

THE LAST BOY SCOUT

written

by

Shane Black

Bang bang bang
Down you go
It's just a job I do

Genesis
Just a Job to Do

You wanna be a detective? Here's what you do: Take a trusted friend, and imagine the worst thing, the most despicable thing, the thing it would never even cross their minds to do. Then assume they've already done it twice.

Joseph R. Hallenbeck
Private Investigator

When you consider that a career in pro football means maybe ten years, after which you got no legs left, and during which you're a painkiller drug addict, a million a year sounds about right. So when people bitch at me about the money I made, I have a pat response: Go fuck yourself.

James Alexander Dix
Former quarterback,
L.A. Stallions

THE LAST BOY SCOUT

FADE IN:

INT. DARK BEDROOM

The only light, that of a flickering TV screen.

A big MAN lies, shirtless, on the bed.
Watching a sports program. We hear:

SPORTS FIGURE (V.O.)

(on TV)

Eliminating the draft? Worst thing ever happened to pro football. Already you got Eric Dickerson, no team's good enough for him... You got Dion Sanders, this guy, Bosworth, bunch of peacocks. Nagurski, I saw him play for 25 bucks a game. And he woulda played for free, you get me? He loved the game. Nowadays? Forget about it.

The TELEPHONE SHRILLS in the stillness.
The Man On the Bed answers it. Speaks haltingly.

MAN ON BED

Hello...?

MALE (V.O.)

Hello, Billy. Do you know who this is?

Silence.

MALE (V.O.)

Kid from Ohio is looking real good, Billie...

The Man's hand unclenches. A container of pills spills over the blanket. He stammers:

MAN ON BED

I'm... I'm gonna... try real hard...

MALE (V.O.)

No, Billy. What you're gonna do ... is rush for 150 yards against Chicago.

MAN ON BED

That's... too much. I can't...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MALE (V.O.)

You can. And you will. This is a business, Billy. You don't make one fifty, you're history, the kid steps in. No more job... and no more pills, Billy.

MAN ON BED

Please... Just give me time...

MALE (V.O.)

One hundred and fifty yards.
Goodbye.

The PHONE CLICKS off. NFL running back Billy Cole stares straight ahead, mouth working spastically.

CUT TO:

AERIAL SHOT - SNOWSTORM

OVER Chicago, Illinois, as the CAMERA SPIRALS DOWN TOWARD a teeming football stadium. We hear crowd noise and marching band music, deafeningly loud, as we SUPERIMPOSE the legend:

SOLDIER FIELD, CHICAGO NOVEMBER 14

INT. ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

The BROADCAST TEAM huddles inside the quilted jackets, squinting through the snow. Speaking into headset mikes.

ANNOUNCER

Good afternoon and welcome to Soldier Field, Chicago, site of today's confrontation between the L.A. Stallions and the Chicago Bears. This is Vern Lindquist with Terry Bradshaw, and, yes, my friends, it is that cold.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - SAME TIME

Billy Cole sits, alone, in front of his locker. Eyes glazed. Face bathed in sweat. He takes a bottle of pills from the locker. Pops three. Hisses a stream of air through his teeth as we --

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY (FOURTH QUARTER)

A deafening CRUNCH as a defensive back hammers a wide receiver, nearly decapitates him. The ball rolls free. The back recovers it.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

... Big Ray Walton puts a devastating hit on Bricmont, so Chicago turns over the ball with a minute and forty seconds left.

EXT. SIDELINES - SAME TIME

The injured player goes by on a stretcher, moaning. Cheerleaders jump and frolic.

BILLY COLE

gets up off the bench. The rest of the offensive unit sprints onto the field. Cole walks. Straight ahead, eyes front. Like a robot. His HEARTBEAT THUDS on the soundtrack.

COLOR MAN (V.O.)

And so L.A. has a chance to ice the game, no pun intended... And you gotta be thinking, give the ball to Billy Cole. He has had an outstanding day, racking up 138 yards against a tough defense.

DOWN ON FIELD

The huddle breaks.

The L.A. team trudges through the snow to the line of scrimmage.

Cole adopts a three-point stance.

Everything happens in hyper-real SLOW MOTION:

The snow falls. The receivers breeze past, in motion to begin their patterns. Moving like gazelles.

Cole's fingers paw the cold earth. Gouging it. He is like a spring. Coiled and ready.

The ball is snapped.

Turf and snow. Erupting.

A firecracker series of POPS as linemen collide. Legs churning.

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CONTINUED:

The ball floats through the snowy air. Pitch-out to Cole.

He takes it on the run. Tucks it under his arm. Behind him, the quarterback bites the dust, leveled.

Cole turns the corner. Picks up a blocker. Feet pounding. Arms pumping.

Up ahead, the free safety barrels toward him. Low and hard.

Cole does not blink. He reaches beneath his jersey. Pulls out a GUN. Pumps THREE SHOTS into the free safety's head.

The bullets go straight through. On the back of his helmet. A mixture of blood and fiberglass.

Cole keeps going, jogging for the end zone. Around him, sound. Fury. Impact. Confusion.

Another defensive back. Straight ahead. Reacts with almost comical terror. Dives to one side. Cole FIRES. Blows out the guy's knee. Ends a career. Keeps going.

We are now in full-scale panic. The players are fleeing the field. Shouts. Pandemonium. A few brave men gather around the fallen players.

POLICE

are on the field now. Running full out. They've got riot guns, cocked and locked. Sprinting through the snow.

Cole crosses the goal line. Touchdown. Drops the ball.

Turns, facing the cops. His eyes are insane.

The crowd is screaming. People are running back and forth like extras in the Keystone Cops.

The first TWO BLASTS from the cops' RIOT GUNS go high and wide. One SHOT BLOWS APART the base of the goalpost.

The forty-foot-high monument pitches over, collapsing like a wounded giant. Lands in a shower of snow and ice.

Cole is oblivious to the bars crashing around him. He smiles and says:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COLE

I'm going to Disneyland...

Puts the GUN to his helmet. FIRES.

CUT TO:

EXT. L.A. STREET - IN SHADOW OF FREEWAY - MORNING

We SUPERIMPOSE the legend:

WEST LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA DECEMBER 20

Good morning, Mr. and Mrs. America, and all the ships at sea. Welcome to another lackluster morning in Southern California. Palm trees limp. Windless silence. 80 degrees at 8:00 AM.

CAMERA CRANES DOWN PAST a huge, rotting billboard. On the billboard, a girl in tight jeans. Grabbing her own butt. A surprised look on her face. Yes, honey, that's your butt.

MOVE IN ON a tiny, weather-beaten bungalow. In the shadow of the 405 Freeway. A shingle hangs from a wrought iron post: JOSEPH R. HALLENBECK, CONFIDENTIAL INVESTIGATIONS.

On the lawn, a late-model Plymouth. The sprinklers come to life. Fling water across the car.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Inside the car, a lone man is asleep, arms akimbo. Sprawled across the seat. Half-empty bottle of Seagrams V.O. RADIO on, playing tinny JAZZ music.

Picture the tiredest, meanest, grouchiest son of a bitch self-hating loser you can. Now give him a two-year-old suit from C & R Clothing. Such is the aforementioned HALLENBECK.

ANOTHER ANGLE

THREE neighborhood KIDS have gathered around the car. Enjoying the spectacle of a sleeping drunk. One tosses a baseball from hand to hand. One picks his nose.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KID #1
Dude's trashed.

KID #2
Shit, we should do something to
him.

Kid #3 continues mining for nose eggs. It looks like his
entire fist is up there. Pause, then:

KID #3
I know where there's a dead
squirrel.

ANOTHER ANGLE - BUNDLE OF PAPER TOWELS - SOME MINUTES
LATER

with a tail sticking out.
The youngest Kid holds it aloft reverently.
Looks in the open car window at Hallenbeck.

Still snoozing. Dead to the world.

KID #1
Do it.

They heave the squirrel into the car and run away.

A pause. Another pause. The sprinkler goes round.
Nothing happens.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Hallenbeck snores. The mashed squirrel perches on his
chest. A shadow falls across him as --

KIDS

return, scratching their heads. Staring in at him.

KID #2
Goddamn. Dude's trashed.

KID #3
Take his bottle.

Kid #1 smiles nervously. Reaches in with infinite
patience.

Trembling hand inches closer and closer --
And closes on the bottle as, without warning --

HALLENBECK

sits bolt upright and grabs the Kid and stuffs a .38 revolver in the Kid's face and cocks it.

HALLENBECK

Hey, motherfucker.

The Kid, of course, shrieks.
And the light of sanity dawns in Hallenbeck's eyes.
He sucks in a deep breath. Releases the struggling Kid.

Swears under his breath. Watches the boys flee in terror. Notices a dead squirrel in his lap. Scowls. Heaves it out the window. Pumps a Camel into his mouth. Lights it. Rescues the bottle of Seagrams.

Thus begins his morning.

He opens the car door. The sprinkler douses him.
He gets out. Stands on the lawn.

One of the Kids, the toughest one, is standing on the sidewalk.

KID #3

I'm not scared.

Hallenbeck scowls.

HALLENBECK

You're on my property, kid.

KID #3

Sidewalk belongs to the government.

Hallenbeck stares at him. Smiles weakly.

HALLENBECK

Excuse me.

He leans over and vomits on the lawn.
One hand gripping the car fender.
The sprinkler goes round and round.

EXT. MALIBU BEACH FRONT - MORNING

A redwood beach house, mellow in the morning sun.
There was a party here last night.
Banners. Balloons and streamers. Tawdry in the light of day.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - SAME TIME

A plush bedroom. Sun streams in the window.

A YOUNG MAN sits, straddling a backwards chair. Bare-foot, bare-chested. Blond hair, perfect tan.

He is nursing a beer. Smoking and staring at --

BED

where a tawny golden girl lies, serene and innocent. Like a sleeping kitten. Rumpled sheets, one breast exposed. No tan line.

The man takes a drag off the cigarette, studies the sleeping girl. Meet Jimmy Dix. Twenty-seven years old, former National League heartthrob.

He shakes his head and mutters:

JIMMY (YOUNG MAN)
Jesus, kid, if only you weren't so
damn ugly.

He gets up and goes into the head. Pulls out a glass vial. Dips a coke spoon with practiced ease. Sucks it up a nostril.

For one moment, he catches his own eye in the mirror.

FLASH CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - FOOTBALL FIELD

Seventy thousand people screaming.
Jimmy in the middle. Younger Jimmy. Fresher Jimmy.

It's a night game at the Coliseum. He's the quarterback.

The snap. Jimmy fakes the draw. Rolls right. Around him, all is impact. Sound and fury.

He targets a receiver and unleashes a rocket. Sixty-yard toss, hits the guy between the numbers.

JIMMY'S FACE

Covered with dirt and mud. Blood, too.
Young and proud. Seventy thousand voices tell him he's alive. He makes a difference.

BACK TO PRESENT

Alone in the bathroom... leaning on the counter. Head down. A voice calls softly from the bedroom:

SLEEPY VOICE (O.S.)
Jimmy, are you still here...?

Pause, then:

JIMMY
I don't know.

He looks up at his reflection. Glazed eyes, beard stubble. Crows' feet around the eyes.

JIMMY
Yeah. I guess I am.

He sniffs, clearing his nose.

INT. WEST L.A. BUNGALOW - MORNING

Hallenbeck opens the door and shambles in. Dark. Depressing. Sprawl of furniture. Stack after stack of sports magazines. Drop all your belongings out of a plane. They will land like this.

He flicks on the light. Crosses to the couch and flops down. Plucks a bottle of aspirin from an end table. Next to the bottle, we see --

TWO FRAMED PHOTOGRAPHS

side by side. In one, younger Hallenbeck is kissing younger bride. Smiling. In the other, the President of the United States presents Hallenbeck with a medal. They are both smiling beneath the Presidential Seal.

BACK TO SCENE

Hallenbeck scowls and chews three aspirin. Swallows.

The PHONE RINGS. He groans. Chain-lights another smoke, stubs out his old one. Chins the receiver and says:

HALLENBECK
Hallenbeck Investigations.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MALE (V.O.)

Hey, Joe, Mike Miller over at Swerdlow. You got a minute?

HALLENBECK

Mmmmm.

MALE (V.O.)

Mmmmm? What's mmmmm? Jeez, you sound fucking terrific. What'd you do last night?

HALLENBECK

Sat in the car. Looked at the sky. Got hammered.

MALE (V.O.)

How bad?

HALLENBECK

I killed a squirrel and don't even remember.

MALE (V.O.)

That's bad, Joe.

HALLENBECK

Tell me about it. Look, I crawled out of a perfectly good bottle to answer the phone, what the fuck do you want?

MALE (V.O.)

Still takin' charity?

HALLENBECK

No pride here. What'cha got?

MALE (V.O.)

Stripper in West Hollywood. Lives alone. Very hot. A three on my finger scale. Means I'd cut off three of my fingers if God would let me sleep with her.

HALLENBECK

Make her a one on your nose scale. Improve your looks.

MALE (V.O.)

Eat me. Deal is this: She's got a psycho, threatens her over the phone. I'm gonna rape you, cut you, the usual crap.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

She thinks he's following her.
I'm up to here, you got plans?

HALLENBECK

I was gonna smoke some cigarettes.

MALE (V.O.)

Can you postpone?

HALLENBECK

These are really good cigarettes.

MALE (V.O.)

She goes onstage at seven. It's
two hundred bucks, Joe.

HALLENBECK

(sighs)

Gimme the address.

MALE (V.O.)

Terrific. And, Joe, big favor,
okay? Try to... fix yourself up,
if you can manage it. Look the
part. Not like the last time,
okay?

Hallenbeck catches his reflection in the mirror over
the TV. His face is ashen grey. Hollow eye sockets.
Blotchy skin.

HALLENBECK

Gimme the address.

EXT. BUNGALOW - MORNING

Hallenbeck emerges into the blinding glare. His tie is
crooked. His cuffs are too short. He looks like a
grouchy bear.

He looks up at the girl on the billboard.

HALLENBECK

'Morning, gorgeous.

Gorgeous does not respond: Coy. Very coy.

Hallenbeck slides behind the wheel of his Plymouth. KEYS
the IGNITION. Phil Woods' SAXOPHONE fills the air. He
looks at himself in the mirror.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

(softly)

Nobody likes you. Everybody hates you. You're an asshole and you're stupid. You're gonna lose.

(pause)

Smile, you fuck.

He stretches his mouth into a grimace.
Pulls out into the street. Off he goes.

CUT TO:

INT. MALIBU BEACH HOUSE - MORNING

Jimmy Dix leaves the bedroom. Pads barefoot down a hall littered with beer cans, food wrappers. A sleeping guy.

Stops at a door, peeks in: all-night poker game in progress. Four bleary-eyed men. Unshaven. Stack of wrinkled money on a card table.

JIMMY

'Morning, boys.

They all grunt. One of them, name of HENRY, looks up at him. Holds out a half-smoked doobie:

HENRY

Hey, Jimmy. You want some of this?

JIMMY

No, man. Why do you think they call it dope?

(beat)

Henry, did I do anything last night that I should know about?

HENRY

You puked a couple times. Pointed at some lady's tits. Chased a dog for a half an hour. Fucked a congressman's daughter, shit on someone's car.

JIMMY

No, man, I meant something bad, that I should know about.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HENRY

Mmmm. Nope.
 (frowns)
 My ass hurts, I think I had gay
 sex last night. I don't remember.
 When are you gonna come look at
 my gun collection?

JIMMY

Soon, Henry.

One of the other PLAYERS looks up, says:

PLAYER

Are you Jimmy Dix? Played for the
 Stallions?

JIMMY

'86 and '87, that was me.

PLAYER

Hell, I think the league gave you
 a raw deal.

JIMMY

Thanks. What the hell, shit
 floats. I'll be back.

PLAYER

I hope so.

JIMMY

I'll be back.

Everyone plays cards. No one looks at him. He frowns.
 Leaves.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Jimmy is seated in the devastated living room. Putting
 on shoes. He hears a COMMOTION outside: A woman scream-
 ing. Water splashing. He frowns, puzzled. Gets up.
 Pads out onto a redwood deck.

EXT. REDWOOD DECK - SAME

A six-foot behemoth is seated in a jacuzzi at the far end
 of the deck. He is dunking a terrified female head under
 the water and laughing.

Jimmy clears his throat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

Ho. Ray.

The MAN looks up, annoyed.

RAY (MAN)

What the fuck you want, Jimmy?

JIMMY

What's with the girl?

She surfaces, sputtering and screaming. Ray thrusts her beneath the surface again.

RAY

Bitch won't blow me.

JIMMY

(pause, then)

Too early in the morning, Ray.
Let her go.

RAY

Fuck you. She's not coming up
till she starts blowing.

Jimmy swallows hard. Says:

JIMMY

Ray. Let her go.

RAY

Fuck you, loser. What are you doing
at a league party, asshole? You and
ol' Dex Manley should get together,
swap stories about gettin' booted.

Jimmy controls himself with an effort.

JIMMY

Ray, she's gonna drown.

RAY

Not if she blows me.

Jimmy's eyes are smoldering. He steps to the right.
Casually scoops up a football lying on the deck.

JIMMY

Last chance, Ray.

RAY

Go spit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

Fine.

Jimmy turns, as if to walk away.
Instead, he spins back and launches the football.

It sings, that's how hard he throws it. And when it
smacks Ray in the face, something breaks. It ain't the
ball.

The big man howls. Clutching his flattened nose.
The girl comes up for air. Gagging and choking.
Jimmy is at her side instantly. Pulls her out of the
water.

JIMMY

Get out of here. Go.

She goes. He leans over and grabs Ray by the hair.
The guy is bleeding. Delirious.
Jimmy yanks until their faces are inches apart.

JIMMY

Best arm in the National League,
you son of a bitch. Remember that.

He lets go. Ray sags, semi-conscious.
The poker players come running as Jimmy walks back inside.

EXT. COAST HIGHWAY - DAY

Jimmy gets into the car. Takes out his vial.
Spoons some powder, sucks it up.
A voice in the background: "Hey, someone shit on my car!"

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Joe Hallenbeck slides his Plymouth to the curb in front
of a cozy stucco dwelling. Gets out, crosses the lawn.
A fat NEIGHBOR is watering shrubs next door. He waves.

NEIGHBOR

'Morning, Joe, how's it going?

HALLENBECK

My ears are burning, Andy. Even
as we speak, someone, somewhere is
calling me an asshole.

NEIGHBOR

You're funny.

HALLENBECK

I'm playing Tahoe on the 15th.

INT. HALLENBECK'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Hallenbeck enters and crosses the living room. A woman, forty-ish, once beautiful, appears in the bedroom doorway. Wearing a terry cloth robe. This is Joe's wife SARAH.

SARAH

I thought you were in Las Vegas.

HALLENBECK

I was.

SARAH

Where did you sleep?

HALLENBECK

Office.

He brushes past her and crosses to the bed. On the pillow, a big stuffed cat toy smiles benignly.

HALLENBECK

Hey, Furry Tom.

He sits on the bed. Lights a cigarette. Opens the night stand and removes a speedloader for his .38. Starts to load the gun.

SARAH

How much did you lose?

HALLENBECK

I wasn't there to gamble. I was doing a skip trace.

SARAH

How much did you lose?

HALLENBECK

Fifty bucks.

He suddenly notices a sheet of paper on the night stand. A crayon sketch. He picks it up, frowns:

HALLENBECK

What's this?

SARAH

Darian's class drew holiday pictures. That was hers. Her teacher wants to see us, Joe.

CLOSE ON DRAWING

It's a picture of Santa Claus, except this Santa has long, stringy hair, bloodshot eyes, and grotesque talons. A little girl's severed head is clutched in one hand. Underneath, in block capitals, is written: SATAN CLAUS.

BACK TO SCENE

HALLENBECK

Satan Claus. Kid's got some talent, don't you think?

SARAH

It's hideous.

Her voice is ice cold. Joe turns and regards her levelly.

HALLENBECK

You okay, Sarah...?

SARAH

I'm tense. I couldn't get to sleep last night.

HALLENBECK

Hmmmm. Well, I think the kid will be fine. Boys still tease her about the headgear?

SARAH

Are you kidding? Brace Face, that's the latest. Little bastards.

HALLENBECK

(under his breath)

She'll be fucking them by the time she's fourteen.

SARAH

Watch your Goddamn mouth, Joe.

HALLENBECK

Well, Christ, you let her wear enough makeup. The kid looks like a goddamn raccoon. She comes in late at night, I think, 'Christ, a burglar.' I almost shot her twice.

SARAH

You're not funny. All the girls at that school wear makeup.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

Yeah, but they don't apply it with a paint sprayer. And for your information, our neighbors think I'm very funny.

SARAH

Go live with them.

HALLENBECK

Don't tempt me.

He tosses the holstered .38 on the bed. Stalks into the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM

HALLENBECK

Damn raccoon.

He sighs, tosses his cigarette butt in the toilet.

Walks back out into the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM

He kneels, looks under the bed.

Frowns.

Straightens and says, very conversationally:

HALLENBECK

Who's the guy in the closet?

Sarah stops dead. Spins and stares at him.

SARAH

Excuse me?

HALLENBECK

(frowns)

Oh, that's right, you sometimes forget that I'm a detective.

(lights a cigarette)

See, first I noticed how tense you were, but I let that pass. Then I noticed there was steam in the shower like someone was just in there, but meanwhile your hair is completely dry, you follow? So. Why the steamy shower?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK (CONT'D)

Because someone else was in there, right, and since he's not under the bed you must have stuck him in the closet when you heard my key in the door a day early. Tah-dah. Please, no applause.

A silence hangs between them. Sarah just stares. Shakes her head.

SARAH

Well, nothing changes. You're still a lunatic.

HALLENBECK

Mmmmm. I'm sorry, honey, I don't enjoy being observant, but someone's gotta do it.

(beat)

What's his name?

SARAH

Please leave. I have to get dressed.

HALLENBECK

It's okay, I've seen you naked. So, apparently, has someone else. What's his name?

SARAH

You want me to open the closet, Joe? Huh? You want me to indulge your fucking paranoia, I'll throw the door open, is that what you want me to do...?

HALLENBECK

Is this a trick question?

SARAH

I'll do it, Joe. Okay? And then we'll both know you're a psycho, is that what you want? Huh??

An awkward pause. Finally Hallenbeck scowls and says:

HALLENBECK

No. We won't open the door.

SARAH

Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

(sighs)

Nope. Door stays shut. Instead, what I'm gonna do is...

(he scoops up the
.38)

... I'm gonna count to three, and then I'm gonna put a bullet in there, and you can stop me anytime by speaking the truth. One.

SARAH

If you shoot up my house, Joe, I will make you eat that gun.

HALLENBECK

Two. The truth is a beautiful thing.

He cocks the hammer. Arm extended, hand rock steady.

SARAH

Call your shrink, Joe. I still have the number. Call him and tell him you're losing it, I cannot fucking deal with you like this -- !

HALLENBECK

Three. Last chance.

SARAH

Joe, dammit -- !

He sighs. Starts to pull the trigger. And Sarah screams --

SARAH

Jesus, no -- !

And grabs the gun.

Everything freezes. She looks at him. He looks at her. Understanding occurs.

CLOSET DOOR

swings slowly open, then...

And out steps a man in a bathrobe.

Compact. Wiry. Hair still soaking wet.

None other than MIKE MILLER, Joe's early morning phone call.

We know this because Joe says:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

Hello, Mike. Keeping her warm
for me?

The gun barrel does not waver. Not an inch.

MILLER

Easy, Joe. Don't do nothing dumb.

HALLENBECK

How as she, Mike? On your finger
scale, how was my wife...?

MILLER

It just happened, Joe. It just
happened.

HALLENBECK

You call me from here this morning?

MILLER

She said you were in Vegas. I was
gonna leave a message on the machine.

HALLENBECK

When you found out I was back. Why
didn't you split?

MILLER

She said relax, he never stops home
once he's in the office.

HALLENBECK

Normally I wouldn't.

MILLER

(stares at him)

You knew?

HALLENBECK

I suspected. So how about it, Mike?
On a scale of one to ten. How was
she?

MILLER

Joe, come on, how long we been
friends, huh?

HALLENBECK

How long? Mmm. I'd say roughly
until you put your dick in my
wife.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MILLER

You gotta understand --

HALLENBECK

I know, I know, it just happened. It was an accident. Sure. You tripped. You said, 'Whoops,' and accidentally fucked my wife. Gee, Mrs. H., I'm sorry, just isn't my week. Sure, Mike. Happen to anybody.

(beat)

I don't gotta understand anything.

Sarah speaks then. Head down. Eyes averted.

SARAH

Put the gun down.

HALLENBECK

Hmmm? Oh, right, the gun.

(sighs)

You're right, Sarah, I'm acting nuts.

He pulls the trigger.

The SHOT is DEAFENING in the closed room. Mike Miller screams and clutches at himself. The bullet goes high and wide. Over his head.

On the wall is a framed wedding photo. The twin of the one in Hallenbeck's office. The bullet strikes it dead center.

Blows it to pieces.

Silence. The tinkle of glass hitting the floor. Hallenbeck turns. Regards his wife with hooded, lifeless eyes.

HALLENBECK

Where was Darian?

SARAH

She stayed at Cindy's last night.

He nods. Turns and waves the gun at Miller.

HALLENBECK

Let's take a walk, Buddy.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

The two men come out the back door and cut through the hedge.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Miller's car, a Pontiac Sunbird, is parked at the curb.

Hallenbeck stops in the middle of someone's yard.
Holsters his gun.

A neighbor's dog approaches, happily wagging its tail.
Hallenbeck bends and ruffles its fur.

HALLENBECK

Where you want it, Mike? Head
or gut?

MILLER

Listen, Joe, I --
(stops, sighs)
Gut.

Hallenbeck pats the dog. Straightens. Plants his back
foot and spins. Punches like a sledgehammer, into Miller's
gut.

Miller drops to his knees. Begins to retch.
Hallenbeck takes out a cigarette. Lights it.

HALLENBECK

If I see you again, I'll kill
you.

Miller nods weakly. Gasping for breath.

HALLENBECK

So. West Hollywood at seven, right?

MILLER

Huh...?

HALLENBECK

The job. Seven o'clock, right?

MILLER

You still... want the job...?

HALLENBECK

It's two hundred bucks.

MILLER

Yeah. I guess it is.

He climbs to his feet, still doubled over.

MILLER

I'm sorry, Joe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hallenbeck says nothing. Miller turns and stumbles to his car. Hallenbeck's face betrays nothing. A dead mask.

He walks back toward the hedge.
The neighbor's dog runs up, a tennis ball in its mouth.
Behind him, Mike Miller gets into the Sunbird.

Hallenbeck takes the tennis ball. Throws it.
The DOG BARKS and bounds after it.
Mike Miller turns the key in the ignition.

The CAR BLOWS to pieces.

An ERUPTION OF FLAME.
Flying glass and metal. The car becomes airborne.
Engulfed in fire. Does a lazy spin. Comes down.

The shockwave catches Hallenbeck. Slams him ass over teacups.

Windows blow in up and down the street.
Smoke and fire roll to the sky.

The DOG cowers, HOWLING in fear.
Beside it on the grass, the tennis ball is on fire.

Hallenbeck rolls to his feet. Covered with twigs and leaves. Clothing scorched. Stares. Eyes glazed.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - AN HOUR LATER

A mobile crane hoists what's left of Mike Miller and his Pontiac. Policemen direct traffic, curb bystanders.

OFF TO ONE SIDE

a UNIFORM COP questions Hallenbeck and Sarah, who stand stiffly. Not looking at each other.

UNIFORM COP
Why did Mr. Miller visit your home
this morning, Mr. Hallenbeck?

Joe lies easily:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

He came by to talk business. He had a case he was too busy to continue with, a routine surveillance. He farmed it out to me.

UNIFORM COP

I see. Is that all you talked about?

HALLENBECK

Yeah. That's all.

He looks the Officer in the eye. Betrays nothing.

CUT TO:

NAKED, GYRATING BODY

Female, for the record. Signaling us that we are now:

INT. "BOTTOMLESS PIT" CLUB - NIGHT

Rowdy strip club in West Hollywood. Just like the name suggests; if it's a virus, you're sitting on it. After three drinks, every girl on stage looks like your high school sweetheart. Was your sweetheart fat? Did she have excessive body hair?

FUNK MUSIC, played LOUD. The Monday crowd stomps and claps. Onstage a stripper grinds away with an enthusiasm usually reserved for standing in line at the DMV.

Jimmy Dix sits at the bar, hooting and whistling. Behind the bar, a black man in a wheelchair serves drinks. His name is HARP.

Off to one side, a twenty-five-year-old BEANPOLE speaks into a microphone:

EMCEE (BEANPOLE)

Flash of green buys a flash of pink, gentlemen. So reach into your pockets if you aren't there already, and reward the lovely and talented Ms. Vixen...!

The black man shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARP

My son. He writes his own material, he's proud of that. Some people are proud, they cured leukemia. Old guy stops beating off long enough to laugh, my son thinks he's Eddie Murphy.

Jimmy uncaps a beer and raises it in a toast.

JIMMY

Alex the astronaut.

Harp raises his own glass.

HARP

Alex the astronaut.

It seems to be a common ritual between them. Jimmy drinks, thumps the bottle down. Says, resolutely:

JIMMY

I've had it, Harp.

HARP

Had what?

JIMMY

It, man. I've had it.

(takes a swig)

I don't remember what I did last night. I'm an idiot, Harp, I act like a complete dickhead. I don't have friends. I drink too much. I fuck anything that's warm and breathing.

HARP

Stay on that side of the bar.

JIMMY

(sighs)

I cheated on my girl friend again.

HARP

You cheated on her? You must be crazy.

JIMMY

Maybe so, Harp. Maybe so.

His gaze wanders across the crowded room, fixating on --

SCANTILY-CLAD WAITRESS

Who makes her way between the tables. She is beautiful. Stands out like a teamster at a gay rights rally. Supple body. Deep green eyes. Flaxen hair. Her name is CORY.

She stops at a table against the wall. Puts down a Seagrams V.O. in a rocks glass. Seated at the table is a broad-shouldered man in a bad suit. The essence of boredom. Looks like he's been there three days. A cloud of smoke hangs around his head. Mr. Joe Hallenbeck, no less.

HALLENBECK

The police won't help you, huh?

CORY

Sure. After I'm dead they'll perform the autopsy.

HALLENBECK

Guess you don't want to wait that long.

CORY

Guess not.

HALLENBECK

(scowls)

They only play this kind of music?

CORY

What did you expect?

HALLENBECK

Pat Boone? The Four Freshmen?

CORY

What are you, my father?

HALLENBECK

Yes, I'm your father. Get your clothes on.

(beat)

I hate this funk shit. It's gonna be an extra hundred bucks.

CORY

You're hilarious. Sit next to the speaker, you'll get used to it. After a while you'll be screaming play that funky music white boy.

HALLENBECK

The screaming part I believe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She smiles and moves away.
Hallenbeck sips his drink. Scans the crowd with shrewd eyes.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The lovely Cory approaches Jimmy at the bar. Harp looks on.

CORY
(seductive)
Hello, handsome. How'd you like to buy me a bottle of champagne?

JIMMY
How much for a bottle?

CORY
Forty dollars.

JIMMY
No thanks. Nothing personal, my seventh grade teacher was killed by a drunk driver.

CORY
Tall guy? Sandy hair?

JIMMY
That's the one.

CORY
I had to swerve three times to get him.

JIMMY
Ha-ha.

CORY
So no bottle, then?

JIMMY
For forty bucks I'd rather drink my own piss.

CORY
That's extra.

And with that, she leans over and moulds her lips to his. Time passes. These two know each other, it would seem. Cory pulls away. Jimmy smiles.

JIMMY
Hi, Cory. Rough night?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORY
Arrgh. I've had it to here.

JIMMY
(grins)
I'll bet you have.

She slaps his face. He feigns innocence. Points to Hallenbeck.

JIMMY
Who's the stiff?

CORY
He's nobody.
(beat)
I have to get ready to dance.

JIMMY
Come back soon. I want to buy
you a drink.

She smiles and moves off, swishingly. Jimmy watches her go. His gaze wanders across the room to Hallenbeck. He frowns.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Near the stage, the would-be Eddie Murphy steps up to the mike and says:

EMCEE
You know, crowd, these ladies are fine, but let me tell you the three reasons men prefer sheep: they're always in the mood, they never bitch, and after you fuck 'em you can eat 'em.

A few chuckles. Some coughs. More coughs than chuckles.

EMCEE
(plowing ahead)
And now, here's a lady that's always in the mood, put your hands together for the lovely and talented Ms. Cory...!

Applause. A syncopated DRUM BEAT kicks in. AEROSMITH'S LATEST erupts from the SPEAKERS.

And then she comes on.
And even Joe Hallenbeck must draw in a sharp breath.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Her body is exquisite. She moves like breath. Her eyes can put you under. She is simply that beautiful.

HALLENBECK

sits with his drink untouched before him. Pats his suit pockets, searching for a smoke. Removes a crumpled, empty pack, as:

JIMMY DIX

saunters up, looking less than friendly. He looks at Hallenbeck. Hallenbeck does not look at him.

JIMMY

Hi. You're nobody.

HALLENBECK

Shhh. Don't tell anyone.

JIMMY

That's what Cory said. She said you were nobody.

Only Hallenbeck's eyes move. He looks up, regards Jimmy coolly. They size each other up. Hallenbeck sighs.

HALLENBECK

Easy, Junior, I'm not raining on your parade. She's too young for me. I'm just keeping an eye on her for a few days.

JIMMY

I see. What are you, some kind of bodyguard?

HALLENBECK

Something like that. You got a cigarette?

JIMMY

No. Is Cory in trouble?

HALLENBECK

I hope not. You tell me.

JIMMY

She didn't mention anything to me.

HALLENBECK

Mmmm. That bothers you, doesn't it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

Maybe.

HALLENBECK

Don't sweat it. Women have secrets.
Water is wet, the sky is blue, and
women have secrets.

(beat)

I'll buy you a beer. Sit down.

Jimmy remains standing.

JIMMY

She hired you, huh? What, you in
the phonebook?

HALLENBECK

Yeah. Actually, she hired my buddy
Mike. I'm filling in.

JIMMY

Where's Mike?

HALLENBECK

He died.

JIMMY

Sorry to hear it.

HALLENBECK

Don't be. He was a lousy
surveillance man.

Jimmy leans forward, palms flat on the table.

JIMMY

Look, friend, I don't know who you
are or what's going on. But Cory
is my girl friend and if she's in
trouble, I want to hear about it.

HALLENBECK

That's client confidential.

JIMMY

Tell me anyway.

HALLENBECK

Nope.

JIMMY

I say two words to Cory and you
don't get paid, asshole.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

Do it.

JIMMY

You sure? I'm looking at your suit,
you could use the dough.

HALLENBECK

You don't like my suit, guess what?
I don't like your money.

JIMMY

Good, 'cause you're not getting any.

HALLENBECK

Story of my life.

JIMMY

What is?

HALLENBECK

Not getting any.

They stare each other down. Hallenbeck calmly sips his
bourbon.

JIMMY

You couldn't protect a cup of
warm piss.

HALLENBECK

(nods)
Hit me.

JIMMY

Excuse me?

HALLENBECK

Hit me. Bust me in the chops,
chickenshit.

(beat)
You're not afraid, are you, Jimmy...?

JIMMY

(freezes)
You know who I am?

HALLENBECK

James Alexander Dix, L.A. Stallions,
'86 and '87. Barred from the N.F.L.
on gambling charges. Allegations
of point shaving to support a
cocaine habit, never proven.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK (CONT'D)
Busted once for possession. You had the makings of a first class dumbshit.

JIMMY
Mister... You are now pissing me off.

HALLENBECK
About fucking time.
(extends his hand)
Joe Hallenbeck. I'm a private detective.

JIMMY
(ignores the hand)
I don't know, Joe... You look like a dumb wop to me.

HALLENBECK
At least I didn't shit my talent away on coke, motherfucker.

JIMMY
Can I hit you now?

HALLENBECK
Absolutely.

Jimmy throws a short jab at Hallenbeck's chin. It never gets there. Joe moves, lightning quick, and suddenly Jimmy's fist is trapped. Dead stops. Fingers grinding into palm. Jimmy swears. Stumbles. Sits down hard. Hallenbeck releases him.

HALLENBECK
Please, have a seat.

JIMMY
(gasping)
You think you're some kind of hot shit tough guy, huh?

HALLENBECK
(shrugs)
It's not a question of tough. I'm bigger than you, and I was trained. So I can take you. That's just the way it is. You can throw a better pass.

(beat)
How about that beer?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

Piss off.

HALLENBECK

(signals the waitress)

You were a great quarterback, Jimmy.
I watched you play at Washington
State. Red shirt freshman in '82.
Followed you with the Stallions.
Good scrambling ability, seventy
percent completions from the
pocket... You had the best gun
in the N.F.L.

Jimmy looks at him, puzzled. Didn't they just swap punches?

JIMMY

Yeah. Thanks. I guess.

HALLENBECK

(big smile)

Hell. I'm a fan.

ANGLE ON STAGE

Onstage, the MUSIC GRINDS TO a CLOSE as Cory dispenses with the last of her clothing. Strikes a pose to wild applause and we HOLD ON her radiant beauty and --

CUT TO:

INT. DINGY DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Cory and Jimmy are engaged in very hot sex.
This is not a love scene; this is a sex scene.

Sigh. I'm not even going to attempt to write this quote-unquote "steamy" scene here, for several good reasons:

- A) The things that I find steamy are none of your damn business, Jack, in addition to which --
- B) The two actors involved will no doubt have wonderful, highly athletic ideas which manage to elude most fat-assed writers anyhow, and finally --
- C) My mother reads this shit. So there.

(P.S.: I think we lost her back at the Jacuzzi blowjob scene.)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suffice to say, they fog the screen.

At last, Jimmy rolls over and pours champagne into two crystal glasses. Lifts one in a toast.

JIMMY

Alex the pediatrician.

CORY

(giggles)

Alex the pediatrician.

They drink. And from this blissful affirmation of life we --

CUT TO:

INT. BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR - SAME TIME

Joe Hallenbeck is pounding an already-dented cigarette machine. No dice. It has eaten his money. He shakes his head, muttering.

Looks at his watch. Looks at the dressing room door. Shakes his head again. Walks to the end of the corridor. Goes through the fire door. Out into:

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Starry, moonlit night. A chill breeze. Joe draws a breath.

In front of him, on the wall of the club, is a poster: BAYNARD FOR SENATE, it reads. Above the logo, a picture of a benevolent-looking gray-haired man. Hallenbeck regards it balefully.

HALLENBECK

I didn't vote for you, you bastard.

He looks away, and suddenly notices something on the ground:

A half-smoked cigarette butt.
Just sitting there.

Joe stares at it. Thinks it over.
Starts to walk away. Stops.

HALLENBECK

You're a fuckin' lowlife, Joe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He bends to pick up the butt.
A steel sap whistles over his head, missing by inches.

Hallenbeck spins, startled. Reflexively lashes out with a flattened palm. Misses, chops the air.

Two more men, behind him. Nowhere to go.
A sap pops him behind the left ear. A sickening thud.
The world spins out of focus. He goes down.
Hits the pavement like a ton of bricks.
Rolls over, staring up.
Vision muddy, indistinct.

HALLENBECK'S POV

Three silhouettes hover over him, backlit by streetlamps.
Their voices are fuzzy.

HITMAN #1
That's him. He was with her.

HITMAN #2
Shit, he's packing. What should we do?

HITMAN #3
Get him away from here. Then kill him.

HITMAN #2
There's no contract for him.

HITMAN #3
Then do it for free. Just do it elsewhere.

The men disperse. One of them drags Joe to his feet.
A stocky, crag-faced man. He jams a silenced pistol in Joe's kidney and points him toward a vacant lot nearby.

HITMAN #2
Start walking. I'm right behind you.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The two other Hitmen return to their gray, late-model sedan. Climb into the car and sit, watching the nightclub.

Waiting.

(CONTINUED)

EXT. VACANT LOT - NIGHT

A rusty chain-link fence separates the lot from the boulevard. Choked with weeds. Broken glass. A rusted-out car. A towering billboard looms overhead, inviting people to drink Scotch or get laid, it's hard to tell.

Hallenbeck staggers drunkenly across the lot. The crag-faced man follows behind him.

CRAG-FACE (HITMAN #2)

Wrong place at the wrong time, buddy, that's all it is. Just want you to know it's nothing personal.

HALLENBECK

That's what you think. Last night I fucked your wife.

The gunman cracks up. Hallenbeck grins drunkenly.

CRAG-FACE

Oh, you did, huh? How'd you know it was my wife?

HALLENBECK

She said her husband was a greaseball with bad breath.

The guy cracks up again.

CRAG-FACE

You're pretty cool for a guy gonna take a bullet.

HALLENBECK

After fucking your wife, I'll take two.

The hitman wheezes laughter. Joe just grins.

CRAG-FACE

You're a funny guy. It's a shame to take you off. Here, kneel down.

HALLENBECK

Are you kidding? We barely know each other.

The hitman is now giggling, shaking his head.

CRAG-FACE

This is wild. I never shot no funny guy before.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

You need a special funny bullet.

CRAG-FACE

Come on, cut it out. Head or chest?

HALLENBECK

That's what your wife said.

CRAG-FACE

Would you quit with the wife?
Enough is enough.

HALLENBECK

Ask me how fat she is.

CRAG-FACE

How fat is she?

HALLENBECK

She's so fat I had to roll her in flour and look for the wet spot. You wanna fuck her, you gotta slap her thigh and ride the wave in.

(the hitman loses it)

Like the Pillsbury doughboy, except when you poke her in the stomach, she farts. I got a buddy he's an archaeologist, organized an expedition to her chin. They got lost in her nasal hair. But seriously, her eyes are like the streets of Paris: crossed. They're so crossed when she cries the tears run down her back. She's got back-tearia.

CRAG-FACE

(can't stop laughing)

Oh, that's awful. Buddy, you're a fucking rio --

From a kneeling position, Hallenbeck flings a handful of gravel at the man's eyes.

The man cries out. Stumbles backward. And Hallenbeck moves like a coiled spring. Not drunk at all. He takes the broken bottle he's been clutching and cuts the guy's throat like a knife through butter.

The hitman stands with a shocked look on his face. Blood bubbling.

FIRES the GUN once, into the ground. Drops it from nerveless fingers. Stares at Hallenbeck, aghast.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRAG-FACE

Bastard.

Hallenbeck meets his gaze. A savage, feral gleam in his eye.

HALLENBECK

And then some.

The guy pitches over dead.
Hallenbeck kneels beside him.

Retrieves his .38, holsters it. Slips the hitman's pistol into his waistband.

HALLENBECK

I'm playing Tahoe on the 15th.

He takes off running.

EXT. STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

Cory and Jimmy emerge from the club into the parking lot. She scans the area, shaking her head.

CORY

I can't believe it. The bastard split on me.

(sighs)

I'm staying at a motel for a couple days. Will you follow me?

JIMMY

Sure.

He heads for his car.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The Hitmen wait in the darkened sedan. Watching Jimmy and Cory. The driver keys the ignition. Starts the car. In his lap is an automatic rifle.

EXT. BOULEVARD - NIGHT

Joe Hallenbeck is running full out.

Headlong down the sidewalk. Gasping for breath.

HALLENBECK

Move!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He slams into a man. Knocks him flat. Groceries fly.
Joe doesn't care. He stumbles. Keeps going.

EXT. NIGHTTIME STREET - SAME TIME

Jimmy Dix is behind the wheel of a silver Jag.
Cory is driving a spanking new Ford Fiero.
Jimmy follows behind Cory, watchdogging. Humming with
JOE COCKER on the RADIO.

Cory comes to a red light. Pauses. Turns right onto a
sidestreet.

Jimmy slows, pausing at the intersection.

GRAY SEDAN

passes Jimmy. Accelerating. ENGINE REVVING.
Jimmy only gets one glimpse into the passing car.
It's enough:

Everyone inside is armed to the teeth.
The SEDAN ROARS around the corner, cutting in front of
Jimmy.

JIMMY

Oh God. This is a hit this is a
fucking hit!!

GRAY SEDAN

comes up behind Cory. Comes up fast.
Rams her car. Metal crumples. Meanwhile:

JIMMY

frantically floors the pedal of his Jag, pops the clutch
-- And stalls out.

He roars with anger.
Flings open the door.
Leaps out and runs forward, screaming:

JIMMY

Cory, get out of there!!

Too late. Cory is already out of her car, yelling:

CORY

Hey, can't you fucking drive??

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Her eyes go wide with shock.
The Hitmen burst from their car. OPEN UP on full auto.

Cory is cut down. Blown backward over the hood of her Ford. Flung to the street.

JIMMY

Oh Gooood!!

And without missing a beat, the Hitmen turn --
And OPEN FIRE on Jimmy.

He takes a running start.
Clears the hood of his Jag in a single leap.
BULLETS DICE the metal behind him.

He lands, hard. Sucks the ground. Huddled behind his car, as:

TWO HITMEN

move toward him, triggering THREE SHOT BURSTS.
The kid is dead meat. Or so it seems until, without warning --

JOE HALLENBECK

charges into the intersection. Screaming bloody murder.

He's got a GUN in each fist, and both are BLAZING.

One Hitman dies immediately:
Dances like a puppet, racked by gunfire.
Bullets go through him. SHATTER the sedan's WINDSHIELD.

The second Hitman turns and OPENS UP on Hallenbeck.
Too late. Joe rolls behind a mailbox.
BULLETS chase him, blowing apart the metal box.

The Hitman swears. Turns, running for the sedan.
He knows when a getaway is in order.

Just one problem. He forgot about Jimmy Dix.

A SCREECH of TIRES.

As Jimmy's Jag slews around the corner, laying rubber.
Rockets toward the Hitman, pins him in its headlights --

The Hitman screams as Jimmy plows through him --
And CRUNCHES into the gray sedan.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Shatters the Hitman between the two cars...

And holy Christ, the guy's still alive.
Pinned like a butterfly, legs broken...

He raises his rifle, screaming.

Jimmy dives flat on the front seat. The WINDSHIELD ERUPTS.

The Hitman. Still pinned. Still screaming.

He FIRES SHOT AFTER SHOT into Jimmy's car.

Hallenbeck walks up behind him.
Puts a BULLET in his head. He stops screaming.

JIMMY

is still huddled on the front seat in a sea of broken
glass. Hallenbeck walks up, leans in the window.

HALLENBECK

Hey.

(as Jimmy looks up)

Back up.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Jimmy puts it in reverse. The car backs up.
Steam pouring from the crumpled hood.

The Hitman, now freed, collapses to the street.
Like a sack of flour.

Hallenbeck limps toward him, wheezing.
He stops as:

MOTEL MANAGER

stands outside a door marked OFFICE.
Holding a pump action shotgun leveled at Hallenbeck.
Hallenbeck nods at the bodies in the street.

HALLENBECK

It's all over, compadre.

MANAGER

Get off my property, mister.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

(scowls)

Sidewalk belongs to the government.

He turns and looks at Jimmy. The kid is in pain.
Staring at Cory's bullet-riddled body. Eyes glazed.

Hallenbeck says nothing. He crosses to the shattered
Hitman. Kneels down, fishes through the guy's coat
pockets. Comes up with a bloody pack of cigarettes.
Extracts one. Lights it.

SIRENS fill the air.

And Jimmy snaps out of it long enough to reach into his
coat -- Takes out the vial of coke. Ditches it.
Drops it down a sewer grating, out of sight.
No one sees him do it.

POLICE CRUISERS

come SQUEALING up, flashers turning.
Surrounding Jimmy, who stands, head down and motionless --
And Joe, who smokes and looks at the moon.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

SERGEANT BENJAMIN BESSALO sits behind his desk, scanning
a stack of typed pages. A tired-looking cop named McCASKEY
lounges in the doorway. A Christmas tree in the corner
sheds needles.

Through the glass window, we can see Hallenbeck and Jimmy
seated outside in the squad room proper. Bessalo stops
reading. Sniffs the air. Frowns:

BESSALO

Something stinks in here.

(widens his eyes)

My God, it's this statement!

He flings the paper onto his desk.

McCASKEY

Sarge?

BESSALO

It's shit. Hallenbeck is hiding
something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MCCASKEY

How do you know?

BESSALO

I know how the bastard's mind works.
Every lie has eighty percent truth
to it. Guy scares me.

McCAskey is staring out the window at Hallenbeck.

MCCASKEY

We lookin' at the same guy?

BESSALO

(smiles)

Go ahead. Tell me what you see.

MCCASKEY

I see a guy, looks like he just
slept in his suit.

BESSALO

(nods)

Yep. That's what most people see.

MCCASKEY

There's more?

BESSALO

Oh, yeah. There's more.

(beat)

A long time ago, that son of a bitch
saved the President's life.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - SAME TIME

Outside the office Hallenbeck and Jimmy are perched side by side on a wooden bench. Jimmy is crumpling pieces of paper and tossing them at a wastebasket. He throws with unerring accuracy. Beside him Hallenbeck frowns, deep in thought. Finally, Jimmy speaks:

JIMMY

That stuff Cory fed you about a
weirdo hassling her. That was all
bullshit, wasn't it...?

HALLENBECK

Yeah. I don't know what she was
into, but those were professional
hitters tonight. Mob style.

(beat)

Tell me about Cory. What was she
like?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

None of your fucking business.

HALLENBECK

Listen up, friend. I'm trying to get a handle on this. How was she fixed for money?

JIMMY

(pause)

I don't know. Pretty strapped, I guess.

HALLENBECK

Always kept an eye out for work?

JIMMY

No hooking, if that's what you mean.

HALLENBECK

It isn't. Tell me what she did at the club, besides dance.

JIMMY

The usual. Waitressing. Get a guy to buy you a bottle of champagne. Sit in a private booth, let the poor fuck spill his troubles. Used to say she'd make a great psychiatrist.

HALLENBECK

She get many high rollers?

JIMMY

Sure. Even rich guys get lonely.

HALLENBECK

Fine.

(beat)

So suppose one night, her 'guest' gets a little too drunk, and brags to her... reveals something about himself. Something that could hurt if it came out. What would she do?

JIMMY

I don't get it.

HALLENBECK

Would she blackmail him?

JIMMY

Jesus, I've had about enough of you --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

Would she consider the possibility of
blackmail?

JIMMY

(sighs)

She'd consider it. If she could
get away with it. But she'd need
hard evidence. Otherwise, it's
'I never said that,' his word
against hers.

HALLENBECK

Right. So what does she do?

JIMMY

I don't know. Follow the guy? Have
him followed?

HALLENBECK

Bingo. Kid, this is making sense.
She hires somebody to follow the
mark and obtain blackmail evidence.

JIMMY

Who does she hire?

HALLENBECK

Ah. She hires my buddy Mike.

(beat)

Right? Right. It makes sense.
Except --

JIMMY

Except you told me that Mike was a
shitty surveillance man.

HALLENBECK

Exactly. He got spotted. They
made him, and they killed him.
Then they took out Cory.

JIMMY

Christ, what did the two of them
stumble onto?

HALLENBECK

Whatever it was, it was way over
their heads. They knew they were
in trouble.

JIMMY

How you figure?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

Because Mike was scared. He bailed out and threw the case in my lap.

JIMMY

He handed it to you... without telling you how dangerous it was?

Hallenbeck stares straight ahead. Sighs and says:

HALLENBECK

He was fucking my wife, Jimmy.

(beat)

I die. He gets my wife.

Jimmy just looks at him.

At that moment, McCaskey pokes his head out of Bessalo's office.

MCCASKEY

Okay, you guys are cleared to go. Pick up belongings at the property desk.

INT. PROPERTY ROOM - NIGHT

Hallenbeck is collecting his firearm from the property clerk. Jimmy lounges against the wall. Winks at a hooker as she goes by in the hall, followed by a patrol cop.

Jimmy eyes his rumpled trousers. Ripped shirt.

JIMMY

Shit. This shirt cost me eighty bucks.

HALLENBECK

(holsters his gun)

Glad to see, at a time like this, at least you got your priorities straight.

JIMMY

Do me a favor and shut up. You think I don't care that Cory's dead?

(rubs tired eyes)

Christ, I feel like I been rode hard and put away wet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

Get some sleep.

JIMMY

Wow. What stunning advice. I was gonna go hiking.

HALLENBECK

Fuck you.

They start down the hallway, side by side.

JIMMY

You know something, Joe, for a private eye, you sure don't go in for snappy comebacks.

HALLENBECK

How's this? Fuck you and the horse that looks like you.

JIMMY

Get some sleep.

A passing PATROLMAN stops. Eyes Jimmy thoughtfully. Frowns:

PATROLMAN

You look real familiar. Do I know you?

Jimmy grins, shrugs. Obviously flattered.

JIMMY

You might. Some people recognize me.

PATROLMAN

Got it. Peanuts Morton. Used to sell hash in Crenshaw District.

JIMMY

No, man. I played football. Jimmy Dix, L.A. Stallions.

PATROLMAN

What position?

JIMMY

Forget it.

PATROLMAN

Fuckin' football. Free agents ruined the damn game.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He walks away. Jimmy scowls. Grumbles to himself.

HALLENBECK

We gotta cross the parking lot.
You wanna borrow my sunglasses?

JIMMY

Fuck you.

HALLENBECK

Hey, snappy comeback. You a
detective?

As the two cross the muster room toward the front doors,
they pass the hooker we saw earlier. She is talking to
her pimp.

There is a heated exchange. The pimp slaps her. Hard.

Suddenly, Jimmy lunges forward. Balling his fists.

JIMMY

That son of a bitch!

He's ready to clean the pimp's clock when Hallenbeck
grabs him, spins him bodily. Propels him out the front
doors.

Away from trouble.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

HALLENBECK

What the fuck are you trying to
do, Tarzan?

JIMMY

He hit the chick.

HALLENBECK

You don't start a fight in a
police station, dickhead. Are you
really this stupid or did you take
lessons?

JIMMY

Guy shouldn't treat a woman like
that, is all I'm saying. He just
shouldn't, okay?

HALLENBECK

Why? Because they're weak and
need protecting?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY
 (pause, then)
 Yeah.

He's serious. Hallenbeck starts to chuckle. Shakes his head, lights a cigarette. Laughs through the smoke. This may be the funniest thing he's ever heard.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE IMPOUND LOT - SAME TIME

Hallenbeck walks across the parking lot toward his car. Jimmy trots behind him.

JIMMY
 Mind if I catch a ride with you?

HALLENBECK
 Yes.

JIMMY
 My car's fucked up, remember?

HALLENBECK
 Take the bus.

JIMMY
 Cut it out. Look, you sorta saved my life. Let me buy you a beer.

HALLENBECK
 I'm not thirsty. Good night.

He approaches his battered Plymouth. Jimmy scowls.

JIMMY
 That's it. Good night?

HALLENBECK
 Go home. Get some sleep.

JIMMY
 What are you gonna do?

HALLENBECK
 I'm gonna get a message to the people who killed your friend.

JIMMY
 What's the message?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

That we're out of it. That whatever they're doing, they don't have to worry about us.

JIMMY

You're kidding.

Joe gets in the car. Says nothing.

JIMMY

You're backing off, you're not gonna do anything? I watch T.V., what the fuck kind of private eye doesn't do anything?

HALLENBECK

The kind with a wife and kid. Look, it's over. My job is done.

JIMMY

Fuck you your job is done. We witnessed a murder, Joe!

HALLENBECK

Yes, it was very exciting. Tomorrow I'll take you to the zoo.

(beat)

You wanna play hero, go ahead. When you die, I'll take your closet full of eighty-dollar shirts.

JIMMY

Look, until this is over, I'm sticking with you.

HALLENBECK

The hell you are.

JIMMY

I'm part of this. We do something, we do it together.

HALLENBECK

Have a nice night.

He STARTS the CAR.

JIMMY

Don't drive away, Joe.

Joe puts it in gear. Pulls away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

Joe -- ! I'll tell the cops, Joe.

Joe taps the brake. Stops. Leans out the window, says softly:

HALLENBECK

Tell them what, Jimmy?

JIMMY

That Mike Miller was fucking your wife.

(beat)

Only reason you're not in the cooler, tough guy, is the cops got no motive for Miller's death. When they find out Mikey was dickin' your old lady, seems to me you become suspect numero uno. I'm scared, and I'm coming with you, got it?

Joe gets out of the car and advances on Jimmy.

HALLENBECK

You little creep, I'm gonna beat the shit out of you.

JIMMY

Go for it. Then the cops'll really love my story.

(smiles)

You don't start a fight in a police station, dickhead.

HALLENBECK

You and me is not a fight. You and me is a massacre.

JIMMY

Gosh, you're tough.

HALLENBECK

Get in the fucking car.

INT. CAR - DRIVING - NIGHT

Hallenbeck is in a foul mood. Jimmy lights a cigarette and applies for a position as pep chairman:

JIMMY

You got any hobbies?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

Mmmm. Used to be a pretty fair ventriloquist.

JIMMY

Ventriloquist, really? I hear Ps and Bs are the hardest.

HALLENBECK

Yeah, well, actually --

JIMMY

(interrupts)

Hey, you got any tapes in here?

(leans forward)

Man, what is this shit? Dick Haymes. Who the fuck is Dick Haymes? Jeez, you must be older than I thought.

Hallenbeck grimaces and shifts in his seat.

JIMMY

What's the matter? Stomach problems?

HALLENBECK

Ear problems.

JIMMY

What kind of ear problems?

HALLENBECK

The kind that won't shut up.

He stops at a traffic light. Sees a torn poster on a nearby telephone pole: CALIFORNIA HAS A VOICE - BAYNARD FOR SENATE. He grumbles. Gives it the finger.

JIMMY

Baynard, huh? What's the matter, you got some kind of beef with the guy?

HALLENBECK

You might say that.

JIMMY

You wanna share with the class?

HALLENBECK

(sighs)

Bastard got me fired from my old job.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

Yeah? What were you, cop or something?

HALLENBECK

Secret Service.

JIMMY

You're high. Get outta here.

(grins)

Really...? You protected the man? Holy shit, you musta got laid every night.

HALLENBECK

That's me. Every night.

(beat)

Where did Cory live?

JIMMY

She had an apartment on the West Side. Why?

HALLENBECK

I want to check it out.

Jimmy stares at him, puzzled.

JIMMY

I thought you were off the case.

HALLENBECK

(scowls)

Look, dipshit, I told you that to keep you out of my hair.

(pause)

My client's dead and I haven't earned my fee.

JIMMY

Whoa, back up. You mean, we're gonna nail these fuckers after all...?

(grins)

Damn. I knew there was a hero lurking beneath that gruff exterior.

HALLENBECK

Yeah, I'm a prince. Shut the fuck up.

EXT. ADULT LIVING COMPLEX - NIGHT

Jimmy and Hallenbeck make their way down a flagstone walk between tiny, palm-shaded cottages. The moon casts a pale glow.

HALLENBECK

Bet these places run a fortune.

JIMMY

Tell me about it. I'm paying the fucking rent.

HALLENBECK

How charming. Sounds like a great girl. What else did you spring for? Clothes? Car payments?

JIMMY

Wasn't like that. Cory could've had lots of rich guys. Me, she loved.

HALLENBECK

Oh. Love. Well, forget about it, then.

JIMMY

Let me guess. You don't believe in love.

HALLENBECK

(lights a cigarette)

I believe in cancer. I believe in love.

JIMMY

What, they're both diseases?

HALLENBECK

Something like that.

Jimmy shakes his head sadly.

JIMMY

Man, I don't want to meet the bitch that fucked you up.

HALLENBECK

I'm sure she'd love meeting you. Probably blow you on the front porch.

JIMMY

Little bitter, Joe?

HALLENBECK

Eat shit.

EXT. MOONLIT COTTAGE

The two men approach the door. Jimmy takes out his key ring.

HALLENBECK

The cops are gonna want to check this place out, so don't disturb anything.

JIMMY

Yes, massah.

INT. COTTAGE

Jimmy opens the door. Flips on the lights. Stops in his tracks.

The room has been systematically torn to pieces. A knife has been used to rip open the couch. Broken furniture, shredded clothing. Everywhere. It looks like a combat zone.

JIMMY

I think someone disturbed some stuff, Joe.

HALLENBECK

Well, shit. Looks like somebody beat us to it.

JIMMY

Beat us to what?

HALLENBECK

Whatever evidence Cory was holding.

JIMMY

Assuming there was any. Stay here a minute.

HALLENBECK

Where you going?

JIMMY

Bathroom. You wanna come with me? Doctor said I shouldn't lift anything heavy.

HALLENBECK

I'll pass.

Hallenbeck starts inspecting the wreckage.

INT. CLUTTERED BATHROOM

Jimmy enters and shuts the door behind him.

He scans the floor, covered with clothes, bottles, etc. Picks up a carelessly discarded can of Right Guard deodorant.

Turns it upside down, and unscrews the bottom. Inside, the can is hollow and empty. The perfect hiding place.

Jimmy heaves a sigh of relief. Removes a little plastic Baggie filled with white powder. Stashes it in his shorts.

Starts to replace the lid. Stops. Frowns. Reaches into the can a second time -- And pulls out a yellow envelope.

He looks at it, perplexed. Puts it in his pocket. Replaces the lid. Tosses the can on the floor. Flushes the toilet. Leaves.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Hallenbeck, meanwhile, is prowling the living room, looking at photographs on the walls.

The girl in the photos seems young, beautiful, and naive. One shot depicts Cory and a friend in cheerleader outfits. On it is scrawled, GOOD LUCK IN HOLLYWOOD BABY! LOVE, JANIS

Hallenbeck gazes around the devastated cottage.

HALLENBECK

Looks like you made it, baby.

Jimmy emerges from the bathroom.

JIMMY

Find anything?

HALLENBECK

Yeah, there's some really nice rubble.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY
I may have something.

HALLENBECK
What?

JIMMY
Later. Let's get out of here.

EXT. COTTAGE - NIGHT

The two men emerge from the house. Joe heads for his car. Jimmy peels off toward a battered GMC Pacer parked at the curb.

HALLENBECK
Where the hell are you going?

JIMMY
As long as we're here, I might as well take Cory's car.

HALLENBECK
You got the keys?

JIMMY
Yeah. I'll follow you.

Hallenbeck starts to turn away. Jimmy gets in the car. Hallenbeck stops. Frowns.

HALLENBECK
Cory has two cars?

JIMMY
Yeah. This one's just sitting here until she can sell it.

The color drains from Hallenbeck's features.

HALLENBECK
Jimmy, no!!

He sprints across the sidewalk and yanks Jimmy out of the driver's seat before he can key the ignition.

JIMMY
Ouch -- ! What's your problem?

ANOTHER ANGLE

Hallenbeck kneels and peers under the car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Swears softly as he sees two thin copper wires, glinting in the moonlight.

HALLENBECK

They used a car bomb on Mike, it figures they'd try it on her, too.

(stands)

Except they wired the wrong car.

Jimmy pales noticeably.

JIMMY

Oh. Shit. Oh. Jeez.

Hallenbeck claps him on the back.

HALLENBECK

Easy, kid. No harm, no foul. We caught it in time.

He strolls toward his Plymouth, whistling.

Cheerfully unaffected.

Jimmy catches his breath. Swallows hard.

Turns, and bumps into Hallenbeck, coming back the other way.

JIMMY

What are you doing?

Hallenbeck brandishes a pair of wire-cutters.

HALLENBECK

Gotta disconnect the fucker.

JIMMY

Whoa. Hold on. Um, shouldn't we call the bomb squad or something?

HALLENBECK

(smiles)

Relax, Junior, I used to do this for a living.

He isolates one wire. Turns and offers the cutters to Jimmy.

HALLENBECK

You wanna do it?

JIMMY

No, man, I --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

Come on, chickenshit. Just snip the wire.

Jimmy hesitates, then takes the cutters. Reaches beneath the wheel well. Plucks at the wire tentatively. Cuts.

HALLENBECK

Oh, shit not that one!

Jimmy screams and stumbles backward. Lands on his ass. Hallenbeck is chuckling softly. Shakes his head as he walks around to release the hood.

JIMMY

You're a fucking asshole!

HALLENBECK

And then some, Junior. And then some.

TIME CUT TO:

THREE STICKS OF DYNAMITE - ONE MINUTE LATER

have been taped to the car's ignition system. Hallenbeck removes the taped bundle. Holds it up for inspection.

HALLENBECK

We'll hand this over to the cops. They can analyze it.

JIMMY

Great. So what now?

HALLENBECK

(shrugs)
You tell me, kid.

JIMMY

Give up? Flee? Go really far away?

HALLENBECK

I got a better idea. Let's check in with my family.

They start walking toward Hallenbeck's Plymouth. Hallenbeck tosses the car keys to Jimmy.

HALLENBECK

I'm tired. You drive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

Sure. Family, huh? You got kids?

HALLENBECK

Yeah. Little girl.

JIMMY

Does she like you?

HALLENBECK

Not much, no. And she likes Prince, so go figure.

JIMMY

I like Prince.

HALLENBECK

Great, you can marry my daughter. Or better yet, fuck my wife. I hear all it takes is a credit card and two valid I.D.'s.

(beat)

Open the trunk.

JIMMY

(indicating bomb)

You're just gonna stick that in your trunk?

HALLENBECK

(nods)

You're right. Let's leave it here for the neighborhood kids to play with.

Jimmy opens the trunk. As he does, however, a voice rings out suddenly from the darkness.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hold it right there, gentlemen.

They stop. Slowly they turn.

TWO MEN

are approaching from out of the trees. One holds a flashlight trained on Hallenbeck and Jimmy. The other carries a silenced Beretta.

JIMMY

Is it the cops?

HALLENBECK

No, Jimmy. It's not the cops.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Working quickly, Hallenbeck tapes the bomb to the inside of the truck lid. Slams it shut. Turns, facing the new arrivals.

The MEN wear tailored suits with matching ties. One is tall and lean. The other is a bruiser, short and stout. They both have the seasoned look of professional mob hitters.

The Taller Man speaks, gun held rock steady.

TALL MAN

Good evening, gentlemen. Bit late for a stroll, don't you think?

HALLENBECK

Yeah, you two better be getting home.

JIMMY

The streetlights are on.

TALL MAN

That's amusing. How delightful to find such amusing men so late at night.

(beat)

I don't believe I've had the pleasure.

HALLENBECK

No, I don't believe you have.

(to Jimmy)

He'd like to have the pleasure.

JIMMY

Tell him it's not for sale.

HALLENBECK

He says it's --

SHORT MAN

What's your name, fuckface?

This from the Shorter Man, who is clearly not happy.

HALLENBECK

(shakes his head)

I'm asshole. He's fuckface.

TALL MAN

Jake, apprise Rodney Dangerfield here of his situation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jake slips on a pair of brass knuckles. Steps up and delivers a looping right to Hallenbeck's face. A sickening crunch. A two inch gash streams blood. Jake relieves Hallenbeck of his gun.

TALL MAN

Perhaps we can dispense with the fun and games now, yes?

Jimmy rushes forward, snarling. The Beretta swivels. Jimmy stops, the gun aimed at his gut.

HALLENBECK

(gasping)

Easy... Jim... All they want is the evidence...

TALL MAN

The evidence. Very smart. See, Jake, he knows when a situation is untenable.

(smiles)

You like that word?

HALLENBECK

Great word.

TALL MAN

It occurs to me that you may have the evidence in question.

HALLENBECK

(spits out blood)

Give up, Jimmy. We're dealing with geniuses.

Another fist to the head. Hallenbeck grunts. Spits more blood.

JIMMY

Leave him alone, you fuck!

HALLENBECK

Back off, Jimmy.

The Tall Man turns and eyes Jimmy.

TALL MAN

Leave him alone...?

(shrugs)

Whatever you say. Jake?

The Short Man steps away from Hallenbeck. Turns and launches a kick at Jimmy's groin. Connects. The kid drops to the ground, retching.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TALL MAN

(sighs)

Ah, my young friend... I neglected to tell you that Jake attacks his job with a certain... exuberance.

JIMMY

Christ... I'm being beat up by the inventor of Scrabble.

TALL MAN

He's still in a good mood, Jake. Kick him again.

Jake steps forward.

HALLENBECK

Wait!

Hallenbeck speaks through cracked, bloody lips:

HALLENBECK

You want the fucking evidence that the stripper had. I've got it. So we can play games, or I can hand it over.

JIMMY

And then you'll let us go, right?

TALL MAN

Sure. We'll let you go.
(to Hallenbeck)
Where is it?

Hallenbeck meets the Tall Man's gaze. Speaks softly.

HALLENBECK

Hand me the car keys, Jimmy.

Jimmy stumbles to his feet. Looks at the Tall Man.

TALL MAN

Walk over and hand him the keys.
Slow and easy.

Jimmy takes out the car keys. Crosses to Hallenbeck. Gives him the keys.

HALLENBECK

The evidence is in the trunk.

TALL MAN

Open it. Slow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hallenbeck smiles. Shakes his head.

HALLENBECK
I don't think so.

He turns and throws the keys as far as he can.
They fall out of sight behind a cottage.

HALLENBECK
Oops. I guess nobody gets it.

TALL MAN
You dumb bastard, you're going to
pay for that. Jake, open the
trunk.

Jake steps forward, drawing a .38 silenced pistol.
He is going to shoot open the lock.

ANGLE ON HALLENBECK

This is what he's been waiting for. He tenses, looking
to one side: next to him is a sloping hillside, angling
down and away. He grips Jimmy's wrist, signalling to get
ready.

Jake raises the PISTOL. Take aim at the lock and FIRES.

The SHOT is SILENCED. What follows is not.

Because the bullet blows through the trunk --
And hits three sticks of live dynamite.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Hallenbeck is already moving, pitching to one side,
throwing himself and Jimmy down the hillside.

The night lights up like a SUNBURST.

A tower of fire...

Climbs up and outward from the car.

The TRUNK LID is BLOWN fifty feet in the air.
The tires are pulped.

GLASS SPRAYS for fifty yards in every direction.

And, most importantly: both hitmen are engulfed in
flame.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOUND. Fury.
Flames, rolling skyward.

TINKLE of raining GLASS.
Bits of falling metal.

All in all, a helluva blast, and meanwhile:

JIMMY AND JOE

continue to careen down the hillside.
Bouncing like rag puppets. Out of control.

Lurch to stop at the bottom.
Covered head to toe with dirt. Bruised. Bloody.

Alive.

They lie side by side, sucking air --
Until they both hear an odd noise:

The sound of CRUMPLING METAL.
The sound is GETTING LOUDER.

They both crane their necks in time to see --

The flaming car, tumbling end over end

Coming down the hill.

Heading straight for them.

JIMMY
Jesus fucking Christ!

They both dive for cover, out of the way.
Barely make it.

The CAR plows past them in a shower of dirt.
CRUMPLING. Heaving. Spitting fire.
Finally SLAMS to a halt against a palm tree.
Burns.

The night is filled with SHOUTS and CURSES.
The sound of DOORS OPENING. The crackle of flames.

ON GROUND

Joe rolls over. Looks at Jimmy. Jimmy looks at Joe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

You alive?

JIMMY

Don't know yet.

They crawl to their feet, inspecting for broken bones.

JIMMY

The dynamite?

HALLENBECK

Either that, or we're looking at a major factory recall.

JIMMY

Dead guys... don't make bad jokes, right?

HALLENBECK

Right.

JIMMY

So we're alive.

HALLENBECK

Yeah. Hooray.

He spits blood as SIRENS once more fill the night air, APPROACHING.

HALLENBECK

Go. Get out of here.

JIMMY

What?

HALLENBECK

Get the fuck out of here, I'll take the heat on this one. Rent a car. Then go home and wait for my call. Do it.

Jimmy meets Joe's eyes. Nods. Dashes off into the night.

CUT TO:

INT. L.A.P.D. ROBBERY/HOMICIDE DIVISION - NIGHT

Sergeant Benjamin Bessalo is in the mood to kick things. A metal trashcan is booted across the room with a clang as he whirls, glaring at Joe Hallenbeck, who is seated before him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BESSALO

Goddammit, this is a police matter, you son of a bitch! I'm sick and fucking tired of sweeping up your dead bodies, Joe, and the next time I see your ugly mug I'm puttin' a bullet in it. You got that? You are off the case, buddy. Is that clear?

Hallenbeck stares at him. Blows smoke. Says nothing.

CUT TO:

INT. RENTAL CAR - DRIVING - NIGHT

Jimmy's at the wheel of a rented Subaru. Hallenbeck beside him. He hands Joe the envelope he found in Cory's apartment.

JIMMY

If you thought there was dynamite in the trunk, wait'll you see this.

Hallenbeck reaches into the envelope and extracts a photograph: Two men having lunch together on a secluded patio.

Both are older, distinguished-looking.

Joe suddenly looks very pale.

JIMMY

The guy on the left is Connie Marcon, the owner of the L.A. Stallions.

HALLENBECK

Forget about him. Look at the guy on the right.

JIMMY

Sort of familiar. Who is he?

HALLENBECK

Senator Calvin Baynard.

Jimmy draws a sharp breath. Pause, then:

JIMMY

Let's go back to the cops. I'm scared.

HALLENBECK

Take it easy, kid. It's not so bad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

Not so bad. Excuse me, did you just say the words not so bad? You don't understand, Joe, see, if a guy vomits on the sidewalk, you don't say, 'Oh, hey, it's not so bad, there's some ham in there.' It's fucking vomit, okay? This is bad.

Hallenbeck nervously lights a cigarette. Stares straight ahead through the windshield. Begins to talk:

HALLENBECK

When I was thirty, I was on the President's personal security force. Once night I was on the way home from a late session. I'm on the highway just outside of Georgetown when I see something up ahead.

MEMORY FLASH

Another time. Another night. A younger-looking Hallenbeck. Rugged features. Clipped military haircut.

He is driving.

Down a turnpike, squinting through dense evening mist. Up ahead, a shape materializes out of the fog:

WRECKED CAR

is lying upside down in a pool of shattered glass.

He SCREECHES to a stop.

ANOTHER ANGLE

In a dream-like SLOW MOTION, he approaches the overturned car.

There are two dead bodies inside. A woman. A little boy.

In the window, a stuffed Garfield doll clings with suction cups to the remaining glass. The furry cat is splattered with blood.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK (V.O.)

It was a high-speed collision.
Both cars were totaled. The woman
and the boy were dead. The driver
of the other car wasn't.

STAGGERING DRUNK

is weaving toward Hallenbeck.
Leaving behind his crumpled Mercedes.
He wears an \$800 suit. Tan Cordovan loafers. Silk tie.

DRUNK

Fuckin' bitch... She got in front
of me, man. Shit. My fuckin' car.
Stupid bitch wrecked my car...

He stumbles toward Hallenbeck, eyes attempting to focus.

DRUNK

Do you know who I am...? I'm
Louis Baynard, my father is
Calvin D. Baynard, man. Call my
father, he'll take care of it.

The man lurches to a stop in front of Hallenbeck.
Clutching at Joe's lapels. Wheezing liquor fumes.
He presses a hundred dollar bill into Joe's hand.

DRUNK

You'll tell 'em what happened,
right...? Bitch swerved in front
of me, man. Wrecked my fuckin'
Mercedes. Right...?

HALLENBECK (V.O.)

I could smell bourbon on him, big
time. He was standing there, not
a scratch on him. I went a little
nuts. I hit him.

In SLOW MOTION, Hallenbeck backhands the rich drunk,
with a head-snapping impact that bursts lips. Breaks
teeth.

We see the Drunk's head slowly strike the asphalt.
A sickening concussion.

HALLENBECK

The blow was non-lethal. But when
he fell, his head hit the pavement
funny. Put him in a coma.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The younger Hallenbeck stands on the highway of eight years past, staring at the Drunk with fierce, blazing eyes as we --

SNAP BACK TO:

JIMMY AND JOE - BACK TO PRESENT

Driving.

HALLENBECK

Even when he came out of it, he was never right in the head. His dad fixed everything with the cops. The accident report disappeared. A week later the police found half a kilo of crack cocaine planted in my house. Acting on an anonymous tip.

JIMMY

The senator fucked your job.

HALLENBECK

And my pension. And my marriage. Only reason I'm still licensed to carry a gun, the man himself made a few calls. Since then I'm just playing it out. Day by day.

Jimmy is silent for a moment. Then:

JIMMY

Cory tumbled to some sort of deal between Marcon and the senator, and they had her killed.

(beat)

We gotta show this photo to the cops.

HALLENBECK

Not yet. I need more evidence.

(beat)

I want Baynard, Jimmy. I want to bring him down. I could use your help.

JIMMY

Why should I help you?

HALLENBECK

Because if Baynard takes a fall, so does Marcon. The man who kicked you out of professional football.

INT. PLUSH BEDROOM - NIGHT

A tall, thin, almost effeminate MAN is seated on a couch. High cheekbones. A shock of blond hair. Glittering, malignant eyes.

He is directing a pornographic film.

PRETTY GIRL

is bound hand and foot to the posts of a lavishly appointed bed. Around her, the room is filled with Kleig lights. Reflectors. Camera equipment.

The girl is scowling furiously. She speaks to the director:

GIRL

I want the sheets changed, Milo.

MILO (MAN)

Of course you do, but we're running behind, dearest.

GIRL

I don't give a shit. I'm an actress, not a piece of meat, and I want clean sheets!

MILO

Fine. It's done. Right after this next shot.

A strident BEEPER GOES OFF on Milo's belt. He turns to the two-man crew and claps his hands for attention.

MILO

Okay, let's do it.

(beat)

Roll camera.

CAMERAMAN

Rolling.

MILO

And... action!

The closet door opens. A hulking man emerges. He is carrying a chainsaw. The Girl on the bed stares, incredulous.

GIRL

Milo... What the fuck is this, some kind of joke?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MILO

Not at all, dearest. It's what's known as a snuff film.

The hulking man pulls the starter cord. The SAW ROARS to life.

GIRL

Oh God Milo please oh God oh no please Milooooo!!

A smile twitches Milo's upper lip.

MILO

Easy, Pablo. She's not a piece of meat.

He exits. Closes a sound-proofed door behind him.

INT. WOOD-PANELED STUDY - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Milo enters, all business. Crosses to a telephone with a blinking light. Stabs a button. Scoops up the receiver.

MILO

Yes, Mr. Marcon? How can I help you?

MARCON (V.O.)

Is this line secure?

MILO

One hundred percent, sir. I wouldn't have used your name otherwise.

MARCON (V.O.)

Sid and Jake are dead, Milo. Killed in an explosion. Looks like we got a new player in the game.

MILO

Who is he working for?

MARCON (V.O.)

From available information, he appears to be a free agent. Guy by the name of Joe Hallenbeck.

Milo sits and begins punching keys on a computer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARCON (V.O.)

Get me everything you can on this fucker, Milo. I want it on my computer screen in fifteen minutes.

MILO

Yes, sir. And then?

MARCON (V.O.)

And then you'll be handling it personally.

EXT. HALLENBECK HOME - LATE NIGHT

Dawn is a ghost on the horizon as Jimmy parks the rental Subaru outside. The two men emerge. Head for the front door.

JIMMY

So I get to meet your family, huh? What's your daughter like?

HALLENBECK

She's like thirteen. And if you even look at her funny, I'll shove an umbrella up your ass and open it.

INT. HALLENBECK HOUSE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

As they come through the front door, Joe's daughter, DARIAN, is slumped in a big Lazy-Boy, staring sullenly at a movie on TV. Cute kid, cursed to wear ridiculous-looking dental headgear.

She doesn't bother to look up.

HALLENBECK

First things first. I'm starving.
(notices Darian)
Hey, kiddo. Why aren't you in bed?

DARIAN

I'm watching television.

HALLENBECK

I can see that.

DARIAN

I hate you. Leave me alone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She still won't look at him. The two men cross to the kitchen. Hallenbeck opens the refrigerator, takes out some lunchmeat.

HALLENBECK

She's pissed off because I wouldn't let her go out on a date with her friend Billy.

DARIAN

I missed the biggest party of the year.

JIMMY

Why couldn't she go?

HALLENBECK

(incredulous)

Because she's thirteen, that's why.

(to Darian)

I bought you some ice cream.

DARIAN

I'm not talking to you.

HALLENBECK

Gee, that's a shame. You always have such pleasant things to say. 'I hate you, Dad.' I'm gonna miss that, darn it...

(beat)

It's chocolate chip, your favorite.

DARIAN

I don't care. You're an asshole.

Without missing a beat, Hallenbeck opens the window and heaves the ice cream outside.

HALLENBECK

That's for saying asshole. God, I hate wasting food. Wanna abuse me some more? Go ahead, shock me. You know, I hardly ever hear the word asshole.

DARIAN

Bullshit, I bet you get it all the time.

HALLENBECK

All right, knock it off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARIAN

What're you gonna do, ground me
some more?

HALLENBECK

Hey, you want it, you got it, lady.

DARIAN

Thank you, asshole.

HALLENBECK

You're grounded for a week.

DARIAN

Yes, sir, asshole.

HALLENBECK

That's two. You wanna play this
game? I love this game.

DARIAN

Just leave me alone.

(to Jimmy)

He thinks he's fuckin' Ward
Cleaver.

HALLENBECK

All right, that's it. You wanna
be a gutter mouth? You wanna
sound like your mother, well
that's terrific. Christ, all day
long I don't take enough abuse,
I gotta listen to shit from you!

JIMMY

Hey, Joe, take it easy...

HALLENBECK

Don't you tell me how to talk to
my kid.

DARIAN

All I wanted was to go to a party,
but Pop here thinks I'm out to
get laid.

HALLENBECK

Go for it, kiddo. All the dirty
words. Come on, shock me. Go
ahead.

DARIAN

Sure thing, you dumb fuck-up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

All right, I've had it. Go to your room. Or I will whip your behind.

DARIAN

You'd probably like it.

Hallenbeck takes her by the arm and drags her out of the chair. Toward her room.

HALLENBECK

Goddammit, you are my daughter and you will respect me, got that? You got it? You don't ever call me a fuck-up.

DARIAN

Why shouldn't I, Mom calls you that all the time.

That stops him. He looks at her, stricken.

HALLENBECK

Your mother called me a fuck-up...? When?

DARIAN

On the phone to Uncle Jay.

HALLENBECK

Uncle Jay? Ohh, Christ, I'm a fuck-up, but Uncle Jay, now there's a real stand-up guy. Shit, the bastard cheats on his tax form, I'm surprised he hasn't done time! Why don't you ask your mother why Mister Wonderful isn't in jail for tax evasion?

DARIAN

(smiles)

Because he doesn't fuck up.

She goes into her room and shuts the door. Hallenbeck rubs his eyes. Leans against the wall, exhausted.

JIMMY

You know, for fifty bucks you could get a guy to pull out her fingernails with a pair of pliers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

No. Anything that much fun, I'd want to do myself.

JIMMY

I think we could both use a drink.

Hallenbeck crosses to a cabinet, breaks out a bottle of Seagrams. Swigs. Hands it to Jimmy. As Jimmy drinks, he notices a photo on the wall: Hallenbeck shaking hands with George Bush.

JIMMY

That's you?

HALLENBECK

Yeah. That's me.

JIMMY

You look like the dad on 'The Brady Bunch.'

HALLENBECK

Yeah, I was a regular Boy Scout.

Joe starts to fix a sandwich. Jimmy takes nips from the bottle.

JIMMY

So. You gonna get a divorce?

HALLENBECK

Don't know.

He bites into the sandwich. Not really tasting it.

JIMMY

You don't like women much, do you, Joe?

HALLENBECK

(mouth full)

Mike Miller wasn't the first time. Sarah has cheated on me before. Twice. I never told her I knew. At first, my opinion of women took a real dip, yeah.

JIMMY

And now?

HALLENBECK

Now I'm content if I like the guy she's fucking. This last one was my best friend.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

Horseshit, he was a scumbag private eye.

HALLENBECK

What am I, Jimmy?

JIMMY

He tried to get you killed.

HALLENBECK

Friends can't be perfect.

(sighs)

I wish the sky wasn't blue. I wish water wasn't wet. I wish I didn't still love my wife.

He eats in silence. Jimmy says:

JIMMY

You know what I did last night?

HALLENBECK

What?

JIMMY

I went to a party and shit on a car.

HALLENBECK

Damn. You, too?

JIMMY

I'm a complete loser. Capital 'L.' All I ever wanted... was to be somebody's hero, you know it...? Now I mostly sit around. Watch T.V. Get laid. I'm a fucking slug, throw salt on me I'd curl up. Life sucks.

HALLENBECK

You're wrong.

JIMMY

Life doesn't suck?

HALLENBECK

No, life sucks. But you're not a loser. Cory loved you.

JIMMY

Yeah, and the last thing I did was cheat on her.

(beat)

Why do people cheat, Joe?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

Because it's easier than paying
the tax, Junior.

JIMMY

Ooooooh. Very deep.

HALLENBECK

So deep I don't know what the fuck
it means.

JIMMY

It means another drink is required.

He raises the bottle.

JIMMY

Alex the accountant.

He drinks. Hallenbeck frowns, watching him.

HALLENBECK

Is Alex your accountant?

JIMMY

No. But he could have been.

(beat)

Alex was my son.

Hallenbeck stares at him.

JIMMY

I was married at 19. Sweet young
thing, looking to get out from
under daddy's thumb. I didn't
know she was a junkie. All during
her pregnancy. Shooting up. There
were complications. She died.
Alex lived for seventeen minutes
in the incubator. Fell asleep.
Died before he woke up.

(takes a drink)

He was born... He had time for
one dream... and then he died.
I wonder what his dream was
about.

HALLENBECK

I'm sorry.

JIMMY

I think about him a lot. I mean,
who was this... guy?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY (CONT'D)

This little guy who only got
seventeen minutes, who was he,
Joe...? What was he like?

(beat)

What would he have been?

HALLENBECK

He would have been a great
ball player. Like his dad.

JIMMY

(shakes his head)

No. He had to die, Joe. Don't
you see?

HALLENBECK

Why did he have to die?

JIMMY

(softly)

Because he came out of me.

He puts aside the bottle. Scowls.

JIMMY

I'm gonna borrow your shower.

He exits. Hallenbeck watches him go. Says nothing.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Jimmy enters and shuts the door. Turns on the shower.
Makes no move to undress.
Instead, he reaches inside the waistband on his pants.
Removes a vial of coke. Dips a spoon.

The door opens.

Hallenbeck is standing there with a handful of fresh
towels. He stops. Staring at Jimmy. They freeze in
tableau.

Then Hallenbeck crosses the floor with two quick strides
and slugs Jimmy with all his might. Decks him.

The kid goes over backward into the shower, head striking
the porcelain. He swerves. Claws his way out, drenched.

HALLENBECK

Not in my house, you dumb
motherfucker.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

Joe, man, you don't get it --

HALLENBECK

Shut up.

He picks up the vial of powder.

HALLENBECK

This is what you went looking for
in Cory's apartment, isn't it?
You found this when you found that
envelope.

He crosses to the toilet. Jimmy cries out.

JIMMY

Joe, please!

Joe drops the vial in the water. Flushes.
Jimmy darts forward. Joe shoves him back.

JIMMY

You stupid bastard, do you know
what you've done? That was a
thousand bucks' worth of shit!

HALLENBECK

You got it, son. I'm just mixing
it in with all the other shit.

(beat)

Get the fuck out of my house. Now.

JIMMY

You don't understand.

HALLENBECK

I said, get out. I'll break your
fucking neck, kiddo.

Jimmy glares at him. Coldly defiant.

JIMMY

Go ahead, tough guy. Go ahead.

(beat)

I'm trying to survive, man. I use
that stuff to get by, so fuck you.

HALLENBECK

I don't use it. I get by.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

Oh, sure, Dudley fucking Do-Right, you stand there and judge me, and, meanwhile, you never had your old lady die on you, did you, pal?? And your fucking kid?? And I said to God, 'Hey, buddy, what gives? I go to church, I give to the United Way, what is this dead wife and kid shit...?' And he didn't say nothin', Joe.

He grabs a towel. Scrubs savagely at his wet torso.

JIMMY

And then I lose my job, my fucking life, okay, and why...? You know why? Because I gambled. Whoa, hold on, stop the presses, Jimmy gambled, well shit, of course I gambled, everybody does, and the fucking league knows it!

He advances on Joe, trembling with anger.

JIMMY

Why, Joe? Why is there an injury report in pro football, huh...? Nobody else has a fucking injury report, but the N.F.L. does, so the fucking gamblers will know the spread! Marcon... the commissioner... those fucking hypocrites... killed the last thing I could do, Joe...! I can't do anything... anymore.

And suddenly he is crying.

JIMMY

I couldn't save my wife... She died screaming and I couldn't do a Goddamn thing... And my baby came out... and he was so fuckin' small, Joe... He was too fuckin' small...

He collapses against the wall.
Slides down to a sitting position. Huddled on the floor.

Hallenbeck watches him. Says nothing.
For a moment, he seems moved to compassion...
Then his gaze hardens. He kneels next to Jimmy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

When you're through feeling sorry
for yourself, the front door's
that way.

JIMMY

(wipes his eyes)
You're a total bastard.

HALLENBECK

You brought cocaine in my house.
End of story.

Jimmy is silent. He stands. Exits into the hall.

Joe's daughter, Darian, is standing there.

DARIAN

You're Jimmy Dix, aren't you?

JIMMY

Huh?

There is an awkward pause. Darian holds out a football
card.

Young, smiling Jimmy.

The card is old. Tattered.

DARIAN

I'm sorry I acted like a bitch.
Would you sign my card?

Hallenbeck steps forward.

HALLENBECK

I told you to go to your room.

DARIAN

But, Dad -- !

HALLENBECK

Go to bed. This guy's not signing
anything.

DARIAN

Aw, come off it.

HALLENBECK

Forget it, Darian.

(beat)

The guy's a loser. Big time.

Darian's face is a mask of confusion.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jimmy walks past her to the front door.
Stops with his hand on the knob. Turns.

JIMMY

I never shaved points, Joe. I
never did.

Joe is silent. Stone-faced.

JIMMY

If you want my help, I'm at the
Casa Loma Apartments on Ventura.

He exits. Shuts the door behind him.
Darian goes into her room, fuming. Shuts the door.

Joe is alone. He turns. Sees his reflection in the hall
mirror.

HALLENBECK

Smile, you fuck.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAWN

The first light of day streams through the window.
Hallenbeck pushes Furry Tom to one side.
Sits on the bed.
Regards his sleeping wife with hooded, lifeless eyes.
She is peaceful. Serene. He reaches out to touch her.
Stops. Withdraws his hand.
Crushes out the cigarette. Stands. Leaves.

INT. DARIAN'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Hallenbeck enters. Crosses to Darian's bed.
She is asleep. She looks vulnerable. Helpless.

He leans over and kisses her.
She stirs in her sleep.
Murmurs:

DARIAN

Billy...

Hallenbeck recoils.
Stares at her.

The DOORBELL RINGS.

Startling him. He mutters under his breath.
Stalks out of the room.

ANOTHER ANGLE - FRONT DOOR

Down the hall to the front door. Flings it open, pissed off.

HALLENBECK

Goddammit, Jimmy, I told you -- !

It isn't Jimmy.

Standing on the porch is a tall, thin man with blond hair. The man removes a TASER GUN from his overcoat.

MILO

Good morning, Joseph.

He FIRES point-blank.
The electrode hits Hallenbeck in the chest.
A CRACKLE of electric current. Hallenbeck jerks spastically.

The world spirals away.
He plunges down into darkness.

CUT TO:

INT. CLUTTERED APARTMENT - MORNING

Jimmy looks bad.
Sprawled out on a tangle of dirty sheets.
Jeans. Bare feet.
Smoking.

Staring at a football card.
A duplicate of the one Darian showed him.

He swings his legs off the bed.
Stands, crushes out his cigarette.
Moves into the bathroom.

The Baggie of coke is on the counter.
He stares at it with bloodshot eyes.
Swallows hard.

Acts before he can think.
Grabs the Baggie. Tosses it in the toilet.
Flushes. Watches as it goes down the drain.

EXT. CASA LOMA APARTMENTS - MORNING

Another Goddamned day.
A chill drizzle. The palm trees look forlorn.

AT CORNER NEWSSTAND

Jimmy buys a paper. Trudges along Ventura Boulevard.
Huddled against the chill.

SLEEK, BLACK SEDAN

slides to the curb in front of him.
Two men get out:

One is Pablo, who last we saw wielding a chainsaw in
Milo's snuff film; the other is an ugly piece of hired
muscle who we'll call CHET.

The two men flank Jimmy and walk alongside him.
He looks up, startled.

PABLO
Good morning, Jimmy.

JIMMY
Who are you, and how the fuck do
you know my name?

CHET
(frowns)
This is the guy? You sure it's
the guy?

PABLO
This is him.

CHET
The kid with the million-dollar
arm?

PABLO
Yeah.

CHET
Shit. He don't look like much. I
wouldn't pay no million dollars
for this bozo.

PABLO
Neither will anyone else, anymore.

JIMMY
I'm growing whiskers here, guys.
You got something to say, fucking
say it.

CHET
Wow. Tough guy stuff. Must have
caught it from his buddy
Hallenbeck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

Who?

PABLO

Don't play dumb, shithead. You were with him last night at the club.

CHET

Mr. Marcon sent us to teach you a lesson, Jimmy. Something about keeping your big coked-up nose out of his fucking business.

PABLO

Get ready, kid. This one's an E ticket.

And, with that, they grab Jimmy under the arms. Carry him across the sidewalk to a plywood fence.

JIMMY

Please, guys, don't do this...
Jesus Christ, I was just her
boyfriend, I swear to God, please!

They toss Jimmy over the fence.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Not a terrible fate, under normal circumstances.
In this case, however --

A fifty-foot drop...

Awaits him beyond the fence.
A huge, looming pit dug into the earth.
Foundation for a new parking garage.

Jimmy plummets like a stone.

Under normal circumstances, he'd be dead.
But since it rained last night, he's got three feet of
water to land in.

He hits with a splash. Disappears beneath the water.

Surfaces, screaming in pain.

Thrashes in the muddy water, and only when he looks down
does he notice the splintered bone jutting out of his
skin at a crazy angle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His million-dollar arm. His throwing arm.

He clutches at cracked ribs, screaming:

JIMMY

Oh, God, my arm, my fucking arm,
oh Jesus Christ!!!

He kneels in the muddy water, rocking back and forth.

LONG SHOT - JIMMY

Alone in the pit.

Huddled in a pool of muddy water.

His screams of pain ECHO in the chill, morning air.

INT. LAPD ROBBERY/HOMICIDE DIVISION - DAY

Ben Bessalo's office, to be precise.

Bessalo reclines grumpily at his desk. Scanning reports.
McCiskey hangs up the phone and calls across the room:

McCiskey

I got bad news and bad news.

BESSALO

Gimme the bad news first.

McCiskey

Bad news is, they just pulled
Jimmy Dix out of a construction
site on Ventura. He's busted up.

BESSALO

Okay, now gimme the bad news.

McCiskey

I just got a call from Hallenbeck's
neighbor.

Bessalo looks up, intrigued. McCiskey continues:

McCiskey

Now, according to Hallenbeck, Mike
Miller came to the house early
that morning to talk about a case,
right?

BESSALO

Right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

McCASKEY

Okay. So how come Hallenbeck's neighbor claims that Miller's car was parked there all night, in the same spot?

Bessalo sits bolt upright. Eyes glazed. Wheels turning.

BESSALO

He lied. Why did he lie...?

Realization hits him like a thunderbolt.

BESSALO

Shit. Miller was fucking his wife.

McCASKEY

What?

BESSALO

That's why the car was there, Miller was fucking Hallenbeck's wife, Hallenbeck just got back from out of town, remember?

(beat)

Christ, Joe wasted the bastard himself!

He stabs a button on the phone. Barks into the receiver:

BESSALO

I want an A.P.B. out on Joe Hallenbeck. Now. Find him and if he resists arrest, shoot the bastard.

He slams down the phone. Stares, stricken, at McCaskey.

BESSALO

I let him go, Mick. He wasted Mike Miller and waltzed right out of my office, I let him go, Goddammit!

McCASKEY

Relax, Ben. We'll bring him in. He's not that good.

BESSALO

You wanna bet?

And, with that, we promptly --

CUT TO:

JOE HALLENBECK'S UNCONSCIOUS FACE

Weathered. Sallow. Dark circles under the eyes.

HAND

comes INTO FRAME and slaps him. Hard.
Rocks his head to one side.

INT. ELEGANT BEACH HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - ANOTHER ANGLE

Thick carpet. Polished, wood furniture. Window walls.
Outside, the sea is angry and grey.

PABLO AND CHET

are standing over Hallenbeck, who is slumped in a chair.
Both hitmen wear holstered sidearms.

Chet leans over and slaps Hallenbeck again.

The big detective begins to stir.
His eyelids flutter.

CHET

I think he's awake.

PABLO

Make sure.

Chet's hand flashes out for a third slap --

And from nowhere, Joe Hallenbeck's hand magically
appears.

Intercepts the blow.

Clamps onto Chet's hand and wrenches it.

A cry of pain.

Chet stumbles backward, cradling the wrist.

HALLENBECK

I'm awake.

His eyelids creak open.

He squints, adjusting to the light.

Studies his captors.

CHET

You nearly broke my wrist, man.

HALLENBECK

Life's a bitch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He starts pawing his coat pockets, looking for a cigarette.

In the corner, Pablo chuckles:

PABLO

Milo warned us to watch out for
this guy.

Chet is seething. He glares at Hallenbeck.
Hallenbeck yawns.

CHET

Fuck that. Look at him. He's
nothin'. Guy's a piece of shit.

Hallenbeck ignores him. Sits up. Rubs tired eyes.

HALLENBECK

Anybody got a cigarette...?

Chet steps forward. Grins wickedly.

CHET

Sure, buddy. I got a cigarette.

He reaches into his shirt pocket. Extracts a Marlboro.
Hands it to Hallenbeck. Takes out a lighter.

Hallenbeck places the cigarette between his lips.
Leans forward for a light --
And Chet slugs him in the face.

The cigarette goes flying.
Hallenbeck's head snaps back.
Blood creeps from his lower lip.

CHET

(guffaws)

Hey, baby, I thought you were
tough. See, Pablo, he ain't so
bad.

Hallenbeck's eyes glint fiercely. He takes a breath.
Leans forward and says:

HALLENBECK

I seem to have dropped my
cigarette. May I have another?

Chet turns, meets his gaze. The grin falters a bit.

CHET

(unnerved)

Sure. Sure thing, buddy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He hands Hallenbeck another smoke.
Hallenbeck puts it between his lips.

HALLENBECK

I need a light.
(beat)
And if you touch me again... I'll
kill you.

A pregnant pause.
The challenge hangs in the air.
Slowly, Chet takes the lighter from his pocket.
Pablo looks on, a smile twisting his features.

Hallenbeck leans forward for a light.
Chet extends his arm --

And slugs Hallenbeck in the face again.
Rocks him.

Chet howls with laughter.
Pablo grins.

CHET

Baby! Two for two!

The laughter continues.

Hallenbeck takes a deep breath.
Stands up.

Strikes with a flattened palm.
Breaks Chet's nose.
Drives it up into the brain.
Chet stands, pole-axed. Blinks once.
Pitches over dead.

And suddenly Pablo isn't laughing.
He stares at Hallenbeck, incredulous.
Stares at Chet, lying on the carpet.

PABLO

Jesus Christ.
(draws his gun)
You son-of-a-bitch. Jesus Christ!!

He rushes to Chet. Kneels beside him.
Hallenbeck calmly returns to his seat.

PABLO

You killed him! 'Fuckin' A, you
killed him, he's fuckin' dead!!!

Hallenbeck says nothing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

At that moment, a door opens, and Milo enters. Slick. Well-dressed. Utterly composed.

MILO
Is there a problem?

PABLO
(still dazed)
He killed Chet, Milo. The mother-fucker just killed him!

Milo looks toward Hallenbeck. Hallenbeck says nothing. Instead, he calmly leans forward and picks up Chet's lighter from the carpet. Lights his cigarette. Blows smoke.

A tense moment... and then Milo does something unexpected: He starts to laugh. Advances into the room, chuckling.

MILO
Oh, my. Oh, Goddamn. Joseph, Joseph, you don't disappoint me.

He draws a Walther PPK and approaches Hallenbeck. Smiling and cheerful.

MILO
You seem to have killed one of my men.

HALLENBECK
(shrugs)
I needed a light.

Milo nods as if this makes perfect sense.

MILO
You took an awful risk. Pablo here could have shot you dead.

HALLENBECK
If you wanted me dead, you'd have already killed me.

MILO
Yes, that's true.
(sits down)
I suppose introductions are in order.

HALLENBECK
(waves his hand)
Fuck it. You're the bad guy, right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MILO

Yes. I'm the bad guy.

HALLENBECK

And you've got the gun, and I'm supposed to tremble in fear, something like that?

MILO

Something like that.

HALLENBECK

Fine. I'll start trembling in a minute. Mind if I have a drink first?

MILO

(smiles)

I don't see why not. Pablo, please take Chet's corpse into the other room, and then fix Mr. Hallenbeck a drink.

Suddenly a voice rings out from the doorway:

VOICE (O.S.)

Make that two.

Hallenbeck turns toward the new arrival.

HALLENBECK

Hey, look who's here. Connie Marcon himself.

Sure enough, CONRAD MARCON saunters in, just like he owns the place. Which, by the way, he does. Tall, strong, Texas-tough. Dressed in a Saville Row suit. He frowns at Hallenbeck:

MARCON

Careful, son. Only my friends call me Connie.

HALLENBECK

You got friends? When did this happen?

MARCON

(chuckles)

I'll give you one thing. You're pretty calm for a man in your position.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

You're pretty calm for a man whose team is three and six on the year.

MARCON

They're having some problems.

HALLENBECK

They stink.

Marcon's composure falters, but only for a moment.

MARCON

I'm glad you're here, Joe. We got a few things to discuss.

He takes a moment to gather his thoughts.

MARCON

For starters, I'm sure you're aware that professional football is changing, and not for better.

(lights a cigar)

Used to be, you went to the local stadium come Sunday, you saw heroes. Guys who fought for their hometown. Anymore, no one gives a shit. Ever since Sonny Werblin paid \$400,000 to Joe Namath back in '66, the sons of bitches just got greedier. Playing only for themselves. Giving nothing back to the game.

Pablo hands him a double bourbon.

MARCON

This year, the final blow: the N.F.L. votes to decertify the Players Organization. Eliminates the draft, reduces all athletes to free agents. Reduces football, once and for all, to commerce. To greed, you follow?

HALLENBECK

When do I say the Pledge of Allegiance?

Marcon looks directly at Hallenbeck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARCON

Do you know how many ratings points Monday Night Football lost this year? Per week? An average of two point eight.

HALLENBECK

Oh, for Chrissake. You're telling me this whole thing is about TV ratings?

MARCON

People have stopped watching, Joe! Everybody's turning the channel, they're still looking for heroes, you follow? Guys like you. Milo here tells me you took a bullet for the President, jumped in front of a sniper rifle.

Hallenbeck reacts, startled. Looks at Milo.

MILO

We took the liberty of researching your background.

MARCON

How about it, Joe? Is it truth or hype?

HALLENBECK

(shrugs)

I got the rifle in my closet as a souvenir.

MARCON

There you go, that's what I'm saying. The public wants real heroes. Not a bunch of football prima donnas, jumping from team to team with their fancy lawyers.

(beat)

In fact, Joe, and this is my point, there's only one reason left nowadays to watch pro-football. Can you guess?

It begins to dawn on Hallenbeck.

HALLENBECK

Gambling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARCON

Exactly. Gambling.
 (puffs his cigar)
 Just one problem: football
 gambling is illegal in all but
 two of the fifty states. And
 that, Joe boy, is where I come in.

HALLENBECK

(sudden realization)
 Shit, that's what this is about!
 You're bribing United States
 senators. Paying them to pass
 legislation --

MARCON

-- Legalizing football gambling
 in all fifty states. Exactly.

HALLENBECK

Attendance goes up again. TV
 ratings go up again.

MARCON

You got it, son. The networks are
 happy. I'm happy. Everybody's
 happy.

HALLENBECK

Before we get too fucking happy,
 let's get a couple things straight:
 first, I'm not your fucking son,
 and second... why am I still alive?

Marcon stops pacing. Sighs and sits down facing
 Hallenbeck.

MARCON

It's like this, Joe: everything
 was going great until a couple
 weeks ago, and then I hit a snag:
 Senator Calvin Baynard.

HALLENBECK

(takes a sip of bourbon)
 I don't get it. What's the snag?

MARCON

I offered him the bribe and he
 wouldn't take it.

Hallenbeck actually does a spit-take. Sprays bourbon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLEBECK

Baynard? Are you nuts? The guy's so crooked he shits slinkies.

MARCON

Allow me to clarify: I offered him the bribe, and he turned it down because he wanted more money.

HALLEBECK

(sighs with relief)

Thank God. For a minute there I felt hell freezing over. Did he ask for more than a million?

MARCON

Does the Pope shit in the woods? He wants two million or he'll blow the lid off my whole plan. I don't feel like paying no two mil, so basically that good ole' boy's gotta die.

HALLEBECK

Taking off a U.S. senator, that's pretty ballsy. Even for an asshole like you.

MARCON

Oh, I'm not going to kill Baynard, Joe.

HALLEBECK

Who is?

Marcon says nothing. Just looks at Hallenbeck and smiles.

HALLEBECK

Oh, shit.

He rubs tired eyes.

HALLEBECK

I'm the perfect fall guy. Everyone and his uncle Max knows I hate Baynard.

MARCON

(nods)

Anything goes wrong, all the heat lands on you, Joe boy. My hands are clean.

Hallenbeck scowls.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

Any particular reason I should go
along with this prize-winning
scheme?

MARCON

(smiles)

Just one.

He motions to Milo, who disappears through a doorway.
Reappears a moment later.

He's got Joe's wife.

ANGLE ON HALLENBECK

He stands. Face contorting. Fists clenched.
Rage courses through him like an electric current.

Marcon cocks his gun.

MARCON

Sit down, Joe.

A moment. Joe stands, smouldering. On fire. Sarah
speaks:

SARAH

Do what he says, Joe.

Joe sits. Breathing shallowly.
Eyes locked on Milo.

HALLENBECK

Are you alright, Sarah?

SARAH

Yes.

MILO

That's a temporary condition,
Joseph. As you may be aware,
there are distributors in Mexico
who positively crave snuff films.
And unless you do every fucking
thing Mr. Marcon tells you... your
wife will make her motion picture
debut.

He meets Joe's murderous gaze... and smiles.

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Jimmy is seated, shirtless, on a metal examining table. His ribs are taped. His arm in a cast.

Two men loom over him, sour expressions on their faces: Sergeants McCaskey and Bessalo.

Jimmy shakes his head, exasperated:

JIMMY

Look, I'll say it again for the cheap seats: I don't know anything and I can't help you. Okay? Can I go now?

Bessalo grimaces in disgust.

BESSALO

Let me get this straight: you're walking along, minding your own business, when two guys you never met jump you and throw you in a ditch for no particular reason. Is that it?

JIMMY

That's it.

BESSALO

You're full of shit, kid.
(beat)
Tell me where Hallenbeck is.

JIMMY

How the fuck should I know? Try his house.

BESSALO

We did. Where is he?

JIMMY

For Chrissake, I just met the guy.
(beat)
Look, Sergeant. I don't give a shit about Joe Hallenbeck. I just busted my throwing arm and I'm in a real pissy mood, so you got two choices: either charge me with something or let me the fuck outta here.

He glares defiantly at Bessalo.

CUT TO:

EXT. CASA LOMA APARTMENTS - DAY

The grey day wears on.

Jimmy trudges stiffly down the walk toward his apartment unit. Pulls up short, staring ahead --

DARIAN HALLENBECK

Slumped outside the door to his apartment. Asleep. A crumpled piece of paper clutched in her hand.

He kneels beside her. Touches her shoulder.

JIMMY

Hey. Wake up.

She stirs. Awakens, looking at him. Her eyes are puffy and red from crying. Her hair is a tangled mess.

She hands him the piece of paper, and promptly bursts into tears.

Buries her head in his chest, sobbing. He cradles her with his good arm.

Awkwardly unfolds the crumpled paper and reads:

MOMMY AND DADDY ARE WITH US

CALL THE POLICE AND WE'LL KILL THEM BOTH.

He stares at the note, dumbstruck.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH HOUSE - DAY

A savage wind sweeps in off the ocean. Gulls wheel overhead.

FORTY FOOT YACHT

is tethered to a wooden dock outside the beach house. Milo and his crew prepare to cast off. Meanwhile:

PABLO

approaches along the dock, looking lean and mean in an Izod shirt. He stops in front of Sarah and Joe Hallenbeck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They are seated on the dock.
Each handcuffed to a metal railing.

Pablo kneels and unfastens Joe's cuffs.

PABLO

Get up.

HALLENBECK

Go fuck yourself.

Pablo delivers a savage kick to Hallenbeck's ribs.
Hallenbeck gasps in pain.

HALLENBECK

I meant that... in a good way...

Pablo hauls him to his feet. Props him against the railing.

PABLO

Time for a little payback, Joe.
Call it a service to dear departed
Chet.

He slams a fist into Hallenbeck's middle.
Sarah cries out in alarm.

PABLO

How's that feel, fuckhead?

HALLENBECK

(weakly)
I'm asshole... she's fuckhead.

And with that, Pablo lets him have it.

Rains punches on his chest and gut.
Slams an elbow into his kidneys.
Drives a knee into his groin.

Joe hits the deck.
Milo calls out from the boat:

MILO

Easy, Pablo. I want him conscious.

Pablo is kicking Joe's prone form.

SARAH

Goddamn you, stop it!! Oh, Jesus,
leave him alone!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Pablo gives Joe a last swift kick. Spits on him.
Hallenbeck vomits. Lies bleeding on the dock.

Sarah crawls over to him. As far as the cuffs will
allow. Cradles his head in her lap.

HALLENBECK

Don't... look at me...

SARAH

Shhh. It's okay, Joe. I'm here,
it's okay.

(strokes his hair)

I love you, Joe.

Hallenbeck looks at her like she's just grown three
heads.

HALLENBECK

I get the shit beat out of me...
puke all over myself... and now
you love me?

SARAH

I never stopped loving you, Joe.

HALLENBECK

Christ, you slept with three guys.

SARAH

You knew about the others?

HALLENBECK

I knew.

SARAH

You never said anything.

HALLENBECK

Figured... you needed them.

SARAH

Joe, Goddammit, why didn't you
say something?

HALLENBECK

Like what? 'Fuck you, Sarah'?

SARAH

Yes. Fuck you, Sarah! Anything
to show that you... that you had
some pride left.

A pause. Then Hallenbeck heaves a sigh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

Sorry... I'm fresh out.

SARAH

I'm scared, Joe. Get me out of this.

HALLENBECK

Must be my trick ear. Sounded like you said, 'Get me out of this.'

SARAH

You can take these guys, Joe.

HALLENBECK

I've got cracked ribs and a concussion.

SARAH

Save me, Joe. Be a hero.

HALLENBECK

I don't believe in heroes.

SARAH

That's no excuse.

He stares up at her for a moment. Then, through bloody lips:

HALLENBECK

Fuck you, Sarah...

And he smiles.

Just then, Milo signals from the boat. Seeing, this, Pablo approaches the couple again.

PABLO

All right, lovebirds, break it up.

He yanks Sarah to her feet. Lets his gaze roam up and down her body.

PABLO

Nice tits.

He rips open her blouse. Roughly fondles her breasts.

Hallenbeck. On the ground. He growls with fury. Starts to push himself up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PABLO

Stay down, fucker. Don't you
move.

At that moment, Milo comes striding down the dock.
Whistling cheerfully.

MILO

Careful, Pablo. We don't want to
get Mrs. Hallenbeck all excited in
front of hubby.

He squats next to Joe.

MILO

Hello, Joseph, guess what? Time
to go, and remember: you follow
orders, or the missus pays the
price.

HALLENBECK

You're gonna kill us both anyway.

MILO

Perhaps. But there are ways to
die, and then there are... ways to
die. Capiisce? You determine your
wife's fate.

He yanks Hallenbeck to his feet.
Propels him toward the boat.

As her husband is being led away, Sarah calls out:

SARAH

Joe...!

He stops. Turns. Looks at her.

Boys and girls, there is, within Joe Hallenbeck, a spark:
Tiny. Fizzling. Almost gone.

But now, looking at his wife, that spark unexpectedly
kindles --

And eight years melt away.
Just like that.

The old Joe Hallenbeck looks his wife in the eye and
says, with deadly calm:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

I'll be back.
 (beat)
 That's a promise.

Milo clubs Joe in the head with his pistol.

MILO

You're wasting my time, Joseph.
 Let's go.

Hallenbeck turns. Dirty. Tired. Unshaven. Bloody.
 He looks at Milo... and grins:

HALLENBECK

If you touch me again... I'll kill
 you.

They stare into each other's eyes.
 Hallenbeck does not give an inch.

Milo hits him again.

INT. TOPANGA CANYON HOME - DAY

Remember Jimmy's friend, Henry, who we met briefly near
 the opening of the film? Of course you do, you're a
 highly-paid reader or development person.

Well, Henry is seated in a big, lived-in den watching
 football films. The walls around him are adorned with
 hunting paraphernalia. Rifles. Trophies.

There is a KNOCK at the door. He gets up.
 Crosses to the door. Opens it.

And Jimmy Dix is there. He gets right to the point:

JIMMY

I need to borrow a gun, Henry.

INT. EXPENSIVE, WOOD-PANELED OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Conrad Marcon sits behind a huge teak desk.
 Surrounded by football paraphernalia. Paintings.
 Trophies.

The PHONE CHIRPS. He picks up the receiver. Stabs a
 button.

MARCON

Marcon.

INTERCUT:

ON SHIPBOARD - MILO

MILO

It's Milo, sir. We're now underway and should be lying off Catalina within two hours.

MARCON

Good boy, Milo. The commissioner's party starts at six. I'll put in a token appearance around six-thirty.

MILO

Very good, sir.

MARCON

Any problems with Hallenbeck?

MILO

No, we're getting along famously.

MARCON

Glad to hear it. No fuckups, Milo. I want him deep-sixed.

MILO

I assure you, neither he nor the senator will see another sunrise.

MARCON

Christ, Milo, how come you always have to talk like a fruit?

MILO

If it annoys you, I could always adopt a Texas drawl, though I'm afraid I don't know any stories about fucking pigs. Sir.

MARCON

Cows, Milo. Never pigs.

MILO

I'll remember that, sir.

He hangs up.

Marcon replaces the receiver and chuckles.

MARCON

Goddamn fruitcake.

He turns, and suddenly we realize he's not alone in the room: a STRANGE MAN is seated in the shadows off to one side. His face is obscured... Marcon addresses him:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARCON

So far, so good.

The Man in the corner nods, then speaks. As he does, we notice he has a speech impediment; it sounds like he's talking with his mouth full.

STRANGE MAN

We've worked too hard, Con.
There's no margin for error.

MARCON

Take it easy, buddy. We're covered.

STRANGE MAN

You're using the first team, yes?

MARCON

Absolutely.
(sighs)
Actually, I have no choice.

STRANGE MAN

How's that?

MARCON

Fuckin' Hallenbeck killed the second and third teams.

EXT. LONG BEACH BOAT YARD - AFTERNOON

A sign reads, BOAT RENTALS: DAY AND WEEK.

Jimmy moves briskly down a concrete ramp toward a Hatteras sport charter. He is obsessed. Determined. Darian trots along behind him. She's holding up pretty well, considering.

DARIAN

What do you need a boat for?

JIMMY

I'm gonna crash a party out on Catalina. Marcon will be there.

He swings a bag of gear onto the boat. Starts to store it.

DARIAN

Maybe... we should call the police.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

No, honey. Not now. There's some big shots involved in this mess, and it's my word against theirs. If I blab to the cops, your mom and dad will disappear and they'll never find the bodies.

(beat)

I'm sorry, Darian.

DARIAN

(about to cry)

So... what do we do...?

JIMMY

What I do... is confront Conrad Marcon and threaten to go to the cops, unless he gives them back.

DARIAN

Is that gonna work?

JIMMY

Beats me, but I think it's what your dad would do.

DARIAN

I'm scared.

JIMMY

Me, too, honey.

His gear stashed, he turns to Darian. Tries a smile.

JIMMY

So... why'd you come to me, anyhow?

DARIAN

I don't know. I thought you'd... know what happened, know what to do...

(beat)

I mean, you were one of my dad's big heroes.

Jimmy almost chokes...

JIMMY

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARIAN

When I was little, he used to talk about you all the time. Best football player in the game. Great this. Wonderful that. You shoulda seen him when you got busted.

Jimmy stares straight ahead. Takes a deep breath.

JIMMY

I'll get them back, kiddo. I'll get them back.

CUT TO:

EXT. CATALINA ISLAND - ESTABLISHING SHOT - NIGHT

The island sits beneath a dark, cloud-filled sky. Fog nestles in the foothills, rolling in off the ocean.

CATALINA FERRY

slices through the murk, filled with light, laughter, MUSIC.

ON SHORE

Boats are arriving at a private dock.

A steady stream of guests. Tuxedos and evening gowns. A parade of phony hair and phony boobs.

All mounting the stairs to a huge chalet. Inside, a dinner party is in progress.

INT. OPULENT LIVING ROOM - PARTY

in progress.
People with six-figure incomes.
Pretending they're important.
Mingling. Schmoozing.

At a raised bar, Conrad Marcon bends the ear of a Japanese businessman. A lot of laughter. Back-slapping.

A sudden commotion near the front door.
FLASHBULBS POP. People crane their necks.
Marcon turns to look, as:

SENATOR CALVIN BAYNARD

enters the party, surrounded by an entourage of men in Armani suits. Seeing this, Marcon's face changes. Gone is the affable Texan. In his place, a ruthless murderer. He smiles.

CUT TO:

AUTOMATIC RIFLE

as a thirty-shot clip is snapped into place.

INT. FORTY-FOOT YACHT - CABIN - NIGHT

Milo is preparing the weapon. He works the action. Pumps a round into the chamber.

Looks up at Hallenbeck, who is bound hand and foot. Seated across from him in the boat's cabin.

MILO

Your wife's very pretty.

HALLENBECK

Fuck you, cocksucker.

MILO

My, my. Little testy this evening.

He pulls a switchblade out of his Windbreaker.

MILO

That's not very polite, you know, calling someone a cocksucker. A lot of hard Ks. Very abusive sounding.

Hallenbeck says nothing.

MILO

What would you do, Joseph, if someone called you that? Would you cut out one of his eyes...?

HALLENBECK

Nope.

MILO

What would you do?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

I'd go off and suck some cock
and leave him the fuck alone.

Milo studies Hallenbeck the way a museum curator might
study a new species of fish.

MILO

It occurs to me, Joseph, that I
would very much like to hear you
scream.

HALLENBECK

Come again?

MILO

You're so cool, aren't you? So...
if you'll pardon the expression...
hard-boiled. I'd like, just once,
to hear you scream in pain.

HALLENBECK

Play some rap music.

Milo chuckles, shakes his head.

MILO

Fascinating.

HALLENBECK

When do I kill Baynard?

MILO

(laughs)

Come now, Joseph, did you really
think that I'd hand you a loaded
gun?

(beat)

You're not really going to kill
anyone.

HALLENBECK

I'm not?

MILO

No.

He leans forward.

MILO

You're going to be framed for the
senator's murder... when they find
your corpse at the scene of the
crime.

EXT. PRIVATE DOCK - NIGHT

Boats, lots of them. Sportfishers. Yachts. Floating boats. Money, money, everywhere, and plenty of drinks to drop.

HATTERAS SPORT BOAT

PURRS quietly into the harbor. Jimmy at the rudder. Nudges up to the dock.

In the chalet above, the party rages.

SERIES OF SHOTS - JIMMY'S PREPARATION

Jimmy lashes the boat.
Goes below.
Grabs a tuxedo from the closet.

Stands, dressed, in front of the mirror.

Opens a box. Removes a 9 millimeter Baretta.
Works the slide. Jacks a bullet into the cylinder.
Stashes it in the waistband of his pants:
In back. Concealed by the tuxedo.

Studies his own grim face in the mirror.

JIMMY

Okay, hot shit, let's do it.

EXT. DECK - NIGHT

Jimmy emerges from the cabin. Heads for the rail.
A voice calls out:

DARIAN (O.S.)

Nice tux.

He turns, and sees Darian Hallenbeck.
Peeking her head out from under a tarpaulin.

JIMMY

Goddammit, I told you to go home!

DARIAN

Fuck you, I stowed away. They're my parents, okay?

Jimmy shakes his head. Exasperated.

JIMMY

Fine, whatever. Just stay here.
With the boat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Darian starts to protest.
He throws her the keys.

JIMMY
Anything funny happens, get the
fuck out of here.

Darian takes the keys. Frowns, says:

DARIAN
You look terrible.

JIMMY
I feel terrible.

DARIAN
Are you really a drug addict?

JIMMY
I was. I kicked the habit.

DARIAN
When?

JIMMY
This morning. Stay here.

He swings over the side, onto the dock.

DARIAN
Don't let them break your other
arm.

JIMMY
Thanks, kid. You're a fuckin'
inspiration.

INT. MILO'S YACHT - CABIN - SAME TIME

Milo speaks to Hallenbeck. Clipped. Businesslike.

MILO
At eight-fifteen, Senator Baynard
will leave the party, hopefully
unobserved. He and his entourage
will board a fast boat, and
rendezvous with us at sea.

HALLENBECK
Jesus. He thinks he's getting his
two-million-dollar payoff.

Milo nods. Points to two identical suitcases in the
corner.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MILO

Baynard will not leave his boat.
One of his men will board us, and
inspect the contents of the
suitcase. This suitcase.

He opens one of the cases. Hallenbeck stares.

HUNDRED DOLLAR BILLS

Twenty thousand of them, to be precise. Neatly bundled.

MILO

Then we pull a simple switch.
When the man returns to his boat,
he's carrying this suitcase.

He points to the identical twin.

HALLENBECK

Plastics?

MILO

(nods)

Detonation upon opening. Enough
to kill the passengers, not enough
to sink the craft.

(smiles)

And when we place your charred
corpse amidst the wreckage, the
police will draw the inevitable
conclusion: a down-on-his-luck
P.I. makes a suicide strike
against the man who cost a
career.

HALLENBECK

That sounds lovely, but how is my
body gonna get charred?

With a flourish, Milo pulls aside a tablecloth.
Under the table is a five gallon can of gasoline.

MILO

Maybe I'll get to hear you scream,
after all...

Just then, one of Milo's crew sticks his head in the
door.

CREW MEMBER

You better get up here, we got
a problem.

EXT. YACHT - ON DECK - NIGHT

Milo's yacht is anchored about a half mile offshore. Island lights blink in the distance. Fog rolls in.

Milo emerges from the cabin onto the deck.

Crosses to the railing, looks down at:

FISHING BOAT

bobbing in the water about thirty yards away. A FISHERMAN is waving his arms. Hailing them. Beside him, his wife and seventeen-year-old son.

FISHERMAN

Hey! Buddy, I got a cracked engine casing, I'm dead in the water! Can I get a tow?

Milo swears under his breath. Calls out:

MILO

I'm sorry, sir. This boat is Island Security, we're under strict orders to stay within this sector.

FISHERMAN

Aw, shit! Look, it'll take ten minutes!

MILO

I'm sorry, we can't help you.

FISHERMAN

Goddammit, now I gotta call the Coast Guard!

Milo's crewman steps up to the rail. Speaks urgently:

CREW MEMBER

Milo, he's gonna bring the Coast Guard down on top of us.

Milo ponders for maybe three seconds. Then he calls out:

MILO

Excuse me. Sir?

The Fisherman turns. His family beside him.

MILO

Fuck you, sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He reaches under his Windbreaker.
Pulls out an Ingram model MACHINE GUN.
OPENS FIRE.

The entire family is blown away.
WOOD SPLINGERS POP and fly.
GLASS SHATTERS.

The bodies topple like broken toys.

Milo ceases fire. Turns to his crewman.

MILO

Problem solved. Get over there
and put the bodies below where
they can't be seen.

He saunters away as if nothing unusual has occurred.

EXT. PARTY HOUSE - NIGHT

Jimmy is strolling along a hedge behind the house.
Looking for a back entrance.

He hears VOICES, approaching.
Pulls up short. Ducks into the shadows.

Senator Baynard goes by, with two bodyguards.
Brisk. Businesslike.

SENATOR

Christ, I can't believe I agreed
to this dog and pony show. Let's
get it over with.

The head for the boats.
Jimmy stares after them, mind racing.
Makes a decision: heads for the boats.
Following Baynard.

INT./EXT. JIMMY'S BOAT - NIGHT

Jimmy casts off the lines.
Heads for the cockpit. Darian is inside.

JIMMY

Gimmee the keys, kiddo.

DARIAN

Where are you going?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

The Senator's here, and he's leaving by the back door. I'm gonna follow him.

He keys the ignition.

JIMMY

Get off the boat.

DARIAN

Fuck you, man. No way.

JIMMY

Darian, Goddammit --

She runs below decks.

DARIAN (O.S.)

I'm not coming out!

Jimmy looks up:

The Senator's boat, a sleek, powerful Marlineer, is even now pulling out of the cove.

JIMMY

Okay. Shit. Okay. Easy. Shit.

He throttles forward.

The Hatteras pulls away from the dock.

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

The sound of THUNDERING ROTORS, as a refitted Bell Cobra HELICOPTER cuts through the night sky over Catalina. Banks sharply, cruises offshore.

INT. COCKPIT - SAME

The PILOT works the stick while the CO-PILOT searches the water below through infra-red binoculars. He speaks into a microphone.

CO-PILOT

This is Air One, over.

MALE (V.O.)

Roger, Air One, over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CO-PILOT

The drop zone is clear, repeat,
the drop zone is clear, over.

INTERCUT WITH:

MILO'S YACHT - SAME TIME

Milo is at the other end of the connection.
Beside him, two crewmen.

MILO

Roger, Air One, over and out.
(replaces the mike)
Up anchor, gentlemen, we have a go.
(points to
Hallenbeck)
Gag him and stash him.

As Milo goes topside, one of the men tapes Joe's mouth.
The other opens a cramped storage compartment.

They stuff him inside. Shut and lock the door.

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - NIGHT

About two miles offshore. The Senator's Marlineer cuts
through the waves, converging with Milo's yacht.

The two boats pull up alongside. The lines are made fast.

One of Milo's crewmen greets Senator Baynard's AIDE, a
slick-looking Italian in a \$1,000 overcoat.

Baynard's man hops from one boat to the other.
Boarding Milo's yacht. Meanwhile --

EXT. OFFSHORE WATERS - IN FOGBANK

Jimmy Dix is clearly lost.
He bangs his fist in frustration.

JIMMY

Goddammit, I lost him. I can't
see a fucking thing.

DARIAN

See if this boat has sonar.

JIMMY

Oh, yeah, little Miss Know-It-All.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARIAN

Fuck you.

JIMMY

Watch your mouth.

DARIAN

Take a bath in my ass.

They're clearly having no fun.

CUT TO:

INT. MILO'S YACHT - CABIN - SAME TIME

The payoff is in progress.

One of Milo's crewmen carries the suitcase over to the wall. Places it on a built-in counter. Underneath the suitcase is a half-finished jigsaw puzzle. Off to one side is a half-empty coffee container.

The case is opened. Greenbacks galore.

Baynard's Aide whistles softly.
Examines the stacks of bills. Nods, satisfied.

AIDE

Okay. We're cool.

Just then Milo enters the cabin. Adopts a harsh New York accent as he angrily barks:

MILO

Hey! Any of you stupid fucks bother to frisk this goombah?

CREWMAN

No, sir, we didn't think --

MILO

Exactly, you didn't think! Goddammit, that's two million bucks there, now frisk the fuckin' guy!

AIDE

Hey, baby, I'm clean, take it easy --

MILO

Fuck easy. Against the wall, spread 'em!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As Baynard's man assumes the position --
Milo hits a concealed button.

It happen in less than a second: the built-in counter
rotates into the wall, only to be replaced by an
indentical counter.

Identical half-finished jigsaw puzzle. Identical coffee
cup. And, of course, the identical suitcase.

The indignant Aide turns around, pat-down concluded.

AIDE
Okay? Satisfied?

Milo smiles apologetically.

MILO
We're cool, baby.

He hands over the suitcase.

BACK TOPSIDE

Baynard's man emerges onto the deck, carrying the suitcase.
Steps over the rail, crossing to the Senator's boat.
Gives a thumbs up to the men waiting there.

They cast off the lines. Freeing the two boats.

INT. MILO'S YACHT - BRIDGE

Milo watches, tense.
As the lines are freed, he says:

MILO
Hard to starboard, get us out of
here. Back off a hundred yards
and wait for the blast.

INT. SENATOR'S CABIN - SAME TIME

The go-between heads below deck, carrying the suitcase.
Senator Baynard puts down his wine glass.
Looks up, expectant.
The Aide flashes an "A-Okay" grin.
Sets the suitcase on a table. Meanwhile --

INT. JIMMY'S SPORT BOAT - BRIDGE

Jimmy has had about enough. He sighs with frustration.
Stares ahead into the fog.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

All we're doing is burning gas.
Sorry, kid, I'm turning back.

The words are barely out of his mouth when he hears a throbbing NOISE, growing louder... Darian looks up puzzled.

DARIAN

Do you hear that -- ?

And with that --

AIR ONE

bursts from the fog.

Directly in front of them.
Hovers like an avenging angel, TURBINES SCREAMING --

JIMMY

Holy fucking shit!

Rotor wash sprays in every direction.
The noise is deafening.

INT. AIR ONE - COCKPIT

The PILOT grabs the mike and shouts into it:

PILOT

Code yellow, code yellow, we got
a bogie, repeat, we got a bogie,
over.

INT. MILO'S YACHT - BRIDGE

Milo snaps his head to one side, hearing this.
Grabs the mike:

MILO

Air One, Air One, where the fuck
is he?

PILOT (V.O.)

Nine o'clock, repeat, on your
nine, and closing fast!

ANOTHER ANGLE

Jimmy's BOAT ROARS out of the fog...
And suddenly he's in a world of shit.

Less than fifty yards to port is Milo's yacht.
Fifty years to starboard is the Senator's Marlineer.

JIMMY

Oh, wow. We're fucked.

He GUNS the ENGINE. Spins the wheel, banks to port.

AIR ONE

screams past, cutting across the bow, nearly taking off
the roof --
Jimmy, wrestling the wheel, and meanwhile --

INT. BAYNARD'S CABIN

The Senator actually has his hands on the suitcase to
open it, when one of his MEN yells:

MAN

Shit! Something's going on.

BAYNARD

What is it?

MAN

Another boat. It's a fucking
setup!

BAYNARD

Get us out of here, now!

The guy relays the order, and:

EXT. HIGH SEAS

Baynard's Marlineer surges forward.
Full throttle, heading for shore, as --

EXT. MILO'S YACHT

Milo skids out on deck, grabbing for his machine gun.
Calls out:

MILO

Who the fuck is he?

A crewman grabs a pair of binoculars. Meanwhile --

INSIDE STORAGE COMPARTMENT

Hallenbeck has no fucking idea what's going on, but he can hear everthing that's said, as:

BACK ON DECK

the Crewman lowers the binoculars in disbelief:

CREWMAN

Son of a bitch! It's Dix, the
Goddamn quarterback!

INT. STORAGE COMPARTMENT

Hallenbeck's face goes through various stages of shock. It's nothing compared to when he hears:

CREWMAN (O.S.)

There's a little girl with him!

With that, he goes berserk.

Draws his legs back, thunders them against the compartment doors. Kicks with all his might. Over and over like a crazed horse, as:

BACK TOPSIDE

Air One does a flyby, circling, awaiting instructions.

ON DECK

Milo grabs the hand mike and says:

MILO

Air One, Air One, follow the
Senator, roger? I'll take the
sport boat, you take Baynard, over.

AIR ONE (V.O.)

That's a roger. Over and out.

MILO

(turns to his men)
Okay, let's go. Full throttle.

INT. YACHT - SAME TIME

With a final, resounding crash, Hallenbeck kicks open the compartment. Topples out onto the cabin floor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Works his bound hands over his knees so they're now tied in front of him.

Everybody's topside; for the moment, at least, he is forgotten.

He half crawls, half lurches over to the kitchen nook.

Worms beneath the table... awkward, desperate...
Drags out the can of gasoline.

Tries to unscrew the top. No dice. Can't get a grip.

Finally, in frustration, he tips the can on its side.
Brings his legs up in the air --
Slams them down on the can.

Over and over until, with a metallic pop -- ! it bursts.

Floods gasoline over the carpet, meanwhile:

BACK TOPSIDE

Milo's yacht is plowing ahead, gaining on Jimmy's Hatteras. The crew members take up positions on the prow. OPEN FIRE.

WITH JIMMY

As he throws Darian to the deck, shields her with his body.

The wheelhouse is RAKED by GUNFIRE.

He grits his teeth. Reaches beneath his tux.
Yanks out the BERETTA and returns FIRE, BAM -- BAM -- !
and meanwhile:

INT. YACHT CABIN

Hallenbeck is opening a box of kitchen matches with his teeth.

Dozens of matches fall scattered on the carpet.
He releases the box. Bends. Picks up a single match in his teeth.

Presses his face to the wall. Gives his neck a wrench --
Lights the match.

He drops the match on top of the GAS CAN.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A WHOOSH of combustion. It bursts into flame.

Joe swivels around. Balancing on his backside.
Thrusts his legs into the fire.

Strains. Pulls. Sweat runs in rivers.
Until the ropes binding his legs snap.

He lurches to his feet, lets free.
Now there's only one problem: He's on fire.

The legs of his pants are soaked with gas.
Flames race up his legs.
He plunges headlong up the stairs.

ON TO DECK

where he hurtles toward the rail, dives --
into the sea, swallowed by the waves.

A CREWMAN suddenly screams:

CREWMAN
Fire in the hole!

Fire, indeed. It's a rapidly-spreading blaze.

The pursuit is momentarily forgotten as the crew races to
put out the fire, and meanwhile:

HALLENBECK

surfaces, gasping for air. Trying to swim with his hands
tied.

DARIAN

spots him first. Sees her father bobbing like a cork in
the ocean, screams:

DARIAN
Daddy!!

Jimmy whirls around, startled.

JIMMY
Shit. I don't believe it.

DARIAN
Do something! Hurry!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jimmy spins the wheel. Banks hard to port.
Brings the boat around in an arc. Yells to Darian:

JIMMY

Keep the wheel like this! Don't
let it move!

She grabs the wheel. Jimmy bends down. Opens a compartment. Takes out the boat's anchor. Metal hook, attached to seventy yards of chain. He hefts it like a grappling hook.

JIMMY

Third and long, baby, lets' go...

And, sure, his left arm isn't his good arm --
But, boy, does he heave that anchor.

It soars through space, chain playing out behind it...
Hits water, thirty yards past Hallenbeck --

Who turns, sees the anchor skimming toward him over the waves.

EXT. MILO'S YACHT

Milo, meanwhile, has also spotted Hallenbeck.

He growls in rage. Hefts the Ingram machine gun, as:

ANOTHER ANGLE

Hallenbeck thrusts forward, hooks his bound hands around the passing anchor and whoosh -- !

He is catapulted forward, jerked like a rag puppet.
BULLETS CHOP the water where he just was.

He skims over the waves. Bounced. Battered.
Trailing behind Jimmy at fifty miles an hour.

Jimmy and Darian begin to haul him in.
Struggling. Straining.
The boat rushing headlong, driverless.

With a last, desperate surge of energy --
They drag Hallenbeck over the side. Into the boat.

DARIAN

Dad...!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She collapses, weeping, atop her father.
Hugs him for all she's worth.

HALLENBECK
What the hell's she doing here??

DARIAN
I stowed away...

GUNFIRE splits the air.

Reminds them they're not out of the woods.

MILO'S YACHT

is behind them again. The fire is out. The chase is on.
It steadily cuts the distance.

JIMMY'S BOAT

Hallenbeck staggers to his feet.

HALLENBECK
Get below, Darian. And stay
there.

He stumbles into the wheelhouse. Dazed. Barely
conscious.

JIMMY
Got any ideas?

HALLENBECK
Yeah. Go really fast and hope
they don't catch us.
(beat)
Oh, shit.

JIMMY
What?

HALLENBECK
Fog bank, dead ahead. Hang on.

Into the fog they go, and, folks --

This is really scary.

Because you can't see a foot in front of your face.
They plunge through the fog at fifty miles an hour.
Hallenbeck sweats, eyes glued to the windshield.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And then a shape materializes off to port:
Milo's yacht.

Running alongside. Drawing closer.
Hallenbeck wrestles the wheel. No dice.

The yacht draws ever closer... men on deck... machine
guns...

Joe looks over... and his face tells the story:

HALLENBECK

We're dead.

Except, just then, a strange thing happens:
Milo's yacht veers off to the left. Away from
Hallenbeck. Jimmy stares, dumbfounded.

JIMMY

What the fuck? They're peeling
off. Why?

A pause... then it hits Joe like a thunderbolt:

HALLENBECK

'Cause they got sonar, that's why!
Hard to port!

JIMMY

Port?

HALLENBECK

Left, Goddammit.

The boat slews to the left, as, from out of the fog --

The Catalina ferry looms right in front of them.

JIMMY

Shit fuck piss!

They almost make it.
As it is, they avoid a head-on. Instead, they hit
broadside.

A sickening CRUNCH -- !
Jimmy and Joe are thrown from their feet.

A momentary glimpse of faces rushing past -- Horrified
tourists -- And then the ferry is behind them.

Jimmy gets up. Staggeres to the controls.
Pushes the throttle. The boat lurches forward --
Then SPUTTERS. Fizzles.
He swears violently.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

We're on half power, we lost an engine!

EXT. FOG BANK - SAME TIME

The crippled boat chugs through the mist.

JIMMY

swears again. Bangs his fist.

JIMMY

We're sitting ducks. They got sonar. They can find us.

HALLENBECK

Kill the running lights and radio the Coast Guard.

Jimmy flicks off the lights. Grabs the mike. As he does, a VIBRATING RUMBLE fills the cockpit, causing him to pause... and then stare in shock as their boat emerges from the fog --

And Air One hovers directly overhead.

JIMMY

Fuck me.

The two men watch, helpless, as the helicopter descends, the Co-Pilot taking aim with a LAWS rocket.

HALLENBECK

Get down!

They both hit the floor. Hands over their heads --

And then the pilot makes a costly error: He descends right into the path of Milo's yacht.

With no warning whatsoever, the boat comes bursting out of the fog --

PLOWS right INTO the HELICOPTER.

Second number one: The boat pierces the chopper, rips it to shreds.

Second number two: The whole boat-slash-chopper mix erupts in a shower of wood and fiberglass. Turns night into day.

JIMMY AND JOE

are still huddled on the floor.
Pause. They look up. Bewildered.
There was a big light... Big noise...
Why aren't they dead?

ANOTHER ANGLE

They move like sleepwalkers to the cockpit window.
Stare in disbelief. Joe looks at Jimmy. Jimmy at Joe.

Debris rains down.

CUT TO:

EXT. CRASH SITE - MINUTES LATER

Jimmy, Joe and Darian are on deck, chugging through the
wreckage. Darian clings to her father's arm, in shock.

Hallenbeck sees something in the distance. Squints:

HALLENBECK

What's that?

Jimmy looks: A bright object... going in circles...

JIMMY

That's Baynard's boat!

HALLENBECK

(nods)

It can get us to shore faster than
this one, don't you think?

He starts to turn away. Notices something in the water.
Speaks over his shoulder to Jimmy.

HALLENBECK

Hand me the pole.

Jimmy hands him a long, wooden pole with a hooked end.
He fishes in the water. Snares a large, floating object.
Swings it aboard. Drops it at Jimmy's feet.

The suitcase.

JIMMY

What is it?

HALLENBECK

Birthday present.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He turns away. Jimmy bends to open the suitcase.

Joe heads into the cockpit, Darian beside him. Steers the boat away from the crash site. Toward the senator's boat. Chugs forward on half an engine.

O.S., Jimmy suddenly yells:

JIMMY
Holy fucking shit!!

EXT. BAYNARD'S BOAT - SAME TIME

The once-mighty Marlineer runs aimless circles in the mist. Half the cockpit is blown away, probably by a LAWS rocket.

The Hatteras pulls up alongside, and Hallenbeck steps to the rail, carrying the Baretta.

HALLENBECK
Wait here.

He swings aboard the senator's boat. Gun cocked. Ready.

INT. SENATOR'S BOAT - COCKPIT

Enters the cockpit. What's left of the roof is bullet-pocked.

The navigator is dead. Slumped over the controls. Joe pulls him off the panel. KILLS the ENGINE.

INT. MAIN CABIN

Joe bursts inside. Hard and fast. Gun leveled.

No need. It's a slaughterhouse. The walls are perforated. Baynard and his men are dead. The suitcase's evil twin lies unopened on the table.

Hallenbeck walks over to Baynard's lifeless body. Stares into the wide-open eyes.

HALLENBECK
Sorry, Cal. Life in the big city.

CUT TO:

EXT. LONG BEACH BOAT RENTALS - NIGHT

The senator's boat pulls up to the dock. No one is around.

EXT. DOCK - SAME TIME

Hallenbeck crouches next to Darian, looks her in the eye.

HALLENBECK

Listen carefully. I'm gonna go get your mom back, okay? You're gonna go in the Denny's restaurant and stay there. Talk to the waitress but don't mention me. Mom and I will come pick you up later, got it?

DARIAN

(crying)
They're gonna kill you...!

HALLENBECK

Are you kidding? I do this for a living.

(hands her a twenty)

Buy me an ice cream. I'll be back.

(beat)

I love you.

She throws her arms around him.

CUT TO:

INT. RENTAL SUBARU - DRIVING - NIGHT

All business now. Deadly serious. Jimmy and Joe stare ahead through the windshield. Grim. Tense. In the back seat sits the coveted suitcase.

JIMMY

Your prints are all over that boat. What happens when they find the bodies inside?

HALLENBECK

Quit being a fuckin' killjoy.

He cuts the headlights. Cruises to a stop behind a roadside dumpster.

HALLENBECK

Come on. We've got some things to pick up.

EXT. HALLENBECK'S HOUSE (WEST L.A.) - NIGHT

They creep across a suburban lawn, hugging the shadows.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Across the street, Hallenbeck's house is dark. Deserted.

Truly a sight: Jimmy, in a white shirt and tuxedo pants, nursing a broken arm; and Joe, drenched to the skin, pants hanging in scorched tatters.

Joe suddenly puts up a restraining hand. They stop. Crouched behind a eucalyptus tree. Joe points:

THEIR POV

A late-model Buick is parked just up the street from his house...

There is a man slouched inside. Smoking.

BACK TO SCENE

HALLENBECK

Shit. Someone's staking me out.

JIMMY

(clears his throat)

Oh, I forgot to tell you. The police want you for killing Mike Miller.

Hallenbeck shoots him a withering look.

CUT TO:

EXT. COASTAL WATERS - NIGHT

A Coast Guard cutter is circling the site of the boat/chopper crash. A uniformed ENSIGN shines a light on the dark waters.

ENSIGN

I think I got someone! Four o'clock!

MILO

is draped over a piece of wooden wreckage. Half his hair is burned away. His face is blistered. He looks up, pleading, at the Ensign, as:

ANOTHER ANGLE

He hides the Ingram beneath his body, cocked and ready.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKED BUICK - NIGHT

The sour stakeout cop reaches for a job necessity: the pot to piss in. He undoes his fly. Peees into an old Maxwell House coffee can.

Opens the door to dump it out.
A hand reaches in, lightning quick.
Grabs the can, throws it back in his face.

As he jerks backward, blinded, the hand knocks him cold.

EXT. BUICK - SAME TIME

Hallenbeck drags the unconscious cop from the car.

HALLENBECK
Let's get him inside and tie him
up.

JIMMY
Are you crazy? That's a cop! You
don't punch cops!

HALLENBECK
I forgot. Hurry up.

INT. HALLENBECK'S BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

The cop is bound and gagged in the corner. Unconscious.

Hallenbeck moves hurriedly. Not a second to waste.
Pulls a dark turtleneck from a drawer.
Rips off the sleeve. Throws it to Jimmy.

HALLENBECK
Wear that.

He strips off his own shirt. Crosses to the closet.

HALLENBECK
You know how to use a gun?

JIMMY
The trigger's the little black
thing.

HALLENBECK
Here.

He hands Jimmy a shotgun and a box of odd, black
cylinders.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

Use these. They're shredders.
Equipped with an explosive charge.
When you fire the gun, they spray
on impact. Take out anything
within ten yards.

JIMMY

What are you gonna use?

HALLENBECK

A little souvenir...

He reaches into the closet. Pulls out a sniper rifle.
The rifle. The one responsible for the puckered scar on
his chest.

HALLENBECK

Go bring the car around.

EXT. HALLENBECK'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Jimmy emerges, starts across the lawn.
Pulls up short. Stares ahead at:

HIS POV - TWO BLACK SEDANS

parked at the curb.

BACK TO SCENE

He starts to cry out --
And a dark figure looms behind him.
Clubs him in the head.

INT. HALLENBECK'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Hallenbeck snaps a full magazine into the rifle.
Stuffs extras into a black Windbreaker.
Hears a NOISE. Looks up, expecting Jimmy --
Draws a sharp breath:

PABLO AND ASSORTED GOONS

standing in the doorway. All of them have guns.
Pablo grins, shakes his head:

PABLO

Face it, pal. You're fucked by
God.

CUT TO:

PAD AND PAPER

as they're placed in front of Hallenbeck.
He is seated on the bed. Three guns covering him.
Beside him sits Furry Tom, grinning his stuffed-toy grin.

PABLO

Are you a literate man, Joe?

HALLENBECK

I got a subscription to Jugs
magazine.

PABLO

That's good. See, Joe, what
you're gonna do, you're gonna
write a little story.

A GOON sticks his head in the door.

GOON

We've got Jimmy Dix in the trunk.

PABLO

Get him out of here. Take him to
Mr. Marcon. I'll follow you as
soon as my business here is
finished.

The Goon departs, leaving Hallenbeck with Pablo and two
others. He studies them. Calculates the odds. Verdict:
Bad.

PABLO

Yeah, you're gonna write a little
story, Joe. About how guilt-
stricken you are over Senator
Baynard's death, which is all
over the air waves, by the way.
Yeah... you're so guilty about
paying those hitmen to kill him,
that you're gonna kill yourself.

HALLENBECK

Hey, who's writing this story?
You're doing all the good parts.

PABLO

Oh, and, Joe...? Don't forget to
include how guilty you are over
that cop you murdered.

HALLENBECK

What cop?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Pablo draws his pistol.
PUMPS TWO SHOTS into the unconscious cop in the corner.

PABLO

That one.

HALLENBECK

You son of a bitch...!

Pablo is making a big mistake, but he doesn't know it.
He is fueling Joe Hallenbeck's rage.
Pity the fool.

Hallenbeck regards him with dead, lifeless eyes.
A thoroughly unnerving stare.

Then Joe does something very odd.
He says, softly:

HALLENBECK

We don't like Pablo very much, do
we, Furry Tom...?

There is a pause... And then, incredibly -- Furry Tom
answers. A high-pitched, squeaky stuffed cat voice.

HALLENBECK

(as Furry Tom)

No, Mr. Hallenbeck, we think Pablo
is a motherless fuck who takes it
up the ass.

Dead silence. Pablo is completely thrown; so are we, for
that matter... and then it hits us: Joe is doing ven-
triloquism.

And the funny thing is, he's really good.

Pablo overcomes his shock.

PABLO

Shit, is he doing that?

Hallenbeck's face remains cold. Expressionless.

HALLENBECK

Furry Tom, tell Pablo what I'm
gonna do to him.

HALLENBECK

(as Furry Tom)

You're gong to make Pablo eat all
his teeth, Mr. Hallenbeck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Pablo can't help it. He bursts out laughing.

PABLO
That's amazing, man!

Hallenbeck picks up Furry Tom. Inserts his hand, makes the furry head bob back and forth.

HALLENBECK
(as Furry Tom)
Hey, Mr. Hallenbeck, they're laughin' at me. That's not very nice.

By now, all three hoods are in hysterics.

HALLENBECK
Are you mad, Furry Tom?

HALLENBECK
(as Furry Tom)
I don't get mad. I get even.

And, with that, Furry Tom's mouth opens --
And EXPLODES, showering stuffing.

One of the goons is still laughing when he realizes half his throat is gone...

And Furry Thomas BELCHES FIRE again, and the second goon goes down in a spray of blood, and if you haven't guessed already --

Joe has a gun hidden inside Furry Thomas.

Pablo is a little sharper. A little quicker.
He dives forward, knocks the puppet from Joe's hand.

Joe drives upward, into Pablo's gut.
They reel across the room. Locked in combat.
Lamps topple. GLASS BREAKS.

Pablo slams Joe's head into the wall. Leaves a dent.
Does it again, a sickening impact...
Starts to strangle Joe --

And the truth is, Joe's not thirty anymore.
He's not going to make it. The world swims away.

Then, as if through a tunnel, Joe notices something beside him... something hanging on the wall.

Fights to focus. Breath gone. Strength gone.
Identifies the object:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His Presidential Medal of Valor.
Shiny medal. Shiny ribbon. His name...

It hits him quite suddenly:
The medal has sharp edges.

With the last of his strength, he plucks it from the
wall. Drives it into Pablo's throat.

The big man stumbles backward. Eyes wide. Gurgling.
He thrashes, the red-white-blue ribbon flapping obscenely
from his gushing neck.

Drops to the dusty carpet. Dies.

Hallenbeck takes a deep breath. Eyes wide. Insane.
He is surrounded by corpses. He takes another deep
breath.

Picks up the sniper rifle.
Slings it over his shoulder.
Heads for the door.

INT. CONRAD MARCON'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jimmy Dix is on the floor, and Marcon is kicking him
savagely. Pointed alligator boots lashing out. Again
and again.

MARCON

You know I don't enjoy doin' this,
Jim.

Jimmy curls up in a fetal ball. Marcon paces, shaking
his head.

MARCON

I remember how much you hated the
pain... You got hooked on Demerol,
didn't you...? I'll make a deal
with you. Tell me who you talked
to, and I'll give you all the
painkillers you can swallow.

JIMMY

Nobody knows. Just... just me...
and Hallenbeck...

MARCON

Now, see, I'd love to believe you.
But we are talking about the
future of my football team.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He crosses to the fireplace. Removes a poker.

MARCON

And ain't nothin' more important
than my ball club, 'cept maybe my
collection of autographed
footballs. Got one of yours, you
know.

(softly)

Who'd you talk to, Jimmy?

JIMMY

Nobody...

Marcon raises the poker.
Brings it down on Jimmy's broken arm.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - NIGHT

Hallenbeck leaves the rented Subaru by the side of the
road.

He is dressed in combat black. Government issue.
Rifle over one shoulder. Hunting knife in a hip
scabbard.
Like an angel of death, he moves into the brush.
Heading down the canyon.

EXT. MARCON'S HOME - SAME TIME

An armed sentry patrols the grounds.
Below him, nighttime L.A. stretches to the Pacific.

Joe Hallenbeck emerges like a wraith from the trees.
Clamps a gloved hand over the sentry's mouth.
Drives the hunting knife into his back.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Marcon stirs the fireplace logs, stoking the blaze.
Replaces the poker. Crosses to his desk and sits.

Jimmy is on the carpet, delirious. Out of it.

Marcon presses a button. An armed HARDGUY appears.

HARDGUY

Mr. Marcon?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARCON

He's nothing, he can't hurt us.
Take him somewhere and kill him.

HARDGUY

Yes, sir.

The Hardguy crosses the room. Grips Jimmy by the shoulders.

With a soft SPIT of sound, his forehead blooms crimson. He collapses, lifeless.

At his desk, Marcon whirls, stunned, as:

JOE HALLENBECK

steps through the French doors behind him. He resembles nothing human. A demon in black. Eyes burning. Gun held loosely. An extension of his arm.

Marcon reaches for the button to summon help.

HALLENBECK

Don't.

He jams the rifle barrel into Marcon's throat, nearly crushing his larynx. Hisses:

HALLENBECK

The gun is silenced, I'll fuckin' kill you. Where's my wife?

MARCON

I... I don't remember, I...

Joe shoves on the gun. The barrel chokes him.

HALLENBECK

My wife.

Grabs a pen. Shoves it in Marcon's hand.

HALLENBECK

The address. Now!

MARCON

It's... Milo's film studio...

HALLENBECK

Write it down, dumbfuck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He speaks over his shoulder:

HALLENBECK
Jimmy, you okay...?

Jimmy stirs.

JIMMY
Hurts like hell.

Marcon finishes writing. Hallenbeck snatches up the address. Stows it in his pocket.

HALLENBECK
Okay, Connie, you're gonna walk us out of here, nice and easy, got it?

(beat)
Can you walk, Jimmy?

JIMMY
Yeah... I think so -- Joe, behind you...!

Too late. A revolver is cocked a foot from Joe's head.

STRANGE MAN
Drop it.

It's the same odd voice we heard earlier. The man with the speech impediment.

HALLENBECK
You drop it, asshole, or I kill Marcon.

The Strange Man chuckles.

STRANGE MAN
Sorry, but that won't work. I don't care if he lives or dies, now drop the gun.

A pause. Once more, Joe calculates the odds. No dice. He places the rifle on the desk.

STRANGE MAN
Walk over there by your friend, Joe.

Hallenbeck turns around... and, for once, his jaw drops.

He's looking at a man he never thought he'd see again. A man who suffers from facial paralysis ever since his head bounced off the Georgetown turnpike eight years ago.

LOUIS BAYNARD

Son of the late senator. The right side of his face doesn't quite match the left. The muscles don't work.

Hallenbeck recovers his composure. As Jimmy climbs to his feet, Joe walks over and stands next to him. Two gunmen appear behind them, covering the rear.

HALLENBECK

Well, Goddamn. How's the head, Lou?

BAYNARD (STRANGE MAN)

Aside from permanent facial neuralgia, just lovely.

HALLENBECK

Next time, Lou, just say no.

JIMMY

Shit. This is the drunk guy you slugged, look what you did to his face!

Marcon, meanwhile, is positively livid. He snaps at Baynard:

MARCON

You son of a bitch, you were gonna let him kill me!

BAYNARD

Nothing more or less than you'd do for me, Conrad.

(turns)

I never thought I'd see you again, Joe.

HALLENBECK

Speaking of which, what the fuck are you doing here?

BAYNARD

Call it a financial partnership. For a price, I agreed to connect Mr. Marcon to the necessary people in Washington.

HALLENBECK

In other words, you dropped your father's name a bunch of times.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAYNARD

(ignores him)

But imagine my delight this morning, Joe, when Mr. Marcon informed me of a golden opportunity: a chance to kill my father and frame you for the crime... What can I say, inherit a fortune and humiliate you in the bargain, who could resist?

HALLENBECK

Do I also have you to thank for dragging me into this mess?

BAYNARD

(sighs)

It was I, unfortunately, who bought a forty-dollar bottle of champagne... spoke a little too freely to that hooker.

JIMMY

She wasn't a hooker, dickhead.

HALLENBECK

He should know, Jimmy. With a face like that, he's gotta be paying for it.

BAYNARD

You can die fast or slow, so watch your mouth.

Jimmy chimes in:

JIMMY

We'd rather watch yours. It's goofy-lookin'.

Marcon has had enough. He pounds his fist on the desk.

MARCON

Kill them, Goddammit, waste 'em both!

JIMMY

Any bright ideas, Joe?

HALLENBECK

Gimme a minute.

JIMMY

Excuse me, could you give him a minute? He's trying to think of a way out of this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Behind them, the two hardguys COCK their GUNS.

Jimmy sweats. He's scared shitless underneath.
Hallenbeck clears his throat:

HALLENBECK

You know of course, Connie, that
you're a dead man.

Marcon holds up his hand.

MARCON

Wait.

The gunmen lower their weapons.

MARCON

Let's humor this asshole. What
are you talking about?

HALLENBECK

(shrugs)

Nothing much, just that I made a
phone call from the boat on the
way in.

MARCON

You called the cops? Fuck it,
they can't prove a thing.

HALLENBECK

Oh, but I didn't call the cops. I
called the mob.

Marcon stares at him. Blinks.

HALLENBECK

See, Connie, every year, the mob
rakes in two and a half billion
from football bookmaking. If you
succeed in making gambling legal,
all that money goes to the
government.

(beat)

I wouldn't be surprised if they
put out a contract on you. Of
course, I might be able to call it
off.

Marcon stares him down. A pause. Then Marcon smiles:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARCON

He's bluffing. He's not connected to the mob, what a load of horseshit. Nice try, asshole.

(waves his hand)

Kill them.

HALLENBECK

(plowing ahead)

Then there's the matter of two million dollars. Or didn't you know that watertight suitcases float...?

He once again looks Marcon in the eye.

HALLENBECK

I've got your money, Connie. Stashed in the back of a rented Subaru. We'll take you to it.

MARCON

(laughing)

Jesus, I don't believe it. This guy's a riot.

JIMMY

(sotto)

I don't think it's working, Joe. Try another one.

HALLENBECK

Hell, I'm fresh out. You wanna try one, kid, go for it.

A pause. Then, without warning, Jimmy turns -- And slugs Hallenbeck with his good arm. Decks him.

JIMMY

Fuck you, Joe, I'm not just gonna stand here and die. Mr. Marcon, he's lying. We do have the money, but it's not in a car, it's in a storage locker. I have the key on me. I'll hand it over if you let me go.

Hallenbeck stares in disbelief. The kid's actually trying something.

MARCON

Where is the key, Jimmy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY
It's stashed in my shorts.

MARCON
(nods)
All right. Slow and easy.

JIMMY
Sure. Slow and easy.

Jimmy reaches inside his jeans. Slowly, cautiously pulls something out, concealed in his fist.

We see, but Marcon doesn't:
It's a shredder shell. He holds it in his fist.

JIMMY
Promise you'll let me go.

MARCON
Hell with that, son. Hand it over
or I'll have you kneecapped.

JIMMY
Oh, yeah? Well, that's too bad.
See, it's one of those new plastic
keys. The kind that melt...?

And, with that, he hurls it into the fire.
So fast that nobody can see just what he threw.

JIMMY
I guess nobody gets the money.

The two hardguys rush to the fireplace.

MARCON
Pull it out of there!

One of them grabs a pair of tongs --
and the SHREDDER EXPLODES.

Sprays the two hardguys. Cuts them to ribbons.

Then, several things happen at once:

Everybody goes for a gun.

Hallenbeck lunges, scoops up a fallen pistol --

As Marcon draws his GUN and FIRES, missing --

Joe RETURNS FIRE, BAM-BAM -- !
Catches Marcon in the shoulder, and meanwhile --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Baynard draws down on Jimmy, who picks up a flaming log and hurls it, knocks the SHOT wild, as:

Marcon darts out the French doors, into the night, so Hallenbeck spins, FIRES at Baynard --

Blows him backward in a bloody spray. Baynard sags against the mantel. Collapses, dead.

ECHOES. Silence. Jimmy and Joe are alone with three corpses.

Jimmy snatches up a pistol. Joe slings the sniper rifle over his shoulder. Stares at Jimmy:

HALLENBECK

Plastic keys...? The kind that melt?

JIMMY

Hey. Short notice, best I could do.

HALLENBECK

You did fine, junior.

JIMMY

Learned it from a pro. Come on.

EXT. MARCON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The wooden garage DOORS EXPLODE outward, bursting to splinters, as a Ford BRONCO DRIVES right THROUGH them, Conrad Marcon at the wheel. He careens off into the night. Makes a getaway.

INT. GARAGE - SAME TIME

Jimmy and Joe come racing out of the house, just in time to see Marcon's taillights disappearing up the canyon.

JIMMY

Son of a bitch!

HALLENBECK

Forget about him. Let's get my wife.

He crosses to a parked Mercedes. SHOOTS open the door. Gets in. Pops the ignition package. Hotwires it. The CAR ROARS to life.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HALLENBECK

Get in.

He's so slick, it's scary.

EXT. MARCON'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

The Mercedes barrels out through the splintered garage doors. BURNS RUBBER down the hill.

INT. CAR - DRIVING

They stare straight ahead. Tense. Breathless.

HALLENBECK

On my way, honey, on my way...

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - NIGHT

Conrad Marcon, meanwhile, is rocketing along the winding road, heading up the canyon, when he sees something ahead:

HIS POV - JOE'S RENTAL SUBARU

sitting abandoned in the roadside brush.

BACK TO SCENE

Acting on a sudden hunch, he SLAMS ON the BRAKES. Stops the car. Gets out, crosses to the rental. Peeks in.

A two-million-dollar suitcase sits, pretty as punch, on the back seat.

MARCON

Shit, Joe Boy, you wasn't bluffing...

He draws his gun. Blows out the glass. Reaches in. Opens the car door. Snatches up the briefcase.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT

A block of seedy-looking brick buildings. Off Sunset. Not many people at this hour.

MERCEDES

slews around the corner races down the street, running without headlights.

Lurches to a halt near the mouth of an alley.

Jimmy and Joe burst from the car, guns in hand. Hellenbeck is grim, purposeful. Jimmy is nervous.

JIMMY

I'm new at this, Joe. How do we do it?

HALLENBECK

We get in, we get out. Shoot anyone who's not my wife. Check that: Don't shoot me.

He jacks a fresh clip into his rifle.

CUT TO:

LOCKPICK

inserted in the latch of a back door. Hallenbeck finds the tumblers. Springs the lock in seconds.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jimmy and Joe. Side by side. Walking. Expressionless. They round a bend in the hall.

SENTRY

seated outside a wooden door. .38 special in a shoulder rig. Sees them, leaps to his feet, gun clearing leather --

Joe blows him out of his socks. TWO-SHOT BURST. Silenced.

Guy hits the wall. Paints it with blood. Flops, dead.

Jimmy and Joe step over him. Joe braces himself. Draws back his foot. Kicks the door, as:

INT. STUDIO - SAME TIME

The door flies open. Doesn't hit the wall.
Something stops it.

Joe doesn't blink. He puts the rifle against the panel.
FIRES three SHOTS through the wood.
Keeps going.

A body falls out from behind the door.
Joe doesn't even look.

The body sits up. Not dead yet...

Jimmy comes through the door. SHOOTs him.
Follows Joe.

One more door to go. Thick. Soundproofed metal.

It isn't locked. Joe yanks it open. Steps inside.

MOVIE SET

Lights. Camera. The wrong kind of action.

SARAH

on a bed, naked.

bright lights on her. Around her, a director. A
cameraman.

MAN

with a chainsaw.

and he's standing right over her.

Jimmy BLOWS down the two artistes.
Joe takes the actor.

HALLENBECK

Cut.

He throws the hunting knife. It pierces the guy's neck.
The chainsaw clatters to the floor.

He does the funny little dance peculiar to those with
pierced necks. Falls. Dies.

And then, mercifully, it's over. Joe crosses to the bed,
puts out an arm, and Sarah collapses against him, shaking
with sobs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He strokes her hair. Speaking softly. Quietly.
Speaking to the only woman he's ever loved:

HALLENBECK
I'm here... it's all right...
I'm here...

He cradles his wife in the middle of a slaughterhouse.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Sarah is now dressed, as Joe supports her across the sidewalk toward the stolen Mercedes.
He turns to Jimmy. Hands him a set of keys.

HALLENBECK
Drive one of their cars. They
won't be needing them.

JIMMY
Where do you want me to go?

HALLENBECK
The two million bucks is still in
the Subaru. Parked on Mulholland
above Marcon's house. Go pick it
up and bring it to the office.
We're gonna go get Darian.

JIMMY
Yes, massah.

He moves off into the parking lot.
Hallenbeck says to Sarah.

HALLENBECK
I'll take you and Darian to the
office. You can sleep there.

SARAH
Why can't we go home?

HALLENBECK
There's four corpses in the bedroom.

SARAH
Oh.

It's a very tiny "oh."

ESTABLISHING SHOT - JOE'S OFFICE

in the shadow of the freeway. The night wears on. From
the billboard, Gorgeous continues to entice.

INT. HALLENBECK'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Darian is asleep, cradled in her mother's arms.
Her mother is awake, cradled in Joe's arms.

HALLENBECK
Jimmy should be here any minute.
Then we gotta talk to the cops.

Sarah nestles into the crook of his arm.

SARAH
Will the police catch Marcon?

HALLENBECK
Maybe. He's probably in some
secret crash pad, packing to leave
town.

A pause, then Sarah says:

SARAH
I remember when we got married...
My friends would talk about their
husbands. They'd say, 'Oh, my
husband is a big-time publisher,'
or, 'My husband is a brilliant
lawyer...' I used to say, 'My
husband can stand over a shotgun
victim and eat a ham sandwich
without puking.'

HALLENBECK
Don't knock it. It's a skill.

She turns. Looks into his eyes.

SARAH
I want to try, Joe. Do you still
want to try?

A pause. He leans in and kisses her tenderly.

And, with typically swell timing, a set of headlights
rakes across the window, accompanied by the strobing
light of a police flasher.

HALLENBECK
Ahh, shit. Looks like the local
constable has come to chat.

SARAH
Shall we invite him in?

HALLENBECK
No. Stay here. I'll deal with
it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He gets up, throws on a jacket.

EXT. JOE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Joe exits the office, starts across the lawn toward the vehicle with the flashing light.

Realizes with a sudden shock: something's wrong.

HALLENBECK

That's not L.A.P.D....

HALLENBECK'S POV

the insignia on the door panel reads LONG BEACH SHORE PATROL.

In the same glance, he sees there's a dead cop slumped in the passenger seat, and worse, much worse than that:

Milo is in the driver's seat.

WIDER ANGLE

Milo, who steps out of the car and promptly OPENS FIRE on Joe.

HALLENBECK

Son of a bitch!

He dives for cover, the turf erupting all around him, as:

INT. OFFICE - SAME

Sarah sits bolt upright. Eyes panicked. Terrified. Darian comes awake, screaming:

DARIAN

Mommy, what's happening?

Sarah leaps off the couch, cradling Darian and meanwhile --

EXT. OFFICE - SAME

Hallenbeck spins behind one of the billboard support legs, as BULLETS CHOP it to splinters.

MILO

advances.

changing clips. Methodical. Precise.
Like a robot.

He is obsessed. All vestige of sanity gone.

MILO

You fucked up my face, Joseph!

Joe starts to climb. Scales the wooden structure.
Swings himself onto the raised platform.
Flattens behind the billboard.

MILO

Don't try to hide, Joseph. I've
got all night, you fucked up my
face.

He sprays a BURST of GUNFIRE up at the billboard.

HALLENBECK

huddles behind the billboard as the bullets stitch
upward. Through the wooden frame.

A hot SLUG RIPS through Joe's arm.
An eruption of blood. He hisses in pain.
Rolls away from the gunfire.

Looks around. Desperate.
Sees a painter's bucket lying nearby.

He counts to three.

DOWN BELOW

Milo calmly changes clips.

Hallenbeck bursts from cover.

Hurls the bucket down at Milo, dashes across the front of
the billboard, hard and fast --

BULLETS CHOPPING the board right behind him, blowing
holes in Gorgeous's derriere --

And then Joe does a risky thing:

He sprints to the end of the billboard, running full
tilt, and he leaps out into space, what the hell is he
doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He's trying to make the freeway.

It's a good fifteen feet. Try it sometime.

He flies through open air --

Milo's GUN CHATTERING below, seeking him out --

And just does make it.

Hits the freeway surface and collapses forward, screaming as he rolls on his injured arm... Looks up --

EIGHTEEN WHEEL TRUCK

is headed straight for him, bearing down...!

He rolls aside just in time. It THUNDERS past. Staggers to his feet, frantic --

and Milo is climbing the billboard.

Hallenbeck looks for a place to hide. There isn't any.

He's going to have to run through traffic. He shifts from foot to foot, searching for an opening, and meanwhile --

INT. SUBARU - DRIVING

Jimmy Dix is actually on the freeway, driving, when he looks across the center divider and sees Hallenbeck.

JIMMY

I don't fucking believe it.

He swerves over to the side and meanwhile

HALLENBECK

watches in dismay as Milo climbs onto the platform... Walks across the front of the billboard. Toward the freeway. Toward Joe. Snarling.

Joe grabs a broken bottle off the ground. Heaves it. Milo puts up an arm, catches a glancing blow. Blood flows. All it does is piss him off.

MILO

You ruined my flesh!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hallenbeck dives flat to the road as Milo opens up again, a chattering BURST of GUNFIRE. The muzzle flash is blinding.

The windshield of a passing car SHATTERS -- The driver panics, the car spins out of control --

Slews across the road in the middle of traffic. COLLISIONS. CRUMPLING METAL. EXPLOSIONS of GLASS. SCREECHING TIRES.

CAR

slides straight toward Hallenbeck.

He dives aside, rolls to his feet --

And he's right in Milo's sights.
My friends, the fat lady just sang.

Except another lady says different:

A single GUNSHOT SPLITS the air.

Milo's chest explodes with bubbling blood.
He shrieks. Turns, staring in disbelief at

SARAH HALLENBECK

below, on the lawn. She aims Joe's service revolver and says:

SARAH
You just fucking die.

She FIRES again, and Milo reels backward.
Leaves a bloody smudge on the billboard.

She DROPS the HAMMER again and again. Empties the gun.

Milo jerks and twitches. Racked by gunfire.

Paints a bloody stripe across the billboard, making
Gorgeous's bloody buns even bloodier --

Clutches himself. Looks over at Hallenbeck.

HALLENBECK
She's something, isn't she?

Milo pitches forward. Falls to his death.

HALLENBECK

stares, dumbfounded at Sarah. She look up at him.
A moment passes between them.

Around Hallenbeck, a sea of crumpled cars. HORNS
BLARING. Amidst it all, he stands. Beaten. Bloody.
Bullet-scarred.

Jimmy winds his way through the cars. Walks up to Joe.
They stand in silence for a moment, then Jimmy says:

JIMMY

The car's over on the other side.
C'mere, I want to show you
something.

EXT. 405 FREEWAY - SOUTHBOUND LANE - NIGHT

Jimmy and Joe stand in the breakdown lane next to the
rented Subaru. Jimmy points to the shattered window.

JIMMY

Somebody broke in and swiped the
suitcase from the back seat. Had
to be Marcon, right?

There is a pause. They both stare at the car.
Two million. Down the drain.

Except, after a beat... they begin to laugh.
First chuckling, then chortling..
Now it's go-for-broke. Jimmy hoots. Joe howls.

Jimmy pulls out a key and opens the trunk --
You can guess what's inside.

JIMMY

Son of a bitch got the wrong one!

CUT TO:

AUTOGRAPHED FOOTBALL

on the dresser of a fancy penthouse suite.
Signed by Joe Montana, no less.

CONRAD MARCON

bustles back and forth, shoves the last of his needed
possessions into a travel bag. Hefts it. Puts it near
the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Crosses to the bed, where the other suitcase lies.
Looks at it. Smiles, contented.

Can't help himself. He reaches out. Flicks the latch.

Opens it.

There is a note taped to the inside:

FUCK YOU

EXT. DOWNTOWN SKYSCRAPER - 32ND FLOOR - NIGHT

Marcon's flaming corpse is BLOWN OUT through the glass,
along with his earthly possessions. He plummets like a
meteor.

CUT TO:

EAST L.A. SIDESTREET - NIGHT

Two ten-year-old black boys are walking down the street.
Out strolling in the poverty that exists in the shadow of
the skyscrapers.

Quite suddenly, without warning --

A football drops out of the sky.

Hits and bounces, very high --
Comes down. Settles. Rocks, back and forth.

The kids look up, puzzled. Searching the sky.

The ball sits there. Only slightly scorched.

Tentatively, almost like he's afraid of being caught,
one of the boys bends down... looks both ways...

Picks up the ball. Smiles.

Then, as if by some unspoken agreement --
The other boy starts to run.

Slowly at first, then faster... faster still...
A slant pattern, heading for the mailbox...

And at 12 midnight on December 22nd, the San Pedro Street
quarterback throws an absolutely perfect pass.

Their laughter is joyful. Innocent. Fervid.

They will grow up to be sports heroes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BESSALO'S OFFICE - L.A.P.D. - MORNING

Hallenbeck sits impassively while Bessalo paces, fuming.

BESSALO
You got a lot of questions to
answer.

HALLENBECK
I know.

BESSALO
You'll probably lose your license.

HALLENBECK
I know.

Bessalo glares at him.

BESSALO
Do you care?

Hallenbeck smiles.

HALLENBECK
My wife loves me.

Bessalo looks at him like he's grown a tail.

ESTABLISHING SHOT - JOE'S OFFICE - UNDER THE FREEWAY

Another blistering hot December day.
Gorgeous looks on from her perch, cheerful as ever,
despite the crusted brown stripe on her ass.

INT. HALLENBECK'S OFFICE - DAY

The suitcase sits on a table. Jimmy and Joe contemplate
it over a bottle of Seagrams V.O.

JIMMY
So.

HALLENBECK
Yeah. So.

JIMMY
(clears his throat)
You gonna keep it?

Hallenbeck nods.

HALLENBECK
Some of it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

How much?

Hallenbeck frowns. Opens the case. Reaches in --
And plucks out two crisp \$100 bills. Stuffs them in a
pocket. Jimmy stares at him.

HALLENBECK

(shrugs)

My fee.

He shuts the case. Shoves it toward Jimmy.

Jimmy leans forward, eyeing the suitcase.

JIMMY

Shit, Joe... I got all the money
I need.

He shoves it back into the center. Joe nods.

HALLENBECK

I'm thinkin' I could use a partner.

(beat)

Think you could handle that for
awhile?

JIMMY

I maybe could handle that. For
awhile.

He pours a drink. Raises his glass on high:

JIMMY

Alex the detective.

He drinks.

INT. CANCER RESEARCH CENTER - DAY

A uniformed man is emptying the PLEASE GIVE jar when he
notices a suitcase lying against the wall. Under a
poster that says THE GOAL: A CURE IN OUR LIFETIME.

He bends down. Opens the suitcase.
When the money is counted, there will be \$1,999,800.
A note is taped to the inside:

SO HURRY UP ALREADY

EXT. PALM-LINED L.A. STREET - DAY

Jimmy and Joe walk side by side. Away from us. Slightly drunk. Palms wave lazily. A sweaty Santa rings a bell.

HALLENBECK

See, Jim, the thing is, life sucks.
But you still can't be hangin'
around Satan Claus, you know why...?

JIMMY

Why?

HALLENBECK

'Cause someday, compadre... Satan
Claus and Santa Claus are gonna
have a big fight, and you know
what...?

(beat)

Santa's gonna kick some royal ass.

He puts a fatherly arm around Jimmy's shoulder, grins:

HALLENBECK

Hey. Smile, you fuck.

FADE OUT.

THE END