

The Courier

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12/5/1997

FADE IN:

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE A PRISON - NIGHT

A Greyhound bus drops off a scraggly prison guard. He is average in every possible way. His clothes are gray, his hat is blue. His boots are black. He is The Courier, 35. His sole possession is a blue lunch box.

A sign outside the prison reads:

Buckley Criminal Asylum

The Courier stops at the first gate, where a GUARD looks down from behind a thick glassed control room.

GUARD

Name?

THE COURIER

Thomason. Leonard. 42 dash 389.

The Guard checks a computer screen. The gate beneath him unlocks. The Courier is in.

INT. PRISON ENTRANCE WAY - NIGHT

The Courier walks through a short reception area, where tours of the prison would take place. There are mannequins of guards and prisoners doing chummy things like playing cards and working together on the wood lathe. He walks straight through, all business.

INT. CHECK ROOM - NIGHT

The next room is bare except for a card table and GUARD 2. He's reading a book.

GUARD 2

Hey! How's it going? Gettin' through the night shift?

THE COURIER

Yeah. It's not bad.

The Courier dumps the contents of his lunch pail onto the table. Sandwich, chips, and a pickle.

GUARD 2

Don't fret, buddy. How long you been here, three weeks? Eight, twelve months tops and you'll move to afternoons. That's where the real action is. Where were you before?

THE COURIER
Leavenworth.

The Guard laughs.

GUARD 2
Fuckin' Cub Scout you are! Well, you're
in the big house now.

He checks out The Courier's lunch, examining each item He
picks up the pickle.

GUARD 2 (cont'd)
Sandwich, chips, and a pickle. Same damn
thing every night. Don't you get tired
of this? Because I must admit, I'm not a
big fan of pickles myself.

The Courier snatches the sarawrapped pickle and looks it
over lovingly.

THE COURIER
Let me tell you something, Glen, is it?
This is not just a pickle.

He unpeals the wrapper.

THE COURIER (cont'd)
This is a Northern Virginia Chestnut
Polish. The cucumber this pickle was
made from was picked at the height of its
sweetness. When was the last time you
heard a cucumber described as sweet?

The Guard just shakes head.

THE COURIER (cont'd)
Normally, it would have been a shame to
ruin this cucumber with the pickling
process, except in the hands of Carl
Carlson. Carl's pickled olives for the
King of Spain, calve's liver for the
President of Mexico, and even pickled a
whole pig for the Chief Shaman of the
Holybutus of Sri Lanka. You can imagine
what the tribe thought of that.

The Guard can just imagine

THE COURIER (cont'd)
Bottom line, my friend, is that I'm not
just enjoying a nightly pickle I'm in
the company of the Gods. Smell that.

The Guard take a huge whiff of the outstretched pickle.

THE COURIER (cont'd)

Do you smell the hint of clove, hidden just beneath the garlic? It's perfect. Carl Carlson actually watches his pickles pickle. None of the other greats have ever gone to such extremes. This is not just a pickle.

The guard is a believer.

CUT TO:

INT. GUARD LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

The Courier carefully unpacks his lunch in front of his locker. He unwraps the pickle, looks at it longingly, and takes a small bite. When he pulls the pickle away from his mouth there is a thin metal tube revealed hidden in the pickle. The Courier carefully extracts it.

INT. PRISON - NIGHT

The Courier meanders through a maze of checkpoints, locked gates, and foreboding corridors. Finally, he emerges at a large console where one YOUNG GUARD watches twelve security monitors.

Each screen on the console switches to shots of jail cells and hallways _ except for one that stays rigidly on a single cell containing one IMMENSE BLACK PRISONER. He's sitting quietly, reading a book.

The young guard rises, gathering his things as The Courier moves around the panel.

YOUNG GUARD

How you doing, Leonard?

THE COURIER

Hangin' in there.

(gesturing at the Immense Black Prisoner)

How's the big man?

YOUNG GUARD

Still just reading. All he does, all day long.

The Courier nods again as the young guard shuffles away.

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Light dances across a CRUSTY PRISONER's face while he sleeps. He blinks, bothered, and wakes. The light grows fiercer across his features _ he squints, reaches for his glasses, and his eyes bug out as he realizes a prisoner is on fire in the cell across from him.

Crusty starts howling like a shot dog.

CRUSTY PRISONER
(screams)
Fire! Fire in the hole!

The rest of the cell block, jerked out of their sleep, goes berserk.

INT. CONSOLE MONITOR - NIGHT

One screen shows the burning prisoner. The screen next to it remains locked on the Immense Black Prisoner. Suddenly, that screen goes black.

The Courier is no longer at his post.

INT. BURNING PRISONER'S CELL - NIGHT

Guards rush in from all over, struggle to open the bars to the burning cell, then blanket the burning prisoner with carbon dioxide.

When the dust settles, they are surprised to find that the burning prisoner was a mannequinlike the ones in the reception area

Confusion ensues.

INT. IMMENSE BLACK PRISONER'S CELL - NIGHT

The Immense Black Prisoner looks up from his book to find The Courier standing in his open cell door.

IMMENSE BLACK PRISONER
Fuck you want?

THE COURIER
I'm the Courier.

The prisoner chews on this- there is recognition in his face.

IMMENSE BLACK PRISONER
Nippy Jones sent 'cha?

THE COURIER

That's right.

The Courier pulls the 'key' out of his boot.

IMMENSE BLACK PRISONER

I'll be damned! That backward readin'
gap toothed little rat kept his word.

(glibly)

Do I need to sign for this somewhere?

The Courier is gone.

IMMENSE BLACK PRISONER

(calling out)

Don't you want to see what's in here?

The prisoner opens the tube and pulls out a small, metal key-like instrument. He reaches through the bars and slips the key into the slot on his door. There is a click, and the Immense Black Prisoner smiles.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE A PRISON - NIGHT

The Courier boards the dilapidated bus.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. THE COURIER'S APARTMENT - DAY

The Courier steps out of his shower and wraps a white towel around his waist. His beard is gone, and his hair is sandy instead of jet black. The effect is dramatic as he looks like a different person.

He walks through his sparse apartment. No television, radio, nothing. He hits a flashing button on his answering machine.

ELDERLY MAN'S VOICE

(o.s., with an Eastern European
accent)

Hello? This thing recording? Well, if so, this is your father calling. Haven't heard from you in a while, wanted to let you know I got the check. Hope to hell you're all right. Give you old man a call when you get a chance. Know you're busy. Okay. Goodbye.

The Courier moves to his sparsely-decorated kitchen and is flabbergasted to find a man, LISPY, rummaging through his refrigerator.

Lispy is a thin, effeminate hombre who likes to wear baubles, lip gloss, and speaks with a well-practiced lisp. Ironically, his demeanor is extremely tough and edgy. He does not look up when the Courier enters.

LISPY

I underth-tand you're the man who deliver-ths items to hard-to-reach people.

Lispy backs away from the refrigerator with a dill pickle stuck between his thumb and forefinger like a cigar.

The Courier eyes his pickle

LISPY

My queth-tion i-th do you deliver item-th to people who do not want to be reached?

Lispy takes a bite of the pickle.

LISPY (cont'd)

Damn, thaths taythty.

The Courier cautiously ambles to the refrigerator himself and withdraws an apple

LISPY

I've been th-itting here waiting for you to fini-th that shower th-o that I could ath-k you that que-th-tion.

Lispy has moved over to the kitchen table where he has been working a crossword puzzle in ink. A small attache case sits next to him.

LISPY

What-th a five letter word for 'king'?

THE COURIER

Baron.

LISPY

Uh-uh. Th-tarts with a 'M'.

THE COURIER

Mogul.

Lispy nods approvingly, inks in the word. He lifts a glass of orange juice to his lips, replaces it on the table.

After a second, he raises his head.

LISPY

What does-th the name Sivle Yelserp mean to you?

THE COURIER

I've heard it.

Lispy nods in the same manner.

LISPY

He th-ent me to find you. He want-th to hire you.

THE COURIER

He's alive then?

LISPY

Very much th-o.

THE COURIER

Does Mr. Yelserp know my terms?

The strange man lifts the attache up and lays it on the table.

From his breast pocket, he withdraws a cashier's check for one- hundred thousand dollars and slides it over to the Courier.

THE COURIER

I don't take checks.

LISPY

Thi-th one you will. You have his word.

The Courier picks up the check, examining it closely. 100,000 dollars. Lispy nods at it.

LISPY

As I underthtand it, that is what you make for completing a delivery. You can have it up front--

(beat)

Plu-th five hundred thouthand more if thith case find-th right hand-th.

THE COURIER

Why the kick?

LISPY
Becauth it can't be done.

THE COURIER
Whose hands?

LISPY
Yeltherp's and Yeltherp's only.

THE COURIER
I don't follow.

LISPY
Sivle Yelserp want-th thith package
delivered to himthelf.

THE COURIER
Why?

LISPY
He want-th to thee if he is how should I
thay "findable." If anyone can do it,
he thaid it would be you. I thuggest you
take hith offer.

THE COURIER
Is that right?

LISPY
Yeth. Although he may not be findable,
you obviously are. Again, I thuggest you
take hith offer.

Lispy rises to leave, dusting off his trousers.

LISPY
Oh, and you have til S-thunday.
Otherwise-th, the offer is re-thinded
that check is no good, and you become a
marked man. That'th the deal.

THE COURIER
That's not much of a deal.

LISPY
Tough s-thit.

After the odd man has left, The Courier puts his glass in the
sink and tosses the crossword in the trash.

INT. MUSTY BOXING RING - DAY

A wizened old man, CORNERMAN, sits in the bleachers of a tawdry gymnasium, watching a black kid pummel a Mexican in a decrepit boxing ring. The Courier takes a seat behind him.

CORNERMAN

Mickey T. and No-Neck went down while you was away.

THE COURIER

Whacked?

CORNERMAN

Naw. Fifty to life.

THE COURIER

What about Cisco?

CORNERMAN

(snickers)

Cisco Cisco got scots. Marched fifteen fuckin' firemen into court, all swearin' they was eatin' Moons over My-Hammy at Denny's with Cisco when Papa Nillo was taken out. Defense had a field day, all those uniforms. Cisco walked easy.

(beat)

Weren't so easy for Mick and No-Neck though. They ain't got the friends Cisco's got.

THE COURIER

The truth's the truth.

CORNERMAN

You're right about that.

The Mexican kid's face is turning into a raspberry, and both Cornerman and The Courier wince as a three-punch combination lands cleanly.

THE COURIER

I got a name for you.

CORNERMAN

Shoot.

THE COURIER

Sivle Yelserp.

Cornerman's face turns stone white. His eyes sweep the gym.

CORNERMAN

Don't ever say that name aloud. Not around me. Not here. That name gets mentioned, I'm Al Capone's vaults. I got nothing for you, for Chris'sakes.

THE COURIER

Don't get so shaky. I'm working for him. I just need to find the man.

CORNERMAN

Are you saying something? Because I'm not listening.

THE COURIER

Yeah?

CORNERMAN

That's what I said. You're lookin' at the back of a clam.

THE COURIER

That's funny. You listened to me when I told you to get off the Delta job.

Cornerman pretends to be captivated by the fight. The Mexican kid's nose pops.

THE COURIER

Let's see if I remember that correctly. Hmm. You quit like I told you and the next day Slants and Jerome exploded into a thousand pieces. Parts of 'em were found all over Rhode Island or was it Virginia?

The old man blinks, his face shrewing up.

THE COURIER

You listened to me a great deal back then. It saved your craggly old ass.

CORNERMAN

All right. All right. You want to know where Yelserp is?

The Mexican fighter lands flat on his back. Two Hispanics who are seated in the stands below sulk dejectedly up and pay Cornerman a few dollars before leaving.

CORNERMAN

(whispers)

You want to know where the King is, you gotta look up San Fran Tanna. That's all I got to say and you didn't hear it from me.

Cornerman looks away like no one is sitting next to him.

THE COURIER

Where do I find him?

CORNERMAN

(still looking away)

Clam, I say!

The old man turns to make sure this conversation is through, but The Courier has already disappeared.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO BUS STOP - NIGHT

SAN FRAN TANNA is a bookish Chinese man who wears thick, black glasses that are twice the size of his gaunt face. He waits placidly on a bench for the bus to approach, spreadsheets drooped across his knees. The Bay Bridge glows in the background.

When the bus pulls up, he collects his data tables and climbs aboard.

In the eighth seat on the left, San Fran Tanna spreads his worksheets across his knees and buries his head in the figures. He does not look up when the seat next to him is occupied by The Courier. He speaks in a slow Texas drawl.

SAN FRAN TANNA

Ya ain't workin' for who you think ya are.

THE COURIER

Who do I think I'm working for?

This remark gets the Texas Chinaman to raise his head.

SAN FRAN TANNA

(annoyed)

Are you a ventriloquist? No? Then don't treat me like no damn dummy!

THE COURIER

All right. Who am I working for?

SAN FRAN TANNA

The guy who hired you realhomo wears
rings on every finger, lip gloss talk-th
like thi-th.

THE COURIER

That's right.

SAN FRAN TANNA

He don't work for Yelserp.

The Courier shakes his head as if to say "he doesn't?" and
San Fran Tanna answers with the same gesture.

SAN FRAN TANNA

Nope. He's a Fed.

He waits for The Courier's reaction, but is disappointed to
receive none.

SAN FRAN TANNA

Since Yelserp submerged, the Feds have
been itching like mosquito bites. They
got high-profile indictment and no
arrest. They're nervous. They gifted
you to do their work for 'em.

(beat)

You open the case?

THE COURIER

No. I never do.

SAN FRAN TANNA

Yeah, whatever. My guess is that it's
got a tracker in it. You find the King,
and they're gonna swoop in, that sort of
thing.

The bus rolls to a stop and San Fran Tanna rises.

SAN FRAN TANNA

This here's my stop.

The Courier gets up and lets the Chinaman lead the way off of
the bus.

When the bus drives away, a POLICE OFFICER walks up to the
two of them and BLASTS San Fran Tanna in the face with his
pistol. The Chinese man's body drops to The Courier's feet.

POLICE OFFICER

(politely)

Hi. How are you? I think you better
come with me.

They step over San Fran Tanna.

POLICE OFFICER (cont'd)

(politely)

Watch the blood.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The police officer leads The Courier down a stark corridor.
He always talks in the same manner -- as polite as an English
butler.

POLICE OFFICER

How was your flight into San Francisco?
Continental has some good rates right
now, though I always prefer to fly
American.

The Courier gives him a smug half-smile.

POLICE OFFICER

The weather in the Bay should be fabulous
while you're here. If you get the
chance, try to get up to the wine
country, it's oh, here we are.

They arrive at a wooden door, and the officer opens the door
for him.

INT. TORTURE ROOM - NIGHT

A single wooden chair stands sentinel in the otherwise bare
room.

POLICE OFFICER

Have a seat there, please. Atta, boy.
Wonderful.

The officer moves behind him and chains his ankles to the
chair.

POLICE OFFICER

Would you mind putting your hands back
here for me. Great. Thanks. That
really helps.

He handcuffs The Courier's wrists together, chains them to the chair, then claps his own hands as though he's wiping off the hard work.

POLICE OFFICER

All-righty then. That does it for me.
It was great meeting you. You take care
now.

He leaves.

The Courier waits for an eternity.

Finally, the door bursts open and a large woman, MRS. CAPOLILLO, rushes in. She has abroad forehead, a mop of bleached hair, meaty arms, and fists the size of cantaloupes.

She moves non-stop to where The Courier sits and WALLOPS him one two three times in the face. Mrs. Capolillo rushes out.

A thin line of blood snakes down his cheek where she cut him.

In a minute, a grey-haired man, MR. CAPOLILLO enters. He is short and pudgy, but looks dapper in his neatly pressed shirt that's open at the collar. Tufts of white chest hair poke out at the top. He dabs at his forehead with a black handkerchief.

MR. CAPOLILLO

I see you've met my wife.

Dab dab dab

MR. CAPOLILLO (CONT'D)

Now, I know what you're thinking. How could a sap like me land the prize fish? I'll tell ya. It took persistence, perseverance, and good old-fashioned gusto.

The Courier pulls at his manacles, but there's no hope of loosening them. Mr. Capolillo goes on dabbing.

MR. CAPOLILLO (CONT'D)

Forty years later, she still makes my heart skip when she enters the room.

The Courier understands this. Mr. Capolillo notices the blood.

MR. CAPOLILLO (CONT'D)

I see she forgot to take her wedding ring off again. She sure is keen on that ring.

(beat)

But you don't want a lecture on ancient history, do you? You want to know why you're here. The truth is you came to my town with a delivery. And in my town, all mail belongs to me.

THE COURIER

Is that right?

MR. CAPOLILLO

(flaring up)

You're god-damn right that's right!

Dab dab dab

MR. CAPOLILLO

(collecting himself)

Okay. Okay. Settle. Settle. Now. Please don't interrupt me. I don't like interruptions. Okay, where was I? Oh, yes. All mail belongs to me. You may think of me as San Francisco's Postmaster General. Therefore, you have something that is mine. Fork it over.

THE COURIER

I can't do that.

MR. CAPOLILLO

I don't like that word, "can't."

THE COURIER

Okay. I won't do that.

MR. CAPOLILLO

Mr. Courier. Did you see what happened to Mr. Tanna? Do you think I would hesitate to continue the practice of eradicating the elements in my life which are objectionable? Mr. Tanna has been a trusted confidant in the past.

(beat)

In the past.

THE COURIER

Sorry.

MR. CAPOLILLO
I wish you hadn't said that.

He shakes his head and leaves the room.

After a spell, the door opens again and Mrs. Capolillo returns. The last thing The Courier sees before the room takes a massive ferris wheel spin is the woman's fat fists flying at his face.

EXT. JUNK YARD - DAY

The Courier lies face down in the dirt; the Golden Gate bridge looms in the background.

He lifts himself up, his face lumpy, and limps over to a pay phone.

After depositing a quarter

THE COURIER
Hey, Mike. Who we got in the Bay?

A muffled voice comes out of the receiver.

THE COURIER
Nope. He's dead.

Muffled voice again.

THE COURIER
Jack Straw's out here? Since when?
Jeez. All right. A day or two. Okay.
All right. Thanks.

He replaces the receiver and gingerly touches his swollen eye. He checks for blood, and dials another number.

The Courier's POP answers.

POP
Hello?

THE COURIER
Hey, Pop.

POP
I'll be damned... you're alive. Been wondering about you.

THE COURIER
I know, I'm sorry. I'm on a job.

POP

So how is the computer sales business?

The Courier sees a police cruiser crawl by.

THE COURIER

What? Oh, its okay. Busy.

POP

Well, when you get a chance you should come out and visit. Not gonna be around forever, you know!

The police car makes a turn at the end of the block.

THE COURIER

Don't talk that way. Hey, Pop, I gotta go.

POP

Yeah, yeah. I'm sure you do. Good talking to you.

THE COURIER

Yeah, you to.

The Courier hangs up and steps out to the street He hails a cab.

In moments, one pulls to the curb and the Courier climbs in the back.

A young CAB DRIVER turns to him, immediately acknowledging the pummeled face.

CAB DRIVER

Where to, Holyfield?

THE COURIER

Thirty-five hundred Bayside Drive.

CAB DRIVER

You got it, Real Deal.

The cab driver picks up his CB mouthpiece and relays his pick-up to the station.

The Courier eases back into the seat, grimacing. Without turning around

THE COURIER

Is there a police car following us?

CAB DRIVER
(over his shoulder)
What's that, champ?

THE COURIER
Is there a police car behind us? A cop?

The cab driver peers into the rear view, then eyes the Courier.

CAB DRIVER
A few cars back.

THE COURIER
You know any crowded places around here?

CAB DRIVER
You need to get lost, palooka?

THE COURIER
That's right.

CAB DRIVER
No problem. Game day.

The cab makes a sharp turn the police car follows.

Soon, the cab turns toward 3-Com (formerly Candlestick) ball park.

CAB DRIVER
Better go ahead and pay me now.

The Courier tosses a twenty over the seat.

THE COURIER
Slow to about fifteen when you get up there and keep going, okay?

CAB DRIVER
You got it, Tyson.

The cab pulls up to where a huge crowd is moving down a sidewalk to get to the stadium.

While the cab is still moving, the door opens and the Courier rolls out, springs up like a cat, and quickly blends into the crowd.

The police officer who shot San Fran Tanna can only watch from his car.

EXT. JACK STRAW'S HEMP SHOP- DAY

There is a small flower stand next to the shop. The Courier examines a leafy plant, plucks off a leaf, and goes into the store.

INT. JACK STRAW'S HEMP SHOP- DAY

JACK STRAW is a white man with dirty dread locks and a scraggly beard. He wears a loose tie-dye, hemp pants and sandals. A hemp beret is perched on his head.

His store is a Grateful Dead concert parking lot that's paying rent. Small tables are covered with bongos, incense, pebble necklaces, and various little trinkets. Hemp clothing hangs from all the walls, and posters of the Dead fight bumper stickers and license plates for wall space. The Dead play on a little box.

JACK STRAW

Courier! What's happenin', my man?

THE COURIER

You got any ice?

JACK STRAW

Freezer in the back room.

INT. LIVING SPACE - DAY

The Courier walks to the back which is a disgusting little hole. The sheets on the cot have an oval ring of brown baked into them. "Pulp Fiction" plays on the small television. The scene where John Travolta opens the briefcase and sees the yellow light catches The Courier's attention.

JACK STRAW

(o.s.)

Good to see you, man. Haven't seen you since the July 4th show in Boise.

THE COURIER

Yeah. Sorry about Jerry. How long you been in San Francisco?

The Courier looks over a wall covered with bootleg audio tapes. Each is a Dead show with a different date on it.

JACK STRAW

(o.s.)

Eight months. I stopped touring when he died. Twelve-hundred and fifty-two straight shows.

THE COURIER

Looks like you taped them all.

JACK STRAW

(o.s.)

Yep. Every one. Figured it was a kind of sign, you know? Jerry dying. Decided to get back into it.

THE COURIER

How'd they know I was out here?

The Courier opens the small freezer and chips some ice off the frozen sides.

JACK STRAW

(o.s.)

Who didn't? After Cornerman told you to look up Tanna, he started sweating like a whore at a Catholic bar mitzvah.

The Courier drops the ice chips in a cup. He looks through a small cabinet and finds some paint thinner. He adds this to the ice, swirls it around, and takes a sip.

JACK STRAW (CONT'D)

(o.s.)

He dialed everyone out here trying to cover his ass. The whole coast knew you were coming. If you'd come to see me first, I would've told ya that. But you didn't.

THE COURIER

My mistake. Didn't know you were back.

The Courier pours the rest of the thinner out, and dumps the ice into a towel. He rubs the plant leaf onto the towel and holds it against his head. He goes back to store.

JACK STRAW

The couple you ran into are Mr. and Mrs. Capolillo. Real pieces of work, these two. I see you got the wedding ring treatment. They must think real highly of you.

Jack watches a kid look over the bongs.

JACK STRAW

(to the kid)

Those are hand-carved by a guy in Mexico. Get you high just lookin' at them.

(MORE)

JACK STRAW (cont'd)
 (to The Courier)
 Yeah, you're lucky you're still alive.
 They're a couple of psychos. A real Dr.
 Jeckyll and Mrs. Hyde. Blood-thirsty
 sons-of-bitches.

He sniffs the air.

JACK STRAW (cont'd)
 Jesus Christ! You stink.

Jack waves some incense around.

THE COURIER
 Paint thinner.

JACK STRAW
 Paint thinner?

THE COURIER
 If you introduce a poison into the body,
 the body will fight the poison, no matter
 where it is. I drink it, and put it
 against my eye. Should help with
 infection. The oil from the plant is a
 simple conductor of heat, or in this
 case, cold.

JACK STRAW
 Plant?

THE COURIER
 What's their interest?

JACK STRAW
 The Capolillos? They're still fuming
 about the Doggy Deal.

THE COURIER
 What's that?

JACK STRAW
 You've never heard of the Doggy Deal?
 Shit, man. Tell Gilligan 'hi' for me
 when you get back to the desert island
 you been on.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK IN SUBURBIA - DAY

Mr. and Mrs. Capolillo walk arm in arm down a sidewalk in front of a row of houses that look as though they're out of the Cleaver's neighborhood.

They both have immense plastic smiles across their faces.

They are walking a gorgeous German Shepherd.

JACK STRAW (V.O.)

The Capolillos had this German Shepherd bitch that they loved like their own child, since Mrs. Cap is barren and can't have no kids of her own, thank God. And this bitch is made. I mean its got servants to feed it, bathe it, wipe its ass when it dumps on the lawn, the works, you understand? Anyways, they asked Yelserp to stud it seeing as he's got thirteen Shepherd champions himself. Real dog lovers, these guys. And the Caps think they're doing him an honor, you know, kissing his ass, maybe ask him if he wants one of the pups in a few months.

The Capolillos turn up a walkway to a stately Victorian home. The door opens and the leash to the German Shepherd is handed over.

Before the door shuts on her, Mrs. Capolillo blows kisses to her dog.

INT. YELSERP'S HALLWAY - DAY

The bitch is led down a lengthy corridor.

JACK STRAW (V.O.)

Well, Yelserp's got a bug up his ass cause he's received word that the Caps are skimming on hookers and guns all up and down the West Coast, you know, getting ready to make a run at the King. It's all behind the curtain, and they think he don't know what's going on, but there ain't nothing goes on that Yelserp don't know about and that's the damn truth. Anyways, Yelserp's fit to kill, so you know what he does? He goes out and buys the ugliest mutt he can find. I mean a real bone-hound. I mean this creature is a cross between Benji and Yoda.

The dog comes to a stop outside of a large door.

The door is pushed open to reveal the most hideously deformed mutt ever to appear in American Cinema. This mutt has one expression etched into its face: 'horny bastard.'

The Capolillo's bitch looks frightened as she is pushed into the room and the door is locked behind her.

JACK STRAW (V.O.)

(snickers)

Yelserp's boys all start taking bets on how many times this mutt's gonna stick her, and believe me, nobody bet the under and everybody cleaned up. When Yelserp gives the bitch back to the Caps, it don't know whether its coming or going.

The front door opens, and the leash is handed back to the Capolillos, who look confused.

Their once beautiful German Shepherd now appears rather disheveled.

INT. CAPOLILLO'S KITCHEN - DAY

JACK STRAW (V.O.)

But that's not the worst of it. Six months later, this bitch shoots out the three most hideous looking pups ever to be born in No Cal, and then keels over dead as a doornail.

Three nasty puppies roll around on the floor in front of their dead mother as Mrs. Capolillo screams in the background.

BACK TO:

INT. JACK STRAW'S HEMP SHOP - DAY

JACK STRAW

The Caps have been foaming at the mouth ever since Yelserp went under. They're like sharks circling around blood.

THE COURIER

What about you?

JACK STRAW

What about me?

THE COURIER

You got any ideas on where the big man's hiding?

JACK STRAW

Nope. Not sure I'd tell you if I did.
Tanna knew, and look where that got him.

The bong kid brings a two-footer up to the counter. Jack looks it over, takes a practice pull.

JACK STRAW

Great choice. Twelve bucks.

The kid empties his pockets.

KID

Only got seven.

JACK STRAW

This your first one.

The kid nods. Jack Straw mulls, and hands it over.

JACK STRAW

Knock yourself out.

KID

Cool, man. Thanks.

The kid leaves.

THE COURIER

Tanna was right? Lispy is a Fed?

JACK STRAW

That's the word.

THE COURIER

In that case, where can I find Richter?

JACK STRAW

All you gotta do is find where Hitler's speaking. You find a Hitler, you'll find Richter.

INT. GUN SHOP - DAY

The Courier enters the shop, which has animal heads covering every inch of the exposed walls. Guns line-up like S.S. soldiers behind glass cases.

Right next to the door is a bulletin board covered with right wing paraphernalia. The N.R.A., the K.K.K., Friends of Firearms, are all represented. Plastered right in the middle of it all is a flyer for a Nazi rally.

EXT. REMOTE FIELD IN WOODS - NIGHT

A vociferous leader, HITLER, speaks from a podium at a Neo-Nazi rally. He is ferociously animated and energetic and even wears one of those fucked-up Hitler moustaches.

HITLER

You don't think they're ready for a war?
You don't think they're training right
now to kill you? Niggers got more guns
than the government and they're not
afraid to pull the trigger! They're
doing it in the ghettos everyday!
Practicing on each other! Niggers and
triggers! Niggers and triggers!

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Two Federal Agents, RICHTER and SORDO, watch the rally through binoculars. They are average white men; Richter is a few inches taller than his partner. There are empty candy wrappers all over the place.

Richter backs away from the open window.

RICHTER

I'm gonna go grab some candy.

There is no reaction from Sordo.

RICHTER (cont'd)

(loudly)

Sordo! I'm gonna grab somemore candy.

Sordo lowers his binoculars and looks at Richter, who's leaving.

SORDO

(slurred)

Richter, grab some candy.

Sordo turns back to the window, raising his binoculars.

EXT. OUTSIDE CABIN - NIGHT

Richter opens the door of his car _ an old Cadillac _ and locates a pack of Rolos.

In the background, Hitler's amplified voice emanates through the trees.

HITLER

(O.S.)

They've got girls killing girls, kids killing kids, niggers killing niggers, and the whole time, them leaders are plotting. Plotting. Plotting. Pretty soon, comrades, they're gonna be through plotting and they're gonna start shooting.

Richter shuts the door, starts to walk back toward the cabin, but hears a branch SNAP overhead.

He looks up, surprised.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Richter enters the cabin, only now the muzzle of The Courier's Glock 17 is pushed up against his temple.

Sordo does not look up when they enter; he continues to stare out of the window with his binoculars.

THE COURIER

Hey!

Sordo does not move.

THE COURIER

I said, 'hey'!

Still no response from Sordo.

RICHTER

He's hearing impaired.

THE COURIER

What?

RICHTER

He can't hear you. He's hearing im
He's deaf.

THE COURIER

You're kidding me.

RICHTER

No joke. Born that way. No hearing at all.

THE COURIER

I've never heard of that. A deaf Fed.

RICHTER

Oh, yeah.

THE COURIER

I'm surprised you guys don't have rules

RICHTER

We're a government agency, you know. Equal Opportunity and all that shit. He's real vocal about it. As much as he can be. There's nothing goes on he doesn't want to be a part of. I'm talking everything. Wants to be a regular joe.

THE COURIER

That cause problems?

RICHTER

Occasionally.

THE COURIER

Seems like it would.

RICHTER

Yeah, sometimes.

Sordo, still unaware of the two behind him, picks up the headphones next to him and puts them on. The Courier looks for an explanation.

RICHTER

His ears get cold. Says its lack of blood flow. Actually, he says, "lack of bud fo."

They both ponder this for a second.

THE COURIER

Got you on Hitler detail, huh?

RICHTER

Yeah. Thanks to you. I followed you for 5 months. Knew you better'n my own five-fingered lady, and you still got to the Chief. When your markdelivers the left foot of Joey Zambesi to the director of the F.B.I., you stop getting the choice assignments.

THE COURIER

Don't sweat it. I've been tailed by worse.

The Courier looks back at Sordo, he's now humming to himself completely out of tune.

THE COURIER

How do you get his attention?

RICHTER

I don't know. I could go tap him on the shoulder.

THE COURIER

Never mind.

He moves his Glock away from Richter's head, fires it at Sordo, and moves it immediately back to Richter. The wood by Sordo's hand SPLINTERS, and he jumps up excitedly.

THE COURIER

How you doing?

The Courier waves with his free hand.

THE COURIER

(to Richter)

Ask him if he knows who I am.

Richter starts to sign, but stops. He points to a picture of the Courier plastered to a wall on the far side of the cabin.

RICHTER

Of course he does.

THE COURIER

You fellas know why I'm in your city?

RICHTER

We're well aware of why you're out here.

THE COURIER

That makes sense. I understand I'm working for you fellas.

Richter makes signs to Sordo, and he looks confused. He signs back.

RICHTER

(translates)

I think you got some bad info.

THE COURIER

Oh?

RICHTER

(translates)

We know who hired you. He's no G-man.

THE COURIER

(disbelieving)

Uh-huh.

RICHTER

Seriously.

(translates)

The guy who hired you, showy, lots of jewelry-- talkth like thith.

THE COURIER

Yeah.

Richter snorts.

RICHTER

He's not a Fed. Give us some credit for Christ's sake. No, your guy is Lispy. He's owned by a couple of locals. Real nut cases.

THE COURIER

Oh, yeah?

RICHTER

Yeah. Husband and wife twosome.

THE COURIER

I've met 'em.

He points to his black eye and cut forehead

RICHTER

(impressed)

Got the wedding ring treatment? Nice.

Sordo starts signing energetically and Richter signs back. Obviously, they are arguing.

THE COURIER

(to Richter)

What's he saying?

They continue to sign back and forth.

THE COURIER

You better start giving me some closed captions.

RICHTER

(translates)

You've met the Capolillos?

THE COURIER

Yeah. She's the muscle, he's the lip. Nice pair. Real socialites.

Richter shrugs his shoulders, and Sordo nods, pressing him to continue translating.

RICHTER

(translates)

You know where to find them?

THE COURIER

I know how to find them. But they're not who I'm looking for right now.

RICHTER

They're the ones whohired you to deliver a package to Sivle Yelserp By the way, you open it?

THE COURIER

I never do.

RICHTER

Good. Probably an explosive. They're sending you in to take out the King.

THE COURIER

I'm not real convinced they hired me.

RICHTER

You're welcome to come back with us to the Bureau. We've got a file telephone-book thick on Lispy. Slippery little bastard. He works for the Caps. I can promise you that.

THE COURIER

I'll be honest with you. I don't really give a shit who hired me. I was contracted to deliver a package. If you know about me, then you know when people hire me, they don't have to worry. That's what I offer. No worries.

(MORE)

THE COURIER (cont'd)
I've never missed a drop and this won't be the first. See, what this world is missing is dedication to a craft-

RICHTER
(interrupting)
That's why you get paid what you get paid, yeah, yeah, we get it. What I was saying was, these assholes hire you, beat you up, and...

Sordo signs to Richter.

RICHTER
Yeah, yeah, I'm telling him that. Beat you up and lie to you. It's all part of their act to cover their asses on the off chance you are unsuccessful. What loyalty do you have to them?

THE COURIER
None.

RICHTER
Exactly. Here's the deal. My guess is you don't have a clue as to where Yelserp is or you wouldn't be farting around out here with us.

He picks up some signs from Sordo.

RICHTER
(translates)
You help us nail the Caps, we'll put you on Sivle Yelserp's trail.

THE COURIER
If you knew where Yelserp was, you'd have taken him.

RICHTER
(translates)
I don't think you understand. We've got the Caps on the Blue Page.

THE COURIER
No shit?

RICHTER
That's right.

THE COURIER
I didn't think there was a Blue Page.

RICHTER

The President of the United States is personally on top of this one. Between you, me, and the fence post, I've heard that they share a common skeleton. The big daddy wants them in jail. Priority one. We bust them, Sordo and me are off the Hitler detail.

THE COURIER

That big, huh?

RICHTER

That's right.

For the first time, The Courier lowers his gun.

THE COURIER

I help you, you give me Yelserp's file. That's the deal?

RICHTER

You know me. Hell, in some ways you even owe me one. You help us, you get the big man's file. That's the deal.

THE COURIER

No questions?

RICHTER

You have Uncle Sam's word on it.

The Courier raises his eyebrows, nods in acceptance.

THE COURIER

So what color's my page?

RICHTER

Yours is purple.

THE COURIER

Is that right?

INT. FBI STRATEGIC PLANNING OFFICE - NIGHT

A technician inserts a small electronic device into The Courier's ear as Sordo and Richter watch from the hallway through a window in the door.

Another miniscule electronic device is inserted into the collar of his shirt.

THE COURIER

Test. Test. You guys listening?

In the hallway, Sordo and Richter argue with their sign language. Richter has a full headset on and is gripping a microphone.

RICHTER

You can't work the microphone.

Sordo's voice is tinny, slurred.

SORDO

Why not?

RICHTER

What do you mean why not? You just can't.

THE COURIER

(o.s.)

This coming through you guys?

SORDO

I can do it.

Richter hands him the microphone.

RICHTER

You want to do it _ fine! You do it.

A child-like grin graces Sordo's face.

SORDO

(slurred)

Testing. Testing.

The Courier's head shoots up in surprise when he realizes who is speaking.

Out the window, Richter shrugs his shoulders. The happy Sordo is still talking in the corridor.

SORDO

(slurred)

Testing. Testing.

INT. MALL FOOD COURT - NIGHT

At a small round table, The Courier sits.

A man wearing a FED EX uniform hurries by with a package. The Courier watches him pass, amused.

The Courier lifts the attache Lispy gave him and places it on the table.

Within seconds, the Police Officer appears.

POLICE OFFICER

Hey, how you doin? Mind coming with me?

The Courier stands.

POLICE OFFICER (cont'd)

You enjoying the mall? They have an amazing corn dog right over there.

From across the mall, Sordo and Richter watch through binoculars.

INT. TORTURE ROOM - NIGHT

The Courier is once again bound to the wooden chair.

Mrs. Capolillo enters like an angry bull. In her hand is the attaché from Lispy, unopened.

Light reflects off her wedding ring as she taps the case like a drum.

MRS. CAPOLILLO

It would have been so much easier for you if you would have just handed this over when we asked you the first time.

EXT. VAN OUTSIDE VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

Richter translates her words to Sordo who chews on a Cherry Mash.

INT. TORTURE ROOM - NIGHT

THE COURIER

I don't work that way, honey.

Mrs. Capolillo's face almost comes unglued. Her big paw is already forming a fist.

MRS. CAPOLILLO

What the fuck did you call me?

INT. VAN OUTSIDE VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

Richter cringes and starts furiously signing to Sordo, who doesn't really know what the hell's going on.

RICHTER
(to Sordo)
He's gonna get himself killed!

SORDO
(into the microphone)
You gonna git killed!

RICHTER
Shit! Okay, let's play it his way.

Richter signs to Sordo.

INT. TORTURE ROOM - NIGHT

SORDO
(o.s., in the Courier's ear)
Dey are Darla and Antony Capowiwo.

THE COURIER
What?

MRS. CAPOLILLO
What?

SORDO
(o.s.)
Darla and Antony.

THE COURIER
I mean, you're on your own on this one,
Darla.

MRS. CAPOLILLO
How do you know my name?

THE COURIER
I know a shitload more than you think.
You and your husband are Darlene and
Anthony Capolillo, and you work hookers,
guns and narcotics for Sivle Yelserp on
the West Coast.

MRS. CAPOLILLO
I think you know more about us than you
should, Courier.

INT. VAN OUTSIDE VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

RICHTER
See if she'll talk about Jake Stinsky.

INT. TORTURE ROOM - NIGHT

SORDO (V.O.)

That's wight. I know about what you and your husband did to Jake Stinsky.

THE COURIER

I know what you and your husband did to Jack Stinky.

MRS. CAPOLILLO

Who?

EXT. VAN OUTSIDE VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

Richter grabs the microphone out of Sordo's hands.

RICHTER

(enunciated slowly and clearly)
Jake Stinsky!

Sordo looks at Richter like he's ready to take a shot at his chin.

INT. TORTURE ROOM - NIGHT

THE COURIER

Stinsky or whatever his name was. I heard! I'm no fool!

MRS. CAPOLILLO

You've got hold of some bad information.

THE COURIER

I also heard that you're the ones that hired me to deliver that envelope to Yelserp.

MRS. CAPOLILLO

First, you've said that name twice now in front of me. You say it again and I take out your tongue. Second, you're about the most misinformed son-of-a-bitch I've ever met.

THE COURIER

Oh, cut the bullshit. If you didn't hire me, you would've already pounded open that case. I don't know what your game is...

Mrs. Capolillo gingerly sets the case down on the floor, moves over to the chair, and WALLOPS The Courier in the face again.

She hurries out of the room.

THE COURIER
(to his collar)
You guys ready to move in yet?

EXT. VAN OUTSIDE VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

Sordo interprets Richter's gestures.

SORDO
(slurred)
No good. You must get them to confess to
the killing

INT. TORTURE ROOM - NIGHT

The Courier can't understand the horrendous pronunciation.

THE COURIER
What?

SORDO (V.O.)
They must confess

The Courier still can't understand.

In a moment, the door opens and Mr. Capolillo appears.

THE COURIER
Your turn?

MR. CAPOLILLO
Are you trying to be a wise guy, now?

He stoops, and lifts the case.

MR. CAPOLILLO
Because we can beat that out of you.
I've seen it done. Funny guys made
serious. Loud mouths blubbering like
babies.

EXT. VAN OUTSIDE VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

Richter leans over to another Fed, who is dressed in full SWAT regalia.

RICHTER

If this guy pulls out a dental drill or something, we're going in.

INT. TORTURE ROOM - NIGHT

THE COURIER

Okay. I'm with you

MR. CAPOLILLO

Then we understand each other?

THE COURIER

Sure.

MR. CAPOLILLO

This case. Have you opened it?

THE COURIER

I never do.

MR. CAPOLILLO

Then you will make an exception to your rule this time. If it was intended for my former colleague, then I would like to know what is in it. On the other hand, if it was intended for my former colleague, I can assure you that I'm not going to be the one to open it.

(beat)

That's why you're still alive.

He places the case in The Courier's lap, moves around behind him and uncuffs his hands

MR. CAPOLILLO

If you'll do the honors, I'd prefer to wait in the adjoining, bomb-proof room.

When he gets to the door, The Courier stands, ankles still cuffed to the chair

THE COURIER

Thanks but no thanks.

MR. CAPOLILLO

Excuse me?

THE COURIER

I don't think you understand. I get paid to deliver things unopened. That's what I intend to do here. No one's gonna open this case but Sivle Yelserp.

(MORE)

THE COURIER (cont'd)
Not you, not me, not that gruesome
fucking wife of yours. No one.

EXT. VAN OUTSIDE VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

Richter tries to sign this little monologue to Sordo, but
can't get the words out fast enough.

RICHTER
(to the SWAT leader)
Oh, Christ, be ready.

INT. TORTURE ROOM - NIGHT

Mr. Capolillo's face starts distending like a red balloon.

MR. CAPOLILLO
What did you say?

THE COURIER
Is everybody fucking deaf around here? I
said that as far as opening this case is
concerned, you can go fuck yourself.

MR. CAPOLILLO
(visibly shaking)
You... you...

THE COURIER
Which is probably what you have to do
anyway since the missus is barren as
Nebraska and all. Which, when I heard
that, got me to thinking, there is a God,
there must be. Could you imagine what a
kid of hers would look like?

MR. CAPOLILLO
You... you...

THE COURIER
By the way, how are those cute puppies of
yours doing?

EXT. VAN OUTSIDE VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

The FBI SWAT team cocks and double cocks their guns.

INT. TORTURE ROOM - NIGHT

MR. CAPOLILLO
I'm going to

THE COURIER

What? You're going to do to me what you did to Jake Stinsky?

MR. CAPOLILLO

What I'm gonna do to you ain't even going to compare with what we did to Jake Stinsky.

EXT. VAN OUTSIDE VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

Richter's ears perk up.

RICHTER

That's it! That's it! Move! Move!

The SWAT team piles out of the van.

INT. VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

The SWAT team pours into the building in a massive force.

Shelves in the video store CRASH to the ground _ the SWAT team knocks over every video known to man.

They rush into the long corridor.

Half the guards split down a hall way and bust through a door where Mrs. Capolillo and the Police Officer are smoking cigarettes. Mrs. Capolillo is her typical classy self.

MRS. CAPOLILLO

What the fuck! I said, What the fuck!
You can't be in here. You gotta have a
fucking warrant!

The police officer jerks his hands in the air, looking as though he just wet his pants.

Mrs. Capolillo yanks off her wedding ring and jams it in her mouth like a Hot Tamale.

INT. TORTURE ROOM - NIGHT

The other half of the guards burst into the Torture Room and yank Mr. Capolillo off of The Courier.

MR. CAPOLILLO

(breathing heavily)
I'm gonna I'm gonna I'm gonna

The Courier picks up the case.

THE COURIER

Yeah. Yeah. You're gonna. You're gonna.

Sordo and Richter enter the room as Mr. Capolillo is carted off.

The Courier's face wounds are bleeding again.

RICHTER

We got it.

The Courier feels his bleeding head.

Sordo starts to sign to The Courier, who answers with a middle finger.

Richter laughs as The Courier storms out of the room.

EXT. BURGER JOINT - DAY

At a small cement table, The Courier sips a chocolate milkshake through a red and white straw. He has white medical tape over his cuts.

A blue Cadillac pulls up and Sordo and Richter get out.

THE COURIER

You got the file?

SORDO

Yelserp's dead.

RICHTER

OD'd while sitting on the john at a retirement facility in Phoenix, Arizona. Six weeks ago.

THE COURIER

Are you sure?

Richter drops a file on the table and black and white photographs spill out.

RICHTER

Here's pictures here's the autopsy report.

The Courier leafs through the materials. It's all pretty convincing.

SORDO

(mocking)

So what's in that case you're supposed to deliver?

Richter and Sordo laugh. The Courier is pissed. He stands up and leaves.

Richter talks into the cuff of his sleeve.

RICHTER

Give him another day and then we'll pick him up and get what we can out of him.

EXT. AIRPORT BAR - DAY

The Courier drinks a double Beefeater martini on the rocks.

A little depression weighs on his shoulders.

He catches his face in the mirror behind the bar and is not pleased with the reflection.

BARTENDER

What else for you?

The Courier looks down at his empty glass.

THE COURIER

Nothing else.

BARTENDER

You got business today?

THE COURIER

Yeah. Business.

INTERCOM (V.O.)

This is the final boarding call for Southwest flight 106 to Phoenix.

The Courier stands and flips a few bills on to the bar.

INT. RETIREMENT HOME, PHOENIX - NIGHT

A jovial man, DAN, works the front desk at this trashy-looking retirement home. He has an amazing likeness to Jim Nabors, and looks like he may break into song at any moment.

The Courier enters.

DAN

What can I do you for?

THE COURIER
I'd like to speak with the manager.

DAN
Present and accounted for.

THE COURIER
How long have you been manager
(reads his name badge)
Dan?

DAN
Bout fourteen months.

THE COURIER
You had a fella here six weeks ago that
OD'd on his toilet.

Dan looks up quickly. The Courier starts leafing through some yellowing brochures on the activities of the community.

THE COURIER
That the kind of place you run here, Dan?

The change in Dan's demeanor is amazing. All of a sudden, he starts talking monotone; he's the worst actor in the world, and he ain't about to sing anymore.

DAN
Mr. Jones' overdose was the exception to the rule.

THE COURIER
Jones?

DAN
Yes sir. His overdose was the exception to the rule.

THE COURIER
So it was drugs?

DAN
I am not at liberty to say.

THE COURIER
So you don't know too much about it?

DAN
Yes sir. That's right.

THE COURIER

And you're supposed to keep your mouth shut about it, huh?

Dan looks like he's about to cry.

THE COURIER

Can you tell me the name of the doctor who performed the autopsy?

DAN

Certainly. Dr. Wickmoreland at St. Joseph's hospital.

THE COURIER

Wow. Right off the top of your head.

Sweat trickles down Dan's temple. The Courier slowly turns the pages of the brochure. There is a picture of a smiling doctor taking the blood pressure of a smiling elderly lady.

THE COURIER (cont'd)

Do you take good care of your old folks here, Dan?

The salesman in Dan comes out.

DAN

Of course. The care a resident receives at Shady Pines is second to none. On site nurses, medical staff just minutes away, eight hours of planned activities a day.

THE COURIER

Thank you.

EXT. RETIREMENT HOME - NIGHT

Dan locks up.

In the bicycle rack, a Schwinn two-wheeler awaits its master. Dan unchains and settles on board for his short ride home.

As he crosses the street, a rented Acura SMASHES into him. His body lands on the hood and then hits the pavement.

The Courier steps out of the car, jerks Dan, who is in bad shape, to his feet and quite rudely shoves him into the trunk.

He drives over the bicycle for good measure.

EXT. DRIVE-IN MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

The Courier opens the trunk and pulls Dan out of it. He shoves him in the back seat and points his Glock in his face.

Over The Courier's shoulder, Dan sees a giant movie screen. The cult classic, THE WARRIORS, plays on the screen.

DAN

(groggy)

What?

THE COURIER

You might be interested to know this gun is a Glock 17. It holds 17 bullets in the in the clip and one in the chamber. In case you're not following me here, that's eighteen bullets.

Dan grunts _ he's in pain.

THE COURIER (cont'd)

Strange to call it a seventeen don't you think? Now, who are you working for?

DAN

What are you talking about?

The Courier puts the barrel up Dan's nose. e Htwists it so it points outward, stretching Dan's nostril.

THE COURIER

Dan, I have to inform you that pulling the trigger would do a couple of things in this instance. In your corner here, pulling the trigger would alert the people around us of trouble. Not in your corner, is the fact that whenever you take a breath through your nose it'll whistle like a banshee protecting the grounds of Stonehenge.

DAN

What the fuck do you want from me?

The Courier nods toward the big screen.

THE COURIER

Do you like the movies?

DAN

(in utter disbelief)

What?

THE COURIER
I asked if you like the movies?

DAN
What are you talking about?

THE COURIER
Okay. Look over my shoulder. What do you notice up there? Dan?

He shoves the gun farther up Dan's nose.

THE COURIER
Dan? What do you notice up there?

DAN
I don't know! It's a movie.

THE COURIER
Not just a movie, Dan. The Warriors.

DAN
Okay. The Warriors.

He turns to watch one of the Warriors deliver a particularly bad line.

THE COURIER
The sad part is, Dan, you're a worse actor than these guys.

DAN
What?

THE COURIER
You were reading from a script back at the rest home. Something someone told you to say. To be honest with you, that might be the worst performance I've ever seen.

The gun is now tunneling up Dan's nose toward his brain.

DAN
Okay! Okay! You're right!

THE COURIER
Who paid you to tell me that bullshit about Yelserp dying!

DAN
I can't tell you.

THE COURIER

Dan, if you don't start talking, I have eighteen bullets and I plan to use them all before the Warriors get back to Coney Island.

DAN

They'll kill me!

The Courier makes a hollow, whistling sound. Dan's nose in seconds unless-

DAN

Okay. Okay. Okay. I've got a number back at the home. I'm supposed to call it anytime someone comes around asking about Mr. Jones.

THE COURIER

Back at the home?

DAN

Yeah. Yeah, man. Don't shoot me.

THE COURIER

Let's go.

The Acura's engine fires up.

EXT. LARGE HOME IN CHICAGO - DAY

A stately manor in the suburbs of Chicago. A Mercedes, from the Luxury Series pulls around the circle driveway and stops.

Lispy steps out.

INT. LISPY'S HOME - DAY

The inside of this house is spacious, but morbid and dank, like the inside of a medieval castle. Lispy is quite alone in this house.

He moves through four extremely large rooms: a mead hall, an indoor pool room, an electronics room, an elegant sitting room, before he comes to the kitchen.

He stops suddenly when he sees the Courier rummaging through his refrigerator.

The Courier backs away with an apple in one hand and his Glock in the other.

THE COURIER

I've been waiting on you, you know, doing the crossword puzzle, and I decided to help myself. By the way, what's a four letter word for pain?

He shoots Lispy in the foot.

LISPY

(bellows)

Fuck!

THE COURIER

Exactly.

The bullet destroys a bowl of cat food on the floor. Lispy clutches his foot, cursing, hopping around like a flamingo.

THE COURIER (cont'd)

I just grazed you. Don't be too dramatic about this.

The Courier sets down his apple, and opens the freezer.

THE COURIER

You see, I should have started with you. That's where I made my mistake. If Sivle Yelserp asked you to hire me, then I should have figured that you'd have some information on where he is.

He starts looking through the drawers.

LISPY

I don't know thit! I never met him. I got my order-th from th-omeone el-th.

THE COURIER

You know, that's what I figured at the beginning. But it's funny. When I was at this retirement home where Yelserp supposedly kicked the bucket I was given a phone number. And I'll be damned if that phone number didn't ring in this house.

LISPY

Th-o?

The Courier finds a towel and wraps some ice in it.

THE COURIER

The assumed name. The doctor giving the autopsy report. Nice touches. Pretty convincing. Fooled the Feds.

The Courier picks up his apple and bites into it.

THE COURIER

Your number with the front desk guy, though. I'm not sure that was a good idea. You see, that tells me you helped fake Yelserp's death, and you gotta be in pretty tight with the King to help out with something that big.

LISPY

Yeah? Go fuck your-thelf.

The Courier walks up close and PISTOL-WHIPS Lispy with a right hook that starts from around his belt area.

Lispy's nose POPS. He isn't looking so tough anymore. He starts to say something, but The Courier SMASHES him again.

THE COURIER

Are you going to take me to Yelserp or am I going to keep popping you?

The Courier hands him the ice pack.

EXT. HIGH RISE - DAY

Lispy is at the wheel of his car, his nose encrusted in a layer of dried blood. The Courier rests in the backseat, his gun in his lap.

The car rolls to a stop.

LISPY

I think you be-th-t keep your pi-th-tol pointed at my head when we get out.

THE COURIER

Didn't plan otherwise.

They get out and walk into the building.

INT. HIGH RISE - DAY

The entrance of the building contains a narrow hallway and an elevator.

As soon as they enter the building, two pit-bull-looking security guards draw weapons on The Courier and his hostage.

LISPY

Don't shoot! Don't shoot!

THE COURIER

Tell them to floor their guns!

LISPY

Drop your pi-th-tols! Drop your pi-th-tols!

SECURITY GUARD ONE

No one's getting on that elevator.

LISPY

(losing control)

Just do it, mother-fucker-ths!

They comply, dropping their weapons to the ground. The Courier very carefully propels himself and his hostage on to the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

The doors close

THE COURIER

Which number?

LISPY

All the way up.

The Courier presses Number 45 on the panel and the elevator elevates.

THE COURIER

That wasn't so bad.

LISPY

I think you better keep that gun to my head.

The elevator opens on the forty-fifth floor and standing in the narrow hallway are no less than seventeen behemoth security guards, all with their guns drawn.

LISPY

(desperately)

Plea-th! Plea-th! Put down your weapon-ths!

The Courier is well hidden behind Lispy.

THE COURIER

I'm not coming out till you guys drop 'em.

LISPY

Plea-th fella-ths! Drop 'em. Plea-th! Now, goddammit, now!

The men stoop to put their weapons on the floor.

The Courier moves out of the elevator and immediately backs both himself and his shield into a corner.

THE COURIER

Okay. Everybody into the elevator. Slowly.

LISPY

You heard him. Everybody into the elevator. Nie-th and ea-thy.

The men comply _ the Courier hunkering down behind the shield as they pass.

When the security guards are all crowded inside

THE COURIER

Press one for me there, champ.

One of the guards looks shakily at the elevator control panel.

THE COURIER

If I don't see that elevator go all the way to the bottom, you're going to see the inside of your friend here when you get back.

The guard presses the one button, and the elevator doors slide shut.

As the elevator descends, the guards inside argue

SECURITY GUARD TWO

We really going all the way down?

SECURITY GUARD THREE

You gotta better idea, asshole?

SECURITY GUARD FOUR

Press the stop button!

SECURITY GUARD THREE
I ain't pressing it.

SECURITY GUARD FOUR
Press the button!

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Upstairs, Courier and hostage open the only door in the hallway.

INT. YELSERP'S PENTHOUSE - DAY

The door opens into a massive, lush suite. A cross between the edible room at Willy Wonka's and a rain forest. There are no windows, just dark forest all around. The faint sound of tropical birds and mood music can be heard.

THE COURIER
Any more goons in here?

LISPY
No.

THE COURIER
Where is he?

Lispy pauses. This is his last chance. Die right here, or lead The Courier right to the King and fail at his only job.

LISPY
Follow me.

The two move through the brush, making their way to a kind of small clearing.

From a large hot tub emerges the one and only SIVLE YELSERP.

Yelserp looks like a cross between Don Corleone, a Polar Bear, and a Game Cock. He is a huge man with white hair covering his torso on up, and he struts around like a prissy rooster. He is not pleased.

SIVLE YELSERP
(in disbelief)
Mother Mary.

LISPY
I couldn't

SIVLE YELSERP
Sweet Mother Fucking Mary.

LISPY

There was no way that I could-

SIVLE YELSERP

There is always a way.

(calmly, to The Courier)

Kill the little blubberin' bastard for me, would you?

Sivle Yelserp picks up a fluffy white towel and dries out one of his ears. He sits at a picnic table.

THE COURIER

I was going to deliver this package, Yelserp. One way or another.

The Courier lays the attache on the table. Yelserp pops it open. A gold light glows from the case.

SIVLE YELSERP

Unopened, I see.

THE COURIER

Always.

Lispy has been slowly distancing himself from The Courier, moving back against a wall.

SIVLE YELSERP

Of course. Of course. I would have expected nothing less.

He turns around and removes \$500,000 in thousand dollar bills from a small cabinet. The glow is still coming from the case.

Yelserp nods toward Lispy.

SIVLE YELSERP

You've been through a lot of trouble when you've had the ticket in you pocket from the beginning.

The Courier's face shows no emotion while Yelserp laughs, sinister in the yellow light.

THE COURIER

Just pay me and I'll be on my way.

SIVLE YELSERP

I should have killed the mediator, right? That's where I blew it

(MORE)

SIVLE YELSERP (cont'd)

If I'd've whacked Mr. Ramsey after he gave you the case, you wouldn't be here right now.

THE COURIER

Like I said, one way or another.

Lispy remains pressed up against the wall.

SIVLE YELSERP

I'm a stand-up guy, Courier. You did what you were hired to do. Here's your meal money.

He tosses the wad to The Courier.

SIVLE YELSERP (CONT'D)

And these little guys...

LISPY

What are those?

Yelserp pulls a jar of glowing fire flies out of the case.

THE COURIER

Proof I didn't open the package. East African fire flies. Too much light causes an internal sensory overload. They'll literally burn themselves out. The fact that they are alive means the case was never opened.

Yelserp stands, looks closely into the glowing jar, the fire flies so stirred now the jar is one big light.

SIVLE YELSERP

You are a smart man, Courier.

(to the fire flies)

Not bad, carrying your own personal spotlight.

THE COURIER

Why the test?

SIVLE YELSERP

I need trustworthy men. And you, you need me.

THE COURIER

I don't need anything.

SIVLE YELSERP

You need me to not have you killed.

The lights go BLACK.

There is a muffled gunshot followed by the sound of breaking glass. Muted red emergency lights come on, revealing Yelserp, walking slowly toward The Courier, expressionless. He has a perfect little hole between his eyes.

The escaped and crazed fire flies look like a laser beams shooting through the sky.

Standing behind Yelserp is Lispy, holding ~~small~~ pistol.

LISPY

Oh, that-th a shame.

Yelserp just keeps moving forward, slowly. Blood begins to seep out the hole and down his face.

Lispy moves over to the desk with the gun trained on The Courier, red and gold lights showing him the way.

Lispy picks up the phone and presses a button.

LISPY

Plea-th hurry! He-th killed Mr. Yeltherp!

(to The Courier)

The Capolillos will be very plea-thed.

The Courier realizes now that he has been set up. There is a commotion at the door.

Yelserp collapses into the Courier's arms.

THE COURIER

Ayiiiiiiiii!!!

His scream is guttural, starting in his chest and bellowing from his throat like a roaring wave.

He rushes toward Lispy using Yelserp's body as a shield. Lispy is absolutely shocked.

The Courier pushes the big dead corpse on to Lispy who tumbles over the desk and lands on his girlish butt, Yelserp's body on top of him, just as four bodyguards burst through the doors like bulls out of the gate.

The Courier is gone in the brush. The fire flies are starting to burn out and crash to the floor.

INT. PENTHOUSE - DAY

The Courier bursts into a brightly lit room and through the door to the next -- an office,

a studio,

a bedroom,

a bathroom -- the guards hot on his tail.

EXT. BALCONY - DAY

The Courier crashes through a window and lands out on the garden-like balcony. Ten German Shepherds are penned up here, and they start barking like rabies-infested Cujos.

Luckily, the forty-fifth floor has a balcony that waterfalls with the forty-fourth floor and the forty-third floor -- a tiered effect. The Courier leaps twenty feet to the balcony of the neighbor's below.

INT. 44TH FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

The Courier comes crashing out of the apartment door and into the stairwell, just before the elevator full of guards senses its doors.

SECURITY GUARD FOUR

There he is!

SECURITY GUARD FIVE

The stairs!

INT. 30TH FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

On the 30th floor, he leaps out into the hallway and rushes to the elevator. The other elevator shows that its parked on 35.

It closes right before the guards roar out into the hallway.

SECURITY GUARD FOUR

He's going up!

SECURITY GUARD TWO

Back to the stairs! Go! Go!

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

The Courier presses floor 35.

INT. 35TH FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

The elevator doors open, The Courier gets out of the car, and presses the Level 1 button for the other elevator, then jumps back in the car he was originally in. He pushes the button for the sundeck.

The guards spill out of the stairwell, huffing and puffing, and see one elevator going up and one going down.

Security Guard Three holds his walkie-talkie up to his mouth.

SECURITY GUARD THREE

He could be coming your way! Stay alert
down there! Back up! Let's go!

SECURITY GUARD ONE

Can we just wait for the fucking
elevator?

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

The elevator with The Courier is cruising up, but starts to slow on floor 36. The Courier knows he's trapped. He looks up at the trap door of the elevator. He jumps up once but it's out of reach. The car stops on floor 37. The doors are about to open...

As many buttons as he pushes, he can't keep the doors from opening. He's dead now. This game is over. But when the door opens, he finds a fat, elderly man standing in the hallway, dressed for the beach.

FAT ELDERLY MAN

Sundeck?

The Courier tips his cap and then belts the man in the face, knocking him out cold. He drags the body on to the elevator.

INT. 45TH FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Guards on the Forty-Fifth floor foam at the mouth as the elevator numbers count up to their floor. The doors open, they see the Courier's body crouched in the corner of the elevator and open fire, BLASTING the elevator to hell.

When the dust settles, they realize their mistake --tan old guy in the Courier's clothes.

INT. 37TH FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Back on the Thirty-Seventh floor, The Courier is dressed only in the old man's swim trunks. He tries the man's keys into all the doors on the hallway.

Finally, Number 377 works. He turns the key and opens up on an old woman doing the Elle McPherson workout in a pink leotard.

She is dumbfounded to see this guy walk into her apartment wearing her husband's trunks.

THE COURIER

Hello.

He walks toward her as a scream starts to mount in her throat. He WALLOPS her in the face and a wig flies off her head and into his hands.

EXT. HIGH RISE - DAY

Ambulances, police, fire trucks, and sundry government vehicles have pulled up to the building. Lispy talks with an officer, but his eyes are flashing everywhere.

Two corpses roll out of the building on paramedic stretchers.

An elderly woman walks out, amazed by all of the activity. Only, it's not an elderly woman, it's The Courier in drag. He walks away.

EXT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE COURIER'S APARTMENT - DAY

The Courier cautiously rounds the corner across the street from his apartment building, and sees two UTILITY REPAIRMEN working on the line across from it.

He notices they pull out binoculars watch carefully when a LITTLE BLACK KID carrying a large box of candy enters his building. Instead of crossing, he enters the laundromat on the corner.

Within seconds he exits with a basket of clothes.

INT. MUSTY BOXING RING - DAY

Cornerman watches a boxing match between two white kids.

He doesn't turn around when he hears The Courier's voice.

THE COURIER

What's the word, Cornerman?

CORNERMAN

Must be a ghost behind me 'cuz that voice
belongs to a dead man.

The Courier is dressed in a wrinkled "I Met Bob on the Price
Is Right!" sweatshirt and biking shorts.

THE COURIER

Is that what you hear?

CORNERMAN

Leave me alone, ghost.

THE COURIER

Tell me what the street's saying,
Cornerman.

CORNERMAN

Street says you fucked over the
Capolillo's and then killed Yelserp.
Street says you've managed to piss off
both sides of a war you shouldn't have
been around in the first place.

(beat)

Never have told one of my fighters to
take a fall. Can't imagine I ever would.
But, there ain't no fight worth fightin
if you ain't gotta chance to win. Street
says if you ain't a ghost yet, you'll be
one soon and anybody that helps you gonna
go down too. So leave me alone, ghost.

THE COURIER

Thanks for the warning.

EXT. THE BOXING RING - DAY

As he is walking outside of the building, he is rudely
manhandled and thrown into the back of a limo.

Sordo and Richter face him.

RICHTER

All dressed up and nowhere to go, huh.

THE COURIER

What do you want from me?

Sordo chuckles.

RICHTER

You'll be dead in twenty-four hours if
you don't get help from us.

SORDO
(slurred)
That's the truth.

THE COURIER
Maybe.

RICHTER
Hey, we get medals for the Capolillo
bust.

COURIER
Let's blow the small-talk, Richter. What
do you want from me?

RICHTER
The truth is we've still got one bust
left and we need your help. We want
Lispy.

THE COURIER
I'm through with the pro bono work,
fellas.

RICHTER
Be reasonable. Word is you got a
contract on your head the size of the
Sears Tower.

THE COURIER
That's what I hear.

RICHTER
You'd think that all you been through
you'd have finished your job by now.

The Courier sits, not knowing where this is going.

RICHTER (cont'd)
I mean, with all the shit you're in,
you'd have a little, you know, somethin
to show for it.

Sordo nods along.

RICHTER (cont'd)
Even got a couple of murders under your
belt. Elderly couple...

Richter waits for The Courier's response.

RICHTER (cont'd)

We're confused about something. Why would the money at Yelserp's have your prints all over it? That looks pretty suspicious. Dead man and a half mil with your tracks all over it. Grand jury eats that kinda shit up.

Sordo starts signing like a madman. Richter translates.

RICHTER (cont'd)

Oh, yeah.

(to The Courier)

We've never known Yelserp to pay in cash, either. Only checks.

THE COURIER

What the fuck are you talking about?

SORDO

(slurred)

He's talking about the fact that you didn't kill Yelserp.

THE COURIER

No shit, Lispy did.

RICHTER

No, Lispy killed the rabbit.

THE COURIER

The rabbit?

The limo tears around a corner.

INT. MORGUE - DAY

The big metal drawer comes lumbering out. A white toe holds the tag 'John Doe.' Sordo yanks the sheet down, revealing the ROOSTER MAN

THE COURIER

You're telling me that's not Yelserp.

RICHTER

That's not what I'm telling you. That's what the blue page is telling you. The blue page says Yelserp's got capped teeth. Mr. Doe here doesn't.

THE COURIER

Any chance the blue page is wrong?

RICHTER

Your purple page says you chew on the inside of your left cheek when you are thinking.

The Courier stops chewing on the inside of his left cheek.

RICHTER (cont'd)

If your page turns blue, we'll know how many squares you like to wipe with.

THE COURIER

Where's the real Yelserp?

RICHTER

No clue. Don't really care.

THE COURIER

But he's got a blue page.

Richter shrugs.

RICHTER

Bureau ain't interested.

THE COURIER

Okay. What's the deal?

RICHTER

Word is Lispy's runnin the Caps game now. Got all their dirt. Boss is nervous, and gave the slippery little fuck a red page. Jumped him all the way up from magenta.

SORDO

(slurred)

First time in burro history.

RICHTER

We get him, we can write our tickets. Boss doesn't want to give him a chance to reach blue. But we got no leads. You give us Lispy, and we don't know nothin about you killin Mr. and Mrs. Fitzhugh. And you get the chance to save your ass.

THE COURIER

Okay. I'm in. You got guys at my place.

Sordo signs something to Richter.

RICHTER

Your building is getting new cable as we speak.

THE COURIER

Call them off. I'll get back to you.

RICHTER

Fair enough. How much time you got?

THE COURIER

Noon Sunday.

RICHTER

Okay. Deal's off Saturday at midnight
No Lispy, we pick you up for three
murders.

THE COURIER

Nothing like justice.

INT. NIPPY JONES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

A bass beat pounds the walls of Nippy Jones' penthouse. The scene looks like a polyester bomb exploded on the set of "In Living Color"... smooth daddys with sharp cuts and booty babes with nails like Freddy Krueger work each other over.

INT. BACK ROOM OF NIPPY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

NIPPY JONES leans over a shot at the pool table. He is the greasiest, skinniest, squealiest little pisser in the joint. But its his joint. His POSSE sits around, doting on his every move. Nippy slams the nine ball in and lets out a squeal.

NIPPY JONES

Goddamn, I'm good! Like the ball had eyes!

POSSE

You're good, Nippy! Nothin' but eyes!

Nippy turns to a chalkboard where they are keeping score. The board is covered with various names spelled wrong and backwards. He writes in an elementary scratch:

yppNi \$002

Nobody minds that Nippy is so fucking stupid.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF NIPPY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

There is a KNOCK at the door. The Immense Black Prisoner answers it. It's The Courier. The IBP grabs him and picks him up in a bear hug.

IMMENSE BLACK PRISONER
Hey, Mr.Courier! Thought you were dead.

THE COURIER
Whoa! Hey!

The Courier is in pain. The Prisoner puts him down.

IMMENSE BLACK PRISONER
Say man, you ever need anything, you just say the word. And the word, is Tony.

THE COURIER
Yeah, thanks, Tony. Nippy here?

IMMENSE BLACK PRISONER
Dumb little nigger's in back, brother.
Come on.

Tony (the Actor Formerly Known as the IBP) almost carries The Courier into the other room. They move through the group, The Courier a marshmallow floating in a cup of hot chocolate.

The two enter the back room.

TONY
Yo, Nippy! Look who's here!

Nippy's eyes get huge.

NIPPY JONES
Whoa-whoa-whoa! It's the goddamn Courier! Thoughts you was dead!

THE COURIER
No. Not yet, anyway.

NIPPY JONES
Well, shits me downs a hole... I guess not. You can see my gee An-tone-ee standin here spittin craps. Yo shit be Caddy in my house. Talkin' gold trim mofo!

THE COURIER
That's great.

The Courier looks around the room, sees the messed up board.

THE COURIER (cont'd)
See they let you keep score again, Nippy.

NIPPY JONES
Shit yo. Make's sure my ass wins
thataway.

Nippy smiles a gap-toothed smile and walks to a wet bar.

NIPPY JONES (cont'd)
What you drinkin?

THE COURIER
How about a ginger ale?

The Courier is looking at the chalkboard. Everything is spelled wrong and half the letters are backwards.

Nipy snaoj
Lesser
Grrrany
enoryt

The Courier cocks his head, trying to decipher the NippySpeak.

NIPPY JONES
Ginger? Got a bitch names Amber. No
Ginger, though.

Nippy is a dumb man.

THE COURIER
Yeah, okay. Gimme a beer.

He looks back to the board.

THE COURIER
You ever go to school, Nippy?

NIPPY JONES (cont'd)
I don'ts know if Amber is here today.
Saw the ho' last monf, if I think myself
correctly.
(to a Posse member)
Tyrone, Amber here today?

TYRONE
Amber? Who the fuck's Amber? Cat just
wants a beer.

NIPPY JONES

A beer? Then gets him a goddamns beer.

TYRONE

Yeah, man.

TYRONE grabs a passing babe.

TYRONE

What's your name?

BABE

Ginger.

TYRONE

Get Mr. Courier a beer.

BABE

Fuck you.

THE COURIER

Tell you what, forget it. I'm good.

NIPPY JONES

Whatever, my man. Whats can we do fo you?

THE COURIER

I might be looking for some support.

NIPPY JONES

What? Backups a minute What you mean by that?

Tony has had enough of this.

TONY

The man is looking for some assistance. Some succor.

NIPPY JONES

Suck whore? Shit, looks around.

TONY

(to The Courier)

What you need?

Tony grabs a beer out of the fridge, hands it to The Courier.

THE COURIER

Just some info, first.

TONY

Shoot.

The Courier nods at the open door to the rest of the apartment.

TONY

All ya'll get the fuck out.

NIPPY JONES

Yeah, gets the fuck out.

The Posse removes itself. Tony shuts the door.

NIPPY JONES

Whatever yo needs, yo gots.

TONY

Anything.

THE COURIER

I'm having trouble with a delivery.

TONY

Go on.

THE COURIER

The guy I'm supposed to deliver to is dead.

NIPPY JONES

Thas a problem.

THE COURIER

Yeah.

TONY

What you delivering?

THE COURIER

I don't know. A case.

NIPPY JONES

You don't know whats init?

THE COURIER

No.

NIPPY JONES

Well, check it out!

TONY

Might be the timeto look inside Gain
an edge.

THE COURIER

I can't.

TONY

The cat's dead. What's it gonna hurt?
The case may have a clue, your payment,
whatever...

NIPPY JONES

Whas it gonna hurts? Whatever...

THE COURIER

I don't know. Just can't.

TONY

All right. Dude's dead, I assume yone
vested in this delivery heavily, most
likely your ass. And you ain't got dick.

THE COURIER

Long and short of it.

TONY

Why come to us.

THE COURIER

Like I said: Info. Backup.

NIPPY JONES

Info! Suck whore

TONY

So who can you talk to to get the word?

The Courier takes a pull of his beer.

THE COURIER

What's that club in the deep end with all
the bi's?

NIPPY JONES

Bi's?

THE COURIER

You know, transvestites. Fags.

TONY

You talkin' about the Swizzle Stick.

INT. THE SWIZZLE STICK NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

This place is packed with more six foot women than the WNBA. But they are the real kind, where you aren't quite sure if it really is a guy, and you really don't want it to be.

The Courier sneaks in, dressed in the clothes he lifted off the workout lady, Mrs. Fitzhugh. He's like Aunt Bea at the Paladium. He follows a group in dressed like the Spice Girls and sits at a small table near the wall. Within the first fifteen seconds he's there, every guy in the place has given him the big eye.

The first guy in for the kill is a six-five Mexican, MARILYN MONROE.

MARILYN

Buy you a drink, Mrs. Cleaver?

THE COURIER

Yeah, sure. Whiskey.

Marilyn huskily grabs a passing waiter dressed like KERI STRUG.

MARILYN

Bottle of Walker. Black.

KERI STRUG

(squeaky voiced)

You got it.

He/She limps away.

MARILYN

So. What's your story?

THE COURIER

No story. Just out.

MARILYN

My ass, you're just out. What you want, baby?

THE COURIER

Some company, I guess.

MARILYN

(seductively)

Well, you got that.

Ms. Monroe leans in close and licks The Courier up the cheek. He swallows his repulsion and his pride.

THE COURIER

Not so fast. Girl's gotta drink.

Keri Strug limps back with a bottle. She pours two glasses.

MARILYN

Perfect Ten, baby.

KERI STRUG

(squeaking)

Thank you.

A big Russian looking Bela Karoylidressed in a red, white, and blue coaches warm-up comes by, scoops up Keri and they disappear. The Courier and Marilyn toast and drink.

THE COURIER

I need help.

MARILYN

Anything, baby.

THE COURIER

I want to teach somebody a lesson.
Somebody who did me bad.

MARILYN

You want me to help you make someone
jealous?

THE COURIER

Kind of. But I don't know if he's here.
He used to talk about this place... out
by the lake...

The Courier's voice trails off.

THE COURIER (cont'd)

Maybe you've seen him. Because if he's
here, with one of his bitches, I sure
could use some company tonight.

MARILYN

What's he look like baby? I know
everyone here.

THE COURIER

Kind of skinny, but with a cute little
paunch. Strawberry hair. Wears pink lip
gloss.

MARILYN

Does he talk funny?

THE COURIER

Yeah, but in a sexy kind of way.

MARILYN

Ohh, this is our lucky night!

They toast.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

CLOSE ON:

A cellular telephone. It rings, and a huge black paw picks it up. All we see is telephone and lips.

TONY

Yeah.

BACK TO:

INT. THE SWIZZLE STICK NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

The Courier stumbles back to the table with Marilyn. The bottle is empty.

THE COURIER

(slurred)

Much better. Miss Monroe, I think I am officially drunk. And I blame yoouuuu. And, now that I am so full of liquid courage, I am ready to go show him! So. Where is my man. I mean, myold man. I'm ready to show him!

MARILYN

V.I.P. bathroom. He's always there.

THE COURIER

Where's that?

MARILYN

Follow me.

They get up and push through the crowd, The Courier stumbling back and forth. The two walk past a back door, and The Courier bumps into it. After they pass, the door is unlocked.

The two go up a dark stairway, red velvet on the walls, a mirror ball twirling at the top of the stairs.

INT. V.I.P. ROOM - NIGHT

A small Asian man waits at the top of the stairs, standing behind a velvet rope. Apparently, he is the bouncer.

BOUNCER

Hiro, Marilyn.
(to The Courier)
Who you are?

MARILYN

She's with me.

THE COURIER

(slurred)
I'm with her.

BOUNCER

Okay, then.

He undoes the rope. The room is long & narrow, both sides are lined with plush couches and round tables. Man-babes of all shapes and sizes casually sit back and listen to the beat of The Go-Gos. At the end of the room is a door. The sign on the door reads: Laidies Room. Two large men stand in front of the door.

MARILYN

He's in there.

The Courier picks a drink up off a nearby table, downs it.

THE COURIER

Let's go.

The two walk through the room. The Courier does 360's as they move forward, seemingly enamored with the scene. "We Got the Beat" is getting louder.

During his spins, we see The Courier's face as his back is to Marilyn and the bathroom. For a moment, his face changes. He's in total control, and BACK AT THE BOUNCER, The Courier sees something he likes.

BOUNCER

(o.s.)

Hey, big man! Where you think you goin?

INT. V.I.P. LAIDIES ROOM - NIGHT

The walls are covered with mirrors. Lispy is sitting in a deep wicker chair, wearing a housecoat.

He is petting a cat, while a little MEXICAN MAN dressed like a housemaid paints his toenails. A movable rice-paper wall separates him from the door.

A puzzled look crosses his face as he hears a scuffle outside.

Suddenly, his ricepaper world comes crashing down.

Looming in front of him like a gigantic black shadow is the Immense Black Prisoner, Tony.

TONY

Your men is dead.

He lifts Lispy off the chair and shows him. The two bodyguards have been dragged in to the room, their necks craned to absurd angles. The Mexican maid scrambles out, past a screaming and crying Marilyn.

The Courier saunters in and rips off his wig.

LISPY

(gasping)

I can't th-top the forth-es that are in motion.

THE COURIER

You better start thinking of a way, Newton.

LISPY

There'-th nothing I can do. The men want your blood.

TONY

You want me to pop his neck?

LISPY

It doe-thn't matter what you do to me. They're not gonna th-top until you're dead.

THE COURIER

Okay, Tony. Do it.

LISPY

Wait!!!

The Courier turns back around.

THE COURIER

You got something you want to say?

LISPY

Ye-th. Ye-th. Plea-th. I know a way to clear you. But you gotta let me down.

THE COURIER

You can talk from there.

LISPY

Plea-th. Ju-tht give me a th-econd here.

The big guy looks at The Courier for direction who nods. He sets Lispy on to the ground and folds his huge arms across his barrel chest.

LISPY

You th-ee, all of that Yelserp th-tuff was just a bluff.

The prisoner slaps Lispy on the back of the head, amused.

TONY

Speak correctly.

LISPY

I've got a fucking li-thp, all right?

The big guy laughs.

THE COURIER

Who was it you killed?

LISPY

Yeltherp, who else?

THE COURIER

Who is Sivle Yelserp?

LISPY

Hes'th the King. Or at least he was until I popped him.

THE COURIER

Bullshit. Where's the real Yelserp?

LISPY

What do you mean?

THE COURIER

Don't give me that, Lispy. I know the guy you killed was a rabbit.

LISPY

You're inthane!

THE COURIER

Not according to the blue page.

LISPY

The blue page? Those-th are real?

THE COURIER

Yep.

LISPY

This is-th all a bit perplexthing. I've only dealt with the dead Thivel Yeltherp.

Every time he lisps, Tony can't help laughing.

LISPY

(furiously)

Get thi-th big animal off my back!

THE COURIER

Okay. Back off, T.

Tony turns around, so as to cut off his laughter.

Lispy controls his temper, collects himself.

LISPY

I don't give a shit if he'th dead or not. But if he's not the real Yeltherp, you can be guaranteed you are a dead man. Becauth the real one will think you tried to kill him. And if the real Yeltherp is dead, and you let thith animal kill me, you'll have no leadsth what-thoever, and no one to call off the dogs-th.

A commotion is heard outside the door, men screaming like women and feet pounding the stairs. There is a pounding at the door.

VOICE

Open up! F.B.I.!

LISPY

Thit!

Lispy turns and starts to climb the paper dispenser toward a little window near the ceiling. The door bursts open, armored F.B.I. AGENTS pour in.

AGENTS

Freeze! F.B.I.! Freeze!

The Courier and Tony raise their arms. Lispy, who is halfway up the wall and hanging on to the window, throws back his housecoat and pulls a pearl-handled pea shooter out of thigh holster. He takes a shot at the cops.

THE COURIER

No!

Lispy is splattered against the wall before he can get a shot off.

INT. FBI INTERROGATING ROOM - DAY

The Courier sits at a wooden table while two new Feds grill him.

NEW FED

What the hell did you think you were doing there, Jack-off?

THE COURIER

(coolly)

You haven't been listening.

The Courier looks at his watch.

NEW FED

No. You're the one who's not listening.

The door opens and Richter and Sordo walk in.

The Fed who's been interrogating the Courier looks like he's about to go ballistic.

RICHTER

(to the New Fed)

Beat it, Phil.

NEW FED

This is my bust, Jack-off.

Richter holds up a blue page and the New Fed's eyes grow wide as plates.

RICHTER

(angry)

You still want it?

NEW FED

No, man. That's all right. We... we're finished here. He's all yours.

He and his partner quickly leave.

Richter moves quickly around the table and hooks the Courier under the arm.

RICHTER

Let's go.

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - DAY

Sordo drives a sedan while Richter and Courier talk in the back seat.

RICHTER

What were you doing at the Swizzle Stick?

THE COURIER

What the hell do you think I was doing?
Trying to help you guys.

RICHTER

You were supposed to call us before you
made a move.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

They walk down a long row of empty pews towards an open casket.

THE COURIER

Yeah, why? So you a-holes could come
kill my only lead?

RICHTER

You didn't call us! I could have stopped
it.

Sordo starts signing madly. Richter reads his message.

RICHTER

Sordo says he knew we couldn't trust you
and we had to have you tailed.

THE COURIER

Trust me?
(beat)
It doesn't matter.

They get up to the coffin. Laid out inside is the Sivle Yelserp rabbit.

THE COURIER

What are we doing here?

RICHTER
Do you know who this is?

THE COURIER
I know it's not Sivle Yelserp.

RICHTER
His name is Bradley Cribbs.

THE COURIER
So.

Richter removes the blue page from his inside pocket as he speaks.

RICHTER
He's a Fed.

The Courier has a dazed expression on his face.

THE COURIER
A marker?

RICHTER
Worse.

He hands over the page to the Courier, who looks at it, turns it over, and looks at it again. It's blank, except for the name, Sivle Yelserp.

THE COURIER
What's the game?

EXT. CHICAGO STREETS - DAY

Sordo is driving again while Richter and Courier talk in the back seat.

RICHTER
He doesn't exist.

THE COURIER
You said...

RICHTER
I didn't know. I was left out.

THE COURIER
But it makes no sense. Then what's in my case?

RICHTER

We know what's in your case. A jar of fireflies.

THE COURIER

Nope.

RICHTER

What do you mean, nope?
(to Sordo)
Sordo, pull the car over.

Sordo hums to himself and drives along.

THE COURIER

I mean I didn't give up the real case. Fireflies? Please. I made that one up. When your stooge opened it and I didn't get a reaction, I knew he wasn't the real Yelserp. Give me some credit. I never thought it would be that easy.

RICHTER

You're shitting me.
(to Sordo)
Pull over the car, Sordo.

The car keeps going.

THE COURIER

I'm not shitting you.

RICHTER

You didn't give up the case?

THE COURIER

Have I ever missed a delivery?

Richter leans forward and jerks Sordo's shoulder, who jumps in surprise and slams on the brake.

RICHTER

So where's the case?

THE COURIER

Where's Yelserp?

RICHTER

That's what I'm trying to tell you. There is no Yelserp. The Bureau made him up to fuck with the West Coast mafia. Ask yourself how long you've heard the name Yelserp? Since you were a kid?

(MORE)

RICHTER (cont'd)

Five different Federal Agents have played him going back to the Fifties.

The Courier ponders this, but it is unimpressed. He opens the door and hails a cab.

RICHTER

Where you going?

THE COURIER

To find the real Sivle Yelserp. I've still got twelve hours. Your welcome to try and keep up.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BOXING RING - DAY

As The Courier starts to enter the gym, he turns and looks at the blue sedan that has pulled up across the street. Richter and Sordo sit in the car.

INT. BOXING RING - DAY

Cornerman is sitting on the end of the bench watching BAG WHITE KID slam hard rights into a sparring partner

CORNERMAN

Snap the arm, Jake.

Pop... pop...

CORNERMAN

Stop for a minute, Jake. Look here.

The kid stops, but looks up with a pissed expression on his face as if this old man has anything relevant to say.

CORNERMAN

Let's face it kid. You're slower than a baseball game. Buster is going to hit you fourteen times before you get that big meat hook on him. You're gonna have to make up for it by snapping your wrist at the end of your punch. Give it more torque, kid. More torque. Now try it again. Pop it this time. Really, pop it. Come on, Tommy, give him a workout!

Jake snorts and resumes his workout.

The Courier sits next to Cornerman.

THE COURIER

What do you know about the King?

CORNERMAN

He's dead. Deader'n the nickel malted.

They sit, watching the big white kid pound away.

CORNERMAN (cont'd)

You findin' stuff you don't like?

THE COURIER

I'm not sure.

CORNERMAN

You open the package?

THE COURIER

No.

CORNERMAN

You never do, do you?

THE COURIER

No.

CORNERMAN

You see Jake here, poundin? Poundin, poundin, poundin. Always the same. Predictable as rain on St. Patricks. You know why he's gonna win?

(beat)

Cuz everyone so sure he's predictable. Everyone so smart, they gonna give him a shot as the white dope and think they gonna watch him come down like a Christmas tree on New Years. But this kid got a twist. No one seen it yet, and they won't until its too late. This kid's gonna be a champ. Gonna use their greed and smarts against 'em. They're gonna hand it to him. And he's gonna take it. You wait.

THE COURIER

What's all that supposed to mean?

A round-house right knocks Jake's headgear off. He falls flat. Out for the count.

INT. THE COURIER'S APARTMENT - DAY

The Courier is visibly weary. He goes to a closet and pulls the original case down from a shelf. He lays it on the table in front of him. The case sits there. The Courier sits there. The case... The Courier...

A car drives by outside. A dog barks.

THE COURIER
(in frustration)
Fuck!

He lays the blue page in front of him, next to the case. The only thing on it is Sivle Yelserp's name. A clock ticks...

The phone rings.

THE COURIER
Yes? ... Hey, pop. Not right now. I'm working. It's Saturday? Yeah. No, pop. I didn't mean to... if I did, I didn't... Pop, I didn't mean to. It's 'cause I'm very busy. Okay. Fine, pop. Look, I gotta run. I'll call you later. No I prom ... Pop... Pop... I promise. Okay. Yeah, I promise I'll call you later. I gotta run, pop. Okay? Okay. Okay. Bye.

The Courier sits at the table again. Time passes. He's even more agitated. A jackhammer is pounding out his window.

He carries the blue page into the bathroom, squats on the toilet, the page in his hands; he's trying to think.

His reflection stares at him in the shower-mirror. He looks at his face again, flips his hair back, checking out his receding hairline. He starts to run his finger down through his part, but brings up the wrong hand. Everything in the mirror is backwards... he plays this simple game for a moment.

INT. THE COURIER'S APARTMENT - DAY

The Courier walks dazedly from his bathroom, and kicks his metal kitchen wastebasket. It scrapes across the linoleum.

The Courier goes to the refrigerator and pulls out a pickle. He slowly gnaws on it. The wastebasket is still sitting in the middle of the kitchen. Waiting. The Courier stares at it, an odd look on his face. "How did that get there...?"

BAM! He rips through the basket, the half-eaten pickle hanging out of his mouth. Finally he emerges with his prize: a newspaper. It's folded open to the crossword puzzle half completed by Lispy. He turns the paper over and looks at the name... "Las Vegas Sentinel".

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THE COURIER'S APT. - DAY

Richter and Sordo sit parked in front of the building, watching. Not a trace of discreteness about them.

CUT TO:

INT. THE COURIER'S APARTMENT - DAY

The Courier stands to the side of his window and looks out. The Fibbie's car is parked directly in front of his building, across the street.

He sits in a chair and thinks.

INT. RICHTER AND SORDO'S CAR - DAY

No food, no coffee, nothing. They are simply waiting for The Courier. Sordo signs to Richter.

RICHTER

Yes, I'm sure there is no other way out.

More signage...

RICHTER

What and lose this to Goodwin and Burgess? No fuckin' way, Sordo. This is ours.

Sordo is looking past Richter at the building. He nods at a young black kid, the same kid as before, selling candy. The kid walks into the building.

Sordo signs to Richter.

RICHTER

How am I supposed to know if he has Zagnut Bars?

CUT TO:

INT. THE COURIER'S APARTMENT - DAY

The Courier is still sitting in his chair, motionless.
OFFSCREEN, there is the sound of the kid moving through the building.

KID
(o.s.)
Candy! Who wants it?

CUT TO:

EXT. THE COURIER'S APARTMENT - DAY

The kid leaves the building, turns left, and starts to walk down the street.

INT. RICHTER AND SORDO'S CAR - DAY

The Fibbie's watch the kid walk down the street. Sordo signs...

RICHTER
No. You do it.

Signage...

RICHTER
I know he won't understand you. Shit.

Richter gets out of the car and starts to walk after the kid.

SORDO
(slurred)
See if he's got any Mawo Mars.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND THE COURIER'S APARTMENT - DAY

The Courier drops out of a second story window in back of his building onto some trash dumpsters. He moves down narrow alley toward the front.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THE COURIER'S APT. - DAY

Richter is following the kid, double-timing it to keep up

RICHTER
Hey! Kid! What you got?

The kid keeps walking.

RICHTER

Kid!

Finally the kid stops.

RICHTER

What you got in there?

KID

I got all sort's. Mounds, Reeses, Butterfinger. All proceeds go to help youth in the inner-city.

RICHTER

Got any Zagnuts?

KID

Zagnuts? Where you from?

RICHTER

Never mind. Give me two of everything you got.

KID

Cool.

The kid starts pulling out candy.

EXT. NEXT TO THE COURIER'S BUILDING - DAY

The Courier moves along the side of his building toward the front. He peeks around the corner at the Fibbie's car.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THE COURIER'S APT. - DAY

The kid has made a pile of candy on the ground.

KID

Forty bucks.

RICHTER

What?

KID

Yeah. Four bucks a bar. All proceeds go to help youth in the inner-city.

RICHTER

Yeah, okay.

He digs into his wallet.

KID

By the way, the Courier wanted me to tell you that you forgot about the dumpsters behind the building.

RICHTER

What?

KID

The dumpsters. He was planning on jumping out of a low window onto one of them.

Richter turns and looks at The Courier's building. It seems quiet. Sordo is sitting in the car, looking down...

Richter turns and runs toward the building.

RICHTER

Sordo! Sordo!

INT. RICHTER AND SORDO'S CAR - DAY

Sordo is in the passenger seat, glove box open, tracing a highway east across a map of Nebraska.

RICHTER

Sordo! Stay there! Don't move!

Richter takes a right down the alley next to the Courier's building. Sordo doesn't hear, or move.

EXT. THE COURIER'S APARTMENT - DAY

The Courier sees Richter disappear down the opposite alley and heads out into the street.

INT. RICHTER AND SORDO'S CAR - DAY

Sordo continues to look over the map, still tracing the highway. In the rearview mirror, we see The Courier PASS BEHIND the car. The camera then TILTS DOWN to the side mirror, and we see The Courier start coming up Sordo's side.

Sordo reaches Iowa and finally looks up. The street where the kid and Richter had been is empty. He decides its time to get out of the car.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Sordo exits the car just as The Courier dives back behind.

Sordo stands outside the car leaning against the open passenger door. He looks down the street, confused.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND THE COURIER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Richter finds the dumpsters. He looks in them:
"Where the fuck is he?"

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

The Courier sneaks up along the car, behind Sordo.

THE COURIER

Sordo.

Sordo can't hear a damn thing.

The Courier opens the back door of the car and climbs in. He re-emerges with the keys, shuts the door, and walks off. Sordo is still completely unaware.

EXT. PRISON BUS - NIGHT

The same bus from the opening scene meanders down the road. Tony and the Courier sit in the middle of the bus, wearing suits. They are the only passengers.

THE COURIER

You get the prize?

TONY

Yeah. Got friends in places all over.
Bitch ain't gonna sit right for a while,
that's a fact.

THE COURIER

I bet.

Tony hands The Courier something, which he puts in his right, front pocket.

TONY

How much time you got left?

THE COURIER

Less than a day.

TONY

You sure this guy knows?

THE COURIER

I'm not sure of anything anymore.

The bus pulls to a stop. The prison lights from the opening scene loom in the distance.

The Courier and Tony climb out of the bus which drives off
The Courier and Tony move toward the lights.

Tony takes off his tie, rips the buttons off his shirt, and reveals his old prison uniform.

TONY

Never thought I'd bust back in.

INT. PRISON KENNEL - NIGHT

An assortment of ferocious German Shepherds pace in cages.

This building is outside the prison, connected to the inside of the prison only by a long, dog chute.

Two guards sit at a desk, filling out paper work. A prisoner/janitor sweeps the floor, when he comes to the security door leading to the outside. He hits a buzzer that opens the door.

GUARD ONE

Don't use that door, Kenny

The doorway is filled by Tony.

Before the guard can reach for his gun. Tony is on him, his big fist POPPING the guard's lights out. The dogs bark their heads off.

The other guard attempts to charge the big behemoth, but the Courier appears behind him, two-fisting a hat rack. The guard's skull CRACKS. The dogs are in a frenzy.

THE COURIER

What now, Big Guy?

TONY

We used to use the dog barn for smuggling
rock in, some shanks, dig? Never people.

(to the janitor)

Thanks, Kenny.

The janitor nods at them.

THE COURIER

So what do we do?

TONY

We mix with the puppies here.

Tony opens the cage and sticks out his meaty paw, letting the dogs smell him. They immediately change. A cage full of pussy cats. The Courier climbs in after him.

TONY

Kenny here, Curtis when Kenny's not on, straps contraband on to the dog tags, see. Cons on the other end remove 'em. It's not like the guards inside don't know what's going on, but they know when to look the other way long as we attempt to make it look sneaky.

Tony pushes the Courier into the chute connecting the building, through the wall, to the prison.

TONY

(climbing in behind him)
Have your piece out.
(to the janitor)
Flip the light switch, Kenny.

INT. DOG ROOM INSIDE PRISON - NIGHT

Inside this room - a prisoner sits by the receiving end of the dog chute. Two guards man another desk.

A red light flashes above the dog chute.

One of the guards picks up his walkie-talkie.

GUARD THREE

(into Walkie-talkie)
How many times I gotta tell you, Duane.
You're early!
(to his partner)
Lazy fuck.

His partner presses a button and the chute opens. The Courier pops his head through... gun's blazing. Two POWS later, the guards are layed out.

The Courier quickly changes into one of the guard's uniforms as Tony somehow squeezes through the dog chute.

THE COURIER

You wait for me here.

TONY

I'm going wit' you.

THE COURIER

No, you're not. The uniform won't fit.

TONY

But

The Courier already has the guard's keys and is moving into the hall, locking Tony in the dog area.

THE COURIER

If I'm not back in twenty minutes, you get the fuck out of here. You get caught and you're life in solitary.

He doesn't wait for an answer.

INT. CELL BLOCK - NIGHT

The prisoner's are moving about. It's free time.

INT. MR. CAPOLILLO'S CELL - NIGHT

Mr. Capolillo even makes his prison uniform look dapper, as though it has been custom made for his little body.

He sits alone in his cell, dabbing his forehead, and playing chess against himself when the Courier walks in.

MR. CAPOLILLO

Courier.

Immediately, two humongous prisoners grab the Courier around each arm.

MR. CAPOLILLO

You are a foolish young man. Speak.

THE COURIER

Your choice: your wife or Yelserp.

This gets Mr. Capolillo's attention.

MR. CAPOLILLO

I could... hurt you immensely.

THE COURIER

I know they are holding your wife without bond in Block Eleven, Wing "D," Cell 48 at Manhasset Women's Correctional until your trial. You know that and now you know that I know that. She's dead in twenty-four hours if I don't stop it.

MR. CAPOLILLO

(slowly)

I... don't... believe you.

Dab Dab Dab

THE COURIER
My right pocket.

Mr. Capolillo nods and one of the men reaches into the Courier's right pocket.

He removes... Mrs. Capolillo's WEDDING RING.

MR. CAPOLILLO
How did you

THE COURIER
One way or another.

Mr. Capolillo nods again and the prisoners release the Courier.

THE COURIER
I know he's in Vegas but I don't know where to go when I get there.

MR. CAPOLILLO
What makes you think I know where he is?

THE COURIER
You set yourself up to take a fall. You wouldn't have had me picked up when you knew that Tanna would lead me to the Feds. And you certainly would have opened the package, bomb or no bomb. No, you're still working for him. Because the only thing worse to you than being separated from that wife of yours is what Yelserp would do to you if you ratted him out.

MR. CAPOLILLO
What makes you think I'll tell now?

THE COURIER
That ring in your hand.

MR. CAPOLILLO
You can't get to him even if I told you.

THE COURIER
Try me.

Mr. Capolillo looks at the ring in his hand... back at the Courier... back at the ring..he dabs...

MR. CAPOLILLO

Las Vegas is the most organized city in the world, Courier. And the D.I. is the most organized hotel. He's got the top floor.

(softly)

You can't get to him. No one's even seen him.

THE COURIER

You better hope that I do.

The Courier dashes out.

INT. THE DESERT INN BOTTOM FLOOR- DAY

A blackjack dealer slides mace to a player and then covers it with the ten of Jacks.

DEALER

... and Blackjack!

The player turns around it's The Courier His eyes sweep the room.

In the Desert Inn, a small theater sits right off of the casino. A band strikes up the opening chords of SUSPICIOUS MINDS.

An Elvis impersonator begins singing.

To the beat, The Courier struts over to a set of private elevators, looking at his watch. It's almost six.

There are no buttons on the mirrored elevator, only key holes. He pulls a "key" like the one he delivered to Tony out of his boot. He slips the wires in the key hole turns it, and it clicks The gold phone next to him rings.

VOICE

Can I help you?

THE COURIER

Give me the top floor.

The reflection of the casino and the lounge light up the glass doors.

INT. DESERT INN TOP FLOOR - DAY

A big-boned goon answers the phone. All the time, the music to SUSPICIOUS MINDS swells in the background.

GOON
Who's this?

THE COURIER
I'm coming up.

GOON
Who the fuck is this?

THE COURIER
Tell your boss it's The Courier and I'm
coming up.

The goon hangs up the phone and turns to a comrade.

GOON
He's coming up.

Three more goons appear.

GOON
Where's the boss?

GOON 2
He's safe.

They start locking and loading their weapons.

INT. DESERT INN BOTTOM FLOOR - DAY

The Elvis impersonator continues to belt out the song.

ELVIS PRESLEY
(sings)
Because I love you too much, baby!

The Courier watches him... thinking. He turns back toward the elevator, looking at his watch. He looks up at the reflection of the impersonator. There is a FLASH of Nippy Jones' chalkboard...

INT. DESERT INN TOP FLOOR - DAY

The goons stand outside the elevator Ready. SUSPICIOUS MINDS is now louder than hell, blaring over everything.

GOON
Shoot to kill.

INT. DESERT INN BOTTOM FLOOR - DAY

The Courier pushes the up button for the elevator and waits. There is a FLASH of the part of his hair. He looks at it in the mirrored elevator.

The Elvis impersonator is giving it his all, kicking like the karate Elvis. He catches The Courier's attention, who watches him in the reflection.

ELVIS PRESLEY
We can't go on together! With suspicious
minds! And we can't build...

In the reflection the sign above the impersonator flashes...

Appearing Nightly at the Desert Inn:
ELVIS PRESLEY

Only in the reflection it looks like:

:nnI treseD eht ta ylthgiN gniraeppA
YELSERP SIVLE

The door for the elevator opens.

INT. DESERT INN TOP FLOOR - DAY

The men watch, sweat dripping, as the numbers above the elevator door slowly climb towards them. SUSPICIOUS MINDS is reaching its climax.

The first Goon watches, more nervous than anyone.

The men all shoulder the guns as the numbers reach the top and... open.

INT. DESERT INN BOTTOM FLOOR - DAY

The Elvis impersonator finishes the song on his knees. He is sweating badly, a towel draped around his neck.

A few patrons clap enthusiastically.

ELVIS PRESLEY
Thankyou. Thankyouverymuch.

He waves and walks off the stage.

He walks back to a small dressing room and plops down in front of a mirror.

Naked bulbs guard the mirror like tiny soldiers. Elvis wipes his sweaty face with the towel. Looks into the mirror...

...And the Courier is standing there, holding up the blue page, the words "Sivle Yelserp" reflected in the mirror to spell "Elvis Presley."

ELVIS PRESLEY
(in Elvis drawl)
Can I help you, sir?

THE COURIER
I believe this package belongs to you.

He hands over the real case.

Elvis takes it calmly. The Courier is holding his breath ...still not positive that he's made the right decision. A German Shepherd in the corner growls.

ELVIS PRESLEY
(to the dog)
It's okay, baybeh.
(to The Courier)
What'dya have in here?

He says this, but he's studying the Courier's face. The Courier opens his mouth but nothing comes out.

Elvis nods.

ELVIS PRESLEY
Open it, then.

THE COURIER
I never do.

ELVIS PRESLEY
I know that. But this time it's okay.
You did it. You got me.

The Courier stares at him, eyes huge. It's okay. He is Sivle Yelserp.

With hands shaking, the Courier opens the case.

In the case is a single headshot of Sivle Yelserp as he is sitting right there before him (in fact, he's striking the same pose as in his picture) with a headline that reads: Appearing Nightly in the Desert Inn's Crown Room!

At that moment, ten goons spill into the tiny room, guns all cocked, the Goon that answered the phone leading the charge.

Elvis waves them down.

ELVIS PRESLEY
(to the Courier)
You didn't open it.

THE COURIER
(proudly, but with relief)
Nope.

Elvis nods to him, turns and looks in the mirror.

THE COURIER
Why? Why'd you do it?

ELVIS PRESLEY
The crowd's love me, hound dog.

THE COURIER
No. I mean, why'd you go under? Let the
Fibbies play you?

ELVIS PRESLEY
Play me? Lispy's been leading anyone I
wanted him to to the Fed's Yelserp. Did
it to you. It is, pardon me, was, a
great way to clean out the neighborhood.
We lost a good man there. Momma'll be
sad. Besides-
(he smiles)
Who says I'm under? Me and the Feds got
ourselves a comfortable little
understanding.

He turns back to the Courier.

ELVIS PRESLEY (CONT'D)
When the real King faked his own death,
he became even more of a legend than he
was in his previous life. I just took a
cue from the King. I learned what he
learned. It's easier to run an empire
when you're dead.

The Courier nods.

ELVIS PRESLEY
(to the Goon)
Pay the man, Colonel.

The Goon moves to a small cabinet and pulls out a check,
handing it over to the Courier.

ELVIS PRESLEY
(to the Courier)
I'm just glad the real King didn't hire
you to see if he was findable.

THE COURIER
I'd've found him.

ELVIS PRESLEY
One way or another.

INT. MUSTY BOXING RING - NIGHT

Cornerman watches a boxing match between two black kids.

This time, he turns around when he hears The Courier's voice.

THE COURIER
What's the word, Cornerman?

CORNERMAN
Back to the land of the living, from what
I hear.

THE COURIER
Is that right?

CORNERMAN
That's what I hear.

THE COURIER
You know what I hear?

CORNERMAN
What's that?

THE COURIER
I hear that Siple Yelserp never really
did exist. He's just some character the
Fed's made up.

CORNERMAN
Is that right?

THE COURIER
Not only that, I hear the Capolillos are
going to have their indictment dropped.
Something to do with an illegal search.

CORNERMAN
That's news.

THE COURIER
I shoot it straight.

They both watch the fight for a second.

THE COURIER
You know what else I hear?

CORNERMAN
Tell it.

THE COURIER
I hear the Courier is going under for a while. Seems he's got a father that hasn't seen him in a while.

CORNERMAN
You sure about that?

THE COURIER
I wouldn't lie to you, Cornerman.

As Cornerman grins, the Courier leaves the building and heads out into the darkness.

FADE OUT.