.

She's just a few feet away now.

He passes by her slowly and looks back at her.

WE CAN HEAR her gasp...*gasp but say nothing.*

Stretch's face fills with this wonderful light. A huge smile follows. He hovers there, in a kind of half-dream...

...like a man who can't believe his luck.

He sits down across from her. At a complete loss for words. Tears well up in his eyes now...but we still don't see her.

She reaches her hands out across the table. He takes them gently in his, kissing both and staring back at her.

...then, and only then...*she speaks...*in a VOICE we recognize right away...

CHARLIE

...Yes, indeed.

**THE END**

