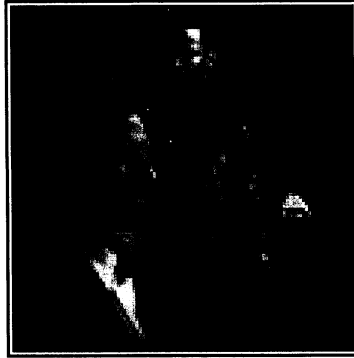


COLLATERAL



Tom Cruise Jamie Foxx
COLLATERAL

**by
Stuart Beattie**

**Revised draft by
Frank Darabont
9/12/00**

**current revisions by
Michael Mann
8/24/03**

**REVISED
October 12, 2003**

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FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY

MM revs. 8/28/03 (blue)
MM revs. 8/28/03 (pink)
MM revs. 9/01/03 (yellow)
MM revs. 9/02/03 (green)
MM revs. 9/03/03 (goldenrod)
MM revs. 9/08/03 (buff)
MM revs. 9/10/03 (salmon)
MM revs. 9/14/03 (cherry)
MM revs. 9/16/03 (tan)
MM revs. 9/18/03 (blue)
MM revs. 9/21/03 (pink)
MM revs. 9/22/03 (yellow)
MM revs. 9/24/03 (green)
MM revs. 9/26/03 (goldenrod)
MM revs. 9/27/03 (buff)
MM revs. 9/29/03 (salmon)
MM revs. 9/30/03 (cherry)
MM revs. 10/02/03 (tan)
MM revs. 10/04/03 (blue)
MM revs. 10/06/03 (pink)
MM revs. 10/09/03 (yellow)
MM revs. 10/10/03 (green)
MM revs. 10/11/03 (goldenrod)
MM revs. 10/12/03 (buff)

FADE IN:

A1

INT. BRADLEY TERMINAL - BLURS - DAY

A1

slide past in a 400mm lens. Then, entering a plane of focus is VINCENT. He walks towards us...an arriving passenger. Suit. Shirt. No tie. Sunglasses and expensive briefcase say "confident executive traveler." The suit's custom-made but not domestic. His hair and shades are current, but it would be difficult to describe his identifying specifics...grey suit, white shirt, medium height. And that's the idea...

*
*

CLOSE BEHIND VINCENT

OVER his left shoulder, walking through milling travelers towards the distant wall of metal and glass, sunlight streaming at him...

*

ANOTHER BUSINESSMAN

- suit, blonde crew cut - walks to camera. Same sunlight, but it hits him from the side. His trajectory is from the left. His eyeline is slightly right. Just now, he looks down at a ticket in his hand...

OVER VINCENT'S LEFT SHOULDER...

right now something catches Vincent's eye. And the two men bump into each other...

TWO-SHOT...

VINCENT

You okay? Sorry...

Vincent puts down his briefcase. The man has a similar briefcase.

MAN

(North London working-class accent)

Yeah, yeah, I'm fine, mate. Enjoy LA...

*

VINCENT GRABS THE BRIEFCASE OF THE MAN

with the North London working-class accent. And continues towards the exit. Was it an accident? Was it a brush pass? The Man's accent signified nothing to us except one thing: foreign origin.

VINCENT

approaches until he's in ECU...

(CONTINUED)

A1 CONTINUED:

A1

OVERHEAD SHOT: VINCENT

up from the bottom of the frame, departs across the floor with the yellow tile, until we lose him into the milling hundreds of Angelenos, heading out into Greater LA and its eighteen million people.

1 CREDIT SEQUENCE:

1

Images wipe across the screen, kinetic and abstract, floating and dreamlike in SLO-MO:

Shades of yellow. Ribbons of silver. Shimmers of chrome.

Headlights sweeping past, flaring to white. Brake lights flashing, halating red. Reflections of overhead fluorescence flowing like liquid along windshield glass...

SOUNDS are dreamlike and abstract, reverberated and discordant, bouncing off concrete walls: car doors OPENING and CLOSING. Brakes. A BABBLE of multi-lingual crosstalk.

Racing Forms. A Farsi newspaper. African hands on a Blackberry. Max's hands do *The New York Times* crossword. A West African speaks French into a cell phone. Metallica in a headset. Hip-hop, Norteno...

*
*
*
*

Mechanics hands change tires, replace air cleaners, close a hood.

*
*

2 INT. TAXI DISPATCH - L.A. - DAY

2

ORANGE and YELLOW FORD CROWN VICTORIAS are wiping screen. We find ourselves in a busy garage at change of shift. A balletic convergence of arriving and departing cars. One's door's flung open...

*
*

3 INT. ONE CAB - MAX'S HANDS

3

enter. They wipe the seats with paper towels and 409...a DMV LICENSE fitted into the small Lexan holder. On it is a picture of Max.

Lights being checked. Indicators. Hazards. Switches. Similar to a pilot doing an aircraft check list. Fast. All fine.

REVEAL NOW: MAX'S BRIEFCASE

*

He opens it, preparing for his workday. CD caddy of personal mixes goes on a visor. Spreadsheet peaks out a worn Mercedes S500 brochure, clipped open. A submarine sandwich from Subway.

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

3

CONTINUED:

3

LONG LENS: OTHER CABBIES - OTHER FACES

*

load-in. Southern California diversity - some unshaven,
swapping stories, counting cash, one stands on the passenger
seat to shout over the roof to his pal, spills his coffee,
couldn't care less...

*

*

*

*

Not Max. His cab is fly. Among cabbies he is GQ.

And as CAR HORNS BLARE. AD LIB BANTER. CABBIES SHOUT. Max
gets behind the wheel, closes the door...

4

INT. CAB - DAY

4

...and WHAM! The noise evaporates. Welcome silence. Max takes
a moment to savor it.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

He starts the engine. RAP MUSIC BLARES from the radio. Max turns it off.

He dumps a CD into the changer. MOZART SONATA fills the cab. From the open briefcase, Max also pulls out one last thing...

A TATTERED POSTCARD

which depicts the whitest sand and bluest sea you can imagine. A dream place. An endorphin-releasing groove. Limitless horizon. It's the Maldives Islands in the Indian Ocean.

MAX

slips the postcard under the rubber bands on the visor. He can see it whenever he wants to. But not now. He flips the visor up, puts the car in gear and pulls out.

CUT TO:

5 EXT. LA DOWNTOWN - MAX'S CAB - LATE DAY

5

northbound on the 405 or Harbor Freeway, an on-ramp to the east 105. It's all magical in the light. Max's cab, rocketing along circilinear ramps into complexity of five traffic streams... *

6 INT. CAB

6

...harsh reality intrudes.. Max is driving a YOUNG PROFESSIONAL COUPLE with carry-on bags, having a heated argument about...

MAN

...it's always you. Why is everything always directed at you...?

WOMAN

...everything is not "always about me." He was being sarcastic and you goddamn well know it...

MAN

...I'm sorry, I didn't hear it that way...

WOMAN

...oh, bullshit! How about the dig about the makeover...?

MAN

...what do you want me to do, punch the guy out? I work with him. And you're perfectly capable of taking care of your own.....

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

WOMAN
 (interrupts)
 ...well, last I checked, you were
sleeping with me, so unless you wanna
 start fucking him, I suggest...

Max endures it silently, invisible as furniture. He doesn't exist as far as his passengers are concerned...

7 INT. CAB - LATE DAY

7

...as Max drops an elderly Asian couple in Little Saigon... *

Up ahead, he sees a cluster of CHINESE GANGBANGERS in their early 20's wearing cheap suits, white shirts and no ties. Some guy gets pushed to the ground, punched and kicked while four or five watch, amused. *

Max's first instinct... *

MAX
 Hey, leave-up on him, man...

One GANG MEMBER, eating take-out with chopsticks, hears, turns, sees Max.

GANG MEMBER
 Say what? What you lookin' at, bitch?
 (stream of hot Cantonese)

He throws his food container. Another throws a beer bottle. Max hits the accelerator as the bottle bounces off the rear windshield...

8 EXT/INT. CAB - GAS STATION - LATE DAY

8

by the freeway. Mexican murals are coated with a patina of corrosion from the fumes. We find Max cleaning Chinese take-out off his cab with the water hose while the gas pump CLICKS OFF. The Attendant he's known for five years finishes a taco. *

ATTENDANT
 (in Spanish)
 How'd you get the chop suey all over
 the cab? *

MAX
 (in Spanish)
 I didn't. The cab got in a fight with
 a gang of Chinese Cholos. *

ATTENDANT
 (in Spanish)
 There's been sprouts by the passenger
 door. *

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

Max hangs the nozzle back, gets in the car...

*

Max slips his credit card into the briefcase. We glimpse the Mercedes S500 catalogue again. And Max flips the visor down, staring at the island. Soothed by the blue.

*

*

We're seeing the most private of Max's rituals, the one he doesn't share with anybody.

Now, he starts hustling for calls by posting himself in a nearby zone. See Max work the computer. He bids and gets a next load.

*

DISPATCHER
(get language)

CUT TO:

*

9 OMIT

9

*

10 OMIT 10
11 INT. CAB - MAGIC HOUR - SUPERIOR COURT BUILDING - MAX 11

presumably, has dropped a load in front. He fills out his trip sheet. A pedestrian businessman asks directions to LAX. Max ad libs, directing him to the people-mover.

Yellow cylindrical stairs...a pretty young WOMAN descends into the interior lobby.

Max finishes his notation.

The young WOMAN detours through media and the rush-hour crowd while talking rapid fire into a cell phone, starts toward Max's cab, waving at it...

Max doesn't see her, starts to pull away.

She gives up, turns toward a green City Cab behind her, but it just picked up a load.

Then, Max catches sight of her and stops. Red taillights.

She turns and starts for the cab.

We SEE Max regard her in his rearview mirror. He ejects a CD and loads a different one.

ADDENDUM: WILD DIAL FOR ANNIE ACTION while Annie's on the cell phone to UNHEARD LEGAL ASSISTANT/TRANSCRIBER... *

ANNIE
I need it transcribed... *

ASSISTANT'S VOICE (UNHEARD)
Off of what? *

ANNIE
Off the line sheets. *

ASSISTANT'S VOICE (UNHEARD)
Why? *

ANNIE
'Cause I think it's him on there. In the gold Lexus on the cell. If it is, he's enhanceable, 'cause of priors in the late '80's... *

ASSISTANT'S VOICE (O.S.)
What about tomorrow afternoon? *

11A EXT./INT. CAB

11A

The woman, ANNIE FARRELL, enters the cab. Everything about her says "serious professional" from her suit to her briefcase and purse. Still on her cell, her attention is focused on the call.

ANNIE

...no, the transcriptions need to be done by seven a.m.. Period. Okay?

*
*

MAX

How ya' doin'? Where to?

ANNIE

Downtown. 312 North Spring Street.
Take Sepulveda to Slauson to La Brea.
La Brea north to 6th into downtown.

Max pulls away from the curb, starts the meter and turns left.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(into cell phone)

So you'll be up late. I'm pulling an all-nighter, too. Save the tears.

*

She ends the call, starts to check her voicemail on her phone. Max's eyes in the rearview mirror...

(CONTINUED)

MAX
I'll take 105 east and up the 110.
It's faster.

ANNIE
(doesn't look at him)
What?

MAX
(louder)
105 to the 110 is faster.

ANNIE
110 turns into a parking lot around
USC.

MAX
This late, the 110 is moving, but La
Brea north of the Santa Monica is
jammed.

*
*
*

ANNIE
110 north of the 10 you get people
going to Pasadena and they drive slow.

*
*

MAX
That's why I jump off at Grand.
(looks at her)
But, hey, surface streets is cool.
That's what you want, that's what we
do...

*
*
*

Annie looks up for the first time. Sceptically...

ANNIE
Are we taking bets? What if you're
wrong?

MAX
Your ride is free.

ANNIE
You got yourself a deal.

12 EXT. OLYMPIC BLVD. - DUSK TO NIGHT

12

Max's cab maneuvers easily through light traffic past golf
driving ranges.

13 INT. CAB - DUSK TO NIGHT

13

Annie glances up from a legal brief, noticing the lack of
traffic.

(CONTINUED)

13 INT. CAB - DUSK TO NIGHT 13

Annie glances up from a legal brief, noticing the lack of traffic.

(CONTINUED)

ANNIE

Go ahead, say it. Go ahead.

MAX

...lucky with the lights.

ANNIE

You weren't "lucky with the lights."
What you were was right. I was
wrong...

(glances at his license)

...Max.

She sets the brief aside, eyes tired anyway. She notices the
MUSIC playing faintly up front. Bach's "Air on a G String."

ANNIE (CONT'D)

You mind turning this up?

Max doesn't mind at all. He tweaks the volume up. Annie leans
her head back to listen, closes her eyes.

MAX

You like Bach?

ANNIE

(nods)

I used to play this piece in high
school.

MAX

Let me guess. Woodwinds?

ANNIE

(smiles)

Viola. I never had the lungs for wind
instruments.

MAX

Could'a fooled me, the way you were
unloading into that cell phone.

ANNIE

(laughs)

Different instrument...

(beat)

You know, if you'd only listened to
me, we'd be all bogged down in traffic
right now, and you would have made an
extra five bucks.

MAX

Yeah? Keep it. Buy yourself
something. Go wild.

(CONTINUED)

ANNIE

(off his silence)

A gentleman. I thought chivalry was a necessary casualty of gender politics...

MAX

Not a big thing, you know...?

ANNIE

How many cabbies get you into an argument to save you money?

MAX

There were two of us. I killed the other guy. I don't like competition...

She's charmed by his deadpan.

ANNIE

You take pride in...being the best at what you do...?

*

MAX

This?

(hesitates)

This is temporary. You know. Pays the bills. I fill in with this. I WILL be the best at what I do, but that's something else.

*

ANNIE

What else?

MAX

I'm setting up something...

*

ANNIE

Like tell me...?

MAX

...limo company I'm putting together. Island Limousines. An island on wheels. So I'm part-timing until I get delivery, Benzes off leases, work up my client lists, staff up, all that...

*

An uncomfortable beat. He turns the conversation back to her:

MAX (CONT'D)

You like being a lawyer?

(CONTINUED)

ANNIE
You psychic?

(CONTINUED)

MAX

I'm starting an 800 hotline.

(off her look)

Caught your phone call. And even if I hadn't, there's the dark pinstripe.

Elegant, not too hip, which rules out advertising, plus a top drawer briefcase, that you live out of, purse looks like a Bodega...

*
*
*

ANNIE

(laughs)

Bottega.

MAX

...Bottega. Guy gets in my cab with a machete? I figure he's a sushi chef. You? Clarence Darrow.

Annie can't help laughing.

ANNIE

Not quite. He worked defense. I'm a prosecutor...

MAX

Big case?

ANNIE

Yeah.

14 EXT. FEDERAL BUILDING (NOT 312 SPRING STREET) - DOWNTOWN - 14
DUSK

Max's cab slides in to the curb. Beat. Still a lot of pedestrian and car traffic, people heading home for the night.

15 INT. CAB - ANNIE'S 15

smile fades as she gazes up at her building, some anxiety comes back.

ANNIE

You got us here fast...

She digs in her purse for the fare.

MAX

You never answered my question. You like what you do?

ANNIE

(hedging)

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

MAX

But not right now...?

ANNIE

(nods)

No, I do...like I can't wait. ...I love standing up in that courtroom.

(hesitates)

At the same time...I always get this clenched-up thing the night before the first day...

MAX

Clenched-up how...?

ANNIE

(beat)

I think I'm gonna lose. I think I suck. I think my case sucks. I haven't prepared enough. My exhibits aren't in order. People are gonna figure out that I don't know what I'm doin'. And I've had this charade going for years. I represent the Department of Justice of the United States government and my opening statement is gonna fall flat at the really important point and the jury's gonna laugh at me.

(beat)

Then I cry... I don't throw-up. A lot of people throw-up. I have a strong stomach.

(beat)

Then I get it together. And rewrite my opening statement. Work the exhibits. For the rest of the night. That's my routine.

(looks up with a smile)

In the morning, it starts. I'm fine.

Max is focused on her eyes.

MAX

You need a vacation.

ANNIE

(faint smile)

I just had...a vacation. On the Harbor Freeway.

She takes money out of her purse.

(CONTINUED)

MAX

No. Not in a cab. You need your head straight, gotta get your unified self up, get harmonic...you know...

ANNIE

When was the last time you took a break?

MAX

I take little ones all the time.

ANNIE

How often?

MAX

Dozen times a day.

He flips the visor down, revealing the postcard of white beaches, clear green water. It's the first time he's shared this with anybody:

MAX (CONT'D)

Maldives Islands. It gets heavy, I take five. Go there.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (2)

15

On impulse, he slips the postcard free and offers it to her. *

ANNIE

No, I couldn't take that...I couldn't.

MAX

Yes, you could. You need it more than I do.

(off her hesitation)

It helps. I promise.

She accepts the postcard, surprised and touched. Her gaze lingers on his for a moment. She holds it.

ANNIE

Wow. Thanks for everything, Max...

MAX

Sure thing.

She gets out of the cab, starts to walk away...

...but turns back, ducking into the cab's window. Looking a bit flustered, she pulls a business card and offers it to him.

ANNIE

In case you ever...I don't know...wanna start an investigation of a Fortune 500 company or argue cab routes or something...

And with that, she goes towards the three assistants waiting for her outside the revolving door. Max is left somewhat stunned, holding her card. He glances down at it:

**ANNIE FARRELL
ASSISTANT UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
CRIMINAL DIVISION
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

Meanwhile...

15A INT. FEDERAL BUILDING, GARAGE - DOOR

15A

*

A hand punches a sequence of numbers into a keypad. The garage is visible beyond. The lock unlocks. We see it is Vincent who walks into the steel interior staircase from the garage.

16 INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - VINCENT - DUSK

16

*

emerges from the interior staircase into the lobby in his good suit with the expensive briefcase. Casually, he glances to his right. We don't know why... *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OVER VINCENT

in front of him is a guard station and a row of tumbrils that require an identity card to not trigger an alarm. Vincent produces his card, scans it across the top.

*

(CONTINUED)

16

CONTINUED: (2)

16

The indicator goes GREEN. Vincent slips the card into his briefcase and walks through, towards the bank of elevators. However, he doesn't take an elevator. He walks past them towards an escalator down to the street. Why did he walk into, through and out of the lobby of the building?

*
*
*
*
*

FRONTAL CLOSE: VINCENT

and PAN RIGHT with him as he and we start a descent on the escalator from the stone foyer to the street level.

*
*

PAST VINCENT'S HEAD,

*

riding the "up" escalator is Annie Farrell and the group of lawyers. Vincent looks at her, appreciatively, then away.

*
*

17

OMIT

17

17A

EXT. FEDERAL BUILDING - VINCENT

17A

exits, approaches us, and ARM DOWN to include the yellow top of Max's cab...

Max still holds Annie's business card, marveling at it and her. From the FRONT...

VINCENT

Hello?

MAX

(glances back)

Uh, yeah...

And Max can't hide his eyeline and interest...

VINCENT

Let's go to...

(Max isn't paying attention)

You free? Or...

*

Vincent starts towards another cab pulling up...

*

MAX

Yeah, yeah, sorry...

Vincent gets in.

*

(CONTINUED)

17A CONTINUED:

17A

MAX (CONT'D)
Where to?

VINCENT
452 South Union Street.

17B INT. CAB - MAX

17B

pulls out, starts the meter.

VINCENT
(checks his watch)
How long you think this'll take?

MAX
Fourteen minutes.

VINCENT
Fourteen? Not fifteen? Not thirteen?

MAX
Two minutes to get onto the 101.
Transition to the 110 to the 10 and
exit on Normandie is four minutes.
North on Normandie is five minutes.
Two minutes to South Union 'cause
there's roadwork. Thirteen plus one
for "shit happens."

Vincent checks his watch.

VINCENT
Mind if I time you?
(Max shrugs)
What do I get if you're wrong? A free
ride?

MAX
An apology.

Max heads for the 100 on-ramp.

MAX (CONT'D)
...I already offered up the free ride
today.

*
*

VINCENT
To who?

*

MAX
...some girl.

*

(CONTINUED)

17B CONTINUED:

17B

VINCENT

Did you ask her out?

Vincent's read Max's mind. Max hadn't thought it through that far. Now that he does, reality sinks in. Annie's out of his league and he knows it.

Gone forever, Max jams her card under the rubber bands on the visor.

CUT TO:

18

EXT. 6TH STREET BRIDGE OVER 110 - NIGHT

18

*

Max's cab zooms across, heading out of downtown.

*

19 INT. CAB - VINCENT

19

Max changes the subject.

*

MAX
First time in LA?

VINCENT
No. To tell the truth, whenever I'm here, I can't wait to leave. Too sprawled-out. Disconnected. You know...? But that's me.

(beat)
You like it here?

MAX
It's home.

VINCENT
17 million people. This was a country, it would be the fifth biggest economy in the world. But nobody knows each other. Too impersonal. But that's just me...you know...

*

*

(beat)
I read about this guy. Gets on the MTA, here, and dies. Six hours he's riding the subway before anybody notices. This corpse doing laps around LA, people on and off, sitting next to him, nobody notices.

*

MAX
I see your point. Yeah...

Vincent glances around the cab.

VINCENT
Cleanest cab I've ever been in. Your regular ride?

MAX
Yeah. I share it with the dayshift guy.

VINCENT
Prefer nights?

MAX
People are more relaxed, you know? Less stress, less traffic, better tips.

VINCENT
You get benefits?

(CONTINUED)

MAX
Like sick leave? *

VINCENT
Retirement? Health and welfare? *

MAX
It's not that kind of job.

VINCENT
Start a union.

MAX
Me, specifically?

VINCENT
Why not?

MAX
Last thing I need is a reason to keep
driving a cab. It's temporary. I'm
fillin' in, you know, while this
other thing I'm putting together is
shaping up...

VINCENT
How long you been driving?

MAX
Twelve years.

Hardly temporary...

VINCENT
Really? What else are you putting
together?

Max hesitates. He's not as secure as he was with Annie.

MAX
I don't talk about it. No offense,
but...

VINCENT
(smiles, shrugs)
None taken. Talkers and doers. Like
you, I like doers.

20 EXT. SOUTH UNION STREET APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

20

A rundown, quasi-deserted area. Alienation in the twilight. A
lonely tenant watches the city from an open window. Max's cab
pulls to the curb...

21 INT. CAB - VINCENT 21
closes his briefcase, checks his watch.

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT

Fourteen minutes. Man, you're good...

MAX

Lucky with the lights.

VINCENT

Yeah, sure. You probably know the light schedules, too.

(leans forward)

Listen...I'm in town on a real estate deal. A closing. One night. I got five stops to make, collect signatures. See some friends. Then I got a six a.m. out of LAX. Why don't you hang with me for the night...?

MAX

I'm not a hire car. It's against regs...

VINCENT

Regulations? These guys don't pay you sick leave.

(pulls his wallet)

How much you pull down a shift?

MAX

Two-fifty, four hundred.

*

VINCENT

I'll make it six hundred. Plus an extra hundred if you get me to LAX and I don't have to run for the plane.

Vincent draws CRISP HUNDRED-DOLLAR BILLS from his briefcase, fans them like a magic trick. Meanwhile, a car pulls up behind double-parked Max. Vincent steals a glimpse of his PC. See a real estate prospectus-looking display.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

...take a chance.

MAX

Man, I don't know.

VINCENT

Yes, you do.

MAX

(succumbs)

Yeah. Okay.

Vincent smiles, gives him a firm handshake.

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT

Cool. We got a deal. Here's three
hundred down. What's your name?

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (2)

21

MAX

Max.

VINCENT

Max? I'm Vincent.

Vincent gets out. Max calls after him:

MAX

I can't double park here...

VINCENT

I'll meet you in the alley behind the building.

Understood. Vincent steps into the building foyer, while...

Max puts the car in gear...

22 EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

22

...and pulls into the alley behind the apartment building.

23 INT. CAB - MAX

23

brings the car to a stop and notices Vincent's briefcase lying on the back seat. A trusting soul. Max smiles.

MAX

Definitely not from around here.

He kills the engine. Silence.

There's a noticeable lack of city noise. DISTANT talk radio. Spanish gospel from a Baptist church. An occasional car passes the mouth of the alley.

Max trades Mozart for Beethoven.

Max checks his watch. Dinnertime. He turns to his battered briefcase on the passenger seat.

It's filled with carefully arranged items. NAPKINS in the pockets. UTENSILS in the pen holders. FOIL PACKS of mayo and mustard and Thousand Island Dressing. 1.5 liter PLASTIC BOTTLE of vitamin mineral water. The well-worn Mercedes brochure for the S500. A spreadsheet, like a handwritten business plan. A large submarine sandwich wrapped in two halves. Neat note pads. Everything's in methodical order.

*
*

23A EXT./INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - VERY CLOSE PAST VINCENT 23A
climbing stairs with palm trees and downtown behind...

23B INT. CAB - MAX 23B
spreads Thousand Island on the sandwich. He glances up at the visor. He tilts it down, peering at Annie's business card, wondering what to do. Will he call her?

He sits a moment, fighting a wave of sadness. Unhappy with himself. With his life. His place in the world.

23C OMIT 23C

23D INT. CAB - MAX 23D

raises the sandwich to take a bite...

FROM THE FLOOR UP PAST MAX + THE STEERING WHEEL (VFX - GRN SCRN) *

up THROUGH the windshield is the twinkle of stars in the night sky. Suddenly, a dark shape from above blacks out the sky. It descends towards us. As Max takes a bite...

...WHAM! SOMETHING HUGE rocks the cab on its axles! GLASS rains down. A HEADLIGHT EXPLODES! The windshield FRACTURES! Max bounces off the ceiling. His submarine deconstructs all over the interior. His coffee spills...

...and then abrupt, stunning silence.

What hit him. An earthquake? Max takes a dazed beat. He peers at the windshield...

THE DEAD FACE OF A FAT MAN STARES AT HIM.

Max recoils with a yell, scrambles from the cab, heart pounding...

24 EXT. ALLEY - FROM ABOVE: CAB - NIGHT 24 *

A CORPSE is angled across part of his roof and windshield in a bathrobe. There's shards of window glass from upstairs everywhere. It makes a halo around the cab. *

Max is stunned.

24 CONTINUED:

24

He looks to see where the body came from.

MAX POV: 3RD STORY (SOUTH UNION LOCATION)

A window on the top floor is broken out. A white curtain flaps in the breeze.

24A LOW ANGLE: CMS MAX

24A

*

turns. Vincent has entered the alley and now stops.

*

Max's first thought: this passenger will think Max ran into this guy.

*

MAX

He - He fell on my cab...!
(points)

VINCENT

(pause)
You always stutter?

MAX

Well, yeah. Yeah. Guy fell on my motherfucking cab from up there...!

Max looks up, points again, as if Vincent might have missed it the first time. Vincent's focus hasn't left Max.

*

*

MAX (CONT'D)

I think he's dead.

VINCENT

...taken two .45s and did a high dive onto his head. It's a good guess.

Max stares at Vincent. It's sinking in. Vincent, meanwhile, has to make his decision. About Max. Kill him and find another, or...

*

MAX

You - you killed him?

VINCENT

No. I - I shot him. The bullets and the fall killed him.

A frozen beat. Everything's out in the open. Max realizes he's in trouble. He backs away, thinking escape...

...and like lightning, Vincent's .45 H+K is in his hand. To Max the .45 caliber bore is the diameter of the Spring Street tunnel.

(CONTINUED)

24A CONTINUED:

24A

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Red-light-green-light? Light's red.

Max freezes.

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT (CONT'D)

You can run, but you'll die tired.

Max nods. Shakily raises his hands.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Put down your hands.

(beat)

Are you cool? Say "I am cool." *

MAX

You are cool.

VINCENT

No.

(beat)

You say you are cool.

MAX

I am...I'm cool.

Vincent decides. The gun disappears back into Vincent's waistband.

VINCENT

Okay. Help me out here. *

MAX

With what?

VINCENT

El Gordo decided to get some air and not take the stairs. So we go to plan B. Pop the trunk. *

MAX

My trunk?

VINCENT

(Isn't it self evident?) I can't leave him here. So unless you want him riding up front with you...and given the hygiene... *

(smells)

...and his sphincters let go...

Max reluctantly pops the trunk, circles to the front of the car. Vincent reaches over the hood, grabs the corpse by the bathrobe lapels, heaves the body into a sitting position.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Gonna roll him off the hood. *

(a homily for Max) *

Always lift with your legs... *

(CONTINUED)

MAX

I don't think I can do this.

VINCENT

He's only a dead guy. On three. Uno.
Dos. Three.

*

He rolls the corpse off the hood. Grimacing, Max gets a firm grip under the arms. Vincent gets the legs.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Got it?

MAX

Yeah.

They start shuffling toward the trunk. Suddenly, Max lets out a YELL, almost dropping his end.

VINCENT

What?

MAX

His hand moved! His goddamn hand
twitched!

VINCENT

It's a spasm! Jesus, don't be such a
girl...

ANGLE FROM INSIDE TRUNK

as they heave the body inside, pausing to catch their breath.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

(to heavy dead person)

Never heard of a treadmill?

*

*

He slams the trunk, shutting us into DARKNESS...

25 EXT. CAB - NIGHT

25

...and we find Max frozen like a statue while Vincent is dousing the hood with Max's 1.5 liter bottle of drinking water.

VINCENT

Six liters of blood in the average
Angeleno, he's gotta dump all his...on
your cab.

(a final dousing)

Okay, that's good enough.

Vincent heads for the car, notices Max's feet are frozen to the concrete.

*

*

(CONTINUED)

MAX

Uh, look...why don't you, like, take the cab...

VINCENT

"Take the cab..."

MAX

Yeah. I - I'll chill. You know. And...they don't check. You know? They don't. They don't know who's driving these things. You, me...

VINCENT

And you promise you will never tell anybody? Right? ...get in the fucking car.

Max does. Vincent gets into the back seat...

26 INT. CAB - MAX

26

behind the wheel, turns the key. The ENGINE GRINDS. He tries again. MORE GRINDING.

VINCENT

Can we leave the scene of the crime, now, please?

*

MAX

I'm trying...

He turns the ignition again. GRIND. GRIND. Vincent's getting steamed:

VINCENT

Max.

MAX

It's not me!

Grind. Grind.

VINCENT

The engine is already on. Put the little pointer on the letter "D." "D" stands for Drive.

26 CONTINUED: 26

Max pulls out of the alley...

27 EXT. STREET - AS MAX'S CAB 27

MAX
You're making me nervous.

VINCENT
I'm making you nervous? I'm the one
on a schedule...

...accelerates away, disappearing, another CAR appears.

27A EXT. UNION STREET 27A

It cruises down the street and stops in front of the apartment building.

RAY FANNING emerges from the car. Edged hair, an earring, *
sports clothes. A salesman or a player or a dealer. Forties, a
face with character and some miles. And something insistent
about his intent...

He heads towards the entry gate, rings a buzzer. Waits a
moment. Rings again. Nothing. Plus...he looks like he could
kick your ass if he wanted to.

He pulls a thin plastic card from an inner pocket of his jacket,
jimmies the door lock...

28 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING COURTYARD, THIRD FLOOR - FANNING - 28 *
NIGHT

approaches across the balcony walkway against the junky palms
and downtown skyline.

He knocks on the door...causing the door to swing in slightly.
He glances down, sees the lock was pulled. Tensing, he fades to
one side, his hand going to his holster at his hip.

He draws a Beretta, reaches out and pushes the door all the way
open...

29 INT. APARTMENT - NOTHING - NIGHT 29

A dark shambles. Old take-out. A TV. Fanning enters *
cautiously, alert for the slightest movement or sound.

FANNING *
Ramone?
(beat)
Estas fiestando con una chica?

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: 29

Nothing. Fanning cautiously enters the bedroom, worried now.
Reemerges. Nothing.

*

30 INT. APARTMENT - FANNING 30

*

carefully negotiates the corners and slides along the wall to
SEE...

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

30

THE BROKEN WINDOW

Glass missing. He leans out. A dizzying drop. A halo of broken glass on the alley below...in the center of which is a big blank spot.

FANNING

Fuck.

And he produces his police radio and we realize he's a cop.

31 INT. CAB, TRAVELING - MAX - NIGHT

31

Max winds his way through surface-street traffic, in shock, sneaking anxious glances at Vincent in back. Vincent's got the tablet PC from his briefcase, studying it. The silence is thick.

Max's hand is shaking. He lifts it off the wheel, tries to steady his fingers. Vincent diverts some attention to Max...

VINCENT (O.S.)

Try deep breathing.

MAX

What?

VINCENT

Adrenaline's wearing off. You get shaky after. Some people slip into shock. It's not uncommon. Deep breathing helps.

Max starts drawing in breaths, letting them out slowly.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Is that better?

MAX

I think so.

They stop at a RED LIGHT. Max glances at the passenger seat. Dressing and stray pieces of lettuce and mortadella. He parks the gearshift and goes for the paper towels, cleaning up.

Vincent over the tablet PC, taking in Max. Softly:

*

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT

What are you doing?

MAX

It's a mess.

VINCENT

So?

Max keeps wiping, as if getting the seats clean might put everything right again.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Lady Macbeth. Leave the seats. The light's green. We're sitting here.

A CAR HORN HONKS behind Max. The car whips around them to get through the intersection.

DRIVER

Asshole!

VINCENT

You no longer have the cleanest cab in La-La Land. You gotta live with that. Focus on the job. Drive.

*

Right. Max puts the car in gear and proceeds.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

(checks the PC)
7565 Fountain. You know it?

MAX

West Hollywood.

VINCENT

(checks his watch)
How long, you figure?

Max has to force himself to concentrate:

MAX

Seventeen minutes. Why?

Silence from the back. Max into the rearview, realizing:

MAX (CONT'D)

Oh. Oh, no. You're kidding. We...

VINCENT

I told you we had other stops to make tonight.

(CONTINUED)

MAX

You said you were visiting friends!

VINCENT

They're somebody's friends...

(changes display)

You drive a cab. I make my rounds.
We both do our jobs, you might make it
through the night and come out seven
hundred bucks ahead.

*

MAX

I...I'm not trying to piss you off,
see? Okay? But I can't drive you
around so you can murder people...
Man, that's not my job...

VINCENT

Tonight it is.

MAX

You don't get it. I mean it. Really.
I'm not up for this...

Vincent realizes Max is on the verge of panic.

VINCENT

You are stressed. I understand that.
Keep breathing. Stay calm.

*

Max starts deep-breathing again, exhaling slowly. Vincent stows
the PC.

*

*

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Are you breathing?

MAX

Yes.

VINCENT

Good. What else calms you down?
Candy? Cigarettes? Breathe.

MAX

Music.

VINCENT

Play music.

Max turns on the CD. SOFT CLASSICAL.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Chopin prelude. Stodgy.
(Max nods)
Here's the deal.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT (CONT'D)

You were gonna drive me around and never be the wiser. But because of El Gordo's high dive, we're into Plan B. Still breathing?

(beat)

Now. We have to make the best of it. Improvise. Adapt to the environment. Darwin. "Shit happens." The I Ching...whatever. Roll with it...

*

MAX

I Ching? You threw a man out a window!

VINCENT

I didn't throw him, he fell.

MAX

What'd he do to you?

VINCENT

Nothing. I only met him one time.

MAX

Then how can you kill him like that?

VINCENT

I should only kill people after I get to know 'em?

(off Max's look)

Six billion people on the planet and you get bent out of shape 'cause of one fat guy?

MAX

Who, who was he?

VINCENT

What do you care? Ever hear of Rwanda?

MAX

Rwanda. Yeah.

*

VINCENT

Tens of thousands killed before sundown. Nobody's killed people that fast since Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Did you bat an eye, Max? Did you join Amnesty International, Oxfam or something? No.

(off Max's silence)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT (CONT'D)

I off one Angeleno, you throw a hissy fit...

Max stops at another RED LIGHT.

MAX

I don't know Rwandans.

VINCENT

You don't know the guy in the trunk, either.

(beat)

If it makes you feel any better, he was a criminal involved in a Continuing Criminal Enterprise.

MAX

Oh, that makes it okay, then. 'Cause all you're doing is taking out the garbage...

*
*

VINCENT

Something like that...

(distracted)

What you need to remember is that nobody gets out of this alive. Even if we quit smoking. Cut out red meat. Everybody dies...

Suddenly -- A BRILLIANT GLARE OF FLASHING LIGHTS stabs at the cab. Max sees --

-- an LAPD CRUISER behind the cab. The ROOFTOP LIGHTS FLASHING...

COP #1 (P.A.)

Please pull the vehicle over to the curb.

Max complies. A second bright beam lights up the interior. TWO UNIFORMED COPS emerge from the patrol car. Faceless silhouettes, approaching cautiously.

VINCENT

(low)

Get rid of 'em.

MAX

How?

VINCENT

You're a cabby. Talk yourself out of a ticket.

The cops are now circling to either side of the cab, using Maglite FLASHLIGHTS.

(CONTINUED)

Vincent eases the briefcase off his lap, his hands clear his field of movement, spread open his jacket to better reach his waistband and his H+K.

MAX

Please. Don't do anything.

VINCENT

Then don't let me get cornered. You don't have the trunk space.

MAX

I can't believe this...

Vincent's hand reaches...

VINCENT

Believe it.

MAX

Don't. I'll talk to them, I'll talk to them...!

VINCENT

(re: cops)
Probably married.

A COP'S HAND descends to the driver's window, raps loudly, GOLD WEDDING BAND catching the light as it taps on the glass.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Maybe that one's got kids. Probably his wife's pregnant...

*

MAX

I'll deal with it!

A FLASHLIGHT BEAM pops on at the driver's window. Cop #1 glaring light into Max's eyes.

A SECOND FLASHLIGHT BEAM pops on, this from Cop #2 on the passenger side. Checking out Vincent in the back. Vincent smiles good-naturedly.

Max rolls his window down. Cop #1 leans down, and we see his face for the first time. A clean-cut blonde guy.

(CONTINUED)

COP #1
License and registration.

Max pulls them off the visor, hands them over. The cop examines them by flashlight.

COP #1 (CONT'D)
Pulled you over 'cause your
windshield's smashed.
(beat)
All of this current?

*
*
*
*

MAX
Yes, officer.

From the other side of the cab, COP #2 lets out a laugh. He's playing his flashlight beam across the seats. Mustard and mayo everywhere.

COP #2
Wha'd you, have a food fight in here?

Max gives Vincent an "I told you so" look in the rearview mirror. Meanwhile, we HEAR dimly on the POLICE RADIO about a domestic disturbance on 83rd and Hoover and some officers responding.

Cop #2 plays his beam across the cracked windshield and damaged hood. Faint reddish traces in the paint. His smiles fades.

COP #2 (CONT'D)
Is that blood?

*

MAX
Yeah. See...
(thinks fast)
I hit a deer.

COP #1
A deer...

MAX
Over by Slauson.

COP #1
A "South Central" deer?

MAX
Goddamn deer jumped out in front of
me. You believe that?

COP #1
(indicates Vincent)
Why you still carrying a passenger?

(CONTINUED)

MAX

I was headed back to my depot, see,
you know? And his drop's on the way.

COP #1

Yeah, but your cab's not safe to
drive. And we're going to impound it.
We need to do a vehicle inventory
while we wait for the tow truck. Pop
the trunk and step out of the vehicle.

(swings flashlight beam to
Vincent)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

COP #1 (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, sir, you'll have to phone for another cab.

VINCENT

Is that necessary, Officer? I'm just a half mile from here.

COP #1

I'm afraid it is. Please exit the vehicle.

(to Max)

You, too.

Max hears a SOFT CLICK behind him. The unmistakable sound of a safety CLICKED OFF. He meets Vincent's gaze in the rearview mirror. A whisper: *

VINCENT

You open that trunk, they go inside.

Behind Vincent, through the rear windshield, Max sees Cop #2 moving to the trunk, playing his flashlight across it...

Max, mouth dry...

MAX

Hey, man, it's been a long day. You know? It's so slow, I pay this guy to ride so I don't get lonely...

(re: Vincent)

My first fare. How about a break? I'm heading to the barn, anyway...

COP #1

Get out of the car. And open the trunk...

Max tosses a hopeless look into the rearview. Vincent's staring at him. No mercy there.

Max steps from the car. The cop escorts Max toward the rear, Vincent smoothly pulls his H+K from his waistband and emerges on the passenger side, gun held out of sight and a heartbeat away from opening fire...

...a CRACKLE OF STATIC, a PANICKY VOICE COMES OVER THE POLICE BAND:

POLICE RADIO

Officer needs help. We got a man with a gun. Shots fired at 83rd and Hoover...

Cop #2 to his partner.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (9)

31

COP #2

Let's go.

Off-screen radio talk from many responding units...

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (10)

31

COP #1
 (to Max; leaving)
 Get that cab back to your garage...

The cops pile into their black-and-white and ROAR off into the night.

Max and Vincent are left standing, gazing across the cab at each other.

VINCENT
 Breathe.

Max starts deep-breathing as they get back in the cab...

CUT TO:

32 EXT. HOTEL + PENTHOUSE - CORPULENT MAN - NIGHT

32 *

in an attorneys suit with rapper clients.

VINCENT
 (to himself)
 I thought Californians exercised...?

REVEAL Vincent looking at his PC. Vincent pulls from his briefcase an identity card for a Notary Public and a second gun, a .45 Cal Para-Ordnance back up. He moves the slide, checking there's a round in the chamber. Max hears metal on metal, looks up. As Vincent holsters it in the small of his back...

VINCENT (CONT'D)
 (abrupt tone)
 What are you lookin' at?

He gets out and enters the passenger seat next to Max in the front.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
 Hands on the wheel. Ten and two.
 Like they taught you in driver's ed.

MAX
 Why?

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT
Because I say so. *

Max grips the steering wheel. Vincent has plastic ties and proceeds quickly and efficiently to bind Max's hands to the steering wheel.

VINCENT (CONT'D) *
Cab's a disgrace. No wonder the cops pulled you over.

On the way out of the car...

DISPATCH RADIO (O.S.)
Max? Max? You out there, you son of a bitch?

Vincent looks to Max...

VINCENT
Who...is that?

MAX
Lenny, my dispatcher.

LENNY (O.S.)
I know you're out there! Answer the goddamn call!

VINCENT
What happens if you don't?

MAX
He'll keep calling.

LENNY (O.S.)
Max? Answer!

Vincent reaches across Max, pulls the mike off the dash, holds it up to Max's mouth.

VINCENT
Don't blow it.

Max nods. Vincent thumbs the toggle.

MAX
Uh, yeah? Lenny? It's me.

LENNY (O.S.)
I got off the phone with the cops. A desk sergeant called to check you brought the cab in...

(CONTINUED)

Silence as Lenny waits for a reaction. Max and Vincent trade a look. Vincent shrugs, thumbs the toggle. Say something.

MAX

Yeah? So?

LENNY (O.S.)

So? So, aside from I hate talking to cops, they tell me you crashed the goddamn cab?

MAX

It got crashed! I didn't...

LENNY (O.S.)

Do I care what, where or why? You're payin'!

*

VINCENT

It was an accident. You're not liable. (Tell him.)

*

MAX

It was an accident. I'm not liable.

LENNY (O.S.)

Bullshit! I'm making you liable! It's comin' outta your goddamn pocket...

*

Vincent stares at Max, expecting him to respond.

VINCENT

Tell him to stick the cab up his fat ass.

MAX

I can't do that. He's the Man.

VINCENT

So what?

MAX

I need the job.

VINCENT

No you don't.

LENNY (O.S.)

You still there? I'm talking to you! Max? Max?

Vincent abruptly puts the mike to his mouth, thumbs the toggle.

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT
He's not paying you a damn thing!

*

(CONTINUED)

LENNY (O.S.)
Who the hell are you?

Vincent glances up, tilts the visor down to see Annie's business card.

VINCENT
Richard Riccardo, Assistant U.S. Attorney. A passenger in this taxicab, and I'm reporting you to the DMV...

*

LENNY (O.S.)
(beat)
Let's not get excited.

VINCENT
Not excited? How am I supposed to not get excited, listening to you try to extort a working man? You know goddamn well your collision policy and general liability umbrella would cover the damages. What are you trying to pull, you sarcastic prick?

*
*

LENNY (O.S.)
I'm just tryin' to...to...

VINCENT
Tell it to him.
(shifts the mike)
Tell him he's an asshole.

MAX
(hesitates)
You're an asshole.

VINCENT
Tell him next time he pulls any shit, you're gonna stick this yellow cab up his fat ass.

MAX
Next time you pull any shit, I'm gonna stick this yellow cab up your fat ass.

Vincent clicks off, hangs up the mike. Looks at Max.

Beat. Max, taped to the steering wheel, nods.

VINCENT
(smiles)
Don't wait up, hon. I gotta work late.

(CONTINUED)

He grabs the ignition keys, shuts Max's door, strolls away.

32 CONTINUED: (6) 32

Max watches in the sideview mirror as Vincent vanishes into the building.

Max is left alone, trapped in his own cab in the alley.

Max jerks and strains against the duct tape, trying to free his hands. He gives up, breathing hard.

32A OMIT 32A

32B INT. HOTEL, PENTHOUSE - NIGHT 32B *

The overweight LAWYER, SYLVESTER CLARKE, who we saw on Vincent's P.C., separates from two girls and a second man, all watching TV, to answer a phone...

SYLVESTER CLARKE *
He identify himself? *
(beat) *
Sure. Let him up. *

32C INT. LOBBY - VINCENT 32C *

in shades leaves the Hotel Security and enters the elevator. *
Meanwhile... *

A32D INT. HOTEL, PENTHOUSE - SYLVESTER CLARKE A32D *

crosses towards the front door. *

32D EXT. HOTEL - ALLEY - MOVING IN ON MAX 32D *

He glances in the sideview, wondering where Vincent is, straining for a glimpse.

Nothing. Just darkness back there... Mind racing...

MAX
HEY! HEY! OVER HERE! I'M IN THE
CAB! HEY! HELP!

The street traffic's distant; nobody's around.

MAX (CONT'D)
HELP! GODDAMN IT! THERE'S A MAN WITH
A GUN! HE'S GONNA KILL PEOPLE!

Max thrashes wildly against the duct tape, screaming with frustration. He starts head-butting the car horn...

BEEEEEP! BEEP-BEEEEEEEEEP! BEEEEEP! BEEP-BEEP-BEEEEEEEEEP!

He raises his head, checking the street traffic a quarter block away. No one on the sidewalk takes notice of Max's cab.

(CONTINUED)

32D CONTINUED:

32D

MAX (CONT'D)

Oh, fuck me.

He shifts low on the seat, getting his knee under the dashboard. He slams his knee up, hitting the RED EMERGENCY LIGHT BUTTON concealed there. EMERGENCY STROBES START FLASHING at the front and rear of the car...

...and still nobody notices.

MAX (CONT'D)

GODDAMN IT, I'M FLASHING LIKE A
CHRISTMAS TREE OVER HERE.

He throws a look to the sideview mirror, sweaty and tense, knowing he's out of time.

(CONTINUED)

THE SIDEVIEW MIRROR

IN WHICH WE SEE Max's reflected eyes. Seconds ticking breathlessly away as he struggles...

He head butts the horn again. BEEP-BEEP. BEEEEEP. Flashers and horn!

MEANWHILE the ANGLE SHIFTS in the mirror, leaving Max's eyes and bringing into view the building and the penthouse at the top and we SEE...

...TWO SILENT MUZZLE FLASHES light up the windows like flashbulbs going off. Another death. Then A THIRD FLASH...then nothing. Lights out. Meanwhile...

MAX (CONT'D)

Oh shit, oh shit, oh shit.

*
*

He is head-butting the horn. BEEEEEP. BEEP-BEEP. And he checks the mirror. This time when he looks, he sees...

*

YOUNG WHITE GUYS. 20-25. They were on the sidewalk. Now they detour into the alley and approach the distressed cab from the back, shielding their eyes from Max's flashing lights.

MAX (CONT'D)

Oh. Oh, thank God! Hey, hey, man, help me out here!

WHITE GUY #1

Yo, whassup?

MAX

(fast, stumbling)

I got my, my hands taped to the steering wheel, here, by this guy, who's taped me in the car, 'cause he's up in the building somewhere...

CLOSER, now, the four are in baggies, hoodies and tattooed with lightning bolts on their necks, swastikas on chests, one has "5150" tattooed on his shaven eyebrow (police code for emotionally disturbed)...

WHITE GUY #2

You all trapped in there and shit?

MAX

...yeah, he's coming back. Hurry. Get me loose so I can call the cops...

WHITE GUY #1 nods...and pulls a chromed .380 and points it at Max.

(CONTINUED)

32D CONTINUED: (3)

32D

WHITE GUY #1
Fuck that, man, gimme your wallet.

*

(CONTINUED)

The others have walked off down the alley, laughing. One tosses * a beer bottle that smashes. Utter disbelief from Max...

MAX
Are you kidding me?

WHITE GUY #1
I will fuck you up! Hand it over.

MAX
(beat)
My hands are taped to the damn steering wheel!

It takes a moment for WHITE GUY #1 to process this. He steps to the window, presses the .380 against Max's cheek. It's utterly terrifying, everything happening fast:

MAX (CONT'D)
...don't shoot me, don't shoot me...

WHITE GUY #1
Then get your ass up, up...

Max pulls himself up by the steering wheel, trying to get his butt off the seat to give the Young Man access. The White Guy #1 gropes for Max's back pocket, trying to get the wallet, pressing the gun to his face, the other guys down the alley, turn the corner.

White Guy #1 pulls Max's wallet, pockets it...

...and pauses, seeing Vincent's briefcase on the back seat.

He yanks open the back door, grabs Vincent's briefcase, too, and walks off after his friends. White Guys #3 and #4 turned the corner. White Guy #2 lingers.

Max, still taped, is shaken. He can't believe what happened. He looks through the windshield at...

WHITE GUY #1

...walking off, cocky as hell, about to vanish into the night...

BACK OF WHITE GUY #1

VINCENT (O.S.)
Yo' homie...

White Guy #1 turns, to see the silhouette of Vincent. He raises his .380 side-handed, like he sees gangsters do on MTV. White Guy #2 joins him.

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT (CONT'D)

(even)

That my briefcase...?

White Guy #1 approaches Vincent from the front...#2 from Vincent's left.

WHITE GUY #2

May-be. And what the fuck else you got?

He closes on Vincent with the .380, held high and on the side. Vincent's left slams aside #1's .380. Draws and FIRES from the hip, putting TWO ROUNDS into #1. HAMMERS-ON TWO ROUNDS to the sternum, pivots. ONE to the head of #2. All in 1.6 seconds.

White Guy #2, falling backwards, is dead before he hits the ground. #1 never saw it coming. Vincent picks up his case, retrieves something from #1's pocket, puts one more into the head of #1 on the way back to the cab... *

...where Max saw it all. Frozen in horror. Astonished.

The rear door opens. Vincent hefts his briefcase into the back seat. He gets into the front.

Vincent sits for a moment, staring off, not looking at Max. Maybe ready to kill him.

Vincent raises something into view. Max's wallet. He tosses it in Max's lap.

Vincent flicks his hand. CLICK-CLACK, a Reeves folding hunter in dull metal, razor sharp...

VINCENT

(quietly)

Where's the button? Under the dash?

MAX

(dry whisper)

Yeah.

Vincent leans over and slices the plastic tie, freeing Max's hands. Beat.

VINCENT

You mind turning it off?

Max doesn't move for a moment, then reaches under the dash and turns off the strobes.

33 INT. CAB - MAX + VINCENT (TRAVELING) - NIGHT 33

Vincent in the back seat. (Juxtapose to a different continuity. *
Through the side window, we see Crenshaw Boulevard barbershops, *
music shops. We're stopped for a light.) Max is shell-shocked.

VINCENT
Another collateral.

MAX
What's that?

VINCENT
Collateral damage. People in the
wrong place at the wrong time.
(meets Max's gaze)
And you? You attract attention? You
are gonna get people killed who didn't
need to be. Understand?

MAX
I'm low on gas...

VINCENT
Pull in there.

33A EXT. GAS STATION, IN STREET - TAXI - NIGHT 33A

pulls by.

TIME-LAPSE - MACRO-CU: NUMBERS

race by. WIDEN. SEE Max filling up the taxi. Vincent is
positioned off the right rear corner from where he is line-of-
sight to everything. His affect is flat, distant. Max has
witnessed violent death and the full, lethal capabilities of
Vincent. Neither say a word...until softly...

MAX
Vincent?

VINCENT
Yes, Max?

MAX
Am I collateral?

Pause. A long one.

VINCENT
I haven't decided.

Max is silent. Absorbing this. Vincent checks his watch.
Unexpectedly, his mood changes up.

(CONTINUED)

33A CONTINUED:

33A

VINCENT (CONT'D)

But, hey! New news. We are ahead of
schedule.

MAX

Huh...?

*

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT
We got time to kill.
(fast change-down)
You like jazz?

MAX
I'm...what? Sorry?

VINCENT
Jazz.

MAX
Not that much.

VINCENT
Guy told me about a place off
Crenshaw. Leimert Park. All the West
Coast greats played there. Dexter
Gordon, Thelonious Monk, Chet Baker.
Like that...
(off Max's look)
Buy you a drink. Expand your
horizons... *

Max doesn't get Vincent's mood up-change.

CUT TO:

34 EXT. SOUTH UNION APARTMENT BUILDING, ALLEY - CRIME SCENE - 34
NIGHT

COPS and FORENSIC TECHNICIANS. In the midst of it all is:

Ray Fanning. He wears his badge, visibly, now. We find him
turning as his superior, RICHARD WEIDNER, 50-ish, is entering
the crime scene.

WEIDNER
...this informant of yours, what's his
name, Ramone?

FANNING
Ramone Gallardo. Supposed to take him
for a drink. I come here, find this.

WEIDNER
You been working him? *

FANNING
Four months...a low-level player, he's
been feeding me stuff on Felix. *

(CONTINUED)

WEIDNER

Reyes-Torrena? Forget Felix. Feds
are all over that. They don't want us
anywhere near it.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

FANNING

Since when is the LAPD working for the
Febb? *

(points up) *

Besides, Ramone flew out a window. My
C.I. flew out a window, he's got
Felix's handprints on his ass. Yes?
That makes it ours. *

WEIDNER

(as if to a child)

Where's the homicide, Ray? Where's a
body? All we got is glass... *

He spreads his hands at the alley floor in a gesture that says
"show me something besides glass."

FEMALE CRIMINALIST (O.S.)

And blood... *

WEIDNER

Huh? *

FEMALE CRIMINALIST

(off looks) *

...blood...down here...in the
glass...here's some more... *

A FEMALE CRIMINALIST (SID) examines the alley floor with Luminol
and a handheld BLACKLIGHT WAND, picking out dark patterns. *

FEMALE CRIMINALIST (CONT'D)

...small splatter patterns here...all
over there... *

SHINING FLASHLIGHTS pick out blood on the alley wall. Fanning
steps to where the cab was parked, stands in the middle of the
blank spot surrounded by the glass, points down:

FANNING

Ramone flew out the window. Went
splat. Here's the glass. *

(beat) *

Then some tires rolled over it. *

WEIDNER

How's that spell homicide? Maybe he
jumped.

FANNING

Sure. He's depressed. So he jumps
four stories out a window onto his
head.

(mimics)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FANNING (CONT'D)
"Wow, that feels better!" Picks
himself up. "Now, I think I'll go on
with the rest of my day..."

PLAINCLOTHES COP (O.S.)
(from above)
Ray! Catch!

Two uniformed cops have approached.

*

(CONTINUED)

Weidner and Fanning glance up. A PLAINCLOTHES COP is leaning out of Ramone's broken window, dangling a clear plastic baggy. He drops it. It comes sailing down...

*
*

...right into Fanning's grasp. He glances down at it, shows it to Weidner...

TIGHT ON WEIDNER

...revealing two spent .45 cal. shell casings in the bag.

WEIDNER

(switches)

So, who's got what? Any witnesses?
We been knocking on doors?

*

COP #1

Old guy across the street, lives above the deli? Says he saw a cab parked here earlier tonight. There were two guys working under the hood.

WEIDNER

Description. What did he see?

COP #1

"Kinda" saw...guy's got glasses like coke bottles.

FANNING

Did he "see" it or did his seeing eye dog see it?

COP #1

Late-model four-door Ford. Yellow or orange.

(off Fanning's look)

Maybe it was a taxi cab.

*
*

WEIDNER

Four thousand taxis in LA County.

(beat)

What else...?

That's it. Uniforms go back to work. Photographer shows. He doesn't know what to shoot.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: (5)

34

Meanwhile, Fanning, lost in thought...

FANNING

Remember fall, 2001? That Bay Area deal? Oakland. Cabbie drove around all night. Killed three people...

*
*

WEIDNER

Then he flipped out, put the gun to his head. So what?

*

FANNING

So the Oakland PD detective, whatshisname, never bought it.

*

WEIDNER

Why?

FANNING

The Cabbie had no criminal record. No history of mental illness. Pops three people, then himself? And the victims weren't random. Two were involved in some pharmaceuticals scam...

(off Weidner's look)

Anyway, the detective always thought there was somebody else in that cab.

35 INT. "DANIEL'S" JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT

35

Dark and elegant - in an early '60's modern jazz kind of way with a low ceiling, small tables, leatherette booths, history soaked into the walls. A BLACK MAN in his late 50's, DANIEL, is playing a muted trumpet on stage with a QUARTET.

CUSTOMERS are few, clustered at small tables or at a few curved leather booths. The walls are lined with great FRAMED PHOTOS of jazz icons.

At one table, we find Vincent and Max. Vincent about the music...

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT

...a little '60's, early Miles thing happening...

MAX

I never learned to listen to jazz.

VINCENT

You don't learn to listen...anymore than you learn to breathe. Open your ears.

Vincent's attention's focused on the music.

MAX

I get a beat. I don't really hear a melody...

VINCENT

...he's off the melody, behind the notes. Outside what's expected. Improvising off impulse. Kind of like tonight.

MAX

Like tonight?

VINCENT

Sure.

(beat)

This is nothing, if not "What's next? Right now. In the moment."

(beat)

There's people...ten years from now? Same job, same place, same shit. Everything the same; keepin' it safe. Over and over and over and over...

(beat)

"Ten years from now?" Man, you don't know where you'll be...ten minutes from now...tonight.

(beat; re: saxophonist)

That's what he's saying. Open your ears. You'll hear it...in his "dialoguing" with the trumpet...

The WAITRESS arrives, an Asian woman with a tray of drinks:

WAITRESS

'Nother Vodka tonic, hon?

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT

And one for my friend.
(indicates stage)
Who's on the tenor sax?

*

WAITRESS

That's Daniel, baby, he's the owner.

VINCENT

He is terrific. Would you be so kind
as to invite him over after his set?
I gotta buy him a drink.

*

*

*

WAITRESS

Sure thing, darlin'...

Vincent gives her a radiant smile and tucks a twenty dollar bill into her apron as she leaves...

TIMECUT:

...and we find Daniel sharing more than a few drinks with Vincent and Max, the place almost closed. Just the three of them.

DANIEL

...I was a young cat back then, about
nineteen, bussin' tables. Right here.
Didn't pay but shit, but that wasn't
the point. Being around the music,
that was the thing. And I was. Take
this one night...July 22, 1964...who
walks in. Mr. Louis Armstrong.

VINCENT

You're kidding me.

DANIEL

Right through those doors. The man
himself.

VINCENT

Jesus...

DANIEL

He was in town playing two gigs a
night at the Coconut Grove in the
Ambassador Hotel... After his last
set, he decides to come on down to
South Central to hang with his people.
That's how he was, you see. Never
forgot who we was. Money and fame an'
all that? Meant nothin', long as he
could blow that horn.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DANIEL (CONT'D)

So before you know it, he's up on that stage, doin' his thing.

VINCENT

Was it great? Better than great, it had to be...

DANIEL

Like Winton Marsalis says, it was pure, spiritual essence. Louis was playing. God was smiling.

VINCENT

You heard Armstrong play live. I've never been this jealous. You get to talk to him?

DANIEL

Did better'n that.

Vincent gives him a questioning look. Daniel smiles, raises his hands, mimes blowing a trumpet.

VINCENT

No.

DANIEL

Oh, my, yes.

VINCENT

C'mon...

DANIEL

Fella owned this place back then, cat named Dix Dwyer, he let slip to Louis that I played. So Pops, he just waves me right up. My heart about stopped. But I got up there all the same, and we played for nearly twenty minutes.

*
*

VINCENT

Unbelievable...

(to Max)

...you hearing this?

Max is drawn into the story in spite of himself:

MAX

How'd you do?

DANIEL

How do you think? You ain't shit when you playing next to Louis Armstrong. But, Dippermouth, he was kind. He could see me trying. He carried my ass as best he could.

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT

Remember what you played?

DANIEL

Most vividly.

(ticking them off)

"Potato Head Blues," "Sleepy Time Down South..."

(laughs)

...then Pops laid some "Cornet Chop Suey" on me, and left me in the dust like a whipped dog.

VINCENT

Whipped dog? *

DANIEL

Whipped dog on a wet night. *

VINCENT

Crowd dig it? *

DANIEL

(smiles, nods)

The crowd was most kind.

(beat)

I was born in 1945, but that was the moment of my conception. Right here in the used-to-be crowded room. *

Daniel picks up the bottle to freshen up their drinks...

VINCENT

Crowds not here now?

DANIEL

Oh, jazz ain't the draw it used to be.

VINCENT

But the place looks great.

DANIEL

Only 'cause I got the wherewithal to finance keepin' it up on my own. *

VINCENT

What a great story. I'll tell the folks in Culiacan and Bogota that story. *

...and Daniel's hand freezes just as he's about to pour. He glances up at Vincent.

(CONTINUED)

DANIEL

You know the people in Culiacan and
Bogota?

VINCENT

(softly)

'Fraid so.

Max is glancing from one to the other, unsure what's going on.
Realizing it isn't good.

(CONTINUED)

DANIEL

And here I thought you were such a cool guy.

VINCENT

I am a cool guy. With a job I was hired to do. You know how it is.

There's genuine regret in Vincent's tone. Max feels his heart pounding, but manages to keep his voice steady:

MAX

Let him go, Vincent.

VINCENT

I'm working here.

MAX

You're the one who keeps talking about going with the flow. You like the man, you like the way he plays. How about a little jazz, huh?

VINCENT

Improvisation? That's funny from you.
(thinks about it, looks to Daniel)
Okay, some jazz for the jazz man.
How's this? I'll ask a question?

*

DANIEL

What question?

VINCENT

Jazz question. You get it right, we roll. You disappear. Tonight. You don't go home, you don't pack a bag, you leave town...and nobody, I mean nobody, ever hears from you or sees you again.

DANIEL

How do I know you'll keep your word?

VINCENT

I never lie. Ask Max. Max, have I lied?

Daniel looks to Max. Hope, fear, and desperation in the older man's face.

MAX

No. No. He hasn't lied...

*

(CONTINUED)

Daniel absorbs this, looks back to Vincent.

DANIEL

Means you're a man who lives on reputation.

(beat)

I will take your word. And I will give you mine. If I walk out of here tonight, I'd go so far away, it'd be just like I was dead.

*
*

Vincent nods. We have a deal. He eases something from his waistband. Max knows. His heart is in his throat.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

And one more thing. Those guys and their man, here, what's his name, Felix?

*
*
*

VINCENT

Yeah.

*
*

DANIEL

Tell them, if by some chance I get this wrong...you tell them I had to. They laid a grant of immunity on me. So it was flip and play ball or go back inside. I ain't goin' back inside.

*
*
*
*
*
*

VINCENT

Sure.

*

Daniel pours himself that drink. He lifts his shot glass, hand trembling slightly, knocks it back. Sets the glass down.

DANIEL

Lay it on.

VINCENT

It's simple. What was Louis' first musical instrument?

DANIEL

I know all there is to know about Louis.

VINCENT

Then let's have it.

Daniel hesitates.

(CONTINUED)

MAX
(blurts out)
It was a trumpet! Wasn't it? Wasn't
it a trumpet?

Daniel shakes his head.

DANIEL
Coronet. Bought it from a New Orleans
pawnshop when he was a kid.
(MORE)

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Cost him five dollars. Got a two-dollar advance on his salary from a fine Jewish family he worked for, saved up the rest.

A frozen moment. An endless pause. Max not even breathing, staring at Vincent, waiting...

...a beat of regret...

...and Vincent's gun came up so fast, Max didn't even see it. THREE SMALL POPS. A different gun: .22 caliber Ruger with a thick, silent barrel. Three small holes. And Daniel's head falls forward. Vincent catches it, arranges Daniel's arms so that Daniel's head rests on them as if he's taking a nap. And Vincent did it gently, almost regretfully. A red mist of blood swirls in the air.

Max is stunned beyond words, and powder-burned at such close range.

Silence now. No one's noticed. The waitress was in the kitchen. Softly:

VINCENT

Tin horn. Cost him a dime. Rode the junk wagon and played for the neighborhood. People sold them stuff. Rags. Bottles. Whatever.

Max sits frozen, unable to move...

CUT TO:

36 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT

36

...and they exit the club. Vincent heads for the cab, turns and sees Max standing there.

VINCENT

Let's go.

MAX

No.

VINCENT

What you mean, no?

MAX

I'm done. Find another cab.

Max turns, walking away. Vincent blinks at him, almost laughs.

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT

Max?

MAX

Leave me alone.

(shouting)

I'm collateral anyway, so do it and
stop making me a part of this!

(beat)

I don't wanna know you!

Vincent grabs the back of his collar, slams him against the wall. Max's neck is a centimeter from breaking. Their faces are inches apart.

VINCENT

(low, threatening)

I'm not playing.

MAX

You played him, man.

(off Vincent's look)

He got the answer right, would you
have let him go?

The question hangs in the air. Before Vincent can answer, the DISPATCH RADIO CRACKLES:

LENNY (FILTERED)

Max? Maaax. Pick up, you dipshit.

VINCENT

What is it with this guy?

LENNY (FILTERED)

Maaaaaax!

Vincent spins Max, controls him, as he propels him to the cab, slams him against the fender.

Vincent releases him, points at him. Don't move. He reaches into the cab, pulls out the radio mike, clicks it on.

VINCENT

You hassling my man again?

LENNY

Who are you?

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT

Same fare you talked to last time.

LENNY (FILTERED)

What are you guys, taking an all-night tour?

VINCENT

We're gay lovers, what's it to you? *

LENNY (FILTERED)

Nothing! Aside from every night Max's mother driving me crazy, I'm dancin' on a rainbow! May he come on the line, please.

VINCENT

Hang on.
(to Max)
Carefully...

Max takes the hand mike, clicks it on.

MAX

Yeah?

LENNY (FILTERED)

Your mother's calling every ten minutes. Why didn't he show? Are you all right? Where are you? *

VINCENT

(whispers)
Show for what?

MAX

(ignoring him)
Tell her I can't make it tonight, okay?

LENNY (FILTERED)

What am I, related to you? You tell her yourself!

Lenny CLICKS OFF. Dead air.

VINCENT

Show up for what?

MAX

She's in the hospital.

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT
You visit every night?

MAX
Yeah. What difference does it make?

VINCENT
Cause if you don't show it breaks a routine.

MAX
So?

VINCENT
So people start looking for you, this cab. That is not good. *

MAX
No. I can't take you to see my mother...

VINCENT
Since when was any of this negotiable?

CUT TO:

37 INT. HOSPITAL - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

37

Stark corridors, queasy fluorescent lighting, PATIENTS and STAFF MEMBERS. A row of INJURED PEOPLE are seated along one wall, waiting for attention.

The AUTOMATIC DOORS swing open. Max and Vincent enter, the briefcase held at Vincent's side. As they enter and proceed up the corridor...

VINCENT
Stay three paces in front of me and one to my left...

Max, seeing the innocent people along the walls, complies. Vincent sees in the ceiling a security camera mounted in a Perspex hemisphere and averts his face towards Max...

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Flowers?

Max turns, sees a row of FLOWER BOUQUETS at the gift counter.

MAX
Waste of money. Won't mean a thing to her.

Vincent pulls an arrangement, tosses the flowers to Max, pulls his wallet to pay.

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT

(sincere)

She carried you in her womb for nine months.

38 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT 38

The elevator arrives. Vincent and Max get on. Vincent presses the button and the doors start to close...

MAN'S VOICE
Hold, please...

Vincent puts his hand out, stopping the doors. A MAN slides in the elevator with them...

38A INT. THE ELEVATOR 38A

...and turns around. Detective Ray Fanning. He doesn't see Max *
in the back corner. His back is to him.

FANNING *
Five. Thanks.

Vincent hits the button. The doors close.

The three of them ride up in that awkward silence you only ever experience with strangers in elevators. He glances to Vincent at the control panel, nods.

VINCENT
Having a good night?

FANNING *
Mezzo-mezzo. You?

Vincent nods. Making do. The elevator stops. Vincent and Max get off to the right. Fanning continues riding up one more *
floor...

39 INT. FIFTH FLOOR HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - ELEVATOR DOORS - NIGHT 39

open. Fanning gets off, turns a corner. SEE a sign indicating *
"MORGUE."

40 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM, LOWER FLOOR - MAX - NIGHT 40

(POSSIBLY INCLUDE CORRIDOR)

Enters with the flowers. Vincent appears behind him, hovering in the doorway. Max moves toward the bed...

...where IDA RILKE lies hooked up to a heart monitor, a clear plastic oxygen mask over her mouth. She opens her eyes.

MAX
Hi, Ma.

(CONTINUED)

IDA
I've been calling and calling.

MAX

I got caught up at work.

IDA

Why couldn't you call me on the telephone? I'm lying here, wondering if something horrible happened to you...

MAX

(to cut her off)

I brought you flowers.

*

IDA

What am I gonna do with flowers?

MAX

You're gonna cheer up.

IDA

How? By worrying...

(wheezes)

...that you spend money on things...that all they're gonna do is wilt and die?

*

*

*

*

MAX

(to Vincent)

See?

(to Ida, defensively)

I didn't buy 'em. He did.

*

*

IDA

Who? Come in. What I got is not contagious.

(beat)

Why didn't you tell me we had company?

(to Vincent)

And what's your name? Sorry. My son is rude.

*

*

*

*

VINCENT

No harm done, madam.

She takes the flowers from Max, making a fuss over them:

IDA

You paid for my flowers? They're beautiful. Max, will you introduce us?

(CONTINUED)

MAX

Mom, Vincent. Vincent, my mother,
Ida.

Vincent sets his briefcase by the door, approaches the bed,
offers his hand. She takes it. He glows with charisma.

VINCENT

I'm really happy to meet you, Mrs.
Rilke. *

IDA

Oh, call me Ida. To what do we owe
this pleasure?

Vincent sits in the chair at bedside.

VINCENT

Well, I was with Max when he got the
call.

IDA

And you came all the way here to see
me?

VINCENT

It's nothing.

IDA

Tell my son. You have to hold a gun
to his head to get him to do anything.

VINCENT

Tell me about it.

Vincent leans in, helps her adjust her pillows.

IDA

You must be an important client of
Max's.

This catches Vincent slightly off guard. He glances to Max.

VINCENT

Client? I like to think of myself as
his friend. A mentor. *

IDA

Max never had many friends. Always
talking to himself in the mirror...
It's unhealthy.

MAX

Hey, mom. How many times do I have to
ask you not to do that?

(CONTINUED)

IDA

Do what?

MAX

Talk about me like...I'm...not...in
the room, here.

IDA

(to Vincent)

What's he sayin'?

VINCENT

Ida, he says he's standing right here.
In the room. Here.

*
*

IDA

(to Max)

Yesss, you are, honey.
(back to Vincent)
He's sensitive.

VINCENT

I know. But I'm sure you're proud of
him.

*

IDA

(directed at Max)

Of course I'm proud. You know, he
started with nothing. Look at him
today. Here. Vegas. Reno...

Vincent looks at Max...squirming under the exposure.

MAX

Mom, Vincent's not interested.
(to Vincent)
Let's go.

VINCENT

No. I am interested.

*

IDA

What's your name, again?

*

VINCENT

Vincent...

MAX

I came to see you. I saw you. You look fine. Let's go.

He's kissed her and wants to get out of there.

IDA

Limousine companies.

VINCENT

Yeah?

IDA

He drives famous people around, you know?

VINCENT

Limousine companies? What an achievement...

Max heads for the door...

IDA

Visit again?

VINCENT

I'm only in town tonight.

IDA

When you come back?

VINCENT

Sure. I promise.

IDA

Well, nice to meet you, Vincent.

He turns to find Max gone. He looks down, eyes widening.

So is the briefcase.

Vincent races out into...

40A INT. THE HALLWAY

40A

...and spins around, frantically trying to see where Max went. Nothing but a FEW PATIENTS and HOSPITAL STAFF...

...and a door marked "STAIRS" swinging shut at the end of the hallway. He runs in that direction...

40B INT. HOSPITAL STAIRWELL

40B

Vincent bursts through the door into the stairwell, hearing RUNNING FOOTSTEPS below. He peers over the railing...

(CONTINUED)

40B CONTINUED:

40B

...and sees Max three flights down. Max freezes, looking up, clutching the briefcase. A moment of eye contact...

VINCENT

Stop or I'll go back and kill her.

MAX

You'd do her a favor.

...and Max keeps going, vanishing from view. Vincent takes off after him, plunging down the stairs at breakneck speed...

VINCENT

I'll tell her the truth!

(CONTINUED)

40B CONTINUED: (2)

40B

MOVING WITH MAX

careening dizzily down the steps with the briefcase, hurtling from one landing to the next, FOOTSTEPS ECHOING on concrete.

MOVING WITH VINCENT

racing down the steps like a madman, yanking his H+K from under his jacket...

41 EXT. HOSPITAL - ON REAR DOOR - NIGHT (OPTIONAL)

41

Max comes through the stairway door, racing like crazy along a row of HUGE ROARING INDUSTRIAL WASHERS, trying to make it to the EXIT DOOR at the far end...

...and Vincent bursts from the stairwell in pursuit, pausing to whip his H + K up in a two-handed grip, aiming down the length of the laundry room...

...as Max vanishes through the exit door at the far end.

42 EXT. HOSPITAL/ON REAR DOOR - NIGHT

42

Max races out.

42A OMIT

42A

42B INT. HOSPITAL STAIRWELL - VINCENT

42B

*

racing down the stairs...

*

42C EXT. HOSPITAL - REAR DOOR - VINCENT

42C

bursts through parking lot.

42D EXT. HOSPITAL - WIDE: VINCENT (VFX)

42D

See Vincent at end of parking lot running towards us. PAN LEFT to Max running up a walkway over the freeway.

43 EXT. PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE - MAX

43

runs to camera along the bridge which we now reveal is above and...

OVER THE FREEWAY

Max runs up, exhausted. The stream of lights beneath them. Max swings the briefcase back, preparing to hurl it...

VINCENT

Don't!

(CONTINUED)

...and Vincent's H+K is aimed at Max. Max looks back, sees Vincent, gun aimed at him...

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Red-light-green-light, Max.

A heartbeat. A hesitation. And then...

MAX

Bullshit.

...Max hurls the briefcase with all his might. Vincent watches in horror as it spins lazily through the air and crashes onto the freeway below where it's run over, flips in the air, is hit by a truck and the tablet PC is de-constructed into useless pieces of plastic and silicone. Vincent approaches.

VINCENT

(hisses)

What the fuck was that?

MAX

Jazz.

Max is suddenly on the ground, not knowing how he got there, about to die.

Vincent, above, staring at Max.

VINCENT

You are screwing...with my work! My prep was in there. I'm coming up on number four. The night is no longer young. Are we getting adversarial?

*

*

Each syllable like a bullet. Should Vincent kill him? Then, almost admiring...

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Didn't know you could do that...

(beat)

Let's see what else you can do.

...and he pulls Max to his feet.

CUT TO:

44 INT. HOSPITAL MORGUE - NIGHT

44

Fanning's in the "cold room" with a MORGUE ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT

(checking his clipboard)

We've had three come in tonight. Two John Does. Maybe one's your guy.

The attendant nods at the first of four PLASTIC-WRAPPED CORPSES lying on stainless steel tables. Fanning draws the sheet back: Homeless Man with a beard.

FANNING

No. Not Ramone.

(CONTINUED)

The attendant makes a notation on his clipboard. Fanning nods at the next corpse.

FANNING (CONT'D)

Try that one.

The attendant draws the sheet back. It's the Younger Man who mugged Max and took Vincent's briefcase.

FANNING (CONT'D)

No. Next...

ATTENDANT

That's what's funny. These three came in within half an hour of each other. And the kid and that last guy (number 4)...they were done by the same shooter.

FANNING

Why do you say that?

Fanning gets alert.

ATTENDANT

Same wound pattern. Two in the sternum. One in the head. Add this cat's shooting tight groups.
(indicates chest)
Double taps are a couple millimeters apart.

Intrigued, Fanning steps to the fourth corpse. Attendant draws the sheet back.

Fanning stares down at the dead face. Instant recognition.

45 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY + AUTOPSY ROOM - MINUTES LATER 45

Fanning is on a pay phone, amped up, talking with Richard Weidner. (Weidner's at home, perched on the edge of his bed, in a crowded bedroom overlooking MacArthur Park or palm trees and city lights, rubbing the sleep from his eyes. INTERCUT as needed:)

FANNING

...yeah, I'm still at MLK. The John Doe doesn't pan out. Not Ramone. But you'll never guess who else is in the meat locker.

WEIDNER

Elvis Presley?

(CONTINUED)

FANNING
Sylvester Clarke. Criminal-lawyer
turned lawyer-criminal?

*

WEIDNER
"Sly" to his clients...

FANNING
...including my high-diving informant,
Ramone, who he represented, who's
still missing. Both of whom were in
the exotic-substances business...

WEIDNER
Ramone and "Sly" Clarke in one night?

FANNING
In one night. Something bad is going
down. And I don't think the Feeb know
about it...

Weidner hangs up, hauling himself off the bed as we...

*

CUT TO:

46 INT. MAX'S CAB, TRAVELING - MAX - NIGHT

46

Max drives in self-conscious silence, feeling Vincent's gaze
on the back of his neck.

VINCENT
Limos, huh?

MAX
Don't start.

Vincent enters text into a cell phone/pager.

VINCENT
Hey, I'm not the one lying to my
mother.

MAX
She hears what she wants to hear. I
don't disillusion her.

VINCENT
Yeah, right. Maybe she hears what you
tell her.

Vincent sends. Waits.

(CONTINUED)

MAX

Whatever I tell her's never good
enough. It's always been that way...
My three older brothers...their wives
made 'em move outta town.

*

Vincent closes the pager/cell.

VINCENT

You're goin' to a place called El
Rodeo. It's on Whittier Boulevard in
Anaheim.

MAX

Where on Whittier?

VINCENT

Look it up.

MAX

What's at El Rodeo?

VINCENT

Just drive.

(beat)

They project onto you their flaws,
what they don't like about themselves,
their lives, whatever. And then they
rank on you, instead...

MAX

How do you know?

VINCENT

I had a father like that.

MAX

Mothers are worse.

VINCENT

Mine died when I was one.

*

*

MAX

What happened?

VINCENT

He hated whatever I did. Got drunk.
Beat me up all the time.

MAX

Then what?

VINCENT

(intimate)

I killed him. I was 12.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT (CONT'D)

He was the first.

(off Max's look)

I'm kidding. He died of liver cancer.

MAX

I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT

No you're not.

(beat)

So driving this cab "temporarily" is
all bullshit...? *

MAX

It's not bullshit.

VINCENT

Twelve years is not temporary.

MAX

You gotta get cash together.
Insurance, bond, maintenance, tires.
Staff-up. Client lists. It's not get
the car, put asses on seats.

VINCENT

Why not?

MAX

'Cause Island Limos will be more than
a ride...like a club experience, a
cool groove you don't want to end.
Like that. So it's gotta be perfect.
Perfect. *

VINCENT

Uh-huh.

MAX

Plus I got bills. She's been dying of
the disease since I was in high
school...

47 EXT. EL RODEO NIGHT CLUB (ANAHEIM) - NIGHT

47

Headlights pull through the jammed lot. Max's cab. And it
pulls past the entrance to a parking slot near the alley.

48 INT. CAB - NIGHT

48

VINCENT

Here's good.

Max backs in, cuts the engine. Vincent checks it out,
concealing himself as much as possible in the shadows of the
back seat.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Gimme your wallet.

MAX

Why?

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: 48

Vincent snaps his fingers impatiently. Max pulls his wallet, passes it back.

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT

I'll hold it for you in case they search you.

MAX

In case who searches?

Vincent nods toward El Rodeo.

VINCENT

The people inside. Go in and ask for Felix. He's expecting you.

MAX

Felix? Okay. What's he look like?

VINCENT

Dunno. Never met him.

MAX

Who is he?

VINCENT

He's from who hired me.

MAX

I don't get it.

VINCENT

You destroyed my work-ups. And number four is due. Whatta you think, night's over? Called on account of rain?

(beat)

Go be me. In there. Score the backups. He'll have 'em on a flash drive or CD...

*

MAX

(appalled)

Why me? I can't. Why don't you go?

*

VINCENT

They don't know what I look like. And I don't meet people. Like in risk management. Protect anonymity. And you're not going to screw that up.

*

*

MAX

How'm I gonna be you?

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT

Max, who's SoCal Cab Company? Ralph SoCal?

MAX

No.

VINCENT

Ever met the owner?

*

MAX

No.

VINCENT

Well, I don't work for them. I work for their bosses. They don't get to meet me, either.

MAX

If...if I don't pull it off...?

VINCENT

They're gonna kill you.

*

(shrugs)

You got ten minutes. 10:01? I drive the cab to the hospital and execute your mother on my way out of town...and don't pretend indifference.

MAX

I can't do this.

VINCENT

You threw my PC onto the freeway. You've got balls bigger than Toledo.

MAX

If I pull it off, it's gonna get other people killed...

VINCENT

Out of options, Max. Take comfort in knowing you never had a choice.

*

MAX

Uh, how long you been doin' this?

*

VINCENT

Why?

MAX

In case he asks.

VINCENT

Private sector? Six years.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: (4)

48

MAX
You get benefits?

VINCENT
No. Nor paid sick leave. Quit
stalling. Get out of the cab.

Max hesitates, opens the door, gets out...

49 EXT. STREET - LONG LENS: MAX - NIGHT

49

Crossing towards the entrance.

FED #1 (O.S.)
Who is this?

FED #2 (O.S.)
Not Julio Iglesias...

...and we hear WHIRRING. ANGLE PULLS BACK...

50 INT. SURVEILLANCE LOCATION - NIGHT

50

Reveal FEDERAL AGENTS clustered loosely at a row of monitors, in a hard location. On the monitors are multiple views of El Rodeo's exterior entrances, two ND homes, the interior of two ND cars. One agent watches Max cross to the El Rodeo entrance. The room is littered with SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT and pizza boxes.

SENIOR AGENT FRANK PEDROSA, permanently agitated, stands. The camera on Max ZOOMS in, tracking him.

50A EXT. STREET OUTSIDE "EL RODEO" - PARKING LOT, FOUR-FIXTURE LIGHT STAND

50A

Move closer. REVEAL it's a camouflage housing, holding a video surveillance camera that RIGHT NOW pans and ZOOMS IN on Max.

AGENT #1 (O.S.)
Mark the time.

50B INT. SURVEILLANCE LOCATION - PEDROSA

50B

reacts to a SOFT KNOCK on the door. Fanning and Weidner are ushered in. Pedrosa glances at them, motions "hang on a second," as he stares at the monitor.

*

51 INT. EL RODEO, ENTRANCE - NIGHT

51

Entrance does NOT have a crowd waiting to get in past disco bouncers. Only light traffic flows in and out. But, it does have extensive security. Max, hiding his terror, steps up to two men at the door.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED:

51

MAN #1
Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

MAX

Uh, hi...

MAN #2

Que pasa? Wha's up, homes?

MAX

I'm here to see Felix. He has something for me.

MAN #2

(cold, believable)
Don't know no Felix.

That's it. Max failed. He won't make it past the front door.

MAX

Uh. Say...say it's Vincent. I'm Vincent.

The two men trade surprised look. Suddenly cautious and respectful. They lead Max inside.

52 INT. SURVEILLANCE LOCATION - NIGHT

52

Pedrosa watches the group exit into El Rodeo, then turns to Fanning and Weidner for quick introductions:

*

WEIDNER

Lt. Richard Weidner. LAPD. Major Narcotics Division.

FANNING

Detective Ray Fanning. LAPD. Major Nar...

PEDROSA

(interrupts, shaking hands)
Yeah, hi, okay. Agent Frank Pedrosa.

WEIDNER

Thanks for seeing us...

PEDROSA

Yeah. You're welcome. How can I help? What's up? Why do you wanna know about our case?

FANNING

Has there been any unusual activity tonight?

PEDROSA

As in...

(CONTINUED)

FANNING

As in a murder or maybe a murder spree
in Wilshire Central.

PEDROSA

All quiet on the western front.
Various people are asleep. Various
people are not. They come and go in
cars, pickups and taxis. Other than
that, we're watching air move.

(repeats)

...your interest in our case?

Fanning trades a surprised look with Weidner. A taxi? Fanning
gestures. Pedrosa nods okay. Fanning rushes to the monitors,
sees Max's cab peeking out from behind the corner of the
building. *

FANNING

Hood's all beat to shit.

Weidner's fumbling on his cell phone, out, already dialing.

PEDROSA

On what?!

FANNING

On that. *

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: (2)

52

WEIDNER

What's the license number?

Technician on the joystick pans a remote camera to the cab, pulling out his notebook and scribbling down the number...

53 INT. "EL RODEO" - NIGHT

53

...as Max is led into a cavernous, blue Day-Glo Sinaloan disco.

And they move through dancers, in Sinaloan style: white cowboy hats, jeans, braided key chains, endangered-species cowboy boots. Hot ladies in spandex and other couture by Earl Scheib.

As they approach a row of booths opposite a mural of famous corrido singers...more sophisticated security appears. PACO pats down Max. Another, Rubio, cautiously covers him. Then...

MAX

is led to a booth in which sits FELIX REYES-TORRENA.

FELIX

- unlike El Rodeo's population - wears Hermes bought in Paris. Reserved elegance...

FELIX

I thought you'd be taller.

He's not invited to sit.

FELIX (CONT'D)

Anyway I look at this, I see only one thing. I see one thing with you. Here. Tonight. I see trouble.

Gestures... Max sits, forces himself to meet Felix's gaze.

FELIX

So. Vincent. Explain...

Meanwhile...

54 INT. SURVEILLANCE LOCATION - MONITOR - NIGHT

54

REPLAYS Max's entrance. It's enhanced and the audio is filtered, eliminating RF interference and background noise. We and they HEAR...

MAN #2

Don't know no Felix.

MAX

I'm Vincent...

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

54

The reaction in the room is electric.

FED #3
Did he say "Vincent?"

55 INT. EL RODEO - NIGHT

55

FELIX
(light complaint)
Vincent don't meet people. The jefes
in Culiacan, Bogota, maybe. But he
won't talk to you. But, now you are
here. Okay. Why?

*
*
*
*

For a moment it looks like Max isn't even going to get the words out. Then:

MAX
I lost my stuff.

Pause.

FELIX
"Stuff"? Your "stuff"?

MAX
Yeah.

FELIX
I want you to listen to me real well.
(beat)
Special teams put together that list
of..."dedos."

*
*

MAX
Dedos?

FELIX
Fingers. Informants.
(litany)
Signal intercepts, voice-recognizing
software, surveillance...very
expensive counterintel produced that
list.

*
*
*
*
*

(beat)
An important list, wouldn't you say?
And you "lost" it?

MAX
I'm sorry.

FELIX
Sorry? Sorry does not put back
together again Humpty Dumpty...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Max is nearly pissing himself.

(CONTINUED)

FELIX (CONT'D)

Do you believe in Humpty Dumpty?

Felix makes eye contact to PACO. Paco nods. Rubio, next to him, has his hand on an SMG and moves right to get a better line of fire on Max.

MAX

No.

FELIX

Do you believe in Santa Claus?

MAX

No.

FELIX

Neither do I.

(beat)

But my children do. They are still small. But do you know who they like even better than Santa Claus? His helper, Pedro Negro. Black Peter. There's an old Mexican tale that tells of how Santa Claus got so very busy looking out for the good children that he had to hire some help to look out for the bad children. So he hired Pedro. And Santa Claus gave him a list with all the names of all the bad children, and Pedro would come every night to check them out. And the people, the little kids that were misbehaving, that were not saying their prayers, Pedro would leave a little wooden donkey on their windows. And he would come back and if the children were still misbehaving, he would take them away and nobody would ever see them again. Now, if I am Santa Claus and you are Pedro, how do you think jolly old Santa Claus would feel if one day Pedro came into his office and said, 'I lost the list.'? How FUCKING FURIOUS do you think Santa Claus would get?!

*

Paco's gun is visible. Safety clicks off Rubio's SMG.

FELIX (CONT'D)

So tell me, Vincent. Tell me what you think.

MAX

I think...

(CONTINUED)

He can't finish.

FELIX

What?

MAX

I think...

(to security)

...I think you should tell the man behind me to put that gun away.

FELIX

What did you say?

MAX

(low, tight)

I said. Tell him to put the gun away. Before I take it and beat his bitch ass to death with it.

*

Felix eases back, measuring Max.

MAX (CONT'D)

I picked up a tail.

FELIX

Federal?

MAX

You tell me. How do I know? So I tossed the list and work-ups to protect...in part...

(sees his clothes)

...your Hermes, Facconable sorry ass.

Felix considers "Max."

MAX (CONT'D)

You think I like comin' here? Like I got stupid all of an instant? Shit happens. You gotta roll with it. Darwin. I Ching...

FELIX

Has, uh...

MAX

The fat man. The penthouse guy. The jazz man. It leaves two.

FELIX

(checks his watch)

Can you finish?

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (4)

55

MAX

In six years, have I ever not?

Meanwhile...

56 INT. SURVEILLANCE LOCATION - NIGHT

56

...while the Feds go apeshit at what they've been told.
Meanwhile, Weidner answers his cell...

*

PEDROSA

...are you telling me Ramone Gallardo
and Sylvester Clarke were murdered
tonight? Both killed...?

FANNING

...Sylvester for sure, Ramone...

WEIDNER

(interrupts)

We got another D.O.A. One "Daniel
Baker" in South Central...

FED #3

That's three? He killed three in one
night?

WEIDNER

Three what?

Fed #3 looks at Pedrosa. Mute.

PEDROSA

Three witnesses.

(beat)

For a secret grand jury, secret my
ass...

FANNING

So who's left? Before you lose them,
too...

57 INT. EL RODEO - NIGHT

57

In a carrying case, a ruggedized PC is brought to the table.
Felix turns it on. Enters a password. Downloads two "files"
(Targets #4 and #5) into a flash drive in the USB port.

FELIX

The last two...

Felix unplugs the flash drive and pushes it across to Max. Max
takes it. Their eyes meet.

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED:

57

FELIX (CONT'D)

Do not fail.

MAX

I never do.

Felix releases the flash ram. Max rises...

(CONTINUED)

MAX (CONT'D)

And as a token of appreciation...I
want to offer you a discount. Yeah.
All my services, here, tonight...
Twenty-five percent off.

FELIX

Twenty-five?

MAX

Hell, make it fifty.

FELIX

Very generous.

MAX

(beat)

By the way. Daniel said he was sorry.

Felix nods. Max turns and walks out.

The moment he's gone, Felix glances to Paco. They're giving him
questioning looks.

FELIX

(in Spanish)

Go to Fever. He's met me. If it
begins to go wrong, close his eyes.
He cannot fall into their hands...

They rise.

58 EXT. EL RODEO - MAX

58

exits, taking in a deep breath of night air, stunned that he's
still alive...

59 INT. SURVEILLANCE LOCATION - MONITORS

59

The Feds swarm, remotely ZOOMING and capturing images, everybody
talks at once...

ALL THE FEDS

(chaotic, ad lib)

...his face, make sure you get his
face...Vincent the ghost...too grainy,
too much noise...plus twelve dB of
gain, you get noise or you get no
image...you getting this? ...yeah...

ANGLE SHIFTS to Fanning, cell phone to his ear, trying to block *
out the noise as:

(CONTINUED)

FANNING

...yeah, uh-huh...African-American,
medium build, dark hair...are you
sure?

Meanwhile, Pedrosa has separated from the group and on both a
hard line and a Nextel is speaking urgently...

PEDROSA

(into Nextel)

LA101 to chase units... I want a
three-car revolving tail on that cab.
LA102 is on him, now, at El Rodeo. We
will do a take-down of the cab with
Vincent in it before he gets where
he's going.

(into hard line)

Locate our witness, Peter Yip...wife,
girlfriends, mommy, daddy, whatever.
Get him evacuated. Get him safe.

(into Nextel)

On the cab, the assault team, when
they are in place, will do the take-
down. Do NOT spook him before. I
want Air Support up and to maintain at
1,500 feet.

Meanwhile...

FANNING

(into cell phone)

E-mail me his license. Okay? I'll
wait...

(to Weidner)

Anybody else in that cab?

Weidner can't tell from the angle of the surveillance camera.
In the street below, Max walks to the cab...

60 INT. CAB - MAX

60

...gets in behind the wheel, feeling limp. He lets out a slow
breath, reluctantly passes the flash drive to Vincent, who
already has Max's PC ripped from the dash and in the back seat.

Vincent plugs the flash drive into the USB port. The icon
appears. Vincent double clicks the cursor on it.

VINCENT

Vegas odds would have compelled a
"don't pass" bet on you walking out of
there...

MAX

...I'm very impressed.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: 60

Vincent enters a code. He sees what he needs.

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT
Washington Boulevard. After-hours
dance club near Crenshaw called
"Fever." Know it?

MAX
Twelve minutes.

Vincent quits the flash drive, looks at Max. Max starts the car
and pulls out...

61 INT. MAX'S CAB - VINCENT

61

looks at Max through the rearview mirror.

VINCENT
You'll be late. Jump on the freeway
and get me to the 105 west.

*
*

MAX
Why?

VINCENT
Do it.

62 INT. SURVEILLANCE LOCATION - NIGHT

62

While the Feds are departing to interdict the killer before he
can take their next witness, Fanning is trying to get a word in
edgewise to a fast-walking Pedrosa...

FANNING
...according to the cab company's
dispatcher, this cabbie's been driving
that cab for twelve years...

PEDROSA
So what?

FANNING
...so, you're telling me this cabbie
walks into a phone booth and, shazaam,
changes into a meat-eater, super-
assassin? What's he do, squeeze 'em
in between fares?

PEDROSA
No. Cabdriver Max is floating down a
storm drain. He is stuffed in the
trunk of a cab. He is being devoured
by flesh-eating stretococcus...

Fanning displays on his cell phone Max's picture from the DMV on
Max's license. It's blurred, low-res.

(CONTINUED)

FANNING

The guy, who walked out, looks like
this guy...!

63

EXT. SURVEILLANCE LOCATION REAR LOADING DOCK

63

...and coming down the steps, fast, Fanning and Weidner at their heels. Talking over his shoulder...

PEDROSA

'Cause he picked a cabdriver who looks like him...

FANNING

What's Vincent look like?

PEDROSA

Who knows. He's a ghost... Vincent's not even his name.

FANNING

I don't know...

PEDROSA

We do.
(nods to Fed #1)

FED #1

We see private-sector security working for cartel groups in Colombia, Russia, Mexico...hiring ex-Special Forces types, ex-KGB all the time...

PEDROSA

Guys with trigger time, skill sets...real tradecraft...
(beat)
...like, look like a "cabdriver."

*
*

They near their cars...

FANNING

What are you gonna do?

PEDROSA

Take down his ass. Save our witness.

...as Pedrosa and other Feds climb into a Cadillac and a Buick and a third car.

FANNING

What if they're wrong?

WEIDNER

The guy identified himself as "Vincent" and just met with the bad people!

(CONTINUED)

FANNING

Bullshit. There is something else
going on.

WEIDNER

It's not our game!

CUT TO:

63A INT. MAX'S CAB - REAR SHOT OVER MAX - NIGHT 63A
to the 405 south on-ramp to the 105 west. Plus PROFILES *
(L to R) + FRONTAL driving shots of cab to an off-ramp. *

64 INT. LAX PARKING STRUCTURE - MAX'S CAB - NIGHT (GARY'S 64
AIRPORT SHOT)
enters and drives past CAM into the interior. Is Vincent
parking and leaving early?
VARIOUS LOCATIONS + ANGLES INSIDE PARKING STRUCTURE...
Max's cab drives up ramps under white strips of neon and crosses
the bridge to the adjacent parking structure at the northwest
corner of the parking area across from the Bradley Terminal.

64A INT. LAX PARKING - FBI MONTE CARLO 64A
darts in after Max's cab...hesitates, keeps a distance...sees
it's clear, then accelerates, tailing the cab.

64B INT. LAX PARKING, UP-RAMP - MAX'S CAB 64B
accelerates up an up-ramp...

A64C INT. MAX'S CAB, ROOFTOP - VINCENT A64C
has turned around in his seat and looks out the rear window. We
see why the FBI couldn't follow...

64C INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - FBI MONTE CARLO 64C
pulls in and stops. It's in sight of but doesn't approach the
latest up-ramp to the roof.
FBI AGENT #3
I follow him up there...we blow the *
tail! *

65 OMIT 65

65A EXT. EMPTY ROOFTOP LOT - WIDE 65A
EMPTY PARKING LOT ROOF. Anybody tailing Vincent and Max would
expose themselves right here. It's called a choke point.

66 OMIT 66

66A INT. MAX'S CAB - VINCENT 66A
VINCENT
(to Max)
Let's go.

(CONTINUED)

66A CONTINUED: 66A

Max starts towards the down-ramp.

66B INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - FBI MONTE CARLO 66B

FBI AGENT #4
(into Nextel)
LA103 to LA101. Pedrosa, Pedrosa...
(to Agent #3)
Air support...

FBI AGENT #3
(into radio)
LA103 to Air 4...you still have him?

HELICOPTER PILOT (O.S.)
Air 4 to LA103. I lost him. You're
in controlled air space. I gotta stay
out until I get clearance from LAX
tower...

FBI AGENT #4
(into Nextel)
Pedrosa...!

67 INT. PEDROSA'S BUICK - PEDROSA - NIGHT 67

Listens. Then...

(CONTINUED)

PEDROSA
 (on his cell phone)
 ...you lost him?
 (he listens)
 He can head anywhere out of LAX.
 North or south on the 405, east on the
 105, the 110...

Pedrosa's plan to intercept and take down Vincent just crashed.
 He rapidly recalculates.

PEDROSA (CONT'D)
 They locate Peter Yip?

FED #1
 (on phone)
 On with the wife. She thinks he's at
 Fever. They called. Can't get
 through.

PEDROSA
 (to Driver)
 Washington and Crenshaw. Move!
 (into radio)
 LA101 to LA103, LA104, LA105. Fever.
 After-hours club on 2407 Washington,
 near Crenshaw. Pico Union. Hit it!

LA105 (O.S.)
 (into radio)
 LA105 to LA101. Copy that.

A67A OMIT A67A

B67A AERIAL - MAX'S CAB B67A

from inside the curve "cloverleafs" onto 105/110 interchange.

C67A INT./EXT. MAX'S CAB C67A *

under the interchange north (or southbound 110).

D67A INT. BLACK SUV D67A

One of Pedrosa's chase units with four SWAT-types in sports
 clothes jams off the freeway onto an exit ramp to surface
 streets, north on Western or north on Crenshaw.

67A INT. MAX'S CAB - MAX + VINCENT - NIGHT 67A

are riding in pensive silence through the neon visual noise of
 Koreatown.

VINCENT
 Would you have called her?

(CONTINUED)

MAX

Who?

VINCENT

Your lady friend. The one who gave
you her business card.

(Max is silent)

Or was she just being polite?

MAX

I don't know.

VINCENT

Why hold back? Why not act off your
impulse? Pick up the phone?

MAX

All I owe a fare is a ride, Vincent.

(CONTINUED)

67A CONTINUED: (2)

67A

VINCENT

It's not what you owe me. Time is fleeting. Life is short. Time is luck. One day it's gone...

(beat)

You make it out of this alive, you should call her. That's what I think...anyway...

It's an important speculation from Vincent, given what's going to come later. And meanwhile...

68-69 OMIT

68-69

70 INT. FBI CADILLAC - PEDROSA

70

with two or three agents in the other two cars. One checks there's a round in the chamber of his .9mm, as the silent neighborhoods pass by.

71 INT. S600 MERCEDES - PACO, RUBIO + TWO OTHER COLD-EYED KILLERS

71

Rubio has a silenced .9mm with an Aimpoint laser sight.

72 INT. LAPD UNMARKED CAR - FANNING

72

at the wheel. Tailing the FBI cars at a distance, CROSSCHATTER drifting from the police band...

72A EXT. OLYMPIC (OR?) - MAX'S CAB - NIGHT

72A

cruises east. Korean neon burns into the sodium-lit magenta sky. The streets are empty at four a.m. Reflected streetlights flow up the windshield, colors kicking off dented bodywork. The streets are deserted; the city seems dangerous. Max and Vincent's attention, suddenly, is taken by something else...

72B INT. MAX'S CAB - MAX + VINCENT'S POV: THREE COYOTES - NIGHT

72B

*

separate and apart lope diagonally across Sunset. Adult males. Hunting. They're indifferent to urban habitation, as if they, not we, own this city...

72C EXT. ALEXANDRIA STREET - ABSTRACT SIGNAGE

72C

becomes a frontal of Max's battered cab TO CAMERA and it turns right, as...

73-74 OMIT

73-74

75 INT. FBI BUICK - OVER PEDROSA + HIS POV THROUGH WINDSHIELD - NIGHT 75 *

A half block ahead he/we GLIMPSE Max's cab pull into the Fever forecourt...

PEDROSA
There...!

75A INT. MAX'S CAB, APPROACHING "FEVER" NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT 75A

There's chaotic valet parking with Bentleys and a Lambo in choice spots. The party-till-dawn crowd. And in the thick of it...

75B INT. FBI BUICK 75B

But they are preceded by a Porsche SUV, and a limo cuts them off and tries to disembark a diva, two girlfriends and two guys, with players heading into a club before Fever. Heavyweight Security has a fuck-you attitude towards Pedrosa's Buick and the SUV (LA105) until...

76 EXT. KOREAN MALL - FEDS - NIGHT 76

in tactical vests with CAR-15's; side arms...deploy. Vanity muscle undergo instant attitude change. Pedrosa ad libs telling diva to shut up and get back in the limo. BUT Max's cab has disappeared from view.

77-78 OMIT 77-78

79 EXT. FRONT OF CLUB FEVER - PEDROSA - NIGHT 79 *

PEDROSA
We get Yip out. You take Vincent.
Clean shots! Watch your backgrounds.

Pedrosa approaching the front entrance, the non-HRT are with the BOUNCER, who, in response to a request we didn't see, is trying to get a response on his radio from people in the interior...but fails, as his men enter. Meanwhile...

80 OMIT 80

81 INT. CLUB FEVER - VINCENT - NIGHT 81 *

propels Max past a bar, through screens of glass, frosted alcoves...jammed with people.

VINCENT
Booth towards the back. That's where he hangs. Fat Korean guy. Terminal acne as a youth. You go first.
(MORE)

81 CONTINUED:

81

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Fifteen feet in front and three to my
left. Wander, and innocent bystanders
get the first rounds. Clear?

It's all black lacquer and frosted glass.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED: (2) 81

Back rooms - in Korean luxu - are for karaoke or the Korean hotties who hang by a counter, like a check-in area. Panels of glass in semi-circles in front of planting, some with sheets of water running down, separate the different zones. OR...it's cheesy disco with flat screens playing Korean music videos and stock market quotes with out-of-date Christmas decorations and black-lit outer-space murals. Visually, it's as noisy as the Korean hip-hop, which makes it impossible for anybody to hear anything.

81A EXT. FRONT OF CLUB FEVER - FANNING + WEIDNER - NIGHT 81A

flash their LAPD badges, brush past the doorman, proceed in...

81B INT. FEVER - CLOSE: VINCENT 81B

with Max in front and to his left, snakes through the crowd, swimming among them, scanning for Peter Yip, seeking his target in the back booths...

81C PEDROSA + THE FEDS 81C

enter up the stairs. Staying as discrete as possible while urgent, while Pedrosa shoots looks, his POVs, Feds move south along east wall into densest part of the club...searching for "Vincent," trying to spot him before he can assassinate Peter Yip, searching for Yip, as...

82 INT. CLUB ENTRANCE - PACO, RUBIO + TWO 82

enter. They hang at the rear. Wait. Their job is to take out "Vincent" if it looks like there's trouble, a double-takeout, because "Vincent" must not fall into the hands of the FBI. He knows too much.

82A PEDROSA 82A

searches, desperately, for Peter Yip, his last witness, to get him to safety.

82B FANNING 82B

enters, scanning the crowd. Nothing. He and Weidner split-up. *

82C VINCENT 82C

deeper among the dancers, now SEES distantly...

PETER YIP

for a moment. He's located towards the back wall across the dance floor in a booth on a raised area in the semi-circular room. With him are too-young Korean girls and a heavysset Rapper. The view got blocked by an African-American and a Korean bodyguard in suits near the booth, facing out.

(CONTINUED)

82C CONTINUED:

82C

Behind the booth are five or six Korean gangsters. But on the dance floor, itself...

(CONTINUED)

82C CONTINUED: (2)

82C

VINCENT SPOTS

an outer perimeter of security. Bodyguards within the crowd, facing outward from the booth...looking for trouble before it gets to the row of booths and Peter Yip.

MAX

receives the glance from Vincent. He's gestured down the middle of the dance floor towards the rear. They work their way through the mass of bodies. Meanwhile, Vincent casually smiles at a girl and takes an oblique path, sliding along a convex side wall. Vincent's path brings Vincent up behind Bodyguard #1, who looks to the right as...

BODYGUARD #1

pounded in the kidney. His head is twisted around and torn back, dropping him to the floor amid the bodies and noise. Vincent's focus is already on BODYGUARD #2, as he kicks down with ferocious force, slamming Bodyguard #1 into unconsciousness...

Bodyguard #2 intuits, turns. Vincent's foot slams his knee sideways, breaking it, Vincent's palm bounces the man's forehead back, his fist slams into his exposed neck, that fast.

MAX

buffeted by dancers, saw, backs away, as...

BODYGUARD #3

saw the assault on #2. He grabs for Vincent...who breaks the grab, pulls Bodyguard #3's head and neck down towards him, slams his knee into his rib cage twice, breaking things, spins the man backwards, rips his head sideways and back, a centimeter from breaking, and holding it there with his left arm, Vincent's right hand is filled with the H+K as he moves towards Peter Yip.

82D PEDROSA,

82D

just then, SEES...

PEDROSA POV: PETER YIP

glimpsed in the booth from Pedrosa's angle.

PEDROSA

(to Fed #1)

There's Yip! Get him out of here!

And Fed #1 moves with Fed #2 along the wall on the opposite side towards Yip while Pedrosa crosses the floor, sees the disturbance and over his right shoulder, right there is...

(CONTINUED)

82D CONTINUED:

82D

PEDROSA (CONT'D)
VINCENT!!!

*

(CONTINUED)

82D CONTINUED: (2)

82D

Mad Dog Killer "Vincent."

PEDROSA (CONT'D)
 (into lapel radio)
 Middle of the dance floor! There he
 is!

82E FEDS + HRT WITH ASSAULT WEAPONS

82E

*

push through dancers...

PEDROSA
 FBI! FREEZE, VINCENT! DON'T MOVE!
 FREEZE! HANDS IN THE AIR!

*

*

Max hears they spotted Vincent. Then he realizes the three,
 four weapons of cops fighting through crowd are all aimed at
 him. People who aren't falling away from him are confused. Max
 is the loneliest man in the room...

*

*

MAX
 Don't shoot! I'm not Vincent!

But Korean hip-hop thunders. Korean music videos are crazy
 visuals.

82F RAPPER

82F

*

next to Yip thinks HE'S getting busted, wants to get out
 while...

BODYGUARDS #4 + #5

at either end of Yip's booth struggle to see from where the
 threat is coming.

KOREAN GANGSTERS

*

behind the booth put hands on weapons. They SEE Fed #1 + Fed #2
 slide behind patrons, closing in, to get Yip to safety...

*

VARIOUS FEDS (O.S.)
 (to Man)
 FREEZE! HANDS IN THE AIR! ON YOUR
 KNEES! NOW! NOW!

KOREAN GANGSTER #1 -

pushed sideways by Fed #1, who's trying to reach Yip - sees the
 weapon in Fed #1's hand. So he pulls his 9mm, which Fed #2
 shoves sideways but the gun FIRES, hitting an incoming...

PEDROSA

in the upper thigh, slamming him face first to the floor.

(CONTINUED)

82F CONTINUED: 82F

AND WITH THE FIRST GUNSHOT, ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE...

82G MAX 82G *

drops to the floor. Rounds are fired at him by Yip's Bodyguard #5. A dancer is hit.

82H PACO

82H

gives the look of Rubio, who's moved to within 30 feet from Max. He nods "yes"...take out "Vincent," but...

REAL VINCENT

advancing to the Yip booth, sees the red line through smoke and the jewel of a laser point dance around Max's ear. Sees the source...

VINCENT'S H+K

over nearly-dead Bodyguard #3, swings left and punches THREE ROUNDS into Rubio...

AND MAX

sees Vincent saved his life. As...

VINCENT

spots...

PACO

ten feet away...

PACO

(looks from Vincent to Max
to Vincent)

You're...

(he got the joke)

He drops to the floor for cover...to disappear...while...

82J MAX

82J

is on the floor amid destroyed furniture, overturned tables, panicked patrons and...

FANNING

...low, pushing through the chaos, gets a glimpse of Max. Fanning shoves sideways to reach him, imbued with this mission for some inexplicable reason...

*

*

82K AT BOOTH - PETER YIP

82K

is protected by his confused scrum of Korean gangsters and bodyguards. Girls dove under tables. The Rapper and one Bodyguard struggles through crowd that traps them to get out, while...

(CONTINUED)

82K CONTINUED:

82K

VINCENT

- the only calm in the storm - has dumped Bodyguard #3 and is moving on the cluster of protection at Peter Yip's booth, when...

FROM THE LEFT SIDE OF BODYGUARD #1

- breathing in rasps and risen from the dead - grabs for the gun in Vincent's right hand as...

82L FANNING

82L

*

gets to Max.

MAX

I'm Max! I'm a goddamn cab driver!

FANNING

I know. I know!

*

Fanning grabs him, keeps him low, pushes his head down...

*

FANNING (CONT'D)

I'm Detective Fanning, LAPD! I'm getting you out of here.

*

*

...and they slide behind the back of the opposite banquettes, seeking cover, and break towards a rear exit. While...

82M HEAVY KOREAN GANGSTER, ALSO...

82M

slams Vincent's gun hand with a short baton. Vincent's disarmed. Two Men are on him.

A KNIFE IN VINCENT'S LEFT HAND

sinks into Bodyguard #1's leg, dropping him.

KOREAN GANGSTER

swings the baton for Vincent's head. Vincent steps inside. Traps the man's arm. Takes his baton, releases his torqued body and backhands it across the Gangster's neck. Vincent slams a forehand across his ribs. As the Korean Gangster, concussed, falls backwards, forcing Vincent to the floor...

BODYGUARD #4,

coming up the middle from Yip's booth, where attention focuses right now on the real threat: Vincent, FIRES A THREE-SHOT BURST from an SMG. And, Vincent, retrieving his H+K, rolls concussed Korean Gangster off of him, and...

(CONTINUED)

82M CONTINUED:

82M

VINCENT

places FOUR SHOTS into Bodyguard #4. VINCENT'S ASSAULT WILL BE IN A STRAIGHT LINE. Now, he rolls onto one knee, FIRES TWO MORE, dropping African-American Bodyguard #5, who had two handguns blazing. And RISING...

(CONTINUED)

82M CONTINUED: (2)

82M

VINCENT ALMOST AT YIP'S BOOTH

Korean Gangster is blown back. Another tries to help 300-pound Yip escape over the back. He's HIT. Peter Yip falls back into the banquette, his eyes wider because Vincent's coming. Vincent reloads. As his thumb hits the slide release and it jacks forward, he's already FIRED a round into Yip. And Yip's eyes - at the fierce face of death approaching - are filled in his last moments with Vincent, who FIRES four rounds. And one to the head. That fast. And the wall of frosted glass with a plane of water running down it behind dead Peter Yip is untouched, serene.

82N WOUNDED PEDROSA

82N

Feds are shouting. HRT are searching. Bodyguards are surrendering. Korean gangsters scream at each other. Inane Korean infomercials, videos, while...

83 INT. BACK STAIRS - MAX + FANNING

83

race past karaoke and music recording rooms and escape down the back stairs. Fanning pushes Max ahead, covers their rear. *

MAX + FANNING FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS

MAX

Oh, man, am I happy to see you! I don't believe it!

FANNING

Yeah. I know. Relax. Breathe. You're okay.

Other patrons have collapsed on the stairs and huddle on the landing. Max and Fanning slide by and step over them to get to the exit door to the back alley.

MAX

I can't believe it. I can't believe it...!

Fanning guides Max forward. Emotions flood out of Max. Ten hours of traumatic stress. Max's nightmare is over. He's home free. Tears stream down his face.

84 EXT. SIDE STREET BEHIND CLUB - WIDE: FANNING + MAX

84

emerge. BOOM, BOOM, BOOM. Fanning is dead before he hits the ground. Max is horrified. Vincent grabs Max, propelling him forward.

VINCENT

(fierce)
GET IN!

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED: 84

He throws Max behind the wheel, gets in the back...

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED: (2)

84

VINCENT (CONT'D)

DRIVE!

Max - numb - hits the gas, peels out, his door left open, hands barely on the wheel, driving and motor skills impaired, scraping off the sides of adjacent cars. Dead Detective Fanning, now inert, is left behind. *

CUT TO:

85 EXT. AERIAL SHOT: LOS ANGELES CITYSCAPE - NIGHT

85

STRAIGHT DOWN from above. Acid-mint streetlight in pools on Olympic Blvd. The yellow cab is the only vehicle heading east. Everything else streams west. Emergency vehicles. Flashers.

86 INT. MAX'S CAB - MAX

86

in shock. Back in purgatory...eternally in his cab's front seat. As the lone yellow cab drives east...

SINGLE: VINCENT *

VINCENT

What a clusterfuck. Only thing didn't show up was the Polish cavalry.

Max's life, controlled by Vincent, is a nightmare, perpetual and eternal...

VINCENT (CONT'D)

You don't wanna talk, tell me to fuck off...

MAX

(inaudible)
...fuck off.

Vincent's attention is out the window at the streams of emergency vehicles...at the earpiece, filled with LAPD and news helicopters.

86A EXT. STREET - FRONTAL: THE ANONYMOUS YELLOW CAB

86A

heads east. All other traffic races to the debacle left behind...

VINCENT (O.S.)

...blood, bodily fluid and death get to you? Try deep breathing. Or remember, we all die anyway...

MAX (O.S.)

You had to kill Fanning?!

(CONTINUED)

86A CONTINUED:

86A

VINCENT (O.S.)
(blasé)
Who's Fanning?

*

86B INT. CAB

86B

MAX
That cop!
(beat)
Why'd you have to do that? You
couldn't wound him? The guy had a
family, maybe parents, kids who gotta
grow up without a dad, he was a good
guy, and he believed me...

VINCENT
I shoulda saved him 'cause he believed
you...?

MAX
No, not just that.

VINCENT
Yeah, that...

MAX
Yeah, so, what's wrong with that?

VINCENT
It's what I do for a living...

MAX
Some living.

VINCENT
Head downtown...

MAX
What's downtown?

VINCENT
How are you at math? I was hired for
five hits. I did four.

MAX
(grim)
One more.

VINCENT
There you go...!

MAX
Whyn't you kill me and find another
cab.

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT

'Cause you're good.

(shrugs)

We're in this together. You know...fates intertwined. Cosmic coincidence. All that crap...

MAX

You're full of shit.

VINCENT

I'm full of shit?

(beat)

You're a monument of it. You even bullshitted yourself, all I am is taking out the garbage. Bad guys killing bad guys...

*

MAX

'Cause that's what you said...

VINCENT

And you believe me...?

MAX

What'd they do?

VINCENT

How do I know?

(beat)

But, they all got that "witness for the prosecution" look to me. It's probably some major federal indictment against somebody who majorly does not want to get indicted... I dunno.

*

MAX

That's the reason?

VINCENT

That's the "why." There is no reason.

(beat)

No good reason; no bad reason. To live or to die.

MAX

Then what are you?

VINCENT

(looks up)

...indifferent.

Vincent hesitates, then back out the window...

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Get with it. Get over it.
 ...millions of galaxies of hundreds of
 millions of stars and a speck on one
 in a blink...that's us. Lost in
 space. The universe don't care (about
you).

(beat)

The cop, you, me? Who notices?

MAX

What's with you...?

*

VINCENT

As in...?

MAX

Man, if someone had a gun to your head
 and said: "You gotta tell me what's
 goin' on with that person across the
 street, there, what they think, who
 they are, how they feel, or I will
kill you"...they'd have to kill
 you...wouldn't they...?

(beat)

'Cause you don't have a
 clue...about...anyone.

*

(struggling for the words)

...I don't think you, you have a clue,
 period. Did anyone "do" for you in
 your life...? Ever? When you draw
 breath in the morning? Open your eyes
 in the a.m.? You
 anticipate...anything? Want anything?
 Expect anything? I don't think so...

*

(beat)

'Cause you are low, my brother, way
low... and some standard parts that are
 supposed to be there?...with you,
 aren't. So what happened to you, man?
 What happened to you?

VINCENT

...all the cabbies in LA, I get Max,
 Sigmund Freud meets Dr. Ruth...

MAX

Answer the question.

VINCENT

Look in the mirror.
 (on the attack)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT (CONT'D)

...with your paper towels...a bottle
of 409...a limo company someday. How
much you got saved? *

MAX

None of your business.

VINCENT

Your business "plan?" Someday?
"Someday my dream'll come..."?

(beat)

And one night you'll wake up and
discover it all flipped on you.
Suddenly you're old. And it didn't
happen. And it never will. 'Cause
you were never going to do it, anyway.
The dream on the horizon became
yesterday and got lost. Then you'll
bullshit yourself, it could never have
been, anyway. And you'll recede it
into memory...and zone out in a
Barcalounger with daytime TV on for
the rest of your life...

(beat)

Don't talk to me about killing. *
You're do-in' yourself. In this
yellow-and-orange prison. Bit by bit.
Every day.

EXTREMELY CLOSE: Max is soaking up every word.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

All it ever took was a down payment on
a Lincoln Town Car. What the hell are
you still doing in a cab?

The needle on the speedometer is creeping past forty...

MAX

'Cause I never straightened-up and
looked at it, you know...?

VINCENT

Slow down.

MAX

(ignoring him)

...myself, I should have. My brothers
did...

(beat)

Tried to gamble my way out from under.
(That was) Another born-to-lose deal!
Then, "it's gotta be perfect to go!"
You know? Risk all torqued-down.

Needle pushing sixty...

(CONTINUED)

MAX (CONT'D)

But you know what? It doesn't matter.
What's it matter, anyway? 'Cause we
are...insignificant out here in this
big-ass nowhere. *Twilight Zone* shit.
Says the badass sociopath in my
backseat. So that's one thing I got
to thank you for, bro... Until now, I
never saw it that way...

*
*

The cab goes blasting through an intersection on a red light. A
LOS ANGELES TIMES DELIVERY TRUCK SLAM ON ITS BRAKES as Max
swerves, barely avoiding a collision.

VINCENT

That was a red light!

Max glances in the rearview.

MAX

...not until now. So what's it all
matter? It don't. Fuck it. Fix it.
Nothing to lose. Right?

Vincent's H+K's aimed at Max's head. Max almost laughs.

VINCENT

Slow the hell down!

MAX

Why? What are you gonna do? Pull the
trigger? Kill us? Go ahead, man!
Shoot...my ass.

VINCENT

Slow down!

MAX

Vincent?

Their eyes meet in the rearview mirror. Vincent is arrested by
a look in Max that he's not seen before. It's the even,
confrontational look of a man with nothing to lose.

MAX (CONT'D)

Go fuck yourself.

Max slams on the brakes and cranks the steering wheel hard
right...

87 EXT. STREET - RIGHT WHEEL 87

hits a low divider...rear end comes unstuck, rotating over the front right and flipping the cab into a violent roll onto its roof, spinning down the street, SMASHING off other cars, pieces falling off, spewing glass...

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

87

...and then settling upside-down, revolving slowly to a creaking stop, antifreeze spilling across the pavement.

And then everything goes silent, motionless, still.

87A INT. CAB

87A

Wreckage. Steam from the ruptured radiator. Crumpled metal. Missing hood. Disintegrated windshield...shattered glass.

Max is trapped upside-down in his seatbelt, his roof half caved in, one side of his face streaked with blood. Alive but dazed.

Movement in the back. Sharp intake of breath. Then a voice...

VINCENT

Well. That was brilliant.

MAX

Was your seatbelt fastened, honey?

-- and a BLOODY HAND shoots from the darkness behind him, plunging an aluminum section that used to hold the perspex screen in place. Max jerks his head aside and the aluminum rail misses him by inches, ramming solidly into the headrest instead. *

Max releases his seatbelt, dropping and hitting the ceiling of the cab. Vincent, sardined in the reduced space in the back, lunges forward. Max wildly fights to keep the knife at bay and crawl out his window. We hear a POLICE SIREN. Vincent, eyes glittering, kicks out the window on the other side.

Max, crawling away on the pavement, keeping low, the taxi between them, looks back...

MAX'S POV: VINCENT

...in a glimpse, running off into the night. Vincent's hand pulls the .45 Para Ordnance backup from his waistband. Vincent's SHOES CRUNCH on broken glass. He vanishes into darkness as the SIREN GROWS near...

Max pushes painfully to his feet. Looks around.

A surreal moment. Max standing by his overturned cab, the empty city all around him, breathing the cool night air.

Alive.

It strikes him in that moment. He's survived the night. The blood pumping through his veins is a fact. It stuns him. Overwhelms him.

(CONTINUED)

87A CONTINUED:

87A

How good is life?

The LAPD black and white screeches to a stop. A SERGEANT gets out.

SERGEANT
(into radio)
12A75 requesting an RA unit at Grand
and 9th for a TC with injuries...

SERGEANT, looking at the truly wrecked cab...

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
Are you alright? What happened?

And the mundane beauty of the question makes Max look at him like he's crazy, and there are tears streaming down his face. The Sergeant approaches Max, gentle but firm:

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
(as if to a child)
You've been in an accident. An
ambulance is on the way to help you.
Do you understand what I am saying to
you? Sit down on the curb. Okay?
(Max nods)
Anybody else in there?

Max shakes his head. The Sergeant shines his flashlight on the passenger compartment, concerned about Max.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
Don't worry about the cab. They'll
get you a new one. You okay? *

MAX
(finds his voice)
I'm...fine. Fine. Just dizzy and
shit. *

SERGEANT
Sit there and breathe deep, sir. *

You'll be okay. *

The Sergeant, now at the rear of the cab, to make sure there's no gasoline spill, suddenly freezes, his flashlight beam finding the trunk lid ajar from the crash, and inside is the corpse of Ramone Gallardo in a sprawled heap.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
Put your hands where I can see 'em!
Get on your knees! Slowly!

MAX
Huh?

(CONTINUED)

87A CONTINUED: (2)

87A

Sergeant's gun is out on Max. Max does as he's told, getting to his knees on the pavement. Curious. The whole thing strikes Max as insane. Absurd.

87B OMIT

87B

87C EXT. STREET - MAX

87C

MAX

Sure. Arrest me. Take me in. Police station. LA County's good.

...and he's on his knees, hands on his head. Sergeant coming up behind him, covering him. Per procedure, Sergeant holsters his weapon, draws his cuffs, and grabs Max's right wrist, cuffing it.

MAX (SLO-MO)

One arm is brought down behind his back...

MAX'S POV: PUSH SLOWLY INTO DEBRIS

from the wreckage. Granules of shattered safety glass. Max's on-board computer that Vincent used - upside down - and "ON"... And...

TIGHTER ON MAX (SLO-MO)

as he sees the display from Vincent's flash drive of the last two targets. Max's falls forward and flattens his face on the pavement to see...

*

(CONTINUED)

87C CONTINUED:

87C

MAX'S POV PUSHING IN

The split image. On the left is Peter Yip. On the right is...

ANNIE FARRELL. ASSISTANT U.S. ATTORNEY.

MAX (SLO-MO)

Breath goes out of him. Target #5 is Annie. As the Sergeant is
struggling for Max's left hand, now, Max's lunges for... *

UNDER SHATTERED GLASS

the visible grip of Vincent's .45 H+K. *

MAX

pulls the Sergeant off-balance, whips the H+K around while still
on his back, jamming the gun to the Sergeant's head. Sergeant's
hand reaches for his holstered Beretta...

MAX (CONT'D)

Get your hand off your gun!

Max jams the gun tighter to the Sergeant's head. He's not
certain where to point it.

MAX (CONT'D)

Look, someone's gonna get killed if I
don't, it's... *

SERGEANT

(cuts in) *

PUT YOUR GUN DOWN!

MAX

NO! I gotta go, see, you don't... *

SERGEANT

(cuts in) *

PUT THE GUN DOWN!

MAX

HEY, HEY! When did this become a
negotiation?

Max grabs the gun out of the Sergeant's holster and tosses it
under the car. He takes his second set of cuffs...

MAX (CONT'D)

Cuff yourself to the goddamn door.

Sergeant cuffs his arm through the window frame of the open
squad-car door. Max tosses the key. Trapped.

(CONTINUED)

87C CONTINUED: (2)

87C

SERGEANT

You're in a world of shit...

MAX

Good! Do us a favor. Call the police! I'm going to 6th and Fig.

(running off)

I got no time to explain...

*
*
*

...and the last the Sergeant sees of him, Max is vanishing up the street into the darkness.

A87D EXT. STREET - MAX

A87D

*

Running.

Stripped of everything now. Operating purely on instinct. Vincent's gun in his right hand, handcuff dangling from his left wrist...

Running.

The city silent around him. The only sound is his feet hitting the pavement...

Running.

TWO COP CARS rocketing through an intersection a block or so behind him, SIRENS WAILING. Max veers for cover, not breaking stride, pressing on...

More distant SIRENS, now, police units responding...Max, racing up the middle of the street...

Seeing a late-night PARTIER coming out of The Standard with a CELL PHONE, Max grabbing the phone right out of his hand as he sails past him, the Partier spinning around to chase after him...

PARTIER

Hey, asshole!

Max whips around, H+K snapping up.

MAX

Fuck off!

The man does. Max keeps running, dialing, fumbling Annie's business card from his pocket, getting the numbers wrong, trying again...

*

(CONTINUED)

87C CONTINUED: (3) 87C

...and he finally stops, gasping for breath, punching in the final numbers. LOUSY signal. CAMERA CIRCLES AROUND MAX TO REVEAL...

*
*

87D EXT. PARKING STRUCTURE 87D

Max runs up the stairs of a parking structure to get a better signal. He and we SEE...

*
*

MAX'S POV: FEDERAL BUILDING

across the freeway. Dark offices. Only a few have lights on. Except...

*

Three floors that are completely lit, 14th through 16th.

MAX
(gripping cell phone)
C'mon, go through, go through...

Through intermittent CELL PHONE STATIC, we hear RINGING on the other end...

*

87E INT. FEDERAL BUILDING LOBBY - VINCENT - NIGHT 87E

uses a card similar to the one we saw in the front to gain access to the elevator lobby without setting off the alarms. BUT this card's connected to a wristband with other key cards and an identification card of a heavysset black woman. We don't understand...

*
*

WIDER

*

beyond Vincent the lobby's vacancy is sinister...

*

87F OMIT 87F

88 INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT 88

Vincent rides up, watching the numbers climb...

89 OMIT 89

89A EXT. PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT 89A

Max waits, heart pounding, phone ringing, eyes scanning the windows...

*

He sees a FIGURE on the uppermost well-lit floor, 16, through the south windows cross an office to grab the phone. Annie.

*

INTERCUT WITH:

90

INT. US ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - ANNIE - NIGHT

90

*

lays down some files and grabs up the phone, bleary from exhaustion. She wasn't kidding about pulling an all-nighter.

(CONTINUED)

ANNIE
Annie Farrell.

MAX
(gasping for breath)
Annie...it's Max.

ANNIE
(uncertain)
Max...

MAX
Max, the cab driver!

ANNIE
(beat)
Max?
(glances at clock)
...kind of a strange time to be
calling...

MAX
Listen! Listen, okay? There's a man.
His name's Vincent. He's come to kill
you!

ANNIE
He's...what? Where are you...?

MAX
(shouting)
Kill you! He is coming to kill you!

ANNIE
(beat)
Is this a joke? 'Cause it is not
funny.

MAX
A guy, Felix, hired him! Or people
Felix works for. He's already killed
witnesses, now he's coming after you!
He was scoping out your building when
I dropped you off. I don't know what
happened, but he got into my cab.

90A INT. ELEVATOR LOBBY - ELEVATOR DOORS

90A

slide open. Vincent emerges onto the floor, using a master key
card to enter the office...

91 INT. OFFICE - ANNIE 91

tries to decipher what Max is saying through the CELL PHONE
DROPOUTS:

ANNIE
Did you say Felix? As in Reyes-
Torrena? How do you know about my
case? I don't understand...

MAX
It doesn't matter! Get out of the
goddamn building...

92 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT 92

...but it's too late, Vincent's at a wooden door in the wood-and-
glass office interior with an "Assistant U.S. Attorney Annie
Farrell" sign. He kicks in the door at the lock. It slams
open. He's through, H+K up...

REVERSE: NOTHING

Empty. No one's home. It's not the same office. Vincent steps
in...

92A INT. 16TH FLOOR OFFICE 92A

Annie finally grasps what Max is telling her:

ANNIE
...okay, okay, Max, I believe
you...I'll get out of the building...

MAX
No, no, wait...!

93 OMIT 93

93A EXT. PARKING STRUCTURE - MAX 93A

sees across the freeway: Vincent looking through Annie's
office. It's on the 14th floor...

LOW ANGLE PAST MAX

CAMERA TILTS UP to reveal Annie two floors above. She's frozen
at a table in the law library on the south wall, phone to her
ear.

93B INT. 14TH FLOOR, ANNIE'S OFFICE - VINCENT 93B

SEES purse, take-out, coffee cups...Vincent KNOWS she's still
here.

(CONTINUED)

93B CONTINUED:

93B

And the ANGLE becomes OVER VINCENT out the window to the parking structure below and to the speck on the roof - Max, watching him.

93C EXT. PARKING STRUCTURE - MAX

93C

MAX
...he's two floors below you.

(CONTINUED)

93C CONTINUED:

93C

ANNIE
In my office?!

*

MAX
Where are you, what floor?

ANNIE
Sixteen, law library and files.

*

MAX
He doesn't know you're up there! Stay
right where you are! Call 911!

ANNIE
Max, are you sure?

MAX
Call the goddamn police! Don't move
from that spot...

94 INT. 14TH FLOOR - NIGHT

94

Vincent pauses from examining offices with half-glass interior walls. His eyes going to a desk phone. Three banks of extensions. All dark. ONLY ONE of the extension buttons is GLOWING. Then it goes out. Then it lights up again.

*

Glowing light. It's Annie calling 911. Next to it is typed the extension's location.

*

Files Section, 16th Fl.

Vincent looks up. He knows where she is. CAMERA TILTS UP of his look...

95 OMIT

95

95A EXT. PARKING STRUCTURE - MAX

95A

sees, realizes Vincent knows where she is...

MAX
(into cell phone)
Hang up. Hang up! Annie, get out!
He knows where you are!

96 INT. 16TH FLOOR FILES SECTION - ANNIE

96

lost in CELL PHONE INTERMITTENT CUT-OUT...

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED: 96

ANNIE

Hello? Max? What did you say?

No use. He's gone. She punches a clear line, dials 911...

97 OMIT 97

97A EXT. PARKING STRUCTURE - MAX 97A

frantically hits redial. Nothing. No signal. SHRILL FAST-BUSY TONE. No cell service.

MAX

Shit!

Pure desperation. He glances over the abutment to the grass slope below. No time to think. He acts. Fuck it. He jumps, clumsily, falling, rolling...

97B FALLING DOWN THE SLOPE 97B

with Max. Desperate, not graceful, pushing to his feet, ankle wrenched, racing/hobbling, grass-stained hoody, across...

97C INT. 14TH FLOOR - LONG LENS ON MAX 97C

...crossing the bridge over the Harbor Freeway to the office building...

98 INT. 16TH FLOOR FILES SECTION - NIGHT 98

...as Annie listens to the 911 RECORDING:

VOICE

...call will be answered in the order received. If this is not an emergency...

99 OMIT 99

99A EXT. FEDERAL BUILDING, LOBBY (GAS CO. WEST OVERVIEW) - MAX 99A

enters. The sidewalk is elevated above the lobby. Through the brightly-lit glass walks Max sees the lobby is strangely vacant. No security guards. (Then he SEES a LONG SMEAR OF BLOOD across the white stone...) * *

99B OMIT 99B

100 INT. 16TH FLOOR FILES SECTION - ANNIE 100

finally hears a CLICK ON THE LINE as:

(CONTINUED)

100 CONTINUED: 100

FEMALE VOICE (FILTERED)

911. How can I help you...?

ANNIE

There's a man in the building! He's trying to kill me. I'm...

100A INT. UTILITY ROOM, 16TH FLOOR - FIRE AX 100A

WHACK! Vincent swings it again, instantly severing the 16th floor's power and telephone trunk line. Sparks emit from the bundled cables in the thick conduit. He tosses the ax, exits into the hallway, jabs the elevator button...

100B EXT. FEDERAL BUILDING, LOBBY (EAST VIEW) - MAX 100B *

appears. And SEES...dead NIGHT WATCHWOMAN squeezed behind the security desk... *

101 INT. FILES SECTION - NIGHT 101

...as Annie finds herself talking to a dead line:

ANNIE

...hello?

Meanwhile...

102 EXT. BUILDING LOBBY - NIGHT 102

Max hurls a steel trash can at the glass wall with all his might. It just bounces off.

Max pauses, stymied. He raises Vincent's H+K clumsily in one hand, braces himself, squeezes the trigger. Nothing. Is there a safety on this thing? He finds it.

He tries again. FIRES TWO SHOTS into the glass door. The gun almost kicks out of his hand. But the door disintegrates. He walks through...

103 INT. 16TH FLOOR FILES SECTION - NIGHT 103

Annie, frozen with indecision. What to do? Stay or go?

(In keeping with the building's design, a WALL OF GLASS separates this area from the corridor beyond, which is separated by glass from other offices and the lobby. Normally, you'd be able to see people working, walking the hallway.)

Right now, the corridor's dark. Terrifying.

She forces herself to move, to cross the office, run now...for the door to the...

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED:

103

INTERNAL CORRIDOR

...but she only gets ten feet before she's stopped by...

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED: (2) 103

A door opening. A SOFT FOOTSTEP. Somebody's there. Somebody stealthy. *

She backs up, against the floor-to-ceiling windows. Frozen. Heart pounding. Listening. Against the city at night out the windows... *

She backs up, further towards the windows, back into... *

103A INT. FILES SECTION 103A

...where she backs past file cabinets. Not deep enough. Nowhere to hide. So she backs along the glass. Nothing now but the CITY GLOW spilling faintly through the windows. Low shelves of legal books. Tables offering no cover. While...

A SHADOW

tracks against the city laid out to the south, the 110 and 10 like arteries carrying white and red cells (headlights and taillights)...

ANNIE crouches under a table and crawls backwards. She can't hear a thing. Her heart pounds. The silence makes her want to scream.

A POV of empty, scary office. Over the table, b.g., is the glass wall running the length of the office area. The corridor beyond. Empty.

A SHADOW...? Did she see a shadow pass against the murky darkness out there?

A soft sound. Feet on carpet. Did she hear it? Is she imagining it? The breath catches in her throat. Eyes wide.

THE SHADOW

in the bullpen by a corridor. It lurks, silently. Waiting. It's Vincent.

FRONTAL: VINCENT

And then he moves. Softly. Quietly...

TIGHT ON ANNIE

Under the table...by the windows. A huddled form against the city lights and helicopters. Waiting. Not breathing. Still as a statue. Then the urge is too strong.

She's got to get out, get out now!

Annie on her hands and knees, trying to crawl away, soundlessly...

(CONTINUED)

...not realizing that walking upon her, SOUNDLESSLY, from the back is Vincent. She doesn't know. He's a shadow in the dimness.

ANNIE

senses. Stops. Turns...and she sees the shape - twenty feet away - of Vincent...the Para-Ordnance .45 coming up. The .45 cal barrel like a tunnel into nothingness.

VINCENT'S EYES

are cold, indifferent.

VINCENT'S FINGER

squeezing off the slack on the trigger.

VINCENT'S EYES

sense. Stops. Turns.

A SILHOUETTE

in a doorway. Aiming a gun. He's backlit by a red emergency light on a rear wall. For a moment, Vincent can't bring himself to believe it...

VINCENT

Max?

MAX

Let her go.

Vincent smiles, it's harsh, almost canine...

VINCENT

What are you gonna do, shoot m--

BLAM! A MUZZLE FLASH. Vincent got kicked in the head. He goes sprawling.

Max rushes up to Annie. Grabs her arm, jerks her away...

ANNIE

Max...?

He pulls her to her feet. Both of them backing away, running for the door. A GROAN. Max pulls her harder.

VINCENT

rises, gets behind cover. Sitting up, eyes glittering, hand clasped to the side of his head, blood coursing through his fingers.

(CONTINUED)

103A CONTINUED: (2) 103A

VINCENT

Jesus, Max. You shot my ear off. *

He pulls his hand away, sitting on the floor, staring at the sheet of blood on his palm. He looks at the fleeing Max. *

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Okay, MAX!

103B INT. GLASS CORRIDORS - MAX 103B

has the H+K aimed, backing for the elevator lobby...

103C VINCENT APPEARS 103C

around a corner, clearing space. Fast. His Para-Ordnance up. Max and Annie running, now... Vincent sees vague shapes...

BOOM-BOOM! BOOM-BOOM! Gunshots punch through the glass, inches from Max and Annie, collapsing walls revealing Vincent against the LA-scape. Blossoms of white flame: BOOM-BOOM...

103D INT. ELEVATOR LOBBY 103D

...and a moment later the GLASS WALL EXPLODES into the corridor, by a chair, CRASHING through it, followed by Vincent, into the elevator lobby, while...

103E INT. ELEVATOR - MAX 103E

hits the ground-floor button and "close," the doors taking a million years to do that. As they're sliding shut, he sees Vincent across the lobby, raising the gun...

Max throws himself on Annie, both to the floor. BULLETS PUNCH through the paper-thin sheet-metal doors. But the elevator's moving now...

103F INT. 16TH FLOOR HALLWAY 103F

...leaving Vincent behind. He darts for the stairs.

103G INT. ELEVATOR 103G

Max and Annie on the floor, breathing hard, staring at each other in wordless shock. They reach the ground floor...

103H INT. BUILDING LOBBY 103H

...and Max drags her forward, the two of them racing across for the exit, seen WIDE + HIGH in REAR SHOT (Gas Co. lobby, running to S.E.)...

103J INT. BUILDING STAIRWELL 103J
 Vincent careens down the steps, the entire side of his head bloody, his ear mostly gone. He SLAMS through a door into --

103K INT. LOBBY 103K
 -- where he finds the elevator standing empty. He hears a door alarm, turns, runs across the lobby...

103L INT. LOWER LOBBY - VINCENT 103L
 enters and races down the frozen escalator to CAMERA. *

A103M INT. MTA - REAR SHOT: MAX + ANNIE A103M *
 enter and run through the interior hall OR down the lower *
 staircase. *

103M INT./EXT. MTA - LOW/WIDE ANGLE: VINCENT 103M
 entering from the street, diagonally, down to CAM. (The office building is behind him.)

104 OMIT 104 *

105 INT. BOARDING PLATFORMS (GREEN LINE) - MAX + ANNIE 105 *
 race towards the boarding area. *
 Hardly anyone in sight, except for an OLD WHITE HOMELESS GUY *
 with a TV set in a shopping cart powered by a car battery. *

MAX *
 CALL THE POLICE! *

He stares at them like they're nuts. They run towards the empty *
 platform. No train! *

Neon-lit, strange art, like dead people floating in a pool, *
 hangs from the ceiling. *

Max and Annie run, turning this way and that, trying to decide *
 what to do. *

A105A OVER MAX + ANNIE - SAME A105A *
 They run down ANOTHER STAIRCASE where we see the BLUE LINE *
 PLATFORMS, running at 90 degrees. No train there, either! They *
 race down, anyway to get away, because... *

105A EXT. TOP OF STAIRS TO GREEN LINE PLATFORM - REAR SHOT: 105A *
VINCENT *

runs into frame, SEES Max and Annie 50-75 yards away, racing *
down the stairs to the Blue Line...a difficult shot, Vincent *
aims, elevates the front sight...

(CONTINUED)

105A CONTINUED: 105A
BOOOOOM! BOOOOOM! BOOOOOM! Vincent FIRES THREE ROUNDS... *

105B INT. BLUE LINE PLATFORM - MAX + ANNIE 105B *
cut by .45 caliber bullets chewing craters in the ceramic tiles inches from them. *

106 INT. BLUE LINE - MAX + ANNIE 106 *
HEAR, NOW, A TRAIN PULL IN. BUT it's upstairs on the Green Line. They run down the platform for the stairs back UP! *

A106A INT. GREEN LINE PLATFORM - VINCENT A106A *
running, SEES the train arriving on the OPPOSITE PLATFORM. He looks down to the stairs to the Blue Line. A train pulls in there, too! Decision time. *

B106A INT. GREEN LINE, THE FOURTH SUBWAY CAR - MAX + ANNIE B106A *
...are discovered crawling into the car. They collapse, low on the floor, waiting for the doors to close, the train to pull out, hoping Vincent hasn't followed... *

VINCENT *

has to decide, has to second-guess Max. A beat. The train sits there for seconds. It seems like hours, like fucking forever. Vincent riveted to the spot. Max + Annie praying Vincent doesn't appear. *

The doors start to close, sliding irrevocably shut. *

VINCENT *

Then he knows. With no hesitation, he leaps off the platform onto the rails as the train starts to pull out. *

C106A INT. FOURTH SUBWAY CAR - MAX + ANNIE C106A *
are at the sliding which adjoins the fourth car to the third car. The train's picking up speed. Where's Vincent? As a precaution, they start for the third car. *

D106A EXT. MTA - HELICOPTER FROM ABOVE D106A *
...we're out of the subway on the surface... *

106A INT. THIRD CAR - MAX + ANNIE 106A *
low, down the aisle of the third car, rising for the door. And Max turns and looks: *

(CONTINUED)

106A CONTINUED:

106A

VINCENT

*

standing in the fourth car, staring at him.

*

106B OMIT

106B

*

106C INT. SECOND CAR - MAX + ANNIE 106C *
race in as ROUNDS pound through glass into the second car. *
ROUNDS SLAM through metal and glass. *

106D INT. FOURTH CAR - VINCENT - NIGHT 106D *
VINCENT *

is coming... *

VARIOUS ANGLES

...and the SEQUENCE BUILDS, Vincent working toward the front...
Max and Annie desperately looking for cover. City racing by.
Train racing by city. A few RAGGED PASSENGERS trying to huddle
out of harm's way with nowhere to go. As the TRAIN THUNDERS AND
SHRIEKS over the track junctures...

THE FIRST CAR

Max and Annie rush in, slide the door shut. This is as far as
they can go. They drop into a crouch at the door, breathing
hard, terrified, Max with his back against the wall, arm stiffly
keeping the door handle wedged tight, his head just below the
door's window. A harsh, ragged whisper:

ANNIE

Where's the next station?

A frozen moment. Eyes locked. Knowing they're probably going
to die together, even though they hardly know each other.

THE TRAIN GOES BLACK, LIGHTS DYING AS THEY SHRIEK OVER ANOTHER
JUNCTURE...then the LIGHTS RETURN, stuttering.

Max rises slightly up, peers over the lip of the window. Here
comes fucking Vincent down the aisle of the second car. He sees
Max. He shouts, barely audible from here...

VINCENT

YOU CAN'T WIN, MAX! I DO THIS FOR A
LIVING!

...and he keeps coming, .45 at his side, a sheet of blood down
his face from the missing part of his ear.

...the visage of Vincent, the .45 in his hands, scares the shit
out of the early-morning passengers.

...and Max clutches the H+K, takes a deep, shaky breath, his
eyes on Annie's, not even sure in that moment what he's going to
do, probably die, and he lunges up, Vincent not ten feet away...

AND THE TRAIN GOES DARK.

(CONTINUED)

106D CONTINUED:

106D

A BLIZZARD OF MUZZLE FLASHES, both men FIRING THROUGH THE WINDOWS at each other, GLASS SHATTERING between the cars and getting sucked away by the wind, Max screaming, face lit only by the GUNFIRE, clumsy in how he holds Vincent's H+K, firing one-handed, not aiming, not looking where he's shooting...Vincent's Para-Ordnance BOOMING OUT MASSIVE ERUPTIONS OF FLAME...

(CONTINUED)

106D CONTINUED: (2)

106D

...and then abrupt silence as the LIGHTS RETURN, Max looking down, his expression nearly childlike with terror. He stares at the H+K in his shaking hand, sees the slide is locked back - gun's empty. He rises up. His look says, "go ahead, kill me..." through the shattered window. *

Vincent's standing in the other car, right where we left him. Watching Max. A little smile on his face.

107 INT. VINCENT'S CAR - NIGHT

107

Vincent ejects the empty magazine. Before it even hits the floor or at his feet...Vincent's hand loading a full mag, the weapon pointed at Max, like it was when he reloaded and shot Peter Yip the first time.

Odd, though. His fingers aren't working that well. His brilliant sleight-of-hand seems gone. He fumbles the reload, in fact.

The magazine of stacked .45's drops, landing at his feet among the expended casings. A few fresh droplets of blood patter quietly.

Vincent considers picking up the mag, but it suddenly seems like way too much trouble. He blinks at the .45 in his hand, as if confused, then turns and starts unsteadily back toward the back of the car.

The .45 slips from his fingers, clattering to the floor.

Max watches Vincent walk away.

Vincent only makes it halfway. He has to sit. He grabs an aluminum pole, eases himself onto the seat, trying to catch his breath.

Max slides his door open, steps across the bridge between cars. Slides the second door open. Enters.

Vincent turns his head slightly, watching Max draw cautiously nearer. Max stares down, seeing the blood spreading across the floor beneath Vincent. Turning into quite a pool.

Vincent tries to speak, can't quite manage. Max sits across from him. Annie appears in b.g., watching them.

VINCENT + MAX

sit there, riding the train. Softly:

MAX

We're almost at the next station.

(CONTINUED)

107 CONTINUED:

107

Vincent smiles faintly. He leans his head toward Max as if conferring a secret. In a halting whisper:

VINCENT

Guy. Gets on a subway. Dies.
(off Max's look)
Think anybody'll notice?

MAX

looks into Vincent's eyes. It means "I'm that guy" and "will anybody notice me when I'm gone?"

VINCENT

leans back, gazing straight ahead now. Rocking gently with the motion of the train...

...and with much effort and to Max's amazement, Vincent emits a soft, rasping wheeze, but it's a faint laugh all the same.

Max has no idea what's so funny to a dying man. Vincent looks.

Max follows his gaze. There, right across the car, among all the ADVERTISEMENTS near the ceiling, is:

AN AD

The whitest sand and bluest sea you can imagine. A dream place. Limitless horizon. *

107A INT. VINCENT'S CAR - MAX - DAWN

107A

Vincent's no longer laughing. In fact, Vincent's no longer doing anything. Ever.

Annie comes to Max and sits. She shivers. Max takes off his zippered, hooded sweatshirt and puts it around Annie. It's a small gesture. But it's a protective and confident act... She takes his hand. Dawn lightens the sky ahead. They ride the train together, side by side, neither saying a word. For now.

The train pulls in to a station...

WIDE ANGLE OF SUBWAY CAR

...and Max pulls Annie to her feet. The doors open. They silently get off. The first sideways streams of yellow light shaft into the station.

The doors close again. The train pulls out.

(CONTINUED)

107A CONTINUED:

107A

WE HOLD ON Vincent for a while. Riding the train by himself,
into the dawn, his head back as if sleeping, alone in the car,
as the sun rises.

*

Another dead guy on the subway...riding into a new day.

And Max, in his Polo shirt and dirty pants, an arm around Annie,
wearing his stained sweatshirt, rises to us up the
escalator...freeways, arteries of traffic behind them.

*

*

*

FADE OUT