

written by John August

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

EXT. A DITCH - NIGHT

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

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

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

Bleeding a lot.

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

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

> > CUT TO:

2 INT. A DARK PLACE - DAY? NIGHT?

Pitch black. We hear an ENGINE and ROAD NOISE.

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

SPARKS. A cigarette lighter flares.

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

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

The lighter goes out. It's black again.

CUT TO:

## 3 INT. UNIDENTIFIABLE ROOM - DAY

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

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

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

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

CUT TO:

3

## TITLE OVER BLACK:

# Part One: 'X'

Christmas MUZAK plays. A baby CRIES.

FADE IN:

4 INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

A cash drawer slides shut.

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

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

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

## RONNA Paper or plastic?

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

## RONNA Paper or plastic?

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

RONNA Paper or plastic?

STRINGY HAIRED WOMAN

Both.

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

STRINGY HAIRED WOMAN You didn't double my coupons.

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

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

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

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

STRINGY HAIRED WOMAN Don't think you're something you're not. I used to <u>have</u> your job.

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

RONNA Look how far it got you.

5 INT. SUPERMARKET AISLE - DAY

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

5

3.

#### 6 OMIT

## 6A INT. SUPERMARKET STOCKROOM - DAY

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

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

Simon's eyes track Ronna as she passes.

CLAIRE (low) Don't.

SIMON

Why not?

CLAIRE She's been on for fourteen hours.

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

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

#### SIMON

Ronna?

RONNA

No.

She trades her apron for her coat.

SIMON I haven't asked you yet.

RONNA Answer's still no.

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

SIMON Are you menstrual? Pre-menstrual, postmenstrual? 6A

4A. 6A

6В

	RONNA One of the three. (punches out) Okay, Simon. In case you haven't heard the buzz, the scoop, the word on the street, I'm getting evicted. Tomorrow. So pardon me if I'm not in a holly-jolly mood right now.
	Claire looks over, looks away. Ronna heads for the door leading outside.
	SIMON Ronna, they wouldn't evict you at Christmas. You'd be ho-ho-homeless.
	He follows her out the door.
6В	EXT. BEHIND THE STORE - CONTINUOUS
	Ronna forges ahead, ignoring him.
	SIMON Is that why all the overtime? How much do you owe?
	RONNA Three eighty.
	SIMON That's nothing.
	RONNA More than I got.
	SIMON I'll give you twenty right now for a blowjob.
	She stops, turns on him. Her look could freeze lava.
	SIMON Handjob?
	A beat. The start of a smile. Simon's just pushing her buttons.
	SIMON Ronna, do you want my shift?
	RONNA Serious?

\*

6B

# SIMON I haven't punched in yet.

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

SIMON [CONT'D] Look, my best mates are going to Las Vegas this weekend. I've never been -- I'm told it's incredible. If you took my shift, I could go with them. Everybody wins. (beat; she's not sold) Cash up front.

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

# RONNA

Deal.

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

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

Without turning back, she flips him off.

7 OMIT

7 CONTINUED:

7

8 OMIT 8 8A INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY 8A An UNSUSPECTING WOMAN takes a container of orange juice from the refrigerator case. Suddenly, AN ARM reaches out through the case, grabbing it away. The woman gasps. VOICE ON INTERCOM Available cashier to the front. Customers waiting. 9 INT. BEHIND THE REFRIGERATOR CASE - DAY [CONTINUOUS] 9 MANNIE (17) pulls his arm back through with the orange juice. He's on break with Ronna and Claire. VOICE ON INTERCOM Repeat, cashier to the front. All eyes look up to the voice of God. CLAIRE One of us has to go. MANNIE Dead celebrities? RONNA Loser goes up. Steve McQueen. She rips open a case of Snapple, taking one. CLAIRE М...М... Mannie is checking out a small printed rave invite. In a flash of inspiration... CLAIRE Michael Landon. MANNIE Lucille Ball.

9 CONTINUED:

We MOVE CLOCKWISE with a rapid, snooze-you-lose pace. RONNA Burt Lancaster. (to Mannie, re: invite) Can you drive? CLAIRE L...L... MANNIE If you don't mind The Beast. RONNA I love The Beast. CLAIRE Lane Staley. (off reaction) Alice in Chains. RONNA He's not dead yet. MANNIE It's true. CLAIRE (substituting) Lewis Carroll. Alice in Wonderland. Claire takes the invite from Mannie. MANNIE Carole Lombard. RONNA Lee Marvin. CLAIRE М...М... MANNIE Don't say Molly Ringwald. CLAIRE Martha Raye. MANNIE Nice. Robert Mitchum. RONNA Shit! M. M. MMMMMMMMalcolm X.

6A. 9 Claire just stands there confused, mouthing "X...X..." Mannie scoops a fingerful of whipped cream from a tub.

CLAIRE You can't say Malcolm X.

RONNA He's famous, he's dead.

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

He puts the tub back on the shelf.

RONNA That's not my problem.

MANNIE (to Claire) You can challenge.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RONNA

I am.

## 10 INT. SUPERMARKET / CHECKOUT LANE - DAY

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

#### MANNIE

Xerxes.

RONNA

What?

MANNIE Xerxes. Some dead pharaoh guy. Starts with X.

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

MANNIE Pharaoh coulda saved your ass.

Mannie pushes his cart down to the next checkstand.

VOICE (O.S.) There's an opera about him.

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

> ADAM Xerxes. I took music appreciation twice.

ON RONNA

Whatever.

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

> ADAM Does a British guy still work here?

RONNA He went to Vegas for the weekend.

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

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

RONNA

Scurvy?

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

ZACK

Say...

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

RONNA Doughnuts, aisle four.

ZACK

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

She stops bagging. Looks at Adam. At Zack.

RONNA

How much?

ZACK Twenty at twenty.

RONNA You're overpaying.

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

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

RONNA Mary Xmas Supafest.

ADAM You're going? ZACK And we had planned this kinda pre-party. Only there's 20 of us, it's like all or nothing.

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

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

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

9A. 10

10. 10

RONNA

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

ZACK

Kick ass.

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

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

ADAM

Absolutely.

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

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

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

CLAIRE You know that Simon's in Vegas.

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

MANNIE Todd GAINES?

CLAIRE Who's Todd Gaines?

MANNIE Simon's dealer.

Claire sits forward in the seat, suddenly worried.

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

She looks at Mannie. He shrugs, unsure.

RONNA Ok, listen up. If Simon <u>were</u> here -which he's not -- he would charge fifteen, when I know he gets it for ten. (MORE)

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

MANNIE But it's like an evolutionary leap. You're moving up the drug food chain. Without permission. 10A. 11 CLAIRE Ronna, you shouldn't do this.

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

RONNA

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

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

RONNA (CONT'd) Besides, Todd likes me. This won't be any problem.

A BUZZER sounds.

12 EXT. DOORSTEP - NIGHT

12

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

INTERCOM VOICE

Speak!

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

A long pause.

INTERCOM VOICE

Yeah?

RONNA

Can I come up?

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

She motions back "five minutes" to The Beast.

#### 13 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

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

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

## 14 INT. APARTMENT / LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Todd?

Ronna pushes the door open from the hallway.

# RONNA

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

> GAINES (O.S.) Don't let the cat out.

Ronna closes the door behind her.

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

RONNA I didn't wake you up, did I?

## GAINES

Nah.

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

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

RONNA I keep him honest.

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

IN THE BACKGROUND

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

## GAINES

You leaving?

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

## GAINES

Be good.

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

> GAINES I take it this is not a social call.

# RONNA

I need a favor.

#### GAINES

A favor? Wow. I didn't know we were such good friends, Ronna. Because if we were, you would know I give head before I give favors. I don't even give my best friends head, so the chance of your getting a favor right now are pretty fucking slim. (beat) You might try just telling me what you want to buy.

RONNA Twenty hits of ecstacy.

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

CLOSE UP

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

## ON GAINES

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

He backs off. She looks confused.

He nods. Do it.

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

Her hands are shaking. She holds them together.

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

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

RONNA Todd, I would never fuck you like that.

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

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

GAINES What's the occasion?

RONNA

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

GAINES

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

RONNA

No.

GAINES You're not dealing.

RONNA Swear to God.

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

## GAINES

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

RONNA Understood.

He snaps the cap on tight.

GAINES Twenty at fifteen is 300.

RONNA Fifteen? I was thinking more like ten.

GAINES You already did strap it on.

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

GAINES Inflation's a bitch.

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

RONNA

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

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

# RONNA (CONT'D)

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

# GAINES

See,  $\underline{that}$  would be doing you a favor, and you know how I feel about favors.

RONNA I could leave something with you. Collateral.

He gives her a quick look over.

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

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

15 EXT. THE BEAST - NIGHT

15

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

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

16 EXT. DOORSTEP - NIGHT

16

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

RONNA

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

CLAIRE Hello! He's a drug dealer.

## RONNA

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

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

#### RONNA

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

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

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

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

A beat.

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

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

Ronna holds the door as Claire reluctantly steps inside.

17 INT. MANNIE'S CAR - NIGHT

The clock on the dashboard reads 8:04.

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

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

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

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

## MANNIE

Ronna!

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

# MANNIE

You're a pro.

RONNA I'm a top-seeded amateur.

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

MANNIE And I'm a very happy man.

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

18 INT. VENICE HOUSE / MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

A beefy guy named BURKE HALVERSON reaches out a hand.

BURKE Damn good to meet you, Rhonda.

#### RONNA

Ronna.

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

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

BURKE Work work work. Friday must be a busy night.

RONNA That was just a friend.

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

> BURKE (O.S.) Hey. What can I get you to drink?

> > RONNA

Some of that orange juice would be great.

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

ZACK So this party tonight sounds like it's gonna be huge. 18

18.

ADAM

Massive.

 $$\operatorname{ZACK}$  That would be a synonym for huge.

ADAM Just backing you up.

ZACK And I appreciate that.

18

18 CONTINUED: (2)

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

Adam looks at Zack. Ronna catches it.

BURKE (back thru door) Cerveza?

He hands her a beer.

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

ANGLE ON RONNA

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

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

RONNA (suddenly) You got a bathroom?

ADAM Down the hall on the right.

ZACK Let me show you...

He moves at Ronna strangely. It freaks her out.

BURKE Maybe we could do this first.

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

ADAM We said Chicago, you said Philadelphia.

CUT TO:

A MONITOR

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

(CONTINUED)

ADAM [FILTERED] Maybe she didn't notice.

19

20

21

22

23

18 CONTINUED: (4)

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

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

19 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE UP: Ronna locks the door.

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

She looks at herself in the spotless mirror.

RONNA You're fine. You're fine.

20 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

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

21 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

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

A KNOCK on the door.

22 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

BURKE Everything all right in there?

23 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ronna's heart is in her throat.

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

RONNA

She struggles with the cap. Child safety.

Fine.

23 CONTINUED:

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

FLUSHES.

24 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

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

25 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

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

26 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

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

Burke forces the door open to reveal

RONNA

standing with her beer, cool as an Eskimo.

RONNA

All yours.

She pushes past him into the hall.

27 INT. MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

27

24

25

26

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

Adam steps in her way.

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

RONNA (turns, backing away) No. No, see we don't. That's what I came here to tell you. I couldn't get anything.

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

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

RONNA

It's true.

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

RONNA Who the fuck are you? Monty Hall?

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

RONNA Did you know I'm only 17?

BLACK AND WHITE / SURVEILLANCE CAMERA

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

The men just stand there, watching.

BACK TO COLOR

CLOSE ON Burke, dumbstruck. He nods at Adam.

Adam steps away from the door.

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

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

28 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT (NORMAL)

28

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

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

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

27

22.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

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

29 EXT/INT. THE BEAST ON STREET - NIGHT

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

RONNA

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

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

RONNA They were fishing. I bit.

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

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

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

RONNA

We can't.

MANNIE

Why not?

RONNA They're gone. I flushed them.

## MANNIE

Oh shit.

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

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

(CONTINUED)

## RONNA

What?!

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

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

He sits quietly, a scolded dog.

RONNA

Drive.

#### MANNIE

Where?

RONNA Just drive. I have an idea.

# 30 INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

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

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

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

# 31 INT. AT THE MANAGER'S COUNTER - NIGHT

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

A CRAPPY CD PLAYER

spins away. He presses the " $| \blacktriangleleft \triangleleft$ " button, then cranks the volume dial all the way up.

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

24. 29

30

32	INT. AT CHECKSTAND - NIGHT	32
	The Register Woman looks up.	
33	INT. AN AISLE - NIGHT	33
	Two STOCKBOYS look up.	
34	INT. DRUG AISLE - NIGHT	34
	A COUPON-WIELDING WOMAN looks up, confused, but proceeds to push her cart around the end of the row.	
	Ronna looks both ways. She's alone.	
	She starts grabbing boxes off the shelf and shoving them into the pockets of Mannie's coat. Cold medicine. Allergy medicine. Every pill she can find.	
	SWITTERMAN	
	comes ROARING by behind her, heading for the front. She tries to duck away, but he's too steamed to even notice her.	
	Ronna does a quick check to see if she got everything. Hurrying down the aisle, she swipes a bottle of Evian.	
35	INT. END OF ANOTHER AISLE - NIGHT	35
	The two stockboys give a wide-eyed, Spielberg $^{ ext{TM}}$ stare	
	We MOVE to the next aisle, where the Coupon Woman is staring at the same thing	-
	We MOVE again to Ronna at the end of her aisle. She just now sees it	
36	INT. FRONT OF THE STORE - NIGHT	36
	ANGLE ON Mannie. He sticks his hand out.	
	ANGLE ON the Register Woman. She sticks her hand out.	
	Their palms meet. Their hips come together. And they dance.	
	What starts as a tango, spirals into a STAR SEARCH-y routine of dips, spins and Arthur Murray nightmares. Torville and Dean of linoleum.	

(CONTINUED)

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

## ANGLE ON MANNIE

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

HIS POINT OF VIEW

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

ANGLE ON MANNIE

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

MANNIE'S POINT OF VIEW

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

CUT TO:

# 37 INT. THE BEAST / DRIVING - NIGHT

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

> RONNA Were they round or oval?

MANNIE (recovering) Round. White. Like aspirin. Like <u>baby</u> aspirin.

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

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

RONNA (holding them up) A or B?

MANNIE

Β.

RONNA

You're sure?

MANNIE I wasn't really looking.

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

Her BEEPER goes off again.

RONNA Stop fucking paging me, Claire!

Mannie nurses the Evian bottle.

A PHONE rings.

38 INT. GAINES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

CLAIRE Yeah, I guess.

GAINES (on phone) My friend Claire here says it's going to be a kick-ass-fucking-time...What, you know her? (to Claire) It's your buddy Simon. He's in Vegas. CLAIRE I know. GAINES She knows...Hell, I dunno... (looks at Claire) Maybe...Yeah, well save a load for me big boy...Whatever. He hangs up. The CD player is still muted. The silence is vast. Gaines scratches an armpit. Checks his watch. Claire looks away. GAINES What do you want for Christmas, Claire? CLAIRE I don't know. GAINES Do you want to get laid? CLAIRE No. GAINES No, you don't wanna get laid or no, you do, but you don't want to get laid with me? CLAIRE You can't answer that. I mean, it's like... GAINES Either way you're fucked. Where are they, Claire? CLAIRE They'll be here. GAINES They'll be here. Huh.

28.

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

GAINES Are you a virgin?

## CLAIRE

What?

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

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

CLAIRE Breakfast Club. I get it.

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

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

## GAINES

I'm kidding!

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

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

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

The BUZZER sounds.

Saved by the bell.

Gaines pushes the TALK button on the intercom.

# GAINES

Speak!

# FILTERED VOICE

It's Ronna!

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

39 EXT. DOWNSTAIRS DOORWAY - NIGHT 39 Ronna looks back to Mannie. RONNA Don't say anything. And try not to look so stoned. He nods, wiping a finger across his forehead to squeegee off the sweat. 40 40 INT. GAINES' APARTMENT - NIGHT Gaines sits pensively on the edge of the couch, then smiles warmly. GAINES That's no problem. These things happen, I understand that. Claire smiles, relieved. Mannie stands behind Ronna, his gaze carefully fixed on the wall. GAINES (CONT'd) Let me just fill out a return slip here, and I'll have the manager give you a refund. RONNA Todd, I'm trying to explain what happened. They had already gotten stuff from somewhere else. It was just a case of miscommunication, I thought... Ronna's VOICE fades to nothing as we PUSH IN on Mannie. A SIAMESE CAT lays down on a table in front of him, staring at him. HUXLEY [SUBTITLES ONLY] I can hear your thoughts. Mannie squints, looks around. He and the cat are alone in the room. HUXLEY [SUBTITLES] Xiang Kai-Shek. Famous Chinese ruler guy.

Starts with X.

Mannie smiles.

MANNIE [SUBTITLES]

No. "C" Chiang Kai-Shek.

The cat curls itself.

HUXLEY [SUBTITLES] You're going to die.

Mannie snaps back, eyes panicked.

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

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

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

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

#### GAINES

Hey Ronna.

A beat. Todd shakes the pill bottle.

GAINES I just gave you a favor.

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

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

41 EXT. FIELD PARKING LOT - NIGHT

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

42 INT. THE BEAST - NIGHT

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

42

41

(CONTINUED)

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

RONNA

Pin me.

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

CLAIRE

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

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

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

A beat. She picks up a box.

An idea forming, Ronna sits back up. Smiles.

CLAIRE What? What?

43 EXT. FIELD / PARKING LOT - NIGHT

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

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

44 EXT. AT THE MINIVAN - NIGHT

44

43

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

RONNA Hi. I'm Kelly, and this is Donna. We were wondering if you might want to hang out. 45 INT. THE MINIVAN - NIGHT Ronna and Claire are packed in tight with three VALLEY HIGHSCHOOL COUPLES. The guys are stoned, the girls uptight. They're all breaking curfew. FILA GUY I think I feel something. RONNA It's really smooth, isn't it? Donna's brother is a pharmacist. He got it for us. A look from Claire -- why are dragging me into this? But she goes for it. CLAIRE Chip. His name is Chip. My brother. NIKE HAT Is it like a wave, or is it like a zoom? FILA GUY It's like floating. Like, "Hey down there, how's the ground and shit." NIKE HAT I got it. Oh, fuck. Yeah, I feel it. ANOREXIC GIRL Is it really that cool? FILA GUY You gotta try it. Shit, I'll buy for you. He pulls out his wallet and hands Ronna a twenty. She gives the Anorexic Girl a tablet, who downs the pill with a swig of Diet Coke. RONNA And you know what makes it even better? If you smoke a lot of pot. I mean a lot of it. Fila Guy nods, firing up the mini-bong again.

#### 46 EXT. LINE OUTSIDE A WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

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

# CLAIRE

(low) I can't believe you are selling allergy medicine.

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

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

SKATE-PUNK GUY Hey. People are saying you have some really good stuff.

Ronna takes the money, looks him over.

RONNA Show me your tits.

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

> CLAIRE How much have you made?

# RONNA

Four hundred.

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

47 INT. GAINES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

MUSIC builds throughout.

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

Pulls open a drawer full of socks. Digs out the wide-mouthed bottle. Shakes out a pill. 47 CONTINUED:

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

Fuck.

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

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

The music EXPLODES and we're...

48 INT. WAREHOUSE / MARY XMAS SUPAFEST - NIGHT

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

RONNA

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

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

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

49 EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

49

47

48

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

> FILA GUY This girl inside. She and her friend have it.

SPIDER MARINE Ecstasy? The real shit?

FILA GUY Pharmaceutical grade. None of the crunchy herbal rave shit.

ANOREXIA GIRL Best twenty bucks you could spend. We look past Fila Guy to see Todd Gaines, who's been listening. Seething.

#### 50 INT. BY THE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

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

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

TODD GAINES.

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

Mannie works his way into the mob.

STROBES fire overhead.

Ronna dances on, oblivious... Gaines circles, searching... Mannie fights his way through the outer ring of MOSHERS...

Through the crowd, we see Gaines looking in... Mannie grabs Ronna... She smiles, tries to kiss him...

He YELLS in her ear. He has to repeat himself... She looks back over her shoulder... A space in the crowd...

She sees Gaines. He sees her.

The MUSIC STOPS. Dead silence.

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

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

#### 51 EXT. WAREHOUSE ALLEY - NIGHT

A side door BLASTS open, Ronna dragging Mannie by the wrist. They race down the alley. A burly BOUNCER shouts after them: 50

BOUNCER

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

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

# 52 EXT. DIFFERENT ALLEY - NIGHT

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

GAINES

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

RONNA What's wrong? Mannie?

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

RONNA Jesus. You're burning up.

MANNIE I can't feel my hands.

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

## 53 EXT. ALLEY / DUMPSTERS - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

52

53

(CONTINUED)

37. 51 RONNA

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

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

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

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

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

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

Her heart skips a beat. She drops the keys.

RONNA Todd, I can explain.

GAINES I'm not going to ask you to.

He climbs off the car, approaching.

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

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

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

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

GAINES

Not really.

He cocks the gun.

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

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

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

GAINES So now you're an entrepreneur.

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

A RED MIATA

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

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

PUSH IN ON GAINES

seeing the hit. HEARING it. Stunned.

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

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

GAINES

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

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

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

39. 54

#### 55 EXT. IN THE DITCH - NIGHT (RAIN)

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

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

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

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

She collapses back, a new wave of pain.

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

RONNA

Mannie!!

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

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

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

RONNA Don't you get it? I win.

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

FADE OUT.

# OMIT INT. SUPERMARKET STOREROOM - DAY Offscreen, a SOAP OPERA plays. Simon is on the phone, a wellworn employee list in his hands. SIMON (ON PHONE) No, no. Donde Miguel? Claire leans against the wall beside him, skeptical but amused. She turns a box of cookies over in her hands, reading the ingredients.

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

#### CLAIRE

Mexico.

56

57

57A

OMIT

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

CLAIRE Simon, <u>no one</u> is going to take your shift.

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

JUMP CUT TO:

57B EXT. ALLEY BEHIND SUPERMARKET - DAY

SIMON Ronna, do you want my shift?

RONNA Are you serious?

SIMON I haven't punched in yet.

She only half-believes him.

56

57

57A

57B

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

CUT TO:

Darkness. We hear an ENGINE and ROAD NOISE.

#### 58 SPARKS

58

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

> SIMON Shit. Shit!

He starts kicking, hyperventilating. The lighter goes out.

TITLE OVER BLACK:

#### ے۔ 58

# Part Two: 'Shoot'

59 INT. THE TRUNK - DAY? NIGHT?

Simon keeps KICKING.

SIMON Fucking let me out of here!

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

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

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

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

THREE MEN

back off, laughing. We are...

60 EXT. SIDE OF INTERSTATE - DAY

TINY Mo'fuckin Jack-in-the-box.

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

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

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

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

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

> TINY Pop! Goes the asshole.

59

#### 61 INT. SINGH'S CADILLAC / DRIVING - DAY

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

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

SINGH She actually <u>found</u> your dick?

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

The passengers don't seem impressed.

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

MARCUS Was it hard or soft?

TINY What, my dick?

SINGH The contact lens.

#### MARCUS

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

TINY

What the fuck does that matter?

#### MARCUS

(leaning over seat) It matters because it happened to me. It was my story. I told this story about a year ago. The difference was, I knew those small-but-important details. That, and it was true. TINY Oh. Whatever.

MARCUS

Whatever?

TINY

Whatever.

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

TINY Yo, pull your stinky dinky out of my ass.

I was just trying to make conversation. Fuck. Give a nigger a break.

Singh MOANS, not again.

MARCUS What nigger? This nigger?

TINY My mother's mother was black.

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

SINGH Stop. Truce.

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

SIMON (moaning) Stop.

MARCUS Look at your skin.

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

MARCUS Thank you Rhythm Nation.

62

62 INT. SILVER STAR CASINO RESTAURANT - NIGHT It's a dive, and nearly empty. The guys work their way down both sides of a self-service food bar. Simon is mostly recovered. SIMON So what does Valentina do? MARCUS She's a nutritionist. She also teaches a class at this college. SIMON What class? MARCUS Tantric sexuality for couples. SINGH She teaches people how to fuck? TINY Man, I taught myself. MARCUS (to Simon) You shouldn't eat shrimp. It's loaded with iodine. TINY This shit is expensive. You're paying five bucks for lettuce and seeds and shit. Tiny up-ends the rest of the shrimp cocktail onto his plate. Pissed, Singh scoops away a handful for himself. AT THE TABLE The guys eat. Tiny tries to make a sandwich out of the various foods on his plate, but the bread keeps crumbling. MARCUS Thing is, most people really don't know how to make love. They just put it in and move it around until they get off. What tantra teaches you is how to prolong and

deepen the experience, bring it to a higher level. If one man in ten were having the sex I'm having, there would be no war. SIMON What's the longest you and her ever did it?

MARCUS Fourteen hours.

SINGH Holy shit!

TINY How many times you shoot?

MARCUS

Not once.

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

MARCUS You redirect the orgasm inside.

He's greeted with skeptical looks.

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

#### SIMON

Bullshit.

MARCUS Swear to God. And I do mean Allah.

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

MARCUS I haven't ejaculated in six months.

TINY

Six months!

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

TINY You are some kind of Obi Wan Kenobi motherfucker. (MORE) 46.

62 CONTINUED: (2)

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

Singh agrees. Simon, however, is still intrigued.

# 63 INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

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

MARCUS (reading) Todd Gaines. The drug dealer.

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

MARCUS He's the <u>good</u> drug dealer. I get confused.

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

The Desk Woman returns with their keys.

SIMON

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

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

SIMON No. Not necessary.

DESK WOMAN Great then. Welcome to the Riviera.

Simon walks away with Marcus.

SIMON (low) Lesbian. 47. 62

#### 64 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

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

Singh MOANS, lying down on a bed.

MARCUS Did I tell you not to eat the shrimp?

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

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

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

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

SIMON (on phone) You're going to a wedding?...What is it, a rave?

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

SIMON (on phone) No, I know Claire...Are you going to fuck her?

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

BOY Who are you?

MARCUS This is our room.

Simon leans around to look.

BOY Oh. What are you doing?

SIMON Raping small children.

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

# 65 INT. MIRRORED ELEVATOR - NIGHT

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

SIMON Did I mention how much I like your jacket?

## MARCUS

No.

SIMON There's a reason.

The elevator bell BINGS.

66 INT. THE CASINO - NIGHT

Simon finds Marcus at a blackjack table.

SIMON Let me borrow some money.

MARCUS Where's your money?

#### SIMON

I lost it

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

MARCUS We've been here five minutes.

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

MARCUS Let me see your wallet.

(CONTINUED)

65

66 CONTINUED:

Simon hands it over. Marcus pockets it.

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

67 INT. CASINO - NIGHT

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

68 INT. CASINO HALLWAY - NIGHT

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

69 INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

REBECCA (mocking) Een traffic skewl?

#### SIMON

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

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

REBECCA Do you want to be getting high with us? 66 66

69

68

# 70 INT. THE BECKYS' HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

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

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

Simon hands her the pipe and the lighter.

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

#### BECKY

Oh my God!

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

#### REBECCA You're fine. You're fine.

Becky is crying.

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

SIMON You're beautiful.

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

71 INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

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

CLOSE ON SIMON

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

Finally, he breathes again.

(CONTINUED)

70

BECKY

Did you go?

He shakes his head.

BECKY

Why not?

SIMON Tantra, baby.

LATER

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

THE CURTAINS ARE ON FIRE.

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

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

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

Amid the chaos, Simon feels for his shoes.

#### 72 INT. HALLWAY / ELEVATOR BAY - NIGHT

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

73 INT. CASINO MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Gentle Christmas MUZAK.

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

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

52. 71

72

73

74

75

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

MARCUS I am not a bathroom attendant!

# 74 INT. BY THE ELEVATORS - NIGHT

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

SIMON Hey. We're leaving.

# MARCUS

Fuck yeah.

# 75 EXT. HOTEL ENTRANCE - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

76 INT. THE FERRARI / DRIVING ON FREEWAY - NIGHT

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

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

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

MARCUS

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

SIMON (nodding) Sort of a dull ache.

#### MARCUS

Exactly.

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

77 INT. FERRARI / DRIVING DOWNTOWN - LATER

77

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

MARCUS See if there's a map.

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

SIMON Orange County.

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

SIMON

Holy shit.

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

> MARCUS Don't point it at me!

SIMON How do I know if it's loaded?

MARCUS First, you stop pointing it at me.

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

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

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

MARCUS Great, put it back.

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

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

MARCUS Hold the wheel.

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

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

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

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

78 EXT. 7-ELEVEN - NIGHT

78

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

SIMON

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

MARCUS

...eagle...

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

MARCUS

The N-R-A.

He tears a page out of the phone book.

SIMON You're certain?

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

SIMON Chicks with guns?

A beat. Giving up...

MARCUS

Yes.

79 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

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

SINGH

Kill me.

TINY I ain't your bitch. Kill yourself.

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

> TINY What the fuck?

It's the same boy.

BOY You got some smoke?

TINY You got some pubic hair yet? BOY Man, I've been smoking up since I was eight.

TINY Where is your mom at?

He pushes past the kid...

80 INT. THE OTHER ROOM - NIGHT

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

BOY She's not my mom.

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

BOY Are you on heroin? Are you kicking?

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

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

BOY Fuck you.

81 EXT. PARKING LOT / CRAZY HORSE - NIGHT

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

APPROACHING THE ENTRANCE...

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

SIMON

Explain.

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

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

# 81

## MARCUS

Nothing.

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

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

# 82 INT. THE CRAZY HORSE - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

Noelle laughs at something Marcus said.

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

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

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

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

## 83 INT. SHORT HALLWAY - NIGHT

83

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

Marcus gives Simon a look. Simon shrugs it off.

(CONTINUED)

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

VIC JR. I need a major credit card.

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

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

#### MARCUS

Yes.

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

SIMON

Crystal.

VIC JR. Enjoy your evening.

He pulls back the curtain.

84 INT. PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT

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

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

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

Simon adjusts himself in the crotch.

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

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

Marcus whispers something to Noelle.

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

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

His fingers start to twitch.

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

And suddenly...

Simon grabs Noelle's ass.

It's Heaven.

## NOELLE (yelling) Hands! Hands!

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

# NOELLE

The other one!

Simon tumbles off his chair, scrambling.

VIC JR. What the fuck did I tell you!

He kicks Simon in the ass.

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

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

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

> MARCUS We're leaving.

Vic Jr. kicks Simon again.

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

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

MARCUS I'm not trying to throw down here.

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

MARCUS I don't want to try.

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

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

A GUNSHOT.

SCREAMS.

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

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

Marcus checks his shirt. A spray of blood.

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

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

SIMON Everybody back the fuck away.

They do. Marcus holds his place.

MARCUS Oh, man. Fuck.

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

# SIMON (to Holly) Is there another way out?

# HOLLY

Behind you.

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

A beat.

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

VICTOR What happened!

HOLLY They shot Vic. They went out the back.

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

VICTOR (handing off gun) Find them.

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

HOLLY

Call 911.

VICTOR No! No cops.

85 EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The Ferrari SCRAPES as it takes the curb too fast.

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

86 INT. FERRARI / DRIVING - NIGHT

Taking a left, Marcus slows down a little. We're on an empty street well away from the Crazy Horse. He dabs at his bloody nose. 86

86

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

MARCUS What are you doing?

SIMON Getting rid of the weapon.

Marcus slams on the brakes.

MARCUS It has your fingerprints on it.

SIMON

Oh shit.

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

> SIMON Do we answer?

Marcus brakes again. The phone keeps RINGING.

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

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

MARCUS Get the gun. Go. Find it.

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

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

For a moment, silence.

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

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

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

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

87 INT. VICTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

87

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

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

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

VIC JR. (gritted teeth) I know.

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

She shakes her head, crying.

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

Vic Jr. winces with pain.

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

Noelle hands him a towel to mop up the blood.

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

He finishes the last stitch, tying it off.

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

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

HOLLY They said they were from Los Angeles.

Noelle nods.

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

Noelle nods harder, crying again.

88 INT. HOTEL ROOM BATHROOM - NIGHT

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

89 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

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

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

ANNOUNCER [V.O.] Steve decided to try his hand at craps. 88

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

TINY Yo! Mmmhmm. Room 875.

He hangs up.

SINGH Who was that?

TINY Some shit, I dunno.

90 INT. RAM CHARGER - NIGHT

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

VIC JR. They're at the Riviera.

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

VICTOR Motherfucker!

91 EXT. THE STRIP - NIGHT

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

92 INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

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

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

93 INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

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

90

93

91

(CONTINUED)

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

THE MAN The other one, honey.

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

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

No answer. The doors open.

THE WOMAN This isn't our floor.

The Man steps out of the elevator, looking around.

THE MAN Maybe we're five.

THE WOMAN Or six. We'll try both.

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

94 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

94

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

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

TINY What the fuck?

Simon tosses Singh his wallet, pockets the keys.

MARCUS Just do it. Now!

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

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

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED:

# VOICE IN HALL

Room service.

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

HIS P.O.V.

A fleshy hand blocks the fisheye.

95 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

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

96 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

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

Tiny knocks on the door to the adjoining room

TINY (low) Hey. Kid.

97 INT. OTHER ROOM - NIGHT

The kids mutes the TV.

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

BOY Fuck you.

INTERCUT

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

BOY Hundred bucks.

TINY

Fuck!

96

95

### SIMON Give him the money.

He gathers money from their wallets.

98 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

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

99 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The door knob jiggles. WHIP back to the guys.

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

OTHER SIDE

The Boy counts the money, straightening the bills.

TINY (O.S.)

Open now!

- 100 INT. HALLWAY NIGHT The door handle bends further, further. Finally SNAPS.
- 101 INT. HOTEL ROOM NIGHT

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

TINY

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

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

102 INT. ADJOINING ROOM - NIGHT

Fuck!

Singh has his ear to the door.

SINGH (whisper) They're in.

98

97

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100

101

102

(CONTINUED)

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

MARCUS (whisper) If you let them in here, they will kill you. Understood?

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

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

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

BOY (pointing) Down the hall. That way.

103 INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

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

104 INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Running to the Cadillac, Singh feels for his keys.

SIMON

I got 'em.

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

THE TIRES SMOKE

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

### 105 INT. CADILLAC / PARKING GARAGE EXIT - NIGHT 105

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

MARCUS They're right behind us. 103

## TINY

Who?

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

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

### 105B EXT. PARKING RAMP - NIGHT

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

106 EXT. FLAMINGO ROAD - NIGHT

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

106A INT. CADILLAC - NIGHT

MARCUS Cop. Cop!

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

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

SIMON How did they find us?

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

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

106

105B

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

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

Gunning the engine, he hangs a hard left, cutting across three oncoming lanes. The Ram Charger tries to follow, but the

traffic is already moving. Over the protest of many HORNS, the pickup finally forces its way through.

# 107 EXT. A SIDE STREET - NIGHT

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

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

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

SIMON

Hold on.

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

TINY Mother of fuck!

# 108 EXT. VERY NARROW ALLEY - NIGHT

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

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

108A UP AHEAD

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

MARCUS

Shit.

SINGH (looking back) Wait, no. They're coming in. 108A

107

72. 106A Behind them, the Ram Charger gingerly negotiates a three-point turn into the alley. Wider, it scrapes against one side.

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

## MARCUS We can't make it!

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

#### MARCUS

STOP!

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

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

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

### 109 INT. THE CADILLAC - NIGHT

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

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

110 EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

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

SIDE MIRROR.

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

### 111 INT. CADILLAC - NIGHT

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

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

112 INT. RAM CHARGER - NIGHT

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

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

113 EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

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

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

113A INT. CADILLAC - NIGHT 113A

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

113B EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Swinging wide, the Cadillac comes free with another CRUNCH.

Momentum keeps the Ram Charger heading straight for the construction.

### 113C INT. RAM CHARGER - NIGHT 113C

Victor hooks the wheel hard, trying to avoid it.

111

113

112

113B

#### 113D EXT. STREET - NIGHT

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

### 114 INT. CADILLAC - NIGHT

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

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

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

#### 113D

115	INT. ROLLED RAM CHARGER - NIGHT	115
	We look through the windshield to find Victor piled on top of his son. Regaining his wits, the old man steps on Vic Jr.'s shoulder. Gets another foot into the steering wheel, climbing up to the driver's door window.	g
116	EXT. STREET - NIGHT	116
	Victor looks out to see the Cadillac turning down a side street, out of sight.	
	VICTOR Sonofabitch!	
117	EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT	117
	The Cadillac, bruised but unbroken, heads west. Las Vegas shimmers in the distance.	
118	INT. CADILLAC - DAWN	118
	In the back seat, Tiny is propped up with a bloody shirt pressed to his head. Singh has his feet up to brace the back of Marcus's seat.	
	SINGH Just so we're clear. You stole a car, shot a bouncer, and had sex with two women?	
	TINY You had sex with two women?	

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

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

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

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

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

119 EXT. STREET / CRASH SCENE - DAWN

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

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

He takes the gold card from his pocket.

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

Vic Jr. looks to his dad.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

- 120 OMIT 120
- 121 OMIT 121

121A INT. SUPERMARKET STOCKROOM - DAY 121A Off-screen, a SOAP OPERA plays.

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

(CONTINUED)

121A

CLAIRE

(low) Don't.

SIMON

Why not?

CLAIRE She's been on for fourteen hours.

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

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

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

Simon follows Ronna out into the alley.

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

MALE VOICE #1 I'm not the man you're looking for.

MALE VOICE #2 We both know you were on the pier. You saw what happened to Carmen. We DROP DOWN to see the TV. Onscreen, a police interrogation room. The Cop is played by  $\underline{Adam}$ . The Accused is played by  $\underline{Zack}$ .

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

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

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

122 INT. BATHROOM AT FALAFEL HUT - DAY

122

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

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

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

BURKE You work out, don't you?

ADAM You have to. It's in the contract.

BURKE

No, you have a great body.

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

## BURKE Hey! People in here!

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

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

Burke smiles, an amused roll of the eyes.

ZACK

What?

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

Adam and Zack share a look. A beat.

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

Loop sits back, his job finished.

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

A beat.

# LOOP

Safe enough.

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

123 INT. FALAFEL HUT - DAY

123

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

LOOP I think my girlfriend watches your show.

(CONTINUED)

LOOP She doesn't do anything.

# BURKE

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

Loop bows to Burke's superiority.

BURKE [CONT'D] My wife's a deputy sherriff, you believe that? A cop and a sherriff, married. It's like the freakin' odd couple. 78A. 123

ZACK I smell a pilot. Burke is oblivious to sarcasm. Loop's pita is selfdestructing. He eats faster, trying to finish before it falls apart. BURKE You guys got girlfriends? What am I saying? You gotta lot of girlfriends don't you? You got women sending you their panties. Two goodlooking guys... (to Loop) What do you say? LOOP (mouth full) Pussy magnets. BURKE If I was not a happily married man I would be rubbing up against you to get some of that. (off Loop's reaction) Some of the pussy power. Zack offers Loop a napkin. He passes. ADAM Actually, I'm settled down. Four years now. LOOP (still chewing) No ring. ADAM Nothing legal. Draining the rest of his Coke, Burke gets up to dump his tray. BURKE (to Zack) How about you? ZACK Same. BURKE This is a crime. You two should be out getting laid.

79. 123

124 124 EXT. BY A PAYPHONE - DAY Loop stands nearby while Adam talks to no one in particular. ADAM Star light, star bright first star that I see tonight... 125 INT. BURKE'S CAR - DAY 125 Burke and Zack listen to a radio recorder. ADAM [CONT'D, FILTERED] ... I wish I may, I wish I might... Burke turns the volume down, picks up his walkie-talkie. BURKE (on walkie-talkie) That's good. I'm getting him. Through the windows, we can see Loop and Adam approaching. We hear low CHATTER as they talk. BURKE So, Zack. What does your girlfriend look like? ZACK About five-eight, brown hair, blue eyes. BURKE Hot. ZACK Yeah. BURKE She faithful? ZACK No. I don't think so. BURKE You faithful? ZACK Not anymore.

126

### 126 INT. BURKE'S CAR / DRIVING - DAY

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

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

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

ON ADAM, corner of his eye.

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

LOOP C'mon, tell us.

ADAM Absolutely. Tell us.

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

ZACK I found socks.

BURKE What, red socks, blue socks?

ZACK

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

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

We pull into the parking lot of

THE GROCERY STORE.

Adam turns on Zack.

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

ZACK Only after I found out.

ADAM

Huh.

### 127 INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

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

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

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

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

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

ZACK Isn't it ironic.

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

Zack's glare could strip paint.

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

CLAIRE Gay men are so hot. It's tragic. 82. 126

128 INT. FRONT OF THE STORE - DAY

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

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

ZACK We're going to ask. <u>You're</u> going to ask.

ADAM

Why me?

ZACK You look more wholesome. Just improv.

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

ADAM Who are you calling?

ZACK Nobody. I'm giving you an opening.

129 INT. CAR IN PARKING LOT - DAY

129

128

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

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

LOOP No, we heard. You guys did great.

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

ADAM

Maybe.

ZACK Probably.

129 CONTINUED:

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

# 130 EXT. STREET IN HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT 130

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

131 EXT. FRONT OF GAINES' APARTMENT – NIGHT 131

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

132 INT. BURKE'S CAR - NIGHT

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

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

132A INT. VENICE HOUSE / MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

BURKE

Exactly.

132

132A

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

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

Burke cracks his neck, showtime.

(CONTINUED)

84A. 132A ZACK

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

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

We stay on Zack, unconvinced.

133 INT. VENICE HOUSE - NIGHT

133

Zack looks over as Burke comes out of the kitchen.

BURKE

Cerveza?

He hands Ronna the beer.

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

Ronna has halfway figured out what's going on.

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

RONNA (suddenly) You got a bathroom?

ADAM Down the hall on the right.

ZACK Let me show you...

## SLOW MOTION

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

Go.

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

ZACK

85.

132A

133

134

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

For a just a second, Zack smiles.

134 INT. VENICE HOUSE - LATER

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

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

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

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

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

BURKE Hey, feel the abs on this one.

He rubs Zack's stomach.

BURKE You could scrub laundry on these.

## LOOP (re: box) Full hands.

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

BURKE

What?

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

LOOP Nothing. I'm out of it. Merry Christmas, guys. Good to meet you. Adam waves. Zack nods. Loop shuts the door behind himself. Now its just the three men. An awkward beat.

ZACK

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

BURKE You did your part.

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

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

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

A beat.

ZACK Actually, you know, I had plans.

ADAM

You did?

ZACK

I do.

ADAM With your girlfriend?

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

#### ADAM

Huh.

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

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

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

### 135 EXT. A TINY HOUSE IN CULVER CITY - NIGHT

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

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

### 136 INT. LIVING / DINING ROOM - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

> IRENE Yes? Hi?

ADAM Sorry. Phone. Messages. Check?

IRENE

Here.

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

He suddenly smiles. Irene notices and stops mixing.

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

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

138 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

138

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

ZACK

Sorry.

BURKE No, stay for a sec.

Burke sprays more cologne on his hand.

BURKE Smell this. What does it smell like?

Zack shakes his head, doesn't know.

BURKE CK One. But it's not.

ZACK

Really.

BURKE I get this for a quarter what that stuff costs.

ZACK It's nice.

BURKE

Here.

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

> BURKE (re: bedspread) It's down. So is the liner.

ZACK It is soft.

BURKE

Get on.

ZACK That's okay.

Burke pushes Zack back flat the bed.

BURKE Did you hear that?

ZACK Hear what?

BURKE Exactly. Individually wrapped springs. Top quality.

Burke climbs onto the bed beside him.

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

ZACK I sure wouldn't.

A beat.

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

139 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Irene is back whipping the potatoes.

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

ADAM (mock bashful) It does have perks.

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

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

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

IRENE There's no feeling. Nobody gets jealous.

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

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

She backs off. There's an awkward beat.

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

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

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

> IRENE What goes with turkey?

## ADAM AND ZACK

White.

140 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

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

### BURKE

More wine?

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

#### ADAM

No.

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

ADAM I'm not. It's true.

Burke and Irene share a look.

BURKE If you gotta go, then I understand. (awkward beat) But Irene and I sort of had an ulterior motive inviting you here.

Zack looks to Adam.

IRENE He makes it sound sinister. It's not.

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

Adam and Zack shake their heads.

IRENE

Just guess.

#### ADAM

Sears?

91.

139

(CONTINUED)

ZACK J.C. Penney's?

Irene and Burke both smile.

BURKE

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

#### IRENE

The wine.

### BURKE

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

IRENE

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

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

#### BURKE

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

#### IRENE

...like the entertainment industry.

ZACK

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

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

141

142

140 CONTINUED: (2)

Zack and Adam share a look of disbelief and wonder.

141 EXT. FRONT OF BURKE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

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

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

ADAM With me, or one of your other boyfriends?

142 INT. LIQUOR STORE ON PICO - NIGHT

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

ZACK I have cheated on you with exactly one guy.

ADAM

Ditto.

ZACK

Who?

ADAM

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

He finds the right brand.

BY THE REGISTER

They wait in a short line.

ZACK I'll tell you mine.

ADAM

No.

ZACK

Why not?

94.

142

143

ADAM You can't wait to tell me, can you? You're gloating. You think yours is better than mine. ZACK I don't. ADAM It's Sean Connery, isn't it? ZACK Count of three. ADAM Alright. Sure. Wait. (reconsidering) Okay. With fingers, they both count off "One. Two. Three." ADAM ZACK Jimmy. Jimmy in makeup. ADAM Jimmy? ZACK Jimmy. Jimmy. They both stand for a moment, bewildered. It's their turn at the register. Adam sets the bottle down. A doorbell RINGS. INT. HIGH RISE APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT 143 An apartment door opens to reveal a chubby girl in sweats (SANDRA) with a cordless phone and giant bowl of popcorn. She drops the former into the latter. ADAM Is Jimmy here? SANDRA Oh my God. Oh. My God. She's thrilled and disbelieving at the same time. She fishes the phone out of the bowl.

95.

143

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

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

> SANDRA You do know, don't you?

> > ZACK

We know.

# SANDRA

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

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

> SANDRA It's some sort of rave thing.

ZACK (takes card) Mary Xmas Supafest.

SANDRA He left an hour ago.

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

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

144 EXT. WAREHOUSE / MARY XMAS SUPAFEST - NIGHT

144

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

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

96. 144

# ADAM

I know.

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

Adam imitates the MOAN.

ZACK

Somewhere off Greenland, hunchback whales were beaching themselves.

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

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

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

A beat.

ZACK When was that?

ADAM October, maybe?

ZACK Early October. And he suddenly got so much better.

A beat.

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

145 INT. SUPAFEST - NIGHT

145

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

AT THE BAR

145 CONTINUED:

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

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

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

He smiles nervously.

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

Tucking away the scissors, he and Adam walk off.

146 EXT. FIELD - NIGHT (RAINING)

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

147 INT. MIATA - NIGHT (RAINING)

Zack gives directions from the passenger seat.

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

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

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

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

By instinct, he SLAMS on the brakes.

Something CRASHES down on the soft roof.

ZACK What the fuck! 146

147

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

> ZACK Oh my God.

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

ZACK

Ronna.

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

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

ZACK Go. Go. Go! ADAM What if she's... ZACK

Go!

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

IN THE MIRROR

Gaines steps out to watch them go.

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

We stay at ditch-level as the headlights retreat.

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

The Miata is parked at the far island.

150 INT. MIATA - NIGHT (RAIN) 150

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

#### ZACK

Let's think about it logically. Either she's alive, or she's dead. If she's dead, then there's nothing we can do. If she's alive, then the guy with the gun, who seemed to want to shoot her, probably did shoot her.

ADAM So even if she's alive, she's dead.

# ZACK

Exactly.

Adam takes another drink.

ZACK

On the plus side, the only witnesses are you, me and him. And none of us are going to want to be talking about it. So if you really think about it, it didn't turn out as badly as it could have.

ADAM A girl is <u>dead</u>.

# ZACK (snaps) I didn't say it went perfectly.

Adam gets out of the car, walks away. Zack takes another swig.

151 EXT. SIDE OF THE GAS STATION - NIGHT (RAIN)

Adam stops at a payphone. A long moment before he reaches for the receiver. With a breath, he dials 911.

> OPERATOR (V.O.) 911 Emergen...

He hangs up.

152 EXT. GAS STATION ISLAND - NIGHT (RAIN)

152

151

Zack dunks the squeegee back in the bucket. With a wad of paper towels, he cleans the hood of the car.

## 153 INT. GAS STATION BATHROOM - NIGHT (RAIN) 153

Washing his face, Adam looks at his reflection in the scratched mirror. He steps to the urinal, unbuttons.

Before he can start to piss, he notices something strange. He looks down at his crotch.

### 154 EXT. GAS STATION ISLAND - NIGHT (RAIN) 154

Zack throws away the last of the towels as Adam approaches.

With a finger to his lips, Adam holds out a mess of tape and wires, all connected to a battery pack. It's the microphone he was wearing.

ZACK Holv sh...

mory one...

He stops himself. Adam throws the bundle as far as he can. They keep their voices low anyway.

> ZACK They wouldn't have been listening all this time.

ADAM Hello, they could have been recording it. Everything we said could be on tape somewhere. They would know we did it.

A beat.

ZACK (an idea) What if we were just running lines? For a scene?

Adam won't even dignify that with an answer. A long moment, just the BUZZ of the lights overhead. With an almost eerie calm...

ZACK There's a pretty good chance no one's found her yet.

ADAM They will.

ZACK No. Listen. If there's no body, there's no crime.

155 EXT. FIELD - NIGHT (RAIN)

The Supafest is still RAGING in the distance. Adam digs through the trunk of the convertible, frantically rearranging the junk inside. He keeps looking around the lid, waiting for someone to sneak up on them.

Zack watches Adam's fruitless arranging efforts.

ZACK Stop. Okay, stop!

ADAM

What?

ZACK It's a Miata.

All Adam's effort, he's made enough room for a pizza. Maybe.

ZACK We'll put her in the passenger seat.

ADAM Where will I...Or you...

ZACK In the passenger seat. Holding her up.

Adam shudders at the thought.

With a flashlight, Zack jumps down into the ditch. He nudges Ronna's body with his foot. She's dead alright.

He rolls the body over, grabbing under her arms. He tries to hoist her up, but she's too heavy and the ditch is too deep.

ZACK Little help?

ADAM (not moving) I can't.

ZACK What do you mean?

# ADAM I can't do this.

Frustrated, Zack tries again to lug the body out. He can't do it by himself. Meanwhile, Adam is starting to hyperventilate, tears swelling.

> ZACK Okay, listen to me...

ADAM She's dead.

ZACK She's not dead.

ADAM She's dead. I hit her and I killed her.

He looks around, expecting someone to walk up and see them.

ZACK No you didn't, okay? This is all just make-believe. This is a scene. She's just acting dead. And you're just acting scared.

Adam laughs to himself, still crying.

ZACK See, there's the lights, and there's the camera. Watch your blocking. (pointing) There's Michelle in wardrobe, say "Hi, Michelle!"

ADAM Hi, Michelle.

### ZACK

The craft service truck is right around the corner, and they have lots of little veggie burgers on the grill. And you can have one if you just help me finish this scene. (sniffing) Can you smell them? Can you smell them on the grill?

A beat.

ADAM I'm not delusional.

### ZACK Then take her fucking arms!

Obeying, Adam grabs Ronna's wrists as Zack pushes from below. Together they get the body out of the ditch. Zack climbs up to help maneuver her into the car. Just then...

Ronna MOANS.

Adam freaks out, dropping his side. Ronna's head hits the dirt. Louder MOANING.

ADAM She's not dead.

ZACK

No shit!

They stand back, watching Ronna MOAN as she lies half-in, halfout of the car.

> ADAM If she's not dead, that means we didn't kill her. We can just leave her.

ZACK She's almost dead. We leave her and she dies, why did we bother coming back? I mean, you still killed her.

ADAM What do you mean,  $\underline{I}$  killed her?

ZACK Christ, I didn't mean it that way. C'mon. I would never testify against you.

Adam is not reassured.

ZACK We have to stick with Plan A.

ADAM

In Plan A she was dead.

Zack reaches into the car, pulling out The Club. Trades a look with Adam, who finally acquieces. Almost says something, doesn't. They both look around, making sure no one's coming.

Zack grips the bar like a baseball bat. Adam turns his back, covering his ears.

Zack raises the bar. Adam scrunches his face tight.

156

155 CONTINUED: (3)

Zack takes two quick breaths. And holds.

And holds. And holds.

Adam opens his eyes, looks back. Zack isn't swinging. He lowers the bar. They both breathe again, relieved.

ZACK Okay. New plan.

### 156 EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT (RAIN)

A CAR ALARM drones incessantly, the siren interrupted with an occasional

### CAR ALARM VOICE Back away from the vehicle.

Weaving through some parked cars, we settle on an angry BMW, its lights flashing. A small throng of RAVERS have gathered around to look, because Ronna's limp body lies on the hood.

A familiar face pushes through the crowd, just arrived.

FILA GUY Hey, it's Kelly. Somebody beat the crap out of her.

Moving to find...

SKATE-PUNK GUY Somebody call an ambulance!

After a beat, he realizes he should do it himself. He takes off running.

ADAM AND ZACK

look around from the edge of a van in the distance.

ZACK Look, she's fine. They're getting an ambulance. She's fine.

Adam keeps watching, not convinced. He turns back, a thought...

ADAM What about that guy? The guy with the gun. He could still go after her. ZACK

Okay, listen. Girl <u>in</u> ditch -- that's our problem. Girl <u>out of</u> ditch -- that's her own problem. We're done. We did the right thing.

Thunder RUMBLES overhead. Off Adam's look...

ZACK Okay, approximately the right thing. In a half-assed, thrown-together fashion.

Adam smiles despite himself. Zack points, "See? See?" That just makes Adam smile more.

ZACK

Home?

ADAM

Home.

As they walk off, we leave the Mary Xmas Supafest still BLARING in the distance.

157 INT. JAVAMAN CAFE / HOLLYWOOD - DAY

Too early for the brunch crowd, just a smattering of vampires. All around, Christmas lights are strung with mad abandon.

The lights overhead FLICKER. Everyone looks up. That's when we come to find

TODD GAINES

sitting alone at a booth by the window, disassembling a newspaper. He finds the comics.

157

157 CONTINUED:

Laying the paper flat, he tears off the bottom corner of the page and starts reading like a kid, his whole body leaning over the table.

At the door, Claire comes in, shaking the rain out of her hair. After a beat, she does it again, as if she doesn't remember doing it the first time. She's tired and wired, all nerves and raw edges. There's static only she can feel.

She looks right past Gaines, out to the rain on the street. He watches her, but doesn't try to catch her eye. The Jamaican WAITER walks past her with a pot of coffee.

WAITER Anywhere you want.

CLAIRE I'm meeting people.

He doesn't care. Claire takes a seat at the table in front of her, but it's not to her liking. Then a booth. She plays with the salt shakers. Bad.

It's only now that she sees Gaines watching her. At first she doesn't recognize him. Then a light goes on. She climbs over the booth and into his, facing him.

CLAIRE

Hey.

GAINES

Hey.

CLAIRE

We're twins.

She turns over his hand, compares it to hers. They both have the same ink stamp on the back. He's busted, no way to talk himself out.

The Waiter comes with coffee, refills Gaines' cup.

Claire overturns the cup in front of her. The Waiter fills it. She overturns a second cup, points to it. A big weird smile. Reluctantly, the Waiter fills that too. Then leaves.

> CLAIRE I'll pay you back for breakfast. (leaning closer) Don't worry. I'm not really that hungry.

She sheds her coat, having great difficulty with one sleeve.

CLAIRE Have you seen Ronna? Or Mannie?

He shakes his head.

CLAIRE See, when we go out, we always meet here afterwards in case we get separated. (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

05A. 157 CLAIRE (cont'd) It happens more than you'd think. I've been paging her, but she hasn't called back.

The lights FLICKER again, storm still raging.

Halfway into getting her coat off, Claire has second thoughts, but continues nonetheless. Gaines is taken off-balance, his private space violated.

Claire finally looks up at Gaines, smiles. A beat.

CLAIRE Unless you wanted to eat alone.

GAINES No. It's fine.

157A INT. CAFE - LATER

Gaines scrapes the last of his eggs off the plate. Claire sits with two pieces of toast, untouched. She takes the scrap of the newspaper he tore off, looks at it.

> CLAIRE What do you have against The Family Circus?

GAINES It's evil.

CLAIRE Besides that.

GAINES Okay. Location mostly. Bottom right corner, just waiting there to suck. It's the last thing you read, and it spoils everything you read before it.

CLAIRE You could just not read it.

GAINES I hate it, yet I'm uncontrollably drawn to it. Are you going to...

He points to her toast. She slides it over. He slathers on a thick coat of jelly.

CLAIRE Do you know what I like about you? GAINES

What?

### CLAIRE

I'm asking. I don't know. It's not your face, because you're only medium cute. I think what it is, is you might be the first non-fake person I've met here.

### GAINES

Me.

## CLAIRE

I'm serious.

GAINES Professional curiousity. What are you on?

CLAIRE Ginseng and lotsa caffeine.

Gaines leaves money for the check.

A beat. Claire looks around at the various decorations: a red tree by the door, snowflakes on the window, lights blinking on the wall.

157A CONTINUED: (2)

# CLAIRE

You know what I like best about Christmas? The surprises. It's like, you get this box, and you're sure you know what's in it. You shake it, you weigh it, and you're totally convinced you have it pegged. No doubt in your mind. But then you open it up, and it's something completely different. Bing! Wow! Bang! Surprise! I mean, it's like you and me here.

She smiles. She has a bewitching smile.

#### CLAIRE

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

# 158 INT. STAIRWELL TO GAINES' APARTMENT - DAY

158

Claire kisses Gaines, pinning him against the wall. Rain BEATS against the door.

She fumbles with his belt. His hand slides under her jacket, trying to undo her bra. They take a break from undressing to kiss harder.

Reclining on the steps, Claire tries to push his jeans down with her toes. Her foot gets caught in the chain from his wallet. Her butt slides down a step. They laugh.

Her hand hits something hard -- his gun. It's tucked into his jacket pocket.

As they start to work up a rhythm, Huxley the cat comes down the steps, curious. He brushes against them, unnoticed. Finally, he MEWS.

# GAINES (stopping) How did you get out?

He looks to the top of the stairs, where a MAN is watching them.

It's Victor.

He has the silver .45 drawn on them. Gaines looks down to the door at the bottom. Vic Jr. is blocking it. They're trapped. Claire looks around, trying to figure out what's happening.

159 - 167 OMIT

159 - 167

167A INT. GAINES' LIVING ROOM - DAY

Gaines draws a map for Victor on the coffee table.

GAINES Simon's apartment is around the back -the gate's always open. Now, you're going to take Sunset to Hyperion.

As he's talking, we MOVE to reveal Vic Jr. by the door, holding the gun on them, and Claire, sitting on the couch beside Gaines.

> GAINES [CONT'D] At Hillhurst, you have to keep right -you want Sunset Boulevard, not Sunset Drive.

CLAIRE (to Gaines) Why don't you just drive him there? Maybe you could help pull the trigger.

Gaines gives her a look. Victor takes the map and folds it. He hands Gaines back his credit card.

Just then, we hear a SOUND at the door -- a gentle KNOCK. All eyes go to look.

CLOSE ON the doorknob, someone trying it. It's unlocked. We TILT UP to reveal the opener is actually...

SIMON.

He charges right into the room, shutting the door behind him.

SIMON Todd, listen, I need hide out here. You won't believe the shit we got into in...

He sees Victor. He immediately reaches for his gun, but

VIC JR.

167A

is right behind him. He yanks Simon's gun away, then halfpushes, half-carries him forward, slamming him down ONTO THE COFFEE TABLE. Claire and Gaines both scoot back, freaked. Vic Sr. puts the qun to Simon's head. Panicked, Simon squirms, trying to look around. His face is mushed against the glass. VICTOR How was your drive? We flew. Victor hands the gun off to Vic Jr., who rests it at the back of Simon's head. Simon is moments away from execution. All at once... GAINES SIMON HeyHeyHey. Not here, not now. Please no. God! Shit! I This is so not where you want don't wanna die. to be doing this. VICTOR Do it. Vic Jr. COCKS the gun. Simon SQUEALS. At the last moment... CLAIRE Wait! Stop! STOP! You can't do this! You won't get away with it! For a brief moment, she has their attention. She points to herself. CLAIRE [CONT'D] Hello, witness. (re: Todd) Witness. What are you going to do, kill us too? Gaines looks over, thanks for bringing that up. But Claire still has the floor. CLAIRE [CONT'D] What is wrong with you people? Do you think this is an effective way of dealing

> VICTOR This fuck shot my boy.

with problems?

SIMON ...in the arm.

Vic Jr. leans on him, shut up.

CLAIRE (to Victor) So, what? You're going to kill three people? (beat, no answer) What do you actually want?

VICTOR

Justice.

A look between all parties.

CUT TO:

167A

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

Sitting in the green chair, Simon makes an 'X' on his bicep with a marker. He feels for the bone.

SIMON It's all flesh here, it should be okay.

Gaines and the Vics stand around him. In the background, Claire is dubious and horrified.

Vic Jr. puts Todd's gun to the 'X.' Gaines hands Simon a shirt to mop up the blood.

SIMON

Right, great.

On some sick level, he's really into this.

Vic Jr. gets ready to shoot. Everyone subtly backs away, bracing for the gunshot. Three. Two. One.

But there's no bang.

Everyone looks at Vic Jr. He pulls the gun away.

VIC JR.

I can't.

CONTINUED:

VICTOR What do you mean you can't? (beat) You pull the fucking trigger.	who knows they're gonna be	* * * *
SIMON It's all right. Reall	У•	*
Claire rolls her eyes this is going to take forever. While the Vic's argue, Claire grabs her coat and purse.		* *
GAINES Where are you going?		*
CLAIRE I gotta get to work.		*
Todd doesn't want her to leave, but really, what can he say? Everyone turns to watch Claire leave.		*
VICTOR Look, now the girl's l	eaving.	*
SIMON See you, Claire.		*
We follow her out the door. As s	he exits	
GAINES Be good!		
In the background, the Vic Jr. is	s psyching himself up again.	*
INT. HALLWAY - DAY [CONTINUOUS]		
Claire shuts the door behind her. As she's headed for the		

Claire shuts the door behind her. As she's headed for the steps, we hear a GUNSHOT. She flinches but keeps walking.

SIMON [O.S.]

I'm okay!

168 OMIT [See Scene 176] 169 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY 169 Ronna wakes up, a bit at a time, an IV dripping overhead. We hear carolers SINGING in the distance. Her nose crinkles, her tongue finds her lips. Finally a swollen eye opens, looks around. A MEXICAN FAMILY is gathered around the other bed in the room, the father dressed as Santa Claus. Ronna sees the IV dangling from her arm. She sits up with difficulty, a head rush. She tries to get her bearings, but genuinely doesn't know how she got here. After a beat, she rips off the tape and carefuly pulls the needle out of her arm. 169A EXT. SUPERMARKET - DAY 169A It's stopped raining, but the pavement is still wet. 169B INT. SUPERMARKET BREAK ROOM - DAY 169B Ronna slides her time card into the machine, which PUNCHES down. 169C INT. SUPERMARKET AISLE - DAY 169C Ronna ties her apron as she heads to the front, limping a bit. 169D INT. SUPERMARKET / CHECKOUT LANE - DAY 169D Claire finishes bagging groceries. Looks up to see Ronna coming to open the next register. RONNA Hey. Claire doesn't say anything, a pointed silence. Ronna keys in, checks the drawer. Claire returns to her register. Ronna tries to make eye contact, but no luck.

168

RONNA Okay, real mature.

Claire continues to ignore her, turning her back. She straightens coupons, rubber-banding them.

# RONNA

Claire.

Nothing. A beat. Finally...

RONNA Alright. Mistakes were made. Things didn't go exactly as planned.

Claire's eyes -- understatement.

RONNA [CONT'D] But it wasn't exactly a banner night for me, either.

Claire stops, disbelieving -- if Ronna only knew. She turns on her, then back to the register, holding it in. But she just has to face her to say...

> CLAIRE You are constantly using us.

## RONNA

Using you? You use me. Come on, if it weren't for me, you would be sitting home every night eating popcorn and watching reruns of 90210.

CLAIRE (overlapping) Mannie is your chauffeur, and I am... (what is she?) I am some chick you leave sitting in an apartment.

RONNA (overlapping) That is such bullshit. Mannie does not feel that way. Ask him. Ask him! Where is he?

CLAIRE Why would I know?

A beat. A cold horror crosses Ronna. Remaining calm...

RONNA He drove you here, didn't he?

CLAIRE No, I got a ride. His car was still in the parking lot when I left.

RONNA Oh shit. Shit!

Without even closing her register, she takes off her apron and heads for the door.

170 EXT. ALLEY - DAY

# RONNA (yelling) Mannie? Mannie?

Ronna limps ahead. A taxicab waits in the background.

171 EXT. A DIFFERENT ALLEY - DAY

CLAIRE Mannie! Mannie!

All the alleys look the same. He could be anywhere.

172 EXT. BEHIND A DUMPSTER - DAY

A stray black cat scratches through a pile of foam peanuts, looking for bugs. Another cat crawls up the body of Mannie, propped against the dumpster. A trickle of water drips off the garbage onto his face. The cat licks it clean.

Mannie smiles.

173 EXT. ALLEY INTERSECTION - DAY

RONNA Mannie! Can you hear me?

MANNIE (O.S.)

Yeah!

Ronna turns to see Mannie behind her, stretching his neck. He's pale. His eyes are bloodshot. But otherwise, he's fine.

> MANNIE You look like shit.

174 EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

The Beast is the only car left. Ronna and Claire circle, looking for the keys on the ground. Calling out...

RONNA You fucked Todd Gaines? 170

171

172

173

174

CLAIRE

No! (embarrased) We made out.

RONNA (mocking) Made out?

CLAIRE Kissed. A little. What?

RONNA Hello! He's a drug dealer.

Claire doesn't want this to go any further. Fortunately, just then...

CLAIRE Found 'em.

She shakes the mud and grime off, then throws them to Ronna. Mannie lies back on the trunk, droopy.

RONNA (unlocking passenger door) You might have brain damage from overdosing.

MANNIE Dain brambage?

A beat.

MANNIE Xavier Kugat. Starts with X.

RONNA

You shit.

She puts him in the car, holding his head like he's a criminal on "Cops."

# CLAIRE

I'll drive.

Ronna hands her the keys over the roof of the Beast, sunlight shining off the gathered rain. They take a beat, just the two of them.

> CLAIRE So, do you have enough money to pay off your rent?

RONNA And twenty left over. Maybe I'll open a savings account.

GETTING IN...

Claire starts the car. Mannie leans up from the back seat.

MANNIE So what are we doing for New Year's?

Ronna smiles.

RONNA Merry Christmas, Mannie.

THE BEAST

ROARS off across the parking lot, TITLE MUSIC building.

174 CONTINUED: (3)

We PAN BACK to the rave hangar, heading for it, picking up speed. A MATCH CUT takes us to...

174A EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

174A

We HEAR a rave in full swing ahead. The hangar door is open, pitch black inside. We fly in, bringing us to...

BLACK OUT.

#### AFTER FIRST CREDITS

FADE IN:

#### 175 INT. SIMON'S APARTMENT - DAY

175

Simon awakes to POUNDING at the front door. He stands and turns, disoriented, no idea when or where he is. He finally finds a clock -- it's 4:14 in the afternoon.

More POUNDING at the door. Simon half-crawls to the window, looking out to see who's at the door.

HIS P.O.V.

From this angle, all we can see is the sleeve of a man's jacket.

SIMON (tentatively) Who is it?

He ducks, expecting a hail of gunfire.

MALE VOICE [O.S.] It's Todd.

A beat, then Simon finally drops his panic. He keeps the gun in hand as he pulls the chair away from the doorknob and slowly undoes the lock. He leaves the chain on.

Looking out through the crack, we see Gaines, alone.

SIMON Jesus, Todd. Thank God. (undoes chain) You won't believe the shit I've been through...

Without a word, Gaines grabs him by the collar and SMASHES him, one punch to the face. Simon falls in a dazed lump to the floor. We stay down with him as we watch Gaines walk away.

Simon blinks and sniffles as we once again

FADE OUT.

## 176 INT. APARTMENT PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Adam and Zack scrub the Miata's upholstery with brushes and various cleaners, trying to get the bloodstains out. Zack stops for a moment, watching Adam. Adam looks up, what? Nothing. A quiet beat, the first moment of genuine affection between them.

Suddenly we hear a BEEPING. We can't tell where it's coming from.

Following the sound, Adam finds a mud-encrusted beeper wedged between the seat and the center console. He looks up to Zack, then checks the number.

FADE OUT.

### 998 OFFSCREEN SOAP OPERA DIALOGUE

[NOTE: These are wild lines to play underneath scenes 6A, 57A and 121A. Since these scenes are longer than before, we need extra soap opera in the background before we get to Adam and Zack.]

JIMMY SHUBERT Somethin' about it just didn't add up. So last night I went back to the pier to do some investigating of my own. Turns out there are two boats named the Princess. Only, one just got back from two weeks at sea -- Sal Dominico's boat. It got me thinkin' -- if Chase really did know Carmen was on to him, how come he didn't tell Lucas, or Gamble, or Myerson? Why would he drive up to Pinecliff by himself? And why would you still have his briefcase? (beat) Answer me that, Danielle. If you have an answer.

MUSIC rises, a scene cut.

New MUSIC leads into...

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

#### ADAM

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

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

ADAM

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