

The Courier

By
Michael Brandt & Derek Haas

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FADE IN:

EXT. MEXICAN JUNGLE - DAY

A FIGURE chops his way through the Mexican rain forest with a machete. He moves quietly and quickly, like he's done this a hundred times.

He emerges from the jungle and climbs onto a large rock. We see he's wearing a backpack.

HIGH ANGLE: The figure is perched on a rock hanging over a swiftly running river. Without much of a hesitation, he dives into the river and starts swimming across.

*
*

LATER:

The sun starts to set as the man finds an old and barely used path through the jungle. The path ascends at a sharp angle, and he starts to climb.

*
*
*

TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN:

He arrives at the top of a hill, and makes his way to an ancient set of stone steps. At the top, he quickly ducks behind a crumbling stone wall.

*
*

From here, he can hear an AMERICAN VOICE.

VOICE (O.S.)

I'm just a simple smuggler from the States, Manuel. You tell me you need explosives to help with mining demolitions, I don't question it. You really wanna go to Belize and blow shit up, I got no problem with that.

The figure slowly peeks back around the wall and we get our first good look at THE COURIER, his face illuminated by the flames of a flickering fire. He's a handsome dude, young, bearded, tough, eyes showing perception beyond his years.

Those eyes narrow at what he sees...

CLOSE ON: the face of a mammoth black man, TONY.

Tony continues with his lecture, like he doesn't have a care in the world.

TONY

The only thing I ask in return is that I'm compensated for my time and effort without all the menace. And I gotta say Manuel, this qualifies as menace. Dig?

HIGH ANGLE:

Now we see where Tony is located. He's standing at the end of a wooden plank, facing straight out, hanging 200 feet over a rocky crevice.

Behind him, a band of machine gun-toting MEXICAN BANDITOS sit around a fire, with two of the banditos sitting on the other end of the plank, creating a teeter-totter effect and the only thing keeping Tony from plummeting to the rocks below.

The banditos at the fire pass a bottle around.

The whole setting is part of a GIANT MAYAN TEMPLE built on the top of a mountain. Mayan images are carved into the stone walls, and square columns hold up the different levels of the temple. Steeply angled stairs lead to the top.

And behind the temple is the crumbling wall where The Courier is hiding.

He eyes the situation from his side of the wall...

The Mexican leader, MANUEL, passes off the bottle and stands up from the fire. He walks over to the plank where the two small men are sitting on the plank. Both of them together barely outweigh Tony enough to keep him from falling.

TONY

I mean, what are we trying to accomplish here, amigo?

MANUEL

(in Spanish)

<Nearly 2000 years ago, the Mayans built this temple for human sacrifice. People had a choice. Jump, or face the knife and bleed to death. For men, they usually cut off their peckers!>

All the banditos LAUGH like madmen.

TONY

(in Spanish)

<I delivered what you wanted.>

MANUEL

(in English)

It's the sacrifice of the innocent that most pleased the Gods.

Manuel walks over to where THREE DONKEYS stand, giant packs on their backs. He digs into one and pulls out a clay looking brick with wires and a timer attached to it. *

MANUEL

These explosives are worthless without the detonators! *

TONY

How the hell am I supposed to provide detonators? You said all you needed was hardware and now we're in the middle of the fucking jungle when you change the order. *

BEHIND THE WALL: The spot where the Courier was standing is now empty.

CUT TO:

IN THE TEMPLE:

The Courier hustles through a dark passageway, a penlight leading his way. Finally he pops out on a small ledge that overlooks the rocks where sacrifices were made. *

Tony stands on his plank just ten feet directly over The Courier's head. The Courier is in an ancient viewing area for the sacrifices. *

He pulls the backpack off and looks around for options. He feels the stone walls, worn smooth over the years. Tony and his plank are too far out of reach...

ON THE LEDGE:

The two banditos sitting on the end of the plank watch the bottle go around.

PLANK BANDITO 1

(in Spanish)

<Give me a drink.>

FIRE BANDITO

<Sure.>

He caps the bottle and tosses it to the bandito on the plank. But it falls short, and sits just out of the reach of the bandito.

Tony watches all this with concern.

The bandito on the plank wiggles forward, stretching for the bottle.

TONY
 (in Spanish)
 <Hey friend, I don't think that's such a
 good idea...>

But the bandito thinks he can make it, and his buddy sitting on the plank next to him gives him a toothless grin, urging him on.

The bandito keeps moving for the bottle, trying to keep as much weight as he can on the plank, closer, closer, closer...

He got it! A big smile crosses his face until the plank slips from under him.

Tony's weight is way too much for the bandito left on the plank, and he literally flings the bandito into the air and over the edge.

Tony starts to fall to the rocks below...

...but at the last minute grabs the backpack strap that The Courier has swung his way! Tony SMACKS into the side of the mountain, he and The Courier each with a hold of a backpack strap.

The bandito flies by them to the rocks below!

The Courier pulls with all his might as the threads on the straps start to pop... but at the last second he is able to get Tony up to the ledge where The Courier stands.

TONY (CONT'D)
 Who the fuck're you?

THE COURIER
 I have something for you. Nippy Jones sent me.

Tony peers closely at the guy.

TONY
 Shit, man, you the Courier.

The Courier nods.

TONY
 I'll be damned. Nippy Jones sent the Courier.

THE COURIER

You were supposed to be in Mexico City.
You weren't.

TONY

Tell me about it. How the fuck'd you
find me in a temple 700 miles from
nowhere?

THE COURIER

That's my job.

The Courier hands him the torn backpack.

TONY

What's in it?

THE COURIER

I don't know.

TONY

You didn't open it?

THE COURIER

I never do.

TONY

Do I need to sign for this somewhere?

The Courier smiles, shakes his head.

Tony opens the backpack, and from it, withdraws a small,
black remote device with a red thumb trigger.

VOICES can be heard above them. Tony looks up and sees the
banditos peering over the edge at him. As soon as they see
Tony, they start shooting over the edge at him. He dives
back out of the way.

TONY

Glad you came when you did.

*

THE COURIER

I've never missed a delivery and you
weren't gonna be the first.

Tony eyes his remote device and then WHISTLES loudly.

AT THE TEMPLE:

The donkeys start to walk to the edge toward the WHISTLING
sound, and also toward the group of banditos.

BACK ON THE LEDGE:

TONY

I spent eight days leading those asses
through the rainforest... pushing them,
pulling them, and most importantly,
feeding them.

(beat)

You ever need anything, you let me know.

Tony turns and WHISTLES again.

AT THE TEMPLE:

The donkeys keep moving up behind the crazed banditos.

BACK ON THE LEDGE:

Tony carefully peeks back out, the remote device in his hand.
The banditos start FIRING wildly again.

He turns back, but The Courier has disappeared.

TONY

(smiling)

All right, then.

Tony squeezes the trigger.

AT THE TEMPLE:

The donkeys have made it right behind the banditos now...

BOOM!

IN THE JUNGLE:

The Courier is hacking his way back through the thick
underbrush when the explosion shakes the trees around him.
He cringes at the thought of those poor donkeys and
disappears into the darkness.

The CAMERA PULLS UP AND BACK to reveal the Mayan Temple and
various ruins rising out of the jungle. *

Slowly, the view of the Mayan ruins DISSOLVES INTO a view of
the Chicago Skyline. The two panoramas look eerily similar. *

CUT TO: *

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.

Music THUMPS from the apartment next door, REVERBERATING through the wall to his bedroom. An alarm clock on the table by his bed vibrates toward the edge. Smiling, The Courier picks up the clock before it falls and tosses it on the bed.

He walks through his sparse apartment. No television, radio, nothing.

He 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

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. Aren't you a little young for a woman tho... th-tunning?

The Courier ignores the question, 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. Lippy nods at it.

LIPPY (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?

LIPPY

Tru-tht me, you'll like it.

THE COURIER

Why the kick?

LIPPY

Becauth it can't be done.

THE COURIER

Whose hands?

LIPPY

Evil Thivel's and Evil Thivel's only.

THE COURIER

I don't follow.

LIPPY

Evil Thivle want-th thith package
delivered to himthelf.

THE COURIER

Why?

LIPPY

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

THE COURIER

Is that right?

LIPPY

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

Lippy 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 picks up the case and moves into his bedroom. *

CUT TO: *

INT. COURIER'S HALLWAY - LATER *

The Courier steps out of his apartment, dressed now, and moves down the hall to the elevator, without the case. Across from the elevator doors is the source of the loud MUSIC: Apartment 403. *

Outside 403, an OLD LADY argues over the loud music with a beautiful young woman, ANNA. *

OLD LADY *

I can barely hear myself think in my own apartment! *

ANNA *

Maybe thinking is your problem. *

OLD LADY *

What did you say? *

ANNA *

I said I'm sorry and I'll keep it down. *

The Courier gives them a half-glance and boards the elevator. *

OLD LADY *

This is the last warning. *

The old lady waddles off as Anna pulls the door to her apartment closed and heads for the elevator too. *

ANNA
Hold the elevator!

The Courier locks eyes with her and starts to hit the 'OPEN' button on the panel, but stops himself at the last minute, allowing the doors to close in the woman's face.

Anna stands, looking at the elevator queerly, like she can't believe he didn't hold the door for her.

Suddenly, the doors open again. The Courier stands there, awkwardly, pressing the "open" button. He looks like he's about to say something, but decides against it, and shuffles to the back of the car as she enters.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

They ride down for a moment in silence. Then...

ANNA
(offers)
You're the guy in 405.

She sticks out her hand, The Courier shakes it.

ANNA
I'm Anna.

THE COURIER
The music fan.

ANNA
(smiling)
Shit, you gonna get on me too?

THE COURIER
No, no. It's fine with me.

ANNA
I spin at a club and I gotta lay stuff down at home.

THE COURIER
Don't worry about it. I like it.

The doors open again and they step out into...

INT. FOYER OF APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

The sun is shining into this average looking apartment entry. Mailboxes line one wall.

ANNA

Yeah? You into beats? Atrek, Qbert,
Swamp, those guys?

They move over to the mailboxes, put their keys in.

THE COURIER

Yeah. All those guys.

ANNA

You have no idea what I'm talking about.

THE COURIER

(caught, grins)
None at all.

ANNA

Well, I'll hook you up if you wanna stop
by sometime. Burn you some discs. Get
you a starter set going.

THE COURIER

Yeah, okay.

ANNA

You know where I am.

The Courier reaches in his mailbox and pulls out a postcard,
a romantic island setting on one side.

Written on the other side in magic marker are the words: THE
SUNSETS HERE JUST BLOW ME AWAY!

The Courier looks at it, his eyes narrowing. He collects
himself, and closes the mailbox.

THE COURIER

Well, goodbye, Anna.

ANNA

See ya around...

The Courier disappears out the door.

ANNA

(to herself)
...whatever your name is.

Anna looks at the outside of the Courier'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 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 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 anywhere. *

(MORE) *

CORNERMAN (cont'd)

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 just need to find the man.

CORNERMAN

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

THE COURIER

Yeah?

CORNERMAN

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

The Courier watches the action in the ring.

THE COURIER

I want to tell you something I've never told anybody.

This gets Cornerman's attention.

THE COURIER

When I was sixteen I got my first assignment from Won Ton Don.

CORNERMAN

I remember him. Hard guy.

The Courier nods.

THE COURIER

He sends me out to Highland Park to shake down some dime poker player that owes him a bundle. Another fella holds the guy while I go to work on him.

CORNERMAN

Yeah?

THE COURIER

Before I know it, my arm's so tired, I can't lift it anymore and this guy's raw, lying at my feet. I've never seen anything more...

He looks for the right word, can't find it.

THE COURIER

I was good at it, really good, the guy
would've told me anything, but it
wasn't...

The Courier's struggling.

Cornerman doesn't say anything, waits.

THE COURIER

Two weeks later, Don comes back to me and
gives me a choice. I can drive down by
Comiskey and work over an old man, get
him to rat out his little brother. Easy
as pie.

In the ring, the black guy gets in some heavy work to the
Mexican kid's ribs. Easy as pie.

CORNERMAN

Or?

THE COURIER

Or, I can deliver a sealed package to
Jimmy Zimmerman.

CORNERMAN

Jimmy Zimmerman? Holy shit, that guy had
an army around him. There's no way...

Cornerman gets it.

CORNERMAN

Ohhhhhh.

THE COURIER

That's the day I started doing what I do.

CORNERMAN

Look, kid, I don't care if you delivered
Stonehenge to Jimmy Zimmerman, I can't --

THE COURIER

Cornerman, I know it's the Zimmerman job,
but I need to find Evil Sivle. It's what
I do.

(beat)

I need a start.

The old man blinks, his face shrewing up.

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

CORNERMAN *

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.

INT. THE COURIER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The Courier tosses some clothes in a duffel bag as the ever-present MUSIC thumps from Anna's apartment.

He grabs the bag and moves to his bathroom. *

IN THE BATHROOM: *

He moves the toilet over a little, exposing a hole in the floor. He bends over and retrieves the case that Lispy gave him before heading out of the apartment. *

IN THE HALLWAY:

The Courier passes Anna's door which is open about a foot. MUSIC BLARES as he stops and peeks in, trying to get a glimpse of her.

He can barely see her through the crack in the door. She's at work, half a headphone to one ear, spinning records on a pair of turntables. She looks gorgeous.

An OLD MAN waddles by, surprising The Courier. He collects himself and heads for the stairs, case in tow.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - DAY *

The Courier steps out of his apartment and hails a cab. A yellow taxi with "Chicago Taxi Company" written on the side stops and picks him up. The cab pulls OUT OF FRAME... *

CUT TO: *

A cab pulling back INTO FRAME... *

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - DAY *

...the Courier is now in the back of a different cab that says "Yellow Cab of San Francisco" on it. *

The taxi comes to a stop in front of a nondescript building. The Courier flips a few bills over the seat and climbs out, no longer carrying the case. *

INT. ACCOUNTING FIRM - DAY *

Rows and rows of desks are lined like pews in this bookkeeping cathedral. In the middle of the room, sits a bookish Chinese ACCOUNTANT who wears thick, black glasses twice the size of his gaunt face. *

The nameplate on his desk reads 'Walter Fisher.' *

He stands up, still examining numbers on his desk, crosses one last thing out with a pencil, tucks it behind his ear and moves out of the room toward a door marked "BATHROOM." *

INT. BATHROOM - DAY *

The FLUSH of a toilet. *

The man steps out of a stall and steps to the sinks to wash his hands. Suddenly The Courier steps into the reflection in the mirror, behind where the accountant is standing. *

THE COURIER *

You San Fran Tanna? *

The accountant looks around in a panic like the walls have ears. He shakily applies some soap to his hands, and speaks in a slow Texas drawl. *

ACCOUNTANT *

(nervously) *

You got the wrong guy. Names Fisher. *

Walter Fisher. *

THE COURIER
I don't think so.

ACCOUNTANT
(trying his best)
Are you a ventriloquist? Then don't
treat me like no dummy.

The accountant blows hot breath into the mirror in front of
him, fogging up a little section.

ACCOUNTANT (CONT'D)
I'll tell you right now, I don't know any
San Fran Tanna and I don't believe I'd
spill it to ya if I did. Who the hell're
you anyway?

THE COURIER
I've got something for his boss.

The accountant eyes The Courier, then his finger moves to the
mirror, and he writes a number into the foggy area: 5670.

ACCOUNTANT
Sorry I can't help you. I gotta
skedaddle before I miss my bus.

The Courier looks at the number, gets it.

THE COURIER
Sure. My mistake.

He leaves and the accountant watches him go.

CLOSE ON: That number in the fog of the mirror: 5670.

The accountant's hand wipes it out.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO BUS STOP - DAY

That same number, 5670, now printed on the side of a bus as
it pulls to a stop.

Spreadsheets drooped across his knees, the same accountant
waits placidly on a bench as the bus approaches. The Bay
Bridge glows in the background.

INT. BUS - DAY

He climbs aboard and gives the BUS DRIVER a nod before finding a seat towards the middle. A FIGURE already sits in the back row, alone. *

Another PASSENGER tries to get on the bus after the accountant. *

BUS DRIVER
Sorry, out of service.

PASSENGER
But --

The driver shuts the door in his face. The bus pulls off, climbing one of San Francisco's famous hills.

The accountant, the one and only SAN FRAN TANNA, spreads his worksheets across his knees and buries his head in the numbers. He does not look up when the seat next to him is occupied by The Courier. *

SAN FRAN TANNA
So you're the Courier, huh? What in the name of fried banana sandwiches do you want with Evil Sivle? *

THE COURIER
Just tell me what you know.

SAN FRAN TANNA
Whoa now, cowboy. Why would I go and do that? *

THE COURIER
Because you do his books and the word is you're skimming. You put me on him and I'll buy you a couple of days until the wanted posters go up. Look, either you help me or you don't. But I'm going to find him one way or another. *

(beat)
You don't help me and Evil Sivle's got nothing to worry about except auditing his books. *

Tanna looks at the accounting book in his hands, stuck. He closes the book. *

SAN FRAN TANNA
All right, Trigger. Let's start from the beginning. The guy who hired you... *

(MORE) *

SAN FRAN TANNA (cont'd)
 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 other than a
 case. *
 *

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

SAN FRAN TANNA
 You open it? *

THE COURIER
 No. I never do.

SAN FRAN TANNA
 Yeah, whatever. My guess is there's
 something in that there case that'll lead
 you right to him. Open it. Check it
 out.

BUS DRIVER
 Tanna!

The driver nods at the opposite side of the bus. Tanna
 climbs over and looks out the window...

...and spots a dark blue muscle car suddenly pull up and then
 slow to ride alongside the bus, even with the window.

THE COURIER
 What is it?

Tanna stands quickly and moves to the back of the bus so that
 he can look out the back window.

Sure enough, another blue muscle car is tailing right behind
 them. Tanna immediately ducks down, trying to stay outta
 sight.

THE COURIER

Trouble?

SAN FRAN TANNA

It ain't the cavalry.

(to the bus driver)

You got any ideas?

BUS DRIVER

Yeah, end of the line's right ahead.

SAN FRAN TANNA

Buy me a minute or two.

BUS DRIVER

You got it.

ON THE STREET:

The bus is at the top of a hill in an industrial part of town, the city and Alcatraz spread out below them.

Three blue muscle cars now flank the bus, which makes a quick right turn, cutting off one of the cars, and BUSTING THROUGH a chain link gate and into a massive graveyard of old cars.

IN THE BUS:

Tanna pulls out a lighter and starts to light his accounting book on fire!

SAN FRAN TANNA

Let's see them fuckers make hide nor hair of this!

EXT. CAR GRAVEYARD - DAY

The bus races down an aisle. Piled high on both sides of the aisle are hundreds of junked cars. The three muscle cars fall in line behind the bus, chasing it through the cars.

The road is nothing but a DUSTY TRAIL cutting through the rusted carcasses, and the giant bus kicks up an unbelievable cloud of dust behind it. The Courier and Tanna both look out the back, but can't see anything through the cloud. Are the cars still back there?

Suddenly, the bus skids to a stop as it reaches the end of the aisle. A dead end. The dust cloud surrounds the car.

BUS DRIVER

Sorry, Tanna! You're on your own!

The bus driver opens the door and bolts out, disappearing into the cloud.

The Courier and Tanna scramble after him.

SAN FRAN TANNA
Come on, son! Let's hit the leather!

The Courier grabs Tanna.

THE COURIER
Wait.

They both stare down the aisle they just came down. There's still so much dust it's hard to see, but they can't HEAR anything.

Slowly, the dust settles and the muscle cars are nowhere to be seen.

SAN FRAN TANNA
What you thinkin'?

THE COURIER
I have no idea.

CUT TO:

IN THE GRAVEYARD:

The Courier and Tanna peer around a massive pile of cars. From their POV they see Marin County, the Golden Gate Bridge, the Presidio, and the entrance to the graveyard...

...where a COP, checks out the destroyed gate. They start to walk toward the cop.

As they approach...

SAN FRAN TANNA
Listen, son, there's a guy named Jack Straw runs a little hemp shop on Haight. Look him up and he'll tell you what's what in case I gotta bolt.

THE COURIER
Hello, officer.

POLICE OFFICER
Hello.

Tanna looks at the officer and his face falls.

Suddenly, the Police Officer BLASTS San Fran Tanna in the face with his pistol. The Chinese man's body drops to the Courier's feet.

OFFICER OLMSTEAD

(politely)

I'm going to have to ask you to come with me.

The Courier's eyes dart everywhere, from the cop's face, to his nametag, which reads "OLMSTEAD," to his gun, before finally settling on the puddle of blood starting to come from Tanna's dead body.

POLICE OFFICER

(politely)

Watch the blood. And please don't run. We'll find you, and probably kill you. Let's keep this amicable, okay?

He opens the passenger door of his car, beckons the Courier to join him for a ride. Reluctantly, the Courier climbs in.

INT. POLICE CAR - DAY

Officer Olmstead 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.

OFFICER OLMSTEAD

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

Officer Olmstead leads a groggy Courier down a stark corridor.

OFFICER OLMSTEAD

Is your head starting to clear? Should be right as rain in just a few.

(MORE)

OFFICER OLMSTEAD (cont'd)
 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.

OFFICER OLMSTEAD (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.

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

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

OFFICER OLMSTEAD (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.

OFFICER OLMSTEAD (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 the
street to hail 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 punneled face.

CAB DRIVER
Where to, Holyfield?

THE COURIER
Haight and Ashbury. *

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 along the bay towards 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.

Officer Olmstead can only watch from his car.

CUT TO:

EXT. JACK STRAW'S HEMP SHOP - DAY

The Courier walks under the street sign announcing the intersection of Haight and Clayton. He crosses the street, moving toward Jack Straw's Hemp shop.

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.

THE COURIER
You Straw?

JACK STRAW
That's right.

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. On the wall is a rack full of thousands of cassette tapes. Each one a different Grateful Dead show.

The Courier opens the small freezer and chips some ice off the frozen sides. He dumps the ice chips into a towel, places it against his head and goes back into the store.

JACK STRAW

You must be The Courier.

THE COURIER

Yeah? How'd you guess?

JACK STRAW

After Cornerman told you to look up Tanna he started sweating like a whore at a Catholic bar mitzvah. He dialed everyone on the coast trying to cover his ass. No one goes looking for Evil Sivle. No one.

THE COURIER

Maybe so. But he hired me.

JACK STRAW

So you're workin' for the King?

The Courier gives a half nod.

JACK STRAW (CONT'D)

Damn. He must be freaked out about something.

(beat)

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

Jack watches a KID look over the bong.

JACK STRAW (CONT'D)

(to the kid)

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

(to The Courier)

Yeah, you're lucky you're still alive.

(MORE)

JACK STRAW (CONT'D)

They're a couple of psychos. A real Dr. Jeckyll and Mrs. Hyde. Blood-thirsty sons-of-bitches.

THE COURIER

What's their interest?

JACK STRAW

Aww, they're still fuming about the Doggy Deal.

THE COURIER

What's that?

JACK STRAW

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

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK IN SUBURBIA - DAY

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

They both have immense plastic smiles across their faces.

They are walking a gorgeous German Shepherd.

JACK STRAW (V.O.)

The Capolillos had this German Shepherd bitch that they loved like their own child, since Mrs. Cap is barren and can't have no kids of her own, thank God. And this bitch is made. I mean its got servants to feed it, bathe it, wipe its ass when it dumps on the lawn, the works, you understand? Anyways, they asked 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. 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.

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. 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 Sivle. 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, Straw. 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

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 Dragon detail.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHINATOWN ALLEY - NIGHT

Two Federal Agents, RICHTER and SORDO, sit on a stoop of a nice residence in Chinatown. They are average white men, the only Caucasians on the street. Richter is a few inches taller than his partner. They eye every passer-by, intently. There are empty candy wrappers all over the stoop.

Sordo wears a pair of earmuffs.

RICHTER

(without looking at his partner)

I'm gonna go grab some candy.

There is no reaction from Sordo. Richter turns to him.

RICHTER

(loudly)

Sordo! I'm gonna grab some more candy.

SORDO

(slurred)

Richter, gwab some candy.

*

Sordo goes back to eyeing people on the street like the conversation never happened.

Richter steps off the stoop and turns down an alley, where his government issue sedan is parked.

In the glove box, he locates a pack of Rolos.

He starts to back out of the driver's door, and is surprised to find a Glock suddenly pressed up against his temple.

He holds up both his hands. The CAMERA PULLS BACK to find The Courier holding the gun.

THE COURIER

It's a miracle I found you with the way you and your partner blend in so well around here.

RICHTER

That's a good one.

THE COURIER

Got you on Dragon detail, huh?

RICHTER

Yeah. Thanks to you, Courier.

THE COURIER

Why's that?

RICHTER

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.

Richter shrugs, his hands still up.

THE COURIER

Who's your new partner?

RICHTER
You want to meet him?

The Courier nods, drops his gun to his side and Richter puts his hands down, not too concerned.

They shuffle out of the alley and turn to the stoop. Sordo doesn't notice them.

RICHTER (CONT'D)
Sordo!

Sordo doesn't move. Richter sighs, heavily.

RICHTER (CONT'D)
He's hearing impaired.

THE COURIER
What?

RICHTER
He can't hear. 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.

THE COURIER
It cause problems?

RICHTER
Occasionally.

THE COURIER
Seems like it would.

RICHTER
Yeah, sometimes.

Sordo stands there, carefully watching the people on the street.

THE COURIER
Nice earmuffs.

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

They both ponder this for a second.

Richter moves over to Sordo and taps him on the shoulder. Sordo looks surprised to see The Courier standing there. He goes for his gun, but Richter stays his hand and shakes his head.

RICHTER
He's The Courier.

*

SORDO
I know dat. He's...

Just then, the front door to the residence opens and a little fat CHINESE KID stands in the doorway, looking up expectantly at Richter and Sordo.

Richter sighs heavily again.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHINATOWN STREET - NIGHT

A neighborhood celebration is in full bloom through the streets of Chinatown, including a couple of those Chinese Dragon trains and hordes of revelers.

The CAMERA PICKS UP the fat Chinese kid walking along the street happily, holding a Chinese Yo-Yo.

Richter, Sordo, and The Courier follow closely behind the kid.

RICHTER
(explains)
Ambassador's kid.
(MORE)

RICHTER (cont'd)
 Little prick has a death threat against
 him, probably phoned in by the last
 agents to work Dragon detail.

The Courier nods. Sordo's eyes rove everywhere.

After a moment...

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.

Richter taps Sordo on the shoulder, makes some signs. Sordo
 looks confused, signs back as they keep walking, the parade
 going on around them.

RICHTER
 I think you got some bad info. We know
 who hired you. He's no G-man.

THE COURIER
 (disbelieving)
 Uh-huh.

RICHTER
 Seriously. 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
 Capolillo's.

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 as they trail the Ambassador's kid.

RICHTER (CONT'D)
(translates)
He wants to know if you know where to find the Caps.

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

RICHTER
You open the package?

THE COURIER
I never do.

RICHTER
Good. Probably an explosive. The Caps hired you to go in and 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. He works for them.

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
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.
(MORE)

RICHTER (CONT'D)

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 in Chinatown 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've 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 top floor has him in a no fly zone for some reason. The Caps are another story. We bust them, Sordo and me are off the Dragon detail.

THE COURIER

I help you, you give me Evil Sivle's file?

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.

BAM! BAM! BAM!

Some FIRECRACKERS GO OFF and Richter immediately dives on the kid. Sordo, who has no idea what is happening, stares off the other way.

When he sees Richter on top of the kid, he looks panicky and jerks his weapon up, pointing in every direction.

The Courier just stares at them.

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. Enough said.

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, Officer Olmstead appears.

OFFICER OLMSTEAD

Hey, how you doin? Mind coming with me?

The Courier stands.

Officer Olmstead

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:

EXT. VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

In a dilapidated part of the city, a dark blue DELIVERY TRUCK pulls up a block from a video store called "Henry's Video's."

Stealthily, an entire SWAT team in full regalia exit the back of the truck and fan out toward the video store.

The CAMERA PANS past the store and finds a WHITE VAN parked a block away in the other direction.

INT. VAN OUTSIDE VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

Richter and Sordo huddle in the cramped van with a TECHNICIAN. The walls of the van are covered with eavesdropping equipment.

The Courier's CONVERSATION with Mrs. Cap plays as Richter translates her words to Sordo, who chews on a Cherry Mash.

MRS. CAPOLILLO (O.S.)

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

CUT TO:

INT. TORTURE ROOM - NIGHT

The Courier is once again bound to the wooden chair.

In Mrs. Capolillo's hand is the attaché from Lispy, unopened.

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

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?

IN THE VAN:

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.

IN THE TORTURE ROOM:

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.

IN THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOOD:

SWAT SHARPSHOOTERS take positions on buildings that give them
a clean shot at the store.

Other SWAT MEMBERS position themselves near the doors of the
store, GUNS and a giant BATTERING RAM ready.

IN THE VAN:

Richter is signing to Sordo.

RICHTER
See if she'll talk about Johnny Lewellen.

IN THE TORTURE ROOM:

SORDO (O.S.)
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?

IN THE VAN:

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.

IN THE TORTURE ROOM:

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?

IN THE VAN:

Sordo interprets Richter's gestures.

SORDO

(slurred)

No good. You must get dem to confess to da kiwwing.

IN THE TORTURE ROOM:

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.

IN THE VAN:

RICHTER
(to Sordo)
If this guy pulls out a dental drill or
something, we're going in.

Richter picks up a radio.

RICHTER
(into the radio)
Be ready.

*

IN THE STREET:

The SWAT LEADER, pressed up against a building, speaks into a
mouthpiece.

SWAT LEADER
We're in position, sir.

IN THE TORTURE ROOM:

Mr. Cap circles The Courier like a cat.

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.

IN THE VAN:

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

RICHTER

(in the radio)

Oh, Christ, be ready.

IN THE TORTURE ROOM:

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?

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!

IN THE VAN:

Richter's ears perk up.

RICHTER

(into the radio)

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

IN THE STREET:

The SWAT leader circles his hand.

SWAT LEADER

(into the radio)

We're a go! We're a go!

The massive battering ram turns the door to the store to splinters as the SWAT team pours into the store.

INT. VIDEO STORE - CONTINUOUS

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

They rush into the long corridor, guns ready for anything.

Half the guards split down a hall way and bust through a door where Mrs. Capolillo and Officer Olmstead 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!

She takes a mighty swing at the first SWAT member to try and grab her, knocking him off his feet, then turns to make a break for the back door, but SWAT team members pour in from here too.

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

Officer Olmstead jerks his hands in the air, looking as though he just wet his pants.

IN THE TORTURE ROOM:

More of the SWAT team bursts into the Torture Room and yanks 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.

CUT TO:

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. He pulls out his wallet and withdraws from it a series of postcards, all similar to the one he pulled out of his mailbox earlier. On the backs of each are similar messages in magic marker: "Better Her Than Me" and "How Does it Feel?" And "She Was So Sweet On The Phone."

The Courier flips through them. The bartender approaches, breaking his reverie.

BARTENDER

What else for you?

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 flips a few bills on to the bar, returns the postcards to his wallet, and walks away.

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 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?

Dan looks like he's about to cry.

DAN
No... Well, yes, I mean.

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
Okay, thank you, Dan. *

The Courier leaves.

Dan watches him go and hurries out of the room, down a
hallway, and into an office.

He jumps when he turns the light on. The Courier is sitting
at his desk, holding out his telephone.

THE COURIER
Looking to make a call? *

DAN
(stammers)
No, I... I...

THE COURIER
Let's go for a ride.

DAN
I can't leave, I have to --

The Courier puts his glock on the desk.

THE COURIER

I doubt anyone's going to die in the next couple of hours Dan... unless you make this difficult.

Dan nods, scared to death.

CUT TO:

EXT. BLUFF OVERLOOKING A DRIVE-IN MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

The Courier sits in the driver's seat while Dan sits nervously in the passenger side of his rented Acura. Dan's trying not to fidget, but it's obvious how scared he is.

The Courier locks the doors, and Dan jumps.

They are parked on a bluff. Down below, a drive-in movie theater plays the cult classic, THE WARRIORS.

THE COURIER

You ever seen this movie?

Dan shakes his head, about to wet himself.

THE COURIER (CONT'D)

It's a classic. Here's the thing, what I wanted to show you was what bad acting looks like up on the big screen.

They pause to watch a particularly bad line.

THE COURIER

Because that display you pulled back there in the rest home... that was the worst acting I've seen in a long time.

DAN

I...

THE COURIER

What I want to know is who wrote your script?

DAN

I don't...

THE COURIER

Save us some trouble, Dan. I'm gonna find out what I want to know before the Warriors reach Coney Island. I can promise you that.

*

Dan's eyes move from the screen and settle on the Glock in the Courier's lap. The Courier doesn't take his eyes off the screen.

Dan may break into tears at any moment.

OFF DAN'S TERRIFIED LOOK:

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, crosses over to him.

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 PISTOL-WHIPS Lispy in the mouth with a right-hook that starts from around the belt area, CRACK!

LISPY

(bellows)

Fuck!

THE COURIER

Exactly.

Lispy looks at the Courier with a new level of respect and fear. His eyes start to water and his lip starts to bleed.

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.

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?

Lispy holds the back of his hand to the cut on his mouth.

THE COURIER

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

(beat)

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 PISTOL-WHIPS Lispy again.

Lispy's nose POPS. He isn't looking so tough anymore.

THE COURIER

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

CUT TO:

EXT. ART-DECO OFFICE BUILDING - 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 in front of a two story modern office building. 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. ART DECO OFFICE BUILDING - 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.

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

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.

Lispy presses Number 2 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 second floor and standing in the narrow hallway are ten behemoth security guards, all with their guns drawn.

LISPY (CONT'D)

(desperately)

Plea-th! Plea-th! Put down your weapons!

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 cour-th 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. Do it or we're gonna be late!

The men put their guns away.

LISPY
 That-th it, boy-th. Thank you. Evil
 Thivle thak-th you.

*

He and The Courier step past the guards and 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
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 Lispy here 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're a smart man, Courier.

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 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. Somehow, he keeps sucking air through his lungs.

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, forcing him to drop the half million dollars.

Suddenly, the Courier 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.

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.

It's a long jump to the balcony of the building across the street, but The Courier doesn't even break stride, just takes the jump at full speed...

...soaring through the air...

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

...soaring, and then hitting the outside of the cement balcony hard. Somehow, he manages to cling to the plaster, hanging on by his elbows, but slipping...

He looks below him to the alley, where a wrought iron fence waits for him if he lets go.

With all of his will he pulls himself up to the balcony just as the Security Guards from Evil Sivle's building start FIRING at him.

Their bullets bounce off the plaster as the Courier scrambles into an open door.

IN AN APARTMENT:

The Courier races through the bedroom as a woman blow-dries her hair, oblivious to the man running through her apartment and out the door.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The Courier quickly exits the front of the building, safe for the moment. The moment doesn't last long, because out of nowhere a WHITE VAN hops the curb and SLAMS into him knocking him on to his back.

Rude hands yank him off the ground and toss him into the back of the van.

CUT TO:

INT. VAN - DAY

Sordo and Richter face The Courier, who had the wind knocked out of him.

RICHTER

What the hell're you doing?

The two HEAVIES climb into the front and start the van moving. Richter and Sordo are surrounded on all sides by surveillance equipment.

The Courier holds up a finger, trying to catch his breath.

While The Courier collects himself...

RICHTER (CONT'D)

Why the hell would you shoot Evil Sivle?

THE COURIER

What? I didn't... shoot... him.

Sordo presses a REWIND BUTTON on a small screen in the van. The screen comes alive with a SECURITY CAMERA'S VIEW of Evil Sivle's lair in the jungle room:

We see the previous scene: the Courier receiving his money, the lights go out, darkness, 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 (CONT'D)

(confused)

You had him under surveillance?

SORDO

We had you under durveylance.

RICHTER

The top floor wanted to know what was in your case. But we never thought you'd shoot Evil Sivle.

THE COURIER

I didn't. Lispy did.

RICHTER

(confused)

The hell you say?

The Courier flips him his Glock. Richter pulls out the clip... no bullets.

THE COURIER
It's never been loaded.

Richter looks surprised, holds the gun up to Sordo's nose. Sordo takes a few sniffs.

SORDO
Hadn't bin fired.

Richter immediately scrambles for a phone.

RICHTER
(into the phone)
Where's Lispy? Uh-uh. Uh-huh. Well
find him, goddammit. Little butt-rubber
pulled a three-card-monte on us!

Richter hangs up the phone and stares at The Courier. The three just sit there.

The Courier's eyes settle on the surveillance monitor, which is freeze framed on Evil Sivle, the bullet hole in his head. Finally...

THE COURIER
That wasn't Evil Sivle.

Richter purses his lips.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

The van 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 back, 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.

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. VAN - DAY

The Courier faces the agents again. Richter is on the phone,
listening.

RICHTER
(into the phone)
Yes, sir. Yes, sir. I see. Yes, sir.

He hangs up the phone, makes some signs to Sordo, and then
faces The Courier.

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
doublecrossed us and now we've got two
dead FBI Agents. Sordo and I just
received orders 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 gave us the
Caps and now we got Mr. C in Leavenworth
and the missus stowed away in Manhasset
Women's. As long as we're on such a
roll... the top floor wants you to give
us Lispy.

The van 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
over it to Justice. The top floor wants
blood, Courier. Give us Lispy and
they'll forget you were 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
More or less. You know a big ol' black guy goes by Tony?

THE COURIER
Smuggler?

CORNERMAN
Uh-huh.

THE COURIER
Yeah, I delivered something to him in Mexico.

CORNERMAN
Yeah, well he put out the word he was looking for you.

THE COURIER
(sharply)
I'm a little busy right now.

CORNERMAN
Don't kill the messenger.

THE COURIER
You can say that again.

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 a 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. After a moment, he steps out on to...

THE FOURTH FLOOR HALLWAY:

Anna's door, across from the elevator, stands ajar, MUSIC BLARING like always. *

The Courier moves to where he can sneak a glimpse inside her apartment. There's no sign of Anna.

He walks down the hallway to his own apartment, and finds the door slightly open.

INSIDE HIS APARTMENT:

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 the storage hole below has been discovered. *

The Courier doesn't wait for more.

He hustles back into... *

THE LIVING ROOM:

...where now he hears a RUSTLE behind the sofa. The Courier springs over behind it and yanks up a body, then shoves it against the wall.

It's Anna, and she's just coming to. A nasty bump mars her forehead.

ANNA

Ow, shit!

THE COURIER

(angry)

What the hell're you doing in here?

Anna is still kind of dazed.

ANNA

I... I...

THE COURIER

(still hot)

Did you find what you were looking for?

ANNA

(pissed)

What? Hey asshole, I heard someone over here and came to invite you to dinner. Next thing I know I'm yanked inside, thrown on the ground and someone starts kicking the shit outta me.

*
*
*

The Courier softens.

THE COURIER

I'm sorry. Are you all right?

She softens too, nods.

THE COURIER (CONT'D)

Did you see who it was?

ANNA

Yeah. The day I met you in the elevator. He came out of your door.

*
*

THE COURIER

Lots of jewelry? Lip gloss?

ANNA

That's the one.

THE COURIER

I have to go find him. Will you be all right?

She looks down at the ground...

ANNA

Aww, fuck me.

She reaches down and picks something up.

THE COURIER

What is it?

She's holding an expensive looking CD player, only it's busted and wires are coming out.

ANNA

I was gonna play you some of the shit I put together. You were gonna be the first to hear it.

THE COURIER

I'm sorry you got wrapped up in this. I'll make it up to you.

He locks eyes with her.

THE COURIER

You gonna be all right?

She nods, meaning it.

THE COURIER (CONT'D)

Okay, I'm gonna come check on you as soon as I get back.

ANNA

Are you in some sort of trouble?

THE COURIER

Not as much as the other guy.

Anna breaks into a smile.

The Courier sprints out of the room and Anna watches him go.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE COURIER'S APARTMENT - DAY

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

They don't even notice him.

THE COURIER
Where's the van?

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

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.

CAB DRIVER
So where we going?

THE COURIER
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
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
 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 with a bag
 fulla 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
 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. A chalkboard positioned by the
 table lists several bets going on at once. In the mirrors,
 all the writing looks backward.

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.

TONY
 Well, I just wanted to thank you again
 for saving my ass.

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 your 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. We smuggle shit through there every day.

(to Nippy)

Nippy, you still got your 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, and the line stretches forever behind him.

Lispy checks his watch, frustrated with the delay.

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.

Each businessman gets a hand wand ran over them after they pass through the metal detector.

Another SECURITY WORKER at the end of the conveyor picks up the briefcase of the one of the businessmen.

SECURITY WORKER 1
Sir, mind if I open your case?

BUSINESSMAN
No, that's fine.

Lispy watches this exchange with concern.

Finally, he steps up and places THE CASE on the belt where it moves into the machine. Over the shoulder of the security worker, on the video screen, we see the case just enter frame, it's contents about to be revealed to us...

BEEP!

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

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

SECURITY WORKER 2
Step back through, please.

LISPY
It-th jus-th my jewelry.

SECURITY WORKER 2
Just step back through.

He does, and again it goes off.

SECURITY WORKER 2 (CONT'D)
Step over here, please.

LISPY
Jes-uth Chri-tht.

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.

SECURITY WORKER 2
Okay. Have a nice flight.

LISPY
(smart ass)
Thank-th.

Lispy moves over to the carousel where the Security Worker at the end of the conveyor stands, his hands on Lispy's case.

SECURITY WORKER 1
This your case?

LISPY
(unsteady)
Uh... yeah.

SECURITY WORKER 1
Mind if I take a look inside?

LISPY
Uh, I don't think --

SECURITY WORKER 1
It's not really a question, sir.

LISPY
Okay, then.

Lispy takes a few steps back, as the man pops the latches on the case.

Lispy scrunches his eyes, expecting something bad.

SECURITY WORKER 1
Okay, sorry to bother you sir.

Lispy opens his eyes, perplexed. He spins the case around, opens it, and looks inside...

Folded neatly is the crossword puzzle he had half finished at The Courier's. Now it's completely filled in.

LISPY
Thi-th ith-n't my cay-th.

SECURITY WORKER 1
Excuse me.

LISPY
That'th not my...

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 a white convertible Caddy, Tony 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
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, what now, amigo? *

THE COURIER
There's a guy and his wife being transferred from county jail in San Fran to the federal pen in the morning... *

TONY
(immediately) *
I've ridden that transport truck six times. You need to hit it? *

THE COURIER
Something like that. I gotta get to this guy and his wife at the same time. *

A broad smile creases Tony's mug. *

TONY
Say no more, brother. *

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 is enough to strangle Nippy again. *

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

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

NIPPY JONES
(mutters to himself)
I didn't say nothing. Talk to me like
that. *

The Courier's face falls blank, memories of something coming
back. *

CUT TO: *

EXT. DINER PARKING LOT - DAY *

They all climb out of the car and Tony opens the trunk. *

He and The Courier start to get dressed, but The Courier
stops, leans against the trunk, and looks down the empty
highway. *

THE COURIER
(to no one but himself)
You know, I don't even remember leaving
it out. I don't know if it was the
holidays or the old cabin or what, but my
guard was down. *

Tony and Nippy stop dead. *

THE COURIER (cont'd) *

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

FLASH: A log cabin stands alone in the East Texas pines. *

THE COURIER (cont'd) *

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? 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. *

TONY *

And your girl opened it? *

THE COURIER *

Fallrina got wind of my delivery. I *
 didn't know what was in the package but *
 he obviously did... He called and told *
 her he was expecting a package from me, *
 asked her to open it for him. *

FLASH: a phone RINGS inside the cabin, a female hand answers *
 it. *

THE COURIER (cont'd) *

I never should've gotten someone *
 involved, not in what I do. *

FLASH: an explosion SHAKES THE CAMERA and an armful of *
 firewood is dropped to the forest floor. *

A younger Courier spins, his eyes not believing what they *
 see. Orange flecks of light from the fire dance across his *
 face and his eyes... *

BACK TO: *

The Courier against Tony's car, the orange flecks of light *
 still on his face... like they've followed him here. *

THE COURIER (CONT'D) (cont'd) *
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 sends me postcards every so *
often from different places. Tells me *
he's glad it was her and not him. *

TONY *
No shit? *

NIPPY JONES *
Cold. *

The Courier nods. *

THE COURIER *
His time will come. And I'll be there *
waiting. But not now. Come on. *

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING *

Tony, Nippy and the Courier sit in a corner booth, three cups *
of coffee in front of them. *

Tony is holding court. *

TONY *
Here's the deal. Trucks leave the county *
jail house on Saturday mornings for *
transfers to three places: Baileyville, *
Darden and Manhasset Womens. *

CUT TO: *

EXT. COUNTY JAIL HOUSE - DAY *

Three transport trucks that look like they belong on an Army *
base sit idling outside a jail house. *

Two FEMALE GUARDS sip coffee in front of the vehicles. They *
wave to two MALE GUARDS who approach from the street. *

TONY (V.O.)
 Now, they'll have two drivers per
 vehicle, and then a Federal Marshal will
 hop in back to ride with the convicts.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

THE COURIER
 Okay...

TONY
 What we're gonna have to do is use both
 strength and finesse. I'm gonna get to
 the wife through strength, and you and
 Nippy here are gonna get to the husband
 through finesse.

THE COURIER
 All right...

TONY
 I said three sets of drivers...

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTY JAIL HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE ON: the two women guards sip their coffee.

TONY (V.O.)
 There's gonna be two lady-guards driving
 the bitches to Manhassetts.

CLOSE ON: the two men guards share a joke.

TONY (V.O.) (cont'd)
 And there's gonna be two male guards
 driving the state offenders to Darden.

BACK TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Nippy scrunches up his nose.

NIPPY JONES
 What about Baileyville?

TONY
 Ahh, the Federal prisoners. Those
 drivers are gonna be the two of you.

NIPPY JONES
How you figure?

TONY
Because the real ones are sitting two
booths behind you.

He points his finger and The Courier and Nippy look over
their shoulders. Two FEDERAL GUARDS chat it up with a
waitress.

The Courier turns back smiling.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTY JAIL HOUSE - DAY

The Courier and Nippy Jones walk up to the other guards, now
wearing the two federal uniforms from the guys at the coffee
shop.

They nod and smile at the other four guards.

TONY (V.O.)
Now, one thing you might have to deal
with...

Just then, a couple of women prisoners, including Mrs. Capolillo,
are led out of the jail in chains and placed in
one of the transport trucks. A Federal Marshal climbs in
with them.

The two female guards excuse themselves and hop up into their
truck. The truck rolls out of there, and the Courier and
Nippy watch it go.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Tony leans forward.

TONY
They may not ship your boy all the way to
Baileyville.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTY JAIL HOUSE - DAY

Two lines of male prisoners are now led out into the
sunlight. One is loaded on to a truck marked for
Baileyville.

The second line holds Mr. Capolillo. The sneer on his face is visible from a mile away.

TONY (V.O.)

Since he's pending trial, they might just take him over to Darden State to get him out of the way.

Sure enough, Mr. Cap's line is loaded on to the Darden State truck. The two other drivers nod at Nippy and The Courier before jumping up in the truck that holds Mr. Cap.

The Courier watches them take off. A MARSHAL speaks up next to the Baileyville truck.

MARSHAL

You boys ready to hoof it?

Reluctantly, the Courier nods and climbs up behind the wheel, Nippy hopping in next to him. The Marshal jumps in the back, and The Courier steers the big rig out to the street.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

The Courier leans back, cool.

THE COURIER

And if that happens?

TONY

(smiling)

Strength and finesse, brother.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - DAY

The Courier steers his truck right behind the other transport truck.

Through the back, he can see Mr. Capolillo in there, his hands in chains, seated next to the Marshal.

TONY (V.O.)

You gotta be the finesse.

The Courier punches the accelerator, and suddenly lurches the truck up beside the other rig. The two trucks barely fit on this hilly road.

When he pulls even with the truck...

THE COURIER
You gotta pull over!

STATE GUARD
What?

THE COURIER
Pull over!

The state guard puts his hand to his ear.

STATE GUARD
What'd you say?

In the back of the Courier's truck, chained prisoners rattle around like bowling pins.

Nippy looks at the driver, pulls up a gun.

NIPPY JONES
He said pull over this motherfucker!

The state guard sees the gun, grits his teeth and guns his own truck.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

The Courier smiles at Tony.

THE COURIER
So while we're using finesse, you're gonna be using...

TONY
That's right, brother. Strength.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY - DAY

The two female drivers guide their transport truck down this bucolic two-lane highway.

In the back, Mrs. Capolillo sits uncomfortably. The Federal Marshal just looks back at her, no emotion on his face.

The truck moves along at a steady pace, not a care in the world. It begins to pass through an intersection...

BAMMM! A Diesel 18-Wheeler Truck Cab suddenly rams the transport truck from the side, smashing it like a sledgehammer, and toppling it over.

The transport truck slides down the highway on its wounded side, throwing up sparks along the way.

In the cab of the truck, Tony surveys the damage, appreciating his handiwork.

He climbs out of the cab and starts walking down the street toward the felled truck, cocking a sawed off shotgun on the way.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Tony spreads his hands.

TONY
(smiling)
Easy as pie.

THE COURIER
Yeah. Just one, two, three.

TONY
(confidently)
That's right.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - DAY

The Courier's truck is falling behind the other one, the state driver determined not to stop at any cost.

THE COURIER
Shit.
(to Nippy)
Take the wheel.

NIPPY JONES
What?

THE COURIER
Take the wheel! Get me alongside!

Nippy doesn't have a choice, because the Courier is already climbing out and on to the roof of his truck.

Nippy fights to hold the wheel steady, while The Courier
scrambles to the roof of the truck. *

IN THE BACK OF THE STATE TRUCK: *

The Marshal spies this crazy guard on top of the other truck,
closing on them. His radio is cackling. *

IN THE CAB OF THE STATE TRUCK: *

The driver is looking at The Courier in the rear-view,
barking into his radio. *

STATE GUARD *

We gotta three-two-nine in progress! *

IN THE BACK: *

The Marshals eyes go wide as his radio squawks... *

STATE GUARD *

(on the radio) *

I repeat! Three-two-nine in progress! *

All the prisoners start to get hope in their eyes. Mr.
Capolillo sneers, smug now. *

MR. CAPOLILLO *

This is your lucky day, boys. They're
springing me. *

The rest of the prisoners start howling like banshees. *

MARSHAL *

Shut up! *

The Marshal stands to get a better look at the Courier. *

ON TOP OF THE COURIER'S TRUCK: *

The Courier steadies himself on top of the truck. *

INSIDE THE COURIER'S TRUCK: *

The Federal prisoners inside the Courier's truck all look up
at the sound of the footsteps on the roof. *

The Marshal in this truck, LARRY, also looks up, perplexed.
Then his radio squawks... *

RADIO *

Larry, we got a three-two-nine above you. *

Larry cocks his shotgun. *

ON TOP OF THE TRUCK: *

The Courier spots the Marshal in the back of the other truck taking aim at him with a shotgun. *

BAM! The guy fires and The Courier hits the deck. *

Just then, a second blast: BAM! The roof explodes right next to the Courier's head. *

He looks down through the opening and locks eyes with Larry the Marshal, who is re-cocking his shotgun. *

The Courier scrambles to the front of the truck. *

THE COURIER *

Dammit! Nippy, get me close! *

IN THE CAB: *

Nippy looks up to see the Marshal in the other truck taking aim at him. *

BAM! He ducks just in time, but the shot rips a hole in the hood of the truck and the engine catches on fire. *

Nippy tries desperately to keep the truck on the road, steering in spite of the flames. *

Meanwhile... *

ON THE ROOF: *

The Courier is thrown backwards, and has to scramble to stay on the roof. *

BAM! Another blast comes from Larry the Marshal below him, nearly slicing him in half. *

IN THE CAB: *

Out of options, Nippy guns the accelerator to the floor. *

The flaming truck responds and barrels at the other truck, SMASHING into the back of it. The Courier anticipates and leaps from one truck to the other in the process. *

IN THE BACK OF THE STATE TRUCK: *

The Marshal in the back of the Capolillo's truck stumbles backward, and Mr. Cap grabs him, wrapping the chains around his neck, choking the life out of him. *

ON TOP OF THE STATE TRUCK: *

The Courier scrambles to the cab, and slides down to the passenger side window, to do battle with the passenger guard. *

The driver sees this happening, and tries to keep one hand on the wheel and reach for his pistol with his free hand as the Courier pounds his partner through the window. *

IN THE BACK OF THE STATE TRUCK: *

Mr. Cap continues to choke the Marshal. *

The Marshal's finger involuntarily pulls the trigger of his shotgun, and a gunshot rips through the front of the truck... *

IN THE CAB: *

...taking out the driver just as he had gotten his pistol up. He fires into his partner's back, and immediately falls across the wheel, jerking it down... *

ON THE ROAD: *

...causing the state truck to hit a curb and flip on to its side, throwing the Courier into a parked car. *

Nippy's truck then smashes it from behind like a battering ram. *

For a moment, both trucks sit like wounded animals in the middle of the street. *

IN THE BACK OF THE STATE TRUCK: *

As the smoke clears, slowly, Mr. Capolillo emerges from the back, followed by a few other prisoners. His hands and feet are still chained. *

ON THE ROAD: *

Nippy hops down from the cab of his truck, unscathed. Mr. Cap spots him. *

MR. CAPOLILLO *

Thanks for the bust. You got a key for these chains? *

NIPPY JONES

Uhhh...

He's looking around for any sign of the Courier, unsure what to do.

Mr. Cap SNAPS his fingers.

MR. CAPOLILLO

Come on, guy. We gotta fly this coop before the blue-suits scramble this way.

Nippy approaches him... in quite a daze.

MR. CAPOLILLO (cont'd)

You got my wife yet?

The Courier's voice comes out of nowhere.

THE COURIER

Yeah, we got her.

Mr. Cap looks up; he can't believe it.

The Courier stands there, bleeding, bruised, pissed.

MR. CAPOLILLO

What the hell...

THE COURIER

Where is he?

MR. CAPOLILLO

(sneers)

Fuck you... where is he. All this to get to me, you wasted your time.

The Courier pulls a cell phone out of his pocket, punches a button and holds the phone up to Mr. Cap's ear.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Mrs. Capolillo has a phone held to her ear by Tony's big hand.

Her hands and feet are also still chained, and she lays on the ground, Tony's shotgun pushing in on one cheek.

MRS. CAPOLILLO

Don't tell 'em a fucking thing, darling!

Tony pulls the phone up to his own head. *

TONY *
 Son, you best tell Mr. Courier what he *
 wants to know. *

BACK TO: *

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - DAY *

Mr. Cap looks at the Courier like he's a dead man. *

THE COURIER *
 Either you tell me where I can find Evil *
 Sivle or my guy's gonna go fishing for *
 that wedding ring she swallowed. *

Mr. Cap just looks at him. *

THE COURIER (cont'd) *
 Your choice: your wife or your boss. *

Mr. Cap stands, weighing his options. Finally... *

MR. CAPOLILLO *
 You couldn't get to him if I told you. *

THE COURIER *
 Try me. *

MR. CAPOLILLO *
 (heavily) *
 What you really want is in that case, *
 Courier. Trust me. Get that to Evil, *
 and your whole world changes. *

The Courier looks at him strangely. *

THE COURIER *
 So where do I find it? *

Cap just stares back at him. The Courier puts the phone to *
 his own ear. *

THE COURIER (cont'd) *
 (into the phone) *
 Break a couple fingers, big man. *

Mr. Caps eyes go wide, the idea of his love being hurt. *

MR. CAPOLILLO *
 Okay, wait! *
 (beat) *
 (MORE) *

MR. CAPOLILLO (cont'd)

You want your case, try Berkley Executive
Airport. A silver Gulf IV. If you hurry
you can make it.

THE COURIER

And Sivle?

MR. CAPOLILLO

Evil Sivle's the brightest light in a
city of a million bulbs, Courier.

(softly)

But you'll never get to him.

THE COURIER

You better hope that I do.

With that, he turns and walks away.

MR. CAPOLILLO

(bellows)

What about these chains?

Nippy high-tails it outta there, following the Courier.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET CORNER - LATER

Tony's 18-wheeler cab is parked on the corner. He, Nippy and
The Courier all stand in front of it.

TONY

You'll be taking my ride.

NIPPY JONES

What?

TONY

(ignoring him)

The clock's tickin' on your ass. Just
bring it back in one piece.

THE COURIER

I'll leave it at the airport.

TONY

Whatever.

NIPPY JONES

How we s'posed to get home?

TONY

Brother, we gonna walk.

Tony bumps fists with the Courier. *

TONY (cont'd) *
I hope you find what you're lookin' for. *

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 - NIGHT

From a distance, the desert town looks like a toy model, the lights glowing in the darkness.

But there's one light that stands out amongst all others. It's on top of that big black pyramid at the end of the strip: the Luxor.

INT. LUXOR - NIGHT

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.

The Luxor is even funkier on the inside. It's an enormous black cavern, with a casino situated amongst huge black pyramids sprouting right out of the floor.

The hotel is built into the giant walls, with kooky elevators that ascend at diagonal angles.

A small theater sits right off of the casino. A band strikes up the opening chords of SUSPICIOUS MINDS, where an Elvis impersonator begins singing.

The Courier walks over to a set of private elevators, carrying THE case.

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. 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. LUXOR TOP FLOOR - NIGHT

The CAMERA IS BEHIND A MALE HEAD, who has the phone to his ear. We don't see this guy's face. All the time, the music to SUSPICIOUS MINDS swells in the background.

MALE VOICE
Who's this?

THE COURIER
I'm coming up.

MALE VOICE
You'll never make it.

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

The man hangs up the phone and without turning his head addresses a comrade.

MALE VOICE
He thinks he's coming up.

Three more GOONS appear.

GOON 1
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.

The man who answered the phone has disappeared.

GOON 1

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 The Luxor:

ELVIS LIVE!

The door for the elevator opens and the Courier climbs on. 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:

:roxuL ehT ta ylthgiN gniraepPA

!EVIL SIVLE

THE COURIER

Evil Sivle.

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

At the last second The Courier squeezes through the doors out of the elevator, and locks eyes with Elvis on the stage.

Elvis gives him a half NOD and then belts out the last of "Suspicious Minds."

The Courier can't believe it, still in shock, and he takes a step toward the little stage. All of a sudden, a host of THUGS cut him off, snapping him out of his reverie.

The Courier doesn't wait for more. He takes off, sprinting through the casino like a bat out of hell. The Thugs fan out and try to run him down.

Without missing a step, the Courier steps on a chair, launches up on to a roulette table, higher on to the roulette wheel itself and jumps even higher from there on to a row of Slot Machines.

As he runs along the tops of these ringing, whirling machines, the goons chase him from below. He leaps to another bank of even taller slot machines and then leaps up to the Mezzanine level above the casino, where he gains footing.

Down below, he spots Elvis moving through the machines toward the private elevator where the Courier was just standing. The Courier can only get glimpses of The Man, because of the layout of the machines. Once Evil Sivle is in the elevator, he looks up at The Courier and gives him the famous smile/sneer. Then the mirrored doors shut and the elevator takes off.

The Courier takes off along the Mezzanine, when from a stairwell ahead of him, several thugs emerge, all carrying guns.

Without hesitation, the Courier leaps from the Mezzanine on to the side of one of the indoor pyramids and hops from that on to the top of one of the elevators that is ascending diagonally. The goons can only watch helplessly. The elevator rises twenty floors and disappears into a diagonal chute.

CUT TO:

INT. FORTIETH FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Elevator doors pry open and the Courier hoists himself into the hallway.

The Courier, clutching the case, starts making his way down the hall.

He comes to a T-intersection in the hallway. He looks to his left, then his right, unsure which way to go.

Suddenly, the same MALE VOICE that was on the phone springs up behind him.

MALE VOICE

Going somewhere, mailman?

The Courier spins and can't believe his eyes.

It's Lispy! He's no longer wearing rings, he's decked out in a nice Italian suit, and his lisp is gone! He's holding an Uzi.

The Courier quickly masks his surprise.

THE COURIER

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

He holds up the case.

LISPY

I told you you weren't gonna make it.

THE COURIER

What happened to the Feds?

LISPY

Probably popping out of baggage claim about now.

He raises the Uzi.

LISPY

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.

The Courier dives, just as Lispy unloads the Uzi. He ends up in the open hallway that forms the "T," just as bullets rip into the wall next to the intersection.

Immediately, the Courier rolls to his feet and sprints up the corridor.

Back by Lispy, a dozen goons emerge from a stairwell, breathing hard. Lispy yells at them.

LISPY

That way! Move, now!

*

IN THE HALLWAY:

The Courier races as fast as he can, heading for anything. Bullets start to whiz at him, shattering the windows to the outside. Lispy is standing at one end of the hall, giving everything he has from his gun.

As The Courier reaches another turn in the hallway, he's suddenly tackled off his feet by a behemoth goon, and knocked through one of the shattered windows to the outside.

ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE PYRAMID:

The Courier and the goon go tumbling out the window.

The Courier manages to catch the case on the corner of the window inside the building and uses that to stop himself.

He hangs on to the handle for dear life, because when he looks down he sees the huge goon sliding down the side of the pyramid at an impossible angle. Sorry, goon.

The Courier looks up and realizes he's only ten feet or so from the top of the pyramid, where there's a landing used to service the giant spotlight shooting straight up.

The Courier weighs his options, which doesn't take long because he can hear the goons coming his way from inside.

This close to the top the edges of the pyramid are all very close, and one is just feet to his right. One, two, three, and he swings himself toward the edge, throwing his leg over so he's riding the edge like a horse. He dis-lodges the case and starts going up.

FROM THE HALLWAY:

Lispy's gun is just clicking. He realizes it's empty and drops it in disgust. Just then, he sees that case somehow lodged inside the corner of the window, right before it disappears, upward.

Lispy books it out of there, and we hear a DOOR BEING THROWN OPEN and then STEPS ASCENDING A METAL STAIRCASE.

ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE PYRAMID:

The Courier ascends the edge, slowly, slowly, almost slipping, and then pulls himself over the ledge of the service area.

IN THE LIGHT ROOM:

The Courier drops over a shelf and lands next to the enormous spotlight, still holding the case. He squints, looking at this amazing light, so enormous it can be seen from space. As his eyes adjust, he barely makes out...

...on the other side of the light, Lispy is there waiting for him.

Lispy launches across the face of the enormous spotlight, diving over it and smashing the Courier back into the railing.

The Courier manages to free himself, and the two men go at it, fighting like professionals, all around the enormous spotlight.

They tangle up and then the Courier pushes Lispy back. As he does, Lispy grabs the Glock out of the Courier's pants.

He sneers, this was too easy, and points the gun at the Courier. Without hesitation, he pulls the trigger.

CLICK.

THE COURIER

It's never been loaded.

Lispy looks at him queerly, and then with realization, like he can't believe he didn't know that before.

The Courier uses the moment to wallop Lispy hard, spinning him like a top and leaving him face down on the spotlight.

A single door stands on the other side of the light.

The Courier enters the door and steps inside...

INT. OFFICE ON THE TOP FLOOR - NIGHT

...an ornate office. One whole side of the room consists of an opaque wall that glows in cool, changing colors, using the light of the spotlight to cause its glow.

Elvis is seated at a desk doing paperwork like Willie Wonka.

The room itself 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...

Elvis looks up at The Courier.

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

THE COURIER
I believe this package belongs to you.

He walks to the desk and hands over the case.

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

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

CUT TO:

THE SPOTLIGHT ROOM - NIGHT

Lispy manages to push himself off the light.

IN THE OFFICE - NIGHT

Unknown to The Courier, the door he came through opens behind him. A pissed off Lispy stands there.

He opens a drawer and withdraws a gun. He trains the gun and it's laser sight at the back of The Courier's head.

ELVIS
(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 at the Luxor!

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

(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?

The King smiles.

ELVIS

'At's a good one.

LISPY

When the real king faked his own death,
he went from being a man to being a
legend.

ELVIS

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

So the Caps finally gave me up? Only
fools rush in.

*

LISPY

It's gonna be a shame killing those two.

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

ELVIS

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

LISPY

You see, Courier, you're the only
outsider that knows where to find E here.

ELVIS

(to Lispy)

But he's a man of his word, and mama would have liked him.

(to The Courier)

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 over to The Courier.

The Courier just looks at them.

THE COURIER

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

LISPY

Take your girl out on the town. Tell her I'm sorry about the rough stuff.

ELVIS

A deal's a deal.

Reluctantly, The Courier takes the check.

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 the gold chain with the famous
 Elvis lightning bolt charm hanging on it. The one Elvis gave
 all his friends.

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 tomaweews?

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 Sivle gave The Courier.

SORDO
We got medahs 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.
(MORE)

RICHTER (cont'd)

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 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. He's fingering her busted CD player, which is out on a dresser. *

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, which is not something I do very often. It would've knocked your socks off.

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 brand new CD Player to replace the one that was broken. The pie has a bite taken out of it. *

Anna picks up the CD Player and smiles. *

CUT TO: *

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.