

RUSH HOUR

Original Screenplay

by

Ross LaManna

FADE IN:

EXT. LOS ANGELES - DAY

The whole dysfunctional megalopolis, beige and blurry in the summer smog. If this is the American Dream, do me a favor and wake me up.

EXT. LAX - DAY

The traffic loop outside the terminals is gridlocked -- mostly with stretch limousines.

INT. LAX - (INCLUDE NEWS REPORT MONTAGE) - DAY

Inside, the airport is done up with festive posters, streamers and banners: Welcome - Pacific Partners Summit

A planeload of cheerful CHINESE DELEGATES come into the crowded terminal. Some sport red T-shirts with a picture of Mao wearing Mickey Mouse ears.

They get onto the people mover, passing by a TV REPORTER:

REPORTER

(to TV CAMERA)

Eager to mend its tarnished image, Los Angeles has really put out the welcome mat for tomorrow's summit. The city promises quite a party as leaders from Japan, China, South Korea, Australia, the U.S. and others begin talks for the largest free-trade treaty in history.

The SCENE changes to TAPE of DELEGATES from other countries arriving.

Then, we see massive SECURITY PREPARATIONS all around the city.

REPORTER (VO)

(continuing)

The one sour note is North Korea, the only Pacific Rim country not participating. There are rumors of secret meetings with North Korean representatives, but U.S. officials insist the North must first hold democratic elections, and halt its nuclear weapons program -- as they claimed to have done back in 1995.

We CUT TO a heated debate in the UN SECURITY COUNCIL.

Then ARTILLERY FIRE over the Korean DMZ.

The SCENE returns to LAX.

REPORTER (VO)

(continuing)

Tensions remain high since last year's skirmishes between North Korea and the U.S. So any chance of the communist North joining the Pacific Partners seems highly unlikely.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FREMONT PLACE - DAY

An exclusive, walled-off section of Hancock Park. There's only one route in and out, past a manned guardhouse on Wilshire.

EXT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - DAY

A Colonial-style mansion, surrounded by an imposing, wrought-iron fence. There is a bronze plaque, in English and Korean, next to the entranceway:

Consulate

of the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

The driveway gate opens and a long, black Mercedes with tinted windows and diplomatic license plates glides out.

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAY

An alert North Korean CORPORAL watches the perimeter MONITORS. He pushes a switch to close the gate behind the Mercedes.

EXT. UTILITY POLE - OLYMPIC BLVD - DAY

From atop a pole outside the south wall, a man with binoculars overlooks the private streets of Fremont Place.

HIS POV - THROUGH BINOCULARS

as the Mercedes cruises through the quiet neighborhood.

BACK TO SCENE

The man, PAUL JAVAL, is thirtyish, nervous; with short, sandy hair. He takes the binoculars away from his face and we see his eyes -- they're a strange, unnaturally light gray.

Javal takes an ORANGE PILL from an unlabeled prescription bottle and pops it into his mouth. He climbs down the pole to a van with a phone company logo on it.

EXT. WILSHIRE BLVD - DAY

The Mercedes comes out of the Fremont Place gate, and turns into the heavy morning traffic.

INT. MERCEDES - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

It is extremely quiet, due to inch-thick glass on the windows and 4,000 pounds of armor plating on the car's chassis.

The DRIVER is a North Korean Army Major. On the seat beside him is an AMD-74, a 5.45x39mm-caliber machine gun.

A HAND from the back seat darts between the front seats and turns on the RADIO to a ROCK station. The Driver turns it off.

NEW ANGLE

The hand belongs to 10-year-old SAM KE HAN. Sam sits back and sighs to his sister, JOY (15). Between them sits a middle-aged Scandinavian GOVERNESS.

SAM

I can't stand it -- half an hour to get to the stupid school every morning... with no music...

(Korean; subtitled)

[Just our damn Nanny...]

EXT. CRENSHAW BLVD - DAY

Javal's van, also with tinted windows, turns onto Crenshaw. It

follows the Mercedes, several cars behind it.

INT. JAVAL'S VAN - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Javal, wired, drums on the steering wheel while driving. He glances at some expertly constructed, radio-control REMOTE UNITS sitting on the seat next to him.

EXT. SANTA MONICA FREEWAY - DAY

Traffic is moving at about 35 MPH. The Mercedes merges onto the freeway, heading west. Javal's van follows.

The thumping of a RAP SONG rattles the other drivers' fillings as a LOWRIDER with its stereo turned up to "11" cruises by.

INT. MERCEDES - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Even 500 watts of bass cannot penetrate the armored silence. The Driver scans the road, wary but sensing no danger. He puts on his blinker to take the 405 South exit.

EXT. SANTA MONICA FREEWAY - DAY

The van follows, now directly behind the Mercedes, in a procession of vehicles going up the long, curved overpass arcing 100 feet above the 10, toward the 405.

INT. JAVAL'S VAN - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

As they approach the crest of the overpass, Javal flips a switch on his radio-control unit...

CLOSE - ROAD SURFACE OF OVERPASS

Six small SEMICIRCLES, exact replicas of the stay-alert bumps on the white lines of the overpass, EXPLODE. They spew hundreds of sharp, triangular nails across the roadway. Immediately, scores of tires on passing cars BLOW OUT...

WIDER

Causing, 50 yards ahead of the Mercedes and van, the most hellacious, gut-wrenching, piss-your-pants, chain-reaction PILE-UP you can imagine.

Dozens of drivers LOSE CONTROL of their vehicles... sideswipe their neighbors... grind against the guard rails. Some fishtail into 180's, smashing headlong into the traffic still

coming onto the overpass.

Brakes squeal, people scream, metal crumples, airbags deploy, glass shatters.

And then it gets really nasty...

A Honda gets jammed under a truck hauling cinder blocks. The truck JACKKNIFES, tipping over like a drunken giant.

It SMASHES through the concrete wall and guard rail...

Along with several cars and their SCREAMING OCCUPANTS, swept over the edge by the truck like discarded soda cans.

They plummet through space, CRASHING onto the freeway below.

INT. MERCEDES - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Sam, Joy, and the Governess brace themselves as the Driver slams on the brakes. He barely avoids hitting anything.

DRIVER
(Korean)
[Stay in the car.]

EXT. FREEWAY OVERPASS - DAY

A nightmare scene of smoke, twisted wrecks, dazed victims. The Mercedes and van sit motionless in the backed-up traffic.

INT./EXT. JAVAL'S VAN & ROADWAY - DAY

Javal slides open a TRAP DOOR on the floor of the van. He slips a wheeled, mechanic's repair platform through it.

ANGLE WITH JAVAL

as, unnoticed amid the chaos, he lies on the platform and rolls under the Mercedes.

The undercarriage of the Mercedes is armored with steel. Javal stops at a patch of perforations -- an air exchange vent. He attaches a slim DEVICE over the vent, flips a switch on it, then rolls back toward the van.

INT. MERCEDES - DAY

Oblivious to Javal's actions below them, everyone watches as

police and news helicopters circle above. Then, some CHP motorcycles straddle the lanes and zoom by.

INT. JAVAL'S VAN - DAY

Sweating, Javal sits back in the driver's seat and checks another radio unit. Working.

EXT. FREEWAY OVERPASS - DAY

The CHP has cleared a path through the devastation, and traffic trickles through. As the Mercedes and the van pass by, Javal looks proudly at the misery he's wrought. He follows the Mercedes onto the 405 south.

INT. JAVAL'S VAN - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Javal drives behind the Mercedes, with one hand on the radio unit. The Mercedes signals to take the Venice exit.

Javal fingers the radio unit, itching to use it...

But he PASSES by the Mercedes as it gets off the freeway.

INSERT ANGLE - UNDER THE MERCEDES

Javal's device is armed, and waiting...

FADE TO:

EXT. SIERRA BONITA AVENUE - CARSON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A pretty street in the Miracle Mile, lined with neat, single-family homes. Timed SPRINKLER systems water some of the yards.

Every house on the block except the one we're in front of has a "For Sale" sign on the lawn. From the weathered looks of the signs, they've been there for quite a while.

INT. CARSON'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's a hot night. The ceiling fan above the bed spins slowly.

PETE CARSON tosses restlessly in bed, the sheets half-covering him. Next to him his wife, MIRANDA KNOLL, snores contentedly.

Carson is in his late thirties, outdoorsy, with a tight, muscular build. Emotionally he's tightly-wound as well.

Miranda is 35, raven-haired, sensible, pretty. She believes above all else that one should never raise one's voice.

Carson groans... he's DREAMING...

CUT TO:

EXT. BEVERLY DRIVE - (CARSON'S DREAM) - DAY

Quick, SILENT IMAGES: A street cordoned off with police tape. Cops, SWAT teams, FBI surround BEVERLY THRIFT, a bank.

Carson, younger, hair shorter, sits in an FBI COMMAND TRUCK across from the bank. Covering the mouthpiece of the phone in his hand, he's arguing with the OTHER AGENTS in the truck.

Suddenly, a huge, fiery EXPLOSION blows out the front of the bank building. Horrified, Carson runs toward it...

CUT TO:

INT. CARSON'S HOUSE - BEDROOM AND HALLWAY - NIGHT

Carson is snapped awake by a CAR ALARM going off outside.

CARSON

Son of a bitch!

He bolts out of bed, wearing nothing but a pair of striped bikini briefs. Miranda rolls over, sleepy, unconcerned...

MIRANDA

Pete... please... we have to be up early tomorrow. Call the police.

CARSON

Yeah, right.

He races down the hall -- right past the house alarm keypad, its LCD reading "ARMED."

He grabs an aluminum baseball bat from the umbrella stand. Forgetting to disarm the house alarm, he yanks the front door open. The house alarm begins SHRIEKING.

CARSON

(continuing)

Shit!

MIRANDA

pulls the pillows over her head and sighs.

MIRANDA

Not again...

EXT. CARSON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Carson comes around to the driveway, which is illuminated by the streetlight --

Where two 20-ish ASSHOLES are sitting in his 1965 Mustang convertible, their presence courtesy of a huge cut they've made in the otherwise-perfect ragtop.

Car-theft tools in a leather case between them, they're prying the ignition switch out of the dashboard.

Asshole #1 spots Carson. He gets out of the car, wielding a crowbar. His partner keeps working.

NEW ANGLE

Asshole #1 lunges viciously, swiping at Carson with the crowbar, taking a piece out of his side. Carson starts BLEEDING profusely, but he's too pissed to notice.

Carson uses his bat to take the offensive. They go at each other like combatants in a swordfight, the CLANKING of metal echoing through the neighborhood along with the screaming house and car ALARMS, and frantic neighborhood DOGS.

Surprised at Carson's fury and strength, Asshole #1 backs onto the lawn, oblivious to the running SPRINKLERS.

As he backs away, his shoe catches on one of the sprinkler heads. It breaks off, and a huge GEYSER of water sprays out.

Carson holds his bat in both hands and jams the front of it into Asshole #1's breadbasket. He doubles over.

Carson grabs Asshole #1's arm, and pulls it quickly against his raised knee. There is a SNAP and a loud howl as the arm breaks, and Carson tosses him aside.

Seeing this, Asshole #2 gives up on the car. He takes off toward the street. Carson runs to head him off, but he's a lot faster in his Air Jordans than Carson is in his bare feet.

WIDER

Carson grabs the metal lid from a garbage can at the curb and FLINGS it like a huge Frisbee. It sails across the street --

And NAILS Asshole #2's head. He kisses the pavement, stunned.

Carson runs up and grabs him, but he pulls out a long, sharp screwdriver and jabs at Carson with it.

Then, blue flashing lights appear from around the corner: A WESTEC Chevy Blazer. Two uniformed GUARDS get out, and fumble with their sidearms.

WESTEC GUARD

Everybody... chill! Bikini boy! On the ground!

Asshole #2 is still trying to gouge Carson with the screwdriver. Carson glares at the dopey Guards.

CARSON

Asshole was trying to boost my car!

ANGLE ACROSS STREET

Carson's fiftyish, black, next-door NEIGHBOR, wearing pajamas and a robe, comes out of his house. Carson sees him.

CARSON

Mike -- call 911!

NEIGHBOR

Been trying...

(has a cordless phone)

It's busy.

(to Guards; re Carson)

He's the good guy, you schumcks.

The Guards seem to get it. Without warning, one takes out a TASER and ZAPS Asshole #2. Carson lets go just in time.

CLOSER

Holding his bleeding side, Carson walks back to his house. He notices the "Neighborhood Watch" sign has graffiti spray-painted on it. He touches it -- the paint is still wet. His Neighbor shrugs -- whatta ya gonna do?

The PAPER GUY drives by... and tosses Carson's newspaper right under the gushing SPRINKLER.

CARSON

I hate this fuckin' town.

EXT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - ESTABLISHING - DAY

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - DAY

Joy is standing on the toilet, blowing cigarette smoke into the exhaust fan. Someone KNOCKS on the door. She flicks the cigarette into the toilet, puts a ZIPPO LIGHTER in her pocket.

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - HALLWAY - DAY

Joy opens the bathroom door. Sam is standing there, grinning.

JOY

There are six bathrooms in this house, Sam.

SAM

(fanning the air)
But only one with a smoking section.

She quickly closes the door behind her. Sam laughs.

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Sam and Joy sit at the table. AMBASSADOR HAN and MRS. HAN are having breakfast: radish soup, kimchi and grilled fish.

Ambassador Han reads through the morning's faxed communiqués. He's 43, rarely smiles, and hates living in the U.S. He's dressed in an impeccably-tailored, Valentino two-piece suit.

Mrs. Han is slender, soft-spoken, but as iron-willed as her husband. She, however, is quick to smile. She's wearing a summery dress with a white sweater over her shoulders.

Ambassador Han pulls the front of Sam's shirt to reveal the "Nirvana" logo on his T-shirt.

AMBASSADOR HAN

(Korean)
[Go change.]

Ambassador Han's X-ray stare turns to Joy.

AMBASSADOR HAN

(continuing)
[You smell like a fireplace.]

A BUTLER appears with a phone. He WHISPERS to Mrs. Han.

MRS. HAN

It's the Governess...

(into phone)

Hello, Hilda...

CUTAWAY - CLOSE ON GOVERNESS

as she speaks into a cellular phone. She's extremely nervous. We cannot see her surroundings.

GOVERNESS

(thru phone)

Mrs. Han... I am very sick today...

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - DINING ROOM - DAY

MRS. HAN

(into phone)

We will see you next week...

(hangs up; smiles to kids)

It appears I'll be taking you to school.

INT. JAVAL'S VAN - DAY

In the back of his van, Javal pats the Governess' hand.

JAVAL

Very good. You may go now...

He speaks with a slight accent, French, perhaps. He pops an orange pill, then unlatches the rear doors of the van. With a quick glance back at him, she goes to open the doors.

Javal grabs a plastic tarp and throws it over the Governess' upper body. He puts his arm across her neck, flicks open a gravity knife and PLUNGES it through the tarp, into her chest.

He drops her on the floor of the van and fastidiously wipes a small smudge of blood from his hand with a handkerchief.

INT. CARSON'S HOUSE - BATHROOM AND BEDROOM - DAY

Carson steps out of the shower. He looks exhausted. Toweling off, he goes into the bedroom, where Miranda is riding an exercise bike, listening to music on headphones and reading the sprinkler-soaked newspaper, all while watching the TV.

ANGLE ON TV

A perky blonde traffic reporter, BOBBI MARCHFELDER, talks to us from a local NEWS COPTER.

BOBBI

(on TV)

...Good morning, Summit Day! It's gonna be the Super Bowl, the 4th of July, the Olympics and Woodstock all rolled into one! All over town there'll be parades, concerts, rallies, festivals... So get out there everyone, but plan your drive-time accordingly! This is Bobbi Marchfelder, your Eye in the Sky...

We CUT TO the White House lawn, where the PRESIDENT is about to board a helicopter.

MORNING ANCHOR (VO)

(on TV)

The President is on his way...

PRESIDENT

(on TV)

...It's an honor hosting my fellow leaders in Los Angeles, the capitol city of the Pacific Rim...

We CUT BACK to the studio and the MORNING ANCHOR.

MORNING ANCHOR

(on TV)

We'll see the menu for Mayor Simpson's Brentwood barbecue, right after this...

We CUT TO a MUSICAL MONTAGE of preparations for the events around town.

BACK TO SCENE

As the MUSIC swells, Carson turns the TV off.

MIRANDA

I was watching that.

CARSON

If I hear one more Beach Boys song,

I'll shoot myself.

Miranda points at the headphones -- she can't hear him.

CARSON

(continuing; while smiling)

I said, if we were having sex once in a while, you wouldn't need to ride that fucking bike every morning.

MIRANDA

(hasn't heard a thing)

Be right with you...

As Carson dresses, we get a LOOK at their bedroom -- Miranda's nightstand has two neat stacks of periodicals on it, with Los Angeles magazine and Psychology Today on the top of them.

Carson's nightstand is overflowing with books and magazines about other cities and states: Wonderland Washington; Magnificent Oregon; Welcome to North Carolina."

INT./EXT. CARSON'S HOUSE - PATIO & KITCHEN - DAY

Miranda, dressed in a conservative skirt, jacket, black shoes, is out on the patio. Her breakfast -- a bowl of fruit and wheat germ -- sits on the patio table while she waters some sickly-looking ROSE BUSHES in a planter.

Carson, dressed in shirt and tie, looking beat, fries a steak and three eggs in butter. He comes outside with his breakfast and a magazine article: "American Expatriates in New Zealand."

MIRANDA

(looks him over)

Have you gotten any sleep lately?

CARSON

(ignores the question)

Shop's gonna tow the car in -- goddamn ignition's trashed.

MIRANDA

Take mine. I'll ride in with Diane.

Carson watches as she carefully picks the dead leaves off the rose bushes.

CARSON

You ask me, those suckers are a lost cause.

She continues, then glances at the article Carson is reading.

MIRANDA

It's not for you.

CARSON

You mean it's not for you.

MIRANDA

I don't chase car thieves in my underwear. C'mon, you'd die of boredom if we ever sold this house and moved.

CARSON

I'd die of shock, from finding anyone dumb enough to buy the place. Even for what it's worth now.

MIRANDA

Lots of people bought at the top of the market...

CARSON

That sure cheers me right up.

MIRANDA

I don't know why we even talk about it. The city's not the problem. So we move. It wouldn't matter. What's that saying: "Wherever you go, there you are."

Carson just looks at her. Reaching for the salt, he winces from the cut in his side.

MIRANDA

(continuing)

I hope you're current on your tetanus booster. Was it worth it?

CARSON

One cut... two assholes in the hospital... Yep.

Carson glances at his watch and gets up.

CARSON

(continuing)

Well, another day of baby-sitting my favorite bunch of people...

He grabs a Bianchi shoulder holster with a Sig-Sauer P-229, 9mm pistol, straps it on, then pulls on a blue windbreaker. Emblazoned on the back are large yellow letters: FBI.

MIRANDA

Ask for a transfer.

CARSON

They're not gonna transfer me. You know damn well why I was bumped down to guard duty...

(as he's leaving)

My outstanding people skills.

Miranda tries to return to tending her roses. But instead, she sadly watches him go.

EXT. CARSON'S HOUSE - DAY

A look of sorrow crosses Carson's face as he watches some YOUNG KIDS laugh and shove, getting onto a school bus.

He then glances at his wounded Mustang, parked in the street. He spots something on the windshield: A pink parking ticket.

The parking sign above the graffiti-stained Neighborhood Watch sign reads: Street Cleaning - Friday 8-10 AM.

CARSON

I hate this fuckin' town.

Carson CHIRPS open Miranda's car: a red Volvo 960.

As he pulls away, we SEE a bumper sticker on the car: a circle and slash through cartoon weapons on one side, cartoon teddy bears on the other, and "Arms Are For Hugging" in between.

EXT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - DAY

The Driver backs the Mercedes out of the garage behind the Consulate. We notice there is ANOTHER MERCEDES parked inside.

Mrs. Han, Sam and Joy come outside. They hear some heartfelt

SWEARING:

ANGRY VOICE (OS)

Goddamn Limey overpriced piece a
shit...

THEIR POV

In the driveway across the street, a man in a business suit has his head under the hood of a brand-new Jaguar convertible. The JAG OWNER's 15-year-old, blonde daughter, LISA, sits in the car with her schoolbooks in her lap.

JOY

turns to Mrs. Han:

JOY

Can we give Lisa a ride?

INT./EXT. MERCEDES - DAY

It pulls into the driveway across the street. The Jag Owner is still SWEARING mightily. Lisa climbs into the Mercedes.

LISA

Hey, Joy... Sam...

Joy rolls the window up and the SOUND of cursing disappears.

LISA

(continuing)

Excellent -- I can't hear him!

SAM

(raps on window)

The glass is an inch thick.

(points to doors, roof)

Armor-plated. Bulletproof. Bomb-
proof.

LISA

Perfect car for L.A.

(looks back at her Dad)

Starts, too.

EXT. CRENSHAW BLVD - DAY

As the Mercedes travels its usual route down Crenshaw, Javal's

van begins following it.

INSERT ANGLE - UNDER THE MERCEDES

where Javal's DEVICE is attached, still waiting...

EXT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - DAY

A dark-green government Dodge pulls up and parks behind one just like it on a paved area near the Consulate gate.

DAVE JUAREZ, (chubby, 40, Mexican-American, a desk jockey) gets out of the Dodge and hangs an FBI shield over his top pocket.

He glances over at North Korean Security Chief COLONEL LEE, (45), who has paused inside the gate to regard Dave, and the outside world, with profound contempt.

Dave, attach. case in one hand and notebook computer in the other, walks to a 10-by-15 detached guardhouse on the far corner of the property, just outside the high fence.

INT. FBI GUARDHOUSE - NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - DAY

Inside are two desks and four chairs, a console of communication equipment, a microwave and a Mr. Coffee.

Dave enters. Two FBI agents, finishing their shift, gather their belongings: ROBBINS (late 20's; male; thinning hair) and SABATINI, (early 30's; cute; dark, bobbed hair; female).

They wear blue FBI blazers and have standard-FBI-issue 10mm Heckler & Koch MP-5 machine pistols in oversized shoulder rigs. Dave is in civilian clothes, and is not armed.

ROBBINS

Yo, Dave the Computer Man! Actually escaped the office!

DAVE

I'm doin' field upgrades. Gives 'em a chance to hose out my cage.

He glances through the window at Colonel Lee.

DAVE

(continuing)
Who's the fuckin' gargoyle?

ROBBINS

Their Chief of Security, Colonel Lee.

Sabatini makes the jerk-off sign with her hand.

SABATINI

"Chuckles," as we're inclined to call him.

(yawns; flops in a chair)

Friggin' graveyard shift...

ROBBINS

Love to know what dope made it the Bureau's job to give full-time protection to foreign consulates.

(offers coffee to Dave)

Cup a mud?

DAVE

Not if you made it. Why don't you get Sabatini to brew the java? She's the alleged chick.

SABATINI

Blow me.

DAVE

Where's Carson?

SABATINI

On his way. Some creeps tried to rip off his Mustang last night.

(beat; solemnly)

They cut the ragtop.

DAVE

Motherfuckers...

Dave takes three PCMCIA computer cards from his attach case.

DAVE

(continuing)

Latest and greatest. Wireless network link-ups.

SABATINI

Whoa, slow down, I'm gonna pee.

ROBBINS

Me, too.

DAVE
Ingrates.

EXT. CRENSHAW BLVD - DAY

The van drives in the lane alongside the Mercedes.

INT. JAVAL'S VAN - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

HUMMING, Javal drives with one hand, while tapping with his other on the top of the radio-controlled remote box.

EXT. CRENSHAW BLVD - DAY

As they approach the light at Washington Blvd, just turning yellow, Javal's van gets in front of the Mercedes.

Their lanes stop for the red light. A FRUIT VENDOR holding a bag of oranges walks from car to car.

Javal slips the van into neutral and lets it roll back until his rear bumper taps gently against the Mercedes' front bumper.

INT. MERCEDES - INCLUDE POV THROUGH REAR VIEW MIRROR - DAY

The Driver hits the HORN. The van doesn't move. The Driver glances in the rear-view:

There's a Jeep Cherokee tight on his tail, and the BLACK LADY in it is busy dealing with a carpool full of 8-year-old KIDS.

The Driver looks at Mrs. Han, who's peering out the side window, fascinated by the African-American-themed storefronts. They're all festooned with Summit-related banners, and SHOP OWNERS are preparing for a community sidewalk bazaar.

Sam, bored, stuffs several pieces of GUM into his mouth.

INT. JAVAL'S VAN - SAME

Javal flips the switch on his radio-controlled remote.

INSERT

Under the Mercedes, the device Javal planted there begins to emit thick, white CS TEAR GAS.

INT. MERCEDES - DAY

The GAS pours in through the ventilation system. Everyone inside starts coughing and choking uncontrollably. The Driver grabs his AMD-74 machine gun and pops the door locks.

EXT. CRENSHAW BLVD - DAY

The Driver, Mrs. Han, Joy, Sam and Lisa pile out of the car.

Jittering with excitement, fear and speed, Javal hops out of his van, holding a Benelli M-1, a semi-automatic shotgun.

He SHOOTS the Driver in the chest. The BLAST from the shotgun muzzle, however, is unlike anything we've ever seen before: it is blindingly BRIGHT, even in broad daylight, belching a huge cluster of glowing, white-hot magnesium.

The Driver flies back against the Mercedes, EMPTYING his machine gun into the air. The wound in his chest is full of BURNING magnesium shrapnel.

WIDER

The other drivers in the intersection see this and go completely nuts. Some duck for cover under their dashboards. Others peel away. A few COLLIDE with oncoming traffic.

The Carpool Lady in the Cherokee pushes the kids down on the floor. The Fruit Vendor hides by rolling under a car.

Sam and Joy are incapacitated by tear-gas coughing fits. Mrs. Han stumbles toward them, trying to get them to run away. Javal PUNCHES her, knocking her down.

He turns to Lisa, surprised to see her. Sweating, he points the shotgun at her... almost pulls the trigger... then notices Mrs. Han's expression of horror and thinks the better of it.

He spots a MOTORIST in a Ford Escort, peering cautiously over his dashboard to get a look at the action.

Javal SHOOTS the Motorist through the windshield with another bright, searing blast of magnesium. The Motorist and the entire front of his car burst into FLAMES.

Mrs. Han is on her knees, sobbing. Javal grabs her by the arm and pulls her to the back of the van. He opens the doors.

JAVAL

You see that I'm serious in my intention, yes?

(she nods)

If you cooperate, you and your children will be home for dinner tonight.

He tightens his grip on her. She nods again, then looks at the kids. Javal shoves her, Sam, Joy and Lisa into the van.

INT. JAVAL'S VAN - DAY

He grabs three pairs of handcuffs off a C-shaped bar welded on both ends to the inside of the van. He handcuffs one of Mrs. Han's arms, passes the chain through the bar, then handcuffs the other. He does the same with Sam; then handcuffs one of Joy's arms, passes the chain through and attaches the other handcuff to Lisa.

Javal hops in his seat and drives away on Washington.

EXT. CRENSHAW BLVD - DAY

Several people, including the Carpool Lady, rush over to the Driver, who lies DEAD and SMOLDERING on the ground.

His hand is halfway inside his bloody pants pocket, holding a small plastic card with the Consulate's phone number on it.

EXT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - DAY

Colonel Lee and a North Korean Army OFFICER come running out. ANOTHER OFFICER starts up a car in the back of the house.

INT. FBI GUARDHOUSE - NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - DAY

Robbins and Sabatini see the commotion and go to investigate. Dave follows.

EXT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - DAY

Ambassador Han runs out. He has a stricken look on his face.

COLONEL LEE

(Korean; to Ambassador Han)

[You must stay here.]

Ambassador Han nods. The FBI agents run up. To them:

AMBASSADOR HAN

Someone took my family!

The agents look at each other -- holy shit! Colonel Lee's car SCREECHES to a stop. Sabatini stands in front of it.

SABATINI

You got no jurisdiction outside
this property!

Colonel Lee shoves a big, ugly Tokorev 7.62x25mm-caliber pistol in her face as he's opening the car door.

SABATINI

(continuing)
Shit!
(to Ambassador Han)
Yank his fuckin' leash!

AMBASSADOR HAN

My men are going!

Colonel Lee jumps into the car and it screeches away, almost running Sabatini over.

AMBASSADOR HAN

(continuing; to Sabatini)
It's a white telephone van, driving
west on Washington Boulevard.

The agents rush back to their guardhouse. Dave's government Dodge is blocking theirs.

ROBBINS

Keys!

Dave tosses them to Robbins. Sabatini shoves Dave into the back seat. He looks at her, dumbfounded.

SABATINI

You're ridin' shotgun.

INT. DAVE'S DODGE - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Dave is thrown against the back of the seat by the ACCELERATION.

ROBBINS

Cherry?

DAVE

Under the seat.

Sabatini grabs the red flashing light, puts it on the dashboard.

ROBBINS

Siren?

DAVE

I don't know! I'm never in a fuckin' hurry..!

EXT. FREMONT PLACE - DAY

Just as they race out of Fremont Place past the guard gate, Carson, in Miranda's Volvo, comes in on the other side.

INT. CARSON'S VOLVO - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Carson sees the agents in the Dodge and floors the Volvo. He fishtails, making a U-turn.

He straddles the lanes on Wilshire to pull up next to them. All the cars in front of them swerve to clear out of the way.

He rolls down his window. Sabatini shouts over to him:

SABATINI

Someone snatched Han's family! White phone van, westbound on Washington!

Carson looks like he's been punched in the stomach.

CARSON

Give me a secure radio!

Sabatini takes a small two-way MOTOROLA RADIO out of her pocket and throws it through her window to Carson. Dropping it in his lap, he punches the gas. Robbins floors Dave's piece-of-shit Dodge, trying to keep up.

EXT. FEDERAL BUILDING, WESTWOOD - ESTABLISHING - DAY

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICES - DAY

Diplomatic Liaison EARL WALTHER is using the reflection in his office window to adjust his necktie. Walther is 30, good-looking, black; a GS lifer working his way up the ranks by virtue of his quiet competence.

A CO-WORKER sticks his head into the office, then shields his eyes from the sight of Walther's sharp new suit.

CO-WORKER

Someone's been to Nordstroms, big time.

WALTHER

Clothes make the man.

CO-WORKER

But does the man make enough for the clothes?

WALTHER

(smiles)

The man makes payments on his Visa.

Walther's SECRETARY rushes in.

SECRETARY

Mr. Walther... priority line!

WALTHER

(into phone)

This is Diplomatic Liaison Earl Walther... What's the nature of your emer --

(grimaces)

Aw, Jesus... not today...

(beat)

I'll inform channels and get a copter in the air. For God's sake, keep it quiet. Do what you can, but don't endanger civilians or the family!

INT. CARSON'S VOLVO - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Carson drives with one hand, while holding the radio.

CARSON

(into radio)

You bet -- nice and easy.

Real easy, until he narrowly MISSES a bunch of cars when SCREECHING around a corner.

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICES - DAY

Walther presses the intercom button on the phone.

WALTHER

(into phone)

Get the Secretary of State on the horn.

(listens)

I know he left already. I'm familiar with the concept of time zones. Find his ass.

INT. CARSON'S VOLVO - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Carson turns the frequency on his two-way.

CARSON

(into radio)

Robbins, Sabatini... Chopper's on its way.

EXT. WASHINGTON BLVD - DAY

Driving skillfully, Carson edges past the North Koreans.

INT. CARSON'S VOLVO - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

And then, Carson can't believe it: he spots Javal's van, a couple blocks ahead, driving at normal speed.

CARSON

(into radio)

Check it out! Ahead, on the right!

SABATINI (VO)

(thru radio)

Think it's them?

CARSON

(into radio)

Yeah... but it seems too easy... I'll move up; he won't suspect a civilian car. Stay back, then get on his ass when I signal. We'll box him in.

He looks over at Colonel Lee, whose car is pacing his.

CARSON

(continuing; into radio)

If the Mod Squad gets in your way,

don't be shy about getting 'em out.

SABATINI (VO)
(thru radio)
Copy that one.

INT. COLONEL LEE'S CAR - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Glaring, Colonel Lee looks over at the FBI cars as they pass.

INT. DAVE'S DODGE - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Sabatini pulls out her machine pistol, and tosses the two-way to Dave. He looks scared, and carsick.

SABATINI
Don't puke... I hate when guys puke!

EXT. WASHINGTON BLVD - DAY

Carson tries to approach Javal without drawing his attention.

INT. JAVAL'S VAN - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

He still drives at the same speed as the surrounding traffic.

HIS POV

As Carson nonchalantly passes, Javal NOTICES the government-issue two-way radio sitting on the seat of Carson's Volvo.

JAVAL

grins... it's show-time. He STOMPS on the gas.

INT. CARSON'S VOLVO - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Pissed that he's been made, Carson speeds up.

INT. JAVAL'S VAN - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Driving fast, Javal makes a hard right. As the van leans with the turn, something rolls out from under a sheet of canvas on the floor -- the Governess' BODY, bloodied and grotesque under the plastic tarp it's wrapped in.

Joy starts SCREAMING, as does everyone else when they see it.

Javal pulls out a Beretta Centurion 9mm pistol and FIRES a

deafening round through the roof of the van.

JAVAL

I need to concentrate!

EXT. WASHINGTON BLVD - DAY

During a lull in traffic, a WELL-DRESSED WOMAN jaywalks across the street. An LAPD black-and-white changes lanes and puts on its flashing lights. As two COPS write her a ticket...

Around the corner TWO MEN make a quick exchange of money and a vial of crack.

NEW ANGLE

The Cops do notice Javal speeding by, with Carson's Volvo, the FBI Dodge and Colonel Lee's car in hot pursuit. They shove the ticket in the Well-Dressed Woman's hand and hop in their car.

EXT. LA CIENEGA BLVD / SIDE STREETS - DAY

Javal turns onto the side streets -- rows of run-down apartment buildings. He takes a circuitous route, gaining a one-block lead on Carson and the others.

Then, he makes a sudden turn into a one-way alley.

INT. JAVAL'S VAN - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Javal hits a remote garage door opener. Ahead, rickety doors on one of a line of detached garages facing the alley OPEN up.

Across from the garage, parked parallel against the back of an empty building, we notice a duplicate van. It's facing the same direction as Javal is driving.

Javal slams on the brakes, stopping just past the garage, and then quickly backs up into the garage.

INT. ALLEYWAY GARAGE / JAVAL'S VAN - DAY

As he pulls in, we catch GLIMPSES of the van slipping backwards into a FIBERGLASS SUPERSTRUCTURE that fits tightly around the rear two-thirds of it. As the van comes to a stop, several snap-buckles on the edge of the superstructure spring closed.

Javal reaches out the van window and pulls on a rope hanging from the ceiling of the garage. The rope releases the door from the opening mechanism, so it immediately falls CLOSED.

Then, Javal turns several switches on another of his neatly-constructed remotes:

INT. DUPLICATE VAN - SERIES OF SHOTS - DAY

Steel straps are holding the steering wheel rigid.

A set of relays, triggered remotely, start the engine;

Engage the transmission;

And supply fuel to the carburetor.

EXT. ALLEYWAYS

The duplicate van takes off down the alley. Just as it gets up to speed, Carson and the others round the corner into the alley behind it. As far as they know, they're still chasing Javal.

The alley is several blocks long, running parallel to the main road, separated at each block by perpendicular streets. The duplicate van races along, scraping against parked cars and the rear walls of buildings...

INT. CARSON'S VOLVO - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

CARSON

(into radio)

He's gonna wrap it around something!

EXT. ALLEYWAYS - DAY

Indeed, as the duplicate van crosses a street, cars swerve to avoid hitting it. It continues into the next alley.

Up ahead, a garbage truck lumbers into the far end of the alley, its metal lift-rods extended to pick up a dumpster.

CARSON (OS)

Oh, shit...

The duplicate van CRASHES into the garbage truck and EXPLODES.

NEW ANGLE

Carson, horrified, jumps out of his car. Robbins and Sabatini run up. They have to hold Carson away from the burning van. Dave hurries to the back of a building and gets sick.

Colonel Lee, wide-eyed with anger, gets in Carson's face.

COLONEL LEE

You should not have interfered!

Carson shoves Colonel Lee out of his way, hard.

CARSON

I'm in no mood...

Colonel Lee comes back, ready for a fight. Carson is happy to oblige, but Robbins grabs Carson's arm.

ROBBINS

Forget about him!

By now, ONLOOKERS have begun to gather, as LAPD black-and-whites and helicopters converge on the area.

EXT. ALLEYWAY GARAGE - DAY

A block away, the garage door opens, and we hear something eerie and unexpected: a scratchy, music-box kids' SONG, coming from a loudspeaker.

Javal's van pulls out and we see its TRANSFORMATION: The superstructure surrounding the body of the van makes it look like a graffiti-covered, unlicensed ice cream vendor.

EXT. ALLEYWAYS - DAY

The entrance of the alley is blocked by a black-and-white. So, accompanied by the SONG, Javal drives along the one-way alley in his camouflaged van, passing unnoticed by the authorities.

Anguished, Carson is staring at the BURNING duplicate van...

CUT TO:

EXT. BEVERLY DRIVE - (FLASHBACK) - DAY

Beverly Thrift EXPLODES and BURNS...

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEYWAYS - DAY

Carson tries to shake the memory away. He looks around, sensing that something isn't right, then turns to the other agents.

CARSON

Let's get back to the Consulate.

Off their perplexed looks, we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BACHELOR APARTMENT - DAY

One room, bathroom and kitchenette. A laptop computer and peripherals are on a table, along with some cell phones, a toolbox, and some jumbles of electronic circuitry.

In the main room, there are three large Lazy-Boy easy chairs, side by side, facing a 27-inch TV on a stand. A cloth covers two OBJECTS sitting atop the TV.

The door opens. Mrs. Han, Joy, Sam, and Lisa walk in, rigid with fear. Javal, Beretta 9mm in hand, comes in behind them and closes the door. Javal strips off his sweat-soaked shirt and wipes his face with it. Mrs. Han realizes he's wired to the moon... and it terrifies her.

JAVAL

Does anyone need to use the rest room? This will be your last opportunity for a few hours.

(no takers)

Very well. Mrs. Han, Sam, Joy, please sit here.

(indicates the Lazy Boys;
then turns to Lisa)

And you... what is your name?

LISA

(after a beat)

Lisa...

Still holding the Beretta, he grabs a polo shirt from the closet and pulls it on. As the family sits in the chairs:

JAVAL

No, Mrs. Han, this one. Thank you.

He takes a pair of handcuffs out of his pants pocket. He tries to handcuff Lisa, hands behind her back, but she resists.

JAVAL

(continuing; sotto)

You afford me some additional

bargaining power. But not much.

She wilts. Javal cuffs her to the handles of the refrigerator. He puts a strip of duct tape from his tool box across her mouth.

He uncovers one of the items atop the TV: An electronic box with three pairs of oversized, LED VU meters on the front of it.

We NOTICE neat lines of wires running from each of the chairs up into it. Javal flips one of a row of switches on it; a green light and the meters come to life.

JAVAL

(continuing)

There. No taping your mouths, no restraints. Please remain still while I explain. The meters on the left indicate sound pressure -- Decibels. There are microphones on your chair backs. If you raise your voices above certain level, putting your meter in the red zone for more than one sustained second, the circuit will be closed.

(beat)

The right meters indicate motion. There are pressure sensors inside the armrests and seats. The sensors don't like to get wet, so I hope you were honest about not needing to use the loo. If you make any excess movements, or try to leave your chair, the circuit will be closed.

MRS. HAN

I don't understand...

She looks at her sound meter, which jumped close to the red.

MRS. HAN

(continuing; softly)

What happens if the circuit closes?

JAVAL

Kaboom...

He uncovers the other item atop the TV -- a one-pound brick of C-4 high explosive with the detonation mechanism jammed into it. Mrs. Han gasps and begins to PANIC.

JAVAL

(continuing)
Easy... deep breath...
(to the kids)
Do each of you understand?

They nod. Tears roll down Joy's face.

JAVAL
(continuing)
Keep your wits, and all will be fine.

He flips another switch and the green light turns yellow. He then turns on the TV. COVERAGE of the Summit is everywhere.

COMMENTATOR #1
(on TV)
...Not since the '84 Olympics has the whole city had an such an opportunity --

Javal turns the channel to a SOAP, and MUTES it. He starts pacing, and glances at his watch. It's 9:15 AM.

INT. GOVERNMENT HELICOPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

Earl Walther looks through the window as his copter lands on the lawn behind the North Korean Consulate.

EXT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - DAY

As the copter lands, Carson comes out to meet Walther.

WALTHER
Carson?
(Carson nods)
Walther. Who told the Ambassador?

CARSON
His Security Chief.
(beat)
There was a civilian with them -- fifteen-year-old girl from across the street. We're trying to reach the parents.

WALTHER
Goddamn it...
(sotto)
Look, Mrs. Han was the North Korean Premier's niece! We're hearing rumors they're gonna make a major issue out of what happened here...

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - HALLWAY - DAY

Carson and Walther come into the house. We hear only the TICKING of the grandfather clock in the foyer.

Colonel Lee and his Officers stand by the stairs; Robbins, Sabatini and Dave stand together near the front door.

CARSON

I'm not so sure what happened here.
Something smells. Asshole was acting
like he wanted us to spot him...

WALTHER

What the hell are you talking about?

AMBASSADOR HAN (OS)

Mr. Walther?

Ambassador Han comes down the stairs, his face tight with repressed emotion.

WALTHER

Ambassador Han... my deepest --

AMBASSADOR HAN

-- I have no wish for condolences.
Just answers.

WALTHER

As soon as we have any to give...

Suddenly, the Butler sprints across the foyer. He shoves the cordless phone into Ambassador Han's hands.

Ambassador Han listens to the phone, then takes in a sharp breath and sits on the steps.

AMBASSADOR HAN

(into phone)
Yoon..?!

CARSON

(to FBI agents)
Start a trace!

Carson is elated. Robbins, Sabatini and Dave rush out. Walther pulls out a cell phone and hits a speed-dial key.

WALTHER

(into phone)

Mr. Secretary... they're alive!

COLONEL LEE

(to Carson; incensed)

You are tapping our phones?!

CARSON

(while crossing to

Ambassador Han)

Yeah, you didn't know. And I'm Meryl
Streep.

INT. BACHELOR APARTMENT - DAY

Javal is holding his cell phone next to Mrs. Han's face.

MRS. HAN

(into phone)

We are not hurt. But this man is
very serious --

He pulls the phone from her, takes a breath to compose himself.

JAVAL

(into phone)

I want you to remember the feeling
you had when you thought your family
was dead, and use it to inform the
choices you're about to make.

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - HALLWAY - DAY

CARSON

Say you want to talk to the kids...

AMBASSADOR HAN

(into phone)

I need to know my children are all
right.

JAVAL (VO)

(thru phone)

Be in front of a television in two
minutes. Tune it to channel four.
You'll get the picture.

Javal hangs up. Stunned, Ambassador Han stands up.

AMBASSADOR HAN

There is a television in my office.

As Carson, Ambassador Han, Colonel Lee and Walther hurry to the office in the back of the house, Carson's radio crackles:

ROBBINS (VO)

(thru radio)

We're screwed on the trace -- he's on a cell phone.

INT. FBI GUARDHOUSE - NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - DAY

Dave and Robbins watch Sabatini work the comm console.

DAVE

Play the tape back. I might be able to pull the electronic serial number out of the subcarrier.

CARSON (VO)

(thru radio)

Ask Dave if he knows how to find the phone's serial number.

ROBBINS

(smiles; into radio)

Hey, great idea...

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - AMBASSADOR HAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Ambassador Han turns on the TV to channel 4.

ANGLE ON TV

It's the same medical SOAP that's on at the apartment -- a DOCTOR and NURSE are screwing in a deserted operating room.

INT. BACHELOR APARTMENT - DAY

Javal is standing in the kitchenette, pointing a DIGITAL STILL CAMERA at the family. It FLASHES as he takes a picture.

CLOSER

There is a cable running from Javal's computer to his cell phone. He hooks another cable to the digital camera, and an IMAGE appears on the screen of his laptop. He clicks on "SEND."

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - AMBASSADOR HAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Everyone stares expectantly at the TV. They turn as the fax machine on the credenza RINGS. An IMAGE begins to emerge from the machine: the picture from Javal's digital camera.

CLOSE ON FAXED PICTURE

It shows the Han family sitting in their booby-trapped chairs in front of the TV. The explosives and the electronics are clearly visible atop the set, as is the program on the TV.

CARSON (OS)

Oh, Jesus, those're explosives!

(beat)

Look at the TV -- this was just taken.

BACK TO SCENE

A second page on the fax begins to come through. As it does, the telephone RINGS. Carson and Colonel Lee both go for the extension near the sofa; Carson grabs it first. Ambassador Han picks up the phone on his desk.

JAVAL (VO)

(thru phone)

There must surely be several people in the room; you may put me on the speakerbox if you wish.

Ambassador Han clicks on the SPEAKERBOX. Carson and the others look at the second faxed page: a list of instructions.

JAVAL (VO)

(continuing; thru speakerbox)

I am not a terrorist. Your countries' political posturing means nothing to me. So do not waste time trying to negotiate.

(beat)

The Federal Reserve Bank of Los Angeles can furnish ten million dollars U.S. by 2:00 PM. The required denominations are in the instructions, as is the method of packaging. Be in your car at 3:00 PM, and drive north on Highland

Avenue. I will call with where to leave the money, which you will do at 3:30. If I am unmolested, I will call again at 4:00 with the family's location and the method for removing them from their... predicament.

Could you please refer to page one?

(they look at the photo)

Any deviation from these instructions and my device will fulfill its function at exactly 5:00 PM.

CLICK. Ambassador Han looks around, feeling totally helpless. Carson says nothing, trying not to show how uneasy he feels.

AMBASSADOR HAN

(to Walther)

P'y,ngyang must approve the ransom...

WALTHER

Of course. The FBI's top Hostage Negotiator is on the way --

CARSON

-- Goddamn Negotiator's the last thing we need! This asshole sound like he was interested in bargaining?

Walther glares at Carson, then continues to Ambassador Han:

WALTHER

We have people who are experts in these situations. We really feel it would be best if you let them coordinate everything...

Numb, Ambassador Han nods.

WALTHER

(continuing; to Carson)

Let's get on it...

INT. FBI GUARDHOUSE - NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - DAY

Robbins, Sabatini and Dave look up as Carson and Walther enter.

CARSON

...You're gonna just pay up, count on his good nature to return the family?!

WALTHER

It's the President's intention to keep this quiet, move forward with the Summit, and work with the North Koreans. Jesus, you've already embarrassed the shit out of us over the phone surveillance --

CARSON

-- They know their phones are tapped! They tap our fucking phones!

WALTHER

That's not the point! The point is not acknowledging it!

(beat)

We got an international incident brewing, with a country we were practically at war with last year! Our best Negotiator is gonna run point. If you got a problem, you can take the goddamn rest of the day off.

CARSON

This Consulate is my responsibility.

WALTHER

Not any more.

Carson is stunned. (OS), we hear a CHOPPER approaching.

WALTHER

(continuing)

That's the Negotiator. You do the briefing.

Carson shoots a disgusted look at the others, then leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - AMBASSADOR HAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Carson turns off the Beach Boys SONG on the TV behind him.

Holding Javal's faxes, he's facing Ambassador Han, Colonel Lee and the Hostage Negotiator (whom we don't yet see.)

CARSON

...Our worst enemy'll be the city.
There are events gearing up all
around town, and a dozen world
leaders arriving. Add the Friday
rush hour and usual L.A. bad
behavior and it'll be a nightmare
out there by 3 PM. It all works to
the advantage of the kidnapper,
hinders our pursuit efforts...
(frowns)
You don't agree?

WIDER

The Negotiator stands and takes the faxes from Carson.

It's Miranda, his wife. Her FBI shield-holder is folded over
the breast pocket of her jacket.

MIRANDA

I'm wondering whether to believe him
when he says he's strictly motivated
by money.

CARSON

(grabs faxes back)
You see one word of Peoples'-
Liberation, Holy-Jihad, Revolutionary
whatever-it-is-we're-pissed-off-about-
this-week bullshit in this entire
letter?

MIRANDA

I still want to check the MO against
known politicals, terrorists --

CARSON

-- Already doing it. We're
coordinating with the Secret
Service, the NSA and the CIA.

MIRANDA

Have someone talk to the LAPD, give
them a cover story for the media
about the crash on La Cienega.

Walther comes in and looks at Carson.

WALTHER

Why didn't you tell me Doctor Knoll
is your wife?!

This surprises Ambassador Han and Colonel Lee.

CARSON

(while looking at Miranda)
If she'd changed her name when we
got married, I wouldn't have to.

MIRANDA

(to Carson)
I'm so enjoying this opportunity to
finally work together...

WALTHER

Jesus, forget I asked.
(beat)
The cash will be here in an hour.
(to Miranda)
Any thoughts on the kidnapper's
thoughts?

MIRANDA

Everything indicates he's working
alone. And his concerns do seem to
be solely about the money... so I
agree that he's only using the
Summit and the tension with North
Korea to create extreme motivation
to pay the ransom.

COLONEL LEE

I will bring the money to him.

CARSON

My ass.

COLONEL LEE

The hostages are citizens of the
People's Republic of Korea --

CARSON

-- Hey, do I go to the torture
chambers in your prisons, tell you
how to do your job?

WALTHER

All right, you're outta here! Is

this the same insubordinate crap you pulled at Beverly Thrift?

Carson glares coldly at Walther.

CARSON

I'll coordinate the drop.

AMBASSADOR HAN

Perhaps that is better. Inspector Carson knows the terrain --

COLONEL LEE

-- Then he can come with me.

Walther looks at Miranda. She nods her assent.

WALTHER

(firm; to Carson)
It's settled.

CARSON

It sucks.

MIRANDA

But it means we can get on with it.

The Americans leave the room.

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - HALLWAY - DAY

Still fuming, Carson walks ahead. Miranda pulls Walther aside.

MIRANDA

(sotto)
Get one thing straight, Mr. Walther.
If the Bureau had listened to Pete,
Beverly Thrift never would've
happened.

INT. BACHELOR APARTMENT - DAY

Hands shaking with nerve- and speed-induced jitters, Javal turns two switches on the unit atop the TV. Two LED readouts light up: one shows the current time -- 2:30 PM -- the other is fixed at 5:00 PM. Below, the TV is still on.

Javal flips the channels, stopping at a rerun of "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous." He suppresses a gleeful giggle.

JAVAL

That's more like it...

He checks the contents of his prescription bottle. Two pills. He takes one, stuffs the bottle in his pocket, and leaves.

EXT. P.Y,NGYANG, NORTH KOREA - DAY

SUPER: P,y,ngyang. Capitol of North Korea.

Poster city for the charms of Communism: dreary, crumbling, gray, stifling, hopeless.

INT. WORKERS' PARADISE HALL - CONFERENCE CHAMBER - DAY

In the main government offices, a meeting of ten overly-decorated MILITARY MEN and their SUPPORT STAFFS.

Sour GENERAL KAI (50's) is ARGUING heatedly in KOREAN with an aged MODERATE GENERAL. The weak-willed PREMIER OF NORTH KOREA sits up front and listens passively.

An ARMY MAJOR sitting behind General Kai stands and slips out the door.

EXT. WORKERS' PARADISE HALL - ROOFTOP - DAY

Crouched behind an air-conditioning unit, the Major, an American Operative, speaks in UNACCENTED ENGLISH into a small UPLINK DEVICE, disguised to look like a palmtop computer.

OPERATIVE

(into uplink device)

...They've got the Premier agreeing to the hard-line position --

He hears footsteps approaching (OS).

OPERATIVE

(continuing; sotto)

More to follow...

He angles skyward a tiny dish-shaped antenna on the Device. On its screen it says COMPRESSING... SCRAMBLING... UPLINKING...

After it's finished, the Operative snaps it closed and puts it into a false bottom in his attach. case. He disappears just before a GUARD rounds the corner.

EXT. STREETS OF LOS ANGELES - VARIOUS ANGLES - DAY

"Welcome Pacific Partners" banners hang everywhere.

WORKERS and CATERERS prepare for the various parties and events around town. COPS and PRIVATE SECURITY do their best to keep traffic moving, but it's already getting congested.

INT. FBI GUARDHOUSE - NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - DAY

Dave stares at his computer, looking through a DATABASE of kidnapers and their modus operandi. He rubs his eyes.

DAVE

I wanted to be home by now, take the kids to the rally in Boyle Heights.

SABATINI

We got a cabin in Big Bear. By now, L.A. was supposed to be a brown blotch in the rear-view mirror.

She's helping Walther stack packs of THOUSAND-DOLLAR-BILLS into a series of small plastic bags, tying each one off when it's the size of a brick. They then put the individual bags into two larger bags.

Robbins rubber-bands a matchbook-sized HOMING TRANSMITTER in between two packs of cash. He then hollows out a dime-sized space inside a different pack of money with a razor knife.

He puts a tiny, SECOND homing transmitter in the space. Carson checks some hand-held receivers. Miranda crosses to him.

MIRANDA

He'll expect a homing device --

CARSON

-- I expect him to expect it. He'll check the cash with an RF detector...

(re larger transmitter)

Meaning he'll find this one.

(re smaller transmitter)

This only has a quarter-mile range, but on a frequency too low to detect.

(turns off receiver)

And I doubt the asshole will have an X-ray machine or a metal detector.

MIRANDA

Why must you always refer generically to criminals as "assholes?"

CARSON

Gosh, you're right. It could undermine their self-esteem and spoil their chances for rehabilitation.

MIRANDA

You been reading my magazines in the bathroom again?

She returns to listening to an AUDIO TAPE:

JAVAL (VO)

(thru recorder)

"And my device will fulfill its function at exactly 5:00 PM..."

MIRANDA

He's really exhibiting pressured speech... big effort here to sound calm. Same with his vocabulary... if he were in control, he wouldn't feel such a need to sound that way.

CARSON

Just tell me if we can use it.

MIRANDA

If we needle him he could get sloppy and give us an opening, but I'm not going to risk it. This is the worst kind of perpetrator: anything makes him deviate from his carefully-scripted plan, he could become extremely volatile.

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAY

During this, Colonel Lee stands in a window on the top floor, pointing a LASER EAVESDROPPING UNIT at the FBI guardhouse.

MIRANDA (VO)

(thru headphones)

Do we have back-up if the bleeper fails?

CARSON (VO)

(thru headphones)

Nothing but physical surveillance.

INT. FBI GUARDHOUSE - NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - DAY

MIRANDA

It's real important we don't lose him. He didn't go through all the trouble of designing that bomb not to use it.

Carson looks at her as the thought of it hits him.

CARSON

Well, it ain't gonna happen.

(beat; sotto)

Not again...

EXT. WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON, DC - ESTABLISHING - DAY

INT. WHITE HOUSE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The National Security Council: VICE PRESIDENT, SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE, STATE, CHIEFS of the FBI, CIA and NSA -- sit nervously around a table, facing a video conferencing setup. The President, in Air Force One, APPEARS on it.

PRESIDENT

(thru video link)

What the hell is the big crisis?

SECRETARY OF STATE

We just received a missive from the North Korean attach. They say the kidnapping is a U.S. plot to provoke and humiliate them during the Summit.

PRESIDENT

(thru video link)

Bullshit. They're just ticked because we don't want the Chinese dragging their asses into the treaty talks.

The SENIOR INTELLIGENCE OFFICER refers to his notes.

INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

We have a covert operative in place. He reports the hard-liners and moderates in the High Command are arguing about how to respond, should the Premier's niece and her children should be killed.

PRESIDENT

(scowls; thru video link)
Respond?! Christ. What about the
damn Premier?

SECRETARY OF STATE

He's weak. He has to look tough to
save face, keep control of hard-
liners... otherwise he risks a coup.

CIA CHIEF

Which is a real possibility. Most of
those old-fart Generals don't want to
-more-

CIA CHIEF (Cont'd)

be part of the Summit any more than
we want them to. They're mad as hell
he even talked to the Chinese.

PRESIDENT

(thru video link)
I don't want to deal with this right
now! Get our diplomats on it. Tell
the North we'll pay the ransom for
'em... Placate 'em! And make damn
sure we get that family back in one
piece. Who's in charge in L.A.?

FBI CHIEF

The Bureau, Sir. We have a crack
team in place.

SECRETARY OF STATE

There's a Diplomatic Liaison from
State, too.

CIA CHIEF

(to FBI Chief)
What about your man stationed at the
Consulate...
(refers to notes)
Carson? He was demoted from the FBI
Hostage Program, couple years back.
And this did happen on his watch...

FBI CHIEF

(irritated)
There's no way he could've prevented
this abduction! Besides, I've got one
of my top Negotiators in charge --

PRESIDENT

(thru video link)

-- Whatever. I want a total news blackout and I want this over with, quickly! Without giving those Commie little bastards any excuse to shit all over my Summit!

EXT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - DAY

Inside, the grandfather clock in the foyer CHIMES THREE TIMES.

Colonel Lee, carrying an AMD-74 machine gun, goes to get in the driver's side of the second armored Mercedes, but Carson is already there. Grumbling, he crosses to the passenger's side.

Carson drives off just a moment before Colonel Lee is completely in the car.

EXT. HIGHLAND AVENUE - DAY

The Mercedes crosses Melrose, going into Hollywood. The town is all done up with posters and banners.

Robbins and Walther follow a block behind the Mercedes in an unmarked car; Sabatini and Dave drive ahead in Dave's Dodge.

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - AMBASSADOR HAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Miranda, Ambassador Han, and Lisa's father (the cussing Jag Owner) wait by the phone. Miranda smiles reassuringly at the two nervous fathers. The phone RINGS; she picks it up.

MIRANDA

(into phone)

Yes, please go ahead...

JAVAL (VO)

(long beat; thru phone)

Ah... this must be one of those professionals --

MIRANDA

(into phone)

-- I'm only here to see that everyone gets what they want --

JAVAL (VO)

(thru phone)

-- I've got my shotgun in little Lisa's mouth, and I will pull the trigger in five seconds unless you put the Ambassador on the phone.

Miranda hands the phone to Ambassador Han.

INT. MERCEDES - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

From the two-way radio in Carson's pocket:

MIRANDA (VO)

(thru radio)

The drop is at the DeMille barn, across from the Hollywood Bowl. You're to leave the money in the center of the parking lot.

CARSON

(into radio)

Shit... no way we can set up a stake-out in...

-more-

CARSON (Cont'd)

(checks watch)

Four minutes. Call the Park Rangers at the Bowl. Have them clear the area of civilians.

MIRANDA (VO)

(thru radio)

Remember, Pete... we're dealing with a customer with a lot of rage.

CARSON

(to himself)

Must've bought a house same time we did.

EXT. HIGHLAND AVENUE - VARIOUS ANGLES - DAY

Robbins and Walther are inching along in traffic on Highland near Hollywood Blvd.

Elsewhere, we see unmarked police and government cars cruising around, dropping off disguised FOOT-SURVEILLANCE OFFICERS, etc.

A BIKER CLUB

of twenty aging, weekend-warriors, all on custom Harleys, turn

from the Boulevard onto Highland.

EXT. DEMILLE BARN - DAY

Carson drives the Mercedes into the entrance of the Hollywood Museum Park. Carson stops in front of a yellow barn with a sign atop it: "Jesse Lasky Famous Players."

INT./EXT. JAVAL'S VAN - DAY

Still disguised as an ice-cream truck, the van is parked across Highland by the entrance to the Hollywood Bowl, where a Summit-related concert is being readied.

Javal watches the Mercedes, and takes his last pill. He's flying.

INT. MERCEDES - DAY

Colonel Lee grabs the two large plastic bags full of money from the back seat, opens his door, and drops them onto the pavement. Carson looks around.

CARSON

(into radio)

There's about a hundred ways he can scurry off like a cockroach from here... So spread out.

Colonel Lee checks their BEEPING homing receiver. Carson hangs a left onto Highland, going back the way he came.

INT. DAVE'S DODGE - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Dave holds their homing receiver. Sabatini, behind the wheel, smacks his arm and points ahead:

EXT. DEMILLE BARN - DAY

Javal's van drives into the parking lot, and stops right above the bags of money.

DAVE

(into radio)

Our boy's in a fuckin' ice cream truck!

EXT. ODIN STREET - DAY

Sabatini and Dave watch Javal's van through the trees.

INT. JAVAL'S VAN - DAY

Javal, sweating and shaking, quickly runs a metal-detector wand over each of the individual bags of money. One of them makes the speaker in the wand handle WHINE.

INT. DAVE'S DODGE - INCLUDE POV OF DEMILLE BARN - DAY

The van pulls away.

Dave glances at the homing receiver. The signal isn't moving. He looks up...

Two of the small bags of money are sitting on the pavement.

DAVE

Son of a bitch!

(into radio)

He found the beepers -- both of them!

INT. MERCEDES - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

CARSON

(into radio)

Fuck! Okay, stay back. It's not like he'll be hard to see in that truck. Which way's he heading?

DAVE (VO)

(thru radio)

Toward the freeway.

Carson hangs a U-turn.

EXT. HIGHLAND AVENUE - DAY

At the complex intersection where Highland ends at the 101, Javal bears to the right, toward the South on-ramp.

Sabatini and Dave follow a few cars behind as he gets on it.

Suddenly, he scoots over to the shoulder and slams the van into REVERSE. He backs off the on-ramp, past a row of angry drivers, passing by Sabatini and Dave.

Peeling in reverse onto Highland, Javal stomps on the brakes. The snap buckles holding the ice-cream-truck superstructure around his van BREAK APART, and the whole thing slides off... blocking Sabatini's way.

Javal drives forward again, this time getting onto the 101 North on-ramp.

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - AMBASSADOR HAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Miranda looks at Ambassador Han and Lisa's father while anxiously clutching her two-way radio.

MIRANDA

(into radio)

What happened?

CARSON (VO)

(thru radio)

We're made! Gotta grab him!

MIRANDA

(beat; into radio)

All right... Carefully...

INT. MERCEDES - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Carson follows Javal onto the freeway. Colonel Lee grabs his AMD-74 machine gun.

CARSON

Watch it! We need him alive!

EXT. HOLLYWOOD FREEWAY - DAY

Colonel Lee leans out and SHOTS Javal's rear tires out.

The van drives erratically, held in its lane by bumping against the cars around it.

Carson pulls up closer...

Suddenly, the rear doors of the van burst open...

And Javal flies out, riding a motorcycle. He's got the money stuffed into two big, chaps-sized SADDLEBAGS slung over the back of the machine.

He straddles the lanes, going against traffic, riding like a maniac back the way he came.

Carson watches him in the rear-view... and speeds up, driving away from him.

COLONEL LEE

Turn around!

But Carson hugs the shoulder, moving through the heavy traffic, until he spots what he was looking for:

The Biker Club, riding in formation up ahead.

Carson cuts in front of them and slams on the brakes. He jumps out and grabs one of the Biker's machines by the handlebars, wrestling it to a stop. While pulling its BURLY OWNER off it:

CARSON

FBI. Call our office, they'll take care of you.

Meanwhile, the other BIKERS have come to help their friend. They pull guns, knives, chains...

They're stopped by Sabatini, who appears holding her MP-5 machine pistol. The Biker yells at Carson as he drives way:

BIKER

I'm a taxpayer! I'm a goddamn dentist!

COLONEL LEE

gets in the driver's seat of the Mercedes and turns it around.

JAVAL

continues down the freeway on his bike, straddling lanes, driving the wrong way, retracing his route back to Highland, leaving CAR HORNS, CURSING, and COLLISIONS in his wake.

WIDER

When everyone thinks they've seen it all, here comes another mad biker -- Carson -- riding against traffic in pursuit.

EXT. HIGHLAND AVENUE - DAY

Javal rides against traffic down the Cahuenga on-ramp, then jumps the divider, runs the light crossing Highland, and gets into the southbound lanes.

He just misses a BUS, nearly wiping out.

CARSON

Just don't kill yourself, you piece
of shit...

Carson fishes out his two-way.

CARSON

(continuing; into radio)
Helicopter or two would be nice!

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - AMBASSADOR HAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Listening to the two-way, Miranda tries to follow the action.

MIRANDA

(into radio)
Love to be in the loop on this...

EXT. HIGHLAND AVENUE - DAY

Speeding up, Carson precariously cuts in between traffic.

CARSON

(to himself)
Not just now, dear...

Seeing Carson approaching on his right, Javal pulls his Benelli
shotgun from one of the saddlebags. He rests the barrel on his
arm and FIRES a blinding-white load of magnesium at Carson.

Carson grabs the brake handles to slow down, and the BLAST
crosses just in front of him. A few BURNING pieces pepper the
front fender of the bike, but the bulk HITS the concrete art-
deco statue in the entrance to the Hollywood Bowl. The statue
shatters into a million FLAMING fragments.

CARSON

(continuing; grumbling)
I coulda had a ranch... maybe some
horses... but no, we moved to L.A.

JAVAL

speeds up. A car passing on the right BUMPS him. Javal grabs
for the handlebar to stabilize himself, DROPPING the shotgun.

A HELICOPTER appears, and flies just above him.

Then, spotting some police cars ahead, he quickly hangs a
right, ducking onto Alta Loma Terrace.

EXT. ALTA LOMA TERRACE - DAY

Carson stops at the entrance to the winding, hillside neighborhood, accessible only by footpaths. The area is covered by thick foliage, hiding Javal from the helicopter.

Carson revs down so he can listen for Javal's machine. He HEARS it up above and takes off, up a steep flight of stairs.

NEW ANGLE

Javal has reached the summit, only to find he's boxed in. He can either turn around, or take the neighborhood's unique, outdoor elevator, housed in a free-standing, three-story concrete tower.

He jumps off his bike. Carrying the saddlebags, he runs into the elevator -- but it needs a key to operate.

Javal comes back out, panicking. He HEARS Carson coming up the hill. He spots a GARDENER watering nearby with a hose.

ANGLE WITH CARSON

as he reaches the summit. He sees Javal's motorcycle, abandoned, lying on its side...

And then he sees the Gardener, sprawled on the ground, a BULLET HOLE in the center of his forehead.

Carson turns off his motorcycle and pulls out his Sig 9mm. He moves slowly toward the elevator tower and looks inside.

HIS POV

The casement window in the back of the tower is broken. One end of the gardener's hose is tied to a grate, and the hose is hanging through the broken window.

Carson looks out the window as Javal climbs down the outside of the tower on the hose to High Tower Drive, the street below.

CARSON

(into radio)

He's on foot, at the base of the elevator tower!

But just as Carson is about to climb down the hose...

EXT. HIGH TOWER DRIVE - DAY

Javal spots a COLLEGE GIRL backing a tiny Geo out of her garage. He rips her out of the car, jumps in and tears away.

EXT. ALTA LOMA TERRACE - DAY

Carson jumps back on his motorcycle and starts it up.

CARSON

(into radio)

Goddammit! He's in a blue Geo!

EXT. HIGHLAND AVENUE - DAY

In the Geo, Javal drives out onto Highland. He muscled his way through traffic, then cuts across to Franklin.

Behind him, Robbins and Walther drive along the divider lane.

On the bike, Carson emerges from Alta Loma, joining Sabatini and Dave in Dave's Dodge and Colonel Lee in the Mercedes as they all try to catch up to Javal.

The helicopter flies ahead, then disappears past the hill below Franklin.

EXT. VINE STREET - DAY

Javal hangs a hard right off of Franklin onto Vine, putting him on top of a hill that drops down to Sunset.

Carson and Colonel Lee close in on the Geo.

Suddenly, the helicopter RISES UP from the bottom of the hill. It's less than fifty feet in front of Javal, at eye level.

Javal FIRES at the copter with his Beretta.

Colonel Lee indiscriminately FIRES his machine gun at the Geo.

Carson SHOUTS at Colonel Lee, furious at his carelessness!

INT. PURSUIT COPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

Colonel Lee's BULLETS trace across the cockpit of the helicopter; one hits the PILOT in the neck. Clutching it with one hand, the Pilot loses control of the copter.

EXT. VINE STREET - DAY

Everyone on the road scatters to get out of the copter's way.

It appears as though it's going to crash onto the street, then it gains altitude, GYRATING wildly just above the Geo.

Javal tries to move away, but one of its landing runners SMASHES through the top of the windshield, WEDGING itself against the inside of the Geo's roof.

Snared, the little Geo is LIFTED off the ground -- instantly too high for a terrified Javal to escape from it.

INT. PURSUIT COPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

The wounded Pilot, barely conscious, searches for safe area to set down -- but there are cars and people everywhere.

The Pilot wrestles his stick; his copter is almost impossible to control with the car hanging from it. He's fading...

EXT. VINE STREET - DAY

The copter and Geo lurch over and past the round Capitol Records building, KNOCKING the spindle off the top of it.

The impact further destabilizes the copter's flight. It's heading right toward the 20-story Sunset Vine Tower, at the bottom of the hill.

INT. JAVAL'S GEO - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

Javal, trapped inside, looks through the windshield as the glass and steel side of the tower looms closer. He SCREAMS.

EXT. SUNSET VINE TOWER - DAY

The copter and the Geo CRASH into the side of the Tower, 12 floors up. Glass blows out in all directions; the rotor shatters; office furnishings are blown through the hole like backwash.

The Geo hangs passenger's side down from the runner.

CLOSER

From the series of jerking, slipping MOVEMENTS, it is clear the copter is not going to stay where it is for long.

The Geo's passenger side door pops open. Javal, panting with fear, jimmies his foot against the dashboard and holds the steering wheel to keep from falling out.

ANGLE ON VEHICLES BELOW

In the clog of traffic, cars swerve away, rapidly reverse... anything to get away from the area below the impact.

JAVAL

reacts to another SLIP. The big saddlebags of money on the seat start to slide toward the open door.

He gingerly reaches over to grab them... the copter SHIFTS again... he loses his grip...

And, clutching the saddlebags, he TOPPLES out of the car.

We stay with him as he FALLS 12 stories, SCREAMING...

Then LANDING on top of a parking meter. It RIPS through his chest and he hits the sidewalk with a wet THUD.

EXT. VINE AND SUNSET - DAY

Carson rushes across the street to Javal's body. The teetering copter and Geo are right above it.

Grimacing, Carson tries to lift Javal's body up off the parking meter, but it's messy, slippery work...

Unable to move the body, Carson quickly searches its pockets. All he finds is the now-empty prescription bottle.

Above, the copter GROANS... it's about to come loose...

Carson pulls out his Sig 9mm and FIRES several times at Javal's right wrist, then TEARS the HAND off the body.

With a loud WRENCHING of metal, the copter and Geo break away from the building.

Carson grabs the saddlebags and runs like hell across the street, diving for cover behind a car.

BEHIND CARSON

the copter and Geo crash to the sidewalk and EXPLODE.

NEW ANGLE

Sooty, covered in Javal's blood, Carson crosses to the others. He throws Walther the saddlebags and Sabatini the severed hand.

CARSON

Fingerprint it.

(to Walther)

He's not gonna tell us where to find the hostages...

-more-

CARSON (Cont'd)

(looks at watch)

Meaning we got exactly 80 minutes to figure it out for ourselves.

WALTHER

Figure it out?! With what?!

CARSON

(ignores him; into radio)

Miranda! We need a copter, pronto!

(to Robbins)

Get back to his van. There were no plates, but check the VIN, look it over, then meet us at the Consulate.

Robbins is still trying to process what just happened.

CARSON

(continuing)

Go!

CUT TO:

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - AMBASSADOR HAN'S OFFICE - DAY

The clock reads 3:50 PM. Carson, Miranda, Robbins, Sabatini, Ambassador Han and Colonel Lee are all TALKING at once.

CARSON

(to Walther)

...Scrounge us some bodies: National Guard, State Troopers, CHPs, local PD's, meter maids --

WALTHER

-- They're gonna search the whole city in a goddamn hour..?!

CARSON

Look, I don't need you to tell me how fucked we are!

WALTHER

Fuck you!! Every time you're on a case something explodes!

Carson looks like he's going to explode. Before he can reply:

MIRANDA

Stop! The clock's running! Arguing is a luxury we can't afford!

-more-

MIRANDA (Cont'd)

(looks at Carson)

What's done is done. There'll be plenty of time to point fingers later.

Carson would love to get into it, but he lets it slide. He looks Sabatini, wandering aimlessly with Javal's severed hand.

SABATINI

I need some fuckin' ink!!

Carson grabs one of the expensive pens from Ambassador Han's desk, SNAPS it in half, and hands it to her.

In the b.g. she stands at the credenza, inks the hand's fingers and thumb and rolls them onto a piece of letterhead paper.

AMBASSADOR HAN

This is impossible! How can you even begin to find them?

Good question. All eyes go to Miranda.

MIRANDA

Well, the normal procedure is to negotiate with the perpetrator...

Her head is spinning. She looks at Carson.

CARSON

Let's take stock. We've got a picture of where he hid the family, and recordings of his calls --

MIRANDA

-- That's right! We can send them to our experts for analysis...

CARSON

(to Ambassador Han)
Same with his fingerprints. But that means we need high-quality image and data transmission. We can piss away ten minutes coptering this shit to our offices in Westwood, or we can use your surveillance equipment.

COLONEL LEE

There is no surveillance equipment. This is a diplomatic facility --

CARSON

-- You want to play games, fine.

He turns to go. Ambassador Han turns to Colonel Lee.

AMBASSADOR HAN

Take them upstairs.

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAY

In the converted attic, several North Korean ESPIONAGE AGENTS monitor military and police frequencies, downlinks from remote wiretaps and surveillance units; short-wave, cellular, etc. Their equipment, being of Chinese and Iranian manufacture, is hardly cutting-edge technology.

Colonel Lee and Ambassador Han enter. The Espionage Agents are surprised when Carson, Miranda, Walther and Sabatini follow. Walther looks around, amazed. Carson grabs a pair of headphones.

CARSON

South Korean Consulate's just down the street -- want to take a listen?

Colonel Lee pulls the phones away from him.

Carson takes the page with the fingerprints from Sabatini. The Espionage Agents back away from her and Javal's hand.

CARSON

(continuing; re hand)
Shitcan that thing, will you?!

She looks around. Then, shrugging, she tosses it into a wastepaper basket.

CARSON

(continuing; to Colonel Lee)
Got a digital scanner?

COLONEL LEE
Analog.

CARSON
(looks equipment over)
You might want to drop a few bucks at
Radio Shack and get with the decade.
(into radio)
Dave -- get in here. Bring your
computer, a city map, and the tapes
of the ransom calls.

DAVE (VO)
(thru radio)
On my way...

He's also HEARD, faintly, through the laser eavesdropping unit
by the window. Carson notices, but doesn't comment.

MIRANDA
(to Colonel Lee)
Colonel, you saw the perp. Describe
him to the Ambassador, see if it's
anyone he knows.

Colonel Lee begrudgingly obliges. Carson dials a phone.

CARSON
(into phone)
This is Carson in L.A. There's a set
of prints coming over. Narrow the
search criteria: Male, thirties,
Caucasian... French, Belgian, Swiss,
maybe Canadian. Try kidnapers and
bombers first. We need an answer in
fifteen minutes.

EXT. HOOVER BUILDING, WASHINGTON, DC - DAY

FBI headquarters, with the Washington Monument in the b.g.

INT. HOOVER BUILDING - FINGERPRINT LAB - DAY

A TECHNICIAN, wearing thick glasses, sits in front of a high-
resolution computer monitor.

FINGERPRINT TECH

(into phone)

That yellow air out there finally
rot your brain?! It's impossible!

CARSON (VO)

(thru phone)

Dazzle me.

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAY

Carson clicks off the phone, then, as he dials another number:

CARSON

(to Walther)

We got one of the best sound guys
right here in town...

(into phone)

Newman in Audio Analysis...

DAVE (OS)

Newman's gone.

WIDER

Dave comes into the room.

DAVE

He quit, couple weeks ago. Opened a
bed and breakfast in Wyoming.

Carson looks at Miranda and hangs up the phone.

DAVE

(continuing; looks around)

Damn... they get HBO? I'd sure like
to see the fight tonight.

CARSON

Get those tapes transferred to a
sound guy. We need ambient and
background analysis, the whole
enchilada.

DAVE

Enchilada -- you saying that because
I'm Mexican?

CARSON

No... 'cause you're fat.

MIRANDA

(picks up Javal's fax)
Photo enhancement... Isn't there
some amazing tech with the LAPD --

DAVE

-- Bronsky. Transferred to Seattle
PD a month ago.

CARSON

Jesus H. Christ...

SABATINI

I'd send it to Langley. Let the CIA
earn their keep.

CARSON

Do it.

Carson tosses Javal's bloody, unlabeled prescription bottle to
Miranda. She looks it over, runs her finger inside, tastes the
dust on her fingertip.

MIRANDA

Given his behavior, this orange
residue... I'd say Desoxyn, 25 mg.
Amphetamines.

CARSON

Any significance?

MIRANDA

It's consistent with the lone wolf
scenario: A handful of these is pure
bravery-in-a-bottle, 'til the
psychosis and paranoia kick in.

(beat)

We could check pharmacy records, on
the remote chance he got them
legally... if we had a couple of
weeks, that is.

CARSON

(to Sabatini)
Get the Bureau on it.

MIRANDA

Forget it. It's a waste of manpower.

CARSON

Look, goddammit, you start skipping no-chance-in-hell leads, we can all quit and go to the beach right now.

Sabatini looks at them -- which will it be? Miranda frowns and nods her okay, then spreads the L.A. map out on the table.

CARSON

(continuing)

He grabbed the family at 8:30. The last certain visual we had was just before his van went into the alley on La Cienega at 8:42. He called the Consulate at 9:30.

MIRANDA

That gives him about fifty minutes to get to his location, move and secure the hostages, and activate his time bomb.

CARSON

He probably waited a while to pad the time -- he wanted us know the family was still alive...

(sotto; re Koreans)

...So these crazy bastards wouldn't throw a premature shit hemorrhage, but he didn't want to call too soon, either. I say they're within 15 to 20 minutes, via surface streets, of where we last saw them.

He draws a circle on the city map: Beverly Hills to downtown, Hollywood to Inglewood.

MIRANDA

The most densely-populated part of the L.A. basin. This narrows it down to about 200,000 dwellings.

A beat while this sinks in.

MIRANDA

(continuing)

He was traveling west --

CARSON

-- Bet he doubled back.

MIRANDA

C'mon, that's total conjecture --

SABATINI

(re Carson)

-- I'd trust his instincts when dealing with maniacs. He is deeply disturbed.

MIRANDA

You're telling me?

INT. WHITE HOUSE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Everyone is smoking. Their tension has increased tenfold since we last saw them. The President, SEEN through the video setup, is pacing on Air Force One.

SECRETARY OF STATE

...North Koreans have gone ballistic, accusing us of botching the ransom drop on purpose.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

They're still harping on that "American plot" nonsense.

PRESIDENT

(thru video link)

Meaning?

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

They say the death of the Premier's niece and her family would justify immediate retaliation.

PRESIDENT

(thru video link)

Are they out of their fuckin' minds?!
What kind of retaliation?

Everyone in the room looks at one another.

CIA CHIEF

They're threatening to pull a Saddam

Hussein: remember the Scuds he lobbed at Jerusalem during Desert Storm?

(beat)

They're talking about firing a missile into Los Angeles --

PRESIDENT

(thru video link)

-- A goddamn WHAT??

INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

Best guess is an AS-15, medium-range cruise -- their version of our Tomahawk, launched from offshore.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

The AS-15 is gyro-guided. It will find the city, but it's not too accurate beyond that.

VICE PRESIDENT

Still, for their purposes it's perfect: Hit somewhere in L.A., take out a city block or two...

SECRETARY OF STATE

To the eyes of the world it's a measured response -- like what Reagan did to Qaddafi. But actually striking at an American city would be a huge psychological victory for them.

PRESIDENT

(thru video link)

I don't believe I'm hearing this!

(beat)

So if we know it's coming, we can knock it out of the fuckin' sky!

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

These weapons fly subsonically, below radar... we don't have the defenses in place... If we'd had the time to deploy a string of Patriot anti-missile batteries across the coast --

PRESIDENT

(thru video link)

-- You're saying we got all this lousy hardware and can't stop one goddamn missile??

Everyone's silence answers his question.

PRESIDENT

(continuing; thru video link)

I want an immediate search for all ships within range.

FBI CHIEF

We better inform the other leaders, stall on the Summit --

PRESIDENT

(thru video link)

There's no reason to panic yet -- they can't launch until after the family's confirmed dead!

CIA CHIEF

Afraid that's not the case...

The Intelligence Officer illustrates his explanation with FOOTAGE and DIAGRAMS on a nearby COMPUTER SCREEN:

INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

The North Korean Premier holds what we call a "Brinksman Switch." He's able to destroy a missile in flight, right up to the moment before it achieves its target.

CIA CHIEF

Our Op says they've timed their retaliation to hit right after 5:00.

FBI CHIEF

And if the family turns up okay, they'll just make it self-destruct.

PRESIDENT

(thru video link)

Shit! I really don't need this today!

VICE PRESIDENT

We're forgetting one thing here: the family. Intelligence is sure the North will abort their attack if Mrs. Han and her kids are safely returned?

CIA CHIEF

Absolutely. Their whole game depends on claiming a legitimate provocation.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Still, we should let them know there'd be a response... if it comes to it.

PRESIDENT

(thru video link)

I'd like to turn 'em into a radioactive parking lot.

SECRETARY OF STATE

That's the problem: we can't. We're the last superpower. Our hands are tied by politics, alliances, goddamn stacks of treaties... most we could do is give 'em a "measured response" back again, or everyone starts crying that we're the bullies.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Damn, I miss the Cold War. Russians wouldn't have dreamt of pulling a stunt like this.

PRESIDENT

(thru video link)

Believe me, the North drops one in my fuckin' city, I'm dropping ten in theirs. Get some bombers in the air. And don't tell me any more bad news!

EXT. HOLLYWOOD FREEWAY - DAY

Robbins stands by Javal's van, on the shoulder of the freeway.

ROBBINS

(into radio)

...Phone company decal's a fake. DMV says the van was purchased a week ago from a private party in Santa Monica. I called 'em; they said the guy paid cash, and he fits our boy's description. Signed the name "Douglas McArthur" to the Transfer of Title.

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAY

CARSON

(into radio)

Cute.

(to Miranda)

He signed the name of the Allied
Commander during the Korean War.
Maybe he was a political.

MIRANDA

No. The phony ice cream truck, the
booby-trapped chairs... he could've
-more-

MIRANDA (Cont'd)

done it without half that stuff. But
this was going to be the score of a
lifetime... he was showing off.

CARSON

(to Dave)

Who's got those kinds of skills:
Electronics, vehicle customizing,
computers, explosives?

DAVE

Military. Cop, maybe. Shit, your
average high-school student if
they're so inclined. My guess is our
perp used off-the-shelf equipment
for everything except the C-4, and
that's only slightly harder to get
than crack or heroin, if you know
who to ask.

EXT. PARKER CENTER - DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - DAY

LAPD headquarters.

INT. PARKER CENTER - VARIOUS ANGLES - DAY

Everyone who can be spared, even moth-eaten SUPPORT PERSONNEL,
hustle through the maze of hallways and get into waiting cars.

EXT. STREETS OF LOS ANGELES - VARIOUS ANGLES - DAY

From up here, it looks like the city is one big block party.
Accordingly, traffic is heavy and unpleasant.

BOBBI (VO)

Please, L.A., I know we're about to have quite a party out there, but don't forget the Golden Rule on the roadways... News time is 3:59...

INT. NEWS COPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

Bobbi looks into the TV camera, dripping with sincerity.

BOBBI

This is Bobbi Marchfelder, your Eye in the Sky... back to you, Brent...

The red light on the camera goes off. Bobbi turns to the Pilot.

BOBBI

(continuing; furious)
Hey, dickhead... I was backlit that entire segment!
(as if to a child)
Keep... the sun... to my left!!

The Cameraman and the Pilot sigh at each other.

BOBBI

(continuing)
What's new on the kidnapping rumor?

CAMERAMAN

Nada. Total news blackout.

BOBBI

Go back over the hill.

NEWS PILOT

We got the valley traffic report in fifteen --

BOBBI

-- "Stalled vehicle! One lane closed! Sig alert...!" I'll improvise!

She takes an industrial-sized bottle of Mylanta out of her purse. It's fitted with a water-bottle DRINKING SPOUT. She takes a huge swig and grimaces.

BOBBI

(continuing; to Cameraman)
What are you lookin' at? I was the

morning anchor in Houston! And I'm
one break away from getting out of
this stupid fuckin' whirlybird!

INT. BACHELOR APARTMENT - LOS ANGELES - DAY

The Han family sits in their booby-trapped chairs. Joy
carefully turns to her mother.

JOY
Why us?

MRS. HAN
You heard him -- for money.

JOY
What if something goes wrong?

MRS. HAN
(firmly)
It won't.

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAY

Carson grabs his FBI blazer off the back of a chair.

CARSON
I'm going to the kidnapping site.

MIRANDA
I want to talk to the witnesses.

Colonel Lee also heads for the door. Carson looks at him.

CARSON
Great, we'll hire a bus.

They leave. Dave, meanwhile, paces, phone in hand.

DAVE
(into phone)
...I know it's privileged
information, goddammit! Lemme talk
to a supervisor... You are a
supervisor... Lemme talk to your
goddamn supervisor... I told you,
I'm with the FBI...
(to Sabatini)
Cellular company says he was using a

phone with a cloned number.

SABATINI

Big surprise. Have 'em send a list of the numbers called on the account.

DAVE

That's what I'm trying to get.
They're saying I need a subpoena.
(into phone)
Don't put me on hold... Don't...
(pulls phone from his ear)
I'm listening to Michael fuckin'
Bolton!

SABATINI

Walther! Get on the horn to Justice and deal with this!

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - ANGLE ON FISHING TRAWLER - DAY

SUPER: Pacific Ocean. 500 miles west-northwest of Los Angeles.

We FIND a nondescript commercial fishing vessel. Up top, some Asian "FISHERMEN" crank in and stow their nets.

INT./EXT. FISHING TRAWLER - DAY

Coming closer, we see it's actually a disguised North Korean SPY VESSEL. Several MEN, working under hanging tarps, secure a 20-foot-long missile launching track to the bow.

Two MISSILE EXPERTS install a green, cone-shaped WARHEAD of high explosives onto the nose of a 23-foot-long, short-winged CRUISE MISSILE. They wait for the CAPTAIN's orders...

EXT. HOLLYWOOD FREEWAY - DAY

Robbins is in Javal's van, examining the innards of the remote-control boxes. He picks up his radio.

ROBBINS

(into radio)
A lot of the components are made by the same manufacturer -- a car security company.

CARSON (VO)

(thru radio)

Jump a copter to the Consulate. See if the manufacturer sells to the public. Find out what shops use their stuff; put people on the phones with a description of the perp.

EXT. CRENSHAW BLVD - DAY

At the kidnapping site, the intersection is blocked off with yellow police tape. Several LAPD cruisers are parked nearby. Some COPS are interviewing the Carpool Lady.

Despite this, the neighborhood's bazaar -- a sidewalk sale with MUSIC, food vendors, etc. -- has half-heartedly begun.

The government helicopter HOVERS and Carson helps Miranda climb down a long chain ladder. Colonel Lee follows impatiently.

NEW ANGLE

Carson uncovers the bodies of the Driver and the Motorist, lying on the sidewalk. He grimaces. Colonel Lee does not. Miranda wants to look, but Carson drops the cover. She picks it up, then turns away in horror.

A young BLACK COP crosses to them. He's holding a plastic bag with a spent shotgun shell in it.

YOUNG COP

Inspector! Look at this...

(reads from shell)

"Dragon's Breath..?"

CARSON

Twelve-gauge shell filled with magnesium and ignition powder. Shit's worse than napalm -- Geneva Convention outlawed it for warfare.

MIRANDA

Then how did he get it?

CARSON

Easy -- you can buy 'em mail order.

(looks around)

Where's the Consulate's car?

YOUNG COP

(beat)

Uh... apparently it was stolen...

COLONEL LEE

Stolen!? What is it with you
people --

YOUNG COP

(angry)
-- What's this "you people" shit?

CARSON

(to Colonel Lee)
Shut up!

MIRANDA

(aside; to Young Cop)
He means all of us "you people."

CARSON

(to Young Cop)
Find it! How many bulletproof
Mercedes could be cruising around
Crenshaw?

YOUNG COP

You'd be surprised...

CARSON

I hate this fuckin' town.

INT./EXT. FISHING TRAWLER - PACIFIC OCEAN - DAY

The North Korean COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER puts down his
headphones and hurries on deck to the Captain. It's time.

Suddenly, a BEARDED CREWMAN crosses to the Captain. He calmly
SHOOTS him and the FIRST MATE.

The rest of the Crew is shocked. Holding his pistol on the
Crew, the Bearded Crewman nods at the Missile Experts.
Saluting, they remove the green warhead from the missile.

Two OTHER CONSPIRATORS, carrying a metal locker, appear from
below deck. The Crew murmurs nervously as they remove from the
locker a red warhead and attach it to the missile.

Finishing, one of the Experts pushes the firing trigger and
the missile WHOOSHES from its launching pad.

EXT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - DAY

The government helicopter touches down behind the Consulate.

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAY

Ambassador Han, Walther and Sabatini are looking at a series of high-definition faxes spread out on a table.

Carson, Miranda and Colonel Lee hurry back in. Disgusted, Carson throws his jacket on a chair.

CARSON

Wasted trip: Witnesses say he was working alone, and he was a vicious son of a bitch. Old news.

COLONEL LEE

(to Ambassador Han)
And our car was stolen.

AMBASSADOR HAN

I felt safer when I was the Ambassador to Libya.

SABATINI

Image enhancements came back.

POV OF PICTURES

The CIA technicians have enlarged and enhanced every part of the fax deemed significant, in individual blowups.

BACK TO SCENE

Colonel Lee is standing right beside Carson, leaning over to look at the pictures. Carson looks at him, irritated.

CARSON

We going steady?

SABATINI

The sun position tells us the windows are facing northeast.

(beat)

Here's the best -- look at the glass on the prints hanging in the background. There's a reflection of a reflection, out on the street: the corner of a billboard.

CARSON

Looks like the wheel of a car.

MIRANDA

We talked about these billboards,
when we were car shopping! Four-
door... they make a wagon, too.

(beat)

Something Japanese... God, what was
it? Toyota... Mazda... Honda... You
thought it had no character.

CARSON

I thought that about all of them.
C'mon, think, dammit!!

MIRANDA

You think!! You were there, too!

They're stumped, and bitterly frustrated. To Sabatini:

CARSON

Call the outdoor advertising
companies. Get the location of all
the billboards for Japanese cars
within our search parameters.

Meanwhile, Dave and Robbins are calling car alarm shops:

DAVE

(into phone)

...Peerless Auto Security. We need
to know whether you've sold a large
quantity of these components to any
one customer, or whether you'd had
any stolen recently...

EXT. P.Y,NGYANG, NORTH KOREA - ESTABLISHING - DAY

INT. WORKERS' PARADISE HALL - GENERAL KAI'S OFFICE - DAY

General Kai stands in hushed conversation with the Army Major
Operative and another trusted AIDE. The PHONE buzzes; the
others leave the room before General Kai picks it up.

INT. WORKERS' PARADISE HALL - OPERATIVE'S OFFICE - DAY

Behind closed doors, the Operative LISTENS to the phone call
with an EAVESDROPPING RECEIVER. What he hears stuns him.

CUT TO:

EXT. WORKERS' PARADISE HALL - ROOFTOP - DAY

The Operative is in his hiding spot with his uplink device.

OPERATIVE

(urgently; into device)

...Missile heading to L.A. has a
Kipchak Warhead! Repeat: missile is
Kipchak equipped! It was switched by
order of --

A GUNSHOT rings out (OS), and the Operative's chest EXPLODES in blood. He pitches forward... but presses the "transmit" button on the uplink device before dying.

On screen it says UPLINKING... (without scrambling)... then another GUNSHOT destroys it.

Angry, General Kai steps INTO FRAME and kicks the Operative over with his foot.

INT. BACHELOR APARTMENT - LOS ANGELES - DAY

Mrs. Han and Joy sit motionless. Sam, on the other hand, is trying not to squirm. Mrs. Han looks at him, angry.

MRS. HAN

He asked you if you had to go...

The family becomes aware of a shrill SOUND, (OS), distant at first, but growing increasingly louder... The sound-level meters all begin to creep upward...

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CLOSE - DAY

A team of GARDENERS has arrived on the property for their weekly mow, blow, and go. They have lawnmowers, edgers, blowers -- it's as NOISY as an aircraft carrier during takeoffs.

INT. BACHELOR APARTMENT - DAY

The SOUND is getting louder, and louder...

JOY

Oh, my God...

The meters are hovering just below the red...

SAM

pivots his head and looks at the tiny microphone, no bigger than a pencil eraser, attached neatly to the headrest.

He begins chewing his wad of GUM... leans in toward the microphone, his head obscuring what he's doing...

He moves back and we see he's SEALED the front of the mic with a small piece of the gum.

And his meter drops to zero.

WIDER

Sam tilts his head forward and bends his wrist upward so he can get the rest of the gum out of his mouth. Then, while keeping pressure on the armrest with his elbow, he moves his hand over to Mrs. Han. They can't quite reach each other...

He FLICKS the piece of gum and she catches it.

Meanwhile, the NOISE increases. The two meters peak into the red... the yellow WARNING LIGHT begins to flash...

Mrs. Han quickly puts the gum in her mouth, bites it in half, and cautiously passes the remainder over to Joy.

Joy puts the gum in her mouth. She tries to push it over her mic, but her hair is in the way. She shakes her head; some hair strands remain, but she covers the mic just as the Gardeners' noise reaches a CRESCENDO...

All three sound meters sit pinned to zero. The yellow light stops flashing.

Sam, sweating, looks at his mother and sister... and starts laughing. They join him: a celebration for a small victory.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DUSK

The clock on the wall reads 7:13, eastern time. The President, still on Air Force One, APPEARS on the VIDEO LINK. Cut the tension in the room with a knife? You'd need a chainsaw.

PRESIDENT

(thru video link)

So what the hell does "Kipchak" mean?

INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

Uh, it's a code name... for weapons
using the Yersinia Pestis bacillus...

He really doesn't want to be the one telling the President
about this.

INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

(continuing)

Kipchaks were Asian nomads. In 1347
they attacked a Genoese fort, and
catapulted infected corpses over the
walls. The Genoese who survived
carried the disease back to Europe...
and it killed half the population.

PRESIDENT

(thru video link)

Get to the goddamn point, Major.

The Intelligence Officer looks at the CIA Chief.

CIA CHIEF

Seems the missile is armed with a
warhead carrying the Pneumonic
Plague.

The President goes nuts.

PRESIDENT

(thru video link)

The Black Plague?! Every time I talk
to you fuckin' guys it gets worse!
What happened to this "limited
retaliation" shit?

SECRETARY OF STATE

The North Koreans insist the missile
carries a conventional payload. They
say we're trying to trick them into
aborting the attack.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Especially since the uplink from our
Op in P'y,ngyang was unencrypted.

CIA CHIEF

We think one of the Hard-liners
switched the warhead without the

Premier's knowledge. But he's not about to take our word for it, and he's too weak to risk the humiliation of backing down.

PRESIDENT

(incredulous; thru video link)
They use a biological weapon on American soil, they have to know we'll respond!

SECRETARY OF STATE

Maybe they don't think we got the guts. Maybe they want a war, 'cause they think they can whip us, like what happened in 'Nam. Look who we're dealing with: a teetering, outlaw regime, and inside it, some wild-ass renegades working their screwy agenda!

PRESIDENT

(thru video link)
What the hell are we doing in L.A.?

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

We've deployed Marines from Pendleton and Twenty-Nine Palms, Army from Ft. Irwin, put 'em in protective suits, but it's 40 minutes before they're on the ground.

PRESIDENT

(thru video link)
All right. Assuming the worst...
What'll happen?

The Intelligence Officer demonstrates with another of his
COMPUTER GRAPHICS.

INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

The warhead vents the plague bacteria above the target area, infecting about 50,000 people. First symptoms are vomiting, lymph nodes become swollen; temperature rises to 105. Victims turn deep purple from lung hemorrhaging, usually die the

same day.

(beat)

There are treatments -- streptomycin and tetracyclines -- but we'd be overwhelmed by the numbers and its extreme contagiousness.

CIA CHIEF

We could have 500,000 infected in a week, who knows how many after that.

Long beat as everyone tries to contemplate the unthinkable.

PRESIDENT

(thru video link)

I'm gonna toast those fuckers! Have the Summit leaders been warned?

FBI CHIEF

Yes, sir... no one's landing in L.A. 'til we give the all-clear.

PRESIDENT

(thru video link)

And you're sure it's safe if we can get 'em to destroy the missile in flight?

INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

The bacteria can't survive the heat of an explosion.

CIA CHIEF

I suggest none of this go any further -- not even to the agents working to find the family. Word leaks out to a city of 12 million people there's rocket full of the Plague coming at 'em, you'll create a panic of biblical proportions.

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAY

Everyone is painfully on edge. Ambassador Han paces. The FBI agents are on a phone or a radio, working leads.

Colonel Lee mutters something to Ambassador Han in Korean.

CARSON

Say what?

COLONEL LEE

Perhaps someone will decide it is foolish to incur the wrath of North Korea.

CARSON

(crosses to Colonel Lee)

Yeah, the U.S. is behind the whole thing. And we're knocking our heads, trying to find your people, just for show.

WALTHER

Carson...

CARSON

Let's grab a few beers, kick back 'til five o'clock rolls by. Then maybe we can have a war over it. I think that's a great idea, seeing as how you fuckers have needed your clocks cleaned for fifty years now!

COLONEL LEE

(gets up)

Why wait until five?

Ambassador Han and Walther keep Carson and Colonel Lee from going at each other.

MIRANDA

Pete!

(sotto)

Christ, you're self-indulgent! There's nothing but anger and cynicism left inside you, so they're all you can express any more. No wonder everyone in the Bureau thinks you're such a nutcase!

CARSON

Hey, I'm not the only one with a rep around the office... "Dr. Knoll-It-All."

MIRANDA

(hurt)

You've been dying to tell me that...

She walks away. Carson immediately regrets saying it.

CARSON

Miranda...

(to himself)

Shit.

EXT. STREETS OF LOS ANGELES - VARIOUS ANGLES - DAY

LAPD cruisers squeeze through the crowded streets, fanning out through the various parties around town. COPS walk through the crowds with copies of the picture Javal faxed, and photos of the Han family and Lisa.

EXT. SKY OVER PACIFIC OCEAN - DAY

The red-tipped cruise missile, flying at 550 MPH, 400 feet above the water, streaks toward its distant target.

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAY

Robbins is still working the phone.

ROBBINS

(into phone)

...Yeah, Peerless Auto Security...

fine... get your manager...

He puts the receiver down, hits the speakerbox button and the mute button. He crosses to Dave's desk to grab some papers.

We can hear the CONVERSATION at the alarm shop:

INSTALLER #1 (VO)

(thru speakerbox; muffled)

Tell Jerry, pick up line one!

INT. AUTO SECURITY SHOP - DAY

A group of young INSTALLERS horse around as they outfit luxury cars with security systems, high-end audio components, etc.

INSTALLER #2

Jerry's outta here!

INSTALLER #1

Some cop's asking if we sold a bunch of Peerless parts.

INSTALLER #2
Talk to Javal!

INSTALLER #1
Javal's off today.

INSTALLER #3
Dude's off a lot.

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAY

INSTALLER #4 (VO)
(thru speakerbox)
He's used to it -- fuckin' Frenchies
get the whole summer off.

INSTALLER #2 (VO)
(thru speakerbox)
Man's Canadian, dickweeds!

INSTALLER #1 (VO)
(thru speakerbox)
You're gonna have to call back on
Monday...

Carson rushes over to the phone. To the others in the room:

CARSON
Everyone shut up!
(into phone)
Guy on vacation, the Canadian --

INSTALLER #1 (VO)
(thru speakerbox)
-- Yeah, Javal...

CARSON
(into phone)
Six foot, sandy hair, spooky eyes?

INSTALLER #1 (VO)
(thru speakerbox; laughs)
Zombie Eyes! You know the man?

Carson and Miranda look at each other. Bingo!

CARSON
(into phone)
I need a full name, address,

anything you got!

INSTALLER #1 (VO)

(thru speakerbox)

Paul Javal... hang on, we'll look it up... This an immigration thing? Shit, he's our best installer.

NEW ANGLE

One of the Korean Espionage Agents answers a RINGING phone on Colonel Lee's desk, listens, then hits the hold button.

ESPIONAGE AGENT

Inspector Carson, extension 666...

CARSON

That's appropriate...

(to Dave)

In 30 seconds you're gonna give me Paul Javal's shoe size.

Carson hurries over, grabs the phone. We SEE him punch the button for x666.

CARSON

(continuing; into phone)

Carson...

EXT. FEDERAL BUILDING, WESTWOOD - ESTABLISHING - DAY

EDWARDS (VO)

Edwards, Sound Lab...

INT. FBI SOUND LAB - DAY

EDWARDS, headphones around his neck, sits in front of a wall of audio analysis equipment.

CARSON (VO)

(thru phone)

Whatta you got?

EDWARDS

(into phone)

Ambient background sound is normal city stuff, but there's a distinct echo pattern. Your people are in or near a high-rise that's at least

eight floors tall. And there are other high-rises nearby.

CARSON (VO)
(thru phone)
How high up are they?

EDWARDS
(into phone)
No way to extrapolate that from the sample you gave us.
(refers to notes)
One more thing: There's an emergency siren approaching at 17 seconds into the second call, passing the location at 33.5 seconds.

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAY

Carson hangs up the phone.

CARSON
Okay -- high-rises in our search area. Eight stories or higher.

MIRANDA
Downtown, Century City, Westwood corridor, Museum Row, Mid-Wilshire... North of Sunset Strip there's a few...

CARSON
Sabatini! What about that billboard?

SABATINI
Nothing yet! Everyone's left their goddamn offices already!

CARSON
(to Robbins)
LAPD will have a record of all emergency vehicles running Code 3 at 9:32 AM. Get their starting point and their destination.

MIRANDA
And have them narrow their foot-searches to areas around high-rises.

CARSON

(to Dave)

Where's that fuckin' address?!

DAVE

I'm still holdin'!

Meanwhile, we hear the high-pitched whine as Dave's MODEM connects with another computer. Dave's fingers fly across the keyboard, and in a moment, a PICTURE of Javal appears: hair longer, bearded... but the eyes are unmistakable.

DAVE

(continuing)

He's on our hit parade. Interpol passed us his records when he entered the country.

(reads)

French by birth... looks like a total scumbag.

SABATINI

Isn't that redundant?

DAVE

(reads from computer)

Raised in Quebec. Moved to Europe; served some short stretches, petty shit... arrested for kidnapping, no conviction. Did four years in France for blowing bank vaults. Moved to U.S. last year. Clean since then.

CARSON

Get his Driver's License number; Social; bank accounts; charge cards; club memberships... find out what movies he rented. Get whoever's closest to the Auto Shop to get in there, interview everybody.

MIRANDA

This sure was a ballsy move for a car-alarm installer.

CARSON

Hey, he watched the news... Everyone knows the U.S. will do anything to avoid trouble with a mad-dog country.

They turn, noticing that Ambassador Han has overheard.

MIRANDA
Ambassador --

CARSON
-- Quit apologizing for me!

MIRANDA
Quit giving me reasons to!

AMBASSADOR HAN
(to Carson)
On occasion, my wife has been known
to kick my ankle under the table.

Miranda gives Carson a "your turn to be gracious" look.

CARSON
Sounds like her aim's a little low.

Not exactly what Miranda was hoping for. Dave hands Carson a
piece of paper.

DAVE
Address, according to the Auto Shop.

CARSON
(looks at paper)
Apartment 1060! He's in a high-rise!
Sabatini -- you're with us.
(off Robbins' disappointed
look)
She's got the field experience.

Carson and Miranda grab their jackets, then she stops.

MIRANDA
There still could be accomplices.
If there are, they'll hear us in
the helicopter.

Carson looks again at the address...

CARSON
There's a TV station a couple blocks
away. We'll land on their pad.
(to Robbins)
K-EYE. Clear it with 'em. Have a
SWAT team assemble, but tell 'em to

hang back unless we need 'em.

EXT. OSAKA, JAPAN - ESTABLISHING - DAY

SUPER: Osaka. Western Japan.

INT. OSAKA APARTMENT - DAY

In the tiny bedroom of a wheelchair-bound JAPANESE TEENAGER, computers and HAM RADIO equipment are stacked everywhere.

He turns on a tape recorder. We hear a faint, crackling VOICE:

OPERATIVE'S VOICE (VO)

(on recorder)

...Missile heading to L.A. has a
Kipchak Warhead! Repeat: missile is
Kipchak equipped!

The Teenager rolls to a computer running CompuServe. He clicks the CHAT icon, types: "Anyone up on their spy terminology?"

INT. BACHELOR APARTMENT - LOS ANGELES - DAY

With the gardeners gone, and their sound sensors disabled, Mrs. Han, Joy and Sam are SHOUTING for help.

They listen for a response; it is completely quiet.

EXT. K-EYE STUDIOS - LANDING PAD - LOS ANGELES - DAY

Just as the government helicopter lands, Bobbi's news copter lands right next to it.

Bobbi intercepts Carson, Sabatini, Miranda and Colonel Lee on the pad. Her Cameraman follows, ENG camera on his shoulder, videotaping everything.

CARSON

Oh, great, the media...

(realizing)

It's the goddamn traffic girl!

MIRANDA

Traffic person.

BOBBI

Where are you going?

CARSON

We can't get into that right now...

BOBBI

Hey, you expect to use my station's facilities and not even tell us --

Carson grabs the ENG camera, pops the videotape out of it and crushes the tape.

MIRANDA

(to Bobbi)

Sorry...

BOBBI

(looks Miranda over)

What the fuck are you, the Barbie Corporate Ass-Lick model?

Miranda is utterly aghast. She reaches under Carson's jacket and takes the handcuffs off his shoulder rig. She grabs Bobbi by the arm and gets her in a half-Nelson.

MIRANDA

Guess what, Sister... you're about to spend the next five years in a penitentiary for interfering with a federal investigation.

The STATION MANAGER comes running out of the building.

STATION MANAGER

Bobbi! I promised we'd respect their news blackout!

BOBBI

(to herself)

Figures... you dickless wonder.

Bobbi wriggles out of Miranda's grasp. Carson looks at his wife, who's still fuming, and smiles to himself.

The Station Manager hands Carson the keys to his Lexus.

STATION MANAGER

I get an exclusive later, right?

CARSON

This works out, I'll play the

fuckin' banjo for you.

EXT. SKY OVER PACIFIC OCEAN - DAY

The cruise missile makes a slight course adjustment.

EXT. STREETS OF LOS ANGELES - VARIOUS ANGLES - DAY

People begin to arrive at the events. BOOSTERS pass out food, wine and beer... and crank up the Beach Boys TUNES.

Meanwhile, law enforcement cars move into the areas with high rises -- Century City, Westwood, downtown, etc.

EXT. U.S. AIR BASE - VARIOUS ANGLES - DAY

A sign on the control tower reads: U.S. Air Force, Okinawa.

Flight Crews direct a squadron of planes out onto the flight line: F-16 fighter bombers, along with F-15 fighter escorts.

They begin to TAKE OFF...

EXT. FOUNTAIN AVENUE - DAY

The Lexus is stuck in a dense knot of traffic.

Carson gets out and walks across the hoods of the stopped vehicles around him -- to much COMPLAINING by their owners -- until he finds the reason for the jam-up:

Along the shoulder of the road, a long line of equipment trailers and motor homes, cables, lights, rent-a-cops and gawkers. A MOVIE SHOOT. Carson groans.

He hurries back to the Lexus. Miranda rolls her window down.

CARSON

We're hoofing it.

Miranda and Colonel Lee immediately get out of the car and run off, leaving Sabatini to contend with it.

SABATINI

(pissed)

'She's got the field experience'...

To park the fuckin' car!

EXT. MIMOSA APARTMENTS - DAY

A boxy, ten-story complex built in the sixties.

INT. MIMOSA APARTMENTS - DAY

Carson, (FBI jacket folded over his arm) Miranda, and Colonel Lee rush into the lobby.

Carson is about to show the CONCIERGE behind the desk his i.d, but the Concierge is nervous and sweating. Carson pulls out his Sig 9mm, approaches the door behind the desk, which is ajar... He pushes it open...

And finds himself staring at the muzzles of three M-16 rifles.

Three SWAT TEAM members are standing there in full body armor.

CARSON

(pulls out his i.d.)

Whoa... FBI..!

They lower their weapons.

CARSON

(continuing)

How the hell you get here so fast?

SWAT TEAM #1

They're shootin' a cop movie down the street. We're workin' as extras.

CARSON

Terrific. Who else is here?

SWAT TEAM #1

Three officers on the roof, next building over, and two in the tenth-floor hallway.

CARSON

Tell 'em to be cool. We're going up.

(to Concierge)

Give me your master key.

EXT. ADJACENT APARTMENTS - DAY

The SWAT team SHARPSHOOTERS crouch on the roof.

SWAT TEAM #1

(thru radio)
Feds going up -- Anglo male and
female; Asian male.

INT. MIMOSA APARTMENTS - UNDERGROUND PARKING LOT - DAY

Sabatini drives the Lexus in and parks it in the fire lane.

INT. MIMOSA APARTMENTS - HALLWAY - DAY

The fire door opens next to an elevator with the number "10" on it, and Carson, Miranda and Colonel Lee come out.

Carson and Miranda creep quietly along the hallway, toward apartment 1060. Carson listens at the door, hears nothing.

He moves to the next door down, apartment 1058, and quietly unlocks the door.

INT. MIMOSA APARTMENTS - #1058 - DAY

The shades are drawn, and the apartment is dark.

As Carson and Miranda cut through the apartment, they realize there's a WOMAN lying in the bed. She's naked, and she's not alone. Someone is under the sheets. ANOTHER WOMAN.

The first Woman opens her eyes, sees the intruders, and grabs for a Colt Gold Cup .45 auto in the dresser drawer.

WOMAN

What the fuck..!

Her friend sits up. Miranda holds her finger to her lips and shows them her FBI shield.

MIRANDA

Sorry...

Carson cranks open their window and steps out onto the foot-wide, ornamental balcony.

CARSON

(to Miranda)
Wait here.

She begins to protest. He shoots her a look that silences her.

EXT. MIMOSA APARTMENTS - DAY

The SWAT sharpshooters watch from the next building over as

Carson, ten floors up, peers through the slit in between the curtains into the window of Javal's apartment.

He swings his legs over onto Javal's ornamental balcony... the bolts holding the rail onto the wall are loose and rusty... the balcony SLIPS a little...

He leans on the crank-operated window until it SNAPS open.

INT. MIMOSA APARTMENTS - JAVAL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Carson steps inside. He looks around the bedroom -- it's empty. No furnishings, the closet shelves are bare, even the pictures on the walls are gone, leaving only their outline.

Carson cautiously goes into the living room --

It's also empty. All that remains are a few cardboard boxes, and three flower pots in macramé ceiling hangers by the living room window. Some dead leaves lie on the floor beneath them.

CARSON

(into radio)

I'm in. It's empty, but sit tight while I look around.

Carson cautiously approaches the cardboard boxes.

INT. MIMOSA APARTMENTS - #1058 - DAY

The clock on the bedstand reads 4:25. Miranda smiles uncomfortably at the two naked women together in bed.

MIRANDA

I like what you've done with the place...

INT. MIMOSA APARTMENTS - HALLWAY - DAY

The elevator DINGS. Sabatini comes out, H&K MP-5 in hand.

SWAT Team #2, standing on the far side of the hallway with Colonel Lee, sees her machine pistol and takes aim.

COLONEL LEE

Wait!

Colonel Lee walks over to Sabatini.

SABATINI

Where's Carson?

COLONEL LEE

Inside.

Sabatini starts down the hall. Colonel Lee stays where he is.

INT. MIMOSA APARTMENTS - JAVAL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Carson cautiously peers in the moving boxes. They're empty.

He crosses to the front door, looks it over, unlocks the deadbolt. He turns the knob, the button POPS open...

He stops, noticing a HAIRLINE SEAM in the doorjamb where a piece was cut, then neatly replaced.

Then, he's startled as he hears a strange, mechanical whining NOISE coming from the kitchen.

He goes to investigate -- it's an almost-dead, avocado-green refrigerator straining to start its compressor. He looks for booby-traps, opens it, and looks inside. Empty.

Looking down, he notices he's got a dead leaf stuck to the bottom of his shoe.

Glancing in the living room, he sees the dead leaves on the floor below the three hanging plants. He looks at the plants: two are dead. The one in the middle is not. It's plastic.

We HEAR the jiggle of the front doorknob.

CARSON

NO! --

Too late... The front door opens....

Carson crouches behind the big, heavy refrigerator door...

As the middle flower pot EXPLODES. It's a shrapnel bomb: it spews thousands of tiny carpet tacks 360 degrees around room.

Sabatini is HIT full on -- she falls backwards into the hall.

INT. MIMOSA APARTMENTS - #1058 - DAY

Miranda and the women in the darkened bedroom SCREAM as the

tacks tear hundreds of HOLES through sections of the wall.

Tiny shafts of LIGHT appear in the wall, except where it is covered by furniture (keeping them from being shredded.)

INT. MIMOSA APARTMENTS - HALLWAY - DAY

SWAT Team #2 and Colonel Lee come running, as does Miranda.

Carson is kneeling next to Sabatini. She looks up at him and tries to say something, but a only long, mournful, final BREATH escapes her. Agonized, Carson looks around...

And sees Colonel Lee. He lunges for him.

CARSON

I said keep everyone back!!

He punches Colonel Lee in the jaw. Colonel Lee slams against the wall, then comes back at Carson, hitting him in the throat.

MIRANDA

Stop it!

Miranda and SWAT Team #2 pull them apart.

CARSON

(to Colonel Lee)

Get out of my sight.

He kneels next to Sabatini, and closes her eyes.

INT. NEWS COPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

It's in between reports. The Cameraman listens to the Grateful Dead on a BOOM BOX. Bobbi answers her ringing CELL PHONE.

BOBBI

(into phone)

Marchfelder.

STATION MANAGER (VO)

(thru phone)

You dated the Mayor, right?

BOBBI

(sighs; into phone)

You need a traffic ticket fixed?

STATION MANAGER (VO)
(excited; thru phone)
Try to confirm something for us.
There's an incredible buzz on the
Internet -- someone picked up a
classified message on a U.S.
Intelligence frequency. We think
it's authentic!

EXT. STREETS OF LOS ANGELES - VARIOUS ANGLES - DAY

The streets of Hollywood are even more congested than before,
as the festivities really start rockin'.

INT. GOVERNMENT HELICOPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

Carson and Miranda sit together in the back and Colonel Lee
sits next to the Pilot as they fly back to the Consulate.

Miranda looks at Carson, who's trying real hard not to let
Sabatini's death slow him down.

CARSON
(into radio)
What's the status?

ROBBINS (VO)
(thru radio)
Wilshire and West PD Divisions had
seven vehicles running with sirens at
9:32. They're getting the routes from
the officers now.

CARSON
(into radio)
Hurry it the hell up.

He glances over at Miranda. After a beat:

CARSON
(continuing)
I should've known she'd come up.

MIRANDA
Pete --

CARSON
-- "Should've." Shit, there's a
familiar word.
(long beat)
That day... I was there soon enough.

We should've rushed 'em, before they could finish setting up...

MIRANDA

The Bureau never would've let you. They want it by the book: talk them out.

Carson looks out the window, not hearing a word she says...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT./EXT. BEVERLY THRIFT - (FLASHBACK) - DAY

Carson is in the FBI command truck, talking on the phone to:

A BANK ROBBER, barricaded inside the bank. Phone in hand, he holds a shotgun on a dozen hostages: BANK EMPLOYEES and CUSTOMERS -- including a couple of YOUNG KIDS. One is holding a soccer-sized, rainbow-colored rubber ball.

The OTHER BANK ROBBER wires up a series of explosive charges.

Both Robbers rush inside the vault, and pull the door closed to protect themselves...

The front of the building, where the hostages are, EXPLODES.

Carson runs to the bank. He spots the kid's ball, rolling in the street... BURNING. He turns away, horrified, devastated...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GOVERNMENT HELICOPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

CARSON

Twelve bodies -- only the hostages.

MIRANDA

You were a greenhorn. It wasn't your decision. You can't keep living as such a raw nerve, never sleeping --

CARSON

-- Those kids were ten years old!
(sotto)
Same age as the Han boy...

He turns away. She takes his hand.

INT. BACHELOR APARTMENT - DAY

The family continues to call for HELP. As they do, we

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY JUST OUTSIDE APARTMENT - DAY

Their CRIES echo faintly through a deserted tangle of ladders, construction equipment, sheets of drywall, etc.

A warning sign taped to the wall near the elevator reads:

This Floor Has Been Temporarily Vacated
For Minor Earthquake Retrofitting.

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAY

The mood is glum. Carson looks at Robbins, Dave and Walther, then at the empty chair where Sabatini had been sitting.

CARSON

C'mon! Who's pulling Javal's bank records? What about cross-referencing possible aliases? We got 33 minutes!

Hearing Beach Boys MUSIC on the TV's and radios on the surveillance console, Carson angrily punches them all off.

Suddenly, Miranda looks at him:

MIRANDA

Camry! The billboard! Toyota Camry!
(reaches for phone)
Where are the numbers for the outdoor ad companies?

ROBBINS

Parker Center's making those calls.

INT. NEWS COPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

Bobbi and the News Cameraman are arguing bitterly:

BOBBI

Turn the fuckin' camera on! DO IT!!

CAMERAMAN

Maybe it's true... probably is true.
That's why they got a news blackout!

BOBBI

I'll rip your miserable eyeballs
out! NEWS IS OUR FUCKIN' JOB!!

He sighs and turns the CAMERA on.

INT. BACHELOR APARTMENT - INCLUDE ANGLE ON TV - DAY

The Han family listens to Bobbi, amazed, horrified...

BOBBI

(on TV)

...A warning was radioed to U.S.
Intelligence that a biological weapon,
allegedly containing the deadly
Pneumonic Plague, is approaching Los
Angeles. While unconfirmed, the
President and other leaders are all
late in arriving...

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAY

The TV's are off -- so they see none of Bobbi's report.

Carson crosses to Dave. He's at his computer, looking at a
long column of telephone numbers.

DAVE

Finally got the call list from
Javal's phone. Most aren't his;
they're from the legit user who
didn't know his number was cloned.

CARSON

Go to the bottom of the list, work
back through the last 12 hours.

Dave jumps to the bottom, points at a number.

DAVE

Here's the call to the Consulate --
965-5000.

(while scrolling)

The rest are dupes... all from the
other guy...

CARSON

Wait... go back... the one at seven
this morning...

Dave highlights a number: 213-965-5666.

WIDER

Carson glances over at the telephone on Colonel Lee's desk.

(FLASHBACK) - CLOSE ON PHONE

from when Carson took a call there, pushing the mute button.

(FLASHBACK) - EXTREME CLOSE UP

on the label showing the phone's extension number: "x666."

BACK TO SCENE

Across the room, Colonel Lee is watching Carson intently.

Carson turns to look at him. They make eye contact.

Time stands still.

Realization.

Feeling like he's moving in SLOW MOTION, Carson reaches for
the Sig 9mm in his shoulder holster.

Colonel Lee grabs the AMD-74 machine gun on the desk.

CARSON

Get down!

Colonel Lee STRAFES the room and backs toward the door.

The BULLETS trace a line across the room. One of the North
Korean Espionage Agents is HIT. He slams against the console.

Carson tackles Ambassador Han and shoves him onto the floor,
while popping off several ROUNDS in Colonel Lee's direction.

Robbins also dives for cover, pushing Walther down first.
Robbins takes a BULLET in the shoulder.

Miranda is HIT. The impact tumbles her over the desk.

CARSON
(continuing)
MIRANDA!

Colonel Lee, still FIRING, slips out the door.

Gunsmoke hangs in the air as Carson scrambles to Miranda.
Several PHONES have begun ringing. No one notices them.

Dave never moved -- he sits hunched over, clutching his
notebook computer, muttering the HAIL MARY.

Carson rolls Miranda over. She's got a large, scorched bullet
hole in the front of her blouse. Carson tears her blouse open.
She's wearing a kelvar vest under it, and the slug is
mushroomed against the vest.

She awakens, GASPS and starts swinging her fists at him.
Carson is overwhelmed with relief.

Then he notices Robbins, bleeding profusely, propped against
the wall next to Walther. Walther is dead -- shot in the head.

OS, we hear several SPURTS of machine gun fire, and a car
ENGINE roaring to life. Miranda looks at Carson...

MIRANDA
Go..!

EXT. WILSHIRE BLVD - DAY

The city's reaction to Bobbi's announcement is immediate and
severe. It makes the panic during the '92 riots look like a
drive in the country.

EXT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - DAY

Carson bursts through the door just as the second armored
Mercedes CRASHES through the wrought-iron entry gates. Carson
fires several SHOTS, which ping harmlessly off the Mercedes.

Carson sprints for a car. Miranda's Volvo is the closest one.

INT. CARSON'S VOLVO - DAY

As Carson is starting it, the passenger door opens and
Ambassador Han gets in.

CARSON
Get the fuck out of here!

Ambassador Han responds by putting on his seat belt. Carson sighs and tears out of the driveway.

EXT. FREMONT PLACE - DAY

Colonel Lee crashes through the Fremont Place guard gate, then hangs a right on Wilshire. He drives the center turn lane, zooming past the snarl of cars.

EXT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - DAY

In the back of the Consulate, Miranda, sore as hell, climbs into the government copter. It WHINES to life and TAKES OFF.

INT. CARSON'S VOLVO - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Carson looks around at the chaos around them.

CARSON

Shit, it's like a Godzilla movie out here!

Then he HEARS, on a nearby car's FM RADIO:

FM NEWSCASTER (VO)

(thru car radio)

...These words, which have terrified the city:

RECORDING OF BOBBI (VO)

(thru car radio)

...A biological weapon, allegedly containing the deadly Pneumonic Plague, is approaching Los Angeles...

Stunned, Carson looks over at Ambassador Han, who buries his face in his hands.

CARSON

(into radio)

Miranda...!

MIRANDA (VO)

(thru radio)

I heard. I'm in the copter.

CARSON

(into radio)

I want you to get out of here...

INT. GOVERNMENT HELICOPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

Miranda is flying just behind Carson's Volvo. The TRAFFIC is beyond nightmarish. She smiles at his concern for her.

MIRANDA

(into radio)

Shut up and keep your eyes on the road. That's my goddamn car.

(beat; into radio)

Dave? You staying on top of the research?

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAY

Sweating, Dave is watching the ACTION outside on a TV while hurriedly bandaging Robbins' shoulder with some torn cloth. He grabs for the two-way and we realize he's panicking.

DAVE

(into radio)

I can't... My kids...

MIRANDA (VO)

(thru radio; calmly)

Listen: the best way to help them is to stay at your computer. If any information comes in, holler. Okay?

He squeezes his eyes shut... After a long beat:

DAVE

(into radio)

Okay...

EXT. SKY OVER LOS ANGELES - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

Several large military helicopters approach -- troop contingents from Pendleton and Ft. Irwin.

The big CH-54 dual-rotor copters set down and offload MARINES and ARMY INFANTRY.

Others, like Apache Gunship combat copters and Hueys, begin to follow the pursuit. They join the police and TV copters, and it looks like the Ride of the Valkyries.

EXT. STREETS OF LOS ANGELES - VARIOUS ANGLES - DAY

People flee from the festivities in droves. Seeing the helicopters and TROOPS in bio suits only fuels the hysteria.

We hear news REPORTS coming from car radios, boom boxes, TV's. Reporters chatter urgently in English, Spanish, Japanese, Korean, Farsi, their voices mixing with the shouts of pedestrians, the rumbling and horn-blowing of the traffic...

Everyone, everywhere is getting into their cars in a mad dash to get out of town or rendezvous with loved ones.

This is the mother of all rush hours.

EXT. WESTERN AVENUE - DAY

Colonel Lee's car turns right onto Western Avenue. He's in the heart of Koreatown -- hardly any of the signs are in English.

He swerves through the panicked drivers jamming the roads -- in the center lane, or into the oncoming traffic. The cars he HITS crumple against the Mercedes without slowing it down.

Carson's Volvo follows, squeezing through traffic in its wake.

INT. NEWS COPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) DAY

Bobbi is salivating with excitement (and antacid.) She snaps off her mic and yells at her Cameraman:

BOBBI

Don't lose the Benz, moron... pull back... show the other copters around us... this is fuckin' great...

INT. CARSON'S VOLVO - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Ambassador Han looks glumly at the chaos in the streets.

CARSON

...The Colonel hired Javal, made it look like he was working alone. Then he made sure Javal got killed, so we'd never find your family -- and they'd have an excuse to drop their bomb. But what's in it for 'em?

AMBASSADOR HAN

There are men in my government whose

power depends on North Korea staying as it is: Socialist, repressive, isolated from the world. They'll resort to anything, even war, to keep it that way. They have the Hitler Syndrome: if their country cannot exist the way they want it, they would rather see it destroyed.

EXT. WESTERN AVENUE - DAY

Colonel Lee gets stuck in a line of cars trying to get onto the 10 East. Above, a swarm of HELICOPTERS circle him.

INT. APACHE HELICOPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

Marine MAJOR VREELAND and his PILOT sit in the lead helicopter, an Apache Gunship.

INT. CARSON'S VOLVO - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Carson leans on the HORN and tries to push through traffic.

VREELAND (VO)

(thru radio)

FBI, this is Major Vreeland. Discontinue your pursuit, we're gonna box his ears from up here.

CARSON

(into radio)

Negative -- his car's armored! And we need the bastard alive!!

VREELAND (VO)

(thru radio)

We've got the situation in hand.

INT. COLONEL LEE'S MERCEDES - DAY

Colonel Lee sees the Apache helicopter approach. He leans into the back seat, knocking the top off a long, plastic crate.

INT. APACHE HELICOPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

The SUNROOF on the Mercedes slides open. Colonel Lee's upper body pokes through the sunroof. He's holding a manportable S.A.M. -- a 3-foot-long, fiberglass rocket launcher.

Vreeland tries to bring his machine guns to bear on Colonel Lee, but there's no time...

VREELAND
(to Pilot)
Shit! Pull back!

EXT. COLONEL LEE'S MERCEDES - DAY

Colonel Lee depresses the trigger on the launcher and a rolling-pin-sized rocket is EXPELLED.

EXT. SKY ABOVE WESTERN AVENUE - DAY

The rocket SLAMS into a police helicopter just in front of the Apache, creating a huge FIREBALL, turning the copter into two tons of red-hot shrapnel.

INT. CARSON'S VOLVO - DAY

Carson and Ambassador Han watch with horror.

INT. NEWS COPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

A hundred yards away, they're BUFFETED by the explosion.

BOBBI
(to TV camera)
Jesus fuckin' God!!!
(beat; smiles)
Uh, I think we're gonna set down
now. Back to you, Brent.

EXT. WESTERN AVENUE - VARIOUS ANGLES - DAY

The burning hull of the police copter CRASHES into a mini-mall, causing a FIRE and EXPLOSION.

Hot metal and debris PINGS and POPS as it rains over the neighborhood, sending cars and pedestrians rushing for cover.

EXT. HELICOPTERS - DAY

Vreeland's Apache and the remaining helicopters scramble away.

VREELAND
(into radio)
Out of the air, or retreat 7,000
meters from target vehicle!

The copters set down in parking lots, rooftops, wherever.

Armed troops climb out to keep PANICKED MOBS from swarming them in an attempt to leave the city.

INT. BACHELOR APARTMENT - INCLUDE ANGLE ON TV - DAY

The Han family watches the TV, amazed, as Colonel Lee ducks back down into the Mercedes and closes the sunroof.

JOY

I always hated that guy...

EXT. SANTA MONICA FREEWAY - DAY

Other drivers, not knowing whether Colonel Lee's rocket is the biological missile, scatter away from him. Colonel Lee squeezes onto the freeway on-ramp.

INT. CARSON'S VOLVO - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Pieces of burning DEBRIS are still landing nearby. Carson looks at Ambassador Han:

CARSON

One of yours?

(Han nods)

What the hell do you need heat-seeking rockets for in L.A.?

AMBASSADOR HAN

There could be another riot...

CARSON

(shakes his head)

And they call me Mr. Overkill.

(into radio)

Dave, what do you know about...

He looks at Han.

AMBASSADOR HAN

Strela-2...

CARSON

(into radio)

Strela-2 anti-aircraft rockets?

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAY

Dave, calmer but still sweating, taps at his computer. A schematic of Colonel Lee's rocket launcher appears on it.

DAVE

(into radio)

I'm with ya... Strela-2. Perenosniy zenitniy raketniy kompleks. Russian factory index 9K-32-M2 --

CARSON (VO)

(thru radio)

-- Skip the goddamn trivia! I need range, guidance, arming method, anything we can work with...

MIRANDA (VO)

(thru radio)

-- You don't "work with" rockets, Peter!

INT. POLICE CRUISER - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Miranda has hitched a ride in a black-and-white.

MIRANDA

(into radio)

Stay back. LAPD's putting up a roadblock.

EXT. SANTA MONICA FREEWAY - DAY

Several police cars clear a path for two huge, yellow DWP BULLDOZERS borrowed from a construction cite.

They rumble up onto the eastbound freeway, turn, and then stop, side by side, facing oncoming traffic. They lower their huge front shovels to create a roadblock.

INT. NEWS COPTER - CLOSE - DAY

Bobbi sits impatiently, microphone in hand...

WIDER

The copter has landed behind an AM-PM Minimart/gas station.

Bobbi, her Pilot and her Cameraman turn when they hear a KNOCKING on the windshield of their copter...

Oblivious to the panic on the streets, a raggedy HOMELESS GUY stands with a spray bottle, wanting to wash the windows on the copter. Bobbi gulps some Mylanta and waves him away:

BOBBI

Save it for someone who gives a
shit!

EXT. STREETS OF LOS ANGELES - VARIOUS ANGLES - DAY

All of the celebration locales are trampled, abandoned messes.
So much for "Fun Fun Fun" and L.A. putting on its best.

MOBS make panicked runs on the stock in grocery, drug and
hardware stores. Violence breaks out in the aisles and parking
lots.

PEOPLE in their homes work feverishly to seal their doors and
windows against the plague with tape, towels, plastic.

INT. COLONEL LEE'S MERCEDES - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Colonel Lee screeches to a stop 500 feet from the bulldozers,
angling the Mercedes so the driver's door is facing them.

EXT. SANTA MONICA FREEWAY - DAY

The windows on the Mercedes glide open....

Carson hurries to catch up to it...

Colonel Lee FIRES a rocket at the bulldozers through the
driver's side window. The BACKBLAST from the launcher vents
through the passenger's side.

The ROCKET impacts the bulldozer on the left; the EXPLOSION
actually FLIPS the huge machine head over tail into the air.

The bulldozer lands upside down on the lane divider, crushing
a portion of it.

Colonel Lee rolls up his windows and drives around the burning
wreckage.

The other drivers really give him wide berth now...

EXT. HARBOR FREEWAY - DAY

Approaching downtown, Colonel Lee turns onto the 110 north.

INT. CARSON'S VOLVO - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Traffic moves aside for Colonel Lee's notorious Mercedes. Carson catches up to it.

DAVE (VO)
(thru radio)
...The Strela-2 needs 45 meters to arm, so stay tight on his ass.

Carson SLAMS his Volvo into the Mercedes. Ambassador Han braces himself on the dashboard. Carson looks over at him.

CARSON
That Kraut-mobile have any weaknesses you'd like to tell me about?

AMBASSADOR HAN
I don't think so -- they said it was solid as a rock.

CARSON
(looks at his crumpled car)
No shit...

As Carson moves forward, Colonel Lee's window opens enough to allow the barrel of his AMD-74 machine gun to poke through.

Carson shoves Ambassador Han's head down and ducks. Colonel Lee STRAFES the Volvo.

Carson looks up just in time to see...

A pickup truck, ahead, stalled on the shoulder.

Carson slams on the brakes, but it's too late... The Volvo CRASHES headfirst into the back of the truck.

The Volvo's AIRBAGS deploy, stopping Carson and Ambassador Han from plowing into the dashboard. After a beat:

AMBASSADOR HAN
(dazed)
I can't believe I'm still alive...

CARSON
This were a Hyundai you wouldn't be.

Ambassador Han looks at Carson, wondering if he's putting him on. The car is a twisted mess. Carson can't get the door open.

EXT. HARBOR FREEWAY - DAY

A red and white LAFD paramedic's ambulance puts on its SIREN and hurries to the Volvo. Two PARAMEDICS jump out.

CARSON

Get me out of here...

They pry his door open with a crowbar. Carson climbs onto the roof of his car. Grimacing from pain, he looks around.

CARSON

(continuing; into radio)
Anybody see him?

MIRANDA (VO)

(thru radio)
Still heading north on the 110.

The Paramedics pry the passenger door open and help Ambassador Han out. Carson looks at the ambulance. He's getting an idea...

CARSON

(into radio)
Dave... You're sure those rockets
are heat-seeking?

DAVE (VO)

(thru radio)
Classic IR, reflective optical
system. How come?

CARSON

(into radio)
Just keep working your leads...

Carson climbs into the back of the ambulance.

INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

Carson rummages through the supplies, finds what he's looking for, and (BELOW FRAME) starts stuffing them into a canvas bag.

EXT. SANTA MONICA FREEWAY - DAY

Carson climbs onto the roof of the ambulance.

CARSON

(into radio)
This is Carson. I need a copter.

EXT. HELICOPTERS - (VARIOUS ANGLES) - DAY

Everyone in the grounded helicopters -- LAPD, National Guard, Marines, media -- react to Carson's request as if he's crazy.

CARSON (VO)

(thru radio)

Something small and nimble.
Anybody... come in low, from the
south... I'm on an ambulance by the
9th Street exit.

MIRANDA (VO)

(thru radio)

Are you out of your mind?

INT. NEWS COPTER - DAY

Bobbi is standing next to her copter in the back of the minimart, listening to this exchange on a POLICE SCANNER. Her Cameraman is eating a microwave burrito. Bobbi jumps in, grabs the ENG camera, and yells at her Pilot:

BOBBI

Get this fuckin' thing in the air!

(to Cameraman)

Out! Not enough room for four.

CAMERAMAN

(as they TAKE OFF)

What am I supposed to do when the
plague comes, hold my breath?

INT. POLICE CRUISER - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

They rapidly cut through the traffic.

MIRANDA

(into radio)

Switch to a secure channel.

(flips a switch)

What on earth are you thinking?

CARSON (VO)

(thru radio)

I'll make him open the sunroof.
Someone can shoot tear gas or a
percussion grenade inside.

MIRANDA

(into radio)

Pete, you haven't gone... suicidal or anything on me, have you?

CARSON (VO)

(thru radio)

No way. I couldn't stand making so many people happy.

EXT. HARBOR FREEWAY - DAY

Carson waves his arms as he sees a helicopter approaching.

The glare from the sun masks the copter's markings. It HOVERS above him. With the canvas bag slung over his shoulder, Carson jumps up onto the runner, then climbs up inside the cockpit.

INT. NEWS COPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

Carson closes the door, then sees Bobbi.

CARSON

You?! I wanted a police copter!

PILOT

Just tell me what to do. I flew two tours in 'Nam.

BOBBI

And he doesn't go unless I go!

CARSON

Wrong-o...

CUT TO:

EXT. NEWS COPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

The door opens and Bobbi comes TUMBLING out of it!

WIDER

They're hovering above the roof of a high-rise hotel downtown. Bobbi lands with a huge SPLASH in the rooftop swimming pool.

BOBBI

surfaces, sputtering and screaming:

BOBBI

I'm a respected electronic
journalist, you fuckin' prick!!

Carson replies by tossing her industrial-sized bottle of
Mylanta out after her.

EXT. SKY ABOVE OCEAN - FOLLOW CRUISE MISSILE - DAY

In the distance, there is smog on the horizon.

INT. NEWS COPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

They follow the 110 north. Ahead, Carson sees the Mercedes
cutting across lanes.

CARSON

(into radio)

Got 'im -- looks like he's headed
for the 101.

INT. NEWS COPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

Carson has the Pilot hover just above and behind the Mercedes.
It comes to a stop and the sunroof opens up.

Carson lashes himself to the copter's center post with a piece
of the seat harness, then slides the door open.

He reaches into the canvas bag and takes out a road flare. He
breaks the flare open, IGNITING it.

CARSON

(to Pilot)

Pull hard to the left, on my
signal...

He braces himself on door jamb...

Below, Colonel Lee's head pokes up from the sunroof.

EXT. COLONEL LEE'S MERCEDES - DAY

Colonel Lee calmly aims the rocket launcher and FIRES.

INT. NEWS COPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

Carson tosses the lit flare, hard, away from the helicopter.

CARSON

Now!

The Pilot swings the helicopter in the other direction, and the rocket FOLLOWS the flare, streaking past the helicopter.

A few seconds later, the rocket EXPLODES in midair behind them.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Miranda sees what Carson is doing.

MIRANDA

You fucking lunatic!!

INT. NEWS COPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

The News Pilot looks over at Carson.

PILOT

Hope you got more flares than he's got rockets.

EXT. HARBOR FREEWAY - DAY

Miranda and the L.A. Cop, both holding small tear gas pistols, split up. Crouching behind the cars on the freeway, they sneak up on the stopped Mercedes.

INT. NEWS COPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

Carson takes another flare out of the canvas bag. He breaks the top off... and it doesn't ignite.

Below, Colonel Lee loads another rocket into the launcher...

EXT. HARBOR FREEWAY - DAY

Miranda is climbing the metal stairs leading to a graffiti-covered freeway sign.

INT. NEWS COPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

Carson fumbles to pull another flare out of the canvas bag.

EXT. HARBOR FREEWAY - DAY

Avoiding coils of razor-sharp concertina wire around the sign,

Miranda FIRES a tear gas canister at the Mercedes' sunroof.

It misses, bouncing off the windshield, filling the area with white smoke. Colonel Lee keeps his eye on the copter...

INT. NEWS COPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

Carson gets the new flare lit and throws it away from the copter just as Colonel Lee FIRES another rocket.

The rocket EXPLODES a few dozen yards away. Shrapnel PEPPERS the copter, DAMAGING the rear rotor.

Struggling to maintain control, the Pilot heads for the Sixth Street on-ramp, below the freeway, out of the line of fire.

EXT. HARBOR FREEWAY - DAY

Colonel Lee spots Miranda, up on the freeway sign, loading another tear gas canister. He STRAFES the sign.

She flattens; the BULLETS tear through the sign above her.

The L.A. Cop rushes the Mercedes. Colonel Lee FIRES at him, hitting him across the legs.

Colonel Lee ducks back into the Mercedes and drives away.

VARIOUS ANGLES

As Miranda comes down from the sign...

Carson climbs up the embankment from Sixth Street to the 101...

The downed L.A. Cop waves as a pair of ambulances drive up, lights flashing and sirens WAILING.

Carson runs alongside one of the ambulances, pulling the driver's door open before it's stopped.

The Paramedic is the one who helped him and Ambassador Han out of the Volvo. Carson yanks him out of his ambulance.

MIRANDA

Sorry...

INT. AMBULANCE - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Carson jumps in. Miranda climbs in the passenger's side. As he

peels away, Miranda smacks Carson on the head.

MIRANDA

You're completely deranged! Playing chicken with rockets!

CARSON

Well, what the hell were you doing out there?

AMBASSADOR HAN (OS)

What are both of you doing?

Carson turns, surprised and annoyed to see Ambassador Han, his arm bandaged, lying in the cot in the back.

CARSON

Oh, for Christ's sake... Hold on!

Lights and SIRENS going, they rush into the 110/101 interchange.

Ahead, Colonel Lee's Mercedes is driving through the cars that are parting like the Red Sea for him.

MIRANDA

Even if we can pry him out with...

(looks at her watch)

Twelve minutes to go, I doubt he'll be very cooperative.

CARSON

I'll just use my outstanding people skills.

Carson glances up at the sign showing the upcoming exit: Glendale Blvd - Echo Park. A thought is forming...

CARSON

(continuing; to Ambassador Han)

That car's like a rock, right?

EXT. HOLLYWOOD FREEWAY - DAY

Carson suddenly cuts to the left. When they reach the Glendale Blvd exit, he SLAMS the ambulance into the side of the Mercedes, forcing it onto the freeway off-ramp.

INT. COLONEL LEE'S MERCEDES - (MOVING SHOT) - DAY

Carson pushes the Mercedes across Bellevue Avenue, toward the park surrounding Echo Lake. Colonel Lee STRAFES the ambulance.

EXT. GLENDALE BLVD - DAY

Carson keeps BUMPING the Mercedes as they reach Glendale Blvd, running right alongside the lake.

With a hard shove, Carson sends the Mercedes SKIDDING off the road, through the small guardrail, and INTO the lake.

Carson slams on the brakes, fishtailing the ambulance into the grass surrounding the lake. Sig 9mm in hand, he hops out.

The Mercedes is so heavy that it's already half-submerged.

INT./EXT. COLONEL LEE'S MERCEDES - DAY

WATER pours in from the floorboards, the air vents...

Colonel Lee climbs out through the sunroof and FIRES at Carson with his AMD-74.

EXT. ECHO LAKE - DAY

Carson ducks behind the ambulance, takes careful aim...

And SHOOTS Colonel Lee, WINGING him in the shoulder. Colonel Lee's machine gun goes flying, and he tumbles into the water.

Meanwhile, Cops, Army, Marines, etc. arrive via helicopter and car. Major Vreeland is among them. The news media, ENG cameras bouncing on their shoulders, run alongside them.

CLOSER

Carson races over to grab Colonel Lee, who is slogging out of the lake. There is a glint of bright steel... and Colonel Lee SLASHES at Carson with a knife.

Carson moves aside... but the knife SLICES across his upper arm. Carson falls backwards.

Colonel Lee, on hands and knees, tries to crawl away. Suddenly, someone KICKS him in face, flipping him over.

It's Miranda. Colonel Lee's knife goes flying.

Carson, bleeding, piles onto Colonel Lee. Vreeland assists. Colonel Lee fights like mad to break free...

Until Miranda JAMS her heel into his groin. He cries out.

MIRANDA

Ever hear of "fuck-me" pumps?
Well, these are fuck you pumps!
(pushes harder)
Where's the family?

Surprised at his wife's new negotiating technique, Carson shoots a look at Vreeland. Vreeland grimaces.

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAY

Dave sits in front of his computer, phone receiver resting on his shoulder, riveted by the ACTION on the TV.

DAVE

Holy shit -- Knoll-It-All's turned
into Dirty Harriet!

He turns as his MODEM squawks and another download comes in.

DAVE

(continuing; into phone)
You're sure there were no accounts in
the other names I gave you?

EXT. ECHO LAKE - DAY

While Miranda continues to apply encouragement to Colonel Lee's gonads, Ambassador Han limps over. He yells some ORDERS at Colonel Lee. After a moment, Colonel Lee sags.

AMBASSADOR HAN

Let him up.

Carson's not so sure, but they're completely surrounded by military and law enforcement personnel. He releases his grasp. Miranda removes her heel.

Then, with lightning reflexes, Colonel Lee grabs Vreeland's Rock Island Arsenal Colt .45 Auto from its snap-holster.

COLONEL LEE

Victory!

Carson dives back onto him. But he twists his arm around and PULLS the trigger -- with the muzzle underneath his own chin.

Carson, Miranda and Ambassador Han are SPRAYED with his blood.

WIDER

Dumbfounded everybody looks at each other...

Carson, dogged, kneels next to Colonel Lee's body and searches through his pockets, looking for something, anything.

EXT. SKY ABOVE OCEAN - FOLLOW CRUISE MISSILE - DAY

Ahead, in the distance, the coastline comes into view.

INT. BACHELOR APARTMENT - DAY

The family stares at the TV. Mrs. Han purses her lips... fighting it... a tear rolls down her face. The time: 4:51.

EXT. ECHO LAKE - DAY

Carson reaches for his two-way radio.

CARSON

(into radio)

Dave...

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAY

Dave is looking at the TV, paying no attention to his computer.

INCLUDE COMPUTER

as some bank records are being downloaded: faxed IMAGES of processed checks SCROLL down the screen.

CARSON (VO)

(thru radio)

Anything else come through?

DAVE

(numb; into radio)

Take a hint. We're screwed.

CARSON (VO)

(thru radio)

Not yet...

Shaking his head, Dave glances at his computer...

CLOSER

Just in time to glimpse the words "First & Last + Deposit" on one of the checks as it scrolls off the screen.

DAVE

fumbles to scroll back to the check.

DAVE

(into radio)

Wait! One of Javal's alias accounts:
check for an apartment rental!

CARSON (VO)

(thru radio)

You're shittin'... Where?!

CUT TO:

EXT. BACHELOR APARTMENT - ANGLE ON WINDOW - DAY

Through the sheer curtains over the window we can SEE the Han family sitting in their booby-trapped chairs.

DAVE (VO)

Park La Brea!

We PULL BACK... they're way up in a high-rise building... The CAMERA continues to PULL BACK, farther and farther...

...REVEALING 4,222 apartment units, on 168 acres. The building in which the apartment is located is one of 18 identical, 13-story towers standing side-by-side in a series of hexagons.

EXT. ECHO LAKE - DAY

Vreeland's Apache helicopter LIFTS OFF.

INT. APACHE HELICOPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

Miranda looks at Carson, then checks her watch. 4:52.

CARSON

(into radio)

...Have the Manager evacuate the
complex. Find out which unit the

family's in, but don't let anyone go
in 'til we get there.

INT. NORTH KOREAN CONSULATE - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAY

Dave, re-energized, is juggling the phone and the radio.

DAVE

(into radio)

Private security's going around with
PA's, and they set off the fire alarm.

(into phone)

Well, try callin' him again!

(into radio)

Manager's gone, and the Assistant
can't find the key to get to the
rental manifest.

(into phone)

Then kick the fuckin' door down!

INT. PARK LA BREA OFFICE - DAY

The dense Assistant Manager, MILTON, stands in the outer
office, staring at the inner office's closed door.

MILTON

(into phone)

I'll try him in his car again...

During this, outside:

WESTEC GUARDS (OS)

(thru car-mounted PA)

Tenants -- leave your apartments at
once... Take the stairs...

INT. APACHE HELICOPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

Carson sticks the radio in his pocket and looks at Miranda.

CARSON

"Fuck-you" pumps??

INT. BACHELOR APARTMENT - DAY

The hostages can hear the WHOOPING fire alarms and the (OS)
ANNOUNCEMENT. Joy looks at Mrs. Han, hopeful.

JOY

They must know we're here...

ALL
Help!

No answer.

EXT. PARK LA BREA - DAY

Police cars, military vehicles, fire trucks, etc. converge on the complex from all directions.

Several helicopters circle the complex. One has a PA in it:

VOICE THRU PA
Han family. Show us your location...

INT. BACHELOR APARTMENT - DAY

The family listens, frustrated, as the HELICOPTERS circle (OS).

Joy carefully slides her arm along the arm rest, then tries to coax something out of her pocket -- her Zippo lighter.

JOY
Mother... Sam...

They look over at her as she lights it. After a beat, Mrs. Han understands... She hesitates, then:

MRS. HAN
Do it.

Joy drops the lighter to the floor, then swats it with her foot to Mrs. Han. She does the same, passing it to Sam, who's sitting closest to the window.

With one eye on the VU movement meter, Sam kicks the lighter, sliding it across the carpet toward the curtains.

INT. PARK LA BREA OFFICE - DAY

Several COPS and MARINES burst into the office. Milton, the Assistant Manager, cowers as they SHOOT the lock off the door to the inner office and rush in.

MILTON
It's a brown binder... Says "Rental Manifest." You can't miss it...

They literally tear the office apart.

INT. BACHELOR APARTMENT - DAY

The FIRE is consuming the curtains. Thick, toxic SMOKE begins to fill the tiny apartment, and everyone starts coughing.

INT. APACHE HELICOPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

They circle, overwhelmed by the sheer number of apartments.

CARSON

(into radio)

Apartment number would be real helpful, gang...

Miranda points to a wisp of SMOKE above one of the towers.

MIRANDA

There!

They come around, and spot the FIRE in the apartment's window. It is nine stories up, four stories below the top floor.

EXT. SKY ABOVE OCEAN - FOLLOW CRUISE MISSILE - DAY

The coast looms closer.

EXT. PARK LA BREA - INCLUDE APACHE HELICOPTER - DAY

The Apache hovers parallel to the apartment, 20 feet away. Carson feeds out a steel cable from a winch...

Then throws a spring-loaded grappling hook onto the thick, iron balcony railing.

Hanging onto a webbed rescue harness, Carson slides quickly across the line, onto the balcony. Using the butt of his Sig 9mm, he BREAKS a hole in the glass on the locked sliding glass door. He reaches through and unlatches it.

INT. BACHELOR APARTMENT - DAY

The FLAMES have engulfed both sets of curtains and have begun to creep across the floor and the ceiling.

Carson glances over at the electronics on the TV: 4:55 PM.

The family is coughing from the smoke, trying not to panic.

In the kitchen, Lisa can't cough through the tape on her mouth. She's freaking out.

Seeing this, Carson runs over to her and pulls the tape off. She starts SCREAMING, so he grabs her face.

CARSON

Okay... work with me here!

He grabs one of the refrigerator handles and pulls, but it won't come loose. Lisa cries out in frustration.

LISA

Hurry, please hurry...

Carson spots Javal's toolbox. In it, he finds a socket set handle, which he levers in between the refrigerator handle and the door. He rips one handle loose, then the other.

Carson turns his attention to the booby-trapped chairs.

Lisa sits on the floor, frantically pulling her handcuffed hands around her feet so they're in front of her, then runs for the front door. Just as she reaches it:

CARSON

DON'T!

He grabs her before she opens the door. There's a small magnetic sensor at the top of the door jamb.

CARSON

(continuing)

We have to go out the window.

MRS. HAN

Can't you disarm the bomb?

CARSON

Too risky. Let's concentrate on getting you out of here.

He looks at the meters on the electronic units.

CARSON

(continuing)

Sound detectors?

MRS. HAN

Sam covered them with chewing gum.

SAM

High-tech problem, low-tech solution.

Carson looks at Sam, impressed, then peers under the chairs.

CARSON

Pressure sensors. Use 'em in convertibles: Bad guy sits on your seat, he sets the alarm off. These are rigged backwards -- get up, you set 'em off.

SAM

You a bomb expert?

CARSON

Nope. But I've had some car alarms in my day.

(to himself)

For all the goddamn good they do...

Carson looks around, thinking. He spots the roll of duct tape on the table, grabs it and unrolls a long piece.

CARSON

(continuing; to Mrs. Han)

Slide your arm forward... Watch the meter... Keep the pressure on the armrest with your elbow...

He wraps the armrest with tape, cinching it tight.

CARSON

(continuing)

It'll squeeze the sensor, duplicate the weight of your arm... Okay... pick it up.

They look at each other, scared... After a beat, she does.

The meter JIGGLES... but stays in the black! Everyone sighs with relief. Carson repeats the process on her other armrest.

CARSON

(continuing; to Sam)

Low-tech solution...

(to Mrs. Han)

Lean back... Carefully.

Carson feels for the sensor in the seat, finding it buried under Mrs. Han's thighs. He runs a long piece of tape around the seat and wraps it tightly.

He tries to lift Mrs. Han, but the meter moves to the red.

MIRANDA (VO)
(thru radio in his pocket)
How's it going in there?

CARSON
(to himself)
Nag, nag, nag...

He wraps another piece of tape around the seat, and tries again to lift her. This time it works!

EXT. SKY ABOVE OCEAN - FOLLOW CRUISE MISSILE - DAY

The missile has almost reached land.

EXT. U.S. FIGHTER BOMBERS - SKY OVER SEA OF JAPAN - DAY

Traveling toward the Korean DMZ.

INT./EXT. BACHELOR APARTMENT - INCLUDE APACHE HELICOPTER - DAY

Time: 4:58. The Apache helicopter HOVERING outside is making an incredible racket.

Carson is helping Joy get free of her chair. As she stands, the pieces of her hair stuck to the gum over the microphone head begin to PULL the gum away!

Mrs. Han sees the meter heading for the red, and the yellow warning light flashing... She grabs Carson's arm.

Carson quickly covers the mic... The meter drops to zero.

WIDER

The FIRE is spreading across the carpet and walls. Carson is hurrying everyone out onto the small balcony. He helps Lisa into the rescue harness. She's terrified.

CARSON
You'll be over in five seconds...

She nods. Miranda pulls her across the cable and send the harness back. Carson turns next to Sam, but he stands back so

his sister can go.

ANGLE ON BOMB

One minute... fifty-nine seconds...

CARSON

sends Sam across... the harness comes back... he straps Mrs. Han into it...

CARSON

Tell 'em I'm gonna release the hook
and ride down on the line.

He pushes her across. As soon as she's there, he gestures to the Apache Pilot to move closer so he can release the hook.

ANGLE ON BOMB

Thirty seconds... twenty-nine...

THE HARNESS

slides back across to him; Carson grabs it with one hand and tries to undo the hook buckle with the other...

But the cable is crooked, and the buckle is JAMMED -- if he can't release it, he's stuck there! Carson tries to free the hook, but it's dug in between the concrete and the railing.

Fifteen seconds to go...

Carson looks over at the helicopter and waves them away.

CARSON

(shouts)

Release the cable from your side!
Get out of here!

MIRANDA

(shouts back)

Come over the railing! Grab onto the
harness!

INT. APACHE HELICOPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

Miranda turns to the Pilot.

MIRANDA

Tear the hook loose!

PILOT

It'll pop the winch buckle!

MIRANDA

Try it anyway!

INT./EXT. BACHELOR APARTMENT - INCLUDE APACHE HELICOPTER - DAY

Five seconds to go...

The Apache helicopter backs away from the high-rise...

The cable pulls taut...

Carson wraps the webbing of the harness around his wrist...

The Apache STRAINS against the resistance of the cable...

The entire railing around the balcony BREAKS away, with Carson HANGING on the harness next to it...

The helicopter turns and flies away...

EXT. PARK LA BREA - DAY

The bomb EXPLODES, blasting a huge hole in the tower.

All the windows in the nearby towers and apartments IMplode.

CARSON

is engulfed in the FIREBALL... We can't tell if he's alive.

INT./EXT. APACHE HELICOPTER - (AERIAL SHOT) - DAY

The force of the blast HITS them like a tidal wave. The Pilot fights to keep control while looking for a place to set down.

BELOW

Huge chunks of debris, glass, furniture, etc. rain down.

Carson and the section of railing underneath the helicopter swing like a pendulum from the force of the blast.

Groggy, he loosens his grasp on the harness, and jumps clear as the helicopter lands.

Miranda leaps out of the Apache and runs to him...

WIDER

Dust and debris from the explosion hang in the air;
helicopters crisscross the scene.

Everyone turns their eyes skyward, looking for the missile...

INT. WORKERS' PARADISE HALL - P'Y,NGYANG - (INCLUDE TV) -
DAY

The Premier and the High Command are watching the action at
Park LaBrea on CNN Live...

...As Ambassador Han embraces his family.

Furious, General Kai gets up and leaves the conference room.

The others look at the Premier. After a beat, he crosses to a
PANEL OF ELECTRONICS and SLAPS a large red button on it...

EXT. SKY ABOVE SANTA MONICA - DAY

The cruise missile EXPLODES, completely obliterating it.

EXT. U.S. FIGHTER BOMBERS - SKY OVER SEA OF JAPAN - DAY

The lead jet cuts away, turning around. The others follow.

EXT. PARK LA BREA - DAY

The Han family crosses to Carson, blackened and bloody,
sitting on the curb next to Miranda. Ambassador Han shakes
his hand. Mrs. Han and Miranda cry. Joy and Sam grin at him.
After a beat, Carson gathers the kids up in his arms. It is a
profound catharsis for him...

EXT. WORKERS' PARADISE HALL - P'Y,NGYANG - DAY

General Kai is getting into his car. He look up as an ARMY
OFFICER approaches... and SHOTS him! The Officer pushes his
body into the passenger's seat, gets in, and drives off.

FADE THRU TO:

DARKNESS

and the sound of RUNNING WATER.

EXT. PASTORAL SCENE - DAY

A beautiful ranch house and horse barn, sitting on a meadow beside a brook, overlooking an unspoiled pine forest.

INT. CARSON'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The pastoral scene is a COMMERCIAL on the TV.

Carson, wrapped in a towel, holds the phone and paces.

CARSON

(into phone)

...I'll call you next week.

Carson hangs up, and CLICKS off the TV as he leaves the room. The sound of RUNNING WATER continues (OS)...

EXT. CARSON'S HOUSE - PATIO - NIGHT

Miranda, wearing a bathrobe, is WATERING her sickly roses. Carson comes outside.

MIRANDA

Who was that on the phone?

CARSON

The Bureau.

(beat)

They want me back on the hostage team.

MIRANDA

What did you say?

CARSON

Told 'em I'd sleep on it...

Miranda smiles, then looks at him, surprised, as he crouches down and helps her turn the soil around the rose bushes. They work in silence. Then, tentatively, she leans over and kisses him. Soon they're in each other's arms, holding tight...

INT. CARSON'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Still entwined, Carson and Miranda stumble in. While kissing:

MIRANDA

Working with you today was

certainly... interesting, Inspector.

CARSON

It's my outstanding people skills.

He slips her out of her robe and they fall onto the bed. It is a tender, romantic moment...

Until, (OS), a CAR ALARM goes off. Miranda bolts up.

MIRANDA

I hate this fucking town...

Carson ignores the ALARM -- and Miranda's comment. He pushes her back onto the bed and turns off the bedside lamp.

All of the books and magazines about other places to live spill from his nightstand, onto the floor...

FADE OUT.