

the nice guys

by

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The late 1970's:

THE CITY OF ANGELS wrestles with its two most resistant demons: SMOG AND PORN.

Once-glamorous Hollywood Boulevard -- a RED-LIGHT district.

In the VALLEY, SMOG alerts keep kids HOME FROM SCHOOL.

At the start of this decade, Los Angeles filed a lawsuit against the Big Three automakers.

The charge? A CONSPIRACY to suppress what was then known only as "a smog control device."

In fact? The CATALYTIC CONVERTER, as it is now known, had been withheld for over a decade.

All the above is TRUE. The story that follows: PROBABLY NOT.

EXT. HILLSIDE - COLDWATER CANYON - L.A. - NIGHT

Lighted HOMES dot the landscape. Clinging like stragglers to the steep canyon. Wreathed in fog. Secure. Sleepy.

Above, random cars *shuush* by up on Mulholland.

PUSH IN ON ONE HOME

Nestled in the canyon. The back door opens, emits a brief shaft of light, as a BOY (14) in pajamas lets the dog out.

He shuts the door. And the CAMERA DRIFTS alongside the house. He's visible through windows, heading down the hall, switching off lights as he goes.

WE PUSH IN THROUGH A WINDOW

Following behind the boy. Down a darkened hallway as he stops at one particular door...

He turns the knob, ever so gently. Listens... Then --

CLICK--! The boy switches on a PEN FLASHLIGHT.

Enters the room. Creeping in carefully, inching his way towards A BED. He leans down. Peers underneath.

From above, SNORING. Mom, Pop. He shines the light: THERE, under the bed, surrounded by dust bunnies--

A STACK OF PORN MAGAZINES

The boy grasps one from the top. Gingerly, slides it off. Stands again. Penlight, off. Heads back out

INTO THE HALLWAY

The boy (let's call him Bobby) moves quickly now. Starts back down the hallway, examining the magazine.

It's called BUSTER. And it's a clear product of its decade.

The cover prominently features a porn star with a noteworthy rack... Bold lettering proclaims her to be: *SUPERSTAR MISTY MOUNTAINS*. Bobby smiles.

We follow him into the KITCHEN. He raids the fridge. Finds half a HAM SANDWICH, drops it on a plate. Eyes riveted on the CENTERFOLD: MISTY in full glory--

He turns, heads toward his room... A man with a purpose. Do we want to know this purpose?

He stops. Damn. Forgot something. Jogs back, with us in tow. Crosses to the fridge. Opens it. Grabs a bottle of milk.

Of course, forgot the milk. Where's our thinking?

He stands, the kitchen window at his back, and pours himself a glass... And that's when we see something he doesn't--

OUT THE KITCHEN WINDOW

A CAR. Way in the distance. A POWDER-BLUE TRANS AM.

It appears out of nowhere. Punching through the guardrail up on Mulholland with a fog-muffled CRUMP-!

It's almost comical. Half-obscured by Bobby's head, the car crosses our POV. Showering earth.

Then it's GONE. Blink and you missed it. Window, boring again.

Holy shit. BOBBY, oblivious.

Leaves the kitchen, actually yanks our POV away. Walks, juggling the sandwich and magazine, into the living room.

Raises the glass of milk, takes a sip --

THE WALL EXPLODES

Just DISINTEGRATES. The whole damn thing. Part of the CEILING going with it, as

THE POWDER-BLUE TRANS AM

BLASTS into the house, moving impossibly fast. Showering DEBRIS. Trailing trees, brush...

It hurtles across the room. DETONATES obstacles. BLOWS them to splinters. Sweeps the place clean, doing 50, half on its side--

Then, just as promptly, DEPARTS.

Crash--! Sails OUT THE OPPOSITE WALL. Into the night. Just like that. CAMERA PANS TO FOLLOW --

Peering out the gaping HOLE, out and down --

Unbelievable. There it is, STILL GOING. Plunging down a HILLSIDE. Tumbling. Chewing up huge GOUTS of dirt.

WHAM--! It slams to a STOP. A hundred yards down the hill. Battered. Smoking... Stillness, then. Echoes, fading...

BOBBY, knocked off his feet by the impact, stands shakily. Stares out what used to be the back wall of his house...

EXT. HILLSIDE - MINUTES LATER

BOBBY staggers downhill in his PJs. Past uprooted trees, gouged earth. Trailing in the car's WAKE --

The sound of DOGS BARKING fills the canyon now. Faintly we hear Bobby's PARENTS up above. Calling his name.

Bobby stumbles. Falls. Rolls to his feet...

THERE, BELOW.

The car sits steaming. Roof pancaked.

He forces his feet to move. Approaches the wreck as you'd approach a sleeping dragon. Cranes his neck for a look...

The car is empty. And then A COUGH. BEHIND him, he spins--

Stops dead. Transfixed.

MISTY MOUNTAINS

Lies twisted against a rock. Completely nude. Famous curves bruised, discolored (this is to be handled *tastefully*.)

Bobby can't help staring. He tries to make sense of what he's seeing: *That's Misty Mountains. That's her in the flesh.*

Her breath comes in hitches, gulps.
Her eyes are swimming. Unfocused.

Finally notices BOBBY. Fixes him with a pain-wracked stare.

MISTY MOUNTAINS

How... do you like my car... Big Boy.

SIRENS, approaching.

She convulses. Spasms once, twice. BLOOD jets from her mouth.

She dies staring at him.
The strangest moment of this kid's young life.

The two of them in tableau. SIRENS, closer now. Wind, gusting.

We hold... And then Bobby does something odd. He grips his pajama top. Yanks it over his head. Shivers, it's cold.

Steps up next to the corpse...
Delicately lays the fabric across her. Covers her up.

Withdraws. Stands trembling in the cold.
Waiting on the sirens... CUT TO BLACK. ROLL CREDITS.

Pause, then--

HEALY (v.o.)

It's a different world these days. More cynical. Less innocent. You see it all around... You see it in the kids--

INT. GRADE SCHOOL CLASSROOM - LIGHTS DIMMED

A roomful of sullen, vacant-eyed kids (mean age of, say 13) sit watching an ancient EDUCATIONAL FILM. Subject: GRAMMAR.

ONSCREEN - A young boy holds up a white BEACH TOWEL:

NARRATOR (ON FILM)

Bart has a PLAIN towel.

The word "*adjective!*" appears on screen, DING..! And then Bart is replaced by a little girl clutching a YELLOW TOWEL:

NARRATOR (ON FILM)

Sarah has a BRIGHT towel.

DING..! Another kid, another towel. This one multi-colored:

NARRATOR (ON FILM)

Jonathan has a GAY towel.

The classroom erupts in LAUGHTER... Apparently this is the funniest thing ever. One kid actually falls out of his seat.

CAMERA settles on one YOUNG GIRL in particular, laughing with her classmates. Dark hair. Beautiful.

HEALY (v.o.)

They know too much. Precocious is a good word... only that doesn't get it. It's like precocious, only shittier...

EXT. JUNIOR HIGH - AFTERNOON - DAY

School's out. Kids exit the building. Moving in cliques. Stoners. Skaters. More Stoners. It's the 70's, after all.

CAMERA FINDS our YOUNG BEAUTY as she starts home. After a moment, a fire-engine red CORVETTE pulls alongside her.

Turns out she knows the guy in the car -- the MUCH OLDER guy in the car... They strike up a conversation as

ANOTHER ANGLE

SOMEONE watches from a store window across the street.

He's got a kind face, this man. Late-thirties maybe.
For the record? Meet JACKSON HEALY.

HEALY (v.o.)

Take this one. Thirteen and already she's
got herself a winner. Sure, he's three
times her age... But he's got money for
pot. And he drives a nice car.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

The RED CORVETTE is parked in the driveway of one of those
modern boxes on stilts that populate the hills.

CAMERA DRIFTS

To an open WINDOW. We HEAR people having sex inside:

OLDER MAN (o.s.)

Yeah! Who's the man, baby?! Who?!

YOUNG BEAUTY (o.s.)

... You are. You're the man. Oh, yes.
You're the man! You! You!

CAMERA FINDS HEALY

Just below the window. Hidden in SHADOW. Bored, eating
peanuts. Pops them one at a time... Munches. Listening:

YOUNG BEAUTY (o.s.)

You're the man! You're my Foxy-fox!

Healy frowns: Foxy-fox..?

YOUNG BEAUTY (o.s.)

Foxy-fox! Foxy-fox!

Healy shrugs. Picks through his handful of nuts...
Whispers to himself:

HEALY

... Yeah, but is he the man...?

YOUNG BEAUTY

Oh, yes baby! Yes! You're the man, baby!

Ah, that's better... Healy smiles as he finds a cashew.

HEALY (v.o.)

Love. Grand, isn't it?

(beat)

I was in love once. June Miller.

FLASH CUT TO: A POLYNESIAN RESTAURANT

HEALY sits across a table from a knockout BLONDE. They stare into each other's eyes. A beat. Healy starts to say something-- The blonde cuts him off:

BLONDE

Jack... I slept with your father.

The guy at the next table does a SPIT TAKE.

BACK TO SCENE - Healy dusts peanut debris from his hands.

HEALY (v.o.)

Marriage is buying a house for someone you hate... Remember that.

ANOTHER ANGLE - SAME HOUSE - LATER

The YOUNG BEAUTY exits. Alone. Her BICYCLE, stashed by the front door. Banana seat. Tassels on the handlebars. She gets on, rides off. HEALY steps from the shadows. Stares after her.

HEALY (v.o.)

Yep, these days the world is a vulgar, unromantic place...

HEALY cracks his neck. Grimaces. Slips on a pair of BRASS KNUCKLES. Starts towards the front of the house--

HEALY (v.o.)

So I adjust.

Healy knocks on the FRONT DOOR. The OLDER GUY answers it.

HEALY

Are you the man?

OLDER MAN

What..?

Healy SLUGS him. WHAM--! SHATTERS the man's JAW-- And right then we FREEZE FRAME. On the moment of impact. The poor guy's face CONTORTED IMPOSSIBLY. Sickeningly.

HEALY (v.o.)

I don't have a job title. I'm not in the yellow pages... But if you've got trouble with someone --

INT. THE COMEDY STORE - NIGHT

Setting up for the night's business. Healy sits in a booth at the back of the club. An older man sits across from him.

HEALY (v.o.)
 -- Someone's threatening you, someone's
 messing around with your underage
 daughter. Whatever --

The older man gives Healy an ENVELOPE. Shakes his hand. Leaves.

HEALY (v.o.)
 -- You might ask around for me: Jackson
 Healy's the name... When business is
 good, I'm easy to find. When it isn't--?

INT. UNITED DC-10 - COACH SECTION - MID-FLIGHT - NIGHT

Crammed to overflowing with weary travelers. The color
 ORANGE at the apparent height of its popularity.

Healy sits by himself in the first row. A slim metal
 BRIEFCASE rests on the seat by his side.

HEALY (v.o.)
 -- Means I'm traveling... The 1st and 14th
 of every month.

Healy reaches into the front pocket of his jacket, takes out
 a pack of PARLIAMENTS. Lights up, one handed.

Never taking his other hand off the briefcase.

HEALY (v.o.)
 LA to New York. Drop off and pick up. No
 questions asked. Not something I'm proud
 of... But it's work.

A stewardess approaches Healy--

STEWARDESS
 Sir..? I'm sorry, but if you'd like to
 smoke you'll have to move to the smoking
 section of the plane.

Healy follows her finger. On the floor, a yellow LINE. Beyond
 that, a bunch of people smoking. Healy gets up --

Moves FIVE WHOLE FEET. Sits. Ah. Now it's cool to smoke.
 Joins his fellow smokers, puffing away. Smoke BILLOWS
 throughout the plane... A BABY coughs.

EXT. MULHOLLAND DRIVE - GRAVEL TURNOUT - SUNSET

The city of Los Angeles laid out as far as the eye can see.
 Which isn't that far, really. SMOG obscures most of the view.

TWO CARS are parked up here. Healy's Chevelle, and a Ford.

Healy leans against the Ford.

HEALY (v.o.)
 Sometimes I feel okay about things. Not
 often. Scotty, my AA sponsor, keeps trying
 to get me to quit this kind of work.

Inside the Ford is a WOMAN. Dirty blonde hair. Young. She hands
 Healy a slip of PINK, COW-SHAPED NOTEPAPER:

GIRL
 I think there's two of 'em... I just got
 the name and description for one. They've
 been talking to all my friends, asking
 where I live. I'm scared.

Healy studies the slip of paper. Pockets it.
 The woman hands him an envelope.

GIRL
 ... You'll take care of 'em?

HEALY
 Consider it done.

The girl offers Healy a fragile smile.

GIRL
 Thank you... I feel better already.
 You... You make me feel safe.

HEALY
 (smiles)
 That's my job.

Healy starts to leave, counting the money in the envelope--
 Then stops. Turns back. Leans in the window:

HEALY
 ... Um, you're short.

GIRL
 I'm... What?

HEALY
 You're twenty bucks short.

GIRL
 Oh. I'm sorry... Here, ummm...

She fishes through her purse for some cash. Finds two tens.

GIRL
 ... Sorry, here...

ANGLE ON MULHOLLAND

The FORD drives off. Taillights, receding. Healy watches it go.

HEALY (v.o.)

Truth is, I've been thinking about what
Scotty said... I could try for an
investigators' license. Become a detective,
you know..? Those guys help people.

(beat)

Maybe then I'd feel good in the morning.

CUT TO BLACK. Pause. Then--

INT. RESIDENTIAL HOUSE - BATHROOM - MORNING

A HAND dangles limply from the edge of a PORCELAIN TUB.
WIDEN to reveal a tousled-looking MAN, 40-ish. FULLY
DRESSED, immersed in water up to his neck. Dead asleep...

Meet HOLLAND MARCH.

Somewhere in the house a PHONE starts to RING.
Slowly, March's EYES open. He sits up, sloshing water.
Winces. Puts a hand to his throbbing temple. Stops, frowns.

There's something WRITTEN on the palm of his hand.
With a permanent marker, in an unmistakably feminine script:

YOU WILL NEVER BE HAPPY

March just stares at it: How did that get there..? The phone,
still RINGING. March ignores it. An answering machine picks up:

ANSWERING MACHINE (o.s.)

You have reached March Investigations.
This machine records messages. Wait for
the tone, and speak clearly.

A BEEP, followed by:

YOUNG GIRL'S VOICE (HOLLY) (o.s.)

This is your daughter speaking. Thursday,
as you may remember, is my birthday.
Please give accordingly --

March waves a hand at no one in particular.

MARCH

Yeah, yeah...

YOUNG GIRL'S VOICE (HOLLY) (o.s.)

Also, I hope you didn't forget that
you're supposed to be working today --

March blinks. A beat, then:

MARCH

Oh, shi--

He's already leaping out of the tub. Over this we HEAR:

MARCH (v.o.)

What with the world coming to an end,
you'd think people would, you know, band
together or something...

INT. MARCH'S CAR - SUNSET BOULEVARD - DAY

March in a beat-up CONVERTIBLE. Stuck in a GAS LINE.
Cars HONKING as March inches towards the ARCO STATION.

MARCH (v.o.)

Nossir. People are still mean and petty
and unforgiving... which is good, 'cuz
otherwise I'd be out of a job.

Up at the pumps, a FIGHT breaks out. March ignores it...
Peruses the day's newspaper. A featured headline:

BRAZIL'S 'KILLER BEE' RAMPAGE CONTINUES

He takes out a PORTABLE ELECTRIC RAZOR the size of a BRICK.
Starts shaving. The glamorous life of a detective.

MARCH (v.o.)

They implemented a no-fault divorce here
couple of years back. That screwed things
up... Lotta private cops folded.

(beat)

Not me. I got this guy, runs security at
a local retirement park, he kicks a few
cases my way -- slam dunks, most of 'em.

FLASH CUT TO: A CONDO IN LEISURE WORLD - DAY

March, in the living room, talking to an OLD LADY.
He writes in a notebook as she relates her problem:

OLD LADY

It's my husband. Fred is his name. He's
gone missing.

MARCH

(professional concern)
Missing..? I see.

OLD LADY
I'm terribly worried... Fred's just never
been gone for this long.

March nods, writes... Then spots something out of the corner
of his eye: There's an URN over the fireplace.

March squints at the PLAQUE affixed to it:

FRED MILLER -- A devoted and loving husband.

March frowns.

MARCH
Um, Mrs. Miller... Your husband Fred..?
Exactly how long has he been missing?

OLD LADY
Oh, let's see...
(furrows her brow)
Probably since the funeral.

March nods.

MARCH
I see... I see...
(puts away notebook)
Well, I can start today if you like.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - MARCH ON SURVEILLANCE - DAY

March slouches in his car. Watches through the window of a
Hollywood SEX SHOP. A couple debates which dildo to buy. The
man holds up several; the woman shakes her head.

MARCH (v.o.)
Lean pickings, but I hang in... Maybe I'm
a fighter. Maybe someday people will
notice. Maybe the flying pigs will tell
them.

MARCH snaps pictures of the couple. The woman shakes her
head, still obstinate --

MARCH
(sighs)
Honey, you're not gonna find one with a
breadmaker in it, just buy the fucking
thing.

He snaps another photo.

MARCH (v.o.)

In the meantime, I take whatever's out there. It's bottom feeding, sure. But at least you're getting fed.

INT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - DAY

March is talking to the guy behind the counter:

MARCH

... She's blonde, about yea high..? Might be from the neighborhood. Name's Amelia.

The worker shakes his head.

March turns, and we follow him OUT OF THE SHOP. He stands on the sidewalk out here, stares down the street at a long line of other establishments--

MARCH (v.o.)

It ain't rocket science. It's grunt work.

A SERIES OF SHOTS - MARCH CANVASSING

Literally going store to store.

Asking questions at the Quick-e-Mart. At a fast food joint. Talking to a VALET. Talking to a NUDE DANCER, Bent-double, peeking through her knees... She shakes her head, no.

MARCH (v.o.)

You ask questions. Pound the pavement. Chances are something's gonna pop--

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - NIGHT

MARCH'S CONVERTIBLE pulls to the curb. He gets out, noticing his hand: **YOU WILL NEVER BE HAPPY**. Faded, but still there. Scowls at it. Looks down the row of seamy BARS --

INT. THE IRON HORSE BAR - NIGHT

MARCH talking to the bartender. Looking worn out.

BARTENDER

I think I remember her. Amelia, right? She was in three, four nights ago. Drank bourbon martinis.

March perks up instantly:

MARCH

That's disgusting. Pay with a credit card, by any chance?

BARTENDER
As in, am I gonna pull the receipts for
you? Fat fucking chance.

March offers up a folded \$10 bill.

BARTENDER
That's very pretty.

MARCH
I made it myself.

BARTENDER
Yeah? I made this.

He produces a carved wooden BAT from under the bar. CUT TO:

EXT. BACK OF CLUB - LATER THAT NIGHT

Dark. Shadowy. Across the alley, we see the same bartender
LOCKING UP. He pockets the keys. Heads off...

MARCH (v.o.)
Look, I'm not saying it's easy. I'm not
saying you don't gotta think on your
feet. Bend a few rules, maybe.

Pan to REVEAL MARCH, behind a dumpster. Dark sweater, black
cloth cap. He takes a RAG, proceeds to wrap his KNUCKLES...

BACK DOOR OF CLUB - WITH MARCH

March sidles up, whistling. Glances both ways.

MARCH (v.o.)
But it's worth it. As long as you get the
results--

He braces himself. PUNCHES THROUGH the glass pane.

MARCH
Ow! Shit!

He pulls his hand back out. His wrist is BLEEDING. Fuck.
He puts pressure on it. Red SEEPS through his fingers.

MARCH
Ow, ow, ow.

Damn, that's a lot of blood. He takes the RAG from his
knuckles, tries to cover the wound... The rag turns red
instantly. Starts dripping.

MARCH

Woah. Ow. Woah. Lots of blood. Lots of blood. Okay. Okay.

March takes a few steps back, stumbles. Suddenly dizzy now. Goddamn, that's a lot of blood.

He shifts his grip -- and a literal STREAM OF BLOOD spews preposterously. Straight up into the air. He teeters in a tight little circle. Blood squirting everywhere.

MARCH

Okay. Ow. Wait, wait. Okay. Okay.

His eyes start to flutter now as we SLAM-CUT TO:

BACK OF AMBULANCE - NIGHT

Blasting through traffic, siren WAILING. March's face, CHALK-WHITE. Head lolling. A MEDIC hunches over him--

MEDIC

I need two units of whole blood! Shit! BP dropping! Christ, we're LOSING HIM--!

The ambulance careens across lanes. CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE - LATE THAT SAME NIGHT

The night quiet. Serene. A HOSPITAL NUN wheels a bandaged March outside, to a waiting TAXI. Helps him stand.

NUN

Tell me, are you willing to find God?

MARCH

(doped up)
No can do... I'm already looking for Amelia.

He staggers to the cab, climbs in.

MARCH (v.o.)

Bottom line, I get by. I make some money. I live my life. I'm happy...

TIME-CUT: THE TAXI, DRIVING AWAY

A placid, narcotized MARCH in back.

MARCH (v.o.)

Except, you know, for all the stuff I'm not happy about... But it's best not to think about that.

The taillights recede into the gleaming distance.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - PANORAMA - DAY

A thick crust of smog hangs in the air. The sun still blazing.

NEWSCASTER (o.s.)

The Air Quality Management District today issued a stage two smog alert for most of the Los Angeles basin...

INT. HEALY'S APARTMENT - SAME

It's a small place. Situated just above "The Comedy Store" on Sunset. Clean. Spartan. It looks like a monk lives here.

Healy lies in bed, atop rumpled sheets. Stares at the ceiling. The newscast continues on the TV nearby:

NEWSCASTER (o.s.)

... The AQMD cautions residents not to engage in any unnecessary exercise until after 6 pm tonight...

Healy checks the time: 4:21 PM. Sighs. Sits up.

NEWSCASTER (v.o.)

Infamous adult film star Misty Mountains was pronounced dead early yesterday morning, after driving her car off a Canyon road. Drugs may have played a--

Healy shuts the TV off.

TIME CUT: HEALY BUTTONING HIS DRESS SHIRT.

He stops to sprinkle fish-food into a saltwater aquarium.

On his desk, a daily "tear-off" CALENDAR. **Your word for the day!** He tears off yesterday's page. Reveals today's word:

Equanimity \e·qua·nim·i·ty\, *noun*: The quality of being calm and even-tempered; composure.

HEALY

She accepted their problems with grace and he with equanimity.

Healy smiles, pleased with himself. Finishes with his shirt. Grabs his coat, exits the room... SLAM!

In the foreground we see something he forgot -- Something shiny. His BRASS KNUCKLES.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - WITH HEALY - DRIVING - LATE AFTERNOON

Healy, on the way somewhere. Cruising up Laurel Canyon.
As he nears a construction area -- POV HEALY:

He sees a cute YOUNG GIRL. 14, maybe 15 years old--
Sees her snake beneath a chain-link fence.

Once inside, she stands. Dusts herself off.
Paces off 10 steps across the scorched, barren ground.
6 steps over, 3 back -- like following a treasure map.

Healy, puzzled. This is really very odd behavior.

She finds a specific spot. SITS. Composed. Takes out a BOOK.
Starts to read aloud. We have no idea why she's doing this.

ANGLE ON HEALY, GOING BY... His gaze lingers a moment,
curious. Then he turns the corner.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DUSK

HEALY pulls up. Takes a slip of familiar NOTEPAD PAPER out of
his pocket. It's PINK. And shaped like a COW. Checks it--

Then gets out of the car, whistling a tune. He crosses to a
slightly run down 50's-modern HOUSE. Patting his coat pockets
as he goes, looking for something:

His brass knuckles. Gone. Shit. He shrugs it off. KNOCKS.

VOICE (O.S.)

Just a minute..! Who is it?

HEALY

Messenger service. Holland March home..?

The door opens -- revealing none other than HOLLAND MARCH.
Distracted, scratching at the bandage on his wrist--

MARCH

Hi.

Healy SLUGS MARCH full in the face.
March drops as though pole-axed.

Healy steps past him. Inside. Shaking his hand in pain...
Shuts the door. Looms over March. Poised like a dancer:

HEALY

Mr. March, we're gonna play a game.

MARCH

This is a mistake, you got the --OOOFF--!

HEALY
It's called, "Shut up, unless you're me."

MARCH
(gasping)
I... I LOVE that game.

Healy spots March's WALLET on a nearby counter. SLUGS him again for good measure, then crosses -- begins idly flipping through the wallet. Stops. Whistles low:

HEALY
You're a private investigator?

MARCH manages to sit up. Props himself against the wall.

MARCH
Look... There's 30 bucks there. Take it.

HEALY
I told you, I'm a messenger.
(looks around)
You afford this on a P.I.'s salary?

MARCH
At night I'm a superhero. What's the message?

Healy kneels down next to March--

HEALY
Stop. Looking. For Amelia.

MARCH
Fine. Hey. 'Nuff said. Put a fork in me.
I'm done. Don't really put a fork in me.

HEALY
(stands)
That's fine, Mr. March. Amelia will be happy to hear you got the message. Almost done. Last thing..?

MARCH
You wanna know who hired me to find her.

HEALY
Bingo. Now, we can do this the easy way--

MARCH
Her name's Glenn.

HEALY
Or we can do this the hard way--

MARCH

My client's name is Lily Glenn. She's an old woman. Thinks Amelia might be her niece... Hired me on Tuesday.

Healy stops, momentarily thrown. March spits blood.

MARCH

Anything else..?

HEALY

You just gave up your client.

MARCH

Well, I made a discretionary revelation--

HEALY

No, you gave her up, just like that. Some poor old woman pays you good money and that's how you treat her..?

March just shrugs. Supports himself on a coffee table... Stands. Slowly, painfully. Covertly slipping one hand into an OVERTURNED COOKIE JAR--

Comes up with a .38 SPECIAL. Spins toward Healy... Only Healy isn't where he was, he's *dropped*, he's on the ground, foot lashing out -- KICKING THE COFFEE TABLE.

-- WHAM! -- the whole damn thing comes up from the ground. SLAMS MARCH in the face. Knocks him back on his ass.

Healy is on him in a flash. Grabs the gun. Dumps the shells. Tosses it... Says, sadness in his voice:

HEALY

I'm sorry you didn't get the message.

MARCH

I get it now. I dig. I get it.

Healy grabs March, wrenches his bandaged arm up behind his back. Pins him against the wall.

MARCH

Ow. Watch it there! I'm injured!

HEALY

Listen, when you talk to your doctor, tell him you've got a spiral fracture of the right humerus... Got that?

MARCH

Wait, wait... Jesus, man, STOP!

HEALY

Deep breath.

Healy twists March's arm PAST THE BREAKING POINT -- CRACK! --
March screams as we SLAM-CUT TO:

EXT. MARCH'S HOUSE - DUSK

Healy comes out the front door. A YOUNG GIRL, carrying a
grocery bag, is headed the opposite way, swigging a drink--

It's the same girl he saw in the FENCED-OFF LOT earlier.
This, we will come to realize, is March's daughter HOLLY.

HOLLY

Hi. Want a Yoo-Hoo?

HEALY

A Yoo-Hoo..? Man, I haven't had one of
those in about 10 years.

HOLLY

Knock yourself out.
(hands him one)
You a friend of my Dad's?

HEALY

Business associate. He's inside. Resting.
(vigorously shaking the bottle)
Didn't I see you crawling around an empty
lot a few blocks over..?

HOLLY

... Maybe... I read there sometimes.

Healy nods. Takes a swig of his drink. Smiles.

HEALY

"It's me-he for yoo-hoo!"
(nods again, a beat)
Well... Thanks.

The girl waves. Walks up to the house. Healy gets into his car.
Takes another sip of Yoo-Hoo. Smiles. Drives off.

CUT TO: A WHOLE DAMN CASE OF YOO-HOO. CLINK-ING as --

EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - NIGHT

Healy lugs it down the sidewalk on Sunset. Pushes through a
small crowd of people waiting outside a CLUB.

INT. THE COMEDY STORE - SAME

Busy night. A BAD STAND-UP holds forth on the lighted stage:

RONNIE THE COMIC

So you heard about this lawsuit..? L.A.
is suing the automakers over the
catalytic converter.

(beat)

Thing is, I don't see what all the fuss
is about... I installed one on my car,
nothing happened... Except, well, I
turned into a Catholic. But that's it.

The laughter is not deafening.

Healy wrestles the Yoo-Hoos through an UNMARKED DOOR at the
back of the club. Starts up a FLIGHT OF STAIRS --

Someone enters behind him. Healy looks back:

TWO MEN. One's older, with horn-rimmed glasses and a brush
cut. The other's in his twenties, feathered hair and gold
chains. Back in the day, Richard Lynch would have played
this guy. Don't know who that is? Shame on you.

HEALY

Sorry, this area is private.

Gold Chain ignores this. Starts up toward Healy. The Older
Guy closes the door at the base of the steps.

GOLD CHAIN

Wow. You got, like, an apartment up here?

HEALY

Guys, if you're looking for a bathroom--

GOLD CHAIN

Nice try. We're looking for Amelia.

A BLUR OF SILVER.

GOLD CHAIN has a STEEL BATON. Healy can't react. Hands full
-- WHACK--! Down he goes. Yoo-hoo's SMASHING as we CUT TO:

AN OLD WOMAN'S FACE, DISTRAUGHT

This is Lily Glenn. And she looks like she's about to cry--

INT. PASADENA HOUSE - NIGHT

MARCH walks past camera. His right arm is in a CAST now.

MARCH

Mrs. Glenn, let's be reasonable; this is a high profile case, your niece was a famous, um... actress. The head medical examiner himself ID'd the body--

MRS. GLENN

I'm telling you, I SAW her, Mr. March. I didn't imagine it. I saw my Misty *alive*.
(exasperated)
I... I thought you said you *found* her...

MARCH

No... I said I was tracking the girl you saw; doesn't mean it's your niece.

MRS. GLENN

Why won't anyone *believe* me?

MARCH

Mrs. Glenn, you were upset. You were at your dead niece's house, all those painful memories -- you just made a mistake, could happen to anybo--

MRS. GLENN

I'm telling you, it was Misty. There was no mistake... I saw her through the front window--

MARCH

Yes, you said--

MRS. GLENN

--clear as day. She was wearing a blue pinstriped jacket. She was writing something... Then she came out and drove off before I could get her attention.

(points)

This was TWO DAYS after the accident!
AFTER they said she went off that cliff!

A pause. March takes a deep breath... Then:

MARCH

Mrs. Glenn, Misty Mountains is dead... She died in that accident... I never should have taken your money in the first place.

The old woman starts to cry. Chin set in feeble determination:

MRS. GLENN

Even if it's for nothing... Even if this Amelia girl isn't my niece... I don't have anything else, do you understand..? Please, Mr. March -- *please* -- will you keep looking for her? For me?

March sighs... Considering.
Then looks the old lady directly in the eye and says:

MARCH

No.

INT. MARCH'S CAR - SAME

March climbs in the passenger side. Slams the door. A pause.
Holly sits in the driver's seat.

MARCH

Holly... Am I a bad person?

Holly picks at her nails, distracted.

HOLLY

... Yeah, pretty much.

MARCH

(nods, then)

Drive. Get me out of here.

Holly puts it in gear.

HOLLY

Did you solve the case, dad?

MARCH

... Sure. Yeah. Case closed.

INT. HEALY'S APARTMENT - SAME

WHAM--! Healy smacks against a wall.
Then crumples as GOLD CHAIN enters frame. Looms over him.

In the background OLDER GUY is tossing the place. Emptying drawers. Throwing stuff... Gold Chain kneels next to Healy:

GOLD CHAIN

Okay, sport, I'm asking you again...
Where is Amelia?

Healy makes himself sit up. He looks resigned, weary. He spots a pack cigarettes amongst the nearby debris. Grabs it as a wave of LAUGHTER wafts up from the club below.

HEALY

... Told you... I just don't know anyone
named Amelia... I--

Gold Chain KICKS Healy in the gut, WHAM--! No warning. Folds him
sideways, retching. More LAUGHTER from the club below.

Healy straightens again. In pain.

GOLD CHAIN

You don't talk, we're gonna have to start
breaking your fingers. You understand.

HEALY

I understand.

OLDER GUY calls out:

OLDER GUY

Got some kind of hidden cabinet here!

GOLD CHAIN turns, crosses the room. Starts pounding on the
cabinet. Breaks it open. Inside is a heavy canvas BAG.

HEALY

UM, YOU DON'T WANNA OPEN THAT... That's
not mine. My friend wanted me to hold it
for him... Trust me, don't--

GOLD CHAIN ignores Healy, rips the bag open--

AN EXPLOSION OF BLUE PAINT.

Just like one of those charges they hide with bank money.
Turns Gold Chain's face an impossible, shocking BLUE --

At which point, through the floor, comes the BIGGEST BUZZ
YET of LAUGHTER... Like a sitcom soundtrack.

HEALY

That's, um... that's not gonna come off.

GOLD CHAIN snarls. Savagely wipes his face on towels.
Crosses to the AQUARIUM, dips his face, scrubs--

HEALY

Tried to tell you.

Gold Chain stops. His still-blue face dripping wet.

GOLD CHAIN

You tried to tell me..?

He reaches in the tank, grabs a TROPICAL FISH -- FLINGS IT.

It SMACKS the wall wetly. Next to Healy.

HEALY

Come on, the fish...? Don't do that.

No dice. The guy just sneers, groping for another fish. Healy appeals to the older dude:

HEALY

Can you please tell this guy to act like a professional?

Older Guy just SHRUGS as Gold Chain gets hold of a yellow-striped number. Tosses it, squirming, into Healy's lap.

GOLD CHAIN

You're gonna eat that, bastard. Do it!!

HEALY

This isn't gonna help you... Do you get that? This is silly and unprofessional--

GOLD CHAIN

EAT THE GODDAMN THING!! NOW!!

HEALY

No.

Gold Chain draws an AUTOMATIC. Lets it dangle at his side.

GOLD CHAIN

... Stand up.

Healy sighs. Gets to his feet. It's slow going. He's in pain. Stands in the middle of the room... Arms held loosely.

HEALY

Stop and think. Is this why you came here tonight? To make me eat fish? To shoot me?

Healy locks eyes with the kid. Gone is any trace of resignation. Of passivity. He suddenly looks... hard.

HEALY

You could have come in here. Beat up on me. Trashed the place. I wouldn't have cared. It's what I expected.

(shakes his head)

But you didn't do that. Instead you gotta piss me off. Make an enemy. Even if I did know something, there's no way I'd give it up to you. You're a moron.

(pause)

Also, Slick, blue ain't your color.

GOLD CHAIN RAISES THE GUN AND FIRES.

Healy's already in motion..! The bullet goes wide. Past Healy's shoulder, keeps going --

OUT THE OPEN WINDOW

Hits a WOMAN in the APARTMENT across the street.

Her half-open window SHATTERS, pop--!
Arm wound. She goes down with a YELP. Drops from sight.

The OLDER GUY knocks the GUN aside.

OLDER GUY
You stupid son of a bitch!

VOICES, now, from across the way. SHRIEKING.

Healy, a BLUR. Dives into the BEDROOM. Hits, flat.
Sweeps a SHOTGUN from behind the bed. SPINS, barrel up --

Front door, open. Still swinging... Visitors, gone. CUT TO:

EXT. THE HOLLYWOOD STAR LANES - MORNING

Googie architecture gleams in the bright morning sun.

INT. HOLLYWOOD STAR LANES - SAME

A party for Holly in progress. MARCH stands at the counter, surrounded by a pack of howling YOUNG GIRLS, all CALLING out their shoe sizes. He raises a hand:

MARCH
Whoa, whoa, EASY. Christ Jesus, one at a time, huh? THANK you. Janet, size..?

JANET
You took the Lord's name in vain.

MARCH
No, I didn't, I found it useful... Cindy, you a six..?

CUT TO: THE OBLIGATORY BOWLING SHOTS

Except every ball goes straight in the gutter.
Squeals, giggles..!

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - RESTROOM - SAME

MARCH, in a closed stall. On the pot. Reading TIME MAGAZINE.
The cover story's about GLOBAL COOLING.

Arm, still bugging him. He fishes out a cigarette, lights up. Hears the bathroom door open. Clopping FOOTSTEPS. Looks down-- ALLIGATOR BOOTS. Outside. A hand TAPS politely:

MARCH

I'm in here.

HEALY (o.s.)

It's me, Mr. March. I intend you no harm. You're safe. Say "yes" if you understand.

OUTSIDE THE STALL

Stands JACKSON HEALY. Calm, posture seemingly casual. He waits... Then, slowly, the stall door swings wide--

MARCH

... Yes.

Reveals MARCH, still on the throne. Holding the door open with his bad hand. The other's got a GUN trained on Healy.

MARCH

How stupid do you think I am? Huh..? I got a permit to carry, dumbass, and since your little "visit" yesterday this baby stays right here, right where I can--

As he goes to pat his holster, the STALL DOOR starts to swing closed, he quickly has to BANG it back open. He looks ridiculous. The cigarette falls from his lips, burns his leg. He swears --

HEALY

... Need any help?

MARCH

Just stay right there, you mother.

March reaches for his pants, the STALL DOOR swings shut again. He BANGS it open -- he can't hold his gun, and the door, and pull his pants up.

MARCH

... I got this.

HEALY

You mind if I look away..?

March shifts. Tentatively rises up... Gives up. Sits again.

MARCH

All right, this is pissing me off... What do you want?

Healy takes a deep breath, looks a little embarrassed:

HEALY

I, uh... I need you to find Amelia for me.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - HEALY & MARCH, SEATED - SAME

March is wary. Watchful. Healy attacks a slice of pecan pie with gusto, seemingly unruffled.

MARCH

... So you think these guys want to... hurt this chick Amelia?

HEALY

Sure... After they're done killing her.

MARCH

Any way to warn her?

HEALY

I can't reach her. I been trying.

MARCH

I don't get it. Why do you care? What's in it for you?

A pause. Healy chews, swallows... Then:

HEALY

... I don't want to have to move.

March looks thoroughly perplexed. Healy shrugs:

HEALY

Look, it doesn't matter.

Healy drops a wad of bills on the table.

HEALY

Two days in advance. That's \$400. Plus whatever the old lady's giving you --

MARCH

Old lady, fuck you, old lady, you broke my arm, I quit, remember?

HEALY

So call her up, get back on the case. Get paid twice.

March dry-washes his face with his hands.

HEALY
 Help me find Amelia. You were looking for
 her, right..?

MARCH
 ... Yes and no.

HEALY
 Excuse me?

March leans back in his chair, sighs.

MARCH
 Last week, the old broad hired me to find
 her niece -- Misty Mountains.

HEALY
 Misty Moun--
 (stops, frowning)
 The dead chick? The porno chick--?

MARCH
 Yeah. That one.
 (leans forward)
 Two days after the crash, Auntie Lily
 went to clean out her niece's place...
 Spotted Misty inside her house, through
 the front window. Alive and well. Then
 saw her drive away.

HEALY
 Bullshit.

MARCH
 (shrugs)
 I checked it out anyway... Talked to the
 guard at the front gate, turns out there
 was a girl there that evening --

HEALY
 Amelia. The old lady saw Amelia.

March makes a "bingo" gesture.

MARCH
 Guard confirmed it. Keeps notes of all
 cars, in and out. I ran the plate, got
 her name --

HEALY
 And..?

March affects disinterest. Casually holds up three fingers:

HEALY

Three.
 (frowns)
 Three what?

MARCH

Three days, in advance. If you want the rest.

HEALY

\$600..? That's fucking robbery.

MARCH

Yes, it is.

HEALY

I only got \$400.

MARCH

Banks are still open, you can hold one up if you hurry.

From behind him comes a "*bud-dum-BAH-!*" He turns, startled-- And sees HOLLY there. Perched on the edge of the booth.

MARCH

Holly, what are you doing?

HOLLY

Giving you a rim job.

MARCH

RIM SHOT.

HOLLY

Whatever.
 (plops down beside him)
 Hey, can we go one more game, before--

She sees Healy. Stops, blinks...

HOLLY

... You're the guy that beat up my dad.

MARCH

It's okay. He won't hurt me, he only did it for money. He's a nice guy... aren't you, slick?

Healy manages a lame smile. Holly stares at him.

HOLLY

You beat people up... and charge money?

HEALY

Yeah.

HOLLY

Wow. No way... So, um... How much would you charge to beat up my friend Janet?

HEALY

How much you got?

MARCH

Okay, discussion over.

HOLLY

Hey, is that apple pie?

She reaches over and grabs March's plate. Starts eating. Bouncing a little in her seat. Happy as a clam.

HEALY

Two days. That's all I got.

March makes a decision:

MARCH

Four hundred. Two days. We find her sooner, I keep the money.

HEALY

Done.

MARCH

That's good.

He scoops up the money, checks his watch:

MARCH

Because I already know where she is.

EXT. GRIFFITH PARK - DAY

Kids playing on swings. Blankets with family picnics. Nearby, littered across the grass:

More than A HUNDRED PEOPLE.

Sprawled on the ground. Arms, legs akimbo. Each one wearing a GAS MASK, lying perfectly still... This is a "Die-in."

They're pretending to be dead as a form of protest. Hand painted signs proclaim: **FOR THE BIRDS!**

To one side, a few spectators. Smoking. Pointing. Looking bewildered. Whatever...

MARCH and HEALY appear at the edge of the gathering.

MARCH
 (nods at the protesters)
 There you go. Thank you and goodbye.

HEALY
 Wait. What do you mean, there I go..?

MARCH
 This is Amelia's protest group. She's in there somewhere. So. Have at it--

March turns to leave.

HEALY
 Hold on -- how do you know she's actually in there?

MARCH
 I told you, it's her protest group. She started it. Which was the hot tip I got yesterday just before you broke my arm.

HEALY
 Okay, but she's holed up somewhere, hiding, right? What makes you think she's gonna be here, if--

MARCH
 Of course she's gonna be here. It's her protest group.

HEALY
 Stop saying that.

MARCH
 (put-upon)
 You know what? Watch this.

He turns. Loudly addresses the crowd of protesters:

MARCH
 EXCUSE ME! HI! We're looking for Amelia.

No response -- everybody still pretending to be dead.

MARCH
 AMELIA? ARE YOU HERE..? HELLO..?
 (nothing)
 LOOK, THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT -- DOES ANYONE HERE KNOW AMELIA?

Finally, from amongst the "dead" comes a mask-muffled VOICE:

VOICE (o.s.)
We can't talk to you!

March squints, searching for the source of the voice.

MARCH
What? Who said that?

VOICE (o.s.)
We can't talk to you! We're dead!

MARCH
Yeah, okay, I get it. Real clever... But this is a serious matter here.

VOICE (o.s.)
So is this, we've all been killed.

MARCH
Look, pal--

VOICE (o.s.)
Fuck you, we're dead!

One of the smoking onlookers turns to March, offers helpfully:

SMOKER
They can't talk to you, man. They're dead.

MARCH
Thanks. That's helpful.

The smoker smiles, nods: *no problem*. HEALY turns to the him:

HEALY
What are these assholes protesting anyway..?

SMOKER
I dunno...
(smokes more, then)
HEY, WHAT ARE YOU GUYS PROTESTING?

Pause, then:

VOICE #2 (o.s.)
The air.

MARCH
You're protesting the air..?

VOICE #2 (o.s.)
The pollution. The birds can't breathe.

HEALY
So you all died because of the pollution?

VOICE #2 (o.s.)
Right.

HEALY
What about the gas masks? I mean,
wouldn't that have saved you?

Long pause... no one answering this one.

VOICE #3 (o.s.)
... They didn't work.

March, his plan in tatters. Steps into the crowd:

MARCH
Can we get back to Amelia here--

He steps on some guy's hand:

DEAD GUY
Ouch, fucker!

MARCH
Sorry.
(addressing everyone)
AMELIA..? WE KNOW YOU'RE HERE. WE NEED TO
SPEAK WITH YOU...

A new voice cuts in now, this one from behind March somewhere:

VOICE #4 (o.s.)
Hey. Dickhead. She's not here.

MARCH
Of course she's here. This is her protest
group.

VOICE #4 (o.s.)
So..?

MARCH
So that means she's here.

VOICE #4 (o.s.)
Well, she isn't.

MARCH
Yes, she is.

VOICE #4 (o.s.)
No, she isn't.

March getting pissed now. Glances back at Healy for help.
 Healy just shrugs: *What do you want me to do..?*
 Now another dead protester starts talking:

VOICE #5

She's not here because of her boyfriend.

MARCH

(turning towards the new voice)
 Her boyfriend..? Why?

VOICE #5 (o.s.)

'Cuz he died. Really died. Three days ago.

MARCH

He died..? So then, where's Amelia..?

VOICE #5 (o.s.)

We can't help you. We're dead.

March stares up into the sky, exasperated:

MARCH

Okay. Which one of you assholes wants to
 make twenty bucks..?

INT. MARCH'S CAR - DRIVING - DAY

March driving. Healy in the passenger seat. One of the
 PROTESTERS sits in back. Brown hair, about five foot five.
 Gas Mask pushed back on his head. His name is Chet.

MARCH

Up here, Chet..?

CHET

Yeah. Make a left here.

March turns left. Pulls up to the curb. They all climb out.

They're standing in front of BLACKENED HUSK that was once a
 COZY BUNGALOW... It's been burned to the ground.

MARCH

What the fuck is this..?

CHET

That's Dean's house. Amelia's boyfriend.

HEALY

That's not a house, Chet.

CHET

I told you, he burned to death--

HEALY
But you didn't tell us the house burned
to death.

CHET
So..?

MARCH
So now we can't search it.

CHET
Oh.
(beat)
Maybe you can search the burned part.

March sighs. This is not going well.

MARCH
I thought you knew Amelia.

CHET
I mostly knew her through Dean... He kept
talking about some film they were making.

HEALY
Film?

CHET
He was a filmmaker. Experimental films.
That's how we became friends. 'Cuz I'm
kinda in the business myself.

HEALY
What do you do?

CHET
I'm a projectionist.

HEALY
Oh.

CHET
Anyway, Dean stored all his stuff here.
Had a bunch of old film stock. That's what
caused the fire. Went up, POOF! --
(nods)
His life's work and his life. Gone...
Makes you think, doesn't it?

MARCH
Not really.

March spots a kid, 14 or so, long hair. Riding his bike just
up the street. He motions to him:

MARCH

Hey, kid! Come here!

The kid rides up. Eyes March with adolescent defiance:

KID

What?

MARCH

You know the guy that lived here?

KID

Maybe... What's it to ya?

CHET

He'll give you 20 bucks if you answer.

MARCH

Wait, I didn't say that.

KID

20 bucks, man. Or you can blow.

March takes a deep, deep breath. Fishes a twenty out of his pocket. Hands it to the kid.

KID

Yeah. I knew the dude. Filmmaker dude. Saw him making a film last month.

CHET

An experimental film, right?

KID

I guess... More like a nudie film.

MARCH

Did you see a girl with him? Blonde. Five nine, give or take. Named Amelia?

KID

Naw... I didn't see her, but I saw that famous chick.

HEALY

What famous chick?

KID

The dead one. Porn star. Misty something.

MARCH

Misty Mountains? You saw Misty Mountains?

March and Healy exchange looks.

MARCH

But you didn't see this other girl,
Amelia.

KID

Nope... I hung out for a while, too.
Tried to get a job. Talked to the
producer. Sid... Sid Hatrack I think.

MARCH

Nobody's name is Hatrack.

KID

Whatever. I asked him to give me a job.
Because, you know, I got a big dick. I
offered to show it to him.

HEALY

That's nice... You sure you didn't see
any other girl?

KID

I'm sure... You guys want to see my dick?

MARCH

No.

KID

20 bucks.

MARCH

We already gave you 20 bucks.

KID

That doesn't count towards the dick.

HEALY

We don't want to see your dick.

KID

Fine... Fags.

The kid rides off.

MARCH

Hey, kid... What was the name of that
film? Did they tell you?

The kid looks back:

KID

Yeah. Stupid title: "*How Do You Like My
Car, Big Boy?*"

INT. CAR - WITH HEALY AND MARCH - DRIVING - DAY

March drives. He is not in a good mood. We come in mid-chat:

MARCH

Fine, you got me for two days. But two days is two days. That's the deal. Like it or lump it.

HEALY

Sure. Just to clarify -- I decide to "lump it," what... does that entail--?

MARCH

I dunno. It's from the Bible.

They turn onto Hollywood Blvd. Healy chews his lower lip:

HEALY

There's something funny here...

MARCH

Nah. Guy burned up. Happens, trust me.

HEALY

It "happened" three days ago -- same day Amelia fell off my radar.

MARCH

You phoned, she didn't answer --how's that radar? Maybe she dislikes you.

HEALY

Or she's dead.

MARCH

God willing.

This buys him a dirty look from Healy. March glances up casually, does a swift double-take --

MARCH

Hey-hey! HATRACK.

He abruptly pulls over. STOPS. He's pointing past Healy, out the WINDOW -- Above them, a XXX theater MARQUEE: **SAVAGE SID SHATTUCK presents: HARD IN THE SADDLE**. Healy laughs:

HEALY

Shattuck. Who's that?

MARCH

Savage Sid. The porn KING. Experimental film, my ass. They were making a porno.

(beat)

Damn. So, he was there.

HEALY

(thinks)

Yeah... and he didn't burn up.

INT. MARCH'S HOUSE - EVENING

Holly stuffs some clothes into an overnight bag. MARCH is on the phone.

MARCH

What..? I can't -- yes, for Mr. Shattuck. I'm an old friend. I'll wait. Thanks.

As he speaks, he keeps a weather eye out the WINDOW:

HIS POV - HEALY

Standing out on the patio. Glancing around the neighborhood, crushing a bug on the cement, whatever...

March notices HOLLY staring out the window, too. Worried. He covers the mouthpiece with one hand, says:

MARCH

Holly, ease up. This is work.

HOLLY

Look at him. He looks like he's getting ready to shoot the neighbors.

MARCH

See..? I like him better already.

Then, into the phone:

MARCH

Yeah, hi, I'm here... What's it about..? Well, I'd prefer to speak directly with Mr. Shattuck --

(beat)

Okay. Well, I was asking after a mutual friend of ours, Amelia. I wondered if--

(beat, his face changes)

What..? Say that again.

(pause)

Okay. Thank you.

He hangs up, looking exhilarated.

MARCH

That was the number I got for Sid Shattuck.

HOLLY

And..?

MARCH

They were setting up for a party... I asked for Amelia, they said she'd be "back" in time for it. Back. Like she's been staying there.

(looks up)

Who are you staying with tonight?

HOLLY

Jessica... You're going to a party?

MARCH

No, I'm going to a BIG party.

She plops down across the room, looking pissed. Picks up the NEWSPAPER, reads from the front page:

HOLLY

"Adult film star Misty Mountains, shown here at last month's Detroit auto show." Dad, she's gross.

MARCH

So are midgets, but people like them in movies. It's WORK, kiddo. I do this, we won't have to sell the furniture.

HOLLY

(looks around)

Can we sell it anyway?

MARCH

Jessica's... NOW.

EXT. MARCH'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - SAME

Holly exits the house just as Healy heads in. She blows on by without looking at him -- then stops. Turns, says:

HOLLY

... I'm friends with a cop, you know.

Healy glances over. Says mildly:

HEALY

That so..?

HOLLY
He likes my dad a lot, too.

HEALY
Maybe they should get married.

She turns on her heel and stalks off. CUT TO:

EXT. BEL AIR - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

The L.A. basin, a dazzling scatter of lights below us.

INT. MARCH'S CAR - DRIVING - SAME

HEALY navigates Bel Air Road. March checks street numbers.

HEALY
... Tell me something: Did you actually believe the old lady... I mean, that she saw Misty alive that night?

MARCH
Hell no... You kidding? She's a blind old bat. Her glasses are actual coke bottles, the whole things. Paint a moustache on a Volkswagen, she says, "That Omar Sharif sure runs fast."

HEALY
... So then, why'd you take the case in the first place?

MARCH
For the money.

HEALY
Oh...

They lapse into silence. Majestic houses glide past --

HEALY
This Shattuck guy, he just distributes porno? Nothing else?

MARCH
That's the word.

HEALY
(surveying the lush homes)
Tell you something, brother, you and me got it all wrong.

A line of cars is forming just ahead. Beyond it we can see a VALET shooing an errant DEER out of the road.

MARCH

That's it up there...

(turns)

We do this my way. Nice and easy. 68 and sunny. Got it?

HEALY

68 and sunny. Roger that.

Another VALET hurries towards them as they climb out of the car. March takes a ticket off the valet... Then stops--

A LOUD NOISE emanates from the back of the car... A steady POUNDING. The valet, utterly thrown. Healy, bewildered--

Not so, MARCH. His face settles in a SCOWL. He grits his teeth. Stalks to the trunk of the car. Heaves it OPEN-- His daughter HOLLY is inside.

HOLLY

I know what you're gonna say -- but since I'm already here, you might as well take me in with you, right..?

March's expression doesn't flicker. He simply shuts the trunk again. Calmly walks to the valet, hands him the keys:

VALET

(over renewed POUNDING)

Um, I can't take your car like that.

March sighs, flicks a look to Healy that says, "You see what I put up with..?" Goes back to unlock the trunk... CUT TO:

MARCH HUSTLING HOLLY ALONG THE SIDEWALK

Taking her away from the party. Healy trails behind them. Holly, wide-eyed; watches as scantily clad GIRLS flounce by--

HOLLY

Dad, there's like, *whores* here and stuff.

Looking around for a cab.

MARCH

How many times have I told you..? Don't say, "and stuff." Just say, "There are *whores* here."

HOLLY

Well, there's like, a ton.

A CAB pulls to the curb nearby. March waits for two chicks in tube tops to clamber out.

HOLLY

Dad, come on! I said I was sorry. I can even help. I'll ask around for this Amelia chick. Or that blue guy. Dad--!

He shoves Holly inside. Gives her some money. Slams the door. Watches as the cab pulls away. Shaking his head.

HEALY

Cute kid.

MARCH

If you say so.

HEALY

What happened to her mom, anyway?

MARCH

There was a house fire. She burned up. Happens.

HEALY

Jesus.

MARCH

Yeah. Lot of that going around. Shall we?

They head back for the party. AND WE SEE BUT THEY DON'T--

HOLLY'S CAB slows at a stop sign, fifty yards away--
And HOLLY jumps out. Just flings open the door and runs.

A tiny cab driver head sticks out the window, "Hey!"

INT. PARTY - SHATTUCK HOUSE - NIGHT

The place is ABSOLUTELY HUGE. The property spreads out behind the house and goes down the hill quite a ways.

A MASS OF BODIES clog a nearby DANCE FLOOR. Satin jackets, Halston knock-offs, white suits and feathered hair.

March and Healy enter. Wander amid the chaos.

MARCH

Right, so... If Amelia doesn't show, we still got Shattuck. We brace the guy. I'll come on like the good guy -- you blind his son, or whatever. Work your magic, and--

(stops noticing)

What are you looking at..?

HEALY

Nothing.

March follows his gaze to a very young, very cute GIRL.

MARCH

You were checking out that redhead.

HEALY

No I wasn't.

MARCH

Nothing to be ashamed of. She's cute.

HEALY

She's fifteen.

MARCH

Seventeen if she's a day. And she's hot.

HEALY

That chick could be your daughter.

MARCH

No, she couldn't... Look, obviously I'm not attracted to my own daughter--

HEALY

Great. What do you want, a medal?

MARCH

--I'm just saying, youth is attractive. Like, sometimes, when Holly brings home some of her *older* girlfriends...

HEALY

I'll give you fifty bucks to change the subject.

(beat)

Let's split up. You spot Amelia or a guy with a big blue face? Find me.

He peels off. March watches him vanish into the assembled disco chic. A passing WAITRESS nearly collides with March--

MARCH

Whoa, incoming..!

He sidesteps, deftly snags a DRINK off her tray. Heads off.

TIME CUT: A HALF HOUR HAS PASSED - PARTY IN FULL SWING

It may be a party, but Healy is NOT enjoying himself. He stands, getting jostled. How hard can this be..?

Squints across the room--

SEES MARCH. At an INDOOR BAR. Talking to the bartender.

MARCH

... Now what you really gotta be worried
about is them killer bees--

HEALY clamps a big mitt on March's shoulder:

MARCH

Take it easy, brother, there's enough for
everyone--

(turns)

Oh. Hi

HEALY

Any luck..?

MARCH

Nope. You?

HEALY

None... No girl. No blue face. Nothing.

The bartender hands March his drink.

HEALY

Hey. Less drinking. More looking.

MARCH

What are you, some kind of super-prude?
This is like my third drink.

HEALY

Whatever, I'm gonna check the rest of the
house.

Healy stalks off... March watches him go. Downs his drink in
one shot. Hands the empty glass back to the bartender.

MARCH

Hit me again, Skipper.

The bartender pours him another one. March drinks it...

MARCH

Hey, listen... I seem to have misplaced
my sister. Dirty blonde hair, 'bout yay-
high..? Answers to Amelia?

BARTENDER

Hmmmm. Doesn't sound like anyone I
know... You want one more?

MARCH
 (considers)
 Why the hell not..?

SERIES OF QUICK CUTS:

MARCH AT A BAR BY THE POOL

He's got another drink in front of him.

MARCH
 Yeah, see, I'm looking for a gal-pal,
 answers to Amelia..? Actually, she's my
 sister, I'm worried about her.

MARCH TALKING TO A COCKTAIL WAITRESS

She hands him a fresh drink.

MARCH
 ... bout yay-high, answers to the call of
 the wild..? Nah, just kidding. She's my
 sister. I forgot her name.

MARCH WITH TWO TOPLESS CHICKS

Drinking a Mai Tai now.

MARCH
 ... I gotta find her... I'm her sister.
 She's worried about me. I'm worried, too.

He grins like an idiot at the two girls.

INT. SHATTUCK HOUSE - HALLWAY - SAME

Fewer people back here. HEALY finds an office. Waits for the right moment, tries the door--

INT. SHATTUCK'S OFFICE - SAME

The place is a mess. DIRECTORS' CHAIRS stacked in a corner. Lighting equipment... Makeshift storage for porn production.

Healy crosses to the desk. It's piled high with CLOTHING wrapped in plastic. This, apparently, is PORN WARDROBE. He lifts a pinstriped jacket off the top. It's hand labeled:

"HOW DO YOU LIKE MY CAR, BIG BOY"
Misty, scene 1.

He dumps the rest of the clothes on the floor. As he does, a PIECE OF PAPER flutters out... Healy retrieves it:

The paper is PINK... And it's SHAPED LIKE A COW. FEMININE HANDWRITING on it: 28-10 BURBANK APT. WEST, FLT 2, 10:30 pm.

Amelia's writing..? Healy frowns. Pockets the paper. Looks around the office once more...

Then exits into the hallway. Starts toward the living room. Glancing at the DEN, in passing. Stops--

INT. SHATTUCK HOUSE - DEN - SAME

HOLLY is in here. With the young REDHEAD we saw earlier. And some DORKY LOOKING GUY.

They're watching a porno being projected against a wall.

HOLLY
(looking up)
Hey.

HEALY
... Um, Holly... I'm not so sure you should be watching this.

The dorky guy waves Healy out of the way:

DORK
What's it to you, idiot..? Move. You're in my way.

Without even looking, Healy grabs the dork by the hair. BOUNCES his head off the coffee table -- WHAM! --

HEALY
Look, dickweed, that girl sitting there is a minor... Where do you get off showing her this kind of stuff, anyway?

HOLLY
He's not showing it to me --

Healy stops.

HEALY
He isn't?

HOLLY
No... He just wandered in...
(points at redhead)
She put it on.

Healy looks slightly deflated now.

HEALY

Yeah, well... She shouldn't be watching this kind of stuff either.

REDHEAD

Watching it..? Man, I'm in it.

Healy blinks. Frowns. Looks over at the screen for a moment. Takes a good hard look this time...

HEALY

... Oh.

The dorky guy is still just sitting there. Fingering the rapidly forming bruise of his forehead. Healy clears his throat... Looks over at the dork:

HEALY

Listen, uh... Sorry about that, man... Your head okay?

The dork doesn't answer. Starts crying instead... Healy nods:

HEALY

... Good.

Decides it's time to leave. Exits... HOLLY watches him go. Pause, then feigning nonchalance, she says to the REDHEAD:

HOLLY

Oh, by the way, I'm supposed to meet someone here. Do you by any chance know a girl named Amelia..?

REDHEAD

Hmmm... She in the business?

HOLLY

I think she did a film with Sid Shattuck.

REDHEAD

(shakes her head)

Don't know her. But Sid's gross. He told me this one chick was his sister, right? Then a few days later, I walk in on them and they're all, doing anal and stuff!

HOLLY

Don't say "and stuff" -- just say, "They're doing anal."

EXT. OUTSIDE DECK - OVERLOOKING CANYON - NIGHTTIME

March steps outside and draws a deep lungful of night air--

Sees a STRAGGLER out on the deck. Five-two. Blonde. He grins drunkenly at her. She waves:

BLONDE

Hey.

MARCH

Hey, yourself. What's your gig, blondie?
What do you do?

BLONDE

I do a little acting.

MARCH

Little acting? Hey! Me too. Do this.

He motions for her to shoot him; finger-gun. She does--

BLONDE

Bang!

March takes it high in the chest. GRUNTS. Staggeres.
Executes a death-pirouette.

Topples over the railing, into the night.

The BLONDE laughs, claps... pause... FROWNS.
Steps to the edge, peers over the railing--
Sees MARCH bounce down the canyon like a rag puppet.

EXT. BOTTOM OF HILL - SAME TIME

MARCH tumbles to a halt like tennis shoes when you stop the dryer. Sits up, trailing weeds. From above, faintly:

BLONDE (O.S.)

Woooo! That was great!

She wanders away, already disinterested.

MARCH takes stock. Miraculously, his cast is intact. Stands, patting his jacket... Aw, no. His gun, GONE. Jarred loose.

He turns, looking around... Stops cold--
There is a WOMAN watching him from the shadow of the trees down here. March can only make out her bright YELLOW DRESS.

MARCH

Jeeze, you scared me... Listen, this'll
sound weird, but I lost my gun.

(stops, squinting)

Hey... You look--

The woman BOLTS. Just like that.

Takes off running without saying a word.

Gone. March stares after her. Blinks. Shakes his head. Whatever. GUN. Just find the gun... He starts pawing the ivy.

Bingo. He finds it. Stands, checking the weapon over. Takes a step back--

AND TRIPS OVER THE DEAD GUY.

The one sprawled out in the ivy directly behind him. March "YELPS!" loudly. Stumbles. Falls on his ass...

Sits in the dirt. Slack-jawed. Blinking at the body.

HEALY (O.S.)

Yo! March! What are you doing?

March jumps again. Snaps his head upward --

EXT. OUTSIDE DECK - OVERLOOKING CANYON - SAME

Healy stands, looking down.

MARCH (o.s.)

Get... Get down here... Now.

Healy frowns, puzzled -- March doesn't sound so good. Holly wanders out onto the deck.

Healy glances back, makes a fast decision... Pulls some money out of his pocket:

HEALY

Holly, get yourself a cab. Go home. Now.

HOLLY

No way! I'm helping! You can't tell me--

HEALY

(calling out)

March?

MARCH (o.s.)

WHAT!?

HEALY

Tell Holly to take a cab home.

MARCH (o.s.)

HOLLY?! Jesus, are you still here!?

Holly looks pissed... Snatches the money out of Healy's hand. Turns on her heels and marches off, sullen.

Healy makes sure the coast is clear. Then -- HOPS THE RAILING.
Hits. Scrambles downhill, showering dirt... Slides to a stop.

A beat, as he notices the corpse and registers it for what
it is: a corpse. A ragged exit wound bisects its face.

HEALY

What happened? Who is he?

MARCH

I... I think I'm gonna throw up.

Healy goes through the guy's pockets. Finds a wallet.

HEALY

Um... You're not gonna like this.

MARCH

I can feel it at the back of my throat.

HEALY

It's Sid Shattuck.

MARCH

It's Sid-- Oh, God. No. No.

Healy is squinting at the body... Thinking.

HEALY

What is going on..? Anybody worked on
this Amelia flick -- the boyfriend; then
Misty; now Shattuck... They're all dead.

(beat)

What do you think?

MARCH

Who fucking cares??

(points to corpse)

Before we break the case of the century,
could we maybe consider dealing with this
ROTTING DEAD GUY???

HEALY

What should we do with him?

MARCH

Are you kidding? We gotta move him.

(off Healy's look)

There was a girl... She SAW me here.

HEALY

Did she see the body?

MARCH

Doesn't matter. It'll be found. She can place me here, looking for a gun --

HEALY

And tell the cops and you'll go to jail. I get it.

MARCH

I vote for Plan A: I throw up -- then we move the body.

HEALY

I'm down with that.

March nods. Bends over. Begins executing his plan. TIME CUT:

INT. PARTY - SHATTUCK HOUSE - SAME

Holly stands upstairs by the main bar. Fuming. She swipes a flute of champagne off a passing waitress, drains it...

A HAND taps her shoulder. She whirls, GUILTY as hell --

WOMAN

Are you the one who's been asking about Amelia?

Holly blinks. A six foot tall AMAZON in a HALTER TOP stares down at her, questioningly.

HOLLY

... I, uh, may have said something.

AMAZON

What do you want with her?

Holly's not sure how to handle this. Swallows, says:

HOLLY

She's... she's my sister, see. I need to warn her. Yeah, see, two freaky guys came around..? They're all, where is she, where is she -- Scared me, kinda.

The Amazon scrutinizes her for a long moment...

AMAZON

Okay. You seem like a decent kid...
(nods)
I'll take you to her.

HOLLY

... You'll, um... Oh. Kay.

Holly nods. Smiles. Her smile looks a tad sickly. CUT TO:

EXT. TREES AND BRUSH -- WITH MARCH AND HEALY

Our guys drag SHATTUCK'S BODY through the brush.
Healy's got his legs. March has hold of an ugly tie.
Both grunting. Sweating. Speaking in harsh whispers:

HEALY

How the hell'd you spot him, that's what
I'm wondering. From way up top..?

(dawning realization)

Wait a minute. You didn't... Did you FALL
down that hill?

MARCH

Oh, come on... I had three lousy drinks--

HEALY

Sure. That's why you can't walk straight.

MARCH

For Chrissakes, I'm carrying a dead body!
I'm sorry I'm not Baryshnikov here--

HEALY

Ha! You can't say "Baryshnikov!" You DID,
you fell down here! Didn't you?

(exasperated)

Unbelievable. First you get drunk... Then
you take a header off the balcony which,
I'm sure, is a keen old-time detective
trick--

MARCH

Can we just *get him out of sight*, please?

March indicates a sagging FENCE, separating properties.
They plod toward it, wheezing with effort.
PARTY NOISE, wafting on the night air.

HEALY

Ready? On three; one... two... THREE.

They heave the corpse over the top. It DROPS from view..!

ANOTHER ANGLE - OTHER SIDE OF THE FENCE

At the end of the day? It's not their fault, I mean, really,
how could they know there was ANOTHER party at the
neighbors'? Below the fence, 30 feet straight down?

DEAD SHATTUCK plummets out of the sky and EXPLODES a glass
table. Takes out a busboy. 150 people watch, thunderstruck.

BUSBOY
 JESUS! MY LEG! Oh my God! My leg!

Healy and March, uncomprehending. They peer over the fence:

MARCH
 I think he's still in sight.

They BOOK. Back up the hill. Hit a set of wooden STEPS and keep right on climbing. CUT TO:

EXT. SHATTUCK HOUSE - STREET OUTSIDE - NIGHT

THE AMAZON leads Holly past the valet station. Down the street to a waiting LIMO. Engine idling.

AMAZON
 Hop in back, sweetie.

Holly swallows hard. Climbs in, heart thudding. There is a man seated back here. Face turned, looking out the window.

The Amazon leans in after Holly, says:

AMAZON
 This one says she's Amelia's sister.

Then pulls back out, SLAMMING THE DOOR.

MAN
 Is that a fact?

He turns to look at Holly -- his face, a scrubbed but no less vivid shade of BLUE...

BLUE FACE
 Good times.

EXT. SHATTUCK HOUSE - OUTSIDE STAIRS - NIGHT

With HEALY and MARCH, as they retreat up OUTSIDE STAIRS. Pushing through people, shoving them aside.

March reaches a wooden LANDING: Deck, hot tub. Lunges for the NEXT set of stairs.

Healy appears, close on his heels. Turns towards the stairs, accidentally SLAMS into a big guy. Starts to apologize --

FREEZES. Dead stop.

We recognize the BYSTANDER. It's OLDER GUY. Blue-Face's partner. Big as life. Their eyes lock.... They launch. NO HESITATION. March, everyone else, forgotten.

Older Guy's .38, clearing leather --

Healy KICKS OUT--! Sends it sailing. It lands in the HOT TUB. Older Guy counters: PULLS A SWITCHBLADE. *Lunges.*

PANDEMONIUM. The deck clears rapidly. People SCREAMING. Running every which way, surging up the stairs and meanwhile--

INT. LIMOUSINE - SAME TIME

HOLLY pressed back up against the door of the limo. Feeling behind her for the door handle.

HOLLY

... No thanks. I think we must be talking about a different Amelia.

Blue Face inching towards her. Voice deadly calm:

BLUE-FACE

Really..? How can you be sure? Why don't you describe your sister for--

Suddenly he stops. Breaks off mid-sentence, staring past her out the window. Holly darts a look herself, sees--

A GIRL IN A YELLOW DRESS

Bolts out of the front door of Shattuck's house. Frantic. Trailing a backpack. Accosting the VALET. YELLING:

YELLOW DRESS

I need my keys. Now. My keys, HURRY--!

Her words, clearly audible.

BLUE FACE flicks a glance at the seat across from him. Holly, following his gaze again:

A FADED PHOTOGRAPH sits there.

It's a shot of AMELIA. The woman we saw hire Healy. Looking slightly younger with a graduation cap and tassel...

OUT THE WINDOW: The GENUINE ARTICLE. No mistaking her.

Blue-Face just won the lottery. Everything changes, that quick.

Holly, now worthless. Blue-Face lunges ACROSS her. Thrusts open the DOOR, pinning Holly in the process.

BLUE-FACE

Don't fucking move.

A GUN MATERIALIZES

In his outstretched fist. He sights down the barrel.
This is it, he's not fucking around.

And you know what..? Holly decides she isn't either.
Fuck being scared. She wrenches one arm free--

GRABS THE DOOR AND YANKS IT SHUT

Right on Blue-Face's wrist.

A loud CRUNCH--! He BARKS sudden PAIN.
The gun bucks in his hand. DISCHARGES, KA-POW--!
Shot goes wild. Blasts splinters from the valet box.

BLUE FACE recoils and HOLLY kicks the door back open.
Leaping from the car--

HOLLY

Amelia, run!!

Amelia SPINS. Locks eyes with Holly... BOLTS like a cheetah.

PANIC. People yelling, rushing for cover. Holly stumbles,
gains her feet as Blue-Face fumbles with the gun, reaching
for her--

This time she slams the door ON HIS FINGER.
PAIN, white-hot. He shrieks, falls back inside the car.

Holly doesn't miss a beat--
SHE RUNS FOR IT. Heart thudding, feet slapping pavement.

Chasing a blotch of retreating YELLOW, as Amelia flees down
the canyon. The party's become a ROUT.

EXT. OUTSIDE STAIRS - BACK WITH MARCH

MARCH heading up the STAIRS fast-- following the sound of
the GUNSHOT. The wood, vibrating... *thrumming*. He looks up:

MARCH

Fuck me.

Panicked PARTY GUESTS. STAMPEDING DOWN towards him, as behind
him they STAMPEDE UP. He fights through, bursts out--

EXT. VALET AREA - FRONT OF PARTY - SAME

Onto the drive. Casts about --

HIS POV: THE BLACK LIMO

BLUE-FACE at the wheel. Laying rubber. People actually FLINGING themselves aside--! IT SCREECHES off, down the canyon.

March turns -- the VALET who parked his car earlier gives him a slightly surprised look:

VALET

Hey, man, I think that limo is going after the girl who was in your trunk! Far out, huh?

MARCH

My trunk--?
 (realizing)
 Oh, fuck. FUCK..!
 (beat)
 Where the hell are my keys?!

EXT. SHATTUCK HOUSE - WOODEN LANDING - SAME

The DECK, now empty after the exodus.

HEALY and OLDER GUY. Still at it. Circling each other.

OLDER GUY darts in quickly, brandishing the knife.
 HEALY scrambles back -- Stumbles against the HOT TUB.

A glint of METAL in the water. THE GUN.

Healy dodges a SLASH -- DIVES for the weapon.
 Comes up, soaking wet, spins to FIRE --

Too late. Because OLDER GUY'S already ON TOP OF HIM.
 Tackles him. STABBING. As they both PITCH BACKWARD --

Over the EMBANKMENT.

Tumbling, bouncing. DOWN THE WOODED HILLSIDE.
 Skipping, end over end. Kicking up dirt --

Then WHAM--! WHAM--! the two men slam to an abrupt STOP in the middle of a clearing. Twenty yards apart.

Healy groggy, bleeding, wet... The REVOLVER'S GONE.
 He spots it to his left. Tries to stand. Collapses.
 SCRAMBLES for the gun. Hands and knees.

Snatches it up and AIMS IT before Older Guy can even get to his feet. PULLS THE TRIGGER:

CLICK--! Older Guy FLINCHES --

Nothing. It's a misfire.
 Healy pulls the trigger twice more --

CLICK--! CLICK--!

It won't fire. He gets it immediately: The cartridges are wet.

Older Guy smiles.

He's still got the knife. He starts for Healy.

Oh, Shit. Frantically, Healy flips the GUN CYLINDER open. Spins it as fast as he can. Water flying off the thing. Flicks it back into place. Aims. Older Guy ten yards away--

CLICK--! CLICK--! CLICK--!

Fuck. Healy tries to stand and back up at the same time. Falls again. Fuck. Flicks the cylinder open. Spins it. Desperate. Blows on it this time--

Older Guy is almost on him. He flicks the cylinder closed.

CLICK--! CLICK--! CLICK--! CLICK--!

Older Guy SWINGS THE KNIFE--

CLICK--! CLICK--! BLAM--!

MUZZLE FLASH. Close range. The bullet catches Older Guy in the collar bone. SHATTERS IT. Blood and flesh go flying.

Older Guy SCREAMS, spun like a top. Goes down flailing.

The shot echoes in the canyon closeness.

HEALY drops his arm to his side. Chest heaving. There. Much better. Tosses the gun. Spits blood.

Steels himself. Staggeres to his feet. Half-limping now. Kicks the knife away. Looms over Older Guy.

OLDER GUY

(wheezing)

Wait... You don't... I can pay you. I can pay y--

Healy rears back and STOMPS the guy's elbow. We hear a SHARP SNAP and the man SCREAMS again. SQUIRMING.

HEALY

Are you bargaining with me?

Older Guy shakes his head emphatically.

OLDER GUY

... No... No... I'm gone... You'll never... see me again... Never...

Healy takes the KNIFE. Holds it an INCH from the guy's EYE.

HEALY

Uh-huh. Where will you be?

OLDER GUY

Mi... Michigan...

Healy considers a beat. Then, surprisingly, nods.

HEALY

Michigan works.

Withdraws the knife. Staggered upright. Was it worth it? He'll worry about that later. Turns, starts uphill -- then just as suddenly STOPS. Ears pricked:

A SCREECH OF TIRES from down the canyon.

HIS POV: DOWN THE HILLSIDE

We can see A ROAD below us, through the trees.

Healy spots two figures RUNNING. They dodge across the tarmac. Start down a wooded SLOPE. Getting OFF THE ROAD.

Behind them, A LIMO SHRIEKS TO A STOP.

A MAN jumps out, pulling a gun. Hard to say from this distance, but it looks like his face might be BLUE.

Healy galvanizes. Powers forward. Running on his hurt leg. Older Guy, forgotten -- and meanwhile

INT. CAR - WITH MARCH - DRIVING - SAME

He takes a corner full-speed. UP AHEAD--

THE LIMO. Angled in the middle of the road. BLUE-FACE aiming a gun down the canyon. FIRING.

No hesitation. March VEERS. Targeting Blue-Face. Stomps the accelerator. Engine, howling..!

BLUE-FACE reacts to the noise. Doesn't miss a beat. Spins and FIRES RIGHT AT MARCH.

WINDSHIELD, splintered..! March ducks.

SKIDDING. OUT OF CONTROL.

Blue-Face DIVES aside, nick of time, as

MARCH'S CAR - Fishtails. Slews off the road...

Just misses a full-grown DEER. Sends it SCAMPERING.

A TREE RUSHES AT US. March slams it HEAD ON... WHAM--!
Silence. A beat. March shakes his head. Clearing it. Turns--

BLUE-FACE is gone. Down the hillside.
March blinks, and then--

Someone ELSE flashes across the road, limping:

MARCH

HEALY!

Healy doesn't stop. Hobbles, yelling back, pointing:

HEALY

See if you can cut him off! Go!

Shit. March jams it in reverse. Pulling free. Takes off as--

EXT. CANYON ROAD - FURTHER DOWN THE HILL - SAME

Holly and Amelia stumble down onto another paved road. Amelia clutching her BACKPACK. Both running for their lives--

HOLLY

Go! Run!

What happens next happens quickly:

BLUE-FACE

Emerges from the trees behind them. Stops, drawing a bead on Amelia. His finger tenses on the trigger, as

A DEER BURSTS FROM COVER

Ten feet away. Leaping into the road. It's the one that March spooked. It fetches up sharply, seeing Blue-Face --

At which point, inexplicably, we make a HARD CUT TO:

THE INTERIOR OF A FAMILY SEDAN

DAD, driving a tad fast, whips around a corner.
From the back seat, his son YELLS:

SON

DEER!

Dad cries out, SWERVES--! Misses the deer, thank God.

Hits BLUE-FACE instead.

Just fucking nails him--! FLINGS him, limbs skewed, into the air... He lands with a sickening THUD--! CUT TO:

HOLLY -- Still running. Shoots a look back. Sees the CAR come to a SKITTERING STOP. Sees THE DAD get out... Stare -- Then HOP BACK in his car and take off.

Leaving BLUE-FACE lying there, in the middle of the road. His leg, twisted back at an impossible angle...

Holly stops... Hesitates...

AMELIA

What the hell are you doing?!

HOLLY

He's HURT. Just... just hang on!

She starts back toward him. Amelia calling after her:

AMELIA

Are you crazy?! Stay away from him!

Holly just keeps going. Onto the road. Approaches the downed man--

He's a mess. He rolls over, gasping... SEES HOLLY. Stops.

Holly stares back at him... Turns to call to Amelia -- Sees her RETREATING at a dead run. Goodbye.

BLUE-FACE, meanwhile, is out of it... He reaches out a hand for her... She makes a decision. Crouches, takes his hand.

HOLLY

It's okay... you're gonna be alright... I'll get help.

A RUSTLING sound. Holly spins, startled-- HEALY is standing behind her. Staring down at BLUE-FACE. Grim.

HOLLY

A car hit him, we need an ambulance..!

HEALY

... Right.

He strips off his sliced up jacket, lays it across Blue-Face.

HEALY

Holly, go flag someone down... Hurry, he's in a bad way.

Holly scurries off. Healy and Blue-Face, alone now.

He looms over the prone figure.
For a moment, Blue-Face turns his eyes upward at Healy,
imploring -- then, with dawning recognition:

BLUE-FACE

You...

Healy regards him, detached.

HEALY

Me.

Blue Face coughs... Fixes Healy with a belligerent grin:

BLUE-FACE

Too late... The word already went out on
you and the private cop... Ever hear...
of John Boy..? By now, he's... heard of
you... You ain't got long to live.

Healy shrugs philosophically.

HEALY

Nobody does.

He reaches out a powerful hand; calmly, clinically...

QUICK TIME CUT -- ANOTHER ANGLE

HOLLY comes running back down the road. Desperate, flustered:

HOLLY

Healy! No one's stopping!

Healy stands over BLUE-FACE'S BODY.
Slipping his jacket back on:

HEALY

Sorry... He didn't make it.

Holly shifts her gaze to the corpse. Stunned.

Casually, Healy leans down, starts rifling the dead man's
clothing. Comes up with a WALLET.

Checks the license: **Seymour Jones. Detroit, Michigan.**
He frowns at that... Just as HEADLIGHTS SWEEP them.

Healy quickly tosses the wallet, as RED AND BLUE flashers
fill the night --

HEALY

... And that would be the cops.

Holly doesn't even look up.
She can't stop staring at the body in the road. CUT TO:

EXT. CANYON ROAD - AFTERMATH - NIGHT

POLICE CARS, skewed across the roadway. A COP routes traffic, past the accident site -- BLUE FACE'S BODY is loaded into an ambulance.

PARKED AT ROADSIDE -- MARCH'S CAR

Healy leans against it, calmly smoking. While March argues with the UNIFORMED OFFICER, standing guard:

MARCH

... Look, you got our statements. Can I talk to my kid now or what? She's over with the nurse.

OFFICER

Sir, I was told to keep you here. So I'm keeping you here. Just following orders.

MARCH

(indignant)
Yeah, well... *Hitler was just following orders!*

Healy thinks about correcting March -- but really, what's the point..? Right then, a WOMAN appears at the cop's side.

She's dark. Dark hair. Dark eyes. And beautiful. Late 20s, early 30s. She wears a crisp, tailored business suit.

As soon as she arrives, the cop gives her a quick nod and departs. Just like that... The woman smiles at March:

WOMAN

You're Mr. March, I think.
(to Healy)
And you are..?

HEALY

Not answering that question.

WOMAN/TALLY

(slight shrug)
My name is Tally. If you'll come with me..? My boss would like a word.

March and Healy just exchange looks. Follow warily, as she leads them to a black SEDAN. Stops, waits, as --

THE BACK WINDOW GLIDES DOWN

Revealing ANOTHER WOMAN. Late 40's. Well kept.

KUTTNER

Gentlemen. How do you do?

MARCH

About this bad, most of the time.

KUTTNER

My name is Judith Kuttner. I work for the California Department of Justice.

MARCH

I see... Well, that explains exactly nothing. What the hell's all this about? Why are you holding us?

KUTTNER

Please, keep your voice down. I'm trying to be discrete here...

(pause, deep breath)

... I'm Amelia's mother.

EXT. SCENIC OVERLOOK - NIGHT

L.A. continues to dazzle. Clouds awash with the glitter from below. TALLY plays a game with HOLLY in the background. As --

KUTTNER AND OUR GUYS

Sit at a picnic table. Talking. The SEDAN shields them from the road. Kuttner nervously lights a smoke... There's a snapshot of Amelia on the table.

KUTTNER

First off, I want to thank you. From the interviews we're getting, it sounds like you might have saved my daughter's life.

MARCH

That was mostly Holly.

Kuttner glances back at Holly. Chews her lip. Thinking...

KUTTNER

I need your help. And I'm wondering if I can really trust you.

MARCH

Most people don't... But I'm starting to get the idea you don't have much of a choice.

Kuttner regards March... Makes a decision.

KUTTNER

My situation is... well, "delicate" is putting it mildly. My job can be very public sometimes --

Healy frowns -- then suddenly snaps his fingers:

HEALY

That's where I've seen you before -- on TV. Prosecuting that car company thing.

KUTTNER

The lawsuit over the catalytic converter. Exactly. That's half my day.

(beat)

The other half I spend on pornography.

MARCH

Really..? That makes two of us.

KUTTNER

You may have noticed that Hollywood Boulevard has devolved into a cesspool. Not to give cesspools a bad name.

HEALY

So you're, like, an anti-porn crusader?

KUTTNER

More or less... The Vegas mob is looking to expand their porn apparatus to L.A. I'm doing everything I can to stop that--

MARCH

Right. Porn is bad, yes, we get it --
 (breaks off, squints)
 -- Wait... Your daughter made a Sid Shattuck film.

Kuttner nods. Stares off:

HEALY

Ouch... Ma'am, no offense -- but why'd Amelia do this film, if she knew it could embarrass you?

KUTTNER

Oh, that's what she wanted. She's a petulant child, she... lashed out. Since her father died we've had... a difficult relationship.

MARCH

So, there's a film out there, somewhere.
A prime piece of blackmail.

KUTTNER

That would be my worry, except for one
small detail --

(beat)

There is no film. Not anymore.

She stubs out her cigarette.

KUTTNER

It's been destroyed... There was a fire,
Amelia's friend, boyfriend, whatever he
was--

HEALY

Dean. Yeah. We've been to the house.

KUTTNER

This Dean was apparently editing the film
when the fire started -- all the footage
burned. Everything.

MARCH

A great loss to cinema, I'm sure. That
begs the question:

(beat)

Mrs. Kuttner, why is everyone who worked
on that film now dying?

KUTTNER

I don't know, Mr. March. I wish I did.
All I know is Amelia is in danger.

HEALY

So put her in protective custody. After
tonight she'll get scared, come running
home--

KUTTNER

No. She won't. You don't understand--
(sudden tears)

I know how she thinks. She doesn't trust
me. I'm... Big Brother. I'm the
government.

(beat)

She thinks it's me doing all this.

The implications of this set in. She wipes her eyes.

KUTTNER

My daughter is out there, running scared.
And she can't call home... because she
thinks her own mother is trying to kill
her.

She reaches into her bag. Takes out a CHECKBOOK.

KUTTNER

I want to hire you. Both of you. Find
Amelia. Protect her.

ANGLE ON CHECKBOOK

We see the sum take shape -- T-E-N THOUSA--

MARCH

Hire us? Sure. But we don't come cheap.
(smug)
I'm thinking five thousand dollars.

She stops writing. Pause... She rips up the check. Starts
writing again. March grins triumphantly at Healy. CUT TO:

EXT. MARCH'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - FALSE DAWN

Healy stands back here. Staring at the half empty pool.
Smoking... March comes out through the sliding glass doors.

MARCH

She's asleep now. She's fine.

Healy nods. March kicks a beachball into the pool.

HEALY

Listen, something bothers me...
(frowns)
Kuttner's prosecuting this car company
thing, right? Could mean hundreds of
millions against the big three.

MARCH

Yeah. So?

HEALY

That guy tonight, the Blue-face one...
Got a look at his ID.
(beat)
He's from *Detroit*.

MARCH

... Probably nothing.

Healy nods... Then:

HEALY

Oh, I almost forgot...

He reaches into his coat. Takes out the COW-SHAPED paper he found at the party.

HEALY

I found this in Shattuck's office.

(reads)

28-10 Burbank Apt. Western, Flight 2.

10:30 pm... I think Amelia wrote this.

March glances at it: *28-10 BURBANK APT. WEST, FLT 2, 10:30 pm.*

HEALY

She might be trying to skip town -- what do you think?

March shakes his head, a beat --

MARCH

I think whatever it is, it can wait. I need 8 hours...

(beat)

Just drop by in the afternoon tomorrow. We'll sort it all out.

INT. HEALY'S CAR - SAME

Healy, driving away from March's house. He spots something out the side window, squints:

BEHIND SOME CONSTRUCTION FENCING

We can just make out the beam of a FLASHLIGHT -- held by a small figure sitting in the dirt... Reading from a book.

Healy, bewildered. He hits the brakes and we CUT TO:

HOLLY MARCH

Sitting Indian style in the middle of the vacant lot -- this is exactly where we first met her... She reads out loud to no one.

Healy steps into frame behind Her... She stops reading but doesn't look up:

HOLLY

Hey.

HEALY

Hey.

Healy glances around. No one else here.

HOLLY
You've got your foot in the toilet.

HEALY
... What?

HOLLY
(turns)
Your foot. It's in the toilet.

HEALY
Oh.

Healy takes a couple of steps forward.

HOLLY
You just knocked over the lamp.

HEALY
Right. Sorry... Was this your room?

HOLLY
... No. Mom and Dad's.

Healy nods: Oh.

HOLLY
... Mom loved detective stories.

She closes the book. Takes a deep lungful of night air.

HEALY
Aren't you supposed to be in bed?

HOLLY
I couldn't sleep.

HEALY
I see.
(nods)
... Then I'll leave you to it.

Healy turns to leave... Heads back to his car.

HOLLY
Mr. Healy..? Can I ask you something?

Healy stops, looks back:

HEALY
Anything.

HOLLY
... What did you do to that man tonight?

HEALY
What..?

HOLLY
On the road... When I went to go get
help. What did you do?

HEALY
I... Nothing.

HOLLY
You didn't...
(pause)
... Did you kill him?

HEALY
No... Of course not. I -- of course not.

She studies him a moment longer. Finally nods: she believes him.

HOLLY
Okay... That's good...
(little smile)
... I knew you couldn't do something like
that... Goodnight, Mr. Healy.

CUT TO:

A CAR DOOR SLAMMING

As Healy gets back into his car. Keys the ignition.
Catches sight of himself in the rearview mirror:

Notices something he hadn't before... Something troubling.
He shakes it off -- Puts the car in gear. Drives away...

And we CUT TO BLACK. Darkness. Silence. A count of FOUR, then:

FADE UP. A TV NEWSCAST. A SLICK, WELL DRESSED MAN being
interviewed. As workers in the background set up tables.

REPORTER
I'm here with a representative of the
Detroit Auto Manufacturers, Mr. Bergen
Paulsen... Mr. Paulsen, I understand
you're in town today getting ready for
the Auto show--

PAULSEN
That's right, Mike. For thirty years, it's
been my privilege to debut the finest in
automotive technology. Right here in L.A.

The CAMERA starts to pull back from the TV set now.

We're inside Healy's apartment. The TV drones on, unnoticed... The reporter asking about the catalytic converter lawsuit now.

Healy walks past frame. Fresh from the shower. Hair tousled. We follow him over to his "word of the day" calendar:

Internecine \In.ter.ne.cine, *adj*: Pertaining to dissention within a group; mutually destructive.

He ponders a moment, then says out loud:

HEALY

The marriage failed when their internecine struggle overwhelmed what love remained.

He smiles, satisfied. Shrugs on his coat. Exits whistling.

EXT. MARCH'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Healy sits on the front porch. Waiting. Smoking.

MARCH'S CAR pulls into the driveway. March and Holly climb out. She's carrying packages. March carries a new suit.

HEALY

Hey.

MARCH

Hey, hey! The man of the hour!

They approach Healy.

HEALY

Didn't know what time you'd be here. You said the afternoon--

MARCH

Right. Sure. Sorry... But I went to the bank. Got your money. Right here.

He pulls out an envelope.

MARCH

That's all of it. Half. Twenty-five hundred... Yep...

(beat)

You know, minus a couple hundred... Damage to the car... I figured you'd want to chip in for that.

Healy just shrugs it off.

HEALY

Sure.

MARCH

What do you think..?

March holds up his suit, proudly. It's maroon.

HEALY

Nice... I guess.

Holly pushes past Healy. She does not look happy.

HOLLY

We stopped at a bar. That's why we're late.

She darts inside the house.

HEALY

Right... So, uh, how you wanna do this?

MARCH

Well... I think we, you know, give it a couple of days... Then we'll call Kuttner, see if we can hit her up for a second installment.

HEALY

We can -- I mean... What..?

MARCH

You don't want to call too soon. Gotta act like you're on to something, been working hard... Then wammo.

(beat)

I'm good at this. Trust me.

He heads into the house. Healy turns, follows him inside:

HEALY

Wait, you're just gonna... lie to her?

MARCH

Yeah.

(off Healy's expression)
What?

HEALY

She paid us. ME. She paid me to do a job... I don't wanna lie to her.

MARCH

Fine. I'll lie to her.

(beat)

Don't worry. This is a good thing. We're gonna get some free bread.

March hits play on his answering machine. He's got two messages. Both from Lily Glenn, Misty's aunt:

LILY (on machine)
Mr. March, this is Lily Glenn. I haven't heard from you about Misty's case--

March fast forwards it:

LILY (on machine)
Mr. March, I really want to find out if you've made progress--

March deletes both messages. Uninterested... Looks up:

MARCH
Right. So, we good?

HEALY
Good..? No, we're not good.
(beat)
Look, we have theses clues to follow --

He fishes out the COW-SHAPED PAPER he got off Blue Face.

HEALY
Burbank Airport? Western flight 2? I'm thinking she's skipping town --

MARCH
Great! Fine! She gets shot in another city. We're off the hook.

Healy turns, starts to walk back out the front door.

HEALY
Forget it.

Just then, HOLLY appears from down a hallway. March doesn't see her. Neither does Healy. March follows Healy, reaches for his shoulder --

MARCH
Wait, wait. Just one Goddamn secon--

Healy SHOVES HIM. March stumbles, knocking trash and beer bottles off the coffee table. Lands on his ass... Sits in spilled beer, pitiful.

HEALY
I'll find these guys myself. I don't need a pathetic idiot.

MARCH

Oh, you don't need a pathetic idiot.
Ahhh, see, I had it confused --

March glances over at that exact second. LOCKS EYES with his daughter. The look on her face stops him cold:

She's ashamed of him.

Healy on his way out the door, says:

HEALY

You're the world's worst detective.

MARCH

... Yeah, but I got a really cool ad.

Then, just before Healy's gone, March makes a decision --

MARCH

Hey, Healy -- say 'Hi' to Amelia for me.

HEALY

I will.

MARCH

'Course, you won't have much luck at the airport... Seeing as it's not a flight.

Healy hesitates, turns back... March shrugs:

MARCH

Your note. It's not a flight. Look at it.

Healy looks at it: *28-10 BURBANK APT. WEST, FLT 2, 10:30 pm.*
March gets to his feet... Speaks unerringly from memory:

MARCH

Most airports -- Burbank included -- have nighttime overflight curfews. 10 to 6. Plus that first number? It's today's date, reversed the European way -- which makes sense when you see FLT. That's not flight. My guess? It's flat. As in apartment.

Pause. Healy stands, thunderstruck. Licks his lips, thinking.

HEALY

And Burbank APT. West..?

MARCH

The Burbank Apartments West. I've driven past it a few times. It's a dump.

He gets up. Sighs. Turns to Holly:

MARCH

We're going now. And you're going to
Jessica's. For real this time.

INT. HEALY'S CAR - BURBANK - EVENING

Healy slews his car to a stop along a deserted-looking block
on Vineland... Healy and March clamber out. Look around.

Only there's nothing here. A gas station. An empty lot.
AN ELDERLY MAN is out walking his dog. Healy hails him:

HEALY

'Evening. We're, uh, looking for the
Burbank Apartments..?

ELDERLY MAN

(points to empty lot)
Used to be there. Tore those puppies
down, going on two years now.

He walks on. Leaves March and Healy just standing there.
A pause. Another pause. Then March turns to Healy and says:

MARCH

So. The airport, then..?

EXT. NIGHT SKY - ESTABLISHING AIRPORT

Above us, a BOEING 737 climbs skyward. Wingtips blinking --

CAR BLOW-BY - HOLLYWOOD WAY - BURBANK

Healy and March rocket past, doing eighty.

INT. CAR - WITH HEALY AND MARCH

Healy at the wheel. Speeding. Racing against time.

MARCH

Well, they used to have those overflight
restrictions. I read all about 'em. So,
okay, maybe they changed them, but if they
did then that's... that's just wrong.

Healy is just ignoring him. Fuming. March decides it's best
to drop it. Stares out the side window. Squints, then:

MARCH

Hey, she's not going to the airport.

HEALY

What..?

March points out the window.

MARCH

Pull over.

Healy glances over:

HEALY

Look, I've had it to here with your --

(stops)

What? What are you pointing at?

MARCH'S POV:

The car glides to the curb, and the two men stare silently at this vision before them... Healy whistles:

A FIFTEEN-STORY GLASS AND STEEL TOWER. Rising up from an expanse of asphalt. On a huge MARQUEE:

BURBANK AIRPORT WESTIN

And underneath: **Visit "THE FLIGHT LOUNGE" Disco 1 & 2**

Healy just shakes his head.

MARCH

West is Westin. She's not leaving town.

HEALY

(nods)

She's meeting someone.

INT. WESTIN HOTEL LOBBY

MARCH AND HEALY hurry through the faux-maritime Mecca that is the AIRPORT WESTIN. Locate the FLIGHT LOUNGE.

INT. "THE FLIGHT LOUNGE" - BAR - SAME TIME

For the moment, no one but the bartender, JOE. Our guys belly up to the bar --

JOE THE BARTENDER

'Evening. What can I get you?

MARCH

Information. Ever see this girl?

He props a snapshot of AMELIA on the bar. Joe frowns:

JOE THE BARTENDER
Looks familiar. You guys cops?

MARCH
In spirit. She woulda come in, like, last
half hour..?

JOE THE BARTENDER
Hey. I just work here.

MARCH
I know, dickhead, that's why I'm asking.
Maybe ordered something wacky, say, a
bourbon martini..?

Bingo. We see the spark of recognition:

JOE THE BARTENDER
Riiiiiight... Could be. Memory gets foggy,
you know? What's in it for me?

MARCH
(indicates Healy)
He'll stop doing it.

JOE THE BARTENDER
Doing what?

Healy grabs Joe's TIE, yanks--! Bounces his head off the bar.

MARCH
That.

JOE THE BARTENDER
OW! Fuck.

MARCH
Listen -- *Joe*, is it?
(reading nametag)
We really need to find her.

HEALY
Yeah. And *Joe*, we can do this the easy
way, or-- oh, wait, this *is* the easy way.

Healy reaches for Joe again --

JOE THE BARTENDER
Okay! Jesus. What ever happened to
offering me twenty bucks?

MARCH
We're in a recession. The girl?

JOE THE BARTENDER
 The PENTHOUSE. Top floor.
 (massages his forehead)
 She's in the penthouse. There. You happy?

HEALY
 She's there now.

JOE THE BARTENDER
 Sure, yeah, but listen -- you guys don't
 wanna go up there, trust me.

MARCH
 Why? Who's there?

JOE THE BARTENDER
 These New York guys. Business guys,
 whatever -- point is, they got fucking
 bodyguards. Mohammed types -- you know
 the kind, had their balls removed. What's
 that called?

HEALY
 Marriage.

JOE THE BARTENDER
 Anyway, he booked the penthouse.

Healy and March exchange glances:

MARCH
 What the hell is she up to..?

JOE THE BARTENDER
 (pleading)
 Guys, no one wants trouble. She's gotta
 come back down. Can't you just... hang
 here, have a couple cold ones on me?

Healy and March mull it over. Why not?

JOE THE BARTENDER
 There. See? Very reasonable. Your buddy,
 that was the problem, he wasn't
 reasonable --

Red flag. HEALY picks up on it instantly:

HEALY
 Say again. Our buddy..?

JOE THE BARTENDER
 The other guy, yeah, come round lookin'
 for Amelia -- he wasn't with you?

HEALY

Describe him. He have a name?

JOE THE BARTENDER

No name. Big fucker. Blonde. Like a Nebraska boy, corn-fed, you know?

HEALY

Where'd he go?

JOE THE BARTENDER

Got on the elevator. Right before you came in.

HEALY

You witnessed this.

JOE THE BARTENDER

No, it was told to me by a wise old Indian, of course I fucking witnessed it.
(stands)
I'll grab you a couple beers.

He exits. HEALY chews on that. Says without looking up:

HEALY

Could be... Makes sense... John Boy.

MARCH

Who..?

HEALY

Some guy Blue Face mentioned.

MARCH

Mentioned? Mentioned how?

HEALY

You know: "This man is coming to kill you..." That kinda crap.

MARCH

What?!

HEALY

Big, farm-looking motherfucker..?
(beat, shakes his head)
Shit, what am I talking about..? We don't even know what John Boy looks like.

March is starting to look panicked.

MARCH

Look, all we gotta do is wait, right..?
She comes down, we grab her, ta-da.

HEALY

I suppose. Unless he's up there now,
murdering her.

They both sit there, pointedly not looking at each other.

MARCH

Not worth getting shot over.

HEALY

You wouldn't think.

He rubs tired eyes. Lets out a long, ragged breath.

HEALY

Okay. Here we go.

March's face registers the sort of undistilled misery only a true coward can appreciate.

INT. ELEVATOR - HOTEL - SAME

Healy and March step inside the elevator.
March presses "P". They ascend.

It's a glass elevator, you can see the city outside.
They stare at the elevator doors. They've seen the city.

New Age MUZAK, serene. All of life's rough edges, blunted.

MARCH

(abruptly)
Munich.

HEALY

What?

MARCH

That's it, right? What you call a guy,
had his nuts removed? A Munich?

Healy slips on his brass knuckles. Flexes his hand.

HEALY

Munich is a city in Germany.

MARCH

Oh.
(brightens)
Hitler only had one ball.

HEALY

Yeah, I'd heard that.
 (watching the floor indicator)
 Okay, here we go.

They face forward. Shoulders squared. Ready for anything.

The elevator glides to a stop, *ding--!*
 The doors open. They're both about to exit, when--
 LAUGHTER fills the corridor. Healy frowns, listening.

Wheezing, asthmatic laughter -- the kind, you think you're
 gonna pass out, the joke's so fucking funny.

HEALY leans out, cautiously... Just in time to see

A SUITED MAN

Stumbling toward him. Weaving, side to side.
 Equilibrium, gone. Wheeze... Stumble...

Healy draws a sharp breath:

From the guy's collar, a sad little spritz. *Wheeze..!*
 Like a kids' drinking fountain. Bright blood. Arterial.

HIS THROAT'S BEEN CUT.

Guy collides with the wall. Eyes, pleading with Healy...

POUNING FOOTSTEPS, NOW

These from the OTHER direction. MARCH stares, eyes wide --

A SIMILARLY DRESSED MAN

Comes rocketing out of a side corridor. Headed their way --

Three loud, sharp REPORTS.
 BULLETS rip through his mid-section--!

The window behind him, cracked. Splattered. He SCREAMS and
 the WHEEZER keeps on wheezing and all is blood and chaos --

HEALY doesn't say a word. Never changes expression.
 Leans back into the elevator. Reaches past March --

Pushes the "Lobby" button.
 The doors glide shut, erasing the corridor.

OUTSIDE, IN THE SKY

The gut-shot MAN bursts through the picture window.
 Tumbles past the elevator --

Inside, Muzak plays, soothing.
 Healy slides the brass knuckles off.
 Stashes them in a pocket.

Their visit to the penthouse, 15 seconds in duration.

You know, it was never all that hot of an idea.

MARCH
 (looking ill)
 Feels... like I'm gonna...

HEALY
 Don't even think about it.

CUT TO:

HEALY'S CAR

Squealing up out of the parking garage. Onto the street.
 Getting the fuck out of there. Fast.

INT. CAR - WITH HEALY AND MARCH - DRIVING - NIGHT

March presses his forehead to the side window.
 His face, a study in despair... Without looking up:

MARCH
 Cops.

Sure enough, STROBING RED, BLUE -- painting the buildings.

Without missing a beat, Healy swerves into an alley behind
 the Westin. Pulls over. Kills the ignition... Pause.

HEALY
 You know, the thing is --

MARCH
 Shut up.

They sit. Checking the mirror. Saying nothing...
 The cops get farther away. Crickets resume chirping.

Pause... the tension, palpable.
 March opens his mouth to wrap things up --
 Something lands on the car. HARD.

WHAM--! Buckles the roof. What in the name of God..?
 March claws for his weapon, then FREEZES as

TINY HUMAN FEET

Appear. On the WINDSHIELD.

Hearts in their throats, our guys swap glances.

MARCH

What the fu--??

FEET. Walking down the windshield...

AMELIA, THEIR QUARRY

Hobbles into view. Torn dress. Cuts, scratches. Poised atop the hood, eyes crazed, hair wild --

MARCH

HOLY SHI--!

The moppet in the windshield SPINS, startled. Executes a sad little burlesque for their benefit:

They watch, oddly detached, as she raises a BERETTA she's been clutching and BLASTS a shot through the windshield.

KA-POW! The seat cushion blooms stuffing, as--

AMELIA SLIPS--!

Goes over backwards. Tumbles from sight. Out of frame. Just like that. Gunsmoke, hanging in the air.

Silence. They both sit there.

By unspoken assent, they clamber from the car, one on each side. Find her splayed flat on her back. Unconscious.

March glances up at the FIRE ESCAPE they've parked under. Looks at Healy. The wind blows. SIRENS...

INT. MARCH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

THE FRONT DOOR bursts open. March and Healy enter. Carrying the half-conscious AMELIA between them.

HOLLY is in the living room playing TV PONG with her friend JESSICA. She jumps to her feet, surprised to see them:

HOLLY

Holy shit, you got her!

March is equally surprised to see his daughter.

MARCH

What the hell are you doing here? You're supposed to be at Jessica's!

They walk/drag Amelia through the living room and into Holly's room. Lay her on the bed. Holly and Jessica tag along behind them.

JESSICA

Sorry, Mr. March, my sister kicked us out. She was having some guy over, didn't want us around.

MARCH

(still pissed)
Yeah... Well... Your sister's a slut.

JESSICA

I know.

On the bed, Amelia's eyes flutter open. She squints.

HEALY

Feel well enough to talk? We got some questions.

She shifts her gaze to Healy. Eyes focusing.

AMELIA

You were... You were supposed to get these guys off of me.

MARCH

Amelia, do you know what they want? Who sent them?

AMELIA

Yeah. I know... It was my mother.

March and Healy exchange looks.

HEALY

Why don't you start from the top?

Amelia shuts her eyes again. Tired.

AMELIA

Why? It doesn't matter. It--
(stops, sighs, then)
I... made a film... With Dean, my boyfriend. The idea was we'd do this... artistic, uh, film. Experimental film--

MARCH

Porno film?

Amelia's eyes snap back open.

AMELIA

It's not a porno! Look, do you know who my mother is?

HEALY

Yes. We've met her. We talked to her.

AMELIA

(bitter)

What'd she tell you..? That I was a loon? That I was lashing out?

HEALY

Something like that.

AMELIA

Yeah, well... My mother is a criminal. She's one of them.

MARCH

Them..? Who's them?

AMELIA

She's one of the insiders. She's one of the capitalist, corporate suppressors.

(getting worked up)

She's one of the elite fear-mongers. And her and her pig cronies have us in the cross-hairs. We're just pawns, man! They're trying to kill us all!

Pause.

JESSICA

Gosh.

HEALY

So, you're saying your mother is... bad?

AMELIA

... Yes.

MARCH

Does this have anything to do with the birds?

Amelia lets her head fall back again. Closing her eyes.

AMELIA

My mother is supposed to be working for the Justice Department, right?

HEALY

Sure. She's prosecuting that car thing.

AMELIA

Yeah. Only she's not... I mean, she's not prosecuting it. The automakers..? She's gonna let 'em walk.

MARCH

But... they have evidence--

AMELIA

Sure, they have evidence. They've got memos proving Detroit conspired to suppress the converter. Proving they'd rather poison our air than spend a little money...

(warming again)

But my mother's gonna say it's not enough to convict. She's gonna lie. She's on the take. Money, again, right? Mammon, that's her god. That FASCIST, CAPITALIST --

HEALY

(cutting in)

Okay, okay..! Back up. How do you know this?

Amelia calms again.

AMELIA

I was spying on her... I listened in on her phone calls.

MARCH

So why didn't you just go to the police?

AMELIA

She is the police! She's the head of the Justice Department!

MARCH

Then to a newspaper.

AMELIA

(exasperated)

Look, these people all work together! You been living under a rock?

HEALY

So you decided to make a... porno film?

AMELIA

It's not a porno. We made a *statement*. And yes, it contained nudity --

MARCH

And porn stars..?

AMELIA

That's just the commercial element. Okay? Sid said we had to have that... The reality was, we were gonna get our message out there... It was all in the film. Names. Dates. Everything. Everything my mom was doing. Once it got out, once it was in theaters there was no way they could suppress it. No way to cover it up.

MARCH

I just want to get this straight. You made a porno -- where the important part was the plot?

AMELIA

What's your hang-up, man?

HEALY

So, it's not about the actors, the sex, nothing. It's the fucking story? That's what you're telling us?

Amelia nods, calming again.

AMELIA

... My mom found out about it. Killed Dean. Destroyed all his work...

HEALY

Your mom killed Dean?

AMELIA

Of course. She killed Misty, too.

HOLLY

And Sid Shattuck?

AMELIA

Yeah.

March nods.

MARCH

So, it's like, uh, Jack the Ripper and then your mom.

HOLLY

So what are you gonna do?

AMELIA

... I don't know... I haven't figured it out yet...

(leans back, eyes flutter)

I'm just tired now. I'm tired.

HEALY

Right... Well, we'll think on it. You, uh, get some rest.

They all step out of the room. Close the door.

HEALY

What do you think..?

HOLLY

I like her!

JESSICA

I like her dress.

MARCH

I think she's a loon. According to her, her mother is single-handedly taking down all of western society.

HEALY

(nods)

Yeah. People do want to kill her though... Like John Boy.

MARCH

Maybe he heard her talk for five minutes.

HOLLY

Who's John Boy?

JESSICA

He's on "The Waltons."

HEALY

This is a different John Boy.

MARCH

We think.

The phone in the kitchen starts to RING. March gets it.

MARCH

This is March.

INTERCUT - TALLY

Judith Kuttner's assistant. She stands in the middle of a well-appointed study at Kuttner's house.

TALLY

Mr. March, this is Tally... I don't know who else to call.

MARCH

Tally..? What's going on?

TALLY

I don't know quite how to say this. So I'll just say it -- I think Judith, Mrs. Kuttner, I think she may be involved in something... How do I put it...

MARCH

Illegal..?

TALLY

I wouldn't go that far. Shady. Maybe.

MARCH

Well, her kid certainly seems to think so.

TALLY

Amelia? Did you talk to her? Is she safe?

MARCH

Yeah. She's here now. A little banged up, but still intact.

(beat)

She thinks her mom is a one woman crime spree.

TALLY

That's insane. Whatever Judith's doing, it's to benefit Amelia, bet on it -- still...

(plunges in)

I just got a call from her... She wouldn't explain herself. But she said she needed \$100,000 dollars in cash.

MARCH

Why?

TALLY

I don't know. I think she's in trouble. She sounded... scared.

MARCH

Scared?

TALLY

I can send the family doctor to look
after Amelia, if--

(pause)

Mr. March, would you be willing to carry
the money for me?

MARCH

Carry the money..?

TALLY

I don't know where else to turn. And I'm
worried about Judith... Will you help?

EXT. RESTAURANT PARKING LOT - NIGHT

March and Healy lean against March's car. Waiting for Tally.
March finishes a cigarette. Checks his watch.

MARCH

Tally should be here any minute.

HEALY

(nods absently)

Wish I knew who to believe on this thing.

MARCH

Tell you what, that *kid's* a write-off.

HEALY

She's misguided.

MARCH

She's NUTS. She won't be happy 'til
there's a bird in the White House.

A pause... Then Healy shrugs.

HEALY

Maybe they're both telling the truth.

MARCH

What does that mean?

HEALY

(frowns, then)

I had this friend, right? In the Secret
Service. Worked the Nixon detail -- this
was after they threw him outta office...

(beat)

Anyway, one day Nixon is out driving,
down near San Clemente. Just him and a
few agents.

(MORE)

HEALY (CONT'D)

And they come upon this *accident*, first ones on the scene. Guy pinned under his own car. So, NIXON gets out, RUNS to the guy's side to check on him... Nixon says to him, "You're gonna be fine, son. You're gonna be okay." But then, the guy just dies, right there.

Pause. March has a vaguely constipated look on his face.

MARCH

I don't get it.

HEALY

Just look at it from the other guy's point of view. The guy that died... He's out, driving along one day. Gets in a horrible accident. And he's laying there, near death. Staring up at the sky... And former president RICHARD NIXON appears to him... Tells him he's gonna be fine.

(beat)

What did that guy think? Did he think this was *normal*..? You know, that everyone sees Nixon before they die--

MARCH

You're expecting an angel, you get this shit.

HEALY

Right... Same situation... Just looks vastly different depending on your point of view. That's what I'm saying.

MARCH

It all just depends on your point of view.

HEALY

Sure. Right--

MARCH

--how you look at it.

HEALY

Yeah. What's wrong..?

MARCH

For Chrissakes, you tell me this epic fucking story, and ten minutes later the point is there's two ways of looking at things? Why not save time and say, "There's two ways of looking at things."

Healy just shrugs.
March rubs his eyes. Tired. Lights another cigarette.

MARCH
... Be kind of a bummer, that's what
death was like.

Healy nods...

HEALY
Could be worse... Could be Agnew.

A GREY MERCEDES

Pulls up along side them. TALLY gets out. Carrying a LARGE METAL SUITCASE. She sets it on the hood of March's car. Looks at our guys:

TALLY
That's it. \$100,000. I packed it
myself... It wasn't easy putting this
together on short notice.

March and Healy offer no reply. She regards them oddly:

TALLY
I want to thank you, for doing this.
(beat)
It's nice to have people like you in the
world, still... What are we gonna do once
we run out?

Healy stands, pulls the suitcase toward him.

HEALY
So, tell us where to go.

INT. MARCH'S CAR - DRIVING SAME

March driving. Healy in the passenger seat, eyes closed. The metal SUITCASE rests on the backseat.

March drives in silence. Smoking... But then, after a few moments, his eyelids start to droop. He shakes it off.

MARCH
Man, I'm getting kinda tired here...
(glances over)
... Healy?

Healy SNORES lightly.

MARCH
Terrific...

He stares back out the windshield. Concentrates on driving...
But his eyelids grow heavy again. His eyes shut for a second--

He snaps them back open:

MARCH

Shit. Hey, Healy? Wake up!

Healy mumbles something. Looks over:

MARCH

Sorry, I'm falling asleep here, man.
You're gonna have to drive.

HEALY

Alright. Pull over at the next turn off.

MARCH

Okay, cool...

(beat)

Listen, you worried at all -- I mean
about making this drop?

HEALY

Not me... I got insurance--

He pulls up his pants leg revealing an S&W AIRWEIGHT REVOLVER
in an ankle holster.

HEALY

This baby right here... Never leaves me.
Ever.

MARCH

Cute... Let's just hope you don't have to
use it.

(noticing)

I'll pull off here.

HEALY

You know what? You don't need to pull
off... The car can drive itself.

MARCH

(confused)

What are you talking about..?

HEALY

Just let go of the wheel, man.

March considers for a second...
Then tentatively lets go of the wheel--

And sure enough, as they approach a bend in the road, the car turns all by itself... March looks delighted:

MARCH

Hey, I didn't know it could do that!

HEALY

You kidding? All cars can drive themselves. It's amazing what Detroit can do these days.

From the back seat, a GIANT, MONSTROUS KILLER BEE, roughly 6 feet tall, LEANS FORWARD. Turns it's humongous COMPOUND EYES towards March. Oversized tongue protruding, says:

GIANT KILLER BEE

Yeah, March, where the fuck have you been?

MARCH

Like you know! You don't even drive, you fly everywhere, asshole.

HEALY

He's got a point there, Bumble... You can't even WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING?! JESUS! WAKE UP! WAKE UP!

MARCH'S EYES SNAP OPEN

He fell asleep at the wheel. He's been dreaming. Healy is YELLING at him:

HEALY

LOOK OUT GODDAMNIT! LOOK OUT!

March whips his head around-- They're headed right for a CONCRETE OVERPASS SUPPORT.

HE SLAMS ON THE BRAKES.

Too late -- WHAM! -- THEY SMASH INTO THE SUPPORT HEAD ON.

March and Healy jolted against their seatbelts as the car comes to an immediate stop. The front end STOVED IN.

THE METAL SUITCASE launched out of the back seat. SHATTERS the front windshield. Keeps going -- SMACK! -- IMPACTS against the concrete support. Breaking open.

Showering SHREDDED NEWSPAPER everywhere.

March and Healy stare out the broken windshield. In shock. Silent. Stunned.

The newspaper rains down all over the car.

There is no money in the suitcase.
It takes awhile for all this to process. March blinks:

MARCH
You okay?

HEALY
... The suitcase.

MARCH
(swallows)
I know.

HEALY
There's no money.

MARCH
I know.

A long pause.

HEALY
Maybe someone... Messed with it... I
mean, uh--

MARCH
Tally packed the money herself. She said
so.
(beat)
She totally fucked us.

HEALY
Yeah...
(frowns)
Doesn't... make sense, I mean, why? What
good's it do to... send us off on a... a
thing, a--

MARCH
--a wild goose chase.

HEALY
Wild goose chase, exactly. Take us out of
the city...

MARCH
Three, four hours... When we could be
back dealing with Amelia and--

March stops cold. The same exact second as Healy.
Fear swims in their eyes. They exchange a look--

MARCH

Motherf--!

March keys the ignition. The engine catches -- sounds like shit but at least it runs... Slams it into reverse --

PULLS FREE of the concrete support.
BLASTS backwards--! Throws a smoking 180, as we CUT TO:

INT. MARCH'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Holly plays solitaire. Tries to ignore the background jabber of JESSICA, phone welded to her chin:

JESSICA (on phone)
... No, like the Waltons. Yeah, on TV.
Uh-huh. Richard something. Thing on his
face, yeah. What's that actor's name?

THE DOORBELL RINGS. Holly gets up --

HOLLY
Jess, get off the phone.

JESSICA (on phone)
Yeah, yeah. Anyway, this new John Boy's
like, a murderer. Shit, now it's gonna
bug me, who was that actor..?

EXT. ROAD - MARCH AT A PHONE BOOTH - SAME

A BUSY SIGNAL. MARCH slams down the phone. Frenzied. Flings himself into the car, waves at HEALY, go, go --

INT. MARCH'S HOUSE - SAME

Holly opens the FRONT DOOR. On the other side, a tall, bland-looking man with a medical bag:

MAN
You're Holly..?
(extends his hand)
Dr. Malek.

HOLLY
Hi. She's inside. Come in.

He smiles amiably. Shrugs out of his coat. Shuts the door.

DOCTOR
Mind fetching your Dad?

HOLLY
Uh... he's running an errand.

DOCTOR

Yeah? Back anytime soon?

HOLLY

Oh. Hour, tops.

DOCTOR

Fine. Now, then, Nurse Holly, how's our patient? That's her?

He points to JESSICA, who flashes a brisk Ally-Sheedy wave. Never looks up.

HOLLY

No, that's Jessica. What she's got you can't fix.

(points to bedroom)

In there asleep. Slight fever.

DOCTOR

On drugs, you think? What was she saying? Was she making sense?

He crosses to the bedroom. Turns, and for the first time something captures Holly's attention:

ON HIS CHEEK

Just below the right ear, looms a large, discolored LUMP. A mole. Holly watches it go by... mesmerized. Frozen.

HOLLY

She... uh, she called us fascists.

Holly, heart pounding now. And it gets worse -- an oblivious JESSICA picks this moment to chime in:

JESSICA

Holly. What's the name of that actor on the Waltons? Richard something. With the hockey puck on his face.

Beside Holly, the man goes very STILL. The temperature in the room seems to drop. A FLICKER. He recovers quickly, like he never heard --

Too late. Holly saw. She knows. With affected casualness, she crosses to the counter:

HOLLY

That show's for retards. Dr. Malek, would you like a cookie? Just baked 'em.

JESSICA
None left. I looked, remember?

HOLLY
(quiet desperation)
No, there's a couple. Doctor?

DOCTOR/JOHN BOY
I could be persuaded. After I've had a
look at Sleeping Beaut--

He stops. Turns, eyes flat and dead. Becomes quite still--

HOLLY HAS A GUN IN HER HAND

The gun she just lifted from March's COOKIE JAR.

JOHN BOY
Nurse Holly..?

Ten feet separate them. John Boy smiles. Raises his hands.
The MEDICAL BAG drops. A SYRINGE rolls free --

Jessica just now noticing the gun--

JESSICA
Holly, what are you doing?! Are you CRAZY?

Holly licks dry lips, says to John Boy:

HOLLY
There are handcuffs in the desk, asshole.
Get them. Slow.

John Boy, so still it's frightening. Brow furrowed. Like
he's listening to a radio only he can hear.

HOLLY
HEY! Did you hear me?

Pause... he looks up. Consults his watch.

JOHN BOY
This is really slowing me down, Holly.

JESSICA, still in shock.

JESSICA
HOLLY! What's going on?!

HOLLY
(clenched teeth)
Jessica, it's him. He's the guy.

John Boy reaches in his pants. The action so casual Holly doesn't think to stop him. From the waistband, he produces a straight-razor.

JOHN BOY

Jessica, if you help me with this, I'll only kill Holly.

EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT

March's CAR slingshots into view, past Holly's vacant LOT.

INT. CAR - WITH HEALY AND MARCH - SAME

March, focused. Healy stuffing an extra gun clip in his coat.

MARCH

Come on, now... 68 and sunny...

INT. MARCH'S - LIVING ROOM - SAME

JOHN BOY seems, if anything, MORE casual now. As he slowly walks toward Holly. A dreadful stillness about him.

HOLLY

Jessica. Dial 911.

John Boy cocks his head. Hears a car, faint in the distance. Keeps moving.

JOHN BOY

Jessica..? I wouldn't do that if I were you.

HOLLY

Jessica, DON'T LISTEN.

The pressure, simply too much. Jessica's just a kid, she BOLTS--! Rushes headlong for the door --

CROSSES BETWEEN HOLLY AND JOHN BOY

Mistake. A split-second advantage, and John Boy takes it. With no seeming effort, he GRABS JESSICA.

SLINGS her round in front of him. Facing the GUN. HOISTS her into the air, legs kicking --

AND HURLS HER.

It's bizarre. All his might, flat-out THROWS her at Holly. Here she comes... Surreal. Holly DUCKS.

JESSICA PINWHEELS PAST HER--

Goes CRASHING through a side WINDOW. An explosion of glass. She vanishes into the night, as --

HEADLIGHTS

Flash through the FRONT WINDOWS of the house. John Boy sees it, reacts instantly -- turns, heads for the front door--

EXT. MARCH'S HOUSE - STREET - SAME

The cavalry is here. HEALY AND MARCH burst from their CAR--

MARCH
Did you hear that..?

HEALY
(slight head shake)
Dunno... Whose car is tha--

He stops, mid-sentence.

AS A STRANGE MAN casually crosses March's front lawn. In no great hurry. He spots March and Healy. Waves.

JOHN BOY
'Evening.

Healy and March, thrown. The guy, so utterly *unperturbed*.

MARCH
Hey... Do you know what that loud noise was?

The words hang in the air. JOHN BOY pauses at his car. Casually opens the trunk, reaches inside --

JOHN BOY
Yeah, just now..? I threw that girl out the window.

Healy reacts instantly:

HEALY
MARCH! DOWN!!

Healy TACKLES March behind a PLANTER--

As JOHN BOY comes up FIRING. A STERLING SUBMACHINE GUN. FULL AUTO. Rips the suburban nighttime to pieces.

March's car takes the first fusillade. Tires blown. Glass shattered. John Boy swivels, targets the planter. Chunks of concrete go flying.

March rolls out to one side, looks up -- SEES JESSICA.
At the side of the house. Lying there.

MARCH
JESUS CHRIST..!

Without thought, he powers to his feet. Sprints across twenty feet of lawn. GUNFIRE chasing him. Earth shooting up in gouts.

He flings himself FLAT around the side of the house. Combat crawls to Jessica. Checks her. Alive. Gathers her up, as --

BACK OUT ON THE STREET

Healy is making a move. First lull in the fire, he BOOKS.
Across the drive. Towards March's car --

LUNGES across the front of it.
Clears the hood. Touches down. Rolls.
Gun aimed, UNDER THE CAR, towards John Boy's feet. SWEARS:

John Boy is LOOKING BACK.

The killer lies flat. Already aiming under the car. Healy jumps, CLINGS to the door panel, as the world ERUPTS...

INT. HOUSE - SAME

March bursts in the side door, carrying Jessica.

MARCH
HOLLY!!?

He half-runs, half-staggers. Rounds the corner --

HOLLY AND AMELIA

Are crouched, hugging each other.

AMELIA
Fucking fascists!

HOLLY
Dad..!

MARCH
Yeah, yeah, okay. Come on.

He pushes them into the bedroom. Places Jessica on the bed:

MARCH
Stay here. Don't move.

He takes the GUN from Holly.

Runs to the FRONT of the house, and meanwhile --

OUTSIDE - HEALY'S PINNED

Behind a eucalyptus TREE. Every few seconds he thrusts out an arm, FIRES. Shooting blind.

The TREE gets RIPPED TO SPLINTERS in response.

John Boy's head snaps sideways. Sees MARCH inside the house. Doesn't miss a beat --

Draws a SECOND WEAPON from the trunk of his car. A HANDGUN. Targets March with it. While still firing at HEALY, he aims the other gun.

Blows SHOT AFTER SHOT through the front WINDOW at March's scuttling form. Glass, COLLAPSING.

John Boy drop-stuffs new clips so fast it's scary. *Slap-click--! Slap-click--!*

In the midst of this, he pauses to check his watch. Frowns, annoyed. Off-schedule. It's taking too long --

BACK INSIDE - BEDROOM

JESSICA, now, stirring. HOLLY crouches:

HOLLY
Amelia, gimme a han--
(swivels round)
Amelia?

Reacts, startled. AMELIA, poised in the WINDOW. Overlooking the steeply pitched BACK YARD.

AMELIA
Tell Mr. Healy thanks for nothing.

HOLLY
Wait -- Amelia, NO!!

Amelia JUMPS. Slips from view, *plummets* -- CUT TO:

FRONT YARD - HEALY AND HIS TREE

He picks his moment -- BREAKS COVER.

Spins into view. Puts three in the raised TRUNK LID, *pow-pow-pow-!* JOHN BOY, now, forced to dodge --

Healy sprints. DIVES through the shattered front WINDOW of March's house. Hits, rolls... Comes up running --

PUMPS TEN SHOTS

Back out the fucking window as he races toward cover--

OUTSIDE, JOHN BOY

Decides on retreat. Distant SIRENS, now. Approaching.
He climbs behind the wheel of his car --

SHRIEKS out of the driveway. In a cloud of brick and stucco.
Right then, the EUCALYPTUS TREE finally BREAKS IN TWO--
Slams down with a THUNDEROUS CRACK--! Just missing his car.

He screeches away. Brow slightly furrowed. Disappointed.

INT. HOUSE - FOLLOW WITH MARCH

Crouched low, MARCH arrives at the bedroom. Opens the door --

MARCH

Oh, no...

HOLLY, in tears... He moves to the window, peers out:
A 15-FOOT DROP, TO THE HILLSIDE. Amelia nowhere to be seen.

EXT. STREET - WITH JOHN BOY - DRIVING

It doesn't take JOHN BOY long to realize he's riding on
RIMS. Two blocks from March's, he PULLS OVER. Gets out...

Approaches a random CAR. Goes to break the GLASS, stops --

A POLICE CAR is approaching.

The first to respond. Inbound. 30 yards out.
In a split-second? John Boy changes tactics.

Walks right out INTO THE ROAD. Waves his arms frantically --

The police cruiser SLEWS to a halt. The COP gets out, one
hand on his weapon...

COP

Sir? Please calmly tell me what th--

He's candy. John Boy MOVES. FAST. Spins the cop.
Bounces his head off the hood. CUT TO:

THE POLICE CAR, SQUEALING OFF --

INT. CAR - DRIVING

JOHN BOY at the wheel. He hits the flashers, just for fun.
Checks the rear view -- Can hardly believe his LUCK:

Because there, running up the road, SCREAMING for him to STOP... is none other than AMELIA.

He permits himself a smile. CUT TO BLACK. PAUSE. FADE IN ON:

EXT. MARCH'S NEIGHBORHOOD - AN HOUR LATER - COPS EVERYWHERE

POLICE CRUISERS, six of them. Flashers turning. The night wears on. Everyone's dead tired.

MARCH wanders in circles. Takes an interest in the ground.

AMELIA KUTTNER

Is a blanket-covered lump in the middle of the road. Pitifully small. COPS swarm round. All too late.

HEALY says nothing. Looks on, his face unreadable. His client, dead. She paid him. He just stands there. There's nothing he can do.

And so he just stands there.

INT. POLICE STATION - HALLWAY - NIGHT

March and Healy sit, HANDCUFFED to a bench in the hallway. March stares at the ground. Healy gazes at the ceiling.

They're silent.

We hear the low murmur of station activity in the background. We hold... Finally, a man enters frame. Suit, tie. Lawyer.

PERRY THE LAWYER

Alright, guys. They're letting you out on your own recognizance... You'll be processed and free in an hour.

MARCH

What about Kuttner? Did they question her?

PERRY THE LAWYER

(deep breath)

No. They didn't... They're not going to.

MARCH

Perry, listen to me--

PERRY THE LAWYER

No, March, you listen... You're lucky to be getting out at all. She's the head of the Justice Department, you can't come in here spouting this crap and expect --

MARCH

Perry, it's true. She had her daughter
killed--

PERRY THE LAWYER

March, it's your word against Kuttner's.
You lose... They're gonna want to
question you some more in the next couple
of days --

(beat)

You might want to think about changing
your story.

March falls silent. Healy continues to stare at the ceiling.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - 101 FREEWAY - MORNING

Cars backed up as far as the eye can see. It's rush hour and
nobody's moving. A thick CRUST OF SMOG hangs over the city.

INT. TAXI CAB - 101 OVERPASS - SAME

March and Healy in the back seat. Holly up by the driver.
They inch along, breathing exhaust fumes.

March stares out the window. From up here on the overpass,
he's got a nice hazy view of the city in the morning sun.

MARCH

You know those idiots -- those protester
idiots?

Healy looks over.

MARCH

I think they were right... The birds
can't breathe.

HEALY

Think so?

MARCH

Yeah. I think so.

Silence. They inch forward some more.

MARCH

Amelia dead. Misty, Shattuck. All dead.
The rest of us get to choke --

(looks over)

No one cares.

HEALY

Well, it looks that way.

MARCH

Guess that's how it goes sometimes.

HEALY

That's how it goes a lot of the time.

MARCH

Yeah...

(beat)

I need a drink.

EXT. MARCH'S HOUSE - SAME

The CAB pulls up outside of what's left of March's house. Glass broken. Bullet holes. Police tape.

March and Holly climb out and stare at their home while Healy pays the driver.

HOLLY

In some ways, it's kind of an improvement, you know?

MARCH

Yeah... Grab whatever you need and we'll stay in a motel or something... For tonight anyway.

Holly disappears inside the house, just as a huge BOAT of a car pulls up to the curb outside. Parks awkwardly.

An old woman gets out. We recognize her. It's Lily Glenn, Misty's aunt. She approaches March. Looking determined again.

MARCH

(last thing he needs)

Mrs. Glenn, hello... I know you've been calling. I've been a little busy.

MRS. GLENN

Well, I just--

(stops, seeing house)

Oh, my! Your house!

MARCH

Yes, my house. We're remodeling... Mrs. Glenn, perhaps now is not the time--

The old woman, sensing the brush off, ignores the house looking like a war zone. Puts her determined face back on:

MRS. GLENN

Now is the time, Mr. March. Have you made any progress on my case?

MARCH

No, Mrs. Glenn. Not really... I'm not sure I'm going to.

She notices Healy, seemingly for the first time.

MRS. GLENN

He's supposed to be looking for my niece!

HEALY

Um, yes. Heard about that.

MRS. GLENN

She's alive, too. I know because I saw her. Only, nobody believes me. Why won't they believe me?

HEALY

Um, I don't know, ma'am.

MRS. GLENN

I saw her at her house! Right through the front window, clear as day! She was writing something at a desk. She was wearing a blue pinstriped jacket...

HEALY

Sure. I've seen that jacket.

MARCH

Mrs. Glenn, please... I need to get--
(stops, catching something)
What'd you say?

HEALY

What..?

MARCH

You've seen that jacket.

HEALY

Yeah. At Shattuck's. It was in his office with a bunch of other wardrobe.

MARCH

The jacket was in his office?

HEALY

Yeah. A blue, pinstriped jacket. Had Misty's name on it. It was for the film.

MARCH

Wardrobe. For the film.

HEALY
I think I just said that.

March blinks once. And suddenly he gets it.

MARCH
Holy fucking shit!

MRS. GLENN
(reacts to language)
Oh, my..!

Healy's totally lost now. March, suddenly excited.

MARCH
Mrs. Glenn, I need you to take us to
Misty's and show us *exactly* what you saw.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - STREET - DAY

MARCH steers to a halt outside Misty Mountains' Hollywood Hills hideaway. It looks forlorn after only a week.

As they all exit the car, LILY speaks excitedly:

MRS. GLENN
There. That's the window.

March is silent. Intent. Uses Lily's KEY, opens the door--

INT. HOUSE - SAME

Spacious living room. Lot of BUILT-INS: Cabinets, consoles. Psychedelic furnishings, erotic art. HEALY sizes it up, then states the obvious:

HEALY
Mrs. Glenn. There's no desk in this room.

MRS. GLENN
(flustered)
Well I... I don't know what to say...

MARCH, meanwhile, is looking around. Staring up at the ceiling. Examining the floor. Holly watches him:

HOLLY
Dad, what are you doing?

March bumps the coffee table. It's pretty heavy. He kicks it again. It's really heavy. Starts checking it over.

MARCH
Just hang on... Hang on...

There's a long split down the middle of the table. He tries to get his fingers in there. Feels underneath it.

Hits a latch... The coffee table splits open. We see something inside. Elevating. EMERGING. He grins --

A MOVIE PROJECTOR rises into view. LOCKS in position, *click--!* Pause. There it sits.

MRS. GLENN
I don't understand.

He turns to her, eyes twinkling.

MARCH
Very simple. You did see your niece that night, Mrs. Glenn. You saw her on that wall. At a desk. In a pin-striped suit.

He rummages inside the console. Healy, confused --

HEALY
Wait. So what she saw... she was looking at a MOVIE?

MARCH
Not a movie. THE movie. Misty's farewell performance. Projected on that wall.

HEALY
You can't be serious.

MARCH
You got a better idea?

HEALY
All the copies of the film burned up.

MARCH
Then how did Lily watch it through that window *two days* after it supposedly burned? Chrissakes, the WARDROBE matches.

LILY stammers:

MRS. GLENN
I... I'm confused --

They pay her no heed.

MARCH
What if Amelia lied to us?

HEALY
You're saying she made a copy?

MARCH
A copy, yes. Wouldn't you?

HOLLY
And gave it to Misty.

MARCH
YES. That night she came, checked the film against that wall, then carried it off with her -- all while Lily watched.

Healy, wheels turning. LILY tugs March's arm:

MRS. GLENN
I need to ask something --

HEALY
I dunno, March. That's pretty thin...

But now, against his will, HEALY's hooked. He snaps his fingers. Looks up, eyes wide:

HEALY
The businessmen.

MARCH
Huh?

HEALY
At the Westin, remember? Bartender said she was meeting some dudes out of New York. Conducting some kinda business --

MARCH
Selling them the film.
(excited)
See? What'd I tell you? It's out there, man. The film still EXISTS.

They exchange triumphant looks. LILY, insistent now:

MRS. GLENN
Please... please stop talking.

They all trail off. Turn, to find her looking STRICKEN.

MRS. GLENN
I listened to everything you said... Does this mean...
(lip trembles)
Does this mean my niece is dead..?

Awkward pause. Holly avoids her gaze. Healy looks pained.

MARCH
She was murdered, Lily.

MRS. GLENN
...I see.

MARCH
But we're gonna get the people who did it.

INT. CEDARS SINAI HOSPITAL - LOBBY - DAY

HEALY, HOLLY AND MARCH hustle through the HOSPITAL doors.
Moving fast and loose --

INT. PATIENT ROOM - AFTERNOON - MAN IN BED

Okay. Remember the WHEEZING GUY, from a few pages back? The Airport Westin sequence -- his throat cut, exactly, that guy. Well, he's HERE, in bed. A survivor.

Private room. Hushed, dim. He lies still. Throat bandaged.

He hears a sound. Looks up -- Sees HEALY enter furtively,
beckon to MARCH and HOLLY. The guy goes rigid.

They approach. Huffing, out of breath. Flank the bed. March,
elected spokesman. He smiles, offers pad and paper:

MARCH
Hi, I don't know if you remember us, but
we have a couple questions. If you can
just, you know, write the answers --

The guy RECOILS. Swats away pad and pen. Scared witless.
Actually makes MEWLING noises.

HEALY
Whoa! Easy! No one's here to hurt you.

The man seems to think otherwise. Seems INCONSOLABLE.
March frowns:

MARCH
Damn. What's this guy's problem? I mean,
yeah, the cut throat. Obviously --

HEALY tumbles to it first. Leans in, gaze steady:

HEALY
We're not with anyone else. Okay?
(beat)
Sir, was someone else here?

HOLLY
 (catching on)
 Um, yeah. About six-two? Blond hair, big
 thing on his face?

At this, the Wheezer stops struggling and promptly faints
 dead away. March shakes him. Again. Nothing.

MARCH
 Swell. Now what?

March leans back against the wall to wait. Kicks something
 on the floor. Look down.

MARCH
 Hey... Check out the floor.

There's numerous scraps of NOTEPAPER, scattered all over the
 linoleum by the bed. Healy stoops. Grabs one. Whistles:

HEALY
 I'll be damned... John Boy did question
 him.

MARCH
 How can you be sure?

Healy flashes the note: "**DON'T KILL ME.**" March immediately
 gets down on his knees, starts snatching up notes. Reading
 them. Holly follows suit.

MARCH
 (reading)
 "Please... Please..."
 (grimaces)
 That's useful.

Holly's got one:

HOLLY
 (reading)
 "No... We didn't get it yet..."

MARCH
 Didn't get what? The film?

Holly just shrugs. Healy thinking:

HEALY
 She didn't give it them, maybe? Not yet?

MARCH
 They never took possession? Oh, great.
 That's just great. And now she's dead.

Healy grabs another note:

HEALY

"After they were done with it..."

(thinking)

Hand over the film, after they're done with it. THEY. Her protest group?

MARCH

The Birdy Bunch. "Done with it.." What does that mean?

They scramble through more notes. Discarding one after another until March finds:

MARCH

"Her friend is a projectionist."

Healy stops... Frowns:

HEALY

Is that... Are they talking about that protester kid, you know--

MARCH

The idiot kid.... Chet! That was his name! Chet!

Holly finds another note. Reads it:

HOLLY

"At the L.A. Auto show."

MARCH and HEALY both freeze.

MARCH

The Auto Show. Isn't that, like, tonight..?

HEALY

Yeah... Big party. All the mucky-mucks'll be there... The press, everyone...

MARCH

You don't think--

HEALY

Great place to get the message to the people, you know..?

Off March's look we CUT TO:

EXT. GRANDE VISTA HOTEL - DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

Below us, a sprawling HOTEL COMPLEX.
Opposite the L.A. Convention Center.

THREE HI-RISE TOWERS

Form a "U" around a ground-level COURTYARD. Swank. Ritzy.

CARS rotate on huge PEDESTALS down there. As SEARCH-LIGHTS
sweep the sky. There's even a dance floor on the ROOFTOP.

Welcome to the L.A. Auto Show's GALA OPENING NIGHT.

EXT. HOTEL COURTYARD LEVEL - PARTY - SAME

We spot MARCH, HEALY and HOLLY moving among the rich and well
dressed. They push through the bustle of activity. Harried. Out
of breath... MARCH corrals a passing SECURITY GUARD:

MARCH

Hi there! We're looking for the
projection room.

The guy points up, past a giant suspended MOVIE SCREEN -- to
the far side of the hotel, dotted with windows.

SECURITY GUARD

Ninth floor. You have a pass..?

MARCH

Sure. We have a pass.
(the guy leaves)
We don't have a pass.

HOLLY, ever-helpful:

HOLLY

They gotta let hotel guests up, right?

Before they can respond, Holly leans over, and as they pass
a POOLSIDE TABLE -- she snags a set of keys from two
oblivious CHATTING GUESTS.

March smiles. Chip off the old block. CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL - 9TH FLOOR CORRIDOR - SAME

Music, heard faintly. Our guys come barreling out of the
elevator. Down the HALLWAY...

The whole floor's been taken over by the show. Makeshift SIGNS
taped to the doors. They pass a guy, March flags him:

MARCH

Hey, you seen Chet? The projectionist?

GUY

Just left... Like ten minutes ago. Went for a drink. And you are..?

MARCH

In a hurry. Thanks, buddy.

GUY

(frowns)

How'd you know my name was Buddy?

They round the corner. Still moving. Scanning paper signs. Healy spots one that reads "MOVIE ROOM." Nudges March.

They try the door. Locked. March signals Holly, still at the far end of the hallway:

MARCH

Check down there... We clear?

Holly looks both ways. Gives March the thumbs up.

Healy grabs the handle. APPLIES HIS WEIGHT to the door panel. Shifting. Heaving. An audible SNAP--! March motions for Holly to keep an eye out, as

INT. HOTEL SUITE - SAME

They enter what looks like a fairly nice hotel SUITE. Couches, chairs, parquet floors. And there, aimed out the WINDOW --

A BIG CLUNKY PROJECTOR, rented for the occasion. THERE'S A FILM IN IT, threaded onto a PLATTER.

Healy crosses the room. Plucks at the leader, unspools ten feet of film. Holds it to the light --

MARCH

Well..?

HEALY

(blinks, perplexed)

It's... a bunch of cars.

March hunkers down. Pores over the footage.

HEALY

"Motor City Pride." This isn't it. It's not the film.

MARCH

The projectionist, he must still have it stashed somewhere.

From BEHIND them issues a calm, clear VOICE:

VOICE (o.s.)

My thinking, exactly.

They SPIN, startled --

IT'S TALLY. In one hand, a bright, distractingly GREEN WALKIE-TALKIE. In the other, an equally distracting AUTOMATIC.

She closes the HOTEL DOOR without looking, actually slams it right in Holly's FACE, locks her out--

MARCH

Hey, Tally, how's it going? Wow, you look great. Nice gun.

She waggles the automatic:

TALLY

Got it special for you. Weapons on the floor. Now.

Healy sighs. Unlimbers a revolver, tosses it. Ditto March.

HEALY

You kill the projectionist..?

TALLY

No. My associate's out looking for him now. We'll find him.

Healy squints at her. Sizing her up--

HEALY

Tell me, Tally. Ever killed anybody?

TALLY

In Detroit, yes. Three times.

HEALY

(not what he was expecting)
Oh... Really?

MARCH

That's where this mess began, isn't it?

TALLY

Sorry?

MARCH

Detroit. Misty Mountains was at that auto show. Last month.

TALLY

(shrugs)

She was stupid. Kept bragging about her new movie. The stir it would cause.

MARCH

Tally, listen. You're not a murderer.

HEALY

She did kill three people --

MARCH

I mean, you know, deep down.

Abruptly, there is a sharp KNOCKING at the door.
A poorly disguised VOICE calls:

HOLLY (o.s.)

Room service..?

Tally frowns. Her attention drawn to the door, briefly--
And that's enough time for MARCH to MAKE HIS MOVE.

He drops to the FLOOR. Darts out an arm --
Grabs the CUFF OF HEALY'S PANTS. Frantic. Searching.

Healy frowns down at him... Tally, too... Gun still leveled,
as March determinedly goes for Healy's OTHER leg--

TALLY

What's wrong with him?

HEALY

Not sure.

(to March)

Um... March? What the fuck are you doing?
Just curious.

March sits up, a trifle breathless--

MARCH

Shit. I was going for the gun... I guess
you musta moved it...

HEALY

What gun?

MARCH

The one you showed me... Your ankle gun.

HEALY
Who told you I had an ankle gun?

MARCH
You did. You showed me, remember?
(floundering)
You know, on the -- the road. Last night,
right before we hit that, um...
(frowns)
Hang on. Did I... *dream* that..?

HEALY
Are you serious? Are you fucking serious?

MARCH
No, no, wait--

HEALY
You DREAMT IT, you moron. There's no
ankle holster. Wow. WOW. This takes the
prize--

TALLY
SHUT UP, BOTH OF YOU!

Tally unlocks the door:

TALLY
Holly..? You can come in.

Holly, enters, pushing a small service tray.

TALLY
Very clever, Holly.

HOLLY
Thanks, I thought so--

And on the word "so" Holly moves. Fast. Snatches the COFFEE POT off the tray and flings it at Tally... Covering her with SCALDING HOT LIQUID--!

Only Tally doesn't seem all that bothered. Perhaps the fact that the coffee isn't *actually hot* has something to do with it.

TALLY
Why did you just throw cold coffee on me?

HOLLY
(sheepish)
I got it in the hallway... I thought it
was hot.

Tally just shakes her head. Moves to close the door--

AND SLIPS... Slips on the coffee puddle at her feet.

She goes down with a YELP. CRACKING her head on the doorknob. The GUN in her hand discharging, BLAM-! Takes out a lamp.

And she's OUT COLD. That quick.

March pops to his feet. All business.

MARCH

Well, that worked out... Now, we gotta find this projectionist before John Boy.

HEALY

That guy said he went for a drink... Take the upstairs bar. I'll take downstairs.

EXT. HOTEL COURTYARD - LAVISH BAR - SAME

CHET, THE PROJECTIONIST, sits at the bar looking nervous. Checks his watch for the umpteenth time. Glances around.

A MAN steps up a few feet away. Scans the crowd. Tall, broad, easy-going grin. Giant mole... John Boy.

JOHN BOY

Anyone here seen the projectionist?

CHET gives an involuntary start. John Boy catches it. Turns:

JOHN BOY

You're the projectionist..? Look, we got a problem on nine. Someone knocked over the projector. Film's all over the floor.

PROJECTIONIST

The film's on the floor, really?

JOHN BOY

Yeah, fuckin' mess. Follow me..?

CHET nods, gulps his scotch. John Boy waits, smiling. CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP PARTY - SAME

A smaller, more exclusive version of the party downstairs. MARCH AND HOLLY step out of the elevator. Survey the scene.

MARCH

Stay here. Guard the elevator.

HOLLY

Dad, I want to help--

MARCH

Good. You can push the button for me when I get back.

He walks away, leaving her fuming. Heads over to the bar. (Clearly a different bar than the one we just saw Chet at.) Starts scanning the crowd in vain.

Absently plops down on a barstool... The second he does, a hand taps him on the shoulder.

VOICE

Hey, pal, what can I do for you..?

MARCH

(spins his chair around)
Excuse me..?

BARTENDER (VOICE)

Free drinks, man. What'll you have?

March blinks at the endless line of bottles behind the bar.

MARCH

... Free drinks..?

EXT. HOTEL COURTYARD - SAME

Healy makes his way through the crowds. Spots the main bar. Pushes towards it... Catches the bartender's attention:

HEALY

Hey, I'm looking for a guy about Five-five. Brown hair. He's supposed to be running the projector for us--

BARTENDER

Yeah-yeah. Guy already came and got him. Something about film on the floor, right?

HEALY

Which way did they go?

BARTENDER

They took the service door, right over--

But Healy's already on the move. We follow him as he pushes through the service exit.

He jogs down the corridor, tries the door at the far end -- it leads to a LOADING DOCK.

Empty. He starts to head back in, when a NOISE startles him. He spins. Movement, *there*... Inside one of the dumpsters.

Healy runs over --

A BLOOD-covered CHET THE PROJECTIONIST is in the dumpster.
Barely moving. Eyes glassy.

HEALY
Jesus, Chet! Can you hear me? Chet?

EXT. ROOFTOP PARTY - SAME

Holly by the elevator, being ignored by the ultra-rich.
Something catches her eye:

A DISTRACTINGLY GREEN WALKIE-TALKIE

Clipped to someone's BELT. Looks just like the one TALLY had.
Holly leaves her position to get a look at the OWNER...

Medium height. Compact. Not young; definitely an older guy...
He turns -- OH, SHIT. It not an older guy --

It's the OLDER GUY.

His arm in a sling. Pledge to HEALY, forgotten.
Holly creeps closer to him, trying to act casual as we CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL COURTYARD - PARTY - SAME

JOHN BOY strides quickly up the stairs to the terrace level.
Casually wiping something off his hands with a handkerchief.

Nearly collides with a party guest. A guy we recognize. Flanked
by two BURLY BODYGUARDS. It's Bergen Paulsen, the car company
exec from TV. They lock eyes.

PAULSEN
What... What're you doing here..? I can't
be seen with you.

JOHN BOY
The film... It's here.

PAULSEN
Here!? Just what are we paying you for!?
You were supposed to take care of it!

John Boy fixes him with a dead stare. Unnerving. Says:

JOHN BOY
I am.

Then turns, keeps walking. Looking annoyed now.
Reaches into his coat pocket. Takes out a Walkie-Talkie.

EXT. ROOFTOP PARTY - SAME

With OLDER GUY as John Boy's VOICE CRACKLES from the walkie-talkie on his belt:

JOHN BOY (on walkie)
The film's in the projector, repeat, in
the projector.

Older Guy snatches up his radio:

OLDER GUY
What..? We already checked--

JOHN BOY
It's spliced into the other film. Right
in the middle of it... Go get it.

OLDER GUY
On my way.

He clicks off. Stands, all business. Starts to go...
But some sixth sense STOPS him. He frowns. Turns:

Locks eyes with HOLLY.

To date, they've not met. No matter. Recognition flashes
between them. She heard. She KNOWS. It's in her eyes.

OLDER GUY
Don't you know it's rude to eavesdrop?

EXT. ROOFTOP PARTY - BAR - SAME

MARCH, still sitting at the bar. OLDER GUY and HOLLY step up
behind him... OLDER GUY leans down, says in March's ear:

OLDER GUY
I've got a gun pointed at your daughter's
spine... Come with me.

March turns, straightens, a big lop-sided GRIN on face.
Oddly? Doesn't seem any too frightened.

MARCH
A gun..? Why's that? Hey, Holly?! Your
buddy here want a drink? They're FREE.

Older Guy stops, surprised: *This guy's plastered.*
Holly, somehow, looks less surprised.

OLDER GUY
Let's all just step this way, Mr. March.

He indicates an area behind the Port-a-Johns. Obscure. Empty. Screened by PALM TREES.

MARCH

Hey, if you say so. It's a party, right?

INTERCUT - HEALY DOWNSTAIRS

Trying to help Chet. Trying to talk to him at the same time.

HEALY

Chet, the film? Amelia's film? Where..?

Chet's head slumps to one side, against Healy's arm. Giving him a close up view of Healy's watch... He smiles suddenly.

CHET

... Starts... now...

HEALY

What..?

CHET

Spliced... in... Starts now...

And right at that moment we CUT TO:

INT. 9TH FLOOR SUITE - PROJECTION ROOM - SAME

All is still and quiet in here.

THE CAMERA slowly closes in on the projector...
As without warning -- CLICK! -- the system jumps to life.

The whole thing, running off a TIMER.
Chet or no Chet -- it's movie time.

EXT. HOTEL COURTYARD - SAME

Suddenly all the lights dim. The search lights shut down. And a blast of JAZZY, UP-TEMPO MUSIC fills the air.

JOHN BOY goes rigid. Spins. Looking up--

THE GIANT SCREEN STARTS TO GLOW

Blossoms to life as, below, A THOUSAND HEADS turn as one...

EXT. ROOFTOP - NEAR THE EDGE

March, WOozy. Leans on a chair back for support. Older Guy shoves HOLLY with the GUN --

OLDER GUY

Okay. This is far enou--

STOPS. Frowns. From below, MOVIE MUSIC.
What in God's name..? He turns, distracted --

It's as good a chance as March is gonna get.

MARCH'S FACE. Slack. Drunken. Miserable.
And then, OUT OF NOWHERE, it transforms--

If you blinked, you missed it. Suddenly he ain't drunk.
Suddenly he looks hard. And grim... And FURIOUS.

MARCH

(completely sober voice)

HOLLY, DUCK!

Holly hits the floor as--

MARCH SPINS, SLINGS THE CHAIR--!

OLDER GUY doesn't react quick enough.
THE CHAIR SMASHES him in the face..!

And March is still in motion. Spinning -- knife-edged HAND
outstretched. CHOPS viciously at the guy's NECK. Once. TWICE.

Crushes his trachea, COLLAPSES it.

The man stumbles in circles. Fingers go slack. The gun
drops. March is on it, instantly --

OLDER GUY grabs HOLLY. An iron grip. Gurgling..!

March FIRES, *BLAM--!* From the ground, no hesitation.
Blows Older Guy BACK... Toward the looming EDGE.
He teeters, starts to go over... *Still clutching Holly.*

MARCH DOESN'T THINK

LUNGES. Sheer desperation. With his good arm, miraculously
SLAPS HOLLY BACK onto the ROOF --

Sadly, accompanies Older Guy INTO THE SKY.

THEY PLUMMET. Holly SCREAMS--!

DOWN. DOWN.

Two men. Tumbling... Getting smaller and smaller... Until--
TWO DISTINCT OUTCOMES:

March hits the POOL --
Older Guy, well... DOESN'T.

The result:

March SPLASHES --
Older Guy sort of... well, POPS.

GROUND LEVEL - THAT MOMENT

Men in tuxes, women in gowns: SPACKLED. Older Guy fucking exploded. A woman SCREAMS. BIKINI GIRLS flee the pool --

Amazingly, amid the thousand-odd folks, only a handful even notice what happened... A RIPPLE, off to one side.

JOHN BOY SEES IT. But doesn't seem all that interested. Calmly starts for the HOTEL; he's got to stop the FILM--

EXT. SECURITY EXIT - SAME

The doors burst open. HEALY EMERGES. Scanning the crowd. One hand on the GUN in his pocket. Just in time, as, up above

ON THE GIANT MOVIE SCREEN

"Motor City Pride," is abruptly PRE-EMPTED. Clicks. Pops. A few feet of LEADER. And then --

MISTY MOUNTAINS APPEARS, 30 FEET HIGH

She looks great. Healy exhales a ragged breath. The film's rolling, the jig's up: HUNDREDS of people, gazing upward --

Now ANOTHER ACTOR appears on screen. We HEAR dialogue:

MALE ACTOR

I'm Bergen Paulsen! I represent the
Detroit auto manufacturers!

DOWN IN THE COURTYARD

The real Bergen Paulsen watches. Thunderstruck:

BERGEN PAULSEN

... Oh, my God...

JOHN BOY - ODDLY DETACHED

Observes the switchover. He's too late. Okay, fine. Knows what he has to do.

Turns, shoulders back through the crowd. Fishes in his coat. Approaches a poolside LAMBORGHINI, revolving on its pedestal--

In passing, calmly rolls a HAND GRENADE underneath it. Keeps walking. Produces an AUTOMATIC, never breaks stride.

Aiming up at the 9th floor.
He targets the projector and OPENS FIRE.

INSTANT PANDEMONIUM.

People screaming. Scrabbling to get out of his way.

He BLOWS A WHOLE CLIP skyward.
No good. The film keeps right on playing...

INT. SWIMMING POOL - WITH MARCH

MARCH comes to, UNDERWATER. Panicked.
THRASHES wildly. God, he's DROWNING--!

OPENS HIS EYES, SEES RICHARD NIXON

Swimming beside him. Waving...
It barely registers... HE KICKS HIS LEGS--

We follow him up... up... out of the blue deep. He breaks
the SURFACE. Clutches the CONCRETE. Choking, gasping --

A CAR BLOWS APART.
Not twenty feet from him.

The Lamborghini TEARS ITSELF TO BITS. Bystanders, killed.
Ripped by shrapnel. Black oilsmoke FUNNELS SKYWARD.

FULL SCALE CHAOS. A thousand people run for their lives.
Our guys can kill a party like no one's business.

EXT. ROOFTOP - WITH HOLLY - SAME

At roof's edge, HOLLY drops flat. Shouts down:

HOLLY
DAD...!!

SMOKE billows upward. But she spots March...
A tiny figure down there. On his KNEES. He waves up at her.

She lets out a breath. RELIEVED.

Starts to turn away -- something catches her eye. THE FILM.
MISTY'S IMAGE starts to shake... Skips... Then, all at once

THE SCREEN GOES DARK.

Someone just stopped the movie.

HOLLY
Uh-oh.

WITH MARCH - BELOW

Retrieving his fallen gun... He notices it too.
Takes a few steps. Staring up...

SOMEONE GRABS HIM. He start to recoil--! It's HEALY.

HEALY
The film. Let's go.

Healy pulls him toward the hotel. March, fighting to KEEP UP. Huffing, wheezing. Two sorry-ass saviors, these.

Healy turns to say something -- FREEZES.
Focusing past MARCH'S SHOULDER. Eyes wide.

JOHN BOY. THEY LOCK EYES.

HEALY
MARCH, ON YOUR NINE.

Huh? March spins, whoops, that's his THREE --
HEALY doesn't blink. Cross-draws his gun and OPENS FIRE.
Through the smoke. JOHN BOY dives, rolls --

FIRES AT MARCH, *BAM-BAM-BAM--!*

Jesus! MARCH DIVES across a sports car...
Lunges over the hood. Metal, pocked...! PERFORATED.
He LANDS. Shaken. Hugs the vehicle. Safe, ALIVE.

HEALY, RELENTLESS. PROWLs THE SMOKE.

Gun up. Around him, flame. CARNAGE.

WITH MARCH - HIDING

Here's the thing: With respect to HIM? The car is stock-still. Immobile, and thus good cover. One problem:

THE CAR IS REVOLVING

And so is MARCH, oblivious.

Behind him, scenery keeps changing... He doesn't notice.
Raises his gun. Takes a steadying breath.

Behind him, JOHN BOY drifts into view... March, eyes closed:

MARCH
Okay. You can do this. Ready? One. Tw--

BANG--! Blood LEAPS from his arm. March, SHOT.

MARCH
 WOOOOOWWW!! Fuck! Fuck! OW!

He looks around. Confused.

HEALY targets the muzzle flash. Lays COVER FIRE as MARCH attempts to dive back over the car, and meantime--

INT. PROJECTION ROOM - 9TH FLOOR

HOLLY comes bursting through the door:

TALLY is here. Nose broken. Looks like shit. THE FILM'S off the projector, she's got it in a canister. Using electrical TAPE to SEAL it. Whirls round, SCISSORS in hand --

AND HOLLY SLIPS

On the COFFEE puddle from before. Goes down, SLIDING...

IT SAVES HER LIFE

As Tally HURLS the scissors, THWACK--! They STICK in the wall. Holly scrambles past her... Snatches the FILM CAN.

TALLY
 Give me that, you fucked-up little
 HIPPIE!!

Advances on Holly. Murderous... With nowhere to run, Holly looks Tally right in the eye, says:

HOLLY
 Lady, you want it..?
 (smiles)
 Go get it.

With that, she turns, and rolls the can straight for the balcony RAILING. Tally FREAKS. Lunges after it --

Holly TRIPS HER. Down she goes. She SCREAMS. Leading with her face, WHACK! Into the railing. She's done. Holly then watches, mesmerized...

As the future of Detroit ROLLS OFF THE EDGE. Into space.

DOWN BELOW

Everyone looks up, following the sound of Tally's scream.
 THE OBJECT OF THEIR QUEST

Arcing through the night.

JOHN BOY, frozen. Tracking its descent... MARCH, crouched behind a car, watching... HEALY, transfixed... CEO BERGEN PAULSEN, HIS BODYGUARDS... all RAPT.

It catches the moonlight like a shiny COIN.
VANISHES into the billowing SMOKE... Spell, broken:

PAULSEN
(to bodyguards)
Get me that film.

And just that quickly, it's a whole new ballgame.
Basically? Everyone makes a run for the film.

EXT. COURTYARD - THE CHASE IS ON

In a split second, everyone's up and running.

March STAGGERS, nearly goes down. Beaten, bedraggled. DEAF.
He should lie down. Instead?

For no visible reason, he GALVANIZES.
Suddenly he's RUNNING.

HEALY appears at his side. They pour it on.
Leaping obstacles. Dodging flaming wreckage --

JOHN BOY materializes. Ten yards to their right.
Healy SHOUTS:

HEALY
March! Get the film!

Then PEELS OFF towards John Boy. FLINGS himself at the guy.
They go crashing through tables and furniture.
Locked in combat. And meanwhile--

MARCH, STILL RUNNING

Up ahead, Bergen Paulsen's BODYGUARDS, sprinting for the
film... March is closer.

He swoops in at a dead run. Snatches up the film --

KEEPS GOING.

Just clutches it to his chest and fucking RUNS.

BODYGUARDS, pounding after him. He swerves, toward the HOTEL
LOBBY. Feet slapping. Breath, sawing in and out.

MARCH
NowayfuckyoufuckYOUNOWAYFUCKYOU.

A BULLET cuts the air like an angry hornet.
Hits the GLASS entryway -- COLLAPSES IT.

As March LEAPS. Sails through the shattered doors...
Lands. Tumbles, HARD -- rolls to his feet, KEEPS GOING.

EXT. COURTYARD - HEALY AND JOHN BOY FIGHTING

JOHN BOY's got HEALY. He SPINS him -- SLAMS him down onto a
GLASS BAR. Shatters it with Healy's FACE.

Healy, in trouble.

SCRABBLES BEHIND HIM with both arms. Flails at John Boy's coat.
Actually jams a hand in his COAT POCKET. Yanks, tugs --

Breaks FREE. SPINS back around. Arms up --

STOPS. Noticing something. Something in his hand.

It's a GRENADE PIN.

He just yanked it from John Boy's pocket.
He stares at it dumbly. John Boy looks, too.

Oh, Shit.

Healy turns and RUNS. John Boy paws at his coat. Frantic. GIVES
UP. Whips it off and FLINGS IT.

NIGHT BECOMES DAY

A shattering ROAR. The floor tilts sideways. DEBRIS,
showering. Bits of flaming wood--!

JOHN BOY, ROCKED.

Blown off his feet. Flung, head over heels --

HEALY, blown sideways. Rolls to his feet. ON FIRE. Hurls
himself at JOHN BOY, no hesitation, and meanwhile

EXT. HOTEL - WITH MARCH

MARCH bursts forth into the REAR PARKING LOT.
Running for his life. Running to SAVE THE FILM.

Paulsen's BODYGUARDS, on his tail...

Gunshot, a brittle CRACK--! Parts his hair.

He jukes left. Out into the STREET and

WHAM! -- A CAR HITS HIM

Doing maybe 25 miles an hour. Not too fast, but fast enough. Pops him up onto the hood. He SMACKS the windshield.

LOSES THE FILM. It slips out of his hands. Starts ROLLING. Away from him. Down the street...

The driver gets out, PISSED OFF:

DRIVER

What the fuck you think you're doing?!

That's L.A. for you.

MARCH, dazed, ignores him. Or maybe he doesn't even hear him. Struggles to his feet. Film, GONE. He dropped it.

Where--? There. ROLLING. March is gonna have to CATCH it --

BEHIND HIM, OUT OF FOCUS

The BODYGUARDS appear. Shove past the irate DRIVER. Knock him on his ass... He starts yelling. An altercation ensues --

MARCH, OBLIVIOUS

Breaks into an awkward, hitching jog... As, behind him, amazingly -- a FULL BLOWN FIGHT ensues. The driver SCREAMING.

Then someone FIRES A GUN back there. BLAM--!

March doesn't care. Keeps on. Like a kid chasing after a ball. Five feet in front of him... Three feet...

MORE GUNFIRE now. The driver firing at the bodyguards. Them firing back. Who knows..? March reaches out. One FINGER...

Touches the canister. STOPS it. It wobbles once. Becomes still... He snatches it up. His prize.

And promptly collapses.

Right in the middle of the road. Falls down. Sits clutching the film. Looking around, addled. Woozy. Breath sawing.

There are bodies over there. Flashing lights, too. People moving. The POLICE... March frowns, when did they get here?

He didn't notice. He's got the film. And meanwhile:

EXT. HOTEL COURTYARD - SAME

HOLLY appears now. Following a trail of destruction. Running, head throbbing. Rounds the side of the hotel --

And there's HEALY. At his feet, flat on the cement:

JOHN BOY.

Healy's got him in a headlock.
Meaty forearm, encircling the guy's big bull neck--

He's CHOKING him to death.

HEALY

Holly, get back! Go away!

Holly remains. Panting. Fixed on Healy:

HOLLY

What are you doing?! Stop! Healy stop!

Healy doesn't let up. John Boy turning purple in his arms...

HOLLY

Please! You don't have to kill him!

HEALY

Yes, I do, Holly! Get away! Now!

She refuses to budge. Stares Healy down:

HOLLY

You don't! You didn't kill that blue-faced guy... You didn't kill him.

Healy's caught off-guard. Suddenly aware of the lie he told.

HEALY

Holly... He killed Amelia... He's a murderer.

HOLLY

But you're not. Leave him for the police.

Healy, conflicted.

The teenager watching him choke a man to death.

HOLLY

Mr. Healy, if you kill this man, I'll never speak to you again.

Healy stares up at Holly.

A long moment... John Boy dying every second of it.
Finally, Healy sighs... cautiously disengages himself.
As he rolls to one knee, we see that he's HURT. Bleeding.

He looms over the fallen John Boy:

HEALY
 Congratulations... You owe your life to a
 sixteen year-old girl.

John Boy locks eyes with Holly... Says nothing.

HEALY
 (raises his arm--)
 Goodnight, John Boy.

On the blow to the HEAD we CUT TO BLACK.

PAUSE. FADE UP ON:

MISTY MOUNTAINS

Big as life. Wearing a BLUE PIN-STRIPED SUIT. She sits at a
 desk, writing. The nameplate on her desk says JUDITH KUTTNER.

We hear a KNOCKING off screen. She looks up:

MISTY
 Come in.

ANOTHER ANGLE

A door opens. And a CHEESY LOOKING GUY steps through. He
 fixes Misty with a stare, then starts to WILDLY OVERACT:

CHEESY GUY
 I'm Bergen Paulsen! I represent the
 Detroit auto manufacturers! What's this
 about you suing us?!

Misty stands up, strikes a sexy pose:

MISTY
 You poisoned our precious air! The people
 won't stand for it!

Cheesy Guy approaches Misty, tries out his own sexy stance:

CHEESY GUY
 What if we could come to some kind of
 arrangement, Mrs. Kuttner..? A monetary
 arrangement.

MISTY
 ... I don't know... I'd need to know the
 exact amounts you'd pay me -- along with
 the dates and times of payment.

CHEESY GUY

That's no problem... Take off your clothes and we'll talk about it.

Misty hesitates for a second, then starts to disrobe as a FUNKY GUITAR RIFF kicks in.

And now the CAMERA starts to pull back, revealing the edges of a MOVIE SCREEN. Back further now--

We're inside a courtroom. A closed door, grand jury hearing. Jurors watch the projected film with mounting discomfort.

INT. COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - SAME

March and Healy sit on a bench in the hallway. March stares at the ground. Healy gazes at the ceiling. They're silent.

A door opens down the hall, and the real JUDITH KUTTNER emerges. Flanked by two UNIFORMED OFFICERS.

They sit her down on a bench directly opposite our guys. Handcuff her to it. Move off a few paces to stand guard.

An awkward silence... Kuttner breaks it.

KUTTNER

I guess you two think you've done something here.

Pause, then:

HEALY

This ain't about what we've done. It's about what you did.

KUTTNER

Do you even... have a clue as to what just happened?

MARCH

More than a clue.

KUTTNER

I stepped out of line..? That it? Took money for personal gain..?

They say nothing.

KUTTNER

I didn't want that money. It wasn't some "plan" I had. Do you get that? There's a protocol. I followed it.

HEALY

What does that even mean?

KUTTNER

You think you're gonna bring down the car companies? Start a revolution? What age are you two living in?

(beat)

Detroit can't be allowed to fail. It's as simple as that... They'd take the whole country down with them.

(shakes her head)

I was acting in the national interest.

HEALY

And your daughter? What about her interests?

KUTTNER

(blinks)

... I tried to save her.

MARCH

You had her killed.

KUTTNER

(flash of anger)

I did no such thing! Detroit had her killed! I wanted her safe -- why do you think I hired you?

(beat, calm again)

I tried to save her from herself.

Her composure, restored. It's downright creepy.

HEALY

You're going to jail, Mrs. Kuttner. Where you belong.

A pause. She regards both of them for a moment, then says:

KUTTNER

I am going to jail... But it won't make a difference.

(beat)

Whatever happens, Detroit won't be held accountable. If I'm not there to take care of it, so someone else will.

MARCH

Yeah..? We'll see.

KUTTNER

Yes. You will, Mr. March.

She leans back as the courtroom doors burst open, people start to file out. A lawyer walks past March and Healy:

LAWYER

We're getting you in, right after lunch.

He gives them the thumbs up, walks on past. March and Healy stare across at Kuttner... Lost in thought.

CUT TO:

A RINGING BELL

WIDER - It's a CHRISTMAS BELL. Guy in a SANTA COSTUME stands on a street corner ringing it... Apparently it's Christmastime.

A CAR pulls up next to Santa. Healy gets out. Starts down the sidewalk. In a bit of a hurry. Ducks into a restaurant--

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - SAME

A hostess approaches Healy, he waves her off.

Spots HOLLY sitting by herself at a table. Walks over to her.

HEALY

Where is he?

HOLLY

Where do you think? He's at the bar.

HEALY

I guess he heard.

HOLLY

Oh, boy, did he ever.

(beat)

See if you can do something with him,
'cuz I sure can't.

HEALY

I'll try...

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - BAR - SAME

MARCH, folded across the bar like a man clutching a life raft. Soused... Healy appears, takes the seat next to him.

MARCH

Healy..? What are you--

(squints)

Holly call you..?

Healy just nods.

MARCH

Ah... Guess you're here to tell me what an asshole I am for having a little drink, huh?

HEALY

Not today I'm not.

He signals the bartender.

HEALY

Scotch, please.

March regards his friend with drunken incredulity...

MARCH

... So, you saw it, on the TV--

March points at the black and white suspended behind the bar.

HEALY

I saw.

MARCH

They're lettin 'em off... The car companies... Scott free...

(shakes his head)

Not enough evidence... So they say...

HEALY

I saw.

The bartender sets a drink in front of Healy. His first drink in five years. He looks down at it, considering...

HEALY

Look... Maybe they got away with it this time... Thing is, people are stupid, but they aren't that stupid--

MARCH

If you say so...

HEALY

I say so... These guys are going down. In ten years, we're all gonna be driving electric cars from Japan. So fuck 'em, you know?

March thinks for a moment... Slowly starts to nod.

MARCH

Yeah... Fuck 'em.

Healy raises his drink in a toast. March follows suit.

HEALY

For the birds.

MARCH

Hallelujah.

They drink. March looks down. Sees a BEE crawling on the bar. He takes a napkin. MASHES it.

CUT TO BLACK. THE END.