

# DRIVE

Written  
by  
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Based on the novel  
by  
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EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF L.A. STREETS AND FREEWAYS - NIGHT.

Car lights glitter down below, flickering across the endless network of streets and freeways that span the L.A. basin. From above, the city looks like an electronic grid. Or a sparkling maze. The tiny pinpricks of red and white light move in different directions, but never seem to find a way out. Over the images, we hear a flat, emotionless voice:

DRIVER V/O

...hundred thousand streets in this city, you don't need to know the route. You give me a time and place, I give you a five minute window. Those five minutes I'm yours. Whatever goes down I'm yours. Minute either side you're on your own...

INT. LOW RENT APARTMENT/ KOREATOWN/ L.A. - NIGHT.

A map of downtown L.A. is spread out on a bed, dozens of different routes marked in pencil. The voice-over continues -

DRIVER V/O

...One last thing. You won't be able to reach me at this number again...

DRIVER hangs up the phone. He folds his map of LA and slips it in his duffel bag. A few clothes and other essentials are neatly packed inside. He zips the bag shut and takes one last look at a cheap TV set. On screen, the LA Clippers are taking a pounding from the New York Knicks. Driver's more interested in the scoreboard clock than the game itself. He studies it a moment, then switches off the TV.

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING LOT/ APARTMENT/ KOREATOWN - NIGHT.

The apartment block's laundry room is next to the parking lot. Driver walks with his head down, carrying his duffel bag, not even glancing at the sad collection of NEIGHBORS who are busy doing their washing. He enters the dimly lit car park and heads towards a sleek black Chevy Impala.

INT/EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ ALVARADO - NIGHT.

The Clippers-Knicks game plays on the car radio. Driver is only half listening, focused on the road. We see his face in the passing neon lights. Feline good looks. Impassive blue eyes. Something almost melancholy in his unwavering gaze. He drives carefully, letting other cars overtake.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Driver glides into the parking lot of another low-rent apartment block.

INT. STAIRWAY/ APARTMENT BUILDING/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Clutching his duffel bag Driver heads up the stairway. Hurrying down in the opposite direction he sees a pretty LATINA GIRL wearing a waitress outfit. Their eyes meet briefly, before Driver looks away.

INT. APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Driver unlocks the door to his new apartment. It's not all that different from his last one. Clean, sparse, and anonymous. He doesn't even bother to walk in. He tosses his duffel bag inside and locks the door again.

INT/EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - NIGHT

Driver's back on the road, the basketball game still playing on the radio. He drives past a row of brightly lit Mexican food shacks on Silver Lake Boulevard and turns into a run down garage lit up with a neon sign - *Shannon's Custom Kings - vintage cars.*

INT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - NIGHT.

A grizzled old mechanic, SHANNON, limps down the stairs of the garage's living quarters, greeting Driver with a sleepy smile as he climbs out of the Chevy.

DRIVER

I wake you up?

SHANNON

I fell asleep in front of the TV.

DRIVER

Anything good?

SHANNON

Spanish novella. There's this senorita I'm crazy about...

Shannon's pet cat, "Miss Dickinson", sidles up to Driver affectionately as he follows the old man through the garage.

SHANNON

You want something to eat?

DRIVER

I ate at Denny's.

SHANNON

You call that food. Even Miss Dickinson eats better than you do...

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They head past rows of vintage cars -- Fords, Dodges, Buicks -- until they arrive at a plain hatchback.

SHANNON

...Pearl white Honda Civic. Most popular car in the state of California...

Driver casts his eyes over the unimpressive vehicle then holds out his hand for the keys.

INT/EXT. HONDA CIVIC/ TOY DISTRICT/ DOWNTOWN L.A. - NIGHT.

The basketball game is approaching the end of the third quarter. Driver's behind the wheel of the Honda now, cruising past rows of dingy toy stores on 3rd Street. He glances at his watch. It's 9:50. He checks his mirror then turns into a side street.

INT/ EXT. HONDA CIVIC/ ELECTRONICS SUPERSTORE/ DOWNTOWN - NIGHT.

A vast electronics superstore dominates the deserted street. Under the pale yellow glow of the street lamps, Driver sees signs advertising a '*huge blow out weekend sale*'. He pulls over, making sure he has a good view of the entrance. On the radio, the basketball commentator is getting more excited.

BASKETBALL COMMENTARY

...This is some comeback from the Clippers!  
Only a few minutes ago they looked dead and buried!...

Driver reaches under the seat and pulls out a small handheld scanner. He switches it on, tuning it to the right frequency. Crackling police dispatches are interspersed with the basketball commentary now.

POLICE SCANNER

...9 Adam 81, what is your current location?...Repeat, what is your current location?...

BASKETBALL COMMENTARY

...Another unbelievable three pointer from Davis and the Clippers are within five!...

Inside the store, everything is dark and silent -- then suddenly the alarm screams to life. Driver looks up, betraying just a hint of surprise -- this wasn't supposed to happen.

BASKETBALL COMMENTARY

...Time out Knicks...

Two masked MEN burst out of the building. One of them clutches a bulging hold-all while the other covers the door with a shotgun.

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BOOM. He fires into the store, the muzzle flash lighting up the darkness.

Again we catch a flicker of irritation on Driver's face -- this wasn't supposed to happen either. He hits the gas, sooner than he would have wanted. In one smooth movement the Honda sweeps towards the entrance. Driver steers with one hand then reaches behind the seat and pushes open the rear door with his other hand.

The masked men slide in the back seat and Driver floors the gas, taking off at speed. In his rear view mirror he sees a SECURITY GUARD run out of the building, aiming a gun. Driver slaloms out of the gates as the security guard opens fire.

INT/ EXT. HONDA CIVIC/ STREETS/ DOWNTOWN - NIGHT.

Driver thunders over the 1st Street bridge towards Boyle Heights, then eases his foot off the gas, slowing to a steady speed. In the back seat the two armed robbers rip off their masks, looking pumped up with adrenalin. Driver studies them disapprovingly in his rear view mirror, then swerves right on Mission Street as his police scanner crackles to life.

POLICE SCANNER

...Attention all units...211...Superstore  
on Traction Avenue...Suspects headed  
Eastbound on 1st Street...Driving a white  
hatchback...

Driver swings sharply into 4th Street now, crossing the L.A. River again, heading back in the same direction he came.

POLICE SCANNER

...Airships dispatched...Downtown and Boyle  
Heights...All units standby. Repeat, all  
units standby...

Up ahead, the lights of Downtown L.A. glitter against the night sky. Hovering between the neon green glow of the skyscrapers Driver sees the red and white glint of a police helicopter. He switches off his headlights, turning left on Santa Fe Avenue.

INT/ EXT. HONDA/ ALLEYWAYS/ INDUSTRIAL AREA/ DOWNTOWN - NIGHT.

The armed robbers watch in tense silence as Driver weaves in and out of the industrial alleyways with his lights switched off. It's as if he's trying to find his way out of the maze or probing to see if there's anyone out there.

POLICE SCANNER

...1 Baker 11, headed south on Boyle  
Avenue...No sign of suspects...Repeat, no  
sign of suspects...

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The armed robbers look relieved when suddenly a police car glides past at the end of the alleyway, its lights also off. It's like catching a glimpse of a passing shark's fin. Driver taps the brakes gently, his car sliding to a stop. He stays there a moment, then eases the Honda forward, turning in the same direction as the black-and-white.

INT/ EXT. HONDA/ LA RIVER INDUSTRIAL AREA/ DOWNTOWN - NIGHT.

It's a high-risk strategy but Driver follows the black-and-white at a distance, hidden in the darkness, knowing other squad cars won't be checking the same route. The police car makes its way through the dimly lit industrial zone, unaware it's being shadowed. Driver turns his car radio up a whisper.

BASKETBALL COMMENTARY

...And for the first time in the game the Clippers have the lead. 71 to 69. Seven to go in the Fourth here at the Staples Centre...

Driver turns the sound back down. Up ahead, the police car swings left, disappearing from view. Driver slows down too, anticipating the next obstacle. He doesn't have long to wait. In the distance he suddenly sees the piercing beam of a police chopper's search-lights, sweeping the area one more time.

Driver floors the gas, speeding straight towards the approaching helicopter. The armed robbers are too stunned to protest. They just sit there, watching the sweeping searchlights getting closer and closer.

Then suddenly it becomes clear what Driver's doing. Up ahead, there's a small underpass below the 7th Street bridge. Driver slides the car under the safety of the bridge just before the chopper's searchlights spot them.

INT/ EXT. HONDA/ UNDERPASS/ LA RIVER INDUSTRIAL AREA - NIGHT.

The roar of the helicopter thunders overhead. The underpass is crammed with dirty mattresses and shopping carts. Sleeping HOBOS can be seen under dirty blankets. Driver waits for the echo of the helicopter to fade, then moves forward again.

INT/ EXT. HONDA/ OLYMPIC BOULEVARD/ DOWNTOWN - NIGHT.

Gloomy yellow street-lamps shine down on the industrial zone. Rows of delivery trucks are parked outside the meat-packing factories. Driver cruises cautiously down the deserted street. The crackling of the police scanner and the droning of the basketball commentary add to the tension. Finally up ahead he sees car-lights streaming back and forth on Broadway.

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DRIVER

Get down...

The armed robbers lie flat on the back seat, paying Driver more respect now.

INT/ EXT. HONDA CIVIC/ BROADWAY/ DOWNTOWN - NIGHT.

There's a steady flow of traffic on Broadway. Driver falls in behind the other cars. On the radio, the basketball game is still playing.

BASKETBALL COMMENTARY

...Three thirteen left on the clock.  
Dunleavy calls a time out and it's the  
Clippers by one...

The passing head-lamps light up Driver's face. There's not a trace of emotion in his eyes -- even when he spots a patrol car approaching in the opposite direction.

BASKETBALL COMMENTARY

...Buckle up your seat belts Clippers fans.  
This game really is too close to call...

The two cars pass each other slowly. Driver sees the cops in the Black-and-White peering at the Honda as they head past. He turns down the basketball game and focuses on the scanner.

POLICE SCANNER

...This is 1 David 16...White Honda Civic  
headed South on Broadway and  
Pico...Couldn't get a look at her license  
plates...Appears to be only one occupant...

In the back seat, the armed robbers wait nervously for the police dispatch to respond.

POLICE SCANNER

...1 David 16...why don't you check her  
out...

As soon as he hears this Driver swerves sharply into the next street.

INT/ EXT. HONDA/ SIDESTREET OFF BROADWAY/ DOWNTOWN - NIGHT.

Driver guns around the block now, building up speed.

POLICE SCANNER

...This is 1 David 16...We lost the suspect  
somewhere between Broadway and  
Grand...Possible evasive action...Request  
airship and additional units...

INT/ EXT. HONDA/ WEST PICO BOULEVARD/ DOWNTOWN - NIGHT.

Driver bursts out onto Pico now. A squad car headed in the opposite direction slows down as it sees him but is caught up in the flow of traffic, unable to turn round and give chase.

POLICE SCANNER

...1 David 11...suspect headed West on  
Pico...

Driver threads his way through the vehicles in front of him, so smooth and effortless it's hard to tell how fast he's going. He glances up as he hears the dull rumble of a police chopper overhead. The helicopter is almost directly above him, swinging its search-beam back and forth to get a lock on his position.

Driver pushes the car as fast as it will go, but there's no way of outrunning the chopper. Blue light floods the asphalt around him as he guns down Figueroa.

POLICE SCANNER

All units...pursuit in progress...white  
Honda Civic...Headed North on Figueroa...

Even now Driver doesn't panic, turning his attention back to the basketball game.

BASKETBALL COMMENTARY

Thornton pulls up from behind the arc,  
misses. Rebound New York. One eighteen to  
play...

Driver swerves sharply towards the sparkling lights of the Staples Centre.

INT/ EXT. HONDA/ STAPLES CENTRE/ PARKING LOT - NIGHT.

The terraced parking lot looms up ahead. A sign above the barrier says '*Season Ticket Holders Only*'. Driver punches in a ticket and roars into the parking lot.

INT. HONDA/ STAPLES CENTRE PARKING LOT - NIGHT.

The Honda screeches from one level to the next. With a game going on, the parking lot is almost full. Finally Driver pulls into a free parking space.

BASKETBALL COMMENTARY

...Thirty seconds remaining and all the  
Knicks have to do is run out the clock...

For all their professionalism, the armed robbers look tense, realizing they're cornered. Driver listens calmly to the overlapping basketball game and police scanner.

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POLICE SCANNER

...Repeat, suspect headed towards the Staples Centre...White Honda Civic...

BASKETBALL COMMENTARY

...Davis steals. Passes to Gordon. Last chance for the Clippers...

Driver glances in his side mirror. Behind him, dozens of FANS are already streaming out into the parking lot before the game is over, hoping to avoid the inevitable traffic.

BASKETBALL COMMENTARY

...Gordon back to Davis...Davis for three...This is unbelievable!...

The jubilant commentary continues, but Driver isn't listening anymore. The game has served its purpose. Hundreds of fans flood into the parking lot now. Dozens of cars pull out of their parking places. Within seconds the parking lot is a seething mass of blaring vehicles.

BASKETBALL COMMENTARY

...What a remarkable comeback...Outplayed for most of the game, the Clippers have shown incredible resilience...

Driver glances at the armed robbers and nods. It's time. They climb out of the car, merging in with the crowd.

EXT. STAPLES CENTRE/ DOWNTOWN L.A. - NIGHT.

Outside, the streets around the Staples Centre are clogged with traffic. Slowly we begin to PULL OUT. Beneath us, we see that dozens of the cars in the chaos are white Honda Civics. We hear police sirens and glimpse flashing gumballs, but the endless walls of hemmed-in cars block the Black-and-Whites. We keep climbing, gazing down at the hundreds of different shaped, different sized vehicles, and realize that somewhere below Driver is making his getaway.

EXT. BUFFET TABLE/ FILM SET/ SAN PEDRO/ LOS ANGELES - DAY.

A SLOW DISSOLVE to a buffet table -- cold cuts, pizza slices, salads, doughnuts. Driver stands in line, carrying a tray, piling food onto two plates. To our surprise he's dressed as a police officer. It's only when we see the cameras and lighting rigs behind him that we realize he's on a film set. All around him the rest of the STUNT CREW are laughing and chatting, but Driver keeps himself to himself.

EXT. VEHICLE AREA/ FILM SET/ SAN PEDRO/ LOS ANGELES - DAY.

In the distance a black Charger is pulling off flashy double-eights and turnarounds on a practice course. Driver watches with mild interest then walks on. Shannon, the old garage owner we met earlier, lies under a 70's model police car, working on the suspension. We see several other muscle cars from the same period parked nearby. As well as running the vintage car garage Shannon hires out his vehicles for the movies.

DRIVER

They're out of doughnuts...

SHANNON O/S

Bullshit...

Shannon slides out from under the car and limps up on his bad leg, frowning as he sees the plate of healthy looking salad.

SHANNON

You putting me on a diet?

DRIVER

Don't want you having a heart attack. Who's gonna look after 'Miss Dickinson'?...

Shannon takes his plate of salad with exaggerated distaste when someone calls out to him from the set.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Hey, Shannon! Be with you in a minute!...

Shannon acknowledges the irritating AD with a wave.

SHANNON

Sure thing, Jimmy...

(Under his breath)

Asshole's been saying that for five hours...

Driver smiles at the old man affectionately then looks across the busy film set. The AD returns to a huddle with the DIRECTOR, a MOVIE STAR, and a STUNT DOUBLE who's dressed in exactly the same clothes as the movie star.

SHANNON

...I got a call from our friends last night. They like the way you drive. They wanna use you again.

We sense the reluctance in Driver's eyes as he keeps staring at the huddle.

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DRIVER

You tell 'em we weren't interested?

SHANNON

I told 'em *you* weren't. Said if they were happy with a one-legged wheelman I'd be glad to take your place...

Driver senses he's only half-joking.

DRIVER

How much do we still need?

SHANNON

More than this straight-to-video garbage'll ever pay. Another hundred to buy a decent stock car and around thirty, forty per race...

(Covering his frustration with a smile)

Don't worry, I'll think of something...

Driver catches a hint of discomfort in the old man's eyes before he averts his gaze.

SHANNON

Sonofabitch, what does he want now?...

The irritating AD comes running over like an eager errand boy, waving two toy cars.

AD

Change of plan, guys. We're gonna try something different...

(To Shannon)

Is the Black-and-White ready?

SHANNON

Been ready for a while, Jimmy...

The AD takes his toy cars and demonstrates the new stunt for Driver on the hood of the Black-and-White.

AD

...Okay, what happens is you swerve out of the alleyway and see Gordon in your mirror. You slow down and try to block him off. He keeps coming and gives you a nudge just above the left rear wheel. The impact should be enough to send you spinning round and round for a good few seconds -

DRIVER

How fast is he going?

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AD

Don't worry about that. We wanna shoot straight after lunch. How's that sound?

SHANNON

Sounds dumb. You can't pull off a stunt like that with just a few hours notice.

AD

Gordon says it's a piece of cake.

SHANNON

Sure he does. All he has to do is hit us. He does it any faster than forty miles an hour he won't spin us round he'll send us end over end all the way to Baja -

AD

Who's doing the driving, Shannon? You or the kid?...

Driver senses how hard it is for Shannon to hold his tongue.

AD

(Turning to Driver)

You up to it?...

INT/ EXT. POLICE CAR/ FILM SET/ SAN PEDRO - DAY.

Driver sits at the wheel of the Black-and-White while a STUNT SUPERVISOR checks his harness is strapped on tight. Shannon leans into the window to give him some last minute advice.

SHANNON

Watch yourself. He can't drive for shit...

Driver smiles softly, then calmly unstraps his regulation safety harness and clips on his seat belt instead.

2ND UNIT DIRECTOR O/S

Camera ready, sound ready...

Shannon joins the rest of the crew, looking on.

2ND UNIT DIRECTOR

...ACTION!...

Driver floors the gas, screeching out of the alleyway. He swerves between several oil drums then straightens up on the main road.

In his rear view mirror he sees the star stuntman Gordon's black Charger appear on cue, bearing down on him.

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Driver slows to forty, like he's supposed to, but the black Charger keeps coming at speed.

Driver's eyes stay fixed on his rear view mirror, judging the other car's speed and angle of approach to perfection, anticipating the collision.

The Charger slams into the back of Driver's car at sixty miles an hour, hitting him just above the left rear wheel.

Driver's reactions are quick as lightning, counter-steering instinctively as the Black-and-White goes careening off the road. He keeps the car upright long enough to slow it down before it finally flips end over end harmlessly a couple of times.

Up ahead, Gordon's car skids to a showy stop.

2ND UNIT DIRECTOR O/S  
...And CUT!...

Wild clapping and cheering breaks out, everyone assuming Gordon's timed the collision to perfection. Only Shannon seems interested in Driver, limping over and helping him out of the battered Black-and-White.

SHANNON  
Nice work, officer. You almost got yourself killed for two hundred bucks...

Driver smiles, spitting out some fake candyglass from the shattered windshield.

INT. CHINA BELLE RESTAURANT/ DOWNTOWN L.A. - DAY.

The hustle and bustle of a busy Chinese restaurant. Among the packed tables and passing WAITRESSES we see a tough looking old man in his 60's, (BERNIE ROSE), sitting at a table, tucking into a bowl of noodles with a knife and fork.

BERNIE ROSE  
...You run a perfectly good business - whaddya want to branch out for at your age?

Shannon sits opposite him but he isn't here to eat.

SHANNON  
You know how much my business made last year? Thirty Grand. Takes me six months to restore a car and a couple seconds for these jerks to write it off on some gag that doesn't even make it into the movie...

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Bernie Rose shakes his head wearily and picks up the business plan Shannon's given him to read, giving it a cursory glance.

BERNIE ROSE

I don't understand these numbers -- just tell me how much you need.

SHANNON

Let me talk you through it first.

BERNIE ROSE

I don't have time, Shannon. I'm supposed to be having lunch with my partner -

SHANNON

I'll make it quick. The big money teams burn through three, four million a year but that's 'cause they're using half a dozen test drivers and a stable of cars.

BERNIE ROSE

I don't know the first thing about motor racing but I assume there's a reason for that?

SHANNON

Sure, but it's not the only way. All I need is a hard-used stock car. We start off with the small-town action then work our way up. There's close to two thousand events out there and once we make the Show we're talking millions.

BERNIE ROSE

'Millions'? Since when did you become a dreamer?

SHANNON

Since I bust up my legs. Look, I wouldn't come to you unless I was sure about this...

Bernie Rose fixes him with his steely blue eyes. Even though he has a soft spot for Shannon he doesn't look convinced.

BERNIE ROSE

How can you be sure? What have you got these big shot teams don't have?

SHANNON

I got a driver.

BERNIE ROSE

You just told me they had half a dozen drivers.

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SHANNON  
Not like this one...

He stares at his friend with quiet conviction.

SHANNON  
I been working with this guy a long time -  
I've never seen anything like it. I had the  
money I'd back him myself...

Bernie Rose considers him quietly.

BERNIE ROSE  
But you don't have the money?...

SHANNON  
I'm telling you, Bernie, put this kid  
behind a wheel there's nothing he can't do.

Bernie Rose shakes his head, relenting despite himself.

BERNIE ROSE  
Alright, but I wanna meet him first...

SHANNON  
No problem...

Shannon beams happily when suddenly they're interrupted by  
Bernie's partner, a big bull of a man with a gruff voice.

BERNIE'S PARTNER (NINO)  
Don't tell me you started eating without  
me?

BERNIE ROSE  
You show up this late what do you expect...  
(Introducing Shannon)  
This is my friend, Shannon. He used to work  
for us but you probably don't remember...

Shannon stands up respectfully, shaking Nino's hand then  
offering him his seat.

BERNIE ROSE  
(Dismissing Shannon gently)  
I'll call you tomorrow...

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - NIGHT.

The reflection of passing neon signs rolls down the Chevy's  
windscreen. Driver's cruising down Hollywood Boulevard, shut off  
from the world outside. The HOOKERS and HIPSTERS have taken over  
the streets while up above airbrushed movie stars stare down  
from their lofty billboards.

EXT. PARKING LOT/ MINI MALL - NIGHT.

Driver heads across the parking lot towards a garishly lit mini-mall. Up ahead a small group of GANGBANGERS are hanging out with intent. They see him coming and look over intimidatingly. Driver's only reaction is to bunch his car keys in his hand, the longest key sliding between his second and third fingers like a weapon. The gangbangers don't see it but the unflinching look in his eyes unnerves them and they look away, letting him pass.

EXT/ INT. BUFFALO BAR AND GRILL/ LA - NIGHT.

Jukebox music plays in the darkly lit bar and grill. Driver sits on his own, working his way through a plate of meatloaf.

BEARDED REDNECK OFFSCREEN  
Mind if I cut in?...

Driver looks up and sees a burly REDNECK with an unkempt beard and a wrestler's physique. The redneck slides into the seat opposite him.

BEARDED REDNECK  
You're Shannon's buddy, right? We met last year. You drove me and my brother back from Palm Springs...

Driver stares into the redneck's coked-up eyes, then looks back down at his food.

BEARDED REDNECK  
Next run we hired another wheelman - I spent six months in jail, my brother got himself killed...  
(He grins through yellowing teeth)  
He wasn't much, mind you, just family...

Driver doesn't seem to hear him.

BEARDED REDNECK  
Thing is -

DRIVER  
I'm not interested...

Driver looks up quietly, fixing him with his icy gaze. The Redneck's smile slowly fades. He considers his response for a moment, then decides against it, standing up.

BEARDED REDNECK  
Well, it's good to see you again...

Driver carries on eating as if the man didn't exist.



INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING LOT/ APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

The Chevy's headlights wind their way down the cavernous gloom of the underground car park. Driver climbs out, looking ghostly in the flickering glare of the overhead strip-lights.

INT. ELEVATOR/ APARTMENT BLOCK/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

The elevator is as run down as the rest of the building. Driver presses the fourth floor button and the lift starts to climb. As it reaches the ground floor the bell rings and the doors open. Driver finds himself face to face with the pretty Latina girl he saw the other night. She looks a little startled to see him, then recovers with a smile.

PRETTY LATINA GIRL (IRINA)

Hi...

She joins him in the elevator, her waitress's uniform visible beneath her coat.

DRIVER

Which floor, ma'am?...

PRETTY LATINA GIRL (IRINA)

Fourth please...

Driver presses the fourth floor button even though it's already lit. The doors shut and the elevator starts to climb. Driver stares out quietly. The pretty Latina girl looks awkward in the silence, feeling like she should say something.

PRETTY LATINA GIRL (IRINA)

Guess they finally repaired the elevator...

Driver nods gently but says nothing. Irina finds the silence even more awkward now. She looks relieved as the elevator doors finally open. Driver steps aside to let her out first.

PRETTY LATINA GIRL (IRINA)

Thank you...

INT. CORRIDOR/ APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Driver and Irina walk down the corridor in the same direction, only a few feet apart. She seems more aware of his presence than he is of hers. She reaches the door to her apartment first.

IRINA

Goodnight...

DRIVER

Goodnight, ma'am...

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Driver looks at her just long enough not to seem impolite, then continues down the corridor, not even glancing back.

EXT. DIRT TRACK NEAR MONTECITO - DAY.

Bright sunlight. In the distance we see a trail of dust moving across the flatland. Everything is silent, then slowly the hum of an engine rises as the stock car turns towards us. It shimmers in the heat waves, the noise of its engine getting louder as it picks up speed.

Shannon stands with his friend Bernie Rose at the edge of the makeshift track, staring at the glittering car.

BERNIE ROSE

You're gonna have to tell me if that's fast  
or slow 'cause I got no idea...

Shannon smiles to himself.

SHANNON

It ain't slow...

INT. RACE CAR/ PRACTICE TRACK NEAR MONTECITO - DAY.

Even in the cramped space of the roll cage there's something effortless about the way Driver controls the car. His eyes are fixed in concentration, his body tensing only slightly as he lifts his foot off the gas and turns the wheel.

EXT. PRACTICE TRACK NEAR MONTECITO - DAY.

The glinting vehicle is lost in a cloud of dust, then reappears again, moving even faster now. The STOCK CAR'S OWNER, a bearded hot-rodder with a t-shirt that says, "*Drive it like you stole it*", joins Shannon with a confident smile.

STOCK CAR OWNER

Told you she was a beauty...

SHANNON

(Playing hard to get)  
Maybe where you come from...

Bernie Rose pays no attention to their banter, his eyes fixed on the stock car as it finally slows to a stop.

EXT. RACE CAR/ PRACTICE TRACK NEAR MONTECITO - DAY.

Driver climbs out of the car. As he looks up he sees Shannon limping over with the stock car's owner, a couple of MECHANICS, and Bernie Rose.

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SHANNON

(Still playing hard to get)  
 ...Looks a little long in the tooth to me.  
 Think we should we take her home?...

DRIVER

I dunno. She's got a mind of her own...

Shannon grins, turning to Bernie Rose.

SHANNON

Bernie, this is the driver I been telling  
 you about...

One look at Bernie Rose and Driver senses the power and  
 authority behind his clear blue eyes.

SHANNON

Bernie's thinking of investing in our race  
 team...

The old mobster holds out his hand, meeting Driver's gaze.

DRIVER

My hands are a little dirty...

BERNIE ROSE

Don't worry. So are mine...

He gives Driver a big grin and a powerful handshake, sizing him  
 up. Driver smiles politely, gazing back at him. The stock car's  
 owner interrupts the moment, holding a stop watch.

STOCK CAR OWNER

Couldn't see much wrong with that. You beat  
 the fastest lap by more than half a second.

SHANNON

You bullshitting us with lap times again?  
 You can't call this a goddamn track.

DRIVER

(To the mechanics)  
 You might wanna take a look at her  
 suspension before we go again.

STOCK CAR OWNER

We can do that right now. Got everything we  
 need...

Driver turns to Bernie Rose before he leaves.

DRIVER

Nice to meet you...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BERNIE ROSE

You too...

Their eyes stay on each other, then Driver follows the stock car owner and his mechanics back to the car. Bernie Rose stares after him quietly, thinking to himself.

BERNIE ROSE

(To Shannon)

How much do you need to get started?...

INT. SUPERMARKET/ ECHO PARK - SUNSET.

Tinny supermarket music plays in the background. Driver walks past the vast selection of instant coffee brands, bemused by the choice. Suddenly he notices something out of the corner of his eye. At the far end of the aisle his pretty Latina neighbour, Irina, is browsing through the cereal section. Standing next to her is a young boy of six or seven, (BENICIO). Irina hasn't spotted Driver yet, but the little boy is staring at him fixedly. Driver hesitates, then heads down another aisle before Irina sees him, keeping himself to himself.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ STREET/ ECHO PARK - SUNSET.

Driver slows down at a red light on his way home. As he stares out of the window he sees Irina and the little boy again. They're walking back to the apartment with their groceries. The kid seems perfectly happy, but Irina's struggling with the heavy bags, putting them down for a rest before she picks them up again. Driver sets off as the lights change to green. For an instant we think he's going to drive past Irina and the boy, but at the last moment he pulls over and reverses.

INT. KITCHEN/ IRINA'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - SUNSET.

Driver carries Irina's grocery bags into the kitchen for her.

IRINA

Thank you so much...

Benicio hovers by his mother, still staring at Driver.

IRINA

Go get ready for bed, honey...

The little boy leaves reluctantly.

IRINA

Would you like a beer?

DRIVER

No, I'd better get back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA

I'll make it easier for you. I'll be  
offended if you refuse...

There's a playful charm to her directness. Driver finds it hard  
to say no.

DRIVER

I'll have a glass of water, please...

INT. LIVING ROOM/ IRINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

Irina's living room is the same size as Driver's but it's  
decorated in warm, vibrant colors, as distinctive as his is  
anonymous.

IRINA

You just move to LA?...

DRIVER

No, I been here a while.

IRINA

And before that?

DRIVER

Here and there...

IRINA

(A mischievous smile)  
Too many questions, huh?...

Driver smiles back awkwardly, not sure how else to respond.

IRINA

Soon as you finish your water you're free  
to go...

It's only when she grins that he realizes she's joking. She  
looks at him a moment, then turns away as Benicio calls out from  
his bedroom.

BENICIO OFFSCREEN

Mama?!...

IRINA

(Excusing herself)  
I'll be right back...

She leaves with another smile, disappearing into the bedroom.  
Driver has a sip of water, glancing around the living room as he  
waits for her to return. He notices a few photographs on a side  
table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Most of them are of Benicio and Irina, but one of them shows the little boy standing next to a wiry hispanic guy with gangbanger tattoos -- the two of them posing next to a life-size Mickey Mouse at Disneyland.

Irina walks back into the living room, pausing as she sees Driver gazing at the photograph. He turns around.

IRINA

Sorry about that. He couldn't find his pyjamas...

(Trying to sound casual)

That's his father in the picture. The one with the tattoos not the big ears...

Driver smiles, taking another look at the photograph.

DRIVER

What's he do?

IRINA

Lately he's been into charity work, helping provide jobs for state workers...

Driver doesn't understand.

IRINA

He's inside. They got him taking down a savings and loan...

He looks at her and realizes she isn't joking.

DRIVER

I'm sorry.

IRINA

My fault for picking the wrong guy. Last time I make that mistake. What do you do?

Driver hesitates.

DRIVER

I help out at a friend's garage but right now we're working on a movie.

IRINA

Sure you are.

DRIVER

I'm just a driver.

IRINA

Like for limos?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DRIVER  
No, a stunt driver...

She looks at him incredulously.

IRINA  
You mean all those car chases and stuff?

He nods, a little embarrassed.

IRINA  
Wow. You should have told Benicio.

DRIVER  
He interested in that kind of stuff?

IRINA  
Aren't all little boys?...

She smiles again, teasing him gently. For all his reserve Driver can't help staring back at her.

BENICIO O/S  
Mama, I can't find my toothpaste...

Benicio appears in the doorway wearing his pyjamas.

IRINA  
Honey, it's where it always is.

BENICIO  
I looked.

IRINA  
Look again...

Driver finishes his glass of water, anxious to leave now. Irina turns back to him as her son disappears.

IRINA  
I took him to a show once at Universal Studios. All those guys falling off buildings...  
(She hesitates)  
You ever do tours like that?...

Driver feels put on the spot.

DRIVER  
I only work there part-time, ma'am.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

IRINA

Oh, I didn't mean for you to ask. I meant  
was there a number I could call or  
something? Weekends it's hard to keep him  
entertained...

DRIVER

Usually they don't allow visitors...

Driver feels guilty brushing her off but Irina shrugs as if it's  
no big deal, gesturing to his empty glass.

IRINA

You want some more water?

DRIVER

I should get going...

He catches the disappointment in her eyes, but she covers it  
with another good humored smile.

IRINA

Well, thank you for helping me with my  
groceries...

DRIVER

Thank you for the drink...

She takes his empty glass and walks him to the door.

EXT/INT. VIEW OF STREET/ DRIVER'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - DAY.

Passing traffic roars by on the busy street. Irina and Benicio  
are walking home again. They look like they've just come back  
from the beach, Irina carrying a basket full of towels, Benicio  
clutching a dusty soccer ball. Driver stares down at them from  
the window of his apartment, blowing gently on a cup of coffee.

EXT. FILM SET/ SAN PEDRO/ LOS ANGELES - DAY.

The FILM CREW are busy setting up lights and scaffolding. The  
set's dressed to look like LA in the 70's, muscle cars parked  
all the way down the street. Shannon and Benicio approach a  
Black Charger covered with camera rigs and diffusion screens.

SHANNON

Who's your favorite movie star?

BENICIO

I don't have one.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

SHANNON

Well, if you did he'd be sitting there behind the wheel, looking all cool, while the real driver...

(He points to a secret compartment at the bottom of the dummy car)  
...Would be hiding down there...

For the first time Benicio looks impressed.

SHANNON

You like roller coasters?

BENICIO

Uh-huh.

SHANNON

Then follow me...

Irina stands with Driver, smiling as she watches her son fall in behind Shannon.

SHANNON

...You might have to walk a little faster. I'm hard to keep up with on these legs...

Benicio quickens his pace, responding to Shannon's challenge. Driver and Irina follow them down the make-believe 70's street.

IRINA

He's great with kids...

DRIVER

It helps that they're the same age...

Irina grins, taking a look at his handsome face.

IRINA

How long have you known him?

DRIVER

Since I was eighteen. I'd just arrived in LA, living out of a beat-up Ford. He gave me a job and a place to stay.

IRINA

(Sensing the affection in his voice)  
Sounds like you owe him?

DRIVER

He'd never see it that way.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

IRINA

But you do?

DRIVER

We're partners...

Up ahead, Shannon's introducing Benicio to some of the CAMERA CREW, making a fuss over him.

IRINA

He told me you wanted to be a race car driver. I didn't know if he was joking.

DRIVER

Oh, he's serious.

IRINA

How about you?

Driver shrugs.

DRIVER

I'd like to give it a try but in my experience the things you set your heart on don't always work out.

IRINA

You believe that why'd you move to the city of dreams?

DRIVER

The smog.

She smiles.

IRINA

I used to dream about coming here when I was in Salvador. I think I got it mixed up with New York or something on the TV. I imagined it was all these big skyscrapers and you could walk everywhere.

DRIVER

You move here with your husband?

IRINA

No, I met him in LA. At a party. A week later I was pregnant with Benicio...

(Feeling a little guilty for running her husband down)

He had all kinds of plans then, a catering business, a restaurant franchise. Every idea someone else got there first...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Shannon interrupts, calling out to them.

SHANNON

Come on, boys and girls, keep up...

He points them towards a warehouse, guiding Benicio inside.

INT. FILM SET/ WAREHOUSE/ SAN PEDRO - DAY.

A cut-down 70's muscle car is attached to a 'spit-roast rig', a large cylindrical device that simulates a vehicle rolling over in a crash. Shannon helps Benicio and Irina buckle up in the back seat then turns to Driver.

SHANNON

Come on, we can all fit in.

DRIVER

You go ahead...

He stands back as Shannon starts the rig. The cut-down car spins round and round like a washing machine, picking up speed, Benicio and Irina shrieking happily in the back seat. Driver smiles, enjoying watching them but as always a little apart.

INT. BENICIO'S BEDROOM/ IRINA'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Cradling the sleeping Benicio in his arms Driver lays him down on his bed. Irina takes off her son's clothes and puts on his pyjamas, careful not to wake him. Driver slips out of the room, uncomfortable with the intimate moment between mother and son.

INT. LIVING ROOM/ IRINA'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Irina walks out of the bedroom now, smiling at Driver gratefully.

IRINA

Thank you for today. He had a wonderful time...

(A beat)

So did I...

DRIVER

I'm glad...

He stares back at her in the silence, both of them looking a little uncertain.

IRINA

...And I'm sorry if I put you on the spot, you know, having to ask Shannon to arrange the visit...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

Don't worry, I don't think he even asked...

IRINA

I appreciate it anyway...

Her eyes stay fixed on his, the attraction palpable.

IRINA

It's not always easy to meet people when you're on your own with a child. Usually everyone runs a mile. I guess they think it's more trouble than it's worth...

Driver hesitates, sensing she's sounding him out.

DRIVER

It's no trouble...

She smiles softly, reassured. Driver finally breaks the tension, making a tentative move towards the door. Irina opens it for him, then hesitates, touching his arm gently as he's about to head out. Driver knows he could kiss her, and wants to, but something inside holds him back. Irina seems to read his mind, removing her hand discreetly, smiling goodnight.

EXT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAY.

The roar of machinery. Driver and Shannon stand together in the forecourt of the garage, looking on as a hauler drops off the second-hand race-car Driver tested in Montecito. Driver looks at Shannon, sensing his excitement and enthusiasm.

INT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVERLAKE BOULEVARD - DAY.

Miss Dickinson, Shannon's cat, scampers around the colorful race-car, moving from Shannon to Driver. They're both absorbed in their work now, highly skilled mechanics. Driver works under the hood with the precision of a surgeon while Shannon sweats and strains under the lift. Gradually, in a series of time lapses, the second-hand stock car begins to look like the real deal.

EXT. SPEEDWAY/ LOS ANGELES COUNTY - DAY.

Irina stands near the edge of the race track with Benicio, watching the transformed stock-car scream around the half-mile oval. Shannon joins her, holding a stopwatch.

SHANNON

He's quite something, huh?...

Irina watches Driver speed up on the straight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHANNON

From the outside you'd think there ain't a whole lot going on, but inside...

(He pauses meaningfully)

...That's what makes him so goddamn special. He keeps it all in, then lets it out behind the wheel.

IRINA

(Lightly)

Maybe he should get out more...

SHANNON

Or meet someone...

Irina smiles at Shannon's none-too-subtle match-making.

IRINA

Lucky he has you...

SHANNON

I'm not much comfort on those long, lonesome nights...

Irina can't help laughing, looking back at the race track. The stock car is picking up speed all the time, a thing of awe and beauty. She and Benicio watch it swoop and surge around the high curves like a bird of prey.

INT. LIVING ROOM/ IRINA'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

On TV, the 'Flinstone's' prehistoric car scuttles along the streets of Bedrock, Fred and Wilma arguing in dubbed Spanish, the screen flickering from color to black and white. Driver and Benicio sit on the couch, watching the cartoon. From their relaxed body language, it's clear some time has passed and they know each other a little better.

DRIVER

What's he saying?...

BENICIO

They're having a fight...

DRIVER

I got that...

BENICIO

He wants to go bowling and she doesn't want him to...

Irina calls out from her bedroom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA O/S  
I'm almost ready...

Driver looks back at the screen. Wilma's dropping Fred off at the bowling alley.

BENICIO  
That's his friend, Barney...

Barney Rubble heads over to Fred now, stopping dead as he sees the stony look on Wilma's face. The color flickers again.

DRIVER  
I'm gonna show you a trick...

Benicio watches curiously as Driver gets off the couch and kneels beside the TV.

DRIVER  
Now this is pretty complicated. You watching?...

Benicio nods. Driver suddenly gives the TV set a hard smack and the interference stops.

DRIVER  
Think you can remember that?...

Benicio grins. Driver smiles back, then looks away as he hears the phone ring. Irina walks out of her bedroom, dressed in her waitress's uniform, and answers it.

IRINA  
Hello?...Yes?...Yes, this is she...

Driver sees the look of surprise on Irina's face as she listens to the voice on the other end. The doorbell suddenly rings. Irina catches Driver's eye and asks him to open it. He heads over, checks the spy-hole, then opens it. A friendly looking Hispanic lady in her 60's beams at him.

HISPANIC LADY (MRS GUTTIEREZ)  
(In Spanish)  
Good evening...

DRIVER  
(In faltering Spanish)  
Good evening...

Mrs Gutierrez heads past him as if she's regular visitor to the apartment and scolds Benicio affectionately.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MRS GUTTIEREZ  
 (In Spanish)  
 It's 8:30. Teeth. Pyjamas. TV off.

BENICIO  
 (In Spanish)  
 It's not TV. It's a DVD...

Driver glances back at Irina curiously. She puts down the phone, forcing a smile but looking distracted.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Irina sits next to Driver in the passenger seat, staring out of the window at the glittering fountain in Echo Park.

IRINA  
 Thanks for the ride.

DRIVER  
 It's on my way.

IRINA  
 (A rueful smile)  
 Where?...

Driver smiles back softly, keeping his eye on the road.

IRINA  
 I've never come this way before...

DRIVER  
 It's a short cut...

IRINA  
 The park looks pretty at night...

She looks at Driver, watching him quietly, then looks away again.

DRIVER  
 Is everything okay?...

Irina takes a long time to answer, still staring out of the window.

IRINA  
 That was my husband's lawyer on the phone.  
 He cut a deal. They're releasing him next  
 week...

She tries to sound casual but we feel her regret. Driver takes the news quietly, even though it hits him like a sledgehammer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

That's great...

IRINA

I'm glad for Benicio. It's been hard for him without his father. If it wasn't for that I don't know if I'd take him back...

Driver knows she's trying to explain herself but doesn't reply, driving in silence.

Up ahead the traffic lights turn red and the car slows to a stop.

Inside, the silence is unbearable. Irina hesitates, then looks at Driver. He's even more handsome in the shadowy half-light, something achingly lonely and melancholy about his stillness.

Irina can't help herself. She leans over and kisses him -- first on the cheek, then on the mouth. Her hands caress his face until he finally responds, kissing her back.

Outside the lights change to green but the car doesn't move.

Irina kisses Driver more and more passionately. There's a deep sadness and longing in her eyes, as if she knows this is the first and last time.

INT. IRINA'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - DAY.

An eruption of laughter and celebration. A sign in Spanish over the door says, *Welcome home Papa*. Inside the apartment there's a party going on -- Latin music, balloons and streamers, the roar of conversation. STANDARD GUZMAN's been released from jail and all his homeboys are here to celebrate. He stands among them, receiving congratulations and homecoming gifts.

STANDARD

Can I open it now?...

FRIEND

No, man, not in front of everyone.

STANDARD

You embarrassed? Bet it's a t-shirt. You went and bought me a t-shirt at the one dollar store...

Everyone laughs as Standard hugs his friend. He's a force of nature, charismatic and unpredictable at the same time. Across the room Driver helps himself to some food. He's surrounded by Spanish speakers, feeling out of place. He looks over and sees Irina standing next to her husband. Their eyes meet briefly -- before Standard's voice interrupts again.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

STANDARD

...See, this is what I need...  
 (He holds up an envelope full of  
 cash someone's just given him)  
 ...Rina and I are gonna open a restaurant  
 in Silverlake next year. Best Salvadoran  
 food in LA. None of you are invited...

Hoots of derision.

STANDARD

...What? You're looking at the Head Chef at  
 Chino. I make Papusas filled with pork and  
 yucca better than even Rina does...

Irina pulls away from him as he tries to hug her.

STANDARD

...Now she's mad at me...

Everyone cheers as Standard kisses his wife adoringly. Driver  
 turns away. Irina sees his reaction out of the corner of her  
 eye. She also sees one of Standard's friends giving Benicio a  
 swig of beer.

IRINA

Hey Santi, cut it out...

STANDARD

Let the kid have a drink. Come here,  
 Benicio...

Benicio runs into his father's arms. Standard lifts him up and  
 gives him a sip of his own beer.

STANDARD

You like that?

BENICIO

Yeah.

STANDARD

Well, it's the last time you're having  
 any...

There's more laughter as Standard kisses Benicio and swings him  
 round. Irina takes her opportunity and slips away, joining  
 Driver. There's an awkward silence as they stare at each other.

IRINA

You okay?...

DRIVER

Yeah. Fun party...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

IRINA

Thanks for coming...

DRIVER

Thanks for inviting me...

She holds his gaze, feeling the distance between them.

DRIVER

Your husband seems like a nice guy...

She doesn't reply for a moment, conflicted.

IRINA

He's a good father, when he's around. I don't know about a nice guy...

Her eyes stay on his, with genuine regret, when suddenly Standard appears behind them.

STANDARD

This guy my parole officer?...

Driver and Irina turn around. Standard smiles at his own joke, clapping Driver on the back.

STANDARD

Good to meet you, man. Benicio's told me all about you...

Benicio's holding his father's hand, proud as can be.

STANDARD

In fact he can't stop talking about you. 'Papa, this guy's so cool. He can do this, he can do that, fix the washing machine, fix the TV'. Man, I'm thinking, what did I bother to come back for?...

He says it lightheartedly but there's an edge to his voice.

DRIVER

He's a great kid...

STANDARD

Takes after his mother...

Standard slips his arm around Irina now, his eyes fixed on Driver.

STANDARD

I hear you drive for the movies?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DRIVER

I help out sometimes. Most days I'm a mechanic.

STANDARD

Still have to be pretty good?

DRIVER

I get by.

STANDARD

Not like a nine-to-five gig, huh? Lot of free time on your hands...

He's still smiling but the insinuation is clear. Irina starts to look uncomfortable.

STANDARD

Rina cook for you yet?

DRIVER

Yeah. Sounds like you're a pretty good cook yourself.

STANDARD

That's right. Come over one night I'll show you what I can do...

Again there's a hint of menace behind his easy smile. Irina feels the tension, but Benicio beams innocently, glad the two men in his life have met.

STANDARD

Help yourself to another drink, my friend. I'm gonna dance with my wife...

He gives Driver another 'friendly' clap on the back then leads Irina away. Driver watches them go, smarting inside.

EXT. FILM SET/ SAN PEDRO/ LA - DAY.

A shiny white Coupe De Ville glistens in the sunlight.

SHANNON

...No fucking way, Jimmy...

Driver's on set again, wearing his cop uniform, watching Shannon in the middle of a heated argument with the irritating AD.

SHANNON

...It's taken me three years to restore this car. You and I agreed it was only gonna be part of the background -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AD

Whatever we agreed the director wants it to be part of the action now and I'm not gonna tell him no. We'll pay for any damage -

SHANNON

You gonna pay me for three years work? It isn't just about the money -

AD

Look, I'll make it simple for you, either you play ball or get the fuck outta here...

Driver doesn't like the way the AD's talking to his friend.

DRIVER

Hey, take it easy -

The AD ignores him, jabbing his finger at Shannon.

AD

I'm serious, Shannon. I don't need your fucking attitude every time I ask for something. Every other prick in this city sells cars -

SHANNON

Don't point your finger at me, you asshole -

AD

Who you calling an asshole!...

As the AD shoves Shannon, Driver intervenes, grabbing his arm.

AD

Get your fucking hands off me!...

The AD swings his elbow at Driver but Driver deflects the blow, connecting with a vicious pile-driver. It's the first time we've seen quite how strong he is, and quite how violent. The AD hits the ground hard, trying to roll away, but Driver swarms all over him, kicking and stamping him prison-style, making sure he doesn't get up. Even Shannon's stunned by his sudden explosion of violence. It takes several members of the nearby crew to finally drag him off before he beats the AD to a pulp.

EXT. TRAILER/ FILM SET - DAY.

The door of the accounts trailer opens and Shannon limps out in frustration. Driver watches him quietly as he heads over, holding an envelope.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHANNON

Six hundred dollars severance pay. Thank  
God we don't need these assholes any more..

Driver smiles back softly.

SHANNON

You broke his jaw and cracked three of his  
ribs...

DRIVER

That all?...

SHANNON

Yeah, you'd left him to me I'd have broken  
both his arms too...

They exchange another gentle smile then Shannon looks more  
serious, concerned.

SHANNON

Not like you to lose your cool over some  
jerk-off? Is something up?...

Driver shrugs, gazing back at him impassively. Shannon shakes  
his head, knowing he won't get any more out of him.

SHANNON

Well, if it's any consolation, I liked her  
too...

INT/EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ MEXICAN RESTAURANT/ DOWNTOWN - NIGHT.

Through the windows of a Mexican restaurant we see Irina serving  
tables in her waitress's uniform. Driver's watching her from his  
car. He hesitates, conflicted, then drives off again.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ APARTMENT BLOCK/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Most of the lights are off in the apartment building. Driver  
leans out of the Impala and inserts a key to open the gates of  
the underground car park. As they swing open, he sees bright  
head-lights gleaming down below. A black Lincoln town car is  
heading up the ramp. Driver reverses, letting the other car out  
first. As it glides past, he sees several tough looking MEXICANS  
sitting in the back seat. He watches the Lincoln disappear in  
his mirror, then drives down the ramp.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ UNDERGROUND CAR PARK - NIGHT.

As Driver winds his way down the car park, he notices something  
in the shadows. A figure lies sprawled against one of the  
pillars. A smaller figure kneels a few feet away. Driver stops  
his car, climbing out to see what's happened.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The prone figure groans in pain. As Driver approaches he realizes it's Standard. The smaller figure is Benicio. He stares at his father helplessly, then looks up at Driver in tears. Driver kneels beside Standard, checking nothing's broken.

DRIVER

Can you move?

STANDARD

Where's Benicio?

DRIVER

He's right here...

Driver glances at Benicio. He looks completely dazed, shaken by the beating his hero father's just taken. Standard raises his head painfully and looks at his son.

STANDARD

It's okay. Those guys were friends of mine.  
Friends fight. It's no big deal...

Driver watches the boy struggling to hold back his tears.

STANDARD

You don't say nothing to your mother, you understand? This is between you and me...

Benicio nods, too choked-up to speak. Standard turns to Driver.

STANDARD

Can I use your bathroom to clean up? I don't want Rina to come home catch me like this...

INT. LIVING ROOM/ DRIVER'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Benicio sits in front of the TV, watching a baseball game. Driver stares at him quietly.

DRIVER

You okay?...

The boy nods, still trying to be brave. From the bathroom there's the sound of running water.

INT. BATHROOM/ DRIVER'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Standard spits out blood in Driver's sink. As he checks his face in the mirror, he notices how neatly Driver's laid out his toothbrush, shaving cream, and razor.

INT. LIVING ROOM/ DRIVER'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Standard walks out of the bathroom, dabbing his mouth with a hand-towel, some of his swagger restored.

STANDARD  
Got anything to drink?

DRIVER  
Water...

Standard smiles thinly.

STANDARD  
You ain't gonna mention this to Rina?

DRIVER  
That you got your ass kicked?

STANDARD  
Fuckin' punks took me by surprise.

DRIVER  
Fuckin' punks didn't look like they needed to...

Standard's smile fades a little.

STANDARD  
You saw them, huh?...

Driver doesn't reply. Standard studies him more closely now, sizing him up.

STANDARD  
You ever been inside?...

DRIVER  
Why?...

STANDARD  
You got that look about you. Way you lay out your shit in the bathroom. This place even looks like a cell...

He hesitates, wondering whether to confide in Driver.

STANDARD  
Those guys were connected to a prison gang in Chino...

DRIVER  
You run up a tab in the yard?...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STANDARD

Yeah, they bought my debt, multiplied it,  
then added a few zeroes when I got out...  
(He glances at Benicio, then looks  
back at Driver)  
What were you in for?...

DRIVER

I didn't say I was...

Standard grins, convinced there's more to Driver than meets the eye.

STANDARD

You ever drive for anyone?...

DRIVER

(Deliberately misunderstanding)  
You mean like a chauffeur?...

Standard grins again.

STANDARD

You know, I got a sweet score lined up...

DRIVER

Sounds like you need it...

STANDARD

Yeah, I'm way out in the water. I don't pay  
up who's gonna look after my family?...

He stares at Driver pointedly now, then turns back to Benicio.

STANDARD

Come on, Benicio. Time for bed...

INT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAY.

Shannon limps around a shiny red Thunderbird, midway through his polished sales pitch.

SHANNON

...1959 -- Buddy Holly, diners, drive-in  
movies and T-Birds - time when 'made in  
America' actually meant something.

Bernie Rose listens with a smile. He's bought his partner, Nino, to the garage to look at some of Shannon's vintage cars.

BERNIE ROSE

...You might wanna try a different sales  
pitch -- when Nino and I were growing up  
the only cars he ever stole were German...

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

NINO  
 (Grinning)  
 That's cause I couldn't tell the  
 difference. A car's a fucking car...

At the far end of the garage Driver hears them laughing, too busy working on the stock car to pay them any attention.

NINO  
 ...I'm gonna look like a faggot sitting in  
 this thing...

More laughter. Shannon opens the door of the Thunderbird, inviting Nino to take a seat.

SHANNON  
 ...Try her out. She's more comfortable than  
 a water bed...

NINO  
 ...Sounds like my wife...

Bernie Rose keeps smiling, then looks over at Driver, observing him quietly now.

Driver's still working on the race car, applying a blow torch, so absorbed he doesn't hear Bernie Rose approach.

BERNIE ROSE O/S  
 So, this is where all my hard earned  
 money's going?!...

Driver stops what he's doing, turns off the blow torch, and stands up respectfully. Bernie Rose grins, examining the car.

BERNIE ROSE  
 How long before our first race?

DRIVER  
 Couple months.

BERNIE ROSE  
 We gonna be ready?

There's something gently challenging in his gaze now.

DRIVER  
 I hope so.

BERNIE ROSE  
 Cautious man. Like myself. Don't wanna make  
 promises you can't keep...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Across the garage Shannon is sitting in the T-Bird with Nino, revving the engine for him to admire.

BERNIE ROSE  
Shannon tell you he fucked up his legs  
working for me?...

Driver shakes his head.

BERNIE ROSE  
Went over a canyon after a high speed  
pursuit. Did six years in Rickers and never  
said a word...

He watches Shannon affectionately, then looks back at Driver.

BERNIE ROSE  
I hear you did some time as well?

DRIVER  
Five years.

BERNIE ROSE  
You miss it?

DRIVER  
I don't have any plans to go back.

BERNIE ROSE  
You sure? 'Cause sometimes people miss it  
and don't even realize it themselves...

He grins, still holding Driver's gaze.

BERNIE ROSE  
The reason I ask is 'cause our friend's got  
a lot riding on you. So do I...

Their eyes stay on each other with just a hint of tension when suddenly they're interrupted by the honking of a horn outside.

DRIVER  
I better get that...

BERNIE ROSE  
Sure. Anything you need just let me know...

Driver nods gratefully, then turns away.

EXT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver heads out of the garage and sees a beat-up Oldsmobile in the forecourt. Standard climbs out of the vehicle, greeting him with his customary grin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STANDARD

How you doin'?...

Driver nods a greeting.

STANDARD

Got a minute?

EXT. PORCH/ MEXICAN FOOD SHACK/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAY.

The restaurant porch looks out onto a busy road. Standard watches Driver polish off his beef burrito.

STANDARD

You like the food, huh?...

DRIVER

Not enough to change my mind...

Standard makes sure no-one's listening, then leans closer.

STANDARD

Look, it's a simple bank lick. Six figure cash score we're in and out in two minutes tops. All you have to do is wait outside.

DRIVER

If it's that simple why don't you ask one of your friends to drive?

STANDARD

Guy cookin' up the score wants a *pro*. I got everyone else lined up but the only wheelmen I know are ram-raiders and carjackers. One look at them and he's gonna take his action some place else.

DRIVER

Could be the best thing that ever happened to you.

STANDARD

Just meet the guy, okay. Listen to what he has to say. You don't like it, walk away.

DRIVER

I don't like it.

STANDARD

Look, I wouldn't come to you unless it was a last resort. These guys, they're fuckin' animals. You saw what they did to me in front of my kid and that's just the start..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Standard's tough guy pose slips for a moment and he looks tense.

STANDARD

I owe these fuckin' *norputos* thirty grand.

DRIVER

Nobody blows that kind of money in the joint. Thanks for lunch...

He pushes his plate aside, about to leave.

STANDARD

Alright, it wasn't just gambling...

Driver stops now, seeing the panic in his eyes.

STANDARD

...They got it into their heads I gave up some people to get an early release. It's bullshit, but they're using it as an excuse to squeeze more money outta me...

DRIVER

Sounds like you dug your own grave.

STANDARD

And I'd lie in it too, only it ain't me they're gonna come after...

He pauses, letting the implications sink in.

STANDARD

Yesterday a car followed Rina and Benicio home from the supermarket. Rina didn't notice nothin' but Benicio recognized some of the guys from the other night...

Driver considers him quietly, not sure whether to believe him.

STANDARD

I don't pay up they're gonna greenlight my wife and kid.

DRIVER

You worried about them why don't you leave town?

STANDARD

You think Rina would come with me? She found out I'd put Benicio's life in danger she'd get rid of me in a second. Or maybe that's what you want?...

He stares at Driver accusingly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STANDARD

I'm not blind. I know the two of you got close when I was inside so you can imagine how hard this is for me -

DRIVER

Don't try and play me, Standard.

STANDARD

It's the only way I know how to protect my family...

Standard holds his gaze unapologetically. Driver studies him quietly, then leaves a twenty dollar bill on the table and gets up. Standard stares after him, no idea what he's going to do.

INT. CORRIDOR/ APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Driver rings the buzzer of Irina's apartment. A moment later Benicio opens the door, happy to see Driver.

DRIVER

(Smiling back)

Your mother in?...

BENICIO

She's in the laundry room...

Driver pauses.

DRIVER

Your father told me you were followed home yesterday? Did you recognise the guys from the other night?...

Benicio's smiles fades. Driver sees the effort in his eyes, knows he's trying to fight his fears like his father told him.

BENICIO

My dad said he's gonna take care of it...

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM/ APARTMENT BLOCK/ ECHO PARK - DAY.

Wet clothes and foam tumble around in a washing machine window. Driver arrives at the door of the laundry room and sees Irina sitting on a bench, reading a magazine while she waits.

DRIVER

Hey...

IRINA

(Looking up)

Hey...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She looks surprised but pleased to see him.

DRIVER

I was on my way to the car park and I...

He suddenly trails off as he notices someone else in the room. A tough looking MEXICAN sits on another bench in the far corner, waiting by one of the washing machines. Irina doesn't pay him any attention but Driver looks tense now.

IRINA

You okay?...

DRIVER

Yeah...

Driver glances at the Mexican's wash-load, trying to figure out if he's for real, then looks back at Irina.

DRIVER

You almost done?

IRINA

No, I got another load after this...

She smiles again, completely unaware of the tension. The Mexican is looking at Driver now. It may be paranoia but Driver wonders if he's waiting for him to leave.

DRIVER

Mind if I sit down?...

IRINA

Sure...

Driver sits down next to her, glancing at the tattoos on the Mexican's bare arms. He recognises them from his own time inside. There are Aztec symbols on his shoulders, spider webs on his elbows indicating he's done time, and a screaming face on the back of one hand hinting at what he went down for. He could be just a neighbour but Driver feels more and more uneasy.

IRINA

...It's nice to have some company...

Driver looks back at her and smiles, hiding his concern. Behind her, the washing machine spins faster and faster.

EXT. PARKING LOT/ HOLLYWOOD/ SUNSET AND HIGHLAND - DAY.

Mocking laughter. A group of KIDS in baggy jeans and baseball caps hang around the car park, grinning at Standard's beat-up Oldsmobile as he climbs out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STANDARD

What the fuck you lookin' at?...

He glares at the kids as he walks alongside Driver.

INT. LOW RENT BAR/ HOLLYWOOD/ SUNSET AND HIGHLAND - DAY.

COOK, the guy organizing the score, fits right into the seedy bar -- designer t-shirt, gold wristwatch, slicked back hair.

COOK

...Getting harder and harder all the time  
to step around the amateurs...

Standard and Driver sit opposite him. Driver's unimpressed by his half-assed wiseguy act while Standard's all smiles.

STANDARD

That's why I bust my balls finding a pro...

Cook doesn't seem to hear him, still studying Driver.

COOK

You look like you're hard to work with?

DRIVER

Not if we understand each other.

COOK

What's to understand? It's my score. Either  
you sign on or you don't.

DRIVER

Then I don't.

COOK

That's okay by me. I got a dozen other  
crews I can farm this out to.

STANDARD

He didn't mean it like that, man...

Standard looks worried, trying to diffuse the tension.

COOK

So, what does he mean?

DRIVER

I drive. That's all I do. I don't sit in  
while you're planning the score or running  
it down. You tell me where we start, where  
we're headed, where we'll be going  
afterwards. I don't take part, I don't know  
anyone, I don't carry weapons, I drive...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Standard seems surprised by Driver's professional patter. It's as if he's done this a hundred times before.

COOK

Attitude like that must cost you a lot of work.

DRIVER

It's not attitude, it's principle.

COOK

Okay, but if we're going in heavy so are you.

DRIVER

No deal. I need to start shooting I figure you don't know what you're doing...

Standard's sweating now but Cook nods gently. He writes a figure down on a piece of paper and slides it across the table.

COOK

You don't want to participate, there it is. Fee for service. We keep it simple...

Driver takes one look at the number he's written and gets up.

DRIVER

Sorry to have wasted your time...

Standard's about to have a heart attack.

STANDARD

Hey, sit down, man. We can figure this out.

COOK

He's right. I'm just fucking with you...

Driver hesitates, all his instincts telling him to walk away, but he stays where he is.

COOK

Five on the team, we split six ways. Two shares for me, one each for the rest of you. That work?...

Driver stares back at him in silence, thinking about Irina and Benicio, then finally nods.

EXT. KOREAN BUTCHER'S/ DOWNTOWN - DAY.

The squawking of dozens of chickens. Over the din we hear Standard's jubilant voice.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

STANDARD

...Man, the way you nailed that guinea motherfucker! You shoulda' been my fuckin' attorney...

A poultry van is making a delivery outside a Korean butcher's.

STANDARD

...You choose your chicken just like in a fish restaurant. They kill it right in front of you...

(He slaps Driver on the back)

Choose a big fat bird, my friend. Tonight we're celebrating...

INT. LIVING ROOM/ IRINA'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Driver sits at the dinner table with Standard, Irina and Benicio. Standard's in high spirits, beaming at his wife.

STANDARD

...I was such a jerk the first time we met. We're at this party and I see the most beautiful girl I ever laid eyes on and I walk over and say, 'Hello Miss, my name's Standard Guzman'. She takes one look at me and asks, 'Where's the deluxe version?'...

(He laughs)

It took me like a minute to get it...

Irina smiles awkwardly, glancing at Driver, curious what he's doing here with her husband. Benicio grins too, eager to please his dad.

STANDARD

You don't get it either do you, Benicio? Hope you didn't inherit your Papa's brains.

He ruffles his son's hair then pours himself another shot of tequila. Irina turns to Driver.

IRINA

More chicken?

DRIVER

Thanks...

Their eyes stay on each as she serves him.

IRINA

So, where did you guys run into each other?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STANDARD

At his buddy's garage. I wanted to see if I could trade in the Olds...

Irina's still staring at Driver, not convinced by her husband's explanation. Standard sees the look between them but his only reaction is to drain his glass and tuck into his food.

STANDARD

Now this is what I call a *deluxe* chicken. I think we should copy the Koreans and rear goats and chickens in our back yard. Turn this whole city into a third world shithole and make it feel like home -

IRINA

Standard -

STANDARD

Excuse my language, Benicio...

IRINA

(Changing the subject)  
How's the movie going?...

Driver looks a little uncomfortable.

DRIVER

I'm not working on it anymore...

Irina looks at Standard then back at Driver, her suspicions raised.

IRINA

So, what are you working on?...

DRIVER

The stock car -

STANDARD

Come on, Rina. Can't you see he doesn't like talking about himself.

IRINA

(Losing patience)  
Then why don't you go ahead and talk for all of us.

STANDARD

All right, I will. This time next week I'm gonna take you and Benicio away with me...

Irina stops and looks at him in surprise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STANDARD  
(Gently)  
Where you wanna go?...

His quiet confidence concerns her even more.

IRINA  
You just got out of jail -

STANDARD  
Where you wanna go, Benicio?

BENICIO  
Disneyland.

STANDARD  
Fuck Disneyland. I'm gonna take you and  
your mother away from this bullshit city -

IRINA  
Benicio, it's time for bed -

STANDARD  
Don't worry. Your Papa's got it all figured  
out -

IRINA  
Benicio, you heard me -

STANDARD  
It's okay. I'll take him...

Standard gets up from the table, lifting Benicio in his arms and carrying him back to his bedroom. Driver watches them. Even in this kind of mood Standard's completely devoted to his son. Irina watches them disappear then turns back to Driver.

IRINA  
You have any idea what he's talking about?

Driver hesitates, finding it hard to meet her searching gaze.

DRIVER  
...Guess he had too much to drink...

Irina stares back at him, unconvinced.

INT/ EXT. TAXI/ LANKERSHIM BOULEVARD/ STUDIO CITY - DAY.

Rows of used car lots line Lankershim boulevard, hundreds and hundreds of shiny vehicles on display.

EXT. USED CAR LOT/ LANKERSHIM BOULEVARD - DAY.

A slick looking SALESMAN approaches Driver as he casts his eyes over a 92 Dodge Spirit.

SALESMAN

...Classic American muscle car. Electronic fuel injection, twin balance shafts, single turbo. You just tell me when to shut up...

Driver ignores the well-oiled patter, still examining the car.

DRIVER

Can I take a look inside?...

SALESMAN

(Grinning)

Twist my arm, I'll even give you a demo...

INT/ EXT. DODGE SPIRIT/ STREETS/ STUDIO CITY - DAY.

The Salesman sits next to Driver in the passenger seat, buckling up with a smug smile as the car cruises down Lankershim Avenue.

SALESMAN

You might wanna take it slow till you get a feel for her...

Driver ignores him, his eyes fixed on the road.

SALESMAN

...These Spirit RT's got specific chassis tuning. Corner like a dream...

Driver isn't listening, concentrating on the sound of the engine. The Salesman leans over and turns on the radio.

SALESMAN

We can replace the radio at no extra charge-

DRIVER

You mind turning it off...

The Salesman's smile fades as he switches off the radio, watching Driver shift through the gears.

SALESMAN

Everything okay?

DRIVER

Little too much play in the transmission and the clutch needs to come up some...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Salesman notices Driver's wheelwork now, and his footwork, beginning to realize he isn't so green after all. He's about to say something when suddenly Driver swerves into a sidestreet at the last moment, catching him by surprise and startling him.

DRIVER

See what you mean about her cornering like  
a dream...

For once the Salesman's lost for words.

INT. WORK ROOM/ SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver walks along a work table, choosing tools and spare parts he needs for the Dodge Spirit, slipping them in his hold-all. He hears 'Miss Dickinson' purr at the door and zips up the bag, knowing Shannon isn't far. The old man limps up to the doorway with a curious smile.

SHANNON

You still here?...

DRIVER

Just on my way out...

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING LOT/ APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

The hood of the Dodge Spirit is open, the tricked up V8 engine gleaming under a work light. Driver's face is fixed in concentration, his fingers deftly rearranging metal and wire.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

The Bank of America building glitters in the sunlight. Driver's parked across the street, studying the ebb and flow of traffic. He looks up at the traffic lights, checks his watch, then times how long they take to change.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ STREETS/ WOODLAND HILLS - DAY.

Driver turns off Topanga Canyon Boulevard into the steep winding roads around Woodland Hills. His brain works like a computer, memorizing street names, distinctive houses, stretches where the road is uneven, even the foliage before a turn.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver's back on the open road again, judging the hair-pin bends around an ominous stretch of Topanga Canyon Boulevard.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ ROUTE 27/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - DAY.

Topanga Canyon Boulevard flows into the Pacific Coast Highway. Driver hits the gas now, turning the car loose, testing its speed.

INT/EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ SANTA MONICA - DAY.

More reconnaissance in Santa Monica. We see passing street signs. Pearl Street. Cedar Street. Pine Street. Driver slows down as he spots a police car parked on Maple Street. He drives past it slowly, registering the speed trap.

INT. DRIVER'S BEDROOM/ APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Driver packs his clothes and belongings into his duffel bag. He has his shirt off in the stifling heat and for the first time we see his powerful physique and faded blue 'gladiator school' tattoos. He looks up as he hears a knock on the door and opens it, expecting Standard. Irina stands there instead.

IRINA

Can I come in?...

DRIVER

Sure...

She stares at his prison tattoos, unable to hide the surprise and disappointment in her eyes, then walks past him into the Spartan room. Driver feels self-conscious, reaching for a t-shirt. Irina notices the packed duffel bag on his bed now.

DRIVER

You want something to drink?...

IRINA

No thanks...

She looks back at him as he pulls on his t-shirt and sees a long scar running down his back, another confirmation of a criminal past she never suspected. She turns and stares out of the window again, watching the distant lights of downtown L.A.

IRINA

Standard's been coming home late the past few nights. I thought maybe you knew why?

Driver hesitates. He doesn't like lying to her.

DRIVER

No...

She keeps gazing out of the window at the glittering lights.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA

Every time he makes that speech about taking me and Benicio away, giving us a better life, he's got something lined up...

She turns and looks at Driver now, letting him know she knows.

DRIVER

Maybe you should talk to *him*...

IRINA

I gave up on him a long time ago. All I care about is my son...

Her eyes are fixed on Driver.

IRINA

His father winds up in jail again, all of a sudden he'll be thirteen, fourteen, hanging around street corners, getting into trouble...

(A beat)

They send him to reform school you have any idea what kind of future he'll have?

DRIVER

I was state-raised myself.

IRINA

Then talk some sense into Standard...

She looks at him quietly, appealing to whatever feelings he has for her, but Driver's eyes give nothing away.

IRINA

You know, the funny thing is him I understand, him I can read like a book. But you...

She sounds disappointed.

IRINA

Why would you get involved with someone who's gonna fuck up every time?...

Driver can't tell her it's because of her, can't find the words to explain. She takes another look at the packed duffel bag on his bed then turns away.

INT. VIEW ON STARBUCKS/ ENCINO - DAY.

Through the windows of a crowded Starbucks we see Standard sitting at a table with his 'crew.' There's a striking looking girl with short blonde hair, (BLANCHE), and a rugged looking cowboy type, (DAVE), who wears a suede jacket with tassels.

INT. DRIVER'S CAR/ STARBUCKS PARKING LOT/ ENCINO - DAY.

Driver's watching Standard and his crew from the car. They stroll out of the Starbucks, talking animatedly. Standard spots the Dodge waiting for him and says goodbye to the others, wishing them luck. Blanche and Dave head off to their open-top car. Driver starts his engine as Standard approaches.

INT. DRIVER'S CAR/ VENTURA BOULEVARD/ ENCINO - DAY.

Driver's on the road now. Standard sits in the passenger seat, looking tense.

DRIVER

You sure you wanna go through with this?

STANDARD

(Forcing a smile)

What the fuck you talking about, man?...

Up ahead Dave and Blanche's open-top car overtakes another vehicle.

STANDARD

You losing your nerve?

DRIVER

No, your *wife* came to see me. She's worried about your *son*.

STANDARD

Yeah, well I'm doing this for them...

Driver slows down as the traffic lights turn red, feeling conflicted. Standard looks thoughtful too.

STANDARD

Did Rina ask you to watch my back?

DRIVER

Frankly, I don't think she gives a fuck what happens to you.

STANDARD

Yeah, but she's still my wife...

He smiles softly, his voice quieter now.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

STANDARD

Relax, man. We're all pros here. Cook sent in a crew to jam the alarm system last night. We just stroll in, take our time, like shopping at Gucci's...

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

The crackle of a police scanner. Driver's parked a hundred yards from the bank. Standard stares at the glittering building, looking even more anxious now. Out of his window he sees Blanche cross the street and enter the bank. It's almost time.

STANDARD

I know I can be a prick sometimes but I appreciate what you're doing for us...

He doesn't look at Driver, but he sounds sincere, his eyes fixed on the bank.

STANDARD

...They think the world of you, Rina and Benicio, you know that right?...

Driver nods, sensing the tension in his voice.

STANDARD

Say something happens to me...you think you could find a way to take care of them?...

DRIVER

Nothing's gonna happen to you...

Standard forces another smile, slips on his sunglasses, then finally opens the door.

STANDARD

Then I'll see you in ten...

Driver watches him cross the street with a strong sense of foreboding.

INT. BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ TARZANA - DAY.

Standard enters the bank, his heart beating even faster now. From his point of view everything looks threatening. The CUSTOMERS standing in line. The TELLERS' hard set faces. The SECURITY GUARDS' weapons. He looks relieved as he spots Blanche talking to one of the Tellers, playing the dizzy blonde.

BLANCHE

...Is there any way I could speak to the manager?...

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver casts his eyes around the street, observing the smallest details -- the number plates of other parked vehicles; passersby on the sidewalks; the windows of overlooking buildings. Across the street, he sees Dave the cowboy stroll into the bank.

INT. BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ TARZANA - DAY.

Dave joins a line at one of the Teller's windows, also wearing sunglasses. Standard waits in the line next to him. Both of them keep their heads down, hoping no-one gets a look at their faces. They needn't worry. The bank's too crowded for anyone to pay attention to anyone else. The only exception is Blanche, who's sitting at the MANAGER's desk, charming him with her questions.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

A sleek black Caddy glides past Driver's car and stops outside the bank. Cook climbs out in a suit, carrying a large briefcase. Driver watches the Caddy drive on and disappear down the street.

INT. BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ TARZANA - DAY.

There's only one CUSTOMER left between Standard and the Teller's window. Standard glances at the guards nervously. One of them looks like he should have retired a long time ago, but the other one is young and fit. The YOUNG GUARD stares at him, then turns away as Cook finally strolls through the door.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver checks his watch. 8:55. He starts the car.

INT. BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ TARZANA - DAY.

Cook joins Standard in the line, glancing at his watch, playing the part of the impatient businessman.

STANDARD

You wanna go ahead. I don't think I filled out this form right...

Cook nods gratefully and takes Standard's place in the line -- just as the CUSTOMER in front finishes with the Teller.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver cruises past the bank, glancing through the windows, heading for the corner where he told Standard he'd be waiting.

INT. BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ TARZANA - DAY.

Cook leans in close to the Teller's window, blocking her view. Standard and Dave spring into action now, slipping stocking masks over their faces and pulling out their weapons. Standard grabs Cook around the throat and spins him around in the direction of the security guards, shoving a .45 to his head.

STANDARD

One stupid move and I blow his fuckin' head off!...

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver stops the car on the street corner, eyes still alert. Suddenly he notices something. Parked a hundred yards down the road, he sees another vehicle glinting in the sunlight. To the ordinary eye, it's no different from the other vehicles parked on the street, but to Driver it stands out. For one, it's a Roush Mustang. Secondly, it has tinted windows.

INT. BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ TARZANA - DAY.

Everyone's lying face down on the ground except Standard and Dave. Dave trains his .45 on the security guards, while Standard hauls Cook over to the manager's desk.

STANDARD

Where's the vault?

The bank manager doesn't react. Standard pistol-whips Cook brutally, knocking him to the floor.

STANDARD

Fuck with me, I'll splatter his brains all over your face!...

Cowering next to the manager, Blanche pretends to cry.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver takes a closer look at the Mustang. As well as tinted windows, it has reinforced bumpers and racing tires.

INT. VAULT/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ TARZANA - DAY.

Still holding a gun to Cook's head, Standard watches the bank manager unlock the vault. As soon as it swings open, he cracks his .45 across the manager's skull, knocking him unconscious. Cook takes over now, switching from hostage to mastermind, stepping into the vault. Standard watches as he drills into one of the safe deposit boxes, ignoring all the others. He finally wrenches the deposit box door open. Standard stares curiously as he sees a large black gym bag inside.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver checks his watch again -- 9:05 -- his eyes still fixed on the mysterious Mustang.

INT. BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ TARZANA - DAY.

Dave wanders among the trembling Tellers and Customers lying on the floor, brandishing his gun. Blanche is still pretending to be one of them, whimpering. Only the young security guard seems unafraid, watching Dave closely from the floor, waiting for his opportunity.

Standard strides back into the main hall with the gym bag, treating Cook like a hostage again.

STANDARD

Down on the fuckin' floor!...

Clutching his bleeding head, Cook lies down on the floor.

STANDARD

You, on your feet!...

He's talking to Blanche now. When she doesn't react, he pulls her up roughly by her hair and drags her towards the exit.

STANDARD

Rest of you motherfuckers, stay down!...

Dave keeps his gun trained on the terrified customers. Behind him, unnoticed, the young security guard starts to reach for his ankle holster.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver finally sees Standard and Blanche emerge from the bank. Standard has his arm around Blanche's waist, guiding her towards the car, clutching the big black bag in his hand.

INT. BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ TARZANA - DAY.

Cook is still lying on the floor with the other customers, pretending to be a hostage. Dave retreats towards the exit. He's so relieved, he doesn't see the young guard unclasp his ankle holster, take out the gun, and aim it at his head.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BANK/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Standard and Blanche have almost reached the Dodge now. Standard smiles at Driver happily when suddenly he hears the crack of gunshots behind him. Driver sees the look of panic in his eyes as he wheels around. The young security guard runs out of the bank.

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Crouching low in an expert firing position he squeezes off several shots. The force of the bullets send Standard flying. Driver sees him hit the sidewalk, arterial blood pumping from his neck. Blanche screams, grabbing the gym bag and leaping into the back of the Dodge. Driver hesitates, takes one last look at Standard's lifeless body, then hits the gas.

EXT. TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

As the Dodge Spirit roars down the street, the Roush Mustang suddenly comes to life, pulling out of its parking place.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ TARZANA - DAY.

Driver glances in his rear-view mirror and sees the Mustang on his tail. It doesn't seem to be trying to close the gap. In the back seat, Blanche zips open the gym bag, then stares in shock.

BLANCHE

...Shit...

There are literally stacks of hundred dollar bills crammed inside. Driver catches her reaction in the mirror, but his attention is focussed on the Mustang. Up ahead, at an intersection, the lights turn red. Driver thinks about running them, but decides against it, braking sharply. The Mustang draws up beside him, its tinted windows glinting in the sunlight.

BLANCHE

Move for Chrissakes!...

Driver ignores her, still watching the Mustang out of the corner of his eye. The lights change to green. Neither car moves. Behind them, people start honking their horns. The Mustang stays where it is, inviting Driver to go first. It's a game of chess. Finally Driver sets off.

EXT. TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD/ WOODLAND HILLS - DAY.

Topanga Canyon Boulevard gets steeper and steeper as the two cars head up into Woodland Hills.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver glances at the passing street signs. Velicata Street. De La Osa Street. Providencia street. The Mustang is still hovering patiently in his rear view mirror. Blanche looks dazed in the back seat. Dumetz Road. Viscanio Street. Buena Ventura Street. And suddenly Driver swerves left.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BUENA VENTURA/ WOODLAND HILLS - DAY.

And now we see why. Half the street is blocked off by roadworks. Driver bumps his way onto the sidewalk, grinds his way along the uneven surface, then veers back on the road. The Mustang has made the turn too, but Driver's got a head start now.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ STREETS/ WOODLAND HILLS - DAY.

Driver takes the steep and winding turns at speed, trying to put as many corners as he can between himself and the Mustang.

EXT. AERIAL SHOT/ STREETS/ WOODLAND HILLS - DAY.

From above, we see the chess game more clearly, the Dodge leading the Mustang deeper and deeper into the maze, giving it more choices to make at every turn.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ STREETS/ WOODLAND HILLS - DAY.

A quick glance in his rear-view mirror and Driver sees that he's lost the Mustang. He turns sharply into the open gateway of a million dollar home.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ DRIVEWAY/ HOUSE/ WOODLAND HILLS - DAY.

Driver stops the Dodge in the driveway, among a bunch of other parked cars. Blanche looks totally bewildered. On a stretch of lawn on the other side of the house, she can see a swimming party going on. It's a surreal sight, but Driver isn't interested. His eyes are fixed on his mirror, watching the street. For a moment, there's no sign of anyone, then suddenly the Mustang glides past. Driver stays where he is, not sure if the Mustang saw them or if it's going to turn back. He waits a moment, then turns the car around, edging back out of the gates.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ STREET/ WOODLAND HILLS - DAY.

There's no sign of the Mustang. Driver turns cautiously back into the street.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ STREETS/ WOODLAND HILLS - DAY.

Driver's heading downhill now, weaving his way out of the maze of streets. He checks his rear-view mirror, when suddenly he sees the Mustang reappear on the crest of a hill. This time it means business, driving at speed, looming larger and larger in his mirror. Driver floors the pedal and the chase explodes.

INT/EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver roars back onto Topanga Canyon Boulevard, turning the wheel hard to stay on the road. The Mustang carries out the same manoeuvre with inch-perfect skill.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

The game of chess has turned into a high speed pursuit now, the two cars taking the hair-pin bends at incredible speeds, the ravine stretching out beneath them.

INT/EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - DAY.

In the back seat, Blanche looks terrified, buckling herself in with trembling fingers. Driver finally sees some other cars up ahead. On speed and power his vehicle may be no match for the Mustang, but in traffic the odds are even. He weaves his way past the slower cars, trying to put obstacles between himself and the Mustang. The pursuing car matches him move for move, but doesn't attack, simply staying on his tail.

Up ahead, Driver suddenly spots a huge truck approaching. He swings onto the other lane, bearing down on the behemoth. Instinctively the truck shifts into the middle of the road. Instead of trying to avoid it, Driver floors the pedal, keeping his line. The truck starts to drift into the wrong lane now. The Mustang has to brake sharply to avoid a head-on collision. Driver takes his chance, mashing the gas and swerving past the truck on the outside, gaining a few vital seconds.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - DAY.

Topanga Canyon Boulevard flows into the Pacific Coast Highway, hundreds of vehicles visible down below.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - DAY.

The tactics have changed as well as the terrain. Driver slaloms past the cars in front of him on the highway, faking left and right to shake the Mustang.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - DAY.

The two cars move in almost perfect symmetry.

INT. DRIVER'S CAR/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY/ SANTA MONICA - DAY.

Driver sees an exit sign for Santa Monica, but keeps to the fast lane. It's only when he sees the Mustang fall in behind him, that he suddenly drifts across the entire width of the freeway, narrowly avoiding the onrushing cars, screeching into the Santa Monica exit. The Mustang has even less time to react, but somehow pulls off the same manoeuvre, staying right on his tail.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ STREETS/ SANTA MONICA - DAY.

Street signs blur past. Bay Street. Grant Street. Pacific Street. Driver leads the pursuing Mustang through the narrow routes he's memorised a dozen times.

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In the back seat, Blanche looks petrified. Pearl Street. Cedar Street. Pine Street. And suddenly Driver hits the gas. The Mustang stays in his mirror. Responding. Exactly what Driver wants. He taps the brakes once, twice, then slows down to twenty as he crosses Maple Street.

The Mustang comes charging in, falling right into his trap. Driver shoots a glance in his rear-view mirror as a police car suddenly swings out of Maple Street and signals for the Mustang to pull over. He's led his pursuer into the speed trap he'd discovered on his dummy run. He watches as the Mustang pulls over, finally forced to abandon the chase.

EXT. MOTEL/ VENICE - DAY.

Purple neon spills onto the forecourt of a seedy motel.

INT. MOTEL ROOM/ VENICE - DAY.

The black gym bag lies open on a double bed, full to the brim with stacks of cash. Blanche sits on the bed, answering Driver's questions in a trembling voice.

BLANCHE

...My job was to ask for the manager. So the others could identify him...

DRIVER

The guy running the show - Cook - how much did he tell you could expect to net?...

BLANCHE

Forty Grand...

She glances at the bag, looking almost frightened at how much more money there is. Driver switches on the cheap TV set with the remote, flicking through the news channels. There's no mention of the robbery yet. He zips up the bag and heads out.

DRIVER

Stay here. Don't answer the door...

Blanche nods, too shaken to protest.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT/ VENICE - SUNSET.

Pulsing car lights glitter on the nearby freeway and all around. Driver wanders around the motel parking lot, talking on a cell phone. All we hear is the roar of passing traffic.

INT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - SUNSET.

Silence. Shannon holds the phone to his ear, looking like he's been punched in the gut, trying to comprehend what he's hearing.

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'Miss Dickinson' gazes up at him quietly. Finally the old man manages to speak.

SHANNON  
...Why didn't you tell me?...

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT/ VENICE - SUNSET.

Driver doesn't reply, staring out in guilty silence.

INT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - SUNSET.

Shannon listens to the silence on the other end.

SHANNON  
(Quietly)  
...Well, it's done now...

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT/ VENICE - SUNSET.

Driver gives him a moment, then continues.

DRIVER  
...There was a car waiting for us. '05  
Roush Mustang. Wasn't cops or Feds. Didn't  
make a move till we were clear of the  
scene...

EXT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAY.

Shannon tries to put his own concerns out of his head and concentrate on the matter at hand.

SHANNON  
Sounds like someone found out about the  
score and tried to rip you off...

EXT. MOTEL/ VENICE - DAY.

DRIVER  
I don't think so. I think whoever's behind  
this planned it from the start. Standard  
told me they sent in another crew to bypass  
the alarm system last night...

EXT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAY.

'Miss Dickinson' is still gazing up at Shannon.

SHANNON  
How big's the take?...

EXT. MOTEL/ VENICE - DAY.

DRIVER  
Close to three million...

EXT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAY.

SHANNON  
Jesus...

The gravity of the situation hits Shannon hard, all his dreams for the two of them hanging by a thread.

SHANNON  
I'll see what I can find out. You okay where you are?...

EXT. MOTEL/ VENICE - DAY.

DRIVER  
For now. I'll call you back in an hour...

Driver hangs up, hesitates, then dials another number. Benicio answers.

BENICIO'S VOICE ON THE PHONE  
Hello?...

Driver hears the tremor in his voice.

DRIVER  
Benicio?...

BENICIO'S VOICE ON THE PHONE  
Yeah?...

DRIVER  
Is your mom there?...

There's an uncomfortable silence. Driver can feel the little boy trying to hold it together.

BENICIO'S VOICE ON THE PHONE  
She's gone with the police. My dad was hurt in an accident...

Driver pauses again, feeling guilty.

DRIVER  
Tell her I'll call later...

INT. MOTEL ROOM/ VENICE - DAY.

A soap opera plays on the TV. Driver walks back into the motel room. Blanche lies on the bed, looking more relaxed now. Driver picks up the remote and flicks through the channels until he finally finds a breaking news story on the robbery. There are police mug-shots of Standard and Dave on screen.

TV REPORT

...The second armed robber was also pronounced dead at the scene. He was identified as Standard Guzman of Echo Park, Los Angeles...

Driver listens to the report in silence. Blanche looks upset again, confronted with the reality of what's happened.

TV REPORT

...Other details are unclear but the eyewitness account of Security Guard, Leo Biaggio, suggests the two robbers had no accomplices and bank officials have confirmed that no money is missing. In other news...

Driver switches off the TV, staring at the blank screen curiously. He turns to Blanche.

DRIVER

The guard saw you grab the bag and jump in the car -- why would he say there were no accomplices?

BLANCHE

I've no idea.

DRIVER

Any idea there'd be another car waiting?

This time she takes a fraction too long to answer.

BLANCHE

I told you everything I know -

DRIVER

You heard the report -- no accomplices, no money missing. Someone's trying to make a bullshit story stick and right now you and I are a big inconvenience!...

(Cold and menacing)

The other two are dead, you understand? Now either you're part of the set-up or you're next in line...

(CONTINUED)

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She finally meets his gaze, close to tears.

BLANCHE

...Cook told me another car would hold us up...but he said nothing about anyone getting hurt...

Driver stares at her quietly, beginning to put the pieces together in his head.

DRIVER

You were gonna rip us off and split the take?

She nods guiltily.

DRIVER

How long have you known him?

BLANCHE

Couple months. We were fooling around. I've never been mixed up in anything like this -

DRIVER

You know his real name?

BLANCHE

He told me it was Chris, but I just called him Cook...

There are tears in her eyes. Driver's fairly certain she's telling the truth.

DRIVER

You ever hear him discuss the job with anyone else?

BLANCHE

No. He said it was just the two of us...

Her tears are flowing freely now, her cheap eye-liner running down her face. Driver stares at her quietly, lost in thought.

BLANCHE

....Please...Can I go wash up?...

Driver nods distractedly. Blanche heads over to the bathroom. As she disappears inside Driver notices something on the bed where she's just been lying. It's her cell phone. Still flipped open as if she's called someone recently.

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Driver reaches for the cell phone when suddenly he hears glass smashing in the bathroom, and a dull thud, like someone collapsing on the floor. At the same time there's a loud banging noise on the motel room door, someone trying to kick it open.

Driver reacts in an instant, rushing towards the bathroom door. He has to barge it open, something obstructing the way.

INT. BATHROOM/ MOTEL ROOM/ VENICE - DAY.

Driver almost trips over Blanche's sprawled body as he bursts through. One quick glance and he knows she's dead - half her head blown off. Another quick glance and he sees her killer, a big burly HITMAN, trying to climb through the same bathroom window where he just shot her.

Driver moves like lightning, grabbing the man's arms before he can get off another shot and pulling him through the window. The hitman lands heavily in a sea of broken glass, cutting his forehead open, blinded momentarily by the blood in his eyes.

Driver takes his opportunity and slams the man's face back into the glass strewn floor, stunning him for a few more seconds as they struggle. Looking around, he grabs the largest shard of glass he can find and buries it in the shooter's neck.

INT. MOTEL ROOM/ VENICE - DAY.

In the bedroom, the 2nd HITMAN finally kicks the door open. Driver bursts through the bathroom door at the same time -- aiming the 1st shooter's .45 -- squeezing off three shots through the silencer. The force of the bullets picks up the 2nd hitman and flings him against the wall like a rag doll.

The startling explosion of violence is over just as suddenly as it began. Driver slumps to the floor in exhaustion, his hand and his arm ripped open by the broken glass. There's blood splatter all over the wall. Neon lights from outside flashing on the dead man's face. But no panicked footsteps or sirens. The assault was as silent as it was deadly.

Driver crawls over to the dead hitman and rifles through his pockets. All he finds are a set of electronic car keys.

EXT. MOTEL/ VENICE - NIGHT.

It's dark outside, all the cars in the parking lot looking like ghostly shadows. Still clutching the gym bag Driver presses the electronic car keys he found on the dead killer. The lights of a sleek black Eldorado flash on.

INT/ EXT. ELDORADO/ PACIFIC AVENUE/ VENICE - NIGHT.

Driver's in the Eldorado now, steering with one hand as he talks to Shannon on his cell-phone.

DRIVER

...No papers in the car either. These guys were pros.

SHANNON'S VOICE ON THE PHONE

You got any good news?...

DRIVER

Yeah, I'm hurt. I need a doctor to patch me up...

SHANNON'S VOICE ON THE PHONE

1157 Penn Street. El Segundo. I'll meet you there as soon as I can...

Outside the window we can see passing junkyards gleaming under vapor lights.

EXT. DOC'S HOUSE/ EL SEGUNDO - NIGHT.

An OLD MAN in a t-shirt and boxer shorts opens the front door, looking Driver up and down with mischievous booze-glazed eyes.

DOC

That arm doesn't look so good...

DRIVER

You think?...

The underworld doctor grins, inviting Driver inside.

INT. DOC'S HOUSE/ EL SEGUNDO - NIGHT.

Scissoring Driver's blood soaked shirt away the doctor examines the shards of glass embedded in the tattoos on his arm.

DOC

(More interested in the tattoos than the wounds)

That's quite an education you got there...

(His hand shakes as he probes the wounds with a hemostat)

Come across so many of these I consider myself an expert on prison ink. Too bad I can't see for shit otherwise I'd tell you your whole life story...

Driver looks up at him warily from the cloth covered sofa.

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DOC

Relax. Just having my fun with you...

He picks up a bottle of bourbon from among his bowls of Peroxide and Betadine, takes a drink, then offers it to Driver.

DOC

Take a hit off that. Chances are you'll need it...

Driver shakes his head, closing his eyes.

EXT. GARDEN/ DOC'S HOUSE/ EL SEGUNDO - NIGHT.

The city lights glitter all around. Driver stands next to Shannon in Doc's garden, his arm patched up now. Shannon stares out, still trying to come to terms with what's happened.

SHANNON

This guy Cook got a real name?...

DRIVER

Maybe Chris. Probably not...

SHANNON

Well, whoever he is, he's got the weight to put a security guard on the inside, hit a safe deposit box he knows no-one's gonna report missing -- maybe it's better if you lie low till I find out more, see if I can cut a deal...

DRIVER

Just find out who he is...

Shannon senses the quiet determination in his eyes.

SHANNON

I wish you'd asked me that before you took the job. I could have told you your friend Standard had a rap sheet the length of my arm, got himself busted virtually every time he left the house...

Driver doesn't reply, his gaze fixed on the glittering lights.

SHANNON

Lotta guys fall for other mens' wives but you're the only one I know robs banks to make it up to the husband...

(He shakes his head)

Hell, why couldn't you just make a pass at her...

EXT. CEMETRY/ BOYLE HEIGHTS/ EAST LA - DAY.

From a distance we see a funeral party gathered around a grave. Irina and Benicio look out of place among the homeboys and gangbangers who've shown up for Standard's funeral.

INT. DRIVER'S CHEVY IMPALA/ CEMETRY/ BOYLE HEIGHTS - DAY.

Driver watches the burial from his car. As the coffin is laid to rest, Irina hugs Benicio, trying to comfort him. Standard's pals try to pay their respects but she ignores them.

INT. SALVADORAN RESTAURANT/ DOWNTOWN L.A. - NIGHT.

Passing cars flow past on Broadway. Irina's back at work, serving tables. For all her grief she makes an effort to smile.

EXT. BROADWAY/DOWNTOWN LA - NIGHT.

Her shift over, Irina walks down Broadway, heading towards her bus stop. Suddenly she feels a gentle hand on her shoulder. She turns around and sees Driver. She stares back at him quietly, close to tears.

IRINA

Were you with him?...

Driver can't lie to her. She keeps staring at him, then turns and walks away. Driver hesitates, then pursues her down the street. He finally catches up with her, grabbing her arm. Irina spins around.

IRINA

Get your hands off me!...

All her pent-up emotion pours out now as she pounds his chest with her fists.

IRINA

...Goddamn you! Why?!...Why?...Why?...

Slowly the tears overwhelm her and her blows begin to weaken. She folds into his arms, sobbing in his embrace.

INT. DRIVER'S CHEVY IMPALA/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Driver and Irina ride in his car now, street lights passing overhead. Irina looks faraway, gazing out of the window.

DRIVER

...He was into one of the prison gangs for a lot of money. They threatened to come after you and Benicio if he didn't pay up.

(CONTINUED)



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She says nothing.

DRIVER

He was trying to protect you...

IRINA

Good job...

Her eyes well up again at the thought of Benicio.

DRIVER

How's Benicio?...

IRINA

How do you think? His father's dead...

She stares out bitterly.

IRINA

Every kid in the barrio wants to hang out with him now. They all think Standard's some kind of hero...

DRIVER

What are you gonna do?...

IRINA

Move as far away from this city as I can...

Driver keeps his eye on the road.

DRIVER

I've got some money saved up. Anything you need I'll take care of it.

IRINA

What are you, the bank? I work for a living. I don't need your widow's pension.

She turns away, even closer to tears now, gazing at a silver bracelet on her wrist.

IRINA

This is the one thing Standard ever bought me. Fifty bucks. He left the price tag on so I'd know...

She refuses to cry for her husband.

IRINA

He had more heart than brains. That's the only good thing I can say about him...

INT/ EXT. CHEVY IMPALA/ APARTMENT BUILDING/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Driver pulls up outside the apartment block, glancing at the other cars on the street. Irina notices his caution.

IRINA

Are the cops looking for you?

DRIVER

I don't think so.

IRINA

Anyone else?

DRIVER

Maybe...

She stares at him in concern, despite everything.

IRINA

Where are you staying?...

DRIVER

In the car for now...

She keeps gazing at him with a mixture of reproach and regret.

IRINA

You need anything from your apartment?...

DRIVER

I got it all here...

She still can't look away or bring herself to leave.

IRINA

Just tell me one thing...

(She pauses)

How did he talk you into it?...

Driver takes a moment to reply.

DRIVER

He didn't talk me into anything. I've been doing this my whole life. It's what I do...

She stares back at him sadly.

IRINA

Stupid me...

She looks at him a moment longer, then climbs out of the car.

EXT. GARDEN/ BERNIE ROSE'S HOUSE/ MULLHOLLAND DRIVE - DAY.

A beautiful Spanish-style house overlooks the great expanse of the city. Bernie Rose and Shannon walk together in the lush gardens.

BERNIE ROSE

...Blue skies and palm trees everywhere I look. I'm going nuts in this fuckin' city.

SHANNON

Just wait till you get to Paradise.

BERNIE ROSE

Thank God I'm already booked at the other place...

They both grin, strolling past orange trees in bloom. In the distance a MAID is preparing lunch by the pool.

BERNIE ROSE

Talking of heaven, you never told me you took an interest in titty bars?

SHANNON

What?

BERNIE ROSE

That's what your guy Cook does. Runs a strip joint on La Cienega. How come you're curious about him all of a sudden?...

Even though they're close, Shannon's wary of giving away too much information.

SHANNON

Friend of mine owes him some money. I wanted to see if I could get a knockdown.

BERNIE ROSE

Good luck. From what I hear he isn't the charitable type...

Shannon smiles, hiding his concern.

BERNIE ROSE

How's our race team by the way?...

SHANNON

Great. We're all set for next month...

BERNIE ROSE

That's what you should worry about...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Shannon nods distractedly, walking in silence.

BERNIE ROSE  
This friend a close friend?...

SHANNON  
Yeah...

Bernie Rose puts an arm around Shannon's shoulder.

BERNIE ROSE  
You want my advice?...

Shannon looks up, trying to hide his anxiety.

BERNIE ROSE  
Don't take pills for other people's  
headaches...

INT. LIQUEUR STORE/ LA CIENEGA - DAY.

Driver places a large bottle of beer on the counter.

STOREOWNER  
Two dollars, please...

EXT. STRIP JOINT/ LA CIENEGA - DAY.

Driver walks across the street with his open bottle of beer. At the end of a large parking lot he sees an ugly building advertising, *Girls, Girls, Girls*. As he approaches the strip club, he pours the beer from his bottle onto the tarmac. At the same time he takes out a cigarette.

And now we see why. A STRIPPER sits on the steps at the back entrance to the club, smoking. She looks up warily as Driver approaches. He holds up his cigarette and smiles.

DRIVER  
Got a light?...

She hands him her lit cigarette.

DRIVER  
Cook upstairs?...

She nods, relaxing a little. Driver hands back her cigarette, then walks calmly through the back door.

INT. HALL/ STAIRS/ STRIP JOINT/ LA CIENEGA - DAY.

Through the 'stage' door Driver glimpses a bunch of half-naked STRIPPERS at the bar.

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There's a handful of CLIENTS watching a pole dance, but otherwise the place is empty. Driver puts out his burning cigarette on the wall and heads upstairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR/ STRIP JOINT/ LA CIENEGA - DAY.

Driver heads down a long corridor now. A couple of STRIPPERS emerge from their changing room, looking surprised to see him, but he puts them at ease with another friendly smile.

DRIVER

Cook moved office again?

STRIPPER

That one over there...

Driver smiles gratefully, then heads towards an office at the end of the corridor. He knocks on the door. A voice calls back.

COOK O/S

It's open...

Driver keeps turning the handle as if he can't get in.

COOK O/S

It's open, goddamit!...

He hears Cook striding impatiently towards the door now. He waits, then suddenly kicks the door open, right in Cook's face.

Before Cook can recover, Driver storms into the office, smashing the empty bottle of beer across his skull. Cook collapses in a heap. Driver walks calmly to the door, locks it, then heads back towards Cook, hauling him up from the floor.

He's about to hit him again, when suddenly he stops. Cook's bleeding from the fresh cut on his forehead, but he also has some other cuts and bruises on his face. Someone's clearly given him a beating since the robbery. As Driver stares at him curiously he begins to understand.

DRIVER

Should've figured you for a shill. Who were you fronting for?

COOK

Fuck you -

Driver slams his head against the wall.

DRIVER

Whose money am I holding?...

(CONTINUED)

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COOK  
(Spitting out blood)  
Don't worry. They'll come get it...

Driver rams his fist into Cook's nose now, busting it, then watches him crumple to the floor. He bends over the groaning man and rifles through his pockets. Finally he finds what he's looking for. Cook's cell phone. He scrolls down the call log and finds the same number appearing again and again.

INT. PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

The kitchen is busy, CHEFS taking out hot pizzas and slicing them up in takeaway boxes. In the background we hear the phone ringing.

INT. BACK ROOM/ PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

An impeccably dressed MAN IN A TAN SUIT answers the phone.

TAN SUIT  
Hello?...I'm afraid we're closed. Could you call back after twelve...

EXT. PARKING LOT/ BURGER KING/ SUNSET BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver leans against his Chevy Impala, talking on Cook's cell phone.

DRIVER  
I could, but your boss won't be happy when he finds out you've kept him waiting...

INT. BACK ROOM/ NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

Tan Suit looks curious now.

TAN SUIT  
Can I ask what this is about?...

EXT. PARKING LOT/ BURGER KING/ SUNSET BOULEVARD - DAY.

DRIVER  
I have something that belongs to him.

TAN SUIT O/S  
And that would be?...

DRIVER  
Three million dollars...

There's a pause on the other line now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAN SUIT O/S  
Please hold...

INT. NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

Tan Suit walks into the main restaurant area. A large bull of a man sits on his own in the empty restaurant, drinking a cup of coffee. It's only when he hears Tan Suit approach and turns around that we realize it's Nino, Bernie Rose's partner.

EXT. PARKING LOT/ BURGER KING/ SUNSET BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver hears a heavy chesty voice come on the line.

NINO O/S  
You have something of mine?...

Driver registers the quiet menace in the voice but doesn't recognise it.

DRIVER  
Seems that way...

INT. BACK ROOM/ NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

Nino's voice betrays no emotion.

NINO  
And you're calling me why? You expect me to buy my stuff back from you?...

EXT. PARKING LOT/ BURGER KING/ SUNSET BOULEVARD - DAY.

Driver's framed against the Hollywood hills.

DRIVER  
I'm not selling. I give you a time and place, you come collect your stuff...

INT. BACK ROOM/ NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

Nino looks suspicious.

NINO  
What do you get out of it?...

EXT. PARKING LOT/ BURGER KING/ SUNSET BOULEVARD - DAY.

DRIVER  
Just that. Out of it. You put a muzzle on Cook, forget your zombies at the Motel, forget we ever had this conversation...

INT. BACK ROOM/ NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

NINO  
Your partners happy with that?...

EXT. PARKING LOT/ BURGER KING/ SUNSET BOULEVARD - DAY.

DRIVER  
I don't have partners...

INT. BACK ROOM/ NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

Nino begins to relax now.

NINO  
You're not very good at this, are you?...

EXT. PARKING LOT/ BURGER KING/ SUNSET BOULEVARD - DAY.

DRIVER  
At what I do, I'm the best. This isn't what  
I do. I'll call again with instructions...

Driver switches the cell phone off, throws it in a trash-can full of burger wrappers, then climbs back in his car.

INT. BACK ROOM/ NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

Nino hangs up. Behind him we see that Tan Suit is also in the room. There's also another thug wearing a dark suit.

INT. LIVING ROOM/ IRINA'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Irina is dressed for work, giving last minute instructions to her sitter, Mrs Guttierrez.

IRINA  
(In Spanish)  
...He can watch TV for another hour then  
bedtime...

She's interrupted by the buzzer. She walks over and opens the front door then stops in surprise. Driver stands there.

DRIVER  
You got a minute?...

She stares back at him quietly, trying not to engage.

IRINA  
No, I have to get to work...

Driver looks over her shoulder now.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

DRIVER

Hey...

Benicio's emerged from his bedroom to see who it is.

BENICIO

Hey...

The little boy looks fragile and vulnerable in his pyjamas.

DRIVER

I'm sorry about your father...

Benicio nods, acknowledging his sympathy. Driver stares at him quietly but can't find any more words of comfort. Irina feels the guilt in his eyes. He turns and looks at her now.

DRIVER

Can I at least drive you to work?...

INT. CORRIDOR/ APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

Driver and Irina stand in the corridor in silence, waiting for the elevator.

IRINA

I thought it wasn't safe for you to come here?...

DRIVER

I bought myself some time. I'm leaving in the morning...

We sense Irina's disappointment, even though she tries to hide it. The sound of the elevator bell is almost a relief. The doors slide open, revealing two other passengers.

Neither Driver or Irina recognises them, but we do. One of the men is TAN SUIT, the other is DARK SUIT, Nino's henchmen. Tan Suit takes one look at Driver and Irina then hesitates, as if he's not sure whether to stay in the elevator or get out.

TAN SUIT

Sorry, which floor is this?...

IRINA

Fourth...

TAN SUIT

(With a friendly smile)

We thought it was going down...

He steps back into the elevator, making room for them. Driver follows Irina inside then reaches for the elevator buttons.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

Which floor did you want?...

Tan Suit has to decide quickly.

TAN SUIT

Lobby...

Driver presses the lobby button, then presses the car park button for himself and Irina.

INT. ELEVATOR/ APARTMENT BLOCK/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

The elevator starts to descend, Driver and Irina looking even more awkward in front of the two strangers. Tan Suit studies them quietly, as if he's contemplating a move, but the elevator is cramped and Driver's looking right at him. The elevator bell suddenly rings as they reach the lobby. Tan Suit hesitates, then smiles goodnight and walks out with Dark Suit.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ BROADWAY - NIGHT.

The headlights of passing cars light up Driver and Irina's faces as the Chevy heads down Broadway. Driver stares out quietly, thinking to himself.

DRIVER

I want you to come with me...

We feel the impact on Irina -- the surprise and confusion.

IRINA

What are you talking about?

DRIVER

You said you wanted to take Benicio away from here. What's stopping you?...

Irina's almost too stunned to speak.

IRINA

I don't know you.

DRIVER

You will. Once I straighten out this thing I'm getting out for good. We'll go some place. Anywhere you want...

She shakes her head, fighting her feelings for him.

IRINA

You're crazy...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

No, I'm not...

He glances in his mirror as the headlights of another car sweep past.

DRIVER

...When I was inside they'd tell us the only way to survive was to hold onto something in your mind, something you wanted bad enough to keep you going till you got out. It never worked for me. Women, beaches, tropical islands, I couldn't picture any of it. Same out here. I never wanted anything my whole life till now...

There's an innocence in his words that breaks Irina's heart.

IRINA

It doesn't work like that...

DRIVER

Why not?

IRINA

Because people like you never get out. Even if you want to. And I don't want Benicio to grow up like that...

Driver says nothing now. The one argument he has no answer to. Up ahead he sees the lights of the Mexican restaurant where Irina works and pulls over. Irina looks upset but she forces a casual smile, determined to be strong.

IRINA

Thanks for the ride...

Still fighting her own emotions she gets out of the car, hurrying over to the Mexican restaurant.

Driver stays in the car, staring ahead. Every instinct tells him to drive away but for once he can't help himself. He suddenly opens the car door and heads after Irina, refusing to give up.

EXT/ INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT/ BROADWAY/ DOWNTOWN L.A. - NIGHT.

We follow Driver as he strides towards the restaurant with quiet determination. From inside the restaurant Irina turns around and sees him, looking surprised. Their eyes stay on each other, only the neon washed windows separating them.

Driver enters the restaurant when suddenly he sees Irina's expression change.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She's staring past him now, gazing outside in confusion. Driver turns around and catches a glimpse of a man striding across the sidewalk, raising his arm.

It's Tan Suit. Driver dives for cover as bullets suddenly explode and glass shatters. Irina hits the deck too with the other waiters and customers, screams of panic filling the room.

Tan Suit's lost his opportunity in the chaos. He fires a couple more shots then turns back, hurrying towards a getaway car.

Driver's still at floor level, looking for Irina in the chaos. He finally spots her lying a few yards away, shaken but unhurt. Time seems to stop as their eyes meet. Beneath her fear Driver also senses her regret, as if all her worst fears about him have been confirmed. He finds it hard to look away from her but in his heart he knows it's over too. He finally gets to his feet, striding out of the restaurant. Irina stares after him as he vanishes into the night, tears filling her eyes.

EXT. DRAINAGE CANALS/ EAST LA - NIGHT.

Headlights gleam as a car turns into a deserted stretch of road overlooking the drainage canals. The car stops and Shannon gets out, limping over. Driver's waiting for him in the shadows.

SHANNON

I was about to have sex for the first time  
in years and your phone call woke me up...

(He grins)

You set the meet?

DRIVER

There isn't gonna be a meet. They're more  
interested in covering their tracks than  
getting their money back...

Shannon stares at him in confusion.

SHANNON

I don't understand -

DRIVER

They sent someone after me. They knew I'd  
go see Rina...

Shannon looks stunned now, speechless.

DRIVER

(Gently)

Who did you talk to?...

The old man takes a moment to reply, still reeling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHANNON

*Bernie...* I asked if he could help. Him and this guy Nino go way back. I told him you weren't interested in their money, that you only did it for the girl...

(He looks at Driver quietly)

I wanted to make sure once you returned the dough that was the end of it...

Driver stares back at him, his brain working now.

DRIVER

I'll need a car -

SHANNON

Look, let me talk to Bernie. These guys probably didn't listen to him -

DRIVER

It's too late. They won't let this lie...

Shannon says nothing now, knowing Driver's right.

DRIVER

I'll need clean plates and a fake VIN number. Leave it for me at the end of the block.

Shannon nods, still looking dazed.

SHANNON

It'll take me a few hours to find a salvaged car for the VIN.

DRIVER

Soon as it's done you gotta go. They'll come after you to find out where I am...

The old man stares back at him, still finding it hard to relinquish the dream. He looks over at the drab landscape of shopping carts, garbage bags and worn tires that have been dumped in the drainage canals, then looks back at Driver.

SHANNON

What the fuck are we doing here? We should be in Charlotte or Daytona drinking champagne out of trophies and getting laid by pit lizards...

Driver stares back at him affectionately.

EXT. NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

The roar of passing traffic. A nondescript sign outside an even more nondescript restaurant advertises 'Pizza'. There are a few tables outside, several BUTTONMEN including Tan Suit drinking espressos.

INT. NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - DAY.

Bernie Rose twists a spoonful of spaghetti around his fork and shoves it in his mouth irritably.

BERNIE ROSE

...I already gave you my advice. You shoulda' taken your money back and left this guy alone...

Nino and Cook sit opposite him, the only people in the restaurant.

NINO

It's not that simple, Bernie.

BERNIE ROSE

Not now it's bounced up in your face.

Cook interrupts.

COOK

Mr. Paolozzi, I owe you this guy. Just give me the greenlight and I'll -

BERNIE ROSE

(Contemptuously)

You like taking orders, go shut the blinds.

Cook is taken aback.

BERNIE ROSE

Sun's in my eyes...

Nino doesn't look at him, a clear indication he should do as he's told. Cook stands up, humiliated, and walks over to the windows. Bernie Rose carries on eating his spaghetti. Nino hesitates, watching him quietly.

NINO

...The money belonged to a half assed wiseguy from Philly. I had a tip-off he was gonna invest it here in LA, try to run a rival operation. I wanted to teach him a lesson...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bernie Rose stops eating, the light in the restaurant gradually fading as Cook shuts the blinds.

BERNIE ROSE

You stole from our own people?

NINO

I told you, he's just a punk -

BERNIE ROSE

And where did this punk find three million dollars? You ever consider he may have consulted some higher-ups? You even bother to check? -

NINO

I don't give a fuck who gave him their blessing. This is my city.

BERNIE ROSE

Your city? This is a big city, pal, and last time I checked we were partners! -

NINO

We are partners -

BERNIE ROSE

Then why the fuck didn't you come to me before you set up your dummy robbery or before you decided to rub this guy out?!...

Bernie Rose's eyes blaze with anger. Cook sits back down at the table, having closed the blinds.

NINO

This was off to the side, Bernie. I didn't wanna involve you.

BERNIE ROSE

Well, now you fucked up I am involved. You have any idea what kind of heat you're gonna bring down on us? You steal from the family, you hold out on them, that's a death warrant for both of us.

NINO

What family? These fucks still call me a kike to my face. I'm fifty nine years old, they pinch my cheek, treat me like a fuckin' kid. They're the reason we left New York in the first place. Decrepit old men waving us over to their dinner and domino tables to complain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BERNIE ROSE

Those old men gave us the funds to move out here.

NINO

And I made them a lotta money. I made you a lotta money too.

BERNIE ROSE

The money always flows up, Izzy. You know that...

He calls Nino by his childhood name now, emphasizing the fact that they're both outsiders in this organization. For the first time Nino's tough guy act slips and he looks anxious.

NINO

...That's why this driver has to go. Him and the old man are the only two people can tie me to the robbery...

BERNIE ROSE

What about this prick?...

He doesn't even bother to look at Cook.

COOK

Mr. Paolozzi -

NINO

Shut up...

The two friends stare at each other as if Cook didn't exist.

NINO

I shoulda' come to you first, Bernie. I know that. This gets out these Dagos are gonna come after me, they been lookin' for an excuse for years...

He stares at Bernie Rose apologetically, appealing to their life long friendship.

BERNIE ROSE

All right, I'll take him down...

Nino nods in gratitude.

BERNIE ROSE

(To Cook)

Pass the salt...

Cook hesitates, tired of taking shit from the old man, but thinks better of saying no and reaches for the salt shaker.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (3)

Quick as lightning, Bernie Rose drives the stainless steel fork into the back of his neck, the force of the blow almost slamming Cook's face into the table. Bernie Rose twists and grinds the fork deeper for good measure, then with one powerful sweep of his arm clears Cook off the table.

Cook's not dead yet, just writhing on the floor, choking on his own blood. Bernie Rose keeps his eyes fixed on Nino.

BERNIE ROSE

Your turn to clean up after me...

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD/ LA - SUNSET.

The final washes of red and orange fade in the sky, replaced by thousands of gleaming lights. Through the crowds of singles and night people we see the flashing neon sign of a drab hotel.

INT. HOTEL ROOM/ HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - SUNSET.

Driver's duffel bag lies packed on the bed, next to the black gym bag with the money. He stands at the window of the anonymous hotel room, dialling a number on his cell phone.

INT. IRINA'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

The living room phone starts to ring. Irina walks in from her bedroom, about to answer, when she hesitates.

INT. HOTEL ROOM/ HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - NIGHT.

Driver waits, gazing down at the flow of humanity on the street, listening to the unanswered ringtone.

INT. IRINA'S APARTMENT/ ECHO PARK - NIGHT.

The phone keeps ringing. Irina instinctively knows who it is, waiting for her answer machine to come on. Benicio appears in the doorway, looking half asleep.

BENICIO

Mama?...

IRINA

It's okay, baby, go to bed...

She looks at him with a reassuring smile, hiding her emotions.

INT. HOTEL ROOM/ HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - NIGHT.

Irina's voice finally comes on the answer machine.

IRINA'S VOICE ON THE PHONE

This is Rina. Please leave a message...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Driver hesitates, wondering whether to leave a message, then hangs up.

EXT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - NIGHT.

The neon sign for *Shannon's Custom Kings* blinks on and off in the cold dawn light.

INT. SHANNON'S BEDROOM/ GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAWN.

Shannon is brewing himself a cup of coffee in his shabby quarters when he hears the metallic echo of the garage door downstairs. He looks over curiously. 'Miss Dickinson' also pricks up her ears.

INT. STAIRS LEADING TO GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAWN.

It's dark on the stairs. Shannon looks a little anxious as he limps down the steps, followed by Miss Dickinson.

INT. GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAWN.

The vintage cars are silhouetted in the gloom. Shannon looks at the main garage door. A crack of blue light peeps through where it's been forced open. Someone's broken in. He glances around the garage nervously then suddenly stops. Leaning against the stock car he sees a familiar figure.

BERNIE ROSE

All this priceless junk, you should get better locks...

SHANNON

Door's always open to you...

Bernie Rose steps out of the shadows, his hands in his coat pockets.

BERNIE ROSE

I was hoping you might have left by now.

SHANNON

(A rueful smile)  
Where would I go?...

Bernie Rose smiles back.

BERNIE ROSE

I'm looking for your driver...

SHANNON

You break in like this I figure it's bad news.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERNIE ROSE

It's bad luck. Two thousand bank licks in this city a year, he had to pick the wrong one.

SHANNON

He tried to put it right.

BERNIE ROSE

Picked the wrong guy for that too. My partner's a belligerent cocksucker with his back against the wall...

Bernie Rose stops now, standing face to face with Shannon.

BERNIE ROSE

Any idea where he is?...

SHANNON

Probably across the border by now. Mexico. Brazil. Belize. That's where I'd like to go...

Bernie Rose smiles, not believing a word.

BERNIE ROSE

He didn't invite you along after everything you've done for him?

SHANNON

That's gratitude for you, I guess. Can't rely on anyone these days.

BERNIE ROSE

Except you...

He says it sincerely, with quiet admiration.

BERNIE ROSE

I ever tell you how long Izzy and I been friends? Since we were six. Only Jewish kids in a neighbourhood of wops. Long as I can remember he was getting me into trouble and I was getting him outta scrapes...

He looks almost apologetic.

BERNIE ROSE

Anyone else I'd take your side...

SHANNON

Anyone else I'd do the same...

Bernie Rose watches him with a mixture of affection and regret.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BERNIE ROSE

I leave here without finding out where he is others'll come after me. I guarantee they'll be too stupid to figure out you won't talk and drag it out unnecessarily...

SHANNON

Then I'm glad you got here first...

He looks at his friend with quiet dignity, accepting the inevitable. Bernie Rose holds his gaze sadly, then looks away, admiring the shiny stock car.

BERNIE ROSE

You know, it's too bad, I think you would've made something of this business...

SHANNON

Nah, I'd have fucked that up too...

Shannon smiles, finally at peace with himself. Bernie Rose grins, stepping forward to hug his friend goodbye. 'Miss Dickinson' watches them for a moment then suddenly hears the sound of a heavy blow and scampers off in fright.

INT/ EXT. DRIVER'S CAR/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAY.

Sunlight glints on the parked cars by the curbside. Driver heads down Silver Lake Boulevard to pick up his clean car, like he arranged with Shannon. He slows down as he approaches the sign for Shannon's Custom Kings, glancing out of the window to see if anyone's staking out the garage, when suddenly he notices 'Miss Dickinson' scampering outside on her own, pawing at the garage door as if she wants to get in. We see the surprise and concern on Driver's face. Forgetting about his own safety he turns the car around and heads towards the garage.

INT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAY.

As soon as Driver opens the garage door he smells the stench of exhaust fumes. He covers his face with a handkerchief and peers inside. Shannon's vintage cars shimmer in the shafts of sunlight like a dream. As Driver heads past the rows of dimly lit vehicles he sees a figure sitting behind the wheel of a white Coupe de Ville.

Shannon's eyes have been closed, his head leaning gently against the car seat. Whoever killed him left him here with dignity.

Driver opens the car door and lifts up Shannon's body, carrying him out, resting him on the floor. Years of pent up emotions well up in his eyes as he cradles his dead friend in his arms, brushing the strands of white hair off his face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He stares at the old man's face in silent anguish then gradually grief and guilt give way to anger and he rises to his feet.

EXT. SHANNON'S GARAGE/ SILVER LAKE BOULEVARD - DAY.

A sleek black Dodge Challenger roars out of the garage.

INT. BARBER SHOP/ EAST LA - DAY.

The grating sound of an electric razor. Driver sits in a barber's chair, having his hair buzzed to the scalp, his clear blue eyes cold and deadly.

INT. HOTEL ROOM/ HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - NIGHT.

Driver's studying his LA map again -- his eyes moving from street to street -- Westwood Boulevard, San Vincente, the PCH.

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING LOT/ HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - DAY.

Clutching his duffel bag and the black gym bag with the money Driver heads through cavernous parking lot, looking ghostly in the flickering glare of the overhead strip-lights.

INT/EXT. DODGE CHALLENGER/ BEVERLY HILLS - DAY.

Through the windscreen of the black Challenger we see a yellow Cadillac now, pulling up outside a swanky clothing store. Tan Suit leans out of the window, honking his horn. A moment later a SEXY YOUNG GIRL sashays out with some shopping bags and slides into the passenger seat. Driver watches Tan suit and the girl kiss then follows the Cadillac as it sets off.

INT. PARKING LOT/ APARTMENT BLOCK/ BEVERLY HILLS - DAY.

Tan Suit and his girlfriend climb out of the Cadillac. Tan Suit's so busy fondling her, he doesn't notice the sleek black car parking silently behind them.

INT. DODGE CHALLENGER/ PARKING LOT/ BEVERLY HILLS - DAY.

Driver opens the dash and pulls out a long strip of razor wire.

INT. CORRIDOR/ APARTMENT BUILDING/ BEVERLY HILLS - DAY.

Looking down a long corridor we hear laughter coming from one of the apartments. A moment later, TAN SUIT emerges, trying to drag his naked girlfriend behind him.

GIRL  
(Giggling)  
Stop it, baby, I got neighbors...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAN SUIT

(Playful)

I want 'em to know what a slut you are...

He starts to kiss her breasts before she finally pulls away from him and disappears back inside her apartment, slamming the door shut. Tan Suit looks pleased with himself as he heads back to the elevator, pressing the call button.

INT. ELEVATOR/ APARTMENT BLOCK/ BEVERY HILLS - DAY.

The elevator doors open and Tan Suit steps in, pressing the parking level button now. The doors start to close when suddenly a young man with sunglasses and a buzz cut steps inside. Tan Suit looks a little surprised. There was no-one in the corridor a moment ago.

TAN SUIT

Which floor?...

DRIVER

Lobby...

Tan Suit doesn't recognise him. He presses the button and the elevator starts to descend.

DRIVER

You had a good time?...

Tan Suit isn't sure he heard right, turning around indignantly.

TAN SUIT

What did you fuckin' say?...

Then suddenly he recognizes Driver -- a moment too late.

INT. ELEVATOR/ PARKING LOT/ APARTMENT BLOCK - DAY.

The elevator doors open and Driver strides out. Behind him we see Tan Suit's body slumped on the elevator floor, his suit covered in blood, a length of razor wire wrapped round his neck.

EXT. NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - SUNSET.

Streaks of red light fill the sky as the sun begins to set. Two big white Lincoln Continentals are parked outside Nino's Pizzeria. Nino and his FOOT SOLDIERS and BODYGUARDS emerge, climbing into the cars. As they set off we see the black Dodge Challenger pull out behind them.

INT. DRIVER'S CHALLENGER/ NINO'S PIZZERIA/ WESTWOOD - SUNSET.

There's the same calm, almost dead look in Driver's eyes as he drifts in behind a couple of other cars, keeping them between himself and the two white Lincolns.

EXT. STREETS OF WESTWOOD - SUNSET.

The sunlight is fading fast. The neon cityscape has come to life and the streets are a sea of glittering lights.

INT. BODYGUARD CAR/ STREETS OF WESTWOOD - SUNSET.

The CHAUFFEUR of the bodyguards' Continental checks his mirror as he turns into another street, seeing only the anonymous glare of headlights behind him.

INT. DRIVER'S CHALLENGER/ STREETS OF WESTWOOD - SUNSET.

Driver slows down and lets another car turn in front of him, keeping it between himself and Nino's convoy.

EXT. STREETS OF WESTWOOD - SUNSET.

The streets are less crowded in this residential area. As the car in front of Driver pulls into its front drive, Driver takes the next turning, leaving only the two Lincolns cruising down the empty road.

INT. DRIVER'S CHALLENGER/ PARALLEL STREET/ WESTWOOD - SUNSET.

Driver cruises along another residential street. At every intersection we glimpse the two Lincoln Continentals heading in the same direction down a parallel street.

EXT. SAN VINCENTE BOULEVARD/ BRENTWOOD - SUNSET.

The Continentals turn back into traffic on San Vincente.

INT. NINO'S CAR/ SAN VINCENTE BOULEVARD - SUNSET.

Nino's talking on a cell phone in the back seat.

NINO  
...Sure, Carlo, I'll send him your  
regards...

INT. DRIVER'S CHALLENGER/ SAN VINCENTE BOULEVARD - SUNSET.

Driver merges in with the traffic, weaving between the cars in front of him until he has the two Continentals back in his sights.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW/ SAN VINCENTE BOULEVARD - SUNSET.

The sun has almost set, the red backlights of the cars blinking in the fading light.

INT. BODYGUARD CAR/ SAN VINCENTE BOULEVARD - SUNSET.

The bodyguards' car follows Nino's car down 7th Street.

INT. DRIVER'S CHALLENGER/ SAN VINCENTE BOULEVARD - SUNSET.

This time there are no other vehicles turning into the same street. Driver has no choice, settling in behind Nino's convoy.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW/ 7TH STREET/ PACIFIC PALISADES - SUNSET.

The two white Continentals and the black Challenger are the only cars on the road.

INT. BODYGUARD CAR/ 7TH STREET/ PACIFIC PALISADES - SUNSET.

The chauffeur in the bodyguards' car glances in his rear-view mirror and spots the Challenger for the first time. For now he doesn't give it much thought.

INT. DRIVER'S CHALLENGER/ 7TH STREET - SUNSET.

Driver stays on the Continental's tail.

INT. NINO'S CAR/ 7TH STREET - SUNSET.

Nino finally says goodbye on the phone.

NINO  
 ...Nice talking to you too...  
 (As he hangs up)  
 Asshole...

Dark Suit, who's sitting next to him in the back seat, smiles.

EXT. ENTRADA DRIVE/ PACIFIC PALISADES - SUNSET.

All three cars head into Entrada Drive.

INT. BODYGUARD CAR/ ENTRADA DRIVE/ PACIFIC PALISADES - SUNSET.

The chauffeur in the bodyguards' car checks his mirror again and notices the Challenger still on his tail. Just as a precaution he slows down, seeing if the pursuing car will overtake.



INT. DRIVER'S CHALLENGER/ ENTRADA DRIVE - SUNSET.

Driver has to decide in an instant whether to take up the invitation. He overtakes the bodyguards' Continental, sliding in behind Nino's car.

INT. BODYGUARD CAR/ ENTRADA DRIVE - SUNSET.

The chauffeur in the bodyguards' car looks thrown as the Challenger tucks in between his and Nino's car, separating them.

INT. NINO'S CAR/ ENTRADA DRIVE - SUNSET.

Nino's chauffeur checks his mirror and sees the Challenger behind him now instead of the Continental.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW/ W.CHANNEL RD./ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - SUNSET.

The three cars move in a single line as West Channel Road feeds into the Pacific Coast Highway.

INT. NINO'S CAR/ W.CHANNEL RD./ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - SUNSET.

Nino's chauffeur checks his mirror again. Driver's Challenger is still blocking his view of the bodyguards' car. He turns right into the Pacific Coast Highway, assuming the bodyguards' car will catch up on the open road.

INT. DRIVER'S CHALLENGER/ W.CHANNEL RD. - SUNSET.

Driver takes his foot off the gas now, slowing down before the turn.

INT. BODYGUARD CAR/ ENTRADA DRIVE - SUNSET.

The chauffeur in the bodyguards' car looks annoyed at Driver's hesitance but still doesn't suspect anything.

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - SUNSET.

Driver's Challenger finally turns into the highway, separating the two Continentals by an even greater distance now.

INT. DRIVER'S CHALLENGER/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - SUNSET.

Driver watches the lead Continental round a sharp corner up ahead, disappearing from sight.

INT. BODYGUARD CAR/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - SUNSET.

The chauffeur in the bodyguards' car finally loses patience, putting his foot on the gas, trying to overtake Driver.

INT. DRIVER'S CHALLENGER/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - SUNSET.

Driver speeds up in response, his face fixed in concentration.

INT. BODYGUARD CAR/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - SUNSET.

The chauffeur in the bodyguards' car drifts into the outside lane to overtake.

INT. DRIVER'S CHALLENGER/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - SUNSET.

Driver waits for the perfect moment. A car sweeps past in the opposite direction. No other vehicles in sight now.

INT. BODYGUARD CAR/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - SUNSET.

The chauffeur in the bodyguards' car draws closer -- when suddenly the Challenger skids out of control.

INT. DRIVER'S CHALLENGER/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - SUNSET.

Driver's foot comes off the gas, decelerating sharply as he spins the wheel, pretending to lose control.

INT. BODYGUARD CAR/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - SUNSET.

Startled by the sight of the skidding Challenger in front of him the chauffeur spins his wheel instinctively, swerving into the inside lane, falling into Driver's trap.

INT. DRIVER'S CHALLENGER/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - SUNSET.

Driver straightens out of the skid now, speeding up again, ramming into the Lincoln from the outside lane.

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - SUNSET.

The Challenger sideswipes the Continental at the exact point where the chauffeur is sitting, hard enough to make him lose control, but gentle enough for Driver's car to bounce off and keep its course.

INT. BODYGUARD CAR/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - SUNSET.

The chauffeur is thrown back in his seat by the impact, watching helplessly as the Lincoln hurtles into the embankment wall. The last thing he sees is concrete turning into flame.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - SUNSET.

The fireball from the exploding car shoots up in the sky.

INT. DRIVER'S CHALLENGER/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - SUNSET.

Driver watches the blazing car in his mirror, then looks away, continuing down the highway.

INT. NINO'S CAR/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - SUNSET.

Nino's chauffeur has surged too far ahead to have any idea what's happened. In his rear-view mirror all he can see is the empty road and the darkening sky.

INT. DRIVER'S CHALLENGER/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - SUNSET.

Driver puts his foot on the gas, the speedometer rising.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - SUNSET/NIGHT.

From above we see the Challenger moving faster and faster on the open highway, the rising hills on one side, the churning ocean on the other. Finally the lights of Nino's car come into view.

INT. NINO'S CAR/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - NIGHT.

Nino's chauffeur sees the distant gleam of headlights in his mirror. He slows down, assuming it's the bodyguards' car. In the back seat Nino dials another number on the cell-phone.

NINO

...Bernie, it's me...

EXT. AERIAL VIEW/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - NIGHT.

The headlights of the Challenger sweep ahead of it on the open road. From above it looks like a shark closing in on its prey.

INT. BERNIE ROSE'S HOUSE/ LA - NIGHT.

Bernie Rose stands by a large bay window in his house, listening to the phone in silence.

INT. NINO'S CAR/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - NIGHT.

Nino sounds apologetic.

NINO

...Look, about that thing today...I didn't realize you had money tied up with the guy...

In his rear view mirror the chauffeur sees the headlights of the car behind getting closer.

INT. DRIVER'S CHALLENGER/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - NIGHT.

Driver stares ahead, his eyes fixed on the Lincoln's backlights.

INT. BERNIE ROSE'S HOUSE/ MULLHOLLAND DRIVE - NIGHT.

Bernie Rose looks weary.

BERNIE ROSE

It wasn't about the money...

NINO O/S

I know...

INT. NINO'S CAR/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - NIGHT.

In the front seat Nino's chauffeur checks his mirror curiously.

NINO

When this is over I'll make it up to you, I swear...

The lights of the car behind have vanished.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - NIGHT.

Even from above we can't see the Challenger with its lights off - no idea how close it is to Nino's car.

INT. BERNIE ROSE'S HOUSE/ MULLHOLLAND DRIVE - NIGHT.

BERNIE ROSE

How many times I heard that before...

INT. NINO'S CAR/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - NIGHT.

Nino grins.

NINO

I lost count -

Suddenly blazing headlights explode to life behind him.

INT. DRIVER'S CHALLENGER/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - NIGHT.

Driver rams the Lincoln at over a hundred miles an hour, hitting it just above the left rear wheel, exactly like the first stunt we saw.

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - NIGHT.

The impact is momentous. The huge Continental is lifted up in the air and spun round at the same time. It slams back into the tarmac then flips end over end for a hundred yards.

INT. BERNIE ROSE'S HOUSE - NIGHT.

Bernie Rose is left holding the phone as the line goes dead.

INT. DRIVER'S CHALLENGER/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - NIGHT.

The collision has barely knocked Driver off course. His Challenger skids to a stop near the overturned wreck.

INT. NINO'S CAR/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - NIGHT.

Among the carnage, we see Nino, bloodied but still alive. He unbuckles his seat belt and crawls out of the twisted wreck.

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - NIGHT.

Driver gets out of his car, calmly walking over to the pulverized Lincoln. He sees Nino stumbling off towards the beach but doesn't hurry after him yet. He checks to make sure the other passengers are dead, then reaches into the car, and takes out Dark Suit's revolver from his bloody jacket.

EXT. BEACH/ OCEAN/ PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - NIGHT.

Nino stumbles through the sand, running for his life now. He looks behind him and sees Driver calmly pursuing him. He keeps running, but he's badly injured, slowing all the time. Fear clouds reason and he staggers towards the crashing waves.

Driver slows down as he watches the gangster wade into the ocean, a pathetic last attempt to evade him. The crashing waves and the undertow are an impenetrable wall. Every time Nino tries to wade out further, the ocean drags him back.

Driver stares at his trapped prey, Nino's attempts becoming more and more feeble as the ocean exhausts him and snuffs out any hope of escape. Finally he retreats back into the shallow water, barely able to keep his footing. He turns around and faces Driver, the crashing waves still smashing into his back.

They stay like that for a long time. Gazing at each other. Driver silhouetted against the white sand. Nino trapped in the ocean. Then Driver raises his revolver and fires.

EXT. BLUE FLAMINGO MOTEL/ WEST SUNSET BOULEVARD - MORNING.

A strip of red neon runs all the way around the motel. Over the monotonous drone of traffic we hear a phone ringing.

INT. DRIVER'S ROOM/ BLUE FLAMINGO MOTEL - EARLY MORNING.

Driver reaches across the bed and picks up his cell-phone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

Hello?...

BERNIE ROSE'S VOICE ON THE PHONE

This is Bernie Rose...

A long silence.

BERNIE ROSE'S VOICE

I'd say things have gone far enough. Your lady-friend's just about the only piece left on the board...

(He pauses to let the threat sink in)

See any reason why this should go on?...

DRIVER

Doesn't have to...

BERNIE ROSE'S VOICE

Then we should meet. You know a place called Warszawa -- Polish joint, corner of Santa Monica and Lincoln?...

Driver stares out quietly.

DRIVER

I'll find it...

BERNIE ROSE'S VOICE

Good. I'll see you there at one...

INT. BERNIE ROSE'S HOUSE/ MULLHOLLAND DRIVE - DAY.

Bernie Rose hangs up, staring out too.

INT/EXT. DRIVER'S CHALLENGER/ LINCOLN BOULEVARD - DAY.

Waves of traffic blur past. From across the street Driver watches a blue Honda Prelude pull into the restaurant parking lot. Bernie Rose climbs out. On his own. Driver sees him head into the restaurant, then starts his own car, heading towards the same parking lot.

INT. WARSZAWA RESTAURANT/ LINCOLN BOULEVARD - DAY.

A typical 1920's bungalow has been transformed into a fancy restaurant. Driver walks in and sees Bernie Rose sitting at a table, pouring himself a glass of wine. He's dressed for the occasion, wearing a jacket and tie. He sees Driver and gets to his feet, holding out his hand. Driver shakes it, and sits down.

BERNIE ROSE

Care for a glass?...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Driver stares at him across the table.

DRIVER

Thanks...

Bernie Rose pours him a glass of red wine from the bottle.

BERNIE ROSE

I can recommend the duck. Hell, I can recommend everything -- Hunter's stew with homemade sausage, Pierogi, Borscht -- but the duck's to die for...

He delivers the last line with a pointed smile.

DRIVER

Duck sounds good...

Bernie Rose calls over their WAITRESS.

BERNIE ROSE

The duck, please. For both of us. Pink.

WAITRESS

Anything else?

DRIVER

Not for me.

BERNIE ROSE

Me neither...

He waits for the waitress to leave, then turns back to Driver.

BERNIE ROSE

You've been on a roll. Cut yourself quite a swath out there.

DRIVER

I never asked for any of it.

BERNIE ROSE

We usually don't. But it comes down on our heads regardless. Just look at Shannon and Nino...

Driver holds his gaze, the tension palpable, laughter and conversation drifting over from the other tables.

BERNIE ROSE

Anyway it's water under the bridge now. Question is where does that leave us?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DRIVER  
That's up to you.

BERNIE ROSE  
You bring the cash?

Driver nods. Bernie Rose studies him quietly.

BERNIE ROSE  
Tell me something, how does someone with no interest in money wind up robbing a bank?

DRIVER  
I could answer that I wouldn't be here now.

BERNIE ROSE  
Shannon told me it was because of the girl.

Driver hesitates, looking uneasy for the first time.

BERNIE ROSE  
Don't worry, nobody else knows...  
(He takes a drink)  
You still see her?

DRIVER  
She's not interested.

BERNIE ROSE  
She's got her head screwed on right. I got three ex-wives, six kids and twelve grandchildren. Not one of them speaks to me now...

He grins, looking into Driver's eyes with just a hint of sympathy.

BERNIE ROSE  
You think we choose our lives?...

DRIVER  
If we do I messed up.

BERNIE ROSE  
Me too. This thing I'm in, this racket, there's no way out. I wanna retire they retire me first. It's a gilded cage. I had my life again I'd do just about anything else...  
(A wry smile)  
...But like they say, you can't put the shit back in the donkey...

Driver stares back at him.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (3)

BERNIE ROSE

These people I have the misfortune to be involved with, they don't mind Nino being gone, but they want guarantees there's no loose ends...

DRIVER

Sounds like we have a problem...

BERNIE ROSE

And just when we were getting to know each other...

Their eyes are fixed on each other, deadly enemies but kindred spirits of a kind.

BERNIE ROSE

...We shake hands, say goodbye, it's the start of your new life. They're gonna come after you no matter what. No end to it. Someone gets tired, somebody else takes their place. It goes on and on. Whatever dreams you have, whatever plans, you might as well forget 'em, because this is what it's gonna be like till the day you die...

(A beat)

I just thought you should know...

DRIVER

What do you suggest I do?...

Bernie Rose shrugs.

BERNIE ROSE

First time I heard about you, Shannon told me you drove. Fast. That's a start...

He keeps staring at Driver, then smiles coolly.

BERNIE ROSE

Either that or you choke on the duck...

EXT. PARKING LOT/ LINCOLN BOULEVARD - DAY.

The Challenger is parked at the back edge of the parking lot, half hidden by a fenced area for garbage. Driver pops the trunk, taking out the black gym bag with the cash. Bernie Rose doesn't even look at it, still admiring the car.

BERNIE ROSE

How much does something like this cost?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

Nine, ten thousand. If you can find one that still runs.

BERNIE ROSE

Maybe I'll take yours. Part of our deal.

DRIVER

Wouldn't recommend it. Every time you turn the wheel it's a fight.

BERNIE ROSE

I got enough of those on my hands...

He grins, then holds out his hand for the gym bag.

BERNIE ROSE

Guess we won't be seeing each other again..

Driver reaches out to give him the bag. Suddenly Bernie's hand snakes out of his pocket, twisting a switch-blade into Driver's gut. He pulls it out, ready to stab again, but this time Driver catches his wrist, slowly forcing the knife up to his throat.

Their eyes are fixed on each other for a moment, with something like regret, then the blade pierces Bernie Rose's neck, sinking deeper and deeper. Driver holds the old man in his arms as he dies. They stay like that, locked in a fatal embrace, then Driver lowers Bernie Rose gently to the ground, out of sight.

Blood seeping through his shirt, Driver picks up the gym bag and puts it back in the trunk, slamming the door shut.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF A MUCH LARGER PARKING LOT/ LA - DAY.

We're looking down on an enormous parking lot, hundreds of different colored vehicles gleaming down below. Driver's Challenger pulls into the lot, searching for a place to park.

EXT. LARGE PARKING LOT/ LA - DAY.

Driver climbs out of the Challenger, wearing a jacket over his blood-soaked shirt, the tiny beads of sweat on his face the only visible signs of discomfort. He walks to the back of the car, kneels down, and hides the keys behind the left rear wheel, drops of blood dripping on the tarmac beneath him. He gets up again, then sets off through the maze of parked vehicles, dialling a number on his cell-phone.

EXT. ECHO PARK - DAY.

Picnic food is spread out on a blanket. Irina piles some refried beans on Benicio's paper plate then answers her phone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA

Hello?...

EXT. LARGE PARKING LOT/ LA - DAY.

The blazing sun beats down. Driver walks through a long corridor of glinting cars.

DRIVER

It's me...

EXT. ECHO PARK - DAY.

Irina stares in surprise, looking torn.

DRIVER'S VOICE ON THE PHONE

Don't hang up. I didn't call to change your mind...

Irina says nothing but she stays on the line.

EXT. LARGE PARKING LOT/ LA - DAY.

Driver walks painfully through the maze of cars.

DRIVER

You got a pen? I need you to write something down...

EXT. ECHO PARK - DAY.

Irina still looks conflicted as she hears the quiet urgency in his voice, then finally replies.

IRINA

Hold on...

Benicio watches his mother curiously as she takes out one of his pens and coloring-in books from the picnic basket.

IRINA

Okay...

EXT. LARGE PARKING LOT/ LA - DAY.

Sunlight glitters on the roofs of the parked cars, dazzling Driver's eyes.

DRIVER

...JJT 108...

IRINA'S VOICE ON THE PHONE

...JJT 108...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

It's the license number of a black Dodge Challenger. I've left it in a long term car park on the corner of Culver and Lincoln. Section M 10...

EXT. ECHO PARK - DAY.

Irina writes down the details on a page of the coloring-in book, still looking confused.

DRIVER'S VOICE ON THE PHONE

There's a bag in the trunk with some money. Keys are under the left rear wheel...

IRINA

What do you want me to do with it?...

EXT. LARGE PARKING LOT/ LA - DAY.

Driver walks with difficulty, finding it hard to breathe.

DRIVER

It's yours. It's safe to keep it. No-one's gonna come looking for you...

All around him the Chevys, Dodges, and Fords glitter in the sunlight.

EXT. ECHO PARK - DAY.

Irina hears his labored breathing now, tears of concern welling in her eyes.

IRINA

I told you, I don't need your money...

EXT. LARGE PARKING LOT/ LA - DAY.

Blood seeps through Driver's shirt, dripping on the tarmac at his feet.

DRIVER

Then take it for Benicio...Get him out like you said...

(Grimacing in pain)

Give him a chance...

EXT. ECHO PARK - DAY.

Irina avoids Benicio's searching gaze, trying to fight her tears.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA  
Are you hurt?...

EXT. LARGE PARKING LOT/ LA - DAY.

Driver's skin looks deathly pale, his eyes a haunting shade of blue. He keeps walking through the maze of cars, casting his eyes from one vehicle to the next, looking for the perfect ride.

DRIVER  
Just out of breath...

Finally he spots a beautiful white Camaro up ahead.

DRIVER  
How're you doing?...

EXT. ECHO PARK - DAY.

For the first time we see the Echo Park fountain sparkling in the background.

IRINA  
Okay. I'm in the park with Benicio. We're having a picnic...

DRIVER'S VOICE ON THE PHONE  
Say hi...

Irina can no longer hold back her tears, heartbroken.

EXT. LARGE PARKING LOT/ LA - DAY.

Driver stops in front of the white Camaro, looking unsteady on his feet.

DRIVER  
I gotta go Rina...

He pauses.

DRIVER  
Meeting you was the best thing that ever happened to me...

EXT. ECHO PARK - DAY.

Irina smiles, her tears flowing freely now.

IRINA  
It was nice to meet you too...

EXT. LARGE PARKING LOT/ LA - DAY.

From above we see the maze of vehicles stretching out forever -- Chevys, Chryslers, Fords -- the history of America on wheels. Driver switches off his cell-phone reluctantly then heads towards the Camaro.

INT. WHITE CAMARO/ LARGE PARKING LOT - DAY.

Driver climbs into the front seat of the Camaro, catching his breath. He sits there a moment, sheltering from the world outside, then pulls out a pocket knife, opening the blades until he finds the screwdriver. He starts with the left side of the steering column, then gets to work on the section below the turn signal. His face shows the strain, but his fingers are as steady as ever. A master at work. Finally he breaks into the ignition device, leaning back in the seat to take a rest.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW/ LARGE PARKING LOT - DAY.

We're gazing down at the white Camaro from above, waiting for it to move.

INT. WHITE CAMARO/ LARGE PARKING LOT - DAY.

Driver's face is completely still now. So are his eyes. He looks almost at peace. There's a long pause, then slowly he leans forward and turns on the ignition. As the engine comes to life, we CUT TO BLACK.