

FLY BY NIGHT

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TEASER

EXT. JAPAN NATIONAL ROUTE 4 - NIGHT

Silence. Above, a full moon illuminates a deserted highway.

Beside these steel and concrete veins, a vast, dark and unforgiving forests hide secrets best left buried.

A black CAR flies south past a large road sign reading:

LEAVING FUKUSHIMA PLEASE DRIVE CAREFULLY

THUMP! The car hits a small pothole in the highway.

INT. CAR TRUNK - NIGHT

A lone man's head bounces off the trunk, he's unconscious.

Picture the tireddest, meanest, grouchiest son-of-a bitch self hating loser you can.

Now give him the thousand yard stare of a mental health orderly whose seen more crazy than Arkham Asylum, and a two dollar Hawaiian shirt like Magnum P.I's, but less than half the detective he was.

Meet JOE HORIUCHI (40s). An eye opens, another. He comes to.

Hair matted with sweat, bruise colors his eye, dried blood cakes his wounds. A fresh lump on his skull from the trunk.

No idea where he is. Joe's eyes look everywhere, his breathing accelerates, heartbeat echoes inside the trunk.

Electrical tape gag and bind his wrists, feet and mouth.

He tries to wrestle off the tape from around his hands.

Can't.

He struggles to spit out the gag.

Can't.

A muffled SCREAM, he SCREAMS again. He loses it, his bound hands move to the lid. He pounds on it, claws at it.

His bound feet kick up at it. He cries. HYSTERICAL. Words we can't imagine come out his mouth.

He exhausts himself.

Muffled MUSIC plays. Joe squeezes his eyes shut, calms himself, halts his hysteria, listens. MUSIC gets louder.

He wipes his eyes, looks around, spots it. His way out.

He sends the little boy back to where he came from.

Joe's back.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

DRIVER (40s) Iranian, mustache, solid, gives exudes a strong ex-military vibe, checks his watch, wears surgical gloves.

A NOZZLE pokes through a crack in the back seat.

WHOOSH!

The car fills with WHITE FIRE RETARDANT, driver, blind, coughs, gasps for air.

Winds down the window, white retardant spills out the car. The retardant clears.

Driver wipes his eyes, looks in the rearview mirror.

In the rear view Joe rises, covered in white powder and dried blood, like a ghost. Driver's eyes widen.

Joe explodes at the driver, lunges for a headlock.

The car swerves. Straightens.

Driver wrenches his gun, through the dust covered windshield. Smashes The butt into Joe's face.

Joe's nose explodes, he recoils, SCOFFS like his nose is blocked the only passage air can escape is his open mouth.

Driver tries again, Joe defends, spits blood in the driver's face, driver winces, his gloved hand clears the blood.

The car swerves over the meridian.

Oncoming car horn BLARES, driver swerves, gains control. He aims his weapon over his shoulder, pulls the trigger.

BAM! BAM BAM!

Bullets rip through the roof. Deafening. Joe blinks, struggles to focus.

Joe strips the weapon from the driver's hand with a deft flick of his palm, the weapon falls to the passenger seat. Driver reaches for it exposing his neck, Joe sees his chance, locks in a rear naked triangle choke.

He may be a useless S.O.B but he can hold himself in a fight.

The driver eyes Joe over his shoulder, how the fuck does he know how to do that? Driver reaches for Joe's face, digs his fingers into Joe's swollen eye.

Joe screams releases his grip, falls into the back seat.

Driver scrambles for his weapon.

Joe lifts his legs, kicks into the back of the drivers seat.

CRUNCH! Driver face sandwiches between his seat and the steering wheel.

The car crosses the medium into the oncoming traffic lane.

Driver peers through the steering wheel a head.

A large TRUCK approaches. Too late to stop.

Driver pulls hard left, SLAMS THE BRAKES. Not in time.

Driver's car clips the truck's right bumper. Tires screech, driver's car tips, FLIPS up.

SILENCE.

The car goes airborne.

DEAFENING METAL-CRUNCHING as the car lands back to earth, FLIPS send the car over and over.

Driver's driven forward by the force of the impact, a driver's side air bag, explodes, cushioning him.

Joe, not so fortunate, bounces around, winces smashes against the car interior. Windshield glass digs into his face.

Driver's car CRASHES to a halt on the side of the highway.

Steam billows from the hood..

Music picks back up.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. TOKYO - NIGHT

Rain. Neon-drenched streets of a large red light district, eye-catching billboards vie for attention.

(All conversations between Japanese nationals take place in the Japanese language).

JOE (V.O.)

Love hurts.

Anonymous individuals under umbrellas float through a maze of bright lights, bars, pachinko parlors, touts and hustlers.

A CHYRON reads: ONE WEEK AGO.

Joe lingers, in disguise, like a thousand other businessmen, off-the-rack black suit, sensible shoes.

JOE (V.O.)

No one is spared the agonies of intimate relationships.

With his pocket video camera, he shadows a balding, overweight, typical BUSINESS MAN.

JOE (V.O.)

Our romantic lives are shaped by how we imagine the range of our choices.

Trailing the business man, a GIRL (17), school uniform, plaid mini skirt, long white loose fitting socks.

His daughter.

Joe eyeballs the pair enter a short-stay don't tell hotel, a nondescript exterior blends into Tokyo streets.

JOE (V.O.)

These shape our choice of partner, the sense of worth given by relationships, our desires.

A giggly couple fall out a separate door.

Camera lens snaps shut.

With his gaze fixed on the hotel entrance, Joe backs into the shadows of the alley, takes cover from rain, he pumps a cigarette in his mouth, lights it, lingers.

Joe's attention is grabbed by an out of shape MAN across the street. He flails his arms, shouts argues with a WOMAN.

Joe watches the man push her, she raises her hands in defense, the man cusses at her, rips the handbag away.

JOE (V.O.)
Choices are necessary.

Joe struggles to stay put.

The man slaps her, hard.

JOE
Shit.

He flicks his cigarette, slides out of the alley, moves across the street. The man raises his hand, the woman cowers, Joe catches the man's hand.

JOE (CONT'D)
I wouldn't do that.

MAN
Who the fuck do you think you are?!

The man spins, veins pop from his head, fists clench, he throws a punch at Joe.

Joe slips it, rips an uppercut to the man's liver, he folds like an accordion, collapses on the ground.

Joe rifles through the man's pockets pulls out his wallet, photo I.D from inside.

JOE
Someone, somewhere is calling me an asshole.

Joe throws the wallet back at the man.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Joe approaches his car. STEVE GAN (40s) slides up, Asian American, shady debt collector disguised as an over polite business man.

Steve grips an umbrella, Joe doesn't. It rains.

STEVE
Horiuchi-san, is now a good time?

Joe half gestures to the rain, the fact he has no umbrella, Steve leans in. They are close, too close, but dry.

JOE

Sorry I haven't called.

STEVE

There's an outstanding balance owed. With all due respect, I'd like to ask you, when might you be able to make your payment?

Joe open his car door, Steve slams it closed with his hand.

JOE

I intend to pay my debt.

STEVE

I appreciate your acknowledgement of the situation. Would you help by making a payment in full shortly?

JOE

I'm barely making ends meet now.

Steve examines Joe's car, in the back seat his life through the passenger window. Like a nuclear bomb hit it.

STEVE

I appreciate your honesty. What are you able to afford at this time?

JOE

Eight payments, 60,000 yen per month starting end of the month.

STEVE

I appreciate your kind offer, do you think it's possible to pay this off within four payments of 120,000 yen per month?

JOE

Steve is it? I don't want to make promises I can't keep.

STEVE

The debt's a year old, I don't think that my superiors can wait much longer. You do know who my superiors are?

INT. JOE'S OFFICES - DAY

Small, lacking in clear theme. The guise of a successful private investigator, however simply cosmetic.

JOE

Not a few weeks. Months!

Joe's shoulder wedges a phone to his ear.

JOE (CONT'D)

Am I talking in a foreign language?
My payment, that's all! Dai? When
you're gonna pay me. Okay. Maybe I
can means Monday. Half's good.
Hello? Hello? Asshole.

Joe checks messages, none.

He tosses an envelope stuffed with ten thousand yen bills in an open drawer, pushes the drawer closed with his foot.

He turns pages of a small book, numbers on one page, money paid. The next, money owed, numbers fill the page.

Joe dials. Sorts through mail.

OVERDUE.

OVERDUE.

FINAL NOTICE.

Joe scans his office, wallpaper peels off in the corner.

He turns to the drawer, opens it, eyes the envelope stuffed with bills.

INT. SIAM PALACE RESTAURANT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Joe throws a cigarette into his mouth, lights up.

Opposite Joe, KAZUO YONEKURA, sunglasses inside, gold watch, Joe studies Yonekura's missing finger, yakuza alert.

The next two guys, GENTA and HIRO act.

GENTA

Fold.

HIRO

Out.

Joe looks over at Yonekura's stacks, high society, shoots a glance back at his own, short.

Yonekura shuffles chips in his right hand. OTHERS watch.

JOE

I don't think you've got spades.

Joe antes all his chips.

YONEKURA

You're right, I don't.

Yonekura lays his cards down. Aces full.

Joe sits stunned, like he took a punch to the face. He rises, turns toward the entrance door. Two large SECURITY GUARDS appear in his path.

He turns to the kitchen, a THIRD SECURITY GUARD appears.

Shit.

INT. SIAM PALACE RESTAURANT - BACK OFFICES - NIGHT

Office door ajar. Joe peers in. ANURAK SONRAM (60s) Thai, looks like he's carved out of stone, sits in silence.

Face down in front of him, an overweight ASIAN MAN, prostrate on the floor.

On the TELEVISION the SOUND of Muay Thai boxing. Bone on bone. Cheering.

Asian man looks for comfort from Sonram. Sonram gives him none. Asian man rises, hands a bloody handkerchief to Sonram.

Asian man leaves. Joe clocks a bandaged bloody stump missing a finger on his left hand.

Joe enters, guards flanks him, stands across from Sonram.

SONRAM

Know why you're here?

Joe grabs the knife on the table, security guard moves to Joe, who slams his palm down on the table, fingers spread, lays the blade on his little finger.

SONRAM (CONT'D)

Clearly not. Something to drink?
Not a drink, drink.

JOE

I'm fine.

Joe falls into a nearby chair. On the TELEVISION Two Thai Boxers beat on each other, crowd wild, people bet on which way the fight will turn.

SONRAM

You're a private dick, that right?

JOE

I'm licensed.

SONRAM

What does that mean?

JOE

It means sometimes I do favors for people, sometimes in return they give me gifts.

SONRAM

Gifts huh? You were police right?

JOE

Yeah I was with the Security Bureau in the city for a while, before that I was with the TMPD.

SONRAM

So why did you quit?

JOE

I didn't like the hours.

SONRAM

Corruption get to you.

JOE

Not really, it would have been hard to support my family without it. So what can I do for you?

SONRAM

This was my brothers idea.

JOE

If you want I can leave.

SONRAM

They say you're trustworthy.

JOE

Who did you hear that from?

SONRAM

They say you're like a Japanese, an honorable man.

JOE

News to me.

SONRAM

She's gone. Again.

JOE

Cancel her credit cards, she'll be back in an hour.

SECURITY GUARD

It's been twenty four hours. Left without her cards, not answering her phone.

JOE

Call the police?

SONRAM

It's important to ensure this family's image is upheld.

JOE

How's that my problem?

SONRAM

You're going to bring her back.

JOE

Have him do it.

Joe gestures to one of the security guards.

INT. IDIOT SAVANT - NIGHT

An old small pub. BUILDERS drill sand, varnish.

A tap spews out beer. YUKA TAMURA, (30s) beautiful, upbeat, a sweetheart, hands Joe a beer.

They share a smile. Hers lingers longer than his.

YUKA

Hey.

JOE

Mmmmm.

YUKA

Wow, you sound terrific. What did you do last night?

JOE

Played cards. Got hammered.

YUKA

How bad?

JOE

Think I hurt someone's feelings.

YUKA

That's bad.

JOE

Tell me about it.

YUKA

Still taking charity?

JOE

No pride here, what'cha got?

YUKA

Stripper in Roppongi, gotta psycho threatening her over the phone, usual crap.

Joe catches his reflection in the mirror behind the bar. His face grey. Hollow eye sockets.

JOE

I maybe currently booked.

YUKA

No. He's gonna ruin your life..

JOE

He's not gonna ruin my life..

YUKA

Have you heard the stories.

JOE

I've heard the stories.

YUKA

Careful turning over old stones.

JOE

Don't you have a bar opening to worry about?

YUKA

Just don't throw it all away.

JOE

Throw what away? I don't do anything. I sit, watch, film, I let it happen.

YUKA

You're supposed to. It's your job.

JOE

It's my excuse.

INT. CARD ROOM - NIGHT

A few faces sit around the table, stacks high, some low.

A hand ends, TATSUYA wins a medium pot.

Joe rakes in the cards, cleans the deck, takes some of Tatsuya's checks. Several at the table take notice.

Joe stacks the checks with his own.

TANAKA, coifed yakuza boss style, watches Joe.

TANAKA

Fucking cocksucker. What's your name? He fucking kited the pot.

Action on the table stops dead. Everyone covers their chips, watches the cards.

JOE

Who?

TANAKA

You. I saw you rake the chips in and put them in your stack.

JOE

Those? By accident, I was about to give them back.

TANAKA

You stacked them, you stole them.

Joe looks for someone to back his appeal.

JOE

I wouldn't...

TANAKA
Get out of here.

Resigned, Joe collects his checks.

TANAKA (CONT'D)
Leave them.

JOE
What?

TANAKA
Fucking go.

A few sizeable Japanese spectators escort Joe out.

EXT. CARD ROOM - NIGHT

BAM!

Joe's cigarette falls out of his mouth. Huge meaty blows from fist and feet rain down on him.

Joe lays on the ground bleeding, hands rifle his pockets, take every lose piece of cash he has.

INT. GOVERNMENT HOUSING - NIGHT

Joe stumbles in, old apartment, a shambles, not much furniture, books and CD's, filled with unemptied moving boxes. A downgrade. Depressing.

Drop all your shit out of a plane. They will land like this.

Joe throws a towel on the kitchen table, opens and reaches in to the icebox, chucks a handful of ice on the towel wraps it up rests it on his head.

Joe cracks a beer. Kicks the fridge door closed. A LOW RUMBLING.

Plates clatter. Rumbling grows, dishes fall over in the sink.

Light from a passing train comes through the window, glows upon a judo trophy in a box. Large, noble, a golden judo player stands in frozen motion at the trophy's pinnacle.

Clattering dies down.

Joe opens a drawer. Parking tickets, a framed old photo, he pulls it out.

The Prime Minister presents Joe with a medal. They both smile beneath the Ministerial seal.

He dials his cell.

SONRAM (O.S)
Glad you called.

JOE
Why you can't do this yourself?

SONRAM
Innocence through lack of association. I could do it, but I'd risk incarceration by the way I go about my business.

JOE
What was she wearing when you last saw her?

SONRAM (O.S.)
Mickey Mouse jacket, mini skirt.

JOE
Clear my debt, cover my expenses, and I'll do it.

He hangs up. Joe sips his beer, eyes his little finger.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A GIRL'S FACE, a passport style photograph. 17 years old, Thai features, smiling, lip gloss, eyeshadow.

The picture distorts and blackens. A HISS, fire and smoke erupt through the girl's face, photograph curls up in flame.

Burning shards fall into a metal trash can in a small tub. A heavy book staunches rising smoke, dumped onto a trash can.

A bible.

A MAN'S HANDS, slide a necklace into a zip lock plastic bag, rings follow. Hands seal the bag.

Outside, low flying jet AIRCRAFT pass overhead.

Hands shake blackened scraps from the trash into the bag. Bag closes tight.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. JOE'S OFFICES - DAY

Joe flies out the exit, he's intercepted by MAMORU TAKANO (50s), heavysset, unshaven, battle-scarred reporter.

MAMORU

Mr. Horiuchi, Mamoru Takano, Tokyo Express. Got a moment?

JOE

No comment.

MAMORU

How's self-employment?

JOE

No comment.

MAMORU

You hear Adachi is set to lead the party.

JOE

I did.

MAMORU

They say he's making a run for Prime Minister, care to comment on that?

Joe stops, spins, eyeballs Mamoru.

MAMORU (CONT'D)

How does it feel being labelled co conspirator in a murder?

BAM!

Joe's fist slams into Mamoru's nose, he flails back, falls down on his ass. Gets in his car, screeches away.

INT. SIAM PALACE RESTAURANT - DAY

Joe stands, examines a photo of Sonra's granddaughter.

JOE

This recent?

SONRAM

It's a couple months old.

JOE
You got a list of friends,
hangouts?

Security guys pass Joe a piece of paper, Joe opens it.

SONRAM
You got a plan?

JOE
I don't plan, I improvise.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Young puffy-faced NURSE, sits at a desk filling out a form, Joe glances over. Nurse holds up a wallet sized photograph.

NURSE
This recent?

JOE
Two months.

NURSE
Still wear her hair like that?

JOE
Yep.

Nurse checks her computer, resumes filling out forms.

NURSE
Nothing in admissions, we'll keep
an eye out if she does come in.

JOE
You've got my number, thanks.

INT. INTERNET CAFE - DAY

Joe pecks away at a keyboard, scans social media accounts. CLICKS on a profile icon. He CLICKS the most recent, FaceTime video display opens.

Call RINGS: Not available. Joe reads the message, dials the number on his cell, straight to voicemail.

Joe texts Yuka.

JOE (TEXT)
Talked to her school. Wasn't in
class this week.

YUKA (TEXT)
Skipped before?

JOE (TEXT)
Yeah.

YUKA (TEXT)
Screwing around with friends?
Reached out to them?

Pictures with another GIRL, pretty, affluent. She wears a Mickey Mouse jacket. It's date stamped, recent.

Joe checks the phone's location. A bar.

INT. BAR - DAY

Dark, dingy. Formica tables. Customers in used clothes sit at the bar, nurse drinks, chat. Anime on a big MUTED TV.

Joe enters, all conversation stops. Patrons stare.

They return to their drinks, and their conversations.

Joe glances around. No sign of her.

Joe approaches a bored-looking BARTENDER, behind the counter.

JOE
Excuse me.

Bartender, cuts vegetables, looks up, knife in hand.

JOE (CONT'D)
I was supposed to meet my
girlfriend here.

Bartender shrugs, gives him a look: Yeah, so?

JOE (CONT'D)
Dark hair, slender, five five.
Wearing a Mickey Mouse jacket.

BARTENDER
A what?

JOE
Mickey Mouse jacket.

Bartender plops vegetables into small plates, pauses, shakes his head.

BARTENDER
Don't remember.

JOE
You sure?

Bartender leans over, calls out:

BARTENDER
Hey! Man here's looking for his
girlfriend, dark hair, Mickey Mouse
jacket. Anybody see her?

Joe looks along the counter. Blank faces, disinterested
shrugs, a few headshakes no.

Joe scratches his head. Takes another look around.

JOE
You got a lost property? I think
she left her phone here.

BARTENDER
After four days we take it to the
police.

JOE
Shit.

EXT. FUKUSHIMA - STREET - NIGHT

Students, shoppers, strollers in middle-class contentment. An
OLD COUPLE window-shops.

WHAM!

From nowhere, SARAI SONRAM (17), deep, old-soul eyes,
shoeless, not the entitled brat we thought we'd find, knocks
the old couple over as she flees for her life.

Sarai dashes across the street, bounds around a parked car,
onto the sidewalk.

EXT. FUKUSHIMA - STREET - NIGHT

Sarai alive, jumps a guide rail into the darkness of an
underpass. She hides, breath heavy, panic becomes relief.

She's free. Still. Silent. Unprepared for.

THE SHOOTER. (40s) circles behind her. His features familiar,
the ex-military Iranian driver. Tonight, all business.

His surgical gloves grip a Makarov, silenced pistol. He steps forward, raises his weapon at Sarai, when.

Behind him, shit.

A BICYCLE passes, a DELIVERY GUY already there, slows down.

Delivery guy speeds up, past the shooter, he's a witness, no choice, no hesitation, he raises his gun.

Delivery guy panic-peddles, BANG. He skids, falls, like a faulty toy.

Shooter tucks away the gun, descends onto Sarai.

EXT. SETAGAYA - DAY

Rich folks live here. Joe pulls up, gets out.

YUME (17) sits on steps of a large house. Tall, long black hair, affluent, pretty, smirks, stink-eyes Joe's car.

JOE
Detective Horiuchi, TMPD. I'm
looking for someone.

YUME
Lies.

JOE
Excuse me?

YUME
Lies. Police don't drive crap cars.

JOE
I'm undercover.

YUME
Foreigners don't work for them.

JOE
It says Japanese on my passport.

YUME
Lemme see your badge.

JOE
Alright, I'm a friend of Sarai's
grandfather, okay? Mr. Sonram's
worried.

YUME

I told one of Sonram`s guys,
haven't talked to Sarai in a week.

JOE

So if I go through your phone,
I'm not gonna find anything from
Sarai? No calls, texts..?

YUME

No. Even if they were on my phone,
I wouldn't give you the password.

JOE

You've been invaluable.

Joe walks to his car. Takes three tries to start it, drives off. Joe turns the corner, Yume's on her phone.

Behind Yume, Joe`s car BURNS around the opposite corner, he hops out, unseen, approaches Yume from behind.

YUME

Come on, answer..!

SARAI (O.S.)

Hi! It's Sarai, leave a message..

YUME

Hey, it's me! Listen, someone's
looking for you. I think your
grandfather sent him..

Joe yanks Yume's phone from her hand. Yume whips around to see Joe going through her phone.

YUME (CONT'D)

Hey! You can't take my phone!

A TEXT SELFIE of Sarai in her Mickey Mouse jacket, arm in arm, with Yume.

Joe blows up the photo, a motel sign in the B.G.

JOE

Got a problem? Call the police.

INT. IDIOT SAVANT - DAY

Yuka hangs an old black and white photo.

WOMAN (O.S.)
Glad to see you're keeping out of
trouble.

Yuka turns.

YUKA
Do I know you?

She flashes a badge, DETECTIVE SEIRA NOGUCHI (30s). Beauty
censored by a simple suit, all business.

NOGUCHI
I know you. Noguchi, TMPD. While
we're looking at old photos...

Noguchi lays a mug shot on the bar, Joe.

NOGUCHI (CONT'D)
Recognize this guy?

Yuka stiffens. Noguchi clocks it.

YUKA
He was a photographer.

NOGUCHI
Seen him recently?

Yuka shrugs. Noguchi places her card on the bar, turns.

NOGUCHI (CONT'D)
If you see him, tell him he's going
to lose his license.

YUKA
For what?

NOGUCHI
Interfering in police business.

EXT. IDIOT SAVANT - DAY

Noguchi exits, strides towards her cruiser. Behind her...

MALE VOICE (O.S)
How does a guy like that get caught
up in all this?

NOGUCHI
You know I can't talk to you.

MAMORU

With conspiracy now in the police
arsenal you should have this
wrapped up soon? Or are there still
some missing pieces of the puzzle?

Noguchi reaches for her car door, Mamoru catches it, she eyes
him, he regrets it, lets go.

MAMORU (CONT'D)

I just want to know, how he ties
into it all?

EXT. AIRPORT - NIGHT

A JET AIRLINER descends overhead, a sign above a Hawaiian
themed motel: HANEDA ROYAL INN

INT. ROYAL INN - NIGHT

Front office, Joe shows a photo of Sarai and Yume to MR HARA
(60s), motel manager, balding, out of shape, Hawaiian shirt.

JOE

Seen this girl? She come in?

HARA

Didn't see her.

JOE

You didn't see her, or she didn't
come in?

HARA

You police?

JOE

Yes, sir.

HARA

They don't hire foreigners.

JOE

I get that a lot.

HARA

Where's your badge?

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Joe slouches on the sofa. Stares over at his photo. A KNOCK.

Joe opens the door, Yuka stands there with a convenience store bag stuffed with food.

YUKA
You need to eat.

Yuka observes him, hands him a Mister Pepper.

JOE
What's this?

YUKA
A Doctor Pepper.

JOE
It's a Mister Pepper, I asked for a Doctor Pepper. Only assholes drink Mister Pepper.

YUKA
Drink up then.

Yuka reaches into the plastic bag, pulls out a bottle of whiskey. A smile grows across Joe's face.

YUKA (CONT'D)
Had a visit from the cops today.

Phone RINGS.

JOE
Hold that thought. Moshi Moshi.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
You speak English?

JOE
Yes.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
A friend gave me your number. She was a stripper at the Karma Sutra; said you might be able to help.

JOE
Try me.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Can we organize a time and place to talk face to face?

EXT. ADACHI POLICE OFFICES - DAY

Mamoru exits his taxi, approaches, rings the doorbell, no answer. A CLICK.

VOICE (O.S.)

Yes.

MAMORU

Takano Mamoru, Tokyo Express.

VOICE (O.S.)

Don't need any.

MAMORU

I'm not selling anything.

VOICE (O.S.)

We already have a subscription.

MAMORU

I'm not selling newspapers, I'm a reporter, from the Tokyo Express. Wanted to get your comment on... Hello?

INT. TOKYO EXPRESS - NEWS FLOOR - DAY

Mamoru strides through a reception with dilapidated décor.

He passes nicotine glaze covered window blinds near an island of desks, to the SENIOR REPORTERS DESKS in back.

He sits at his desk, knocks over the HAPPY RETIREMENT CARDS on his desk, flips through stacks of letters: years of shit on the walls. Photos, clippings, phone books.

He grabs his phone wedges a phone to his ear with his shoulder. What's not on walls or desk sits in boxes.

MAMORU

Jun, hi. Takano Mamoru, Tokyo Express. Detective Noguchi there?

INT. STARBUCKS - DAY

ANDREA (20s), saunters in, foreign, white skin, blonde hair, tall, high heels, ponytail.

Joe fights to pick his jaw up from the floor.

JOE

Andrea?

ANDREA

Call me Andy. That for me?

She takes the coffee from the table.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

I gotta do some stuff, let's walk
and talk.

She doesn't take the business card Joe holds.

INT. BOUTIQUE - DAY

Joe holds a number of garments, Andrea sorts through clothing
racks, hands another garment to Joe.

JOE

So, what kind of work do you do?

ANDREA

I`m a prostitute.

JOE

You do this by choice?

ANDREA

I don't have a problem with what I
do.

JOE

What's the problem then?

ANDREA

The girls being forced into it and
the assholes making them do it.
They're always sobbing, can't leave
the building during the day.

JOE

Where'd you say you work?

INT. ROYAL INN - DAY

Joe enters the lobby, stops, scans the room.

No one pays him much attention.

He stares at the customers. Why do they avoid eye contact?
They hiding something?

He scrutinizes more...

A gruff SALARYMAN, sits at a nearby table, shovels food in his mouth, averts his gaze.

A traveling SALESMAN. Overweight, sweaty. Pops vitamins along with his coffee.

Strange. No women. A BUSINESSMAN approaches the counter.

Joe eyes Hara jot a note on a pad, tears off the carbon slip.

He places one copy on the desk, the other in a pile by the cash register.

Joe approaches.

JOE

I want to see your slips.

HARA

What?

JOE

You take names. I want to see them.

HARA

I don't have to show you anything.

Joe leans in his face.

JOE

If she came in, she's in that pile.

Hara stiffens, stares him straight in the eye.

HARA

I've had just about enough of you.

Joe reaches for the receipts. Hara's hand clamps onto his.

JOE

Let me see the fucking slips.

Joe overpowers Hara, he grabs the receipts.

He goes through them, scans the names. TAO, MANA, ANA and...

Joe raises his eyes, the unpleasant tip of a large sushi knife looks back at him.

HARA

You have to leave.

Joe back pedals. Everyone stares. He shuffles, for the exit.

EXT. ROYAL INN - DAY

Joe spots a CLEANER at the rear with a garbage bag. The cleaner disappear around a corner. Joe creeps to the corner.

From the corner he watches the cleaner dump envelopes, polaroids, lost property in a dumpster.

Cleaner saunters away, lights a cigarette.

Joe creeps up to the dumpster, peers over.

Burnt photos of young girls. He reaches in, cleaner approaches, Joe falls in, freezes.

The cleaner saunters past. Joe's cellphone RINGS.

The cleaner stops, turns. Moves towards the dumpster.

VOICE (O.S)
Hey! Breaks over.

Joe watches the cleaner return inside. Joe waits, peers out of the dumpster. Grabs the evidence.

EXT. SIAM PALACE RESTAURANT - ALLEY - NIGHT

Joe leans against his car, holds a glass of whiskey.

He looks up, across the alley, a giant billboard, graced by the face of Adachi. Under his fist pump, a slogan reads:

A SOCIETY IN WHICH ALL 100 MILLION PEOPLE CAN BE ACTIVE.

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Joe, younger, clean shaven, focuses his camera across the street to the adjacent motel.

Silhouettes move, a FEMALE FIGURE hangs by her arms from the bathroom ceiling, a MALE FIGURE slaps and beats her.

Joe pulls back, stunned.

EXT. SIAM PALACE RESTAURANT - ALLEY - NIGHT - BACK TO PRESENT

Joe stares at the billboard, swallows his drink, hurls his glass at the billboard. It bounces, smashes on the street.

INT. SIAM PALACE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Handful of patrons. A WOMAN straightens bottles behind the bar. Sonram sits reading.

A KNOCK on the bar. Sonram looks up, Joe stands nearby.

SONRAM

Still alive? Hope you're not here
for the cards.

JOE

Change in plans. Got a minute?

Sonram puts down his newspaper.

SONAM

What you got?

JOE

Police have her phone. Traced her
to a hotel near the airport.

SONRAM

That`s not a lot.

JOE

Manager's stonewalling me.

SONRAM

I hear there's a reporter from the
Tokyo Express paying attention. You
don't want to be embarrassed by him
getting ahead of it.

JOE

I got it covered.

Joe waves a polaroid, tosses it onto the table. A FIGURE
screws a young naked GIRL on a Tatami mat.

Sonram picks it up, studies it, rises, leads Joe into an

ADJOINING ROOM

Dark. In the center a MAN sits, naked, taped to a chair, in a
pool of piss, covered in blood and tears.

A LARGE THUG hovers over him wrapped in a rubber bib apron,
he grips a large machete.

SONRAM

I am a little concerned that you don't seem to grasp the urgency of the situation.

JOE

No. I don't think I do.

SONRAM

If she's not found soon, it won't be your finger I'll take. It'll be your whole fucken arm.

Joe freezes. The door to the adjoining room slams shut.

SONRAM (CONT'D)

Yours, or maybe that of your pretty barmaid friend.

JOE

Touch her and I'll kill you.

SONRAM

You'll do nothing. How'd you get this?

JOE

Stole it.

SONRAM

Know them?

JOE

Can ask someone I worked with.

SONRAM

And go get her phone. You got less than a week. Better skip to it.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Joe masks his distrust, strides through automatic doors, approaches a large, old POLICE OFFICER sitting at reception.

JOE

I called about some lost property, my sister's phone.

He gestures to down the hall.

Joe shuffles deeper into the belly of the police station.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S)
May I help you?

Joe startles, turns. FEMALE OFFICER, stands, robotic smile.

JOE
I'm looking for my sister's
cellphone.

FEMALE OFFICER
She contacted the mobile phone
carrier to prevent misuse?

JOE
To my knowledge.

FEMALE OFFICER
Let me check. Please wait here.

JOE
Thanks.

She returns with a box of mobile phones in zip lock bags. Joe
rifles through, finds Sarai's.

JOE (CONT'D)
This, she loves her Mickey Mouse.

FEMALE OFFICER
Happy you've found it, they can be
expensive to lose.

JOE
Indeed.

FEMALE OFFICER
Before you take it, do you have a
SIM card or serial card number?

JOE
For what?

FEMALE OFFICER
Required for proof of ownership.

JOE
Damn. I don't have that.

FEMALE OFFICER
It's clearly stated on our website.

JOE
I'm family.

OFFICER
Even so, you need some valid
identification.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

ADACHI TADANOBU (50s), saunters past, like he owns the place. Which, by the way, he does. Tall, Tokyo-tough. Dressed in a Saville Row suit, a voice like Darth Vader. He frowns at Joe.

ADACHI
You've come a long way from the
security bureau.

JOE
How's your son's face?

ADACHI
Careful son.

JOE
I'm not your son.

ADACHI
We know you're a hero, Don't need
to be one now. My guys tell me you
took a bullet for the Prime
Minister, jumped in front of a home-
made gun. Truth or hype?

JOE
Got the gun in my closet as a
souvenir.

ADACHI
Still cleaning up messes?

JOE
Unfinished business

ADACHI
Good luck with that. Ever thought
about working for me?

JOE
I'd rather slam my dick in a door.

ADACHI
Nothing is impossible. See you
round.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Wipers drag a piece of paper across the windshield. Joe reaches out, plucks off a parking ticket, crumples it, tosses it into the back seat, where ten more sit.

He checks his missed call. Yuka.

Joe notices in his rearview mirror, parked down the road, a BLACK MERCEDES BENZ. Heavy rain bounces off it`s hood.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Joe drives. A car BUMPS him from behind, Joe`s tape deck triggers MUSIC. Joe pulls over, tries to turn it off.

In his rearview mirror, through the rain, he sees the black Mercedes Benz.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Joe gets out, a ding in his fender.

A FIGURE emerges from the offending vehicle, hands in surgical gloves dropped at his side

JOE

That dent matches the others. How about you give me twenty thousand yen and we`ll call it a...

BAM! He punches Joe across the face. Joe spins, drops to his knees, everything a blur.

MUSIC plays, figure moves toward Joe`s car. Joe CHARGES, tackles the figure over the hood.

Joe punches him in the solar plexus, stuns him. They struggle for control.

Figure KNEES Joe, a combo, GUT! JAW! GUT! Joe drops.

Joe gets up, barrels into him. Figure knees Joe in the solar plexus, figure lands more shots to the side of Joe's head, lunges a kick at Joe. Joe flies back.

Joe's not bad, it's just this guy's so damn fast.

Before Joe can stand, a brutal kick lands to the side of Joe's head.

The figure reaches into Joe's car, grabs at the dumpster evidence, jumps in his car, screeches AWAY.

Joe, on one knee, a bloody mess, spits out blood, a few teeth, rises to MUSIC, staggers, no evidence, blood everywhere.

No clue what just happened.

EXT. STREET - TOKYO - NIGHT

People ogle the circle of police surrounding Joe, bruised, dazed, resting on the curb, the Benz gone.

NOGUCHI (O.S.)
Mr. Horiuchi..?

Noguchi parts the circle of police. Joe looks up.

NOGUCHI (CONT'D)
Detective Noguchi, TMPD. Can you tell me what happened?

JOE
I just told these guys the whole story, gave a description of the car. Didn't catch a plate.

NOGUCHI
Every officer in the city's looking for him.

JOE
Except you.

Joe starts to go. Police shove him back down.

He eyes a POLAROID, Noguchi turns, clocks Joe's car, Joe pockets the polaroid.

NOGUCHI
Your vehicle?

JOE
That's a fancy word for it.

Noguchi puts him in cuffs.

NOGUCHI
I'm placing you under arrest

JOE
For what, getting beat up?!

NOGUCHI
Unpaid parking tickets. There's a
warrant out.

INT. POLICE STATION INTERVIEW ROOM - NIGHT

Joe sits, taps his foot. Noguchi enters.

NOGUCHI
We found the car. Stolen last week
in Kanagawa. It's being processed
as we speak. If they left prints.

JOE
He was wearing gloves.

NOGUCHI
So, not lucky. For you.

JOE
You say that like I'm a suspect.

NOGUCHI
Everyone is until we establish the
facts.

JOE
That in the police manual?

NOGUCHI
How about I ask the questions?

JOE
Since you're never gonna ask a
question you don't know the answer
to, I'm not going to tell you
anything you don't already know.

Noguchi remains poker faced.

NOGUCHI
A young girl was playing under a
pear tree in her yard one evening,
suddenly she disappeared, without a
trace. Thirty years later, she
returned, looking old and haggard.
She remained silent, but said she
just wanted to see everyone once
more, she leaves as mysteriously as
she came.

(MORE)

NOGUCHI (CONT'D)

No one tells her story, because no one wants to hear it. They know she's Kamikakushi, hidden by the gods, spirited, enslaved for the rest of her life.

JOE

Bleak.

NOGUCHI

They would always come back with some mark.

Noguchi grabs Joes arms, roles up the sleeves to reveal tattoos.

NOGUCHI (CONT'D)

Something to show they'd been taken. That's why you call the police for something like this. Hire an amateur, you get amateur mistakes.

JOE

There must be witnesses.

Nothing from the detective.

JOE (CONT'D)

What is it, tea time?

Still nothing from Noguchi. Finally:

NOGUCHI

You lost a man we wanted. Very incompetent on your part.

JOE

So working with me is out of the question?

NOGUCHI

I'm arresting you for obstructing a police investigation.

JOE

Wait a minute!

NOGUCHI

I can keep you in here for twenty three days without a lawyer.

JOE
 You can't do that. I'm on an active
 case!

Noguchi leaves, CLANG of the door as it closes. Lock turns.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Joe hangs up, scans around.

Fifty identical desks. Fifty identical phones. Fifty
 identically dressed men in white shirts and ties work under
 fluorescent lights of this large open room.

He heads towards the door, passes long rows of bureaucrats,
 telephones ring off the hook.

Joe exits processing, finds Yuka waiting.

JOE
 Thanks, I'll pay you back.

YUKA
 I'll add it to your tab. What the
 hell happened to your face? And why
 do you smell like garbage?

JOE
 Long story. Tell you in the car.

They head to the exit, turn a corner, Yuka thrown to see.

NOGUCHI (O.S.)
 Interesting. So you two are..?

JOE
 Friends.

Which rankles Yuka.

JOE (CONT'D)
 You guys know each other?

YUKA
 Long story. Tell you in the car.

They exit. Noguchi watches Joe.

INT. YUKA'S CAR - NIGHT

Joe checks his bruised eye in the visor mirror.

JOE

So what's up with you and Noguchi?

YUKA

It's nothing. She's looking for someone I knew.

JOE

What is it with this town?
Everybody's looking for someone.

JOE (CONT'D)

You wanna punch me in the other eye? Maybe it'll look better if they match.

YUKA

You're lucky he didn't kill you.

JOE

It's like everything I touch.

YUKA

This isn't your fault.

JOE

That's not how it feels.

YUKA

Maybe you should just let the police handle it.

JOE

And walk away? Pullover.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Andy opens the door. Joe stands there, all banged up. They embrace.

INT. HER BEDROOM - NIGHT

It is dark. We can't see clearly. They are in bed.

Atop her... he kisses her neck... his hands under her, raising her... he moves down, kisses her breasts... puts his mouth around a breast... she arches, moves... he kisses her shoulder... she opens her mouth.

Atop him... she kisses his chest, licks it, lowers her head... lower... lower... he arches his back... her mouth comes up... her mouth on his lips again... he turns her.

Atop her... he moves her legs apart... she holds his back... he moves inside her... harder...

Atop him... she leans close over his face, her tongue in his mouth... kneels over him... she moves his arms above his head... moves higher atop him... her breasts in his face... kneeling over his face... moving oh-so-slightly... his face strains towards her.

She kisses him... moving her hips lower now... over his chest... lower...

And he is inside her... her arms above him... his eyes open... she kisses his neck... moves...grinds hard against him now...she is on her knees... head arches back...her breasts high...still grinding.

Her back arches, strains... he strains toward her... she holds her arms high... she comes out of the arch... shivering... falling over him... his arms come forward and hold her close... closer... closer... as she moves with slight... shivery... movements.

INT. ANDY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It is dark, quiet. Pindrop quiet. Joe sits on the side of the bed, head down. Andy asleep nest to him, naked.

He looks around the room...clothes all over the floor.

He gets up, walks into the

BATHROOM

The light is bright. He looks at himself in the mirror.

He pours the water, lowers his head, puts cold water on his face. He comes back up, opens his eyes. Andy is in the mirror behind him. She startles him.

He looks at her in the mirror, doesn't turn.

He lowers down into the basin again, puts more water on his face, comes back up, uses a towel this time, finishes with the towel. She looks at him in the mirror the same way. He looks at her in the mirror, doesn't turn.

JOE

Who are these assholes?

ANDREA

Two guys run Roppongi, and Haneda, supplying girls for the places I work. One guy's foreign, everyone calls him Slick.

JOE

Got names?

ANDREA

Sorry. They own five or six clubs, recruit women abroad, bring them here, stick them in sex clubs and rip them off.

JOE

Why don't they just quit?

ANDREA

They're totally dependent on these bastards.

INT. EIGHTH CIRCLE OF HELL STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

A chandelier, a few sofas for intimate chat, a karaoke machine.

A BIG GUY behind the bar, bad suit, yakuza alert, gives Mamoru the once-over.

A buxom REDHEAD grinds her ass on Noguchi's crotch, runs her fingers through her hair.

NOGUCHI

Order one Blue Hawaii, you can pack your bags and cover family affairs.

MAMORU

Whiskey please.

Noguchi nods to the big guy, who nods back, pours two shots of Jameson's, slides one down the bar.

Noguchi grabs the glass, lifts it to her mouth in one motion, knocks it back. Bar keep passes the other to Mamoru.

NOGUCHI

Confused are we?

MAMORU

I normally work politics, not crime, the data is sparse, but, presumably participants volunteer.

NOGUCHI

It's trafficking. No official regulation opens flood gates for exploitation.

MAMORU

How?

NOGUCHI

Payment to a woman's family comes through a third party broker.

MAMORU

Misaki Tada.

NOGUCHI

Talking about her would cost me my job. Broker and client have no way of knowing if the girl has been sent willingly, or if it's a form of forced prostitution, even slavery.

MAMORU

Worst-case?

NOGUCHI

The woman's not even related to the family that's profiting from her dowry.

MAMORU

If it's illegal, shouldn't this whole area be shut down?

NOGUCHI

Let's walk, I'm off duty, this is off the record.

EXT. KABUKICHO - NIGHT

Disneyland festival of lights parade. Except the neon signs advertise blow jobs. Every building covered in semi nude signs of women working there.

Middle of the streets, TOUTS formally dressed, grab sleeves, shove pamphlets into hands of meandering SALARYMEN advertising sexual pleasures.

Noguchi points. A THAI PROSTITUTE lurks near an alley.

NOGUCHI

I could arrest her if she's openly soliciting. That's illegal. But, if guys come up to her..

MAMORU

No problem.

Mamoru and Sekiguchi stroll past love hotels, Thai PROSTITUTES gather near a park close to Okubo station.

IRANIAN MALES service JAPANESE MEN in park restrooms.

INT. S&M CLUB - NIGHT

A short little BALD GUY wearing a sarong chats up Noguchi.

MAMORU

Why aren't customers punished?
Wouldn't that discourage the trade?

NOGUCHI

Sure it would, but who the fuck do you think wrote the laws? Guys. Hell, in the 1950s probably half the Diet was frequenting Soapland.

Mamoru peeks behind a curtain. In the center of a huge room filled with eight or nine tables a platform.

On it a DOMANATRIX clad in leather. Breasts jut out of her blouse, nipples pierced with safety pins, hair pulled back in a bun.

MAMORU

You hear of that case, the politician, the Security Bureau guy?

NOGUCHI

Adachi? Can of worms there.

The Dominatrix wears a huge white strap on dildo, she sodomizes a MIDDLE AGED MAN in a navy blue suit with.

NOGUCHI (CONT'D)

What's considered secret is now much whatever the government wants to consider secret. Whoever your source is needs to be careful.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. PACHINKO PARLOR - NIGHT

A wall of noise, a cloud of cigarette smoke.

Endless rows of men sits in front of machines punching the flippers. NOISE from metal balls, deafening.

No social interaction.

A MAN, arms covered with tattoos, badly in need of a shower, starts a new game.

Joe moves up to the vacant machine beside him, puts in his change. Joe doesn't face the man, they speak in Japanese.

The man walks off. The SNITCH. Joe`s in business.

INT. CRAMPED ROOM - REAR OF PACHINKO PARLOR - NIGHT

Clatter of machines outside. Joe's snitch sits cross-legged on the floor, studies the polaroid. Joe towers above him.

SNITCH

Very nice. Have any more?

Joe grabs him by his collar, shoves him against a wall. Polaroid falls to the floor.

JOE

Who's she?

Joe bangs the snitch's head back against the wall, bangs his head against the wall again. The snitch, terrified.

SNITCH

She works in a Department store.

JOE

Where?

SNITCH

West Tokyo.

JOE

The guy?

SNITCH

You wanna stay away from him, he's bad news.

JOE
What's his name?

SNITCH
Kakiuchi. Kenji Kakiuchi.

SERIES OF SHOTS - JOE SURVEILS THE POLAROID GIRL

- A GIRL (20s) behind a cosmetic counter, wears a store uniform: blue and white dress, white gloves. A doll.

- The polaroid of Kenji's porno pic. Same face. Joe stands in the crowded store, glances back at his snitch.

- The snitch stands near the door, nods.

57 - They watch the girl help a customer choose an eyeliner. 57

- Joe watches through the window, SALESGIRLS line up at the door across the street, bow, thank the last customers. Standard practice.

- The girl comes out in her uniform, heads down the street.

58 - Joe follows. 58

59 - The girl steps out of a coin laundry, carrying her laundry, walks past a doorway where... Joe stands. 59

- Narrow streets, neon signs as far as the eye can see. The girl hurries. Joe, a half block behind, bumps into people, tries not to lose her.

- The girl buys fruit from a stand. She turns, facing Joe, yards away. Joe smiles, walks into a store.

- The girl moves to the corner, stands alone.

- Joe watches in the store doorway.

- THREE BOSOZOKU riding motorcycles come around the corner, drive past her, then circle back.

- A RIDER stops to talk to her, drives off. She hurries off in the opposite direction.

- The girl, pushes through crowds, crosses the street. Joe, pretends to look in a store window, picks her up.

- She climbs into a taxi.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. ROYAL INN - NIGHT

Across the street Joe exits his taxi, watches the girl exit hers, go inside.

Joe approaches the entrance. Looks in, packed with SALARYMEN, HOSTESSES in silk sell cheap champagne at expensive prices.

Joe slide forward, BOUNCER in a white tux, stops him. Shoves him back.

JOE
Hey, no hands, huh?

Joe steers away from the main entrance, down basement steps.

INT. ROYAL INN - NIGHT

Joe walks through the basement KITCHEN, filled with CHINESE and FILIPINO COOKS and DISHWASHERS who pay no attention.

Joe starts up a stained kitchen staircase through a pair of swinging doors, lands in a seat at the bar.

The bar crowded. Andrea slides her arm around his neck, pours him a whiskey.

Joe surprised, Andrea winks, he checks out the room, searches for the girl.

Two THUGS stand outside a sliding door, inside a half dozen LIEUTENANTS sit on either side of a table.

Joe finishes his drink.

A rice paper door slides open, a DOZEN men with close cropped hair sit on tatami mats, playing poker. Some have coats off, arms covered with tattoos. Yakuza.

Andrea nods to something across the room:

A HOSTESS, serves drinks, slides out leaves the door ajar.

ANDREA
Other door.

The hostess slides a door open to an adjacent room,

Joe cannot see inside. She slides it shut.

Joe rises, pretends to be drunk, bumps into a table, stumbles toward the sliding doors.

The BODYGUARDS eye Joe. He stumbles past them, grabs the sliding door, moves through it, yanks it closed.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

A long aisle, five cubicles on either side. Curtains hang from doorframes affording privacy to each cubicle.

Joe pulls back a curtain, a YOUNG PROSTITUTE lays on a mattress, soiled sheets, drugged up, in nothing but an unbuttoned blouse.

Discarded towels lay in a cardboard box in the corner. Beside the bed, Joe eyes a bucket, half a dozen used condoms in it.

The prostitute looks up at Joe, holds up a condom in a lazy, indifferent hand, spreads her legs.

Joe fights back his revulsion, retreats.

Joe pulls another curtain aside: a MAN fucks another PROSTITUTE, who lays there, far away glaze in her eyes, while he pounds away.

Out in the corridor Joe moves on. Pulls the next curtain, finds a MAN about to mount another glazed over PROSTITUTE, whose face he cannot see.

Joe's about to withdraw, he sees, on the floor by the bed...

A Mickey Mouse jacket.

EXT. SETAGAYA - DAY - FLASHBACK

Joe goes through Yume's phone, A TEXT SELFIE of Sarai wearing a Mickey Mouse jacket, arm in arm with Yume.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT - BACK TO PRESENT

Joe springs forward, grabs the man by his shirt, pulls him off the girl.

BAM! Joe knocks him out.

Joe turns to the prostitute.

A complete stranger.

Joe lifts the jacket.

JOE
Where'd you get this?

The girl in too much of a drugged state to answer.

JOE (CONT'D)
Who gave it to you?

FOUR GUARDS see Joe, pull out their Beretta's. Two more grab him, fling him head first against the wall.

Joe feigns being drunk.

JOE (CONT'D)
I have to piss, gentlemen. I'm so
sorry but I have to..

The bodyguards hurry him towards the door.

EXT. ROYAL INN - NIGHT

Joe stumbles down steps, affects a drunken, pigeon-toed walk. Two bodyguards watch from inside.

No longer being watched, he stops his affected walk.

Joe jumps into a payphone, dials.

EXT. ROYAL INN - NIGHT

Joe stands across the street, waits for police to arrive.

The girl steps out, lights a cigarette. TIME SLOWS.

She looks up, spots Joe through traffic. SIRENS AND POLICE CARS from either end of the street peel around the corner.

A big BRUISER SMACKS her, pulls her back inside.

Joe races across the street. Horns BLARE. Joe reaches the curb, Royal Inn doors BURST OPEN.

It's a madhouse. Remaining lieutenants and bodyguards fan out, trying to elude arrest.

Joe hurries inside.

INT. ROYAL INN - NIGHT

Joe spots the girl being pulled out the rear entrance. He starts after her, the bouncer who stopped him earlier confronts him.

Joe connects to the bouncer's jaw before he can raise his hands. The bouncer staggers back.

Joe flies out the rear door.

EXT. REAR ROYAL INN - NIGHT

SILENCE. Narrow streets, deserted, the girl nowhere. Joe makes his way down the street.

Wind jostles a paper lantern.

A GUNSHOT.

Joe ducks for cover, it's a car BACKFIRING. He continues on.

Joe clocks a woman giving a man a blow-job in a narrow alley. The man's face, hidden in shadows.

Joe continues on. From the darkness.

FIGURE (O.S.)
Foreigners like you are a dime a
dozen.

Joe turns. The figure steps out from the darkness, raises his hand, makes a gun with his finger, points, shoots at Joe... He lowers his hand.

It's the Mercedes Benz driver. It's the man in the polaroid.

It's KENJI KAKIUCHI.

Kenji tosses a handful of change at Joe.

KENJI
Keep the change.

A brand new Kawasaki motorcycle with windshield and full fairing gleams under a street light.

The DULL ROAR of a half dozen motorcycles in the distance breaks the stillness.

TWENTY BOSOZOKU on their multi-cylinder high tech street bombers, creep around the corner.

They head straight for Joe, at the last moment, split floating away IN SLOW MOTION, as if Joe didn't exist.

The bikers stop near doorways and alleys, gun their engines.

KENJI (CONT'D)
You`re a rookie... But you can take care of yourself.

Joe glances at the bikers, back at Kenji. Unarmed. To make a move would be suicide.

More POLICE SIRENS in the b.g. Close in.

KENJI (CONT'D)
What's the matter? I'm right in front of you, Joe.

Joe doesn't budge. Kenji turns, walks off. Bikers gun engines.

The street empties, a street sweeper pushes his wet broom.

Joe frozen, in the street, realizes how deep in it he is.

INT. ROYAL INN - NIGHT

THE DOOR splinters. Bouncer steps back as four helmeted officers, rush in, Noguchi behind them.

Pandemonium. People rush for exits, any exit. Joe sees Andrea, grabs her.

JOE
You seen the girl wearing this?

Holds up the Mickey Mouse jacket.

ANDREA
Worked here. As a waitress.

JOE
When did you last see her?

ANDREA
A week ago?

JOE
She looked drugged out? Coerced when you last saw her?

ANDREA
She looked...happy.

JOE

Go.

Police flood in from every doorway, yelling, surround the hotel. Patron's duck, terrified, staring down gun barrels.

Joe calm, watches, swallows some leftover whiskey on the bar, Noguchi approaches.

NOGUCHI

Think you can get one of those women to come forward?

JOE

You'll protect them right?

NOGUCHI

We'll have to arrest them for working illegally on a tourist visa and deport them.

POLICE line patrons up against walls.

JOE

Who's going to come forward only to go to jail?

NOGUCHI

It's the law. With testimony we can bust these guys for violations of immigration laws, maybe we can shut their business down that way.

Organized Crime Control Division members cart out women and men in handcuffs.

Joe rifles through his pockets, pulls out a directive from the National Police Agency.

JOE

It says police are to close down human trafficking operations and take care of victims.

NOGUCHI

NPA bullshit, divorced from reality. There's no way we can ignore someone working here illegally and give them shelter.

JOE

Even if they're victims?

NOGUCHI

Victims are classified as illegal workers and repatriated.

JOE

What if you don't arrest them?

NOGUCHI

That would be negligence of duty.

Joe grabs his jacket, his anger palpable.

JOE

All yours then.

Noguchi climbs onto the table.

NOGUCHI

Under section 216 of the Penal code, I serve notice this premise and its occupants...

Hara, bolts from patrons lined up against the wall. Noguchi jumps down to stop him.

NOGUCHI (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

Hara head butts her, Noguchi hits the floor. Hara, runs. Joe, doesn't miss a beat, a small sigh.

JOE

Fabulous.

SERIES OF SHOTS - JOE CHASES HARA

- Hara runs past dog-walkers, past women climbing out of taxis half a block ahead.

- Joe, short of breath, chases Hara,

- Noguchi blasts past Joe, blood streams from her nose, leaves Joe a half block behind, cursing his fitness.

- AT THE CORNER a car jerks to a halt, a MAN gets out, throws Hara in the back, surgical.

- Noguchi watches the car streak away, turns, sees Joe, hands on knees, gasping for air.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Mamoru bursts out of nowhere.

NOGUCHI

Careful you get yourself shot. Try knocking. Can I help you?

MAMORU

I rolled up, usual drills, ran the traps, checked clips...

NOGUCHI

Ok, wait.

MAMORU

The company Adachi used for girls is called Siam Dream.

NOGUCHI

Who runs it?

MAMORU

A Thai. Anurak Sonram. I got this.

Mamoru pulls out a recording device on the desk. Pushes play.

VOICE (O.S.)

Erase the story or we will erase you. And maybe your family, we'll do them first so you learn a lesson before you die.

INT. SIAM PALACE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Joe staggers in. One side of his face, swollen. A band-aid over his eye; blood caked earlobe.

Sonram doesn't look up from his newspaper, he wears a smile.

SONRAM

Thought you knew your way around dark alleys.

Joe drops Sarai's Mickey Mouse jacket in front of Sonram.

Sonram's smile fades.

SONRAM (CONT'D)

Let's go for a drive.

END OF ACT FOUR

TAG

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

Joe exits the car with Sonram to see Hara blinded by lights. Hara kneels, rigid with fear.

HARA

I'm so sorry. Please. Please.
Please don't hurt me. I'm so sorry.

SONRAM

What are you sorry for?

HARA

I thought...

SONRAM

How old were they?

Hara can't answer.

SONRAM (CONT'D)

Answer the question.

HARA

Seventeen...fifteen...

SONRAM

You knew, and you did nothing.

Joe watches Sonram open the trunk, he pulls something out. Sonram walks towards Hara. Joe sees it's a machete.

HARA

They pressured me to take this job,
I earn less than half my previous
salary. Please have pity on me.

SONRAM

This isn't about you. This is about
these girls and making sure you
don't forget them.

Sonram nods to two HEAVIES with him who grab hold of Hara.

One heavy slips a plastic strap around Hara's arm, uses it as a tourniquet. They wrestle Hara down, pull his arm.

HARA

I won't forget. Forgive me!

Sonram approaches, grips the machete. He looks down at Hara...

HARA (CONT'D)
Fukushima!

SONRAM
What?

HARA
They took her, others too. I'll
change. I'll be a better man.

SONRAM
I know.

Sonram slams down the machete, severs Hara's arm at his
elbow. Hara SCREAMS in agony. Sonram turns to Joe.

SONRAM (CONT'D)
If there's anything you need,
information, money, call me.

JOE
She take any medication?

SONRAM
Why?

JOE
Girls are often kept sedated with
morphine derivatives.

SONRAM
Anti depressants. Her mother lived
on them. Find out what those
bastards are afraid of. Drive up to
Fukushima. Our peace treaty with
them will not hold. I guarantee you
that. Don't come back without her.

INT. JOE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Joe with a whiskey, packs a bag. A KNOCK at the door.

JOE
It's unlocked.

Door opens, it Yuka.

YUKA
You don't like me.

JOE
Did I say that?

YUKA
You toler --, tolerate me.

JOE
Are we getting married?

YUKA
I just want you to be ok.

JOE
I'll be gone for a bit.

Joe approaches. Yuka clocks his unease.

JOE (CONT'D)
You sharing my phone number?

YUKA
What? No.

JOE
Promise me you won't do any
investigating while I'm gone.

YUKA
You kidding? I've got a bar to run.

Joe's hands shake, he balls them into fists.

YUKA (CONT'D)
You've got that look.

JOE
What look?

YUKA
The one where things are about to
get worse before they get better.
You have no cards to play. The
Inagawa kai? The Sumiyoshi kai?
They're cute compared to these
guys.

Yuka grabs Joe's shoulder, looks him right in the eyes.

YUKA (CONT'D)
Sure you want to go down that road?

JOE
I'm not planning anything crazy.

YUKA
You're not planning at all. Think.
Keep your eyes on the right road.

INT. OFFICES - NIGHT

Joe's office empty. Phone RINGS.

INT. TOKYO EXPRESS - NIGHT

Mamoru hangs up, pours a strong drink.

Ash from his cigarette falls onto the carpet, stubs it out in an ashtray.

He sticks one in his mouth, fumbles for his lighter, holds it to his cigarette.

EXT. PETROL STATION - NIGHT

Mamoru fuels up his car, protein bar hangs out his mouth.

Joe's old car speeds past.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Joe cruises past the petrol station, along the highway, flies by a road sign, FUKUSHIMA 239 km.

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

Under Joe's car, nestled in the cobweb of wires, temperature, and light, a portable GPS tracker BEEPS.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Noguchi sits in her cruiser, follows the GPS beep from Joe's car on her phone. Her car ROARS into life.

INT. ABANDONED OFFICE - DAY

Shattered, old furniture.

Sarai, kicks flails, tied to an arm rail. Bound, DUCT TAPE over her mouth, tears stream down her face. Her eyes widen.

A FIGURE stands over her, pulls out a knife.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END