



written by
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1/14/98 - PRODUCTION DRAFT
3/18/98 - BLUE REVISIONS
3/25/98 - PINK REVISIONS
4/20/98 - YELLOW REVISIONS
4/27/98 - GREEN REVISIONS
5/05/98 - GOLDENROD REVISIONS
8/20/98 - BUFF REVISIONS
8/26/98 - SALMON REVISIONS

EXT. A DITCH - NIGHT

A light rain and crickets CHIRPING. Somewhere in the night, DANCE MUSIC is blaring, but here it's only a whisper with a beat.

Water trickles out of a jagged pipe. Splashing up mud, the riverlet weaves through hamburger wrappers and sunbleached beer cans, spent condoms and an old Spin magazine.

The tiny stream ripples past glass and trash and the body of a woman. Face up, breathing. Dead grass caught in her braids. Her name is RONNA MARTIN. She's eighteen and bleeding.

Bleeding a lot.

She tries to push herself up, but the dirt around her crumbles. Her legs are useless. Despite it all, there's a smile of perverse joy to her face, like she's just remembered the punchline to a favorite joke.

CLAIRE (V.O.)
You know what I like best about Christmas?
The surprises.

CUT TO:

2 INT. A DARK PLACE - DAY? NIGHT? 2

Pitch black. We hear an ENGINE and ROAD NOISE.

CLAIRE (V.O., CONT'D)
It's like, you get this box, and you're
sure you know what's in it.

SPARKS. A cigarette lighter flares.

We're in the trunk of a car with SIMON BAINES (22), a skinny Brit with surfer hair. He looks around, realizes where he is. Panicked, he starts POUNDING and KICKING.

CLAIRE (V.O., CONT'D)
You shake it, you weigh it, and you're
totally convinced you have it pegged. No
doubt in your mind.

The lighter goes out. It's black again.

CUT TO:

3 INT. UNIDENTIFIABLE ROOM - DAY 3

We keep tight on CLAIRE MONTGOMERY (19) as she talks to an unseen guest. Christmas lights blink behind her.

CLAIRE (CONT'd)
But then you open it up, and it's something completely different. Bing! Wow! Bang! Surprise! I mean, it's like you and me here.

She takes a sip of coffee, smiles. She has a bewitching smile.

CLAIRE
I'm not saying this is anything it's not. But c'mon. This time yesterday, who'dda thunk it?

CUT TO:

TITLE OVER BLACK:

Part One: 'X'

Christmas MUZAK plays. A baby CRIES.

FADE IN:

4 INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY 4

A cash drawer slides shut.

On the far side of the checkout stand, a STRINGY HAired WOMAN counts food stamps. Her eyes are sunken, black. She's got a screaming BABY on her arm and two rambunctious BOYS in the cart. They're wearing pajamas and raincoats.

It's five a.m. and the store is almost empty.

Containers of frozen orange juice spin endlessly on the conveyor belt. Ronna Martin -- the girl in the ditch -- is bagging groceries.

RONNA
Paper or plastic?

She wears a green apron with a red "Yule Save More" button.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

RONNA
Paper or plastic?

She's been working for fourteen hours, and it shows. Her intonation doesn't change at all.

RONNA
Paper or plastic?

STRINGY HAIREWOMAN
Both.

Finally satisfied she has all her stamps, the Woman starts looking through the receipt. In the cart, the boys knock gum from the stand.

STRINGY HAIREWOMAN
You didn't double my coupons.

RONNA
They're at the bottom. In red. Where it says, double coupons.

She finishes one bag and starts another. The Woman is watching her carefully.

STRINGY HAIREWOMAN
You can't do that. You can't put bleach in the same bag as food. It's poison.

Ronna fishes out the bleach and makes a big show of wrapping it in a plastic bag.

STRINGY HAIREWOMAN
Don't think you're something you're not. I used to have your job.

Ronna puts the bag in the cart. Looks her dead in the eye.

RONNA
Look how far it got you.

5 INT. SUPERMARKET AISLE - DAY

5

Ronna pulls off her apron as she heads for the back. In the BACKGROUND, the Stringy Haired Woman is bitching to an overweight STORE MANAGER.

6 OMIT

6

6A INT. SUPERMARKET STOCKROOM - DAY

6A

Dark and dusty, packed floor to ceiling with crates and palettes. Offscreen, a SOAP OPERA plays on TV.

Ronna comes around the corner, a thundercloud of anger and frustration. She passes by CLAIRE (19) and the British SIMON (21) at the phone, sorting through a crumpled list.

Simon's eyes track Ronna as she passes.

CLAIRE

(low)

Don't.

SIMON

Why not?

CLAIRE

She's been on for fourteen hours.

At her locker, Ronna misdials the combination. Frustrated, she POUNDS the locker, then re-dials.

Simon approaches Ronna gingerly. Claire gives up on him, setting to work opening a box of expired cookies.

SIMON

Ronna?

RONNA

No.

She trades her apron for her coat.

SIMON

I haven't asked you yet.

RONNA

Answer's still no.

She slams her locker. She crosses to the time clock.

SIMON

Are you menstrual? Pre-menstrual, post-menstrual?

(CONTINUED)

6A CONTINUED:

RONNA
One of the three.
(punches out)
Okay, Simon. In case you haven't heard
the buzz, the scoop, the word on the
street, I'm getting evicted. Tomorrow.
So pardon me if I'm not in a holly-jolly
mood right now.

Claire looks over, looks away. Ronna heads for the door
leading outside.

SIMON
Ronna, they wouldn't evict you at
Christmas. You'd be ho-ho-homeless.

He follows her out the door.

6B EXT. BEHIND THE STORE - CONTINUOUS

6B

Ronna forges ahead, ignoring him.

SIMON
Is that why all the overtime? How much do
you owe?

RONNA
Three eighty.

SIMON
That's nothing.

RONNA
More than I got.

SIMON
I'll give you twenty right now for a
blowjob.

She stops, turns on him. Her look could freeze lava.

SIMON
Handjob?

A beat. The start of a smile. Simon's just pushing her
buttons.

SIMON
Ronna, do you want my shift?

RONNA
Serious?

*

(CONTINUED)

6B CONTINUED:

SIMON

I haven't punched in yet. *

She only half-believes him. Simon's not prone to benevolence.

SIMON [CONT'D]

Look, my best mates are going to Las Vegas this weekend. I've never been -- I'm told it's incredible. If you took my shift, I could go with them. Everybody wins. *

(beat; she's not sold)

Cash up front.

He peels off three twenties from his clip. She looks at the money, thinking. Finally, she takes it.

RONNA

Deal.

Beyond exhausted, she starts walking back to the store. After a beat...

SIMON

Ronna? Are you certain I couldn't have a blowjob?

Without turning back, she flips him off.

7 OMIT

7

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

8 OMIT

8

8A INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

8A

An UNSUSPECTING WOMAN takes a container of orange juice from the refrigerator case. Suddenly,

*

AN ARM

reaches out through the case, grabbing it away. The woman gasps.

*

VOICE ON INTERCOM
Available cashier to the front.
Customers waiting.

*

*

*

9 INT. BEHIND THE REFRIGERATOR CASE - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

9

MANNIE (17) pulls his arm back through with the orange juice. He's on break with Ronna and Claire.

*

*

VOICE ON INTERCOM
Repeat, cashier to the front.

*

*

All eyes look up to the voice of God.

CLAIRE
One of us has to go.

MANNIE
Dead celebrities?

*

*

RONNA
Loser goes up. Steve McQueen.

*

*

She rips open a case of Snapple, taking one.

*

CLAIRE
M...M...

Mannie is checking out a small printed rave invite.

In a flash of inspiration...

CLAIRE
Michael Landon.

MANNIE
Lucille Ball.

(CONTINUED)

We MOVE CLOCKWISE with a rapid, snooze-you-lose pace.

RONNA
Burt Lancaster.
(to Mannie, re: invite)
Can you drive?

CLAIRE
L...L...

MANNIE
If you don't mind The Beast.

RONNA
I love The Beast.

CLAIRE
Lane Staley.
(off reaction)
Alice in Chains.

RONNA
He's not dead yet.

MANNIE
It's true.

CLAIRE
(substituting)
Lewis Carroll. Alice in Wonderland.

Claire takes the invite from Mannie.

MANNIE
Carole Lombard.

RONNA
Lee Marvin.

CLAIRE
M...M...

MANNIE
Don't say Molly Ringwald.

CLAIRE
Martha Raye.

MANNIE
Nice. Robert Mitchum.

RONNA
Shit! M. M. MMMMMMMalcolm X.

(CONTINUED)

Claire just stands there confused, mouthing "X...X..." Mannie scoops a fingerful of whipped cream from a tub.

CLAIRE
You can't say Malcolm X.

RONNA
He's famous, he's dead.

MANNIE
That's like a rule or something. Nothing starts with X.

He puts the tub back on the shelf.

RONNA
That's not my problem.

MANNIE
(to Claire)
You can challenge.

CLAIRE
Okay, I challenge. Give me one dead celebrity that starts with X.

RONNA
This is bullshit. I am not working the
fucking register. *

She's winning no sympathy. Mannie starts to audibly CLICK the countdown. Ronna shoots him a withering look.

RONNA
X...X...There is one. I know I thought of one before.

A jug of milk suddenly shifts to the side, revealing the bulbous face of the Manager, looking through from the store side.

SWITTERMAN
Break was over four minutes ago. Who's up front?

Claire looks at Mannie. Mannie looks at Ronna. Resigned to martyrdom...

RONNA
I am.

10 INT. SUPERMARKET / CHECKOUT LANE - DAY 10

Ronna rips off a receipt, handing it to a CLUTCHY OLD WOMAN. Starts scanning someone else's groceries. Mannie is digging out returns from under Ronna's checkstand. He suddenly looks up.

MANNIE

Xerxes.

RONNA

What?

MANNIE

Xerxes. Some dead pharaoh guy. Starts with X.

RONNA

That wasn't it. I never heard of fucking "Xerxes."

MANNIE

Pharaoh coulda saved your ass.

Mannie pushes his cart down to the next checkstand.

VOICE (O.S.)

There's an opera about him.

Ronna looks up at the customer, a handsome college guy (ADAM). He's cute in that fresh-scrubbed, Midwestern way.

ADAM

Xerxes. I took music appreciation twice.

ON RONNA

Whatever.

Adam's friend ZACK is with him in line, YABBERING on a cellular phone. Ronna hits total. \$25.12. Adam hands her a credit card. She swipes it through the machine and starts bagging their groceries.

ADAM

Does a British guy still work here?

RONNA

He went to Vegas for the weekend.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

A glance between Adam and Zack, hard to read why. Zack nods for Adam to go ahead.

ADAM
Betcha wonder why we're buying all this orange juice.

RONNA
Scurvy?

She's not going to rise to the bait. Zack looks over at Adam, then to Ronna.

ZACK
Say...
(checks nametag)
Ronna. You don't know where we could get something to go with this orange juice, do you?

RONNA
Doughnuts, aisle four.

ZACK
But then you get the weird taste in your mouth. I was thinking something a little more euphoric. The British guy usually hooks us up.

She stops bagging. Looks at Adam. At Zack.

RONNA
How much?

ZACK
Twenty at twenty.

RONNA
You're overpaying.

ZACK
We're desperate. A bunch of us are going to this party tonight, this warehouse thing...

He pulls out a postcard-sized invite. Bright colors, slick printing...

RONNA
Mary Xmas Supafest.

ADAM
You're going?

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: (2)

ZACK

And we had planned this kinda pre-party.
Only there's 20 of us, it's like all or
nothing.

Switterman walks down the end of the aisle, headed for the
manager's desk.

ZACK

(low)

A friend was supposed to get the stuff in
Chicago, but now he's snowed in. So if
you could help us out here...

All three watch Switterman pass. It gives Ronna a beat to
think. She hands Zack a post-it note and a pen.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: (3)

RONNA

Gimme a number. Let me see what I can do.

ZACK

Kick ass.

Adam smiles. It's a nice smile. Even Ronna notices.

RONNA

So do you want the o.j. or not?

ADAM

Absolutely.

11 INT. MANNIE'S CAR / PARKING LOT - NIGHT

11

The Beast is Mannie's pride and joy, a late-70's Toyota held together with duct tape and prayer. It's outfitted for the season with Christmas lights lining the windshield and back window. Santa has replaced Jesus on the dashboard.

Ronna climbs in the passenger door, counting a stack of 20's fresh from the ATM. Claire's in back.

CLAIRE

You know that Simon's in Vegas.

RONNA

I don't need Simon. I'm going to Todd.

MANNIE

Todd GAINES?

CLAIRE

Who's Todd Gaines?

MANNIE

Simon's dealer.

Claire sits forward in the seat, suddenly worried.

CLAIRE

You can't do that, can you? I mean, go around Simon.

She looks at Mannie. He shrugs, unsure.

RONNA

Ok, listen up. If Simon were here -- which he's not -- he would charge fifteen, when I know he gets it for ten.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

RONNA (cont'd)
Times twenty hits, that's a hundred bucks
I'd be pissing out my dick.

MANNIE
But it's like an evolutionary leap.
You're moving up the drug food chain.
Without permission.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: (2)

CLAIRE

Ronna, you shouldn't do this.

Ronna pockets the cash. Mannie's about to say something when she stops him.

RONNA

Both of you chill the fuck out. It's just once. When Simon gets back, we can still overpay for quarters if it makes you feel all warm and happy. But this is my deal, so just sit back and watch.

Mannie and Claire remain unconvinced. Ronna reaches for the keys, CRANKING the ignition even though Mannie's driving. The ENGINE purrs.

RONNA (CONT'd)

Besides, Todd likes me. This won't be any problem.

A BUZZER sounds.

12 EXT. DOORSTEP - NIGHT

12

Ronna stands by the intercom of a two-story walkup in Hollywood. Waiting, she looks back to the street, where The Beast sits idle at the curb.

INTERCOM VOICE

Speak!

RONNA

Todd! It's Ronna Martin. You know me through Simon.

A long pause.

INTERCOM VOICE

Yeah?

RONNA

Can I come up?

Another long pause. Ronna looks back at The Beast, embarrassed. Finally the door BUZZES and a latch CLICKS open. Stairs lead up.

She motions back "five minutes" to The Beast.

13 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT 13

Three out of four lights are burned out in the hallway.

A few feet ahead of Ronna, a door stands partly ajar. A weird red-and-green light spills out through the crack, along with an Alice in Chains SONG.

14 INT. APARTMENT / LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 14

Ronna pushes the door open from the hallway.

RONNA

Todd?

Shades drawn, the room is completely insulated from reality. The light bulbs have been marked over, casting eerie pools of red and green light. Broken CD's dangle off a tiny Christmas tree by the stereo. Slacker seasonalism.

GAINES (O.S.)

Don't let the cat out.

Ronna closes the door behind her.

TODD GAINES emerges from the darkened bedroom, tying the string on a pair of sweat pants. That's all he's wearing.

RONNA

I didn't wake you up, did I?

GAINES

Nah.

He settles into an overstuffed couch and lights a Marlboro. Adjusts himself in the crotch. Motions for her to take a chair. She's more nervous than she wants to let on.

GAINES

I thought you were still buying quarters off Simon. Least what Simon pretends are quarters.

RONNA

I keep him honest.

GAINES

At that level you're supposed to pinch. It's the economics of it.

(CONTINUED)

IN THE BACKGROUND

A WOMAN with a ballerina's body comes out of the bedroom. She tucks an unrealistically large breast down into her tight top.

GAINES

You leaving?

She leans over the back of the sofa for quick, tonguey kiss. In a sneak attack, she shoves a Santa's hat down to his ears. He bats the white pom out of his eyes.

GAINES

Be good.

The woman is out the door without a word. Gaines looks back over at Ronna, not the least bit self-conscious about the hat.

GAINES

I take it this is not a social call.

RONNA

I need a favor.

GAINES

A favor? Wow. I didn't know we were such good friends, Ronna. Because if we were, you would know I give head before I give favors. I don't even give my best friends head, so the chance of your getting a favor right now are pretty fucking slim.

(beat)

You might try just telling me what you want to buy.

RONNA

Twenty hits of ecstasy.

He takes a deep drag on the cigarette, looking at her. Blows the smoke out. He picks up a remote control. Aims it at the stereo.

CLOSE UP

The volume meter, climbing fast.
Out of the green, into the red.
The MUSIC is deafening.

ON GAINES

On top of Ronna, face in her ear. His hand wraps around her head, holding her tight. We can't HEAR what he's saying. Ronna's eyes betray her fear.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (2)

He backs off. She looks confused.

He nods. Do it.

The MUSIC still BLARING, she stands and slowly unbuttons her shirt. Takes it off -- very self-consciously. Pulls her t-shirt off over her head. Just her bra underneath. He motions for her to turn around. She does, then back.

Her hands are shaking. She holds them together.

Gaines aims the remote at the stereo. The MUSIC retreats.

GAINES

You come here out of the blue asking for twenty hits. Just so happens twenty is the magic number where intent to sell becomes trafficking.

RONNA

Todd, I would never fuck you like that.

GAINES

How would you fuck me? Would you strap it on?

He climbs over the sofa to a dresser. In a drawer, he digs down through a pile of socks to find a wide-mouthed bottle. And an empty Tylenol bottle. Blows out the dust.

GAINES

What's the occasion?

RONNA

There's this big Christmas party thing. Warehouse, you know. A bunch of us are doing sort of a pre-party thing.

GAINES

Friends of yours. You're not going to go and try to sell this on me, are you?

RONNA

No.

GAINES

You're not dealing.

RONNA

Swear to God.

He transfers pills from the big bottle to the Tylenol bottle.

(CONTINUED)

GAINES

This is the real thing. Pharmaceutical grade, not that crunchy herbal rave shit. Don't let anyone double dose or you'll be frying eggs off 'em in the emergency room. One hit per headbanger.

RONNA

Understood.

He snaps the cap on tight.

GAINES

Twenty at fifteen is 300.

RONNA

Fifteen? I was thinking more like ten.

GAINES

You already did strap it on.

RONNA

It's just that I know you charge Simon ten.

GAINES

Inflation's a bitch.

He offers it to Ronna, who doesn't reach out for it.

RONNA

Here's the deal. There's 20 of us. I need all of this. But I only have two hundred. I mean, that's all I have.

Gaines undoes the cap of the Tylenol bottle, starts pouring the pills back out.

RONNA (CONT'D)

No, hear me out. This two-hundred is like a downpayment. You give me the stuff, I get the extra hundred from them, then I come right back and pay you.

GAINES

See, that would be doing you a favor, and you know how I feel about favors.

RONNA

I could leave something with you. Collateral.

He gives her a quick look over.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (4)

GAINES

I already got a fucking Swatch. I need something I know you'll come back for.

Ronna looks at the Tylenol bottle in his hands. Thinking...

15 EXT. THE BEAST - NIGHT

15

Ronna kneels down beside the passenger window. Knocks on the glass. Claire rolls down the window. MUSIC spills out.

RONNA

Claire, could you come up with me for a sec?

16 EXT. DOORSTEP - NIGHT

16

The release BUZZER stops as Ronna pulls open the door to the stairs. Claire just stands there, disbelieving, making no motion to go in.

RONNA

Forty-five minutes. Hour, tops. You just have to sit there.

CLAIRE

Hello! He's a drug dealer.

RONNA

Jesus, Claire. Don't get 818 on me here. How much shit have I done for you? This is nothing.

CLAIRE

No. No! You're making me an accessory.

RONNA

Claire. That bracelet of mine you're wearing is an accessory. You are just some chick who's sitting in an apartment. That's it.

It's not just the matter at hand, but years of minor adjustment and one-upsmanship. Ronna finally drops the bravado.

RONNA

Okay, no bullshit. I need this. I don't get this money, I get evicted. My ass is out the street.

CLAIRE

You could...

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

RONNA
(stopping her)
No, Claire. I don't have anyone else to go to. I am coming to you and I am asking for your help. Please. Help me.

A beat.

CLAIRE
Forty-five minutes. That's like eight o'clock.

RONNA
We'll be back by eight, I promise.

Ronna holds the door as Claire reluctantly steps inside.

17 INT. MANNIE'S CAR - NIGHT

17

The clock on the dashboard reads 8:04.

RONNA (v.o.)
Is this it? Are you sure?

ENGINE running, The Beast is parked along a residential street in Venice. In the driver's seat, Mannie looks for an address.

MANNIE
Six-forty-four. Jesus, next time ask for directions.

He kills the engine. Ronna does a quick face-check in the rear view mirror. She's out the door, moving a hundred miles an hour.

MANNIE
Ronna!

She looks back in. Mannie shakes the Tylenol bottle she forgot. Tosses them to her.

MANNIE
You're a pro.

RONNA
I'm a top-seeded amateur.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

She pockets the bottle. SLAMS the door. Mannie tracks her as she circles the car.

MANNIE

And I'm a very happy man.

In his palm, two tablets. He works up a good gob of spit, then swallows them both. They're bitter as hell.

18 INT. VENICE HOUSE / MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

18

A beefy guy named BURKE HALVERSON reaches out a hand.

BURKE

Damn good to meet you, Rhonda.

RONNA

Ronna.

BURKE

Ronna. When I heard Philly got snowed in, I thought we were fucked for sure. Glad we found you.

Her PAGER goes off, a shrill CRY. She quiets it, checks the number. Burke smiles.

BURKE

Work work work. Friday must be a busy night.

RONNA

That was just a friend.

Only now do we TURN to see Adam and Zack standing nearby, trying to look cool. Their house is spartan even by frat-boy standards, just goodwill furniture and as-is Ikea.

BURKE (O.S.)

Hey. What can I get you to drink?

RONNA

Some of that orange juice would be great.

Burke does a hepcat swing through the kitchen door, leaving Ronna alone with Adam and Zack.

ZACK

So this party tonight sounds like it's gonna be huge.

(CONTINUED)

ADAM
Massive.

ZACK
That would be a synonym for huge.

ADAM
Just backing you up.

ZACK
And I appreciate that.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: (2)

BURKE (O.S.)
Ronna hun, we are fresh out of o.j....

Adam looks at Zack. Ronna catches it.

BURKE
(back thru door)
Cerveza?

He hands her a beer.

ADAM
(to Burke)
Oh yeah. Hey. We bought a whole bunch of
orange juice. It's in the car.

ANGLE ON RONNA

watching them with a lion tamer's concentration. Burke looks
back over at her.

BURKE
Now, Zack tells me you got 20 at 20, is
that right?

RONNA
(suddenly)
You got a bathroom?

ADAM
Down the hall on the right.

ZACK
Let me show you...

He moves at Ronna strangely. It freaks her out.

BURKE
Maybe we could do this first.

Burke shoots Adam a look. Ronna's already headed down the
hall. They wait silently until Ronna's out of earshot.

ADAM
We said Chicago, you said Philadelphia.

CUT TO:

A MONITOR

In black-and-white VIDEO, we're looking down on wide-angle
view of the entire room -- a surveillance camera. We can see
the reflection of someone watching.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: (3)

ADAM [FILTERED]
Maybe she didn't notice.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: (4)

18

BURKE (FILTERED)
Just wait here. Keep it calm.

Burke walks off camera, headed for the hall. Zack hangs his head. Adam looks up at the camera.

19 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

19

CLOSE UP: Ronna locks the door.

She leans back against the frame, panicking.
She turns on both faucets.
She checks the window.
Nailed shut.

She looks at herself in the spotless mirror.

RONNA
You're fine. You're fine.

20 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

20

Burke leans up against the outside of the door, listening.

21 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

21

She pulls the Tylenol bottle out of her pocket.
She looks down at the toilet.
Hesitating, until...

A KNOCK on the door.

22 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

22

BURKE
Everything all right in there?

23 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

23

Ronna's heart is in her throat.

CU: The handle, rocking back and forth, locked.

RONNA
Fine.

She struggles with the cap.
Child safety.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

It finally POPS open.
A few pills scatter on the carpet.
She dumps the contents into the toilet.

FLUSHES.

24 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

24

Burke hears it. Freaks out. He rifles through the keys on his belt.

25 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

25

Ronna's on all fours, searching for spilled pills. She tosses them into the swirling water.

26 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

26

CU: The hole in the center of the door knob. A thin allen wrench slips in.

Burke forces the door open to reveal

RONNA

standing with her beer, cool as an Eskimo.

RONNA

All yours.

She pushes past him into the hall.

27 INT. MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

27

Ronna is headed for the front door. Following behind her, Burke waves at Adam -- BLOCK THAT DOOR!

Adam steps in her way.

BURKE

Ronna, hun, do we got a deal here or not?

RONNA

(turns,
backing away)

No. No, see we don't. That's what I came here to tell you. I couldn't get anything.

She bumps back into Adam at the door. Burke is closing in.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

BURKE
C'mon, resourceful girl like you? I don't believe it.

RONNA
It's true.

BURKE
I just want to make a deal here, Ronna. Can we make a deal?

RONNA
Who the fuck are you? Monty Hall?

Zack chokes a laugh. Burke stares right through her. Ronna swigs her beer like a trucker.

RONNA
Did you know I'm only 17?

BLACK AND WHITE / SURVEILLANCE CAMERA

RONNA (FILTERED)
I probably shouldn't be drinking this beer, should I? Being so underage and all.

The men just stand there, watching.

BACK TO COLOR

CLOSE ON Burke, dumbstruck. He nods at Adam.

Adam steps away from the door.

Ronna backs her way out the door, never taking her eyes off them. The door CLOSES.

A BEAT. Adam and Zack await the fury. Burke looks back to the hallway.

28 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT (NORMAL)

28

A white guy with dreadlocks comes out of a locked door. His name is LOOP.

LOOP
Man, I don't know what happened, it's like the machine just ate the tape.

He cracks a videotape against the doorframe, pulling out the innards.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

MANNIE (v.o.)
Why would they go after you?

29 EXT/INT. THE BEAST ON STREET - NIGHT

29

The car is parked on the side of another residential street.

RONNA
I think it was Simon they were after. He deals all the time out of the store. I mean, he makes change out of the fucking register.

MANNIE
They didn't know who was dealing, just that it was someone at the store?

RONNA
They were fishing. I bit.

Ronna's PAGER goes off with a shrill BEEPING. She checks the number.

RONNA
It's Claire. She paged me while I was in there.

MANNIE
We go back to Todd. Tell him they didn't show up, whatever. And then just swap the pills for Claire.

RONNA
We can't.

MANNIE
Why not?

RONNA
They're gone. I flushed them.

MANNIE
Oh shit.

RONNA
Think of something. I need a hundred bucks or 20 hits of X.

A long silent beat as both put on their thinking caps. Mannie tries to beat down a smile that curls the edges of his lips. He clenches his jaw, trying to keep it in.

(CONTINUED)

RONNA

What?!

She turns his chin to hold his eyes to the light. They're wild and dilated. And his smile resurfaces despite his best efforts.

RONNA

You took one, didn't you? Fuck you, Mannie! How could you do this to me? I need you now.

He sits quietly, a scolded dog.

RONNA

Drive.

MANNIE

Where?

RONNA

Just drive. I have an idea.

30 INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

30

A sign over the entrance reads "Yule Save More." Christmas MUSAK blares "Jingle Bell Rock" overhead.

The automatic doors slide open to reveal Ronna and Mannie, who split up. We follow Ronna, who is now wearing Mannie's black trench coat. The store is almost empty, with STOCKMEN beginning to unload palettes.

Ronna turns down an aisle marked "Soap/Shampoo/Drugs."

31 INT. AT THE MANAGER'S COUNTER - NIGHT

31

Mannie scans his hand on a UPC register, watching the laser on his fingers, listening to it BWOOP. He smiles broadly at an idle REGISTER WOMAN, who doesn't even look up. He then ducks down behind the counter.

A CRAPPY CD PLAYER

spins away. He presses the "◀◀" button, then cranks the volume dial all the way up.

The opening FLOURISHES of a Latinized Christmas classic BLAST through the PA system.

32 INT. AT CHECKSTAND - NIGHT 32

The Register Woman looks up.

33 INT. AN AISLE - NIGHT 33

Two STOCKBOYS look up.

34 INT. DRUG AISLE - NIGHT 34

A COUPON-WIELDING WOMAN looks up, confused, but proceeds to push her cart around the end of the row.

Ronna looks both ways. She's alone.

She starts grabbing boxes off the shelf and shoving them into the pockets of Mannie's coat. Cold medicine. Allergy medicine. Every pill she can find.

SWITTERMAN

comes ROARING by behind her, heading for the front. She tries to duck away, but he's too steamed to even notice her.

Ronna does a quick check to see if she got everything. Hurrying down the aisle, she swipes a bottle of Evian.

35 INT. END OF ANOTHER AISLE - NIGHT 35

The two stockboys give a wide-eyed, Spielberg™ stare...

We MOVE to the next aisle, where the Coupon Woman is staring at the same thing...

We MOVE again to Ronna at the end of her aisle. She just now sees it...

36 INT. FRONT OF THE STORE - NIGHT 36

ANGLE ON Mannie. He sticks his hand out.

ANGLE ON the Register Woman. She sticks her hand out.

Their palms meet. Their hips come together. And they dance.

What starts as a tango, spirals into a STAR SEARCH-y routine of dips, spins and Arthur Murray nightmares. Torville and Dean on linoleum.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

The stockboys watch, horrified but transfixed. The Coupon Woman taps her shoe against the wheel of her cart.

ANGLE ON MANNIE

dancing his heart out. His face is red and dripping sweat. He's too out of it to notice.

HIS POINT OF VIEW

a JET ENGINE ROAR, swirling light. The MUSIC is stacked up on itself, overlapping and bizarre. For just a moment, horrifying.

ANGLE ON MANNIE

he stops mid-twirl. Holding himself against a magazine rack. Ronna takes him by the shoulder.

MANNIE'S POINT OF VIEW

Ronna leans into a fish-eye swirl. The ROAR grows louder, continuing as we

CUT TO:

37 INT. THE BEAST / DRIVING - NIGHT

37

Behind the wheel, Ronna's ripping open boxes of medication. Cracking open jars, she spills the tablets out on her hand.

RONNA

Were they round or oval?

MANNIE

(recovering)

Round. White. Like aspirin. Like baby aspirin.

She digs through the pockets of the coat, seeing what else she grabbed. Her BEEPER goes off. She hits it to make it stop.

She pops an allergy pill out of its blister pack. Compares it to another pill, almost the same.

RONNA

(holding them up)

A or B?

MANNIE

B.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

RONNA
You're sure?

MANNIE
I wasn't really looking.

Making a decision, Ronna starts popping the rest of the pills out of the blister pack, dumping them into the Tylenol bottle.

Her BEEPER goes off again.

RONNA
Stop fucking paging me, Claire!

Mannie nurses the Evian bottle.

A PHONE rings.

38 INT. GAINES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

38

Gaines picks up the receiver, clicking the remote to mute the CD player. He's still shirtless and wearing the Santa Claus hat.

GAINES
(on phone)
Speak!...Just licking my dick, whazzup with you?...Yeah...The Crazy Horse, you'll have to look it up...I don't know what I'm up to.
(to Claire)
Where's this party at?

Claire is sitting in the corner, holding herself very still.

She digs a postcard-ish invite out of her purse. He snaps his fingers. She hands it over.

GAINES
(on phone)
It's called "Mary Xmas." Mary like a chick...Like her name is Mary, not like you marry her. You fucking moron...I dunno, some warehouse shit.
(to Claire)
Is this gonna be cool?

CLAIRE
Yeah, I guess.

(CONTINUED)

GAINES

(on phone)

My friend Claire here says it's going to be a kick-ass-fucking-time...What, you know her?

(to Claire)

It's your buddy Simon. He's in Vegas.

CLAIRE

I know.

GAINES

She knows...Hell, I dunno...

(looks at
Claire)

Maybe...Yeah, well save a load for me big boy...Whatever.

He hangs up. The CD player is still muted. The silence is vast. Gaines scratches an armpit. Checks his watch. Claire looks away.

GAINES

What do you want for Christmas, Claire?

CLAIRE

I don't know.

GAINES

Do you want to get laid?

CLAIRE

No.

GAINES

No, you don't wanna get laid or no, you do, but you don't want to get laid with me?

CLAIRE

You can't answer that. I mean, it's like...

GAINES

Either way you're fucked. Where are they, Claire?

CLAIRE

They'll be here.

GAINES

They'll be here. Huh.

(CONTINUED)

He gestures like he's going to click on the CD player, but instead points it at her.

GAINES
Are you a virgin?

CLAIRE
What?

GAINES
C'mon, Claire. Answer the question.
Answer the question, Claire.

She doesn't say anything. Gaines laughs his ass off.

CLAIRE
Breakfast Club. I get it.

GAINES
Look at me. I want to show you something.

She looks back over at him. He slowly undoes the drawstring to his sweat pants. Starts to reach inside. Claire watches, revolted and disbelieving. A beat.

GAINES
I'm kidding!

His hand reaches between the cushions of the couch, where he pulls out a 9mm handgun.

GAINES
I'm not kidding. Where the fuck are they,
Claire?

The gun pointed at her, Claire is losing her shit. Her face squeezes tight, like her head's being sucked through a tiny hole. Just when she's about to pop...

The BUZZER sounds.

Saved by the bell.

Gaines pushes the TALK button on the intercom.

GAINES
Speak!

FILTERED VOICE
It's Ronna!

Smiling, Gaines hits the DOOR button. Claire collects her wits.

39 EXT. DOWNSTAIRS DOORWAY - NIGHT 39

Ronna looks back to Mannie.

RONNA
Don't say anything. And try not to look
so stoned.

He nods, wiping a finger across his forehead to squeegee off
the sweat.

40 INT. GAINES' APARTMENT - NIGHT 40

Gaines sits pensively on the edge of the couch, then smiles
warmly.

GAINES
That's no problem. These things happen, I
understand that.

Claire smiles, relieved. Mannie stands behind Ronna, his gaze
carefully fixed on the wall.

GAINES (CONT'd)
Let me just fill out a return slip here,
and I'll have the manager give you a
refund.

RONNA
Todd, I'm trying to explain what
happened. They had already gotten stuff
from somewhere else. It was just a case
of miscommunication, I thought...

Ronna's VOICE fades to nothing as we PUSH IN on Mannie.

A SIAMESE CAT

lays down on a table in front of him, staring at him.

HUXLEY [SUBTITLES ONLY]
I can hear your thoughts.

Mannie squints, looks around. He and the cat are alone in the
room.

HUXLEY [SUBTITLES]
Xiang Kai-Shek.
Famous Chinese ruler guy.
Starts with X.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

Mannie smiles.

MANNIE [SUBTITLES]

No. "C"
Chiang Kai-Shek.

The cat curls itself.

HUXLEY [SUBTITLES]

You're going to die.

Mannie snaps back, eyes panicked.

It's a few minutes later. Everyone's in different places, different moods. Mannie hasn't moved at all.

GAINES

(handing back cash)
I'm keeping fifty. Call it interest.

RONNA

That's fine. Todd, I'm really sorry about all this.

Ronna steers Mannie towards the door, trying to keep his back to Todd. But at the last moment...

GAINES

Hey Ronna.

A beat. Todd shakes the pill bottle.

GAINES

I just gave you a favor.

RONNA

(a smile)
And here I thought you just gave me head.

They trade a look as she exits. Gaines picks up the cat, gives it a scratch. Silly humans.

41 EXT. FIELD PARKING LOT - NIGHT

41

Mannie lies on the roof of The Beast, arms spread wide, cigarette in his fingers.

42 INT. THE BEAST - NIGHT

42

Ronna and Claire stare at each other, a competition, neither wanting to exhale first.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

Hands waving, Claire struggles to keep herself from laughing and choking. Finally she gives in, coughing up smoke and snot. Ronna blows out a cool ribbon of smoke.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: (2)

She hands over a wreath of plastic holly.

RONNA

Pin me.

She leans down to let Claire pin the holly in a crown around and through her hair.

CLAIRE

Okay, at the risk of sounding like. You know. Me. What are you going to do about getting evicted? You're still short, aren't you?

Mannie's hand flops down to the window. Claire hands him the joint.

From RONNA'S P.O.V., we see the floor is still littered with dozens of boxes of medicine.

A beat. She picks up a box.

An idea forming, Ronna sits back up. Smiles.

CLAIRE

What? What?

43 EXT. FIELD / PARKING LOT - NIGHT

43

Ronna and Claire weave through the densely packed lot, where RAVE-GOERS party in and around their cars, drinking and smoking.

As they walk, Ronna pops allergy medicine out of a blister-foil pack. She tosses the box away. Scanning the lot, she points to a mini-van.

44 EXT. AT THE MINIVAN - NIGHT

44

Ronna knocks on the window. A NERVOUS TEENAGER rolls it down, releasing a cloud of smoke. Ronna smiles.

RONNA

Hi. I'm Kelly, and this is Donna. We were wondering if you might want to hang out.

45 INT. THE MINIVAN - NIGHT

45

Ronna and Claire are packed in tight with three VALLEY
HIGHSCHOOL COUPLES. The guys are stoned, the girls uptight.
They're all breaking curfew.

FILA GUY
I think I feel something.

RONNA
It's really smooth, isn't it? Donna's
brother is a pharmacist. He got it for
us.

A look from Claire -- why are dragging me into this? But she
goes for it.

CLAIRE
Chip. His name is Chip. My brother.

NIKE HAT
Is it like a wave, or is it like a zoom?

FILA GUY
It's like floating. Like, "Hey down
there, how's the ground and shit."

NIKE HAT
I got it. Oh, fuck. Yeah, I feel it.

ANOREXIC GIRL
Is it really that cool?

FILA GUY
You gotta try it. Shit, I'll buy for you.

He pulls out his wallet and hands Ronna a twenty. She gives
the Anorexic Girl a tablet, who downs the pill with a swig of
Diet Coke.

RONNA
And you know what makes it even better?
If you smoke a lot of pot. I mean a lot
of it.

Fila Guy nods, firing up the mini-bong again.

46 EXT. LINE OUTSIDE A WAREHOUSE - NIGHT 46

Mannie leans against a wall, pale and out of it, a nauseated smile on his face.

CLAIRE

(low)

I can't believe you are selling allergy medicine.

RONNA

We're out of that. We're down to chewable aspirin.

A SKATE-PUNK GUY comes up to them, money in hand.

SKATE-PUNK GUY

Hey. People are saying you have some really good stuff.

Ronna takes the money, looks him over.

RONNA

Show me your tits.

A beat. He pulls up his shirt to show his skinny white chest. Deeming him worthy, Ronna hands him a pill and sends him on his way. She adds the twenty to her stack.

CLAIRE

How much have you made?

RONNA

Four hundred.

The opening RUMBLES of an industrial ANTHEM rise as we cut to:

47 INT. GAINES' APARTMENT - NIGHT 47

MUSIC builds throughout.

Standing at the dresser, Gaines cracks open Ronna's bottle. Pills spill out on a plate. He counts them, pushing them aside in groups with a card. Stops. Picks one up. Looks at it more closely...

Pulls open a drawer full of socks. Digs out the wide-mouthed bottle. Shakes out a pill.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

Flicks on a desk lamp.
Looks at both pills in his hand, comparing...

Fuck.

He flips over the card on the dresser.
Mary Xmas.
The invite Claire gave him.

With a sudden RAGE, he WINGS the plate against the far wall.
It SHATTERS.

The music EXPLODES and we're...

48 INT. WAREHOUSE / MARY XMAS SUPAFEST - NIGHT

48

A grinding, sweating sea of humanity. In the mosh pit,
SKINHEADS and coked-up POSEURS run in blind circles. A stringy-
haired EYELINER BOY crashes into

RONNA

who had her own groove going. She shoves him back into the
wheel, a foot on his ass.

Claire, behind her, YELLS something in her ear. We can't hear
a thing. Ronna downs the rest of her drink, hands Claire the
cup. That's not what Claire meant -- she's a little pissed --
but Ronna is oblivious.

Both hands free, Ronna pushes her way deeper into the eye of
the storm. She adjusts her holly crown. She's sky high and
loving every minute of it.

49 EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

49

The line to get in is longer still, snaking down the wall.
Fila Guy is talking to a friend in a SPIDER MARINE shirt.

FILA GUY

This girl inside. She and her friend have
it.

SPIDER MARINE

Ecstasy? The real shit?

FILA GUY

Pharmaceutical grade. None of the
crunchy herbal rave shit.

ANOREXIA GIRL

Best twenty bucks you could spend.

(CONTINUED)

We look past Fila Guy to see Todd Gaines, who's been listening. Seething.

50 INT. BY THE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

50

Sweating hard, Mannie is pressed back against a pole, shirt over his head. Two nose-ringed RIOT GRRRLS are drawing a Christmas tree on his chest and stomach with a fat magic marker.

Looking over at the entrance, he watches some GAPSTERS move past the BOUNCERS. And behind them,

TODD GAINES.

Mannie's drugged eyes go wide with panic. He hunches down. Gaines starts looking around the edge of the crowd.

Mannie works his way into the mob.

STROBES fire overhead.

Ronna dances on, oblivious...

Gaines circles, searching...

Mannie fights his way through the outer ring of MOSHERS...

Through the crowd, we see Gaines looking in...

Mannie grabs Ronna...

She smiles, tries to kiss him...

He YELLS in her ear. He has to repeat himself...

She looks back over her shoulder...

A space in the crowd...

She sees Gaines. He sees her.

The MUSIC STOPS. Dead silence.

Ronna and Gaines trade stares for what feels like an eternity, until suddenly...

The MUSIC BLASTS back, harder than ever. Like a shot, Ronna and Mannie are out of there. Gaines plows through the crowd, coming after them.

51 EXT. WAREHOUSE ALLEY - NIGHT

51

A side door BLASTS open, Ronna dragging Mannie by the wrist. They race down the alley. A burly BOUNCER shouts after them:

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED:

51

BOUNCER
HEY!!
(re: sign
on door)
NO EXIT!!

The Bouncer is blindsided by Gaines, who charges after Ronna.

52 EXT. DIFFERENT ALLEY - NIGHT

52

Ronna pulls Mannie into a covered doorway, a niche set off from the alley. They hide back in the shadows as

GAINES

races past. Ronna kneels down to Mannie, who's hunched over his knees sweating and shaking.

RONNA
What's wrong? Mannie?

She puts a hand on his sweating forehead. His cheeks.

RONNA
Jesus. You're burning up.

MANNIE
I can't feel my hands.

RONNA
Listen to me. We're going to find Claire and get out of here.

53 EXT. ALLEY / DUMPSTERS - NIGHT

53

Ronna half-carries Mannie down the alley. He's too heavy to lift, and too out of it to go much further. He collapses to his knees. She can't get him back up.

Without warning, he HEAVES. We hear the SPLASH on the asphalt.

She props his head back against a dumpster. Wipes his face.

RONNA
Sweetheart. Mannie. I'm going to leave you here. I'm going to get the car and come back for you.

She fishes the keys out of his pocket. Mannie grabs onto her arm, tight.

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED:

RONNA

I can't carry you! Mannie, just hide here. Just like a little mouse, okay? You're going to be fine. Ain't nobody leaving.

She pushes his legs into the shadows. He's crying.

54 EXT. FIELD / EDGE OF PARKING LOT - NIGHT (RAIN)

54

In the distance, we hear the RUMBLE of the music. Keeping low, Ronna works her way down a row, coming to Mannie's car. She tries one key, then another.

We LOOK UP to see Todd Gaines watching her from the hood of a nearby car.

GAINES

How's it going, Ronna? How are sales?

Her heart skips a beat. She drops the keys.

RONNA

Todd, I can explain.

GAINES

I'm not going to ask you to.

He climbs off the car, approaching.

GAINES [CONT'D]

The thing is, it's not like I'm in a highly ethical industry. But goddamn, Ronna. You fucked me over for 20 lousy hits.

He pulls his gun from the back of his jeans. By instinct, she starts to move away.

A red Miata moves down the row behind Ronna. She looks to it for help, but it's already passed.

RONNA

It's not what it looks like. I mean, it sort of is, but it's complicated.

GAINES

Not really.

He cocks the gun.

(CONTINUED)

RONNA

I know I fucked up, but I can make it up to you. Please, Todd.

GAINES

I'm the last fucking person you should be expecting a favor from.

RONNA

I have the cash. I have more than I owe you.

GAINES

So now you're an entrepreneur.

At the last moment, Ronna bolts. She ducks around the corner of a van, only to see...

A RED MIATA

doing 20 in reverse. It brakes, but there's no time. It hits her hard.

She flies up over the roof of the car, CRASHING down on the soft top. Her limp body starts to slip down the windshield, but finally sticks.

PUSH IN ON GAINES

seeing the hit. HEARING it. Stunned.

A beat, then we hear the engine REV, pulling back again. That shakes Ronna loose, letting her drop over the headlights in front.

Rolling down the slope at the edge of the field, Ronna topples ass-first into a drainage ditch. Her body lands with a sickening THUD.

GAINES

stands where he is, gun still in hand, dumbfounded.

He looks to the Miata. It suddenly takes off, kicking up dirt and grass. For a moment, all is quiet.

Finally, Gaines tucks the gun into his jeans. One last look around, then he starts working his way back across the parking lot. Disappears.

55 EXT. IN THE DITCH - NIGHT (RAIN)

55

We stay on Ronna's body as we HEAR the Miata suddenly pull away. Somewhere in the distance, the Mary Xmas Supafest is still RAGING, but here it's only a WHISPER with a beat.

With a sudden SPASM, Ronna moves. Turns herself over on her back. Each breath WHEEZES and GURGLES.

She pulls the remainder of the holly crown out of her hair and tosses it aside. She tries to push herself up. Her legs won't move.

Catching her breath, she looks to the top of the ditch, waiting for somebody to look in. No one does. Adjusting herself, she slides against a weathered magazine. Spin. Jane's Addiction on the cover.

She collapses back, a new wave of pain.

After a beat, she suddenly LAUGHS, until gradually it becomes a COUGHING. She pushes her hair back, streaking blood across her face.

RONNA

Mannie!!

There's no answer. The YELLING hurts. She won't do that again.

RONNA

Mannie, I got it! I remembered who the fuck it was! Perry Farrell's dead girlfriend. Xiola Blue. X-I-O-L-A. Fuck, I knew there was one.

A sudden spasm of pain. She winces, sobbing. It passes.

RONNA

Don't you get it? I win.

She COUGHS as she laughs, spitting out some blood. We PULL BACK, rising higher until we slowly

FADE OUT.

56 OMIT 56

57 OMIT 57

57A INT. SUPERMARKET STOREROOM - DAY 57A

Offscreen, a SOAP OPERA plays. Simon is on the phone, a well-worn employee list in his hands.

SIMON (ON PHONE)
No, no. Donde Miguel?

*

Claire leans against the wall beside him, skeptical but amused. She turns a box of cookies over in her hands, reading the ingredients.

SIMON (ON PHONE)
Jalisco?
(to Claire)
Where is Jalisco?

CLAIRE
Mexico.

Fuck. Simon hangs up the phone without saying goodbye. He continues down the list.

CLAIRE
Simon, no one is going to take your shift.

Ronna comes around the corner, zombie-tired. She heads to her locker. Simon watches her, an idea forming.

JUMP CUT TO:

57B EXT. ALLEY BEHIND SUPERMARKET - DAY 57B

SIMON
Ronna, do you want my shift?

RONNA
Are you serious?

SIMON
I haven't punched in yet.

*

She only half-believes him.

(CONTINUED)

57B CONTINUED:

SIMON [CONT'D]

Look, my best mates are going to Las Vegas this weekend. I've never been, I'm told it's incredible. If you took my shift, I could go with them. Everybody wins.

*

CUT TO:

Darkness. We hear an ENGINE and ROAD NOISE.

58 SPARKS

58

A cigarette lighter. The flame finally catches and we see Simon. He feels around, touching the ceiling, the walls, the floor. He's locked in the trunk of a car.

SIMON

Shit. Shit!

He starts kicking, hyperventilating. The lighter goes out.

TITLE OVER BLACK:

(CONTINUED)

Part Two: 'Shoot'

59 INT. THE TRUNK - DAY? NIGHT? 59

Simon keeps KICKING.

SIMON

Fucking let me out of here!

The lighter burns his thumb. He switches hands. Listens for a second. The car isn't driving anymore.

He tries to catch his breath, but keeps getting more panicked. A key SCRAPES in the lock.

The trunk lid opens a crack. Bright daylight spills in.

Simon KICKS the lid and pops up, ready to swing a tire iron.

THREE MEN

back off, laughing. We are...

60 EXT. SIDE OF INTERSTATE - DAY 60

TINY

Mo'fuckin Jack-in-the-box.

TINY (19) is not black, but thinks he is.

Simon climbs out of the trunk and does a face-plant in the gravel. He's shit-faced drunk.

MARCUS

Dude, you passed out before we left L.A.

MARCUS (24) was a tailback at UCLA, and still has the build. He is black, and has no confusion over this matter.

Simon is about to reply when he suddenly HEAVES. Everyone backs away. Tiny takes the tire iron, puts it to the side of the trunk. He starts cranking it while HUMMING "Pop Goes the Weasel," ending with...

TINY

Pop! Goes the asshole.

61 INT. SINGH'S CADILLAC / DRIVING - DAY

61

A massive land yacht from the pre-Embargo era. SINGH (23) is driving, nursing a beer. Marcus reads a magazine. Tiny talks from the enormous back seat, where Simon is recuperating.

TINY

So this chick, she's bobbing up and down on my dick like she's fucking Marilyn Chambers.

SINGH

She actually found your dick?

TINY

(ignoring)

Then she starts going around the outside-- you know, painting the tree--when WHACK! It hits her in the eye. And her contact, it's like stuck on my dick.

The passengers don't seem impressed.

TINY

Her contact lens. It's stuck on the end of my dick.

MARCUS

Was it hard or soft?

TINY

What, my dick?

SINGH

The contact lens.

MARCUS

Do you remember if it was a colored lens? That she used to have two blue eyes and now she had one blue and one brown?

TINY

What the fuck does that matter?

MARCUS

(leaning over seat)

It matters because it happened to me. It was my story. I told this story about a year ago. The difference was, I knew those small-but-important details. That, and it was true.

(CONTINUED)

TINY
Oh. Whatever.

MARCUS
Whatever?

TINY
Whatever.

A beat. And another. The matter just won't drop.

TINY
Yo, pull your stinky dinky out of my ass.
I was just trying to make conversation.
Fuck. Give a nigger a break.

Singh MOANS, not again.

MARCUS
What nigger? This nigger?

TINY
My mother's mother's mother was black.

MARCUS
So you say, yet we have never seen a
picture of this Ebonic woman.

SINGH
Stop. Truce.

MARCUS
If you were any less black, you would be
clear.

SIMON
(moaning)
Stop.

MARCUS
Look at your skin.

TINY
I see black because I know I am. Color is
a state of mind.

MARCUS
Thank you Rhythm Nation.

62 INT. SILVER STAR CASINO RESTAURANT - NIGHT

62

It's a dive, and nearly empty. The guys work their way down both sides of a self-service food bar. Simon is mostly recovered.

SIMON
So what does Valentina do?

MARCUS
She's a nutritionist. She also teaches a class at this college.

SIMON
What class?

MARCUS
Tantric sexuality for couples.

SINGH
She teaches people how to fuck?

TINY
Man, I taught myself.

MARCUS
(to Simon)
You shouldn't eat shrimp. It's loaded with iodine.

TINY
This shit is expensive. You're paying five bucks for lettuce and seeds and shit.

Tiny up-ends the rest of the shrimp cocktail onto his plate. Pissed, Singh scoops away a handful for himself.

AT THE TABLE

The guys eat. Tiny tries to make a sandwich out of the various foods on his plate, but the bread keeps crumbling.

MARCUS
Thing is, most people really don't know how to make love. They just put it in and move it around until they get off. What tantra teaches you is how to prolong and deepen the experience, bring it to a higher level. If one man in ten were having the sex I'm having, there would be no war.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON
What's the longest you and her ever did
it?

MARCUS
Fourteen hours.

SINGH
Holy shit!

TINY
How many times you shoot?

MARCUS
Not once.

SIMON
Fourteen hours, you didn't go once. Not
even at the end?

MARCUS
You redirect the orgasm inside.

He's greeted with skeptical looks.

MARCUS (CONT'd)
How long does your orgasm last? A couple
seconds? I've had orgasms that lasted an
hour and a half.

SIMON
Bullshit.

MARCUS
Swear to God. And I do mean Allah.

SINGH
When was the last time you got off? I
mean like, wet.

MARCUS
I haven't ejaculated in six months.

TINY
Six months!

MARCUS
Anyone can do it. All it takes is
discipline.

TINY
You are some kind of Obi Wan Kenobi
motherfucker.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED: (2)

TINY (cont'd)
Call me old school, but I am still down
with coming and going. Am I right?

Singh agrees. Simon, however, is still intrigued.

63 INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

63

We hear slot machines CHIMING in the distance. Marcus picks a gold card up from the counter.

MARCUS
(reading)
Todd Gaines. The drug dealer.

SIMON
He gets a discount. He let me use it.
He's a good guy.

MARCUS
He's the good drug dealer. I get
confused.

SIMON
We'll pay cash anyway. This is just to
get the room.

The Desk Woman returns with their keys.

SIMON
Could you answer a question...
(checks nametag)
...Rachel? Hypothetically, do you think a
man could make love to a woman for 14
hours without ever achieving climax?

DESK WOMAN
I think my manager would be better able to
answer that question. Would you like me
to call him over?

SIMON
No. Not necessary.

DESK WOMAN
Great then. Welcome to the Riviera.

Simon walks away with Marcus.

SIMON
(low)
Lesbian.

64 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

64

Doubled over, Tiny BANGS on the bathroom door. Singh emerges, pale and sweating. He steps over Tiny, who crawls in. Hanging up his clothes, Marcus waves away the smell.

Singh MOANS, lying down on a bed.

MARCUS

Did I tell you not to eat the shrimp?

SINGH

I have something for you. Where did I put it? Oh, it's right here.

He gives him the finger. Simon is on the phone by the window.

SIMON

(over action)

Todd, it's Simon. What's up?...I'm in Vegas, we just got here. What was the name of the place you said we should go...The Crazy Horse. What are you doing tonight?

Marcus neatly unfolds his clothes, hanging them up in the closet.

SIMON

(on phone)

You're going to a wedding?...What is it, a rave?

From the wall, KNOCKING. Simon and Marcus look to a door by the window.

SIMON

(on phone)

No, I know Claire...Are you going to fuck her?

Simon points at the KNOCKING door. Marcus finally opens it to reveal a 12 year-old BOY in the adjoining hotel room.

BOY

Who are you?

MARCUS

This is our room.

Simon leans around to look.

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED:

BOY
Oh. What are you doing?

SIMON
Raping small children.

The Boy's MOTHER yanks him back from the door, shutting it.

65 INT. MIRRORED ELEVATOR - NIGHT

65

Simon and Marcus are fully macked out. Marcus adjusts the shoulders of his bright yellow jacket.

SIMON
Did I mention how much I like your jacket?

MARCUS
No.

SIMON
There's a reason.

The elevator bell BINGS.

66 INT. THE CASINO - NIGHT

66

Simon finds Marcus at a blackjack table.

SIMON
Let me borrow some money.

MARCUS
Where's your money?

SIMON
I lost it

The DEALER is waiting for Marcus to play. He takes a card, bust.

MARCUS
We've been here five minutes.

SIMON
I was playing this game at a hundred dollar table and I didn't understand it, but now I do. I think I figured out how to beat it.

MARCUS
Let me see your wallet.

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED:

Simon hands it over. Marcus pockets it.

MARCUS

You can have it back in an hour. No, no.
No buts. One hour, right here.

67 INT. CASINO - NIGHT

67

VARIOUS SHOTS: Simon wanders, bored. He hits on a WOMAN at the nickel slots. When she rebuffs him, he turns his attention to the COCKTAIL WAITRESS.

68 INT. CASINO HALLWAY - NIGHT

68

Simon wanders amid the GUESTS spilling out of the Shapiro wedding reception. He helps himself to a glass of champagne.

69 INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

69

Simon shares the elevator with drunken bridesmaids BECKY GOLDMAN and REBECCA GOLDSTIEN. Both are 19.

BECKY

Okay, if you're from over there, then where did you meet these friends? Of yours. Who I don't see.

SIMON

They already knew each other, but Marcus I met in traffic school.

His accent is suddenly Irish. It's weirdly charming.

REBECCA

(mocking)

Een traffic skewl?

SIMON

I'm a good driver, I am. I learned everything from American television. Hunter, Magnum P.I. -- The Knight Rider is an excellent program.

The doors open at the Beckys' floor. They get off. Rebecca turns...

REBECCA

Do you want to be getting high with us?

70 INT. THE BECKYS' HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

70

While Rebecca smokes up, Becky tears a kleenex in half. She rolls each piece into a plug, shoving one up each nostril.

BECKY
(explaining)
Otherwise, I can't hold it in.

Simon hands her the pipe and the lighter.

Rebecca blows a perfect smoke ring at Simon. He smiles, a little smoke escaping. She leans close and kisses him. Softly at first, then harder. They're a few beats into it when...

BECKY
Oh my God!

Her kleenex is on fire, flames in each nostril. Hands waving, she stands up. Snorts hard. The plugs shoot out, landing on the carpet, which begins to smolder. Simon stamps the flames out.

REBECCA
You're fine. You're fine.

Becky is crying.

REBECCA
(to Simon)
Tell her she's fine.

SIMON
You're beautiful.

He kisses her. After a moment, her panic subsides. She kisses him back.

71 INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

71

Simon slides between the two Beckys, three naked bodies clenching and releasing.

CLOSE ON SIMON

breathing harder and faster, faster, until he suddenly stops. The expression on his face is agonizing, like a tightrope walker about to lose his balance. The Beckys stop to watch him, worried he might be hurt.

Finally, he breathes again.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED:

BECKY
Did you go?

He shakes his head.

BECKY
Why not?

SIMON
Tantra, baby.

LATER

A new position, Rebecca on top and sweating. Next to Simon, Becky is passed out and SNORING. It's only as we look over Rebecca's back that we see

THE CURTAINS ARE ON FIRE.

On the bed, Simon lies motionless in aching nirvana. His head turns. He sees the flames. And does nothing.

Rebecca reaches climax with an inhuman series of MOANS. It's on the third of these that the smoke alarm suddenly BLEATS. It settles into a piercing WHINE.

Becky falls out of bed, disoriented. Sees the fire and SCREAMS. Rebecca climbs off Simon to attack the flames with a pillow, beating them down. Holding her head together, Becky tries to reach the smoke detector itself.

Amid the chaos, Simon feels for his shoes.

72 INT. HALLWAY / ELEVATOR BAY - NIGHT

72

In the elevator on the right, Simon jabs at the button while getting his jeans on. As his doors slide closed, the left elevator opens, revealing hotel SECURITY.

73 INT. CASINO MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

73

Gentle Christmas MUZAK.

At the sinks, Marcus wets his fingers to fix his hair. An OLD TEXAN washes his hands at the next sink, looks around for a towel. Marcus takes two from the dispenser, hands them over.

When he's finished, the Texan sets the crumpled towels on the counter, along with a dollar bill. He taps his hat and leaves.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

73

A beat before Marcus sees the bill and makes the connection. He shouts to the closed door...

MARCUS
I am not a bathroom attendant!

74 INT. BY THE ELEVATORS - NIGHT 74

Not breaking his stride, Simon catches Marcus coming out the restroom.

SIMON
Hey. We're leaving.

MARCUS
Fuck yeah.

75 EXT. HOTEL ENTRANCE - NIGHT 75

Seething, Marcus joins Simon in line for a cab. A white Ferrari pulls up to the curb beside them. The FERRARI MAN tosses the keys at Marcus, who can't help but catch them.

FERRARI MAN
Keep it close and there's an extra ten bucks for you.

He slips Marcus a five as he rushes into the casino. A beat. Simon is cracking up. As we REVERSE, we see the valets are wearing the same yellow sportcoat as Marcus.

MARCUS
Get in. Get in the car. Get in.

76 INT. THE FERRARI / DRIVING ON FREEWAY - NIGHT 76

Top off, wind whipping. Marcus downshifts, letting the engine RACE as he passes another sports car. The STEREO is blasting.

Pale and dazed, Simon tries to light a cigarette. It blows out of his fingers. It was his last. He adjusts himself in his seat, uncomfortable.

SIMON
(shouting over noise)
Question. When you're doing tantra, you hold it in at the end, right?

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED:

MARCUS

No. Never. Redirect the energy, but you never hold it in. Haven't you ever gotten blue balls? Hurts like a bitch.

SIMON

(nodding)

Sort of a dull ache.

MARCUS

Exactly.

Marcus looks over to Simon, who is trying to get his breath.

77 INT. FERRARI / DRIVING DOWNTOWN - LATER

77

Empty intersections, no traffic to speak of. Marcus is looking for a cross-street. They're lost.

MARCUS

See if there's a map.

Simon goes through the glove compartment. Amid the condoms and parking tickets, he finds one.

SIMON

Orange County.

He throws it out. He tries to shut the compartment, but it's caught on something. He reaches in...

SIMON

Holy shit.

Marcus looks over. Simon gently pulls out a 9mm Baretta. Fascinated, he turns it over in his hands. Marcus tries to keep an eye on the road.

MARCUS

Don't point it at me!

SIMON

How do I know if it's loaded?

MARCUS

First, you stop pointing it at me.

Simon aims the other way, out the window. As they drive through an intersection, they pass a car full of LOCALS.

MARCUS

Floor. Floor!

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

Simon throws the gun to the floor. Marcus flinches, expecting it to go off. It doesn't. He checks the rear-view mirror. No trouble. Simon picks up the gun again.

SIMON
I've never held a real gun before. It's heavier than I thought.

MARCUS
Great, put it back.

SIMON
I want to know if it's loaded. How do I...

He starts pulling and pushing on it, trying to get the clip out. He's not going to stop until he does it or shoots himself trying.

MARCUS
Hold the wheel.

Marcus removes the clip, hands it over. Simon counts the bullets.

SIMON
I hold ten men's lives in my hand.

MARCUS
It's a nine millimeter. It doesn't have stopping power.

SIMON
Right. For that you'd need Magnum Force.

78 EXT. 7-ELEVEN - NIGHT

78

At a pull-up payphone, Marcus is looking through the map in the phone book. Simon is still fondling the gun.

SIMON
This is why I came here. This is America. I'm serious. You want to take one symbol for all of America, it's not the flag or the hawk...

MARCUS
...eagle...

SIMON
...or the automobile. America is about a man and a gun.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED:

SIMON (cont'd)
From the American revolution, to taking
the West, killing Indians, American
history is all about access to firearms.
In England, we can't even own a gun.
Here, it's a birthright.
(beat)
If I were an American, I'd join the E.R.A.

MARCUS
The N-R-A.

He tears a page out of the phone book.

SIMON
You're certain?

MARCUS
The E.R.A. was this chick thing in the
'70s.

SIMON
Chicks with guns?

A beat. Giving up...

MARCUS
Yes.

79 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

79

Tiny lies on the bed, watching a bad hotel porno. Singh comes
out of the bathroom, pale and shivering.

SINGH
Kill me.

TINY
I ain't your bitch. Kill yourself.

KNOCKING at the adjoining room door. They try to ignore it,
but it's relentless. Finally, Tiny answers it.

TINY
What the fuck?

It's the same boy.

BOY
You got some smoke?

TINY
You got some pubic hair yet?

(CONTINUED)

79 CONTINUED:

BOY

Man, I've been smoking up since I was
eight.

TINY

Where is your mom at?

He pushes past the kid...

80 INT. THE OTHER ROOM - NIGHT

80

The mirror image of their room. The same porno plays on the TV. Kleenexes on the bed.

BOY
She's not my mom.

Tiny rummages through the open suitcases, finally finding a bottle of Pepto-Bismol. He cracks the seal and drinks half of it on the spot.

BOY
Are you on heroin? Are you kicking?

TINY
I'm kicking your ass if you knock again.

Tiny goes back into the other room, pulling the door shut.

BOY
Fuck you.

81 EXT. PARKING LOT / CRAZY HORSE - NIGHT

81

Sodium vapor lights BUZZ overhead. Simon adjusts something in his coat while Marcus locks the Ferrari.

APPROACHING THE ENTRANCE...

MARCUS
Listen up. They're going to ask if you want buy a bottle of champagne. You don't, but don't say that right off.

SIMON
Explain.

MARCUS
Champagne means you want a private dance. You can't afford it, neither can I. But if they know we're not biting, they don't even dangle the bait.

SIMON
So, "champagne" is a code.
(beat)
What does vodka mean?

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED:

MARCUS

Nothing.

At the door, Marcus stops Simon before he goes in.

MARCUS

We have one word, champagne. You can order anything you want, anything, as long as it's not champagne.

82 INT. THE CRAZY HORSE - NIGHT

82

Pitch black except for tiny Christmas lights. To Simon's left, a skanky MIDDLE-AGED COUPLE plays video poker. At the bar, Marcus SHOUTS to the BARTENDER -- the MUSIC is deafening.

Out of the shadows, two dancers approach. They split up, blonde HOLLY taking Simon, while brunette NOELLE heads for Marcus.

Holly offers Simon a hand, they shake. She leans close to talk into his ear. He smiles.

Noelle taps Marcus on the shoulder, ducks to the other side playfully. Takes a sip of his drink.

Simon points to Marcus. Holly nods, feeling the fabric of his shirt.

Noelle laughs at something Marcus said.

Holly measures her hand against Simon's, rubs it against her neck. He is staring at her magnificent breasts.

At Noelle's urging, Marcus flexes his bicep. Noelle flutters.

We come in CLOSE as Holly leans over to say something. Simon speaks first...

SIMON

I'd like to buy your most expensive bottle of champagne.

83 INT. SHORT HALLWAY - NIGHT

83

A curtain at the end, blue light overhead. Holly leads the way with a bottle of champagne. Noelle follows with glasses. Behind them, the guys.

Marcus gives Simon a look. Simon shrugs it off.

(CONTINUED)

The curtain parts, letting the women through. From the darkened space beyond, a giant BOUNCER steps out -- massive even compared to Marcus. He's sucking on a lollipop.

VIC JR.

I need a major credit card.

Marcus looks to Simon, who hands over the gold card. Vic Jr. reads them the boilerplate...

VIC JR.

This is a gentlemen's club. You are expected to behave as gentlemen. I will be giving you one rule. If you break this rule, I will break your arm. Are we clear?

MARCUS

Yes.

VIC JR.

The ladies can touch you. You cannot touch them. At any point, for any reason. Is this clear?

SIMON

Crystal.

VIC JR.

Enjoy your evening.

He pulls back the curtain.

A mirrored ball spins overhead, stars racing across the black paneling. Holly nudges Simon into his chair. He and Marcus sit back to back.

As the champagne POPS, we move into a series of overlapping shots:

Noelle licks the foam from Holly's fingers.
Holly rubs the bottle against herself, pours.
Noelle and Holly dance together, a tinsel ribbon around them.

Simon adjusts himself in the crotch.

Noelle lights a cigar for Marcus as Holly dances alone.
Holly lifts her miniskirt to reveal a g-string.
Simon cranes his neck back, banging heads with Marcus.

(CONTINUED)

Noelle takes a puff off the cigar.
Holly straddles Simon, rubs against him. He shudders. His hands start to rise. She gently pushes them back down.

Marcus whispers something to Noelle.

Noelle comes up behind Holly, moving with her as she rubs against Simon. Marcus turns to watch.

Enraptured, Simon watches the four-armed woman on top of him.

His fingers start to twitch.

Noelle kisses the edge of Holly's neck.
Simon's hands rise, reach...
Holly MOANS...

And suddenly...

Simon grabs Noelle's ass.

It's Heaven.

NOELLE
(yelling)
Hands! Hands!

Noelle and Holly both get off him. Holly kicks his leg. From behind the curtain, Vic Jr. charges in. He heads straight for Marcus.

NOELLE
The other one!

Simon tumbles off his chair, scrambling.

VIC JR.
What the fuck did I tell you!

He kicks Simon in the ass.

MARCUS
Yo. Yo! He fucked up, he lost control.

VIC JR.
Am I talking to you? I'm talking to your faggot friend here.

He kicks Simon again. Holly and Noelle stand in the corner. This has happened a hundred times.

MARCUS
We're leaving.

(CONTINUED)

Vic Jr. kicks Simon again.

MARCUS
Enough! Stop kicking him.
(no effect)
I said to fucking stop kicking him.

Vic Jr. turns on Marcus. A beat. He shoves him, hard.

MARCUS
I'm not trying to throw down here.

VIC JR.
(another shove)
You think you can kick my ass?

MARCUS
I don't want to try.

Vic Jr. WHACKS Marcus, an old-fashioned bitch slap. A beat. Marcus tries to keep the rage down. Feels his nose bleeding.

He backs away, but Vic Jr. keeps coming. Suddenly...

A GUNSHOT.

SCREAMS.

For a beat, no one's sure what happened. We look around to Marcus. Vic Jr. Holly. Noelle. Then finally Simon.

He just fired. The gun is steady in his hand.

Marcus checks his shirt. A spray of blood.

Vic Jr. checks his arm. It's bleeding.

We HOLD for a moment, the mirrored ball still spinning overhead.

SIMON
Everybody back the fuck away.

They do. Marcus holds his place.

MARCUS
Oh, man. Fuck.

Blood is squirting out of Vic Jr.'s arm. He holds it, dumbfounded.

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED: (3)

SIMON
(to Holly)
Is there another way out?

HOLLY
Behind you.

A fire escape door. Simon motions for Marcus to come. Pushing the bar, no alarm sounds. They back out, into the night. The door swings shut.

A beat.

Suddenly, an MAN charges in with a silver .45. He is Vic Sr., 60, owner and proprietor. You don't fuck with Victor.

VICTOR
What happened!

HOLLY
They shot Vic. They went out the back.

Victor KICKS the door open, ready to fire. The alley is clear. The BARTENDER comes through the curtain.

VICTOR
(handing off gun)
Find them.

The man races out. Victor looks at his son's arm. It's bloody, but he'll live. Holly SHOUTS down the hallway.

HOLLY
Call 911.

VICTOR
No! No cops.

85 EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

85

The Ferrari SCRAPES as it takes the curb too fast.

From the alley, the Bartender chases after it, finally stopping to squeeze off three SHOTS. None seem to hit. The Ferrari tears down the street.

86 INT. FERRARI / DRIVING - NIGHT

86

Taking a left, Marcus slows down a little. We're on an empty street well away from the Crazy Horse. He dabs at his bloody nose.

(CONTINUED)

In the passenger seat, Simon looks at the gun in the hand. He suddenly throws it out.

MARCUS
What are you doing?

SIMON
Getting rid of the weapon.

Marcus slams on the brakes.

MARCUS
It has your fingerprints on it.

SIMON
Oh shit.

Craning around, Simon looks for it in the street. Marcus backs the car up. Suddenly, a phone RINGS. Lights flicker on the car phone.

SIMON
Do we answer?

Marcus brakes again. The phone keeps RINGING.

MARCUS
It's probably Orange County asking where the hell his car is.

SIMON
It's a cell phone. They can trace where we are even if we don't answer.

MARCUS
Get the gun. Go. Find it.

Simon climbs out and starts looking, crouching to look under cars.

In the Ferrari, Marcus sits back and kicks the phone with his boot, over and over until it stops, dead.

For a moment, silence.

Then the car's ALARM starts going off. Marcus SCREAMS with frustration. He punches buttons on the keychain, but nothing will quiet it. He tries the key in the ignition. It won't turn over. Climbing out of the car, he kicks it with all his might.

Simon finds the gun, crawling under a truck to get it.

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED: (2)

Using his jacket, Marcus starts frantically wiping off the inside and outside of the Ferrari. Simon joins him. The whole time, the alarm is still WAILING.

Satisfied, Marcus motions that they're done. He and Simon take off running down the street.

87 INT. VICTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

87

A bent needle pierces two flaps of skin, drawing a line of blood with the thread.

Victor ties another stitch in Vic Jr.'s arm. He's had practice at this. In the background, the Bartender and Noelle are watching. Victor's tirade is directed at all of them.

VICTOR

Just because a rapper has a white buddy
doesn't mean he's Sidney Fucking Poitier.
You check them. You pat them down.

VIC JR.

(gritted teeth)
I know.

VICTOR

(to Noelle)
And you, you were on top of him. You
didn't feel anything.

She shakes her head, crying.

VICTOR [CONT'd]

This thing. This thing is a wall of shit.
It is a fucking call from on high that I
have to leave. I have to get out before
this all just falls in on me.

Vic Jr. winces with pain.

VICTOR [CONT'd]

You know what wakes me up in the middle of
the night, covered in sweat? You aren't
any worse than anyone else of your fucked
up generation. Towel.

Noelle hands him a towel to mop up the blood.

VICTOR [CONT'd]

In the old days, you know how you got to
the top? By being better than the guy
ahead of you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

VICTOR [CONT'd] (cont'd)
How do you people get to the top? By being so fucking incompetent that the guy ahead of you can't even do his job, he falls on his ass and congratulations, you're on top. Only now the top is down here when it used to be up here and you don't even know the difference.

He finishes the last stitch, tying it off.

VICTOR [CONT'd]
My generation, we're dinosaurs. We're gonna die. You're gonna kill us off. But you'll never be dinosaurs. You're little fucking rats and that's all you're ever going to be.

Holly looks in, holding a gold card. Victor motions, "well?" She hands it over.

HOLLY
They said they were from Los Angeles.

Noelle nods.

VICTOR
Then they must be staying somewhere, isn't that right Noelle?

Noelle nods harder, crying again.

88 INT. HOTEL ROOM BATHROOM - NIGHT

88

Pale and dehydrated, Tiny sits on the toilet. He HUMS the theme to "I Dream of Jeannie."

89 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

89

ANNOUNCER [V.O., ON T.V.]
Once Karen learned these simple rules, she discovered blackjack was as easy as it was fun.

Singh is propped up on one of the beds. He's just this side of death. Toilet FLUSHING. Tiny comes out of the bathroom, takes the other bed.

ANNOUNCER [V.O.]
Steve decided to try his hand at craps.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED:

Tiny resumes HUMMING. After a few beats, Singh joins in with the theme to "Bewitched." The melodies blend surprisingly well. Just into the second chorus, the phone RINGS.

TINY

Yo! Mmmhmm. Room 875.

He hangs up.

SINGH

Who was that?

TINY

Some shit, I dunno.

90 INT. RAM CHARGER - NIGHT

90

In the passenger seat, Vic Jr. flips a cell phone shut. He was working through the yellow pages.

VIC JR.

They're at the Riviera.

Victor changes lanes. He SLAMS on the horn, SHOUTING at the car that cut him off.

VICTOR

Motherfucker!

91 EXT. THE STRIP - NIGHT

91

Climbing out of a cab, Marcus throws two bills at the DRIVER. Simon is already running down the sidewalk.

92 INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

92

Simon furiously pounds the elevator button. With a DING, doors finally open. He and Marcus get on. The doors shut.

In the same shot, we WHIP BACK to look at the lobby, where Victor and Vic Jr. have just entered. They walk calmly but quickly.

93 INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

93

Victor presses the '8' button. The mirrored doors close. Half a beat later, they open again.

(CONTINUED)

A PLEASANT RETIRED COUPLE get on. Press '4.' The doors don't close. The Woman presses the 'Door Open' button.

THE MAN
The other one, honey.

She sees her mistake. The doors finally close. In the reflection, the Man looks back at Victor and Vic Jr. Smiles.

THE WOMAN
Sure is a fun way to spend Christmas,
isn't it?

No answer. The doors open.

THE WOMAN
This isn't our floor.

The Man steps out of the elevator, looking around.

THE MAN
Maybe we're five.

THE WOMAN
Or six. We'll try both.

She reaches for the panel. Victor grabs her hand. She GASPS, startled. Without saying a word, he shoves her off the elevator, BANGING on the door close button until it finally responds.

94 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

94

Marcus and Simon burst in like a cyclone. Marcus grabs his clothes out of the closet.

MARCUS
All right, listen up. We're leaving in 30
seconds. Grab what you can.

TINY
What the fuck?

Simon tosses Singh his wallet, pockets the keys.

MARCUS
Just do it. Now!

The panic is contagious. After a stunned beat, Tiny and Singh start moving, putting on shoes and restuffing suitcases.

A KNOCK at the door. Everyone freezes. More KNOCKING.

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED:

VOICE IN HALL
Room service.

Simon steps gingerly to the door, looks out the peephole.

HIS P.O.V.

A fleshy hand blocks the fisheye.

95 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

95

Victor and son smile at a COUPLE walking past. When they're gone, a giant orange plumber's wrench drops down from Jr.'s jacket sleeve.

96 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

96

Simon backs away from the door, freaking out. Marcus checks the windows. They're eight stories above a parking lot.

Tiny knocks on the door to the adjoining room

TINY
(low)
Hey. Kid.

97 INT. OTHER ROOM - NIGHT

97

The kids mutes the TV.

TINY (O.S.)
Kid. Open up the door.

BOY
Fuck you.

INTERCUT

TINY
Look, I'm really sorry, you know? It's just, it would be really swell if you would open this door. Now. It's kind of an emergency.

BOY
Hundred bucks.

TINY
Fuck!

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED:

SIMON
Give him the money.

He gathers money from their wallets.

98 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT 98

Pulling all his weight into it, Vic Jr. begins to pry the door handle off.

99 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT 99

The door knob jiggles. WHIP back to the guys.

Tiny finally chips in. Simon shoves the cash in a wad under the door. They wait.

OTHER SIDE

The Boy counts the money, straightening the bills.

TINY (O.S.)
Open now!

100 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT 100

The door handle bends further, further. Finally SNAPS.

101 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT 101

The far side of the lock mechanism drops to the floor.

TINY
Fuck!

Fingers reach into the hole, trying to pull back the bolt. Finally catch it. The door swings open, revealing...

...an empty room. Colt .45 in hand, Victor storms in. Checks behind doors and under beds. The suitcases are half-packed.

102 INT. ADJOINING ROOM - NIGHT 102

Singh has his ear to the door.

SINGH
(whisper)
They're in.

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED:

Simon peers out the peephole into the hallway. Marcus lifts the Boy against the wall.

MARCUS

(whisper)

If you let them in here, they will kill you. Understood?

The boy nods. Marcus drops him. Simon opens the hallway door a crack. It's clear. On the count of three, they go.

We stay with the boy, who sits back against the windows, excited and rich. There's a KNOCK at the adjoining door. The boy tucks the money away.

With a BOOM, we hear the door being kicked open. It only takes four blows.

BOY

(pointing)

Down the hall. That way.

103 INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

103

Swinging off the railings, the four guy race down the stairs. Up above, a door SLAMS open.

104 INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

104

Running to the Cadillac, Singh feels for his keys.

SIMON

I got 'em.

As Simon unlocks the door, the other three look at each other -- should he really be driving?

THE TIRES SMOKE

as Simon backs out. In the distance, Victor and son appear around the corner. Victor motions to go for the truck.

105 INT. CADILLAC / PARKING GARAGE EXIT - NIGHT

105

A line of cars wait to pay at the booth. Simon slams on the brakes. Looking out the back window, Marcus sees the bright lights of the Ram Charger approaching.

MARCUS

They're right behind us.

(CONTINUED)

105 CONTINUED:

TINY

Who?

In answer to his question, the Ram Charger SLAMS into the trunk of the Cadillac. Simon cranks the wheel, barely avoiding the car ahead of him.

Not slowing, Simon aims for the entrance lane, where the bar is coming down behind a small Nissan. Threading the needle, Simon makes it past the car and the gate. The Ram Charger smashes through the bar.

105B EXT. PARKING RAMP - NIGHT

105B

The Cadillac charges out of the parking lot, nearly hitting another car as it heads onto the Strip. Looking back, we see the Ram Charger following them out.

106 EXT. FLAMINGO ROAD - NIGHT

106

Four a.m., but there's still traffic. The Cadillac slaloms between taxis and tourists. Approaching an intersection, yellow light...

106A INT. CADILLAC - NIGHT

106A

MARCUS

Cop. Cop!

There's a police car waiting at the stoplight. Simon hits the brakes, just short of a SQUEAL. They stop in a middle lane, next to the cop. Simon and Marcus look over to the OFFICER, trying to be calm. Singh and Tiny peer out the back.

The Ram Charger slowly approaches, no hurry. In the squad car, the Officer takes a radio call. Drunken TOURISTS walk past. The crosswalk switches to a flashing red hand.

SIMON

How did they find us?

MARCUS

It's their town. I'm sure they have people.

The Ram Charger pulls in right behind the Cadillac. It's so tall, all we see are the blinding headlights through the back window. Singh and Tiny slink down. Marcus checks the gun on his lap.

(CONTINUED)

106A CONTINUED:

The red hand stops flashing. The opposing light goes from green to yellow. Simon gently REVS the engine. Suddenly, a WHOOP.

Lights flashing, the police car makes a right turn from the left lane, cutting in front of them. The SIREN is deafening. Simon sees his opportunity.

(CONTINUED)

106A CONTINUED: (2)

Gunning the engine, he hangs a hard left, cutting across three oncoming lanes. The Ram Charger tries to follow, but the traffic is already moving. Over the protest of many HORNS, the pickup finally forces its way through.

107 EXT. A SIDE STREET - NIGHT

107

The Cadillac takes a corner hard, fishtailing into oncoming traffic. Tiny SCREAMS. Simon pulls it back into the lane. In the rear-view mirror, we see the Ram Charger, gaining.

MARCUS

We have to get off the major streets.
Take a right up here. No, not here!

It's too late. Simon mistook an alley for an actual road.

SIMON

Hold on.

Aiming for the alley, Simon hits a curb on the way in. Singh's head BANGS against the roof. The passenger-side mirror smashes off against the wall.

TINY

Mother of fuck!

108 EXT. VERY NARROW ALLEY - NIGHT

108

Just inches of clearance on either side, the alley runs behind a series of strip malls and office buildings. There's only one way out -- Simon's aiming for the boulevard on the far side.

SINGH

(looking out back)
I don't see 'em.

108A UP AHEAD

108A

The end of the alley approaches. From the far edge, a flashing orange light. A giant street-sweeper is slowly crossing the alley. We WHIP BACK to see the Cadillac approaching.

MARCUS

Shit.

SINGH

(looking back)
Wait, no. They're coming in.

(CONTINUED)

108A CONTINUED:

Behind them, the Ram Charger gingerly negotiates a three-point turn into the alley. Wider, it scrapes against one side.

Ahead, the street sweeper is blocking one-quarter of the alley. One-third. A moment of hesitation, then Simon floors it. The Caddy hits thirty, forty. Engine RACING --

MARCUS

We can't make it!

The sweeper is already halfway across the alley. Singh braces for impact. Somehow, Simon still thinks he can clear it.

MARCUS

STOP!

At the last moment, Simon SLAMS on the brakes. They're skidding towards it.

Marcus grabs the wheel and jerks it. The front bumper catches the wall, sending the trunk SLAMMING against the far alley wall. A ear-piercing SCREECH.

A ribbon of sparks shoots off as the front and rear bumpers are scraped away. Forward momentum finally stops.

109 INT. THE CADILLAC - NIGHT

109

The abrupt stop sends Tiny flying into the front seat, where his head SMACKS against the dash. Marcus's seat breaks, PINNING him. He pushes back, but Singh YELPS in protest.

Simon blinks, trying to figure out if he's alive. With Tiny's bleeding head on his lap, he shifts into reverse.

110 EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

110

The tires SPIN in place. The car is wedged in tight sideways. Further down the alley, we find the broken-off

SIDE MIRROR.

In its cracked face we see five Ram Chargers approaching. A giant tire smashes the mirror to bits.

111 INT. CADILLAC - NIGHT 111

Shifting gears, Simon tries to rock the car back and forth, making no progress. Looking over his seat, Marcus sees the giant pickup heading right for them. The headlights are bright enough to cast shadows.

Forcing back the seat, Marcus stands up through the open sunroof. Aims and FIRES. Once. Twice. Three times.

112 INT. RAM CHARGER - NIGHT 112

On the first shot, Vic Junior ducks down. Two bullets punch through the windshield. The third ricochets off the hood.

Victor keeps the pedal to the floor. He's not stopping.

113 EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT 113

All four guys duck just before impact. The Ram Charger CRUNCHES into the side of the Cadillac, pushing it down the alley. More sparks shoot off as it goes.

Looking ahead, the street sweeper has moved past the end of the alley, but the far side of the street beyond is a construction area, flashing barricades all around. The Ram Charger will push them right into it.

113A INT. CADILLAC - NIGHT 113A

Clearing the end of the alley, Simon punches the gas.

113B EXT. STREET - NIGHT 113B

Swinging wide, the Cadillac comes free with another CRUNCH.

Momentum keeps the Ram Charger heading straight for the construction.

113C INT. RAM CHARGER - NIGHT 113C

Victor hooks the wheel hard, trying to avoid it.

113D EXT. STREET - NIGHT

113D

Hitting a parked car, the Ram Charger tips and rolls over, landing on its side. It SCRAPES along the asphalt, finally coming to rest.

114 INT. CADILLAC - NIGHT

114

Simon fights to regain control, the street outside a blur. Over his shoulder, an oncoming Yugo can't stop fast enough. The little car hits just in front of the tire, sending the Cadillac spinning back the opposite direction.

Tiny's unconscious body flies out the passenger window. Marcus and Singh both grab hold. As Simon rights the spin, the Cadillac brushes past the green street sweeper, still humming along. Marcus and Singh pull Tiny back in, inches away from decapitation.

Simon finally settles into a lane, checking the rear-view mirror.

115 INT. ROLLED RAM CHARGER - NIGHT 115

We look through the windshield to find Victor piled on top of his son. Regaining his wits, the old man steps on Vic Jr.'s shoulder. Gets another foot into the steering wheel, climbing up to the driver's door window.

116 EXT. STREET - NIGHT 116

Victor looks out to see the Cadillac turning down a side street, out of sight.

VICTOR
Sonofabitch!

117 EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT 117

The Cadillac, bruised but unbroken, heads west. Las Vegas shimmers in the distance.

118 INT. CADILLAC - DAWN 118

In the back seat, Tiny is propped up with a bloody shirt pressed to his head. Singh has his feet up to brace the back of Marcus's seat.

SINGH
Just so we're clear. You stole a car,
shot a bouncer, and had sex with two
women?

TINY
You had sex with two women?

Simon ignores them, still checking his rear-view mirror.

SIMON
We can be in Mexico by noon. I say we
split up from there. I'll take Baja.

MARCUS
Fuck Mexico. We're going home. To L.A.

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED:

SINGH
Simon, think about it. If they were going to call the cops, they would have called them in Las Vegas. They just wanted us gone, and we're gone. It's over.

Simon checks the mirror, checks the road. With a deep breath, he tries to believe. But doesn't.

119 EXT. STREET / CRASH SCENE - DAWN

119

Vic Jr. peels back his bandage to check the bleeding. His father is at a payphone. In the background, we see a tow truck starting to pull the Ram Charger back upright.

VICTOR
(on phone)
Tommy, it's Vic. I need you to run a credit card for me. You ready?

He takes the gold card from his pocket.

VICTOR
First name 'Todd.' Last name 'Gaines.'
G-A-I-N-E-S.

Vic Jr. looks to his dad.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

120 OMIT

120

121 OMIT

121

121A INT. SUPERMARKET STOCKROOM - DAY

121A

Off-screen, a SOAP OPERA plays.

Claire leans beside Simon. His eyes track Ronna as she passes.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

(low)
Don't.

SIMON

Why not?

CLAIRE

She's been on for fourteen hours.

At her locker, Ronna misdials the combination. Frustrated, she POUNDS the locker, then re-dials.

Simon approaches Ronna gingerly. We stay back with Claire, who sets to work opening a box of expired cookies.

She half-listens as Ronna and Simon have their discussion at the lockers, then at the time clock.

Simon follows Ronna out into the alley.

Claire takes a seat atop a crappy console TV, eating an oatmeal cookie. The VOICES on the soap opera seem familiar.

MALE VOICE #1

I'm not the man you're looking for.

MALE VOICE #2

We both know you were on the pier. You saw what happened to Carmen.

(CONTINUED)

121A CONTINUED: (2)

We DROP DOWN to see the TV. Onscreen, a police interrogation room. The Cop is played by Adam. The Accused is played by Zack.

ZACK

Don't forget, detective. I was cleared of all charges.

ADAM

I don't care how many high-priced lawyers you bring in. Eden Valley will never stand for your kind of scum.

As the MUSIC rises, we PUSH IN on Zack. PUSH IN on Adam. The TV image FADES OUT.

122 INT. BATHROOM AT FALAFEL HUT - DAY

122

Adam stands mostly naked, his shirt off his shoulders and jeans around his ankles.

Loop -- the white dreadlocked guy -- retapes a transmitter on his thigh. A wire runs up to a microphone on his chest.

Zack and Burke are by the door, watching. The bathroom is really cramped.

BURKE

You work out, don't you?

ADAM

You have to. It's in the contract.

BURKE

No, you have a great body.

The door starts to open, someone trying to come in. Burke holds it shut.

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED:

BURKE

Hey! People in here!

Whoever was trying to come in gives up. Burke pulls a college sweatshirt out of a shopping bag, hands it to Zack. Motions that he's supposed to wear it. As he's putting it on...

ZACK

Just so we're clear. Whether you get something on this guy or not, Adam and I are done today. Finished. Charges dropped. That's how it works, right?

Burke smiles, an amused roll of the eyes.

ZACK

What?

BURKE

Seems to me, if a guy's so concerned about the legal process, how come he finds himself getting busted for possession?

Adam and Zack share a look. A beat.

BURKE

Relax. I sign your form and the whole thing goes away. Your lawyer got you a good deal.

Loop sits back, his job finished.

ADAM

Is it safe to have a radio against my balls like this?

A beat.

LOOP

Safe enough.

A BEEP as he presses a button. His headphones register.

123 INT. FALAFEL HUT - DAY

123

A small sit-down dive in West Hollywood. The four men finish lunch.

LOOP

I think my girlfriend watches your show.

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED:

BURKE

Tell them what your girlfriend does.

LOOP

She doesn't do anything.

BURKE

They're not even married and she does nothing. My wife -- we've been married two years -- she still takes overtime three nights a week.

Loop bows to Burke's superiority.

BURKE [CONT'D]

My wife's a deputy sherriff, you believe that? A cop and a sherriff, married. It's like the freakin' odd couple.

(CONTINUED)

ZACK
I smell a pilot.

Burke is oblivious to sarcasm. Loop's pita is self-destructing. He eats faster, trying to finish before it falls apart.

BURKE
You guys got girlfriends?
What am I saying? You gotta lot of
girlfriends don't you? You got women
sending you their panties. Two good-
looking guys...
(to Loop)
What do you say?

LOOP
(mouth full)
Pussy magnets.

BURKE
If I was not a happily married man I would be
rubbing up against you to get some of that.
(off Loop's reaction)
Some of the pussy power.

Zack offers Loop a napkin. He passes.

ADAM
Actually, I'm settled down. Four years now.

LOOP
(still chewing)
No ring.

ADAM
Nothing legal.

Draining the rest of his Coke, Burke gets up to dump his tray.

BURKE
(to Zack)
How about you?

ZACK
Same.

BURKE
This is a crime. You two should be out
getting laid.

124 EXT. BY A PAYPHONE - DAY 124

Loop stands nearby while Adam talks to no one in particular.

ADAM
Star light, star bright first star that I
see tonight...

125 INT. BURKE'S CAR - DAY 125

Burke and Zack listen to a radio recorder.

ADAM [CONT'D, FILTERED]
...I wish I may, I wish I might...

Burke turns the volume down, picks up his walkie-talkie.

BURKE
(on walkie-talkie)
That's good. I'm getting him.

Through the windows, we can see Loop and Adam approaching. We hear low CHATTER as they talk.

BURKE
So, Zack. What does your girlfriend look
like?

ZACK
About five-eight, brown hair, blue eyes.

BURKE
Hot.

ZACK
Yeah.

BURKE
She faithful?

ZACK
No. I don't think so.

BURKE
You faithful?

ZACK
Not anymore.

126 INT. BURKE'S CAR / DRIVING - DAY

126

Burke drives, with Loop in the passenger seat and Adam and Zack in back.

BURKE
(to Loop)
Zack's girlfriend is fucking around on him.

LOOP
Man, I'm sorry. How did you find out?

ON ADAM, corner of his eye.

ZACK
It's no big...I don't really want to get into it.

LOOP
C'mon, tell us.

ADAM
Absolutely. Tell us.

There's a palpable tension between Adam and Zack. The others don't see it.

ZACK
I found socks.

BURKE
What, red socks, blue socks?

ZACK
White socks. You know how the good kind of socks have band around the ankle that keeps them from stretching out? When I moved in, every one of the socks had that. Suddenly, there was one sock that didn't.

BURKE
You hear that? We got John Sherlock Holmes in the car here.

We pull into the parking lot of

THE GROCERY STORE.

Adam turns on Zack.

(CONTINUED)

126 CONTINUED:

ADAM
Alright. But you've been fucking around,
too.

ZACK
Only after I found out.

ADAM
Huh.

127 INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

127

At the refrigerator section, both Adam and Zack reach for orange juice. Both back off. Adam motions, after you.

ADAM
So, Zack. Do you know who your
girlfriend's fucking?

He over-articulates, as if speaking for a Learn English Now! tape. Zack does likewise. Their animosity is palpable.

ZACK
No, Adam. I do not. I have suspicions.
Mostly former boyfriends who keep
calling.

ADAM
What a coincidence. I have the exact same
problem with my girlfriend. In fact, I
think she's been sleeping around on me,
too.

ZACK
Isn't it ironic.

ADAM
Don't you think?
(beat)
Maybe I should start checking for socks,
too.

Zack's glare could strip paint.

As Adam and Zack head for the front, we REVERSE to find Mannie and Claire, who have been watching the spat while restocking.

CLAIRE
Gay men are so hot. It's tragic.

128 INT. FRONT OF THE STORE - DAY 128

Zack pushes the cart past the checkstands, looking at each CASHIER -- they're all female. Adam is starting to panic. In near whispers...

ADAM
He's not here. What are we supposed to do? He's not here.

ZACK
We're going to ask. You're going to ask.

ADAM
Why me?

ZACK
You look more wholesome. Just improv.

He steers the cart into Ronna's checkstand, where she's waiting on a Clutchy Old Woman who eyes everything suspiciously. Zack pulls out his cell phone, fake dials.

ADAM
Who are you calling?

ZACK
Nobody. I'm giving you an opening.

129 INT. CAR IN PARKING LOT - DAY 129

Adam and Zack approach on either side of the car, get in the back. Burke and Loop are waiting.

ADAM
He wasn't there. The British guy, he wasn't there.

LOOP
No, we heard. You guys did great.

BURKE
This chick...
(checks notebook)
Ronna. You think she can score?

ADAM
Maybe.

ZACK
Probably.

(CONTINUED)

129 CONTINUED:

BURKE
Then that's all we need. It's all
connected. The circle of life.

130 EXT. STREET IN HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT 130

Waiting in The Beast, Mannie drums his fingers to the MUSIC.

131 EXT. FRONT OF GAINES' APARTMENT - NIGHT 131

Claire is arguing with Ronna. She finally relents and goes
upstairs with her.

132 INT. BURKE'S CAR - NIGHT 132

Burke is watching through binoculars. Adam, Zack and Loop are
in the car with him.

BURKE
Now they're both going. What's up with
that?

132A INT. VENICE HOUSE / MAIN ROOM - NIGHT 132A

Adam and Zack stand around as Burke gets the house ready,
moving furniture and poofing pillows, as if it's remotely
believable.

ZACK
So if she gets the stuff, what, you arrest
her?

BURKE
We try to bring her over.
(beat)
See, we arrest her and then what? One
crack whore off the street. So we cut her
a deal. She helps us get this guy. We
cut him a deal. He helps us get the guy
above him. It's just like what happened
with you.

ZACK
So, sooner or later, everybody's working
for The Man.

BURKE
Exactly.

(CONTINUED)

132A CONTINUED:

Adam motions to leave it alone. Zack won't.

 LOOP
 (leaning out the back room)
 She's coming up.

Burke cracks his neck, showtime.

(CONTINUED)

132A CONTINUED: (2)

ZACK

What if she isn't really a dealer though?
If you just pulled her into this one
thing, wouldn't that be entrapment?

BURKE

If she's making this deal, she's a dealer.
Doesn't matter if its her first or her
last.

We stay on Zack, unconvinced.

133 INT. VENICE HOUSE - NIGHT

133

Zack looks over as Burke comes out of the kitchen.

BURKE

Cerveza?

He hands Ronna the beer.

ADAM

(to Burke)

Oh yeah. Hey. We bought a whole bunch of
orange juice. It's in the car.

Ronna has halfway figured out what's going on.

BURKE

Now, Zack tells me you got 20 at 20, is
that right?

RONNA

(suddenly)

You got a bathroom?

ADAM

Down the hall on the right.

ZACK

Let me show you...

SLOW MOTION

Stepping towards Ronna, his back to Burke. He very
deliberately mouths a silent...

ZACK

Go.

Ronna sees it. Her eyes go wider. Zack nods.

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED:

In the background, Burke is trying to look around. Ronna turns, heading down the hall. Up above, the camera is watching.

For a just a second, Zack smiles.

134 INT. VENICE HOUSE - LATER

134

Burke SLAMS Zack up against the wall, twisting an arm behind him. He kicks his feet apart, then starts to cuff him. Zack is in considerable pain.

BURKE
(to Adam)
Now watch what I do with his wrist. I twist it away while I put on the second cuff. That way he can't go after me. He doesn't have any leverage.

He releases his hold on Zack, his hands cuffed behind him.

BURKE
I watch all these cop shows and they never do it right. Pisses me off.

Loop emerges from the back room, carrying a big box of videotapes on his way out.

BURKE
Hey, feel the abs on this one.

He rubs Zack's stomach.

BURKE
You could scrub laundry on these.

LOOP
(re: box)
Full hands.

Loop pauses at the door, looking around. He's forgotten something.

BURKE
What?

A beat. Loop can't remember what it was.

LOOP
Nothing. I'm out of it. Merry Christmas, guys. Good to meet you.

(CONTINUED)

134 CONTINUED:

Adam waves. Zack nods. Loop shuts the door behind himself. Now its just the three men. An awkward beat.

ZACK

We're done, now, right? That's what we talked about. Whether or not the deal went through, we just had to do our part.

(CONTINUED)

BURKE
You did your part.

ZACK
(relieved)
Great. Well, hey. A pleasure.

He turns to the side, offering Burke his handcuffs to undo. Burke makes no motion to do so.

BURKE
Now that he's gone, there's something I wanted to ask you guys about. Sort of a proposition.
(beat)
See, my wife and I -- Irene, she's my wife -- we're both working on Christmas so we're gonna have Christmas dinner tonight. And I was thinking, maybe you guys would want to come over, eat some dinner with us. My wife is great, you'll love her, then I'll sign your form. How does that sound?

A beat.

ZACK
Actually, you know, I had plans.

ADAM
You did?

ZACK
I do.

ADAM
With your girlfriend?

ZACK
Yes, Adam, in fact. With my girlfriend.

ADAM
Huh.
(beat; another; then suddenly)
Wow, I can't believe I forgot this. I saw your girlfriend this morning, and she asked me to tell you that she couldn't make your plans tonight.

Zack stares at Adam, a "why are you doing this" look.

(CONTINUED)

134 CONTINUED: (3)

134

ADAM
(to Burke)
It looks like we're both free.

135 EXT. A TINY HOUSE IN CULVER CITY - NIGHT

135

Zack hits the alarm for his red Miata, which BWOOPS. He and Adam walk to the door, hostility simmering.

A prefab Nativity scene glows beside the front door. Adam pushes the doorbell, which CHIMES "Hark Ye Herald Angels Sing." Horrified, Zack turns to leave. Adam stops him.

136 INT. LIVING / DINING ROOM - NIGHT

136

Too tall for the room, a Christmas tree leans back in a corner. The rest of the living room is dominated by a giant leather sofa pit.

Bored, Adam lifts a plate to check the imprint. He sets it down, straightening it. Now it's out of alignment with the other plates. He looks around casually. No one's watching.

Circling the table, he fixes all the plates and moves silverware to its proper position.

137 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

137

Burke's wife IRENE is mashing potatoes with considerable zeal. Adam leans in, sees her dedication and tries to duck out. But she saw him.

IRENE
Yes? Hi?

ADAM
Sorry. Phone. Messages. Check?

IRENE
Here.

She points. He sheepishly crosses to get it. While he's dialing, Irene starts in with the electric mixer. Butter. Milk. Salt. Adam doesn't know where to look while he's listening to his messages.

He suddenly smiles. Irene notices and stops mixing.

ADAM
(re: phone)
They're singing Christmas carols. My family. Minnesota, they do that.

She leans close to listen. Smiles. She continues to lean close -- uncomfortably close -- for a long beat.

138 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

138

We hear a toilet FLUSH. Zack emerges from the bathroom to find Burke stark naked, rubbing his hands over his body.

ZACK
Sorry.

BURKE
No, stay for a sec.

Burke sprays more cologne on his hand.

BURKE
Smell this. What does it smell like?

Zack shakes his head, doesn't know.

BURKE
CK One. But it's not.

(CONTINUED)

ZACK

Really.

BURKE

I get this for a quarter what that stuff costs.

ZACK

It's nice.

BURKE

Here.

He sprays some on Zack's hands, who didn't want it. While Burke turns to get some underwear, Zack tries to rub it off on the bedspread.

BURKE

(re: bedspread)

It's down. So is the liner.

ZACK

It is soft.

BURKE

Get on.

ZACK

That's okay.

Burke pushes Zack back flat the bed.

BURKE

Did you hear that?

ZACK

Hear what?

BURKE

Exactly. Individually wrapped springs. Top quality.

Burke climbs onto the bed beside him.

BURKE

I could be doing aerobics over here and you wouldn't feel it.

ZACK

I sure wouldn't.

A beat.

(CONTINUED)

138 CONTINUED: (2)

BURKE
So, Zack. Would you say you're open to
new things?

139 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

139

Irene is back whipping the potatoes.

IRENE
Of course you like your job. You get to
kiss all those pretty girls.

ADAM
(mock bashful)
It does have perks.

Irene pops the beaters out of the mixer, hands one to Adam.
They lick the potatoes off them.

IRENE
Tell me something. When you kiss those
girls, you're not really kissing them,
are you?

ADAM
It's a stage kiss. Your lips touch, but
there's no tongue.

IRENE
There's no feeling. Nobody gets jealous.

ADAM
It's acting. It's not real.

She takes his cleaned beater from him, dumps it in the sink.
Turning back, she kisses him. Caught off guard, he backs into
the refrigerator. It's a good three-second lip lock.

She backs off. There's an awkward beat.

ADAM
See, now, that. There was a tongue there.

BURKE (O.S.)
Honey, red or white?

Now dressed, Burke comes in with two bottles of wine. Zack is
behind him at a distance, still creeped out from the bedroom
encounter. He and Adam trade panicked stares.

IRENE
What goes with turkey?

(CONTINUED)

139 CONTINUED:

ADAM AND ZACK

White.

140 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

140

Irene slides a plate under the candlestick, where wax is dripping onto the tablecloth. Burke tips the bottle at Adam.

BURKE

More wine?

ZACK

No. He doesn't want any more. Unless he does, do you?

ADAM

No.

ZACK

This has been great, just wonderful, but we're going to need to leave. Soon. Adam's not feeling well.

ADAM

I'm not. It's true.

Burke and Irene share a look.

BURKE

If you gotta go, then I understand.

(awkward beat)

But Irene and I sort of had an ulterior motive inviting you here.

Zack looks to Adam.

IRENE

He makes it sound sinister. It's not.

BURKE

She's right. Okay, you've looked around our place. Where do you think we got most of this stuff?

Adam and Zack shake their heads.

IRENE

Just guess.

ADAM

Sears?

(CONTINUED)

ZACK
J.C. Penney's?

Irene and Burke both smile.

BURKE
It's actually from Confederated Products.
Almost everything in this house is from
Confederated Products, from the toilet
paper to the mattress to those candles.

IRENE
The wine.

BURKE
Even that cologne you liked.
(practiced)
See, Confederated Products is a multi-
level direct wholesaling company. That
means we don't just sell the products
ourselves, we also recruit and manage
teams who work under us. Irene and I
started eight months ago and we're
already bringing in fifty thousand a year
in revenues.

IRENE
We're the number four distributor in
Southern California. By March, we might
be number three.

She crosses her fingers. So does Burke. We look to Zack,
horrified.

BURKE
Now, as law enforcement officers, Irene
and I can't recruit distributors from
inside the force. It's against the rules
and we'd get fired. So what we do is look
for people in other industries...

IRENE
...like the entertainment industry.

ZACK
Wait.
(realizing)
You want us to sell Amway.

BURKE
Confederated Products. It's a different
company, different quality of product.

(CONTINUED)

140 CONTINUED: (2)

Zack and Adam share a look of disbelief and wonder.

141 EXT. FRONT OF BURKE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 141

Walking to the Miata, Adam takes the keys. Zack folds a form.

ZACK
I need to do something terrifically
unwholesome. I need to bathe in sin.

ADAM
With me, or one of your other boyfriends?

142 INT. LIQUOR STORE ON PICO - NIGHT 142

Adam checks a low shelf for the right brand of scotch. Zack
kneels beside him.

ZACK
I have cheated on you with exactly one
guy.

ADAM
Ditto.

ZACK
Who?

ADAM
No. See, if I tell you, you will freak
out and it will be drama. Bad not-funny
Roseanne kind of drama and I am just not
up for it.

He finds the right brand.

BY THE REGISTER

They wait in a short line.

ZACK
I'll tell you mine.

ADAM
No.

ZACK
Why not?

(CONTINUED)

142 CONTINUED:

ADAM
You can't wait to tell me, can you?
You're gloating. You think yours is
better than mine.

ZACK
I don't.

ADAM
It's Sean Connery, isn't it?

ZACK
Count of three.

ADAM
Alright. Sure. Wait.
(reconsidering)
Okay.

With fingers, they both count off "One. Two. Three."

ADAM
Jimmy.

ZACK
Jimmy in makeup.

*
**

ADAM
Jimmy?

ZACK
Jimmy. Jimmy.

They both stand for a moment, bewildered. It's their turn at
the register. Adam sets the bottle down.

A doorbell RINGS.

143 INT. HIGH RISE APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

143

An apartment door opens to reveal a chubby girl in sweats
(SANDRA) with a cordless phone and giant bowl of popcorn. She
drops the former into the latter.

ADAM
Is Jimmy here?

SANDRA
Oh my God. Oh. My God.

She's thrilled and disbelieving at the same time. She fishes
the phone out of the bowl.

(CONTINUED)

143 CONTINUED:

SANDRA
(to phone)
I'll call you back.
(to them)
Jimmy's not here. He went to this thing.
Let me find it.

She can't decide whether to close the door on them or not, so she only shuts it halfway. She pokes her head out the door again.

SANDRA
You do know, don't you?

ZACK
We know.

SANDRA
I take no responsibility. I was only an innocent bystander. But there was once where you missed each other by three minutes. It was so exciting.

She finds what she was looking for on the back of the door. Peels off a printed card.

SANDRA
It's some sort of rave thing.

ZACK
(takes card)
Mary Xmas Supafest.

SANDRA
He left an hour ago.

Adam and Zack head back down the hall. She calls out after them.

SANDRA
You're not going to kill him, are you?
The little shit owes me rent.

144 EXT. WAREHOUSE / MARY XMAS SUPAFEST - NIGHT

144

At the doors, BOUNCERS stamp hands. We move down the line of people waiting to get in, stopping on Adam and Zack.

ZACK
Okay, I just have to say this. The thing is, about Jimmy, he wasn't even that good.

(CONTINUED)

144 CONTINUED:

ADAM

I know.

ZACK

Mediocre at best. And the sounds he made, God. It was like having sex with Nell.

Adam imitates the MOAN.

ZACK

Somewhere off Greenland, hunchback whales were beaching themselves.

ADAM

And the ear thing. Hello, I have Q-Tips. That's really not necessary.

ZACK

The only thing I will give him credit for is the oral.

ADAM

What do you mean? He was terrible. At some point I just had to stop him and correct years of bad technique. I had to take him by the ears and retrain him from the throat up.

A beat.

ZACK

When was that?

ADAM

October, maybe?

ZACK

Early October. And he suddenly got so much better.

A beat.

ADAM

That is so disturbing. It's like you were there.

145 INT. SUPAFEST - NIGHT

145

Claire cuts through the crowd with two empty cups, in search of beverage.

AT THE BAR

(CONTINUED)

145 CONTINUED:

A sloe-eyed blonde boy (JIMMY) makes friendly with the BARTENDER, who is too busy to flirt. Rebuffed, Jimmy scans the crowd.

Zack comes up behind him, grabs him by the waist. Jimmy smiles, kisses him hello.

Adam comes up from the other side, blows in Jimmy's ear. Jimmy is so coked up that it takes him a beat to make the connection. Zack plus Adam equals bad.

He smiles nervously.

Zack takes a pair of child safety scissors from his jacket. Confused, Jimmy tries to back away. Adam holds him tight. Grabbing a fistful of hair, Zack cuts it off at the scalp. He lets the hair fall to the floor.

Tucking away the scissors, he and Adam walk off.

146 EXT. FIELD - NIGHT (RAINING)

146

The tiny Miata maneuvers through the badly organized parking lot, trying to find the way out.

147 INT. MIATA - NIGHT (RAINING)

147

Zack gives directions from the passenger seat.

ZACK
Right. This right. This right!
(passing)
That was the right you wanted.

Adam ignores him, convinced he can get out this way. A beat later, it dead-ends in a chain link fence.

Zack points to his lips. He didn't say a word.

Adam slams it in reverse, backtracking. He's doing about 20 when suddenly we hear a loud THUMP!

By instinct, he SLAMS on the brakes.

Something CRASHES down on the soft roof.

ZACK
What the fuck!

(CONTINUED)

147 CONTINUED:

Ronna's face suddenly slams down on the windshield, bleeding already. Both men SCREAM. Her eyes are open, staring at them. After a beat, they recognize her.

ZACK
Oh my God.

ADAM
It's...It's that girl.

ZACK
Ronna.

Her body continues its slide across the windshield, finally resting on the hood. In a sort of spasm, Adam REVS back, shaking the body off. It drops beyond the headlights.

Zack looks past Adam to see Gaines standing there, gun drawn.

ZACK
Go. Go. Go!

ADAM
What if she's...

ZACK
Go!

Adam pops the clutch and they lurch backward, out of there.

IN THE MIRROR

Gaines steps out to watch them go.

148 EXT. FIELD / PARKING LOT - NIGHT (RAIN) 148

We stay at ditch-level as the headlights retreat.

149 EXT. 24/7 GAS - NIGHT (RAIN) 149

The Miata is parked at the far island.

150 INT. MIATA - NIGHT (RAIN) 150

Adam steadies his hands on the wheel. Zack passes him the scotch. He takes a gulp, passes it back. The energy is still revved up to 11 -- we don't let ourselves catch a breath.

(CONTINUED)

150 CONTINUED:

ZACK

Let's think about it logically. Either she's alive, or she's dead. If she's dead, then there's nothing we can do. If she's alive, then the guy with the gun, who seemed to want to shoot her, probably did shoot her.

ADAM

So even if she's alive, she's dead.

ZACK

Exactly.

Adam takes another drink.

ZACK

On the plus side, the only witnesses are you, me and him. And none of us are going to want to be talking about it. So if you really think about it, it didn't turn out as badly as it could have.

ADAM

A girl is dead.

ZACK

(snaps)

I didn't say it went perfectly.

Adam gets out of the car, walks away. Zack takes another swig.

151 EXT. SIDE OF THE GAS STATION - NIGHT (RAIN)

151

Adam stops at a payphone. A long moment before he reaches for the receiver. With a breath, he dials 911.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

911 Emergen...

He hangs up.

152 EXT. GAS STATION ISLAND - NIGHT (RAIN)

152

Zack dunks the squeegee back in the bucket. With a wad of paper towels, he cleans the hood of the car.

153 INT. GAS STATION BATHROOM - NIGHT (RAIN) 153

Washing his face, Adam looks at his reflection in the scratched mirror. He steps to the urinal, unbuttons.

Before he can start to piss, he notices something strange. He looks down at his crotch.

154 EXT. GAS STATION ISLAND - NIGHT (RAIN) 154

Zack throws away the last of the towels as Adam approaches.

With a finger to his lips, Adam holds out a mess of tape and wires, all connected to a battery pack. It's the microphone he was wearing.

ZACK
Holy sh...

He stops himself. Adam throws the bundle as far as he can. They keep their voices low anyway.

ZACK
They wouldn't have been listening all this time.

ADAM
Hello, they could have been recording it. Everything we said could be on tape somewhere. They would know we did it.

A beat.

ZACK
(an idea)
What if we were just running lines? For a scene?

Adam won't even dignify that with an answer. A long moment, just the BUZZ of the lights overhead. With an almost eerie calm...

ZACK
There's a pretty good chance no one's found her yet.

ADAM
They will.

(CONTINUED)

154 CONTINUED:

ZACK

No. Listen. If there's no body, there's no crime.

155 EXT. FIELD - NIGHT (RAIN)

155

The Supafest is still RAGING in the distance. Adam digs through the trunk of the convertible, frantically rearranging the junk inside. He keeps looking around the lid, waiting for someone to sneak up on them.

Zack watches Adam's fruitless arranging efforts.

ZACK

Stop. Okay, stop!

ADAM

What?

ZACK

It's a Miata.

All Adam's effort, he's made enough room for a pizza. Maybe.

ZACK

We'll put her in the passenger seat.

ADAM

Where will I...Or you...

ZACK

In the passenger seat. Holding her up.

Adam shudders at the thought.

With a flashlight, Zack jumps down into the ditch. He nudges Ronna's body with his foot. She's dead alright.

He rolls the body over, grabbing under her arms. He tries to hoist her up, but she's too heavy and the ditch is too deep.

ZACK

Little help?

ADAM

(not moving)
I can't.

ZACK

What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

ADAM

I can't do this.

Frustrated, Zack tries again to lug the body out. He can't do it by himself. Meanwhile, Adam is starting to hyperventilate, tears swelling.

ZACK

Okay, listen to me...

ADAM

She's dead.

ZACK

She's not dead.

ADAM

She's dead. I hit her and I killed her.

He looks around, expecting someone to walk up and see them.

ZACK

No you didn't, okay? This is all just make-believe. This is a scene. She's just acting dead. And you're just acting scared.

Adam laughs to himself, still crying.

ZACK

See, there's the lights, and there's the camera. Watch your blocking.

(pointing)

There's Michelle in wardrobe, say "Hi, Michelle!"

ADAM

Hi, Michelle.

ZACK

The craft service truck is right around the corner, and they have lots of little veggie burgers on the grill. And you can have one if you just help me finish this scene.

(sniffing)

Can you smell them? Can you smell them on the grill?

A beat.

ADAM

I'm not delusional.

(CONTINUED)

ZACK

Then take her fucking arms!

Obeying, Adam grabs Ronna's wrists as Zack pushes from below. Together they get the body out of the ditch. Zack climbs up to help maneuver her into the car. Just then...

Ronna MOANS.

Adam freaks out, dropping his side. Ronna's head hits the dirt. Louder MOANING.

ADAM

She's not dead.

ZACK

No shit!

They stand back, watching Ronna MOAN as she lies half-in, half-out of the car.

ADAM

If she's not dead, that means we didn't kill her. We can just leave her.

ZACK

She's almost dead. We leave her and she dies, why did we bother coming back? I mean, you still killed her.

ADAM

What do you mean, I killed her?

ZACK

Christ, I didn't mean it that way. C'mon. I would never testify against you.

Adam is not reassured.

ZACK

We have to stick with Plan A.

ADAM

In Plan A she was dead.

Zack reaches into the car, pulling out The Club. Trades a look with Adam, who finally acquiesces. Almost says something, doesn't. They both look around, making sure no one's coming.

Zack grips the bar like a baseball bat. Adam turns his back, covering his ears.

Zack raises the bar. Adam scrunches his face tight.

(CONTINUED)

155 CONTINUED: (3)

Zack takes two quick breaths. And holds.

And holds. And holds.

Adam opens his eyes, looks back. Zack isn't swinging. He lowers the bar. They both breathe again, relieved.

ZACK
Okay. New plan.

156 EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT (RAIN)

156

A CAR ALARM drones incessantly, the siren interrupted with an occasional

CAR ALARM VOICE
Back away from the vehicle.

Weaving through some parked cars, we settle on an angry BMW, its lights flashing. A small throng of RAVERS have gathered around to look, because Ronna's limp body lies on the hood.

A familiar face pushes through the crowd, just arrived.

FILA GUY
Hey, it's Kelly. Somebody beat the crap out of her.

Moving to find...

SKATE-PUNK GUY
Somebody call an ambulance!

After a beat, he realizes he should do it himself. He takes off running.

ADAM AND ZACK

look around from the edge of a van in the distance.

ZACK
Look, she's fine. They're getting an ambulance. She's fine.

Adam keeps watching, not convinced. He turns back, a thought...

ADAM
What about that guy? The guy with the gun. He could still go after her.

(CONTINUED)

156 CONTINUED:

ZACK

Okay, listen. Girl in ditch -- that's our problem. Girl out of ditch -- that's her own problem. We're done. We did the right thing.

Thunder RUMBLES overhead. Off Adam's look...

ZACK

Okay, approximately the right thing. In a half-assed, thrown-together fashion.

Adam smiles despite himself. Zack points, "See? See?" That just makes Adam smile more.

ZACK

Home?

ADAM

Home.

As they walk off, we leave the Mary Xmas Supafest still BLARING in the distance.

157 INT. JAVAMAN CAFE / HOLLYWOOD - DAY

157

Too early for the brunch crowd, just a smattering of vampires. All around, Christmas lights are strung with mad abandon.

The lights overhead FLICKER. Everyone looks up. That's when we come to find

TODD GAINES

sitting alone at a booth by the window, disassembling a newspaper. He finds the comics.

(CONTINUED)

157 CONTINUED:

Laying the paper flat, he tears off the bottom corner of the page and starts reading like a kid, his whole body leaning over the table.

At the door, Claire comes in, shaking the rain out of her hair. After a beat, she does it again, as if she doesn't remember doing it the first time. She's tired and wired, all nerves and raw edges. There's static only she can feel.

She looks right past Gaines, out to the rain on the street. He watches her, but doesn't try to catch her eye. The Jamaican WAITER walks past her with a pot of coffee.

WAITER
Anywhere you want.

CLAIRE
I'm meeting people.

He doesn't care. Claire takes a seat at the table in front of her, but it's not to her liking. Then a booth. She plays with the salt shakers. Bad.

It's only now that she sees Gaines watching her. At first she doesn't recognize him. Then a light goes on. She climbs over the booth and into his, facing him.

CLAIRE
Hey.

GAINES
Hey.

CLAIRE
We're twins.

She turns over his hand, compares it to hers. They both have the same ink stamp on the back. He's busted, no way to talk himself out.

The Waiter comes with coffee, refills Gaines' cup.

Claire overturns the cup in front of her. The Waiter fills it. She overturns a second cup, points to it. A big weird smile. Reluctantly, the Waiter fills that too. Then leaves.

CLAIRE
I'll pay you back for breakfast.
(leaning closer)
Don't worry. I'm not really that hungry.

She sheds her coat, having great difficulty with one sleeve.

(CONTINUED)

157 CONTINUED: (2)

CLAIRE

Have you seen Ronna? Or Mannie?

He shakes his head.

CLAIRE

See, when we go out, we always meet here afterwards in case we get separated.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

157 CONTINUED: (3)

CLAIRE (cont'd)

It happens more than you'd think. I've been paging her, but she hasn't called back.

The lights FLICKER again, storm still raging.

Halfway into getting her coat off, Claire has second thoughts, but continues nonetheless. Gaines is taken off-balance, his private space violated.

Claire finally looks up at Gaines, smiles. A beat.

CLAIRE

Unless you wanted to eat alone.

GAINES

No. It's fine.

157A INT. CAFE - LATER

157A

Gaines scrapes the last of his eggs off the plate. Claire sits with two pieces of toast, untouched. She takes the scrap of the newspaper he tore off, looks at it.

CLAIRE

What do you have against The Family Circus?

GAINES

It's evil.

CLAIRE

Besides that.

GAINES

Okay. Location mostly. Bottom right corner, just waiting there to suck. It's the last thing you read, and it spoils everything you read before it.

CLAIRE

You could just not read it.

GAINES

I hate it, yet I'm uncontrollably drawn to it. Are you going to...

He points to her toast. She slides it over. He slathers on a thick coat of jelly.

CLAIRE

Do you know what I like about you?

(CONTINUED)

157A CONTINUED:

GAINES

What?

CLAIRE

I'm asking. I don't know. It's not your face, because you're only medium cute. I think what it is, is you might be the first non-fake person I've met here.

GAINES

Me.

CLAIRE

I'm serious.

GAINES

Professional curiosity. What are you on?

CLAIRE

Ginseng and lotsa caffeine.

Gaines leaves money for the check.

A beat. Claire looks around at the various decorations: a red tree by the door, snowflakes on the window, lights blinking on the wall.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

You know what I like best about Christmas?
The surprises. It's like, you get this
box, and you're sure you know what's in
it. You shake it, you weigh it, and
you're totally convinced you have it
pegged. No doubt in your mind.
But then you open it up, and it's
something completely different. Bing!
Wow! Bang! Surprise! I mean, it's like
you and me here.

She smiles. She has a bewitching smile.

CLAIRE

I'm not saying this is anything it's not.
But, c'mon. This time yesterday, who'dda
thunk it?

158 INT. STAIRWELL TO GAINES' APARTMENT - DAY

158

Claire kisses Gaines, pinning him against the wall. Rain BEATS
against the door.

She fumbles with his belt. His hand slides under her jacket,
trying to undo her bra. They take a break from undressing to
kiss harder.

Reclining on the steps, Claire tries to push his jeans down
with her toes. Her foot gets caught in the chain from his
wallet. Her butt slides down a step. They laugh.

Her hand hits something hard -- his gun. It's tucked into his
jacket pocket.

As they start to work up a rhythm, Huxley the cat comes down
the steps, curious. He brushes against them, unnoticed.
Finally, he MEWS.

GAINES

(stopping)

How did you get out?

He looks to the top of the stairs, where a MAN is watching
them.

It's Victor.

(CONTINUED)

158 CONTINUED:

He has the silver .45 drawn on them. Gaines looks down to the door at the bottom. Vic Jr. is blocking it. They're trapped. Claire looks around, trying to figure out what's happening.

159 - 167 OMIT

159 - 167

167A INT. GAINES' LIVING ROOM - DAY

167A

Gaines draws a map for Victor on the coffee table.

GAINES

Simon's apartment is around the back -- the gate's always open. Now, you're going to take Sunset to Hyperion.

As he's talking, we MOVE to reveal Vic Jr. by the door, holding the gun on them, and Claire, sitting on the couch beside Gaines.

GAINES [CONT'D]

At Hillhurst, you have to keep right -- you want Sunset Boulevard, not Sunset Drive.

CLAIRE

(to Gaines)

Why don't you just drive him there? Maybe you could help pull the trigger.

Gaines gives her a look. Victor takes the map and folds it. He hands Gaines back his credit card.

Just then, we hear a SOUND at the door -- a gentle KNOCK. All eyes go to look.

CLOSE ON the doorknob, someone trying it. It's unlocked. We TILT UP to reveal the opener is actually...

SIMON.

He charges right into the room, shutting the door behind him.

SIMON

Todd, listen, I need hide out here. You won't believe the shit we got into in...

He sees Victor. He immediately reaches for his gun, but

VIC JR.

(CONTINUED)

is right behind him. He yanks Simon's gun away, then half-pushes, half-carries him forward, slamming him down

ONTO THE COFFEE TABLE.

Claire and Gaines both scoot back, freaked. Vic Sr. puts the gun to Simon's head.

Panicked, Simon squirms, trying to look around. His face is mushed against the glass.

VICTOR

How was your drive? We flew.

Victor hands the gun off to Vic Jr., who rests it at the back of Simon's head. Simon is moments away from execution.

All at once...

GAINES

HeyHeyHey. Not here, not now. This is so not where you want to be doing this.

SIMON

Please no. God! Shit! I don't wanna die.

VICTOR

Do it.

Vic Jr. COCKS the gun. Simon SQUEALS. At the last moment...

CLAIRE

Wait! Stop! STOP! You can't do this! You won't get away with it!

For a brief moment, she has their attention. She points to herself.

CLAIRE [CONT'D]

Hello, witness.
(re: Todd)

Witness. What are you going to do, kill us too?

Gaines looks over, thanks for bringing that up. But Claire still has the floor.

CLAIRE [CONT'D]

What is wrong with you people? Do you think this is an effective way of dealing with problems?

VICTOR

This fuck shot my boy.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON
...in the arm.

*

Vic Jr. leans on him, shut up.

*

CLAIRE
(to Victor)
So, what? You're going to kill three
people?
(beat, no answer)
What do you actually want?

*

*

VICTOR
Justice.

A look between all parties.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

Sitting in the green chair, Simon makes an 'X' on his bicep
with a marker. He feels for the bone.

SIMON
It's all flesh here, it should be okay.

Gaines and the Vics stand around him. In the background,
Claire is dubious and horrified.

Vic Jr. puts Todd's gun to the 'X.' Gaines hands Simon a shirt
to mop up the blood.

SIMON
Right, great.

On some sick level, he's really into this.

Vic Jr. gets ready to shoot. Everyone subtly backs away,
bracing for the gunshot. Three. Two. One.

But there's no bang.

*

Everyone looks at Vic Jr. He pulls the gun away.

*

VIC JR.
I can't.

*

*

(CONTINUED)

168 OMIT 168

[See Scene 176]

169 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY 169

Ronna wakes up, a bit at a time, an IV dripping overhead. We hear carolers SINGING in the distance.

Her nose crinkles, her tongue finds her lips. Finally a swollen eye opens, looks around. A MEXICAN FAMILY is gathered around the other bed in the room, the father dressed as Santa Claus.

Ronna sees the IV dangling from her arm. She sits up with difficulty, a head rush. She tries to get her bearings, but genuinely doesn't know how she got here.

After a beat, she rips off the tape and carefully pulls the needle out of her arm.

169A EXT. SUPERMARKET - DAY 169A

It's stopped raining, but the pavement is still wet.

169B INT. SUPERMARKET BREAK ROOM - DAY 169B

Ronna slides her time card into the machine, which PUNCHES down.

169C INT. SUPERMARKET AISLE - DAY 169C

Ronna ties her apron as she heads to the front, limping a bit.

169D INT. SUPERMARKET / CHECKOUT LANE - DAY 169D

Claire finishes bagging groceries. Looks up to see Ronna coming to open the next register.

RONNA

Hey.

Claire doesn't say anything, a pointed silence.

Ronna keys in, checks the drawer. Claire returns to her register. Ronna tries to make eye contact, but no luck.

(CONTINUED)

169D CONTINUED:

RONNA
Okay, real mature.

Claire continues to ignore her, turning her back. She straightens coupons, rubber-banding them.

RONNA
Claire.

Nothing. A beat. Finally...

RONNA
Alright. Mistakes were made. Things didn't go exactly as planned.

Claire's eyes -- understatement.

RONNA [CONT'D]
But it wasn't exactly a banner night for me, either.

Claire stops, disbelieving -- if Ronna only knew. She turns on her, then back to the register, holding it in. But she just has to face her to say...

CLAIRE
You are constantly using us.

RONNA
Using you? You use me. Come on, if it weren't for me, you would be sitting home every night eating popcorn and watching reruns of 90210.

CLAIRE
(overlapping)
Mannie is your chauffeur, and I am...
(what is she?)
I am some chick you leave sitting in an apartment.

RONNA
(overlapping)
That is such bullshit. Mannie does not feel that way. Ask him. Ask him! Where is he?

CLAIRE
Why would I know?

A beat. A cold horror crosses Ronna. Remaining calm...

(CONTINUED)

169D CONTINUED: (2)

RONNA

He drove you here, didn't he?

CLAIRE

No, I got a ride. His car was still in
the parking lot when I left.

RONNA

Oh shit. Shit!

Without even closing her register, she takes off her apron and
heads for the door.

170 EXT. ALLEY - DAY 170

RONNA
(yelling)
Mannie? Mannie?

Ronna limps ahead. A taxicab waits in the background.

171 EXT. A DIFFERENT ALLEY - DAY 171

CLAIRE
Mannie! Mannie!

All the alleys look the same. He could be anywhere.

172 EXT. BEHIND A DUMPSTER - DAY 172

A stray black cat scratches through a pile of foam peanuts, looking for bugs. Another cat crawls up the body of Mannie, propped against the dumpster. A trickle of water drips off the garbage onto his face. The cat licks it clean.

Mannie smiles.

173 EXT. ALLEY INTERSECTION - DAY 173

RONNA
Mannie! Can you hear me?

MANNIE (O.S.)
Yeah!

Ronna turns to see Mannie behind her, stretching his neck. He's pale. His eyes are bloodshot. But otherwise, he's fine.

MANNIE
You look like shit.

174 EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY 174

The Beast is the only car left. Ronna and Claire circle, looking for the keys on the ground. Calling out...

RONNA
You fucked Todd Gaines?

(CONTINUED)

174 CONTINUED:

CLAIRE

No!
(embarrassed)
We made out.

RONNA

(mocking)
Made out?

CLAIRE

Kissed. A little. What?

RONNA

Hello! He's a drug dealer.

Claire doesn't want this to go any further. Fortunately, just then...

CLAIRE

Found 'em.

She shakes the mud and grime off, then throws them to Ronna. Mannie lies back on the trunk, droopy.

(CONTINUED)

RONNA
(unlocking passenger door)
You might have brain damage from
overdosing.

MANNIE
Dain brambage?

A beat.

MANNIE
Xavier Kugat. Starts with X.

RONNA
You shit.

She puts him in the car, holding his head like he's a criminal
on "Cops."

CLAIRE
I'll drive.

Ronna hands her the keys over the roof of the Beast, sunlight
shining off the gathered rain. They take a beat, just the two
of them.

CLAIRE
So, do you have enough money to pay off
your rent?

RONNA
And twenty left over. Maybe I'll open a
savings account.

GETTING IN...

Claire starts the car. Mannie leans up from the back seat.

MANNIE
So what are we doing for New Year's?

Ronna smiles.

RONNA
Merry Christmas, Mannie.

THE BEAST

ROARS off across the parking lot, TITLE MUSIC building.

(CONTINUED)

174 CONTINUED: (3)

174

We PAN BACK to the rave hangar, heading for it, picking up speed. A MATCH CUT takes us to...

174A EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

174A

We HEAR a rave in full swing ahead. The hangar door is open, pitch black inside. We fly in, bringing us to...

BLACK OUT.

AFTER FIRST CREDITS

FADE IN:

175 INT. SIMON'S APARTMENT - DAY 175

Simon awakes to POUNDING at the front door. He stands and turns, disoriented, no idea when or where he is. He finally finds a clock -- it's 4:14 in the afternoon.

More POUNDING at the door. Simon half-crawls to the window, looking out to see who's at the door.

HIS P.O.V.

From this angle, all we can see is the sleeve of a man's jacket.

SIMON
(tentatively)
Who is it?

He ducks, expecting a hail of gunfire.

MALE VOICE [O.S.]
It's Todd.

A beat, then Simon finally drops his panic. He keeps the gun in hand as he pulls the chair away from the doorknob and slowly undoes the lock. He leaves the chain on.

Looking out through the crack, we see Gaines, alone.

SIMON
Jesus, Todd. Thank God.
(undoes chain)
You won't believe the shit I've been
through...

Without a word, Gaines grabs him by the collar and SMASHES him, one punch to the face. Simon falls in a dazed lump to the floor. We stay down with him as we watch Gaines walk away.

Simon blinks and snuffles as we once again

FADE OUT.

176 INT. APARTMENT PARKING GARAGE - DAY

176

Adam and Zack scrub the Miata's upholstery with brushes and various cleaners, trying to get the bloodstains out. Zack stops for a moment, watching Adam. Adam looks up, what? Nothing. A quiet beat, the first moment of genuine affection between them.

Suddenly we hear a BEEPING. We can't tell where it's coming from.

Following the sound, Adam finds a mud-encrusted beeper wedged between the seat and the center console. He looks up to Zack, then checks the number.

FADE OUT.

998 OFFSCREEN SOAP OPERA DIALOGUE

998

[NOTE: These are wild lines to play underneath scenes 6A, 57A and 121A. Since these scenes are longer than before, we need extra soap opera in the background before we get to Adam and Zack.]

JIMMY SHUBERT

Somethin' about it just didn't add up.
So last night I went back to the pier
to do some investigating of my own.
Turns out there are two boats named the
Princess. Only, one just got back from
two weeks at sea -- Sal Dominico's
boat. It got me thinkin' -- if Chase
really did know Carmen was on to him,
how come he didn't tell Lucas, or
Gamble, or Myerson? Why would he drive
up to Pinecliff by himself? And why
would you still have his briefcase?

(beat)

Answer me that, Danielle. If you have
an answer.

MUSIC rises, a scene cut.

New MUSIC leads into...

ZACK

I'm not the man you're looking for.

ADAM

We both know you were on the pier. You
saw what happened to Carmen.

ZACK

Don't forget, detective. I was cleared
of all charges.

ADAM

I don't care how many high-priced lawyers
you bring in. Eden Valley will never
stand for your kind of scum.