

The Crow

by

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Based on
A screenplay by
John Shirley

Based on the comic book
created, drawn, and written by
James O'Barr

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FADE IN:

EXT. CEMETERY - LATE AFTERNOON

BOOM! A crack of lightning illuminates the silhouette of a perched crow large in f.g.

TIGHT ANGLE - FRESH GRAVE

As a spade smoothes the walls of a new double decker plot.

DIMITRI (O.S.)
We're losing the light; let's pack
it in.

ANGLE - DIMITRI AND ALEXI

TWO GRAVEDIGGERS. Scoop digger parked f.g. towering Gothic-style church b.g. Rolls of astro turf. They look up toward the sky.

ALEXI
Snow, maybe.

DIMITRI
What, you gonna ski on this?

He indicates the mound of fresh dirt. Spits into the grave.

DIMITRI (CONT'D)
Come on, let's bag this. It's
beer time.

Alexi nods and unfurls the tarp over the dirt.

LOW ANGLE TRACKING SHOT - FLOWERS ON GRAVES

As we MOVE alongside a pair of canvas-sided combat boots, as the wearer collects the most lively flowers from each grave in sequence.

TIGHT ANGLE - THE CROW

Cemetery DEFOCUSED b.g. Large, glossy-black, the bird follows the arc of movement in the previous shot. Ruffles its feathers as it begins to sprinkle rain.

ANGLE - ELLY - RESUMING HER MOTION

A dirty-blondish tenement KID of eleven, clad in a blend of cast-offs and hand-me-downs; her version of street punk chic. She totes a skateboard under one arm (itself a berserk Jackson Pollock chaos of band stickers, silver marker and graffiti, with dayglo wheels), and transfers her impromptu bouquet so she may unzip a flap and hike up a ragged hood against the rain. She stops to watch the gravediggers pack up and EXIT b.g.

ELLY

Guess the picnic got rained out.

She looks down o.s. at --

ANGLE - SHELLY WEBSTER'S GRAVE

as Elly places the gathered flowers down. Almost reverent.

RESUME CROW ANGLE - ELLY B.G.

as Elly takes a single white rose and places it atop the grave near Shelly Webster's.

ANGLE ON GRAVE - AS ELLY LEAVES

TILT UP from rose to the name: ERIC DRAVEN. Rain spatters the granite, darkening it.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP - CROW'S EYE

It blinks in its alien way.

WITH THE CROW

as it takes wing from its unseen perch. Lands atop Eric's headstone. It pecks tentatively at the top of the monument.

ANGLE - ELLY NEAR ERIC'S GRAVE

She hasn't gotten too far before she notices the bird.

ELLY

Oh, scary.

The bird blinks at her from the headstone.

ELLY

What are you, like, the night watchman?

Another blink from El Birdo.

CAMERA WITH ELLY - BOOMING BACK HIGH

as she exits the iron gates of the cemetery without looking back. Brutal building facades, like dead eyes, and bad alleyways, like hungry mouths, are gradually revealed as we continue PULLING BACK to unveil that the cemetery is smack in the middle of the city.

EXT. MAXI-DOGS - TWILIGHT - RAIN CONTINUES

CLOSE-UP of a foot-long hot dog being drowned in mustard.

MICKEY (O.S.)

What this place needs is a good
natural catastrophe. Earthquake.
Tornado...

ANGLE - ALBRECHT AND MICKEY

ALBRECHT is a black beat cop, 35, in a rain slicker.

MICKEY is the grease-aproned entrepreneur of Maxi Dogs, a steamy
open-front fast foodery.

ALBRECHT

You gotta put the mustard
underneath first.

MICKEY

Maybe a flood, like in the Bible.

ALBRECHT

Here, let me do it.

He grabs the dog from Mickey. Mickey puffs his cigar while he
cooks. Albrecht methodically spreads a napkin and performs
surgery on the hot dog, coating the bun with mustard, rolling
the dog in the bun. Flashes Mickey a "gimnee" look.

ALBRECHT

Come on... onions. Don't cheap
out on me. Lotta onions.

MOVING ANGLE - AS ELLY SKATEBOARDS TOWARDS MAXI-DOGS

MICKEY

Heyyy -- it's the Elly monster.

ALBRECHT

How do you ride that thing on a
wet street?

ELLY

Talent. Hi.

ALBRECHT

Care for a hot dog?

ELLY

You buying?

ALBRECHT

I'm buying.

Elly grabs the stool next to Albrecht. They've done this
routine before.

ELLY

No onions, though, okay?

ALBRECHT
(horror)
No onions?

ELLY
They make you fart.

Mickey laughs. Spots Elly a Coke.

MICKEY
What's goin' on, Elly?

ELLY
I went to see a friend of mine.

MICKEY
Well, how's your friend?

ELLY
She's still dead.

Albrecht and Mickey exchange a look re: Elly's matter-of-factness.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT (RAIN)

Thunder KABOOMS o.s. The crow pecks the top of the stone again and a chip of granite flies off, bang!

EXTREME CLOSE - THE HEADSTONE

as the crow pecks again and draws blood from the rock.

CLOSE-UP - THE CROW

A dot of blood on its ebony beak.

LOW ANGLE - HEADSTONE

A thin, watery trickle of blood wanders from the top of the stone toward the earth. Rain does not interfere. Lightning plays in the rolling cloud cover, b.g.

RESUME THE CROW

as it takes off from the gravestone, into the rain.

CLOSE-UP - THE BLOOD

It slowly fills the name Eric graven into the rock.

CLOSE-UP - FOOT TAPPER

A LOW ANGLE like the SHOT introducing Elly's boots. This time we see cowboy boots, leather chaps. The foot taps. Waiting.

MEDIUM ANGLE - THE FOOT TAPPER

as lightning strikes. Just enough for us to see a figure in a long duster and cowboy hat.

RESUME ERIC'S HEADSTONE

DRAVEN fills with blood. Blood continues groundward.

NEW ANGLE - THE FOOT TAPPER

Turning to meet FRAME as the crow alights on his outstretched arm. This is the SKULL COWBOY. We glimpse the death's head, beneath the brim of the cowboy hat.

RESUME ERIC'S GRAVE

as blood trickles into the turf at the base of the grave.

TIGHT ANGLE - THE CROW

shaking off rain. Watching intently.

CLOSE-UP - SKULL COWBOY'S FREE HAND

Black gloved. It walks a flat silver throwing knife across its knuckles, like a quarter somersaulting.

RESUME ERIC'S GRAVE

The turf stirs beneath the white rose. Magically, a slim white hand parts the earth to grasp the rose.

SKULL COWBOY POV - ERIC'S GRAVE

as the figure of ERIC DRAVEN stands up from behind his own headstone.

LOW ANGLE (FROM GRAVE) - ERIC

Pale. Clad in cerements: cheap black burial suit, slit open in back. White shirt. A nothing tie. No shoes. Rain sluices mud from his upturned face. He looks to the sky. Lightning.

ANOTHER ANGLE - FOLLOW ERIC

as he weaves to lean against a nearby tree.. Looks o.s.:

ERIC'S POV - THE SKULL COWBOY

water-blurred, through the rain, standing with the crow perched on his arm like a hunting falcon. He releases it and it flies to the tree.

ANGLE - ERIC

watching this. Wipes mud from his eyes, tries to clear vision. The crow lights in the tree and they meet eye-to-eye. Eric looks back o.s. and we RACK to include the Skull Cowboy.

ERIC
What the hell are you?

SKULL COWBOY
Interested? Follow the crow.

NB: The Skull Cowboy speaks in a nicely distorted, buzzlike charnal house whisper. Unsettling and hackle-raising.

Eric turns back to the bird, which takes wing in the rain. His eyes follow it. He looks back, disoriented, doubtful, but the Skull Cowboy is gone.

LONG DEEP ANGLE - THE CROW

Taking wing in the rain, showing the way.

ANOTHER ANGLE - ERIC

alone in the cemetery. After a moment's hesitation, he lurches off, following the crow.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARCADE GAMES SUPPLY OFFICE - NIGHT - TO ESTABLISH:

A candy-flaked muscle T-bird is parked at the curb.

INT. ARCADE GAMES SUPPLY OFFICE - NIGHT

A MOVING SHOT during o.s. lines. Past dead video and pinball devices. Past a desk with an open briefcase, coffee cup, ashtray -- someone was just there. Then past a WOMAN, trussed with duct tape to her office chair, gagged, hot fear in her darting eyes.

COMPLETE CAMERA MOVE to include SKANK, a blade-thin speed freak with pattern baldness, always loud, jittery, a manic dust puppy. And T-BIRD, an arrogant Aryan, brush-cut iron pumper, who is prepping an incendiary. He exhibits a small squeeze bottle of arson cocktail to Skank.

T-BIRD
Uncle T-Bird's 100-proof
accelerator. I squirt you with
this, you could jump in the
Detroit River and burn all the way
to the bottom.

INSERT A CLOSE-UP of the bomb in his hands as he works. Silver canisters, an LED timer, wires.

T-BIRD (CONT'D)

You know, Lake Erie actually caught on fire once, from all the crap in it. Wish I coulda seen that.

He CLICKS a switch. PEEP. LED countdown blurs.

T-BIRD (CONT'D)

We're ready to rock.

Skank notices the captive woman's handbag on the floor. Picks it up. Looks through it for valuables.

SKANK

What about Working Girl?

INTERCUT the woman's increasingly horrified reactions.

T-BIRD

What about her?

SKANK

I say we leave her here to fry, man.

T-Bird looks casually at the woman. Smiles hideously.

T-BIRD

No. Let's take her with us.

ANGLE - THE WOMAN

Her eyes bug in a terrified NO!

EXT. STREET - MOVING - NIGHT

As the T-Bird fishtails wildly around a corner and eats street.

INT. T-BIRD - TRAVELING - NIGHT

T-Bird drives. One eye on his digital watch (doing an equally fast countdown). Skank wrestles their captive, the woman, in the back seat.

T-BIRD

(pissed off)

Skank, shut her the fuck up!

Skank punches her and she sags. Then he looks forward.

SKANK
Whoaaa -- T-Bird, red light, red
light!

EXT. STREET CORNER NEAR MAXI-DOGS - NIGHT

As the T-bird slews wide, cutting sidewalk, scattering
nightwalkers, immediately attracting everybody's attention.

ANGLE - ALBRECHT - AT MAXI-DOGS

Reacting, with a mouthful.

ALBRECHT
Goddammit.

Mickey grabs the counter phone instantly.

MICKEY
Call it in?

Albrecht is off and running for the corner already.

ALBRECHT
Yeah! Do it!
(to Elly)
Stay right there!

HOLD ON Mickey. He points at Albrecht's hot dog. Yecch.

MICKEY
(yelling after)
You want I should save this for
you?

EXT. MOUTH OF ALLEY ACROSS FROM CEMETERY - NIGHT

The car slides to a nose-down panic stop.

SKANK (O.S.)
Dump her, man, dump her!

The woman comes tumbling from the car, which blasts off with a
war whoop from the guys inside.

ANGLE - CORNER - ON ALBRECHT

Gun out, hauling ass on wet pavement. Aims at the departing
car. Gives it up. Still too far away. PEDESTRIANS in the way.

ANGLE - THE WOMAN

hurting, cut, bleeding, tottering toward a dumpster. Duct tape stuck to her face but cut away around her mouth. With her as she falls into the alley darkness... straight into the arms of Eric.

CLOSE TWO-SHOT - ERIC AND THE WOMAN

Their eyes lock. Eric stiffens with his first FLASH.

NB: Eric's flashes of past memory are conditioned by the nature of the things with which he makes physical contact. Hints and fragments in fierce, super-saturated COLOR. Puzzle pieces he must assemble. Each flash keynoted by a BLOWBACK NOISE and accompanied by a degree of pain. It hurts to remember.

FLASH: INT. T-BIRD - WOMAN'S STRUGGLE

The faces of Skank and T-Bird are murky, ephemeral, their voices hideous, distorted echoes. A knife snaps open. We see the blade. Blood. Skank hits her, pow! and --

FLASH ENDS.

ANOTHER ANGLE - ERIC AND WOMAN

An airborne crow POV spiralling up and away from them.

MATCH WITH:

ANGLE - THE CROW

perched on a fire escape, high above, watching and waiting.

ANGLE - RESUMING ERIC AND WOMAN

She fades. He lets her drop away, horrified. And staggers back into the cover of the alley. Her blood is on his hands.

ANGLE - ALBRECHT RUNNING

Skidding in, spotting the woman. Kneeling to her.

ALBRECHT

Here now! You're gonna be okay!
Can you understand me? I'm a
police officer...

The woman is no longer in pain. Deathly calm now.

WOMAN

He touched me and it stopped. The
pain.

ALBRECHT

What did you say?

WOMAN

I saw a ghost...

Her eyes roll back and she dies in Albrecht's arms.

ALBRECHT

Oh no... don't go, darlin', you
stay with me, now... shit!

HIGH ANGLE CROW POV - THE ALLEY

BOOMING BACK from Albrecht, the Woman, onlookers, as police
units SCREECH up to assist.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND ARCADE GAMES SUPPLY HOUSE - ON ERIC - NIGHT

Eric in lurching flight, panting. Stops and steadies against
the wall across from the backside of Arcade Games.

ANGLE - THE CROW (FLYING)

Circling, then lighting on the fire escape above Eric.

BACK WINDOWS OF ARCADE GAMES - ("CROWVISION")

"Crowvision" is what the crow "gives" Eric to see. Visually
distinct and immediately identifiable.

ERIC'S POV - BACK WINDOWS OF ARCADE GAMES

Which he's already seen through the crow's eyes.

ANGLE - ERIC

looking up at the crow. Disoriented. Doesn't understand.
Suddenly he cottons and covers his eyes just in time to shield
from:

ANGLE - BACK OF ARCADE GAMES

The rear windows EXPLODING outward in a spray of fire and
debris.

ANGLE - WITH ERIC

as he reels back, crashes into a dumpster. Falls.

ANGLE - THE CROW

landing on the dumpster edge near a pair of discarded combat
boots in the trash. Flames.

LOW ANGLE - ERIC

The blood from his hands mars his burial shirt. He tears the shirt away, leaving his tie absurdly intact. Wipes his face with the shirt. Discards it. Stops, held by his discovery --

PUSH IN ON ERIC

as his fingers explore the five puckered bullet punctures in his chest. Almost a circle. Comically, he feels his back for exit wounds. Then hauls himself upright, coming level with the crow. His glance at the bird is almost accusatory.

ANGLE - THE CROW

Inscrutable. We should get the idea that some silent communication is taking place.

ANGLE - ERIC'S FEET

bare, muddied, frozen. TILT to Eric. His gaze moves from the crow to the boots in the trash. He grabs them, pushes them onto his bare feet. His eyes catch the firelight. Distant o.s. SIRENS.

ERIC

Fire. In the rain.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLUB TRASH - NIGHT

We are now within the neon techno-depths of Club Trash. The BG music is hard, savage, primal: a doom-laden Radio Werewolf band rules. Cabaret Blitzkrieg, packed with death-to-Yup trendazoids. We'll see more of this circus later. Right now the BG SOUND is our biggest clue to the flavor of this establishment since we are --

TIGHT CLOSE-UP - A FRAMED 8 X 10

Thinly filmed in dust, mounted among dozens of other band shots. Visible among the posed members of a group called Diabolique is Eric, wielding guitar on the club stage. ND BLUR as people CROSS FRAME.

GRANGE, 45-50, powerful, a seasoned assassin, cruel but loyal. His facade remains stony as he leads three other men briskly down the corridor: NGO NWA, 50ish, clad Chinese gangster style - white topcoat, white scarf, tinted shades - and two Bodyguards supplying a power perimeter around him, lean, dark-haired Asian killers who would gladly die for Ngo Nwa. Which they will, in just a minute.

They have just passed the Diabolique 8 X 10. Ngo Nwa's gloved fingers, in passing, leave little skid tracks in the dust that clear the eyes of Eric in the photo.

As the foursome reaches the DOOR, Grange turns doubtfully -- suspiciously -- to Nwa.

NGO NWA

He will see me... unannounced.

ANOTHER ANGLE - THE DOOR

As Grange keys in the enter code The door hisses open. Without a word, Nwa passes inside and the door is pulled shut in Grange's face by the Bodyguards, who post themselves to either side.

INT. LAO'S NIGHTCLUB OFFICE - NIGHT

The door CLOSES and BG NOISE is GONE. Through a large window (mirrored on the club side) all sorts of activity is visible through automatic mini-blinds. A fly-vision bank of 12 TV monitors is hot with surveillance.

LAO, a painfully clean-cut, Armani-clad Asian, impeccable, almost dashing, but the dynamic here is crystal clear: Nwa is the King; Lao, the Dark Prince in this hierarchy.

At the desk, Lao is startled from his contemplation of a tiny, perfect rat skeleton by Ngo Nwa's unheralded entry. The desktop is bare except for an arcane Vietnamese fighting knife, half a meter long with an ideogrammed blade, dramatically positioned beneath an Artemide lamp. Lao RISES and feigns servility.

NB: The following exchange will play FAST and entirely in VIETNAMESE.

LAO

(formal greeting)

NWA

(dismissiveness, contempt, then chastizing anger as:)

Nwa INDICATES the blade with some ridicule.

LAO

(phony assuagement)

NWA

(knows it's bullshit)

Lao turns, staring out the blinds, fighting for control. Deep breath. He turns back to his "master." Nwa gestures broadly at the opulent office, indicating that Lao should be grateful, but is somehow errant.

NWA
(respect is required)

LAO
(begrudging agreement)

Lao sees the Blade. An idea. He lifts it reverently, bears it to Nwa hilt-first in both hands, as if bestowing a thing of unmeasurable worth.

NGO NWA
(why give me this?)

Nonetheless Nwa accepts the blade. It gleams. Hypnotic. Even Nwa has to admire it. Turns it so the blade is pointed at his sternum. His attitude indicates Lao is too far away to do anything untoward.

LAO
(sinister punchline)

Lao SPINS through the air and HEEL-KICKS the blade THROUGH Nwa's chest, pinning him to the door. It's over so fast the gasp of astonishment never escapes Nwa. Lao is much more than merely treacherous, he is extremely capable.

LAO
(in perfect English)
When I spoke of an offering, I
didn't mean an offering to you.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Grange, standing out of arm's reach in the corridor, kills both Bodyguards with a double headshot as they turn in greeting as the door OPENS.

ANOTHER ANGLE - CORRIDOR - LAO, GRANGE AND CORPSES

Lao exchanges a look with his right-arm; Grange nods affirmatively.

GRANGE
You gonna smoke his bones now, or
however it is you do it?

Lao smiles indulgently. He WIPES the blood from the Blade on the jacket of his ex-lord. Lao now bows to no one.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - ANOTHER ALLEY - NIGHT

Eric, wearing the combat boots, climbs as the crow leads him. Up. He jams his hand on a rusty wedge of metal. Ouch.

CLOSE-UP - ERIC'S PALM

Blood flows from the gash. He vises his fist shut.

ANGLE - ERIC ON FIRE ESCAPE

Eye-to-eye with the crow. Opens his hand.

CLOSE-UP - ERIC'S PALM

The blood flows back into the wound, which closes itself, leaving another scar.

ANGLE - ERIC

Vising the rail. Speaks to the night. Almost a mantra.

ERIC

"My kitten walks on velvet feet,
And makes no sound at all. And in
the doorway nightly sits to watch
the darkness fall. I think he
loves the lady, night..."

(to crow)

Am I alive? Am I dead? Something
else? Something between?

CLOSE-UP - THE CROW

Inscrutable. No answers here.

RESUME ERIC

Almost bemused. Steadier. A hint of friendliness.

ERIC

Thanks for sharing that.

EXT. GIDEON'S PAWN SHOP - NIGHT

As the T-bird grumbles to park curbside. Menacing.

INT. GIDEON'S PAWN SHOP - NIGHT

A junkyard of loot and dusty discards. Junkie thievings and other people's stereos. Behind a wire-meshed security counter GIDEON reads a racing form, chain-smoking throughout scene. He is pear-shaped, stubbled, unkempt. Food on his shirt. JINGLE of doorbells. Gideon lowers his paper to reveal Skank and T-Bird on approach.

GIDEON
Ahhh, jeesus, the creatures of the
night, here they come. Tweedledum
and Tweedledummer.

Skank riles.

SKANK
Hey, blow me, fat boy!

Just as quick, Gideon cocks and levels a Magnum at Skank.

GIDEON
Blow yourself, bigmouth.

T-BIRD
(interposing)
Whoa, hey, whoa.
(hands up)
Business.

He lifts a small carton onto the counter.

GIDEON
Whatcha got?

NEW ANGLE - THE COUNTER

Transaction time. T-Bird passes items through the screen slot
and Gideon gives each one a cursory, doubtful inspection.

T-BIRD
Coupla more rings... 24K.

GIDEON
18K. Crap.

T-BIRD
...necklace... pearls...

GIDEON
Nineteen bucks at Sears. Fake.

T-BIRD
Leather purse...

He hands through the bag wrested from the woman.

GIDEON
What's this -- a little, ah,
bloodstain, right?
(doesn't matter)
Fifty bucks for the box, and I'm
doin' you a --

T-BIRD
Yeah, I know, fatso. Do us all a
favor. Make Top Dollar smile.

SKANK

You wouldn't want Top Dollar not
to smile.

Mention of Top Dollar clams Gideon efficiently up. He hands over the cash to T-Bird with a grimace.

EXT. ROOFTOP - ON ERIC - NIGHT

Eric stares upwards at the crow as it drops like a bomber from the night sky, flying past him skimming the roof, leading him on. Eric exhales, shrugs, feeling mocked by the bird.

ERIC

All right.

And he takes off on a run. Only to stumble and fall. But the fall turns into a TUMBLING ROLL that lands Eric back on his feet still moving. He looks back as if to ask: "did I do that?" and runs out of frame.

ANOTHER ANGLE - PICKING UP ERIC ON THE RUN

as he squints toward the crow and does his best to keep up. TRACK WITH HIM to the edge of the roof, heavily misted in rain.

He jumps a negligible gap to the next lower roof. The next rooftop is a one-story jump down. Eric clears the jump with a WOOF of air. Keeping his eyes on the flying crow; gaining strength. His next leap is more like a broad-jump. Athletic.

FAST MOVING ANGLE - THE CROW

keeping airborne, keeping ahead.

MOVING ANGLE - ERIC

Eyes confidently on the sky as he arches out into space...

UP ANGLE FROM STREET - BUILDINGS

As Eric is seen to jump across a gap at least three stories up where there is no connecting building.

CLOSE ANGLE - TARGET BUILDING LEDGE

as Eric smashes into it, just missing, hinging at the waist, grabbing for purchase, suddenly panicked, gravity pulling him downward.

ANGLE - AT ERIC FROM PHONE CABLE BRACKET

Eric falls but manages to grab the bracket one-handed. He hangs for another deadly moment, then slowly, to his own astonishment, executes a one-handed pull-up that will save his ass.

ERIC

Gotcha.

He completes the pull-up, bringing his chin level with the ledge. As he reaches for it with his other hand the bracket rips from the wall and Eric plummets, with a howl of defeat.

UP ANGLE FROM STREET - ERIC'S DOWNFALL

It's a loooooong way down.

ANGLE - ALLEYWAY

as Eric lands and splits a trashcan in two. A beat as we wonder if any bones are left unpulped. PUSH IN as Eric rolls from facedown to his back.

TIGHT SHOT - ERIC'S FACE

as he completes the roll, gasping, amazed he's still in one piece.

ANGLE - TRASHCAN - ON THE CROW

It flies easily down to inspect Eric as he slowly sits up, examining his hands. Frustrated and pissed off.

ERIC

Thanks.

CLOSE-UP - THE CROW

Not "you're welcome," but otherworldly patience. It waits.

RESUME ERIC

ERIC (CONT'D)

Where're we going next -- the sewer?

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Still, dark silence until Eric lands from ABOVE FRAME, feline. The crow lands simultaneously b.g., perched near a roof access door with a shaded, dim-yellow bulb.

CLOSE-UP - THE CROW

It just blinks at him.

INT. ABANDONED STAIRWELL - NIGHT

as Eric yanks open the rusty rooftop door from the outside and sweeps down the steps in a swirl of night mist.

ANGLE - FOOT OF STAIRS

Trash and detritus all around, clogging the arteries of the building, which is old, unoccupied, forsaken. The crow lights on a scarred banister knob. Eric's footsteps come down into frame.

ANGLE ON LOFT DOOR - INCLUDE ERIC

A year ago this door was sealed with police barricade tape... which now sags, faded.

A sticker across the jamb notifies potential trespassers that this is -- was -- a crime scene. Eric slows, stops, his hand on the banister.

ANGLE - THE CROW

as it wafts ahead of Eric, arriving at the door first.

ANGLE ON ERIC, THE DOOR, THE CROW

Eric has had enough.

ERIC
Are we finished yet?

CLOSE-UP - ERIC'S HAND ON BANISTER

sliding along, as he speaks, until it hits a cigarette burn.

PUSH IN ON ERIC - TIGHT

stiffening as he suffers his second --

FLASH: IMAGES and DIALOG are not linked. A rapidfire MONTAGE set in the loft, a year earlier (it is decorated for Hallowe'en). The broken door. The stairwell is filled with cops and cop noise; lab guys bustle. Albrecht is there, making notes as a DETECTIVE steps over to him.

ALBRECHT
Victim's name is Shelly Webster.
The guy who got tossed is, uh ... --
(checks his notebook)

Albrecht grinds out his smoke on the bannister.

FLASH ENDS.

RESUME ERIC ON THE STAIRS

He sits down hard, hurting from the Flash. His eyes seek the crow. He completes Albrecht's line:

ERIC
"Draven, Eric."

INT. LOFT - NIGHT

As Eric shoves the door open from outside. The lock, popped from the frame, spins on the wooden floor. The barrier tape wisps and dust roils. Dark, chilly, damp. A rat's nest of disuse.

PULL BACK THROUGH BROKEN PICTURE WINDOW

as Eric enters. Glass blown out. Shards poking. Jagged.

NEW ANGLE - AS ERIC WALKS IN

He scans the loft. Sees reflecting golden eyes near the floor.

ERIC'S POV - FLOOR NEAR WINDOW

A white longhaired cat walks into a pool of night light.

ANGLE - ERIC AND THE CAT

He kneels. Extends his hand. The cat nears; likes Eric.

CLOSE-UP - ERIC'S HAND

as the cat makes contact. Sudden white jolt - a FLASH.

FLASH: we HEAR Eric strumming his Strat o.s. We see what he saw: Shelly, holding the cat.

FLASH ENDS.

UP ANGLE - ERIC

Wincing. Recovering from the Flash. He purposefully gathers the cat into his arms and braces for more, harder, stronger...

FLASH: A MAN and WOMAN make love on a big bed amidst a hundred points of candlelight. Shelly and Eric, once upon a time.

FLASH ENDS.

REVERSE ANGLE FROM BEDROOM DOOR - ON ERIC

as the cat, dropped, hits the floor and scrambles out of the way.

CLOSE-UP - ERIC

vising his head, teary-eyed, his nose bleeding.

ERIC

No! Don't look! No! No!

He whirls and unexpectedly punches his fist completely through the masonry wall.

FLASH: Eric and Shelly in a mock waltz. He spins her and they collapse on the bed...

FLASH ENDS.

ANGLE - ERIC

slowly pulling his arm out of the wall.

ERIC
(whispering)
Stop it.

His eyes roll up and he slumps the length of the door frame like a drowning man.

ANGLE - GABRIEL

watching Eric. He hits with an o.s. THUD.

INT. THE PIT - ON FUNBOY'S TABLE - NIGHT

As a gloved hand sets up four bullets next to four shots.

FUNBOY (O.S.)
Let's have some fun.

Funboy pops the bullet like a Contac capsule and washes it down. T-Bird turns to Tin-Tin, the new guy.

T-BIRD
You first.

TIN-TIN
You're outta your fuckin' mind.

Into it, almost jazzed, Tin-Tin downs his bullet and shot, and T-Bird does likewise. Points to Skank.

T-BIRD
No. I'm not the lunatic. He is.

Skank riles, pulls a huge Auto Mag and sticks it in T-Bird's face, cocking.

SKANK
Fuck you, T-Bird!

Just as lightning-fast, T-Bird has his own gun out and jammed right under Skank's jawbone. He makes a kissy face.

T-BIRD
I love you too, you madman.

They all crack up, laughing like ax murderers. Skank drinks. Tin-Tin spot-checks the satchel from Top Dollar's. Darla delivers more shots and Funboy feels her ass.

FUNBOY
Hey, pussycat.

INT. LOFT - DOWN ANGLE (CROW POV) - ERIC ON FLOOR

He's awake. Pushes himself up.

REVERSE ANGLE - THE CROW

Is perched in a dead light fixture, monitoring Eric.

ANGLE - ERIC ON FLOOR

He's awake. Pushes himself up. Realizes he is the center of a faint chalk outline on the hardwood floor. He reaches to touch the dark stain of old blood.

FLASH: Shelly spills into frame, mouth bloodied. T-Bird instantly on top of her, rough.

FLASH ENDS.

ANGLE - WITH ERIC

as he abandons the outline and staggers to the window... where he cuts open his hand on jags of glass.

FLASH: Eric held firm in the grasp of T-Bird and Funboy, one arm each. Five bloody bulletholes in Eric's chest.

The thugs 1-2-3 and hurl Eric backwards through the window, which shatters.

FLASH ENDS.

ANGLE - ERIC AT THE WINDOW

Reeling backward, same trajectory as in the Flash, but toward the floor, in SLO-MO. Overloaded. Blacking out.

AS ERIC FALLS - INTERCUT MONTAGE

A jumble of good/bad images from the loft: Tin-Tin embedding a page of paper in the loft wall with a throwing knife... Shelly's face as she lights a candle... a POPPING champagne cork... the echoing CANNONADE of the shots that killed Eric... Skank backhanding Shelly... Shelly blowing bubbles from a clawfoot tub full of suds... Eric catching Funboy's first slug high in the chest... NEW ANGLE of the glass in the window blowing out as T-Bird and Funboy throw Eric through...

ANGLE - ERIC'S REAL-TIME FALL

He plummets to BLACK OUT FRAME. THUMP. Out cold.

INT. PIT - RESUMING FUNBOY'S TABLE - NIGHT

Funboy contemplates his drink as the previous scene REVERBS.

FUNBOY

More fun than a torture chamber.

Tin-Tin's pocket pager goes BEEP and startles them all. Skank nearly shoots it, jumpy. Tin-Tin pulls on a black leather trenchcoat after clicking off the pager.

TIN-TIN

I hate this goddamn thing...

ANGLE -- DARLA watching them from a distance as Tin exits. Wary.

INT. LOFT - FLOOR LEVEL - NIGHT

An enormous cockroach trundles past, large in frame. RACK to show Eric lying on floor b.g. as his eyes pop open. A flurry of dark motion as the crow flies past frame.

ANGLE -- THE CROW -- having snatched the bug in its beak. Eats it.

ANGLE - ERIC

rising from floor. Careful. Stealthy. Watches his fireplace.

ERIC

We have company.

ANGLE ON FIREPLACE

Huge, marble. Cold. Eric's papier mâché masques of Comedy and Tragedy still hang there. The Skull Cowboy steps out of the dark and into the vague blue light. Shadowy as ever.

SKULL COWBOY

Having fun yet? No?

(beat)

I'll give you a hint. Remember whatsername?

ERIC

Shelly.

SKULL COWBOY

Miss her?

ERIC

Yes.

SKULL COWBOY

Kill the men who killed you both,
and the Day of the Dead will be
your reunion.

The Skull Cowboy prestidigitates a flat throwing knife (like Tin-Tin's). Eric's gaze follows it closely

SKULL COWBOY (CONT' D)

You must use your eyes.

He points to the crow. As Eric looks, Skull Cowboy HURLS the knife at the crow.

ANGLE - THE ONCOMING KNIFE - ("CROWVISION")

Weirdly distorted, a shared vision between Eric and the crow.

TIGHT ON ERIC

As he DUCKS out of the path of the knife he sees through the bird's eyes. He ROLLS.

ON THE CROW

It hops out of the way as the knife embeds in the wall. Eric's ROLL finishes him up nearby.

ERIC

Goddammit.

He GRABS for the knife as if to use it on the Skull Cowboy, but the knife causes an unexpected painful FLASH.

FLASH: Eric bouncing off the bedroom doorframe, Tin-Tin's knife stuck in his shoulder.

FLASH ENDS.

RESUME ERIC

vising his head with his hands, in pain. Too much pain.

SKULL COWBOY

Get it?

ERIC

Leave me alone -- !

He looks up. And the Skull Cowboy is still there.

SKULL COWBOY

(contempt)

Do something about it.

ANOTHER ANGLE - ERIC AND SKULL COWBOY

A horrible beat between them. Then Eric runs full-tilt across the room, bounding to the open window and leaping.

ANGLE - SKULL COWBOY

as close to surprise as he gets. Steps out to watch as --

ANGLE ON WINDOW - ERIC

FLIES feet-first out into space.

CLOSE-UP - BRICKWORK ABOVE WINDOWFRAME

Eric's fingers smash into grip the tiny mortared gaps!

EXT. LOFT BUILDING - UP ANGLE FROM STREET - NIGHT

High above, Eric's feet shoot out the window, knocking loose stray shards that fall toward frame. He swings into an upside-down pose, impossibly holding himself rigid against the building's side, face-down, by his quarter-inch finger-grip.

CLOSE-UP - ERIC

Every muscle rigid, quivering with tension. Hold. Then he relaxes, and swings back inside.

INT. LOFT - AT WINDOW, PICKING UP ERIC - NIGHT

He arches, flips, to land on his feet. The Skull Cowboy is gone. No knife, either. The crow watches. O.S. "meow."

ANGLE - WITH ERIC AS HE TURNS TO SEE THE CAT

ERIC

I guess I'm not ready to leave...
just yet.

He picks up the cat -- wary of Flashes, which don't come this time -- and returns to the window. Feeling safer.

ERIC (CONT'D)

The last time we saw each other,
I didn't do so well.
(holds cat up)
Huh, 'Gabriel'?.

He moves to the fireplace. With his free hand, lifts the Tragedy mask off its hook. Puzzles it, face-to-mask.

ERIC (CONT'D)
I bet you need some cat food...
right?

EXT. STREET - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING:

Eric walking, the Tragedy mask hanging from his hip. An occasional PEDESTRIAN passes without comment, brutalized by the city. Eric, more confident, smells the night's bouquet.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT - ("CROWVISION")

Two men around a trashcan fire. We should recognize Tin-Tin by his black leather trenchcoat. A wonderfully rude RAP tune, "Got a White Woman Tied Up In My Closet, Gonna Jab Her With a Stick," RAZZES b.g.

EXT. STREET - RESUMING ERIC - NIGHT

As Eric REACTS to what the crow has just seen. Slows. Stops. And directs his attention toward the mouth of the alley.

EXT. ALLEY - TIGHT ON TIN-TIN - NIGHT

He pulls the nickel-plated revolver from the satchel. FOLLOW as he hands it across to RATSO, who removes a suitcase-sized boom box (the source of the music) from his shoulder to accept. Ratso is a feral skull-head; street trash.

TIN-TIN
Three hundred and you're a
gunslinger.

HIGH ANGLE - TIN-TIN AND RATSO

As though the crow is still watching, yet perched. A brief shove-and-standoff. The gun deal has gone bad.

RATSO
Please, Tin-Tin, you know I'm good
for the money, man, I promise,
Leslie put me up to it, please,
man, I don't--
(choking scream)

Tin-Tin has just up-rammed a throwing knife into Ratso.

TIN-TIN
Ratty -- shut the fuck up.

Tin-Tin lifts Ratso on the knife, gutting him. Ratso goes slack, deader'n hell. Tin-Tin reaches around to click OFF the boom box... then lets Ratso's corpse fall.

ERIC (O.S.)
Another satisfied customer?

TIGHT ANGLE - TIN-TIN

galvanized by the surprise voice. He automatically draws a fresh knife from the bandolero of knives across his chest inside the coat. Can't yet track the source of the voice.

TIN-TIN
Who the hell is that?
(beat, venomous)
Come on out, man -- I won't hurt you.

ANGLE - ERIC IN ALLEY

He steps out from behind another flaming trashcan. Wearing a long black scarf and the Tragedy mask.

ERIC
Hello, Tin-Tin.

ANGLE ON TIN-TIN - AS HE RISES (FROM RATSO)

trying to process what he sees. And cover. And buy time.

TIN-TIN
Little early for trick-or-treat,
homie.
(re: Ratso)
This dick trying to bushwack me.

ERIC
Murderer.

Tin-Tin blows out a breath. No bluff. Time to kill again.

TIN-TIN
Guess you got that goddamn right.

He shrugs. The shrug becomes the launch of a knife!

TIGHT SHOT - MOVING - ERIC

His black-gloved hand slaps away the incoming knife an inch from his nose. It CLATTERS. Eric continues striding toward Tin-Tin.

ERIC
Try harder. Try again.

SHIFTING ANGLE - ERIC NEARS TIN-TIN

as Tin-Tin throws another knife. Eric closing in. He claps hands together, immobilizing the next knife. Opens his hands, almost an "oops" gesture. Keeps on coming.

ANGLE - ERIC AND TIN-TIN

As they meet. Tin-Tin attempts a roundhouse. Eric blocks it and smashes Tin-Tin into the alley wall.

ERIC

A year ago. Hallowe'en. A man and a woman. In a loft. You helped to murder them.

TIN-TIN

Last Hallowe'en? Yeah?
(beat)

Yeah, I remember. I fucked her too, I think.

ERIC

You cut her. You raped her.
(rage)
You watched.

TIN-TIN

Hey, I got my rocks off, so fuck you in the ass, man.

They're face-to-face now, sweaty and tense. Eric peels off the Tragedy mask.

ERIC

I want you to tell me a story, Tin-Tin.

TIN-TIN

I don't know you...

But, as Eric bears down on Tin-Tin, Tin begins to recognize him. Fear. Sweat.

For the first time, Tin-Tin starts to lose control.

TIN-TIN (CONT'D)

Holy shit... you're dead, man...

EXTREME CLOSE-UP - ERIC

ERIC

Victims. Aren't we all.

INT. LOFT - NIGHT

TIGHT ANGLE - TABLETOP

as Eric's hands place Ratso's boom box on the table and click on suitable weird b.g. MUSIC.

ANGLE - FLOOR-LEVEL

Eric's boots pass frame. An open can of cat food CLANKS down big in f.g. as Eric walks b.g. obviously wearing Tin-Tin's trenchcoat. Gabriel noses into frame to eat from the can.

INT. LOFT, BEDROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Shelly's vanity. Dusty, disused. The mirror spiderwebbed with cracks but still hanging precariously in its frame. Eric is seated, his image crazily split into many. He pulls on a long-sleeved, skin-tight black shirt.

WIDEN ANGLE to reveal the loft now lit with dozens of candle stubs. Placed all around. Ceremonial and weird.

CLOSE-UP - ERIC

ERIC
Hallowe'en is coming. The Day of
the Dead...

In the mirror, multi Erics. He touches the glass, tightening up as he realizes he's in for another --

FLASH: Shelly sleeping on the divan, a year ago, wakes as Eric (O.S.) says "Boo". She cracks an eye open.

SHELLY
Your scary quotient needs work.

FLASH ENDS.

ANOTHER ANGLE - ERIC AT VANITY

Considering old cosmetics. Everything he touches will hurt him. But he's ready to eat this pain. He grabs a lipstick.

FLASH: Shelly at the vanity, in happier times.

SHELLY
I think red's my color, don't you?

FLASH ENDS.

RESUME ERIC

wincing. He drops the lipstick to the floor. Grabs a hairbrush.

FLASH: Eric smashes into the street after his death-fall, trailing broken glass.

FLASH ENDS.

NEW ANGLE - ERIC AT VANITY

Later. He's wearing white pancake makeup on his cheeks, shaky.

FLASH: Eric sucks up Funboy's gunshots in the chest. 1-2-3-4.

FLASH ENDS.

RESUMING ERIC AT VANITY

his face a crazy warpaint maze of white streaks, not blended yet. He looks at his own reflection. In one cracked, triangular facet of the mirror is not a multiple of his face, but the Skull Cowboy. Just one.

SKULL COWBOY

Glad to see you're finally with the program.

ERIC

Bugger off to the graveyard, skull-face, I'm busy.

SKULL COWBOY

You work for the dead. Forget that, and you can forget it all.

The Cowboy tips his hat, and isn't there. Eric sees the crow perched on the edge of the mirror now.

ERIC

Forget this.

He smears the streaks until his face is uniformly grave-wave white.

ANGLE - GABRIEL THE CAT

coming in to sniff around the clutter at the foot of the vanity. Eric looks down toward him... and toward the lipstick he dropped.

CLOSE-UP - ERIC'S HAND

as it glides down to pick up the lipstick. CONTACT, and --

FLASH: Eric, smashed on street, T-Bird's car b.g., upside down in Eric's POV as he rolls over and blood courses from both corners of his mouth, a definite foreshadow of the "Crow" face.

FLASH ENDS.

RESUMING ERIC AT VANITY - TIGHT

ERIC

She always said red was her color.

EXTREME CLOSE - THE MIRROR

We see only a reflected corner of Eric's mouth as he duplicates the blood trail in red lipstick, making one half of a Crow harlequin smile.

EXT. LOFT BUILDING - NIGHT

A MEDIUM SHOT as lightning strikes; a storm brews.

EXT. LOFT - LATER - NIGHT

CLOSE-UP - ERIC'S BOOTS

crossing the floor. Tin-Tin's knife slotted to the bucklework.

CLOSE-UP - VANITY

Eric's hands discard a hairbrush there. He moves off.

CLOSE-UP - GABRIEL

looking up o.s., watching his master stalk around with purpose. Thunder RUMBLES long o.s.

ANGLE - AT ERIC IN WINDOW FROM OUTSIDE

The storm boils. Eric framed in broken window.

CLOSER ANGLE - ERIC IN WINDOW

Eric all in black. Firm-wrapped. Tight-wired. The trenchcoat flutters, cloaklike. His shadowy face framed by the upturned collar, his hair punkish and spiky.

SIDE ANGLE - ERIC

as he moves forward into the light. The crow lights on his shoulder.

ERIC

All right, bad guys...

FRONT VIEW - ERIC

Full crow regalia. Face makeup streamlined. Eric's eyes flash.

ERIC
 (in drawn-out yell)
Here I comme -- !

PULL BACK swiftly, vertiginously, as Eric swan dives from the window, his voice a howl.

UP ANGLE FROM STREET - ERIC'S FALL

Coat winglike. MATCH his dive yell with o.s. crow SCREECH. SLOW MOTION as Eric fills frame and we --

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ALLEY - WHERE TIN-TIN GOT IT - NIGHT

Cop lights bounce, competing with the trash fires. Albrecht and several other UNIFORMS assess the double-death scene. A detective, TORRES tries to appear in charge.

TORRES
 Couldn't have happened to a nicer couple.

ANGLE - ALBRECHT AND TORRES OVER DEAD TIN-TIN

Tin-Tin frozen in deathshock, all of his knives sticking out of him. Dead Ratso b.g., where he fell.

ALBRECHT
 Sure it coulda. Funboy's not here, neither is T-Bird -- none of Top Dollar's number ones.

TORRES
 Y'know, you sure got a hard-on for a guy that's guilty of zip on paper. Top Dollar runs Showtime; what's the matter, don't you like adult entertainment?

ALBRECHT
 This sack of shit is called Tin-Tin.

TORRES
 Don't any of your little pals have real, grown-up names?

ALBRECHT
 He was a runner for Top Dollar. Just muscle.

TORRES
Was.

ALBRECHT

(sigh)

This isn't Top Dollar's style,
anyway. This was somebody else.
Somebody new.

Albrecht lights a fresh smoke. Torres waves the smoke away.

TORRES

And you're gonna tell me who.

ALBRECHT

Whoever made that.

Albrecht points. CAMERA FOLLOWS to wall behind Tin-Tin. A crow silhouette has been daubed in blood there, now dry.

TORRES

What in the hell... do you call
that?

ALBRECHT

I call it blood, Detective. If
you want, you can call it
graffiti.

INT. GIDEON'S PAWN SHOP - NIGHT

CLOSE-UP of Gideon's thick fingers shuffling grimy currency.
Some scratchy 1920s TUNE plays throughout b.g., like a broadcast
from another time and place.

TIGHTER ANGLE - GIDEON

looking up at a sudden metallic SOUND, o.s. Irritated.

GIDEON

Piss off, we're closed.

As the outside security gate rattles, Gideon draws his Magnum
and approaches the front door.

GIDEON

Fuckin' creatures of the night;
they never goddamn learn.

Sudden surprise as he sees the silhouette of the gate SCREE back
against the frosted glass of the front door.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

Hey!!

And he hustles to close up the distance between himself and the
door, gun up. Before he can touch the door, the crowbar comes
rocketing through the glass, pegging Gideon in the forehead and
knocking him flat on his ass. He loses the pistol.

Eric walks through the door, causing the fractured glass to disintegrate around him. He declaims, thespian.

ERIC

"Suddenly I heard a tapping, as of someone gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door."

(pause)

You heard me rapping, right?

LOW ANGLE - GIDEON ON FLOOR

reacting to Eric's weird appearance and looking for his gun.

GIDEON

Oh, bullSHIT! You're trespassing, asshole, you're breakin' and enterin' and you just bought me a fuckin' door!

During Gideon's rant, Eric brushes glass cubes from his shoulders, nonplussed. Now he flings Gideon across the room.

Gideon crashes into the counter cage. As Eric advances on him:

ERIC

I'm looking for something in an engagement ring. Gold.

As Eric comes up behind him, Gideon reaches through the open cage door and pulls a big combat knife from beneath the counter.

GIDEON

You're lookin' for a coroner, shit-fer-brains!

And he tries to nail Eric with the knife.

NEW ANGLE - BEHIND GIDEON - AS GIDEON SWINGS

No Eric behind him. TILT to reveal Eric hanging off the cage above Gideon. Eric slams the cage door against Gideon's head. Drops down like a spider and collects the knife.

ERIC

I repeat: a gold engagement ring. It was pawned here, a year ago, by another gentleman whose name, I believe, was... "T-Bird"?

IN TIGHT ON ERIC AND GIDEON

Eric twists Gideon's sail-like shirt and Gideon turns bright red.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Cute nickname, don't you think?

GIDEON
 (gasping)
 I ain't got no fuckin' ring.

ERIC
 Wrong answer.

Eric nails Gideon's hand to the counter top. Gideon howls!

GIDEON
 All's I got is in a box! Behind
 the counter!

Eric jumps through the cage door. Gideon's eyes bug as he sees his own pierced hand, immobilized.

ANGLE - ON ERIC BEHIND COUNTER

scans the shelves. Rows of boxed ammo. Kerosene tins. A shotgun. Knives and assorted knuckle-duster curios. And the ring box.

CLOSE-UP - THE RING BOX IN ERIC'S HANDS

Dozens of gold rings. Eric's fingers sift through them.

TIGHTER ON ERIC

He brings each ring to his face. INTERCUT with Gideon's feeble struggles and invective, o.s.

ERIC
 No... no... no... no...

He tosses each rejected ring over his shoulder. Until:

CLOSE-UP - THE RING IN ERIC'S HAND

Obliterated by a stab of brilliant white light --

FLASH: Shelly's face, a perfect vision...

FLASH ENDS.

RESUMING ERIC

He closes his fist tightly around the ring. A moment of decision. Then he draws the shotgun from beneath the counter. Uses the butt to knock the knife free of Gideon's hand. It goes spinning across the countertop. Eric shucks the shotgun and rams it into Gideon's nose as the big man slumps to the floor.

ERIC
 Tin-Tin confided in me, before he
 ran out of breath. You have one
 chance to live.

GIDEON
No fucking way. He'll kill me.

ERIC
Who would waste time killing you
... besides me?

Gideon sweats, pants, contemplates the hole in his hand.

GIDEON
(cowed)
Top Dollar.

ERIC
Another jolly nickname?

GIDEON
You want those assholes, you want
Top Dollar.

ERIC
T-Bird?

GIDEON
Like the car. He hangs with
Skank, that little ass-hair, and
they hang at the Pit -- hell,
Funboy lives there. Ask Top
Dollar!

ERIC
A whole club of pirates, with
pirate names ...

Eric seems to go berserk, SMASHING and PUNCTURING cans of flammables and powder while Gideon flinches, nursing his holed hand. Blows just miss Gideon's head. Soon he's cowering.

LOW ANGLE - ERIC

Looking down at Gideon in revulsion.

ERIC
You feed off the living.

SMASH! as another tin ceases to exist next to Gideon. Then Eric is gone, past him without further word, ignoring him entirely. As he exits, shotgun shouldered, he pauses to admire a white Fender Strat hanging among the pawnables. He reaches for it.

ON GIDEON

As he summons some last-minute budget bravery.

GIDEON

You walk outta here, Top Dollar will erase your ass! Top Dollar owns the fuckin' street here and you can't dick with me, you son of a bitch!

RESUME ERIC - FRAMED IN THE DOORWAY

The guitar now bowslung across his back, the shotgun levelled at Gideon's position.

ERIC

One chance to live. Take it.

MOVE IN TIGHT ON GIDEON

as he realizes what Eric means. Hauls ass and bangs through the rear door with a bleat of terror.

ANGLE - RESUMING ERIC IN DOOR

as he cuts loose with the shotgun.

EXT. GIDEON'S PAWN SHOP - NIGHT

as seen from across the street. Eric silhouetted, unmoving as the whole store front blows hellaciously out around him, raining glass and debris. Stirring his hair. Eric is the black eye of the fireball.

LOW ANGLE - FRONT OF PAWN SHOP - EMPHASIZE ERIC

lit by flames and residual explosions. He hurls the shotgun into the inferno. Casually brushes flaming/smoking detritus from his own clothes.

ALBRECHT (O.S.)

Don't move! I said don't move!

NEW ANGLE - ERIC

as he turns, slowly, to see Albrecht, out of reach, gun drawn. Eric's attitude lightens; Albrecht is not the threat here.

ERIC

I thought the police always said "freeze."

Albrecht divides his attention, jumpy, between the odd sight of Eric (guitar on his back), and the raging instant inferno of Gideon's.

ALBRECHT
 I'm the police and I say don't
 move, Snow White. You're under
 arrest; I don't care what else is
 wrong with you! You move and
 you're dead!

Eric has begun to pace toward Albrecht. Palms up. A gesture of
 submission. Albrecht's battle calm begins to waver.

ERIC
 And I say I'm dead... and I move.

ALBRECHT
 No further. I'm serious.

Eric bows, bringing his forehead in line with gun's muzzle.

ERIC
 Then shoot, if you will.

TIGHT ANGLE - ALBRECHT

He gives it up. Can't shoot. This is too weird for him.

ALBRECHT
 Are you nuts, walking into a gun?

NEW ANGLE - LESS THREATENING - ERIC AND ALBRECHT

ERIC
 You must listen carefully: the
 Fire Department will be here soon.
 There is an injured man in the
 alley who needs assistance.
 (meaningfully)
 As Shelly Webster once needed your
 assistance, and as you are shortly
 going to need my assistance.

Albrecht gestures casually, almost comically, with his pointed
 gun. B.g., the crow lands on a fire escape to monitor them.

ALBRECHT
 You wanna run that back for me one
 time?

SIRENS near, o.s. Eric listens to them, to the night.

ERIC
 Listen: Top Dollar. He "owns the
 street here." He will "erase my
 ass."

ALBRECHT
 You don't say.

ERIC
I know Top Dollar has turned your
streets into his hell.

ALBRECHT
Fucking A, my friend.

ERIC
The others are called Skank, T-
Bird. Street names. Funboy.
(beat)
Watch me, Officer Albrecht.

Eric lifts a chunk of glass from the sidewalk. Slow and easy.
Albrecht doesn't completely trust him. Up comes the gun.

ALBRECHT
Watch it...

Eric slices open his palm. Blood flows. To his fingertips.

NEW ANGLE - ERIC AND ALBRECHT

as Eric quickly daubs a crow silhouette in blood on the wall...
then exhibits his gashed hand to Albrecht.

CLOSE-UP - ERIC'S HAND

as the blood retreats and the wound seals itself up.

TIGHT ON ALBRECHT

and the silhouette. His mouth hangs.

ALBRECHT
You're the one who did Tin-Tin...

PULL BACK FAST to reveal Eric is gone from frame. Albrecht does
a quickly 180°. No Eric. Flashbars from incoming units begin
to bounce red and blue off his face.

ALBRECHT (CONT'D)
Great. Good night. Guy shows up
looking like a mime from Hell.
(beat)
Least he didn't do that "walking
against the wind" shit; I hate
that.

EXT. SHOWTIME - NIGHT - TO ESTABLISH

A night owl pornucopia. T-Bird enters beneath a garish theatre
marquee. The 2-bill: RUMP ROMP with BUTTBUSTERS II.

INT. SHOWTIME LOBBY - NIGHT

T-Bird approaches the snack bar. Wet, breathy mating NOISES from the auditorium throughout, o.s. Looking supremely bored, the counterman, DICKEY BIRD, thumbs a porn tabloid. So what.

DICKEY BIRD
T-Bird. Thrill me.

T-BIRD
Business.

T-Bird heads left through a steel door that Dickie buzzes open for him.

INT. SHOWTIME AUDITORIUM (BACKSTAGE)- NIGHT

T-Bird walks past dust-covered boxy black speakers as we glimpse Lance and Angelique making history in reverse, on the back of the movie screen: oratorio as good as porn films can make it...

PORN QUEEN (O.S.)
I don't know how to describe how
I feel, Lance -- so restless --

PORN KING (O.S.)
You're my Moon Queen, Angelique.

PORN QUEEN (O.S.)
Oooh -- I want your rocket right
now in my Sea of Tranquility --
Lance -- !!

ANGLE - CATWALK STAIRS

As T-Bird approaches, the movie SOUNDS DWINDLE O.S. He ascends the skinny metal stairway two steps at a time.

ANGLE - STEEL-FACED DOOR AT TOP OF STAIRS

As T-Bird nears it, a viewplate SNAPS open to assess him. By the time he reaches the top, the door unbolts and admits him.

INT. TOP DOLLAR'S LAIR - NIGHT

As T-Bird enters. The room is organized around a long meeting table and flavored with a taste of everything illegal: drug paraphernalia, weapons.

Across the table are a couple of Sentries like the one that admits T-Bird to the room. TRACK PAST them to a lank-haired silhouette as he turns away from a windowshade, backlit by Showtime's exterior neon.

This is TOP DOLLAR. Who looks like a Johnny Winter acid casualty but is deadly cold, definitely the man in charge.

TOP DOLLAR
Wild fucking night. I hear our pal Tin-Tin got himself very dead.

T-BIRD
And Gideon's just burned all the way down to the foundation.

Top's eyebrows go up. Oh, really?

T-BIRD (CONT'D)
I didn't have nothin to do with that.

TOP DOLLAR
Bet that pisses you off, right?

T-BIRD
Top, what the fuck is going on tonight?

TOP DOLLAR
Stay normal, T. Cops'll be all hot-wired and aggressive. No combat moves until I check this out.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT - ("CROWVISION") HIGH ANGLE

Taking in the street, The Pit, and a little girl seated on an abandoned car.

ANGLE - STREET LEVEL - ON ELLY

Seated on the looted wheelless car, playing with a small doll.

CLOSER ANGLE - ELLY

She doesn't notice someone is watching her yet.

TIGHT ON DOLL, THEN ELLY

She looks up o.s. at Eric, who is still out of frame.

ELLY
What are you supposed to be? A clown?

CLOSE-UP - ERIC

He smiles for what seems the very first time. Warm, even past his Crow makeup.

ERIC
Sometimes.

He glances back and logs the location of the Pit for later, not in a big hurry just now.. Turns back to Elly.

WIDEN ANGLE - ERIC AND ELLY

ELLY
You look like a rock star without a job.

ERIC
I dabble. May I?

He indicates the car hood, a "seat" next to Elly from which he may observe the Pit.

ELLY
If you're not some kinda child molester.

Eric looks behind himself. Who, me? Genuinely amused. He shakes his head no and sits down next to Elly.

INT. CLUB TRASH - NIGHT

The music POUNDS and smoke is everywhere, like incense. INTERCUTS of the clientele, retro, robotic, clove cigarettes and rubber clothing; fetish casual wear.

ANGLE - TOP DOLLAR

right in the center of this noise, looking downscale and dirty in this milieu.

ANGLE - ANOTHER CUSTOMER

passing Top, appraising him, finding him as boring as life itself. Undertaker chic, she stares at Top.

TOP DOLLAR
I thought Hallowe'en was tomorrow night.

An Oriental Bodyguard passes him in f.g., motioning to follow.

INT. LAO'S NIGHTCLUB OFFICE - NIGHT

Lao watches club activity on his flybank of TVs. When Top Dollar shows up at the office door two Sentries try to bar his passage. He shoves through.

TOP DOLLAR
Get outta my way, you mooks.

Lao's demeanor indicates that they should not kill Top.

LAO
An unexpected pleasure.

TOP DOLLAR
Bad news. A lot of action on the streets tonight, and nobody bothered to clear it with me. Tin-Tin got himself whacked.

LAO
Who got himself what?

TOP DOLLAR
One of mine. And it wasn't a standard hit.

LAO
I had heard something like this.
(beat)
Describe it for me. The "hit."

TOP DOLLAR
I was wondering if you could tell me anything... about a wildcat operative?

LAO
I know of no one.
(beat)
But even if there is, I am sure it is nothing outside your capacity to deal with?

TOP DOLLAR
Anybody violates my turf -- our turf -- I'll rip out their heart and show it to 'em.

LAO
To be sure. Now, tell me how your friend died.

INT. PRECINCT HOUSE - NIGHT

ANNABELLA, a comfortably large spider-in-the-web deskworker, sits typing at a terminal. Miked headphone in one ear, police scanner chatter o.s. She blows and pops a pink bubble of gum.

ALBRECHT (O.S.)
Annie?

ANGLE - ANNABELLA AND ALBRECHT

Albrecht enters frame across her countertop.

ANNABELLA
Whatever it is, the answer's no,
Eddie. I'm too busy tonight.

ALBRECHT
Annie, I need a file.

There is a desperate edge to Albrecht's voice.

ANNABELLA
Speak up.
(beat; her guard up)
Clear it with the Captain if you
need a file.

ALBRECHT
This is special, darlin'. Please?

Annabella eyes Albrecht doubtfully. Fatalistic sigh.

ANNABELLA
Just don't tell me you "owe me
one." What file?

ALBRECHT
Double homicide. A year ago.
Last Hallowe'en.

EXT. STREET NEAR THE PIT - ERIC AND ELLY - NIGHT

Still hanging by the car, a bit more familiar with each other now. A low-slung mirror-windowed LIMOUSINE hisses past them and curbs across the street from The Pit.

ELLY
My mom works over there. I'm
waiting for her, but she's
probably with him right now.

ERIC
Who?

ELLY
Mister Funboy.

ERIC
Mister Funboy lives there?

TWO-SHOT - ELLY AND ERIC - (PIT B.G.)

ELLY
He has a room, upstairs. I don't
like him very much.

Elly is NOT happy about this. B.G. we see Grange get out of the car, heading to The PIT, and notice in passing the guy with the white face talking to the little girl down the block.

ELLY (CONT'D)
Can you play that thing or do you
just carry it around everywhere?

Elly indicates the guitar strapped to Eric's back.

ERIC
I can pick out a tune now and
again.

ELLY
Can you play "Teddy Bears'
Picnic?"
(re: doll)
It used to be her favorite.

ERIC
Does she have a name?

ELLY
No name. You sure ask a lot of
questions.

Elly HANDS the doll to Eric and he experiences a WHOLLY
UNEXPECTED FLASH.

FLASH: Elly and Shelly sitting at Shelly's vanity, goofing with
makeup, test-driving lipstick, the doll visible on the vanity.

FLASH ENDS.

RESUME ERIC - AS THE DOLL DROPS FROM HIS HAND

Pain is trying to fight its way out of Eric in surges.

ELLY (OS)
(smart alec)
Hel-LO? Earth to anybody ...?

Eric snaps out of it. Elly retrieves the doll.

ELLY (CONT'D)
Do you feel okay?

ERIC
No.

ELLY
You gotta go now, I bet.

ERIC
I have to go.

Half-zomboid, half-determined, he exits.

INT. PIT - NIGHT - WITH GRANGE

As he circulates to the bar, unimpressed. To the Bouncer:

GRANGE
Top Dollar?

BOUNCER
Never heard of him.

GRANGE
Funboy?

BOUNCER
Oh. Prob'ly upstairs banging
Darla. Pay for your own beer and
they'll prob'ly be down before you
can drink it.

INT. PRECINCT HOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT

CLOSE-UP of an 8x10 of the loft slaughter in Albrecht's hands.
Subject: a document pinned to the wall with a knife.

ANGLE - ALBRECHT AT DESK

flipping through the file. Smoking.

ANGLE - THE 8X10 IN ALBRECHT'S HAND

Subject: Eric, dead in the street in front of the loft
building. The blood on his face reminiscent of his Crow face.

As Albrecht's hand moves the photo we can see in the file
several band shots of Eric as a member of Diabolique...
including the shot on Lao's wall gallery of past performers at
Club Trash.

A DOUGHNUT on a paper plate suddenly touches down in the middle
of all this research, startling Albrecht.

ANGLE - ANNABELLA BEHIND HIM

ANNABELLA

Don't thank me. Your ass is
already in enough trouble for this
shit.

ALBRECHT

I knew that.

Albrecht holds a typewritten page closer to the light.

CLOSE-UP - DOCUMENT, torn by the KNIFE HOLE made by Tin-Tin.

It reads: We, the Undersigned Tenants of 1929 Calderone Court
Apartments...

ALBRECHT

Another nice white girl with a
cause. Like a big KICK ME sign.

Albrecht takes up an 8x10 of Eric's face.

ALBRECHT (CONT)

Shelly Webster. And her nice
white boyfriend, Eric Draven.

With a felt-tip pen he superimposes a Crow smile, like the make-
up, like the blood.

ANNABELLA

Your last little wild goose chase
got you busted back to Beat
Patrol, just like in a bad
detective story, Eddie. Are we
doing the wild goose thing again?

UNDER THIS Albrecht sketches in Eric's spiky Crow hairdo.

ALBRECHT

Could be.

ANNABELLA

You gonna wind up working a school
crosswalk ... that doughnut's
chocolate, you know.

PUSH IN on the doctored photo. It's Eric. It's the Crow.

PUSH IN ON ALBRECHT

ALBRECHT

Well, hello there...chocolate?

ANNABELLA

Don't thank me.

ALBRECHT

Thanks, babe.

EXT. THE PIT (REAR) - ERIC ON FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

Climbing. The crow perched on his shoulder. Not in a hurry.

ERIC

It's a Raymond Chandler evening
 And the pavements are all wet, And
 I'm lurking in the shadows, For it
 hasn't happened ...

TIGHT CLOSE-UP - ERIC

Impish. Clown killer.

ERIC (CONT'D)

...yet.

INT. THE PIT - NIGHT

Grange at a table. Smoking and waiting. No beer. His back
 protected, he is stationed near the fire stair door and has a
 good overview of the room.

INT. FUNBOY'S ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE-UP of a base pipe being lit and hit hard.

EXT. THE PIT (REAR) - FIRE ESCAPE - RESUMING ERIC - NIGHT

Eric's gloved hand slides sinuously up rusted railing.

INT. FUNBOY'S ROOM - NIGHT

A hypodermic needle rises into frame. A nicotined fingernail
 flicks bubbles in the syringe. FOLLOW needle down and BROADEN
 ANGLE: Funboy taps up a vein in Darla's arm and shoots her up.
 Both are naked in a shabby bed. Bare lightbulb above.

DARLA

Ooh, baby -- gimmee all of it.

CLOSE-UP - THE NEEDLE

As the plunger depresses.

ANGLE - ON THE WINDOW

As the crow quite unexpectedly arrives and perches on the sill, scaring the shit out of our two dopey friends. Funboy pulls a giant auto pistol; mock-aims, calms down, doesn't fire.

DARLA

It's a big fucking bird...

She falls back against her pillow, eyes dreamily defocusing. Funboy giggles. Relaxes the gun, which half-disappears into the sheets at his side.

FUNBOY

It's a squab. Here, bird. Here, birdie...

NEW ANGLE - DARLA AND FUNBOY

Except that Eric now stands near their bed, across from the bird's position, the guitar bowslung.

ERIC

Here, Funboy.

Contained panic as Funboy and Darla both startle. The needle flies and lands at Eric's feet. Empty. Funboy struggles to maintain against his high.

FUNBOY

Oh wow, oh wow, don't fuckin' do that, man, I nearly had a fuckin' heart attack.

DARLA

Fun -- look at that guy...

FUNBOY

It's just the dope, don't worry.

DARLA

Fun, he's NOT going away; he's scaring the piss outta me!

FUNBOY

Not me.

Funboy draws the gun from under the sheets. Suddenly he seems totally in focus.

FUNBOY (CONT'D)

Time for you to take your bird and leave, freako.

Eric rips open his shirtfront to reveal the circlet of bullet punctures. This gives Funboy pause.

ERIC

Take your shot, Funboy. You got me, dead bang.

Funboy tilts the gun off-target. Grins as Eric flat-handedly pats his chest, indicating where to shoot.

FUNBOY

You are seriously fucked up, man. Just look at yourself.

In a blur, he sighs and shoots Eric through the heart!

FUNBOY (CONT'D)

BANG! He shoots, he scores!

Then his expression sags a little bit.

ANGLE - ERIC

looking down and daubing his hand in the bullet wound in his chest.

ERIC

Bull's eye. Good shot.

ANGLE - DARLA

who starts scrambling to get out. Grabbing clothes on the floor around herself, she runs right into Eric's outstretched hand.

ERIC

Stay.

Eric twists her arm.

CLOSE-UP - DARLA'S FOREARM

where we may clearly see the needle tracks.

UP ANGLE - ERIC

ERIC

Morphine is bad for you.

He holds her arm captive. Tight, and we PUSH IN CLOSER to see the dope evacuating from the punctures, a reverse of Eric's blood trick. The dope drips from Darla's arm to the floor. Darla's eyes roll up into unconsciousness. She slumps.

ANGLE - ON FUNBOY, gawping.

FUNBOY

How the hell did you do that?

ERIC

Magic.

Funboy regards Eric's battlescars and guitar.

FUNBOY

Either die or do a solo.

Eric looks briefly to his chest wound, wincing. He can't seem to make it tie off fast enough. He turns his attention back to Funboy. But his strength is mysteriously EBBING.

ERIC

Neither.

FUNBOY

Yeah, I got a more fun idea myself.

Funboy lashes out and broadsides Eric across the temple with the gun. Eric falls, rolls back to a stance, but Funboy is right on top of him, howling like a lunatic and pistol-whipping Eric relentlessly.

FUNBOY

I hate trespassers!
(whack!)

I hate prowlers!
(whack!)

I hate peeping toms!
(whack!)

And right now I hate you!

ANGLE - WALL NEAR BATHROOM

as Eric, caught off-guard by Funboy's hyper high and weakened by his wound, comes slamming into the wall, losing his footing. Here comes Funboy, and we TILT UP from Eric's position as he looms, cocking the pistol, which now has Eric's blood on it.

FUNBOY

Ahh, the hell with it, I still got five shots left.

In a blur, Eric grabs Funboy's gun hand. Twists to the crunching of bones. Funboy's skewed-around gun hand blows a hole in his own thigh. Funboy falls back across the bed.

FUNBOY

Owwwaaaa -- fuck me! Look what you did to my sheets, you lame piece'a shit! AAAAAAa! Goddd!

ERIC

Does it hurt?

FUNBOY

Does it hurt?! You dead-ass, clown-faced fuck, of course it fucking hurts! What the shit are you gonna do about this?!

Eric sits on the bed next to Funboy; inspects the ampule of morphine on the nightstand, the needle of the syringe already inserted.

ERIC

I have some painkiller right here.

And he fills the syringe all the way.

ANGLE ON FUNBOY

as he begins to see the light. He can't get away. Growing terror.

FUNBOY

No, wait, no WAIT, that's too much, man, that's like overkill, nobody can take that much, you're wasting it -- !

ERIC

Your pain ends now.

And Eric rams the needle into Funboy's heart, driving home the full dose. Funboy begins to convulse.

Eric falls back on the bed, his force spent. Darla COMES TO in the corner, shock-traumatized. An O.S. COUGH, and Eric opens his eyes.

The Skull Cowboy, standing in the room, tips his hat.

SKULL COWBOY

Howdy.

(beat)

You look a mess. Like an ole cooter dog.

TIGHT SHOT - ERIC'S FACE

streaked with -- mostly -- his own blood.

ANOTHER ANGLE - SKULL COWBOY AND ERIC

SKULL COWBOY

Getting a little ambitious and extracurricular, aren't we?

ERIC

Go away.

SKULL COWBOY

You need to learn to mind your own business or you'll never get where you think you're going.

ERIC

Shut up.

SKULL COWBOY

Maybe I was wrong about you.

The Skull Cowboy seems saddened or disappointed. All we get is a little shake of his skull-head.

Darla makes a SOUND and Eric turns toward her. She's really confused. She's looking to Eric for some kind of answer.

ERIC

Your daughter is out there, on the street, waiting for you.

She's stunned, utterly speechless. All she can do is look in Eric's eyes, try to ponder the phantoms there.

ERIC

Go. Now.

Darla shoves helter-skelter past Eric and out the door without a glance back at Funboy.

Eric, recovering, follows slowly, staring at the open door, stooping to lift the guitar dropped during the fight with Funboy. The Skull Cowboy has vanished. PUSH IN. Grimly, Eric takes a syringe and begins to DRAW blood from the late Funboy.

INT. THE PIT - NIGHT

As a hastily-dressed Darla BANGS out through the fire stair door behind Grange and FLEES the Pit.

BOUNCER

Hey, g'night, Darla.
(to Grange)
That there is Darla.

GRANGE

Funboy?

Bartender indicates UP with his thumb. Grange moves to the fire stairs door.

INT. FUNBOY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Grange has seen the door ajar and now ENTERS gun-first. Freezes when he sees:

GRANGE'S POV - FUNBOY

Half-sheeted, bloody, a hypo hanging out of his heart.

RESUME GRANGE

Eyes darting, drawn to --

GRANGE'S POV - THE WALL NEAR FUNBOY

A crow silhouette spray-painted with a syringe of Funboy's blood. A thin outline, drippy.

RESUME GRANGE

whirling with his gun to bring it to bear on --

ANGLE - GRANGE SEES THE WINDOW

The crow is no longer in the room. Eric is perched on the sill, guitar and all, looking right at Grange as if waiting from him. He winks, holds a finger to his lips -- shhh -- and jumps out into the night.

ANOTHER ANGLE - GRANGE

He almost fires, but doesn't. We see instead the priceless expression on his face as we --

CUT TO:

INT. PRECINCT FOYER - NIGHT

Albrecht lights another smoke, quitting for the night. Waves to the late-working Annabella en route.

EXT. PRECINCT HOUSE - NIGHT

Albrecht hasn't gone three steps before Eric appears behind him, cat-silent, matching pace.

NB: Eric has got a new black rock 'n roll shirt on... and a shell casing from Funboy's gun tied in his hair.

ERIC

Freeze.

Albrecht startles; drops his file. Nearly draws his gun.

ALBRECHT

Jeezus! Don't ever do that, man!

Albrecht pants, hysterical but calming down. Eric waits.

ALBRECHT (CONT'D)

I told you cops don't say
"freeze."

He retrieves Eric's doctored photo from the spill of papers.

ALBRECHT (CONT'D)

You, my friend, are dead. I saw your body. You got buried.

ERIC

I saw it, too.

Albrecht gathers up the file. Eric stands there. We realize he is hesitant about touching the file.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Walk with me.

As Albrecht comes up with the file and they walk.

ANOTHER ANGLE - ERIC AND ALBRECHT ON STREET

ALBRECHT

You died, man. I can't believe it, but here you are. Last year, you and your girlfriend --

ERIC

I need you to tell me what you remember. What happened to us?

ALBRECHT

You went out the window. She was beaten and raped. She died in the hospital.

They stop. Eric didn't know this. Fixes Albrecht with a look.

ALBRECHT (CONT)

Hey, you asked, man.

(beat)

She held on for thirty hours in Intensive Care. Hemorrhage, trauma. Her body just finally gave it up.

(beat; regret)

I saw it, and couldn't do jack for her.

Eric has grown increasingly distraught over Albrecht's lines. Now he turns to Albrecht and, holding Albrecht's temples with his fingers, puts his thumbs over Albrecht's eyes.

TIGHT ON ERIC - ALBRECHT AGAINST WALL

We see Eric react to a brutal FLASH... but we don't see the Flash.

NEW ANGLE - ERIC AND ALBRECHT

And Eric tears from Albrecht; staggers back, now holding his own head. His Crow face slack in realized horror.

ALBRECHT

You okay, man? I mean, what just happened?

ERIC

The venom of bad memories. You were there; you saw her. I saw you seeing her.

Understandably nervous, Albrecht lights up a cigarette.

ALBRECHT

You gotta understand -- I was hoping she'd talk, give me a lead, a clue, something to work with. But she only said one thing to me before she died.

Eric lowers his head, penitent.

ERIC

My name.

ALBRECHT

(fizzles out)
I'm sorry as hell, man.

ERIC

Thirty hours. A day of life, plus change...

TIGHT TWO-SHOT - ALBRECHT AND ERIC

Eric plucks the cigarette from Albrecht's lips, taking a single contemplative puff from it.

ERIC

Hallowe'en is coming, soon. You will have Top Dollar if you watch for me at the Showtime, tomorrow night.

ALBRECHT

I should be trying to stop you.

Eric nods, keeping his eyes on the cigarette.

ERIC

Thank you. For giving a damn.

ALBRECHT

My pleasure.

ERIC
Don't smoke these.

As a bus grumbles past on the street, Eric pitches the butt and simultaneously ducks out of frame.

ANGLE - ALBRECHT TURNS

to see a blank building wall. Fire escape. Darkness. No Eric. He does a full 360° turn. Eric is gone again.

ALBRECHT
Damn, I wish he wouldn't do that.

MOVING ANGLE - FROM BUS ROOF

Coat flapping, Eric is standing on the bus roof as the bus moves away from Albrecht's position.

INT. LAO NIGHTCLUB OFFICE - NIGHT

Lao has the partially disassembled rat skeleton in front of him, as well as a mortar and pestle with some bits of crushed bone, and is smoking powdered rat bone in a pipe as Grange reports to him.

GRANGE
The son of a bitch winked at me.
Then he jumped. Three stories.

Lao seems strangely unaffected by the bizarre nature of Grange's tale.

LAO
Did you see an animal of any kind?
Did you see a bird?

GRANGE
(puzzled)
No. I saw a guitar.
(beat; irritated)
This isn't some rock and roller
you forgot to pay, is it?
(beat)
There was a drawing on the wall
that looked like a bird. In
blood.

Lao's expression is one of sublime content.

LAO
Good.

GRANGE
It could've been a chicken ...

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT - ("CROWVISION")

A LONG SHOT of the T-bird parked across the street from the store as two figures -- T-Bird and Skank -- approach on the store side.

SKANK

I wish to hell I had torched
Gideon's. That fat fuck.

T-BIRD

I wish to hell I knew who it was
that made Tin-Tin into a voodoo
doll last night.

ANGLE - CLOSER ON T-BIRD AND SKANK - STREET LEVEL

They stop walking. Look at each other and sanctimoniously cross themselves. Tin-Tin's big R.I.P. moment. T-Bird indicates the liquor store.

T-BIRD

We need some smokes and some road
beers.

SKANK

Got it.

Skank hustles toward the store. T-Bird crosses to the car.

ANGLE - T-BIRD - THROUGH CAR WINDOWS

WIDEN ANGLE to include the car as he nears it. Behind him, two 12-year-old KIDS, AXEL and CHOPPER, enter the store after Skank, one wearing a long duster.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

as the KIDS enter and split between the counter and magazine rack. East Indian CLERK. Two BOYS fight videogame wars in the corner. Skank "browses," grabbing odds and ends.

EXT. STREET / INT. CAR - LOWER ANGLE - NIGHT

as T-Bird climbs in, digs the last cigarette from his pack, snaps his Zippo and in the sudden orange light, sees:

INSERT - REARVIEW MIRROR

Eric's purloined Strat in the back seat reflecting the light.

ANGLE - T-BIRD

He tries to spin and draw his gun but Eric is upon him, nestling one of Tin-Tin's throwing knives right inside T-Bird's ear.

T-BIRD

What the fuck are you supposed to be, man?!

INSERTS: Eric liberates T-Bird's automatic from the shoulder holster; Eric's hand closes T-Bird's door for him.

ERIC

I'm your passenger. You drive.
And stop talking.

TIGHT ANGLE - T-BIRD'S HANDS

on ignition key and gearshift, making ready. As ordered.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - ON SKANK AT COUNTER - NIGHT

He looks outside and sees Eric as the car fires up, pipes and glasspacks grumbling. Skank moves, BRISTLING.

SKANK

What's all this happy horseshit?

And the car peels out maniacally! Skank tries to pursue -- but the two KIDS draw weapons and freeze everyone in the store.

AXEL

Alright, alright, alright --
everybody be cool and stay exactly
where you are.

Chopper hustles up to the counter and relieves Skank of a gigantic Auto Mag.

CHOPPER

Whoooooaa, cowboy! Cool gun.

Off Skank's look of total outfoxed disgust --

INT. T-BIRD - TRAVELING FAST - NIGHT

Vertiginous windshield POV of onrushing street, highspeed.

ERIC (O.S.)

Faster, T-Bird. Faster. You're
a hell of a wheelman; you know you
can drive faster.

ANGLE - ERIC AND T-BIRD

Eric now holds T-Bird's own gun on him. Eyes locked on T-Bird. T-Bird's jumps between Eric's nightmare visage and the roadway.

T-BIRD

You call it, blood -- you got the gun. You just tell me where you want to go.

Clearly T-Bird would relish bisecting Eric with a meat cleaver as he says this. He's nervous and needs to hold the road.

ERIC

That's good. We're going someplace you've never been before.

EXT. STREET - HIGH ANGLE ON T-BIRD - NIGHT

as the car burns up the obstacle course of pavement, kicking a wake of litter. PEDESTRIANS scurry to clear the way.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

Parked in an alley, facing the street. Two cops work on large styro cups of steaming coffee. MJ (driver) and SPEEG.

MJ

Smells like rain.

SPEEG

Smells like a septic tank. You got that cream stuff?

MJ

In the bag.

Speeg rummages inside a take-out bag.

SPEEG

I hate this cream stuff. They can't even call it cream, legally.

They snap to as the T-bird blazes past, doing ninety.

MJ

What in the crap?

MJ floors the pedal, drenching Speeg in coffee on takeoff.

SPEEG

Ow! Owowowowwww, goddammit!

EXT. STREET - ON ALLEY - NIGHT

as the cruiser ROARS out to give chase.

INT. T-BIRD - TRAVELING FAST - NIGHT

Eric lends the chase car a backward look.

ERIC

You caught one. Drive faster.

T-BIRD

Man, you gonna get us killed dead
and I don't even know what you
want!

Eric cocks T-Bird's pistol and levels it at his face.

ERIC

I want you to stop talking. And
drive. Faster.

Eric rifles the glovebox, tossing items out the window: clips
for the gun. Sunglasses. A giant dildo (brief eyebrows-up to
T-Bird). Then: a roll of (previously established) gaffer's
tape. What Eric needs.

ANGLE - T-BIRD AND REARVIEW MIRROR

as he sees a second cop car join the high speed pursuit.

ERIC (CONT'D)

You're very popular. I thought
you could handle this thing.

T-Bird's macho calcifies. He's going to win.

T-BIRD

To hell with you.

ERIC

(wry)

Naturally.

INSERT - SPEEDOMETER

climbing swiftly toward the 100 mark.

EXT. CITY STREETS - VARIOUS ANGLES - THE CASE - NIGHT

A 3-way pursuit until the T-bird reaches the outskirts of the
city.

EXT. DOCKSIDE STREET - NIGHT

All quiet... until the T-bird ZOOMS past frame. The lead cop car tries to duplicate T-Bird's corner-cut and starts spinning. It clips a light pole. Rebounds into the path of MJ's unit.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - ON SPEEG AND MJ - TRAVELING - NIGHT

as MJ stands on the brakes. Collision imminent. They howl.

EXT. DOCKSIDE STREET - NIGHT

as MJ's unit broadsides the first cop car.

EXT. DETROIT RIVER SHIPYARD - NIGHT

The T-bird careens through dockside silence, alone, then fishtails, SCREECHING, to a lung-compressing halt.

INT. T-BIRD - ON ERIC AND T-BIRD - NIGHT

T-Bird respirating like a jackhammer. Eric holds stoic.

T-BIRD

So what -- you gonna rape me now?

ERIC

Time for your reward, T. Payback,
with interest earned.

Eric rips a long strip of tape from the roll.

EXT. DETROIT RIVER SHIPYARD - NIGHT

A HIGH ANGLE of the car as Eric opens the trunk.

ERIC'S POV - THE TRUNK

loaded with plastique, canisters, timers, arson paraphernalia.

INT. T-BIRD - FAVOR T-BIRD - NIGHT

SLOW TILT starting with T-Bird's foot, firmly taped to the pedal. Mummified into his seat. Hands taped to the wheel. Throat taped hard against headrest.

The car is now in gear, idling.

ANGLE - ON ERIC FROM WINDOW

He drops an incendiary right into T-Bird's lap. T-Bird squirms. No go. Eric reaches in with a bungee cord.

ERIC

A little restrictive? Good.

(chilling)

You held her down and raped her.
You were the first. She burned
while you were inside of her.

(re: bomb)

What's the lag on this? About
twenty seconds, would you say?

T-Bird thrashes, but he's immobilized. Can't even budge the wheel.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I've comrades in Hell, T-Bird.
Give them my best.

Eric activates the timer. Yanks up hard on the bungee cord.

INSERT: T-BIRD FOOTWELL

The bungee cord pulls T-Bird's foot all the way down on the pedal.

ANGLE - ON CAR, FROM DOCKSIDE

Eric steps back, plucks guitar out as car starts to move. The car ROARS for the edge of the dock, about the distance of a football field. Eric examines T-Bird's auto pistol and pops the clip.

INTERCUTS: as the car speeds for the water's edge, Eric thumbs bullets from the clip, one by one.

INT. T-BIRD - TRAVELING FAST - NIGHT

T-Bird's eyes bug in horror and he goes MMMMMMMMMMMHH!

CLOSE-UP - THE CLIP IN ERIC'S HAND

thumbing out the final bullet.

EXT. DETROIT RIVER SHIPYARD - RESUMING ERIC - NIGHT

ERIC

All gone.

ANGLE - T-BIRD REACHES DOCKSIDE

Lifting off and blowing all to hell, a billion smithereens of phosphorescent fire pattering into the dark water. It hits. Sinks. Weird flare glow as the car quickly submerges.

ANGLE - ERIC

heaving the gun into the distant water. Plosh. He produces T-Bird's accelerator. Squirts it into the ground. He prestidigitates and T-Bird's Zippo appears in his hand. He flicks it and drops it into the flammable puddle.

HIGH LONG SHOT - ERIC

walking slowly out of the scene as the firepool coalesces into a burning crow shape.

INT. DARLA'S APARTMENT - DAWN

CLOSE-UP of a frying pan busy burning some pretty firebombed-looking eggs. Kinda gross.

ANGLE - DARLA AT THE STOVE

not thrilled with her own progress.

DARLA

I never was too good at this domestic shit.

ANGLE - ELLY AT LIVING ROOM WINDOW

staring outside at nothing in particular. Yet.

ELLY

Don't say "shit."
(beat)

That's okay. Corn Flakes are okay. Anything.

She pauses as she hears a lilting, faraway GUITAR STRAIN. Across the street she can make out the figure of Eric on his roof playing the guitar,

EXT. ROOF OF LOFT BUILDING - DAWN

EXTREME CLOSE on a Pignose amp. More soft GUITAR strokes as CAMERA FOLLOWS a patchwork of taped-together, jerry-rigged cables to:

ANGLE - ERIC ON ROOF -- shirtless, crosslegged, his Crow make-up streaked by the night's work. His fingering is unsure and he tries the tune again.

INSERT - We see Shelly's engagement ring on a leather thong around Eric's neck, like an amulet.

ANGLE - ERIC PLAYING

He's got it right this time. Strong, sure CHORDS. Passionate. We can almost imagine him conjuring Shelly via musical sorcery. He holds a stroke, letting it ring. Sun rises behind him.

IRATE VOICE (O.S.)

Hey, shut the fuck up!

Eric's eyes, closed with the moment, dart left. Funny.

EXT. MAXI-DOGS - DAY

Later. Elly is seated on a stool. Mickey gives her a chili dog.

MICKEY

Chili dog for breakfast... it's original.

ELLY

Mom tried to cook.

MICKEY

Oh.

CUSTOMER (O.S.)

Hey, Mickey. I need a Special with everything. No sawdust.

MICKEY

(to Elly)

Everyone's a comedian. Enjoy.

Mickey EXITS FRAME.

GRANGE (O.S.)

You're Elly, right? I know your mom.

Elly turns. Grange sits next to her. Lao's mirror-windowed car is parked across the street, b.g.

ELLY

A lot of people "know" my mom.

Grange points o.s., indicating he wants coffee from Mickey.

GRANGE

I know your friend, too -- the one that looks like a rock star.

ELLY
I don't know you.

GRANGE
(easily)
I'd like to get in touch with him.

Elly sizes Grange up.

ELLY
You're not a cop, either. What do you want him for?

GRANGE
I'm looking for a good guitar man.

ELLY
Right.

Grange withdraws a \$10 bill from his wallet and slides it across the countertop to Mickey.

ELLY (CONT)
You buying?
(cuts him some slack)
He kinda wanders around. You'll see him if you pay attention.

GRANGE
I need to find him kind of soon, Elly.

INT. LOFT - ON ERIC - DAY

No shirt, the ring on the thong around his neck -- workout mode.

He twirls and performs odd Crow moves of increasing complexity in the big open living room. On purpose, he stretches hard against the bedroom doorframe.

FLASH: Shelly stands in blue moonlight near the picture window wearing a rococo Victorian gown. **PUSH IN TIGHT** as she is embraced by a nude Eric. He undoes the last few remaining ties that hold the gown in place. **FOLLOW THE GOWN** as it crumples down the length of Shelly's (also otherwise nude) body to the floor..

FLASH ENDS.

LOW ANGLE - FROM INSIDE BEDROOM - ON ERIC

hanging there, inviting the pain the FLASHES bring. Breathing as though he is pumping iron, pumping up.

ANGLE - LATER - ERIC IN BEDROOM

embracing a ragged full-length dress that used to be Shelly's.

FLASH: Eric and Shelly (wearing the same dress), exchange an extremely passionate and intimate KISS in the moonlight.

FLASH ENDS.

ANGLE - RESUMING ERIC

as he drops the dress. Absorbing the pain and memories.

ANGLE - LATER - ERIC IN LIVING ROOM

executing a complex roll that winds him up at the windowsill. He grasps it with both hands.

FLASH: A series of CLOSE SHOTS of Eric and Shelly's HANDS, each moving along the other's body. Curves and dips and contours. But Eric's GAZE never leaves Shelly's eyes.

FLASH ENDS.

ANGLE - RESUMING ERIC AT WINDOW

His GAZE similarly FIXED. Bringing his hands away and clapping them together, deep breath, fingertips pressed to his face, like Kung Fu prep. When he opens his eyes, the crow is there before him on the sill.

ERIC

That's better.

He wipes down his torso with a towel. Looks outside.

ERIC (CONT'D)

It's almost time.

He holds his hand in front of his face and flexes it. We can HEAR tendons crackle like a harness. Closes it into a powerful fist.

INT. TOP DOLLAR'S LAIR - NIGHT

TIGHT on Skank as he slams his fist down on the table. He has a black eye and facial scuffs from his liquor store encounter.

SKANK

Top, I made the sumbitch! Face all painted white like some kinda fuckin' kabuki homo!

WIDEN ANGLE to include all present: Lao, Grange, Lao Guards #1 and #2, Top Dollar, and a Sentry. Top dusts up a line and rinses his nostrils with brandy.

LAO
 Sounds like our "Crow" is
 outmaneuvering you.

TOP DOLLAR
 "Our" Crow...?

LAO
 Come now. You've seen the
 graffiti -- all over the city in
 the few hours it has taken your
 men to drop like plague victims.
 What about your turf, Top?
 (mockingly)
 You don't seem to have ripped out
 anyone's heart yet.

TOP DOLLAR
 (pissed off)
 The night is young.

SKANK
 (hot)
 They found T-Bird flash-fried to
 what was left of his fuckin' car!

Top is angry too, but won't show it to Lao. He rises and goes
 to the window. Neon glow. Top sees something outside, below,
 that really torques him off.

EXT. THE STREET OUTSIDE SHOWTIME - NIGHT (TOP'S POV)

A phantom GRAFFITI ARTIST is spray-painting a crow shape on the
 condemned building right across the street.

INT. TOP DOLLAR'S LAIR - NIGHT

Top whip-drawing an auto pistol and shooting below.

TOP DOLLAR
 Hey, you little fuckweed! That's
 against the law!

His gun smoking. Momentary empowerment.

TOP DOLLAR (CONT'D)
 I don't give a shit what kinda
 bird this guy is.

EXT. WINDOW - NIGHT

As Top turns from the window, PULL BACK to incorporate the chunky shadows where the lights don't fall. Eric is there, perched on the narrow exterior ledge...but we don't know it until he opens his eyes, two dots of white in the blackness.

INT. TOP DOLLAR'S LAIR - NIGHT

LAO AT TABLE -- angered by this macho horseshit, annoyed at his time being frittered.

LAO

I am sitting over here.

He SLAMS a palm on the table and the room goes dead silent. Top looks sheepish.

LAO (CONT'D)

Do you think this childish machismo impresses me?

(regains composure)

When I was a boy in Saigon I watched my country change one block at a time, one building at a time. Whole lives erased. A way of life, polluted. Today, no one forces me to move. I use my powers to change your country, one block at a time, one building at a time.

TOP DOLLAR

Nice speech. What's it supposed to mean?

LAO

Your comprehension is not required. Your cooperation and, indeed, your ability are the issues on the table.

Top rallies to this.

TOP DOLLAR

Whatever you say, I can do.

Skank looks around, nervous and jumpy, a contradiction to Top's guarantee.

LAO

That's reassuring.

CLOSE-UP - TOP'S SHELL CASING IN ERIC'S HAND

from the ledge. Endstamp is for .45 caliber.

ANGLE - ERIC ON LEDGE

He sniffs the cartridge. We can see Funboy's cartridge in his hair. He fists the shell casing tightly.

ANGLE - DOWN-TABLE, AT SKANK

Jittery, grabbing a clip for his own automatic.

SKANK

What was that -- !?

It wasn't anything. Skank loads, stands and jacks the action on his gun. Lao looks questioningly to Top Dollar.

TOP DOLLAR

Too many poppers, Skank. Relax.
Heel.

ANGLE - WINDOW BEHIND TOP DOLLAR

A black blur as Eric arches through, spilling Top.

ANGLE - MEN SEATED AT TABLE

Eric back flips the length of the table and kicks the gun from Skank's hand. All react. Weapons out.

CLOSE-UP - SKANK'S GUN

spinning mid-air to land in Eric's open hand!

GENERAL ANGLE - BIG MOBY SHOOTOUT - (VARIOUS)

Death cleans house. Standing on the table, Eric fires rearward under his own arm to clip Lao Guard #1. He pivots, shooting, and takes out Lao Guard #2 -- who slams backward into the steel door as it is being opened by the Sentry outside. Crash! The door is shut again. Skank paws at the table edge.

ANGLE - GRANGE AND LAO

Grange sprays the room with a Calico 950 Auto, shoving Lao beneath the table for cover.

ANGLE - ERIC

Bullets hit him and demolish everything behind him. Skank hits the deck again. Eric fires and Lao Guard #1 sucks three hits across the chest, firing convulsively at the ceiling, blowing the lights.

ANGLE - TOP DOLLAR

springing up from behind table. but Eric is gone from the field of fire and one shot strikes Skank, rising at the far end.

ANGLE - LAO AND GRANGE

making for the door, Grange as shield. Lao draws a pistol. The door opens and Lao shoots a Sentry to clear him out of the way.

ANGLE - TIGHTER ON LAO

A last look back toward Eric and Grange hustles Lao out.

ANGLE - TOP DOLLAR

Door SLAM o.s. Top is out of ammo as Eric lands from above frame right in front of him and slaps the gun from his hand.

TOP DOLLAR

(awed but maintaining)

You want my attention, man, you got it.

ANGLE - SKANK UNDER TABLE

Wounded but clawing toward Eric just the same.

SKANK

It's him, Top! He dusted T-Bird!

ANGLE - ERIC AND TOP DOLLAR, FACE-TO-FACE

ERIC

You have to be Skank.

(to Top Dollar)

One moment.

As he speaks, WIDEN FRAME as he turns and grabs the oncoming Skank by the hair.

ERIC

Think of a snappy comeback for me on your way down.

Without a beat, he PITCHES Skank right out the window! Skank howls all the way down.

EXT. STREET - ON POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Damaged from the wreck, limping home, piloted by our pals Speeg and MJ. Skank smashes down into the roof, imploding the flashbar and windshield. MJ drenches his lap in fresh coffee.

MJ

OwwwwAAHH son of a BITCH!

ANGLE - SIDEWALK ACROSS THE STREET - ON ALBRECHT

who watches with slow marvel from the shadows.

ALBRECHT
Jesus Christ...

He runs to assist the demolished cruiser.

INT. TOP DOLLAR'S LAIR - RESUMING - NIGHT

Just Top, Eric, corpses, and lazily drifting gunsmoke.

ERIC
Top Dollar. You're the only one
here still wasting good air...

TOP DOLLAR
Five large, in the drawer right
over there. I never saw you.

ERIC
Do you know what you destroyed?

TOP DOLLAR
Take the dope too. Deal?

Eric backhands Top into the wall. Gets in his face, seething.

ERIC
A year ago. A very nice lady
circulated a petition. She died.
Last Hallowe'en. Answer yes or
no.

TOP DOLLAR
That's ancient history!

ERIC
It's yesterday! Do you know what
you destroyed?

Top Dollar yells right back at Eric's anger.

TOP DOLLAR
Who gives a fuck! I'm a
businessman. You gonna do me,
then do me and shut your face!

ERIC
You don't even remember...

TOP DOLLAR
I never forget anything, dickhead.
That building was a sweep-and-
clear; the bitch was a nuisance
with her goddamned petition. It
was a bulldog job and the bulldogs
got a little rowdy... end of
story.

ERIC
Rowdy. Let me fill in some gaps
for you.

And he grabs Top's head the way he grabbed Albrecht's earlier,
slams Top into the wall. Nose-to-nose.

FLASH: Shelly backing away from oncoming Funboy in the loft,
trying to retreat, nowhere to run, her home invaded, scared.

FLASH ENDS.

ANGLE - TOP DOLLAR AND ERIC

Top is quivering, almost helpless in Eric's hypnotic grasp.
Eric winces, hard, and --

FLASH: Shelly cut, bleeding, struggling against T-Bird. Wild.

FLASH ENDS.

ANGLE - RESUMING TOP DOLLAR AND ERIC

Viciously close, more intimate and lethal than anything.

ERIC
You're a detail man, Top -- you
need to see more.

This time Top tries to twist from Eric's grasp but it's no good.

FLASH: Shelly comatose in the ICU, eyes fixed and staring,
hoses darting in and out, cold blue refrigerator light.

Bloody, bruised and broken (from Albrecht's memory).

FLASH ENDS.

CLOSE-UP - TOP DOLLAR

arching, stiffening in pain.

CLOSE-UP - TOP DOLLAR AND ERIC

ERIC
All of her pain, Top. Thirty
hours. All at once...

Eric bears down on Top Dollar again. Top screams. Blood begins
to leak from his eyes, nose, ears.

ERIC (CONT'D)
...all for you.

FLASH: Rapidfire CLOSE-UPS. A jagged compound fracture,
jutting, Shelly's eye, blood-red sclera, purpled and sunken.

Her scraped-raw hand clawing at air. Icebox lighting. A TIGHT SHOT of her monitor going flatline: eeeeeeeeeeeeee...

FLASH ENDS.

TWO-SHOT - RESUMING ERIC AND TOP DOLLAR

as Top sags in Eric's grasp, terror fixing his wide-staring dead eyes. Eric lets him drop like a laundry sack.

ERIC
I didn't think you could handle it
either.

O.S. BANG of impact, heavy against the steel door. Eric turns.

ANGLE - STEEL DOOR

as it is battered down by a squad of police using a power-ram. All weapons snap up to bear on Eric.

LEAD SWAT
That's all she wrote, Bozo! You
stand down now, and that's an
order!

ANGLE - ERIC AS HE MOVES

using his foot to shove the massive conference table at the incoming SWATs while launching himself into the air, flipping toward the window and arching through cleanly as the cops open fire on command. Bullets tear the room to pieces.

LEAD SWAT
The fire escape's covered!

EXT. SHOWTIME - FRONT FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

Picking up Eric on his dive through the window, bullets chasing him. Immediate police fire from below sparks off the ironwork. Eric ducks slugs balletically and scampers to the roof.

ANGLE - SHOWTIME ROOFTOP EDGE

Eric somersaults over. Bullets chip brick in his wake.

STREET LEVEL - UP ANGLE TOWARD ROOF

Showtime girded by police cars and MARKSMEN, Eric a distant shadow figure above. Here comes a TEAM LEADER with a bullhorn.

TEAM LEADER (FILTERED)
On the roof! Keep firing! Keep
firing!

A fury of law enforcement ordnance cuts loose all around him.

RESUME ERIC ON SHOWTIME ROOF EDGE

A forearm up against the fusillade. Below him --

ANGLE - PIT FRONT FIRE ESCAPE

Here come Lead SWAT and his merry MEN.

MOVING ANGLE WITH ERIC - ADJACENT ROOFTOP

Eric runs for it. Half a story higher. He hits the wall and skitters up, gripping tiny cracks in the brickwork.

ANGLE - RESUMING MEN ON SHOWTIME FRONT FIRE ESCAPE

Lead SWAT hesitates -- because of what he sees.

LEAD SWAT

Holy shit, it's Spiderman.

He tries to pull a bead and fires too late.

LEAD SWAT (CONT'D)

What're you Boy Scouts staring at!

Let's go! Let's go! Let's go!

MOVING ANGLE - PICKING UP ERIC ON NEXT ROOF

He sprints to the far edge and dives to the next lower rooftop. As he lands he is nailed by a helicopter spotlight, boring in from behind and above the row of buildings.

MOVING ANGLE - THE STREET BELOW

COPS below, COPS in the chopper, everyone rushing parallel to Eric, trying to keep up.

ERIC'S POV - THE STREET, THE HELICOPTER

PAN QUICK to the next ledge. COPS right behind him on the roof as well.

WITH ERIC - AS HE RUNS TO EDGE

and finds the void waiting there. No connecting building.

ANOTHER MOVING ANGLE - ERIC

staying ahead of the searchlight. A fantastic series of artful moves that wind him up at the rear edge of the roof.

ANGLE - SWAT MEN ON NEXT ROOF

sighting Eric as the light picks him out. Eric glances at them... then jumps.

CHOPPER PILOT (O.S./FILTERED)
 He's off the roof. We can't see
 him.

CLOSE-UP - LEAD SWAT

pulling his weapon off target, because there is no target.

LEAD SWAT
 Dammit to hell!
 (beat; to men)
 Come on!

ANGLE - ALLEY - STREET LEVEL

Eric lands like a falling safe, scattering garbage. But he's okay, up and running.

ANGLE - ERIC'S RUNNING POV - END OF ALLEY

as his escape is cut off by a police car that screeches to a stop, blocking exit.

ANOTHER ANGLE - ERIC

as he backpedals, scanning for an alternate escape.

ALBRECHT
 (from car)
 Come on!

CLOSER ANGLE - POLICE CAR

We can see Albrecht. Eric dives inside and the car burns rubber.

INT. ALBRECHT'S CAR - TRAVELING - NIGHT

Albrecht harried and frantic, but in control.

ALBRECHT
 Keep your head down!

He twists and turns the car, glancing rearward for pursuit. Gradually calms down.

ALBRECHT (CONT'D)
 I figured you might need a ride
 home.

Eric looks up at him from his half-concealed crouch.

ERIC
 It's done.

ALBRECHT
I figured as much. Did you cap
off Funboy?

ERIC
Funboy had to leave this mortal
coil.

ALBRECHT
Yeah, among others.
(sees Eric's condition)
Hey, man -- you're hit.

ERIC
It's only a flesh wound.

ALBRECHT
It's only fourteen or fifteen
flesh wounds.

Eric sits up as the car gains distance. Grabs the cigarette out
of Albrecht's mouth. Takes his single puff.

ERIC
You shouldn't smoke these.
He pitches the smoke out the open car window.

ALBRECHT
Great. Litterbug of the Living
Dead.

Eric turns back to Albrecht.

ERIC
I'm finished.

Albrecht shoots him a doubtful look.

ERIC (CONT'D)
I mean, I've done what I came to
do. It shouldn't hurt this much.
But it'll pass...

ALBRECHT
(not buying it)
Right.
(beat)
You sure I can't just take you to
the Emergency ward?

EXT. STREET - NIGHT - ON ALBRECHT'S CAR

It hangs a turn and their escape is made.

ERIC (O.S.)
They couldn't do anything for me.

ALBRECHT (O.S.)
How 'bout the morgue?

ERIC (O.S.)
No. I have one more thing to do.

EXT. STREET - ANOTHER PART OF THE CITY - NIGHT

Lonelier, less traffic, more deserted.

ANGLE - ON ALBRECHT AND ERIC - THROUGH WINDSHIELD - TRAVELLING

ALBRECHT
You're gonna kill somebody else.
(beat; no response)
We're gonna stop and get a
shitload of Band-Aids?

Eric is obviously fighting to stay centered, stay conscious. His last fight has caused him a great deal of damage, taken a lot out of him. He needs to recharge.

ERIC
I have to prepare for an
anniversary. This coming night.

HOLD on their two kinds of determination, as we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CITYSCAPE - DAY

High blue sky. It might even be pretty if it wasn't Detroit.

INT. LAO'S CLUB OFFICE - DAY

The TV flybank pulses with videotaped images Club Trash's of various performers -- including Diabolique. On several screens, one by one, various images of a guitar-playing Eric Draven FREEZE-FRAME as we PULL BACK to the desk. Lao has the 8x10 from the corridor gallery. He places it withing eyeshot and resumes work on the desk BELOW FRAME; we can't see it yet. among other scattered research and incunabula.

ANGLE - GRANGE

Entering and crossing to the desk. As he comes up on the desk, he DRAWS BACK.

GRANGE
What... the hell is that?

LAO
(calmly)
This is a cobra, Mr. Grange. Yes,
it is real.

NEW ANGLE - LAO AND GRANGE

Revealing Lao with a sealed cage, holding a large, live cobra in his hands. The Killing Blade is nearby.

GRANGE
That thing is poisonous.

LAO
Extremely so.
(beat)
You and I are the recipients of
unanticipated good fortune, in the
form of the man everyone is
calling The Crow.

Grange makes a face. Can't keep his eyes off the cobra.

GRANGE
Give me a break. That guy's a
wacko..

LAO
I intend no slight to you, but I
cannot find the English to
adequately express just what he
is. I suppose Western mythology
would describe him as a Fury.

GRANGE
Not a Plymouth Fury, I bet.

Lao chuckles indulgently.

LAO
Do you know of spirit assassins?
You do know the dead can rise?
Properly motivated, of course ...

GRANGE
Like some sort of zombie on a
revenge trip.

LAO
Mmm. But tonight I can take what
is his.

GRANGE
Only thing you'll get from that
clown is a faster way to die.

LAO
On the contrary ...

ZZLIP! Lao smoothly BEHEADS the snake with the Blade against the stone surface of the desk and discards the writhing body. He squeezes behind one of the eyes and a VENOM SAC protrudes like a dark pimento.

Lao pulls it free of the milky, clinging tissue and EATS IT. Off Grange's stunned expression:

LAO (CONT'D)
...all the dying tonight will be
done by the former Eric Draven.

Lao exhibits the Blade to Grange as though it explains all.

LAO (CONT'D)
Who is only invulnerable so long
as he cares about the dead. When
he begins to care for the living,
you'll find his heart can bleed...
and I want it to bleed for me.

GRANGE
Kill a dead guy?

Lao POPS the second venom sac; swallows it. Pleased.

LAO
Truly kill him. So I may crush
his skull. And smoke it.

Lao SHRUGS. Grange can handle it.

LAO (CONT'D)
Let it suffice that I need him...
and to get him, we'll need his
little friend.

Finally, an assignment Grange can comfortably understand.

EXT. LOFT BUILDING - DAY

Same pretty day. Elly, standing on the sidewalk, looks up at the broken window and then pulls open the front door.

INT. LOFT - DAY

Eric, barechested, emotionally tapped, clean of makeup and blood but exhausted, his movements retarded and slack. Staring fixedly into the fireplace, where he burns everything he could find of his past: the junk from the makeup table, the masques, photos of himself and Shelly.

INT. LOFT - STAIRWELL - DAY

MOVING with Elly as she nears the open loft door. She PEEKS cautiously inside.

RESUME ERIC

Without looking toward the door, he speaks.

ELLY
What's going on . . . ?

ERIC
A remembrance.
(beat)
A closure.

And Eric consigns to the fire the DRESS we saw earlier.

Holds a photograph in a broken frame. Cracked glass. Subject: Eric and Shelly, goofing for the camera.

He chucks it into the fire. Draws a deep breath.

ERIC
Better now. I feel good. How are you, Elly my friend?

Elly is clearly uncomfortable, groping for an excuse just to see Eric. Eric is staring at her, intently.

ERIC
What is it . . . ?

ELLY
I knew. I knew I knew you. Even with the makeup and stuff you wore.
(beat)
You really loved her, didn't you?

CLOSE-UP - FIREPLACE

The photo burns and blackens in the grate.

ERIC
You brought flowers. As long as you don't forget her, Elly, she lives.

ELLY
(upset)
She's dead. She's gone. And now you're just gonna go away and never come back, too. I hate this place; it isn't fair.

ERIC

Elly . . .

He draws her close. Wipes away an errant tear with his thumb.

ERIC (CONT.)

Sometimes the people we care about are gone, for no reason. Sometimes that's really tough. I cry. But if the people we love are gone, we keep them -

He taps Elly's temple, then his own.

ERIC (CONT.)

- right here. It's a big responsibility. And that makes it okay to mourn.

(beat)

I know that if you weren't here, I'd be very sad.

Elly gives Eric a hug.

ELLY

You look funny without your white face on. Like it's your day off or something.

Her quizzical expression amuses him.

ERIC

Somebody here wants to meet you. Gabriel?

GABRIEL the cat has wandered near the fireplace to join them. Elly is immediately smitten. Happy.

ELLY

I remember him! Here, Gabriel... here, kitty... Gabriel... Is he still yours?

ERIC

I think he's yours, now.

The cat seems to like that idea. Elly wraps him hugely up in her arms, talking to him: How're YOU Gabriel, whatcha doin'...

ANOTHER ANGLE - TIGHTER ON ERIC

While Elly is preoccupied with the cat, Eric gives up his last bit of Shelly to the fire - a portrait photo of her, small and creased. He puts it in the fire, watches it burn for a beat, then turns to Elly.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I have something else for you.

RACK FOCUS as Eric lifts off his neck Shelly's ring for Elly's inspection. The ring twirls large in F.G.

ELLY

Nobody ever gave me anything like that before. Ever.

Eric places it around her neck. Elly BEAMS.

ERIC

Shelly would've wanted you to have it. This way, you'll think of her everytime you see it...

ELLY

And she'll be alive. Up here.

Elly TAPS her own temple with a smile, keeping one hand on the ring.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Blowing wind. TRICK-OR-TREATERS wisp past. Ghosts, witches, demons out for Hallowe'en.

ANGLE - CEMETERY FENCE

walking home with Gabriel zipped up inside her coat is Elly. A fire engine WAILS past in the opposite direction.

ANGLE - ELLY ON BROWNSTONE STEPS

Strictly downscale building. Elly to Gabriel:

ELLY

You're gonna like it here.

A car curbs across the street as she enters the building.

ANGLE - PUSH IN ON CAR

as the window cranks down to reveal Grange at the wheel.

INT. DARLA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Darla nervously smoking, doing her best to stay clean, but jittery. Elly enters the shabby living room with Gabriel in her arms.

DARLA

I was wondering where you'd gotten to --

(she sees Gabriel)

Oh, Elly, honey, a cat. Here?

ELLY

He was a present. Besides, we're moving anyway. You said.

DARLA

We'll discuss this later. Obviously. You left the door open.

Darla points. As Elly goes to close the door it opens.

NEW ANGLE - FAVOR THE DOOR

Grange enters accompanied by two Asian martial arts STRONGARMS (Lao Guards 3 & 4). Grange looks around, bemused, his manner avuncular.

GRANGE

Hi, Elly. Remember me?

Elly's surprise is evident. Darla is just plain pissed off.

DARLA

I don't remember you. And I don't remember inviting ...

GRANGE

(to his Men)

If she opens her face again, shoot her in the head.

ANGLE - DARLA

Mouth stalling in the on position as Lao Guard #3 pulls a gigantic gun, draws and cocks.

ELLY

(panicked)

Mom -- !

ANGLE - GUARD #4 AND ELLY

as he scoops her up, captive.

ANGLE - GRANGE AND GABRIEL

He strolls the circuit of the room, stopping near the window.

GRANGE

You should listen to your mother. She said no cats.

NEW ANGLE - A MOMENT LATER - FAST AND HARD

Eric brutally crisscrosses his arms with black vinyl tape.

ANGLE - ERIC DRESSING

Pulling on black night-fighting clothes, skintight.

ANGLE - THE VANITY

as Eric (seen in the mirror) jabs his fingers into the white makeup and smears it on.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. STREET NEAR CEMETERY - NIGHT

Eric marches along in plain view since everyone around him seems to be in costume. The wind whips his coat. KIDS bustle around him with trick-or-treat bags. The crow perched on his shoulder.

ERIC'S POV - CITY SKYLINE

Somewhere, a few blocks over, a building is burning.

ANGLE - ERIC WALKING

A fire engine races past on the street. He steps out in its wake and crosses over to --

MEDIUM MOVING SHOT - THE CEMETERY

waiting for him as he crosses to the fence. Beyond the fence, in the distance, the church looms.

ANGLE - ERIC

He pauses. A KID in a Creature From the Black Lagoon mask comes, passes Eric, then comes back for a touch.

CREATURE KID

Trick or treat!

Eric smiles. Not tonight.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Eric is standing over the grave of Shelly Webster, looking down. He holds for a moment, then moves on.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Eric ascends toward giant oak doors, *tres Gothique*. The crow flaps past, leading him.

NEW ANGLE - TOP OF STEPS -- where waits the Skull Cowboy. As Eric approaches, the Skull Cowboy interposes himself between Eric and the huge double doors.

Eric glares up, defiant. Moves up the steps. The Skull Cowboy extends a skeletal hand: STOP.

SKULL COWBOY
Stop screwing around.

TIGHT ON ERIC

Angry, ready to battle: You talkin' to ME?

SKULL COWBOY (CONT'D)
Your job is done. You interfere with the living, again.

ERIC
Tell me I'll get hurt. That I might die.
(beat)
I've already done that. I don't need anyone's help. Yours included.

STAIR ANGLE - ERIC AND SKULL COWBOY

Eric lower, Skull Cowboy superior, the storm wild around them.

SKULL COWBOY
Do this thing, and you will be vulnerable. The blood will not return.
(beat)
No powers. No reunion. Nothing.

ERIC
Fine with me.

He ADVANCES a step up; the Skull Cowboy holds fast.

SKULL COWBOY
You'll be alone.

ERIC
I'm already alone.

INT. BELL TOWER - NIGHT

Through a castle keep-like slit, Grange, monitors Eric's arrival. He speaks into a headset.

GRANGE
We've got company.

LAO (O.S./FILTERED)
Is he inside?

GRANGE'S POV - ERIC

Eric talking to dead air. Almost arguing with it. Eerie.

RESUME GRANGE

As he talks into his mike he hefts a nightscoped, laser-sighted sniper's rifle.

GRANGE
He's just out front talking to himself. You tell me.

EXT. CHURCH - RESUMING ERIC ON STEPS - NIGHT

Eric, eyes steely, stares down the Skull Cowboy.

ERIC
Don't waste my time.

SKULL COWBOY
Very well. It's your ass.

And the wind kicks up around them both, powerfully.

ANGLE - SKULL COWBOY (EFFECT)

As the force of the storm dust-devils around him and begins to disassemble him. The fire in his eye sockets goes out. His hat flies off and is pulverized by the wind. The garments begin to disintegrate and blow around, rotten cerements falling apart in mid-air.

ANGLE - ERIC ON STEPS -- transfixed by this unexpected development. A shard of the Skull Cowboy blows past Eric's face and transmutes to dust!

RESUME SKULL COWBOY AT TOP OF STEPS (EFFECT)

Transparent, ancient bones, crumbling and blowing away.

ANOTHER ANGLE - ERIC ON STEPS

As Eric lunges for what's left of his mysterious, smart-ass mentor.

CLOSE-UP - ERIC'S LUNGING HAND

Meeting only a swirl of vaporous dust where the Skull Cowboy's heart would have been.

TIGHT ANGLE - ERIC ON STEPS

He has time to register the dust in his palm before it, too, renders down to nothingness, leaving a vague green glow that dies. And as he looks to the sky --

UP ANGLE - THE CROW

flapping down to land on Eric's shoulder. Eric is astonished.

ERIC

But why are you still here?

CLOSE-UP - THE CROW

No answers in the crow's eyes.

RESUME AND FOLLOW ERIC

That's good enough for Eric. He marches to the double doors and shoves them back.

INT. CHURCH - AS ERIC COMES THROUGH DOORS - NIGHT

The high breeze blows in with him, disturbing dust in the disused Gothic dark. Hollow cathedral ECHOES to sounds. A giant 27" TV positioned on the altar, broadcasting static.

LONG SHOT - ERIC AS HE APPROACHES THE ALTAR - ("CROWVISION")

Leery of potential danger from a thousand dark places.

ANGLE - THE TV - AS ERIC ENTERS FRAME

Onscreen: Elly, gagged with duct tape and handcuffed to an iron ring bolted to a flagstone wall. Could be anywhere inside the church.

LAO (O.S./FILTERED)

I believe our friend Elly calls you "Mister Crow."

(beat)

Please acknowledge; the mike will pick you up.

ERIC

I can see her.

LAO

Of course you can.

ANGLE - GRANGE IN THE GALLERY -- in darkness. The running lights on his night-scoped, laser-sighted sniper's rifle which THROWS vague sprays of eerie red and green light.

LAO (CONT'D; O.S./FILTERED)
 (on Grange's headset)
 Don't permit your rage to cloud
 the issue. I believe in barter.
 I propose a simple trade.

Grange SIGHTS his weapon.

CROSSHAIR POV - ERIC AT THE ALTAR

Blurring as Grange re-sights. Eric is not the target. Blur FINDS the crow at the far end of the nave, perched in front of a giant stained glass window.

NEW ANGLE - GRANGE -- squeezing off two quick SILENCED shots.

ANGLE - STAINED GLASS WINDOW -- The first shot blows a hole in some pastoral religious representation. TINKLE of glass.

ANGLE - ERIC -- Spinning at the quiet pfut! sound, to witness:

ANGLE - INCOMING DART - ("CROWVISION")

Spinning and hissing venomously.

ANGLE - ERIC DUCKS

As before, but the crow is not as fast.

TIGHT ANGLE - THE CROW

As it CATCHES the dart and goes down in a flurry of feathers.

LOW ANGLE - ERIC AT ALTAR - INCLUDE TV

His knees buckle. Sympathetic PAIN from the hit.

LAO (O.S./FILTERED)
 You intended to finish this
 evening in the cemetery. I am
 here to help you on your way.

ANGLE - RESUMING GRANGE IN GALLERY

Swapping his tranquilizer gun for a more lethal rifle, similarly scoped. He SIGHTS the fallen Eric in a spray of green light.

HIGH ANGLE - HAND-HELD - ERIC AT ALTAR

Groping for support to drag himself back to standing.

GRANGE (O.S.)
 I've got him if you want him.

LAO (O.S./FILTERED)
No shooting.

GRANGE
(into headset)
Move in, guys.

HIGH ANGLE - THE SANCTUARY -- as Lao Guards #3 and #4 move into light, CLOSING on Eric's position in the center of the aisle. Both wield Calicos and one bears a sword.

CLOSE ANGLE - ALTAR -- Lao makes his entrance from shadow wearing a brisk pugilist get-up, a practical fighting outfit. Makes a show of drawing the Killing Blade.

LAO
I wish to possess what you have now.

ERIC
I want the girl. Unharmd. Now.

LAO
I know. That is why I will prevail. Mr. Grange... ?

Eric CRAMPS UP, CLUTCHING his throat in obvious pain.

ANGLE - GRANGE AT STAINED GLASS WINDOW

Holding the crow by the neck, TIGHTLY. He plucks the tranq dart from its body.

ANGLE - RESUMING ERIC AS LAO MOVES IN CLOSER

Crashing to one knee, invisibly bludgeoned, struggling to breathe. Lao has no fear, walking around the stricken Eric.

LAO
Sooner or later, my actions were destined to bring me a genuine Fury. And it turned out to be you. At last. I appreciate your abilities as few mortals can. That's why I desire them.

ERIC
You're too late. There was a guy outside - on the stairs - you really needed to talk to. But he turned to dust and blew away.
(beat, gasping)
I don't have any power for you to take.

LAO
I don't believe that.

Lao motions to Grange with the Killing Blade. Grange RELAXES his deathgrip on the crow. MOVE IN CLOSE on Eric so we may perceive a palpable degree of relief.

LAO (CONT'D)

Time for you to die for me.

(beat)

Funny, how the dead can still bleed. How they need air.

Eric IMMOBILIZED as Lao DRAWS BACK the Blade. To Grange:

LAO (CONT'D)

Break its neck.

ANGLE - RESUMING GRANGE AT WINDOW as he prepares to do dirty on the bird.

Over his shoulder, we PUSH IN to the BULLETHOLE from the first dart until we're in TIGHT CLOSE-UP of an eye watching through the hole.

EXT. CHURCH - OBVERSE OF WINDOW - NIGHT

Albrecht DIGS through a sling bag of weaponry, trying to simultaneously monitor the "peephole," muttering sotto to himself.

ALBRECHT

Had to go get yourself hip-deep in shit, didn't you, my friend.

It begins to RAIN. Albrecht glances resentfully toward the sky.

ALBRECHT (CONT'D)

Give it a rest, huh?

And hefts a machinegun, clipped over and under. CUTS LOOSE on full auto into the Madonna on the window.

INT. CHURCH NAVE - - NIGHT

As the window EXPLODES toward Grange and he sucks big hits from behind, DROPPING the crow. The bird hits the ground, flapping weakly.

LAO GUARDS #3 & #4 exchange a look and whip up their Calicos, RETURNING FIRE.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Albrecht takes cover as a lot of religious stuff is noisily destroyed all around his position. Chunks of the window continue to disintegrate.

INT. CHURCH (ALTAR) - NIGHT

Eric tuck-and-rolls out of the way as we go CLOSE on Lao, screaming.

LAO
I said no shooting!

Then he's ducking bullets himself as Albrecht STEPS IN through the blown-out window, the machine-gun stuttering out slugs.

The sanctuary comes apart around Lao. He RETREATS to the altar and EXITS whence he came.

TIGHT ON PEW -- ERIC DIVES just as Guard #4 comes after him with the sword, which CHOMPS into the wood and gets stuck there. Guard #4 releases it and cross-draws his Calico as ERIC springs back into frame -- STRAIGHT UP.

TIGHT ON GUARD #4 as Eric's lancing foot propels him backward before he can fire.

INTERCUTS -- ALBRECHT AND GUARD #3 scrambling to reload. Guard changes magazine; Albrecht swaps clips.

ANGLE - DOWN LENGTH OF PEW -- Guard #4 slides. sits up with his gun as Eric, down-pew, grabs the sword.

ANGLE - ALBRECHT AT WINDOW firing now with a gun in each hand.

RESUME ERIC AND GUARD #4, who eats it from Albrecht's gunfire, but not before he puts a round through Eric.

Eric staggers back from the impact but keeps his feet.

RESUME ALBRECHT as he tosses away the dry pistol. His machine gun jams, he fights to get the clip.

ANGLE - GUARD #3 -- reloaded and rising, having caught Albrecht dead-bang in the open by the window.

MOVING ANGLE - WITH ERIC. A complex leap with the sword flashing. He lands near Guard #3 and SLASHES UPWARDS, blade up.

CLOSE-UP GUARD #3 -- screaming in pain, gaping DOWN O.S.

TIGHT ON ALBRECHT looking UP, following the trajectory of something AIRBORNE toward him.

CLOSE-UP - GUARD #3'S Calico spinning mid-air with Guard #3's HANDS STILL ATTACHED, severed mid-forearm by Eric's devastating strike.

ANGLE - ALBRECHT DROPS GUARD #3 -- to REVEAL Eric in the background. Eric salutes Albrecht with the tip of the sword.

WITH ALBRECHT as he moves into the nave, which has been torn apart by gunfire. Hazy smoke. Two dead guys. And Eric.

ALBRECHT
You sorta looked like you might need my help. Shit.

ERIC
This isn't your place. This isn't your fight. And I don't need your help.

ALBRECHT
You're welcome.

ERIC
Leave here. Don't do this. I don't want you here.

ALBRECHT
The hell you say. This isn't just about you any more.

Eric stares dead-on at Albrecht, acidly, then BREAKS the Guard's sword, dropping the pieces and turning his back on Albrecht, who pursues Eric to:

INT. - SPIRAL STAIRCASE TO BELL TOWER - NIGHT

The crow FLAPS UPWARD through the void. Eric grabs the thick bellrope, testing it. A final look to Albrecht.

ERIC
Don't interfere.

ALBRECHT
You're bleeding, man. You can't make it.

Eric shimmies up the bellrope, ignoring Albrecht.

ON ALBRECHT

Watching as Eric disappears from view, fast. Grumbles.

ALBRECHT
You won't mind if I just take the stairs, then, smartass..

He hefts his arsenal bag of hardware and begins to PLOD up the steps.

ANGLE - MOVING WITH ERIC ON THE ROPE -- A weird perspective of his speed climb. Zip! All the way to the top.

EXT. CHURCH ROOF - NIGHT

Slanted, shingled, slippery, dark. Lightning deep in turbid clouds. The crow circles as Eric RISES INTO FRAME.

ERIC

Here I am.

DOWNFRAME lightning STRIKES an ornate LIGHTING ROD (large, Victorian, lance-like) at the far end of the roof from the bell tower.

SILHOUETTING Lao and Elly standing in front of it. Elly flinches at the strike.

LAO

Can you fly, Crow man?

INT. BELLTOWER SPIRAL STAIRS - RESUMING ALBRECHT

He stops his ascent to light a cigarette.

ALBRECHT

I ain't cut out for this superhero shit.

EXT. CHURCH ROOF - RESUMING LAO - NIGHT

Lao SNAPS Elly's free handcuff to the DIMLY GLOWING lightning rod and advances, one foot on either side of the peak of the roof, his blade brandished.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT -- ERIC -- Hands up to grapple, but weaponless. He spiders to meet Lao, suddenly PICKING UP SPEED and RUNNING along the precarious peak.

Lao sees him coming, braces to strike, but Eric executes a BROAD FLYING LEAP right over Lao's head.

ERIC LANDS, SLIPS, sprawls sideways, clinging to the peak of the roof. Lao hurries in to slash with the blade, as Eric averts. The steel RINGS. Eric converts his dodge into a low spin kick that DUMPS Lao.

Eric spread-eagles to keep from falling. Distantly, Lao similarly saves himself.

NEW ANGLE -- THE FIGHT -- Here comes Lao, crabbing back toward the peak. Eric ROLLS to Elly's position, GRABS the lightning rod and tries to wrest it loose.

SIZZLE OF FLESH as Eric's hands are scorched: the metal still blue-hot.

MOVING WITH LAO as Eric battles to free the lightning rod. Lao closes up distance, gives a warcry and prepares to SWING as -

Eric WRENCHES the rod loose and turns to DEFLECT Lao's blow. The weapons SPARK when they meet... and there goes Elly, her handcuff freed, SLIDING DOWN THE ROOF SLOPE.

ANGLE -- ROOF SLOPE -- WITH ERIC as he dodges Lao by using the lightning rod to vault down to where Elly is about to slip off the roof.

With the rod embedded in the roof, Eric hangs on, and Elly hangs on to Eric.

UP ANGLE -- LAO, a dark figure against the night sky, raising the sword.

LAO

Face me!

Eric guides Elly to the top of one of the flying buttresses. When he looks up, Lao is gone.

ANGLE -- BELL TOWER -- Albrecht's head pokes up at last. Looks around, finally spots Eric below and to the left. YELLS, serio-comic.

ALBRECHT

Is he dead yet?

INSERT -- ALBRECHT'S HOLSTER -- as Lao's hand draws Albrecht's gun quickly.

ANGLE -- ALBRECHT AND LAO -- Lao has blindsided Albrecht.

LAO

No. You are.

He jams the gun into the base of Albrecht's neck and fires three times.

CLOSE ANGLE -- ERIC -- He's too far away to matter. Shock.

INSERT -- ALBRECHT'S CIGARETTE as it rolls down the slope, trailing sparks, snuffing out.

ANGLE -- ERIC holding onto lightning rod as lightning CUTS the night above him.

ANGLE -- LAO AT BELL TOWER, triumphant and a bit wild, SHOUTING.

LAO
 You've caused another death,
 Mister Draven! The girl will die
 as well -- because of you!

ANGLE - ELLY ON FLYING BUTTRESS

The base of a triangle - Lao, Eric, Elly.

ELLY
 You go to hell, you pervert!

RESUME ERIC

Rage over the loss of Albrecht. He RISES, hurting but mad as hell. GLARES UP toward Lao.

ERIC
 And how many lives have you
 destroyed?

LAO
 I took yours from you. Your
 little girlfriend? I took hers,
 too. Your meaningless, petty
 life? I took it, so that tonight
 your existence might gain a
 purpose. You're no avenger.
 You're mine.

PUSH IN TIGHT ON ERIC

Eyes alight with hatred for Lao. .

ERIC
 (to himself)
 You're right. I'm not an avenger.
 Not any more.

As lightning strikes, Eric fires his gaze TOWARD THE SKY.

HIGH ANGLE - LAO ON ROOFTOP - ("CROWVISION")

SEEING the crashdive toward Lao through the crow's eyes.

ANGLE - LAO ON ROOFTOP

As the crow wings down INTO FRAME and lights on Lao's head,
 CLAWING!

CLOSE-UP -- THE CROW ON LAO'S HEAD slashing with its claws.
 Pecking out Lao's eyes!

WITH ERIC -- on roof slope as he totters but maintains his
 climb, the crow/Lao UPFRAME B.G.

RESUME LAO -- as the crow abandons him. Lao STAGGERS AND FALLS
 down the roof - toward Eric.

SLANTED ANGLE -- ERIC AND LAO -- Eric ARRESTS Lao's fall, fisting lapels and bringing him nose to nose. Fury.

ERIC
Time for a sacrifice.

Lao's face is a hideous bloody mask with black holes where the eyes used to be. He SMILES gruesomely.

LAO
I don't need eyes to take what I want from you.

He EMBRACES Eric and RAMS the Killing Blade deep into Eric's back!

ON ERIC as he looks down to see the blade protruding from his sternum. Tight grimace. A lot of pain.

ERIC
Can you fly?

He pulls Lao into a backward roll down the roof, HOLDING HIM TIGHT.

MOVING ANGLE -- INTERCUTS -- ERIC AND LAO FALL

Eric lands on his back, forcing the blade THROUGH himself and INTO Lao. Eric completes the roll and KICKS Lao off INTO SPACE, the Killing Blade still embedded in him!

WITH LAO as crashes, sliding, sprawling down PAST Elly's position. Gets to his knees atop a flying buttress. Sees the Blade in his own chest.

CLOSE-UP -- ELLY -- She sees it all happen.

RESUME LAO -- a regretful look toward Eric. He PLUMMETS off the roof edge.

ANGLE -- ERIC SLIDES DOWN ROOF -- He slows, stopping when Elly is in frame. He clutches his own chest. Regards his own shaking hand, drenched in his own blood. Glazed.

ON ELLY, as she finally gets the duct tape off her mouth, trying to get to Eric. She flails and cries out.

ELLY
Don't let me fall!

CLOSE-UP -- Their hands finally meet and GRASP TIGHT.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT (LATER) (RAIN)

A low angle TRACKING SHOT (as when we first met Elly).

Eric's and Elly's feet pass graves. Eric's pace is slow, crippled, limping. They STOP at a grave where Elly BENDS INTO FRAME to steal the flowers there.

Eric is bloody and out of it. She helps him walk.

ELLY

Now do you get to see her?
Shelly, I mean.

ERIC

In a better place. I hope.

ELLY

You're not gonna come back, are you?

Eric's response is halting and uncertain. But he tries to give her hope. He reaches for Shelly's ring around her neck, holds it up to her.

ERIC

I don't know if I can. But you have this... and you know where to come.

ELLY

You mean you'll like, dig your way out of the grave? Euww.

Eric is amused by this in spite of his grievous injuries.

He grasps Elly's face in his hands and bends, painfully, to kiss her on the forehead.

ERIC

For you, I'll try. Promise.

MOVE WITH ERIC

Spent, empty, he holds the rose determinedly, but he's never going to make it the few yards back to his own grave. So close, but no.

His legs finally go and he COLLAPSES onto the humus. One groping HAND tries to drag him an inch further.

ERIC

Leave me now.

ANGLE - ELLY

Tears on her face. She can't watch this. She TURNS and drops the flowers on Shelly's grave

ERIC'S POV - HIS OWN GRAVE

Still too far away to matter.

RESUME ERIC ON GROUND

He gives it up, his face sinking to the wet grass for a beat before SHELLY'S HAND intrudes INTO FRAME to GRASP his hand.

No ethereal glow, no heavenly choir... just a near-dead Eric's blank-faced astonishment, and he moves forward.

ANGLE - ELLY - SHELLY'S GRAVE BG

She's struggles to get her hood up against the rain and roughly wipes the moisture from her face with her sleeve. She TURNS toward Eric's grave. Then, surprise as she looks closer.

ANGLE - ERIC'S GRAVE

Eric is gone. The white rose lies neatly on top of the undisturbed earth there.

HIGH ANGLE - CEMETERY

Emphasizing that Elly is now ALONE in the graveyard.

LOW ANGLE on Elly, ROSE in the foreground --

She walks OFF. HOLD on the rose.

CUT TO:

INT. DARLA'S APARTMENT - DAY (OVERCAST)

A grey day but no rain. Elly stands wistfully by the window, her doll on standby. The apartment is in order and perhaps we notice a few new items. Gabriel the cat, miraculously ALIVE, is sprawled on a chair licking himself. Darla BUSTLES INTO FRAME B.G. Her wardrobe more upscale, her hair done. Her manner is hectic but natural.

DARLA

Worktime, kiddo. First day, new job, gotta go.

This does not get the expected smile from Elly.

DARLA (CONT.)

You sure you're gonna be okay?

Elly turns from the window and NODS silently.

ELLY'S POV - OUTSIDE

The aforementioned grey day in the city.

ANGLE - DARLA and ELLY AT THE WINDOW

Darla comes up. Arm around Elly. Cheer up; her attitude much more connected and loving. PUSH IN ON ELLY so we know she is clutching Shelly's RING tightly in her hand. Darla looks past Elly, out the window.

DARLA

At least it finally stopped raining.

ELLY

It can't rain all the time.

Darla kisses Elly on the temple and is out the door. Elly OPENS her hand to consider the ring. When she looks back out the window —

ANGLE — THE CROW ON THE LEDGE

Elly is looking right at it. Same crow. We're positive. So is Elly. It TAKES WING and flies away.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

An UP ANGLE from Eric's grave toward the tree as the crow FLIES INTO FRAME and perches there, shucking water. PUSH IN on the crow. Watching. Waiting.

SLOW FADE TO DEAD BLACK. FA
THE END.