

"BLOOD AND LOYALTY"

by

Ben Fiore

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

The mid-summer night is deep and clear as it hovers above the uneven, cluttered urban landscape. A light but steady warm breeze makes its way through the low lying canyons of cramped, decaying apartment buildings, avenues and store fronts.

An ancient, flashing neon light illuminates a small section of the street area in front of the cheesy night club, La Bamba Bar and Grill. PATRONS come and go as the lively, fast-paced beat of LATIN MUSIC pulsates from inside.

ANTONIO RIVERA, 23, ruggedly handsome and athletic, exits with FREDDIE RIVERA, 21, short and stocky, in tow. Slightly intoxicated, they cavort and clown with each other as they saunter towards a dark, parked sedan.

Antonio places his arm around Freddie's broad shoulders. Freddie responds with a soft, playful punch to Antonio's stomach as they prepare to enter the sedan.

FREDDIE

Look at this lucky caballero, here.
I can't believe it. Your ugly ass
is getting married on Saturday.
It's finally here, man.

Antonio LAUGHS. He reaches over and rubs Freddie's head, mussing up his thick, black, neatly combed hair.

ANTONIO

Yeah, I'm gonna miss you, my little
brother.

FREDDIE

Ah, you'll be coming around. Nobody
makes arroz con pollo like Mama.

ANTONIO

(laughing)

Hey, Maria's a pretty good cook too,
you know? Works that damned microwave
like you ain't never seen.

They continue on and share a LAUGH as they enter the sedan. Antonio is at the wheel.

INT. SEDAN (PARKED)

Antonio starts the engine. He looks over at Freddie and notices that he has suddenly become silent, a somber expression taking shape on his young face. He grabs his shoulder and shakes him.

ANTONIO
Hey, what's the matter?

Silence for a beat.

FREDDIE
What about Papa?

Antonio seems to sober up at the question.

ANTONIO
What about him?

FREDDIE
You know. Is he coming back? Is he
coming up for the wedding?

Antonio shakes his head in frustration.

ANTONIO
Man, I've been writin' to him for
months and he ain't even answered
one of my letters. Not a stinkin'
one of 'em.

He BANGS the steering wheel with his fist.

FREDDIE
I'm sorry, Antonio. I thought--

ANTONIO
(interrupting)
Look, let's forget about Papa for
now, okay? We're out celebratin',
Bro. I feel good--like I've got all
this energy inside of me.
(beat)
It's like I gotta go out and do
somethin'.

He abruptly places the sedan into gear and quickly pulls away. Freddie continues to look over at him as he drives. Silence prevails between them.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNKNOWN STREET - NIGHT

The sedan pulls over to the curb on a desolate, industrial street. It is dark, deserted and quiet. Antonio switches the headlights off but keeps the engine running.

INT. SEDAN (PARKED)

Through the windshield, they observe a newspaper stand across the street. A tall, gray haired VENDOR, early 70s, closes the stand and locks up for the night.

Antonio watches him intently, resembling an animal sizing up its prey. Freddie looks at him.

FREDDIE

What the hell are we doing here,
man? Why did you stop?

Antonio doesn't answer him. He anxiously fidgets, TAPPING the steering wheel with his fingers. Freddie is growing uneasy.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

Hey, Bro, are you deaf? I said what
are we doing here?

Antonio's eyes remain trained on the vendor's movements. Freddie suddenly comes to a realization. He shakes his head.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

Oh, no. Not this bullshit again.

ANTONIO

Like clockwork, man. He stays open till eleven. Tons of cash, lottery tickets, you name it--all in that little fuckin' bag he carries.

He LAUGHS as the vendor pulls down the metal gates. He carries a zippered canvas bag.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

He walks down into the subway and bam! That's where we do it, little bro.

Silence in the car for a few beats as they continue to watch the vendor. Antonio then reaches over and grabs Freddie's arm. He is full of excited energy.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Yo, you still alive, man?

FREDDIE

(nervously)

Yeah, uh, how're you gonna do it again?

ANTONIO

Ain't you been listenin' to me? We hit him on the subway steps.

Freddie is visibly nervous. He wipes a few beads of sweat from his forehead.

FREDDIE

I don't like this shit, Antonio.
(MORE)

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

You know that. We were out having a few drinks and now you gotta go and ruin it, man.

ANTONIO

Come on. Don't punk out on me now. I've been watchin' this guy for weeks. It's too easy.

FREDDIE

It's just--

ANTONIO

(interrupting)

It's just nothin'. Look, all you gotta do is drive. I'll go down there. As soon as I come up, hit the gas and we're home free. That's all you gotta do, Bro.

Freddie does not respond. Antonio playfully slaps his face.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Hey, we're the Rivera brothers, you know? Ain't nothin' gonna stop us.

Freddie shakes his head in pure frustration. Antonio turns his attention back to the vendor, who now begins to walk down the street. He quietly opens the sedan's door and turns back to Freddie.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Slide over and take the wheel.

Freddie reluctantly slides himself over and takes the driver's position. He watches through the windshield as Antonio comes from behind the sedan and makes his way across the street.

EXT. UNKNOWN STREET

The vendor walks along, clutching the canvas bag. He nears the subway entrance as Antonio closes in behind him, then disappears around a corner.

The vendor quickly turns to look back, but Antonio is gone. He turns again and resumes walking towards the subway.

INT. SUBWAY STATION

The desolate, dimly lit subway mezzanine is quiet except for the distant sounds of an occasional PASSING TRAIN below. There is no one around but the TOKEN BOOTH CLERK, who appears to be asleep inside the booth.

OFF SCREEN, FOOTSTEPS on the staircase as the vendor makes his way down.

He barely makes it to the mezzanine level when he is startled by Antonio, who suddenly jumps out from behind a corner.

He produces a switchblade knife and grabs the helpless vendor by the scruff of his neck. He pushes the man towards an out-of-the-way corner, slamming him against the tile wall.

ANTONIO
Give it up, old man!

The vendor is frozen in fear.

VENDOR
(terrified)
Please....I....I don't want any trouble
here.

Antonio presses the sharp, shiny blade directly onto the vendor's sweaty cheek. It gleams from the bright fluorescent light above.

ANTONIO
Give me that fuckin' bag or I'll cut
your throat from ear to ear.

The vendor quickly hands over the bag.

VENDOR
I've got a sick wife at home. Don't
hurt me, alright? Please!

Antonio savors his brief, sadistic moment of power. He pushes the blade as its tip punctures the vendor's face. Drops of blood begin to cover it, turning the shiny blade into a sickening crimson.

The vendor CRIES OUT in pain, then slowly collapses to the hard, concrete floor, holding the bleeding puncture wound on his face. Antonio callously pushes him aside with his foot, then bolts back up the stairs to the street.

EXT. UNKNOWN STREET

Tightly clutching the canvas bag, Antonio charges across the street towards the sedan. He looks both ways, but there is not a soul around.

INT. SEDAN (PARKED)

Freddie notices Antonio making his way towards him and freezes up. Antonio rips the door open and jumps into the sedan. Excited, breathing heavily and sweating profusely, he reaches over and grabs Freddie.

ANTONIO
(excitedly)
What the hell's the matter with you?
Let's get the fuck outta here!

Freddie snaps out of his trance, places the sedan into gear and quickly pulls away.

EXT. UNKNOWN STREET

The sedan speeds away into the night.

INT. SEDAN (MOVING)

Antonio tries to catch his breath as he peers out the window, taking one last look at the subway station. He then grabs the canvas bag and opens it, eagerly rummaging through its contents.

ANTONIO
I don't know what I'm gonna do with
you. You've gotta move faster, homey.

Freddie does not respond as he drives on.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Anyway, it's a good score.

He holds up the bag for Freddie to see.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Here, take a look at it, Bro.

Freddie briefly takes his eyes off the road and glances at the cash in the open bag. He then notices some blood on Antonio's hand and becomes alarmed.

FREDDIE
(nervously)
Your hand--there's blood on it!
What the hell happened down there,
Antonio? What did you do?

Antonio quickly pulls his hand away, placing it into his pocket in a crude attempt to wipe it clean. He attempts to downplay it.

ANTONIO
Ah, it's nothing, man. I just cut
it on the fence or some shit when I
was running up the stairs. That's
all.

Freddie is still quite alarmed and concerned as he drives. He looks over at Antonio, then turns back to the road before him. Antonio places his hand back into his pocket, simulating a gun as he demonstrates for Freddie.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Bro, look, I did it just like this.
Old bastard thought I had a gun.
Stuck it in his ribs. Told him I
was gonna blow his guts out.

FREDDIE
What did he do?

ANTONIO
Gave it up real fast, man. He was
all cryin' and shit. You should'a
seen him.

Antonio LAUGHS.

FREDDIE
Is that it?

ANTONIO
Yeah, yeah, that's it.

FREDDIE
You sure?

He grabs Freddie's shoulder to reassure him.

ANTONIO
Stop worrying, Bro. Nobody got hurt,
okay? I left him standin' right
there. Good?

Freddie seems relieved.

FREDDIE
Alright. I mean, you know what I'm
saying and--

ANTONIO
(interrupting)
I know, I know. You don't want nobody
gettin' hurt.

Freddie acknowledges with a nod.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
You gotta trust me. I've got it all
worked out.

Freddie does not answer him and continues to drive on into
the night.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

The sedan pulls up in front of an ancient, yet well preserved apartment building. Antonio and Freddie exit and approach the entrance. Antonio turns to Freddie and they stop for a couple of beats.

ANTONIO

And, don't say nothin' about this to Mama. Don't slip about where we got the cash--like the last time you almost got me in deep shit.

Freddie rolls his eyes as they resume walking towards the entrance of the building.

INT. APARTMENT

In the cramped but tidy apartment, LYDIA RIVERA, late 50s, petite, wipes down the kitchen counter. She stops to glance at the clock upon the wall, then grabs a small liquor bottle from her house dress.

She takes a quick swig from the bottle, then quickly places it back into her pocket as OFF SCREEN, KEYS JIGGLE in the door. The brothers enter.

Lydia looks on as Antonio walks right past her towards the bedroom. She then turns to Freddie.

LYDIA

Where were you boys? I had dinner all ready and you never even called to--

Freddie replies nervously.

FREDDIE

(interrupting)

We were just hanging out, Mama. You know, must have forgot.

She looks towards the bedroom in Antonio's direction, then rolls her eyes.

LYDIA

What did he make you do this time? Steal something from a store? Grab an old woman's purse?

Freddie turns away, waving his hand.

FREDDIE

No, Mama. Don't start, alright? I told you we were just hanging out. That's all.

She grabs him, turning him towards her.

LYDIA

Hanging out? What do you think I am, stupid? I know what he's all about and I know what he's making you do, Federico.

FREDDIE

Mama, please. He's my older brother.

LYDIA

Yes, he is your older brother. And, he's my son. For God's sake, you're my son, too.

(beat)

I may be losing him, but I refuse to lose you.

Freddie turns away again.

FREDDIE

Oh, Mama...

Lydia begins to get emotional. Her eyes well up with tears as she addresses Freddie.

LYDIA

Don't you go and turn away from me. I won't stand by and watch him ruin you too. He's become just like your father. Can't you understand that?

Suddenly, Antonio appears and they stop in their tracks. He looks at them amid the silence, then reaches into his pocket and removes some cash. He stuffs it into Lydia's hand.

ANTONIO

This is a little somethin' towards the rent, Mama.

(beat)

Alright?

Lydia looks down at the wad of cash in her hand with pure disgust. She pushes it back at him.

LYDIA

Where did this come from? Who did you rob for this?

Antonio throws his hands up in a gesture to calm her.

ANTONIO

No, no Mama. You've got it all wrong. We've been gettin' some work on the docks.

(MORE)

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
(turns to Freddie)
Ain't that right, little bro?

Freddie returns a blank look.

LYDIA
Well, I want no part of it.

ANTONIO
Come on, Mama. You don't know what
you're sayin'. It's--

LYDIA
(interrupting)
Don't you dare come in here and try
to pacify me with your damned blood
money.
(beat)
Don't you think I know what you're
doing? And, you're dragging this
poor boy in with you. You're just
like your father, that's what you
are.

Antonio shakes his head in frustration.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
And to think you're going to marry
that sweet young girl. She's has no
idea of--

ANTONIO
(interrupting, angrily)
Don't bring Maria into this, Mama.
Besides, we'll be married in a few
days and I'll be gone. Right out
that door and you won't have to see
me around here anymore. Okay?

LYDIA
Well, it can't be soon enough. And,
I want you to stay away from Freddie.
(beat)
Stay away from my baby. He's all
I've got left.

Lydia turns and begins to SOB softly. Antonio stands there
and seems to realize that she has been drinking. He shakes
his head and looks at Freddie. There are a couple of beats
of awkward silence.

Suddenly, Lydia collects herself, then reaches into the pocket
of her house dress. She removes an envelope and tosses it
to Antonio. He is puzzled as he catches it.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
It's for you. It came this morning.
(beat)
It's from...your father.

Antonio's face lights up with excited disbelief as he looks at the envelope in his hand. He then turns and races towards his bedroom, clutching it. Freddie looks on at him as he remains there with Lydia.

INT. BEDROOM

Antonio plops down onto the bed. He can hardly contain himself as he tears the envelope open and excitedly begins to read the enclosed letter.

ANTONIO
(to himself)
Yes!

He gestures with an enthusiastic thumbs up as Freddie enters the bedroom.

FREDDIE
What's all this about?

ANTONIO
I did it. I did it, man.
(he holds the letter
up briefly)
It's from Papa!

FREDDIE
What do you mean?

ANTONIO
Just like we talked about tonight.
All the letters I wrote to him.
(beat)
He's comin', little bro. He's comin'
up for the wedding.

Freddie steps back, trying to absorb it all. He turns to notice Lydia looking on from the kitchen. She has a somber look on her face. He turns his attention back to the excited Antonio.

FREDDIE
You mean he's gonna come all the way
up here for you? Man, you sure?

Antonio shows him the letter again. He points to a section of it, touching it with his index finger.

ANTONIO

Look, says it right here that he's comin'. Takin' a Greyhound Bus on Thursday night.

Antonio rises and parades around the room with excitement, holding the letter up.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

I did it, man. I did it!

Freddie just remains, staring at his brother with a look of fascination that soon turns to one of uncertainty.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SEDAN (MOVING) - DAY

It's early morning as Antonio drives along. Freddie is in the passenger's seat. He is tired and fidgets as they move along.

ANTONIO

You know, sometimes I can't even believe I'm gonna be gettin' married. And then with Papa comin' up--man, it's almost too much for me right now.

Freddie ponders it all, then seems to get a bit emotional.

FREDDIE

Geez, I'm finally going to meet our old man. I don't even remember him.
(beat)
What was he like?

ANTONIO

You were just a little baby. But, he was a good man. Had his problems with Mama. Had to split after a while, you know?

Freddie is silent, pensive as he just stares at the floor.

CLOSE UP on Antonio as he turns to look at Freddie. His expression changes to a somewhat troubled one as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Antonio, as a LITTLE BOY, lies in his bed. OFF SCREEN, a MAN and a WOMAN ARGUE LOUDLY in the next room. He is jolted out of his sleep and meekly rises to investigate.

He looks over at Freddie, an INFANT, lying in his crib, then opens the door a crack. He carefully peeks out at the noisy goings-on.

LUIS RIVERA, 35, strapping and handsome, is obviously intoxicated as he chases a much younger Lydia around the living room. She is terrified and knocks over a lamp as she attempts to back away from his aggressive advances.

LUIS
You bitch. You're gonna do what I tell you!

LYDIA
You're drunk, Luis. Get away from me! Why don't you go back out and screw one of your lousy whores?

An enraged Luis finally reaches her and slaps her across the face. She falls forward and he grabs her by the hair, pulling her towards the bedroom. She resists but to no avail.

Frightened and trembling, Antonio continues to watch the harrowing scene through the crack in the open door. His lip quivers as tears begin to make their way down his young face.

Luis reaches the bedroom with her and SLAMS the door shut. OFF SCREEN, Lydia SCREAMS as her dress is ripped from her and she is thrown onto the bed.

Antonio painfully listens to the disturbing sounds of Luis' GRUNTING and GROANING as Lydia MOANS with disgust.

FLASHBACK ENDS.

BACK TO SCENE :

Freddie breaks Antonio out of his trance as he drives.

FREDDIE
Hey, man!

Antonio snaps out of it and looks at Freddie.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
Ain't you listening to me?
(beat)
I heard he didn't treat Mama right.
He beat her and stuff. Had other
women. Antonio, is it--

ANTONIO
(interrupting)
Don't believe all that bullshit,
okay? I told you they had their
problems.

FREDDIE

But--

ANTONIO

(interrupting)

It was a long time ago. He's our old man and we've gotta respect him. That's all.

Freddie turns away, gazing out the window.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Now, I gotta go tell Maria the good news.

CUT TO:

EXT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Antonio's sedan pulls up in front of the small, quaint looking flower shop. He exits as Freddie remains inside.

The shop's front door is locked at this early morning hour. He looks around, then KNOCKS. Suddenly, a pretty, smiling MARIA SALDANA, 21, peers out through a curtain over the glass door. She unlocks the door, opens it and greets him.

MARIA

What are you doing here so early?
We don't open for another hour.

Antonio excitedly LAUGHS.

ANTONIO

I've got some great news. It was too late to call you last night.
Can I come in?

Maria opens the door fully and Antonio enters. Freddie looks on from inside the parked sedan.

INT. FLOWER SHOP

They walk through the tiny, but festively decorated flower shop towards a back room where a heavy-set, middle aged WOMAN toils away on a large flower arrangement.

Maria stops at a work bench where several flowers are lying. She resumes working on them as she turns towards Antonio.

MARIA

(working on the flowers)

Okay, Poppy. This better be good.
I have to get these arrangements ready for delivery by noon.

Antonio gently grabs her arm, motioning her to sit down in a nearby chair. She is puzzled.

ANTONIO

Baby, you've gotta sit down for this one.

MARIA

What are you talking about? I've got to work on these--

He pulls her again, gently.

ANTONIO

(interrupting)

Please... Wait till you hear this news.

Maria reluctantly drops what she's doing and follows his lead to sit in the chair. Antonio then reaches into his pocket and produces the letter. He begins to excitedly unfold it.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

It's from my pops.

(beat)

He wrote back to me.

Maria just stares at him. She is not moved. Antonio bends forward and softly grabs her hands.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Mi Amore, he's comin'. He's comin' up for the wedding.

He looks at her, hoping for an enthusiastic response but she remains cool, unaffected by the news. There is silence between them for a beat as Antonio senses her lack of excitement.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

(annoyed)

Well...is that all you're gonna do-- sit there?

MARIA

And, what do you expect me to do?

He TAPS the envelope to emphasize his point.

ANTONIO

You act like you don't give a damn about this.

MARIA

Antonio, we've gone through this a hundred times. You know how I feel about--

ANTONIO

(interrupting)

He's my father, for God's sake.
Doesn't that mean anything to you?

Maria rises from the chair. She moves closer and grabs the letter from his hand.

MARIA

What is this? The fiftieth time you've written to him? The fiftieth time you've begged this man to be part of--

Antonio is angered, upset.

ANTONIO

(interrupting)

That's wrong, Maria.

He quickly snatches the letter back from her hand.

MARIA

Wrong, Antonio? I'll tell you what's wrong. The man walked out on you as a child. Your mama and Freddie too. He never looked back. Never cared if you had a roof over your head, clothes on your back or a meal in your stomach.

He turns away from her and she grabs his arms from behind.

MARIA (CONT'D)

That's what's wrong.

(beat)

Now, all these years later, you go through all of this to get this man to come back and share in the biggest day of our lives.

(beat)

Why, Antonio? Why?

He turns back towards her, his eyes welling up with tears.

ANTONIO

Because, for once in my stinkin' life, I want my father--my papa to be there.

(beat)

I want him to be proud of me just this once. Just this one time.

(MORE)

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

(beat)

Not like all those times when I was a kid and all the others, they had their pops to watch them hit a home run, ride a two wheeler, sing 'Happy Birthday' to them. Just this once, baby.

(beat)

I want him to look at me comin' down that aisle with you and say, 'That's my boy.'

Maria gets emotional as a tear begins to run down her pretty face. She extends her arms to hug him.

MARIA

Oh, I'm sorry, Antonio.

They closely embrace for a couple of beats, then face each other. Antonio takes a deep breath, clears his throat and wipes a tear from Maria's face.

ANTONIO

Most of all, I want you to be happy too, Mi Amore.

MARIA

I am happy, Antonio. I just don't want you to get hurt--

He abruptly looks up at the wall clock, cutting her off, avoiding any further discussion about the subject.

ANTONIO

(interrupting)

Baby, I gotta get going. Freddie's waitin' in the car. We gotta go see Cookie Romero. Remember him?

Maria returns a look of uncertainty.

MARIA

Cookie Romero?

ANTONIO

Yeah, he's hooked up with some guy that can get us work with deliveries and stuff.

He turns to exit. Maria seems a little uncomfortable with the mention of Cookie Romero.

MARIA

Be careful, Antonio.

He turns back and gives her a peck on the cheek.

ANTONIO
Love you. I'll give you a call
tonight.

He exits as Maria remains, still with an uncertain look.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP

Antonio exits as Maria closes and locks the door behind him. She glances over at the sedan as Freddie catches a glimpse of her. She then disappears as Antonio enters the sedan.

CUT TO:

INT. SEDAN (PARKED)

Antonio prepares to pull away. Freddie looks over at him.

FREDDIE
So?

ANTONIO
So, what?

FREDDIE
What did Maria say?

ANTONIO
Said she's happy for me, man. Real
happy.

Freddie looks at him in disbelief.

FREDDIE
Happy? I thought she didn't like
the idea that--

Antonio is annoyed. He snaps back at Freddie.

ANTONIO
(interrupting)
Hey--don't question me about shit
when it comes to Maria, okay? I
told her all about Papa comin' up
and she's cool with it.

Freddie shakes his head and turns back towards the window. Antonio lightens up as he begins to pull away from the curb.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Listen, little bro, I hope you ain't
got any plans right now, 'cause we're--

FREDDIE
(interrupting)
What about the job, man?
(MORE)

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

Mama made a call for us and we're
supposed to be at that place by nine
o'clock.

ANTONIO

Come on, bro. You kiddin' me or what?
We ain't goin' on no interview and
we ain't gettin' no bullshit jobs
either.

(beat)

I've got somethin' cookin' with this
dude and we're gonna score some
serious cash. We gotta go see him
now.

Freddie is uptight.

FREDDIE

You know I hate when you pull this
kind of shit. I'm not interested in
any more scores, alright?

ANTONIO

Yo, chill out. Everything's gonna
be okay. We'll make enough bread so
we don't have to worry about workin'
for some asshole for a long time.

He reaches over and playfully grabs Freddie's shoulder,
shaking him.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

This is Antonio, your big brother.
Who the fuck else you gonna trust?

Antonio LAUGHS as he drives on. Freddie is still uptight as
he frowns and shakes his head.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

The sedan pulls over to the curb on a bustling street in a
business section of town. People mill about and traffic is
thick this morning.

Diagonally across from them is a group of obviously upscale
stores and shops. One of them is a jewelry store.

INT. SEDAN (PARKED)

Freddie is puzzled as to why they have stopped there. He
turns and looks over at Antonio, who gazes across the street
at the jewelry store.

FREDDIE

Antonio, what the hell are we--

He is cut off, mid-sentence, as the sedan's rear door opens and COOKIE ROMERO, 25, enters as if out of nowhere.

Cookie is a slimy looking street character with greasy, combed back, jet-black hair. He is clad in a leather motorcycle type vest and sports various tattoos and gaudy gold jewelry. Freddie already seems uncomfortable by his presence.

Antonio addresses him, smiling at his friend through the rear view mirror.

ANTONIO

Where the hell did you come from, bro? Good timing.

COOKIE

Yeah, I was just with this bitch, man. She's like non-stop. Sucks like one of them vacuum cleaner motherfuckers. Almost made my ass late.

They LAUGH except for Freddie.

ANTONIO

(points to Freddie)
This is my kid brother, Freddie.

Cookie reaches his hand over the seat towards Freddie and he barely shakes it.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Freddie, this is Cookie Romero.

Freddie MUMBLES under his breath and they turn their attention to the jewelry store across the street.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

So, this is it, 'eh?

COOKIE

Fuck, yeah. Old dude owns the place for forty years or some shit. Sells all kinda watches and bling to these rich fucks, you know?

Freddie is puzzled as he listens to them.

ANTONIO

There's a lot of cash in that shit, man.

COOKIE

Damned straight. He moves as much as fifty grand for a bank drop on Friday nights.

(beat)

My cousin, Orlando, he knew this dude that worked for him. Got shit-canned tryin' to take a Rollex or some shit.

ANTONIO

You sure about this?

COOKIE

I'm telling you--it comes from a reliable source. I've been workin' on this lead for a while now. It's all legit.

ANTONIO

What about security for this place, man?

COOKIE

Nothin' to worry about. Dude's old fashioned. Don't believe in carryin' a piece. He ain't never been hit.

Freddie looks at them, then back out at the jewelry store. He comes to a stark realization.

ANTONIO

What a fuckin' score, 'eh?

(beat)

When are we gonna--

FREDDIE

(interrupting)

Whoa! Wait a minute. What the hell are you guys talking about here?

Antonio and Cookie look at each other.

COOKIE

I thought you told his ass.

FREDDIE

Told me what?

Antonio rolls his eyes, then looks at Freddie.

COOKIE

(to Antonio)

Go ahead, man. Tell him.

ANTONIO

Alright, little bro. You gotta promise
me you'll listen before you go off
on me, okay?

Freddie braces himself for what's to come. Antonio takes a deep breath.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Cookie's got a solid lead on an easy score. But it ain't nothin' like we're used to doin'.

FREDDIE

What the hell are you talking about,
Antonio--

He is cut short as they notice a police sedan slowly passing by. A POLICEMAN in the sedan looks over at them as they sit there.

COOKIE

Shit. Stinks like fuckin' pigs around here. Let's go somewhere we can talk.

Antonio puts the sedan into gear and they pull away into the bustling morning's hazy sun.

CUT TO:

INT. DINER - DAY

The three sit at a booth in the busy, 1950s style eatery. Cookie makes eyes at a pretty, dark haired WAITRESS who serves them cups of coffee.

COOKIE

Mommie, mmm. She's so fine.

Antonio addresses an anxious Freddie.

ANTONIO

Okay, so it's like this...that jewelry store back there. It's a fuckin' gold mine.

FREDDIE

I still don't understand this,
Antonio. What's it got to do with
you and me?

Silence for a couple of beats as Antonio looks around to ensure that no one is within earshot.

ANTONIO
Do I gotta spell it out for you,
little bro?

Freddie becomes increasingly upset, nervous.

FREDDIE
Antonio, are you crazy? We ain't
never done anything like knocking
over a jewelry store before.

COOKIE
(sarcastic)
There's a first time for everything,
little man.

Freddie rolls his eyes at the remark.

ANTONIO
Freddie, remember what I told you
back in the car? It's a great score
and we won't have to be workin' for
some asshole for a good long time.

FREDDIE
Yeah, well I don't like it.

Antonio grabs Freddie's arm to reassure him.

ANTONIO
Look, Cookie knows his shit, man.
He's got a good lead from a reliable
source.

Freddie is seething as he sits there, shaking his head.
Cookie cuts in.

COOKIE
And, we gotta move our asses on this
for Thursday night.

Antonio is taken aback.

ANTONIO
Oh, man, I'm gettin' married on
Saturday. How the hell am I supposed
to be up for this kinda shit?

COOKIE
The old dude is goin' on vacation
and we ain't gonna see him again for
at least a week. I ain't waitin' no
more.
(beat)
We do it Thursday or I get somebody
else's ass to go in with me.
Comprende?

Antonio is flustered. He has no choice. Freddie looks at him, hoping he'll come to his senses.

ANTONIO

Yeah, I hear you, Bro. This fuckin' Thursday.

Silence for a beat as Freddie boils.

FREDDIE

Antonio, how are you going to pull this shit and then be getting married? How? It's fucking bad, man.

ANTONIO

Don't worry about it.

FREDDIE

Don't tell me not to worry about it. What if you have to chill somewhere for a while, you know, until the heat goes away? What the fuck are you going to tell Maria? What about Papa--

ANTONIO

(interrupting)

I said don't worry about it, man. Just keep your mouth shut and go along with it. I know what I gotta do.

Freddie BANGS his fist down onto the table in anger and frustration. Cookie clearly does not like what he sees. He throws a couple of dollar bills down onto the table and rises.

COOKIE

(rising)

I gotta split.

ANTONIO

Where you goin'?

COOKIE

Supposed to meet up with this other dude with a shit load of hot iPhones he's gotta move.

(beat)

You in for Thursday or not?

Antonio does not immediately answer him. Cookie turns to walk away and Antonio rises to follow him. Freddie grabs his arm in an effort to stop him but he pulls away and follows Cookie to the exit. They come to a stop at the door.

ANTONIO

Yeah. Yeah, I'm in.

COOKIE

Cool.

He looks over at Freddie, who remains seated in the booth.

COOKIE (CONT'D)

What the fuck's his problem? I
thought you said he was cool.

ANTONIO

Ah, he's uptight, that's all. Our
old man's comin' up for my wedding.
We ain't seen him in years. Freddie's
all nervous and shit.

COOKIE

He gonna be alright to drive? You
know, I can get somebody else if--

ANTONIO

(interrupting)

Yeah, yeah, he'll be okay.
Everything's good.

Cookie nods as he pushes the door open to leave.

COOKIE

Talk to you Wednesday.

Cookie exits the diner. Antonio remains there, watching his friend as he disappears into the late morning.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GREYHOUND BUS TERMINAL/MIAMI - DAY

Palm trees sway gently in the warm Florida breeze outside the sprawling, modern bus terminal. Buses come and go as scattered groups of PASSENGERS excitedly mill about.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS TERMINAL/MIAMI

There are several ticket counters as passengers wait in lines for service. A smiling, dapper LUIS RIVERA, 60, completes his transaction with an attractive female TICKET AGENT, mid-20s.

TICKET AGENT

There you are, Mr. Rivera. Your bus
leaves tomorrow at 10:00PM. I know
you'll have an enjoyable trip with
us.

She hands him the ticket and paperwork. He returns a nervous smile.

LUIS

My son, he's getting married, you know?

TICKET AGENT

Oh, that's wonderful.
Congratulations. You must be very proud of him.

LUIS

Yes, yes, I am. And, I have another son.

(beat)

It's been so long, I...

He looks down, his voice cracking with anxiety as he fumbles with the ticket. The ticket agent notices this. The moment is awkward.

TICKET AGENT

Is there anything else I can help you with today, Sir?

He hastily places the ticket into his shirt pocket and turns to exit.

LUIS

No, no. Thank you so much. Thank you.

TICKET AGENT

You're quite welcome, Sir. You have a wonderful trip up to New York.
And, congratulations again.

Luis smiles at her, takes a deep breath and moves away from the counter. He collects himself, then glances over at a YOUNG FATHER who walks along, hand-in-hand, with two SMALL BOYS. He watches them as they walk off and his mind begins to drift away...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SEDAN (PARKED) - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A much younger Luis is seated at the steering wheel. He turns and looks over at Antonio, 6, and Freddie, 4, in the back seat. He glances out the window and we notice that he is parked in front of a bus terminal.

LUIS

Okay, boys, you be good now. Papa's going to go over to the store to buy you some ice cream.
(beat)
Isn't that nice?

Antonio GIGGLES as Freddie begins to CRY.

He looks at them for several beats, then anxiously turns and opens the door to exit the sedan.

Antonio follows him with his innocent, young eyes as he makes his way to the rear of the sedan and opens the trunk. He removes a large duffel bag, SLAMS the trunk shut and begins to walk towards the bus terminal.

Antonio reacts by CRYING in unison with Freddie.

EXT. NYC BUS TERMINAL

Luis looks back at them several times as he walks. He hesitates for a moment, then turns and enters the bus terminal.

INT. NYC BUS TERMINAL

Luis makes his way up to a pay phone. He drops some change into it and dials.

Luis takes the receiver away from his face for a beat. He steps back and takes a deep breath, then places it back up to his ear.

LUIS (CONT'D)
(on phone)
The boys. Come and pick them up
now.
(beat)
They're...in the car.

Fighting back whatever hint of emotion he possessed, he is suddenly unable to utter another word and quickly hangs up the phone.

Without hesitation, he makes his way across the terminal towards a ticket counter and disappears into a throng of passengers.

FLASHBACK ENDS.

BACK TO SCENE :

Luis suddenly snaps out of his trance, still looking in the direction of the young father and two small boys who are now long gone. He SIGHS, then begins to walk towards the terminal's exit.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Freddie and Lydia exit a small supermarket and begin to walk down the street. They carry several bags of groceries.

FREDDIE

Mama, I never asked you much about Papa before. You know, me being so young when he left, I couldn't remember much. But, when I grew up, I heard things--some bad things.

What was he like?

LYDIA

When I first met Luis, I fell pretty hard for him. He was a dapper, handsome man who could charm his way into any girl's heart. You know, you kind of remind me of him as a young man.

Freddie smiles.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

I was young and naive. We were married after courting only three weeks. Then, I got pregnant with your brother and Luis lost his job. He tried getting work but times were tough and he began to stay out late, coming home drunk.

(beat)

Work was scarce and we were scraping by, day to day. I don't know how we made it through.

Freddie listens intently as they walk.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

By the time Antonio was a little boy, things were worse between your father and I. The drinking, the staying out late, the women. I thought that having another baby would bring him around, you know.

She playfully pinches Freddie's cheek.

FREDDIE

What happened then, after I was born?

LYDIA

Things got even worse if you can believe that. One day the police picked him up, claiming he was a suspect in a string of burglaries. They couldn't prove anything and let him go, but it set him off and the drinking binges got out of hand. He began to beat me, Federico.

Freddie looks at her with pity.

FREDDIE

I'm so sorry, Mama.

They stop as Lydia emphasizes her point.

LYDIA

I know you look up to Antonio like a younger brother should. But, I can see your father in him, dear.

(beat)

He's going down the wrong road. I can sense it. It may be too late to stop him, but it's not too late for you.

FREDDIE

But, Mama, he's your son too.

LYDIA

I know that and I love him as I love you. Lord knows how I tried to raise him the right way--to raise both of you.

She gently touches Freddie's face.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

First Luis, then Antonio. I refuse to lose you as well, Federico.

Freddie grabs her hand.

FREDDIE

You're not going to lose me, Mama--or Antonio. Marrying a girl like Maria will settle him down. You'll see.

These resume their walk.

LYDIA

Don't be so sure. Maria is a lovely girl, but she's young and naive. Reminds me of myself when I first met your father.

They approach the apartment building and notice Antonio in his sedan, waving Freddie over. Freddie looks over at him, acknowledging with a nod. He then turns back to Lydia.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

You have a choice, Federico.

He does not answer her and looks over at Antonio again. He turns back to her, hesitates for a beat, then hands her the grocery bags. He gently kisses her cheek and she turns and makes her way up the stairs and into the building.

Freddie then makes his way over to Antonio's sedan and enters. He quickly turns back to look at her. Finally, the sedan pulls away as Lydia turns towards them, watching from the front doorway.

INT. SEDAN (MOVING)

Antonio seems excited, upbeat as they drive along. He eagerly taps Freddie's shoulder as he stares back at Lydia through the window.

ANTONIO

Yo, bro, what's up with Mama? She say anything?

Freddie is silent for a couple of beats.

FREDDIE

No, no, she didn't say anything.

ANTONIO

You sure?

FREDDIE

I told you she didn't say anything, man.

ANTONIO

Okay, bro.

Antonio drives on as silence prevails.

FREDDIE

Where are we going?

ANTONIO

Listen, Cookie's got this thing all worked out. This dude we gotta see.

(MORE)

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
He just got outta the joint and he's
gonna get us a piece, man. It--

Freddie is visibly alarmed.

FREDDIE
(interrupting)
What the hell are you talking about?
You mean a fucking gun?

Antonio reaches over, placing his hand on Freddie's shoulder to calm him. He pushes it away.

ANTONIO
Bro, take it easy, okay? Relax.

FREDDIE
You know how I feel about that shit, man. It's dangerous.

ANTONIO
Well, how the hell are we gonna pull a score like this jewelry store thing without a little heat backin' us up, 'eh? You tell me.

FREDDIE
And, what are you going to do with it? Are you going to shoot somebody? Is that what you're going to do, Antonio? Be a fucking murderer now?

ANTONIO
No way, man. Come on, little bro. You know I'm smarter than that.

FREDDIE
Then, what the hell do you need it for?

ANTONIO
Because it's like havin' a little insurance policy.

Freddie gives him a puzzled look.

FREDDIE
What?

ANTONIO
You know what I mean. Insurance. That's the shit you gotta have, but you hope you ain't never gotta use it. Right?

Freddie shakes his head.

FREDDIE

This is all so fucked up.

ANTONIO

Listen, the old dude, he ain't gonna put up no fight. Cookie's cousin says he don't even carry a piece himself. We use it to scare his old ass. That's all.

FREDDIE

And, what if Cookie's cousin is wrong? What about that?

ANTONIO

What do you mean?

FREDDIE

What if the old man doesn't want to give it up? Are you going to kill him, Antonio?

Freddie is dead-on serious as he looks at him.

ANTONIO

Little bro, you gotta lighten up. Nobody's gonna get wasted, alright? Once that old man sees the barrel of a .357 pointin' at his head, he's gonna hand that shit over fast--real fast. Take my word for it.

FREDDIE

Yeah, well, I'm not down with this.

Antonio's demeanor changes. He is angered.

ANTONIO

What did you say?

FREDDIE

You heard me. I'm not down with this shit!

Antonio quickly pulls the sedan over to the curb. He slams on the brakes as it SCREECHES to a halt. He reaches over and grabs Freddie by the scruff of his neck, pulling him across the front seat, almost face to face with him.

ANTONIO

What the fuck do you mean, you ain't down with it?

Freddie does not answer him as he tries to pull away from the furious Antonio's grip.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
You are down with it! You're down
with it all the way, man.
(beat)
And, let me tell you somethin' else.
You're gonna drive tomorrow night
and you better drive good!

Freddie finally manages to push his hands away, breaking free of his grip. He turns towards the window in complete silence. Antonio SIGHS, collects himself, then pulls away from the curb and drives on.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lydia is seated at the table. The small bottle of liquor is on it, near her. She pages through an old photo album.

Through the drying, cracked plastic, WE SEE ancient, yellowed photographs of Antonio and Freddie as young children.

She turns another page to reveal a photograph of herself and Luis on their wedding day. She is transfixed on it for several beats, stroking her finger over the disintegrating plastic which covers it.

A small tear begins to form in her eye and rolls down her weary face as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT/KITCHEN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A much younger Lydia is seated at the same table, obviously upset by something at this late night hour. She constantly looks up at the clock on the wall, anxiously wringing her hands.

Suddenly, KEYS JINGLE from outside in the hall. She eagerly rises and opens the door. A younger Luis staggers into the apartment. He is intoxicated and almost knocks her over as he stumbles past.

LYDIA
Luis, where the heck have you been?
It's almost 2:30 in the morning.

Luis does not answer her.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
Did you hear me? Where have you
been?

He stops in his tracks and turns around towards her. He points a shaky finger in her face.

LUIS

(slurred)

Listen...you don't ask me nothing.
I told you I was going out, didn't
I?

LYDIA

You told me you were going to see
Mr. Mendez about getting some work.

LUIS

That's right.

LYDIA

That was 3:00 in the afternoon, Luis.
(beat)

This is the third time in a week
that you've come marching in here in
the middle of the night, drunk.
And, you expect me to believe that
you went--

LUIS

(interrupting)

Hey! I told you not to ask me
nothing.

He turns to walk away when she notices what appears to be
lipstick smudged on his white shirt collar. She reaches
over and touches it. He flinches, slapping her hand away.

LYDIA

What is this?

He waves her off and proceeds to stagger away, towards the
bedroom. She grabs his arm, stopping him.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

(infuriated)

I won't stand for any more of this!
You're a married man and you should
be home--

She is cut off by a swift push from Luis which sends her
reeling backwards, crashing into the table, then onto the
floor.

She begins to CRY as he stands over her, rocking back and
forth from the effects of too much alcohol. He points his
finger at her again.

LUIS

Don't you ever try to tell me what
to do. And, don't you ever--

LYDIA
(interrupting)
You don't have a clue, Luis. Oh,
you have no idea.

LUIS
What the hell are you talking about?

LYDIA
I went to the doctor this afternoon.

Luis is silent, almost sobering up for a moment.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
I'm pregnant.

He stands there, looking at her with a blank expression, still rocking back and forth. A couple of awkward beats pass and he turns and staggers away.

Lydia remains in a seated position on the floor. She buries her head in her hands and continues to CRY.

FLASHBACK ENDS.

BACK TO SCENE :

Lydia closes the ancient photo album and gazes up at the clock on the wall. She anxiously wrings her hands, then grabs the bottle, placing it into the pocket of her house dress. She rises and walks off towards the bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. SEDAN (PARKED) - NIGHT

Antonio and Freddie sit in the parked sedan on a seedy looking city street. Freddie looks at his wristwatch.

FREDDIE
Man, it's the middle of the night.
You sure your friend's going to show up? Maybe we should forget--

ANTONIO
(interrupting)
Forget nothin', little bro. Cookie's the real deal. He don't play no games.

FREDDIE
So, what are we supposed to do?

ANTONIO
We wait.

Freddie frowns and shakes his head. Suddenly, they are startled as the sedan's rear door opens and Cookie appears out of nowhere again. He enters.

COOKIE

Sorry I'm late, boys. This bitch again. She won't let me go.

Freddie rolls his eyes.

ANTONIO

(laughing)

You keep that shit up and you're gonna need them fuckin' Viagra pills, bro.

COOKIE

Hey, ain't nobody in my family ever needed them shits. We Romeros are real men, yo.

Antonio and Cookie share a LAUGH. Freddie is silent.

COOKIE (CONT'D)

Alright, dudes. The pleasure is over for tonight. Time to get down to business.

Antonio places the sedan into gear and pulls away.

ANTONIO

Where do we gotta go?

COOKIE

Cypress and 9th. Place is a shootin' gallery or some shit. Dude's gotta make a drop off there. Said he'd meet us with the goods.

Antonio nods and continues to drive. Cookie takes out a wad of cash and begins to count it. He looks towards the front seat at Freddie, who sits there in silence. He addresses Antonio again.

COOKIE (CONT'D)

What's with the fuckin' altar boy over here? He still in for Thursday?

ANTONIO

Yeah, yeah, he's alright. He was just havin' a bad day, that's all.

(looks at Freddie)

Ain't that right, little bro?

Freddie ignores him.

COOKIE

Cause we gotta have our shit together, man. One fuck-up and we're gonna get our asses busted. I don't wanna be smellin' no stinkin' pigs nowhere. You dig?

ANTONIO

No problem, bro. No problem.

Silence prevails as they drive on.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNKNOWN STREET - NIGHT

The sedan pulls up near a squalid, dilapidated house in an obviously crime infested neighborhood. It is clear that the dwelling is an active drug location as various GOONS and sordid looking STREET CHARACTERS mill about in front.

INT. SEDAN (PARKED)

Freddie is uneasy as he looks out the window at the goings-on in the area. He turns towards Antonio.

FREDDIE

Man, where the hell are we? We're not going into that shit-hole, right?

Antonio looks back at Cookie who is looking down at his wristwatch.

COOKIE

We gotta hang tight. Dude should be here any minute.

Antonio now looks as though he too is also becoming weary about the surroundings. Suddenly, they are startled by a KNOCK on the driver's side window. A young, do-rag wearing BLACK PUNK stares menacingly at him from outside.

The punk opens his jacket just enough for Antonio to see the butt of a black semi-automatic pistol in his waistband. Antonio is nervous as he reluctantly opens the window a few inches.

BLACK PUNK

Yo, what the fuck are y'all doin' down here? I know you motherfuckers ain't 5-0.

Cookie answers him from the back seat.

COOKIE

No way, man. No pigs in here.

BLACK PUNK

Then, what do you want? To score
some weed? Some blow?

COOKIE

Lookin' for a dude named Winston,
man. You know him?

BLACK PUNK

Yeah, yeah, I know him. But, what
do you want with him?

COOKIE

We got a little business transaction
to do with him. Supposed to be
meetin' us here.

The black punk hesitates, looking them over through the window.

BLACK PUNK

You sure?

COOKIE

Come on, homes. I didn't come all
the way out here to play no punk-ass
games.

BLACK PUNK

Okay. Wait a minute.

The black punk walks away and enters the house. Antonio turns back to Freddie and Cookie.

ANTONIO

(excitedly)

Did you see that shit? Motherfucker's
carryin' a piece.

FREDDIE

What?

ANTONIO

A gun. Dude's packin'. That sucker
opened his jacket on purpose so I
could see it.

(mimics opening jacket)

Can you believe that?

COOKIE

Probably workin' for Winston. What
do you expect around here, man?

An increasingly nervous Freddie shakes his head.

FREDDIE

Man, I don't like this. I really
don't think--

Freddie cuts himself short as they see the black punk exiting the house, making his way back towards them. He grabs Antonio by the shoulder. He begins to speak in a half-whisper, so Cookie cannot fully hear him from the back seat.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

Antonio, let's forget about this
shit, okay? It's too fucking
dangerous. Look at this shit.

Antonio gently pushes his hand away.

ANTONIO

Shhh! Don't start this crap again
now, man. What did we talk about,
'eh?

The black punk approaches Antonio's window again.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Keep your mouth shut. He's here.

Antonio opens the window a few more inches.

BLACK PUNK

Yo, Winston's here. He says y'all
can come in.

He peers into the car, looking at Freddie.

BLACK PUNK (CONT'D)

And, leave the serious lookin'
motherfucker here.

Freddie reacts.

FREDDIE

What the fuck is he--

ANTONIO

(interrupting, half-
whisper)

Don't say nothin' now, man. Just do
what the dude says and stay in the
car.

Freddie BANGS the dashboard in frustration.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Relax, little bro. Everything's gonna
be alright.

COOKIE
 (anxious)
 Come on. Let's do it.

Much to Freddie's chagrin, Antonio and Cookie exit the sedan and follow the black punk towards the house.

Freddie is expressionless as he stares at them through the window. Suddenly, he is startled by a loud KNOCKING at the driver's side window. He quickly turns towards it.

A creepy-looking, obviously drugged-out, HOODED GOON stares at him through the window. Freddie becomes nervous, uneasy.

HOODED GOON
 (simulating a cigarette)
 Yo, you got a smoke in there?

Freddie is still startled as he stares back at the goon. He does not answer him. The goon remains there and gestures to him.

HOODED GOON (CONT'D)
 You deaf, man? I need a smoke.

Freddie shakes his head 'no' and waves the goon off. The goon MUMBLES something under his breath and disgustedly walks away. Freddie turns back towards the window and is relieved to see Antonio and Cookie exiting the house. They reenter the sedan.

FREDDIE
 What happened in there, man?

ANTONIO
 (excitedly)
 We got it, bro. We'll be packin'
 tomorrow night.
 (turns to Cookie)
 Show him.

Cookie moves towards the front seat. He carefully removes a shiny, snub nosed, .38 caliber revolver from his jacket. He marvels at it as Freddie turns around in the seat to see it.

COOKIE
 It's a .38 caliber, five shot. Just
 like the fuckin' pigs carry when
 they ain't workin'.

Antonio looks over at it with excitement.

ANTONIO
 Look at this, all shiny and shit. I
 can't wait to see that old dude's
 face when he sees it.

Freddie SIGHS with disgust, then turns back around.

FREDDIE

Now, what are we going to do?

ANTONIO

We chill. Chill out till tomorrow night, then we make the hit.

Cookie backs up into his seat again. He plays with the revolver in his hand like a new toy. Freddie nervously looks back at him, then turns towards the front again.

COOKIE

Yeah, speaking of that shit...
(taps Freddie on the back)

You still up for drivin'? I mean, I gotta know there's a set of wheels waitin' for my ass when I come outta that alley.

Freddie looks at Antonio.

ANTONIO

Cookie, man, I told you he's up for it, okay? Don't start pressurin' his ass.

COOKIE

I ain't pressurin' nobody. This is serious shit and your boy ain't been actin' right.

ANTONIO

Don't worry. I told you he's--

Freddie cuts him off.

FREDDIE

(interrupting)

Cut the shit already, okay, man? I'll be there and I'll drive the fucking car.

Cookie stretches back again and relaxes.

COOKIE

Alright, alright. Everything's cool, then. That's what I want to hear.

Silence in the car for a few beats. The tension between Freddie and the entire situation can be felt as Antonio slowly places the sedan into gear and they pull away.

EXT. UNKNOWN STREET

The sordid street characters continue to mill about as the sedan pulls away into the night.

INT. SEDAN (MOVING)

Cookie smiles as he playfully brandishes the weapon in the back seat, holding it below window level. He resembles a child with a new toy. Antonio looks back at him through the rear view mirror.

ANTONIO

(laughing)

Yo, don't go pointin' that thing up here, homes.

Cookie continues to play with the gun, making GUNSHOT NOISES with his mouth.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

So, how's this thing goin' down again?

COOKIE

Old dude closes up at 9 sharp. We get there at about a quarter to...maybe ten to. Park the wheels a block away.

(beat)

Me and you walk back there, nice and easy. I got ski masks, you know, the kind that covers your whole face. We don't put 'em on till we get to the back of the place.

ANTONIO

Then, what?

COOKIE

We hit him right when he comes out to his car. Fast, hard. Take his shit and we book the hell outta there.

Cookie turns his attention to Freddie.

COOKIE (CONT'D)

That's when 'Mr. Conscience', over here, comes in.

Freddie frowns at the remark.

COOKIE (CONT'D)

You be ready at the wheel, the engine running. Put that fuckin' pedal to the floor when our ass touches the seat. That's all you gotta do.

(MORE)

COOKIE (CONT'D)

(beat)

Understand me?

Freddie looks at Antonio.

ANTONIO

Yeah, yeah, man. I told you, he's good with all that.

COOKIE

Well, I want to hear it from him, man. I don't need nobody turnin' pussy on me--

Freddie is enraged as he turns back towards him.

FREDDIE

(interrupting, angrily)

I fucking hear you, okay? How many times do you have to be told?

(beat)

And, I ain't no pussy.

Cookie stretches back again. Antonio looks at him through the rear view mirror.

ANTONIO

Alright, what now, man?

Cookie looks at his wristwatch.

COOKIE

Better get our asses home and get some rest, cause we're gonna need it.

(laughs)

You can drop me off at that bitch's place.

Antonio drives on as a still seething Freddie stares out the window into the night.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Antonio's sedan pulls over in front of an apartment complex. Cookie exits, then turns towards them. Freddie reluctantly rolls his window down a few inches. Cookie addresses him.

COOKIE

Don't take it so personal, man. I just gotta know who my backup is.

It's all part of the game.

(looks over at Antonio)

Adios, ladies. See ya mañana.

Cookie turns towards the complex as Antonio pulls away.

INT. SEDAN (MOVING)

Freddie seems relieved that Cookie is gone. He turns towards Antonio.

FREDDIE

Man, why do we have to go through with this? I mean, I don't like this dude. I don't trust him.

ANTONIO

Little bro, when are you gonna cut this shit out? Cookie's good people, alright? It's the street talkin' through him, that's all.

(beat)

And, I trust his ass. We do the job and we go home and you ain't gotta see him no more after that. Cool?

FREDDIE

I don't know, Antonio. This shit's a lot bigger than knocking over some guy selling newspapers or grabbing an old lady's bag.

(beat)

You've got a gun this time. That's what's different. And, we ain't never had one before.

ANTONIO

I don't know how many times I gotta explain this to you. There's a lot of bread in this one. We need the piece to scare his ass.

FREDDIE

But, what if the old dude's got one himself? What if he's got some kind of security with him? Do you really want to shoot somebody, Antonio?

He reaches over and grabs Freddie's shoulder.

ANTONIO

Bro, relax, okay, man? I told you, it's only to scare his ass, that's all. Believe me, Cookie's cousin's on the money with this one. He knows this old dude ain't got nothin'.

(beat)

It's gonna go fast. We'll be outta there in a couple'a minutes and we're home free. You'll see.

Freddie shakes his head. Silence prevails for several beats.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
What's the matter, little bro?

FREDDIE
I don't like living like this anymore,
Antonio.

ANTONIO
What are you talkin' about?

FREDDIE
You promised me we'd go straight.
Said that we wouldn't be pulling
this kind of shit anymore.
(beat)

You said that someday we'd go into
some kind of business or something.
Remember?

ANTONIO
Yeah, and we can still do it. But,
right now I've got maybe fifty grand
staring me in the face. You know
what kind of score that is, bro?

FREDDIE
(interrupting)
Well, yeah, but--

ANTONIO
If I don't do it, Cookie will get
some other dudes to go in with him.
(beat)
Look, I need this score now. Maria
and I will be able to get our own
place and we won't have to live at
her mother's.

They stop at a traffic light and Antonio turns towards him.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Federico, you're my little brother
and I love you. You're the only one
I can really trust in this whole
fuckin' world.
(beat)
I can't back outta this shit now and
I need you.
(beat)
And, I promise that this will be the
last one. Okay? We'll go straight
like you want. We'll get jobs, get
a business goin'. Whatever you wanna
do.

Freddie rolls his eyes.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
It's Mama, ain't it? I know she's
been talkin' to you a lot about me
lately.

OFF SCREEN, a CAR HORN BEEPS as the light changes and Antonio drives on.

FREDDIE
It isn't just Mama. I know how Papa
was. I know what he did and I know
how he treated her.
(beat)
I don't want to turn into somebody
like him. And, I don't want to turn
into--

ANTONIO
(interrupting)
Somebody like me, 'eh?

Freddie just looks at him.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
You ain't gotta answer me, bro. I
know. I know how Mama feels and I
know you wanna do the right thing.
(beat)
All I'm askin' is for you to trust
me just this one more time. Okay?

Freddie is silent.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Okay?

They pull up in front of their apartment building. Freddie opens the door, but Antonio remains with the engine running.

FREDDIE
Aren't you coming in?

ANTONIO
You go on and get some rest, man.
I'm gonna go and see Maria tonight.

Freddie exits the sedan and walks up towards the building. Antonio watches him, then pulls away into the night.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lydia stares at the clock which reads 3:30AM. Suddenly, the door knob JIGGLES and Freddie enters.

She grabs the liquor bottle from the table and stuffs it into her house dress. She looks at him and he returns a half-smile.

Silence prevails as he saunters off to the bedroom. She looks behind as if expecting Antonio to follow him in.

He is not there as she rises and secures the door. She looks up at the clock again.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MARIA'S MOTHER'S APARTMENT / BEDROOM - NIGHT

Antonio and Maria are sprawled on the bed, naked, just having finished making love. OFF SCREEN, a TV SET BLARES from another room.

ANTONIO

Does your mother watch the TV that loud every night?

MARIA

(giggling)

At least she can't hear us.

ANTONIO

Yeah, well, either way we won't have to worry about it for too long, Mi Amore.

MARIA

What do you mean?

ANTONIO

I mean soon we ain't gonna be livin' here no more. We're gonna get a nice place of our own and--

MARIA

(interrupting)

How do you suppose we're going to do that? You know I don't make much at the flower shop and with you not working, we need to stay here for a while.

ANTONIO

Baby, I got somethin' big cookin'. Somethin' that's gonna get us outta here.

(beat)

Remember those new apartments you liked near the Grand Concourse?

Maria sits up in the bed, the covers neatly tucked around her. She is puzzled.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
I was gonna surprise you and shit,
but I just can't keep it down, you
know?

MARIA
What are you talking about, Antonio?

ANTONIO
Everything's gonna be alright, my
love. It's all taken care of.
Nothin' to worry about anymore.

Maria is anxious.

MARIA
What is it, Antonio?

ANTONIO
(laughing)
You're so beautiful when you get
like this. I told you everything's
gonna be great.

He turns over in the bed, making himself comfortable with a pillow. Maria becomes more anxious. She shakes him.

MARIA
(sternly)
Look at me, Antonio.

He turns towards her, a wide smirk on his face.

MARIA (CONT'D)
I want to know what you mean, you've
got 'something big cooking' that's
going to 'get us out of here'.

She stops in her tracks, coming to a realization.

MARIA (CONT'D)
Don't tell me--

He throws his hands up, gesturing to her.

ANTONIO
(interrupting)
Baby, let's not start this shit again,
okay? It's late now. We're gettin'
married in a couple'a days.

MARIA
That's just it, Antonio. We're
getting married. What you do to
make money--you know how I feel about
that.

ANTONIO

Yeah, I know how you feel, but it's what I do right now, okay? Some dudes paint houses, some pick up garbage. This is me and I ain't apologizin' to nobody for it.

MARIA

Oh, really? And what about what we talked about? You made a promise to go straight. You said you'd find a job and we'd make a go of it like regular people.

ANTONIO

Fuck regular people, man. All them suckers who work nine to five jobs, they ain't happy. They ain't got nothin' to show for it but fuckin' misery. Is that really what you want?

MARIA

What I want is a husband who comes home to me every day, Antonio. Not someone who I've got to be up all night worrying about. Worrying if you're hurt, in jail or maybe even dead. You promised me.

ANTONIO

(disgusted)

Who the fuck am I marryin' here anyway? You sound more and more like Mama every day.

Maria turns away. She begins to CRY. Antonio moves closer, touching her arm.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Alright, alright, Mi Amore. All I'm askin' is just this once. Just this one time, I gotta do this. I'm deep in this shit as it is. I can't walk out.

(beat)

After it's over, we'll be husband and wife. Ain't that beautiful, baby? We'll have a lot of nice things and...and I promise you this from the bottom of my heart. I promise to go straight, to get a nice job and everything'll be great. You just gotta trust me.

He gently caresses her, turning her towards him. He speaks softly into her ear.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Everything's gonna be alright. Trust
me, baby. Trust me...

His voice fades into the sounds of the TV SET as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. UNKNOWN STREET - NIGHT

Antonio's car slowly pulls over to the curb. Across the street is the jewelry store, its lights still on.

INT. SEDAN

Antonio is at the wheel, Freddie beside him in the passenger's seat. Cookie sits in the back, anxiously checking his wristwatch.

COOKIE
We leave the car about half a block down. He takes the wheel.
(points to Freddie)
And, we move in right behind the place where the old dude parks.
(beat)
We hit him fast, take the shit and we get the fuck outta there.

Cookie taps Freddie's shoulder.

COOKIE (CONT'D)
Lights off, engine runnin'. Put the shit into gear when you see us comin', then floor it when our asses are inside.
(beat)
Don't even wait till the fuckin' doors are closed. Comprende?

FREDDIE
(nervously)
Yeah. Yeah, I understand.

He looks over at Antonio.

ANTONIO
(excitedly)
Man, I have a good feelin' about this.

He grabs Freddie's arm, shaking it enthusiastically.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
We're gonna do it, bro. This score's big. Mucho dinero, suckers!

Antonio and Cookie share a LAUGH. Freddie remains silent, staring ahead. Cookie reaches over and hands Antonio a wool ski mask.

COOKIE

Let's go.

Antonio places the mask into his jacket pocket and puts the car into gear.

EXT. UNKNOWN STREET

The car pulls over down the street about a block from the jewelry store. The area is quiet, darker.

Antonio shuts the lights, leaving the engine running.

INT. SEDAN (PARKED)

Cookie looks at his wristwatch again. He brandishes the gun, then places it back into his waistband as Freddie nervously watches.

COOKIE

This is it, dudes. Come on.

Antonio looks at Freddie as Cookie exits the car.

ANTONIO

It's gonna be alright, bro.

Freddie grabs his jacket sleeve.

FREDDIE

(pleading)

Antonio, you know you really don't need this kind of shit. I know we can make the cash some other way. I know we can.

ANTONIO

It's a little late for that shit now. Didn't we just talk about it? I told you it's all gonna go clean after this.

FREDDIE

But, you don't owe this guy anything. Fuck him. We could take off right now and leave his ass--

ANTONIO

(interrupting)

Hey, it ain't about him. It's about me, it's about us. It's about the biggest score we ever made, bro.

Antonio looks outside the car, noticing that Cookie is getting impatient. He turns back to Freddie.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Look, I gotta go. You slide over to the wheel.

FREDDIE

But...

ANTONIO

You know what? Last night I promised Maria that after this is over, I'm goin' straight. A regular job, maybe that business we always talked about someday.

(beat)

Okay?

Freddie doesn't answer him.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Okay?

FREDDIE

Nobody gets hurt, alright? I mean, he's got that gun and--

ANTONIO

(interrupting)

Don't worry. Ain't nobody gettin' hurt. It'll be a clean job. I can handle this motherfucker outside.

COOKIE

(O.S.)

Let's go already, man.

Antonio turns and exits the car as Freddie looks on. He slowly slides himself over to the steering wheel as he watches them walk across the street, towards an alley.

He looks as though he wishes he were anywhere else but there tonight.

EXT. DARK ALLEY

Antonio and Cookie slowly amble up the dark, debris-strewn alley, alongside the jewelry store. All is quiet.

They don the ski masks and move towards a small parking lot behind the store. Cookie checks the gun again.

EXT. PARKING LOT

Antonio and Cookie carefully make their way across the parking lot and secrete themselves behind a late model sedan which

is the only vehicle parked there. They keep their eyes trained on the store's rear entrance.

ANTONIO

(half whisper)

This has got to be the old dude's car. Where do you want to hit him?

COOKIE

I say we wait till he gets right up to us. I don't want his ass tryin' to run back inside.

INT. SEDAN (PARKED)

Freddie is clearly uncomfortable as he squirms around in the driver's seat. He nervously looks towards the jewelry store again and again.

FREDDIE

(to himself)

How the fuck did I get myself into this shit?

He POUNDS on the steering wheel in frustration, then SIGHS, holding his head in his hands. He can't take it anymore...

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

(to himself)

I can't do this, man. I gotta go get Antonio.

Breathing heavily and with great apprehension, he exits the sedan.

EXT. UNKNOWN STREET

Freddie nervously looks around at the quiet surroundings, then at the alley alongside the jewelry store. With the sedan still running, he carefully makes his way across the street and into the alley.

EXT. PARKING LOT

Antonio and Cookie are crouched down, their eyes still trained on the rear door of the jewelry store. Tense moments pass. Cookie looks at his wristwatch again.

COOKIE

He should be closin' up any minute now.

Suddenly, they notice the lights being turned off inside. There is a JIGGLING OF KEYS from the rear door. It begins to open.

They excitedly look at each other. Cookie gives a 'thumbs-up' signal to Antonio and they carefully rise, moving towards the rear of the parked sedan.

The door opens further as an ELDERLY MAN appears. He wears a dark suit and carries a thick leather satchel. He closes and locks the door behind him, then walks towards the sedan.

Cookie looks at Antonio again, then begins to remove the gun from his waistband. They come from around the sedan in an effort to surprise the man.

Suddenly, to their own surprise, Freddie appears from the alley. He spots them, then quickly turns towards the man as he walks away from the jewelry store.

Antonio and Cookie stop in their tracks.

FREDDIE
(frantically)
Antonio!

The shocked man suddenly turns towards Freddie, then sees Antonio and Cookie, who now raises the gun, pointing it towards him.

MAN
(alarmed)
Oh, no!

Immediately sensing the danger, the man dives forward. He quickly rises and in an instant, spins around, removing a .38 caliber revolver from his waistband.

BOOM!! BOOM!! Two almost simultaneous SHOTS ring out, one fired by the man and one by Cookie. Both of them collapse, having been hit in the mid-section by one another.

Time seems to have stopped for Freddie and then it proceeds in slow motion as he watches Cookie and the man fall from the gunshot wounds. He is beside himself and runs towards his brother.

Antonio pulls the gravely wounded Cookie back behind the car. Blood pours profusely from his stomach wound.

COOKIE
(grimacing)
What the fuck just happened, man?

ANTONIO
(frantic)
He shot you, bro. You're hit real bad. We gotta get you to a doctor.

Antonio tries to apply pressure to the wound, but to no avail.

COOKIE
Did I get the motherfucker?

Antonio quickly looks towards the rear door where the elderly man lies dead, sprawled out on the ground. His gun is still held tightly in his hand, a pool of blood growing underneath him.

ANTONIO
Yeah, yeah, man. I think he's dead.

COOKIE
Go get the shit.

ANTONIO
Look, don't worry about the shit now. You gotta try to get up real fast, so we can get you some help before the cops come.

Cookie tries to move, but it is obvious that he has no strength left. Antonio tries to lift him, but he falls like dead weight. He looks over at Freddie who stands there in shock.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Don't just stand there, man! Help me get him up.

They try to lift Cookie, but he crumbles back down onto the ground. OFF SCREEN, the faint sound of POLICE SIRENS in the distance. Antonio and Freddie are desperate now.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Come on, Cookie. You gotta get up.

He looks down into Cookie's pathetic eyes which stare up at him, still and emotionless. His skin is pale and his mouth is open, blood now trickling from it.

Antonio shakes him, but he does not respond. He shakes him again, then realizes that Cookie is dead.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Shit!

He looks down and notices the gun lying there, several feet from Cookie's lifeless hand. He grabs it and rises, the POLICE SIRENS growing louder in the distance.

Freddie backs up as Antonio moves towards the man's prone body.

FREDDIE
What the fuck are you doing? We gotta get outta here!

ANTONIO
I ain't leavin' without the shit.

He quickly makes his way over to the man and notices that his other hand is still tightly clenched around the satchel's handle. He pulls it, but it won't budge. Tense seconds pass. Freddie is at his wits' end.

FREDDIE
Are you crazy, man? Let's go!

Antonio turns towards him and tosses the gun. Freddie is completely puzzled, but manages to catch it. Antonio then uses both his hands to pry the satchel away from the dead man's hand. It finally loosens and he rises with it.

ANTONIO
Motherfucker wouldn't let go.
(looks to Freddie)
Come on!

With the POLICE SIRENS getting closer in the distance, the two brothers charge out of the parking lot and into the dark alley. Freddie trips on some debris and drops the gun. He quickly regroups, rises and retrieves it.

They continue to run, panting and breathing heavily as they make their way into the street.

EXT. UNKNOWN STREET

The sedan sits in waiting as they run towards it. They rip open the doors and Antonio tosses the satchel onto the front seat. They enter, barely closing the doors behind them as Antonio floors it, SCREECHING AWAY into the deep night.

INT. SEDAN (MOVING)

Sweating profusely and breathing heavily, Antonio drives at a high rate of speed. Freddie is trying to catch his breath as he sits there, almost in a trance-like state. Antonio grabs him by the collar, violently, pulling him down in the seat.

ANTONIO
What the fuck is the matter with
you, man? You were supposed to stay
in the car!

Freddie pulls away from his grip and backs up in the seat. He is too distraught to immediately answer him.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
You deaf or somethin'? What the
fuck was that all about?

Antonio continues to drive the sedan at a dangerously high rate of speed. Freddie looks out the window, trying to secure himself in the seat. He attempts to compose himself.

FREDDIE

I...I was nervous. I thought you guys were in trouble, so I--

ANTONIO

(interrupting)

So you come over there just when we were gonna hit him? Are you fuckin' stupid or what? You got Cookie wasted, man!

Freddie wipes tears away from his eyes.

FREDDIE

I'm sorry, Antonio. I was just trying to look out for--

ANTONIO

(interrupting)

Look out for me? You kiddin' me?

Antonio is livid and points his finger at Freddie while he drives.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

I don't need you lookin' out for me! I don't need nobody lookin' out for me--especially a little bitch like you! You understand me?

Freddie continues to CRY and becomes increasingly weary about Antonio's reckless driving.

EXT. STREET

The sedan speeds down the street, SCREECHING around turns.

INT. SEDAN (MOVING)

There is silence for several beats as they continue to drive at a high rate of speed. Antonio looks over at Freddie again.

ANTONIO

I swear, if I knew you were gonna be like this, I would have left your sorry ass home.

Silence for several more beats, then Antonio looks over at the satchel which is on the seat. With one hand on the steering wheel, he takes the other and opens the latch. He rummages around inside it.

Puzzled, he rummages some more, then grabs some papers from inside it and throws them up and over the seat.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Son of a bitch. All that and this old motherfucker ain't got nothin' but receipts in here.

He grabs the satchel and turns it upside down. It is completely empty.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Can you believe this shit?

Freddie looks over at him and then at the empty satchel. He holds on as the sedan continues to rip through the streets.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUS TERMINAL - NIGHT

The terminal is relatively quiet at this late hour. A large Greyhound tour bus pulls up to it.

The doors open and several PASSENGERS exit. Luis disembarks, then walks towards the terminal building.

INT. BUS TERMINAL

Carrying a large duffel bag, he walks into the waiting area. There are several passengers milling about as he makes his way towards a group of vending machines.

As he walks, a somewhat disheveled HOMELESS MAN, carrying a dark garbage bag, walks towards him from the opposite direction. The homeless man briefly collides with Luis, almost knocking him over.

Luis looks back at the homeless man who continues on his way, oblivious to him. An annoyed Luis shakes his head, then makes his way over to a coffee vending machine.

He stops, then reaches into his pocket. A puzzled look comes over him as he digs deeper, then rummages through his other pockets, coming up empty.

He quickly turns in the direction of the homeless man, who is long gone by now. He shakes his head, then stands there, bewildered.

He looks towards the exit, then makes his way out of the terminal.

CUT TO:

EXT. DARK DESOLATE STREET - NIGHT

The street is almost pitch dark. It is quiet, deserted. The bus terminal is visible in the distance. Several DARK FIGURES mill about outside and walk towards the street.

Antonio's sedan comes barreling around a corner at a high rate of speed.

INT. SEDAN (MOVING)

Freddie grows increasingly nervous. He braces himself as Antonio continues to drive like a maniac. He has had enough.

FREDDIE

Man, you'd better slow down! All we need is to get pulled over now.

Antonio looks over at him, taking his eyes completely off the road.

ANTONIO

Hey, I said I don't need you to tell me what the fuck to do, okay?

Freddie shakes his head, holding on for dear life.

EXT. DARK DESOLATE STREET

A DARK FIGURE ambles along from the direction of the bus terminal, moving directly towards the path of Antonio's sedan.

INT. SEDAN (MOVING)

The sedan continues to speed down the dark, desolate street. Antonio's eyes are off the road as he argues with Freddie.

FREDDIE

Yo, keep your eyes on the road!

ANTONIO

I've had it with all your do-good bullshit. You're gonna listen to me now!

Freddie is beside himself, bracing for the worst as Antonio speeds along recklessly.

He looks out the windshield when suddenly, the dark figure steps out in front of them.

FREDDIE

(screaming)

Look out!!

EXT. DARK DESOLATE STREET

An ear-piercing SCREECH of the brakes is followed by the sickening THUD of the vehicle's impact with the dark figure.

Glass shatters, spraying onto the street as the body is hurled 10 feet into the air. It lands face-down, several feet away.

The sedan swerves almost out of control, then SKIDS to an abrupt halt.

INT. SEDAN (STOPPED)

Antonio is hunched over the steering wheel as Freddie continues to brace himself. All is deadly quiet.

FREDDIE

Oh, my God, Antonio. You hit somebody!

ANTONIO

Jesus, what did I do? Sweet Jesus, what did I do?

Paralyzed with shock, they sit motionless and quiet for several beats.

EXT. DARK DESOLATE STREET

The street is completely deserted. It is dark and quiet.

The sedan sits there, its engine still running, a gaping hole in its windshield. Cubes of the shattered glass are sprayed all over the street beneath it.

A short distance away, the body lies face down. It is still and lifeless. Tense seconds pass.

Suddenly, the car doors CREAK open. Antonio and Freddie slowly step out. They are visibly shaken. Freddie spots the body.

FREDDIE

He's right there.

Antonio comes around from the driver's side and they cautiously move towards it, the many shattered bits of glass CRUNCHING beneath their feet.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

Is he...dead?

Antonio kneels down, pressing his ear to the dark figure's back. He looks up at Freddie.

ANTONIO
(almost a whisper)
Yeah, he's dead.

Freddie is filled with grief. He begins to CRY and trembles violently.

FREDDIE
Oh, man. We killed somebody!

Antonio rises, comforting him.

ANTONIO
(consoling)
Take it easy, man. It was an
accident. I didn't see him comin',
alright?

FREDDIE
(frantic)
We've got to call the cops now.
We've got to find a phone.

Antonio grabs him.

ANTONIO
What the hell are you talkin' about?
Get a grip on yourself.

Freddie pushes him away.

FREDDIE
How can you tell me to 'get a grip
on myself'? This guy is dead. We've
got to do the right thing.

Antonio raises his hands to silence him.

ANTONIO
Shhh! Take it easy. We are gonna
do the right thing.

FREDDIE
So, what the hell are we standing
here for? We have to go to the cops.
We'll tell them--

ANTONIO
(interrupting)
Tell them what? That we were just
tryin' to speed away from the scene
of a crime where two guys got shot?
(beat)
And what do you think they're gonna
do?

FREDDIE

But, this was an accident. You said so yourself.

ANTONIO

Yeah, sure. And when they find Cookie and the old man and they put our asses at the scene, I suppose they're gonna see it that way.

FREDDIE

Then, what are we gonna do? Tell me, big brother. Your bullshit finally got people killed tonight. Three of 'em. Just what are we gonna do?

Antonio looks around at the deserted street, then down at the body. The POLICE SIRENS have all but dissipated in the background.

ANTONIO

Look, I ain't goin' to no fuckin' jail for the rest of my life. He's probably some old bum anyway.

FREDDIE

What the hell are you saying?

ANTONIO

I'm sayin' we move him. Move his ass someplace where they won't find him any time soon. Then, we clean up the car and--

FREDDIE

(interrupting)

Are you crazy, man?

(points around)

What if somebody's looking at us right now?

Antonio mocks him by looking around in an exaggerated fashion.

ANTONIO

(sarcastic)

You see anybody around here? Do you?

FREDDIE

But, that's like murder, man.

Antonio storms up to Freddie and points his finger in his face.

ANTONIO

(angrily)

Hey! I didn't murder nobody. It was a damned accident. I told you I ain't gonna lose everything over some old bum. I've got enough shit to cover up now after what happened back there tonight. I don't need this too.

FREDDIE

It ain't right, Antonio. It just ain't right.

ANTONIO

Look, do you know how long I've waited to marry a girl like Maria? Do you know how hard I've tried to get Papa to come up for the wedding?

Freddie wipes a tear from his eye.

FREDDIE

Yeah, I know.

ANTONIO

I know I fucked up tonight with Cookie and all. But, if you think I'm gonna let everything go up in smoke because of some--

FREDDIE

(interrupting)

But, what about him?

(points to body)

What about his family? Don't you think somebody's gonna come looking for him?

Antonio looks down at the body without a hint of emotion.

ANTONIO

(coldly)

We can't worry about that. His number was up tonight, like Cookie and the old man. Wrong place, wrong time. That's all.

Freddie shakes his head in pure disgust.

FREDDIE

Man, oh man. I just can't believe what my big brother has turned into.

Antonio walks back to the car and inserts the key into the trunk lock.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

He opens the trunk and rummages around inside it.

ANTONIO
Where the hell's that fuckin' blanket?

Freddie is puzzled as Antonio pulls an old, tattered blanket from the trunk and walks back over to him with it.

FREDDIE
What are you going to do with that?

Antonio opens the blanket, placing it down, next to the body.

ANTONIO
We're gonna wrap him up. We'll put him in the trunk and drive him over to the bay.

FREDDIE
You're nuts, man. I'm not going along with this one.

To Freddie's surprise, Antonio charges at him. He pins him against the car.

ANTONIO
(threatening)
Look, little fuckin' brother, you will go along with this. You want this to kill Mama? Is that what you want? Now, help me out.

Freddie pulls away from Antonio's grip. He looks down at the body, then back at him.

Antonio kneels beside the body, opposite the blanket. He looks over at a speechless Freddie.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Come on. I need a hand here.

Freddie reluctantly walks back over and kneels beside him. Together, they roll the body into the blanket. Freddie disgustedly looks away during the daunting effort.

The body is now fully wrapped in the blanket and they rise. Antonio takes a deep breath, wiping a bead of sweat from his forehead. Freddie backs several feet away.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
See, my man? That wasn't so hard,
was it--

Suddenly, he is cut short as the BODY RISES up into a sitting position as rigor mortis has set in.

Startled, they both emit a simultaneous GASP, jumping back several feet.

The body then falls back to a lying position as they remain transfixed on the horror before their eyes.

They look at each other for a few seconds, then Antonio slowly approaches it.

He reluctantly crouches down and pushes the body, careful not to come too close. No movement.

FREDDIE

Is he...?

ANTONIO

Yeah. Yeah, he's dead.

Antonio rises and positions himself at the body's head. He motions to Freddie.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Take his legs.

Freddie is still reluctant to approach and does so with much trepidation. They struggle and lift the body, straining as they drag it all the way to the car.

They lift it slowly and roll it into the trunk. Antonio looks around, then closes it quietly. He turns to Freddie.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Come on, get in the car.

Freddie remains silent as they enter.

INT. SEDAN (PARKED)

Antonio looks over at Freddie, who is still visibly shaken.

ANTONIO

Come on, little bro. It's gonna be alright. Trust me.

He reaches over, grabbing Freddie's shoulder to comfort him. Freddie rebuffs him, pushing his hand away. Antonio shakes his head and drives off.

EXT. DARK DESOLATE STREET

Its headlights off, the sedan slowly pulls away into the deep night, the GLASS CRUNCHING beneath its tires.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAY AREA - NIGHT

The sedan pulls up alongside a deserted bulkhead area of the bay. The water is calm, still, as the distant city lights reflect off it. Antonio exits.

ANTONIO

Come on out. It's clear.

The passenger's side door opens and Freddie reluctantly exits. They walk back to the trunk. Antonio opens it.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

(reaching into trunk)

Help me out here.

Freddie hesitates.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

I said help me out!

Freddie joins him and they struggle with the blanket-wrapped body. They finally lift it out of the trunk and lay it onto the ground.

Antonio unwraps it. The body is unidentifiable in the almost pitch darkness.

FREDDIE

This is so fucking bad.

Antonio crouches down, feeling around the ground for some rocks. He begins to stuff the dead man's pockets with them. Freddie is puzzled.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

What the hell are you doing?

ANTONIO

This'll weigh him down. Come on.

Antonio begins to push the body, rolling it over towards the bulkhead. He looks up at Freddie.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Well...? You gonna give me a hand here or what?

Freddie crouches down and joins him as they roll the body over several times, finally resting it at the edge of the bulkhead.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Here goes nothin'!

Antonio pushes forward and the body rolls off the bulkhead, SPLASHING, with great force, into the murky bay.

It floats, then slowly begins to sink, its arms and legs spread out beside it.

After several seconds, it completely submerges, a swirling stream of bubbles and ripples in its wake.

They rise and look around. Antonio smiles, rubbing his hands together.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Well, that's it. We're home free, my man.

They quickly make their way back to the car and enter. Antonio places it into gear and they pull away.

CUT TO:

INT. SEDAN (MOVING) - NIGHT

Freddie is still clearly devastated as he faces downward, holding his head in his hands.

ANTONIO

You gotta snap out of this, man. It was an accident. This whole fuckin' night was an accident.

(beat)

That's why we're gonna forget it. Make like none of it ever happened and we're gonna get on with our lives.

Freddie doesn't respond. He begins to softly SOB.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

And, don't you ever say nothin' about any of this to anyone. Not to anyone.

(beat)

Okay?

Freddie still does not respond as he continues to SOB, his head held in his trembling hands.

He manages to look up at Antonio as they drive. His eyes reveal pure disgust and disdain for his brother now.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

The sedan quietly pulls up to the apartment building. It stops for a moment, then slowly moves further down the street. It finally stops, pulling in behind a few parked vehicles.

The driver's side door opens first and Antonio emerges. He is quick to look back and forth, but no one is around at this late hour.

The passenger's side door then slowly opens. Freddie lethargically exits. He is still quite distraught and wipes tears from his troubled face.

Antonio walks towards the front of the sedan and examines the damage to the hood and windshield. He brushes some of the remaining glass particles away and quickly tries to rub some of the scratches off the hood.

He looks around again at the quiet, deserted street. He then walks around the sedan towards Freddie.

ANTONIO

Remember, man, we gotta keep our mouths shut about this. Not a word to Mama or anybody.

Freddie does not respond and continues to sob softly as they walk towards the apartment building.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

You hear to me?

Freddie still doesn't answer him, prompting an angered Antonio to grab him by the collar and push him up against the brick wall of the building.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

I'm talking to you, little brother.

Freddie pushes his hands away and answers through his tears and anguish.

FREDDIE

I...I heard you. Now, get the fuck off of me.

Antonio takes a step back and shakes his head as if to acknowledge him. They turn and resume their walk up to the building's entrance. Antonio continues to look back and forth, then towards the parked sedan as they walk.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BAY AREA - NIGHT

The recently quiet, desolate bulkhead area of the bay now bustles with several emergency vehicles and POLICE OFFICERS who mill about the scene.

Several high intensity lights illuminate a section where an ambulance sits at the ready, its lights flashing.

A young, athletic looking POLICE OFFICER, clad in full scuba gear, leans on the side of a police sedan. He is exhausted and looks as though he has just been through an ordeal.

Several feet away from him, under one of the bright lights, lies the tattered, waterlogged body of the dark figure.

Kneeling over it is the MEDICAL EXAMINER, early 60s, conducting and examination of the body. He wears a black windbreaker with the initials 'M.E.' emblazoned on the back and uses latex gloves and a small flashlight.

He looks up at DETECTIVE SGT. SAXON, mid 50s, tall, wearing a dark sport jacket, who stands several feet away. Saxon calls out to him.

SAXON

So, what do you think, Doc? Suicide?
Doesn't look like any kind of fishing
boat accident to me.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

Could be some foul play involved
here, Sergeant.

SAXON

What do you mean?

MEDICAL EXAMINER

Well, we've got some heavy trauma to
the head and chest area. Possible
skull fractures. Internal bleeding.

Saxon walks up to the bulkhead and looks into the dark, murky water of the bay.

SAXON

Do you think he was pushed or fell
and hit something down there?

MEDICAL EXAMINER

No, I've got a hunch it didn't happen
here. Could have been dead before
he even hit that water.

Saxon gives him a puzzled look.

MEDICAL EXAMINER (CONT'D)

If I were a betting man, I'd say he
was struck, possibly by a speeding
vehicle, then taken over here.

Saxon looks down at some tire tracks in the gravel, tracing them into the dark distance of the night with his eager eyes.

SAXON

You mean he was dumped?

MEDICAL EXAMINER

Like I said, it's just a hunch right now and I can't say for sure until I examine the body back at the morgue, but...

He rummages through the dark figure's coat pockets and comes out with several rocks which were packed into them.

MEDICAL EXAMINER (CONT'D)

...His pockets were probably stuffed with a bunch of rocks for a reason.

An almost startled Saxon looks on, shaking his head. The Medical Examiner then pulls a wallet out of one of the pockets. He tosses it to Saxon who examines it for several moments.

SAXON

(examining the wallet's contents)

Looks like we can definitely rule out a robbery.

He pulls out a thick wad of soggy cash.

SAXON (CONT'D)

Poor slob was loaded.

Saxon then pulls what appears to be a driver's license out of the wallet. He examines it closely under the bright light.

SAXON (CONT'D)

Recent driver's license here.

(beat)

Florida. A Miami address.

(beat)

Name's Luis Rivera.

He stuffs the license and cash back into the wallet and tosses it to a uniformed POLICE OFFICER who is standing by.

SAXON (CONT'D)

Run this guy's name and see if he has any relatives up this way or what business he'd have around here.

The police officer catches the wallet and walks towards a police sedan.

OFF SCREEN, the POLICE RADIO CRACKLES with a transmission.

The police officer walks back towards Saxon and addresses him.

POLICE OFFICER
Jewelry store robbery over at Kings
Boulevard and 31st Avenue about a
half hour ago.

Saxon and the Medical Examiner turn towards him.

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)
Perp and the proprietor are both
D.O.A.--shot dead in a crossfire.
Witness saw two males jump into a
dark sedan and take off like a goddamn
bat outta hell. Everybody's looking
for 'em.
(beat)
Geez, what a Thursday night, 'eh
Sarge?

Saxon acknowledges him with a nod, then turns and looks out
into the bay where the distant city lights reflect off the
seemingly calm ripples of its troubled waters.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT / KITCHEN - DAY

Antonio is seated at the kitchen table, sipping a cup of
coffee. He appears tired, frazzled from the harrowing events
of the night before. Lydia enters and walks over to a
cabinet. She removes something that she slips into a pocket
of her house dress.

Antonio notices her presence behind him. She stands there
as if wanting to talk to him, but remains silent for several
moments. He turns towards her.

ANTONIO
What is it, Mama?

She appears nervous, apprehensive.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
You're acting like you want to say
something to me.

LYDIA
(nervously)
Antonio, I...

She moves towards him, then begins to gently rub his shoulder,
at first with apprehension and uncertainty.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
I know we haven't felt much or said
much to each other over the last
couple of years.
(MORE)

LYDIA (CONT'D)

I did my best for you boys after
your father walked out on us.

(beat)

You're the way you are and there was
nothing I could do about it. But,
you are my son, just as Federico is.
As much as I was against what you
were doing, as much as I didn't like
it, I still loved you.

She reaches into her pocket and removes an envelope.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

I knew this time would come, so I
saved whatever I could over the years.
It's a little something for you and
Maria.

Antonio is speechless as she places the envelope into his
hand.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Please take it.

He slowly accepts the envelope, then begins to choke with
emotion on his words.

ANTONIO

Mama, I don't know what to say. I
just...I can't accept this.

She pushes his hand away as he tries to give it back to her.

LYDIA

No. You take it. It's for you. It
was meant for you, Antonio.

There is an awkward silence for several beats. They
cautiously clasp hands.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Now, I know how much you wanted your
father here. I know how hard you
tried.

(beat)

Unfortunately, Luis was a man who
thought of himself before those who
loved and depended on him.

(beat)

You must put that aside, Antonio.
Tomorrow is your big day. Go ahead
and make it a memorable one.

Antonio softly kisses her cheek.

ANTONIO

Thank you, Mama. Someday, I'll make it all up to you. Someday, I'll make you proud of me.

LYDIA

I am already proud of you, my son.

They separate and Antonio slowly exits, walking towards the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM

Freddie is lying on the bed, clad in his pajamas. He is awake as he stares at the ceiling, almost trance-like.

OFF SCREEN, a KNOCK at the door. Antonio enters.

ANTONIO

What are you still doin' in bed?
We've got a lot of shit to take care of for tomorrow.

Freddie does not respond as he rolls over in the bed. This frustrates Antonio.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Come on, man.

OFF SCREEN, a KNOCK at the front door in the kitchen. Antonio turns his attention towards it.

INT. KITCHEN

Lydia walks over to the door.

LYDIA

Who is it?

OFF SCREEN, a MAN'S VOICE in the hallway.

VOICE IN HALL

(O.S.)

Police, Ma'am. May we come in?

Lydia is puzzled, alarmed. She turns as Antonio quickly makes his way back into the kitchen.

ANTONIO

What's the matter, Mama?

LYDIA

Antonio, it's the police. What could they want?

Antonio stops in his tracks. The color drains from his face. He looks towards the bedroom, then back at Lydia.

ANTONIO
(whispering)
Ask them what this is about.

LYDIA
(to door)
What is this about? What do you
want?

VOICE IN HALL
(O.S.)
We have to speak with you, Ma'am.
It's urgent.

INT. BEDROOM

Freddie stands by the bedroom door, his ear pressed against it as he nervously listens to the goings-on in the kitchen.

VOICE IN HALL
(O.S.)
Please, Ma'am. We really have to
speak with you.

INT. KITCHEN

Antonio nervously paces back and forth. He stops and looks at Lydia.

ANTONIO
Look, Mama. You have to stall them
for a minute.

LYDIA
Why, Antonio? Why don't we just see
what they want? What could be wrong?

ANTONIO
Please, Mama. Just stall them for a
minute.

Antonio quickly walks back to the bedroom. Lydia speaks through the door.

LYDIA
(to door)
Just a minute, please. I'm not
dressed.

INT. BEDROOM

Antonio pushes the door open, almost striking Freddie.

ANTONIO
We've got a problem!

FREDDIE

This is just great. You know what this means, don't you? They found him. And, they gotta know about Cookie and the jewelry store thing!

Freddie begins to tremble.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

The fucking cops. I knew it, man. I knew I should never have listened to you.

ANTONIO

Look, we're in this shit together. Just keep your mouth shut and let me handle it.

FREDDIE

Sure! What the hell are you going to handle? Where the hell are we going to run?

ANTONIO

Just get your shit together, man. If we don't act right, they'll bust our asses.

Freddie storms over to his bed and sits on the edge. He begins to SOB.

FREDDIE

Oh, man. I don't want to go to jail.

ANTONIO

Little bro, we gotta stick together on this. We don't know nothin' about what happened with Cookie and we sure don't know nothin' about no bum gettin' killed last night.

(beat)

We really gotta keep it together. Okay?

OFF SCREEN, Lydia SCREAMS. They look up in surprise. Antonio rises.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

You stay here!

He bolts out of the bedroom as Freddie remains, trembling on the bed.

INT. KITCHEN

Antonio reaches the kitchen where he sees Saxon, who is accompanied by a young, uniformed POLICE OFFICER.

They attempt to comfort an obviously distraught Lydia.

ANTONIO
What the hell is going on here?

He rushes over to Lydia and embraces her. She is obviously in shock and incoherent as she MUMBLES some WORDS IN SPANISH.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Mama!

She is still unresponsive. He looks up at Saxon and the police officer.

SAXON
Are you the son?

ANTONIO
Yeah, I'm the son. What's the matter?

SAXON
I'm Detective Sgt. Saxon. This is Officer Jackle.
(beat)
We're very sorry to have to inform you--

ANTONIO
(interrupting,
excitedly)
Inform me of what?

Silence for a beat.

SAXON
It's your father.

ANTONIO
What about my father?

SAXON
His name is Luis Rivera. Correct?

Antonio becomes increasingly nervous.

ANTONIO
(anxiously)
Yeah, yeah, that's him. What the hell is wrong?

Saxon CLEARS HIS THROAT. Clearly uncomfortable, he looks at the police officer, then back at Antonio.

SAXON
I'm truly sorry, Sir, but, he's...he's dead.

Antonio is both shocked and puzzled.

ANTONIO

Dead? How? He was supposed to come up from Miami for my wedding tomorrow. It can't be.
(beat)
Are you sure?

Silence for a beat as Saxon takes a deep breath, then...

SAXON

He was found in the bay.

The words hit Antonio like a ton of bricks. He turns pale as beads of sweat begin to form on his forehead.

SAXON (CONT'D)

Looks like foul play was involved. We found his wallet and identification still in his pocket, though.

Antonio's world drops out from under him. He slowly walks the semiconscious Lydia over to a chair.

ANTONIO

(emphatic)

Oh, Jesus.

SAXON

I hate to ask this, but we're going to need you to come over to the morgue to identify the body. We've got a car downstairs.

Antonio attempts to pull himself together. He places the groggy Lydia safely into the chair.

ANTONIO

Okay. Look, Officer, let me get myself together here.

Saxon looks over at Lydia with concern.

SAXON

We could call an ambulance for your mother if you'd like.

ANTONIO

No, no, that's okay. She'll be alright.

SAXON

Alright, Sir. We'll be downstairs in the car.

Saxon and the police officer turn to exit. He stops, then turns towards Antonio.

SAXON (CONT'D)

Again, I'm very sorry about what's happened here.

An anxious Antonio practically pushes them out the door.

ANTONIO

Thank you, thank you.

They exit the apartment. Antonio shuts and locks the door behind them. Lydia is still in a daze as she sits on the chair, her head down on the table.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Oh, Mary, mother of Jesus. What did I do? What did I do?

OFF SCREEN, Freddie angrily CURSES IN SPANISH. He charges into the kitchen towards Antonio.

FREDDIE

(angrily)

You son of a bitch. You killed Papa!

Antonio backs away from him.

ANTONIO

No, Freddie. Stop it! Get yourself together.

FREDDIE

I heard everything. I can't believe this. It was Papa. You killed him.

Lydia wearily raises her head, reacting to the commotion. She manages to raise her voice to them.

LYDIA

Stop it, both of you!

Freddie turns to her.

FREDDIE

Mama, it was Antonio. He killed Papa last night with the car!

LYDIA

What are you saying?

FREDDIE

He tried to rob a jewelry store and it went bad. He killed Papa crossing the street near the bus terminal.

ANTONIO

No, Mama. It's all a mistake. Please believe me!

Lydia nearly faints, collapsing from the chair onto the kitchen floor. Freddie runs over to her as Antonio cautiously follows. He leans over and touches her face.

FREDDIE

(frantic)

Mama!

Freddie attempts to revive her. She is groggy and begins to MOAN. He angrily looks up at Antonio.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

You're going to kill Mama too. I'm going to tell those cops everything.

Antonio startles Freddie by grabbing him by the scruff of his neck and bringing up to a standing position. He slaps him across the face, further startling him. Freddie now trembles and is silent as Antonio rants.

ANTONIO

Now, stop it, man! It was an accident. We gotta come to our senses on this thing.

(beat)

Come on, help me get Mama to her bed.

Freddie backs away, still in shock over the slap by Antonio. He then reluctantly helps him as they get on either side of Lydia and carefully help her to her bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM

Lydia is gently laid onto the bed. She is still groggy and barely conscious as she lies there, MOANING. Antonio looks at Freddie.

ANTONIO

I want you to stay here and look after her. I'm gonna have to go over to the morgue to--

FREDDIE

(interrupting, through his tears)

To do what? What the hell are you going to tell them, Antonio?

(beat)

How the hell are you going to get us out of this one?

Antonio throws his hands up in anger and frustration.

ANTONIO

I don't know, dammit! But, if one of us doesn't go down there right away, they're gonna know somethin' is up.

Freddie looks down, shaking his head in disgust as he cries.

FREDDIE

I knew I never should have listened to you.

Antonio turns to exit.

ANTONIO

Remember, stay with Mama. Don't go out, don't do anything until I come back.

He rushes out as Freddie remains there, still softly crying and lamenting to himself.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING

Antonio exits the building and walks out onto the sidewalk. Saxon and the police officer stand by their unmarked police sedan.

SAXON

Why don't you get in the car. We'll take you over there.

ANTONIO

No thanks, Officer, I think I'll take my own car, if you don't mind.

Antonio then looks a short distance down the block at his own sedan, noting to himself that the damage is visible. He comes to a realization and turns back towards Saxon as he enters the police sedan.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

You know what, uh, I think I'm better off going down there with you guys.

Saxon gives him a quick, peculiar look, then nods as Antonio enters the back seat of the police sedan.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE SEDAN (MOVING) - DAY

The police sedan slowly pulls away down the street. Antonio is nervous as it nears the spot where his own sedan is parked. He notices Saxon looking at the parked cars as they pass, hoping he will not notice the obvious damage.

Tense seconds seem like an eternity to Antonio as they pass by the cars. Then, the police sedan finally begins to speed up. He lets out a soft sigh of relief, the beads of sweat evident on his forehead.

CUT TO:

INT. CITY MORGUE - DAY

Antonio follows Saxon and the police officer as they walk down a dark, dreary, cold-looking corridor of the morgue. He reacts with disgust, covering his nose at times, to the obvious pungent odor of death that permeates the stagnant air around them.

OFF SCREEN, the constant, irritating sound of ELECTRIC SAWS add to the gloomy ambiance.

Passing several covered bodies which lie on stretchers under blood stained sheets in the corridor, they finally reach an examination room. Saxon looks over at him as if to say, "This is it", then leads him inside. The police officer follows close behind them.

INT. CITY MORGUE / EXAMINATION ROOM

The examination room is large and resembles a laboratory, except for the presence of several sump tables which are spread evenly apart. A body, covered in a white sheet, lies on a table to the far left of them. Standing next to it is the Medical Examiner. He is clad in a white medical type coat and holds a clipboard in his hand.

As they walk over, Antonio closes his eyes tightly as if to prepare for the inevitable, grim task that lies before him. He begins to tremble, then clears his throat, trying to mask his anxiety and guilt as best as the situation will allow.

The Medical Examiner nods to Saxon as they gather around the body. Saxon returns a nod and the Medical Examiner pulls up the sheet just enough to reveal the corpse's face.

Antonio is startled for a second, then shakes his head and looks over at Saxon.

ANTONIO
This...this is not my father.

Saxon and the Medical Examiner look at each other, then down at the body's face, which is that of the homeless man from the bus terminal. They are puzzled.

SAXON
Are you sure?

Antonio examines the face again.

ANTONIO
I'm positive, Officer. This is not
my father.

SAXON
Look, you said you haven't seen him
in a long time. Maybe--

Antonio is as relieved as he is shocked.

ANTONIO
(interrupting)
I'm telling you, I know this is not
my father. I've kept up with him,
seen pictures.
(shaking his head)
It ain't him.

A mixture of puzzlement and frustration is evident on Saxon's face as he shakes his head.

SAXON
(to Medical Examiner)
Cover him up.

The Medical Examiner covers the body's face with the sheet. Saxon looks at Antonio. He notices his relief but is still puzzled by the nervousness he displays with his actions.

SAXON (CONT'D)
When was the last time you heard
from your old man?

ANTONIO
A couple'a days ago. He finally
answered one of my letters and said
he was comin' up for my wedding.

Antonio looks at his wristwatch, signaling that he has to go.

SAXON
You sure you haven't heard anything?

ANTONIO
Look, Officer, I don't know what's
goin' on here with the wallet thing,
but I ain't heard nothin' and this
ain't my old man.
(beat)
Besides, he ain't so sloppy to be
gettin' himself clipped by a car and--

Saxon's expression changes. He is suspicious.

SAXON
(interrupting)
What are you talking about?

Antonio clams up.

SAXON (CONT'D)
How did you know he was hit by a
car? I never told you that.

Antonio tries to backtrack. He appears even more nervous as he backs away, looking down at his wristwatch.

ANTONIO
Look, gentlemen, I'm gettin' married
tomorrow and I've got some things to
take care of. I really gotta go.
(beat)
Okay?

Saxon is still suspect of him as he nods to the police officer.

SAXON
Take him back.

The police officer and Antonio turn to leave as Saxon calls out.

SAXON (CONT'D)
Call me as soon as you hear from
your father.
(beat)
I'll be in touch.

Saxon remains there, looking on with the Medical Examiner as Antonio and the police officer exit.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Antonio enters the apartment. He appears drained from the visit to the morgue. As he turns to lock the door behind him, an overly excited Freddie emerges.

FREDDIE
(excitedly)
Antonio! You're not going to believe
this--

Antonio steps back to tell him his own news.

ANTONIO
(interrupting)
Hold it, man. I got some great news
for you.

FREDDIE
But, you've got to listen. Papa
called!

ANTONIO
(surprised)
He did?

FREDDIE
Yeah. It wasn't him, Antonio! It
was all a mistake. We--

ANTONIO
(interrupting)
I know. I was just about to tell
you that, little bro.

FREDDIE
Isn't that great?

Antonio grabs the still excited Freddie and pulls him to the corner of the kitchen in an effort to remain out of earshot of Lydia, whom he assumes is still in her bedroom.

ANTONIO
(almost a whisper)
Look, man, it was a homeless guy
like we thought. Must have stole
Papa's wallet.

Antonio lets out a SIGH, as if he is relieved. Freddie quickly comes back to reality as his expression changes to that of a serious one. He just looks at Antonio in silence for a beat.

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

FREDDIE
You're acting like you're relieved
or something, Antonio. Whether or
not it was Papa, you still killed a
man last night.

Antonio grabs Freddie by the shoulders to emphasize his point.

ANTONIO
Little bro, I told you a thousand
times, we just gotta keep our shit
together, that's all. We don't know
nothin' about no robbery or Cookie
or any of that shit.
(beat)
I'm gettin' married tomorrow and I
ain't going to no fuckin' jail.
Okay?

Freddie doesn't answer him. Antonio playfully grabs his face.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

Now, I want you to snap out of this and tell me, what did Papa say?

Freddie takes a deep breath and attempts to collect his composure.

FREDDIE

He didn't say too much. Just that we could meet him at the diner in an hour.

Antonio perks up and smiles. Freddie just looks back at him, a blank expression on his weary face.

CUT TO:

INT. DINER - DAY

Antonio and Freddie enter the crowded, bustling eatery. They stop as Antonio scans the many filled tables and booths with his eager eyes.

Finally, he spots Luis, who sits at a corner table, sipping a cup of coffee. They nervously approach.

Luis notices them and stands. All three look each other over until a nervous Antonio finally 'breaks the ice'.

ANTONIO

(nervously)

Papa...?

They shake hands as Luis looks his long estranged sons over again.

LUIS

It's good to see you, Antonio.

ANTONIO

(turns to Freddie)

And, you remember Freddie.

Luis extends his hand. They shake.

LUIS

Ah, Federico. I used to call you 'El Torito' when you were a little boy.

Freddie nervously smiles as Luis motions for them to sit. There is still nervous tension as they sit there in silence for a couple of beats. Antonio attempts to mask his fascination for his father.

ANTONIO
So, uh...how was your trip?

Luis LAUGHS.

LUIS
Oh, my. I apologize for the excitement. You see, a street fellow must have stolen my wallet at the bus station when I arrived last night.

(beat)

I should have called you, should have called the police right away. Instead, I called my friend, Alfredo, who put me up for the night.

(beat)

I understand there was an accident concerning this fellow.

Antonio and Freddie look at each other.

ANTONIO
Yeah, well, we're glad you're alright, Papa.

A young, pretty WAITRESS places cups down in front of Antonio and Freddie, then pours some hot coffee into them.

LUIS
So, how are you boys?

ANTONIO
We're okay, Papa. I've been gettin' some work down at the docks, you know.

Luis looks over at Freddie.

LUIS
And you, Federico? So quiet. As a little boy, you never stopped talking.

Freddie nervously CHUCKLES.

FREDDIE
I'm doing alright, Papa.

Silence for a couple of beats again as they sip their coffee. Antonio, amid his fascination for his father, musters up the courage to finally ask him a question.

ANTONIO
Papa, I...

An awkward beat...

LUIS
What is it, Antonio?

 ANTONIO
I wrote you a lot of letters over
the years. Why didn't you--

Freddie cringes as Luis abruptly cuts Antonio off, clearly
avoiding the question.

 LUIS
(interrupting)
So, this young lady you're marrying
tomorrow. Mary, is it?

 ANTONIO
Maria, Papa. Didn't you read any of
the letters through?

He avoids the question again.

 LUIS
I'm sure she's a lovely girl, Antonio.

Antonio tries to hide his frustration.

 ANTONIO
Didn't you see any of the pictures I
sent?

 LUIS
(humoring him)
Of course I did. And I think you've
made a great choice.

Antonio forces a smile.

 ANTONIO
She's beautiful and very smart, Papa.
Practically runs a whole flower shop
by herself and--

Disinterested, Luis changes the subject.

 LUIS
(interrupting)
And how is your mother?

Antonio and Freddie look at each other.

 ANTONIO
Mama's fine, Papa. She's fine.

More silence as they sit there and sip their coffee. After
a couple of beats, Luis looks down at his wristwatch. Antonio
gently touches his arm. He looks up.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Thank you, Papa. Thank you for
coming. I want you to know how much
this means to me.

Luis seems embarrassed. He smiles, then slowly raises his coffee cup. Antonio and Freddie do the same. They CLICK them together in a toast.

CLOSE UP on Antonio, who again forces a smile in an attempt to hide his obvious disappointment.

CUT TO:

INT. SEDAN (MOVING) - DAY

Antonio drives as Freddie sits at the passenger's position. The damage to the sedan's windshield is clearly visible as they drive along.

ANTONIO
So, what did you think, man?

FREDDIE
I don't know, Antonio.

ANTONIO
What do you mean?

FREDDIE
The man seemed like he didn't really want to be there. Like he didn't want to be up here at all.

ANTONIO
Oh, come on, little bro. What did you expect from him after all these years?

FREDDIE
Seemed like somebody probably shamed him into coming. No?

ANTONIO
Hey, man, you gotta give him a chance.
(beat)
At least he showed up. And, after tomorrow, things are gonna change for the better. You'll see.

He playfully grabs Freddie's leg.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Trust me. We're the Rivera brothers, right? Ain't nothin' gonna stop us.

Antonio does his best to remain optimistic as Freddie sits there in silence and they drive on into the sunny afternoon.

CUT TO:

EXT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY

Saxon stands in front of the jewelry store with a WITNESS, a middle aged woman, who converses with him. She points across the street to a small apartment building.

WITNESS

That's my window on the second floor.

SAXON

What happened that night?

WITNESS

I heard two shots. They were right after one another, almost at the same time, you know? Like...bang--bang!

Saxon jots some notes down onto a small notepad.

WITNESS (CONT'D)

They sounded like they were coming from behind the store.

SAXON

Then, what?

WITNESS

These two young fellows come running from the alley and get into a car.

SAXON

Can you remember what they looked like?

WITNESS

It was dark, but they looked young. Maybe in their twenties. One was kinda athletic, the other was shorter and stocky.

(beat)

Got into that car and they took off like a rocket.

SAXON

Can you remember anything about the car?

WITNESS

Dark, late model, I guess. Like I said, it was hard to see at night.

SAXON

You stated to the other detectives that one of them had a gun. Which one was it?

WITNESS

It was the shorter one.

SAXON

Are you sure?

WITNESS

Oh yes. Definitely the shorter one.

Saxon shakes his head and completes writing some notes onto the pad.

WITNESS (CONT'D)

It's a damned shame that they killed the old man. Do you think they'll catch them, Detective?

SAXON

Oh, I think they'll slip up somewhere along the line--if they haven't already.

Saxon reaches out and shakes her hand.

SAXON (CONT'D)

Thanks for your help, Ma'am.

He gets into the unmarked police sedan and pulls away into the late morning's haze.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

The morning's cloudy haze has burned off to a beautiful blue, sunny, early afternoon sky. Several well-dressed, happy WELL WISHERS are gathered on the stairs in front of the quaint looking, white bricked church.

The huge oak front doors open and Antonio emerges, his arm lovingly locked with the arm of Maria, who is stunningly beautiful in her white, flowing gown and headpiece.

The well wishers emit a simultaneous CHEER as the happy couple begins their descent down the stairs. Freddie then emerges, clad in a neat, dark suit. He is accompanied by Lydia.

Luis stands alongside the happy well wishers. He is beaming as he claps and cheers for his newlywed son. The scene is festive in contrast to the dark goings-on that have preceded this moment.

As they descend the stairs, amid the many blessings and congratulations, Antonio notices something out of the corner of his eye. The unmarked police sedan has pulled up several car lengths behind their waiting limousine. He shakes his head, briefly frowning, then turns his attention back to the greetings.

Saxon and the police officer exit the sedan and slowly walk towards the limousine. They watch as Antonio and Maria make their way down the stairs.

Finally reaching the limousine, Maria is helped into it and Freddie follows her. Lydia is sidetracked by some well wishers as is Luis.

Antonio looks over at Saxon and the police officer again as they slowly approach in a discreet fashion. He turns and as he begins to enter the limousine, Saxon taps him on the shoulder, stopping him in his tracks. He turns his head towards them, obviously unnerved by their presence.

ANTONIO

Are you kiddin' me? I just got
married here. What the hell are--

SAXON

(interrupting)
We've got to talk.

Antonio shakes his head in disgust.

SAXON (CONT'D)

It's urgent. I need you to come
down to the station house.

ANTONIO

I told you everything I know
yesterday. Why can't you--

SAXON

(interrupting)
We saw the car. You've got a lot of
explaining to do, Antonio.

Antonio freezes, the color draining from his face. He pauses for a beat, then takes a deep breath.

ANTONIO

Okay, okay, Officer. Just let me
tell my wife.

Saxon and the police officer take a step back as Antonio turns, leaning further into the limousine, his back to them.

INT. LIMOUSINE (PARKED)

Freddie, upon seeing Saxon and the police officer outside, becomes alarmed. Maria is completely puzzled.

FREDDIE
(nervous)
Antonio, what is it with them now?

MARIA
What's going on, Antonio? What do they want with you?

Antonio does not answer them. Instead, he gently takes Maria's hand as she sits there, looking at her with a loving gesture. He then looks over at Freddie, then back at her.

Pulling his hand back, he slowly begins to reach into the waistband of his tuxedo. Freddie is horrified as Antonio removes Cookie's handgun, unbeknownst to Saxon and the police officer, who wait outside, several feet behind him.

As if the surreal scene had begun to play out in slow motion, Antonio spins around, now facing Saxon and the police officer.

FREDDIE
(screaming)
Antonio, no!!!

EXT. CHURCH

A SHOT rings out from Antonio's gun as Saxon and the police officer spring into action, crouching down and producing their own guns in a split second.

BOOM! BOOM! They each return fire, striking Antonio as the well wishers SCREAM and drop to the ground in sheer panic and shock. Chaos...then all suddenly becomes eerily quiet.

Antonio drops the gun, then looks at them in shock. He reaches down, touching his wounds, then looks at his blood soaked hand in horror. He takes several steps forward, as if in an attempt to climb the stairs again, then collapses.

Saxon and the police officer remain in a crouch, their guns still trained on him. Amid Maria's SCREAMS from inside the limousine, Freddie rushes out and straight for his fallen brother. He kneels down and cradles his head in his hands.

FREDDIE
(crying)
Oh, Antonio. Why? Why did you do this?

Antonio looks up at him with his dying eyes. Blood begins to seep from his gaping mouth, his breaths now a labored, bloody death rattle.

ANTONIO

(dying)

I told you...little bro.

(beat)

I...wasn't goin' to no...stinkin' jail.

(beat)

Right?

Freddie caresses him.

FREDDIE

No, Antonio. It didn't have to be this way.

ANTONIO

Tell Maria I...love her. Tell Mama...

Suddenly, he goes limp. He is dead. Freddie is beside himself with grief.

FREDDIE

(crying)

No! No, Antonio, no!

Freddie continues to hold Antonio's head, then realizes that Saxon and the police officer are now standing directly over him. He slowly looks up, only to see the barrels of their guns pointing at him.

SAXON

(firmly)

Let go of him, Freddie. Put your hands on top of your head and stand up, nice and slow.

(beat)

You're under arrest.

Freddie slowly and carefully releases his grip on his dead brother's head. He looks up at them, a blank expression on his young, blood spattered face.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. UNKNOWN ROOM - NIGHT

EXTREME CLOSE-UP on Freddie's terrified face. He sweats profusely as he struggles to swallow, then takes a deep breath.

He closes his eyes tightly, as if hoping that he'd be anywhere else when he reopened them. As they slowly reopen, he shakes his head in deep frustration and regret.

OFF SCREEN, the MUFFLED VOICES of PEOPLE MILLING ABOUT.

Suddenly, he reacts as if someone or something were coming towards him.

FREDDIE

(V.O.)

Oh, no, it's time.

We PULL BACK to reveal that Freddie is tightly strapped into an ELECTRIC CHAIR in a PRISON EXECUTION CHAMBER.

A burly PRISON GUARD approaches and places a wet sponge on top of Freddie's head. He follows with a rubber cap which is attached to a thick cable. It is roughly pulled over the top of his head and buckled tightly under his quivering chin.

Freddie looks past the guard at several PEOPLE with grim expressions who take seats before him.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

The jury didn't take long to reach a guilty verdict. The witness saw me holding the gun, so they believed that I shot the jewelry store guy. With Antonio and Cookie dead, all they had was my word and they didn't buy it.

(beat)

And, all I ever wanted to do was the right thing. Can you believe this?

Freddie gazes around the room again. He focuses on a group of people in the front row.

FREDDIE'S P.O.V.: Lydia sits in the front row of spectators. She is clearly distraught and WEEPS openly.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

Oh, Mama. I can't even begin to tell you how sorry I am. I should have been stronger. I should have saved Antonio from himself. I should have...

Suddenly, a tall, gaunt-looking MAN, clad in a dark suit, approaches. He positions himself beside a large, menacing-looking toggle switch on the cold, grey cinder block wall. He CLEARS HIS THROAT.

MAN

Federico Rivera, you have been found guilty of the crime of murder by a jury of your peers.

Freddie closes his eyes and swallows hard.

MAN (CONT'D)

You have been sentenced to die in
the electric chair. May God have
mercy on your soul.

Grim faced, the man nods to the prison guard, then begins to slowly pull down on the toggle switch.

FREDDIE

(V.O.)

Hey, Antonio. Look what happened to us, big bro. You always said we were the Rivera brothers, remember? And, nothing was supposed to stop--

BANG!!! The ear shattering sound of the toggle switch being thrown and a LOUD BUZZING as a massive surge of electrical power dims the room's lights for a split second.

Freddie convulses violently, choking on the thick foam that seeps from his gaping mouth. His eyes roll to the top of his head as he squirms in agony and we...

CUT TO:

A BLACK SCREEN, THEN...

FADE OUT.