

NEWMAN/TOOLEY F I L M S

THE COURIER

by

Michael Brandt & Derek Haas

11/30/01

FADE IN:

EXT. SHACK OUTSIDE OF GUADALAJARA, MEXICO - DAY

This clapboard, two-room home leans into the wind as though ready to topple at any moment. Dust seems to ooze from the shack as the wind kicks up tiny tornadoes in the yard. Ancient laundry flaps from a clothesline.

A young, dirty WOMAN smokes a cigarillo in the doorway, her hand on her hip.

A Cadillac rolls up to the house, blowing dust all over the woman. She doesn't flinch.

Three MEN get out of the car, two wearing fatigues and carrying machine guns, and one, SPIKE, a twenty-five-year-old techno-nerd, wearing glasses and carrying a laptop. He limps to the woman, kisses her on the cheek and limps into the shack.

INT. SHACK - DAY

It is much darker inside the house - as though light has a hard time filtering through the windows.

No less than fifteen Mexican MEN sit in chairs in the house, all decked out in camouflage, sporting sub-machine guns. They jump up when Spike enters, even though Spike looks extremely out of place. Despite his physical appearance, Spike's face conveys that he is 100%, completely in charge.

SPIKE

Donde esta el Negro?

(Subtitle: Where is the Black?)

One of the men, ESTEBAN, nods his head back over his shoulder to where a curtain divides the room.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

Listar.

(Be ready.)

ESTEBAN

Señor Spike, como comenzamos el revolución? Mis hombres estan impaciente.

(When do we start the revolution? My men grow impatient.)

Spike draws close to Esteban, putting his nose an inch from Esteban's chin.

SPIKE
(threateningly)
Permitéme preocupar por esto.
(You let me worry about that.)

Satisfied that he has made his point, Spike moves to the curtain and puts his head through.

By the light of a candle, an immense black man, TONY, reads from a paperback copy of Cannery Row by John Steinbeck. Red, wooden boxes surround the hulking figure.

Tony only looks up after Spike stands there for a long, awkward moment.

SPIKE (CONT'D)
Estamos seguro.
(We are safe.)

TONY
(in perfect Spanish)
Estas positividad?
(You're positive?)

SPIKE
(dropping the Spanish)
Nobody's seen anything.

TONY
(not missing a beat)
Where's the cash?

SPIKE
In the back of my Cadillac.

Tony stands and looks at the car through the dirty window.

SPIKE (CONT'D)
You can drive it across the border.
Don't worry about the BP. They know
better than to stop that car.
(beat)
When can I expect the detonators to
arrive?

TONY
Soon.

SPIKE
'Soon' is not good enough. We are
wasting time! I've got a ton and a half
of worthless explosives here. I need my
detonators!

Tony turns his gaze to an outhouse behind the shack, which is guarded by a gun-toting Mexican.

TONY
Be cool, man. I'll be back in a minute.

He takes his book and walks out the back door to the outhouse.

EXT. OUTHOUSE - DAY

Tony nods at the guard as he enters.

INT. OUTHOUSE - DAY

The outhouse is a four holer. When the door swings shut the room is black except for what light can sneak through the poorly constructed walls.

Tony pulls down his pants and is about to sit.

From behind him, somewhere in the shadows, a MAN'S VOICE breaks the silence.

VOICE
I've got something for you.

Tony does not turn around.

TONY
Motherfucker. Where the fuck you been?

VOICE
Waiting for you to take a shit. Nippy said you'd be in Matamoros. You weren't.

TONY
Plans changed. How'd you find me?

VOICE
That's my job.

Tony laughs.

TONY
I guess any cat who's got the balls to call himself The Courier better be able to find a big black dude in Mexico. What do you have for me?

The Courier steps out of the shadows. Dark hair and a slight beard help him blend in to the Mexican crowds. He hands Tony a package.

THE COURIER

I don't know.

TONY

You didn't open it?

THE COURIER

That's not my job.

TONY

Do I need to sign for this somewhere?

The Courier shakes his head.

Tony turns around to hold the package up to a stream of light. He rips off the brown paper to reveal a book: Cannery Row.

TONY (CONT'D)

What the hell...

Tony opens the book and smiles. When he looks back over his shoulder, The Courier is gone.

Tony laughs a deep-belly laugh, and gives a half-hearted look down one of the shit holes.

EXT. OUTHOUSE - DAY

Tony exits the outhouse.

TONY

(to the guard)

Spike quiere usted en la casa.

(Spike wants you in the house.)

GUARD

Señor Spike esta aqui? Ay de mi! Por supuesto!

(Spike is here? Oh my god! Of course!)

The guard follows Tony to the house.

EXT. BACK OF THE SHACK - DAY

Tony starts to enter the back door but turns to the guard.

TONY

En la frente, motherfucker.

(In the front, motherfucker.)

The confused guard goes around to the front. Tony slams the back door.

INT. SHACK - DAY

Spike and the pretty woman are alone in the room. She is sitting on his lap, not at all happy about her situation.

TONY

(to the woman)

Limpa el bano. Ahora!

(The outhouse needs cleaning.

Now.)

SPIKE

(to the woman)

Va.

(Go.)

She leaves, glaring at Tony.

Once she is gone, Tony opens the book, closes it, and places it gently on the shelf. The book starts to HUM softly, but no one can hear it.

TONY

(back to English)

Let me see the cash.

EXT. CADILLAC - DAY

Tony and Spike walk up to the Caddy, which is guarded by a pair of men.

TONY

(to Spike)

Tell them to get lost.

SPIKE

(to the men)

Van.

(Go inside.)

The men leave as Spike opens the trunk. He reaches in and pulls out a large suitcase. Tony pops it open and gazes at the wads of cash.

TONY

Nice.

He closes the case and puts it back into the trunk.

SPIKE

And my detonators?

CUT TO:

INT. SHACK - DAY

The hum of the book grows louder. Esteban gets up from his chair and follows the sound into the back room.

ESTEBAN
Que es esto?
(What is that?)

He moves over until he is squinting right at the book. The hum is now extremely loud. He picks the book off the shelf and slowly opens it. His EYES grow huge.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHACK - DAY

The building EXPLODES sending burning planks and bandito parts everywhere.

TONY
Whoa! Looks like your detonators are
here!

Tony grabs each side of Spike's head and snaps his neck like a pretzel.

EXT. OUTHOUSE - DAY

The woman rushes out to see the building on fire, no survivors anywhere. She sees the white Cadillac leaving a trail of dust as it disappears into the desert.

EXT. MEXICAN HIGHWAY - DAY

The white Cadillac hauls ass around a dilapidated Mexican bus.

INT. MEXICAN BUS - DAY

In the back of the bus, The Courier looks out the dirty window as the Caddy speeds by with Tony cruising at the wheel.

The Courier smiles to himself and leans back, satisfied.

A fat Mexican MAN turns to look at him, surveys the grimy filth that blankets The Courier, and pinches his nose.

Smoke curls up in the background from the explosion.

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.

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 (CONT'D)

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 (CONT'D)

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 ATTACHÉ case sits next to him.

LISPY (CONT'D)

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

THE COURIER

Baron.

LISPY

Uh-uh. Th-tarts with a "R."

THE COURIER

Ruler.

Lispy nods approvingly, inks in the word. He lifts the crossword, revealing a thin picture frame that opens like a book. It remains closed.

The Courier immediately zeros in on the frame. Lispy just stares at his crossword.

LISPY

Thee's very pretty.

The Courier picks up the frame and puts it back in a drawer.

They both wait for what's next. Finally...

LISPY (CONT'D)

What does-th the name Evil Thivle mean to you?

THE COURIER

Evil Sivle? I've heard it.

LISPY

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

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

From his breast pocket, he withdraws a folded check and slides it over to the Courier.

THE COURIER

I don't take checks.

LISPY

Thi-th one you will. It-th a cashiers check for five hundred thouthand dollars. From a Thwi-th bank.

The Courier picks up the check, examining it closely. 500,000 dollars. Lispy nods at it.

LISPY (CONT'D)

You can have it up front --

(beat)

Plu-th five hundred thouthand more and a
th-pethel bonus-th if thith case find-th
right hand-th. Unopened of course.

THE COURIER

What kind of bonus?

LISPY

Tru-tht me, you'll like it.

THE COURIER

Why the kick?

LISPY

Becauth it can't be done.

THE COURIER

Whose hands?

LISPY

Evil Thivel's and Evil Thivel's only.

THE COURIER

I don't follow.

LISPY

Evil Thivle 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 thaïd 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 (CONT'D)

Oh, and you have til Thunday. And like I thaid, that case-th is to remain unopened. We'll know if itsth not. Otherwisthe, the offer is re-thinded, and you become a marked man. And I wouldn't th-pend any of that dough. Nobody turns down Evil Thivel. That'th the deal.

THE COURIER

That's not much of a deal.

LISPY

Tough thit.

Lispy marches out the door.

With that, The Courier puts his glass in the sink and tosses the crossword in the trash.

INT. FOYER OF APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The sun is shining into this average looking apartment entry. Mailboxes line one wall. A plastic plant and a wooden bench cover the other side, next to the elevator.

The elevator doors open and the Courier hustles out without the case. ANNA, a pretty woman in her late-twenties is leafing through her mail. She is happy to see the Courier arrive.

ANNA

(playfully)

Hey, you. Where's the fire?

The Courier opens his mailbox. There is nothing in it.

THE COURIER

Hi. No fire, just busy.

She sticks out her hand.

ANNA

I'm Anna.

The Courier shakes her hand.

THE COURIER

Nice to meet you.

ANNA

You shaved your beard.

THE COURIER

Yeah.

ANNA

It made you look tough.

Her bright eyes have grabbed him.

THE COURIER

(reluctantly)

Yeah, well... time for a change.

ANNA

You know I'm up on the fourth floor too.
401. Just down from you.

THE COURIER

I don't spend much time at home.

ANNA

Well, I'm new to Chicago and have been
meaning to come by. You know, do the cup
of sugar thing.

THE COURIER

I'm afraid I don't have much by way of
groceries.

ANNA

Fast food man, huh? I get it.

THE COURIER

Something like that.

He closes his mailbox.

THE COURIER (CONT'D)

Well, goodbye, Anna.

ANNA

Bye.

The Courier disappears out the door. Anna looks at the
outside of this strange man's mailbox, which reads '405.'
Two names have been scratched out.

CUT TO:

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

Evil Sivle.

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 Biederman job.

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

THE COURIER (cont'd)

Let's see if I remember that correctly...
Hmm. You quit like I told you and the
next day they were fishing Slants and
Jerome outta the Chicago River...

The old man blinks, his face shrewing up.

THE COURIER (cont'd)

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 the King is?

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

CORNERMAN (CONT'D)

(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.

When he turns to make sure the conversation is through, The Courier is already gone.

CUT TO:

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. Spreadsheets drooped across his knees, he waits placidly on a bench for the bus to approach. The Bay Bridge glows in the background.

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

INT. BUS - NIGHT

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

First of all, ya ain't gonna find him. Don't know why you'd want to. Second of all, I'm the only one who's gonna tell you the truth.

THE COURIER

Why?

SAN FRAN TANNA

Everyone's on the payroll. They'll tell you anything to throw you off the trail. Evil Sivle don't want to be found.

THE COURIER

Why are you going to tell me the truth?

SAN FRAN TANNA

Let's just say the King's auditing his books this week and there's sure-fire a couple of discrepancies I'd rather not be around to explain. I put you on the man, you distract him, I ride off into the sunset. I figure you can buy me a couple of days until the wanted posters go up.

THE COURIER

So tell me what you know.

SAN FRAN TANNA
The guy who hired you... real homo...
wears rings on every finger, lip gloss...
talk-th like thi-th.

THE COURIER
Yeah?

SAN FRAN TANNA
He gave it to you all caddy-whumpus.

THE COURIER
What's that?

SAN FRAN TANNA
The story. He gave it to you backwards.

THE COURIER
He didn't give me anything.

San Fran Tanna looks at The Courier like he doesn't have the sense God gave him.

SAN FRAN TANNA
You open the case?

THE COURIER
No. I never do.

SAN FRAN TANNA
Yeah, whatever. My guess is there's something in that there case worth havin.' Open it. Check it out.

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

SAN FRAN TANNA (CONT'D)
This here's my stop.

The Courier gets up and lets Tanna 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'm going to have to ask you to come with me.

They step over San Fran Tanna, the Courier's eyes darting everywhere.

POLICE OFFICER (cont'd)
 (politely)
 Watch the blood. And please don't run.
 We'll find you, and probably kill you.
 Let's keep this amicable, okay?

A police cruiser is parked in the street. Reluctantly, the Courier climbs in.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

The Officer is just pleased as punch with his work so far. He always talks in the same manner -- as polite as an English butler.

The Officer pulls a white rag and a bottle out of the glove box.

POLICE OFFICER
 Now, we have to take a ride, and, unfortunately, you can't be conscious for the ride. We're kind of going to our own little 'bat cave'. So... ether. Don't worry, it's totally safe. I promise.

He pours the ether into the rag and holds it out. The Courier reluctantly buries his face in it.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The police officer leads a groggy Courier down a stark corridor.

POLICE OFFICER
 Is your head starting to clear? Should be right as rain in just a few. I've been meaning to ask you how your flight into San Francisco was? Continental has some good rates right now, though I always prefer to fly American.

The Courier gives him a doped half-smile.

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)
 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 (CONT'D)

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 (CONT'D)

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 a broad 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 the love of my life, do you? What you want to know is why you're here. The truth is, you came to our town with a delivery. And in this town, all mail belongs to the Capolillos.

THE COURIER

Is that right?

MR. CAPOLILLO

(flaring up)

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

Dab... dab... dab...

MR. CAPOLILLO (CONT'D)

(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 us. You may think of us as San Francisco's Postmaster Generals. Therefore, you have something that is ours. 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 I find 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.

CUT TO:

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 looking through the phone book, he steps out to the street and hails a cab.

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

INT. CAB - DAY

A 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 Pac Bell ball park.

CAB DRIVER (CONT'D)
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, Stallion.

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.

CUT TO:

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 tribute to the Grateful Dead. 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
Yeah, man, 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.

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.

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.)

Thanks. 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. No one goes looking for Evil Sivle.

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.

(MORE)

JACK STRAW (cont'd)
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 bong.

JACK STRAW (CONT'D)
(to the kid)
Those are hand-carved by a guy in Mexico.
Get you high just lookin' at them.
(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 Straw waves some incense around.

THE COURIER
Paint thinner.

JACK STRAW
Paint thinner?

THE COURIER
Yeah. By drinking this stuff and then
putting it on my eye my body will send
blood cells to fight infection. The
plant helps channel the cold.

JACK STRAW
Plant?

THE COURIER
So what's the Capolillo's interest?

JACK STRAW
You workin' for the King?

The Courier gives a half nod.

JACK STRAW (CONT'D)
Damn. He must be freaked out about
something. Anyway, the Caps are 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 Evil Sivle 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. EVIL SIVLE'S HALLWAY - DAY

The bitch is led down a lengthy corridor.

JACK STRAW (V.O.)
 Well, Evil Sivle'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.
 (MORE)

JACK STRAW (V.O) (cont'd)
 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 Evil Sivle don't know about and that's the damn truth. Anyways, Evil Sivle'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 seen humping furiously on a butler's leg.

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

JACK STRAW (V.O) (CONT'D)
 (snickers)
 Evil Sivle'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 Evil Sivle gives the bitch back to the Caps, it don't know whether it's 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 Evil Sivle went under.
 (MORE)

JACK STRAW (cont'd)
They're like sharks circling around blood.

THE COURIER
What about you?

JACK STRAW
What about me?

THE COURIER
You asked if I was working for Evil Siple. You got other ideas?

JACK STRAW
Maybe.

THE COURIER
What do you know?

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 (CONT'D)
Knock yourself out.

KID
Cool, man. Thanks.

The kid leaves.

THE COURIER
Come on, Jack. What do you know?

JACK STRAW
All I know is Lispy's spent some time at Quantico.

THE COURIER
Lispy's a Fed?

JACK STRAW
I've got it on good faith.

THE COURIER
How good?

JACK STRAW
Good. My guess is you're carrying a
tracker. You find the king, the Feds
swoop in, that sort of thing.

The Courier ponders.

THE COURIER
Richter still work out here?

JACK STRAW
(laughing)
Yeah. He'll be glad to see you. They got
him working Hitler detail.

CUT TO:

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.

The Courier rips it off the board and leaves.

CUT TO:

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 some more candy.

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

SORDO
(slurred)
Richter, gwab some candy.

Sordo turns back to the window, raising his binoculars.

EXT. OUTSIDE CABIN - NIGHT

Richter opens the door of his car -a government issue sedan- 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, their 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 silencer 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 (CONT'D)

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 (cont'd)
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. That package you delivered to the director of the F.B.I. had Joey Zambesi's left foot in it. Since then I've stopped getting the choice assignments.

THE COURIER
That what it was?

Richter nods.

THE COURIER (CONT'D)
Don't sweat it. I've been tailed by worse.

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

THE COURIER (CONT'D)
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 the silenced gun at Sordo.

The wood by Sordo's hand SPLINTERS, and he jumps up excitedly.

THE COURIER (CONT'D)

How you doing?

(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 (CONT'D)

You better start giving me some closed captions.

RICHTER

(translates)

You've met the Capolillos?

THE COURIER

Yeah. Nice pair.

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 who hired you to deliver a package to Evil Sivle. 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. I've never missed a drop and this won't be the first.

RICHTER

What I was saying was, these assholes hire you, beat you up, and...

Sordo signs to Richter.

RICHTER (CONT'D)

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 don't take out Evil Sivle. 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 Evil Sivle is or you wouldn't be farting around out here with us.

He picks up some signs from Sordo.

RICHTER (CONT'D)

(translates)

You help us nail the Caps, we'll put you on Evil Sivle's trail.

THE COURIER

If you knew where Evil Sivle 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

Yep. Evil Sivle's on it, too. But the upstairs has him in a no fly zone for some reason. The Caps are another story. We bust them, Sordo and me are off the Hitler detail.

THE COURIER

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

For the first time, The Courier lowers his gun.

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?

CUT TO:

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 (CONT'D)

(slurred)

Now member, we need to get a confession on a Jake Oo-eh-wen muhduh.

Richter sticks his head in the office.

RICHTER

So where is this famous case?

CUT TO:

INT. SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT - NIGHT

Richter, Sordo and The Courier walk through the terminal toward a bank of lockers.

RICHTER

What if the Caps had found this key on you?

The Courier shows him the key. The locker number has been filed off.

The Courier sticks the key in the coin-operated locker and pulls out the case.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK STRAW'S HEMP SHOP - NIGHT

The phone RINGS. Jack stubs out his roach and answers it.

JACK STRAW

The Straw.

CUT TO:

INT. SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT - NIGHT

The Courier speaks into a cell phone.

THE COURIER

Hey.

Intercut:

JACK STRAW

Courier, what's up, honkey.

THE COURIER

I need you to put the word out. I want to deal with the Caps.

JACK STRAW

Ooo, not a smart move, amigo.

THE COURIER

Just do it.

JACK STRAW

You got it, man.

CUT TO:

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 attaché 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.

CUT TO:

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 attache 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
You're on your own on this one, Darla.

MRS. CAPOLILLO
How the fuck do you know my name?

THE COURIER
You and your husband are Darlene and
Anthony Capolillo, and you work hookers,
guns and narcotics for Evil Sivle on the
West Coast.

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

INT. VAN OUTSIDE VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

Richter is signing to Sordo.

RICHTER
See if she'll talk about Johnny Lewellen.

INT. TORTURE ROOM - NIGHT

SORDO (V.O.)
Work the Johnny Oo-eh-wen anga.

THE COURIER
I know what you and your husband did to
Johnny Oo-eh-wen.

MRS. CAPOLILLO
Who?

EXT. VAN OUTSIDE VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

Richter grabs the microphone out of Sordo's hands.

RICHTER
(enunciated slowly and clearly)
Johnny Lew-ell-en!

Sordo looks at Richter like he's ready to take a shot at his chin, and grabs the microphone back.

INT. TORTURE ROOM - NIGHT

THE COURIER
Johnny Lewellen.

MRS. CAPOLILLO
You've got hold of some bad fucking information.

THE COURIER
I also heard that you're the ones that hired me to deliver that case to Evil Sivle.

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 (CONT'D)
(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 dem to confess to da kiwwing.

INT. TORTURE ROOM - NIGHT

The Courier can't understand the horrendous pronunciation.

THE COURIER

What?

SORDO (V.O.)

Dey muss 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 (CONT'D)

Because we can beat that out of you.
I've seen it done. Funny guys made
serious. Tough guys 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. Let's talk.

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 (CONT'D)

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 Evil Siple. 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

(loudly)

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 Johnny Lewellen?

MR. CAPOLILLO

What I'm gonna do to you ain't even going to compare with what we did to Johnny Lewellen!

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 with the case.

EXT. BURGER JOINT - NIGHT

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

Richter's sedan pulls up and Sordo and Richter get out.

THE COURIER

You got the file?

SORDO

(slurred)

Evah Sivah's dead.

RICHTER

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

THE COURIER

OD'd? Are you sure?

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

RICHTER

Yep. Valium. Here's pictures... here's the autopsy report. He was in Witness Protection. We didn't know.

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

THE COURIER

So where's the blue page?

RICHTER

Who cares? The guy is dead. Looks like you got the weekend off.

The Courier is deflated.

SORDO

(mocking)

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

Richter and Sordo laugh. The Courier, now pissed, stands up and leaves.

EXT. AIRPORT BAR - NIGHT

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. There is another mirror behind him, creating the effect that his image goes on to infinity, along with the neon 'Drink Shiner Bock' beer sign that hangs over the bar.

His reflection does not look good.

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.

EXT. RETIREMENT HOME, PHOENIX - NIGHT

The Courier gets out of a rented Acura. The front of the retirement home is brightly lit, along with another office on the first floor. The Courier heads in.

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 (CONT'D)

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.

DAN
Yes, sir.

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 Pine Acres is second to none. On site
nurses, medical staff just minutes away,
eight hours of planned activities a day.

THE COURIER
Thank you.

The Courier leaves.

Dan watches him go and heads out of the room, through a short
hallway, and into a lit office. The Courier is sitting at
his desk, holding out his telephone..

THE COURIER (cont'd)
Need to make a call?

CUT TO:

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.

On the refrigerator, magnets hold down a note:

SAT AM 130 KANSAS CITY

The Courier looks at it for half a second, turns to Lispy.

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 (CONT'D)

You see, I should have started with you. That's where I made my mistake. If Evil Sivle asked you to hire me, then I should have figured 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 Evil Sivle 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. He plucks a leaf off a nearby plant and rubs it on the towel.

THE COURIER

The assumed name. The doctor giving the autopsy report. Nice touches. Pretty convincing. Fooled the Feds. Do you have any paint thinner, by the way?

LISPY

No.

He puts the ice pack down, 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 Evil Sivle's death, and you gotta be in pretty tight with him 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 Evil Sivle 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. The Courier hands Lispy a handkerchief.

THE COURIER
Clean up your face.

Lispy grimaces as he wipes his nose.

THE COURIER (CONT'D)
One little nod, slip, or cough, and I'll shoot you in the heart. Understand?

LISPY
You'll be dead in thecondths.

THE COURIER
How much will that matter to you?

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 look at The Courier and Lispy. An elderly couple leaves the building, smiling at the guards, who feign a smile back.

LISPY
Hey fellas-th.

GUARD 1
You going upstairs?

LISPY
Yeah.

GUARD 1
With him?

LISPY
Yeah.

The Guards look at each other like this has never happened before.

LISPY (cont'd)

Its-th cool guys-th. He-th on a job for the King.

After a moment, the Guard nods and The Courier and Lispy get 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 heart.

The elevator opens on the forty-fifth floor and standing in the narrow hallway are four behemoth security guards, all with their guns drawn.

LISPY (CONT'D)

(desperately)

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

The Courier is well hidden behind Lispy.

LISPY (CONT'D)

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

GUARD 2

Nobody comes up here, Lispy. You know that.

LISPY

Of coursth I know that, but thith ith an extheption. Ordered by the King himthelf.

GUARD 2
Why weren't we notified?

LISPY
For Chrithakes fellaths, I'm notifying
you now. Now move or we're going to be
late.

The men part as Lispy and The Courier move to an ornate door
at the end of the hall. Lispy punches a code into the key
pad and the door pops open.

INT. EVIL SIVLE'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 EVIL SIVLE.

Evil Sivle 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.

EVIL SIVLE
(in disbelief)
Mother Mary.

LISPY
I couldn't...

EVIL SIVLE
Sweet Mother Fucking Mary.

LISPY

There was no way that I could-

EVIL SIVLE

There is always a way.

(calmly, to The Courier)

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

Evil Sivle 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, Evil Sivle. One way or another.

The Courier lays the attaché on the table. Evil Sivle pops it open. He has no reaction.

THE COURIER (cont'd)

You can see I didn't open it.

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

EVIL SIVLE

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.

Evil Sivle nods toward Lispy.

EVIL SIVLE (CONT'D)

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

The Courier's face shows no emotion while Evil Sivle laughs.

THE COURIER

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

EVIL SIVLE

I should have killed the mediator, right? That's where I blew it. If I'd've whacked Mr. Lispy 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.

EVIL SIVLE

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.

EVIL SIVLE (CONT'D)

And these little guys...

LISPY

What are thosthe?

Evil Sivle pulls a jar of glowing fire flies out of the case.

EVIL SIVLE

Fire flies.

THE COURIER

East African fire flies, and proof that I didn't open the package. They live like vampires, only come out at night. Too much light and they burn themselves out. The fact that they're alive means the case was never opened.

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

EVIL SIVLE

You are a smart man, Courier.

(to the fire flies)

Not bad, carrying your own personal spotlight.

THE COURIER

Why the test?

EVIL SIVLE

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

THE COURIER

I don't need anything.

EVIL SIVLE

You need me to not have you killed.

Suddenly, the lights go BLACK!

There is a MUFFLED GUNSHOT followed by the sound of BREAKING GLASS.

Muted red emergency lights come on, revealing Evil Sivle, 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 Evil Sivle is Lispy, holding a small pistol.

LISPY

Oh, that-th a shame.

Evil Sivle 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 (CONT'D)

Plea-th hurry! He-th killed Evil Thivle!

(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.

Evil Sivle collapses into the Courier's arms, who drops the half million dollars.

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 Evil Sivle'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, Evil Sivle'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.

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 opens its doors.

SECURITY GUARD FOUR

There he is!

SECURITY GUARD ONE

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.

The elevator doors close right before the guards roar out into the hallway. The Courier is gone.

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 into the original car.

IN THE ELEVATOR:

The Courier jabs the button for the SUNDECK.

INT. 35TH FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

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 elevator?

But the other Security Guards are already dashing for the staircase. SECURITY GUARD ONE starts to follow them to the staircase door, but stops, and just watches his team dash up the stairs.

Waiting until the other guards' footsteps diminish into a slight PINK, PINK, PINK on the metal staircase, the guard steps back out into the 35th floor hall.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

When the elevator passes floor thirty-eight on its way to the sundeck, The Courier slams the heel of his hand into the red EMERGENCY STOP button on the elevator, which jerks it to a stop, and clears all the buttons.

He presses the button for the ground floor.

The elevator starts back down.

INT. 35TH FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Security Guard One furtively moves back to the elevator bank, presses the DOWN button, then checks behind him to make sure he's not in trouble.

When he hears the elevator doors open behind him, he turns and is startled to see The Courier facing him inside the elevator.

The Courier is just as surprised to see one bungling Security Guard instead of the army that was chasing him. They both stare wide-eyed, unsure who is supposed to make the first move.

But before the guard can get his gun out of its holster, the Courier belts him in the face, knocking him cold. He drags the body on to the elevator.

INT. 45TH FLOOR HALLWAY

Guards on the 45th 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 with a drawn gun. The Guards open fire, BLASTING the elevator to hell.

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

INT. 35TH FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Back on the Thirty-Fifth floor, The Courier is just zipping up the hapless Security Guard's pants, when the DING of the elevator bank goes off -- the second elevator. The Courier is about to sprint for the stairwell, when the door opens to reveal a FAT, OLD LADY wearing a MuMu.

They stare at each other for a second.

WOMAN

Well, don't just stand there. I'm in apartment 3508.

She holds out the keys to her apartment. Instinctively, he takes them.

THE COURIER

Lady, I'm not --

The other elevator indicator is coming down. 45, 44, 43...

The Courier watches the numbers fall nervously, but the lady won't get out of his way.

WOMAN

On duty? Listen here, mister. My husband's on the building board and I got no qualms about making a report.

42, 41, 40... She's ready to lecture and not about to move.

WOMAN (cont'd)
I swear to God you people. You didn't
get an education and now you're a
security guard. Well, boo-hoo. I hear
all your complaints.

39, 38... She's now mocking him.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
(whiny, imitating)
We need more coffee breaks... My feet
hurt in these shoes... Can my family use
the building's pool? Waah, waah, waah.

Out of options, The Courier takes his gun and pops the butt
of it against her head. She topples in mid-"waah" and the
wig she was wearing hangs from the end of his gun.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH RISE - DAY

Ambulances, police, fire trucks, and a legion of government
vehicles have pulled up to the building.

Two bodies roll out 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 disappears into the growing crowd.

CUT TO:

EXT. COURIER'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The Courier crosses the street, headed for his building.
Suddenly a limo roars up and cuts him off. Two GUYS jump out
of the front and rudely toss The Courier into the back.

INT. LIMO - DAY

Sordo and Richter face him.

RICHTER
All dressed up and nowhere to go, huh?

Sordo chuckles as the two heavies get in the front and the
car starts to drive.

COURIER
What do you want now? I gave you the
Caps.

RICHTER

That's right. And thank you. We got Mr. C in Leavenworth and the missus stowed away in Manhasset Womens.

COURIER

Good for you.

RICHTER

Yeah. We're superstars now. And as long as we're on such a roll... we want Lispy.

Sordo pops a tape into the limo's VCR. The screen comes alive with a SECURITY CAMERA'S VIEW of Evil Sivle's lair in the high rise:

We see the previous scene: the Courier receiving his money, the lights go out, a gun shot, and then the emergency lights come on. Evil Sivle staggers toward the Courier who throws him at Lispy and runs out.

THE COURIER

How the hell did you get this?

RICHTER

From upstairs.

THE COURIER

Upstairs?

SORDO

Someone in D.C.

RICHTER

Like I said, superstars.

The Courier eyes them both, trying to figure out how to play this. Finally...

THE COURIER

That wasn't Evil Sivle.

Richter smiles.

RICHTER

You are good, Courier.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

The LIMO roars up right as some EMT's are off-loading Evil Sivle's corpse from an ambulance at the morgue entrance.

Richter and Sordo step out of the car, followed by The Courier.

RICHTER
(to the EMTs)
Hold up a sec. How 'bout giving us a minute, boys.

They nod and move out of earshot.

Sordo yanks the sheet down, revealing the ROOSTER MAN.

RICHTER (CONT'D)
(re: the body)
His name is Bradley Cribbs. Special Agent Cribbs.
(beat)
We want Lispy for the murder of a Federal Agent.

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

RICHTER (CONT'D)
In fact all the guards were Feds, too.

THE COURIER
He was a marker?

RICHTER
Worse.

He hands over the page to the Courier. It's blank, except for the name, Evil Sivle.

THE COURIER
You said you'd give me everything you have on him.

RICHTER
That's it. Phoenix was a cover-up because Evil Sivle doesn't exist. We didn't know.

THE COURIER
But it makes no sense. Then who hired me?

RICHTER
Who would put fireflies in a jar?

THE COURIER
Me.

RICHTER

You?

THE COURIER

I didn't give up the real case. When your stooge opened it and pretended like he knew what was in there, I knew he wasn't the real Evil Sivle.

RICHTER

You're shitting me.

THE COURIER

Have I ever missed a delivery?

RICHTER

So where's the real one?

THE COURIER

Where's Evil Sivle?

RICHTER

That's what I'm trying to tell you. There is no Evil Sivle. The Bureau made him up to fuck with the underworld. Ask yourself how long you've heard the name Evil Sivle? Since you were a kid? Five different Federal Agents have played him going back to the Fifties.

Richter nods and the EMT's take the body.

CUT TO:

INT. LIMO - DAY

The Courier faces the agents again, his wheels turning fast.

THE COURIER

So Lispy was working for you guys?

RICHTER

That's what we just found out. He's been fronting for us, bringing in the fish as we reeled 'em in. It's brilliant really, making an FBI agent a mob boss.

SORDO

But now it's muhduh.

RICHTER

That's right. For whatever reason, Lispy double-crossed us and now we've got two dead FBI Agents. Sordo and I were ordered to bring you in. Your page has gone red.

SORDO

Tell im about da red page.

RICHTER

I just did.

Sordo points at the blue page The Courier is holding.

SORDO

(smiling)

One more and you're blue.

THE COURIER

Well, I didn't pull the trigger.

RICHTER

We know. That's why we'll let you play "let's make a deal." You give us Lispy, we give you some room. Those're your options.

The limo stops at a light.

RICHTER (CONT'D)

You've got what, 36 hours to deliver the real case?

THE COURIER

(nodding)

Til Sunday.

RICHTER

So we'll give you til Monday morning to give us Lispy. After that, all bets are off. That tape disappears and the Bureau hands that half a mil with your tracks all over it to the D.A. Upstairs wants your blood, Courier. Give us Lispy and they'll forget you were ever involved.

Pissed, The Courier opens the door and hails a cab.

RICHTER (CONT'D)

(calls out)

We understand each other?

THE COURIER
I understand that someone hired me and
I've got til Sunday to find him. You're
welcome to try and keep up.

The Courier jumps in the cab.

SORDO
He gonna play ball?

RICHTER
(confidently)
He doesn't have a choice.

CUT TO:

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 behind him.

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 that what the street's saying?

CORNERMAN
Street says you fucked over the
Capolillo's and then killed Evil Sivle.
That even the Fibbies are pissed off.
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.

He looks back over his shoulder but The Courier is already gone.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE COURIER'S APARTMENT - DAY

The Courier climbs out of the cab and hurries into the building.

INT. FOYER - COURIER'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

He heads straight for the elevators, passing the mailboxes.

The doors finally open and he enters the elevator, alone. As the doors close, he spots Anna running with a bag of groceries.

ANNA
Hold the elevator!

The Courier starts to hit the 'Open Doors' button but then stops himself. The doors are closing...

ANNA (cont'd)
Please, hold the elevator!

The Courier catches Anna's confused look as the door closes the last few inches.

She stands in the foyer, disappointed.

Suddenly the doors re-open. The Courier looks at Anna sheepishly.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Thanks. Thought you were leaving me behind.

She enters the elevator and punches a button.

THE COURIER
I couldn't find the right button. I'm not too good with these things.

The doors close.

IN THE ELEVATOR:

The two stand there, staring straight ahead.

ANNA
(still staring ahead)
You ever eat?

THE COURIER
Pardon?

ANNA
(staring ahead)
I've got groceries.

THE COURIER
I don't follow.

She turns and smiles at him.

ANNA
I was just trying quietly and
mysteriously to invite you to dinner.
You know, speak to you in a language you
understand.

The Courier smiles at this.

THE COURIER
That's good. Dinner, huh?

ANNA
How bout tomorrow?

The Courier's smile disappears.

THE COURIER
Uh, no. I can't.

ANNA
Can't tomorrow? Or can't.

The elevator DINGS and the doors open.

THE COURIER
Can't. Tomorrow, I mean.

They step out.

FOURTH FLOOR HALLWAY:

Anna's door is across from the elevator. She pulls out her
keys and unlocks her door.

ANNA
You let me know when you can. Bring your
friend if you like.

THE COURIER
Friend?

Anna nods at The Courier's apartment door.

ANNA
(matter-of-factly)
The guy staying with you.

She walks in her place. The Courier springs for his door.

INT. THE COURIER'S APARTMENT - DAY

He throws open the door, surveying the damage. The few items of furniture he owns are overturned, ripped up. The place has been ransacked.

THE COURIER
(in frustration)
Shhh...

Some floorboards are pulled up, holes knocked in the walls.

He quickly moves to...

THE BATHROOM:

...where the toilet has been upended, and a storage hole below it has been discovered.

The Courier doesn't wait for more...

CUT TO:

INT. FOURTH FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

He pounds on Anna's door until she opens it, concerned.

THE COURIER
This guy you saw coming out of my
apartment... what'd he look like?

ANNA
Femme. Lots of jewelry. I'd seen him
here once before. I thought --
(beat)
Why what's wrong?

But The Courier's already booking out of there.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE COURIER'S APARTMENT - DAY

The Courier rushes out and hails a cab. He looks around and spots Richter and Sordo's sitting in a sedan across the street.

They don't even notice him.

THE COURIER
Where's the limo?

RICHTER
 (startled, chewing on some
 taffy)
 We're trying to keep up like you said.
 This is ~~more~~ inconspicuous.

The Courier jumps in his cab, and Richter's car pulls out behind it.

CUT TO:

INT. CAB - NIGHT

The Courier sits in the back of the cab. He turns and sees the Feds following him.

He turns back and sinks a little in the seat, depression and doubt all over his face.

CAB DRIVER
 So where we going?

The Courier stares ahead, lost in his thoughts.

CAB DRIVER (cont'd)
 Hey, guy, how bout you give me a break
 and not make me guess, huh?

THE COURIER
 What? Oh...

The Feds' lights reflect off the rearview mirror into The Courier's eyes.

With the light is a FLASH: The note on Lispy's fridge:

SAT AM 130 KANSAS CITY.

Finally...

THE COURIER (CONT'D)
 South side.

CUT TO:

EXT. SLUMMY BUILDING - NIGHT

Richter's car waits at the curb of this ratty looking building. The two agents grimace at the surroundings.

RICHTER
 What kinda shit-hole is this?

Sordo signs something.

RICHTER (cont'd)
You can say that again.

CUT TO:

INT. TONY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A bass beat pounds the walls of Tony's 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.

There is a KNOCK at the door. Little skinny-assed NIPPY JONES comes trucking out of the back room. How he heard the door over the music no one will ever know.

NIPPY JONES
(to himself)
Someone's at the door! Someone's at the door!

Nippy opens the door, where the Courier stands.

NIPPY JONES (cont'd)
Whoa-whoa-whoa! It's the goddamn Courier! Thought you were dead!

THE COURIER
(hurried)
Hey, Nippy. Tony here?

NIPPY JONES
An-tone-ee came rollin in in a white Caddy filled with green. Just like puddin' in a cloud. Yo shit be money in this house. Come on!

They move through the throng, The Courier, a marshmallow floating in a cup of hot chocolate.

The two enter the back room.

NIPPY JONES (cont'd)
Yo, Tony! Look who's here!

INT. MIRRORED ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The back room of Tony's joint has mirrors on all four walls. The reflections of the reflections make the room look like it goes on forever.

Tony leans over a shot at the pool table, with a flick he rockets a ball into a hole.

Tony comes over and gives the Courier a bear hug.

TONY

Heard you were dead.

The Courier winces from the pain.

THE COURIER

Oww, shit. Not yet.

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

NIPPY JONES

What you drinkin, Courier?

THE COURIER

Nothing.

(aside, softly to Tony)

Look, I need you're help.

Like someone flipped a switch, Tony turns all-business.

TONY

(to his posse)

All ya'll get the fuck out.

The Posse removes itself quickly. When the room empties...

THE COURIER

I'm having trouble with a delivery.

TONY

What you delivering?

THE COURIER

I don't know. A case.

NIPPY JONES

You don't know what's in it?

THE COURIER

That's my guarantee when you hire me.

TONY

Might be time to look inside. Gain an edge.

NIPPY JONES

What's it gonna hurt?

THE COURIER
I don't have it. I lost it.

NIPPY JONES
Shit, man, you lost the fucking case?

TONY
Shut the fuck up, Nippy.
(to The Courier)
What happened?

THE COURIER
It's complicated. The guy who gave it to
me took it back. I think he wants me to
fail at the delivery.

TONY
So how can we help?

THE COURIER
The airport.

TONY
No problem.
(to Nippy)
We still got guys at O'Hare?

NIPPY JONES
Shit. Anything you need, just say the
word.

THE COURIER
I think the guy I want is on American
Flight 130 to Kansas City in the morning.
Can we can get to him?

TONY
You want him or you want that case?

CUT TO:

EXT. O'HARE AIRPORT - MORNING

A town car pulls up to the Departures curb.

Before the DRIVER can scoot around and get the passenger
door, Lispy is already stepping out of the car, wearing his
Sunday best. He looks like a zoot-suit refugee from the '40s
with black pinstripes and a fedora.

Clamped in his hand is the Courier's case. Lispy flips the town car driver a Franklin and heads into the airport.

CUT TO:

IN THE METAL DETECTOR LINE:

He waits to pass through the detectors, three back from the front, super cool, the case still in his hand. A couple of BUSINESSMEN stand in front of him.

As they put their briefcases on the conveyer belt running through the X-ray, WE WATCH over the shoulder of an airport security WORKER whose monitor displays the contents of the cases: notebooks, pens, various junk.

Lispy steps up and places the case on the belt where it moves into the machine. On the video screen, we see the case just enter frame, it's contents about to be revealed...

BEEP!

The CAMERA WHIPS AROUND to Lispy, whose jewelry has set off the metal detector.

LISPY
(impatiently)
Thee-th fuckin' thing-th.

AIRPORT GUARD
Step back through, please.

He does, and again it goes off.

AIRPORT GUARD (cont'd)
Step over here, please.

Lispy does, and waits impatiently, while the guard whirls his wand around him, the wand emitting electronic WHIRRS with each pass over Lispy's jewelry.

Lispy just sneers at him.

AIRPORT GUARD (cont'd)
Okay. Have a nice flight.

LISPY
(smart ass)
Thank-th.

Lispy moves over to the carousel where his case should have slid out. But it's not there.

The coolness vaporizes from his face. His eyes search, search, search but his case is gone. So is the airport worker that was running the x-ray.

LISPY (cont'd)

Hey! Where the fuck-th my cay-th!

CUT TO:

INT. O'HARE AIRPORT - DAY

Nippy Jones, case in tow and dressed in airport security garb, opens a door marked 'NO ENTRY,' a gap-toothed smile pasted on his puss.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE PARKING AREA - DAY

Parked inconspicuously at the curb is Tony's white convertible Caddy from Mexico, Big T in the driver's seat and the Courier riding shotgun. The curbside is a zoo, as TRAVELERS are everywhere.

They both watch the airport exit intently. The Courier checks his watch.

A TRAFFIC COP ambles down the curb, making cars that are parked move along. When he gets to the Caddy, he just gives Tony a little nod and passes right by.

CLOSE ON: The Courier's watch. The second hand hits 12. He then looks in the mirror above his visor. In it, he sees Richter and Sordo sitting in their car a few spaces back.

THE COURIER

Okay, buy me two minutes.

TONY

No problem.

Tony scratches his left ear, just long enough for the traffic cop to see him. The cop pushes his hat up with his left thumb. This is picked up by a SKY CAP who decides to push a large cart of bags in front of Richter and Sordo's car, obscuring their view of the Caddy.

Sordo signs something to his partner. Richter shrugs.

RICHTER

I don't know.

Richter struggles to see around the cart. The sky cap knocks a bag off the cart and has to stop in front of them to pick it up.

Richter leans out the window to try and see, but it's hopeless. Finally the cart is moved, and we now see that Tony is the only person left in the car.

RICHTER (cont'd)

Shit! Come on!

The agents jump out of the car and race in.

CUT TO:

INT. O'HARE AIRPORT - DAY

Nippy carefully opens a door to the terminal, the case firm in his grasp. He looks around, then takes one step into the throng of people.

LISPY

Going th-omewhere?

Nippy spins to see Lispy standing behind him. Like a flash, Lispy has a piece of thick twine around Nippy's neck and drags him back into the doorway.

IN THE HALLWAY:

The corridor is empty. Nippy tries to hang on to the case but the lack of oxygen is making him weak. He kicks his feet, thrashes around, but nothing works. Just as his eyes start to bug out, Nippy drops the case next to the door.

LISPY

Thank-th th-ucker.

Lipsy lets go and bends over to pick it up.

The Courier's boot comes down on top of the case. Lispy looks up at him just in time to receive a fire extinguisher to the head, sending him sprawling.

The Courier grabs the case and the recovering Nippy.

THE COURIER

Come on!

They bolt out the door into the terminal.

IN THE TERMINAL:

Richter and Sordo move through the crowd, eyes scanning, when they spot The Courier and Nippy heading their way. The Courier grabs a set of keys off Nippy's belt.

RICHTER

Courier, what --

Without breaking stride, the Courier tosses him the keys.

THE COURIER

First blue door on the right.

He and Nippy continue right on out the door.

Richter and Sordo look at each other, then make a break for the door.

AT THE CURB:

The Courier and Nippy bust outside and jump in Tony's car, which tears out of there.

THE COURIER

They wanted Lispy. They got him.

NIPPY JONES

(rubbing his neck)

Got-damn! You didn't say nothin' 'bout me getting choked to death! Thought my eyes were gonna pop out my head!

Tony looks sideways at The Courier as the Caddy pulls out of the airport and heads up the highway.

TONY

So, where to now, amigo?

THE COURIER

To where Lispy was going. Leavenworth.

NIPPY JONES

Kansas?

THE COURIER

That's right.

NIPPY JONES

What the hell's in Leavenworth?

Tony eyes Nippy in the rear-view.

TONY
The pen, brother.

THE COURIER
Your sister still locked in Manhasset?

TONY
Thirty to life.

THE COURIER
Let's pay her a visit.

TONY
(brightens)
We gonna get to see Tina?

THE COURIER
Yeah. I want her to do a little fishing
for me.

NIPPY JONES
Can we get something to eat first?

CUT TO:

EXT. CADILLAC - DAY

The Caddy rolls down a country highway.

EXT. MANHASSET WOMEN'S CORRECTIONAL - DAY

The Courier and Nippy sit in the Caddy in the parking lot to
the Visitor's Entrance of this Women's penitentiary.

The Courier takes a nap while Nippy munches on a Sonic burger
in the backseat.

Soon, Tony comes out, a big smile on his face. The Courier's
eyes pop open.

THE COURIER
You get the prize?

TONY
Yeah. Bitch ain't gonna sit right for a
while, that's for sure.

THE COURIER
I bet.

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

TONY
Tina says hi.

Nippy scrunches up his nose, trying to figure out what Tony gave the Courier.

NIPPY JONES
What'd he give you?

THE COURIER
My ticket to Evil Sivle.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. CADILLAC - NIGHT

The Caddy whips along, night descending over the fields of Missouri.

TONY
How much time you got?

THE COURIER
Midnight tomorrow.

From the back seat:

NIPPY JONES
Hey Courier, tell me something.

THE COURIER
What's that?

NIPPY JONES
You ever miss a delivery before?

The glare Tony gives Nippy in the rearview is enough to strangle Nippy again.

NIPPY JONES (cont'd)
What? Nothing wrong with that. Shit.

TONY
(to the Courier)
Don't mind him, brother. His faculties are still clouded.

The Courier's face falls blank, a hint of sorrow mars his mouth. He turns to the window.

Just when we are sure he isn't going to answer...

THE COURIER

I didn't remember leaving it out. I don't know if it was the holidays or the old cabin or what, but my guard was down.

He laughs, but there is no laughter in his face.

THE COURIER (cont'd)

My... fiancée... we had just gotten engaged... we were in this cabin my family owned in East Texas. It was Christmas and we wanted to spend it alone.

Nippy leans forward to hear every word.

THE COURIER (cont'd)

Well, I was on a job at the same time, a delivery for some old Chicago fellas. And I was supposed to hand off a package to some little rat. You know what this guy's name was? You're not gonna believe this. Edward Fallrina. You've probably never even heard of him. But that was his name, Fallrina. I'll never forget it.

(beat)

And it was an easy job, too. I'd already made the guy in Houston... Why I hadn't taken him the package... like I said my guard was down. I went to get firewood... it was supposed to be for Fallrina.

NIPPY JONES

And your girl opened it?

The Courier nods slowly.

THE COURIER

The police thought the old cabin had a gas leak, and she was doing the Christmas candles, and... I should've never gotten someone involved, not in what I do.

NIPPY JONES

Shit.

THE COURIER

That's it. That's my story.

After a moment...

NIPPY JONES
That's a sad got-damn story.

TONY
Where's this Fallrina motherfucker now?

THE COURIER
No clue. He sent me a postcard after the funeral. From Guam. Said it was good to be alive.

NIPPY JONES
Cold.

Tony looks out the window.

TONY
There it is.

He pulls the car over to the side of the road. A brightly lit PRISON looms in the distance.

THE COURIER
How long were you in?

TONY
Eight years in here. Twelve total.
(smiling)
Taught me everything I ever needed to know.
(to Nippy)
You see those lights in the towers come on, you come get us.

NIPPY JONES
I got to sit out here by myself? I'm gonna freeze my ass off.

TONY
Brother, its 65 degrees.

The Courier and Tony climb out of the car and move toward the lights.

TONY (CONT'D)
Never thought I'd bust back in.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON KENNEL - NIGHT

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

INT. PRISON KENNEL - NIGHT

An assortment of ferocious German Shepherds pace in cages. Two GUARDS sit at a desk, filling out paper work. A prisoner/janitor, KENNY, 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 shit in to make the days pass a little easier. Drugs, porn, Krispy Kreme. But never people.

(to the janitor)

Thanks, Kenny.

KENNY

You got it, Big T.

Tony grabs the guns from the unconscious guards. He hands one to The Courier.

TONY

Stun guns. Let's go.

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 (CONT'D)

We'd strap contraband to the dog tags. Cons on the other end remove 'em.

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

TONY (CONT'D)
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 and fires the stun gun. Two jolts later, the guards are laid 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 with 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 in for life.

He slams the door, not waiting for an answer.

CUT TO:

... INT. CELL BLOCK - NIGHT

The PRISONERS are moving about. It's free time. They are playing checkers, listening to the radio, lifting weights...

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 steps into his doorway.

MR. CAPOLILLO

Courier.

Immediately, a humongous PRISONER grabs the Courier by the neck and has a homemade shank against his throat.

MR. CAPOLILLO (CONT'D)

What do you think you're doing?

THE COURIER

You've got a choice Cap: your wife or Evil Sivle.

This gets Mr. Capolillo's attention.

MR. CAPOLILLO

What?

THE COURIER

I know they're 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 stands and digs into the Courier's pocket.

He removes... Mrs. Capolillo's WEDDING RING. The one she swallowed.

MR. CAPOLILLO

How did you --

THE COURIER

One way or another.

Mr. Capolillo nods and the prisoner releases the Courier.

MR. CAPOLILLO

What makes you think I know where he is?

THE COURIER

I got a theory and you stop me when I'm wrong.

Mr. Capolillo nods sheepishly.

THE COURIER (cont'd)

Evil Sivle hires me to deliver a package to himself to see if he can be found. But the only way he wins is if I fail. That's why everyone's doing whatever they can to stop me short of putting a bullet in my head. Because if I walk away without finishing the job, the rest of the world's gonna assume the stories are true, and he can keep on running his empire as a ghost.

MR. CAPOLILLO

But why would I...?

THE COURIER

You set yourself up to take a fall. You knew Tanna was cooking Evil Sivle's books and would lead me right to him, so you killed him. And you certainly would have opened the case, 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 Evil Sivle 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. Like I said, she's dead in twenty-four hours.

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. And Caesar's is the most organized hotel. He's got the top floor.

(softly)

You can't get to him.

THE COURIER

You better hope that I do.

He turns to leave.

MR. CAPOLILLO

One more thing, Courier. The part about not putting a bullet in your head? That changed the moment you didn't give the package to the decoy. New rules now, sucker. You'll be dead the moment you walk into that hotel.

The Courier nods and disappears down the corridor.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Nippy sleeps in the Caddy as Tony and The Courier approach. The stars are out, twinkling.

Tony puts a big paw on Nippy's head, shaking him awake.

TONY

Hop out. The Courier's taking our ride.

Nippy wipes the sleep out of his eyes.

NIPPY JONES

What?

THE COURIER

Tony, I can't...

TONY

Take it. The clock's tickin' on your ass.

THE COURIER

You sure?

TONY

Just bring it back in one piece.

THE COURIER

I'll leave it in Wichita. Fly from there.

TONY

Whatever.

NIPPY JONES

How we gonna get home?

TONY

Brother, we gonna walk.

(to the Courier)

I hope you get that motherfucker.

THE COURIER

Thanks. For everything.

TONY

Va.

The Courier jumps in and takes off. Nippy and Tony start walking up the road.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - DAY

From a distance, the desert town looks like a toy model in the sunlight.

INT. CAESAR'S PALACE CASINO - DAY

A blackjack dealer slides an ace to a player and then covers it with the ten of Spades.

DEALER

...and Blackjack!

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

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

An Elvis impersonator begins singing.

The Courier walks over to a set of private elevators.

There are no buttons on the mirrored elevator, only key holes. He pulls a wire "key" out of his wallet, slips it into the key hole, and turns it. The gold phone next to him RINGS.

MALE VOICE

Can I help you?

THE COURIER

Give me the top floor.

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

INT. CAESAR'S PALACE 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 1

He thinks he's coming up.

Three more GOONS appear.

GOON 1 (cont'd)

Where's the boss?

GOON 2

He's safe.

They start locking and loading their weapons.

DOWNSTAIRS:

The Elvis impersonator continues to belt out the song.

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

The Courier watches him... thinking. He looks up at the reflection of the impersonator.

UPSTAIRS:

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

GOON
Remember, new plan. Shoot to kill.

DOWNSTAIRS:

The Courier waits.

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

ELVIS
"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 Caesar's Palace:
ELVIS LIVE!

The door for the elevator opens and the Courier climbs on. As the doors are closing, the Courier gives Elvis one last look. The King. The Courier's eyes go wide, and he spins to see the sign again in the mirror behind him on the elevator.

Only in the reflection it looks like:

:ecalap sraseaC ta ylthgiN gniraeppA
!EVIL SIVLE

The Courier's eyes go wide with realization as the elevator doors close. Elvis Live is Evil Sivle.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

The Courier is panicked. He looks at the panel but there are no other floor buttons... the elevator continues to rise.

Instead of muzak this elevator has Elvis' live performance, which is starting it's big finish.

UPSTAIRS:

The goons watch, sweat dripping, as the numbers above the elevator door slowly climb towards them.

IN THE ELEVATOR:

The Courier hits the Emergency Stop BUTTON and the elevator jerks to a halt.

UPSTAIRS:

The goons note the elevator has stopped. The leader picks up a radio.

GOON
(into a radio)
He's stopped the elevator. We're going down.

Two of the goons pull the elevator doors open.

IN THE ELEVATOR:

The Courier pulls on his doors, forcing them apart, and finds himself between floors. He can just fit through the doors, but there's no way to go up or down.

Then the phone in the elevator RINGS. The Courier can't believe it, but finally picks it up.

THE COURIER
Yeah.

VOICE (O.S.)
Going somewhere?

THE COURIER
Who's this?

VOICE (O.S.)
You don't wanna know.

THUMP, THUMP, THUMP.

Three sets of feet land on the roof of the elevator.

VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You'll never make it.

The Courier slams the phone down and looks at the roof of the elevator. Three goons are standing on top of it.

Panicked, The Courier forces the doors open again. This time he pushes himself out and to the side, just as a rain of bullets come through the roof.

He swings the case through the doors and hits the stop button. The elevator takes off again upwards, narrowly missing the Courier who is perched on a beam in the shaft.

ON THE ELEVATOR:

The three goons on the elevator YELL as they are hurtled upwards.

IN THE SHAFT:

The Courier looks down, ten stories of emptiness below him. Since this is a private elevator, there aren't any doors to any other floors. Just smooth walls and the occasional beam.

UPSTAIRS:

The elevator has arrived, and the main goon checks and sees that it's empty. Suddenly the trap door opens and the goons from the roof fall through, scared shitless.

GOON

Get the hell outta there! He's in the shaft, send it back down!

The goons scramble out and the doors close, the elevator hurtling down toward the Courier.

IN THE SHAFT:

The Courier looks up and sees the elevator coming at him. He desperately searches for an answer... the case!

He twists the handle until it pops off the case, puts the case between his legs, and holding an end of the handle in each hand, leaps for the cable.

He uses the handle to take the friction and act like a break as he slides down the cable just ahead of the elevator!

He lands at the bottom of the shaft, the elevator right behind him. He hits the deck as the elevator stops, just feet from smashing him to bits.

He tosses the smoking handle aside and finds a small metal door that reads "BASEMENT." He crawls toward it and scrambles out of the shaft.

UPSTAIRS:

The main goons stare down the shaft.

GOON

(into the radio)

I don't know if we got him. There's only one way out down there.

INT. CAESAR'S BASEMENT - DAY

The basement is filled with old slot machines, roulette wheels and craps tables. Hundreds of them, piled high, creating a crazy maze.

The Courier, clutching the case, pulls out his glock and starts making his way through the machines.

They must be below the theater, because Elvis's muffled singing filters through the ceiling. The Courier seems to be alone, though, and he weaves his way through the dark toward a stairwell, 50 feet away.

Somewhere in the basement, a door opens and VOICES can be heard. The Courier peers through the machines to see some WORKMEN unloading a cart. After a moment they disappear.

The Courier turns back to his stairwell but something catches his eye. A BIG WHEEL -- the big, vertical Wheel of Fortune kind you spin and bet the numbers -- is 20 feet from him.

It's moving, slowly.

The Courier stares into the darkness, trying to make out shapes or shadows. He doesn't see anything and turns back, only to find a man standing there: Lispy!

But it's not the Lispy we've come to know. Now he's impeccably dressed in an Italian suit and his jewelry is gone. He casually holds an UZI machine gun.

The Courier can't believe his eyes.

LISPY

Going somewhere, mailman?

His lisp is gone!

THE COURIER

Yeah, going to see your boss. This is for him.

He holds up the battered case.

LISPY

You're not gonna make it.

THE COURIER

What happened to the Feds?

LISPY

Probably popping out of baggage claim about now.

He raises the Uzi.

LISPY (cont'd)

This is it. It all ends here. You don't make the delivery and the world stays convinced the King doesn't exist.

THE COURIER

(resolved)

I'm delivering this case, Lispy. You can have your secret.

LISPY

Nope, too many loose ends that way. Goodbye, mailman.

Lispy starts to fire, but the Courier tosses the case at him, distracting Lispy enough to miss and let the Courier dive behind an overturned craps table.

Lispy FIRES wildly in the Courier's direction, the bullets ricocheting wildly off the slot machines.

The Courier rolls into the open and FIRES back, causing Lispy to dive for cover.

The case remains in the open, the two men on either side of the small corridor through the machines.

LISPY (cont'd)

(calls out)

There's gonna be an army here any minute, mailman!

But the Courier has moved from his hiding place, and Lispy has no idea where he is. The case remains where it is.

Lispy frantically searches through the mountains of metal, but he can't see anything.

LISPY (cont'd)

You were set up to fail, see? Just quit
already. There's no happy ending here.
It was over before you began.

Suddenly, somewhere in the basement, the distinctive CLICKING of a roulette table starts. Lispy turns and FIRES at it, but there's nothing to hit.

He crawls low toward the sound, under some tables and around the machines. Carefully, Lispy approaches the roulette table, the wheel starting to slow. He stands and looks at the table.

The ball drops on the GREEN 00. On the felt, on the GREEN 00 square, sits Lispy's original \$500,000 check.

Somewhere a door SLAMS.

LISPY (cont'd)

Shit!

He races back to where the case was. It's gone.

CUT TO:

INT. CAESAR'S PALACE BOTTOM FLOOR - DAY

ON THE STAGE:

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

A few patrons clap enthusiastically.

ELVIS

Thankyou. Thankyouverymuch. You're a
beautiful audience.

He waves and walks off the stage.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Elvis saunters through a golden hued dressing room and plops down in front of a mirror. Naked bulbs guard the mirror like tiny soldiers.

The room is straight outta Graceland. Yellow shag carpet goes wall to wall.

Six televisions, all stacked on top of each other on the far wall, show a different show from the era of the real King. Merv Griffin; Make Me Laugh; Love, American Style...

The Elvis impersonator wipes his sweaty face with the towel and looks into the mirror...

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

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

THE COURIER
I believe this package belongs to you.

He hands over the beaten case.

Elvis takes it calmly. A German Shepherd in the corner growls.

ELVIS
(to the dog)
It's okay, baybeh.

Unknown to The Courier, a door opens behind him. A pissed off Lispy stands there, Uzi trained at The Courier. The distinctive red dot of a laser site dances on the back of The Courier's head.

ELVIS (cont'd)
(to The Courier)
What'dya have in here?

He says this, but he's studying the Courier's face. The Courier is holding his breath ...still not positive that he's made the right decision.

THE COURIER
I don't know.

Lispy's grip on the trigger grows more tense. Another pound of pressure and The Courier is done.

Elvis nods, and hands the case back to The Courier.

ELVIS
Open it, then.

THE COURIER
I never do.

ELVIS

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 Evil Sivle. He is the King. The Courier takes the case back.

Lispy squints even harder, ready to let loose on the man who beat him.

With hands shaking, the Courier opens the case.

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

Lispy starts to squeeze the trigger --

ELVIS (CONT'D)

(to Lispy)

Take it easy there, Colonel. We got a winner here.

The Courier spins to see Lispy and his gun.

LISPY

You sure, E?

ELVIS

As a song.

Finally, Lispy lowers the gun and smiles.

ELVIS (cont'd)

(to the Courier)

So you didn't open it?

THE COURIER

No. No I didn't.

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

ELVIS

You've had quite a ride, buttercup.

THE COURIER

Yeah. I guess so.

ELVIS

And you probably wanna ask a few questions.

THE COURIER

Just one. Why let the Feds play you?
Why the fake Evil Sivle?

ELVIS

'At's a good 'un. You see, son, when the
real king faked his own death, he went
from being a man to being a legend. 'I'm
takin' care of business, just like him.

FLASH of the REAL ELVIS, shaking his hips on Ed Sullivan.

ELVIS (CONT'D)

I learned what he learned: It's easier
to run an empire when you're dead.
Besides...

Elvis dabs some sweat off his brow with a handkerchief and
strikes a pose.

ELVIS (CONT'D)

I got the Fed's in one pocket and the
underworld in the other.

(beat)

Say, that would make a real fine song.

He turns to The Courier.

ELVIS (cont'd)

So the Caps finally gave me up? Only
fools rush in, I s'pose? It's gonna be a
shame killing those two.

The Courier doesn't know what to make of this.

ELVIS (cont'd)

Now, hound dog, you and me gotta get
ourselves a little understanding.

The Courier nods.

ELVIS (cont'd)

You're in a strange place. You're the
only outsider that knows where to find
me. But you're a man of your word, and
mama would have liked you. So you keep
that pie hole shut, and I'll call off the
Fibbies.

THE COURIER

Of course.

ELVIS
I thought you might say that.
(to Lispy).
Pay the man, Colonel.

Lispy moves to a small cabinet and pulls out a check. He tries to hand it and the one from the basement over to The Courier.

The Courier just looks at them.

THE COURIER
I don't want the money. This wasn't about that.

ELVIS
So donate it to a good cause. A deal's a deal.

Reluctantly, The Courier takes the checks.

ELVIS (CONT'D)
Speaking of deals, I also promised you something else.

THE COURIER
What's that?

ELVIS
When the time is right, man. When the time is right.
(beat)
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
One way or another.

LISPY
(genuinely)
You're a helluva mailman, Courier. Let us know if you need anything... anytime.

THE COURIER
Thanks.

The Courier starts to leave.

ELVIS
Courier!

The Courier turns back.

ELVIS (CONT'D)

Do you know, what the King used to say
before he sang, "Are You Lonesome
Tonight?"

THE COURIER

No.

ELVIS

"I am. And I was."

Elvis winks, and tosses him a gold chain with the famous
Elvis lightning bolt charm hanging on it.

ELVIS (CONT'D)

TCB, baybeh!

The Courier smiles and walks out.

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The smoke from small-time bookies and fight junkies hangs
like a low ceiling in this run down, half-filled auditorium.

In the ring, two PALOOKAS get after it. Cornerman stands
outside one corner, barking instructions.

CORNERMAN

Counter, kid, counter! Break his puss!

In the stands, The Courier sits with Tony and Nippy, shelling
peanuts and popping them into his mouth. They watch the
action in the ring.

The Courier is dressed in a button-down shirt and khaki's.
His hair is combed over to the side.

BING! The bell rings and there is sparse applause from the
crowd. The fighters trudge back to their corners.

A hand with a box of candy appears over The Courier's
shoulder.

SORDO

(slurred)

Want some ot tomaweess?

The Courier smiles.

THE COURIER

Surprised it took you guys this long to find me.

Richter and Sordo are sitting directly behind The Courier and Tony, eating candy. They are both heavily bandaged from the Lispy run-in.

RICHTER

Lispy got away. But we'll get him.

THE COURIER

I have no doubts.

RICHTER

You find what you were looking for?

THE COURIER

Nah. You guys were right. He doesn't exist.

RICHTER

That's too bad. For you, that is.

Sordo holds out a tiny little medal with a ribbon attached. Coincidentally, it looks strikingly similar to the TCB medal Evil Siple gave The Courier.

SORDO

We got medaahs for bussin' the Caps.

THE COURIER

Oh yeah? Congratulations.

RICHTER

Same to you.

THE COURIER

Why's that?

SORDO

Burro moved you to a white page. Same as any joe here.

THE COURIER

You don't say.

RICHTER

We do. Guess they want to close the book on you upstairs.

THE COURIER

That's good news.

RICHTER

Capollilo's are dead. Both of them.
Killed within minutes of each other in
jails 300 miles apart. Amazing. Now
they can be together again, I suppose.

THE COURIER

Life's funny that way.

RICHTER

You can say that again.

The bell BINGS again and the fighters go back to their slugfest.

The Courier stands.

THE COURIER

If you fellas don't mind, I've got to be
somewhere.

TONY

(gruffly)

He's got a date.

The Courier narrows his eyes at Tony.

Richter signs to Sordo.

SORDO

You got a date?

THE COURIER

No, just dinner...

RICHTER

Who woulda thought...

THE COURIER

It's just dinner.

NIPPY JONES

He's the dessert.

This gets everyone laughing. Even Sordo laughs... a little late.

THE COURIER

(to the Feds)

Thanks for the news, fellas. Really.
But I'm gonna be late.

He turns to go.

RICHTER
So who's Edward Fallrina?

The Courier freezes. Even Tony doesn't move a muscle.

THE COURIER
(without turning around)
What'd you say?

RICHTER
Edward Fallrina.

SORDO
He's we-surfaced.

Now, The Courier turns, intense.

THE COURIER
Keep talking.

RICHTER
After ten years, we got a guy named Jesus No-No who wants to give him up. But we only got a two hour window to close the deal before No-No disappears. This Fallrina with him.

THE COURIER
I'm listening.

RICHTER
Jesus hit a bank in Montreal. Walked in with a safety deposit key and the right hand of the former possessor of that key. All he took out of the box was a photograph. Seems he's supposed to sell the photograph to Fallrina. The drop's tonight.

THE COURIER
And No-No is giving up Fallrina in return for a white page?

RICHTER
You're getting the hang of this.

THE COURIER
So why me?

RICHTER
(shrugs)
Upstairs. They want you to make a delivery to Fallrina.

Richter hands him a package wrapped in brown paper. On the outside, it reads:

TO: EDWARD FALLRINA
FROM: EVIL SIVLE

SORDO
Guess the burro is twying to we-estabwish
a Evah Sivah.

RICHTER
We were told to bring this to you and to
serve up No-No. We do that, we're off
the hook for letting you go.

THE COURIER
When's the handoff?

RICHTER
Tonight. Ten o'clock at the Airport
Hilton. After that, Fallrina's gone for
good.

The Courier looks at the package.

SORDO
You better get going.

The Courier can't take his eyes off of Edward Fallrina's
name.

EXT. AUDITORIUM PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Tony, Nippy and The Courier walk toward Tony's Caddy, the
auditorium glowing behind them. The Courier holds the
package as they move to the car.

NIPPY JONES
The King kept his word.

TONY
You sure meeting this Fallrina guy is a
good idea?

THE COURIER
I don't know.

They get to the car. The Courier looks down at the package.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Anna is opening a bottle of wine when there is a KNOCK at the door. She walks into a dimly lit dining room, puts the wine on the table, then rushes to the hallway. ☹

She stops in front of the mirror and checks herself out. She's nervous.

She opens the door. There is no one there. Confused, she closes the door and heads back through the dining room to the kitchen.

The Courier is standing in the dark dining room, looking at the set table. Anna JUMPS when she sees him.

ANNA

My God!

The Courier's demeanor is distant, dark.

THE COURIER

Sorry.

ANNA

How did you get in?

THE COURIER

I let myself in... the door was open.

ANNA

It was?

THE COURIER

I can't have dinner tonight.

ANNA

(disappointed)

Oh...

THE COURIER

I have a job. It can't wait.

ANNA

(bristling)

Well, maybe we'll try it again some time.

THE COURIER

(seriously)

I'd like that. I'd like that a lot.

He walks to the front door, opens it.

ANNA

So what is it you do that requires such immediate attention?

THE COURIER

I deliver things.

ANNA

Uh-huh.

THE COURIER

(gravely)

I deliver things to people who don't want to be reached.

ANNA

Oh.

(catching on)

Oh!

THE COURIER

There's an old client that I have to meet. Say goodbye to. He's only going to be around tonight.

ANNA

(softening)

I hope it goes well.

He looks her right in the eye.

THE COURIER

Me too. I'm sorry about dinner.

ANNA

(clumsily)

You should be. I even baked a pie. It's going to be good.

THE COURIER

I know.

ANNA

If you want me to fix you a piece...

She turns toward the kitchen and in the moment it takes her to turn back, The Courier is gone.

IN THE KITCHEN:

She sleepwalks to the kitchen, eyes full of wonder. On the counter next to a cooling pie is a red rose. The pie has a bite taken out of it.

Anna picks up the rose and smiles.

EXT. AIRPORT HILTON - NIGHT

Tony's Cadillac pulls up in front of the hotel.

The Courier climbs out, tucks his chin against the wind. Clutched under his arm is the brown package with Edward Fallrina's name on it.

His expression is as grave as ever. He moves up the steps and into the building.

FADE OUT.