

THE BAD NEWS FIRST

screenplay by  
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FADE IN:

EXT. DOWNTOWN MIAMI - AERIAL VIEW - NIGHT

A helicopter marked MIAMI-DADE POLICE hovers over the PORT OF MIAMI BRIDGE. It's glowing BLUE COLUMNS reflect off the calm and glassy surface of BISCAYNE BAY.

The song "Bad News" - the eighties rock classic - gets our blood pumping as we move for the CITY LIGHTS.

SONG (V.O.)

One, two, three, four, five, six,  
seven...

(beat)

BAD NEWS!!!

The HILTON MIAMI is a real standout as THE HELO approaches the flashy NEON SKYLINE. It changes course, moves steadily toward BISCAYNE BOULEVARD.

THE HELO floats over the long and congested strip. The RED AND BLUE LIGHTS OF POLICE CARS FLICKER IN THE NIGHT as they maneuver through stand-still traffic.

SONG (V.O.)

BAD NEWS!!!

(beat)

For you and you and you and you!

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. BISCAYNE BOULEVARD - STOP LIGHT - NIGHT

An abandoned NEWSPAPER DELIVERY VAN marked THE MIAMI HERALD sits dead center of a very busy four-way intersection. The driver's side, passenger door and rear doors OPEN.

Three PATROL CRUISERS with LIGHTS FLASHING act as a fencing around the perimeter. It's an official CRIME SCENE.

Cars HONK. People YELL and CURSE. A PATROLMAN directs the traffic while other OFFICERS carefully inspect the interior with FLASHLIGHTS, discovering several stacks of UNDELIVERED PAPERS. The headline reads "LAWSON ACQUITTED".

EXT. BAYSIDE MARKETPLACE - NIGHT

It's a hopping Saturday night at The Market. DINERS and PUB CRAWLERS are dressed to the nines as they stroll about the storefront sidewalks.

LIVE MUSIC is faintly heard in the air. A little ACOUSTIC GUITAR, some ELECTRIC BLUES. A street PERFORMER plays some JAZZ SAX for the passers-by.

A SMALL INLET leads in from The Bay, divides two halves of the market. A short, ARCHED BRIDGE suspends over the canal where a touchy-feely COUPLE are enjoying the scenery.

EXT. ARCHED BRIDGE - NIGHT

The woman is CANDIS (20s), hot, provocatively dressed party girl. Drunk as hell. Her date is LOUIS FINDLAY (30s), aka FRIENDLY. He is awkwardly cool with quaffed black hair and a pair of nerdy, wire-rimmed glasses. He dons a flashy but sheik sport coat and wild t-shirt.

CANDIS

I'm not buying this rap about you getting stood up or the two of us just meeting up at random.

(smiles, points)

I have the sneaking suspicion you planned tonight.

Friendly fights a shy smile.

FRIENDLY

You mean like getting you drunk and bringing you here to watch the full moon...make out under the stars and take you back to my apartment for a night of wild, unhinged sex?

CANDIS

Exactly.

FRIENDLY

That's absurd. How could you doubt my sincerity, Candi? I'm shocked. And, furthermore, appalled.

CANDIS

(upset)

It's Candis.

FRIENDLY

Case in point. If I planned any of tonight's activities, then I could have at least found out your name.

(points, smiles)

Brandi, is it?

CANDIS  
HA-HA-HA!

Her breath is strong. Friendly grimaces.

CANDIS (CONT'D)  
Nobody is that naturally charming or spontaneous. Especially after their date stands them up.  
(beat)  
Ya know, they told me about you. They say you're very sneaky.

FRIENDLY  
Oh, really? What else do they say?

CANDIS  
They say to beware of any guy that makes his living bull-shitting the public. They can't separate their job from their personal life.

FRIENDLY  
What if I did make up that story? I wasn't stood up and just said I was so you'd have a drink with me?  
(beat)  
Even if it were true, you'd think women would find that flattering.

CANDIS  
Hate to break this to you but women aren't turned on by stalkers.

FRIENDLY  
What're you saying to me? We're not gonna hit the sheets?  
(playfully)  
Bummer. I put in all that hard work for nothing. What a waste.

CANDIS  
You know...it's a really good thing I'm drunk.

FRIENDLY  
Funny. You took the words right out of my mouth.

Candis grabs his tie, pulls him closer.

CANDIS

Come here. Let me take the words out  
of your mouth.

Candis plants a big one on him just as --

THE POLICE HELO FLIES OVERHEAD

And a BLINDING WHITE LIGHT bounces off the still water like reflections from a giant mirror. Friendly watches THE HELO as the SEARCHLIGHT ROAMS THE IMMEDIATE AREA.

The fierce SOUND OF THE WHIPPING BLADES start to DIM OUT as THE HELO disappears into the night. Headed for DOWNTOWN.

INT. SHAKER'S BAR AND GRILLE - NIGHT

Friendly struts in, moves through a small CROWD gathered by the door and heads for the bar. A PAIR OF UNIFORM PATROLMEN catch his attention. One flirts with SARAH (the bartender) while the other scopes out the room.

Friendly grabs a stool, snatches up a STIRRING STRAW from a highball glass. He bellies up, chews the straw and casually watches the crowd. He spots --

A YOUNG COUPLE at a HIGH TABLE. They keep a careful eye on the TWO COPS. Friendly notices the GUY warningly resting a hand on his GIRL'S LEG. He reaches under the table, grips a heavy pink BACK PACK.

Friendly watches THE COPS. Both are seemingly oblivious and have their backs turned. The GIRL keeps a close eye on them as she makes for the LADIES ROOM -- the BAG thrown over her shoulder.

The one PATROLMAN bids Sarah goodbye, grabs his partner and heads for the door. Sarah spots Friendly waiting at the end of the bar, heads over with his CREDIT CARD in hand.

SARAH

No, I won't go home with you.  
(hands him the card)  
Stop leaving your card.

FRIENDLY

What's with the heat? They deciding  
to charge you with possession of a  
deadly weapon?

SARAH

You mean you don't know?

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Somebody hit a Brinks truck out in  
the parking lot

FRIENDLY  
What? Where?

SARAH  
Right here. Right under your nose.  
(surprised)  
Where have you been? There's cops  
all over the place. I figure you'd  
be the first at the scene.

FRIENDLY  
I've been busy.

SARAH  
I noticed. What's this one's name?

FRIENDLY  
Never mind her. When was this?

SARAH  
About an hour ago. A little less.  
You know, I thought you Grapevine  
guys were on top of this stuff.  
(points at TV)  
It's been all over the TV.

ON THE TV - LIVE NEWS REPORT

The white MIAMI HERALD VAN still parked dead center of the  
intersection. A news ticker - GETAWAY CAR STALLS: ROBBERY  
SUSPECTS FLEE WITH HALF A MILLION.

The report cuts to Bayside Marketplace. The BRINKS ARMORED  
CAR sits by a curb near an ATM machine. YELLOW CRIME SCENE  
TAPE blocks out a crowd of shoppers, rubberneckers who walk  
to and from the market.

SARAH  
They ditched their getaway van at a  
red light out on Biscayne. Right in  
the middle of the street. They say  
if it wasn't for the police chopper  
scaring them off, they would've had  
them in custody by now.  
(beat)  
Really defeats the whole purpose of  
having that helicopter, doesn't it?

Candis awaits by the door, doe-eyed, pathetic, looking like a lost puppy. She searches the busy room for Friendly.

Sarah greets a CUSTOMER and takes his order. Friendly turns and catches eyes with Candis. She taps at her watch, pouty faced, sulking, and ready to call it a night.

Friendly nods, offers her a reassuring but not very genuine smile. He quickly shifts focus to --

THE COUPLE

At the corner table. The GIRL returns from the ladies room with the PINK BAG -- hides it behind her boyfriend's legs.

Friendly watches them closely. He cracks a sly grin.

INT. GRAPEVINE STUDIOS - EDITING SUITE - MORNING

A couple of fat boy EDITORS are glued to their AVID EDITING CONSOLES. They make some not-so final changes to an expose on Metro-Dade cop DENNIS LAWSON.

ON THE MONITOR

A dark and dirty alley. A STUNTMAN dons a MIAMI HURRICANE HELMET, while another MAN stands behind him. They stand a good five feet from a BEER BOTTLE - turned on its side and placed on the filthy ground.

STUNTMAN

(to camera)

Alright. I'm gonna show you what kind of force you would actually need to shatter this bottle.

He is voluntarily THROWN TO THE GROUND by the other MAN.

ON BEER BOTTLE (SLOW MOTION)

The MAN tumbles to the ground and SHATTERS THE BOTTLE WITH THE CRASHING WEIGHT OF HIS HELMET.

A SIXTY INCH FLATSCREEN

Hangs over the consoles and plays the latest footage on a loop. DARBY COLES (30s), cute, but motherly professional type, stands in THE DIRTY ALLEY with a mic in hand.

DARBY

This is the alley where Metro-Dade cop Dennis Lawless Lawson, who was acquitted less than one year ago for his role in the recorded pistol whipping of Miami Hurricane lineman LaRoy "The Strongarm" Curtis, quote "stumbled on the scene" of another eerily similar drug transaction...

Watching from the back of the room is GRAPEVINE founder and CEO - MARTIN "MARTY" GREIR (50s) curly salt and pepper hair and the spark of stubborn determination in his eye.

DARBY (CONT'D)

But Miami PD's "not so finest" has refused comment on allegations of extortion and robbery...

The footage cuts to the gritty SECURITY VIDEO SURVEILLANCE of DENNIS LAWSON (30s) standing in a grocery store parking lot, drawing down on suspect LAROY CURTIS (20) as he takes cover behind his tricked-out CADILLAC.

Lawson's PARTNER steps out and covers the front end of the vehicle as Curtis crouches on the ground.

DARBY (V.O.)

Lawson is "sticking to his guns"... swearing he used necessary force in apprehending unarmed suspects Lisa McKay and Dan Arbegast...

Curtis tosses his weapon into plain view, his hands in the air. He steps out, into the open, as Lawson charges after him and SMASHES HIS GUN in the suspect's face.

DARBY (V.O.)

But Lisa McKay's hefty ten thousand dollar hospital bill says different.

Curtis throws a defensive hand in the air.

SERIES OF STILL PHOTOS

-- Lisa McKay's left arm.

DARBY (V.O.)

Twenty five stitches to her left arm.

-- McKay's face. Badly bruised, swollen.

DARBY (V.O.)  
Twelve stitches to her face...

-- On McKay's stitches.

DARBY (V.O.)  
The evidence paints another picture.  
One not so cut and dry...

-- On McKay's black and blue eye.

DARBY (V.O.)  
This is just one reporter's opinion  
but it seems there's more here than  
meets "the eye".

SECURITY VIDEO - LAWSON AND CURTIS

Lawson WHIPS THE HELL OUT OF CURTIS with his pistol as his partner acts as the lookout man - waiting for witnesses to come along.

DARBY (V.O.)  
Did I mention that both "suspects"  
were unarmed at the time of their  
detainment?

Marty dials a number on his phone.

INT. KURT ROGAN'S HOUSE - GARAGE - MORNING

KURT ROGAN (40s), a once fairly handsome man with a four day stubble and receding hairline sits passed out behind the wheel of his car. His LAPTOP sits open-faced on the dash, along with his I-PHONE.

His GARAGE DOOR still OPEN from the night before. It's a bright, beautiful morning. DOGS BARKING, BIRDS CHIRPING.

Marvin Gaye's "I Heard It Through The Grapevine" plays as his I-PHONE lights up. The name MARTY on the CALLER ID.

MARVIN GAYE (O.S.)  
I bet you're wonderin' how I knew...

EXT. KURT'S DRIVEWAY - MORNING

A NEIGHBOR and his WIENER DOG are out for their daily jog. The dog sniffs its way along the tail-end of the driveway and pisses on Kurt's recycler. It's filled with RED BULLS and cans of BUD LIGHT.

INT. KURT'S CAR - MORNING

Kurt slowly comes around and rubs his tired eyes. He grabs the phone and checks the caller.

MARVIN GAYE (O.S.)  
Between the two of us guys...

KURT  
(answers)  
Yeah...?

MARTY (V.O.)  
Tell me you didn't OK Friendly's story.

KURT  
I didn't OK Friendly's story.  
(thinks back)  
What story?

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. GRAPEVINE STUDIOS - EDITING SUITE - MORNING

Marty is distracted by the two impatient editors, gawking back at him with assuming looks, awaiting his instruction.

MARTY  
(into phone)  
Hold on a sec.  
(to editors)  
I think it sucks. Change it.

The editors, TOAD and WRENCH, share a befuddled look.

WRENCH  
You care to elaborate, Chief?

MARTY  
Yes! It currently sucks! Make it so  
it does not suck! Clear enough?

Toad and Wrench halfheartedly face their monitors to start the re-edit.

INT. KURT'S CAR - MORNING

Kurt points the rear-view mirror at his stubbled face. He pops his eyes open, shifts them side to side, checking for overall redness.

Marty on SPEAKER PHONE.

MARTY (V.O.)

Make a long story short...Friendly ran a segment on the armored car robbery Saturday night and now the cops are out looking for him.

KURT

Cops? What the hell kind of story did he run?

MARTY (V.O.)

Gee. I don't know, Rogan. I was hoping my head of programming may be able to answer that for me. I don't know what I was thinking.

KURT

What happened?

MARTY (V.O.)

I'm here two minutes this morning and I got two of Miami PDs finest waiting for me in my office.

(beat)

They've been gone an hour and my ass is still sore.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. GRAPEVINE STUDIOS - NEWSROOM - MORNING

Marty, phone to his ear, enters the busy room from a narrow hallway. It's wall to wall RED BRICK. The dozens of GLOWING COMPUTER MONITORS brighten the room as a GRAPEVINE INSIGNIA in PURPLE NEON LETTERS proudly GLIMMERS on the wall.

The room is old and worn but the office itself has a unique post-modernistic look. It's decorated with BLACK WORK DESKS and a collage of various SILVER-FRAMED NEWS ARTICLES.

Triple-bladed stainless steel CEILING FANS dangled from the ceiling. EACH BLADE adorned with a soft-white LIGHT FIXTURE which casts a cool, almost strobe-like effect on the room.

MARTY

On top of this Dennis Lawson fiasco the last thing we need is more cops on my back. They're already calling for a removal of Darby's segment.

MARTY (CONT'D)

There's even threat of a civil suit from Lawson. Talk about not knowing how to quit when you're ahead.

KURT (V.O.)

That's bullshit. They don't got a legal leg to stand on. In order to get her for slander, they have to show malicious intent. If she ran the story after his acquittal then that's another problem altogether.

Marty spots a CROWD forming at the window, bunched up and staring through the glass - curiously watching the goings on below.

MARTY

I'm meeting with legal right now. I can tell you all about it when you get here.

Marty checks his watch.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Which better be in the vicinity of the next ten to fifteen minutes.

KURT (V.O.)

Umm...

Marty sneaks up on the CROWD at the window. They all drink sodas and coffee, softly whispering to each other, unaware of his looming presence.

KURT (V.O.)

...I'm gonna need at least thirty.

MARTY

Let me rephrase this. Ten minutes or you're fired. Fifteen and I'll have you killed. Goodbye.

Marty hangs up, heads for the crowd.

MARTY (CONT'D)

What is this?! Look like a bunch of old farts watching a car accident!

The crowd quickly disperses. They look like cockroaches escaping the deadly swat of a newspaper.

One panicked employee turns to a soda machine - fumbles for some change, pretends to buy a drink. This is STEVE FADDEN (20s) awkwardly thin, covered with tats and piercings.

Marty gives him the stink-eye and moves for the window.

A PATROL CAR, UNIFORM COP and TWO PLAIN-CLOTHES DETECTIVES gather by the front door. They are DENNIS LAWSON, mid (30s) and lean and mean. His neatly trimmed hair and perfect neck tie suggest a military background.

His partner is ROY CROWDER (40s), uglier, fatter, and much more slovenly. He's been a cop, and nothing but a cop, his entire adult career.

Marty watches with concern.

MARTY

You can stop hiding behind the chips,  
Rudy. I see you.

KIESHA "RUDY" KNIGHT (20s), African-American beauty, with an orange-streaked quaff of a lions mane for hair, sneaks out from behind a snack machine. She tip-toes it back to her desk.

Marty keeps his eyes on the lot downstairs. He shakes his head with pure disdain as he observes these cops strutting their authority, swinging their big badges around.

INT. KURT'S GARAGE - MORNING

Kurt swings open his door as EMPTY CANS OF RED BULL CRASH TO THE FLOOR. He kicks out his legs -- notices the garage door still open. He shakes his head.

INT. KURT'S OFFICE - GRAPEVINE STUDIOS - DAY

Darby grips this morning's edition of The Miami Herald in both hands as she furiously paces on the carpet and looks disgusted. She looks up and spots --

Kurt racing for his door, a large coffee in both hands and the morning paper under his armpit. He quickly struts his way inside and shuts the door with his foot.

KURT

I don't know. Don't ask.

DARBY

(aggravated)

I didn't say anything.

KURT

Great. Let's keep it that way until  
I've had my coffee.

Kurt throws down his copy of "The Herald" onto the desk and pulls some half and half creamers from his coat pocket. He pours them into the first of two coffees.

Darby holds a copy of The Herald to her chest and sports a not so genuine smile. The headline reads LAWSON ACQUITTED. She does an awesome Vanna White impersonation as she drags her left hand across the giant, bold-faced letters.

DARBY

I'm thinking of having it framed. So  
whadd'ya think?

Kurt stirs his coffee and couldn't care less about Darby's usual morning theatrics. He's seen this act once or twice.

KURT

The words "I told you so" come to  
mind.

Darby isn't amused. She tosses her paper on the desktop and throws her hands on her hips in protest.

DARBY

Nobody forced you to run the story.

KURT

Yeah, right. Like I ever had a choice  
in the matter.

Darby gets real excited and does a little cheerleader dance near the center of the room. She's masking the deeper anger and resentment clearly evident on her face.

DARBY

(plays excited)  
So I've already drafted my follow up  
segment on Lawson's case.  
(beat)  
Wanna hear it?

KURT

(exhausted)  
Oh, more than anything in the world.

Darby stops her little dance, then starts to pace back and forth on the floor like a nervous train wreck jacked up on caffeine and punchy from not enough sleep.

DARBY

Dennis Lawson has done it again. You may remember his name from last years headline grabbing antics when he first got really hopped up on crank and beat the ever loving hell out of local hero and sports legend LaRoy Curtis...

(stops, points at Kurt)

...all in the name of law and order of course...

Kurt sips his coffee and stares at the floor. She's making him tired all over again.

DARBY (CONT'D)

Oh! Did I forget to mention that his intention was to stop a drug deal?

(at Kurt)

You don't need to hire a detective to find the irony there.

Kurt dips his head back and shuts his tired eyes. He sneaks a quick glance at his watch as Darby rambles on.

DARBY (CONT'D)

Then - as he turns and weeps at the TV cameras and giving the best teary-eyed performance since Brando's scene in On the Waterfront, Lawson freely admits to his long term abuse of methamphetamines and voluntarily checks into rehab while our esteemed colleagues at Miami Herald spend the next three and a half months following their fallen hero's progress and turning him into a FRICKING MARTYR!

Darby is so angry, she folds her arms like a pouting child. Kurt tries his hardest to hold back a smile. He can't help but laugh at his emotionally unhinged co-worker.

DARBY (CONT'D)

What do you think? Good?

KURT

Good. I especially like the "fricking" part.

DARBY

Glad you like it. I've been working all morning on it.

KURT  
It's still missing a few touches.

Kurt takes a seat at his desk, kicks back and sips at his coffee. Darby grows defensive as she hovers over his desk and throws him a disgusted look.

DARBY  
Like what?

KURT  
Like Lisa McKay's teethmarks all over Lawson's right arm. Or the crack rock she refused to spit out. Or the cops finding...inhuman...traces of anadrol in Curtis's bloodstream following his arrest. Just little stuff like that.  
(beat)  
Other than that, it's a solid story.

DARBY  
I hate it when you do this.

KURT  
Do what?

DARBY  
Talk to me like that. It's like I don't know if you're patronizing me or giving me crap.

Kurt squints. He doesn't follow.

KURT  
There's a difference?

Marty sneaks up on them from outside Kurt's window. He TAPS HARD ON THE GLASS - surprising them both and giving Darby a near heart attack.

KURT (CONT'D)  
(under his breath)  
Oh, fuck a duck's ass.  
(smiles to Marty)  
Good morning, Chief!

Kurt and Darby watch as a very impatient Marty TAPS at his watch and holds up five fingers. He mouths the words "five minutes" and storms off.

DARBY  
We're not done arguing.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - GRAPEVINE STUDIOS - DAY

Marty sits at the head of the table. Kurt's to his left and Darby and Rudy to the right of him. At the other end of the table sits Steve and DARYL RAYBURN (20s) - African-American athlete, Denzel looks, sports writer.

STEVE

...so this happy housewife with too much time on her hands hears of a gentlemen's club opening up a few blocks shy of the airport...

DARYL

(interrupts)

Titty bar.

Steve stops, turns to Daryl. He's totally off track now. A truly annoyed look on his face.

STEVE

That's what I said. A strip bar.

DARYL

You called it a gentlemen's club. I hate it when you do that shit. Say it!

Kurt, Marty and the others have a LAUGH at Steve's expense. Darby turns to Rudy. They both shake their heads and roll their eyes as if this banter is all typical Monday morning routine.

STEVE

I apologize for censoring myself in front of mixed company. Maybe I didn't find it necessary to refer to it as a titty bar.

DARYL

Get this through your head. You have zero chance of ever hooking up with either of these two women. So stop playing like you don't got the worst mouth in the room.

(beat)

If you're gonna curse, then fuckin' curse already.

Everyone cracks up. Steve doesn't get the joke.

STEVE

Sorry if I didn't wanna say tits when there were two women present. If you want me to say tits, I'll say tits.

MARTY

What about the strip bar?

STEVE

Ok. So this woman starts a petition, getting the other mommies and tight wads all upset about building a...

(at Daryl)

...titty bar...

(to Marty)

...so close to West Creek Elementary. Whining about bringing all the wrong element to the neighborhood. That and the fact that it's being built on the same property where The First United Methodist Church currently stands.

DARBY

Wow. Talk about bad taste.

STEVE

Obviously, this is getting the entire Christian community up in arms.

KURT

That would do it.

MARTY

(to Steve)

What's the short version?

STEVE

This woman's got nearly five hundred signatures on the petition and she'll be presenting it at the Planning and Zoning Board this coming Thursday.

MARTY

Who's on the guest list?

STEVE

This David Wright from The Office of Planning says their plans of building additional parking on an adjacent lot will make it a high traffic area and unsafe for pedestrians, i.e. kids who are going to and from school. So far, that's all I got on our guests.

MARTY

(to Rudy)

Rudy McTootie. What do you have  
for us today?

Kurt, Darby, Daryl and Steve all turn to Rudy and await her answer. She sits in an awkward silence as the curious faces of her co-workers watch on.

RUDY

(nervous)

I'm...uh...still working on it.

Kurt turns to Marty - curiously watches his reaction. A bit nervous for Rudy.

MARTY

What does that mean? You don't have  
shit?

(beat)

If you don't have shit, just tell me.

Kurt and the others turn to Rudy. She is more than a little uncomfortable by the five pairs of eyes all staring back at her.

RUDY

I do. I really do. I have something.

(retracts)

Actually, it could be big or it could  
be nothing at all.

MARTY

In other words, you got a source you're  
not sure of?

Rudy checks with Kurt, who nods and gives her the go ahead.

RUDY

You could say that.

MARTY

So keep on it. I have faith in you.

Rudy exhales in relief. Kurt gives her a quick wink.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Daryl. I hear you got an interview set  
up with LaRoy Curtis and family? -- Get  
their thoughts on this Lawson fiasco?

DARYL

It's not a hundred percent set up, but it shouldn't be a problem. I'm waiting to hear back.

MARTY

Can I get a definite yes or no by the end of the day?

DARYL

You bet.

MARTY

(to everyone)

Ok. As you may have noticed Friendly didn't make it in this morning.

(beat)

You also may've heard something about him running a surprise segment on the armored car robbery Saturday night.

RUDY

So what happened?

MARTY

According to this segment - our Mister Friendly was having a few of his usual cocktails at Shaker's bar when he just happened to observe a young male and a young female carrying a suspicious bag he believed held money stolen from the armored car.

(beat)\_

Anyone with half a brain knows that the video is a joke.

DARYL

(to Marty)

You forgetting that this is Friendly's audience you're talking about?

MARTY

My point exactly. This little prank got over fifteen hundred hits since Sunday morning. Miami P.D. is getting flooded with phone calls from people wanting to know whether or not the story's a hoax.

MARTY (CONT'D)

As you may not know, ninety nine percent of all police work is based on anonymous tips. With P.D. getting all these calls they can't differentiate the real leads from the fake ones. They get the wrong information and they can't build a case. Etcetera, etcetera.

(beat)

They're demanding a retraction or we get nailed with interfering in an official police investigation.

KURT

For all you laymen in the room, this is obstruction of justice.

The whole crew turn and stare at one another. Their look is an uneasy mix of shock and surprise. Rudy looks concerned.

RUDY

They can arrest us?

MARTY

Not you. Me.

DARBY

They can't really do that, can they?

DARYL

Sure they can. They have to have someone to blame for not making an arrest.

Marty taps Kurt on the arm, motions to the fifty inch FLAT SCREEN hanging on the wall - just above the far end of the cherry oak table.

MARTY

You wanna boot up the video?

Kurt stretches for A UNIVERSAL REMOTE, just within reach of his hand. He aims at the lights - dimming them a bit, then points at the television, plays the ARMORED CAR SEGMENT.

ON THE FLAT SCREEN

- is Friendly, his cameraman SCOTTIE (20s), and their boom operator TYLER (20s). They are sitting in the back of what looks like a NEWS VAN. There are MONITORS and the intricate BUTTONS and SWITCHES of editing equipment in the b.g.

The CAMERA seems to be mounted on STICKS as all three stare back at the online audience who are watching the live feed.

Friendly has a small black mic hidden under his collar.

FRIENDLY

Hello out there in Grapevine land. This is your local "Friendly" news man - once again bringing you only the latest, most news-worthy coverage right here from the dark underbelly known as Miami. Joining me once again is the best camera man in the entire civilized world. Scott Bird. The bird is indeed the word.

Scottie leans in, a big smile. He waves to the camera.

FRIENDLY (CONT'D)

And coast to coast. LA to Chicago. He's a boom operator. Say hi to Tyler.

TYLER

What's goin' on?

FRIENDLY

We are live at Bayside Marketplace where a little over an hour ago, two armed men dressed as security guards, knocked over a Brinks armored car and made off with a little over five hundred grand in cash.

(beat)

For those not so good at math - this is half a million dollars. The whole market here is crawling with the most confused, completely clueless looking cops you'd ever hope to encounter.

(beat)

They are now, as I sit here, questioning everyone here at the market, in hopes of breaking something loose, or discovering evidence that will help them to identify these men. Needless to say, they've been incapable of acquiring one single lead of value...whatsoever...

Kurt holds back a silly grin as he checks with Marty to see if he's watching him. Daryl also fights a smile. Steve and the girls look more confused than anything.

## FRIENDLY (CONT'D)

It's been an hour since the robbery and the police have yet to locate these men.

(beat)

You know - I really tried to hold off as long as I could and kept all my opinions to myself. But, you can only watch these poor slobs for so long before you get so frustrated with their stupidity that you just have to speak up.

(beat)

You know what I mean?

Darby's grin is ear to ear. Her and Kurt exchange looks. They're getting a big kick out of Friendly's segment and Marty doesn't like it.

## FRIENDLY (CONT'D)

So - against all my better judgment -- I decided I'd throw my investigative skill into the ring and help catch these guys before someone else got hurt. It just so happens that yours truly has identified two people who I believe are holding the half a million in question...

## MARTY

(to Kurt)

Fast forward this, would you? I'm tired of listening to this crap.

Kurt fast-forwards this slower footage until Friendly and the others crawl out of the van, confronting the MALE and FEMALE ROBBERY SUSPECTS - walking to their car.

They're in what appears to be the first floor of a PARKING STRUCTURE. The young couple are taken aback by the camera crew closing in on them.

The female carries the suspicious PINK BACK PACK last seen at SHAKER'S BAR. Two MEN in cheap suits, COP #1 and COP #2 point their weapons at the surprised couple.

Friendly stands a safe distance behind the two officers as Scottie records and Tyler holds a boom pole over the crowd.

## COP #1

(to Male Suspect)

Get away from the girl!

FEMALE SUSPECT

Oh my God!

(to Male Suspect)

Just give them your wallet, Danny!

COP #2

(to Female Suspect)

Shut up! Face down! Right now!

MALE SUSPECT

What do you want?

COP #2

(to Male Suspect)

Shut the fuck up and get on the ground!!!

Cop #1 grabs him by the LEFT ARM and NECK and forces him to the asphalt - while his helpless female companion continues to look scared and clueless.

FEMALE SUSPECT

DANNY!!!

COP #1

(to Female Suspect)

What's in the bag?!

FEMALE SUSPECT

Nothing! A change of clothes! If you want our money, just take it!

She unzips the back pack, reaches inside.

FEMALE SUSPECT (CONT'D)

Here!

COP #1

Get your hand out of the bag!

(to Cop #2)

SHE'S GOING FOR A GUN! SHE'S GOING FOR A GUN!

Cop #1 charges after her, GRABS THE PINK BAG and fights for control of it with the feisty female suspect. The camera is SHAKY and CHAOTIC as Scottie charges in for the close-up.

The cop gets the best of her as he uses the long straps of her back pack to violently TOSS HER TO THE GROUND. She is badly hurt from the fall, in tears.

Before Scottie can rush in for a clear shot of the wounded female suspect --

Cop #2 BLOCKS THE CAMERA and PLACES HIS HAND OVER THE LENS as Scottie is forced back, away from the scene.

COP #2

Turn off the camera!

The picture turns to SNOW. The words TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES flash on and off in BRIGHT WHITE LETTERS.

BACK TO SCENE

The crowd all turn and stare at one another. Daryl laughs it up, while Marty shakes his head in embarrassment. Darby is also ear to ear smiles.

ON THE FLAT SCREEN

The picture returns to normal as Friendly stands near their suspect's CAR. He addresses the audience while the TWO COPS take turns tossing a beating to a plastic, blow-up SEX DOLL WEARING A BLONDE WIG.

The doll is barely visible on the other side of the car. At first site, it could easily pass as a real person. After a closer look, she's obviously a fake.

The two angry cops do their best Pesci and De Niro routine as they kick the hell out of the plastic doll hiding below the car's undercarriage - just out of view of the camera.

FRIENDLY

As you can see, things have gotten pretty out of control here. But I'd like to thank two of Miami PDs very finest - who if it weren't for them frequenting the same bar, drinking bourbon shots and Pabst chasers til the early hours - we would've never foiled this terrible robbery that's left two of our finest injured.

(beat)

Is it skill, you say? Or is it dumb luck? According to Officer Blake and Dobbs, this is just another case of being in the right place at the right time. Tonight, I'm proud to say the same.

Kurt shuts off the television.

DARBY

(to Marty)

The right place at the right time.

(beat)

Isn't that what Lawson said about the McKay and Arbegast bust?

DARYL

Yeah. Right after she called him out for trying to steal her rock and make off with their cash.

MARTY

(to Rudy)

What do you think, Rudy?

Rudy checks with the others. A bit confused.

RUDY

About what, Chief?

MARTY

About Friendly's story. You do have an opinion, do you not?

RUDY

Yes - I think the video is an obvious response to Dennis Lawson's acquittal. I noticed that this woman referred to the male suspect as Danny. This is an obvious reference to Dan Arbegast.

MARTY

Very good. What else?

RUDY

I think the point of the video was to show how the male suspect was largely ignored, while the officers assaulted an unarmed woman. Like Lisa McKay was by Dennis Lawson.

MARTY

And?

RUDY

Sir...?

MARTY

What else do you think?

RUDY

I think that Dennis Lawson's story is national news. As a national figure, Friendly's segment could be deemed as parody. And that means we're legally protected if Lawson were to ever sue for libel.

KURT

(to all)

There's a good chance each of you will be contacted by the police. You know nothing. If you do know something, we don't wanna hear about it. Keep it to yourself until Chief and me can figure out the next step.

They all nod in agreement. Kurt turns to Marty, awaits his further instruction.

KURT (CONT'D)

Anything else, Chief?

MARTY

Ok. That's it. Quit sitting around and get to work.

They all gather their things and head for the door - one by one. Kurt taps his fingers on the surface of the table, in deep thought. He cracks a mischievous smile.

INT. GRAPEVINE STUDIOS - NEWSROOM - DAY

Rudy sits at a well organized cubicle. She is busy reading a lengthy, back and forth discussion on the eerie black and red message boards of SPOOKYTRUE.COM.

PHOTO STILLs of GHOSTS, POLTERGEISTS, and floating ORBS are featured on the screen. The two having the discussion go by the usernames "XRAY93" and "GHOSTGIRL1".

The name of the forum is "I HEAR DEAD PEOPLE". Sitting next to Rudy, on her desktop, are stacks of old news articles on ALEXIS RAY. Some of the headlines read RAY PLEADS INSANITY and TEEN KILLER GETS OFF.

Kurt swings by her cubicle and takes a seat on the desktop.

KURT

So what's this big story you're not sure about?

Rudy's eyes are glued to the screen as she talks shop with Kurt. She hands him one of the printed articles on Alexis Ray's second degree murder charge.

RUDY

I'm about to find out.

Kurt notices the YELLOW HIGHLIGHTED PORTION of the article. The part that Rudy noted. He reads it out loud.

KURT

(reads)

Alexis Ray - who was recently acquitted of second degree murder, had first been examined by renowned child psychologist Neela Marapovich after telling attorney Mark Russell that a voice commanded her to murder her stepfather.

(to Rudy)

So what? We already know this.

RUDY

Right. But what we don't know is what voice she was referring to.

KURT

There were no voices. He was raping her and she kills him. She played the jury's sympathy card and they bought it.

RUDY

Right. Alexis Ray got off by reason of insanity. But what people don't know is whether or not she really is crazy.

KURT

I hate to think she killed her stepdaddy when she's of sound mind and body.

RUDY

I have a friend who practically lives on this website. Spooky true dot com. She just happens to chime in on a discussion about talking to the deceased. And guess who threw their name into the ring?

Kurt leans in closer to the screen - squints a bit as he reads the small red font of the message board.

KURT

XRAY93?

RUDY

Tell me that doesn't look familiar.

KURT

Yeah. It's Alexis Ray's username on You Tube. She posted a video about fighting back against sexual abuse. It's gotten over a million hits since her acquittal.

(beat)

What is she doing on a paranormal site?

RUDY

Nothing much. Just admitting to hearing the voice of her dead father calling her name at a secluded lake less than a mile from her and her mother's house.

Rudy smiles as she kicks back in her chair and stares up at Kurt. He stares back and forth between the printed article and computer screen, a bit confused.

KURT

But according to Ray's mother...

RUDY

Her father ran away with another woman when she only three.

KURT

But if Alexis says her father is dead and the mother says he's alive...

RUDY

Then it's possible her mother killed her father and covered it up.

KURT

And if she did it once, then maybe she knocked off husband number two?

RUDY

Alexis was only seventeen at the time she killed her stepfather...

KURT

(interrupting)

And her mother doesn't see one day of prison. If, in fact, she killed him.

(a growing smile)

Pretty smart.

RUDY

I sure thought so.

KURT

If she's willing to spill her guts on the internet she's willing to give us her story.

(beat)

Send her a PM and see if she wants to meet up.

RUDY

You mean for an interview?

KURT

That's right. An interview. On video. She's hiding something and she's dying to tell the world about it. I figure it might as well be us.

INT. SHAKER'S BAR AND GRILLE - DAY

It's the mid morning, pre lunch rush and the dining room is completely dead. Sarah (the bartender) wipes down and hangs some wine glasses from an overhead rack.

Kurt leans on the bar and sips a club soda as he asks Sarah some questions about Friendly.

SARAH

The cops were just in here asking about Friendly. You just missed them.

KURT

Dodged that bullet.

SARAH

I guess they weren't in on the joke?

KURT

Believe it or not, they didn't think it was too funny. Go figure.

SARAH

Yeah, well. Cops never did have a sense of humor.

KURT

So what the hell happened in here Saturday night?

SARAH

Well, I knew something was wrong.

KURT

How's that?

SARAH

It was the first time in the three years Friendly's been drinking here he didn't try to take me to bed. So I figured he was sick or something.

Kurt rolls his eyes.

KURT

Besides that, did you notice anything else suspicious about his behavior?

SARAH

He came in and ordered a quick drink and asked me about the robbery.

(beat)

That's about it.

KURT

Nothing else?

Sarah thinks hard as she loads a tray of wet BEER MUGS into a frosted refrigerator. Kurt grows frustrated with Sarah as she loses focus. He taps at his drink - signaling a refill.

Sarah gives him a refill as she squirts some CLUB SODA into the empty glass. She eyes a corner table, just over Kurt's shoulder.

Kurt turns around - stares at the empty round table. It is the same table where our armored car suspects were having a drink and hiding from police.

Kurt faces Sarah.

KURT (CONT'D)

What is it?

Sarah points at the table.

SARAH

Now that I think of it - there was a girl at that corner table over there. She was with a boyfriend or something.

KURT

And?

SARAH

I noticed her and Friendly kept staring at each other. I didnt think much of it because he had this other young hot one waiting by the door. So I figure he was having second thoughts about who he was taking home.

KURT

She have a pink bag with her? Like a kid's back pack?

SARAH

Yeah. I think so. Why?

KURT

No reason. So what about this girl? What happened?

SARAH

She comes back to order another drink. Friendly says she left her lights on.

KURT

Her lights?

SARAH

I knew it was all crap. He was in here an hour before this girl and boyfriend came in. Nowhere near the parking lot so how did he possibly know she'd left her lights on?

Kurt nods. His wheels turning.

SARAH (CONT'D)

That's when I knew he was just trying get her away from this guy.

KURT

Did it work?

SARAH

He got called out on it and offered to buy her and her guy a few rounds to apologize.

KURT

And that worked?

SARAH

She accepts and they all have three more rounds and laugh their fucking asses off. His date got pissed off and left with another guy.

KURT

Thanks for the drink.

Kurt heads for the door.

SARAH

Hey!

He stops in his tracks.

SARAH (CONT'D)

It wasn't complimentary.

Kurt's face flushes red from embarrassment. He pulls a five spot from his pocket - heads back with his tail between his legs.

Sarah laughs.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I'm just pulling your leg, Rogan.  
Put your money away.

Kurt bashfully smiles and pockets the cash. He heads out.

EXT. SHAKER'S BAR/BAYSIDE MARKETPLACE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Kurt leaves the bar and heads across the same arched bridge where Friendly and Candis were watching the full moon. His CELL PHONE RINGS and stops him in his tracks.

KURT

(answers)

Rogan here.

FRIENDLY (V.O.)  
You tired of looking for me, Rogan?

KURT  
A little bit. Where the hell are you?

FRIENDLY (V.O.)  
At the beach. Where else? Are you at  
Shaker's, bugging Sarah with a bunch of  
stupid questions?

Kurt, in a paranoid frenzy, looks in every direction as he feels Friendly's eyes burning a hole in his back.

KURT  
Lucky guess. Are you watching me?

FRIENDLY (V.O.)  
You know me, Rogan. I'm always watching.

Kurt heads across the arched bridge. He keeps his eyes out for Friendly.

KURT  
Cute video, Friendly. You must've spent  
all of ten minutes putting that together.

FRIENDLY (V.O.)  
That was only the beginning, Rogan. I'll  
tell you the rest when you get here.

EXT. RODNEY'S BEACH CONDO - DAY

Kurt approaches the affluent, south beach condo and parks at the curb. The opened garage, driveway and most of the street's curb are occupied with cars.

Kurt pokes his head out the window and listens to the beat of the PARTY MUSIC inside. And then --

Friendly steps out, onto a second story balcony and blasts an AIR HORN. He's wearing a silk robe and having a mojito.

Kurt throws his hands on his ears, stares out the driver's side window and spots Friendly across the street. He's got the wrong condo.

FRIENDLY  
Over here!

Kurt shakes his head and steps out.

INT. RODNEY'S BEACH CONDO - DAY

Kurt stands in the living room with a mojito in hand and watches Friendly build himself a monster sandwich behind the kitchen countertop.

His friend - RODNEY WEBB (30s) - columnist for "The Miami Reporter", kicks back on a cheap leather sofa and watches highlights of Dan Marino's "Dolphins/Jets" record setting game from eighty eight.

FRIENDLY

I couldn't risk coming to work and I can't stay home. It's the first place the cops would look. So I thought I'd treat myself to some R and R. Take a personal day.

(motions to Rodney)

Rodney here's gonna help kick things up a notch.

Kurt watches as Rodney sees how many fritos he can stuff in his fat snack hole without spilling on himself. Kurt shakes his head in amazement. Friendly steps in with his sandwich.

KURT

How could he make this a bigger mess?

FRIENDLY

Check this out, Rogan. We made Lawson look like an asshole. Now him and his partner have the nerve to threaten us with obstruction?

(beat)

Just wait until Rodney here posts that tidbit of news all over the front page of The Reporter. The cops won't stand a chance. They're gonna be asking for Lawson's resignation by the end of the week.

Kurt watches Rodney throw angry hand gestures at the screen and chew with his mouth wide open. A few corn chips fall on his slovenly t shirt.

RODNEY

How could you throw for five hundred yards in one game and lose it by ten points?

FRIENDLY

Because he's no Joe Montana.

RODNEY

That's funny. So why don't you move to San Francisco and be a full blown fag with the rest of the homos?

FRIENDLY

Say. You still go down on your girl with that mouth of yours? No wonder her vagina smells like Fresh Kills.

RODNEY

It smells better than your mother's.

Kurt walks between the two bickering friends - annoyed with the pointless counter attacks and endless vulgarities.

KURT

I'm sorry. I hate to interrupt this special edition of SportsCenter but I still have a paper to run.

FRIENDLY

Would you relax. You're talking like I've fucked up before. When have I ever fucked up? When have I, in the history of people fucking up... ever partaken in the act?

KURT

In addition to removing the segment, boss man wants you to apologize.

Friendly is taken aback by this. He loses his cocky grin.

FRIENDLY

Not only has he lost his balls he's lost his mind!

KURT

You have one other choice. Turn in your resignation. I'm sure Rodney here can get you a gig sorting the mail at The Reporter. Fetch coffee.

FRIENDLY

Trust me. I've got a better idea.

INT. GRAPEVINE STUDIOS - SOUND STAGE - DAY

Scott aims his CANON XLH1 HD CAMERA at Friendly, who stands before a post-production GREEN SCREEN in a flashy but sheik sport coat. The bright glow of two tungsten-halogen QUARTZ LAMPS, dimmed by two white umbrellas, BEAM DOWN on him from both sides of the camera.

FRIENDLY

Just yesterday, the Miami P.D. asked that I personally remove my coverage of the armored car arrests from the video library here at Grapevine...

INT. GRAPEVINE STUDIOS - EDITING SUITE - DAY

The very same segment - featuring Friendly and his coverage of the armored car robbery - is played out on a FLAT SCREEN TV, hanging over the editing room.

The green screen behind him has now transformed into AERIAL footage of DOWNTOWN MIAMI. A FIGURE IN A RED CAPE is flying over the metropolis. The mystery superhero is Friendly with his trademark wire rim glasses.

This red caped figure flies amongst the BRIGHT CITY LIGHTS as the real Friendly - wild sport coat and tie - hosts the segment.

FRIENDLY

For those of you who haven't got the foggiest idea what I'm talking about, this footage in question was recorded last Saturday evening by yours truly and two of my fellow colleagues here at the studio. I'd like to take this time to apologize to The Miami Police Department.

(beat)

At first glance one might think that the video was meant to be a personal attack on the ineptness of our local police. Our Detective Dennis Lawson himself expressed dissatisfaction in how we handled the arrests.

(beat)

I'd like to officially go on record as stating that this is not the case.

The green screen footage of our Superman Friendly switches from the aerial shots of DOWNTOWN MIAMI to the PARKING LOT footage of our fake armored car robbery suspects. They're detained (and beaten) by the police.

The real Friendly stands before this screen as the armored car segment plays out behind him.

FRIENDLY (CONT'D)

What the Miami Police just don't quite understand, is that our staff had been experiencing some technical difficulty in recording the armored car arrests...

ON THE ROOM

Toad and Wrench sit at their respective stations with some true shit-eating grins. Marty and Kurt appear nervous and on edge as they watch the finished product.

ON THE FLAT SCREEN

The female suspect is THROWN TO THE GROUND by the straps of her pink back pack. Friendly stands just to the left of the screen, as we see all the shocking footage played out.

FRIENDLY (CONT'D)

We were only able to capture some of the incident. The other portion was believed to be erased. Much to all of our surprise...the wonderful editing staff at Grapevine Studios were able to recover this lost footage for our viewing enjoyment...

Kurt nervously rubs his eyes and strokes his weary face as the worst is yet to come.

ON THE FLAT SCREEN

The image of Friendly reporting from the parking garage is played against the real Friendly, standing on the opposite side of the screen.

FRIENDLY (CONT'D)

We're hoping that this might smooth over any ill-feelings between Miami PD and the staff here at Grapevine Studios. Without further ado...here it is.

The entire picture turns to SNOW. And then BLACK. The words TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES in bright bold-faced WHITE fills the screen.

Marty squints in confusion as he turns to Kurt - who simply shrugs his shoulders and plays dumb. He watches Marty from the corner of his eye as he chews away at his nails.

ON THE FLAT SCREEN

The two plain-clothes officers, Blake and Dobbs, have their robbery suspects on the ground - cuffed at their wrists and bound and gagged.

Scott, the cameraman, moves in closer to the PINK BACK PACK laying on the ground, near the suspect's car. The ZIPPER IS OPENED as we are barely able to peek inside. Something that looks like either PAPER or MONEY pokes out of the bag.

Friendly follows the camera to this PINK BAG - as he stares back at his audience with an anxious smile.

FRIENDLY

Could it be? Is this five hundred thousand in stolen cash? Or is it, as our suspect proclaims, a change of clothes from the gym? And now, the moment of truth...

(to Scott)

Can I get a drum roll, please?

Scott mimics a terrible sounding DRUM ROLL form behind his camera. Friendly bends down and picks up the bag. He puts it on the hood of the suspect's car - turns it upside down as a whole stack of --

MIAMI HERALD NEWSPAPERS

Come falling out - one after the next. It's all a jumbled mess as Friendly flips over a paper and the headline reads

"LAWSON ACQUITTED"

Friendly holds the newspaper to his chest. The headline now facing the camera.

FRIENDLY

Would you look at this? Who would've thought? The newspaper bandits strike again...

On Marty sternly stroking the whiskers of his chin hair and not emoting one way or the other. Kurt watches him closely, trying to read his eyes.

ON THE FLAT SCREEN

The camera follows Friendly as he walks to the TWO SUSPECTS still on the garage floor. He bends down, sets the paper by the male suspect's face.

FRIENDLY

(to Male Suspect)

Tell me, sir. What would ever possess you to steal a truckload of newspapers?

Friendly pulls the gag from his mouth.

MALE SUSPECT

Get away from me, you liberal fascist pig bastard! You're all just a bunch of fuckin' whores! All of you! With all your lies and propaganda!

DOBBS

That's enough out of you!

Dobbs forcefully PICKS UP THE SUSPECT BY HIS SHIRT - SLAMS him against their unmarked car by his nose. He shoves him into the back seat as the suspect winces in pain.

Blake picks up his female companion, also walks her to the unmarked car. She SPITS at the camera with the ugliest and meanest scowl you've ever seen.

FEMALE SUSPECT

You're in bed with the cops! Why don't you tell the truth for once? He's the Devil! Get him off the streets before he kills someone! He's a MENACE!

Blake shoves the female suspect into the back seat by her head. She forcefully KICKS AT THE WINDOW like a crackhead who just lost her rock. Dobbs crawls in the driver's side and CRANKS UP THE ENGINE.

Friendly turns to the camera - facing his online audience as the female suspect kicks away at the rear window.

FRIENDLY

There you have it, Miami.

## FRIENDLY (CONT'D)

If you're just now joining our story then I'm sorry to say that this five hundred grand in stolen cash has yet to be recovered. And the armored car bandits are still very much at large

(beat)

But - I am very happy to say that the good folks at Miami Herald can sleep a little easier tonight, knowing that their newspapers will be back on the stands where they belong...

## ON MARTY AND KURT

Kurt slowly turns, watches Marty's reactions to the segment as he is still very cool and collected. He scratches at his chin whiskers and stares blankly at the television.

Toad and Wrench also turn around, watches as Marty pulls at his goatee and rocks back and forth on his rubber heels.

## TOAD

(whispers to Wrench)

Well?

## WRENCH

I've seen that look before. He either loves it or he's holding in a fart.

## ON THE FLAT SCREEN

The real Friendly ends the segment as the video footage of the garage cuts to Super Friendly cruising Downtown Miami.

## FRIENDLY

Although the actions of our two angry perpetrators are "extreme" to say the least, this incident does pose a very interesting question.

(beat)

Does the mainstream media... twist the truth in order to victimize the guilty and further persecute the oppressed?

(beat)

Believe it or not...there are some who think certain members of the Miami P.D. shouldn't be on the streets.

FRIENDLY (CONT'D)

I know this concept is very difficult to believe - because of what we're told on the news and what we read in the papers.

(beat)

But who knows? Maybe this...unfortunate incident will truly help us to shed some light on the truth. Or we could all just continue to stick our heads up our butts. I guess only time will tell.

(beat)

Good night, Miami!!!

INT. GRAPEVINE STUDIOS - HALLWAY - DAY

Kurt follows Marty through the narrow halls of Grapevine's post-production offices. Marty looking more than a little frustrated. He moves fast and with purpose. Kurt struggles to keep up with him.

MARTY

Is this Friendly's way of apologizing?  
Calling The Herald a bunch of fascists?

KURT

It gets us off the hook for the armored car. I thought that was the whole idea.

MARTY

When I said stop pissing off the cops,  
I didn't mean to go out and find some  
other group to piss off.

Marty dips into a small break room. Kurt follows behind.

E/I. BREAK ROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Marty drops a few quarters in a snack machine and realizes it's completely empty, with the exception of some old LIFE SAVERS on the bottom row.

MARTY

Are you kidding me? Who in the hell  
fills these things?

KURT

What do I look like? Frito Lay?

MARTY

I pay you to run the office.

MARTY (CONT'D)

The break room's part of the office.

Kurt laughs as he shakes his head.

KURT

I'll get right on it.

Marty reluctantly opts for the WINT-O-GREEN LIFE SAVERS at the bottom of the machine. They drop into the tray. In his attempts to retrieve them, he almost gets his arm stuck in the rusted metal trapping.

MARTY

What the hell. Guess I'll have some fresh breath when I tell Friendly to pack his things.

Marty tears at the foil wrapping as he takes a seat at the cheap folding table. Kurt buys a coke from the soda vendor.

MARTY (CONT'D)

And who in the hell were those two idiots in the garage?

Kurt cracks his soda, takes a sip as he grabs a seat across from Marty.

KURT

They write for The Reporter. I guess Friendly ran into them at Shakers and they all had a few.

MARTY

Yeah, I see that. If you ask me they had more than a few.

KURT

The Reporter already dropped the bomb on Lawson and Crowder. Everyone knows about the shit they pulled. The cat's out of the bag. I say we run with it.

MARTY

Because that's the best way to go, or because he's your best friend?

Marty offers Kurt a life saver. He grabs one.

KURT

He's not my friend. He's like a dog  
I fed once and can't quite get rid of.

MARTY

Well maybe you should start getting  
used to the idea.

Kurt is taken aback.

KURT

What? Firing him? You can't.

MARTY

Give me one good reason I shouldn't.

KURT

The Reporter stuck their neck out by  
running that story on Lawson. How's  
it gonna look if Friendly gets fired  
by one of his own?

(beat)

It's gonna look like we folded, boss.

MARTY

And you really wanna run this story?

Kurt thinks it over. He cracks a goofy smile and nods with  
uncertain, half-hearted assurance.

KURT

I think it's funny. As a matter of  
fact - I think it's damn hilarious.  
The last I checked that was his job.  
Making people laugh.

(beat)

You know what else I think? I think  
Dennis Lawson fucked with us in our  
own house. I really don't know what  
you think about that, but I find it  
entirely unacceptable.

Kurt takes one last swig of his coke and heads for the door  
while Marty ponders his words. He throws his life savers at  
a trash bin by the soda machine. They bank off the wall and  
BREAK INTO A HUNDRED PIECES.

Marty catches a quick glimpse of himself IN A SMALL MIRROR,  
hanging over a corner sink. He doesn't like what he sees.

INT. COFFEE AND BAGEL SHOP - DAY

Darby is in line, paying for her blueberry muffin and large coffee when none other than DENNIS LAWSON walks through the door. He's got a big, stupid grin on his face - spots Darby in line and removes his dark shades.

Darby heads for the condiment table, fights her way through a small crowd gathered by the sweeteners. She pretends not to notice Lawson standing in line. She sneaks a quick peek as he's staring right at her. He steps out of line - heads toward her.

LAWSON

Darby Coles. The breaker of bad news.

DARBY

Dennis Lawson. The breaker of jaws.  
To what do I owe this displeasure?

LAWSON

I was hoping to catch Findlay for a quick word. Since he's spending so much time outside your office these days - I thought I'd meet him for a coffee.

(beat)

Don't suppose you know where he is?

Darby pours creamer in her coffee - pretends to ignore the pestering detective.

DARBY

I can't say that I do.

LAWSON

By the way I never did congratulate you and your staff for doing such a bang-up job on the armored car.

(beat)

That is real top notch journalism.  
We're talking Pulitzer material.

DARBY

Thank you. But I can't take all the credit. You've been keeping us busy lately.

Darby rudely walks off, leaves Lawson by the dairy creamer. She sets her muffin and coffee down on a dining room table.

She finishes stirring sweetener and creamer into her coffee and faces away from Lawson. He doesn't take the hint as he creeps up behind her.

LAWSON

I especially loved all your coverage on the poor Brinks driver who's been laid up in the ICU with a concussion since his near fatal pistol-whipping.

(beat)

Or his frantic wife who's called the precinct every five minutes - asking for updates on her husband's case.

(beat)

Oh, that's right. I forgot. You guys don't do that kind of thing. Just too busy trying to rip my life apart than bother with the facts.

Darby finally snaps - faces Lawson with true conviction in her eyes and in her voice as she quickly sets him straight.

DARBY

Three and four.

(beat)

Three is the number of foster homes Dan Arbegast visited before the age of fourteen. Four is the number of gang-bangers that raped Lisa McKay two days shy of her sixteenth birthday. One of which was her own step brother.

(beat)

So don't hand me any of your happy horseshit about the security guard with a booboo on his head.

Lawson is visibly put off by Darby's comments. He restrains his obvious disdain for the young journalist and sports his famously smug smile.

LAWSON

You better be careful, Darby. One night when your Beamer breaks down and you end up on the wrong end of the tracks, we might not be there.

Darby folds her arms in protest, sports her own smug look.

LAWSON (CONT'D)

God forbid - you actually run into a Dan Arbegast in some dark alley. And when he puts that nine in your face and you yell out and nobody comes, I wonder if you'll still feel the same way about that poor, underprivileged kid from the other side of town.

DARBY

Is that a threat?

LAWSON

Not me, Darby. I'm one of the good guys, remember? I'll see you around.

Lawson heads for the door, stops in his tracks, comes back.

LAWSON (CONT'D)

I almost forgot.

Lawson pulls a manila envelope from his coat - hands it to Darby.

LAWSON (CONT'D)

This is for you. It's the internal affairs progress reports on Officer Vance and Detective Morrisey, a.k.a Blake and Dobbs.

Darby pulls the reports from the envelope. A surprised look on her face. She grimaces as she gives the police records a quick read.

LAWSON (CONT'D)

Oh yeah. They were real cops. They used to be anyways. Before they were investigated for taking bribes - and then charged in conspiracy to commit extortion two years ago.

Darby takes her eyes off the police file - gives Lawson the stink eye.

LAWSON (CONT'D)

Your boy Findlay did a story on them when he was still with The Reporter. He made a lot of enemies when he said they were framed. It cost him his job.

DARBY

So what?

LAWSON

I thought you might be interested to know that two days after the armored car stick-up, they cleaned out their savings accounts and split town.

DARBY

Bullshit.

LAWSON

I was gonna ask Findlay about it but he hasn't been home since Saturday.

(beat)

Almost as if he's been avoiding me.

Darby takes a second look at the police files.

LAWSON (CONT'D)

Tell you what, Darby. Why don't you hold onto those. Give them a closer look when you get the time. I'm sure you'll find it an interesting read.

Darby gives him one last nasty look as Lawson heads for the door with a smug look about him. He throws his shades back on and waves goodbye.

LAWSON (CONT'D)

Tell Findlay I said hi.

Lawson heads out the door. Darby looks sick to her stomach as she dumps her muffin and coffee in the trash.

EXT. SECLUDED LAKE/BOAT PIER - EVERGLADES - DAY

A modestly pretty young teen, wearing a long sleeved fleece and baggy jeans, faces the lake. Her thick and unkempt hair sway in the midday breeze. This is ALEXIS RAY (17) and she is lost in her own thoughts.

A small PADDLE BOAT - tied to an aging pier - FLOATS in the still water below.

A Honda CRV arrives at the scene. Alexis turns, stares back at the truck. The face of RUDY is staring back at her from the passenger window.

The Honda CUTS THE ENGINE. Alexis awaits by the beach.

Rudy and Scottie (cameraman) step from the Honda. Scottie has his camera bag in one hand and another back pack slung over his shoulder.

SCOTTIE

Have I told you that I'm diametrically opposed to this?

RUDY

What's the matter, Scottie? You afraid of ghosts?

SCOTTIE

No. I'm afraid of convicted murderers. Last I checked - ghosts don't cut open your throat while you sleep.

RUDY

The last I checked, she was acquitted. And it was self defense.

Scottie stares back at the creepily still figure of Alexis watching them from the lake. Her long, dark hair sways in the breeze. She's like something out of a bad horror film.

SCOTTIE

Yeah, right. He sat there and watched while she cut his throat. Shit happens.

RUDY

Knock it off. I need you to focus.

Rudy and Scottie head for the lake. Alexis takes a step or two forward. She holds out her arm, stopping Rudy and Scott in their tracks.

ALEXIS

No cameras! Just you!

SCOTTIE

(whispers)

See what I mean? She's gonna kill us. First she kills you, then she kills me.

RUDY

If I'm not back in an hour, come get me.

Rudy heads for the marshy swamp. Alex leads her toward the rotting pier and INTO THE PADDLE BOAT. Scottie watches them with concern as the boat drifts further into the lake.

INT. GRAPEVINE STUDIOS - DARYL'S DESK - DAY

Daryl sits at his cubicle - elbows rested on his knees and looking terribly stressed. A CELL PHONE to his ear. He is nervously stroking the top of his hair.

Kurt just happens to pass by his desk as Daryl strokes his hair and SIGHS in exhaustion. Kurt pulls up a chair, takes a seat across from his frustrated co-worker.

DARYL

(into phone)

I still don't understand, bro. Curtis little brother said he's down to talk. That it was gonna be our story first. Now you're telling me he doesn't wanna talk to the press?

(beat)

I got a deadline here, man.

Kurt leans in closer, listens in on their conversation as Daryl continues to grow more and more upset. He shifts in his chair like an impatient child.

DARYL (CONT'D)

(into phone)

So he's worried we're gonna take cheap shots? Is that it?

KURT

That's understandable.

Daryl gives Kurt a nasty look as he throws his hand in his face, shutting him up. Kurt leans back in his chair, rests his hands on the top of his head.

DARYL

(into phone)

You think maybe you should've called and told me? Like, three hours ago?

Kurt squints a bit as he notices an open desk drawer with a whole slew of POTATO CHIP BAGS, CANDY BARS and other SNACKS piled up in a bundle like a squirrel would hide his nuts.

Kurt grabs a bag of nacho chips and pops them open. He has a few while Daryl finishes on the phone.

KURT

No wonder the machine's empty.

DARYL

(into phone)

Okay. Listen to me closely. When you see him tonight you tell him it's not that kind of story. He's got my word on it.

(listens)

Alright. Call me as soon as you hear something. Later.

Daryl hangs up, angrily tosses his phone on his desk.

KURT

Problem?

DARYL

Curtis changed his mind. He says his mother doesn't want him talking to the press.

KURT

It happens. What's your back up story?

DARYL

I don't have one.

Kurt smiles - tosses the empty dorito bag into a trash bin. He rubs his hands together, scrubbing the cheese dust from his hands.

KURT

Let me tell you a story, Daryl. This friend of mine calls me up. Asks if I wanna go catch a drink. I say sure. He tells me he's gonna take me to this new place. It's crawling with women...

Daryl squints in confusion. He's completely lost.

KURT (CONT'D)

This buddy of his told him this friend goes there every weekend - leaves with a different chick. Every time out. So we go to this place. It's one of those bars on a top floor. With a baby grand and everyone's smoking a cigar and all the women are dressed to kill...

Daryl rubs his sore temples. He's visibly annoyed with this story and ready to call it quits.

KURT (CONT'D)

We're there twenty minutes and there's these three women sitting at the bar, dressed in their thousand dollar gowns.

(beat)

They're not interested in me. They're checking out my buddy. And all night I tease him. So why don't you go talk to them? He says I'm pacing myself. All good things come to those who wait. And I say, I don't know. I think you should go talk to them before they give up and lose interest...

DARYL

Is there a point anytime soon?

KURT

This goes on for three hours. He's still sitting on the stool next to me. So the joint's five minutes from closing. He's spent over sixty bucks on drinks before he finally goes over and talks to them.

(beat)

It turns out all three of them are dudes.

Daryl sighs out loud and slumps forward in his chair.

KURT (CONT'D)

I'm sitting there trying not to laugh and he finally walks back and takes his seat. I ask him what happened. You know what he says?

Daryl thinks it over.

DARYL

I give up.

KURT

He says 'I don't wanna talk about it'.

(beat)

You get what I'm saying to you?

DARYL

Not at all.

Kurt picks up Daryl's phone, hands it to him.

KURT

You can either sit here...and think about what you did wrong or you can pick up the phone and get Curtis to do this interview.

(beat)

You understand now?

Daryl slowly comes around. He smiles.

DARYL

Yeah. I think so.

Kurt pats him on his shoulder and walks off. Daryl slowly exhales as he DIALS a new number on his phone. He looks up and catches eyes with Kurt, who sticks a pinky to his lips and thumb to his ear, mimicking a phone call.

Daryl nods and smiles as Kurt gets lost down a narrow hall and heads back to work.

DARYL

Stupid ass, made up story.

EXT. MARSHY SWAMP - EVERGLADES - DAY

A myriad of black and red MANGROVE, some aged CYPRESS TREES and fields of SAW GRASS dot these marshy waters. The paddle boat slowly drifts around a bend, exposing a more wide open body of water. Alexis motions to a small BEACH in the near distance.

ALEXIS

That's the beach I see in my dreams.  
It's where I hear his voice. Or what  
I think is his voice calling my name.  
It's like I'm standing in the water,  
and staring into those trees...

Alexis points to a small clearing in the cypress. They are the trees closest to the beach. Rudy follows her look.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

There's a heron perched in the cypress.  
I'm watching it...but...I keep hearing  
his voice calling me from the beach.

(beat)

Before I can look...I hear this loud,  
deafening sound. Like a crackling.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

And, suddenly, everything goes dark.

Alexis paddles toward the beach as Rudy listens to the loud cacophony of HERONS, EGRETS and various other WILDLIFE that occupy these swamps.

ON THE BEACH - MINUTES LATER

Alexis and Rudy stand on the beach, staring out at the open body of water before them.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

I wake up on the beach. Looking out  
at the very spot I was just standing.

Alexis instinctively rubs down her arms and clinches up, as if she's catching a brief chill in the air. She trembles as if the temperature just dropped twenty degrees.

Rudy notices this strange change in demeanor. She also rubs her arms, as if this chill is contagious.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

And I'm soaked from the water. I can  
feel the cold in my sleep...

Alexis slowly looks to her right. She appears apprehensive and uncomfortable. Her lips quiver as she struggles to find the words. She squeezes her eyes shut - then opens them up briefly to stare down at the white sand.

ALEXIS P.O.V.

A wounded man, wearing a BLACK AND RED CHECKERED FLEECE and bleeding from the head, stares back at Alexis. He is BENNY RAY (40s), pale and thin, with the same familiar set of ICY BLUE EYES as his daughter. He has DARK, ZOMBIELIKE CIRCLES around these eyes.

ALEXIS (V.O.)

I look down and I see this man...  
staring back at me with these cold,  
black eyes. He's wearing this black  
and red, checkered print shirt...

Benny reaches his hand to Alexis.

BENNY

Help me.

BACK TO SCENE

Alexis breaks into tears. Rudy watches with concern. She looks down at the same beach where Alexis is staring - but there's nothing but sand.

Alexis wipes her eyes, attempts to pull herself together.

ALEXIS

I get scared and look away. But it doesn't matter. Everywhere I look I can see his face. Hes all around me. I'm spinning in circles as he keeps saying my name. Over and over again.

(beat)

Alex...Alex...Alex... Why did you do this to me? I shut my eyes trying to get his image out of my head.

Alexis shuts her eyes for real. She's reliving the painful memory as if it's a permanent fixture in a long, hard life.

Rudy's lips also quiver, as she holds back her own emotions and heartfelt sympathy for this troubled teen. She quickly wipes her eyes and walks to Alexis.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

I feel this hand on my shoulder. I open my eyes and turn around...

Alexis opens her eyes and faces Rudy.

ALEXIS P.O.V.

A tall, faceless figure hovers over Alexis. Its SILHOUETTED by the blinding white SUNLIGHT beaming down from behind.

ALEXIS (V.O.)

There's this black, faceless person staring down at me. There's like a bright white light of energy around them. Like an angel or something...

BACK TO SCENE

Alexis stares back at Rudy with a truly blank expression on her face. Her eyes are on Rudy, but she's somewhere else.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

And then I wake up.

RUDY

How long have you been having these dreams?

ALEXIS

On and off for as long as I can think. This is the first time I've ever worked up the nerve to come out here.

RUDY

When you say on and off...how often is that? When do you have these dreams?

(beat)

What do you think triggers them?

ALEXIS

Little things can trigger it. It's like whenever I see the water or a boat.

RUDY

So these are daydreams?

ALEXIS

The daydreams trigger the nightmares. They're a lot worse. They last a lot longer.

Alexis steps closer to the water - gets her feet wet. She squats on the sand. Rudy follows behind, also takes a seat.

RUDY

What do you think happened to him, Alex? Do you feel responsible?

ALEXIS

I don't know. I never even knew him.

RUDY

Do you remember hurting your stepdad?

Alexis is reluctant to answer. She thinks it over.

ALEXIS

No. But I know that I did.

RUDY

How do you know?

ALEXIS

I don't know. I just do.

RUDY

I know there's a reason you told me about your father. You had to tell someone. Because you need to know what happened to him.

Alexis turns to Rudy - a sincere look.

RUDY (CONT'D)

And you need to know what happened to your stepfather.

ALEXIS

I know what happened.

RUDY

Do you?

Alexis doesn't look so sure.

RUDY (CONT'D)

I know that people think you're crazy. Including you. But there's a part of you that's not so sure anymore. And I know you need to know the truth. Let me help you find it, Alex.

Rudy extends her hand to Alexis -- who is unsure at first. She reluctantly takes it as the two young women stare out at the still water.

MARTY (V.O.)

First she's hearing voices and seeing ghosts, and now it's nightmares?

INT. GRAPEVINE STUDIOS - MARTY'S OFFICE - DAY

Marty is kicked back at his desk. His sleeves rolled up and his pits STAINED WITH SWEAT.

MARTY (CONT'D)

She sounds a little indecisive.

Rudy stands before him with a notepad in hand - a ballpoint pen resting on her ear.

Kurt is laid out on a corner couch with his feet kicked up as Darby sits in a chair across the room. They try hard to ignore each other and not draw attention.

KURT

She sounds like a typical schizo.

RUDY

She's not schizo and she's not crazy.

MARTY

Educate me, Rudy.

RUDY

These dreams are just the visions of a repressed incident. One involving her birth father. Whatever it was it happened before memory.

MARTY

Okay, Doctor Huxtable. And how do you know this?

RUDY

It's obvious those messages online are just a cry for help. It had nothing to do with her seeing a ghost and hearing voices.

(beat)

You know what she told me? She says she doesn't even remember killing her step-father.

Darby catches a glimpse of Marty's SWEATY ARMPITS. She is visibly turned off as she tries her hardest not to stare.

Marty catches her looking and self-consciously clenches his arms together. Darby shamefully offers an apologetic smile.

MARTY

(to Rudy)

So she committed perjury in open court and wants to tell everybody she lied? It doesn't make sense.

(beat)

What's her angle in this? - She already told the whole world that her stepdaddy was raping her. She makes this YouTube video on how to fight back. And now she says she doesn't remember killing him?

RUDY

She just told the jury what they wanted to hear and not what happened. I think she's a scared little girl who believes she might be losing her mind.

MARTY

If it's confirmation she's looking for, I'll save you the trouble. She's looney tunes. But, unfortunately, that story got scooped a long time ago. Where are we going with this?

RUDY

If Alex Ray believes her father truly is dead then why did her mother tell her he ran away with another woman?

This peaks Darby's curiosity. She catches eyes with Kurt who returns with an equally curious stare.

MARTY

(to Kurt)

What do you think about this?

KURT

You have to admit, boss. The mother's definitely hiding something.

MARTY

What does that mean exactly? She killed her husband?

KURT

More like both husbands.

Marty scoffs out loud. He's not buying a word of this.

MARTY

And I thought Alex Ray was crazy.

RUDY

Benny Ray disappeared when Alexis was just three years old. This incident in the swamp may be the last time she saw her father alive.

MARTY

How do you plan on proving that? You gonna hire a hypnotist?

Marty snickers at the thought.

Rudy shamefully looks away. She turns, faces Kurt and looks to him for some backup. Kurt stares at the floor - stalling

Marty slowly loses his smile.

MARTY

(to Kurt)

You're hiring a hypnotist?

RUDY

I already talked with Ray's doctor.  
If anyone knows what's going on in  
Alex's mind, it's her.

MARTY

The same doctor that testified about  
her hearing voices? The same one that  
Alexis Ray lied to so she could dodge  
a conviction?

Rudy sighs with frustration. She takes a seat next to Kurt  
on the couch - giving up. Kurt rubs her back in support.

KURT

This Doctor Marapovich is working on  
a book about Ray. If she's still not  
sure she killed her stepfather, then  
I'm sure the good doctor would wanna  
find out what did happen.

MARTY

And you spoke with her about this?

Kurt stalls. Rudy watches him. Nervous. Kurt finally comes  
around and nods with fake assurance.

KURT

She says she's looking forward to it.

Rudy cracks a grin. Marty isn't exactly convinced by Kurt's  
sincerity. Rudy and Kurt stare back at Marty with assuming  
looks, awaiting his okay.

MARTY

I wanna talk to Darby. Alone.

Darby is a bit surprised by this turn of events. Rudy and  
Kurt step out, shutting the door behind them. Marty walks  
around his desk, faces Darby. He sits down, on the edge of  
the desktop.

MARTY (CONT'D)

She's too close to this girl already.  
I don't want her getting off track.  
Make sure she sticks with the facts.

DARBY

You got it. Anything else, Chief?

MARTY

Rudy can handle this interview with the Doctor and host the segment. I think - other than being a bit over zealous - she's more than ready.

(beat)

In the meantime, I want you to look into something else.

Marty reaches back and snags up a whole STACK OF OLD NEWS ARTICLES - printed up from the internet. He hands them to Darby, who shuffles through them, confused.

DARBY

What's this?

MARTY

Let's just say I got a hunch about something.

DARBY

About what?

MARTY

If I tell you... then you'll find what you think I want you to find. And not what you're supposed to find. I'm only interested in the facts.

Darby's confusion is still very much evident as she stares back at Marty, blank-faced and completely lost.

DARBY

Facts about what, Chief?

MARTY

Gee, I don't know. You tell me.

Darby slowly comes around, cracks a goofy smile.

DARBY

I'll get right on it.

MARTY

(smiles)

Great.

CUT TO:

INT. TONY CHAN'S WATER CLUB RESTARAUNT - NIGHT

Steve maneuvers through a small crowd at the bar and steps out onto the posh, outside deck - overlooking Biscayne Bay. He spots his girlfriend DANA (25) and her parents, MR. AND MRS. WYLER (50s) at a far table near the beach.

He catches eyes with Dana, exchanges smiles and heads over, bumping into a busy WAITRESS - almost knocking a tray full of plates to the floor.

Steve checks his shirt and coat for splashes. He throws the waitress a dirty look.

STEVE

Really?

WAITRESS

(angry)

Yeah, really. You don't call me for three months and then have the balls to show your face here?

Steve, now a bit uneasy, glances over at Dana - who watches with an increasingly antsy look about her. She impatiently flags him over while the two befuddled faces of her parents make things all the more uncomfortable.

STEVE

Believe me. I don't wanna be here. I didn't have a choice.

(beat)

You see, my...

Steve stalls. He fights for the right words.

WAITRESS

Your what?

STEVE

My girlfriend asked me to meet her here.

WAITRESS

You're not making this any easier on yourself. Try again.

Steve watches Dana maneuver through the crowd - dodging the waiting staff, busboys and diners returning to their tables. Steve notices her parents giving him the stink eye.

STEVE

Can we not do this now? My future  
In-Laws are sitting over there and  
staring right at me. I'm supposed  
to be meeting them tonight.

The waitress quickly changes her sore demeanor. She covers  
her mouth in shock as she glances at The Wylers - watching  
them from their table.

WAITRESS

(apologetic)

Oh, my God. You're kidding? I'm so  
sorry. Her parents are staring at us?

(angry)

I'm real sorry, Steve, you lying, two  
timing ass hole, piece of SHIT!

Dana approaches. Steve cracks a phony smile and greets his  
all too curious girlfriend.

STEVE

Baby!

DANA

Honey. Mom and Dad are waiting.

STEVE

(to Waitress)

It's been real great catching up.

WAITRESS

Fuck you.

And she storms off. Dana squints in confusion.

DANA

Run into another one of your fans?

STEVE

Something like that. Come on.

Steve grabs Dana's hand, walks her toward their table when  
he just so happens to glance across the room and spots --

FRIENDLY sitting at a far table with Lawson's partner, DET.  
ROY CROWDER. The two men are having a couple of drinks as  
Crowder hands Friendly a THICK WHITE ENVELOPE.

Steve is taken aback by their exchange as he stops cold in  
his tracks. Dana watches him, wonders what he's looking at.

Friendly and Crowder stand to leave as the detective stuffs the envelope in his sport coat. Steve watches them closely.

STEVE

You know what? I'm gonna get some drinks. What do your parents drink?

DANA

You can order drinks after we sit down, baby. Come on.

STEVE

Yeah, but the service here sucks. They take forever.

(beat)

Whadd'ya want to drink?

DANA

Nothing. I don't want anything. I thought you said you've never been here before.

STEVE

I haven't. I...heard it was bad.

A WAITER passes with a bucket of beers, recognizes Steve.

WAITER

Steve Fadden! The prodigal son returns!

Dana is all the way angry now as Steve is left speechless. He watches Friendly as he leaves, heads for the front door.

STEVE

Ya know, all the sudden I don't feel good. I'm gonna excuse myself to the men's room for a sec, okay?

(beat)

Get me a Heineken or something.

Steve slowly ducks out of the room, keeping an eye on the front door. He watches as Friendly tips his waitress and heads out.

DANA

Are you really that scared to meet my parents?

STEVE

I really have to go. But I'll be back.

DANA

Are you seriously doing this right  
now?

STEVE

Seriously. I'm gonna shit my pants.  
For real. Excuse me.

Steve races for the door.

EXT. TONY CHAN'S WATER CLUB RESTARAUNT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Steve comes charging out the front door - almost running  
over a whole PARTY OF EIGHT making their way inside. He  
runs up to a young VALET, standing his post.

STEVE

(to Valet)

Tall guy! Goofy looking, with black  
glasses and Elvis Costello hair!

VALET

You mean Friendly? You just missed  
him, bro.

(laughs)

He's one funny dude.

Steve rests his hands on his knees and sighs in defeat.

EXT. COLLINS AVENUE - DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

The high pitched WHINE of a yellow FERRARI ENZO is echoed  
in the night air as the standout car whips back and forth  
between lanes, barely dodging the slower traffic.

INT. FERRARI ENZO - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Friendly behind the wheel - listening to some SEX PISTOLS  
and grinning ear to ear. He stares up and down this busy  
boulevard - checking out all the TIGHT SKIRTS and BLONDES  
cruising the NEON STRIP.

He spots a particularly PROVOCATIVE YOUNG WOMAN wearing a  
SILVER WIG, BELLY SHIRT, SHORT SHORTS and knee-high BOOTS.  
This is DESIREE (20s).

EXT. COLLINS AVENUE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The Ferrari quickly cuts across the busy traffic and parks  
at the curb nearest Desiree. He gives the horn a few HONKS  
as Desiree checks for cops and heads over.

The window comes down. Friendly leans over, offers Desiree a welcoming smile.

Desiree opens the door and hops in. The Ferrari bolts off.

INT. FERRARI ENZO - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Friendly obnoxiously chews at his gum and BLASTS HIS MUSIC, playing the role of "douche bag" quite well. He offers his new companion a hit from a fat JOINT.

FRIENDLY

You look like you could use a hit.

DESIREE

What're you? Some nut or something?  
I take a couple hits and wake up in  
your trunk tomorrow.

FRIENDLY

Don't worry. You can't fit in this  
trunk.

Friendly takes another monster hit. Desiree sits in awe of this fine piece of machinery as she runs her hands over the Italian leather upholstery.

DESIREE

So what is this? You steal this car  
or something?

FRIENDLY

What makes you say that?

DESIREE

Nobody smokes a joint in a Ferrari.  
(beat)  
At least none they own.

FRIENDLY

Okay, you got me. It's a rental. I'm  
in town on business. I was hoping you  
could help me blow off some steam.  
(beat)

You know a good place?

Desiree reaches for the inside of his thigh, rubs near his crotch. She licks her lips - throws him a seductive stare.

DESIREE

I think I might know a place.

FRIENDLY

Oh, yeah?

DESIREE

It's just around the corner. But you might have to get this thing under a hundred before you pass it.

FRIENDLY

Whatever you say, sweetness.

Friendly DOWN SHIFTS and slows to a reasonable speed as the young hooker continues to rub the inside of his leg.

EXT. TANGIERS MOTEL - NIGHT

The Ferrari turns into a small lot and parks. A BLUE CAMARO with WHITE RACING STRIPES stops in mid traffic and parallel parks at a street curb.

INT. BLUE CAMARO - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Lawson is behind the wheel, watches the motel closely while Friendly and Desiree step from the Ferrari and head for the front lobby.

INT. KURT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kurt stirs up the ugliest, most horrible, burned up looking batch of STIR FRY ever concocted by humans. A DARK CLOUD OF SMOKE erupts from this ancient looking Wok. Kurt steps back a pace, grabs a DRYING TOWEL from his oven handle and whips away at the RISING SMOKE.

DARBY

Enters the busy kitchen through a garage door, carries with a BOTTLE OF RED WINE. She sets the bottle on a dining room table and quickly removes her coat.

DARBY

How fast can you get this open?

KURT

Need I ask how your day went?

Darby rolls her eyes and grabs a couple WINE GLASSES from a corner liquor cabinet.

DARBY

Lovely. Thank you.

Kurt snags up the bottle of red and YANKS OUT THE CORK with a Houdini. He pours Darby, and himself, a tall glass.

KURT

Say -- What happened to that bottle of shiraz I left at your place last night?

DARBY

You mean the one I drank at Two AM this morning?

KURT

That's the one.

DARBY

Beats me.

Darby chug a lugs her first glass, pours another. Kurt just watches with amazement.

KURT

You ever consider the possibility of you having a drinking problem?

DARBY

Don't kill my buzz. Drinking is one of the few things I still do well.

Kurt shakes his head.

KURT

Sorry. By all means.

Darby about nudges Kurt out of the way as she SNIFFS at the STIR-FRY sizzling in the Wok.

DARBY

Smells good. What the hell is it?

Kurt shoots her an ugly stare while pouring the nasty gruel down the sink. Another cloud of DARK SMOKE ERUPTS from the charred-up pan.

DARBY

(apologetic)

Sorry.

KURT

I got Chinese just in case.

Darby spots a large paper bag on the kitchen countertop and rushes over. She steals a peek inside.

DARBY

Any kung pao?

KURT

I don't know. I got one of every-  
-thing.

Darby pulls out one take out carton after the next like the hungry wolf she is.

DARBY

Good. I'm gonna eat one of every-  
-thing.

Darby opens them all up, ready for her buffet.

DARBY (CONT'D)

Guess who I ran into at Seattle's  
Best this afternoon?

Kurt pours Darby another refill.

KURT

I give up.

DARBY

Dennis Lawson. Found out some very  
interesting things about Friendlys  
video.

Kurt hands Darby a plate and a fork. She attacks the food like she hasn't eaten in three days. Scoops a little bit of everything.

DARBY (CONT'D)

You are not gonna believe what he  
told me today.

KURT

You mean about Vance and Morrisey?

Darby quits stuffing her face for a brief second. Stares up at Kurt with a look of shock and disbelief.

DARBY

You knew about this?

KURT

Of course. It was a big story a couple years ago.

DARBY

Why the hell didn't you say something before?

KURT

Because I knew you'd get all riled up like you're doing now. I didn't see the point.

DARBY

You didn't see the point?! They're criminals! Or haven't you heard?!

KURT

It was a joke. He knew it would piss off Lawson. Why the hell else would he get them involved?

DARBY

Gee. I don't know. You think maybe he was counting on everyone thinking it's a joke? And maybe that was his alibi for the robbery?

KURT

(laughs)

What are you saying? You think that Friendly knocked over an armored car?

Kurt attempts to scoop himself some dinner from the takeout cartons, but Darby swiftly SMACKS his hand.

KURT (CONT'D)

What the hell?!

Darby points her boney finger in his face.

DARBY

You're not allowed to eat until we talk about this and don't laugh at me.

KURT

Talk about what? There's nothing to talk about.

DARBY

You don't think there's a chance that Friendly's somehow involved in this?

KURT

Involved in a robbery? Of course not.

DARBY

I'm not saying he robbed the armored car, but maybe those cops did. Think about it a sec. What if they'd paid off Friendly to do a live segment in the garage and everyone including us thinks it's a practical joke? And we never once consider that they may've actually been the ones who committed the robbery.

Kurt leans over and rests the back of his hand on Darby's forehead, checks her temperature, just like a parent with their sick child.

KURT

How much have you had to drink?

Darby swipes his hand away, annoyed.

DARBY

Don't do that. I'm being serious.

KURT

I know. That's what worries me.

DARBY

Okay. Riddle me this, Batman. If you know about Vance and Morrisey - then you must know about the article. The one Friendly did with The Reporter.

(beat)

It must've been some story if it cost him his job. Wanna tell me about it?

KURT

Friendly had a lot of contacts with the department. Friends, relatives. He knew just about everyone's dirty laundry...

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. TANGIERS MOTEL - NIGHT (SAME)

Friendly escorts his lady of the evening, Desiree, up the stairs, headed for their second story room. He's cautious of his surroundings - checks the parking lot for Lawson's Blue Camaro. It's nowhere to be found.

KURT (V.O.)

Who was taking money under the table.  
Cheating on their wives, or planting  
evidence. Whatever...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. KURT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT (SAME)

Kurt and Darby sit at the countertop.

KURT (CONT'D)

He hears a few things about Lawson.  
Things not even his partner knew of.  
Including a three hundred dollar a  
day coke habit. Just one of several  
other wonderful activities he found  
himself involved in...

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. TANGIERS MOTEL - SECOND STORY - NIGHT (SAME)

Friendly plays grab-ass with Desiree as they strut toward their second story room. Friendly keeps an eye on the lot below, checking for Lawson's car. It's nowhere in sight.

KURT (V.O.)

Friendly was the first one to come  
out and blow the whistle on Lawson.  
So he does a full front page expose  
on police corruption. This is much  
to the surprise of his colleagues.  
It said that Lawson paid off a pimp  
to get himself busted, just so he'd  
roll over on two dirty cops.

DARBY (V.O.)

Vance and Morrisey?

The two turn a corner and approach ROOM 227. Desiree puts the ROOK KEY in the door, unlocks it, while Friendly takes a peek at the BLUE CAMARO ACROSS THE STREET.

INT. BLUE CAMARO - NIGHT (SAME)

Lawson watches the motel - while Friendly and Desiree enter their room. Friendly does a great job of pretending not to notice the dirty cop watching him.

KURT (V.O.)

It turns out Vance and Morrisey were staking out solicitors of prostitutes.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. KURT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT (SAME)

Kurt and Darby carry their dinner to the dining room table as he continues his story about Vance and Morrisey.

KURT

They would follow these johns to the motel and catch em' in the act. Then shake him down for all he's got. It was either that or take an arrest.

DARBY

If Vance and Morrisey were so dirty, then why was Friendly so suspicious of Lawson? He put two bad cops away.

KURT

Because he was just as dirty as they were. Friendly suspected he paid off a pimp to give up Vance and Morrisey.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. TANGIERS MOTEL - ROOM 227 - NIGHT (SAME)

Desiree begins undressing near the bed. Friendly heads to the window, peeks through the cheap venetian blinds.

KURT (V.O.)

He figured Lawson got to him...

FRIENDLY'S P.O.V.

Sitting directly across the street - still at the curb - is Lawson's BLUE CAMARO.

DARBY (V.O.)

Got to him how?

BACK TO SCENE

Friendly turns, faces Desiree - now in her BRA and PANTIES.

KURT (V.O.)

Threatened to arrest him if he didn't agree to his terms. Meanwhile he cuts him in on a piece of the action after taking over this Vance and Morrissey's operation.

They exchange smiles, as she seductively rests on the edge of the bed and gently caresses the sheets with the palm of her hand.

DARBY (V.O.)

Is Lawson still doing this?

KURT (V.O.)

That, you'll have to ask Friendly.

FRIENDLY

(to Desiree)

Nice view from over here.

DESIREE

There's a better one over here.

Desiree lays down, pats the bed, welcomes Friendly to lay down next to her.

Friendly slowly walks toward her.

FRIENDLY

So let me ask you something.

DESIREE

Wanna turn off the lights first?

FRIENDLY

I was just wondering. While I bang you from behind, do I look at you?

(points to a closet)

...or the camera in that closet over there?

Desiree quickly loses her seductive smile.

DESIREE

What?

Friendly heads to the closet, swings open the shutter door. A CAMERA ON A TRIPOD is pointed at the bed. Desiree isn't exactly surprised by this.

FRIENDLY

Typically, on a normal night, one of your dirty cop friends would bust up in here in about ten minutes - catch me with my pants down and my dick in my hand.

(beat)

But not tonight. He knows me. He's watching us...right now.

DESIREE

Who are you?

FRIENDLY

Nice room. I'm especially liking this location. You shut off these lights, signaling the cops across the street. They charge the room, clean my wallet dry. Then see what they can get from my savings account. It's either that or show our little home movie to the wife and kids.

Desiree quickly jumps up, grabs her clothes from the floor. Friendly pushes her to the bed.

FRIENDLY (CONT'D)

Sit tight, sweetie. We're not going anywhere for awhile.

DESIREE

Are you gonna hurt me?

FRIENDLY

That depends.

DESIREE

On what?

FRIENDLY

There's a camaro across the street. Its blue with white racing stripes. You come clean - tell me who it is behind the wheel, and I don't kick the shit out of you.

DESIREE  
I don't know him.

FRIENDLY  
Don't bullshit me, sweetie. I'm not  
in the mood.

DESIREE  
I mean it. I don't know his name. I  
just seen him with DeWitt from time  
to time. That's all.

Friendly grabs Desiree's arm, bends her wrist backward.

FRIENDLY  
DeWitt Carter?

DESIREE  
Yes! DeWitt Carter! You're hurting  
me!

FRIENDLY  
Where is he?

DESIREE  
He's across the street! You just  
said so!

FRIENDLY  
Not Lawson! Carter! Where is he?!

Friendly bends her wrist even further. She winces in pain.

DESIREE  
I don't know where he is!

FRIENDLY  
You got his number handy?

DESIREE  
Yes! My phone's in my purse!

Friendly releases her arm, pushes her to the bed. He grabs  
her purse from a nightstand, digs inside and comes up with  
a CELL PHONE. He scrolls through the CONTACTS.

DESIREE (CONT'D)  
Now take his number and get out!  
I got nothing else to do with it!

Friendly pulls a THICK WHITE ENVELOPE from his coat pocket and throws it on the bed. A stack of loose CASH falls out onto the sheets.

Desiree's eyes light up. Stares at Friendly - a conflicted look about her. She suddenly turns quiet.

FRIENDLY

There's fifteen hundred. In cash.  
It's yours. Under one condition.

(beat)

You tell Carter I wanna meet with him. Tonight. Gatsby's bar. In one hour. If he shows... there's another fifteen hundred, just for you. If he's five minutes late, I come back to collect my money and break your arm. Understand?

Desiree picks up the stack of cash - quickly stuffs it in the envelope. Friendly grabs her arm and once again bends her wrist back.

DESIREE

Let go of me!

FRIENDLY

I didn't hear you.

DESIREE

Yes! I understand!

Friendly lets her go and heads for the door.

FRIENDLY

Relax. Hang out. Get some room service.

Friendly leaves. Desiree rubs her sore wrist, but smiles at the fat stack of money.

EXT. GATSBY'S BAR - NIGHT

Friendly parks in the busy lot. Lawson's BLUE CAMARO parks at a curb across the street.

INT. BLUE CAMARO - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Lawson watches as a crowd of BIKINIS gather by the FERRARI. Friendly gives his girlfriends a quick hug before he heads to the door. Lawson shakes his head.

INT. GATSBY'S BAR - NIGHT

Friendly steps inside this rowdy beach bar. This joint is out of control busy. Loud ROCK MUSIC BLASTS from a corner JUKE BOX. Scantly clad HUNNIES in SHORT SHORTS and BELLY SHIRTS serve up beers to the patrons.

Friendly spots none other than DEWITT CARTER (40s) African American, braided hair, dressed in his finest Tommy Bahama and three hundred dollar loafers. He's sitting at a corner booth, soaking up all the eye candy.

Friendly heads over, takes a seat across from DeWitt. They exchange smiles. DeWitt laughs, shakes his head.

DEWITT

I should've known it was you. The only crazy ass cracker dumb enough to fuck with the po-lice.

FRIENDLY

How you been, Carter? Still taking hush money from the cops?

DEWITT

Money's like pussy, my friend. It all looks the same after awhile. I don't go out of my way for it, but when its dropped in my lap, who am I to say no? You feel me?

(beat)

Green is green. From what I hear - you been cuttin' some corners your-self. Supplementing your income.

FRIENDLY

Oh, yeah. Where you hear that?

DeWitt cracks a sly grin as he points at Friendly.

DEWITT

Nice try, newsman. Almost got me.

FRIENDLY

You don't need to say it. Everyone knows your still Lawson's bitch.

DeWitt drops his smile. Throws Friendly the thousand yard stare. Friendly smiles back as he leans in, nice and close.

FRIENDLY

What I wanna know is, are you ready to make some real money?

DEWITT

And how's that, newspaper man? We gonna knock over some armored cars with your dirty ass cop friends?

FRIENDLY

Let's say I did do it. And Lawson's closing in on me. Let's also say I was looking to blow town. I couldnt do it on my own and needed help...

(beat)

And, I was willing to pay this help a substantial amount of cash to get away clean.

DEWITT

I'm listening.

FRIENDLY

The way I see it...the only way to get Lawson out of my life for good is to take him down first.

Friendly reaches in his coat pocket, pulls out a folded up sheet. He un-crumple the paper and lays it before DeWitt who takes a closer look.

DEWITT

What's this supposed to be?

FRIENDLY

Its an affidavit explaining Lawson's involvement in paying off this local pimp. One who fingered two bad cops.

(beat)

It also explains how he took control of their operation after they'd been put away. All that's missing is a signature at the bottom.

DeWitt looks up from the paper. Confused.

DEWITT

You must think I was born yesterday, newsman.

FRIENDLY

Sooner or later...Lawson's going down. And when he does he's taking you down with him. You're gonna be out of luck and out of a job. I can guarantee the kind of cash it would take you a year to make with Lawson. And that's only if you're taking fifty percent of the business.

(beat)

Something tells me you aren't.

DEWITT

And what happens to me?

FRIENDLY

If it's the cops you're worried about, they want Lawson. Not you. They may even be grateful for the help.

DeWitt takes a more careful look at the document. He spots a blank space marked "signature" at the bottom.

DEWITT

Okay, newsman. How much we talking about?

FRIENDLY

Enough.

(beat)

And if you don't sign the form, I'll have every vice cop in Miami on your ass. You won't have two cents to rub together when I take down your bull-shit operation.

DEWITT

That don't sound so good a deal.

FRIENDLY

The other alternative is making yourself a very nice chunk of change and taking over Lawson's share of the biz.

(beat)

It's a win win situation for you. If I were you I'd snatch it up and thank the good Lord he didn't make my black ass dumb enough to turn it down.

EXT. GATSBY'S BAR - NIGHT

Friendly walks to his Ferrari. He stuffs the WHITE ENVELOPE back in his coat pocket. A crowd of RUBBERNECKERS gather by his car, checking out the goods.

EXT. BLUE CAMARO - NIGHT (SAME)

Lawson keeps an eye out. Friendly crawls in the Ferrari and SPEEDS OUT OF THE LOT. Lawson CRANKS UP HIS ENGINE, follows behind, staying a few car lengths back.

INT. FERRARI - NIGHT (SAME)

Friendly checks his side view mirror -- spots Lawson's BLUE CAMARO a safe distance behind him. Trying to go unnoticed.

Friendly smiles as he FLOORS THE PEDDLE -- SPEEDS AWAY FROM the CAMARO. He zig zags through the slower traffic trudging their way down Collins Avenue.

EXT. FERRARI - COLLINS AVENUE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The speeding race car CUTS A HARD RIGHT at the intersection while the BLUE CAMARO is still fighting its way through the slower traffic.

The CAMARO finally reaches the light and attempts to follow but is quickly SIDESWIPEd by a CAR making a LEFT TURN.

CRASH! - Both cars STOP near the center of the intersection as HORNS HONK like crazy.

INT. FERRARI - NIGHT (SAME)

Friendly laughs it up as he observes the accident from his side view mirror. He faces forward, just barely missing a

RED LIGHT

Hanging over a nearing intersection. But he's going far too fast to stop the runaway car. A panicked look in his eye as he FLOORS THE PEDDLE.

EXT. FERRARI - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Friendly attempts to dodge the incoming traffic, but is HIT FROM THE LEFT by a MIAMI HERALD DELIVERY TRUCK.

CRASH! And the Ferrari SPINS LIKE A TOP as it crumples into a ball of RED, MANGLED FIBERGLASS.

EXT. STREET CORNER - NIGHT (SAME)

Lawson comes running up the street. The DRIVER of the other wrecked car chases after him -- cursing and yelling for him to return to the scene.

DRIVER

Where are you going, man?! Get your  
ass back here!

Lawson impatiently PULLS HIS GUN and points it at the angry driver. He throws his hands in the air and backs down. He heads back to his WRECKED CAR - still sitting in the center of Collins Avenue.

Lawson runs toward the action, as the RED AND BLUE FLASH OF POLICE CARS are visible in the near distance. They rush to the scene of Friendly's possibly fatal accident.

Lawson reaches the STOPLIGHT and cuts a right at the corner where he spots --

THE FERRARI

Or what's left of it, crumpled up and mangled, sitting in a ball of SMOKE AND GLASS. He looks around, notices different crowds of PEOPLE STARING AT HIM. Whispering to one another as they point to his GUN.

Lawson holsters his weapon and rushes off as various POLICE jump from SQUAD CARS and form a perimeter around the grisly scene.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HOUSE PARTY (POST HOMECOMING GAME) - NIGHT

A house party is in full effect. Various cliques gather in different parts of this basement game room. FOUR TEEN BOYS play a round of two on two NINE BALL on a pricey WHITE FELT POOL TABLE.

THREE COUPLES ON THE COUCH play a very heated game of truth or dare. Others watch on, laughing, embarrassed. A COUPLE GRIND TO SOME MUSIC while TWO LOSERS sip their beer - point and LAUGH.

A rowdy crew of THICK NECKED JOCKS play BLOODY KNUCKLES and HAND SLAPS in the corner.

Most of the attention is on LAROY CURTIS (20s), tall, slick athlete, impeccably dressed in only the finest thug apparel and two hundred dollar sneakers.

He's hanging out with his brother DORIAN (18), another real thugged out athlete, almost as smooth as Curtis - but lacks the same kind of magnetism that is drawing a CROWD OF YOUNG HOTTIES to their circle.

Dorian is busy CHATTING UP the lovelies as Curtis keeps his eyes on --

SONDRA

An older chaperon, who keeps her an eye out for trouble and picks up empty cups and other trash. She's a very beautiful young black woman with a set of the biggest brown EYES that could easily stop traffic.

Curtis scans her up and down as she attempts to ignore him, but finally breaks - catching eyes with the football giant. Their exchange is brief, as Sondra stuffs the garbage in a large bag and heads out.

Dorian hugs his lovelies goodbye as they head out a SLIDING GLASS DOOR to the PATIO and SWIMMING POOL. He turns to his friend and watches him pitifully obsess over the ex love of his life.

Sondra heads up the stairs, catching another brief stare at Curtis and Dorian.

DORIAN

Let it go. She's in the past.

CURTIS

That's funny. Could've sworn she was just in the room.

DORIAN

You got to stop looking backwards. It's in the past. That's why they call it the past. You don't want nothing to do with that shit.

(beat)

You been there, done that shit, and never got your motherfuckin' t-shirt.

CURTIS

I don't know, man. It's like she's the one thing I never got a chance to fix.

DORIAN

Listen to you, man. Sounds like you're on Doctor Drew. About to cry and shit. Look at the ass in this house. You're all standing around talkin' bout feelings and shit.

Curtis cracks a smile and laughs at himself.

DORIAN (CONT'D)

Some might find that real stupid. Some might find that shit humanly irresponsible. Now go out to the pool and stare at some titties or take your ass home and watch some lifetime.

Curtis looks his friend up and down, sizing him up. A look of true pity on his face. Dorian grows uncomfortable with his look.

DORIAN (CONT'D)

What?

CURTIS

You decide what prison you goin' to first?

ACROSS THE ROOM

And hanging out by a snack table are Daryl's little brother CHRIS RAYBURN (17) and buddy TREY WALSH (17), blonde surfer dude type. They keep a close eye on CURTIS AND DORIAN, and all the HOTTIES going to and from the swimming pool deck.

A couple of drunken HOT BLONDE CHEERLEADER TYPES stumble in place as they shamelessly throw themselves at the seemingly uninterested Curtis.

TREY

You still haven't talked to him, have you?

CHRIS

Not yet. You heard what Dorian said. His momma don't want him talking to the press. He said no once. I don't get why my brother feels he's gonna change his mind.

TREY

Even if you were still planning on talking to him, I think you missed your window of opportunity.

CHRIS

What're you talking about?

TREY

(watches Curtis)

Look at him, bro. He's gonna spend the rest of the night juggling the varsity cheerleaders. Figuring out which one he's taking home for the weekend.

Sondra rushes down the stairs, heads back over to the SNACK TABLE and squeezes between Chris and Trey. She refills her cup with some diet soda as she quietly observes the drunken blondes flirting with Curtis.

Curtis steals another quick glance at Sondra, who's clearly irritated by this turn of events. She rolls her eyes, heads back upstairs.

Chris watches as Curtis shakes his head with disgust, upset and annoyed by his ex girl's flaky attitude.

CHRIS

I don't know, man. I think he's got his eye on Sondra.

TREY

His ex? No way.

(beat)

Think about it. One of the perks of being somewhat famous like him is not having to grovel. He could buy any bitch in this room.

CHRIS

I think he's feeling her again.

TREY

Sure...maybe he is, but that's not the point. Just cause he's feeling her, don't mean he's gonna go talk to her.

One of the two drunken blondes hanging on Curtis is MAGGIE (18), varsity cheerleader and professional party girl. She is quickly fading fast and ready to pass out on the carpet where she stands.

Chris and Trey watch as she STUMBLES FACE FIRST INTO CURTIS ARMS. Maggie LAUGHS out loud as the other partiers turn and stare. Curtis attempts to keep her from falling on her face but she stubbornly won't let go of him.

CHRIS

Looks like he might have something going on with Maggie.

Trey turns his attention to Curtis and Maggie. He walks the drunken teen toward a corner guest bedroom, while the other partiers watch on.

TREY

Fuck you, man.

Trey defiantly chugs away at his cup of beer, with an angry scowl on his face.

CHRIS

I wasn't trying to be a dick.

TREY

Hey, it's cool. She likes the dark side of the chicken. What can I do?

(beat)

If you'll excuse me. I'm just gonna go somewhere quiet and beat my head against the wall until I bleed from my ears.

Trey heads around the corner to a guest bathroom -- leaving Chris by the snack table. An IPHONE SILENTLY HUMS in Chris pocket. He checks the caller ID:

INSERT - IPHONE

The name DARYL in big, bold letters on the screen. He opens the message. It says: Five minutes away. Does he know I'm coming?

BACK TO SCENE

Chris pockets his phone - dumps his soda in a trash bin and heads toward the bathroom to check on Trey.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Curtis slowly lowers Maggie to the KING-SIZED BED. She is still a sloppy mess, laughing and stumbling around. Maggie flops down on the bed and squirms around the sheets like a fish out of water.

MAGGIE

(drunk)

Tell me a story.

Curtis stands by the bed, looking all but helpless, nervous and unsure he should be alone with this girl. He keeps his eye on the door.

CURTIS

So, you think you're gonna be sick or what?

MAGGIE

I'm not sick. I'm just...dizzy. Very, very dizzy.

Curtis grows impatient, checks his watch.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

God, these jeans are tight. Why are they so fucking tight? Get them OFF me!

Curtis laughs it off. A nervous laugh.

CURTIS

I don't think that's such a good idea.

MAGGIE

You can't tell me what to do.

With her eyes shut, Maggie un-fastens her belt, unzips and takes down her jeans. Curtis almost flies into a panic as he watches the bedroom door.

CURTIS

Cut it out. You gotta stay dressed, okay? Somebody might walk in.

Maggie slowly lifts her head from the sheets - smiles up at Curtis. An almost evil, mischievous grin as she points and laughs at Curtis.

MAGGIE

Sondra luuuuuuuves you!

CURTIS

Oh, yeah? Where you hear that?

Maggie loses her silly smile as her breathing grows heavier and more sporadic. She rubs her increasingly upset stomach.

MAGGIE

You'd have to be fucking blind not to notice.

(beat)

I don't feel so good.

Curtis rests on the side of the mattress, flipping the long blonde hair out of Maggie's mouth and face. He rests a hand on her shoulder in support.

CURTIS

You need to be close to a toilet?

AT THE DOOR

Chris slowly cracks it open - takes a peek inside and spots Curtis RUBBING ON MAGGIE'S BACK. Her jeans now crumpled up around her ankles.

Chris quietly shuts the door without being noticed.

EXT. GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Chris steps across the hall from the bedroom, KNOCKS on the BATHROOM DOOR.

CURTIS

Trey?? You in there??

No answer from the other side. Curtis pulls his IPHONE from his pocket and checks for messages.

INSERT - IPHONE

It reads: Where are you little brother? Talk to me?

BACK TO SCENE

Chris glances back at the bedroom door where Curtis and his drunken, underage companion are doing their thing. He steps toward it...his hand ready to knock...but retracts.

Chris peeks his head around the corner, watches the party.

Everyone is busy minding their own business. Playing games on the couch, dancing, shooting pool, talking. Nobody seems to notice or care what's going on behind bedroom doors.

Chris heads out the SLIDING GLASS DOOR -- onto the SWIMMING POOL DECK where the REAL party is happening.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL DECK - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Chris spots his friend DENISE having a mixed drink and with her legs dangling in the deep end of the water. He walks to a small BEER COOLER resting on the deck - grabs a couple of BOTTLES from the ice and heads for the deep end.

Denise notices him coming and smiles.

DENISE

Chris! Where you been??

Chris quickly takes her hand and escorts her from the water before Denise has a chance to say no. They begin around the house, leaving the party behind.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Where are we going?

CHRIS

Anywhere but here.

CUT TO:

INT. CHRIS'S CAR - NIGHT

Chris and a somewhat drunken Denise cruise the neighborhood while Denise rubs on his leg and kisses on his neck. She is also busy chugging down a bottle of beer.

DENISE

Where are you taking me?

CHRIS

My brother. He keeps sweating this thing with LaRoy. I wanted to get out of there before he showed.

(beat)

Besides. I never told Dorian he'd be coming out to the party.

DENISE

Why don't you just tell him to keep you out of it?

CHRIS

Cos it's not that simple. He starts bitching to Mom and she takes it out on me. Just like everything else.

DENISE

So are we just gonna drive around in circles until your brother leaves?

CHRIS

Nope. We're gonna drive around in a circle until my brother gets himself thrown out, or LaRoy and Dorian whip his ass.

Denise laughs, starts to rub uncomfortably close to Chris's crotch as he grows more and more excited. A great big smile on his face as he shifts in his seat.

DENISE

I'm sure we can figure out some way to pass the time.

Denise attempts to unbutton his pants, but dumps her BOTTLE OF BEER ON HIS LAP. Chris freaks - jumps up from the sheer cold, knocks the bottle from her hand as it --

DUMPS ON THE FLOOR NEAR CHRIS'S FEET

Chris attempts to put on the BRAKES - but this BOTTLE KEEPS GETTING IN THE WAY.

EXT. CHRIS'S CAR - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The car swerves, barely missing an ONCOMING CAR coming from the other direction. Chris loses control and KNOCKS OVER A NEIGHBOR'S MAILBOX.

INT. CHRIS'S CAR - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Chris shoves Denise from his lap. He flies into a panic as And then -- the BRIGHT FLASHING LIGHTS OF RED AND BLUE FILL THE NIGHT SKY. Denise and Chris look in the rearview mirror and spot a POLICE OFFICER walking toward the car. He shines a FLASHLIGHT into the DRIVER'S SIDE, blinding Chris, who is holding an open container of BEER in his hand.

POLICE

Good evening, boys and girls.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HOUSE PARTY (POST HOMECOMING GAME) - NIGHT

The party is starting to WIND DOWN. A few couples MAKE OUT on the couch while TWO JOCKS shoot some pool. Sondra shakes her head at the disgusting mess of HALF-DRUNK CUPS - PLATES OF FOOD and the broken crumbs of POTATO CHIPS and SNACKS on the hard wood floor.

She carries a tall black trash bag as she attempts to clean this place up. All of a sudden --

A COUPLE OF UNIFORM COPS

Enter the house through the SLIDING GLASS DOOR, brandishing FLASHLIGHTS and blinding everyone in the room. Sondra stops in her tracks, drops the garbage bag.

SONDRA

Can I help you?

OFFICER #1

Is this your house?

SONDRA

I live here, yes.

The other Officer approaches the kids at the pool table and on the couch. They attempt to HIDE THEIR DRINKS behind the couch and behind plants, lamps, whatever they can find.

OFFICER #2

Party's over!

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Curtis still RUBS Maggie's back, comforts her as she slowly drifts off into a deep sleep. He checks his watch - hears a CREAKING sound and checks the door.

Officer #1 enters with his flashlight - SHINES IT in Curtis face. His hand on Maggie's back. And her pants around her ankles. Knocked out, not moving.

He's a deer in the headlights.

OFFICER #1

What the hell is this?

Curtis stares down at his own hand on Maggie's back. He is caught off guard and quickly retracts. He puts his hands in the air and slowly stands.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - NIGHT

Chris is sitting alone in a cell, hunched over. Looks sick to his stomach as he rocks back and forth. The sound of the OUTER CELL DOOR OPENING startles him.

A CORRECTIONS OFFICER steps close to the IRON BARS - facing Chris.

C.O.

Rayburn! You're out of here!

He UNLOCKS THE GATE as --

Chris quickly stands, nervous and apprehensive but happy to finally be free. He reluctantly follows the C.O. out of the cell and down the long, cold corridor.

EXT. WAFFLE HOUSE - NIGHT

Kurt, Chris and Daryl hang out in the parking lot, watch as Chris sips on a large black COFFEE. He is a bit hungover as he rests his back on Daryl's car.

Kurt looks like hell from not enough sleep and Daryl is all worked up - pissed off and unable to stand still. He walks in circles, too upset for words.

CHRIS

Daryl - what am I gonna do, man?  
Mom's gonna trip. You can't tell  
her, brother. You gotta promise  
me you won't say shit about this.

DARYL

What? You think she's not gonna  
find out? Are you gonna drive on  
a suspended license and hope you  
don't get pulled over?

Chris looks at his feet in shame.

DARYL (CONT'D)

I know you're not that stupid.

KURT

(to Chris)

So, you told the cops you didn't  
see anything. Is that right?

Chris doesn't answer. Daryl smacks him on his head.

DARYL

Answer the man!

CHRIS

I told them I left when all that  
shit happened.

DARYL

What do you mean when it happened?  
Don't you mean before it happened?

KURT

You know - you're not the only one  
the cops questioned. And sooner or  
later they're gonna talk to every-  
-one at that party. If there's any  
truth to this thing with Curtis and  
the girl...they're gonna find out.

DARYL

You hear that? That means even if  
you say you didn't see shit - then  
someone at the party might say you  
did.

KURT

The cops will know what you saw and  
didn't see. No matter what you told  
them.

CHRIS

(laughs)

Man, do you know who lives at that  
house? Dante's big sister. Sondra.  
It's his ex. What the hell else do  
you think he was doing there?

(beat)

Trying to get some by a high school  
girl? No fuckin' way! She's like  
crazy, Halle Berry hot!

KURT

In less than twenty four hours, the  
media's gonna be perched on Sondra's  
doorstep. Nothing's gonna stop that  
now.

(beat)

You've gotta tell us what went down  
at the party.

Chris is still reluctant. He smacks at his gums, frustrated. He hangs his head low, kicks at some pebbles on the asphalt and refusing eye contact with either of them.

Daryl gets in his face. As close as it gets.

DARYL

Let me paint a clear picture for you little brother. He was found in bed with an underage girl with her pants around her ankles. Now, unless LaRoy Curtis picked up work as a part-time gynecologist, then there's something deeply wrong with that picture.

Chris slowly stares up at Daryl, a dumb look on his face.

DARYL (CONT'D)

And if it weren't for you wimping out and not talking to Curtis like I asked then he wouldn't have got caught with this girl, and you never would've got busted with an open container.

(beat)

Now you got a second chance to do the right thing.

Chris is in deep thought - thinking it all over.

DARYL (CONT'D)

Now don't tell me you didn't see shit and don't know nothing. I'm gonna ask you one time...and one time only. Why did you leave that party?

Kurt's CELL PHONE RINGS. He steps away for a sec - leaving the two brothers to themselves. Answers his phone.

KURT

Yeah? This is Rogan.

(listens, shocked)

Oh my God. When?

Kurt turns, faces Daryl and Chris - who are staring back at him, eagerly awaiting an explanation.

KURT (CONT'D)

Yeah. I'm with him right now. We'll be there in fifteen.

Kurt hangs up.

KURT  
(to Daryl)  
It's Friendly. He's been in a bad  
accident.

INT. SOUTH MIAMI HOSPITAL (EMERGENCY ROOM) - EARLY MORNING

Kurt, Daryl, Chris, Darby, Rudy and Marty are awaiting the final word on Friendly from a small waiting room. Everyone is exhausted, barely holding their eyes open.

None other than LAWSON walks in with partner Roy Crowder. They all turn and give him an ugly stare.

LAWSON  
Any word on Findlay?

MARTY  
Don't worry Lawson. If Findlay dies,  
you'll be the first to identify the  
body.

CROWDER  
That's not what he asked.

MARTY  
No, but he was thinking it. And him  
and his opinion can take it outside.

CROWDER  
I'm sorry about your friend. But we  
got a job to do. Just like you.

Steve walks in with a tray full of hot COFFEES. He hands a cup to each of his co-workers. He saves Rudy for last, as he takes a seat next to her. He throws his arm around her shoulder, comforts her as tears shoot down her face.

He turns, spots a sad looking ER DOC heading towards them. Steve stands, meets him halfway. Marty and Kurt follow his lead, not looking too hopeful.

STEVE  
What's the word, doc?

ER DOC  
We did what we could. But there was  
too much internal bleeding.

Lawson and Crowder stand a safe distance behind the friends as they are hit with the bad news.

Marty and Kurt both look sick to their stomach. Steve drops to his knees and leans his back against the wall - in tears

Lawson and Crowder are somewhat sympathetic as they quietly approach the doctor.

LAWSON

Excuse me, doctor. But did Findlay mention anything about his accident when they brought him in?

ER DOC

I'm not sure I follow.

Steve, Marty and Kurt watch Lawson with suspicion. Crowder and Kurt exchange a look.

LAWSON

I mean...was he conscious when they brought him in?

ER DOC

No. I'm not sure Mister Findlay ever knew what hit him.

CROWDER

Thank you, Doctor.

Crowder grabs Lawson as they head out.

ER DOC

Oh! I almost forgot.

Crowder and Lawson turn back. The ER Doc hands a zip lock bag to Lawson. In it is a THICK WHITE ENVELOPE. Lawson's name is scribbled on the front in blue pen: "DET. LAWSON"

ER DOC (CONT'D)

The paramedics retrieved this from his coat pocket. Obviously for you.

Lawson and Crowder sneak a quick exchange. Marty, Kurt and Steve all stare back at him -- waiting. Lawson feels their stare and slowly heads for the exit.

LAWSON

Thank you, Doctor.

The two cops pass Rudy and Darby in chairs. They watch as Lawson acts unusually nervous and suspicious. Crowder also notices a change in his demeanor.

Lawson pulls this ENVELOPE from the ZIP LOCK and takes out its contents. He unfolds the thick paper and reads a long list of LOCAL AREA MOTELS. Included in this list are their addresses and phone numbers.

TANGIERS MOTEL is at the top of the list. It's CIRCLED IN RED MAGIC MARKER.

He folds the paper backward -- reads the second of several other pages. This is another new list of women's NAMES and CELL PHONE NUMBERS. DESIREE is also CIRCLED IN BRIGHT RED MAGIC MARKER.

CROWDER

Are you gonna tell me what that is?

LAWSON

Just a private joke between friends.

Lawson folds the papers up, stuffs them in the envelope as Crowder watches in confusion. He gives his partner a look of suspicion.

Lawson heads for the AMBULANCE BAY DOORS. His older partner reluctantly follows behind - looking annoyed with his vague and stand-offish behavior.

SUPERIMPOSE:           THREE DAYS LATER

INT. GRAPEVINE STUDIOS - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Marty and Rudy face across the table from Alex Ray's mother CARLA RAY (50s), weathered and tired survivor of a long and very hard life of physical and mental abuse.

Sitting next to Carla is her attorney MARK RUSSEL (40s) who looks sickened and appalled by the VIDEO SEGMENT PLAYING ON THE LARGE FLATSCRREN.

A MONTAGE OF DIFFERENT SHOTS

- The AGING BOAT PIER near Alex's home. The PADDLE BOAT is floating peacefully in the water.
- The small BEACH a quarter mile from the pier.
- A HERON perched in the CYPRESS TREE.

- Different angles of Alex Ray's home. The front and back, and the creek that runs behind their house.

END MONTAGE

Rudy STROLLS THE BANKS of this creek while talking back to the camera.

RUDY

Not so long ago - Alexis Ray entered a courtroom, took the stand and then testified that a voice commanded her to take the life of her stepfather... William "Buck" Perry...

ON MARTY AND RUDY

As they watch Russell and Carla's shocked reaction to this controversial video.

ON THE TV

Rudy stops by the boat pier. She stands just to its side as it is clearly visible in the b.g.

RUDY (CONT'D)

It was this unusual decision to come forward that would forever label Alex as "insane". A term that she has yet to make peace with.

(beat)

Now shes coming forward to reveal yet another shocking secret.

ALEXIS - ON THE BEACH

She stares out into the still water - reflecting on a long life of indecision and uncertainty.

RUDY (V.O.)

Since early childhood, Alex has been reliving the surrealistic visions of her father's gruesome death...

Alexis now sitting on the bank - arms rested on her knees.

RUDY (V.O.)

Terrifying, all too real nightmares that have plagued her since as long as she can remember...

Rudy strolls this beach, alone, as she addresses the camera and continues her segment.

RUDY (CONT'D)

Benny Ray was first reported missing shortly after Alex's third birthday.

(beat)

Alex's mother, Carla Ray, claims that Benny ran away with another woman when Alex was just a child.

(beat)

But is that what really happened? Or did Benjamin "Benny" Ray find himself the victim of a more grisly demise?

ON CARLA

As she gives Rudy the stink eye. Rudy shamefully looks away from her, unable to stare her or Russell in the eye.

ON THE TV - The CAMERA ZOOMS IN ON RUDY

RUDY (CONT'D)

To believe that - one would also have to believe there was something more to Alexis Ray's visions than just another dream. Or is it a dream at all? Or the long lost memory of an unspeakable act of violence that is best forgotten?

The footage CUTS TO the OFFICE OF DOCTOR MARAPOVICH.

Alex is laid out on a couch, eyes shut as DOCTOR MARAPOVICH sits before her. Alex is under hypnosis, following the step by step instructions of her doctor.

MARAPOVICH

Tell me what you see, Alex.

ALEXIS

I see a bird in the tree...staring at me. I can see sand out of the corner of my eye. Something's moving, but I can't make it out. It looks like the beach. But I'm not sure.

MARAPOVICH

I want you to look down Alex. Tell me what you see.

ALEXIS  
I see my feet. And...a boat.

MARAPOVICH  
Are you standing in a boat?

ALEXIS  
Yes.

MARAPOVICH  
Are you alone?

ALEXIS  
Yes. But I can still hear him.

MARAPOVICH  
Hear who, Alex?

ALEXIS  
My father.

MARAPOVICH  
Where do you hear him, Alex? Is he behind you?

ALEXIS  
No. I can hear him from the beach. He's calling me.

MARAPOVICH  
Do you see him, Alex? Do you see him on the beach?

Alex stalls. Her lips tremble a bit -- but nothing comes out. She squints, as if reluctant to answer.

ALEXIS  
I'm looking. But it's hard.

MARAPOVICH  
How is it hard, Alex?

ALEXIS  
Everything is a blur. It's getting darker. I can't see!

Alex rubs her presumably cold arms. She SHIVERS from head to toe. The CAMERA ZOOMS IN ON HER FACE.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)  
It's so cold.

Marty PAUSES THE FOOTAGE.

RUSSELL

I think we've seen all we need to see, Mr. Grier. This is all just further proof that Alexis is just a disturbed deeply confused young woman capable of creating the most absurd of stories.

MARTY

Her doctor may've something else to say about that.

RUSSELL

Carla feels that the good doctors integrity has been tainted by the high-profile nature of this case. In short -- her opinion no longer counts.

RUDY

That's ridiculous! She has nothing else to gain by this!

Marty touches Rudy's shoulder - signals her to keep quiet. She huffs in protest while biting her lip.

RUSSELL

Need I remind you that a story such as this is clearly not in her best interest?

(beat)

Instead of putting the pieces of her life back together - her and her Mom will be the subject of intense media scrutiny.

MARTY

The truth.

RUSSELL

Excuse me.

MARTY

Its what Alexis Ray wants us to find. I'm wondering if that counts for anything. Your client seems to be dead set against the idea.

RUSSELL

You also have a moral obligation. This young lady has been through more pain than you...or me could ever know. Shes been having some bad dreams since her stepfathers passing. Plain and simple. And now you're using that to concoct some half-brained horseshit idea about her fathers death. Just so your...staff...can boost ratings.

RUDY

Have you even spoken with her?

Carla's lips twitch at the mere sound of Rudy's voice. She restrains from hurling across the table and choking her out

CARLA

You really have no idea what you are talking about, young lady.

(beat)

You really should mind your tone when you are discussing concerns that, frankly, don't concern you.

MARTY

Keisha. Give us a minute.

Rudy is appalled by Marty's request, but holds her anger in check as she steps out of the room.

RUSSELL

Alexis has been declared mentally incompetent by the court.

Russell hands the official court papers to Marty, who gives them a closer look.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

This voids any written...or verbal contract between her and Grapevine Studios. As legal guardian...her mother is requesting that you hand over any materials involving Alex. We expect these materials by day's end.

(beat)

Good day to you, sir.

Russell and Carla head for the door. Marty shoots Carla an accusatory glare. She avoids his look - follows Russell out of the office.

Rudy heads back in and shuts the door. She's hopping mad.

RUDY

You're not gonna let them do this.

Marty heads for the fridge - grabs him and Rudy a couple of bottled waters. Hands her one.

MARTY

We have to.

RUDY

Nobody's gonna know the truth.

MARTY

Which is what, exactly? We don't know the truth either.

RUDY

And now we never will.

MARTY

(upset)

Running this story isn't gonna bring her father back! It's only gonna get people speculating what did happen!

(beat)

And who the hell knows what happened? You think putting her under hypnosis by a crack pot doctor is gonna prove who murdered her father?

RUDY

No disrespect, Chief but you wouldn't have let me do this if you thought it was a waste of time.

MARTY

It was a story, Rudy! Alex Ray is a headliner! What exactly do you think we do here?! Report the NEWS? That's what the papers do! We tried to spin something from nothing and it failed!

(beat)

It's not the first time and won't be the last! Get over it!

Rudy is visibly offended by Marty's speech.

RUDY

You don't really mean that.

Marty dumps his water in the trash and pours himself a shot of scotch instead.

MARTY

Sure I do.

Marty kicks back his drink, pours another.

RUDY

Look how upset you are. You know she's hiding something, don't you?

MARTY

It don't matter what I think Rudy. What matters is what we can print. What we can put online and not get sued for millions.

RUDY

And what if there is the slightest chance Carla Ray murdered her two husbands? Are you willing to just turn your back and pretend she had nothing to do with it?

Marty sucks down his second drink - slams his glass down on the table. He plants both palms on the oak - leans all his tired body weight on the table.

MARTY

We don't need the girl.

Marty suddenly looks up at Rudy. Calm. Refreshed.

RUDY

Sir...?

MARTY

(smiles)

I have a hunch about something. And if I'm right, we won't need Alex or her mother's permission to run this story.

(beat)

If you see Darby...send her in here.

INT. DARBY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Darby scrolls the online pages of "newspaperarchive.com" as several PAPERS drop into her HP INKJET PRINTER. She's doing some extensive research on Benjamin "Benny" Ray as the TRAY on her printer is thick with old MIAMI HERALD ARTICLES.

Darby snags up the stack of articles from her inkjet - lays them out, one by one on an old work desk. Some of them read "BOTANIST AND WIFE ARRESTED": Benny and Carla Ray cuffed at the wrists, escorted from their home by TWO UNIFORM COPS.

DARBY

Benjamin Benny Ray and wife Carla, who were arrested and convicted in the First Financial bank heist ten years earlier, mysteriously closed their place of business during the times of both robberies.

(beat)

Although sufficient evidence for an arrest has yet to be discovered, the police are moving them to the top of their suspects list.

Darby reviews another --

"NURSERY STAFF INVESTIGATED": The inside of a greenhouse is the scene of a mass arrest. Four MEN, and four WOMEN, which include Benny and Carla Ray, are cuffed and hauled from the scene by a crew of UNIFORM COPS.

Darby lays it aside and reviews another --

"ROCK STAR ROBBERS KILLED IN SHOOTOUT": Full color pictures of a whole new crew of criminals. These include some not so flattering police MUG SHOTS of FOUR MEN AND FOUR WOMEN, all of their images sit side by side. There's just one distinct difference between this crew and the first. THEY ARE BLACK

Darby reads the finer print.

DARBY

(reads)

South Beach Savings was the fourth in a string of banks targeted by "The Rock Star Robbers" - a crew of master thieves with a true pension for videotaping their crimes.

Darby reviews another article --

"THIRD HEIST LEAVES BANK TELLER DEAD". This story includes color photos of all four "ROCK STAR ROBBERS". Each of them are wearing RED CHECKERED FLEECE SHIRTS and SKI MASKS -- in the midst of holding up a bank.

This footage is taken from the security cameras inside the bank, watching the floor below. One of the bank robbers is branding a HANDHELD VIDEO CAMERA.

DARBY (CONT'D)

Red fleece. Sonofabitch.

And the last article reads --

"EX ROBBERY SUSPECT REPORTED MISSING": A young WOMAN'S FACE graces the front page of "The Miami Herald". The name under the photo reads DARLENE PAINTER.

DARBY (CONT'D)

(reads)

Darlene Painter's friend, co-worker, and former robbery suspect Benny Ray has also mysteriously vanished since his exoneration from the "Rock Star" bank investigation.

Now in her full investigative mode, Darby double checks the specific DATES of the "THIRD HEIST" article and the cover story on Darlene Painter. They are "MAY 13, 1996" and "MAY 17, 1996". Only four days apart.

Darby reaches for her CELL, sitting on the desk. Dials and waits for the other line.

DARBY (CONT'D)

Rogan? How fast can you get to my place?

(listens)

Yes, I know he's looking for me. I had to do something. So listen...

(beat)

I think we've got her. I can't tell you over the phone. You have to see for yourself.

(listens)

Okay. See you at the office, then.

Darby hangs up. She notices an UNREAD MESSAGE.

INSERT - PHONE

The name RUDY on the front. She opens the message.

It reads: Carla wants to go on record. Meet me at her house. Twenty minutes?

Darby responds: Give me thirty? and presses SEND.

BACK TO SCENE

Darby looks a bit unsure.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARLA AND ALEXIS RAY'S HOUSE (EVERGLADES) - DAY

Darby's car carefully approaches the secluded home of Carla and Alexis Ray. She parks near the end of this smooth, dirt path and crawls out.

Darby squints as she observes the home. Her looks suggests that something is amiss. The air is quiet...creepily quiet.

She slowly begins for the rear SCREEN DOOR.

INT. CARLA AND ALEXIS RAY'S KITCHEN - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Darby KNOCKS before reluctantly opening the CREAKING SCREEN DOOR. She cautiously steps inside, as the house is far too quiet.

DARBY

Alex?

As Darby moves further into the kitchen - she spots Rudy at a small round table. Her HANDS have apparently been TIED TO THE CHAIR.

DARBY (CONT'D)

Rudy...?

WHAP! -- She is KNOCKED ON THE HEAD by Carla's THIRTY EIGHT REVOLVER and FALLS TO THE TILE FLOOR.

FADE TO BLACK

KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Darby slowly awakens to a psychotic CARLA RAY hovering over her and Rudy. Her thirty eight in hand. The two girls share a worried look.

DARBY

Where's Alex?

CARLA

Not here. It's just the three of us. Alone at last.

DARBY

They know that we're here. If you do anything stupid...

WHAP!

Carla SMACKS Darby across the face. Rudy SHRIEKS out loud at the sight of her co-worker being struck with such brute force. Darby twitches, her lips quivering, bleeding a bit.

CARLA

And now that I have your undivided attention...maybe you'll keep your mouths shut and listen for once.

RUDY

What do you want?

CARLA

Your people are so hell bent on the truth...never once thinking what it might do to Alex. You think you're helping her? You think you know what is best for her?

(beat)

And you think Im trying to take that something away. That the truth will somehow make all her pain go away...

Carla wipes the BLOOD from Darby's lip. She jerks her head away, spits at her feet.

CARLA (CONT'D)

I always did what I thought was best for my daughter. She doesn't quite understand that now...but after today ...she'll have to understand it. And she's gonna have to make a choice. To trust me. Stand behind me. Understand that what I did was best for her...

RUDY

And what was that, Carla?

CARLA  
SHUT UP!!!

Carla points her gun at Rudy's face. She stares down the barrel, unflinching, fearless.

CARLA (CONT'D)  
You think you understand me? -- You have no idea of the sacrifices I've made for her. Just to keep her safe. From her father. From his life. All the people he's maimed and killed.  
(beat)  
He never could stop. I stood behind him. When I knew he was wrong for me and for Alex.  
(beat)  
Then he runs around with his little whore behind my back.

RUDY  
You killed her. Just like you killed all of them. Right after Benny shot that bank teller...

Carla's eyes twitch at the thought. Darby watches Rudy - in shock and more than a bit surprised.

DARBY  
(to Rudy)  
You knew about that?

RUDY  
Yes. I'm not stupid Darby. I do know how to do my job sometimes.

DARBY  
(to herself)  
Why am I always the last to know?

RUDY  
They all wore this bright red fleece so they wouldn't shoot each other.  
(to Carla)  
It also looks good on TV. Isn't that right, Carla?

CARLA  
Now aren't you the grown up reporter?

RUDY

(to Darby)

You see Carla knew it was a matter of time before they all got caught. And she asked Benny to stop. Even pleaded with him. But it didn't work.

DARBY

No. He was too interested in getting high. High on dope and high on taking down banks with his girl on the side.

RUDY

What was her name again?

DARBY

Darlene.

Carla turns in circles, following Rudy and Darby's back and forth. She can't decide who to point her weapon at first.

RUDY

Oh yeah. Darlene was a little more his speed. Younger, prettier. Someone who lived life on the edge. She was a girl like Benny always wanted.

Carla's eyes twitch with a boiling rage. Her eyes open wide and about to lose control of her actions.

DARBY

Before he got stuck with a kid he didnt want. And the wife he no longer wanted.

RUDY

And you knew the day was coming that he and his friends got caught and Alex got sent into the system. Foster care. Her life ruined. And that wasn't an option for you. Was it, Carla?

DARBY

The funniest thing happened. A group of copycat bank robbers decide to take down South Beach Savings. Steal the spotlight.

(beat)

But they got themselves killed.

Alexis quietly steps into the kitchen from the SCREEN DOOR.

RUDY

As far as the cops were concerned, The Rock Star Robberies were over. So you killed your husband...Darlene, and the rest of his crew. All seven of them.

DARBY

The cops knew there had to be a getaway driver. One more makes eight.

RUDY

It was you, Carla. You wanted nothing to do with taking down banks. But you couldn't go to the cops... could you? You would lose all of that hard earned, stolen money.

(beat)

You had no choice but to kill him.

Alexis holds back her tears. An emotional wreck. She sneaks up behind her mother. One step at a time.

DARBY

How much did you take, Carla? How much was your husband's life actually worth?

ALEXIS

Yeah, Mom. How much was it worth?

Carla spins around, facing her daughter. She keeps her gun on Rudy. For a split second, Darby stares up at the weapon with a determined look in her eye. Her and Rudy exchange a look. Rudy mouths the word "No".

CARLA

(to Alexis)

He had a choice to stop. He didn't. He let his little whore take my baby on a boat ride. My little girl...

EXT. SECLUDED LAKE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Three year old ALEXIS and DARLENE (20s) - dark haired young woman from the Miami Herald news story - cruise the private swamp in Benny's paddle boat.

CARLA (V.O.)

The rest of them were crowded around a fire. Drinking. Smoking their drugs...

Benny Ray, three other MEN and two of their WIVES gather at the CAMPFIRE. They are all drinking BOOZE, smoking WEED and playing GUITAR. They pay no mind to --

Darlene and Alexis FLOATING BY in their boat.

CARLA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I didn't want you to see so I slipped something in your drink...just before you and Darlene left in the boat. You were supposed to be all the way out by the time I shot Benny...

Alexis looks a bit dizzy as she slowly stands in the boat. She wobbles a bit as she stares up at A HERON PERCHED IN A CYPRESS TREE.

CARLA (V.O.)

But you passed out... just after the first shot rang out.

CRACK! - The loud ECHO OF A RIFLE SHOT VIBRATES IN THE AIR.

Alexis topples over, INTO THE LAKE.

Darlene's dead body SLUMPS OVER IN THE BOAT. Some BLOOD on her forehead streaks from a BULLET WOUND.

CARLA (V.O.)

After I shot Darlene, you fell in the water...

Benny Ray stares up at his wife CARLA, now pointing a RIFLE at him and his co-workers (fellow bank robbers). One of the crew - A MAN - attempts to grab Carla's rifle. She puts him down with SHOT NUMBER TWO.

Benny jumps into the lake, swims toward the boat attempting to save his drowning daughter.

CARLA (V.O.)

Your father panicked... and jumped in after you...

Carla pulls a PISTOL from victim number two's pocket. She points it at the other TWO REMAINING MEN charging after her and quickly puts them both down.

Alexis FLOATS FACE DOWN IN THE WATER. Benny is able to make it to her, grabs her, drags her toward the beach. Her face is out of the water, coughing a bit.

CARLA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

By the time he pulled you from the lake  
I'd already killed the others....

Benny manages to get Alexis to safety. He lays her down on the beach. WET and COLD. He gives her mouth to mouth. He stares up at --

CARLA

Who is still branding the hand gun.

Benny's hatred is clearly evident. Carla slowly POINTS THE GUN at her husband. He stands with his hands in the air as he steps away from Alexis.

Carla fires the remaining FOUR SHOTS.

Benny is HIT IN THE SHOULDER TWICE and takes another TWO in the stomach. He falls to the sand, dying. Carla stands over her daughter's body. She slowly comes around and sits up.

ALEXIS P.O.V.

As she stares up at A FACELESS FIGURE -- SILHOUETTED BY THE SUNLIGHT behind her. Her mother.

END FLASHBACK

INT. CARLA AND ALEXIS RAY'S KITCHEN - DAY (REAL TIME)

Carla still holding her gun on Rudy, as Alexis is a sobbing mess. TEARS SHOOT DOWN HER FACE.

ALEXIS

Why did you do it?

CARLA

I gave him one last chance to give up the life. He threatened to take you away from me baby. I wasn't gonna let that happen.

ALEXIS

So what now? You gonna kill them too?

CARLA

Sometimes sacrifices have to be made.

Carla PULLS BACK ON THE HAMMER. Points at Rudy. Darby goes for the gun, as the TWO WOMEN FIGHT FOR CONTROL. And then -

BANG! BANG!

Two more SHOTS RING OUT. Carla pushes Darby away and FIRES a THIRD SHOT --

BANG!

The bullet STRIKING DARBY IN THE SHOULDER as she DROPS LIKE A BAG OF ROCKS to the tile below.

Rudy CRIES OUT. Both Alexis and Carla stand shocked by this ugly turn of events. Darby lays still on the tile floor as she holds her wound and stares up at Carla.

Carla watches as an enraged Alexis stares at her with pure contempt and hatred in her eyes. Carla stares down at the gun in her hands, seemingly disgusted with herself.

ALEXIS

There's been enough killing. If you hurt them, then you'll have to kill me too. Because I will turn you in.

Carla, in a trance like state - shuffles toward the screen door with a blank expression. Darby, Rudy and Alexis watch on as Carla steps outside.

EXT. CARLA AND ALEXIS RAY'S HOUSE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Scottie is just now arriving at the house in his HONDA CRV, parks near the rear SCREEN DOOR as --

Carla steps out with the GUN IN HAND. She is still in her trance as she slowly heads for the CREEK.

Scottie jumps from the truck, VIDEO CAMERA IN HAND. He sets up for a nice shot of Carla, standing by the creek with the GUN IN HAND.

CAMERA P.O.V.

He ZOOMS IN on Carla standing at the bank of the creek. She stares out into the water. She PULLS BACK THE HAMMER on the gun and slowly raises the weapon.

BACK TO SCENE

Scottie holds the CAMERA STEADY.

SCOTTIE

Holy shit.

Scottie then notices --

ALEXIS

Step from the rear SCREEN DOOR -- watches him as he records her mother's suicide.

There is a hopelessly disgusted look in her eyes. A look of disdain and disapproval of this video journalist.

Scottie then sets the camera on the ground, runs as fast as he can toward Carla.

SCOTTIE

Fuck it.

ON CARLA

As she slowly holds the GUN TO HER TEMPLE.

Scottie runs up behind her and TACKLES HER INTO THE CREEK.

SPLASH!

Alexis runs to the scene. The thirty eight now resting on the grass. She picks it up as --

Scottie drags a kicking and SCREAMING Carla from the water. He pulls her onto the bank as --

Alexis points her weapon in their direction.

SCOTTIE (CONT'D)

I wouldn't do that.

ALEXIS

Why not? It's not like anyone would find her. Just like they never found my father.

CARLA

Do it.

Alexis slowly lowers the gun.

ALEXIS

I'm not gonna make it that easy.

Scottie notices Rudy walk a wounded Darby to the scene.

SCOTTIE

I missed something, didn't I?

EXT. FRIENDLY'S APARTMENT (HALLWAY) - NIGHT

Lawson suspiciously checks both ends of the hallway - looks for witnesses. His GLOVED HAND slowly turns the doorknob as he enters the apartment. The DOOR FRAME IS SPLIT - as if an intruder busted in the place.

E./I. FRIENDLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Lawson stops dead in his tracks. He notices that the entire room has been RANSACKED. Furniture is flipped over, ripped open.

-- Kitchen cabinets have been rummaged through. Doors OPEN.

-- The contents of a corner closet have been THROWN TO THE LIVING ROOM CARPET.

-- Cushions from the couch have been tossed aside as A PULL OUT BED sits OPEN.

Lawson slowly moving in. A grin on his face as he observes the terrible mess before him.

LAWSON

Well, Rogan. Looks like someone got their Christmas bonus early.

INT. GRAPEVINE STUDIOS - EDITING SUITE - DAY

Daryl, Kurt, Toad and Wrench watch some RAW FOOTAGE of the LaRoy Curtis/Maggie Shaw segment on a FLAT SCREEN TV.

ON THE TV

Daryl and Trey (Chris's friend), walk through the infamous bedroom where police found Curtis and a drunk Maggie. They stop at the bed as Trey points to the door.

TREY

That's where I was standing when I creaked open the door. But he didnt hear me. But you could clearly see that his hands were in her lap...

Trey points at the sheets - makes hand gestures as he helps to create visuals for the audience.

TREY (CONT'D)

You could see that her pants were down. Only she wasn't moving.

DARYL  
She was unconscious?

TREY  
She was out cold.

The footage CUTS TO Dante and Sondra's LIVING ROOM. Daryl sits across from Trey. The second half of the segment.

DARYL  
Let me ask you a question, Trey.  
How come... with dozens of other  
kids at this party. A full house.  
(beat)  
Why were you...the only one that  
noticed LaRoy Curtis put roofies  
in Maggie Shaw's drink? This is  
a pretty big accusation.

TREY  
Because everyone treats him like  
he's this big hero. All cos he'd  
played college ball. It's a joke.  
Nobody wants to be the one that  
comes forward.

DARYL  
Are they afraid they might lose  
their social standing?

TREY  
They're scared. Everyone knows  
what he wanted with Maggie Shaw  
Everyone knows that he was with  
her. All night. Who else could  
have drugged her? Or why would  
they drug her? He was the only  
one with motive and opportunity.

DARYL  
What do you have to say to those  
who believe Curtis was framed by  
the police?

TREY  
People believe what they want to.

DARYL  
Which is?

TREY

That he's this great guy that didn't pull a gun on two cops. That didn't rape a seventeen year old high school girl.

DARYL

Why would they believe that? Why are they not looking at the facts? As you are suggesting.

TREY

Because by all other appearances he's this cool guy. They don't wanna think that there's people out there capable of leading a double life. That anyone could do these terrible things.

(beat)

Cos then they start to question every one. Their friends. Their own family. Even themselves...

Kurt PAUSES THE FOOTAGE on TREYS FACE. Toad and Wrench turn to Kurt and Daryl, awaiting their approval.

DARYL

This is crazy.

KURT

Yes it is. But it can also work.

DARYL

I don't know how much longer I can keep Mom in the dark on this Curtis thing.

KURT

You have to.

DARYL

But Chris lying to the cops? - This is serious shit. Once we cross the the line, we can never go back.

KURT

It'll work.

DARYL

I don't know, man. This is our Moms we're talking about. Mothers ask a lot of questions.

KURT

Tell her if she has any questions to come see me. When it's all over and the hammer drops on that sonofabitch ...her two boys are gonna be heroes.

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Maggie - our supposed date rape victim, sits behind a white table. A SEX CRIMES DETECTIVE paces back and forth in front of her, going over her testimony. This is DETECTIVE COBB.

DET. COBB

...So you're telling us that Curtis never once handed you a drink? That this Walsh kid's story is bogus?

MAGGIE

I'm telling you that Trey Walsh was covering for somebody. Somebody put something in my drink alright. And he knows exactly who it was.

INT. POLICE VIEWING ROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The Detective turns - stares back at the ONE-WAY MIRROR and smiles at LAWSON AND CROWDER who are watching the interview from the other room.

LAWSON

So Curtis didn't doctor her drink. So who did? And why are we here?

CROWDER

Daryl Rayburn covers a story on the Shaw girl. Rayburn has a brother in high school.

(smiles)

One who just happened to be at this party. So guess who this Walsh kids best friend is?

LAWSON

(smiles)

Oh, there is a God after all.

INT. GRAPEVINE STUDIOS - NEWSROOM - DAY

Rudy sits at her cubicle and quietly chats away with Darby, who stands by the desk with her ARM IN A SLING. Some papers in hand. Steve buys a SODA from the corner machine. It's a typical day at the office until --

KURT AND DARYL

Are spotted being escorted out of the newsroom in HANDCUFFS by FOUR UNIFORM COPS and lead DETECTIVE COBB.

Kurt catches eyes with Darby - gives her a quick WINK and a smile. Darby mouths the words "I Love You".

Detective Cobb notices the exchange and SHOVES Kurt towards the door. The SEVEN MEN quickly exit the room.

Darby, Rudy and Steve all stare at each other. A quizzical look on their faces.

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Detective Cobb grills a worried looking Daryl about Chris's involvement in the Maggie Shaw case.

DET. COBB

Curtis never roofied Shaw's drink.  
You know that, she knows that and  
your brother knows that.

DARYL

My brother knows as much as Walsh  
tells him. He took him at his word.  
It's not his fault Walsh lied.

DET. COBB

Well, it kind of is. You see, Shaw  
says that Chris was the only one who  
handed her any drinks that night.

Daryl looks away. Guilt written all over his face.

DET. COBB (CONT'D)

Not Curtis or Walsh. Just him. So  
either he's covering for Walsh, or  
Walsh is covering for your brother.

(beat)

The only way either of them have a  
chance is if you come clean. Right  
now. What's it gonna be, Daryl?

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM #2 - DAY

Kurt sits behind the white table - staring aimlessly at the walls. Waiting. In walks --

LAWSON

With his famous smug grin and cocky swagger. Kurt SIGHS at the sight. An exhausted LAUGH.

KURT

Thank God. The police.

LAWSON

Well, Rogan. I got some bad news and some bad news. Which you want first?

KURT

I'll go with the bad news.

LAWSON

Bad news is, Daryl just copped to his little brother giving a roofied drink to Maggie Shaw.

(beat)

You see, Walsh wanted in her pants but couldn't risk handing her a drink. So he got his buddy to do the dirty work for him. She gets good and zonked and takes a nap in the guest bedroom. And in goes Walsh for the kill.

KURT

You're making this up.

LAWSON

I'm afraid not, Rogan. Chris told big brother all about it. Claims he didn't know the drink was tainted. That Walsh just handed him the drink and told him to give it to Maggie.

(beat)

Being that Shaw is known to...shall we say...let her hair down... after a few drinks.

KURT

(surprised)

He lied to me.

LAWSON

That's one way of looking at it. The other is...you both lied. And, in the process of lying, covered up a felony.

(beat)

I don't think you and Rayburn would go through all that trouble to help keep Walsh out of jail. But his brother on the other hand...

KURT

I told you. I don't know anything. It was Daryl's baby. I had no reason to question whether Walsh's story was on the up and up.

LAWSON

That's neither here nor there, Rogan. Facts are, you finally got your dicks stuck in the screen door. All of your bullshit about righting the wrongs of the innocents ain't gonna amount to a hill of shit when I get through with you and your friends.

Kurt is boiling over with rage. He calms himself - returns with a smile of his own. He takes a good look at Lawson and reads his beady eyes.

KURT

So tell me, Lawson. What's a robbery cop doing investigating a sex crime?

(beat)

You're either friends with "The Shaws" or you got some other reason for being here. Why don't you just spit it out?

Lawson stares back at the SURVEILLANCE VIDEO CAMERA hanging over the room. He stands, walks over and PULLS A WIRE FROM the back of the camera. Cuts the connection.

LAWSON

It's just us now, Rogan. These guys don't want Chris Rayburn. Or Walsh.

(beat)

The truth is...they can't prove who roofied Maggie Shaw's drink. It's a case the state can't prove. But that doesn't matter to me.

KURT

Why not?

LAWSON

I have enough to shut you, and your Grapevine friends down for all time. Whether Chris Rayburn is innocent or not doesn't matter. All your little fans out there might have something else to say about it.

KURT

You haven't answered my question. What do you want?

LAWSON

It's funny. Right after Findlay gets killed, someone flipped his apartment. Tore it all to shreds. Almost as if they were looking for something.

KURT

And what would that be?

LAWSON

I'd say around the ballpark of one hundred grand in armored car money. Vance gets two hundred and Morrisey gets another two.

(beat)

Your boy Findlay keeps the rest for shooting a bullshit video - setting them up with an airtight alibi.

Kurt slowly cracks a smile. He bursts into hysterics. He can't stop LAUGHING. Lawson isn't amused.

KURT

You're serious?

LAWSON

I figure I run into Darby. Tell her all about Findlays involvement with two dirty cops. She runs and tells you. And you confront Findlay, face to face. As soon as he kicks...you run in and scoop up the cash before the cops find it first.

Kurt just stares at the table, laughing, shaking his head as Lawson gives him the thousand yard stare.

LAWSON (CONT'D)

How am I doing so far?

Kurt finally quits laughing, pulls himself together.

KURT

You still haven't told me what you want, Lawson.

LAWSON

You're a big boy, Rogan. You figure it out.

KURT

And what, may I ask, will happen to this money? If I were to have it in my custody? And I'm not saying I do.

LAWSON

Lets just say I'll see to it you and your friends are in the clear. And Findlay's name stays clean.

Kurt is reluctant to answer. He nods in agreement.

INT. MARRIOT HOTEL - ROOM 501 - NIGHT

Kurt stands on the balcony, overlooking Biscayne Bay as the front door CREAKS OPEN. He turns and stares back at --

Lawson, standing in the doorway.

Kurt holds a large and heavy BACK PACK. Friendly's portion of the ARMORED CAR MONEY.

LAWSON

Aren't you gonna invite me in?

KURT

First, let me see the gun.

LAWSON

Boy, you really do have issues with the department, don't you, Rogan?

KURT

I love cops. I just don't like you, Lawson. Take off your weapon.

Lawson slowly pulls his FORTY FIVE from a shoulder holster. He holds it in the air - his fingers away from the trigger.

KURT (CONT'D)

Now take out the shells and toss me the clip.

Lawson ejects the magazine, tosses it to Kurt.

KURT (CONT'D)

You forgot the one in the pipe.

Lawson pulls back on the slide - EJECTS the remaining SHELL from his gun. Lays the weapon on the kitchen counter.

LAWSON

Can we get to business now?

KURT

You never answered my question, cop. What happens to the money?

LAWSON

A lot of shit can happen between now and the station. I guess there's an off chance it might not make it into evidence. But only time will tell.

KURT

In the meantime the armored car crew gets away scott free. I wonder what your partner would say.

LAWSON

It won't matter. After this, I'll be officially retired. No more Grapevine and no more Louis Findlay.

(beat)

But if you'd rather I arrest you, let me know, Rogan.

KURT

No. I think I'll pass.

LAWSON

That's what I thought. Now let me see the money.

Kurt UNZIPS and tosses the heavy bag to the floor. The inside contents are SHADOWED by a lack of light.

KURT

You'll have to come get it.

Lawson moves for the bag - bends down and reaches into the open zipper. He pulls out what looks like the BACK PAGE of a NEWSPAPER. There's something drawn on it. It says --

"SMILE ASSHOLE!"

In bright RED MARKER.

Lawson stands up, confused. Holds the paper close.

LAWSON

What the fuck is this?

Steve steps out from the corner. A VIDEO CAMERA IN HAND.

STEVE

Over here, dickhead!

Lawson turns to Steve. The front page of the NEWSPAPER is FACING THE CAMERA. It reads --

"LAWSON BUSTED"

He unknowingly holds the headline facing the camera with a dumb look on his face. He watches as --

CURTIS and MAGGIE step from the bathroom. CROWDER steps in through the front door, blocking him in.

DARBY and RUDY appear from behind the couch. Darby's arm in a SLING. They smile back at Lawson.

LAWSON

What is this?

FRIENDLY comes in off the balcony. His ARM also in a SLING and his face a badly BRUISED MESS.

FRIENDLY

I've been meaning to tell you some-  
-thing for awhile, Dennis.

Crowder puts Lawson's arms behind his back, cuffs him.

FRIENDLY (CONT'D)

Fuck you.

FADE OUT:

THE END





