

Nikki Bible

written by

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EXT. HIGHWAY OUTSIDE OF ROCHESTER - MORNING

An old boat of a Cadillac tears down the highway. It stops at a young woman hitchhiking.

NIKKI BIBLE (17), long dark hair and sassy, kicks the passenger door with her boot...

NIKKI

Nice ride.

She leans into the passenger window.

NIKKI

Where ya headed?

The distinct Aussie accent of the driver, SHOOTER MCGAHAN (late 40s), a gladiator with a smile...

SHOOTER

Where are you headed?

She looks up the road then turns back.

NIKKI

Outta town.

SHOOTER

What a coincidence! Me, too!

She looks in the back seat as she gets in the car and sees a duffel bag full of cash wraps.

NIKKI

You rob a bank?

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

We see shooter's face for the first time. He smiles.

SHOOTER

Better!

She closes the door as he puts the car in gear.

SHOOTER

Why was a pretty young thing like yourself in Rochester, anyway?

NIKKI

It's where you go when you want to disappear. I'm not hiding anymore. What about you?

SHOOTER
They found me.

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The car speeds down the road into the unknown distance.

INT. CAR - LATER

Nikki rides with her leg out the window staring at nothing.

SHOOTER
Ya mind getting your foot off my
mirror?

Nikki pulls her foot in and rests it on the dashboard.
Shooter slaps at it.

SHOOTER
Airbags!

She drops her foot down.

NIKKI
Sorry, *daaad!*

Momentary silence.

SHOOTER
So, miss. What ya running away
from? Daddy a diddler?

Gazing into the distance...

NIKKI
Who says I'm running away?

SHOOTER
I just thought--

NIKKI
I'm going home.

Nikki fades from consciousness.

SHOOTER
Where's--

Shooter sees her eyes closed.

SHOOTER
Maybe later...

INT. SHOOTER'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Nikki jolts awake.

SHOOTER
Bad dreams?

NIKKI
Hey, can we stop somewhere? I'm
hungry and I have to pee.

SHOOTER
You got any money?

Nikki reaches into her pocket and pulls out...

NIKKI
I got a twenty.

She has fifteen hundred dollars in her purse, by the way.

SHOOTER
Costs forty for bus fare.

NIKKI
I spent the other half getting to
where you picked me up. Assholes.

SHOOTER
Right. There's a diner along here
somewhere, I'm sure.

In the back seat sits Shooter's duffel bag stuffed with 2.5 million dollars worth of American currency and Euros.

EXT. ROADSIDE DINER - DAY

The car stops.

INSIDE THE CAR

Nikki opens her door before the car shuts off. She slides her foot down the door to open it.

NIKKI
I'll be in the bathroom.

SHOOTER
Hey! Ya mind not kicking my door?!
(to himself)
Bloody teenagers.

He grunts and...

OUTSIDE THE CAR

Shooter closes his door, opens the back. He reaches inside.

NIKKI enters the diner.

INT. ROADSIDE DINER - CONTINUOUS

Nikki walks in. A bell chimes. She strolls past the counter toward the bathroom. A middle-aged WAITRESS stops her.

NIKKI

I need to use the bathroom. He'll
be in in a minute.

The waitress looks out. Shooter closes the door and heads in.

WAITRESS

Back there, hun.

She motions Nikki to the bathroom.

Shooter enters.

WAITRESS

Your daughter's in the bathroom.

SHOOTER

I'll wait up here.

WAITRESS

There's a table yonder.

She points to the middle of the room.

WAITRESS

Think you can fit?

Shooter tips his hat and seats himself.

Nikki comes from the bathroom and sits at the table. The waitress sets down menus.

NIKKI

Pancakes. Bacon and eggs.

The waitress whips out her tickets and writes.

SHOOTER

Just coffee, thanks.

The waitress leaves with the menus.

THREE YOUNG MEN burst into the diner. The important one's name is DELBERT (20), country strong, because of course.

He's a belligerent little shit.

DELBERT
Hoowee! What's that?

He towers over Nikki.

DELBERT
What's your name little girl?

Annoyed sigh.

DELBERT
Come here.

He grabs Nikki's arm and pulls her up. Nikki knees him in the nuts. He barely feels it.

SHOOTER
Um, excuse me, gents.

The waitress rushes in.

WAITRESS
Goddammit, Delbert! I told you to leave customers alone!

DELBERT
But, ma!

WAITRESS
Go sit your ass down!

The boys sit in a booth in the far corner. They hoot.

WAITRESS
Sorry about my boy. He doesn't have what you call social skills. Barely listens to me.

SHOOTER
If you don't mind, mum, I could have a little chat with him.

WAITRESS
Oh, no. That's not necessary.

SHOOTER
No trouble at all!

Shooter pushes back his chair and rises with a grunt.

WAITRESS

You're not gonna hurt him, are you?

SHOOTER

Nah. Just a quick chat.

Shooter carries himself to...

THE BOYS' TABLE

Delbert sits in the middle. Shooter pulls up a chair.

SHOOTER

So your mum says you don't listen
to her. You don't treat women
right, I see.

Delbert scoffs...

DELBERT

Bite me, old man.

Shooter sits backwards in his chair. He reaches to his
waistband. He pulls out...

BANG! His .44 Magnum drops on the table. The boys flinch.

SHOOTER

Now, I got six bullets in this
chamber, and three of you.

One of the boys reaches to touch the gun. Shooter slaps his
hand away.

SHOOTER

Don't touch it!

The boy sits back.

SHOOTER

As I was saying, six bullets and
three of you. That means I can
shoot each of you twice before I
have to reload. And I will reload.

The boys quake in their seats.

SHOOTER

You gonna listen to your mum?

Delbert nods.

SHOOTER

Excellent!

Shooter takes his gun and stands. He tips his hat.

SHOOTER
G'day, gentlemen.

He struts back to his table. Sits.

WAITRESS
Everything OK?

Shooter smiles up at her.

SHOOTER
Peachy!

INT. NOWHERE - CHEAP ASS MOTEL - DAY

Shooter and Nikki hole up in a motel for the night.

It's as grimy as you'd expect. Two beds, faded worn blankets. One lamp, pull chain missing.

Nikki lies on her bed by the bathroom door, reading anything. Shooter sits on his bed. He leans forward.

SHOOTER
Ya know, you remind me of someone.

Nikki turns her head to him.

SHOOTER
Yeah, someone very special.

He inches to the edge of his bed.

SHOOTER
Someone I miss very much.

He kneels beside her. He leans over and looks into her eyes.

SHOOTER
You're what I hoped she'd be.

CRACK! Nikki socks him in the nose.

BOOF! She knees him in the balls.

Shooter holds both and goes down. Nikki grabs his gun off the bed and locks herself...

IN THE BATHROOM

Nikki sits on the toilet, gun aimed at the door. Shooter GRUMBLES and GROWLS outside.

IN THE BEDROOM

Shooter gets to a knee. He touches his nose and looks at his fingers. Blood. He grunts up and feels his balls. They're OK.

He knocks on the bathroom door.

SHOOTER

Shit, Nikki! What was that for?!

IN THE BATHROOM

Nikki's face is stone cold. She aims at the door.

IN THE BEDROOM

Shooter takes a deep breath and gathers himself, leaning forearm on the door frame.

SHOOTER

Look. I wasn't trying to hurt you.
You remind me of my daughter.

(to himself)

Shit, that wasn't creepy. My ex
took her and...

He tilts his head back and catches the blood in his mouth.

SHOOTER

OK. I know what you might be
thinking, and I promise you it's
not like that.

BOOM! A bullet rips through the door!

IN THE BATHROOM

Nikki falls off the toilet, blood on her forehead.

Shooter busts the door in.

SHOOTER

What the fuck!

He grabs the gun and tosses it into the bedroom.

He lifts her up and sets her on the toilet.

SHOOTER

Ah, yeah. The recoil gotcha.

He snaps his fingers in front of her eyes.

SHOOTER

Oi! Can you hear me? How many
fingers am I holding up?

He holds up three. She pushes his hand away.

NIKKI

Get the fuck off me.

Shooter stands back in the doorway looking down at her.

SHOOTER

Look, miss. I didn't mean it like
that. I haven't seen my daughter in
ages. I can't do anything for her.
I want to help you, just like I'd
help her.

Nikki pulls toilet paper from the roll. Places it on her
forehead. Her eyes steady on his forehead.

NIKKI

You're going to teach me how to
kill you.

Shooter was not expecting that. He thinks.

SHOOTER

Why me?

NIKKI

Because if I can do that, then I
know I can beat the ass of every
Delbert in the world.

He smiles, she scowls.

SHOOTER

Alright, miss. I'll teach ya.

She stands and holds out her hand. They shake on it.

INT MOTEL ROOM - DAY

A mattress leans against a wall. Shooter demonstrates.

SHOOTER

Now, the trick is, you have to
follow through. If ya don't...

He punches the mattress dead.

SHOOTER
Nothin'. Once you hit, push your
shoulder into it.

He punches the mattress. BOOM! The wall shakes.

Nikki gets in her stance.

SHOOTER
Right, keep your shoulder down.
Find your balance...

She punches the mattress. It vibrates as it rebounds.

SHOOTER
Nice! Now do that a hundred times
with each hand.

MONTAGE:

Nikki punches relentlessly at first.

Whack! Whack! Whack! Whack!

She tires quickly. Shooter sets her up straight.

Nikki continues.

Nikki does push ups. Sit ups. Squat thrusts. Still tired.

Back at the mattress. WHACK! WHACK! WHACK! Stronger.

Nikki runs between the highway and the woods. Punching air.

More push ups. Sit ups. Yeah, she's getting there.

Mattress attack BOOM! The wall quakes. Oh, yeah!

Shooter teaches her to use her knees. He grabs her shoulders,
and lifts his knee into her sternum. Not hard.

Nikki adds knee lifts to her exercise regimen.

She runs, breathing strong. She arrives at the motel.

END MONTAGE

MOTEL ROOM

Shooter spars with Nikki.

SHOOTER

Now that you know how to punch,
let's give you an alternative. Take
the heel of your hand...

He demonstrates, pulling his fingers back, thrusting.

SHOOTER

And you strike. You can do it to
the heart, the nose, the chin...

Nikki practices. She strikes the mattress straight on. The
wall vibrates. Lucky there are no neighbors.

SHOOTER

That's good. Keep practicing.

Nikki strikes the mattress at different angles. Shooter steps
to the door. Opens it.

SHOOTER

And never be afraid to kick a guy
in the family jewels. You did right
with Delbert. His fat belly just
got in the way.

Shooter steps...

OUTSIDE

He pulls a smoke and lights it. He gazes around the property.
His is the only car there. Mattress strikes pounding behind.

INT. ROADSIDE DINER - DAY

Nikki enters alone. The bell chimes.

She sits in the middle table, same as before. The waitress
comes over, same as before.

NIKKI

What's your name?

The waitress whiffs a smile.

WAITRESS

It's on my tag.

"MARILYN"

NIKKI

Nikki. Where's your boy?

MARILYN

Oh, I'm sure he's fussin' around
somewhere. Just can't seem to stay
out of trouble, even after your dad
talked to him.

NIKKI

Oh, he's not... You expect him to
come in?

Marilyn looks out the window.

MARILYN

Well speak of the devil.

Nikki turns. The boys saunter up the parking lot.

NIKKI

Can you leave us alone for a
minute?

She winks at Marilyn. Marilyn nods.

MARILYN

You be careful.

Marilyn goes to the kitchen as Delbert and the boys come in.
The bell chimes.

DELBERT

Ma! Hey ma!

NIKKI

She's in the back.

DELBERT

Well look who it is! Where's your
daddy? Does he know where you are?

NIKKI

He's at the motel.

Delbert towers over her, same as before.

DELBERT

Then I guess he ain't here to stop
me, now is he?

He grabs her arm and lifts her out of the chair, SAME AS
BEFORE! He just doesn't get it.

Nikki's left palm swoops around CRACK! Right into his cheek,
his head snaps around. He lets go of her.

SHPLACK! She upper cuts his chin. His head snaps back.

She grabs his shoulders BOOF! And knees him in the breadbasket. This ol' boy goes down hard.

Nikki stares down.

NIKKI
Any questions?

Delbert coughs and wheezes on his knees.

She looks at the other two. Raises her eyebrows. They both shy away. They want none of that.

Nikki calls to the kitchen...

NIKKI
Thanks, ma!

The bell chimes.

INT MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The mattress against the wall, the TV on rural news, Shooter and Nikki kick back on the beds.

SHOOTER
So why did you really want to learn
how to fight?

NIKKI
I just want to kick ass.

TV off.

SHOOTER
I still haven't taught you how to
kill me, ya know.

NIKKI
That's blackmail. We shook on it.

Shooter stands.

SHOOTER
I'm going for a drink. I'll leave
you to think about it.

Shooter puts his gun in his waistband.

Nikki sits on the edge of the bed.

NIKKI

When can I learn to shoot that?

SHOOTER

Huh! This? This one's a little too much for ya, miss. I got a lady's shotgun in the car. It's only twenty-two inches, but it does the job. A mate in Melbourne uses one on drug dealers.

NIKKI

Can I see it?

Shooter opens the door.

SHOOTER

I'll think about it. G'night.

He closes the door behind him.

Nikki turns the TV onto some stupid movie and chills.

INT. OUTSKIRTS - COWBOY BAR - NIGHT

Shooter sits at a long bar made from a bare tree trunk listening to country-western music. Not his choice...

A half empty bottle of beer sits in front of him, a glass of whiskey with two ice cubes in his hand. He sips.

SPURT!

Some jagoff REDNECK bumps Shooter from behind. The drink spills. Shooter checks his glass, wipes his chin, and turns.

SHOOTER

Oi!

The hick stands halfway down the bar, waiting.

SHOOTER

Oi! Mate!

Shooter lifts his hand. The redneck sees and struts over.

REDNECK

Excuse me, sir?

SHOOTER

My drink. You made me spill it.

The man may as well be looking at Shooter cross-eyed.

REDNECK

Boy, I can't understand a word you say. Where you from?

SHOOTER

Australia. Look, mate, an apology would suffice. Still plenty left.

The redneck scooches closer.

REDNECK

We don't like your kind here.

SHOOTER

What? Gentlemen?

The redneck's face turns, he pounds the bar.

REDNECK

Foreigners!

Shooter sighs and drops his head. He rises from his seat.

SHOOTER

Look, mate. We got Bogans back home, too. There's no trouble here.

Shooter pulls out his gun and drops it on the bar. CALUNK!

SHOOTER

Unless you want there to be.

The redneck pulls out a .357 and drops it on the bar. BUNK!

SHOOTER

Suit yourself.

Shooter launches into him, knocking him to the floor. He stands over him. SEVERAL LARGE HICKS stand up behind him.

Shooter looks up. He turns.

SHOOTER

Crikey.

INT MOTEL ROOM - LATER

TV off, light on. The SHOWER stops.

The door to the room creaks. Movement in the bathroom.

The room door creeps open. Shooter is FUCKED UP, but alive. He holds his arm against the door and eases himself in. He sliiiides along the wall until he reaches the mattress.

The bathroom door opens. Nikki dressed with wet hair.

NIKKI
How was the bar?

Shooter grunts. Nikki sits on the bed drying her hair with a towel. Shooter leans against the mattress, cheek first.

NIKKI
I thought about what you said. I'm not running to something. I'm running towards it. Big difference.

Shooter nudges. His cheek slips.

NIKKI
After that guy killed Tyrell, I didn't know what to do.

Shooter sliiiides down as Nikki rubs her head dry.

NIKKI
These guys picked me up, said they'd save me bus fair. Said they were headed out of town.

Shooter sliiiides and groooaans.

NIKKI
When I wouldn't put out... You know how it goes.

Shooter slumps to the floor with a soft thump.

Nikki gets up and puts her towel away.

NIKKI
I never told them what I did in Rochester. I knew that much.

She turns off the bathroom light and turns into the room.

Shooter lies slumped over his knee caps, face buried in the carpet. He moans.

NIKKI
Oh, shit!

INT MOTEL ROOM - DAY

The mattress back on the bed, Shooter lies stretched on the floor. Nikki enters with a sack of food and coffee.

She nudges him as she closes the door.

Shooter grunts.

NIKKI

You awake? I got coffee.

Shooter moans and yawwwwns...

SHOOTER

Beer.

NIKKI

They carded me. Coffee. Get up.

She nudges him with her foot again. Shooter stirs and growls.

Nikki sets the sack on the nightstand.

NIKKI

Come on!

She throws a pillow at him. He rolls in his spot. GROWLS!

SHOOTER

I'm up! I'm up!

He wipes the dried blood on his face as he stands. Spies the bed. Sits on the edge. Takes his coffee.

NIKKI

You gotta teach me how to shoot.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The woods provide perfect cover for training. Shooter shows Nikki the "lady's" shotgun. It's small, but effective.

He holds it up with one hand.

SHOOTER

See, I can shoot with one hand.

BOOM! The shot sprays like a water cannon.

SHOOTER

I want you to hold it like this...

He holds it with both hands.

SHOOTER
Your right is your trigger finger.

Nikki holds up the gun.

SHOOTER
Don't forget to breathe...

She takes a deep breath. Squeezes the trigger...

BOOM! Shot sprays. Nikki falls back from the recoil, but no harm no foul. Shooter laughs.

SHOOTER
Brace yourself!

Nikki on her ass...

NIKKI
Let's do that again!

SHOOTER
Alright, both hands, legs steady.

BOOM! Through the afternoon.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

Shooter sits on a rock. Nikki stands.

NIKKI
Thanks for this.

Shooter turns glum.

SHOOTER
Ya know, maybe this isn't right for you, all this fighting. A young girl like you should be enjoying her youth.

Nikki focuses on the shotgun. She raises it. Fires.

SHOOTER
Maybe it's time to go home to your family. You've had your fun.

Nikki glares at him.

NIKKI

They're not my family. The only one
I can stand is my baby sister. At
least she's redeemable.

She fires again.

SHOOTER

I'm just saying, this isn't good
for you.

She lowers the gun.

NIKKI

You're not my father.

SHOOTER

No...I guess you're right.

Shooter gathers himself.

SHOOTER

Alright, then. Let's try the left.

Nikki puts her left finger on the trigger.

BOOM!

She fires again.

INT MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Nikki enters ahead of Shooter, drops the shotgun on her bed.
Shooter holds the door open.

SHOOTER

I think I'm gonna go get pissed.

Nikki sits on her bed, turns on the TV.

NIKKI

Drunk. We say "drunk" in America.
Pissed is angry.

SHOOTER

Right.

NIKKI

You don't want to hang out?

SHOOTER

I'm not really in the mood.

Puppy dog eyes...

NIKKI

You're going to leave me all alone?

Shooter averts his gaze.

SHOOTER

I just don't feel like hanging out
with little girls tonight.

Oh...

SHOOTER

G'night, miss.

Shooter closes the door behind him. Nikki watches it close.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Shooter sleeps on his bed. The door opens. Nikki enters with
two beers. She closes the door and walks to the bed.

NIKKI

Hey. Big boy. Wake up.

Shooter grunts. She places the cold bottle on his neck.

SHOOTER

Ah! What the fuck!

Nikki holds up the beers.

NIKKI

I'm sorry.

Shooter sits up and takes one.

SHOOTER

You didn't do me any harm, miss.

Nikki sits next to him. He opens their beers.

NIKKI

I'm sure you're a great dad. Your
ex is a cunt.

Shooter smiles, then laughs. He tips his bottle to hers.

SHOOTER

Cheers!

INT. ROADSIDE DINER - DAY

Shooter and Nikki sit at their usual table. Marilyn stops.

MARILYN
Pancake breakfast and coffee?

SHOOTER
Some bacon too, please, mum. It's a
good day for bacon, I reckon.

MARILYN
That it is.
(to Nikki)
Lots of syrup?

Nikki nods. Marilyn looks up.

MARILYN
Oh, boy. Here they come.

Nikki braces herself. Shooter turns to see who.

DELBERT and his boys coming to the diner.

SHOOTER pulls his .44 and holds it on his lap.

Nikki cracks her knuckles.

The bell chimes.

Delbert shuffles to the table.

DELBERT
I'm sorry for disrespecting you,
mister. I didn't mean it.

SHOOTER
Oh. Well. No harm done.

Shooter offers his hand.

DELBERT
I should do like my mama says and
be more respectful. I'm sorry miss.

He offers his hand. Nikki accepts.

DELBERT
Have a good day, y'all.

The boys go to their table in the corner.

Marilyn returns with coffee.

SHOOTER
You've done alright, mum.

Marilyn beams as she heads for the kitchen.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Nikki and Shooter stand in the clearing. Nikki raises the lady's shotgun and fires. The recoil sends her back.

SHOOTER
That's good. Hold a little tighter.

Nikki raises the shotgun. BOOM!

SHOOTER
Perfect!

Nikki reloads the shotgun.

SHOOTER
Your father would be proud!

Nikki is displeased. She glowers at a tree, raises, and BOOM!

NIKKI
He's a monster. You know, he *hates* poor people. Probably nuke them all if he could. He watches football but doesn't even pay attention to the game. He talks about the fans, how they're performing this ancient ritual. It's gross the way he fetishizes them.

SHOOTER
What do you care who he hates or loves? So long as he's not hurting anyone, right?

Nikki looks him in the eye.

NIKKI
Empathy-y-y!

Shooter considers this. He nods his head back to think.

NIKKI
As much as he did for me, my "father" never gave me anything. All I want is the truth, and he's going to give it to me.

SHOOTER

Maybe you're training to fight the wrong kinds of monsters. Maybe you need something up here instead.

He points to his head. She rolls her eyes.

INT. ROADSIDE DINER - DAY

Marilyn busies herself wiping tables. The diner is otherwise empty. Business as usual.

The bell CHIMES.

Marilyn continues wiping through the thick Russian accent.

RASTAKOV (O.C.)

Excuse me, miss...

Marilyn stop and looks at the man towering above her, RASTAKOV (50), bald by choice and bored of this shit.

MARILYN

H-how can I help you?

RASTAKOV

I am looking for a man. Very large with a funny accent.

MARILYN

I'm looking at one.

Rastakov is not amused. He draws his pistol.

RASTAKOV

Where is he?

Fear. Quaking. The piss streams down her leg.

MARILYN

I don't know--

Rastakov cocks the gun.

MARILYN

They stay at the motel up the road!

She points in the direction.

RASTAKOV

Thank you.

He turns to the door.

RASTAKOV
You didn't see me.

He raises the gun. BANG! Right between the eyes.

The bell CHIMES.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Shooter packs the ammo and guns into the car. Nikki waits in the passenger seat.

NIKKI
I was a prostitute.

Shooter was not expecting that.

NIKKI
It was a good business decision for a sixteen year old.

Nikki drops her chin.

NIKKI
Until...he showed up. I didn't need a pimp until Tyrell proved I did.

SHOOTER
Rough ya up a bit, eh?

NIKKI
There's a lot of monsters out there, Shooter, and I aim to kill 'em all. He's already dead. I was there. It was brutal.

SHOOTER
And you still want this...

NIKKI
There are more of him out there.

Shooter with an uneasy smile. *Is this right?*

SHOOTER
Too many for one girl, I reckon.

NIKKI
I have to let it out.

SHOOTER
What you need is a good bar fight.

He stands behind her holding her left hand with the gun.

BOOM!

EXT. MOTEL - DAY

Shooter's car turns into the motel. It glides along the asphalt to the parking spot.

INSIDE SHOOTER'S CAR

Shooter notices something odd. A new car parked at the office. He looks in the window. The clerk points outside.

SHOOTER

Aw, shit.

Nikki looks up.

NIKKI

What shit?

Shooter parks.

OUTSIDE SHOOTER'S CAR

Shooter talks over the roof...

SHOOTER

Get your shit. We're going.

NIKKI

What's--

SHOOTER

Later!

Nikki rushes inside.

Shooter turns and surveys the parking lot. Just the one car.

He pulls the .44 from his waistband, holds it behind himself.

Rastakov exits the office. He walks around his car. He hears someone clearing their throat.

SHOOTER...

SHOOTER

Ahem!

RASTAKOV turns. He draws a pistol and steps toward the front of his car.

RASTAKOV
Liam McGahan?

SHOOTER
You and I both know my name,
comrade. Tell Sergei--

RASTAKOV
There is a lot of money for you. I
get half of what you stole if I
bring you in.

SHOOTER
I stole nothing.

RASTAKOV
Two point five million. I could
take it all if you'd prefer.

SHOOTER
No deal. Russkie.

RASTAKOV
I am Rastakov.

SHOOTER
Sure thing, Rusty.

RASTAKOV
RASTAKOV!

SHOOTER
(to himself)
Rusty cough, whatever.
(to Rastakov)
Look, mate! We're done here. Tell
Sergei I'm busy. I'll see him when
he has another job for me.

Rastakov raises his gun.

RASTAKOV
Very well then.

NIKKI (O.C.)
Shooter. Duck.

Shooter ducks. BOOM! A blast from the shotgun!

Nikki exits the room with an arm full of things, some of
which used to belong to the motel.

BOOM! She fires again. Rastakov catches one in the eye. He
screams, holding his eye, patchy with shot.

NIKKI

Let's go.

Shooter gets up and jumps in the car. Nikki follows suit.

The car peels out backward. Shooter shoves it into drive and slams on the gas. UUUURRRRRRTTTTT! He just misses Rastakov lying on the ground by his car, roaring.

INT. SHOOTER'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Nikki tosses her stuff in the back.

NIKKI

Who was that?! Holy shit! I just shot somebody! Who did I shoot?!

SHOOTER

Calm down. Just a Russian gangster. I did a job in Rochester. I delivered the goods, sort of, and I took their money as payment.

NIKKI

How much?

SHOOTER

Two point five mill.

Nikki looks at the duffel bag.

NIKKI

Can you give it back?

Shooter steers around traffic.

SHOOTER

See, it's not that simple. They tried to screw me. I earned it.

NIKKI

They're going to kill you over it?

Shooter shrugs.

OUTSIDE SHOOTER'S CAR

The car zooms off down the highway.

ON RASTAKOV

Rastakov picks himself up, dabbing his eye with his shirt. He pulls out a radio and speaks Russian into it.

RASTAKOV

He's on the move. I've got him.

He opens his car door, starts the engine.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Shooter's car goes very fast.

INSIDE SHOOTER'S CAR

Nikki tries to wrap her head around it.

NIKKI

So you did the job, delivered him to the wrong guy, and stole the money. Is that about right?

SHOOTER

Sort of. They said to deliver him to Rochester. They didn't say where. I delivered him!

Nikki scoffs.

NIKKI

What did you get me into?

SHOOTER

Look. I can drop you off in the next town, you still got bus fare.

NIKKI

I guess so. I never thought I'd get shot at.

SHOOTER

That's what happens when you play with guns.

OUTSIDE SHOOTER'S CAR

The car continues to go very fast.

EXT. HIGHWAY BUS DEPOT - LATER

Shooter's car pulls into the bus depot. It's pretty big considering the size of the town.

The two exit.

ON SHOOTER

SHOOTER

It's been a pleasure, miss. I'm
sorry I didn't get to see you all
the way through.

NIKKI

I had fun. For the first time I can
remember, I had fun.

Nikki hugs Shooter.

SHOOTER

You be good.

Nikki digs her heel into the pavement.

NIKKI

I'm not ready to be good.

SHOOTER

Come again.

NIKKI

I shot a man. In the face! When
will I ever get to do that again?

Shooter eyes Nikki.

SHOOTER

It's not all it's cracked up to be,
especially when they shoot back.

NIKKI

I need this. The truth can wait.

Shooter, hesitant, escorts her back to the car.

INT. HIGHWAY - SHOOTER'S CAR - NIGHT

Nikki sleeps sprawled in the passenger seat.

Shooter eyes the rear view mirror. A flash of white light.

He presses the accelerator. VROOOOMMMMM The lights disappear.

Nikki stirs at the speed change.

NIKKI

What's up?

SHOOTER

Nothin'. Hotel up ahead. Much nicer
than we've been staying at.

NIKKI

Cool.

She goes back to sleep.

EXT. HIGHWAY - HOTEL - NIGHT

Shooter's car turns into the reasonably priced hotel. \$89.99 a night isn't so bad.

He parks by the doors. His foot steps from the car.

Shooter enters the hotel.

INT. HOTEL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Shooter steps to the counter. No waiting this time of night.

He rings the bell DINGGGGGG!

A FRONT DESK CLERK drags himself from the back.

CLERK

How many?

SHOOTER

Two please.

The clerk taps on his keyboard.

CLERK

That's be ninety seven eighty nine.

Shooter flops a hundred on the desk. The clerk examines it, marks it with a pen before putting it under his cash drawer.

The clerk produces two keys. He hands them to Shooter.

CLERK

Two eleven is your change. Room 117 is in the back facing the woods.

SHOOTER

Brilliant!

Shooter takes the keys.

INT. SHOOTER'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Shooter parks in the back facing Room 117. He nudges Nikki.

NIKKI

Umph!

SHOOTER

We're here. Get up.

Nikki stirs.

NIKKI

Bed?

SHOOTER

And shower.

They open their doors.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Much better. A clean room with clean linens, perfect for stealing. Nikki comes out of the shower in a robe.

NIKKI

Your turn. There's another robe hanging up by the door.

SHOOTER

In a minute. Just seeing what's on the telly. Bloody sport.

He shuts off the TV.

Nikki sits on her bed drying her hair.

NIKKI

So it's just the one guy?

Shooter turns to her.

SHOOTER

Hard to tell. Depends on how big the reward is, I reckon.

NIKKI

Two point five million.

Nikki wraps the towel around her hair, pulls a deck of cards from the drawer between the beds.

NIKKI

That's worth running for.

Opens the pack. Shuffles.

SHOOTER

Ya see?!

They share a laugh. Nikki deals the cards, back and forth.

NIKKI

Are we going to chill here and hope
he passes us?

SHOOTER

We've gotta make sure we've lost
him. There could be more.

NIKKI

Wait and watch.

Nikki finishes dealing the deck. She picks up her cards and
straightens them out. Shooter picks up his.

SHOOTER

Precisely.

They play war.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Shooter dozes in a chair in front of the window.

Nikki wakes up behind him. She throws a pillow at him.

POOF! Right in the head! Shooter stirs.

SHOOTER

Yeah, yeah. Beer!

NIKKI

Get your ass up.

Shooter stretches and growls a yawn.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY

Shooter leads Nikki down an aisle filled with liquor.

SHOOTER

You probably want to stay away from
the brown stuff at first. It'll
sneak up on ya. Stick with clear.

He puts a bottle of vodka in the basket he holds.

SHOOTER

That should be plenty for you.

He puts a larger bottle in the basket.

SHOOTER

That should get me through the night. Waddya think?

Nikki rolls her eyes and smiles.

SHOOTER

And now, beer. I hope they have some Aussie stuff.

CUT TO MOMENTS LATER

An aisle full of imports, and only Foster's from Oz.

SHOOTER

No VB. Christ.

He goes for the Canadian beer. A twelve pack should do.

AT THE REGISTER MOMENTS LATER

Nikki walks through first. The CASHIER (22) has a complex.

CASHIER

I.D., please?

SHOOTER

She's not buying. I am.

CASHIER

I still need to see her I.D.

SHOOTER

What for? If she's not buying...

CASHIER

Everyone has to have an I.D.

Shooter whispers to Nikki.

SHOOTER

Why don't you go wait outside.

Nikki complies. Shooter turns to the clerk.

SHOOTER

Look, mate. I've had a bad day. I need a drink.

Shooter wraps his enormous hands around the cashier's throat.

SHOOTER

And no little pissant prick is
gonna keep me from it, understand?

The cashier quakes a nod. Shooter sets him down.

SHOOTER

Ring it up.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Nikki leans against the wall by the door. Shooter exits with his bags and brew.

SHOOTER

Tonight, you learn how to drink.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The liquor and cups crowd the table. Shooter pours a cup of vodka and hands it to Nikki.

SHOOTER

Just toss it in and swallow whole.
Try not to hold it in too long.

Nikki nods. She sips the shot. She coughs.

SHOOTER

Now, now! Don't hold it!

She takes a smaller sip, downs it. Coughs after she swallows.

Shooter pours his own vodka. Half a cup.

SHOOTER

Skoal!

He chugs it in a flash! Slams the cup down.

SHOOTER

Your turn!

He tops off her shot.

SHOOTER

One, two, three...

Nikki takes the shot, swallows quickly. Gasps. Shooter laughs, grabs a couple of beers.

SHOOTER
That deserves a beer.

He pops the tops and hands Nikki one.

SHOOTER
Cheers.

NIKKI
(cough)
Cheers.

They chug. Nikki only clears the neck. Shooter clears half.

SHOOTER
Alright, here's one we normally do
with tequila, but you're too new
for that.

He cuts a lime on the table.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

BLACKNESS

SHOOTER (O.C.)
Rise and shine!

He's blurry at first. Nikki rubs her eyes. She whimpers.

Shooter offers her a beer.

SHOOTER
Hair of the dog. It'll help.

Nikki looks at it and hauls ass to the bathroom. BLEWWWWWUP!

She pops. Shooter shakes his head.

SHOOTER
Waddya wanna do today?

HOOOWWWAATTT! *cough*

NIKKI
Die!

SHOOTER

We could go shopping. It's getting a little cold at night. You could use a jacket.

Nikki peeks out from behind the bathroom door. Thumbs up.

HOOOWWAATTT!

SHOOTER

Nice.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Nikki sips coffee. She's in good spirits with two bags in her hand. Shooter follows her to women's clothing.

Nikki looks at a rack of dresses.

NIKKI

I'm not really a "dress girl".

SHOOTER

You'd look amazing, I bet. You never dressed up for prom?

NIKKI

I was fucking for money for prom.

SHOOTER

Right.

Nikki moves along to the lingerie. Shooter doesn't notice.

Yet.

SHOOTER

It's just, I think a girl should get to live a girl's life, not the life of a woman.

Nikki holds up a pair of black lace panties.

NIKKI

You think these would look good?

Shooter blushes and turns away!

SHOOTER

Christ! I don't need to see that!

Nikki laughs and puts the panties away.

NIKKI
You're such a dad!

LATER AT THE FOOD COURT

They sit at a table apart from other customers. Nikki eats pancakes. Shooter drinks coffee.

SHOOTER
I've never done this before.

NIKKI
Me, neither. It's kinda cool. My mom and dad never took me shopping. Always gave me the charge card and said, "Have Jones," that's our driver, "Have Jones take you."

SHOOTER
This is unbelievable! Not even a princess party?

She protests...

NIKKI
I am no princess.

Shooter rests his chin on his hands.

SHOOTER
When I get out of here with this money, I'm finding my daughter and treating her like one. I'll make up for every minute I wasn't there. She'll be a princess...

Nikki chews her pancakes.

SHOOTER
This is an experience I shall always treasure.

Nikki smiles and swallows.

NIKKI
You're really good at it.

She eats. He watches her.

DEPARTMENT STORE - LATER

Nikki and Shooter walk arm in arm through the store. Nikki wears a stylish leather jacket and new boots. Kick ass.

Shooter drifts in a happy daze.

NIKKI

We have to do this again when it's all over. I have so much fun with you. I'm glad I stayed.

SHOOTER

Me, too. But we'd better get you clear of those arseholes.

Nikki points her fingers like a gun. *kapow*

EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - CONTINUOUS

They stroll into the sunshine. Flowers bloom. Birds sing. Bees buzz along the path.

SHKAFLOOOMMMM!

A GIANT FIREBALL where Shooter's car used to be. Shooter pulls Nikki down and covers her.

ACROSS THE PARKING LOT, hidden amongst the cars, Rastakov watches. He pulls his radio (NOT translated)...

RASTAKOV

Someone else is here.

He pulls his car out.

ON SHOOTER, getting up as the flames recede. He lifts Nikki.

The car is a total loss. Shooter spots a red Datsun nearby. He can jimmy one of those. A forty year old car.

IGNITION BREAKING

SCREWDRIVER TURNING

FOOT ON ACCELERATOR

TIRES SQUEAL

INSIDE THE DATSUN, Shooter races through the parking lot. Nikki holds on for dear life.

NIKKI

Can she handle it?

SHOOTER

It's a forty year old car!

OUTSIDE THE DATSUN

Shooter steers, brakes, and accelerates onto the highway.

INSIDE THE DATSUN

Shooter sweats.

SHOOTER

Shit.

NIKKI

We're cool.

SHOOTER

No. The bag was in the car, under the back seat.

Nikki looks dumbfounded. She raises an eyebrow.

SHOOTER

It's my fault, I know! But we still got some left. I've got what's in my pockets. You've got what's in your purse. Should be a good two two grand all together, yeah?

Nikki sighs and sinks.

NIKKI

We're cool.

She sits back for the ride.

RASTAKOV'S car trails far behind.

A DILAPIDATED MUSCLE CAR follows even further back.

EXT. WOODS OFF HIGHWAY - DAY

Shooter and Nikki shoot in the woods. He teaches her how to hold the .44. He stands behind her, holding onto her hands.

SHOOTER

Alright. Take your thumb and pull the hammer back.

She does.

SHOOTER

Good. Now grip the handle tightly, and squееееееze the trigger. Hold your hands still.

She takes a breath and...

BOOM! Shooter laughs.

SHOOTER
Excellent! You're a natural!

Nikki hands him the gun and shakes her hands.

NIKKI
Son of a bitch, that hurt!

SHOOTER
Ya did good, miss.

Nikki sits on an exposed root. Shooter joins her.

NIKKI
Did you ever take your daughter
shooting?

SHOOTER
She was too young. Her mother took
her from me when she was four.

NIKKI
Would you?

SHOOTER
I suppose. If she liked that sort
of thing. I can't know.

Shooter holds his chin.

SHOOTER
She said I was a danger to my
child. The courts believed her. The
funny thing is, I wasn't even doing
this job then. Too close for the
courts, I reckon.

NIKKI
Do you have any pictures?

SHOOTER
Nah. She never sent me any.

NIKKI
That bitch!

Shooter chuckles.

SHOOTER

You should have seen her. Thick wavy brown hair. She was born with the clearest blue eyes you've ever seen, but they changed to a dark greenish blue...

Shooter drifts away.

NIKKI

She sounds beautiful.

Shooter sings...

SHOOTER

*She's got eyes of the bluest skies
as if they thought of rain...*

Nikki puts her hand on his knee.

SHOOTER

*I'd hate to look into those eyes
and see an ounce of pain...*

Nikki puts her arms around Shooter. He snuffles and rests his head on her shoulder.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The Datsun does it's best to impersonate a fast car.

INSIDE THE DATSUN

Shooter floors it. Nikki chills with her foot out the window. She's used to the excitement now.

SHOOTER

Get your fucking foot down!

NIKKI

It's a forty year old car!

Shooter chuckles to himself.

SHOOTER

At this rate, with no further interruptions, we should make it in record time.

Nikki drifts off...

SHOOTER

Of course, I'll still be around if
you need me. What are friends for?

Still drifting...

SHOOTER

Yeah, well. You just let me know
when you're ready.

Nikki raises her thumb.

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATER

The red Datsun surfs the highway.

INSIDE THE DATSUN

Nikki rides with her foot out the window, kicked back.

SHOOTER

It's been a nice quiet ride.

Nikki leans forward, reaches for the radio.

NIKKI

Mind if I find something?

SHOOTER

No, go ahead. Mi auto es su auto.

She presses the tuner. Garbage. She presses it again. More
garbage. She presses it AGAIN, Bob Seger, "Hollywood Nights".

NIKKI

Yes! I love this song!

She sings...

NIKKI

*Those Hollywood nights...
In those Hollywood Hills...*

She sings to Shooter...

She grabs his shoulder...

NIKKI

Come on, Shooter! Sing!

Shooter waves her off.

SHOOTER

I'm not much for singing anymore.

NIKKI

Come on. I've heard you sing
before. Sing with me!

Nikki sings along to Hollywood Nights.

Nikki nudges Shooter.

Shooter shrugs her off.

She sings some more.

NIKKI

Come on, please?

NIKKI

*She had been born with a face that
could let her get away...*

Shooter, reluctantly...

SHOOTER

*He saw that face and he lost all
control...*

NIKKI

Yes! *He had lost allllll control...*

SHOOTER

Nah, no more. Please.

Nikki's face falls. She turns off the radio.

NIKKI

I didn't mean--

SHOOTER

No. It's just, I used to sing to me
daughter when she was a baby. "Me
and Bobby McGee" but I changed the
lyrics to "me and Ava Marie".
That's what her mum named her.

NIKKI

That's a pretty name.

SHOOTER

It's common. I wanted to name her
Chasten O'Dell. She didn't like it
one bit.

NIKKI

Wow. That's actually beautiful.

SHOOTER

Yeah.

Shooter drifts.

SHOOTER

She took half my heart.

He comes back.

SHOOTER

Sometimes it feels like she took
all of it.

Nikki places her hand on Shooter's.

Shooter focuses on the road.

Nikki sighs. She softly sings Me and Bobby McGee. She changes
every "Bobby" into "Ava".

Shooter smiles as he eyes the road.

By the end of the verse, Shooter sings along.

ON HIGHWAY

The Datsun races best it can down the highway. Shooter and
Nikki sing.

BOTH

*Feelin' good was good enough for
me, good enough for me and Ava
Marie...*

Their voices fade into the distance.

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATER

The Datsun putters along. Classic rock plays.

Shooter checks the rear view. A sedan a quarter mile back.

Nikki tunes the radio.

SHOOTER

Nah, shut that off, miss.

Nikki furls her eyebrows, then does as he says.

REAR VIEW

The sedan is closer. An eighth of a mile, maybe. Another car bringing up the rear.

SHOOTER
Something ain't right.

Nikki looks back.

NIKKI
What is it?

SHOOTER
They're back. More of them.

Shooter downshifts, the engine growls and chokes.

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATER

The Datsun skids around a sharp curve.

INSIDE THE DATSUN

Shooter clutches the wheel, Nikki grabs what she can.

SHOOTER
I think it's best you take a bus!

Nikki howls.

NIKKI
Bullshit! We had a deal!

A sedan pulls up on the passenger side. Bullets riddle the side of the Datsun RATATATATATATATATATATAT. Nikki ducks.

SHOOTER
We're going straight to the next bus stop!

Nikki jolts up and glances out the window.

NIKKI
You're not my father! If I want to be here I'm gonna be here!

SHOOTER
You're going!

NIKKI
I'm staying!

RATATATAT

SHOOTER

Christ...

Shooter picks up the .44 between them.

SHOOTER

Take *this*, point it out *that* window, and shoot *that* car.

NIKKI

Are you crazy! I don't want another concussion! That shit hurt!

Shooter puts the gun in her hands.

SHOOTER

You wanted to be here!

He jerks the wheel to the side.

SHOOTER

Christ! Shoot!

She grips the gun.

OUTSIDE THE DATSUN

The Russian car pulls up hard along the passenger side. A man leans out the back window with a gun.

INSIDE THE DATSUN

Nikki levels the gun on the door. She pulls back the hammer, aims, closes her eyes, and...

BLAM! SCREEEEEECH!

OUTSIDE THE DATSUN

The car squeals and weaves. The other car pulls back. There's a bullet hole in the windshield of the car Nikki shot and a man slumped over the steering wheel.

The car spins sideways and FLIPS

CRABOOM CRABOOM CRABOOM

Before landing on the roof. The second car gives chase.

INSIDE THE DATSUN

Nikki looks back.

NIKKI
Holy shit! Did you see that?!

Shooter's intent is on the road.

SHOOTER
We got one more of the little bastards on us.

Shooter downshifts for a burst of power.

SHOOTER
Damn Japanese piece of shit!

NIKKI
It's a forty year old car!

OUTSIDE THE DATSUN

A two lane bridge. The Datsun jerks onto it. The pursuer a few hundred yards behind.

INSIDE THE DATSUN

Shooter up-shifts. The car doesn't move any faster.

SHOOTER
Cheap Japanese...!

NIKKI
It's a forty year old car!

The Datsun jerks. Shooter looks around. The fuel gauge. Empty. He looks back at Nikki...

SHOOTER
Piece of shit!
(to Nikki)
Don't you say it!

The Datsun jerks and sputters.

SHOOTER
Grab your shit.

Nikki gathers her stuff in one arm.

OUTSIDE THE DATSUN

The pursuit car races in

INSIDE THE DATSUN

Shooter aims his .44 out the window.

OUTSIDE THE PURSUIT CAR

The pursuer slams on the brakes. The car spins around.

The dilapidated muscle car with mismatched parts flies in and stops just in front of the pursuer.

The doors open. DALE (42) lean and Aussie mean, and ANTHONY (37) suburban born and raised, exit, machine guns drawn.

OUTSIDE THE DATSUN

Shooter looks on.

NIKKI

What's going on?

SHOOTER

I'll be...

OUTSIDE THE PURSUIT CAR

The Aussies walk down the pursuer, guns aimed.

RUSSIAN

What the fuck are you doing here!
You shot us!

Dale steps to the driver's window.

DALE

We'll take it from here boys.

He taps the car with the muzzle.

RUSSIAN

Sergei will have you killed.

DALE

Fuck off, mate.

He aims right at the man's head.

The Russian puts the car in gear and sputters away.

DALE

(to Anthony)
Shall we?

ANTHONY

We shall.

They get in their car and drive to the Datsun, stopping a good hundred feet away. They know what they're up against.

Anthony gets out and ducks behind the hood of the beater aiming his rifle.

Dale gets out cautiously with his rifle.

DALE

Shooter?

OUTSIDE THE DATSUN

Shooter smiles.

SHOOTER

I wonder what these pricks want.
Stay here a minute.

Shooter moves around the car with his gun.

They SHOUT across the distance.

SHOOTER

Dale, you old bugger! You can tell
Sergei to kiss me asshole!

DALE

Nah, mate! Fuck Sergei!

SHOOTER

After he let you go?

DALE

We just want the money.

Shooter scoffs...

SHOOTER

The money?!

DALE

Not all of it. Just half. That's
fair, isn't it?

SHOOTER

You blew up the money, dickhead!

Dale looks back at Anthony then back at Shooter.

DALE

Come again?

SHOOTER

Torched it with the car!

Dale drops his muzzle. Anthony rises slowly, lowering his.

DALE

You left the money in the car?

SHOOTER

What was I supposed to do, leave it in the hotel room for the maid to steal it?

DALE

You were at a mall! You didn't think to bring it in?

SHOOTER

It was tucked under the back seat!

Dale loses it! Anthony comes around the car.

DALE

Are you fucking kidding me?!

SHOOTER

How ya goin', Anth?

ANTHONY

Pretty good, Shooter. You?

DALE

Will you shut the fuck up! "How ya goin'"?! You lost the money!

Anthony looks beyond to the Datsun. Nikki steps out.

ANTHONY

Who's that?

Dale notices. Forgets the money. She's hot!

DALE

Yeah!

SHOOTER

Hands off. That's me girl, Nikki.

Shooter waves at her. She waves back.

Dale eyes Nikki.

DALE

Need a lift?

Dale looks at Anthony who rolls his eyes.

Dale and Shooter crack up.

ANTHONY
Fuck ya both.

SHOOTER
So anyway, I shot Dale in the leg a while back, before you and I met.

DALE
Ya cunt.

SHOOTER
Oi! Lady present!

DALE
I wasn't going to shoot you! You shot me for no reason!

SHOOTER
Coulda been worse. Coulda been a damn good reason.

Anthony lifts his eyebrows. Dale ponders a moment.

DALE
Thanks for shooting me in the leg.

Nikki mouths, "Wow!"

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATER

The crew ponders the road and fields around them.

ANTHONY
So how much money do we have?

NIKKI
We? I have twelve hundred. How much do you have.

Anthony withdraws.

DALE
How about I drive you home?

SHOOTER
We're going to the bus station.

NIKKI
My ass, "dad".

SHOOTER
You listen to me, young lady--

DALE
Ever been to the casino?

SHOOTER
She's too young!

DALE
No shit?

NIKKI
I'm down.

Dale plants his foot on the gas.

EXT. CASINO - DAY

Dale's car pulls into the lot and parks.

The three men get out.

ON DALE, leans into the back window.

DALE
Right, as soon as we double up,
I'll send Anthony out with your
money. We split the rest.

NIKKI
What makes you think you'll double?

Dale grins.

SHOOTER
We've played a lot of poker in our
time. One of us will hit it hot.
Maybe not Anthony.

ANTHONY
I'll stick with slots, thank you.

DALE
See ya soon.

The men pace themselves to the entrance.

Nikki waits in the car...

Waits outside the car...

Shooter with a stack in front of him...

Sits on the hood...

Dale sits anxiously behind a huge stack...

Nikki sits in the driver's seat playing with the radio...

Anthony comes back.

ANTHONY

Here ya go.

NIKKI

All of it?

ANTHONY

Twelve hundred, yeah?

Nikki counts it.

ANTHONY

Dale's up to twenty seven hundred.
Shooter's at thirty eight.

NIKKI

And you?

Sheepish...

ANTHONY

Thirty four...

NIKKI

Hundred?

ANTHONY

Dollars.

NIKKI

You got a smoke?

Anthony reaches into his pocket.

They wait...

They have a smoke...

Shooter's stack is smaller...

They lean on the car listening to music...

Dale loses a big hand, his chips almost gone...

They crush out their butts...

Dale and Shooter arrive. Silent.

Anthony looks at them. Nikki gets in the back seat.

Shooter shakes his head.

ANTHONY
What happened?!

SHOOTER
Fucking aces!

DALE
Yeah, well I got taken out by a
bloody Queen-Five! Who plays Queen-
Five to that big a raise preflop?!

SHOOTER
I quit with what I had left.
Nikki's got her money. You two are
pretty well fucked.

They get in the car.

DALE
Alright then. Who's for getting the
fuck out of Dodge? Nikki? Why don't
you climb in the front seat?

Anthony scoffs.

NIKKI
(under her breath)
My ass, perv.

VVVRRRRRIIMMMMM!!!

INT. A GLORIFIED STEAKHOUSE - DAY

The quartet sit around the table.

NIKKI
This one's on me.

DALE
Four beers, please!

NIKKI
I can't drink.

DALE
Oh, right. Poor kid. In that case,
I'll take all four.

They all laugh.

A waitress, DIANNA on her nametag (40s), used to poor lottery winners, sets menus and water on the table.

DIANNA
Would you like to start with our
potato skins?

ANTHONY
Bread, please.

DALE
Didn't you hear? She's paying.

ANTHONY
And a soda water.

Dale rolls his eyes.

DALE
I want this onion flower thing!

Dianna writes.

SHOOTER
The skins will be fine.

DIANNA
And your lovely daughter?

SHOOTER
Oh, she's not--

In a BAD Australian accent...

NIKKI
Oh, daddy! Can I get skins, too?!

Dale laughs. Shooter smiles.

SHOOTER
You can have some of mine.

Dianna leaves.

Dale raises his water glass...

DALE
To getting away with out lives.

The other men raise their glasses.

ALL THREE

Cheers.

Nikki stares into her menu. Gorgeous steaks abound.

NIKKI

T-bone!

SHOOTER

Can you handle that much meat?

NIKKI

I did before the pimp.

Dale and Anthony look in shock.

DALE

Were you a--

Shooter cuts Dale off by putting his hand over his mouth.

SHOOTER

Leave it, mate.

NIKKI

It's cool. I don't mind. I turned tricks for cash.

Dale moves Shooter's hand...

DALE

Are you still open for business?

SHOOTER

Dale Overall!

DALE

I was just asking!

NIKKI

I'm retired. Now kindly fuck off.

Nikki gets up. To Shooter...

NIKKI

I want the T-bone, medium.

Shooter nods. Nikki leaves.

Shooter punches Dale in the arm.

DALE

Ow!

SHOOTER

She's seventeen, mate. She's young... And sensitive.

DALE

Sorry, mate.

Shooter grunts at Dale.

DALE

I swear.

Shooter nods. Dianna returns.

INT. STEAKHOUSE LADIES ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nikki washes her hands. She looks hard at herself in the mirror. She checks her clothes. Looks in her eyes.

She doesn't blink. A gust from her lungs.

NIKKI

Kick his ass later. Tonight is about fun.

She straightens her hair and smiles.

NIKKI

Badass.

She opens the door.

INT. STEAKHOUSE - LATER

Meat scraps fill the plates. Glasses sit half empty. The crew leans back, completely stuffed. Nikki stares at the bone.

NIKKI

Told ya so.

Shooter smiles.

Dianna stops to pick up plates.

NIKKI

And Dale... If you ever say anything like that to me again, I'm beating your ass in front of everyone, and it will not be sexy.

Dale's jaw drops.

NIKKI
Understand?

Dale understands.

NIKKI
(to Dianna)
Check please.

INT. DALE'S CAR - NIGHT

They ride in the night.

Nikki bursts into laughter.

NIKKI
She thought I was your daughter!

Shooter forces a laugh.

SHOOTER
Yeah. Funny stuff.

NIKKI
God, can you imagine?
(bad Aussie accent)
Oi, mate! Wanna get pissed?!

She giggles furiously. Shooter relaxes into his seat.

Dale looks into the rearview mirror. Adjusts it to see Nikki.

DALE
On me mother, I'm sorry.

NIKKI
You're not forgiven, but we'll see.

DALE
Fair enough.

Dale readjusts the mirror. In it headlights on an empty road.

DALE
Dammit.

ANTHONY
More?

DALE
Two, I think. We'll have to find a
place to lay low.

ANTHONY
A hotel would be nice.

NIKKI
Who's paying?

Shooter chuckles.

Nikki laughs. Then stops. An idea!

NIKKI
Hey, Anthony, how many of those car
bombs you got left?

Anthony digs in his knapsack.

ANTHONY
Three. Why?

NIKKI
Because there's two cars following
us, duh.

Dale smiles.

DALE
I like *her*!

A cheap motel just up the road on the left.

DALE
There we go.

Dale speeds up.

EXT. ANOTHER CHEAP MOTEL - LATER

Three buildings facing a center court. Not trying to be fancy, but better than what they're used to.

The junker pulls into the drive thru. Dale gets out and goes into the office. Nearly full parking lot. A few empty spaces.

A minute later, Dale comes out and gets in the car. The car pulls forward into a parking space at the back building.

The doors open and everybody gets out. They walk up the stairs to a rooms in the middle.

ON DALE

DALE
This one's yours. We're next door.

Shooter takes the key.

DALE
We'll need a diversion.

NIKKI
Yes we will.

Shooter opens his door and lets Nikki in. The other two go to their room.

LATER

A 1945 PACKARD drives in. A second car follows. They both park a few spaces from each other on the left.

SHOOTER'S DOOR

opens. He steps out, leans on the railing. He goes back in, leaving the door open.

FOUR MEN

get out of the two cars and sneak to the other side of the parking lot, hidden behind cars.

DALE

exits his room. Walks past Shooter's. Down the stairs.

THE FOUR MEN

duck in the darkness. Dale moves past.

When the four men come up, Shooter leans on the railing smoking a pipe.

ON THE LEFT BUILDING

ANTHONY

crouches and creeps, carrying a knapsack. He slips by cars until he reaches the Packard. He slides between cars...

UNDER THE PACKARD

he pulls a device from the pack. He places it on the center frame and presses a button. It lights up.

SHOOTER

looks out to the stars. He turns and goes inside.

THE RUSSIANS

rise slowly. WHISTLING! It's Dale! They duck.

ANTHONY

slips under the second car.

SHOOTER

brings Nikki out. Points at the stars.

DALE

Passes the Russians.

ANTHONY

creeps back to the center building.

THE RUSSIANS

watch Dale go back to his room. They don't notice Anthony.

SHOOTER AND NIKKI

go inside, close the door.

INT. NEW MOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Shooter sits by the window, peering through a crack in the curtains. Nikki sleeps on the bed. TV muted. Lights off.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT - DREAM

The slashing of the mattress. The blood flying. The monster turns to Nikki.

Nikki finds herself in a dank, dirty pit. Feral hogs surround her. She's frozen in place. The hogs come at her, sniffing and growling. They attack!

SHOOTER (V.O)

Nikki.

Nikki tries to scream. A hand lifts her from the pit and holds her by the neck. It's the "being". It roars.

INT. NEW MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Nikki stirs in her sleep, a small whine from her lips.

SHOOTER

Nikki.

Shooter jostles her.

Her eyes widen. Awake.

SHOOTER

It's time to go.

EXT. MOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

All four exit their doors. They head down the stairs and to the car.

They get in. Dale starts the car, turns on the lights. Everything's normal here.

Dale's car turns and pulls to the frontage road. He goes.

INSIDE DALE'S CAR

Anthony fiddles with a remote control device.

ANTHONY

Don't get too far ahead. They need to be in range.

DALE

Like Shooter's car?

ANTHONY

That was an accident. You said they were still shopping.

OUTSIDE DALE'S CAR

Dale hops on the highway and guns it.

The Packard and other car follow, but not too close.

OUT ON THE HIGHWAY

the traffic has disappeared. Two sets of headlights bear down on Dale's car.

INSIDE DALE'S CAR

Anthony watches the remote. A light flashes. He clicks a lever. The light flashes faster, then stops.

KAFLOOMMM!

ON THE HIGHWAY

A fireball behind them!

THE SECOND CAR

goes up in flames. The Packard stops before running into it.

DALE'S CAR

stops ahead and waits.

THE PACKARD

sits and waits. Someone SPEAKS RUSSIAN. The Packard inches ahead along side the fire.

THE BRAKE LIGHTS

on Dale's car shut off in favor of WHITE LIGHTS. He reverses.

THE PACKARD

stops. The transmission kicks in. CLUNK. It reverses slowly.

INSIDE DALE'S CAR

Anthony waits for the lights to come on.

ANTHONY

He's too far back.

DALE

I'm going, I'm going.

Anthony sees the headlights behind him back away.

ANTHONY

He's getting out of here!

Dale guns the pedal VVRRRRMMMMM! The engine howls in reverse.

ON THE HIGHWAY

Both cars reverse as fast as they can. The Packard is slow. Dale's car isn't.

Dale closes in on the fiery wreckage.

INSIDE DALE'S CAR

Dale leans over the seat watching where he goes. Shooter and Nikki duck out of his way.

ON THE HIGHWAY

Dale's car gets closer. The Packard has made it maybe a hundred feet before wheeling to the side.

DALE'S CAR

closes fast on the fireball.

INSIDE DALE'S CAR

Dale grits his teeth. The inside grows bright from the fire.

THE WRECKAGE

gets bigger in the window.

Dale sweats.

ON THE HIGHWAY

He's almost on the wreck!

SKRRRT WHOOSH

Dale's car whizzes by the fire. And spins 180...

INSIDE DALE'S CAR

The light on the remote goes on. Anthony flips the switch.

OUTSIDE DALE'S CAR

KERFLOOOOMMMM!

ANOTHER FIREBALL!

Dale slams on the brakes. SKRRRRRRRRRTTTTT!

INSIDE DALE'S CAR

turns bright orange. Dale catches his breath bathed in the light. Nikki and Shooter rise up and look out. Anthony wipes his face.

ON THE HIGHWAY

Dale's car sits between two roaring fires.

The car slips into gear and tears off past the first fire.

INT. DALE'S CAR - LATER

The crew is all smiles. They made it, no worse for the wear.

SHOOTER

I say tonight calls for a celebration. Big money and fast cars! What say you, gents?

ANTHONY

I could go for a beer. And a shot.

Dale and Shooter gaze in wonder.

SHOOTER

Now that's a wonderful idea. Something refreshing.

(to Nikki)

Waddya say?

Nikki ponders a moment.

NIKKI

Well, we never did get into that bar fight like you promised.

SHOOTER

That's right we didn't. How about it, gentleman? A bar fight for the lady? I'll throw the first punch.

DALE

I'm in!

SHOOTER

Anthony?

ANTHONY

I'll hide under the table, thanks.

SHOOTER

(to Nikki)

Looks like it's your birthday!

ON THE HIGHWAY

Dale's car rides the road.

INT. RURAL BAR - NIGHT

The quartet enter and stop in the foyer. What is this place? Bikers on one side, cowboys on the other. A strange mix.

A BURLY BIKER walks by.

SHOOTER
I hate bikers.

The biker stops and turns. In Shooter's face.

BIKER
What was that?

SHOOTER
Oh, I said I hate bikers. Not you,
though, mate. You seem nice.

The biker huffs and continues on his way. Dale is all smiles.

DALE
They got cowboys! I've always
wanted to punch a redneck.

ANTHONY
You just like to fight.

DALE
I'm a southpaw. It's my birthright.

ANTHONY
Can we find a table, please?

Nikki looks around.

NIKKI
There's one. By the dance floor.

They walk into the bar and sit at their table, tall with
high-back stools. "Classy".

A BAR RUNNER in jeans, leather vest, cowboy hat approaches.

RUNNER
What can I getcha?

SHOOTER
Two bottles, please.

ANTHONY AND DALE
Same. Same.

The runner turns to Nikki. Looks her up and down.

RUNNER
You got some I.D., honey?

Nikki holds up the keys.

NIKKI
Designated driver.

The runner chews her gum.

RUNNER
Uh huh. How about a soda?

Nikki nods. The runner smiles.

LATER

The men have their bottles. Shooter gives one to Nikki.

SHOOTER
Skoal!

He lifts his bottle to her.

ANTHONY AND DALE
Skoal!

They lift a bottle each.

Nikki looks around. Puts the bottle to her lips. Sips.

ALL
Ohhhhhh!

SHOOTER
You gotta chug it.

NIKKI
Like this?

She puts the bottle to her lips and chugs.

ALL
Skoal! Skoal! Skoal! Skoal!

Nikki chugs half before *GASP!*

SHOOTER
That's my girl!

The runner stops by.

RUNNER
Hey! What's this?

SHOOTER
It's me daughter's 18th birthday.
This is her first beer.

Nikki grins.

RUNNER

No more or you're outta here.

Nikki nods...

NIKKI

Yessum.

SHOOTER

Thanks, mum.

The runner leaves. It's the men's turn. Each take their bottle. Nikki calls it...

NIKKI

Skoal!

The men guzzle hard and fast. Shooter slams his bottle down first. Then Dale. Anthony spits up.

ACROSS THE BAR a YOUNG MAN (20), country strong but sweet looking, watches Nikki and the boys. He's taken by her.

ON NIKKI

NIKKI

I need some music.

She hops down from her chair and finds the jukebox across the small wooden dance floor.

Nikki flips through the song list. The young man approaches.

YOUNG MAN

Excuse me, miss, my name's Gilbert,
and I was just thinkin' you're the
purtiest girl I've ever seen.

Nikki flips through songs. Focused.

GILBERT

Anyway, I was wonderin' if you'd
like to--

NIKKI

Not interested, Gil. Sorry.

Crestfallen...

GILBERT

I didn't mean no offense, ma'am.

He tips his hat. Nikki smiles.

NIKKI

Maybe you can honor me with a
dance. Whatcha say, Gil?

Gil lights up!

NIKKI

Can you help me find a song? I
don't like this country stuff.

Gilbert steps to the interface.

GILBERT

There's some Elvis on here.

He flips through Elvis titles. "BURNING LOVE"

NIKKI

That one!

Gilbert puts a dollar in the jukebox. Nikki leads him to the
dance floor. The piano rings loud...

AT THE TABLE

The men have finished their second beers.

SHOOTER

You ready, mate?

Dale's giddy as all get out.

DALE

Let's do it!

ANTHONY

Do we have to?

SHOOTER

Not at first!

He and Dale laugh. Shooter stretches his back and thrusts his
elbows back just as the burly biker walks by. He elbows the
dude hard.

BIKER

Motherfucker!

He punches Shooter. Shooter falls from his chair but catches
himself. His turn.

SHOOTER

Cheers, mate!

Shooter thrusts and knocks the biker back. Dale stands and punches the first cowboy he sees. It. Is. On.

A biker goes flying into the cowboys. The cowboys see Shooter, think he's on their side. The rush into the bikers.

Dale, same thing with a cowboy. The bikers think he's with them. It's about to be a melee.

The bar erupts in a brawl as men go flying into tables and drinks get spilled. Waitresses get knocked off their feet.

ELVIS

*Lord Almighty, I feel my
temperature rising...
Higher and higher, it's burning
through to my soul...*

ON THE DANCE FLOOR

Nikki moves with a rhythm exotic to a country boy's eyes. Sexy. Sophisticated. Smooth. A city girl slumming it. Seductive. She sets Gilbert on fire.

Gilbert can't keep up. He's a regular stiff. Nikki takes his hand and leads him in a simple rock step.

GILBERT

I don't usually dance to this.

NIKKI

Show me how you dance.

Gilbert raises her hand and twirls her. He's a country dancer, and Nikki loves it. The brawl continues behind them.

ELVIS

*You're kisses lift me higher...
Like the sweet song of a choir...
You light my morning sky, with
burnin' love...*

They dance.

ON SHOOTER swinging at a huge biker and nailing him. Throws him into a cowboy. The cowboy don't take too kindly.

Fists and bodies fly.

Dale uses southpaw to his advantage and punches guys indiscriminately. The joy on his face!

Anthony lies under the table curled into a ball.

Another cowboy flies into the dance floor. A biker follows.

Gilbert gets between the biker and Nikki. Nikki dances around Gil and shows him who she is.

CRANK! To the chin. SCRACK! To the nose. She whoops ass.

The cowboy gets up and goes after Gilbert. He's too wounded, though, and Gilbert knocks him back on his ass.

Nikki finishes the biker off and dances back to Gilbert.

GILBERT

Miss, I don't know you, but I'd
like to.

Nikki smiles.

NIKKI

Shut up and dance!

She dances through the brawl, weaving through the grunts and sweat. Gilbert follows her.

ELVIS

*It's hard to breathe, my chest is
a-heavin'...
Lord have mercy, I'm burning a hole
where I lay...*

To the door...

OUTSIDE THE BAR

a bench waits. Nikki takes a seat and invites Gilbert to sit with her. He does.

NIKKI

I'm not like most girls. I can't
stay here, and I can't take you
with me.

GILBERT

I was just gonna ask for a dance.

NIKKI

Oh.

She laughs.

NIKKI

Could you imagine me a country girl? What would it be like?

GILBERT

It's a lot of work. But when you get time off, it's a lot of fun.

NIKKI

I can't imagine that much work.

GILBERT

You'd make a fine country girl. But a blue bird's gotta be a blue bird.

This makes Nikki smile and blush.

NIKKI

You're a good guy, Gil.

She gets up and kisses him on the cheek.

NIKKI

I'm glad I met you.

She walks back to the entrance alone. She calls back...

NIKKI

Thanks for the dance!

THE DOOR BURSTS OPEN

Dale and Shooter rush out laughing.

ELVIS

I'm just a hunk, a hunk, of burnin' love...

I'm just a hunk, a hunk, of burnin' love...

They get to the parking lot and grab their knees.

Nikki runs over to them.

Anthony bursts through the door, racing to catch up.

ANTHONY

You left me!

Dale still laughs, catches his breath...

DALE

We were distracting 'em so you could make your escape! What took you so long?

Anthony grumbles to the car.

NIKKI

(to Shooter)

I needed that.

She kisses Shooter on the cheek and gets in the car.

EXT. WAY OFF THE HIGHWAY - WOODS - NIGHT

A clearing deep in the woods. A campfire. The four sit around it, Nikki between Dale and Shooter.

DALE

(to Nikki)

So Sergei says, I want you to bring in Shooter. I said, Can't do that, mate. Fuck off. He said, Either you get him or I get you. I said, Alright. What do I get? He said, Half. I said, Tell Shooter's mum I said I was sorry.

Shooter laughs.

SHOOTER

You took a bullet for that!

DALE

Like you wouldn't!

SHOOTER

The difference is, I'd bring you in. Right, mate?

Shooter guffaws.

NIKKI

Wha'd it feel like? Getting shot.

Shooter contains himself. Dale is serious. Anthony is just kinda there.

DALE

Imagine a hornet burrowing it's way into your flesh, only it's on fire.

SHOOTER
Forty-fours will hurt.

DALE
Bloody oath. Still hasn't healed.

Anthony slaps Dale's leg. Dale swipes back.

DALE
Go ta hell!

LATER

The embers burn. Dale and Anthony hunt in the dark woods. Shooter and Nikki sit beside each other.

SHOOTER
Dale's like my brother. We've been through a lot.

Nikki puts her hands to the heat. A GUNSHOT in the distance.

SHOOTER
Met him back when we were both roadies. After the thing with my ex, he got me involved in *this*.

NIKKI
Do you wish you hadn't.

SHOOTER
If I hadn't, would it have changed anything? I might still be on the road doing who knows what with the likes of these cunts.

NIKKI
She got you for doing what you love. Something beautiful.

SHOOTER
Yeah...

Dale and Anthony return with a rabbit. Nikki and Shooter up.

SHOOTER
Now how the fuck--

DALE
I'm a country boy, remember?

He drops the rabbit by the fire.

DALE
Who's hungry?

NIKKI
Ewww...

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY

Everyone sleeps except Dale. He's busy kicking people awake. Not Nikki, though. He moves her shoulder.

They all get up in their own time.

SHOOTER
Where's breakfast?

DALE
We'll worry about that in a minute.
Are we good to go?

Anthony yawns awake. Nikki kicks back.

SHOOTER
Assuming that was all of them. You didn't see anymore on your way in?

DALE
Nuh. Just Rusty Cough. But you took care of him.

SHOOTER
No we didn't. I thought you might have. Like the other guy.

DALE
What other guy???

SHOOTER
The guy on the bridge!

ANTHONY
The one you let go.

SHOOTER
You let him go???

DALE
He was shot to shit.

SHOOTER
But he was alive! Fuck me.

Dale glares at Anthony.

DALE

No, no. That one's definitely dead.
He was on his last breath when I
sent him on his way.

SHOOTER

But you didn't take care of Rusty.

DALE

I saw you shoot him.

NIKKI

From fifty feet away. With this.

She shows him the shotgun.

DALE

Fuck me. We've got about six
hundred miles to go. We can get you
home by evening.

SHOOTER

Dale...Rusty?

DALE

You shot him in the face. He'll be
in hospital, yeah?

SHOOTER

I swear to god, Dale. If there's
anyone behind us, I'm gonna--

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The junker muscle car speeds down the highway.

THREE BLACK SEDANS

give chase, staggered behind.

INSIDE DALE'S CAR

Dale focuses on the road. Anthony locks and loads.

Shooter and Nikki hold on for dear life in the back.

SHOOTER

I'm gonna skin ya, Dale!

ON HIGHWAY

ZZZHOOOOMMMMM Dale's car races.

The car skids mercifully to a stop. Rastakov gets out. Bullet holes riddle the glass. He climbs on the hood.

The other cars zoom ahead, their tail lights shrinking.

RASTAKOV

yells again and stomps on the windshield, knocking it loose. Another yell and stomp. The glass breaks free. He jumps down and pulls it out.

Around to the driver's door. He opens it. Blood everywhere.

ON THE CHASE

The two remaining Russian cars split the highway.

INSIDE DALE'S CAR

ANTHONY

I got two magazines left.

DALE

Shooter?

Shooter checks his pocket.

SHOOTER

Yeah, plenty.

DALE

Hold onto your arses. We got a straight stretch ahead.

OUTSIDE DALE'S CAR

The headlights and tail lights go dark

The Russians pull back. They can't see! They put on their brights. Nothing. Where'd they go???

INSIDE A RUSSIAN CAR

The SECOND DRIVER speaks to the SECOND PASSENGER in Russian.

PASSENGER

Where did they go?

DRIVER

You saw the same thing I did!

BRAKE LIGHTS!

ON THE HIGHWAY

The Russian car veers to the left. To the right, knocking the last Russian car off balance. The two cars bump again.

INSIDE DALE'S CAR

They all duck as the two cars pass, narrowly missing them. They watch the cars veer into each other one last time before running off the road into the forest.

Dale guns it. Flips on the lights.

ON THE HIGHWAY

Dale screeches to a halt when he gets to where the cars went over. He and Anthony get out with their rifles.

They walk on either side of the road. Russian voices.

Dale opens fire into the forest. He knows he's hitting something because he hears the screaming and metal popping.

Anthony finds his target. The two men blast away into the night. They UNLOAD. Reload.

Dale has his target. PAP-PAP-PAP-PAP-PAP SHKABOOM! A giant fireball as the car explodes. Dale celebrates.

HEADLIGHTS! SCREECHING! Rastakov bounces Dale off the hood of his car. Dale flips and lands on his back.

DALE

Me legs!

Anthony runs over.

The Russian reverses, squealing his tires.

ANTHONY

Hang on!

ANTHONY hauls Dale's ass behind his car. Rastakov peels past.

SHOOTER AND NIKKI exit Dale's car. They walk to the left side of the road. Draw him away from Dale.

ANTHONY walks forward toward the side of the road.

DALE grabs onto his bumper.

UUUUUURRRRRTTTTTTTT!!! Here comes Rastakov!

ANTHONY opens fire!

RASTAKOV ducks, laughing.

ANTHONY dodges the vehicular onslaught. The car stops hard.

RASTAKOV looks up. Sees...

NIKKI AND SHOOTER on the shoulder. He revs the engine.

SHOOTER

Go back to Dale, Miss. It's me he wants. I don't need you getting run over by a crazy Russian.

Nikki hesitates.

SHOOTER

Go!

She runs and ducks by the hood of Dale's car.

Shooter stands in the oncoming headlights.

SHOOTER

Rusty! Come on, then!

SCRRRREEEEEEEEEAAAAATTTTT

ON THE HIGHWAY

Rastakov guns it.

He closes fast.

ON SHOOTER

holds still, bathed in light.

Rastakov growls and roars like a wild beast as he shifts.

Shooter's face...

SHOOTER

Fuck me...

RASTAKOV with the missing windshield BANG!

His head explodes! The car veers. Shooter dives and dodges. Everyone looks around. What the fuck happened?

DALE leans over the trunk of his car holding his rifle.

They all run to him.

DALE

Me legs! Fuck me.

He drops to the ground.

Shooter stands over him.

SHOOTER
Always with your legs!

Dale would laugh if it weren't him.

ANTHONY
We'll find you a car. I've got to
get him to hospital.

NIKKI
A hospital. Here we say we're
talking him to A hospital.

Shooter chuckles.

ANTHONY
Shall we?

Anthony holds Dale up by the shoulders to a wail. Shooter
slides his arms down Dale's back to his butt.

DALE
God dammit!

Shooter lifts him. Nikki opens the car door and slides the
seat back.

SHOOTER
Quit your whining. At least you
didn't get shot this time.

Anthony can't hold it in. He laughs, Dale slides down.

ANTHONY
Sorry, mate!

They load Dale into the front seat. The car fire rages.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Shooter enters with a bag. Nikki watches TV.

SHOOTER
I got something for ya.

Nikki turns off the TV and sits up. Shooter reaches into the
bag. He slowly pulls...

SHOOTER
Just a silly little thing.

...a big pink Teddy bear, round and fluffy. He holds it up.

SHOOTER
I got my little girl one just like
it last time I saw her. I don't
know. She loved it.

Shooter holds the bear out for Nikki. She smiles and takes
it. She gives it a squeeze.

NIKKI
It's big and soft! Like you!

Shooter blushes. Nikki presses her nose to the bear's nose.

SHOOTER
I figured a girl needs a bear.

NIKKI
My father didn't believe in it. He
didn't like imaginary friends.

Shooter sits across from Nikki.

SHOOTER
Then why go back?

Nikki drops the bear in her lap.

NIKKI
The truth. I'm nothing like them. I
need to know why.

SHOOTER
The truth is, you're a strong,
tough woman. No other truth matters
so long as you live yours.

Nikki gets up and sits next to Shooter.

NIKKI
They're the only family I know.

Shooter puts his arm around her.

SHOOTER
The only family that matters is the
one you choose. Family doesn't
define you. You define family.

He squeezes her. She squeezes the bear.

EXT. TOWN - ICE CREAM PARLOR - DAY

A brand new red Cadillac sits alone in the parking lot.

INT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

Shooter and Nikki sit in a booth by the window. Shooter has a cone, Nikki eats a Sundae with a spoon.

SHOOTER

I don't know why you don't like cones. They're the best way to eat ice cream.

NIKKI

They're messy.

SHOOTER

You didn't seem to mind getting your hands dirty before.

NIKKI

That was fun. I don't like sticky fingers. It's gross.

Shooter lowers his cone.

SHOOTER

Ya know, maybe you don't have to go home just yet. Like you said, the truth can wait.

NIKKI

I need him to say it.

SHOOTER

I could teach you how to play poker. When you're 18, we hit the casinos and take them down.

NIKKI

Orrrr... We could do your regular job. Split the fee.

He's just not getting through...

SHOOTER

Maybe it's best I take you home.

He lifts his cone to his face and dots his nose. Nikki rolls her eyes and laughs.

EXT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

Still the red Cadillac sits alone.

EXT. FATHER'S MANSION - DAY

A modern mansion. Two stories, black frosted glass walls. It sits on acres of lawn and trees. Flowers along the front in the middle of a circular driveway.

Shooter's "new" car pulls into the round drive.

INSIDE SHOOTER'S CAR

Shooter puts the car in park. Nikki stares at the house.

SHOOTER
Seems a little much.

Nikki sighs.

NIKKI
It's what's important to them.

A blonde woman, MOTHER (40s), tightly wound, exits followed by FATHER (40s), his muscles show through his dress shirt.

Shooter and Nikki exit the car.

OUTSIDE SHOOTER'S CAR

Father steps in front of Mother.

FATHER
Where have you been, young lady?
Your mother was worried sick.

MOTHER
Into the house.

They see Shooter's massive form walk around the car. Father smiles and holds out his hand.

FATHER
Thank you, uh...?

SHOOTER
Shooter McGahan. Pleasure to meet
you finally.

FATHER
I'm Nikki's father. This is her
mother. Was she any trouble?

Shooter looks at Nikki, Mother guiding her into the house.

SHOOTER
She's a good kid.

They shake hands. Father squeezes hard, showing off his form.

SHOOTER
That's a good grip!

FATHER
Have to be in shape in my business.

SHOOTER
What exactly allows you to afford
all this? It's a bit fancy.

FATHER
Money. I'm in the business of
money. What do you do?

SHOOTER
Oh, I run a delivery service. This
is right up my alley, actually.

FATHER
Come. You must join us for lunch.

Father reaches his arm out.

INT. MANSION - FORMAL DINING ROOM - LATER

Modern opulent. Dark, smooth wood and stylish silver. A long table seats the family and Shooter. A blonde man, BROTHER (20) and his SISTER (18), also blonde sit beside Nikki.

Mother and Father sit on either end. Shooter sits next to little blonde EMMA (4).

A servant sets a platter of...hamburgers? Really? She serves Father, then Mother, then Shooter, then the kids.

FATHER
The kids like hamburgers. We do
this every Saturday.

SHOOTER
My favorite!

Shooter picks up his hamburger and bites. He chews a little.

The family cuts their burgers and eats them with forks. Mother sees Shooter eating with his hands and taps her knife.

NIKKI

Psst!

She shows him the knife and fork.

FATHER

Nonsense! "Shooter" is a guest in our strange land. We welcome his cultural differences.

Father picks up his hamburger and bites. The kids follow suit. Mother uses her knife and fork.

SHOOTER

Sorry, mate. I don't mean to be rude. But I think these hamburgers are off. They're not done, yet.

NIKKI

They're plant based.

Shooter looks at his burger.

FATHER

We don't believe in harming animals for our pleasure. We get the same nutrients from plants.

Shooter takes another bite. He talks with his mouth full.

SHOOTER

That's alright. I've eaten a lot of things you wouldn't believe.

He swallows.

SHOOTER

I was outside Hong Kong on a job, and the only thing they had were duck eggs. Turns out, they weren't so much eggs as baby ducks.

Mother drops her knife and puts her napkin to her face. Brother and Sister look on in awe.

FATHER

Fascinating.

BROTHER

You ate an animal?

NIKKI

It's really good.

Mother hisses. Nikki shrugs.

SHOOTER

I wouldn't eat it again if I didn't
have to, but it wasn't bad.

They continue to eat.

Shooter looks at little Emma.

SHOOTER

You've got the most beautiful blue
eyes I've seen in ages.

Emma smiles, then scrunches her eyes closed and hides her
face. Mother looks on.

MOTHER

She says thank you.

She taps Emma on the head. Emma looks up.

EMMA

Thank you!

Shooter smiles.

SHOOTER

And what's your name?

She giggles.

EMMA

Emma!

SHOOTER

Beautiful, just like you!

Shooter eats his vegan burger. With his hands. Emma copies.

EXT. MANSION - BACK LAWNS - DAY

Father drives Shooter in a golf cart among the vast back
lawns. He stops at the top of a hill overlooking the woods
beyond. They get out and take in the vista.

FATHER

Do do play any golf?

SHOOTER

Nah, mate. No time in my business.

FATHER

I've always found you working class types fascinating.

SHOOTER

Is that right? Don't seem to be many working class types around, except for your servants.

FATHER

I was in love with one of you once. A school teacher, of all things.

SHOOTER

Doesn't seem to be your type.

FLASHBACK

A park at midday. A young Father and an unknown woman with long, dark hair hold each other by an artificial lake.

FATHER (V.O.)

She was beautiful, despite her lack of wealth.

A beach at sunset, the couple strolls in the sand.

FATHER (V.O.)

Intriguing to the core.

A fancy restaurant, the sit at a small table. He opens a small felt box revealing a humongous diamond ring.

FATHER (V.O.)

We were serious.

Young Father stands outside an ornate mansion arguing with an OLDER WOMAN.

FATHER

But she's perfect for me!

OLDER WOMAN

I am your mother, and you will do as I say. Get. Rid of her.

She turns her back and walks away.

FATHER (V.O.)

But it was not to be.

END FLASHBACK

Still overlooking the greens.

FATHER

Last I heard, she married a mechanic. Imagine that!

SHOOTER

That's an awfully sad story. You've got a lovely wife and kids.

Father scoffs.

FATHER

A manufactured family. They don't know me as a man, they know me simply as Father.

SHOOTER

Still, they love you--

FATHER

I want to show you something.

SHOOTER

Sure thing, mate.

Father walks...

INT. MANSION - DEN

More a library than a den, Father closes the doors. He moves behind his dark oak desk.

A pig mask hangs on a hatrack in the corner.

SHOOTER

That's kinda creepy.

FATHER

I love scaring the children on Halloween. Works beautifully.

SHOOTER

You like children's screams, eh?

FATHER

I like to draw.

He pulls a stack of drawings from the shelf.

FATHER

These I don't like as much. They seem scattered.

He spreads them on the desk.

FATHER

But these...

He opens the center drawer and slides out a large manila folder. He opens it on the desk.

FATHER

These are my favorites.

Shooter steps in and looks down. His eyes widen.

A sketch of a dead woman, clothes torn, gashes on her back.

Shooter picks it up.

SHOOTER

It does seem more focused.

He sets the picture down and picks up the next. A dead man in an overcoat in an alley.

Dead children.

Dead dogs.

Dead couple in bed.

A dark haired girl.

SHOOTER

Sure you're not a serial killer?

Father huffs. He slides the favorites back in the folder. He gathers the stack and straightens it.

FATHER

I knew this was a mistake. I thought you'd understand.

SHOOTER

I was just yanking your chain.

Still straightening the stack, he pounds them on the desk.

FATHER

I don't know what that means.

SHOOTER

A joke. Didn't mean nothing by it.

Father stops and takes a deep breath.

FATHER

I suppose I brought this on myself.
This is what I have to hide from
them. My soul is an artist.

Shooter smiles.

SHOOTER

Certainly got some great visuals.

FATHER

I don't question the source. I
simply embrace the feeling of
creating something knew.

Shooter's sufficiently creeped out.

FATHER

Let me show you out.

Father leads Shooter from the room.

EXT. MANSION - ROUND DRIVE - EVENING

Father escorts Shooter to his car.

FATHER

What a beautiful car.

SHOOTER

I just picked it up yesterday.

FATHER

You mean you stole it?

Shooter freezes.

SHOOTER

Excuse me mate?

FATHER

Just putting you on, mate?

Shooter's uneasy chuckle.

SHOOTER

Yeah...

FATHER

If there's anything I can ever do
for you...

SHOOTER

Actually, I was wondering--

FATHER

We should meet again. How about
next weekend?

SHOOTER

Could I say goodbye to Nikki?

They stop at the driver door.

FATHER

Oh, I'm sorry. Nikki's working on
her prayer book. She's way behind.

SHOOTER

Right. Next weekend, then.

FATHER

It'll be our pleasure!

Shooter opens the door, gets halfway in.

SHOOTER

You'll tell her...

Father smiles and nods. Shooter gets in and closes the door.

Father waves as Shooter drives off.

INT. OUTSKIRTS - RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A family place with a secluded bar where Shooter sits eating
a REAL hamburger. He savors it.

He stares at the burger between bites. Pink in the middle.

LATER

Shooter holds a beer. He turns his chair to watch the
families dining together.

Mothers cut food for toddlers.

Little kids eat fries while their parents have steak.

A family of three eating hamburgers.

Shooter chuckles to himself. He drinks his beer.

INT MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Shooter lies on the bed flipping through channels. He isn't even looking at the TV. Music plays.

He looks over to Nikki's old bed. He smiles.

SHOOTER

Guess it's just you and me, mate.

He rolls over and closes his eyes.

Thoughts roll through his head. He smiles bigger.

KRIS KRISTOFFERSON

*Then somewhere near Salinas, Lord
I let her slip away*

A tear crawls down his nose.

KRIS KRISTOFFERSON

*She's looking for the home I hope
she finds*

His face twitches. The smile fades.

KRIS KRISTOFFERSON

*I'd trade all my tomorrows
For one single yesterday...*

Those pictures. The couple in bed. The little girl. The pig mask. All flash. "He's a monster," she said.

KRIS KRISTOFFERSON

*Freedom's just another word for
nothin' left to lose...*

Shooter's eyes shoot open.

SHOOTER

Christ!

INT. MANSION - DIFFERENT DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The dining room sits off an open plan kitchen with an island in the middle. The family eats around a table by a bay window. They're almost finished. Nikki picks at her food.

FATHER

If you don't eat, you don't eat.

NIKKI
I'm not hungry.

FATHER
I don't mean just tonight. Eat your
food. Your siblings have eaten.

NIKKI
I'm not like them.

Brother and Sister gasp and stare at Nikki.

Father motions to them.

FATHER
Take Emma upstairs.

The kids quietly comply. Only Mother and Father to deal with.

FATHER
What is that supposed to mean?

Nikki sets down her utensils gently.

NIKKI
You don't treat me like them. You
never have. We don't even look the
same. I want to know--

FATHER
That you were adopted?

Nikki's eyes widen.

FATHER
Your parents were murdered. The
authorities couldn't find any close
relatives. I took you in. And how
do you repay me? By running away!

Mother gets up and walks out of the room.

NIKKI
I couldn't take it anymore. All
this compliance. That's not me!

FATHER
You were always defiant. Hard as I
tried. I treated you like my own
daughter. And what thanks?

NIKKI
Exactly. You treated me like a
clone of her. That's not me.

Father scoffs as he rises.

FATHER

We'll have no more of this. If you don't like it here, you can leave when you turn eighteen.

Nikki gets up.

NIKKI

I'm not waiting a year.

She storms out of the room. Father glares.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Shooter's car races up the highway.

INSIDE SHOOTER'S CAR

Shooter focuses on the road a little too hard. He swings the wheel to the right to avoid a semi.

SHOOTER

Fuck me.

He looks at the radio. He reaches down and turns it on.

Garbage. He watches the road as he tunes.

More garbage.

Presses the scan button.

Mexican music? No thanks.

Scan.

Classic rock station. "Me and Bobby McGee" by Janis Joplin.

JANIS

*Through all kinds of weather...
Through everything we've done...
Yeah, Bobby baby kept me from the
cold...*

SHOOTER

Oh, fuck yeah.

He relaxes.

SHOOTER

*I'd trade all my tomorrows for one
single yesterday...*

Fuck it. He guns it.

OUTSIDE SHOOTERS CAR

The car speeds along weaving through traffic.

INT. MANSION - NIKKI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Nikki lies on her bed reading "The Bell Jar" with the bear beside her. She closes the book and looks at the bear.

She slams the book down and grabs a duffel bag from the closet. She opens it on her bed and starts packing.

Nothing much. Just a few clothes and some cash hidden in a false bottom of a jewelry box.

She zips up the bag.

A KNOCK at the door.

MOTHER (O.C.)

Nikki. Your father would like to see you.

NIKKI

Coming!

Nikki straps the bag over her shoulder and heads out.

INT. OPEN KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Nikki walks downstairs carrying the bear, past the kitchen to the living room.

FATHER (O.C.)

Where do you think you're going?

Nikki freezes.

NIKKI

Out.

He's in the kitchen standing behind the island.

FATHER

And when will you be back?

Nikki bristles. She turns toward him. She steps...

NIKKI

I won't be. I don't know why I came back. It wasn't worth it.

FATHER

I didn't give you permission. You do nothing in this house without my say so. You know the rules.

NIKKI

I've already been in the real world. I don't need you anymore.

Father pulls a knife from the block on the island. Nonchalant. He strokes it.

FATHER

You've needed me your whole life. Where would you be without me? In a foster home?

NIKKI

Running away from there, too, only they wouldn't care so much.

Nikki stops across the island from him.

NIKKI

Why do you?

FATHER

You are my daughter.

NIKKI

Get it through your head! I'm not your daughter!

Father slams the knife handle on the island.

FATHER

I am your father!

NIKKI

You're a monster!

EXT. MANSION - ROUND DRIVE - CONTINUOUS

Shooter screeches to a halt in the drive. He opens his door and lunges out, tripping himself.

SHOOTER

God dammit.

He picks himself up. He sees the silhouettes of Father and Nikki through the frosted glass. Clearly an argument!

INT. MANSION - OPEN KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Father flies off the handle.

FATHER

Who do you think you are?! Don't you test me, young lady!

NIKKI

What are you going to do?

He looks at the knife. Sets it down calmly.

FATHER

I thought you'd grow up to appreciate this life...me.

NIKKI

Who are my parents?

Shooter rushes in.

SHOOTER

Sorry. Didn't mean to interrupt.

FATHER

Not at all. Join us. We were just talking about Nikki's childhood. Go on. Nikki.

Nikki takes a deep breath.

NIKKI

I want to know about my *real* parents. What happened to them?

Father smiles and straightens up.

FATHER

Your father was a mechanic, your mother a school teacher. Typical.

NIKKI

How did they die?

Father nods, surreptitiously picking up the knife.

SHOOTER
Nikki, walk away.

FATHER
I wanted what they had.

Nikki freezes. She looks at Shooter.

SHOOTER
You were right, Nikki. You were adopted, now let's go.

She gazes at Father...

NIKKI
What did you do?

SHOOTER
He's a monster, Nikki. Please. Let's get the hell out of here and back on the road.

FATHER
They had you. I wanted you.

A tear down Nikki's cheek.

NIKKI
No...

SHOOTER
That's all. Nikki, come on!

Father slides around the corner of the island toward Shooter.

FATHER
What more is there?

Father stalks.

FATHER
Your kind, you...working stiffs really do amuse me, Shooter. Much like a busy ant hill amuses a six year old boy with a magnifying glass. It's too tempting...

Father LUNGES at Shooter! Shooter barely misses being cut. He backs himself between Father and Nikki.

SHOOTER
Mate. There's no need for that.

SWIPE! SWING! SLASH!

The blade cuts Shooter's arm.

SHOOTER
Aw, fuck it all.

Shooter swings and misses. He finally lands a blow to the midsection. It hurt, but...

Mistake. The knife plunges into Shooter's liver.

FATHER
I used to like quick, brutal deaths. But I was still in my twenties, then. The palate changes as you get older. Eh...mate?

Shooter grabs the blade as Father forces it deeper.

SHOOTER
Fuck! I need that for drinking!

Father pulls out the knife. Shooter crashes to his knees.

FATHER
There will be none of that in this house. We're a good family. And you've spoiled my daughter.

Father moves for Nikki. Nikki backs up, keeping him square in front of her.

Father swipes the knife. Blood splatters onto Nikki.

Nikki looks at the blood. Shooter's blood. Fuck no.

She lets Father get closer. He lunges. She thrusts.

A palm to his chest. OOF! She's close. He swings the blade. SCRIP! Slices her side. Blood spills. She grabs it and yelps.

Father edges toward Nikki. She thrusts again, but he blocks.

The knife comes in SLASH! Her arm this time. More blood.

Father swings the blade again. Nikki kicks his hand away. The knife flies into the sink. Nikki squares up, barely.

Father swings his fist and CRACK! Right to her cheek. He swings again THWACK! To the gut OOMPH!

Nikki coughs. Breathes heavily. Father grabs her around the throat and lifts her off her feet. She grabs his wrists.

Father squeezes. Nikki chokes, her legs dangling.

FATHER

All I wanted was a daughter who
didn't look like her mother. Why
couldn't you be that daughter?!

He punches her BAM. He punches again BAM. Nikki's bloody.

Father sets her down, still holding her throat. Nikki looks
to Shooter one last time. *Help?* Her eyes say.

Shooter reaches to her, then points to his groin. Nikki turns
back to Father, waiting for the hit.

Father rears back for the death blow. Nikki plants her foot
and clenches her jaw. She swings her leg **BOOM!** Right in the
nuts. A high pitched scream hangs in the air, frozen.

Father drops Nikki as he falls to a knee. He chokes for air.

Nikki grabs his head and BASH! Her knee through his nose.
Father still can't scream from the pain.

Nikki heads to the sink to grab the knife. She comes around
the corner of the island.

NIKKI

You are not my father, pig.

SCHWING! She slams the blade hard into the back of his neck.

FLOP he's down. Nikki rises. BANG! A bullet rips through her
arm. FUCK!

She turns, Mother aiming a pistol.

MOTHER

I knew you'd ruin my family.

BANG! Into Nikki's left side. Nikki falls against the island.

MOTHER

I gave him a family, but he loved
that whore.

Nikki pushes against the island.

MOTHER

What have you ever done?

Mother stands over Nikki. She puts the gun to Nikki's head.

MOTHER

Why should I not take from you what
you took from me?

Her hand squeezes the gun...

BOOM! A big red hole opens in Mother's gut. She's stunned.

BOOM! Right through Mother's heart. Done.

Nikki pushes herself to Shooter, still aiming his trusty .44.

SHOOTER
That's my girl.

He drops the gun.

NIKKI
You're pretty fucked up.

SHOOTER
No worse than them.

NIKKI
Come on...

She tries to get up.

SHOOTER
Nah, miss.
(he motions to the phone)
Call 'em.

Nikki freezes.

SHOOTER
It's OK. I saved your life.

He smiles. She gets it. She reaches for the phone.

EXT. PHOENIX - GRANDMA'S HOUSE - DAY

A bright blue Cadillac stops in front of a white house. It's made of wood, and there is pink bunting over the door and a small banner that reads: "WELCOME HOME NIKOLE BABBITT"

INSIDE THE CAR

Shooter looks across Nikki. Emma in back holding the bear.

SHOOTER
I thought your name was Bible.

Nikki gazes at the banner.

NIKKI
I was only three.

She leans over and hugs Shooter. Shooter holds her.

NIKKI

I want my grandmother to meet you.

SHOOTER

I'm alright, love. Don't want to get too emotional in front of strangers. You'll be alright.

They pull apart, Nikki smiling.

NIKKI

I hope you see your daughter.

Shooter smiles.

SHOOTER

I feel I already have.

A tear streaks down Nikki's cheek. She buries her face in Shooter's chest.

Shooter strokes her hair.

SHOOTER

Now, now, love. You can't meet your family with a wet face.

Nikki sits up and wipes her face. She looks at Emma.

NIKKI

We can't meet them if we stay here.

SHOOTER

Alright, then.

Nikki opens the door, sliding her foot down.

SHOOTER

Stop kicking me door!

Nikki opens Emma's door.

NIKKI

Sorry, *daaad!*

Nikki takes Emma's hand. Emma carries the bear.

NIKKI

(to Emma)

Are you ready to meet my family?

The door slams shut. Emma buries her face in Nikki's hip.

NIKKI
Me, too, kid. Me, too.

Shooter leans over her empty seat.

SHOOTER
Keep in touch!

Nikki holds Emma.

NIKKI
We'll be working together soon!

One last wave. Shooter presses the gas.

SHOOTER
*Busted flat in Baton Rouge waiting
for a train, when I was feelin'
near as faded as my jeans...*

The car pulls away.

SHOOTER (O.C.)
*Nikki thumbed a diesel down just
before it rained...*

Nikki and Emma walk through the fence. Green lawn, flowers under the windows.

They walk up the steps. Nikki squeezes Emma's hand.

She raises her knuckles.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. MID-CREDITS - AIRPORT - DAY

Shooter waits in line at the ticket counter.

It's his turn. A TICKET AGENT waits.

Shooter shuffles in his pockets and pulls out some bills.

TICKET AGENT
Where to, sir?

Shooter places the money on the counter.

SHOOTER
Rochester, please. One way.

Shooter grins.

CUT TO BLACK.