

DOOM DRIVE

an original screenplay by

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FADE IN:

INT. REFRIGERATION ROOM OF MORGUE -- NIGHT

The screen is completely BLACK, SOUNDS OF FOOTSTEPS, a metal door opening, the footsteps get closer then stop. There's a RUSTLING SOUND of CLOTH being pulled back and BRIGHT LIGHT floods the screen.

The bright light dims to form a halo around a darkened woman's face that stares, moving features barely discernible. The face moves aside to be replaced once again by the bright light.

PULL BACK to reveal a small room in a poor morgue in Mexico, none of those refrigerated drawers, a lone body on a gurney. Standing next to the gurney is an attractive woman in her 30's, a short hairstyle, professionally dressed in a woman's suit with a badge clipped to her belt as she is Los Angeles detective ELENA ALEXANDER. Alongside her is the MEDICAL EXAMINER, a Mexican doctor, holding a file folder. The body on the gurney is a good looking physically fit man, DR. JAMES "JIM" FIELDING, his skin unnaturally red as if sunburned, his lifeless eyes staring sightlessly.

ALEXANDER

You didn't close his eyes?

MEDICAL EXAMINER

I leave it natural for you. You see redness from carbon monoxide poison in suicide. That's usual.

Alexander examines a stitched wound on Jim's shoulder.

ALEXANDER

I'll need his fingerprints, death certificate, and you'll send me a copy of the autopsy.

The medical examiner takes from the folder a fingerprint card and death certificate and hands them to Alexander.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

Maybe take time for autopsy.

ALEXANDER

He's dead, it's over. No rush.

The medical examiner takes from the folder a legal sized envelope marked *DETECTIVE ALEXANDER, LOS ANGELES POLICE HOMICIDE* and hands it to Alexander.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

Policia say this in car for you.

Alexander reads it, then puts it in her pocket with the fingerprint card.

ALEXANDER
You slipped the noose, Doc.

MEDICAL EXAMINER
He was doctor?

ALEXANDER
Not like you. A scientist.

MEDICAL EXAMINER
In envelope he admits murder. A young man. Why he did these thing?

ALEXANDER
Why?

Alexander turns to stare at Jim.

EXTREME CLOSE UP OF JIM'S EYE, THE CAMERA GOING DOWN INTO THE PUPIL.

FADE TO BLACK

VOICE in banquet hall of the pompous CEO of Medyn Corporation BURT GORDON saying:

GORDON (V.O.)
Our future is ahead - and it is bright.

INT. BANQUET HALL -- NIGHT

In the banquet room of a downtown LA hotel the Medyn Corporation is feting a very living Jim Fielding. Next to him is his beautiful and vivacious wife, ALISON TRAYNOR FIELDING. Gordon is at the podium on the dais.

CREDITS ROLL:

GORDON
Medyn's sales of the 9041 syndetic triseptate system were up a phenomenal thousand percent last year and it appears that will be exceeded easily in the coming year - and for the foreseeable future.
(applause)

EXT. LA STREETS -- NIGHT

The APPLAUSE SOUNDS OVER LA honky-tonk street life strutting its stuff -- neon reds, yellows, blues, hookers in leather

minis, peacock pimps, shave-headed kids in baggy clothes, across a chasm from the corporate banquet as the APPLAUSE FADES.

A flashy 1960's Chevy lowrider cruising the streets...

GORDON (V.O.)

The heart of the 9041 system came from the vision and the unique talents of one man that Medyn is privileged to honor tonight...

INT. BANQUET HALL -- CONTINUOUS

GORDON

...the inventor of the valve system that makes the 9041 the incredibly successful and outstanding product it is...

Gordon turns and puts out his hand to...

GORDON (CONT'D)

Dr. James "Jim" Fielding!

There is loud sustained applause as Jim kisses his wife who applauds him along with the rest of the audience as he moves to the podium.

INT. LOWRIDER -- CONTINUOUS

Three Hispanics drive very slowly in the lowrider, the leader of the pack MANUEL "MACHETE" HERNANDEZ driving, his sidekick CHAVY slouched in the passenger seat, a third thug in the backseat. They're enjoying the spectacle on the streets. A beautiful woman gives them a look.

EXT. LA STREETS -- CONTINUOUS

Machete is grinning at the woman and the lowrider hops up and down suggestively as it moves along, the woman showing her appreciation of the spectacle.

INT. LOWRIDER -- CONTINUOUS

Machete and Chavy laugh and link fingers.

INT. BANQUET HALL -- CONTINUOUS

JIM

(beat)

I think you'll enjoy the evening more if I just conclude by saying -- I'm honored and touched and I thank
(MORE)

JIM (CONT'D)
you very much for considering me a
part of your well-deserved success.
Drink up, have fun, kiss the person
next to you, I and my beautiful wife,
Alison...

He looks at her.

P.O.V. DR. FIELDING

Alison is smiling as she looks at her husband

JIM (O.S.)
...are not going to Disneyland.

BACK TO SCENE

LAUGHTER and sustained APPLAUSE for having been spared being
bored to death, Jim moving to sit down, Burt Gordon going
back to the podium.

GORDON
And because of his royalties on the
9041, Jim could probably buy
Disneyland.

Less laughter and applause.

EXT. SIDE STREET -- CONTINUOUS

The lowrider moves down a quieter street surrounded by office
buildings, lit up but empty at that time of night. There's
an entrance to a garage, the gate's up, no one on duty. The
lowrider pauses.

INT. BANQUET HALL EXIT -- CONTINUOUS

Jim and Alison get their coats and head out of the banquet
in the company of another COUPLE.

INT. LOWRIDER -- CONTINUOUS

Machete and Chavy look at the entrance to the garage and
then one another. Chavy shrugs, Machete makes a decisive
nod of his head and turns in.

EXT. GARAGE ENTRANCE -- CONTINUOUS

The lowrider enters the garage and disappears.

CREDITS END:

INT. PARKING GARAGE -- NIGHT

Jim and his wife and the other couple enter the garage from the building and say good night to the couple who get in an expensive car while Jim and Alison continue on, his arm over her shoulder, her's around his waist. They obviously love and enjoy one another. The other couple's car passes them, everyone waving. Jim and Alison are alone in the garage.

JIM

You know, we've never done it in a garage.

Alison looks at the dirty, stained concrete.

ALISON

You want to do it somewhere new, we'll go up to Mulholland. At least there's a view.

JIM

I remember when we didn't need a view.

ALISON

For afterwards.

They kiss one another as they walk.

As they reach their SUV, Jim uses his remote to open the locks. He helps his wife into the vehicle and goes around to the driver's side.

There's a SCUFFLING SOUND, Jim stops and listens, all is quiet. He opens the door and gets in. Before he can get the key in the ignition, he's startled by Machete appearing at the driver's window and he flips the door lock. His wife GASPS, and he looks to see Chavy with his face pressed against the passenger window distorting his features.

Jim fumbles to get the key in the ignition, but Machete brings a large gun up to the window, pointing it at Jim. Chavy on the other side has a gun aimed at Alison.

Machete taps the gun on the window, puts up his other hand and begins counting down by lowering his fingers (starting with the pinkie, ending with the thumb and index finger pointing like a gun).

Jim glances at Alison, then back at Machete who gestures with his finger gun to open the lock, the real gun pointed at Jim's head. Jim yields and clicks open the door locks. Machete and Chavy, a small backpack over his shoulder, yank open both doors.

MACHETE

(to Jim)

Get in the back and lie face down on the floor.

JIM

Look, take the car, take our money, just don't hurt anyone.

MACHETE

Okay. But do what I say first.

JIM

We'll get out, you take off, no problem.

MACHETE

I want to search you, I get all the money and your plastic. Get in the back.

Jim hesitates, but what choice does he have? He touches his wife on the shoulder to comfort her as he climbs between the seats and lies on the floor.

Machete climbs in behind him, sits on the seat and takes the backpack from Chavy, pulling out a roll of duct tape which he uses to bind Jim's hands behind him, tape his legs together at the ankles, and wrap a strip around his mouth and then his eyes. Machete puts his feet up on Jim and gives him a couple of thumps.

MACHETE (CONT'D)

You be a good boy, right?

(to Alison)

Get back here, beautiful.

ALISON

Oh, god, god.

CHAVY

Go.

Chavy prods her with his gun and she climbs into the back, carefully stepping over her husband on the floor trying to sit as far away from Machete as possible. Machete pulls her against him and touches her breast, Alison slapping his hand away, Machete smiling, sure of his control.

Chavy climbs in, closing the passenger door behind him, gets in the driver's seat and starts up the vehicle, backing out.

ALISON

I thought you were going to let us go, rob us.

MACHETE

Not here, it's too busy. Relax,
it's okay, you'll be all right.

(beat)

You are very pretty.

Alison is full of despair, suspecting what is to come.

The SUV maneuvers out of the garage, the lowrider following,
driven by the third man.

EXT. DESERTED ROAD -- LATER

ESTABLISHING SHOT of the SUV driving along a dark, little
traveled road.

INT. VEHICLE -- NIGHT

Alison is face down, prone on the seat, keeping her head
averted while Machete rapes her. Chavy keeps looking back
salaciously as he drives. Jim is in anguish, helpless on
the floor while his wife is assaulted.

PAN TO:

The FULL MOON in the sky, larger and larger...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. VEHICLE -- LATER

Machete is now driving, pulling up on a bridge above a body
of water. Chavy, disheveled, pops up from the back seat.

Machete raises his gun briefly. Chavy pulls himself together.

EXT. BRIDGE -- MOMENTS LATER

The SUV pulls to a stop on the bridge fairly high over a
body of water. Chavy gets out followed by Machete. Chavy
yanks Alison from the vehicle, his gun in one hand.

CHAVY

Mo yo ass, bitch.

MACHETE

Be nice, now.

Machete reaches in to drag the trussed Jim from the vehicle,
roughly letting him fall to the ground, pulling the tape
from his feet. Alison bends to help her husband.

CHAVY

She squats pretty. How about one
more?

Machete shakes his head slightly and gestures over the edge of the bridge. Alison has helped her husband to his feet.

ALISON

Let me take off this tape.

MACHETE

After we're gone. Get over here, I want you to get off the road.

He takes her by the elbow and moves her towards the edge of the bridge, Chavy guiding Jim behind them.

ALISON

Why don't you just go now. We won't say anything, we won't tell the police.

MACHETE

That's nice of you. You, you're a nice person.

He raises the gun behind her head and pulls the trigger, the gun POPPING, Alison's head jerking, her body collapsing.

Jim flinches and stops, making muffled cries. As Machete grabs Alison and pushes her body over the edge of the bridge, Chavy steps away from Jim and aims. Jim crouches and turns, knowing what must be coming. Chavy FIRES three times, Jim obviously hit as he staggers.

Machete grabs Jim, Chavy sticking his gun in his belt and helping Machete raise Jim over the edge and drop him in the water.

Chavy and Machete, laughing, run to the SUV and take off.

EXT. WATER -- CONTINUOUS

Jim struggles frantically to simply move through the water, undulating his body like a fish, moving his jaw until the tape is just a thin strip in his gasping mouth. By pure luck, he reaches the edge, his head virtually the only thing up on the dirt out of the water.

JIM

Alison! Alison! Alison...

He writhes trying to get out of his tape bonds.

EXT. CEMETERY -- DAY

Jim, heavily bandaged stands at graveside. Next to him is Alison's brother, MAURY TRAYNOR, a brawny man who builds dragsters for a living.

Around them are numerous others including many from the corporate dinner of the opening scene. A minister concludes the ceremony.

MINISTER

In the name of our Lord and Savior,
 Jesus Christ, who has taken into His
 heavenly kingdom the eternal soul of
 His servant, Alison Traynor Fielding,
 we now commit to the earth her mortal
 remains, earth to earth, ashes to
 ashes, dust to dust. Amen.

The onlookers murmur amen. Maury puts his hand on Jim's shoulder.

INT. JIM'S HOUSE -- EVENING

A soundless television in a nearly darkened room, a single dim light in one corner. On the screen is the film *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* with the scene of the bandits confronting Bogart and the others.

Jim, somewhat recovered but still with bandages, sits slumped in an armchair staring vacantly at the TV, an old revolver in his lap. The shooting starts on the screen and Jim spins the cylinder of his gun, puts it in his mouth and, without so much as a flinch, pulls the trigger, the hammer hitting with a loud CLICK. He lowers it, stares for a moment... as the movie shows the gun battle... then repeats the whole process, the gun again failing to go off. There is a KNOCK at the door that he ignores. He spins the cylinder again -- the KNOCKING is more insistent.

The main bandit is on the screen. Jim aims at him on the TV and the gun goes off with a loud BANG, the screen imploding. Jim looks no more moved than before. There are loud THUMPS at the door, someone bashing against it, Jim paying no attention as he takes another bullet from a box on the table next to him, reloading the gun.

The door jam splinters and the door CRASHES open, Maury stumbling inside.

Jim doesn't even look at him, clicking shut the cylinder and spinning it.

Maury rushes him in the chair, staying slightly behind Jim as he reaches over and grabs the gun. Jim won't let go at first, Maury and he tugging slightly back and forth. Finally, Jim relents. Maury sits heavily on the arm of a chair looking at Jim.

MAURY

She wouldn't have wanted this.

JIM
 She's not here.
 (beat)
 I don't want to be here.

Maury gets up, takes the bullet out of the cylinder, sticks the gun in his jacket pocket, puts the box of bullets in his pocket. Then he reaches down and gestures for Jim to take his hand.

MAURY
 C'mon, let's go.

Jim let's himself be helped out of the chair and Maury leads him out.

MAURY (CONT'D)
 Going to have to get this door fixed.

He shuts it behind them as best as he can.

EXT. MAURY'S BACK YARD -- MORNING

It's a bright day and Jim, the bandages gone and looking much better, comes out the back door of Maury's cluttered ranch establishment in the California countryside, a motorhome and several dragster race cars parked by a multi-car workshop garage to one side. Jim looks with appreciation at the bare mountains in the distance across the desert, then crosses to the garage and goes in.

INT. GARAGE -- DAY

Maury is working on the engine of a 1960's GTO.

MAURY
 Hey, you're up early.

JIM
 How's the engine going?

MAURY
 Bitchin.

Echoes of the assault run through Jim's mind, CHAVY'S VOICE SNEERING "Mo yo ass, bitch!"

MAURY (CONT'D)
 What's the matter?

JIM
 Nothing, nothing.
 (beat)
 You know, I want to thank you Maury.
 If it weren't for you...

MAURY

I know. When Bonnie went, I wouldn't have made it except for what Alison and you did. I never told you -- the night the two of you came and took me out of there, I was about to put a bag over my head and run a hose from my fuel dragster, let that beauty give me peace. I wanted to die for a long time, I missed Bonnie so much. But she would have been mad at me if she'd known. She wouldn't have wanted me to die, just like Alison wouldn't want you to die.

JIM

(beat)

You know, I've been thinking Maury -- I talked to that cop again who's handling the case, Detective Alexander. She's got nothing.

MAURY

Pure luck if they find the scum. And if they do stumble across them, the lawyers will moan the poor boys had learning disorders and their drug addict parents beat them and the gun went off by accident and they just panicked that's all, they're good at heart. They'll be out of jail and my sister will still be dead, son-of-a-bitch.

JIM

It's not going to happen that way. I'm going to find the guys that killed Alison and I'm going to kill them.

MAURY

I'd love to have my hands around the neck of whoever did it. But finding them...

JIM

(interrupting)

Those two bastards didn't ride a bus from somewhere to carjack us in that garage. They drove us out in the country, but the SUV was stripped and burned just a couple of miles from where we were kidnapped. They had to be from somewhere close by.

MAURY

Even if that's true, it's still a huge area to search.

JIM

What have I got to do that's any better?

MAURY

You're serious about this?

Jim stares, deadly serious.

MAURY (CONT'D)

Jim, you're a young man, you're rich. I know you hurt now, but you will get over it. But you do something like this...

JIM

Maury, I appreciate what you're saying, but it's a done deal. I'm going to do it whether you help me or not.

MAURY

(beat)

Well kid, if you're the Mad Ranger, I guess that makes me your faithful sidekick. When do we saddle up, Kemo Sabe?

Jim nods with satisfaction.

EXT. EAST L.A. -- NIGHT

ESTABLISHING SHOT of Maury's restored GTO cruising the wide avenues of neon nightlife.

INT. CAR -- NIGHT

Maury driving, Jim riding, both weary, their hunt fruitless. Maury pulls into the lot of a fast food hamburger joint and slowly cruises by the windows giving Jim a clear look inside. No one inside pays any attention to the car cruising past and Jim recognizes no one, turning away. Maury glances at him, noting his discouraged look.

EXT. FAST FOOD LOT -- CONTINUOUS

The GTO pulls back onto the street.

INT. CAR -- CONTINUOUS

MAURY

You've got to give it time. We can't expect to find them in a couple of weeks.

JIM

We've got more chance of winning the lottery than we do finding them this way...

MAURY

Hey, we're getting to see a lot of the city we didn't know before...never wanted to know, but...

(the joke falls flat)

All right, we'll call it a night, see how we feel.

Maury spots a Mexican drive-through restaurant.

MAURY (CONT'D)

As long as we're here, let me get some decent Mexican food.

EXT. MEXICAN FAST FOOD LOT -- CONTINUOUS

The GTO pulls in, there's no speaker or lighted menu, Maury driving right to the window.

INT. GTO -- CONTINUOUS

MAURY

You want anything?

JIM

No thanks.

A hard-working Hispanic woman slides back the window.

MAURY

Hi.

RESTAURANT WOMAN

What would you like?

MAURY

Beef and bean burrito. Coke, please.

RESTAURANT WOMAN

Two twenty-five.

Maury gives her five bucks and waves away the change, making her smile at him before leaving to get his order.

MAURY

Maybe I shouldn't have gotten beans.
We've got a long ride.

JIM

It gets too bad I'll put you in the
trunk.

MAURY

(beat)
So you want to quit, huh?

JIM

No, but this isn't going to do it.
And we're out of place here. We
keep driving around like this, even
switching cars, the cops are going
to bust us sooner or later and with
the guns...

MAURY

Doesn't matter. The courts ruled
the cops can't search the car just
because they stop us on some excuse.
We keep the guns out of sight and
not on us, we can beat it in court.

The woman brings the food, handing Maury the cup and then
the burrito in a little box with a napkin and a plastic fork.

MAURY (CONT'D)

Thank you.

EXT. MEXICAN FAST FOOD LOT -- CONTINUOUS

Maury pulls the car around the building, stopping in a parking
spot on the far side, shutting off the lights and engine.

INT. GTO -- CONTINUOUS

MAURY

You want a bite?

JIM

My stomach wouldn't handle that this
late.

Maury cuts a bite and as he raises the fork to his mouth a
long-haired young man, CARJACKER ONE, pops up at the window
pointing a long-barreled gun at Maury who freezes, the fork
in mid-air.

CARJACKER ONE

Get out, both of you out this door.

MAURY

No problem, you got it, stay cool.

A headlight flashes across them momentarily, the man glancing at the car going by and Maury drops the food and grabs the barrel of the gun with both hands, pushing it aside.

EXT. MEXICAN FAST FOOD LOT -- CONTINUOUS

The man battles with Maury for control of the gun and suddenly the gun FIRES, hitting no one and Maury keeps fighting, the man trying to pull back, Maury holding it tightly.

CARJACKER ONE

I'll pop you, man.

INT. CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Jim reaches down below his seat and pulls up a paper bag, shoving his hand inside and leaning across Maury pointing the bag at the carjacker's chest. With a loud EXPLOSION the end of the bag blows out and the carjacker is knocked backwards, letting go of the gun.

EXT. MEXICAN FAST FOOD LOT -- CONTINUOUS

The carjacker turns, staggers a couple of steps, then flops on the ground.

INT. CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Maury quickly wipes the guy's gun clean with a napkin and tosses it out the window by the guy's body, then starts the car.

EXT. MEXICAN FAST FOOD LOT -- CONTINUOUS

The GTO backs out and pulls away down the street, not speeding but wasting no time either.

INT. CAR -- CONTINUOUS

MAURY

The cops stop us, we got caught in a gang fight, somebody else shot him, we fled because we're afraid they're chasing us. Wipe the gun down. Is it traceable to you?

JIM

No chance. My father bought it for cash at a gun show when I was a kid. I was with him.

Maury pulls into a residential side street, Jim having cleaned the gun of fingerprints, wrapping it in the bag.

MAURY

I hope you're not sentimental. Throw it down the sewer when I stop.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET -- CONTINUOUS

The GTO stops, the door opens and Jim skims the bag down into the storm sewer, the car accelerates and the door closes.

INT. CAR -- CONTINUOUS

MAURY

In the glove compartment there's dry hand wash. No powder traces on our hands.

Jim opens the glove compartment and gets out the plastic bottle, putting a glob on his hands, then holding it out for Maury who sticks out his hand, Jim pumping a glob for him, putting it back in the glove compartment, both of them rubbing it around on their hands.

JIM

They don't use the dermal nitrate test anymore, it was unreliable. They do neutron activation analysis to pick up barium and antimony from the primer. Very sensitive, rub well.

MAURY

I'm with a scientist, I should have known.

(beat)

How do you feel?

JIM

Gets your adrenaline going.

MAURY

You saved at least my life. You have nothing to be sorry about.

JIM

Sorry? I'm only sorry I can't go back and shoot that fuck again.

Maury is sort of shocked, looking at his brother-in-law with a new appreciation.

EXT. FREEWAY ENTRANCE -- CONTINUOUS

The GTO powers up the ramp and disappears in the mass of cars on the freeway heading out of L.A.

EXT. DRAG RACE TRACK -- DAY

The GTO has been radically altered to a dragster. It's on the line next to another dragster, the red lights flash down and go green, the two cars SCREECHING away, the GTO winning.

An ANNOUNCER on the PA system:

ANNOUNCER

The winner -- 64 GTO owned and driven
by Maury Traynor.

EXT. THE PITS -- MOMENTS LATER

The GTO with Maury at the wheel pulls into the pits and shuts down, Maury climbing out with Jim meeting him.

JIM

Good run.

MAURY

The car's good.
(runs his hand over
the car)
But it was so cherry, it breaks my
heart. We go out searching again,
we got to drive something I don't
like so much.

JIM

What do you think about going out
again?

Maury opens the hood and begins fiddling with the engine, Jim joining him under the hood, waiting for a response.

MAURY

I don't know. The cops must have
talked to the woman in the restaurant.
We keep cruising the neighborhood,
like you said, being so out of place,
we'd probably get nailed.

JIM

It's a big city.

MAURY

So we're just hoping to find Alison's
killer somewhere, anywhere?

JIM

They're all Alison's killer.

Maury looks at him, wondering.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- LATER

ESTABLISHING SHOT of Maury's black Humvee with tinted windows towing an enclosed trailer as they cruise the desert highway towards Maury's ranch.

INT. HUMVEE -- CONTINUOUS

JIM

It's too much. A mother in Baltimore is carjacked and trying to get her baby out of her car she's dragged to her death and the scum throw the baby out the window. A woman tourist in Florida is carjacked and they drive over her head in front of her kids. A girl in Long Beach goes out with a guy she barely knows, they're carjacked by two gangbangers who want to kill the guy, she dies. It's out of control.

MAURY

I don't think it was ever in control.

JIM

But evil wasn't so commonplace. In the 20's Leopold and Loeb killed one kid and it took Clarence Darrow to keep them from the death penalty. Now babies are shot and it's a single line in the paper.

MAURY

So what are you thinking?

JIM

I'm thinking they go outside the law, they made their choice. They live or die with it.

MAURY

I won't argue with that.

JIM

So we set the bait, they take it, their prey bites them back.

MAURY

How do we bite them?

JIM

Can you make a car untraceable?

Maury looks at him, wondering what Jim has in mind.

EXT. BAR -- EVENING

ESTABLISHING SHOT of the Humvee in the parking lot of a country bar near Maury's house.

INT. BAR -- CONTINUOUS

It's a quiet night in the bar, just a few patrons, Maury and Jim in a booth against the far wall.

JIM

We have a huge advantage. All these towns in L.A. county are separate jurisdictions. We move around, vary the M.O., the cops are never going to put it all together.

They're quiet as the waitress, DELIA, brings their beers on a tray.

MAURY

Thanks Delia. Having a good night?

DELIA

You see a rodeo in here?

Maury drops a twenty dollar bill on her tray.

MAURY

Sometimes it just takes one.

DELIA

C'mon, that's too much.

MAURY

It's just dirty printed paper. Buy yourself something pretty.

DELIA

Well thank you so much. Maybe I can do something nice for you someday.

MAURY

I'll be dreaming.

She smiles and leaves. Jim and Maury get back to business.

MAURY (CONT'D)

It's not the cops that really worry me. I don't have to tell you the jackers are dangerous.

JIM

I'll be Mr. Wimp. Take the car, I don't look them in the eye, just an old harmless geezer...with a bag of tricks up the sleeve of his body armor.

MAURY

It's still risky.

JIM

Only if you care, and Maury...I don't care.

Maury thinks about it, looks at Jim and raises his glass. They CLINK glasses and drink.

EXT. PUBLIC AUTO AUCTION -- DAY

Maury has a scraggly beard, his head is covered by a large Stetson, his eyes hidden behind sunglasses. He and the other dealer and the auctioneer are standing by a Lexus.

AUCTIONEER

Going once, going twice...sold.

He points to Maury.

INT. AUCTION SALES OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

A woman finishes filling out the paperwork, handing it to Maury.

SALES WOMAN

Here you are Mr. Margolis. Not every day we get cash.

MAURY

(Texas accent)

Only way to do business, sweetheart. Saves all those bothersome charges.

He folds the paperwork and goes out of the office.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL GARAGE BUILDING -- DAY

ESTABLISHING SHOT of an older garage building in an alleyway of grungy industrial buildings, a new expensive SUV parked next to it.

INT. INDUSTRIAL GARAGE -- DAY

Jim walks with a seedy garage owner through the long, not too clean, garage.

GARAGE OWNER

You can see there's lots of room in here. You won't find a place anywhere in the city with this much room for the price.

JIM

Well, it's pretty much what I need. I give you six months advance what kind of price break will you give me?

GARAGE OWNER

Six months in advance?

JIM

All cash.

GARAGE OWNER

For cash I could go, oh, five percent?

JIM

Ten.

GARAGE OWNER

We'll split the difference. Seven.

JIM

That would be seven-five, but I'll give you the half percent as a bonus. Give me the keys and a receipt, I'll let you know if I want to renew.

The owner has a calculator on which he does some calculation, showing the result to Jim.

GARAGE OWNER

Seven percent discount, six months in advance.

Jim starts counting the money and the owner can't get out his receipt book and pen fast enough.

INT. MAURY'S GARAGE -- DAY

The Lexus Maury bought at auction sits in his home garage, the hood removed, the doors off. In the driver's seat is a store mannequin, the head reinforced in its attachment to the shoulders by metal L-brackets fitted with several large screws.

SLOW MOTION of the air bag exploding from the wheel cover, inflating as it rises, hitting the dummy with tremendous force, flattening the chest, forcing the head backwards so forcefully it rips out the screws of the brackets, the head ripped from the body and flying backwards to bounce off the back window, the air bag rebounding as it reaches the limit of its travel, shards of plastic from the ripped and crushed mannequin spinning through the air.

IN NORMAL SPEED the EXPLOSION echoes in the garage, the air bag collapsing, the destroyed dummy tumbling onto the floor. Jim and Maury come up slowly, awed by the damage.

JIM

I'm going to have the remote turn the air bags on and off. I'm not driving with that in my face.

Maury picks up the busted head of the dummy.

MAURY

Seems prudent.

INT. LA RIVER TUNNEL -- DAY

Jim and Maury slog through a slimy darkened tunnel that makes them hunch over, coming up on a ladder leading up to a manhole where light comes through the holes. Jim takes a short fiber optic cable with an eyepiece on one end from the backpack he's carrying and climbs up. At the top, he pushes the cable through one of the holes in the manhole and looks through the eyepiece.

P.O.V. JIM -- CONTINUOUS

Through the eyepiece, a quiet industrial street with an intersection. The curb is very close.

BACK TO SCENE

Jim pulls the cable back in and gets out a Global Positioning System unit and checks the reading, then climbs back down.

JIM

It looks perfect. It's deserted now. At night, there will be no one around.

MAURY

Seems like the right distance from the river, too. Let's go see what it looks like topside.

JIM

I've got to memorize the turns. I don't want to get lost down here.

MAURY

Let's hope we never need to use this.

They start back out.

EXT. CITY STREET -- COMMERCIAL AREA -- EVENING

A bland Chevy sedan comes down the street and turns into the entrance to a multi-story mall parking lot, disappearing up the ramp.

INT. CHEVY SEDAN -- CONTINUOUS

Jim driving the sedan, Maury in the passenger seat, both in sunglasses and hoodies, drive along the lanes of parking spaces, watching the cars parked to the outside of the building up against the wall. They pass one car that's backed in. Maury points at it.

MAURY

There.

Jim pulls into a nearby space and Maury hops out carrying a backpack.

EXT. MALL PARKING GARAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Maury glances around as he heads towards the rear of the car. Behind it, he takes an electric drill/screwdriver from the backpack and in a moment has the plate off and stuffed in the backpack along with the drill. He walks back to the Chevy, gets in, and it pulls away.

EXT. SANTA MONICA PIER -- LATER

ESTABLISHING SHOT of the lights of the Santa Monica pier and the ocean waves crashing on the beach.

ANGLE ON TRAFFIC MOVING ALONG PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY, INCLUDING THE CHEVY.

INT. CHEVY SEDAN -- CONTINUOUS

Jim and Maury turn off PCH onto an avenue, then down a side street with cars parked solidly along it. Maury is scanning the street through a monocular night-vision scope.

JIM

Clear?

MAURY

There's a squirrel. Shouldn't be a problem unless it's got rabies.

Jim's glides to a halt next to a parked Lexus the same model and color as the one they have. Maury picks up the backpack and hops out.

EXT. SANTA MONICA STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Maury doesn't hesitate, pulling out the electric drill/screwdriver and unscrewing the plate from the Lexus, stuffing it in the backpack. He pulls out the stolen plate from the car in the mall and screws it into place on the car, then gets back in the Chevy, Jim taking off.

INT. LIBRARY -- DAY

Jim is sitting at a desk before a computer. On the screen is an online service for tracing people. Jim is on a page that lists the name of the registered owner of the license plate they stole from the Lexus, Louis Santos, at an address in Santa Monica. Jim prints out the page and exits the Internet, folding the page and putting it in his pocket as he leaves the library.

INT. MAURY'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Jim sits at a desk with a computer, color laser printer and scanner, using graphic print software to make a fake California registration and insurance card for the Lexus. Maury watches.

JIM

This registration looks better than the ones I made for the Chevy. I'm going to redo that one, too. As far as Louie's license goes, I don't think they'll do more than give me a ticket for not having it with me. All else fails, we use the tunnel.

MAURY

You know, for two guys who don't care, we're taking a lot of trouble not to get caught.

JIM

We get caught it's a win for the scum.

INT. MAURY'S HOUSE -- AFTERNOON

Jim is in a bathroom putting on finishing touches in the mirror, transformed to an elderly man with gray hair and

eyebrows, glasses, deep furrows running from his nose to his mouth, creases down both sides of his mouth to his chin. One crease seems less pronounced than the other and Jim applies from a bottle a dab of surgical glue, then manually folds the skin and holds it a moment. When he lets go, the skin is suitably creased. He's wearing an unstylish rumpled suit several sizes too large for him, the shirt collar loose around his neck, although his torso appears fairly bulky. Satisfied, he turns around and goes out, shutting off the light as he leaves.

EXT. MAURY'S BACKYARD -- DAY

Maury, wearing leather driving gloves, is backing the Lexus into the enclosed trailer hooked to Jim's SUV. He gets it in, secures it inside, then jumps out and closes the door and slides the ramp closed. Jim comes out the back door, Maury taking off the gloves.

MAURY

Hey, gramps.

JIM

(creaky voice)

Please don't hurt me.

MAURY

Somebody might shoot you just for being so pathetic.

Jim opens a button on the shirt and shows the body armor.

JIM

They better have a cannon to get through this. You ready to hunt?

MAURY

Load and rack 'em.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL GARAGE BUILDING -- NIGHT

Jim's SUV towing the enclosed trailer turns into the driveway. Maury jumps out of the following Chevy to unlock and open the garage doors, the SUV pulling inside, Maury closing the doors behind.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL GARAGE -- MOMENTS LATER

The door is opened from the inside and the Lexus emerges with Jim at the wheel wearing gloves. Maury closes the door then gets in the Chevy and the two vehicles move off.

EXT. ABOVE LOS ANGELES -- NIGHT

ESTABLISHING AERIAL SHOT of the vast LA ocean of lights in the sprawl south of the city, the sinuous flow of red and white light along the freeways.

EXT. STREETS -- NIGHT

The Lexus with Jim at the wheel hunched like an elderly man, all the windows open, creeps along a wide avenue in the right lane, the other cars whizzing by him, cars pulling out to pass him and then cutting back in.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

A fair distance behind, Maury drives along, the blips of the two cars on his screen, Maury wearing a microphone headset that allows him to talk without taking his hands from the wheel.

MAURY

I'll bet I haven't used more than two gallons all night, the speed we've been going.

JIM (O.S.)

You youngsters, always in such a rush.

INT. LEXUS -- CONTINUOUS

JIM

What about this neighborhood?

MAURY (O.S.)

Charming.

JIM

All right. I'll do the fast food places.

EXT. FAST FOOD BURGER -- NIGHT

Jim takes a bag from the guy at the drive-through window and slowly pulls into a space near the street.

EXT. FAST FOOD CHICKEN -- NIGHT

Reprise of the scene at the burger place.

EXT. FAST FOOD TACO -- NIGHT

Once again, with feeling.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

MAURY
How's the taco?

JIM (O.S.)
I'm not eating it. I had the chicken.

MAURY
Save it for me.

JIM (O.S.)
Cold tacos, sounds delicious.

MAURY
(bad Hispanic accent)
We don't need no stinkin' hot tacos.

EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT -- LATER

The Lexus is parked in a dark spot in the lot near a well-lighted liquor store, people going in and out.

INT. LEXUS -- CONTINUOUS

From the far side of the lot, a guy walks towards the car, his hand in the pocket of his jacket. He stares at Jim as he approaches.

JIM
Whoa, what's this?

The guy goes across the front of the Lexus, staring at Jim who stares back at him warily. The guy makes a bit of hitch in his walk, then moves on, passing the liquor store and disappearing around the corner of the street on the far side.

JIM (CONT'D)
No, he's gone, nothing.

MAURY (O.S.)
What was it?

JIM
The guy looked real suspicious and I stared at him. I don't know if he was planning anything, but I shouldn't have stared. I've got to look more like a mark.

MAURY (O.S.)
Some of these guys are like pit bulls. Pointing a gun at them wouldn't keep them from biting you.

JIM

Well, don't want to scare away the shy ones either. They can be just as nasty.

MAURY (O.S.)

Think wimp.

JIM

By the way, when it looks like something might develop, I'm shutting off my speaker so there's no outside sounds coming through. I won't be able to hear you, but you'll hear me.

MAURY

I'll be ready if you need me.

EXT. STREETS -- LATER

The Lexus is moving along the neon streets again.

INT. LEXUS -- CONTINUOUS

Jim passes a corner hangout, two young Asian guys eyeing him, both with multi-colored spiked hair.

JIM

Watch that place on the corner as you pass, two guys on the side.

MAURY (O.S.)

(beat)

Nice hair. Look like possibilities.

Jim swings around the next corner.

EXT. CORNER HANGOUT -- CONTINUOUS

The Lexus comes down the street and pulls into the lot, stopping on the side of the store next to the two guys.

INT. LEXUS -- CONTINUOUS

Jim shuts off his speaker and leans over to the passenger side a bit to see the two guys.

JIM

Excuse me, young men. I'm a bit lost. I'm looking for Western Boulevard?

The two guys glance at one another.

FIRST ASIAN GUY

Yeah, you know we want to go over there, you can give us a ride and we'll show you where it is.

JIM

Oh, well, I'm not so...

The guy opens the front door and gets in, SECOND ASIAN GUY getting in the back door.

FIRST ASIAN GUY

Just go down this street here.

JIM

Okay, I guess we can help each other out.

FIRST ASIAN GUY

Yeah.

He glances with a smirk at his buddy in back.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

Maury is pulled over up the boulevard.

JIM (O.S.)

Take this side street here?

FIRST ASIAN GUY (O.S.)

Yeah, that's the way.

MAURY

Oh brother, here we go.

He checks the traffic and pulls out, looking at the blips on the screen moving, the Lexus diverging at an angle.

INT. LEXUS -- CONTINUOUS

They're moving down a connecting street with stucco walls hiding the houses on the residential streets off of it.

JIM

This is awfully nice of you boys.

The guy in the passenger seat glances at the guy in back who reaches over and puts his arm around Jim's neck, the guy in front pulling out a gun, grinning.

JIM (CONT'D)

Oh my, what are you doing?

FIRST ASIAN GUY

Stop.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

Maury can see the car down the street pulling to the side and he slows.

JIM (O.S.)

You want the car, you can have it.

FIRST ASIAN GUY (O.S.)

You got that right, old man.

JIM (O.S.)

Take it, take it. Just let me out.

MAURY

Be safe, be safe.

EXT. SIDE STREET -- CONTINUOUS

The back door of the Lexus opens and the guy from the rear seat opens the driver's door and pulls Jim out dumping him in the street and getting in the driver's seat, screeching away before the door is even closed with the rear wheels just missing Jim's legs. Jim gets up and moves to the curb.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

Maury accelerates down the street and pulls up alongside Jim.

EXT. SIDE STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Maury hops out and starts to come around the front, but Jim is already getting in.

MAURY

That was scary. You're all right?

JIM

I'm fine. I wonder what they're doing? They didn't even try to take my wallet or anything.

MAURY

We'll find out.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

They switch off their walkie-talkies.

MAURY

You sure you're okay?

JIM

I scraped my butt, it's nothing.

Maury checks the blip which is moving away from them quickly.

MAURY

These guys aren't wasting any time.

He accelerates after them, Jim picking up the remote box and pushing a button.

JIM

The airbags are on in case they hit something.

MAURY

That would be a shame.

They move down the street, Jim watching the screen.

JIM

Go right up here.

EXT. STREETS -- CONTINUOUS

The Chevy swings around the corner onto a larger boulevard, moving through the traffic.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

Jim stares at the screen while Maury glances at it occasionally as he concentrates on driving.

JIM

They've slowed down, probably don't want a cop to stop them.

MAURY

Let's get them in sight.

He keeps up the speed until they can see the Lexus in the right lane ahead of them, Maury pulling in the same lane and slowing down to keep pace with them.

JIM

We just wait until they get on a quiet street, you can get around them.

Ahead of them, the Lexus turns onto a residential side street and Maury follows. Ahead of them a party has spilled out of a house onto the sidewalks.

EXT. PARTY HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

The house is well lighted with music coming out of it, numerous young people on the porch and lawn and sidewalk. Some of them look at the Lexus. The passenger window is down, the guy grinning, suddenly bringing up a gun and firing. The young people duck and scatter, one spinning and falling as he's hit in the head.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

They see the gun flashes, the shot party-goer falling as the Lexus screeches away.

MAURY

They dropped a guy.

JIM

Stop. Don't go past the house.

Maury is puzzled, but he does as Jim says, angling in to the curb. Ahead, the Lexus has disappeared around another corner.

MAURY

We're not going after them?

JIM

We'll catch them with the GPS. The cops will be interviewing the people at that house, I don't want us going by for witnesses or video.

MAURY

I'll turn around.

Maury makes the turn, Jim checking the screen.

JIM

It looks like they've come back this way on the boulevard and slowed. We shouldn't be too far behind.

MAURY

The drive-by was probably why they wanted the car. They may dump it quick now.

He accelerates, reaching the boulevard.

EXT. STREETS -- CONTINUOUS

The Chevy turns onto the boulevard, speeding up and passing other cars.

EXT. BOULEVARD -- MOMENTS LATER

The Lexus passes by, the Chevy not far behind.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

Ahead, the Lexus turns off a main street for a quieter street once again. As Maury follows, the street is lined with parked cars.

MAURY

What do you think?

JIM

If you can get by.

Maury speeds up, Jim readying the electronic detonator. Maury keeps accelerating, swinging out next to the Lexus at the last instant, pulling alongside. Jim looks at the driver...who looks up at him, recognition on his face. He turns to say something to the guy in the passenger seat and Maury jams the wheel over, driving the Chevy into the Lexus.

EXT. SIDE STREET -- CONTINUOUS

The two vehicles careen along together.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

MAURY

Say goodbye.

He jams the wheel over and forces the Lexus closer to the curb in a space where there are no parked cars.

EXT. SIDE STREET -- CONTINUOUS

The Lexus's brakes screech as it comes up on the next parked car, the Chevy pulling ahead. The driver has almost completely stopped as he barely taps the back of the parked car. The airbags explode violently.

ANGLE ON: A QUICK FLASH OF THE PASSENGER'S HEAD BOUNCING OFF THE REAR WINDOW, SPLATTERING IT WITH BLOOD.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

A short way up the street, Maury has slowed but not stopped. Jim pushes the button and there's a flash of flame from the front of the Lexus. The fire grows quickly.

JIM

It worked.

MAURY

No one's coming out of that thing
alive.

Maury accelerates.

EXT. SIDE STREET -- CONTINUOUS

As the Chevy disappears into the darkness down the street, a man and woman step out onto the front steps of the closest house, the fuel tank of the Lexus EXPLODES, the man pushing the woman back inside. The flames ROAR as the car is engulfed in flames.

INT. CHEVY -- LATER

Jim and Maury are driving along the 91 freeway heading home, passing through Riverside.

MAURY

I'll smooth out the dent before I go
to the races up in Vegas. Come along
if you'd like.

JIM

No, I want to get in some fishing
down in Mexico.

(beat)

So what do you think? You okay with
what we did tonight?

MAURY

Look at this overpass coming up.

ANGLE ON THE OVERPASS WITH THE FREEWAY SIGN RINGED BY RAZOR
WIRE TO KEEP PEOPLE OFF OF IT, A HIGH CURVED CAGE TO KEEP
PEOPLE FROM THROWING THINGS ONTO THE FREEWAY.

BACK TO SCENE.

MAURY (CONT'D)

How did we come to need razor wire
like that? The cops might not agree
with what we're doing, but it works
which is more than they can say.

EXT. SIDE STREET -- LATER

The burned hulk of the Lexus is a crime scene investigation, the police keeping back the crowd as the fire fighters put away their equipment. An unmarked car drives up, two homicide detectives getting out, a well-dressed, laid back older detective, JOE IGER, and a more casually dressed but nervous younger man, FRANK SALLY. They're joined by a police accident investigator, BUSTER D'AMICO.

D'AMICO

So you think this is your car from
the drive-by?

IGER

Kind of hard to tell the color, but
two guys, not too far away, around
the right time and that stolen plate.
Hints, hints, hints.

SALLY

I thought the car would be more banged
up with two guys dead. Must have
been the fire that got them.

D'AMICO

I don't think so.

SALLY

Why?

D'AMICO

The real tip-off is the passenger's
head is lying on the back seat.

Iger and Sally digest that a moment, then check it out for
themselves.

SALLY

Maybe it came off in the fire.

D'AMICO

That would be a first. But the other
thing is that there's no defensive
posture. See how the arms are down.
Most times someone's burned alive,
their hands are up, the fingers
clenched, like they were trying to
grab the flames. Both of them were
dead when they burned. And from the
position of the driver's head, I
think his neck was broken.

IGER

One guy's head comes off and the
other has a broken neck. What, the
airbags?

D'AMICO

I've heard of it with children.

IGER

These mooks weren't children.

SALLY

Think the fire made the bags blow up harder?

IGER

The airbags would have inflated the moment they hit this car in front, then the fire. Must have been defective lawsuit stuff.

SALLY

They hit so lightly couldn't have been going very fast. I wonder why they lost control?

D'AMICO

This dent on the side looks like they scraped something. I had a couple of officers check the parked cars up the street but none of them were damaged. Nobody we've interviewed yet saw anything before the fire.

IGER

Well, if it turns out these were my shooters it makes my case a lot easier. We're not going to get an ID from the witnesses, but there should be shell casings or a gun in the car. The medical examiner is on the way?

D'AMICO

He should be here soon.

IGER

(to Sally)

What say we go get some coffee. Looks like it will be a long night.

Sally and Iger head back to their car, D'Amico wandering away.

ANGLE ON: THE TWO CHARRED BODIES IN THE BURNED HULK.

EXT. MEXICAN BEACH -- DAY

Jim is putting away his surf fishing equipment on the beach of Baja, California, a number of other fishermen nearby, his SUV in the dirt parking lot. He starts walking.

EXT. MEXICAN BEACH -- MOMENTS LATER

Carrying his rod and tackle box, Jim stops where a native Mexican removes a fish from the hook on his rod.

JIM
You're having more luck than me.

The man smiles and nods. Jim looks at the fish he's caught which the man throws back into the ocean.

JIM (CONT'D)
?Como se llama esto pez?

FISHERMAN
Pez ainslodo.

JIM
Ainslodo?

The man nods, then puts his hands next to his face, puffs up his cheeks and moves his hands outward.

JIM (CONT'D)
Ah, puffer fish. Blowfish.

FISHERMAN
Si, si, puffyblow.

JIM
(to himself)
Puffer fish, speak of the devil.

INT. JIM'S HOUSE -- EVENING

Jim is in the kitchen preparing a sushi dinner when the doorbell rings. Jim goes through the dining room where the table is set. He opens the front door and Maury comes in carrying a bottle that he hands to Jim.

MAURY
I didn't know if I should buy red or white so I got Jim Beam, goes with everything.

JIM
Good thought.

He leads the way to the kitchen, Maury looking at the raw fish.

MAURY
Maybe I'll run out to KFC.

JIM
No, this is a rare treat.

MAURY
Rare seems to be the right word.

JIM
You'll love it.

MAURY
Just break open the Jim Beam and
give me a head start.

JIM
You open it, I'll get the glasses.

MAURY
Deal.

INT. DINING ROOM -- LATER

A good bit of the sushi has been eaten, Jim and Maury sitting
at the table digesting, sipping their drinks.

JIM
So what do you think?

MAURY
Well, it doesn't taste as bad as I
expected. Actually, it's kind of
tasty. A bit spicy.

JIM
Lips tingling?

MAURY
My whole throat.

JIM
Feel a little numbness, too?

MAURY
I feel kind of buzzed to tell you
the truth. What is this stuff?

JIM
Puffer fish. In Japan it's a
delicacy, fugu. Kills about a hundred
people a year. Gourmands eat the
liver. They're usually the ones who
die because it's where the fish
concentrates its secretion of
tetrodotoxin, the most powerful
non-protein nerve toxin known.

MAURY
You thought this would be a good
idea for dinner?

JIM

Tetrodotoxin an unusual drug. It acts as an anesthetic and a tranquilizer. A fairly small amount kills, but in just the right doses it can slow physiological functioning so much that the person appears dead but actually is completely aware of everything happening around him. He just can't move or communicate in any way. There's a case in Japan where two friends died after a dinner of fugu. One was buried, but the body of the other was put on a train to be buried in his home town. When it arrived two days later, there was knocking coming from the coffin and when they opened it the man was completely alive. They dug up the coffin of his buried friend and he was dead but the inside of the coffin had been torn to pieces. The film *The Serpent and the Rainbow* was based on an anthropologist at Harvard who believes tetrodotoxin is what created the Zombie legend. The victim is dosed with the poison and the ones that survive and come back to life are the Zombies. If you don't get too much, you're put in a state of catatonia. As the body gets progressively numb, the temperature goes down, blood pressure and pulse drop, there may be nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, intense gastric pain. The lack of oxygen in the blood turns the victim cyanotic, the eyes are fixed with no reflexes in the pupils or corneas. The throat and larynx become paralyzed, followed by the extremities.

Maury pinches his arm to make sure he has feeling.

JIM (CONT'D)

Strangely, there's no impairment of the mental faculties. The victim remains alert and functioning right through the paralytic state.

MAURY

Buried alive Zombies.

JIM
 Maybe you'd like to try the livers.
 I've got a real big bunch of them
 drying in the kitchen.

MAURY
 Why would anyone want...

Maury suddenly understands where Jim is headed.

JIM
 We grind them to powder and create
 an aerosol that blows through the
 ventilation system of the car. Even
 topically on the skin tetrodotoxin
 can be a lethal poison. And unless
 someone tests for it specifically,
 it won't be found. It will look
 like death from acute respiratory
 failure. The jacker has any drug
 history, they'll probably pass it
 off on that.

MAURY
 Remind me never to get on your bad
 side.

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL LA STREETS -- NIGHT

Inner city fortress stores attracting a lively street scene.

INT. TOYOTA -- CONTINUOUS

Jim in his old man's guise, driving an innocuous Toyota sedan,
 drives slowly along the busy neon lit street, attracting the
 attention of hookers and assorted other interesting folks.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

MAURY
 You drawing much interest up there?

INT. TOYOTA -- CONTINUOUS

JIM
 Like a bon-bon at a fat farm.

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL LA STREETS -- CONTINUOUS

The Toyota cruises along, windows open, doors unlocked.

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL LA STREETS -- LATER

In a quieter section, a MAN sits on the back of a bus bench
 at an intersection, the lights changing on little traffic.

Jim in the Toyota slowly comes down the street, passing the man on the bench and stopping at the red light a few yards from him.

The man stares at the Toyota then glances around.

INT. TOYOTA -- CONTINUOUS

Jim can see the bus bench in the mirror, the man jumping down and stepping out into the street heading towards him.

JIM

Here we go. Speaker off.

He reaches and switches off the speaker on his walkie-talkie.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

Maury up the street looks at the scene through the night-vision monocular.

P.O.V. THE MAN GOES AROUND THE BACK OF THE TOYOTA.

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL LA STREETS -- CONTINUOUS

The man pulls open the driver's door and yanks Jim out into the street, bending over to stab at Jim's chest, the knife refusing to go in, surprising the guy. Jim rolls away, yelling.

JIM

Take it, take it, go, get away!

Jim scrambles to his feet and runs, disappearing around the far corner.

The man hesitates a moment, then jumps in the car and floors it, the door slamming shut on its own.

Maury in the Chevy roars into the intersection, heading around the corner, screeching to a stop as Jim comes out of a doorway.

Maury jumps out and grabs him, looking where the man stabbed him.

MAURY

Are you cut?

JIM

No, the kevlar stopped it. The bastard just stabbed me for no reason.

MAURY

Thank god for that vest.

JIM
Let's go get him.

They get back in the Chevy and take off the same way the Toyota went.

INT. CHEVY -- MOMENTS LATER

Jim checks the GPS system, the Toyota somewhere ahead of them.

JIM
I'm not going to fool with this guy.

Jim picks up the remote box, flips the switch and then presses the button.

MAURY
How long will that take? We shouldn't let him drive if he's freezing up.

JIM
It won't take long, but we'll give him a few minutes. Let's catch up so we can see how he's driving. If he starts to lose it, I'll kill the engine.

Maury accelerates.

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL LA STREETS -- MOMENTS LATER

The Toyota goes by and a few seconds later the Chevy flashes past catching up.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

From the Chevy the Toyota is visible ahead.

JIM
There he is. I can't believe he stabbed me. That was just nasty.

MAURY
What did he do when the knife wouldn't go in?

JIM
He looked damned surprised. I started rolling and yelling so he couldn't go for my throat.

MAURY

I think you should carry a gun. Maybe on one of those fast draw forearm devices like DeNiro had in *Taxi Driver*. It could save your life.

JIM

He's stopping.

Ahead of them the Toyota's brake lights are on, the car pulling towards the curb. Maury brakes and pulls over. The brake lights on the Toyota stay on for a few moments, then all the lights go off. The driver's door opens, but no one exits. Then the carjacker leans out, bent over, and awkwardly gets out of the car, clutching his stomach, obviously ill.

JIM (CONT'D)

He's gone.

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL LA STREETS -- CONTINUOUS

The carjacker stumbles against the open door, swinging it shut. He leans against the fender as he moves along, going around the front of the car to the sidewalk where he slowly shuffles away from the car, disappearing around the corner.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

Maury puts the Chevy in gear and slowly moves forward, going past the Toyota, pausing at the corner before turning. As they slowly move down the block, they pass the carjacker on his knees throwing up in a doorway.

JIM

We'll go back and blow the car.

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL LA STREETS -- CONTINUOUS

The Chevy goes around the next corner.

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL LA STREETS -- CONTINUOUS

The Chevy comes around another corner back onto the main drag near where they'd stopped earlier, the Toyota down the street.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

Jim has the remote control box in his hands, but he hesitates. He looks around the deserted street.

JIM

It's just sitting there.

MAURY

The car? It's full of poison.

JIM

He was driving with the window open.
I can wipe it down, it will be fine.

MAURY

You're crazy. Blow it.

JIM

The cars are the hardest part. Going
out of state to get them, the VIN
numbers, the plates and registration.
We can use this one again. No one
knows anything's happened in it.

MAURY

A guy is dying at this moment from
riding in that car and you're going
to get in it?

JIM

I've got gloves, the blower is off,
I take out the box of tetrodotoxin,
clean up inside and drive with the
windows open.

MAURY

Where do you want me to bury you?

JIM

Don't put me in the ground until I
start to smell. You got a rag in
here somewhere?

MAURY

You're not serious?

JIM

It'll be a thrill.

He opens the door.

MAURY

You are one crazy man. All I have
is this handkerchief.

Jim takes it and gets out.

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL LA STREETS -- MOMENTS LATER

At the front of the Toyota, it's hood raised, Jim wraps a
small plastic box in the handkerchief, careful how he handles
it. He slams down the hood then moves for the driver's door.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

Maury watches from up the street. A car is coming down the street behind Maury who looks in the rear view mirror.

ANGLE ON HEADLIGHTS SHINING IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR.

As the car goes past, Maury tenses as he sees it's a police car. Ahead of him, he sees Jim look at the cop car and hurriedly get into the Toyota and shut the door.

MAURY

Oh shit.

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL LA STREETS -- CONTINUOUS

The cop car pulls in behind the Toyota and puts on its flashing lights. Nothing happens for a moment though Jim has started the car. The OFFICER gets out and starts walking towards the Toyota. As he reaches the rear, the Toyota pulls away at a sedate speed down the street.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

Maury watches as the cop runs back to his car and starts pursuing Jim. Maury pulls away also, but more slowly.

MAURY

Goddamn it, I told him, the goddamn car.

EXT. SOUTH CENTRAL LA STREETS -- CONTINUOUS

Maury turns the corner, disappearing while in the distance straight ahead the police car's lights flash and the siren wails.

INT. TOYOTA -- CONTINUOUS

Jim drives along the streets, fast but not recklessly so. At a red light, he pauses at the corner, the cop car slowing behind him before he pulls around and accelerates. Ahead of him is the entrance to a freeway and he goes up the entrance ramp, the cop car close behind but not right on his tail.

EXT. LA STREETS -- LATER

The Chevy comes up on the intersection that he and Jim surveilled earlier from the drainage tunnel below the street, the area completely deserted.

INT. CHEVY CONTINUOUS

Maury parks where he can see the manhole and shuts off the lights, checking his watch.

INT. HELICOPTER -- CONTINUOUS

Two police pilots wearing helmets that obscure their faces in the helicopter above the sprawl of lights of LA. One cop controls the halogen spotlight, aiming it at the ground.

ANGLE ON THE FREEWAY BELOW THEM.

The flashing lights of the police cars blocking all the lanes from passing traffic. The spotlight illuminates the Toyota moving through traffic in the fast lane but not going particularly fast, the cops keeping their distance behind him, an O.J. chase.

INT. TOYOTA -- CONTINUOUS

Still on the freeway, Jim looks up through the windshield trying to see the helicopter, but it's behind him and off to one side. He looks at the tetrodotoxin wrapped in the handkerchief on the seat next to him, then checks his watch. He puts on his blinker again to go around another car, smiling as he looks in the rear view mirror as the police cars engulf the unwary motorist.

ANGLE ON THE POLICE CARS TRAILING ALONG.

He put on his blinkers and cautiously changes lanes for an exit.

INT. TOYOTA -- CONTINUOUS

Jim accelerates as he swings off a street of factories down a ramp to the LA River, bashing through a fenced gate to get into the concrete causeway.

EXT. LA RIVER CONTINUOUS

The cop cars accelerate to catch up, the helicopter keeping him illuminated.

INT. TOYOTA -- CONTINUOUS

Coming up on a large tunnel entrance to one side, Jim reaches for the remote box. He swings into the tunnel. In the darkness, his headlights light up a side tunnel a short ways into the larger tunnel and as he comes up on it, he punches a button on the remote and a BANG sounds from the underneath rear of the car. Jim swings to a halt across the tunnel entrance and opens the driver's door and jumps out carrying the tetrodotoxin. Gasoline is already spreading from the back of the car.

Behind him the cop cars approach fast.

EXT. SIDE TUNNEL CONTINUOUS

He slams the driver's door and flees up the tunnel into the darkness. As he runs, he pushes another button and there's a flash of flame behind him.

EXT. MAIN TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

The cop cars slide to a halt as Jim's car suddenly explodes in flames, gas from the ruptured fuel line making the flames run back up the tunnel from it so the police can't even get too close.

EXT. SIDE TUNNEL -- CONTINUOUS

Jim turns quickly into a much smaller tunnel, having to run hunched over.

EXT. MAIN TUNNEL -- CONTINUOUS

Other cop cars pull up, cops jumping out, cautiously moving forward as the Toyota is engulfed in flames, the gas still burning leading up to it.

CAR CHASE COP

Get back, get back, the tank's going!

SECOND COP

Is there anybody in...

The Toyota gas tank explodes in a fireball, the cops diving for cover.

INT. CHEVY -- MOMENTS LATER

As Maury looks, he sees the holes in the manhole light up from a flashlight below.

EXT. STREET CONTINUOUS

Maury gets out and from the rear of the Chevy gets a tire iron. He goes to the manhole, looking around to make sure no one is around, then sticks it through one of the holes and lifts it and slides it to the side. Jim climbs out grungy from the tunnel. Maury replaces the manhole cover and they head for the Chevy.

MAURY

Why'd you run? I thought you were going to use the phony registration?

JIM

I had that box of tetrodotoxin and I thought the cop might think it was coke. I couldn't let him find it.

MAURY

That's the last time we try to keep a car. It's a lot easier to get a new one than go through that.

JIM

That escape worked like a charm though. Beautiful.

MAURY

Beautiful? Man, you should see yourself - and you stink.

They look at one another and laugh as they climb into the Chevy.

INT. CHEVY - CONTINUOUS

JIM

I was in the car longer than I expected. I feel kind of woozy.

MAURY

If you die, I'll wait a few days before I bury you just to be safe.

The Chevy pulls away.

INT. MORGUE -- DAY

CLOSE UP of the bare foot of the poisoned carjacker. A hand in a medical rubber glove spreads the toes.

PULL BACK to reveal an AUTOPSY DOCTOR in an autopsy room working with a female ASSISTANT, a bright overhead light illuminating the scene, a headset microphone picking up his words. The carjacker is on a stainless steel table. The doctor finishes up examining the man's foot and straightens up.

AUTOPSY DOCTOR

The epidermis is intact, no external wounds of any type, no indications of intravenous drug use. Dried vomit in the mouth and throat are consistent with the description of the location where the body was found. We're proceeding to the examination of the internal organs.

He picks up a rotary handsaw which begins to WHIRR and he lowers it towards the man's body starting at his chest.

INT. MORGUE -- MOMENTS LATER

The assistant is cleaning the saw as the autopsy doctor reaches into the man's chest and spreads back the ribs. He stops.

AUTOPSY DOCTOR

That's odd, the heart is spasming.
I wouldn't expect...

His FACE BLANCHES. His mouth moves but no words come out. He stares wide-eyed at the assistant who looks at him, puzzled and slightly alarmed by his expression.

AUTOPSY DOCTOR (CONT'D)

(hysterical)

He's not dead. My god, he's alive!
He's still alive! Help! Help!
Help!

EXT. POLICE STATION -- DAY

ESTABLISHING SHOT of Los Angeles Police Headquarters.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS -- AUTO THEFT DETAIL -- DAY

DETECTIVE OREN ZELL of the Auto Theft detail is sitting at his desk, wearing a sports coat and slacks, looking over a report. Another officer in plainclothes, ROBERT MANNA, comes by, sitting down on the chair next to Zell's desk.

ZELL

I don't get this.

MANNA

What's that?

ZELL

That burned Toyota in the tunnel with the old guy who got away. The VIN's are all jinned up like it came from nowhere. The plate is off some Irish woman's car -- another Toyota -- from Manhattan Beach, but she doesn't notice it's gone because whoever took it put on another plate from a car in Southgate. Now that's interesting because Santa Monica got an inquiry from Gardena about a plate found on a car used in a drive-by that turned up burned with two dead gangbangers in it.

(MORE)

ZELL (CONT'D)

The owner of the plate hadn't noticed it was missing because there was another plate on his car taken off a car registered here in LA.

MANNA

I'm confused.

ZELL

Same M.O. And it gets weirder. The gangbanger's car had the VIN's underneath obliterated, the dash a composite fake, just like this tunnel runner. Two phantom cars, switched plates, both burned. What in hell is going on?

MANNA

How about we eat at Phil's today. I want a steak sandwich.

ZELL

It's hard for you to forget your stomach, isn't it?

MANNA

What, you don't want to go to Phil's?

Zell is often exasperated by Manna, like now.

INT. PHIL'S RESTAURANT -- LATER

Zell reads papers from the folder while he eats his drippy sandwich, Manna engrossed in his food.

ZELL

Man, this thing really sticks in my craw.

MANNA

Send it back it's no good.

ZELL

No, these two cases. They're just too close.

MANNA

Yeah, but it's an old white man driving the car in the tunnel. How does that link up with two crispy Asian gangbangers? It don't, no way no how.

ZELL

No it don't. Finish up, Sherlock,
we got a mystery to solve.

EXT. POLICE IMPOUND YARD -- DAY

Zell and Manna walk with Frank Sally through a police impound yard filled with cars in various states of decay.

SALLY

I'm with you. No way these guys
would ever go to the trouble of
switching plates just to gangbang.
They don't have the brains to think
that far ahead.

ZELL

So where did they get this weird
car? And how does it link up with
the other one?

They reach the burned hulk of the Lexus.

SALLY

This is it.

Zell and Manna circle the car examining it.

ZELL

I thought it would be more banged
up.

SALLY

Almost nothing. A scrape on the
driver's side, tap on the front grill,
but that was enough. The autopsy
said the air bags took out both of
them. Ripped the head of the
passenger right off. The families
are suing the car company, the family
of the guy they killed is suing
them... Money will be changing hands.

ZELL

How nice for them. The fire was
from the accident?

SALLY

Fuel line rupture.

MANNA

It doesn't look bad enough for that.

SALLY

Guess it was.

ZELL

Maybe, maybe not. When the car in the tunnel blew, the fire was burning for a ways behind it like it had leaked fuel, but it didn't hit anything. We're still looking into how it pulled off that trick.

SALLY

So what are you guys thinking about all this?

ZELL

I'm thinking I may not know what's going on, but I don't like it.

EXT. MAURY'S HOUSE -- DAY

Maury is misting the plants out front with a bottle that uses a hand pump to compress the air to force it out automatically, sending a fine spray. He looks as Jim's SUV drives up.

Jim, wearing a suede jacket with the sleeve unclipped to leave the end open, climbs out with a sly grin on his face. As he approaches Maury, he suddenly stops and stands like a gunfighter.

JIM

You looking at me?

Jim flicks his arm and a small revolver appears in his hand, startling Maury. Jim pulls up the sleeve to reveal the mechanism strapped to his forearm, a slide with a roller bearing welded to a rod clipped on the butt of the gun.

MAURY

That's pretty slick. Taxi Driver.

JIM

Good thought you had. Every little edge helps.

Maury's mister catches his attention, Maury noticing.

MAURY

What?

JIM

That thing throws a fine spray really powerfully. That's interesting.

MAURY

Why is that interesting?

EXT. DESERT -- AFTERNOON

CLOSE UP of a plastic gas can with an unusual metal top that resembles the spray bottle Maury was using. It starts to spray a fine mist with a HISSING SOUND like a snake.

EXT. BEHIND MAURY'S GARAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Jim and Maury stand near his garage looking out into the desert, the gas can just visible. Jim has a remote box in hand. He presses the button and there is a large flash from where the bottle is, followed quickly by the sound of the explosion, dust rising, Jim and Maury hit by a shock wave. The dust rises like a small nuclear bomb.

MAURY

(awed)
Are you kidding?

JIM

That was more powerful than I expected.

MAURY

That's going to tear the damned car apart.

JIM

And whoever's in it.

MAURY

You don't think it's too obvious?

JIM

All they'll know is a gas container exploded. We put some cigarettes and matches in the car for them to find, maybe the container sprung a leak, the fumes built up, the guy lit a cigarette...

MAURY

Gasoline fumes would do that?

JIM

Well, not really. The military uses the aerosol technology for its fuel air bombs which are just below tactical nuclear weapons. But we drop a few judicious clues, I think the cops will write it off to gas fumes. After all, who's going to suspect a fuel air car bomb?

(MORE)

JIM (CONT'D)

It won't burn as much on the outside,
but the interior will be incinerated.
I'll put the GPS in with the radio.

MAURY

The gas is going to stink when it
starts coming out, we're going to
need a remote to short out the
automatic windows, roll them up and
lock the doors. And no sunroof.

JIM

No exit.

EXT. LA STREETS -- NIGHT

A Jeep Cherokee moves down the street in traffic, going slowly
in the right lane. Old Man Jim is at the wheel, the windows
down, the doors unlocked. Jim is wearing the suede coat he
was wearing when he demonstrated the slide gun to Maury.
The area is seedy commercial with body shops, strip bars,
party and liquor stores, an all-night eatery.

INT. JEEP CHEROKEE -- CONTINUOUS

Jim sees a strip mall coming up ahead of him, a number of
cars clustered at one end around a party store, the others
stores closed. On the dashboard is a half pack of cigarettes
and a matchbook.

JIM

(into the radio)

I'm going to stop in this strip mall
with a party store on the corner.

Jim pulls into the strip mall and parks away from the other
cars, up against the buildings in a darkened area.

MAURY

I'm going to park just up the side
street where I can see you.

JIM (O.S.)

Sounds good.

EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT -- CONTINUOUS

The Jeep sits, Jim just a dark shadow inside, people leaving
the party store. The mall is quiet, the Chevy in the shadows
just up from it.

EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT -- LATER

It's more deserted than earlier.

INT. JEEP CHEROKEE -- CONTINUOUS

JIM

This is getting boring. Maybe we should wrap it up for tonight.

MAURY (O.S.)

It's your call.

JIM

A few more minutes.

MAURY (O.S.)

If I don't answer, I'm asleep.

EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT -- CONTINUOUS

The Jeep sits in the quiet lot.

EXT. LA STREETS -- MOMENTS LATER

Up from the strip mall, a van clatters down the street, one of its rear wheels flat.

INT. VAN -- CONTINUOUS

Three biker types with goatees, pony tails, earrings, bracelets, are in the van which is loaded with boxes of electronics -- VCR's, camcorders, that kind of thing.

BIKER PASSENGER

The cops are going to pull us over they see us driving on a flat.

BIKER DRIVER

What the fuck you want me to do?

BIKER PASSENGER

Park it. We'll jack something else and switch the stuff.

Ahead of them is the strip mall parking lot. The driver pulls in, flapping to a stop near Jim.

EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT -- CONTINUOUS

As the bikers get out, they see Jim ripe for the taking.

The driver and the passenger glance at one another and lead the way, striding up to the driver's door of the Jeep and pulling it open.

BIKER DRIVER

Get the fuck out of there.

The driver reaches in and yanks Jim out, spilling him into the parking lot then yanking him up by the coat.

BIKER DRIVER (CONT'D)
(to Biker Passenger)
Stick him in the van.

JIM
Just let me get out of here, I won't
bother you guys.

He has his arm raised up across his chest, the sleeve open, ready to flip out his gun if things go wrong.

BIKER DRIVER
We need your ride. Move.

Jim decides to go along with them for the moment, nodding.

JIM
I'm okay, it's cool.

The biker passenger walks Jim to the van while the biker driver gets in Jim's Jeep and starts it up, backing up the Jeep to the van, the third biker getting the doors open. The passenger pushes Jim in the van next to the boxes. The driver opens up the back door of the Jeep and sees the pressurized gas can, leaning over and yanking it out, throwing it aside in the lot.

Jim sees what's happened but is helpless to stop it.

They quickly move the boxes from the van to the Jeep and when they're finished, the biker passenger asks the biker driver:

BIKER PASSENGER
What about him?

BIKER DRIVER
No witnesses.

Immediately, Jim flicks out the revolver and the bikers see it and duck out of the way. Jim jumps out and runs for the edge of the building.

The biker passenger pulls out a gun but the biker driver stops him from firing.

BIKER DRIVER (CONT'D)
Fuck him. Let's go.

They all jump in Jim's Jeep and take off.

EXT. EDGE OF BUILDING -- CONTINUOUS

Jim watches as they take off, slides the gun back up his sleeve, then speaks into the radio to Maury.

JIM
They took off without the can.

MAURY (O.S.)
What happened?

JIM
They were going to kill me. The
slide gun saved me.

MAURY (O.S.)
Good planning, pardner. I'm coming.

JIM
No. I'll come up. I don't want to
drive past the center. I'll be there
in a second.

MAURY (O.S.)
Okay.

Jim goes out to the parking lot and grabs the gas can, looks up the street at the disappearing Jeep, then sprints back around the corner of the building.

CLOSE UP

THE CAMERA moves in to the roof of the building to show a SURVEILLANCE CAMERA recording events in the parking lot.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

Maury has it started ready to go as Jim gets in, putting the can on the rear floor.

JIM
They were thieves, their van had a
flat. They threw out the can to
load the Jeep. They were going to
kill me for that. No witnesses the
fucker said.

As Maury starts driving, Jim gets the GPS going.

MAURY
Let's hope we can give them payback.

EXT. BIKER BAR -- SHORTLY LATER

The Jeep turns off the street and parks at the far end of a bar, a number of motorcycles lined up in front. The three guys get out and start inside.

The Chevy slowly drives by on the street, turning in at the far end as the three guys go inside.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

JIM

Let's do it.

MAURY

What if they come out?

JIM

I'll shoot them, you drive over them.

MAURY

That should do it.

He pulls down next to the Jeep, stopping right behind it to cover Jim.

EXT. BIKER BAR -- CONTINUOUS

Jim hops out with the fuel-bomb canister, opens the back of the Jeep and wedges the can in among the boxes, then hurries back to the Chevy.

The Chevy pulls onto the street, goes down a bit then makes a U-turn and parks where they can keep watch.

EXT. STREET ACROSS FROM BAR -- LATER

The Chevy is still waiting as TWO NEW BIKERS and their leather LADIES come out and head for their motorcycles.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

Maury looks through the night-vision scope, Jim just watching, as they fire up their bikes, their ladies perched behind them, and peel away from the bar.

MAURY

(biker voice)

We should have us some womens.

JIM

I had one.

Maury deflates.

MAURY

Sorry.

JIM

No, my fault. I'm being maudlin.

Suddenly, the three jackers come out of the bar accompanied by a waddling fat fourth guy. One gets in the Jeep's driver's seat with the fat guy in the passenger seat, the other two climbing in the back seat. The lights come on and the Jeep backs out.

Maury makes a quiet INDIAN WAR WHOOP SOUND.

EXT. STREET ACROSS FROM BAR -- CONTINUOUS

As the Jeep drives off down the street, the Chevy follows.

INT. CHEVY -- MOMENTS LATER

Ahead of them, the Jeep turns into a small business complex disappearing around the rear of the buildings. Maury follows slowly and stops.

ANGLE ON: THE JEEP STOPPED HALFWAY DOWN THE COMPLEX. A SLIDING DOOR IS RAISED, LIGHT FLOODING OUT INTO THE DRIVEWAY. A MAN IS VISIBLE PULLING THE CHAINS, THE JEEP TURNING IN AND DISAPPEARING, THE MAN LOWERING THE DOOR.

JIM

I'm going to do them.

MAURY

Go for it.

Jim clicks on the remote and pushes buttons.

INT. COMPLEX GARAGE -- CONTINUOUS

The Jeep is stopped in the garage that contains boxes of electronic equipment, a couple of ratty desks, a sofa, rap music playing from a cheap radio. Inside the Jeep the men are jerking at the locked doors, more puzzled than alarmed, the guy outside trying to open the driver's door. One of the guys in the back seat is stretched over into the cargo area, covering his face as he shakes the can spraying a fine mist.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

Jim's finger hovers over one last button.

JIM

Goodbye and good riddance.

HE PUSHES THE BUTTON:

EXT. REAR OF BUSINESS COMPLEX -- CONTINUOUS

From the business the twisted garage door BLASTS across the driveway in a tremendous FLASH OF FLAME followed quickly by the ROAR OF AN EXPLOSION, pieces of Jeep and assorted junk swirling out in the cloud of dust, smoke and fire.

INT. CHEVY -- CONTINUOUS

As the business burns, Maury backs up the Chevy and drives out of the complex.

MAURY

(joking)

So, you want to get some pizza?

INT. JIM'S HOUSE -- DAY

Jim is working in his office using CAD on his computer to design something. The PHONE RINGS.

JIM

Hello.

(listens)

Of course I could. What time?

(looks at his watch)

I think that would be all right. At headquarters, right?

(listens)

Room 108. I'll be there.

He sits back in his chair and contemplates.

EXT. LA POLICE HEADQUARTERS -- LATER

ESTABLISHING SHOT of Los Angeles Police Headquarters.

INT. LA POLICE HEADQUARTERS -- INTERVIEW ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Jim sits alone in the bare bones interview room, a one-way mirror on the wall. The interview is allegedly about his wife's murder, but he's not certain that it isn't some trick. Detective Alexander enters carrying a slim notebook.

ALEXANDER

Dr. Fielding, how are you?

JIM

Detective Alexander, fine thank you.

How are you?

Alexander sets the notebook on the table and they shake hands.

ALEXANDER

Hanging in there. Thanks for coming by so fast, I appreciate it.

JIM

Finding who murdered my wife is pretty good motivation.

ALEXANDER

Yes, I can imagine. Anyway, we got some information. It might be nothing, it might be something. What I'd like you to do is look through this book, see if you recognize anyone from the evening of the assault. If you do, or you think you do, or you're just struck by someone, point out the person to me.

JIM

That's it?

ALEXANDER

That's it.

JIM

The guy's in here you think?

ALEXANDER

What's important is what you think.

Alexander sits down in the chair on the other side of the table and Jim opens the notebook that has plastic holders filled with photos. Jim scans the pictures and turns the page.

P.O.V. JIM -- CONTINUOUS

In the book there is a picture of Machete, a booking number on a placard at his chest.

BACK TO SCENE:

Jim stares a moment, then rubs his eye as if there's something in it. He looks back at the book and turns the page, going to the end, then closing it.

JIM

I don't recognize any of them.

Alexander looks surprised and a bit disappointed.

JIM (CONT'D)

Sorry.

ALEXANDER
You certain?

JIM
Maybe if you had a different picture.

Alexander takes from a folder composite drawings of Machete and Chavy and slides them towards Jim

ALEXANDER
Do me a favor, Doctor. Look at the composites you and the artist came up with, refresh your memory, then check the photos again.

JIM
I don't think it's going to help.

ALEXANDER
Humor me.

Jim looks reluctant but checks the composites then opens the book and begins going through it again.

INT. LA POLICE HEADQUARTERS -- FRONT DESK -- CONTINUOUS

Detective Zell comes out from the offices into the public area at the front desk where a uniformed officer sits.

ZELL
(to the officer)
A video tape was dropped off for Zell?

The officer hands him a large envelope with his name on it and Zell goes back inside with it.

INT. LA POLICE HEADQUARTERS -- HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

As Zell moves along through the hallway, he opens the envelope to look at the tape. From a doorway, Jim emerges and they bump into one another.

JIM
Excuse me.

ZELL
Sorry.

Zell goes a bit further down the hallway and turns into the Auto Theft Detail office.

INT. LA POLICE HEADQUARTERS -- AUTO THEFT DETAIL --
CONTINUOUS

There is a TV with a VCR set up against one wall, Zell going over with Manna getting up from his desk and joining him. Zell puts the tape in the VCR and then turns on the TV... which comes on with a snippet of a particularly insane *Jerry Springer* episode... until the VCR kicks in with the tape. We see it is a surveillance video of the parking lot in front of the party store where the Jeep was carjacked, the Jeep just visible at the edge of the frame, the picture not very clear.

ZELL

The cops in the Valley have the unedited original. This is a copy of the part they thought we'd be interested in.

In a series of herky-jerky frames of an intermittent surveillance video, the van with the flat tire pulls in and the bad guys get out.

ZELL (CONT'D)

The cops were checking out this abandoned stolen van and got the party store's parking lot surveillance tape.

On the tape, the bikers pull Jim out, put him in the van and transfer the boxes, followed by Jim sliding out the gun, the bikers scattering and Jim running around the edge of the building, the Jeep driving off, then Jim coming back to get the gas can. Jim faces the camera for a moment as he looks up the street before moving off around the building again.

Zell rewinds the tape to freeze Jim as he faces the camera, holding the gas can. The only thing recognizable about him is his general shape, the features too indistinct to make out.

ZELL (CONT'D)

There's the guy.

MANNA

How do we know that's him?

ZELL

He's in a freak Jeep with stolen plates and phony VIN numbers, gets jacked and complains not at all.

MANNA

Maybe he kept quiet because he's got that gun on a slide.

ZELL

That's weird enough. But think that the same night the jackers just happen to get charbroiled in his Jeep by a weird exploding gas can which is probably that one he's holding in his hand.

MANNA

How did he get it back in the Jeep?

ZELL

I don't know, but it wasn't an accident.

MANNA

You think he bombed them on purpose?

ZELL

Yes I do.

MANNA

Then we've got some sort of vigilante nut on our hands, killing carjackers.

ZELL

That's what I think. And I think that's the guy. I'm going to have the beat cops that chased the car into the tunnel look at this, see if they can ID him. I'm betting they do. He was probably trolling for a jacker when the patrol car tried to pull him over and he took off. Otherwise, some jacker would have died in that booby trap just like the others.

MANNA

So the gangbanger who had his head ripped off by the airbag, that was no accident. This guy meant for that to happen.

He and Zell look at one another thinking how diabolical the murderer is.

ZELL

Let's do the obvious things, get a list of carjackings for the last two years where the victim was injured.

MANNA

You know how many that's going to be? How are we going to follow up?

ZELL

Bobby, we got to do something and that's what we can do right now. Just keep this as quiet as you can. If the news gets hold of this story, they'll go crazy with it. We'll be running our asses ragged trying to bag this guy.

MANNA

Good overtime.

ZELL

Screw the overtime, I don't have enough time-off now to enjoy what I've got. Just keep who you tell to a minimum. You don't have to explain to the asshole clerks what you're doing.

MANNA

Okay.

ZELL

Good.

The VCR suddenly unfreezes and Jim turns and moves off.

ZELL (CONT'D)

I get the weirdest feeling I know him from somewhere. I wonder if I ever busted him.

Jim disappears and Zell ejects the tape and turns off the TV.

MANNA

Reality TV. Hey, what do you think we could get selling the tape to one of those shows?

Zell gives him a dirty look as they move off.

MANNA (CONT'D)

No, I mean when it's over. I'll bet they'd pay thousands. Why not?

They head out.

EXT. MAURY'S BACK YARD -- DAY

Maury comes out of his garage to meet Jim who stops and gets out of his SUV.

MAURY
They didn't lock you up.

JIM
I saw him, the guy who killed Alison.

MAURY
You're kidding. Where?

JIM
In a mug book. The detective said they got some lead, they put his picture in there for me to ID. I told him I didn't recognize anyone.

MAURY
Why?

JIM
He had a booking number on him in the picture.

MAURY
You know the booking number?

Jim nods.

JIM
How do we get his name and address?

Maury rubs his thumb, index and middle finger together to indicate "money."

MAURY
Makes the world go round, you know.

INT. LA POLICE HEADQUARTERS -- AUTO THEFT DETAIL -- DAY

Zell is at his desk as Manna comes in carrying a sheaf of papers.

MANNA
I hate dealing with those FBI guys. How do they get their nose in local carjackings anyway?

ZELL
What do you have?

MANNA
A goddamn telephone directory. Look at all these.

ZELL

You didn't go through those yet for injuries?

MANNA

There are more of those than you'd think, too.

ZELL

Well, pick out the serious ones first. And don't bother with anything too recent. It had to take this guy awhile to build these death machines.

MANNA

Let me ask you something. Just between you and me, do we really want to catch this guy?

Zell knows what Manna's talking about, but it's his job to catch lawbreakers whoever they are regardless of their motives.

ZELL

Try to get the list done by lunch. We can ride around checking out some of them.

EXT. GAS STATION -- DAY

Jim's SUV is parked by the pay phone at a gas station near Maury's house, Jim in the driver's seat while Maury talks on the phone, scribbling something on a piece of paper, then hanging up. He gets in the SUV.

INT. JIM'S SUV -- CONTINUOUS

MAURY

There are no secrets.

He hands Jim the piece of paper.

CLOSE UP of the paper reading: Manuel Hernandez, aka Machete; 12755 Porto Real; Glendale.

JIM

That's nowhere near where we were looking for him.

MAURY

The difference between guessing and knowing. Want to go check him out?

JIM

If he sees me, he'll know something is up. We need to get some kind of foolproof cover.

MAURY

I'll fix that.

EXT. GLENDALE STREET -- DAY

Machete's street, Porto Real, is one of small tract houses with pick-ups, boats and assorted junk in the driveways and garages, parked cars on the street.

A van marked ANIMAL HUMANE SOCIETY, with a small revolving light on the front roof, comes around the corner and moves slowly down the street, parking across from 12755, Machete's house. In the driveway is his flashy low-rider.

INT. HUMANE SOCIETY VAN -- CAB -- CONTINUOUS

Maury is dressed in khaki work clothes that look vaguely official.

MAURY

(speaking into the rear of the van)

That's his house across the street with the low-rider in the driveway.

INT. HUMANE SOCIETY VAN -- HIDDEN AREA -- CONTINUOUS

Jim is crouched in a small enclosed area just behind the seats, a curtain to conceal him from the front, a wall across the rear of the van. A TV set displays a picture up the street. Jim moves a joystick and the picture begins to pan towards Machete's house.

EXT. GLENDALE STREET -- HUMANE SOCIETY VAN -- ROOF LIGHT -- CONTINUOUS

CLOSE UP of the dome light, a small camera inside the clear dome swiveling.

INT. HUMANE SOCIETY VAN -- HIDDEN AREA -- CONTINUOUS

Jim is looking at the picture of Machete's house.

INT. HUMANE SOCIETY VAN -- CAB -- CONTINUOUS

MAURY

Off to work.

He opens the door and gets out.

EXT. GLENDALE STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Maury goes to the rear of the van and opens the doors, revealing several animal cages. He takes out a dog restrainer -- one of the long pipes fitted with a retracting loop at one end. He closes the doors and begins moving down the street as if he's looking for stray dogs.

INT. HUMANE SOCIETY VAN -- HIDDEN AREA -- CONTINUOUS

Jim switches on a VCR to record the TV image of Machete's house, slowly panning the camera 180 degrees -- we see Maury looking up driveways for strays -- then zooming in on Machete's.

PAN IN TO A CLOSE UP of the house, yard and car.

INT. JIM'S HOUSE -- AFTERNOON

PULL BACK from the previous close up to reveal Jim watching the tape in his living room. Machete saunters out his house dressed in cholo gangbanger dress. He checks out his neighborhood, glances at the van, then goes to his car. Some spot on the hood catches his attention and he goes in the trunk to get a rag. There are a lot of batteries in the trunk. He gets the rag and wipes the hood, then puts it back, closes the trunk, gets in the car and pulls out. The CAMERA FOLLOWS as he slowly cruises away down the street.

CAMERA PANS AND FOCUSES on Maury coming towards the van, a snarling mutt caught in his noose and an ELDERLY WOMAN encouraging him to get the dog out of the neighborhood, the harassed Maury nodding at her harangue as he tries to stay out of the way of the enraged dog.

CLOSE UP on the dog baring its teeth as it tries to get at Maury, PAN to Maury's frantic expression as he reaches the van and disappears behind the back.

Jim finds the dog episode very funny.

The DOORBELL RINGS. Jim shuts off the VCR and the TV and goes to the door.

He opens it to find Detective Zell backed by Manna.

ZELL
Dr. Fielding?

JIM
Yes?

Zell shows him his badge.

ZELL
I'm Detective Zell and this is
Detective Manna, LAPD.

JIM
Come on in.

ZELL
(stepping in)
Thank you.

Manna follows and Jim shuts the door, ushering them into the living room.

JIM
Can I get you something to drink,
fruit juice...

ZELL
No, thank you, doctor. We're fine.

JIM
Have a seat.

They all sit down and Jim waits, saying nothing. For a moment the detectives also say nothing, but when Jim just sits waiting Zell finally clears his throat and speaks.

ZELL
We're following up on a number of
carjacking cases. Seeing if there
are any new developments.

JIM
Seeing if there are any new
developments?

ZELL
Sometimes it takes the...person a
bit of time to recall particular
details. With a traumatic event,
the mind tends to shut out precisely
what happened. We follow up to see
if anything new has come up that
might help us, anything you can
remember that you couldn't before.

JIM
I have kind of the opposite problem.
There are things about that night
I'd like to forget, but I can't.

ZELL
I can understand that.
(MORE)

ZELL (CONT'D)

But are you sure there's no little thing you may have overlooked that would help us?

JIM

(beat)

Perhaps I shouldn't say this, but I'm going to anyway. If this is the level of police work I'm relying on to catch the murderers of my wife, the people who effectively destroyed my own life...

(beat)

Do you really think that if I had the slightest lead that would help you catch these people, I'd be sitting on my ass waiting for you to show up so I could tell you about it? Is there anybody that stupid?

MANNA

You'd be surprised how stupid some people are.

Zell gives Manna a dirty look.

ZELL

I understand what you're saying, doctor. I admit it's a long shot, but some people are reluctant to call us about some little thing. They think it can't be important, they'll be bothering us. Of course, sometimes that little thing, it's all we need. You, being an inventor, a self-made man, used to being in charge, maybe you go after people who harm you more aggressively than some others. Is that possible, doctor?

JIM

Is what possible?

ZELL

That you take matters in your own hands, assume responsibility, more than most other people.

JIM

Okay, I apologize for questioning your methods.

(MORE)

JIM (CONT'D)

There are different types, it would be sloppy for you to assume every victim had told you everything that might help. But honestly, I have told you everything. I'm certain there's nothing more for me to remember.

MANNA

You sure?

Jim is sure.

ZELL

(beat)

Then we won't take any more of your time.

They stand up and they all head for the door.

ZELL (CONT'D)

You know, doctor, I'm fairly certain we'll catch the people who did this to you. You were unlucky suffering such a vicious attack. Most of these jackers are just car thieves too dumb to know how to get around the new alarm systems so they have to steal the cars when people are in them. They're not killers like the ones you ran into.

Jim opens the door.

JIM

Just kids looking for fun, huh?

ZELL

In more cases than not, that's true.

JIM

Some fun. Drive safely.

The detectives go out and Jim closes the door and stands pensive.

EXT. JIM'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

The detectives walk to their car, Zell to the driver's side.

MANNA

Nice house. What did he invent?

ZELL

He's got a load of patents, industrial stuff, medical devices.

MANNA

What kind of read did you get off him?

ZELL

He's tough, smart, got good reason, the right build, the timeframe fits. He doesn't go out to work, he has all the time in the world to do just what he wants. He could be the one.

MANNA

You want to blow off these others we've got scheduled?

ZELL

And do what, go to the track? You'd like that, wouldn't you?

MANNA

Like you wouldn't.

They start to get into the car.

INT. POLICE CAR - CONTINUOUS

ZELL

You're a bad influence on me, you know that?

MANNA

I keep trying.

They slam their doors, Manna starts the car and pulls away.

INT. JIM'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Jim stands back from the window watching the detective's car drive away.

INT. JIM'S SUV -- NIGHT

Jim drives his SUV on a desert road near Maury's who is in the passenger seat, both dressed in dark clothes.

JIM

They probably got onto us through the cars. They were always our weakest link.

MAURY

They're going to have a hell of a time trying to trace us through them.

JIM

They had a general description of me from the chase to the tunnel, they go around checking those with motive, carjacking victims. They may be suspicious of me, but they can't know anything about you yet. From now on, we won't be seen together. I'll make certain I have no tail whenever I'm coming. Any messages we'll use encrypted e-mail, no phones.

MAURY

I feel lonely already.

JIM

One more time and we're out of here. I want to tell you, if I shouldn't make it, most of my funds are already in my overseas account through the Caymans. Untraceable. You have access to the accounts. I've changed my will to make you the beneficiary. Anything happens to me, my estate, including the income from my inventions, it all goes to you.

MAURY

Nothing's going to happen to you.

JIM

Just the same, if I should go down, use the money to stay ahead of them. Don't let them get you.

MAURY

(beat)

Maybe we should just take off now, let things cool down. This character isn't going anywhere. We'll always know where to find him.

Jim turns onto the entrance ramp to the freeway to LA.

JIM

Suppose they end up making a case against me and put me away. I might never get a shot at the son-of-a-bitch.

(MORE)

JIM (CONT'D)

But listen, if you want to bow out,
I understand perfectly. There's no
reason for you to take more chances.
I can take care of this on my own.

MAURY

Jim, Alison was my little sister.
(beat)
Besides, I'm not about to let you
have all the fun.

Jim looks at Maury and they're committed.

EXT. FREEWAY -- CONTINUOUS

The SUV accelerates away into the darkness.

EXT. GLENDALE STREET -- LATER

The SUV moves slowly down Machete's street. It's the middle
of the night, few lights are on.

INT. JIM'S SUV -- CONTINUOUS

Machete's low-rider is parked in the driveway and Jim stops
just up from it, Maury watching through the night-vision
scope.

MAURY

And not a mouse was stirring. Cover
me, pard.

He gets out.

EXT. GLENDALE STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Maury walks up to Machete's car, crouching down and reaching
under the rear to attach the tracking unit. It takes only a
second and he's back in the SUV which pulls away.

INT. JIM'S SUV -- AFTERNOON

Maury is driving on Glendale streets, Jim checking the GPS,
wearing a cap pulled low.

JIM

He's stopped somewhere. Maybe a
quarter-of-a-mile ahead.

MAURY

I thought he was headed home for
sure.

JIM

Let's drive by and see what's up.

EXT. BOULEVARD -- MOMENTS LATER

Machete's car is parked in front of an apartment building facing the oncoming traffic, Machete leaning against the car talking to a sexy Hispanic girl.

INT. JIM'S SUV -- CONTINUOUS

They see the car ahead and Maury pulls into the curb just past a party store on the opposite side of the street maybe a hundred yards before the apartment building. They watch as Machete and the girl flirt and touch one another, a couple in the making. Chavy comes out of the party store with a bag with two beer bottles in it. He and Jim look at one another. Jim casually looks away, talking to Maury.

JIM

Christ, it's the other guy.

MAURY

That guy there, with the bag?

JIM

That's him. He looked right at me.

MAURY

Doesn't look like he recognized you unless he's a good actor.

Chavy is walking away apparently unconcerned. He crosses the street without even looking for traffic, heading for Machete. Jim unlatches the hatch between the seats.

JIM

If he made me I'm going to take them out right here.

MAURY

Stay calm, amigo.

Chavy reaches Machete and gives him one of the bottles the three of them laughing.

Jim begins to relax, relatching the storage area.

The three of them disappear into the building.

JIM

I want the both of them, Maury.

MAURY

Oh yeah, they're not getting out alive. We know where to find them, all we have to do is choose a way.

JIM

Something very special.

MAURY

(beat)

We'd better keep moving.

He starts the SUV.

EXT. BOULEVARD -- CONTINUOUS

The SUV makes a U-turn, driving away.

EXT. BOULEVARD -- EVENING

Machete's low-rider is still in front of the apartment building, Jim's SUV in a different position than in the afternoon, further away.

INT. JIM'S SUV -- CONTINUOUS

Maury shifts around in the driver's seat, trying to get comfortable.

JIM

You know, he's left that joyrider of his sitting out on the street for hours.

MAURY

Yeah, we could have put a couple of pounds of dynamite under the seats.

JIM

Those massive explosions tend to intrigue the cops. I think we need something with a subtler touch.

MAURY

We can't do anything complicated out on the street no matter how long he leaves it.

JIM

(beat)

He likes to steal cars, why not give him some of his own medicine. He can have it back later.

MAURY

With our surprise package inside.

JIM

Then it'll be over. Alison can rest
in peace while they rot in hell.

MAURY

Amen to that.

INT. LA POLICE HEADQUARTERS -- AUTO THEFT DETAIL --
AFTERNOON

Zell and Manna have two TV's set up side-by-side with two
VCR's. On the screens are: the surveillance video taken by
the party store camera with Jim coming back and picking up
the gas can after the bikers took off in his Jeep; new video
of Jim coming out of a grocery store near his home, putting
the bags in his SUV. Zell freezes the party store tape where
Jim faces the camera, his features a blur.

ZELL

(to Manna)

Freeze yours now. Freeze it!

Manna manages to stop the other tape with Jim standing by
the SUV looking in the direction of the camera.

ZELL (CONT'D)

The build is the same, the way he
moves, the way he's standing. I
think it's the same guy.

MANNA

Could be the same guy. Or it could
be two different guys, who could
tell? It's pretty fuzzy.

Zell scowls and switches off his VCR, takes the remote from
Manna and turns off the other TV then the VCR.

ZELL

You could be more positive, you know
that? You don't always have to see
the negative. Or you could just
keep your mouth shut.

MANNA

Hey, I call 'em as I see 'em.

ZELL

Yeah, what are you, an umpire?

MANNA

Man, there's a job that must be fun.
Working at the ballpark, big leagues.

Zell walks away disgusted, Manna left dreaming of umping the show, a faraway smile on his face.

EXT. STREETS -- NIGHT

Machete's car is parked near the apartment building in the middle of the night, the street quiet. Headlights come around the corner, a tow truck moving slowly down the street. On the side of it lettering reads: "Avenger Towing." The truck passes Machete's car and stops.

Maury gets out of the driver's side wearing work clothes. From the passenger side Jim gets out to keep watch as Maury works to position the hoist beneath Machete's car and get it attached to the tow bar, stringing emergency tail lights to the back of the car. It's a noisy operation, but no one appears to bother them.

They both get back in the truck and Maury pulls away towing Machete's car.

EXT. GARAGE -- LATER

The tow truck idles while Jim unlocks the door to the industrial garage, a barking dog inside.

As he opens the door, the DOG that Maury caught while surveilling Machete jumps up to be petted, a friendly mutt now.

JIM

Hello there, Wolfie, how you doing?
Watch out now.

Maury backs the tow truck and Machete's car into the garage.

INT. GARAGE -- CONTINUOUS

As soon as the truck and the car clear the door, Jim closes it. Maury shuts off the tow truck and gets out, Wolfie demanding a greeting from him, Maury bending down to get his face slobbered.

MAURY

Oh, you're such a good dog, yes.

JIM

You take the dog out of Machete's neighborhood and he turns into a lover.

They both stand looking at the car.

MAURY

You really think you can make it all work?

JIM

They do it with toy cars, I don't see why we can't do it with a real one. And if it doesn't work, we always have the dynamite option.

MAURY

Be a lot simpler.

JIM

Let's try my way first.

Maury goes to begin lowering the car, Jim taking off the emergency taillights, Wolfie curling up contentedly to watch.

INT. LA POLICE HEADQUARTERS -- DAY

Zell and Manna walk into the Homicide Department, going to the desk of Alexander.

ZELL

Detective Alexander, I'm Zell, this is Manna.

ALEXANDER

Nice to meet you both.

They sit, Manna pulling up a chair from an empty desk. Alexander picks up a manila folder from his desk, handing it to Zell.

ALEXANDER (CONT'D)

I pulled the file on the doctor after you called, but I saw you'd already seen it. So what's your interest in this person?

ZELL

Well, a bunch of things lead us to believe someone is booby-trapping cars, letting themselves be jacked, and then cold-bloodedly killing the suckers.

ALEXANDER

That's something new.

ZELL

A lot of little adds up to pretty convincing.

ALEXANDER

And you think it's Doctor Fielding?

ZELL

That's what we're thinking. For motive, we checked carjackings involving injuries over the past two years. Fielding comes closer than anyone else to matching the description of the suspect. Plus he's got the brains, the money and the time to pull off something like this.

MANNA

Means, motive, opportunity. He's got it all.

ALEXANDER

I wouldn't have pegged him. I had him in here awhile back looking at mug shots and he didn't exactly come on Rambo. Couldn't pick out the guy we believe killed his wife.

ZELL

You busted the guy?

ALEXANDER

Not yet, but it's just a matter of time. An informer dropped a dime on him and we're developing the evidence now. If the doc had recognized him, we could have picked him up right then.

ZELL

I saw composites of the murderer in the file. Didn't he do those?

ALEXANDER

Sure did and the one looked just like our suspect, too. Lives in Glendale, the boys over there are surveilling him. Funny thing, he just reported his car stolen.

ZELL

No shit, what's his name?

ALEXANDER

Hernandez, Manuel Hernandez. Street
name of Machete.

MANNA

Like the knife?

ALEXANDER

The big hacking kind.

ZELL

(to Manna)

You remember seeing his name on the
sheets?

MANNA

Who looks?

ZELL

(musing to himself)

His car was just stolen.

ALEXANDER

Glendale said he was really pissed.
It's funny. It's always the scumbags
who complain the loudest when they
get a taste of their own medicine.

MANNA

With them it's always me me me,
assholes.

ZELL

(beat)

I wonder if it's just coincidence
that this guy's car comes up stolen.
I mean, let's suppose we're right
and the doctor is planting booby
trapped cars to kill jackers. The
guy he'd really want is the one who
killed his wife. You bring him in,
show him the guy's picture, and presto
his car disappears.

ALEXANDER

Even if he was lying about recognizing
the guy he didn't know his name or
anything.

ZELL

Was it a booking photo?

ALEXANDER

Yeah, the guy had a rap sheet a half-
mile long.

ZELL

It's not hard to get the jacket from the booking number. Doc could have found out all he needed to know.

MANNA

So what do you think? He's going to fix the car somehow, let us return it to this joker, then snuff him? Why not just shoot him?

ZELL

I don't know. The doc's obviously a little warped to begin with if he's doing what we think he is. Let's put out a bulletin so we're alerted when the car turns up. Put in a warning to use extreme caution, no telling how it might be rigged. And we're going to have to see if the captain will okay some overtime for surveillance on the doctor.

ALEXANDER

We're going to have to open up an investigation for possible homicide. You can get me a list of the cars?

ZELL

Will do. That should tell us if I'm fishing in the desert or not.

ALEXANDER

To be perfectly honest, I hope you are.

ZELL

I wouldn't be disappointed either. But I'll tell you, I have the feeling this ain't no mirage.

INT. GARAGE -- EVENING

In the industrial area garage, Jim stands next to Machete's car holding an elaborate remote control box, Wolfie in a new doggie bed to one side.

Maury, wearing rubber gloves, is sitting in the driver's seat with the door open and he starts the car. He revs the engine and turns the steering wheel, the front tires moving.

Jim flips a toggle switch on the remote, a green light coming on. Maury revs up the engine again and then Jim moves a slide switch downward, the engine going back to idle, then revving up again as Jim moves the slide the other way.

Jim and Maury grin at one another.

Jim moves so he can see the back of the car and moves another slide switch, the brake lights coming on.

He moves back to the front and flips another switch, a different green light coming on. He moves a joystick and the wheels swivel.

Maury turns the wheel the opposite way, but the wheels don't follow, moving the way Jim moves the joystick until he flips off the switch, the wheels suddenly swinging to where Maury had turned them.

MAURY

Are you kidding me? It's unbelievable.

JIM

You ain't seen nothing yet. Low rider surprise.

Jim pushes buttons and the front of the car jumps up, then the back, then it jerks down and back up again, oscillating front and back until Maury bails out.

MAURY

We can bounce them to death.

JIM

It's not going to be easy to drive. I hope I don't cause an accident.

They both laugh.

JIM (CONT'D)

I want to drop it where he finds it before the cops do. They take it through the impound yard there's no telling what might happen to it. They break something, he spends any time under the hood he's going to notice the changes.

MAURY

It's not a car that blends in. We put it on the main street somewhere near that apartment building, he should stumble on it. Tonight?

JIM

Tonight's the night.

MAURY

So sweetly.

EXT. STREETS -- AFTERNOON

Machete's car is parked on the avenue when another lowrider, Chavy at the wheel, Machete in the passenger seat, passes it and screeches to a halt. Machete, then Chavy, jump out and run to his car.

MACHETE

Oyo, tu madre.

He kisses the fender and rubs it lovingly.

CHAVY

Maybe we should leave it and keep watch, catch the motherfucker coming back.

Machete looks around.

MACHETE

Screw it, I just want to drive her again.

He opens the door and gets in, checking the interior as he pulls out his keys on a chain.

MACHETE (CONT'D)

Looks clean.

He starts it up and revs the engine.

MACHETE (CONT'D)

Hermosolina, okay, we're back.
Whoever took you should pray I don't
ever find them.
(to Chavy)
Andalay!

Chavy jumps back in his car and the two of them accelerate away.

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- CONTINUOUS

Jim and Maury are sitting in a coffee shop having a snack, the GPS system on the table. Jim notices the readout changing.

JIM

Well, well, guess what's on the move.

MAURY

It's about time. What took the
halfwit so long.

Jim picks up the bill, Maury gobbling the last bites.

EXT. PARTY HOUSE -- NIGHT

A party is taking place at an innocuous house on an innocuous street, the party-goers spilling over onto the lawn, MUSIC THROBBING. Machete's car is parked in front.

INT. JIM'S SUV -- CONTINUOUS

Maury is driving, Jim in the passenger's seat, parked up the street. Jim is scoping out the party scene through the night vision monocular.

MAURY

If we can get a clear shot at the sound system let's take it out.

JIM

I see Machete. And there's son-of-a-bitch number two. They've got girls with them.

EXT. PARTY HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Machete, his arm draped over a girl, and Chavy, a girl walking next to him bumping into him with her hip, saunter down the walk and get in Machete's car, Machete driving with his girl pressed against him, Chavy and his girl in the back. Friends of theirs clown around the car as Machete pulls out.

INT. JIM'S SUV -- CONTINUOUS

Maury starts up.

JIM

Keep far back. We can't do anything with the girls in the car anyway.

MAURY

Machete's cheating on his girlfriend. Maybe we should tell her and let her take care of him.

JIM

Only if she promises to kill him.

EXT. GLENDALE BOULEVARD -- LATER

Machete's car turns off Glendale Boulevard heading up towards Griffith Park.

Behind Machete's car, far enough back to be out of sight, comes the SUV.

INT. JIM'S SUV -- CONTINUOUS

MAURY

They're taking them into the park.
This may get pornographic.

ANGLE ON MACHETE'S CAR THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD CLIMBING THE WINDING ROADS.

EXT. GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY PARKING LOT -- MOMENTS LATER

The lowrider wheels into the parking lot of the Griffith Observatory, the lights of LA sprawling into the distance past the observatory building.

Machete and the others get out, pair up and begin strolling towards the observatory. The SUV pulls in and parks a good distance away.

INT. JIM'S SUV -- CONTINUOUS

JIM

These roads are perfect. If only they didn't have those girls...

He makes his decision.

JIM (CONT'D)

Pull up next to their car, back in and keep the engine running.

MAURY

Oh, I don't think this is such a good idea, whatever it is.

JIM

I'm not missing this opportunity.

Maury backs out the SUV.

MAURY

Don't forget you're wearing your slide gun if you need it. I'll be backing you up.

JIM

Just be ready to go.

EXT. GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY PARKING LOT -- CONTINUOUS

The SUV backs into the parking space next to Machete's car and Jim gets out, heading up the pathway towards the observatory.

EXT. GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY -- CONTINUOUS

Near the observatory building, Machete is hoisting up his girlfriend to kiss the bust of James Dean.

MACHETE

No tongue, no tongue.

The group finds this hilarious. Machete lets her down and they fondle one another, the couples moving off to climb the stairs to the roof.

Jim stops by the bust to watch them move across the roof. From the brush by the fence, he picks up a thick stick, then follows them.

EXT. GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY ROOF -- CONTINUOUS

The couples are at the far edge looking at the light show of LA spread out below. Jim moves up quietly, raises the stick and clubs Machete on the shoulders, Machete YELLING, slumping and turning. The others turn and Jim smacks Chavy in the side of the head, staggering him. The girls SCREAM and scatter.

JIM

You sons-of-bitches, I'll kill you!

Jim raises the stick to hit Machete again, Machete rolling away. Chavy, holding his head, moves to get behind Jim who backs up quickly to not be surrounded. Machete pulls out a butterfly knife and Jim backs off quickly, his voice quavering as he yells:

JIM (CONT'D)

I saw you drive in, I've got your license plate number. You won't get away!

Suddenly, he drops the stick and sprints across the roof towards the stairs down. Machete hops up.

MACHETE

(to the girls)

Wait here, we'll be back.

He runs after Jim, Chavy following.

MACHETE'S GIRL

Hey, what's going on? Wait!

The girls straggle to a halt and look at one another with disgust as Machete and Chavy disappear down the stairs.

EXT. GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY PARKING LOT -- MOMENTS LATER

Jim runs past Machete's car and hops in the SUV which roars away.

INT. JIM'S SUV -- CONTINUOUS

JIM
Not too fast.

Maury slows and Jim looks back.

P.O.V. FROM JIM'S SUV, MACHETE AND CHAVY JUMPING IN MACHETE'S CAR WHICH LIGHTS UP, BACKS OUT AND SCREECHES AFTER THEM.

BACK TO SCENE:

JIM (CONT'D)
Gotcha, motherfuckers.

Maury drives out of the parking lot onto the winding upper exit road.

ANGLE ON THE REARVIEW MIRROR, MACHETE'S CAR FOLLOWING THEM.

MAURY
Let's get a little higher, fellas.

EXT. WINDING ROAD -- GRIFFITH PARK -- MOMENTS LATER

The road splits, one going left and down, the other veering right and up. The SUV goes up, Machete's car just a short ways behind it.

INT. LOWRIDER -- CONTINUOUS

MACHETE
Get in the boonies where's there's
no one to save you. Perfect.

Chavy reaches under the seat and gets his gun ready.

INT. JIM'S SUV -- CONTINUOUS

They race through some curves, climbing upwards, coming out on a flat straightaway. Jim looks back.

JIM
Let him get alongside of us.

Maury slows and Machete's car roars up on the inside. Chavy has the window down, the gun out.

JIM (CONT'D)
I don't think so.

He pushes a button on the remote and the window on Machete's car rises

INT. LOWRIDER -- CONTINUOUS

Chavy is startled and pulls back, looking at Machete to see if he rolled up the window.

MACHETE

Do it.

Chavy pushes at the window button but the window won't budge.

CHAVY

It's stuck.

Machete suddenly swerves towards the SUV trying to force it over the edge.

INT. JIM'S SUV -- CONTINUOUS

Maury avoids Machete's swerving.

JIM

Watch this.

He pushes another button and Machete's car leaps up in the rear, Machete nearly losing control. Jim keeps pushing buttons and Machete has to slow down as his car does a spastic dance up and down on its own.

INT. LOWRIDER -- CONTINUOUS

Chavy and Machete hold on as the car does what it wants, Chavy looking at him as if he's lost his mind.

MACHETE

It's broke, I'm not doing nothing!

He stomps on the break, screeching to a halt.

EXT. WINDING ROAD -- GRIFFITH PARK -- CONTINUOUS

As the lowrider slides to a stop, Maury stops ahead of it.

INT. JIM'S SUV -- CONTINUOUS

Jim moves the joystick and the lowrider slowly comes forward swerving from side to side until it's almost next to them and Jim then stops it.

JIM

(to Maury)

Roll down your window.

Maury rolls down the window and Jim leans across so he can be seen by Chavy and Machete as he draws his finger across his throat.

Chavy is still trying to get his window to go down, looks at Machete who yells something at him. Chavy points the gun ready to shoot through the window.

Jim jams up one of the joysticks on the remote and Machete's car jumps backwards then screeches to a halt, the two inside thrown forward into the dash and then back in the seat, Chavy dropping the gun.

INT. LOWRIDER -- CONTINUOUS

They look at one another frightened.

MACHETE

We're out of here.

He throws the car in reverse, looks back over the seat as he tries to back up. The engine revs, but the car goes nowhere. He checks the gearshift, presses the pedal to the floor but the car still doesn't move and then the engine gets quieter. He stomps at the pedal but the engine is idling. Machete yanks at his door and despite everything is shocked when it won't open. Chavy tries his and it's no go.

INT. JIM'S SUV -- CONTINUOUS

Jim moves another joystick and Machete's car screeches up to where they are and slams to a halt. Everything freezes for an instant as they all stare at one another, then Jim waves "bye-bye" and jams a joystick forward, the lowrider leaping down the road, Maury accelerating after them.

Glass from Machete's window breaks out, his foot coming through and drawing back in, and in an instant his head and upper torso appear out the window.

JIM

I don't think so.

He jams a joystick to the left and the lowrider swerves up a hillside kicking up dust, throwing Machete back into the car, and Jim brings it back on the road, jerking it back and forth to keep the two off balance.

MAURY

End it.

Jim gets Machete's car going fast on the straightaway.

JIM

Burn in hell, you bastards.

He swerves the joystick hard right and Machete's car veers to the right over the edge of a steep drop.

INT. LOWRIDER -- CONTINUOUS

Inside the car the two men SCREAM and cover their faces with their arms as the car heads right over the edge.

P.O.V. FROM INSIDE THE CAR OVER THE HOOD AS THE HORIZON TILTS UPWARD AND THE GROUND BELOW RUSHES UP.

EXT. HILLSIDE -- GRIFFITH PARK -- CONTINUOUS

The SCREAMS are abruptly cut off, replaced by the gentle SOUND OF AIR rushing past as the car curves downward.

EXT. WINDING ROAD -- GRIFFITH PARK -- CONTINUOUS

Jim's SUV pulls to a halt at the edge of the road above.

INT. JIM'S SUV -- CONTINUOUS

They watch as the car CRASHES. Jim looks through the night-vision scope.

P.O.V. NIGHT-VISION SCOPE -- CONTINUOUS

Someone is creeping out of the wreckage on the driver's side.

BACK TO SCENE:

JIM

Damn, I think Machete's getting out.
I'm going to finish him off. We're
over by the zoo, get down to the
access road, I'll use the
walkie-talkie to find you.

MAURY

Stay safe.

JIM

I'll be okay. Go now before someone
comes by.

Jim jumps out and Maury takes off.

EXT. WRECKAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Jim opens his coat sleeve and flips out the gun on the slide, takes off the safety, then pushes it back up before heading down the hill, slipping and sliding.

EXT. WRECKAGE -- CONTINUOUS

A banged up Machete hobbles away from the wreck, limping as he hurries to get away, heading for the brush.

EXT. HILLSIDE -- CONTINUOUS

Jim stops up on the hillside a moment and checks through the night-vision scope.

P.O.V. NIGHT-VISION SCOPE -- CONTINUOUS

Machete disappears in the trees and bushes to one side.

BACK TO SCENE:

Jim keeps going.

EXT. WRECKAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Jim comes up on the wreck, Chavy's foot sticking out, his obviously dead body inside. Jim moves away after Machete.

EXT. HEAVY BRUSH -- CONTINUOUS

Machete moves along as fast as he can, stumbling, knowing he's fleeing for his life, so spooked he looks as if monsters were about to jump out of the darkness and grab him.

EXT. HEAVY BRUSH -- FURTHER BACK -- CONTINUOUS

Jim moves along methodically, stopping to listen, scanning with the night scope. He hears CRACKLING from ahead and heads towards it more quickly.

EXT. ZOO FENCE -- CONTINUOUS

Machete slides down a hill and runs up against a fence with three strands of barbed wire angled outward. On the other side is the paved perimeter path of the Los Angeles Zoo, subdued lights spaced along it. Frantically, he moves along the fence looking for a way over or through it.

One of the trees is growing at an angle from the hillside over the top of the fence and he hurriedly climbs up and crawls across it, getting stuck on the barbed wire and RIPPING free which makes him lose his grip and fall onto the path.

EXT. LA ZOO -- CONTINUOUS

Behind him there is the SOUND OF BRUSH BREAKING and he quickly looks which way to go. The path is open for a fair distance in both directions offering no cover, but ahead of him is a short path leading down to a maintenance area with a dumpster.

He turns and runs for it, failing to see the chain across the entrance and pitching over it, falling in the dirt next to the path. There is a short sharp stick by his hand and he grabs it as he gets up and hurries to hide in the bushes across from the dumpster.

EXT. FENCE -- CONTINUOUS

Jim comes sliding down the hill to the fence and scans with the scope.

P.O.V. NIGHT-VISION SCOPE -- CONTINUOUS

The path is empty in both directions, but the chain at the maintenance area is slowly SWINGING.

BACK TO SCENE:

Jim sticks the night vision scope in his jacket pocket, climbs the tree and drops on the other side with a greater agility than Machete showed.

EXT. LA ZOO -- CONTINUOUS

Jim flips out the gun and steps over the chain, slowly moving down towards the dumpster. He keeps away from it, aiming the gun at it, but as he comes up on the far side, the bushes RUSTLE and as he starts to turn Machete leaps out and stabs the stick deeply into Jim's shoulder.

MACHETE

Puto maricon!

Jim GROANS as he tries to turn against the stick and get a shot at Machete, the small caliber gun going off with a POP. Machete tries to wrestle him for the gun, but it is securely attached to the slide and won't come loose.

Jim hits him in the face with his elbow and knocks him backwards into the bushes. As Jim aims another shot at him, Machete ducks and disappears into the thick brush, disappearing up a slight hill.

Jim touches the stick, but there's not much he can do about it and he knows not to pull it out which will only allow the wound to bleed more. He takes off after Machete into the brush.

EXT. BRUSH -- CONTINUOUS

Machete slips and falls, gets up, and sees Jim aiming the gun at him. He ducks and charges Jim, the two of them falling forward.

EXT. BEAR COMPOUND -- REAR -- CONTINUOUS

They fall together into the elevated rear of the bear compound, a circular pit with a fake mountain in it, high at the rear, running downward towards the front where there is a small pool to the left side (as seen from where Jim and Machete are at the back).

Machete twists the gun from the slide and he and Jim struggle for it, Jim knocking the gun from Machete's grasp so it slides down the fake mountain to the bottom. Machete twists the stick in Jim's shoulder making Jim SCREAM in pain, the stick coming out as he twists away.

At the back of the fake rock mountain there is a small metal stairway to the top and Machete gets up and climbs the stairway. Jim jumps and grabs his foot with his one good hand and they fall and roll together down onto the top of the mountain and over the edge.

EXT. BEAR COMPOUND -- FRONT -- CONTINUOUS

Breaking apart, they tumble down the sloping front of the fake mountain, sprawling among the bear's toys of logs and stumps at the bottom.

The wall of the compound is not overly high -- bears not known for their leaps -- but it does have three strands of electrified wire running completely around the top.

The front of the mountain has a thin, tall cut in it leading inside to the bear's sleeping den. The noise has aroused him and the large BEAR ambles out.

The menacing beast starts shambling towards Jim who is closer to him, Jim getting up and facing the bear as he moves away slowly. The bear ROARS.

MACHETE

Jesu Christos!

Machete runs as best he can and jumps for a hold on the top of the wall, the electrified wires SHOCKING him with a FLASH and CRACK and knocking him backwards where he lies for a moment shaking.

Machete's antics have made the bear turn towards him and Machete gets up and backs against the wall, scraping along it. Jim sees the gun and grabs it, the bear ROARING as it moves towards Machete.

MACHETE (CONT'D)

(imploring Jim)

Madre de Dios, shoot, shoot!

JIM

Okay.

Jim SHOTS Machete through one knee, knocking him to the ground and making him SCREAM.

Machete looks at Jim with horror in his eyes, painfully rising only to have Jim shoot him through the other knee, knocking him flat, Machete SCREAMING, knowing he is going to die a horrible death.

The bear advances on him and he tries to drag himself away, whimpering.

Jim carefully moves backwards towards the wall by the pool where the distance to the top of the wall is the shortest. He picks up one of the logs and stretches it across from the pool up to the top of the wall

MACHETE

Help me! Help! Don't leave me!

JIM

(to the bear)

Bon appetite.

Jim carefully crosses the log to the top of the wall, knocks the log back down into the pit, and on the edge of the bushes looks back at the scene.

Machete is on his back, the bear on top of him, Machete SCREAMING in terror.

P.O.V. MACHETE -- CONTINUOUS

The bear's face advances downward, its huge jaws open. There is loud SCREAMING mixed with the BEAR'S ROAR.

FADE TO BLACK as the bear's jaws close on Machete's head, the SCREAMING muffled but continuing in the dark until it is ABRUPTLY CUT-OFF by a horrible CRUNCHING SOUND.

EXT. ZOO -- BEAR'S COMPOUND -- DAY

Detectives Alexander, Zell and Manna work in the bear's compound, Alexander bagging the stick Machete stabbed Jim with, covered in Jim's blood. Other investigators are working around them.

ALEXANDER

If that's the Doc's blood on that stick and the girls ID him in the line-up, he's going down.

ZELL

He wanted his killer so bad he made mistakes.

ALEXANDER

I know the Doc had a reason to hate this guy, but this seems excessive.

MANNA

Brains popped like a grape tomato.

ZELL

I wonder if he finds his revenge sweet.

ALEXANDER

He'd better enjoy it now cause I don't think he's going to find prison so sweet.

EXT. JIM'S HOUSE -- AFTERNOON

Alexander and Zell pull up in the front of Jim's house, Zell driving his detective car.

EXT. JIM'S HOUSE -- 2ND FLOOR DECK -- CONTINUOUS

Jim is lying on a lounge chair sunning himself under a lamp on the second floor deck off the master bedroom in the rear of the house, the stab wound in his shoulder stitched but still raw. He hears the doorbell ring, sits up, and wraps himself in a robe, shutting off the sunlamp. He presses his flesh and sees it go white then back to red, smiling thinly at his sunburn. He goes inside.

EXT. JIM'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Jim opens the front door on Alexander and Zell.

ALEXANDER

Hello Doctor. Did we wake you?

JIM

No. What can I do for you?

ALEXANDER

May we come in.

Jim steps back and they enter, Jim closing the door.

INT. JIM'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

JIM

You guys working together now?
(MORE)

JIM (CONT'D)

I thought you were from different departments.

ALEXANDER

There's some overlap in our cases.

JIM

(to Alexander)

More pictures?

(to Zell)

Or hoping I've remembered something to solve your case for you.

Alexander hands him a piece of paper.

ZELL

It's a subpoena. We want your fingerprints, a sample of your blood.

Jim takes the paper.

JIM

You think I killed my wife?

ALEXANDER

We're not at liberty to state the reason, doctor. We'd like you to come with us now.

JIM

(beat)

I'll get dressed.

Jim heads upstairs. Alexander and Zell look at one another with satisfaction.

INT. JIM'S BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Jim is hurriedly dressing in casual clothes. He goes to the dresser and takes up a small picture of Alison, kisses it and puts it in his pocket. Then he goes out onto the deck and climbs over the rail.

INT. JIM'S LIVING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Alexander is poking around Jim's desk when he happens to look out the window to the front of Jim's house.

ANGLE ON JIM POURING SOMETHING FROM A CONTAINER INTO ZELL'S CAR, HIS SUV IDLING IN THE STREET NEARBY.

ALEXANDER

What the hell...

EXT. JIM'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

From a safe distance, Jim lights a rag and tosses it through the open window of the cop car which ERUPTS IN FLAMES.

Jim jumps in his SUV just as Alexander and Zell burst out of the house to straggle to a halt as Jim disappears down the street, their car a giant bonfire.

ZELL
That son-of-a-bitch...

ALEXANDER
He's not getting away.

Alexander takes out a cell phone.

ZELL
He could have flattened the tire,
but no, he's got to burn it. He's
paying for this.

ALEXANDER
Among other things.

EXT. MEXICAN BEACH -- AFTERNOON

Jim's SUV is pulled up at the far end of the Mexican beach dirt parking lot where he spoke with the fisherman about puffer fish. The windows are rolled up except for the rear driver's side which is cracked to allow a hose to run from it to the tailpipe, the open window around the hose taped over. A Mexican family stands nearby staring as a police cruiser its lights flashing enters the parking lot.

The two officers get out and listen to the man from the family who gesticulates wildly. The officers approach the SUV, the excited family keeping back but consumed with curiosity. The officers examine the SUV, then one opens the driver's door.

Jim is in the driver's seat, his head lolling to one side, skin very red, apparently dead.

The key is on, the dash lights lit, a forlorn warning bell bonging off-key as the power wears down, the engine no longer running. Set prominently on the dashboard is the picture of Alison, next to it the envelope from the opening scene addressed *DETECTIVE ALEXANDER, LOS ANGELES POLICE HOMICIDE*. The two officers look at one another, then officiously move back the family which has crowded in to gawk.

PAN IN TO A CLOSE UP OF JIM'S EYE, THE CAMERA GOING DOWN INTO THE PUPIL...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. REFRIGERATED BODY ROOM OF MORGUE -- NIGHT

A tiny bright light in the center of the darkened screen rushes at us, growing bigger until it fills the screen and the CAMERA bursts through and WE SEE the morgue room, Alexander and the medical examiner looking at Jim's body.

ALEXANDER

Whatever his reasons, there's no excuse. He got what he deserved, case closed.

(beat)

Well, I've got a drive.

The medical examiner covers up Jim and they head out of the room.

INT. MOTORHOME -- MOMENTS LATER

Maury accompanied by Wolfie watches the front of the morgue from down the street as Alexander comes out, the medical examiner at the door. Alexander gets in her car and pulls away, the medical examiner going back inside. Maury starts the motorhome.

EXT. MEXICAN MORGUE -- REAR -- CONTINUOUS

The motorhome parks behind the morgue and Maury emerges, Wolfie wanting to get out but Maury making him wait inside. The back door to the morgue is opened by the medical examiner who looks to make certain they're alone as Maury goes in.

INT. MEXICAN MORGUE -- CONTINUOUS

The two speak quietly though they are all alone as they walk to the refrigeration room, the medical examiner handing Maury an envelope.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

There is copies of certificate of death, allowance of body to family and my card for business.

(emphatically)

Anyone should questions, they must speak just to me. No other, just me. This is much importance.

MAURY

I understand.

(MORE)

MAURY (CONT'D)

And I can't tell you how much the family appreciates your consideration. It's been a terrible tragedy, we just want to put him to rest with dignity and get this behind us. It will be very discreet.

They go into the refrigeration room and stop, Maury looking at the sheet. He gets out his billfold and begins counting into the medical examiner's opened hand two thousand dollars in \$100 bills.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

I am feeling sad for your loss. I'm sorry.

MAURY

Thank you.

The transaction complete, the money counted and in the medical examiner's pocket, Maury touches the sheet at Jim's head.

MAURY (CONT'D)

May I?

The medical examiner has no objection and Maury peels back the sheet from Jim's face.

MAURY (CONT'D)

Rest in peace, cousin.
(to the examiner)
You won't have trouble with the police about the autopsy report?

MEDICAL EXAMINER

This is done. It's known how he died. The red is carbon monoxide poison.

Maury covers Jim back up. The medical examiner hands him a bag.

MEDICAL EXAMINER (CONT'D)

His things. His car is with policia.

MAURY

I'll take care of it after we get him buried.

Maury puts the bag on the gurney and begins pushing it to the door, the medical examiner holding it open.

INT. MOTORHOME -- MOMENTS LATER

The medical examiner helps Maury lay Jim's body on the bed in the rear of the motorhome, Wolfie walking back and forth restlessly, the medical examiner a bit frightened of him. He quickly shakes Maury's hand and gets out, Maury closing the door behind him.

Maury goes to Jim's body and takes down the sheet from his face. He leans over just inches from Jim's face, Wolfie whining, Maury straightening up.

MAURY

You sure look dead. I hope you didn't
take too much of that puffer fish
crap.

Wolfie whines and tilts his head as if puzzled. Maury rubs the dog's head and goes up to the driver's seat, Wolfie curling up in the passenger seat as Maury starts the motorhome, pulling out.

EXT. BEACH -- AFTERNOON

The motorhome is parked in a deserted stretch of pristine beach, an awning pulled out from the motorhome to shade the side, Maury sitting in a beach chair reading, Jim's body on a lounge chair next to him, dressed but still lifeless.

Maury puts down the book and looks at Wolfie chasing the birds as waves gently wash the beach, then looks over at Jim. There's a fly on Jim's face and Maury brushes it away. Suddenly, Jim's eyes turn towards him.

Maury is startled. Jim slowly manages a ghastly smile and Maury grins and begins to LAUGH. From the water, Wolfie BARKS. Jim's smile is bigger.

SOUND OF BOTH OF THEM LAUGHING AS...

THE CAMERA pulls back and rises, the motorhome shrinks, the world enlarges, the empty desert stretching away to one side with the wide blue sea on the other, birds rising majestically as they soar freely into the sky.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END