

"DOWNTURN"  
Original Series by  
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Episode #1  
"Hustle"

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TEASER

EXT. SO. CALI NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

COMBAT BOOTS Bustle down the sidewalk of a lost L.A. suburb. Small trinkets in their path are crushed with each step. Frisbees. Shoes. A squeaky toy. The boots push forward undaunted. -Pace livening with each tread.

MARK (V.O.)

Western culture, with it's governments and organized dogmas, touts the worth of virtue and morals in everyday life...

THREE SIMILAR PAIR join in. One dwarfs the rest in sheer size.

MARK (V.O.)

It's a horribly vague, disjointed lecture beginning from infancy, and lasting well... Forever.

At a STAIRCASE, everyone stops.

MARK (V.O.)

The alleged point of which, is for us to have beliefs that make us better. -The golden rule, for example...

ASSORTED GUNS drop into frame. Disembodied hands cock and chamber rounds. -They're cops.

MARK (V.O.)

Reality, by contrast, teaches a far different, but equally important lesson.

COP #1

Everything tight?

COP #2

Where's the bag?

It drops in. Pink plastic, 'Hello Kitty'.

MARK (V.O.)

Namely, that real-time results of our actions, -altruistic or not, are almost never predictable.

(CONTINUED)

COP #2  
Okay. On three. One...

The large pair BOLTS early. All follow, except the COUNTER.

MARK (V.O.)  
I.E. Patience is not always best.

A CRASH is heard at the top of the steps.

COP #1  
Police! Get on the ground, now!

MARK (V.O.)  
A stitch in time may actually save  
nothing...

The COUNTER makes a belated charge into:

AN APARTMENT

Run down. Filthy. A TODDLER squats near a MIX-BREED DOG as  
it barks piercingly.

MARK (V.O.)  
And lastly...

COP #2  
Secure that animal!

A SINGLE SHOT ends the barking.

MARK (V.O.)  
Others may do unto you, well before  
your intentions are even known.

One by one, bedraggled adults are shoved to the  
floor. A SKI-MASKED COP kicks in a bathroom door where  
a girl flushes DRUGS. He gives the scene a quick once-over  
and leaves without a word.

IN THE BEDROOM

Cops up-end a bed exposing a CASH-FILLED box-spring.

COP #2  
You guys are breaking our hearts!

MARK (V.O.)  
So, now what?...

ON THE FLOOR

The TODDLER'S HAND runs through the dead dog's fur. His other hand cradles a small GLASS PIG.

MARK (V.O.)  
What happens when these belief  
systems fail?...

ON THE LIVING ROOM COUCH

A METH-HEAD is beaten by two masked cops. In the fray, money SPILLS from his pockets.

MARK (V.O.)  
...When these imparted virtues  
cease to work...

Tied up, the occupants are dragged forward. Loose cash is jammed into the now bursting backpack.

MARK (V.O.)  
The way I see it, virtues are like  
tools.

The cops stand at the door. One seems focused on the toddler.

MARK (V.O.)  
If a particular set doesn't work...

He sees the PIG. Full of coins and cash.

MARK (V.O.)  
It's good to keep a different set  
handy.

He rips it from the child. They leave.

MARK (V.O.)  
Any other approach seems well...  
Imprudent.

CUT TO:

ACT ONE

EXT/INT. SPEEDING HONDA - DAY

MARK CROSS, (31) clean, corporate-type. Cruises the fast lane to junk eighties rock. A photo of ALLEN GREENSPAN hangs in the spot usually saved for fuzzy dice.

MARK (V.O.)

Took me a while to get here though.

He blows past a wind-swept sign that reads "San Diego City Limit."

MARK (V.O.)

In the beginning I was probably a lot like you. Burdened with overblown expectations, and hope for mankind.

He swerves before rear-ending a PICKUP TRUCK.

MARK (V.O.)

Lucky for me I had help.

He whips around the truck. Livid

MARK

(out of window)

Asshole!

The pickup driver, a PRIEST, (60s) is unmoved.

MARK (V.O.)

Lots of it.

Mark glares at the priest in his rear-view. Inadvertently, he notices something on the back seat.

MARK

Ah, shit.

CUT TO:

INT. FOLLOWING CAR

An UNSEEN DRIVER does his best to keep up.

DRIVER

Dammit, junior! Eyes on the road!

BACK TO:

INT. MARK'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

On the back seat is a freshly dry-cleaned COP UNIFORM.

Mark plucks a hands-free earpiece from his sun visor and puts it on.

RADIO

*The Dow plunged to its lowest level in decades today amid fears of rising crude, and layoffs in manufacturing...*

Mark grasps the Greenspan pic.

MARK

We need you, man.

RADIO

*In local news, Miguel, "Mickey" Cruz escaped capture in an early morning drug sting on the Otay Border.*

MARK

(Into earpiece)

Home.

INT/EXT. SPEEDING HONDA - CONTINUOUS

The San Diego skyline as it's seen from I-5. Starkly beautiful. Cruise ships and high-rises circle the cobalt-blue bay.

MARK

Pickup, pickup...

VOICEMAIL (O.S.)

Hi, you've reached Tonya. If you really, need to, leave a message and I will get back.

MARK

Your uniform slept in my ride again. Gimme a buzz and I'll run it up there..

A beat. Then reluctantly-

MARK

Love you.

He yanks the earpiece.

(CONTINUED)

MARK (V.O.)

For a decade I'd marketed myself as this Berkeley-educated man-of-the world. Not wanting to face the truth. Which was that in my quest for success, I had achieved only facelessness.

The car exits full speed to a RED LIGHT. The ensuing brake-stand makes a HOMLESS GUY shake his head.

MARK (V.O.)

Like an empty billboard waiting for some kid to bomb graffiti all over me.

P.O.V. - A series of stoplights all turn RED.

MARK (V.O.)

I blame the system.

THE PRIEST pulls alongside.

MARK (V.O.)

And a very rough upbringing.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACKYARD POOL PARTY - CIRCA 1990

Kids, mostly black, lounge in and around a pill-shaped suburban pool. They look out of place amid the palm fronds of this ornate cabana. Some sip beers. Others smoke pot. WEAVING amongst them is a WHITE WOMAN, Karen Cross, (40s), blonde, curvaceous. Outwardly the standard trophy wife, but perhaps a bit more. A calm steeliness belies her beauty. Trash bag in hand, she collects crushed cans and smoldering butts.

KAREN

Let's put it in the bag, please!  
The patio's not a dump!

A fat kid cannonballs the pool.

KAREN

That's it Dante! You're done for the year! Out!

VOICE (O.S.)

Mom! We need you!

(CONTINUED)

KAREN  
Coming sweetheart!

She makes her way to a large playroom where FOUR BOYS, age ten to twelve, stand at a massive Brunswick pool table. MARK, The shortest, mouths an UNLIT CIGARETTE.

TERELL  
That's bullshit! You can't use your mom!

MARK  
My house. My rules.

CESAR  
Yah. Don't be such a winer.

KAREN  
Who's wining?!

BOYS  
No One!

KAREN  
Good. I hate winers. What's up?

CESAR  
We were gonna bet that you couldn't make this shot.

Karen eyes the table.

KAREN  
The eight? Which pocket?

MARK  
Side.

KAREN  
How much?

The boys shift nervously. All eyes turn to Mark.

KAREN  
Well...

MARK  
Five bucks.

KAREN  
Come on guys!

She turns to leave.

MARK  
No Wait! Ten!

Mark lights the cigarette. Karen turns, interested.

KAREN  
(re: cigarette)  
How many is that today?

MARK  
Four.

TERELL  
Five.

She plucks the fag from his lips, crushes it in an ashtray

KAREN  
Alright. On the table.

Mark lays the ten on the wood as Karen grabs a cue. The shot itself, is no feat for a pro. She lines up perfectly, -shoots straight. The cue ball banks off two rails before striking the eight dead-on. -It rolls to the edge of the pocket and stalls.

CESAR  
Shit, that was close!

TERELL  
Ha-Ha! Looks like your mom owes you  
ten bucks.

Karen stares, sick, at the blown shot. Without blinking, she SLAMS the table with a thundering pelvic bump. The ball sinks as the boys stand speechless.

KAREN  
Whoa, earthquake. You guys alright?

She tucks the cash in her cleavage. Off screen, a low, mechanical, whirr is heard.

KAREN  
Oh, fuck.

EXT. CROSS HOME DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

A cop car drives through the gate surrounding this palatial home. It glides in between two Cadillacs, and parks.

INT. CROSS HOME - CONTINUOUS

A panicked Karen quickly herds the boys out of the playroom.

KAREN  
Anyone see little Dave?!

EXT. CROSS HOME DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

A tall, slick-haired, cop (40s) exits the squad car. Boots, badge, revolver, all glisten in the sun.

MARK (V.O.)  
I'm the youngest of two boys. My  
brother Dave, being the adopted  
one.

The Sheriff aims a remote at the garage. The door lifts revealing an OLDER BOY (teens) huffing gas from a can. A SECOND BOY bolts away. Unphased, the sheriff closes the garage door.

MARK (V.O.)  
My Father, a successful developer,  
started a second career at  
thirty-six.

EXT. CROSS BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

A MAD scramble. Karen hurries to hide evidence as the boys hustle kids out of the pool.

KAREN  
Party's over guys! Grab your shit,  
and follow me to the door, now!

EXT. CROSS HOME DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Sheriff, Farrell "Big Dave" Cross, scans for life. He undoes his tie, and heads for the patio.

BIG DAVE  
Honey! -Mark!  
(to himself)  
Where the hell is everyone?!

MARK (V.O.)  
Law enforcement, he said, was his  
first love. So, after developing  
most of Orange, California, he went  
back to it.

EXT. CROSS BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

The kids begrudgingly exit the pool.

KAREN

We gotta move, guys! Let's go!

KID

But we just got here!

KAREN

Mark, would you please help your  
friends out of our freakin' pool!

Arriving on the patio, the sheriff stops, stares  
disbelieving what he sees.

BIG DAVE

Who's responsible for this?!

MARK (V.O.)

My father wasn't what you'd call  
"open minded".

BIGOT VISION. Big Dave's mind morphs kids into grotesque  
caricatures.

MARK (V.O.)

He always had this saying...

CUT TO:

EXT. CROSS BACKYARD - LATER

Big Dave stands with Mark. Guests mill down the driveway.

BIG DAVE

Everybody plays a part, son. People  
play theirs, and we play ours.

MARK (V.O.)

I never got it.

INT. HONDA - DAY

Honking horns kick Mark into the NOW.

MARK (V.O.)

I mean... Were we not people?

(CONTINUED)

The Honda continues down Front street to a concrete parkade. It pulls into a space marked "INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE ONLY".

MARK (V.O.)

One thing I *will* credit the old guy with is influencing my job choice.

INT. OFFICE ELEVATOR - DAY

Mark rides with Feds of all branches. Some don badges. A few have guns. Most carry tall lattes.

MARK (V.O.)

Sure, I made stops along the way...

INT. CUBICLE - E-Z CHECK CASH - 2000

MARK (V.O.)

I did tax preparation...

Mark helps a client as ARMED THIEVES burst in. The cashiers run away, leaving Mark and his client with the felons.

MARK (V.O.)

Even tried teaching consumer math to eighth-graders.

INT. SO. CALI CLASSROOM - 2001

Thirty kids in a room built for half that. A young pair MAKE OUT. Others laugh, talk on cellphones. Mark scrawls something on the blackboard and leaves. "GOOD LUCK IN PRISON. ALL OF YOU!" No one notices.

MARK (V.O.)

Though not a nurturer, I still felt driven to serve...

EXT. OPEN AIR JOB FAIR - 2002

Rows of kiosks represent everything from biotech to banking. Mark ambles through the herd of human cattle towards the "LAW ENFORCEMENT" section.

MARK (V.O.)

But who ever heard of a cop with a Masters in finance?

(CONTINUED)

He passes a cardboard cut-out of a cop that resembles Big Dave

MARK (V.O.)  
There had to be a way...

Separated from the crowd, he sees it. -Three letters looming large.

MARK (V.O.)  
And I knew it the second I saw it.

A man in a gray suit waves him over.

INT. OFFICE ELEVATOR - PRESENT DAY

Third floor. The armed contingent exits leaving Mark, and a few others.

MARK (V.O.)  
But getting back to this whole empty billboard thing...

Mark sees a HOT black girl amongst the Feds. She feels the come-on, but could care less.

MARK (V.O.)  
It's actually quite a dangerous thing to be.

Fourth floor. Mark steps off, looks over his shoulder as the elevator shuts on the girl.

MARK (V.O.)  
There's no way of knowing who's got an eye on you. -Or why.

CUT TO:

INT. I.R.S. SAN DIEGO BRANCH - CONTINUOUS

Busy, as you'd expect. Rows of cubicles manned by the old, young, thin, and morbidly fat. Mark passes them as TODD MCCARTHY, (35), and aging jock, falls in stride.

MCCARTHY  
following your sick tweets is like speed-reading porn.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

Someone reads porn?

MCCARTHY

Bernanke's a festering d-bag!  
Geithner's a lolly-licking  
boy-lover!

MARK

All said with the best intentions,  
I swear.

MCCARTHY

And that stuff about the Clintons?

MARK

Bourgeois scum. But I never cursed.

MCCARTHY

You wanted to.

MARK

Mark these words: when I get up to  
their level, -Game over.

MCCARTHY

Yeah. Tony Soprano, but in the  
Federal Reserve!

MARK

Gotta have dreams, my friend.

MCCARTHY

Gotta get sleep first. Raych came  
by for another all-nighter.

MARK

Again?!

MCCARTHY

Your boy has some ugly needs.

MARK

Ugly ain't the word!

MCCARTHY

Speaking of ugly, your bro's been  
texting me again.

MARK

What's he want?

(CONTINUED)

MCCARTHY  
No clue. Ever try taking his calls?

MARK  
He's confrontational.

MCCARTHY  
He's family.

MARK  
One day you'll have some shot-out  
tweaker in your family. Until then,  
shut up about Dave.

The men turn a corner, walk past a sign that reads "CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS". The carpet's way nicer here. EPSTEIN, (33)  
A curly-haired geek-type emerges from a glass-walled office.

EPSTEIN  
Stay Back! I caught Swine Flu from  
my niece!

McCarthy JUMPS behind Mark.

MARK  
Again?!

EPSTEIN  
No, last time it was Whooping  
Cough.

MCCARTHY  
Where do you live, Epstein,  
Guatemala?!

MARK  
You should go home.

EPSTEIN  
(coughing)  
I got audits all morning. Unless  
someone helps?

MARK  
I have a nine-thirty.

MCCARTHY  
(sighs, reluctant)  
Alright, where's it at?

EPSTEIN  
Pacific Beach.

MCCARTHY  
Another pot clinic?

EPSTEIN  
With a tattoo parlor attached.

MARK  
Cha-ching!

EPSTEIN  
Been a windfall since they Ok'd  
medical bud. City gets eight  
figures a year. Our take is limited  
to cashiers who make six.

MCCARTHY  
Beats starbucks.

Through an open door, Mark sees someone seated in the  
adjacent office.

MARK  
Oh crap!

It's the priest from the freeway.

EPSTEIN  
Tell me that isn't who I think it  
is!

MCCARTHY  
Father Tom! You're nailing  
donate-a-car guy?!

MARK  
On books he's Tom Keene. I never  
made the connection.

MCCARTHY  
Come on! He's clergy! -And he's got  
such cool commercials.

Epstein throws an infectious, hacking, fit. The guys take a  
GIANT step back

MCCARTHY  
Should'nt you be in a quarantine  
bubble?

EPSTEIN  
See if the Father will say a prayer  
for me!

MARK

I would. But he hasn't got one to spare.

Mark steps in his office, shuts the door.

MARK

Top of the morning to you, Father.

FATHER TOM

They ex-commed me in o-five. The Frock's an embellishment.

MARK

Sorry to hear that.

FATHER TOM

You must be Mark.

MARK

Yes.

FATHER TOM

You sound bigger on the phone. Was your old man a cop?

MARK

(suprprised)

As a matter of fact, he was.

FATHER TOM

And mom was some sort of accessory. -A model I'm guessing. Probably never held a job in her life.

MARK

She worked at home. Raised me and my brother.

FATHER TOM

Raised? Wanna try that again?

MARK

Excuse me?!

FATHER TOM

Doted, maybe, but raised? Not quite. The old man was a bit of a hard ass, but she spoiled you. Let you grow up thinking the world was yours for the taking.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

I don't think we're here to discuss...

FATHER TOM

You basically raised yourself. She may have nurtured, loved you, and gave you things you wanted but somehow it just wasn't enough...

MARK

You about done?!

FATHER TOM

Pretty ironic, really.

MARK

What are you talking about?!

FATHER TOM

You're the favorite. Yet in the end you were the one who broke her heart.

MARK

(seething)

ME?! HOW THE FUCK AM I THE ONE!

It's too late to take it back. Mark gathers himself.

FATHER TOM

Sorry for that. I go off on tangents sometimes.

MARK

Obviously.

(a beat)

Let's get back to business shall we?

FATHER TOM

By all means.

MARK

You run the largest charity in Southern Cal. Yet you'd risk that by engaging in acts which, to say the least, are provocative.

FATHER TOM

Provocative?! I run two rehabs and a full clinic. Mind you, that's in addition to the full-time job of

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FATHER TOM (cont'd)  
feeding folks left broke by this  
recession!

MARK  
I'm referring to compliance under  
article five-o-one of U.S. tax  
code. Public charity exemption.

FATHER TOM  
Look, I've been down this road  
before. I don't deny that I'm a  
wide load, but accountants these  
days do not come cheap.

MARK  
This isn't about your books,  
Father.

FATHER TOM  
Then I'm afraid I don't know why  
I'm here.

MARK  
Wanna try that again?

FATHER TOM  
I'm sorry?!

MARK  
There's proof you helped  
Assemblyman Joe LaTorno's campaign  
out considerably.

FATHER TOM  
I've never met the guy.

MARK  
Your secretary wrote him two  
checks. Fifty, and forty grand,  
respectively.

FATHER  
Personal checks. Dot's a big  
spender.

MARK  
By Dot, you mean Dorothy Ann  
Procter. Two convictions for fraud  
in '01.

(CONTINUED)

FATHER TOM  
She's rehabilitated.

MARK  
Question is, are you? Joe Latorno  
sits on the panel that oversees  
development and zoning.

FATHER TOM  
I'm not in real estate.

MARK  
There's a hundred unit complex  
downtown bearing your name.

FATHER TOM  
If you mean the battered women's  
home, I'd hardly call that a hot  
property.

MARK  
Last year one of your "Shelters"  
sold for two million bucks.

FATHER TOM  
At fair market! You know what a man  
like you's problem is?! You're  
completely shut off! -Shut off to  
the pain of anyone not listed as a  
guest on your Facebook page!

MARK  
Maybe. But there's one thing men  
like me *can do*.

Mark reaches in his desk, grabs a file, hands it to Father Tom.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Cover our tracks.

FATHER TOM  
What's this?

MARK  
Bank statements. Prior to her  
donation, Dot wired a hundred grand  
in church funds to her account.

FATHER TOM  
I didn't know.

MARK

Then she's an embezzler.

FATHER TOM

Now wait a minute! Whatever Dot did, I asked her to do. You people sit up your fancy high-rises looking down on the rest of us. You don't stop to think of how regular folks get things done! Eighty percent of my time and a hundred percent of my resources are spent helping those with nothing. So what, if there's a few perks hidden in the weeds!

MARK

Perk or not, this is your last warning. No campaigns.

FATHER TOM

Is that all?

MARK

Not quite. That stuff you said before... You some kind of clairvoyant?

FATHER TOM

Close. Before my calling, I tended bar.

MARK

That's It?!

FATHER TOM

Let's just say driving habits tell a lot about people too.

MARK

Understood.

FATHER TOM

Have a blessed day, kiddo.

The Reverend leaves, nearly colliding with a DARK-SUITED MAN on his way out.

MARK

(to man)

Can I help you find something?

(CONTINUED)

MAN

Nope. I'm good.

An attractive girl in a wheelchair, RACHEL YANG (25), rolls in with a soccer ball.

RACHEL

You down for the cause today,  
Cross?

MARK

Which one?

The stranger disappears.

RACHEL

The Brazilians. I'm telling you,  
it's their day.

MARK

Where'd he go?

RACHEL

Who?!

Mark checks the hallway. -It's empty.

MARK

He didn't have a badge.

RACHEL

Neither do you.

MARK

Never seen him around before.

RACHEL

Just a suit. Who cares?

MARK

I care.

RACHEL

Well it looks like he got what he  
came for and left. I, on the other  
hand, am still in the market for a  
mid-fielder. Know anyone?

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN PARK - DAY

Shouts of joy and agony float to the buildings around a small green pitch. Mark, now shirtless in shorts, runs down a ball in this pickup soccer game.

Rachel's high-tech chair hums over the pitch. It's freakishly fast.

RACHEL  
(shouting)  
I'm open!

Mark hesitates and is stripped by a young Brazilian.

RACHEL  
(shouting)  
What was that?!

Mark charges the kid, who eludes him and scores a game-winner.

RACHEL  
Shit!

Disgraced, Mark prostrates on the pitch. Abbey grabs her ball, rolls over.

RACHEL  
I could easily have them all  
deported

MARK  
Sounds harsh, but okay.

RACHEL  
Or you can take what's left of your  
pride, and go shake hands.

MARK  
(annoyed)  
I lost a game, not my mind or my  
gonads.

He gets up. Starts limping away

RACHEL  
Am I wrong for enjoying this?

MARK  
This?

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL

Watching you suck at something for once.

MARK

Hey, whatever gets you there.

RACHEL

It's weird. Ever since the wreck, my life's been... -I dunno... Illuminated somehow.

MARK

You're kidding right?

RACHEL

No.

MARK

Because I fail to see how any sort of enlightenment could result in McCarthy.

ABBEY

Um. for your clarification, -Todd, as I like to call him, thinks I'm awesome. Plus, -he totally rocks my world in bed.

MARK

So I've heard.

ABBEY

Excuse me?!

MARK

Look. Free advice. When it comes to that guy, -Don't settle.

RACHEL

And who are you to talk, Mr. loveless relationship?!

MARK

Tonya and I are fine.

RACHEL

If you mean "fine" in the bored, unhappy sense, then I agree.

MARK

I don't.

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL

So why not "great" Or "amazing"?

MARK

Because it's smug, overconfident,  
and generally precedes domestic  
violence. And what's with the  
smack-talk? With our past, you  
should be glad I'm helping.

ABBEY

Time out. Since when does a drunken  
hand-job copped at an office party  
constitute a "past"?

Mark BLUSHES bright red.

ABBEY

Hm. Must've been good.

MARK

For the record, I'm typically more  
responsible than that.

ABBEY

Yah. Well for the record no one put  
a gun to my head either.

A shared smile. Without warning, She JAMS the ball in his  
gut.

MARK

Ow!

She rolls away.

MARK

(re: ball)

What do I do with this?

ABBEY

Practice!

A MAN observes them from a bench. It's the hallway guy. He  
lowers his shades as Mark moves closer.

MAN

Hot little number, ain't she?

MARK

(defensive)

I'm sorry?!

(CONTINUED)

MAN

Like one I used to bang back east.  
-With legs, of course.

MARK

(to himself)

Just keep walking... Ignore park  
wacko...

He turns to leave.

MAN

You've been on our radar for years,  
Cross. It's good to finally meet in  
person.

Mark stops, turns.

MARK

How'd you know my name?!

MAN

Bob Evans. GAO. I recruited you.

MARK

Sure. Unbeknownst to me, of course.  
-I'm in no mood for jokes, pal!

EVANS

You're a man with big aspirations,  
Cross. I'm someone who they listen  
to at the Federal Reserve.

MARK

Right... One question there, *Bob*.  
When McCarthy hired you for this,  
did he know you were such a bad  
actor?

Evans shows his badge -It's real.

MARK

Yeah well, I don't know who  
collects your intel, but it's bad.  
-I got a job. And I'm not looking  
to make any lateral moves.

EVANS

What I'm offering is strictly part  
time.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

Doesn't matter. Not interested.

EVANS

Life is ten percent what happens,  
kid. Ninety percent how you work  
it.

MARK

Read my lips, buddy. -No sale.

Mark turns away. The cold, knowing, stare of a lifelong fed  
drilling through his back.

EVANS

I'll be around if things change.

INT. EXERCISE ROOM SHOWER - DAY

Mark stands in the shower, hot water streaming down his face  
and neck.

MARK (V.O.)

Someone once wrote that all rights  
were purely imagined...

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Evans approaches Mark's car. A long tool slides from his  
sleeve. -He pops the hood.

MARK (V.O.)

Myths designed to placate the  
powerless with illusions of  
balance... Justice...

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Combat boots marching. Like the first scene, one dwarfs the  
others.

MARK (V.O.)

While I'm not one for conspiracy  
theories, I can say this with great  
certainty...

INT. ABBEY'S CUBICLE - CONTINUOUS

A photo of Mark dressed as Santa with Abbey on his knee. She studies it before plucking it off the wall.

MARK (V.O.)  
...Every lie needs a taker.

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY - WALKING

Mark straightens his tie on the way back to work.

MARK (V.O.)  
Occasionally, lots of them.

As he turns the corner, he stops short, horrified.

IN HIS OFFICE

Half-open file drawers. A TRASHED desk. Shocked, Mark surveys the room. The only clue left is a series of BOOT SCUFFS on the once pristine carpet.

MARK (V.O.)  
If that isn't written down  
somewhere, it should be.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. MARKS OFFICE - DAY

Entering the room, he notices a BROWN ENVELOPE placed conspicuously on his desk. Slowly, he opens it, empties the contents.

It's a copy of a his FEDERAL APPLICATION from September of '02. In red, someone has scrawled "PERSONAL INFO" on the top. Mark turns to that page. -A trip down memory lane.

Page four. Circled in red is question two. **"HAVE YOU EVER USED, OR SPONSORED USE OF AN ILLEGAL, OR CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE?"** An arrow pointing to the question is anchored by three words. "PERJURY. SEE VIDEO."

A jolt of paranoia makes him look around the room. He sees a FLASH DRIVE taped to the screen of his monitor.

(CONTINUED)

He rips it down and boots up the computer. With one eye on the door, he plugs the drive into a port. It takes time, but a video box appears on screen. Shortly thereafter, -a face. LITTLE DAVE. Much older, but wasted as usual.

LITTLE DAVE

Whooo! Hoo! This is Dave coming to you live from his little bro's graduation party! Umm. I just wanna say that the class of ninety nine has, by far, the hottest fucking chicks I have ever seen in my life! Let's see those assets ladies!

The camera pans to a crowd of drunk girls flashing their tits. On a scale of one to INSANE, this party is pure madness. The camera moves through the crowd of twenty-somethings to a place we've seen before.

AT THE BILLIARDS TABLE

A slimmer, more buff, Mark stands flanked by hot women.

LITTLE DAVE (O.S.)

Dude, over here! Check it out, it's my mom!

The camera pans right. KAREN CROSS, fifties now, cruises with a trash bag. She's aged the way dolls do. -A wonder of modern surgery.

CAMERA MAN

Dude, no way is that your mom!

LITTLE DAVE

Mom!... Mom!... You got any words for the folks out there?

KAREN

Yes. First: Be safe. Second: Have a wonderful time. Third: Clean up after yourselves because your father's flying home on Tuesday. And oh! -I just want to say congrats to my son Mark, on his degree! You've made us all very pr-

LITTLE DAVE

Alright mom, that'll be all for now. -Let's get back to the party!

The camera finds Mark making out with Salma Hayek's twin sister.

(CONTINUED)

LITTLE DAVE  
She better be eighteen bro!

GIRL  
I'm eighteen.

CAMERA MAN  
Holy crap, she speaks English!

MARK  
Would you quit with that stupid  
camera!

LITTLE DAVE  
Whoa, Whoa, little bro, you're way  
too uptight. You know I got a cure  
for that, if you wanna partake.

Dave digs into his pocket, pulls out an eighth-ounce of  
crystal.

MARK  
Dude, you are insane!

LITTLE DAVE  
C'mon, man. It's your night. Do a  
rail with us, come on!

The crowd starts CHANTING simultaneously.

CROWD  
Rail! Rail! Rail! Rail!

Dave cuts a line on the edge of the table.

MARK  
Turn that camera off!

CROWD  
Rail! Rail! Rail!

CAMERA MAN  
Alright. It's off.

The camera pans down until its aimed at the floor. Out of  
frame, but very much ON.

MARK (O.S.)  
Where's mom?!

LITTLE DAVE (O.S.)  
Outside. Hurry up!

ON SCREEN

(CONTINUED)

The sly camera-guy tilts the lens just enough to see Mark chomping down the line. The crowd cheers.

## IN THE OFFICE

Mark's guts have been kicked out. In a fit of rage, he grabs the drive, -ZINGS it across the room, nearly hitting MCCARTHY in the head.

MCCARTHY

Whoa! easy!

MARK

(defensive)

When the fuck did you get here?!

MCCARTHY

Just now. Checked out the pot farm on Mission. Place is insane.

MARK

Um. I'm kinda slammed here.

MCCARTHY

Fair enough. Just came to see if you wanted food.

MARK

Nah. Think I'll work through lunch, today.

MCCARTHY

(awkward)

Suit yourself.

McCarthy heads out. Before leaving, he intuitively turns to Mark.

MCCARTHY

You in some kind of weird mood?

MARK

I'm fine. Just not hungry.

MCCARTHY

In that case, check out THC ink. They got these buds that-.

MARK

(cuts him off)

I'll make a note.

(CONTINUED)

As soon as he leaves, Mark DIVES DOWN, combing the floor with his hands. He checks the counter-tops. Under the desk. -All to no avail. -The drive is just gone.

As if on cue, the desk phone rings.

MARK  
(answering)  
Agent Cross.

EVANS (O.S)  
So... Are we ready to be a bit more social?

EXT. DOWNTOWN PARK - DAY

Evans sits on his favorite bench watching a far less friendly soccer match among Somali cabbies. From the footpath, a man approaches wearing a ballcap and shades. Evans lets out a chuckle.

EVANS  
I Didn't realize I said incognito.

MARK  
How did you get that tape?

EVANS  
First you gotta to tell me how you liked your film debut.

MARK  
I'm getting a lawyer.

EVANS  
Not smart. You see, This is the part where you *should* say: "Golly gee Mr. Evans. How can I get my perjuring ass out of this sling?"

MARK  
Did you say you were with GAO?

EVANS  
I did.

MARK  
What's your job?

EVANS  
Let's just say that our mission, at it's core, is the safety and well-being of the United States.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

You guys walk bombs through airports.

EVANS

As a test.

MARK

Live devices?!

EVANS

Guess you'd prefer it be some jihadist?! Or some nut next to mom on the flight back from Lauderdale?!

MARK

How do you know-

EVANS

The point is that total security often demands harsh measures.

MARKA

What' that go to do with me?

EVANS

Before I forget, that drive you "misplaced" landed in the trash. -Only place you didn't check.

MARK

You put cameras in my office?!

EVANS

Man, I'm starved! You eat yet?

MARK

Why is everyone trying to feed me? I'm not hungry!

EVANS

Fine then. Taco Bell it is.

CUT TO:

EXT. TACO BELL - DAY

Evans' late model Grand Marquis pulls into the parking lot. At shotgun, Mark looks more hostage than passenger.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

Um. Technically I can't leave work  
for taco runs.

EVANS

I'll write you a note.

MARK

Look. Bob. Can I call you bob? I  
appreciate whatever you guys are  
doing here. I really do. but the  
truth is I'm actually...

EVANS

(to himself)

*Drive thru, dining room, drive  
thru, dining room...* Ah, lets do  
drive thru.

MARK (CONT'D)

...Scared out of my mind right now,  
and with good reason. I mean,  
you've got me. Totally. I recognize  
that, and I know you guys recognize  
my need to stay employed here.

Evans pulls up to the order mic.

EVANS

I'll take a number four, no sauce,  
with two Mexican Pizzas.

Evans pulls forward. At the first window, a girl takes his  
money, and hands him the food. He idles ahead to the next  
window where a YOUNG MAN (20's), latino, tats everywhere,  
hands Evans a cloth sack. Evans drops it in Mark's lap  
before pulling away.

MARK

No appetite. Remember?

EVANS

Take a look. Might change your  
mind.

Mark opens the sack, -shuts it just as fast.

EVANS

Not too bad, huh?!

MARK

Um. There's... -money in there.

(CONTINUED)

EVANS

Wish I knew how much. Think you can count it for me?

MARK

Who's is it?

EVANS

Ours.

MARK

Excuse me?

EVANS

Not ours-ours. -The Government's. Collected from one Miguel Saldana Cruz.

MARK

Mickey Cruz? the Drug lord?!

EVANS

No, the landscaper. Cash miraculously shoots out of his leaf-blower.

He bites into a taco.

MARK

Who's oversight does this fall under?

EVANS

That would be mine.

MARK

So you're some kind of rogue fed?

EVANS

Look, I'm not the one with the problem here, You are. I'm just a guy trying to help. You should let me.

MARK

I should let you blackmail me?!

A beat.

EVANS

Think of of it like this taco. Salt. Fat. Heart attack, right? Yet, it effectively solves a short-term problem.

(CONTINUED)

He takes a bite.

EVANS

Rather scrumptiously, I might add.

MARK

I don't follow.

EVANS

Take your basic street-level deal. Two bills for an eighth ounce of blow. -Peanuts. But say you make twenty a day. Now you've got four grand.

MARK

That's a crime.

EVANS

Doesn't mean it's not taxable. The cartels clock billions a year. That's billions in cash revenue going un-levied. Why?

MARK

Probably because it's not supposed to be happening.

EVANS

Yet it *does happen*. Thousands of times a day. Our answer? Round up perps. Mandatory four year stretches. Forty grand a year for for food, and healthcare. Times that by about a million and you got what? Forty billion of your dollars spent warehousing perfectly useful individuals.

MARK

Criminals.

Evans pulls into a supermarket lot, parks in a space.

EVANS

The current administration has chosen not to turn it's back on this potential revenue source.

MARK

Drug Money?!

(CONTINUED)

EVANS

Two costly wars. failing Markets.  
Uncle Sam is in dire need of a new  
hustle. We need your help.

MARK

For what?!

EVANS

To make sure the scum pays their  
fair share.

MARK

Let me get this straight.  
You're going to audit criminal  
enterprise?!

EVANS

Tough times require tough moves.  
A.K.A resourcefulness. Unless you  
wanna go beg China for another two  
trillion.

MARK

Say I help. What's your offer?

EVANS

(laughs)

Zero. -You help us, this little  
problem of yours goes away.

MARK

And if I don't?

EVANS

I'd hate for that application to  
land on the wrong desk.

MARK

I need time.

EVANS

Training starts in six hours.

Evans pulls a pen from his pocket. He writes something on a  
food wrapper and hands it to Mark.

EVANS

Be here at eight sharp. If for some  
reason you no-show, I promise I'll  
take it the wrong way.

Mark looks at the address, reacts nervously to what he sees.

ACROSS THE PARKING LOT

A UNIFORMED COP (40s) Latino, watches Evans' car through binoculars. He speaks into a CELLPHONE on walkie-talkie setting.

UNIFORMED COP  
*Estoy Aquí.* I'm here.

MEXICAN VOICE  
*Donde?* Where?

UNIFORMED COP  
*Pinche supermercado.* A  
fucking supermarket

MEXICAN VOICE  
*Que vistas?* What do you  
see?

UNIFORMED COP  
*El gordo. Con otro wedito.*  
The fat one. With another  
white guy.

MEXICAN VOICE  
*Otro? Quien es?* Another  
one?! Who is he?

UNIFORMED COP  
*No lo conozco.* I don't know  
him.

MEXICAN VOICE  
*Investiguelo. Si nos*  
*Amenece, -Eliminelo.* Check  
him out. If he's a threat,  
eliminate him.

UNIFORMED COP  
*Bueno.*

He flips his phone SHUT.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN: EXT. DOWNTOWN PARK - DAY

Evans drops Mark off. A farewell HONK startles him onto the footpath.

INT. OFFICE ELEVATOR - DAY

Mark and several others ride silently. He still dons a CAP and SHADES.

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY - WALKING

Completely out of it, he collides with several co-workers as he ambles down the hall.

MARK (V.O.)

Whether or not, I'd been set-up for some unknown reason by the Fed, the tape was, as I saw it, *my own fault*. It made me the one thing a cash-strapped government can never pass up. -Cheap labor.

INT. MARK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Mark sits at his desk watching air. After a few seconds, his shirt pocket hums a loud ring tone. Mark lets it ring over and over.

He leans down and grabs the trash can by the desk. The discarded drive sits squarely atop the pile. He grabs the drive, stuffs it in his sock

A knock on the door startles him. Abbey pokes her head inside

RACHEL

You okay? I could hear that from outside

MARK

I'm fine.

RACHEL

That explains the shades.

He removes them, embarrassed.

Rachel glides in. Shuts the door.

RACHEL

Someone saw you with some guy at the park...

Mark puts an index finger to his lips, motions for them to go outside. THEY LEAVE.

IN THE HALLWAY

Mark shuts the door. The dialogue resumes.

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL  
What was that for?!

MARK  
I'm in a bit of a situation right now.

RACHEL  
Your folks okay?

MARK  
They're fine.

RACHEL  
What'd that guy want?

MARK  
Nothing. Say Raych, did you notice anyone strange near my office?

RACHEL  
Is something missing?

MARK  
Sort of.

RACHEL  
Now that you mention it, there were some guys here earlier.

MARK  
You mean *in here*?!

RACHEL  
They wanted the Director. I sent them to Gomez's office.

MARK  
What'd they look like?

RACHEL  
DEA if I remember right.

MARK  
Badges?

RACHEL  
Jackets. Like they were on some raid.

MARK  
Anything else?

RACHEL

The white guy was big. *Gigantor*-big. Then there was a black guy with a ponytail.

MARK

You're incredible.

RACHEL

I have a thing for men with ponytails.

MARK

Thanks Raych.

He heads down the hall.

RACHEL

(shouts)

Where are you going?!

INT. MEN'S TOILET STALL - DAY

Pants up, smart-phone in hand, Mark sits on the bowl scrolling features. He selects "PLAY NEW MESSAGES" and waits a few seconds...

MESSAGE

Hey loser, it's your big bro. Just wanted to-

He skips it.

MESSAGE

Dave again. I've called twice!  
There some reason why you don't-

He hits DELETE.

The display reads: 1 NEW MESSAGE. Nervously, Mark selects "PLAY NEW MESSAGE."

MESSAGE

Hey boo. Got your call. I'm not out here in my draws, So don't trip about the uniform, okay...

The message grinds to background noise. Mark exhales, relieved.

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING LOT - DAY

Walking across the expanse, Mark looks aged. More in the last hour, than the last few years. As he nears his car, closing footfalls FREEZE him in his tracks. He spins around to see a fellow worker climbing into a van. Mark smiles politely.

Turning to his car, Mark bobbles his keys. As they fall to the ground, his EYES WIDEN.

ON THE GROUND

BOOT SCUFFS Circle the car like an ant trail. Entranced, Mark follows them to the driveway.

Just then, a van LURCHES to a stop one inch from Mark's leg. -It's the coworker.

COWORKER

Whoa! Watch where you're goin!

MARK

Sorry.

The coworker drives off, annoyed.

From behind, a firm hand grips Mark's shoulder.

MCCARTHY

You alright?!

MARK

(startled)

Whattthefuck! You trying to gimme a heart attack?!

MCCARTHY

Looked like you were tryin' to kill yourself anyway.

MARK

I'm fine.

MCCARTHY

If it's one thing we've established, it's that you're *not* fine. And since you won't say what's wrong, I've got no choice but to assume the worst.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

What's that?

MCCARTHY

I dunno. Big house for such a young couple. You wouldn't be the first to struggle, if you know what I mean.

MARK

It's not the house.

MCCARTHY

You sure? I mean it would explain a lot. Your moods, for starters... And why you've been grumbling behind my back with Raych.

MARK

What?!

MCCARTHY

Please. Drop the act. She told me everything.

MARK

Dude, are you serious?! Are we really gonna do this now?!

MCCARTHY

You could wait until the next time you two are alone. Again.

(a beat, then)

Funny thing is... I really thought you and I were bros.

MARK

Bros?! This is nuts! You're nuts!

Mark gets in his car, starts it. McCarthy approaches the window.

MCCARTHY

This mean we're not bro's anymore?!

Mark reverses, makes zero eye contact as he drives off.

MCCARTHY

Nice. Real nice.

EXT. 5 FREEWAY - DAY

Mark hums along in the fast lane, visibly on edge.

MARK (V.O.)

I met Todd McCarthy on day one of orientation...

INT. I.R.S. - CONFERENCE ROOM - 2002

Eight new agents sit at a conference table. Among them is Mark; fresh faced, hopeful. At the head, a veteran, JIM GOMEZ, (50s) spouts doctrine.

GOMEZ

First, I'd like to extend a fond welcome, to the next generation of guardians to our great nation's treasury...

Next to Mark, McCarthy sits EYES CLOSED, half asleep.

MARK (V.O.)

I'm pretty sure he was hung over.

EXT. MCCARTHY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

MARK (V.O.)

He was in a bad marriage.

McCarthy stands under a stream of clothes, food, and electronics falling from an upstairs window. Mark watches patiently from his car.

MARK (V.O.)

I was single. And at least in his mind, he was too.

INT. COOTER'S STRIP JOINT - CONTINUOUS

McCarthy ogles a blonde as she grinds on stage. Mark balances a black chick on his knee while kissing her neck. A BOUNCER separates them.

MARK (V.O.)

Truth was, we were just plain lonely.

EXT. STRIP JOINT PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Mark stands lookout as the blonde BLOWS McCarthy in the car.

MARK (V.O.)

Long story short, I put up with a lot of things I shouldn't have.

EXT. I-5 - PRESENT DAY

MARK (V.O.)

And that is how men become "bros".

Mark spots a BILLIARDS sign off the freeway. He exits.

INT. BILLIARDS HALL - CONTINUOUS

A table to himself, Mark racks the balls and lines up for a break.

A DRUNK GUY comes over from the bar.

DRUNK GUY

Play for a beer?

MARK

I don't drink.

DRUNK GUY

For fun then.

MARK

Actually, I was hoping for some quiet. Clear my head out a little.

DRUNK GUY

Boy, are you in the wrong place!

He grabs a cue.

DRUNK GUY

Your break.

MARK

Look man, I don't want trouble.

DRUNK GUY

Who says I'm trouble?

(CONTINUED)

VOICE (O.S.)

I do.

A man steps from the shadows. The UNIFORMED COP, sans uniform, and binoculars. Meet JUAN CARLOS ORTEGA (40s), Heavy set, well dressed. -Speaks with the slightest of Mexican accents.

ORTEGA

Man said he wants quiet.

DRUNK GUY

Who the hell are you?!

ORTEGA

Someone you don't want to meet.

Two BURLY THUGS enter behind Ortega. Drunk guy gets the point, scurries off. Ortega now puts his full attention on Mark.

MARK

Thank you. I think.

ORTEGA

*De Nada*, Senor. A man should be left to play his game.

MARK

Agreed.

ORTEGA

Especially if he's good at it.

Ortega eyes him intently. Scanning for weakness.

MARK

(warily)

Like I said. Thanks. Now, if you don't mind...

Mark aligns for the break. He draws back, -strikes with authority.

ON THE TABLE

Balls fly in all directions. High ball sinks. As Mark squares for a shot, applause erupts behind him. Ortega hasn't budged.

(CONTINUED)

ORTEGA  
Muy bien, Marcos. Con Sabor!

Mark turns to face him.

MARK  
Let me guess... A friend of Bob's.

ORTEGA  
Colleague is perhaps a better term.  
Me and the man you call "Bob" work  
in the same uh... field.

The thugs let out a chuckle.

ORTEGA  
The question is, Mr. Cross; Where  
you fit in this equation.

MARK  
Fit? I just met him! I don't know  
jack about anything he's talking  
about.

ORTEGA  
Maybe yes, maybe no. Either way,  
one is judged by his associates.  
Take a place like this; -bright.  
Crowded. Here you are safe. But out  
there... You could be mistaken for  
something you are not.

MARK  
Like...

ORTEGA  
It's late in the day, Mr. Cross. My  
coworkers and I are tired. Perhaps  
we will continue our conversation  
another time.

Him and his thugs turn to leave.

MARK  
I didn't get your name.

ORTEGA  
Quite right. You can call me...  
Joe.

A Chortle from the thugs.

ORTEGA

And easy on the gas, Mr. Cross. My friend Cesar, here hates to speed.

They exit. Mark is left staring after them.

MARK (V.O.)

Fact: After the FBI, The IRS is our toughest tool against organized crime...

CUT TO:

EXT. CONDOMINIUM COMPLEX - DAY

MARK (V.O.)

Each year, thousands of audits reveal patterns that point out hidden, or ill-gotten gains.

Mark pulls into a spot, checks all sides before getting out.

MARK (V.O.)

Excessive deductions... Gaps in profit and loss statements... All say one thing. -Dig deeper.

While walking, he spots a sedan idling. A man in a tan trenchcoat stands next to it.

MARK (V.O.)

Still, for each racket found, a multitude go unnoticed.

Mark DUCKS behind a parked car.

MARK (V.O.)

Growing in strength and number until the very pillars of the host society are compromised...

After a while a woman appears with suitcases.

WOMAN

Airport. I'm late.

MARK (V.O.)

Making situations like mine inevitable.

Relieved, he resumes walking. Approaching his unit, he clumsily drops his keys in a puddle.

(CONTINUED)

ON THE GROUND

Dark BOOTPRINTS from the puddle to the front door.

Panicked, Mark flies to the door. The yip of a SMALL DOG beckons inside.

MARK

Good girl Maxi! I'm coming!

A flyer on the door knob reads: FATHER TOM'S CHARITIES.  
-GIVE TO LIVE!

As he struggles with the key, the door opens. A Pomeranian darts out, nips at his shoes.

Standing there is Mark's fiancée TONYA, (28) Black, sexy. Even in correction officer's gear she looks regal... Majestic...

TONYA

(crying hysterically)

IT'S IN MY EYE!

MARK

(out of breath)

What is, honey?!

TONYA

SEMEN!

Mark looks at the floor. The bootprints are hers.

MARK (V.O.)

You remember Tonya...

CUT TO:

INT. COOTER'S STRIP JOINT - 2003

Tonya sits nude on Mark's knee.

TONYA

Ready for that dance?

MARK

Sure.

INT. MARK'S HOUSE - PRESENT DAY

MARK  
(re: bootprints)  
Those get on the carpet?

TONYA  
Don't you wanna know how another  
man's sperm got on me?

MARK  
Let's see, you work in a jail, you  
guard animals. I think I can work  
out the rest from there.

The dog keeps nipping and barking.

MARK  
Is this dog nuts?

TONYA  
She went twice on the floor.

MARK  
Where?

TONYA  
By the kitchen, and...

A pile expands under his shoe.

MARK  
SHIT, FUCK, DAMMIT!

TONYA  
Right there.

MARK  
ARE YOU FUCKING SERIOUS?!

He storms away, Tonya hard on his heels.

TONYA  
I was this close to being raped  
today!

MARK  
Wow.

TONYA  
That's it?! -Wow!

(CONTINUED)

MARK

I meant, wow, -Think you'd be used to that by now.

The words hit home. Tonya starts to undress.

MARK

Okay, that was wrong.

TONYA

Mom's coming tonight.

MARK

I won't be here.

TONYA

You're supposed to be.

MARK

It's work related.

He walks to the bedroom. Tonya follows.

TONYA

Did something happen today?

MARK

Like...?

TONYA

I don't know, You seem... -Off.

MARK

Been an "off" kind of day.

He falls onto the bed. The dog follows, starts licking him.

TONYA

Did you mean what you said earlier?

MARK

What'd I say?

TONYA

On the phone. That you loved me.

MARK

(meaning it)  
Of course!

TONYA

Oh.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

I Just hate your job.

TONYA

Me too. But we've got plans, right?

MARK

Yup. Ten years.

TONYA

You'll be Secretary of Treasury!

MARK

Chairman of the Federal Reserve.

TONYA

Right! Chairman of the Fedral  
Reserves

MARK

(corrects her)

Reserve.

A beat.

TONYA

We're going to make it, aren't we?

MARK

Of course.

He pulls her toward him. They kiss.

ON THE BED

The Pomeranian churns a wet turd onto the pillow.

FADE OUT.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. RACHEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rachel sits at her computer scrolling E-mails that are mostly spam. One grabs her eye. The subject reads: YOU FUCKING SLUT! After a brief shock, she flags it and hits DELETE. She clicks EMPTY TRASH, and exhales.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - NIGHT

Mark drives through a dope-ridden neighborhood. Whores, and crack-zombies watch like curious apes. Address in hand, Mark scans the flop-houses for numbers that don't seem to exist.

Suddenly, BLUE AND RED lights explode in Mark's rear view. A police loudspeaker barks "CUT THE IGNITION AND REMAIN INSIDE THE CAR" Nervously, Mark complies.

In his side mirror, the silhouette of a cop grows against a blinding floodlight. A second cop approaches passenger side.

VICE COP#1  
Problem tonight, sir?

MARK  
No, everything's fine.

VICE COP#2  
Then I take it we don't care much  
for stop signs.

He winks at his partner.

MARK  
No!-I mean, of course,-yes! I care!  
I'm just passing through.

VICE COP#1  
Yah? Score some rock. -A Little  
tweek, maybe?

MARK  
No. Look, I think you guys have-

VICE COP#2  
Wait a minute... I know you.

MARK  
I don't think so.

VICE COP#2  
Bull-shit, I see perps in my sleep.  
What's your thing?

MARK  
I'm actually on an errand.

VICE COP#1  
I bet.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

Look, I'm in a hurry. So if you're not ticketing me, could you please just let me go?!

VICE COP#1

Sure.

(a beat, then)

License and registration please.

Angrily, Mark reaches for his wallet

VICE COP#2

Nice and slow.

Mark retrieves the wallet, hands over the I.D.

VICE COP#1

Cross?! You any kin to David Allen?

MARK

Regrettably, yes.

VICE COP#2

Wait! You were at county! Posting bail for that low-life!

MARK

He's my brother.

The cops look at each other.

VICE COP#1

Well, you've got our sympathy.

They return his I.D.

VICE COP#2

You should have said you were after your bro. We could've helped.

MARK

Didn't think it mattered.

VICE COP#2

You find him in one of these flop-houses, you kick his ass, understand!

MARK

No doubt. Just as soon as I find where this is.

He hands them the food wrapper.

EXT. LAY-Z-DAYS MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

A perfect dump. Even by flop-house standards it's uber-bad. Mark parks the car and gets out. A man approaches. -It's Evans. In sweats, he's hardly the man he was earlier.

EVANS

You're late.

MARK

I got held up.

EVANS

Not by the Twins, I hope.

MARK

Who?

EVANS

The Wonder Twins. A couple vice cops we fuck with sometimes.

MARK

No.

EVANS

Good. They're shmucks.

Evans smiles, thinks for a moment.

EVANS

Say, would you mind lifting your shirt.

MARK

Excuse me?!

EVANS

Lift up your shirt!

MARK

This is insane!

He lifts it. Bares his chest.

EVANS

One of your preds tried to record us. Sadly, he was terminated shortly after.

(CONTINUED)

MARK  
Terminated?

Mark stands exposed. The nature of this strange new relationship starts to sink in.

EVANS  
Well don't just stand there, kiddo.  
Come on back.

Evans leads Mark through a maze of numbered doors. Rap, fucking, and laughter echo throughout.

At a blank door they stop. Evans knocks. Inside, a Television is switched off.

VOICE INSIDE  
It's open!

EVANS  
About the guys... They mean well,  
but they're not what you'd consider  
refined.

He pulls a .45 from his waist.

MARK  
Hey! No one said shit about guns!

EVANS  
Relax. Your'e a dope man now.

He pushes the door OPEN.

INSIDE THE ROOM

THREE MEN. Two with Glocks trained on the door.

Mark stands shaking, eyes closed.

One of the men, RICKS, (35), Black. Holsters his gun and slaps the T.V. back on.

RICKS  
I see you brought the food.

Evans stows his piece.

Mark's eyes open to a world of AMMO, PORN MAGS, and TRASH.

(CONTINUED)

EVANS

Thought you ordered out.

RICKS

We tried. They won't deliver.

EVANS

*Would you, if you were five foot two and Chinese.*

(to mark)

Cross, this is Agent Rudy Ricks.

MARK

Pleased to meet you.

RICKS

(taken aback)

What'd you just say?!

MARK

Pleased to meet you.

RICKS

No "Whats up dog" or "What's crackin'?"

(to evans, re: Mark)

Sure there's batteries in this thing?

EVANS

Easy, Ricks.

RICKS

He ain't fake is all I'm sayin'.  
Welch near maimed me wit' some old  
nigga hand shake.

EVANS

Moving right along...

A thirty-ish man with an ugly scar on his head steps forward.

EVANS

This is Tom Dwyer. Our techie.

DWYER

Folks call me bud.

Mark tries un-noticing the wound.

(CONTINUED)

DWYER  
Pretty breathtaking, huh?

MARK  
(caught)  
Yeah.

DWYER  
Made in Waziristan. Wanna feel?

RICKS  
Ignore him man, He's sick. You're  
good people. I can feel it.

DWYER  
That so?

EVANS  
Guess we'll see.

A third man, (40s) Asian, sits in an armchair eying Mark  
like a great bird of prey.

EVANS  
(to Mark)  
Don't stare too long. He  
hypnotizes.

The man rises, extends a hand.

ASIAN MAN  
Harry Cho. You must be my  
replacement.

MARK  
Excuse me?

EVANS  
Zip it Harry!  
(to Ricks)  
Where's Welch?

DWYER  
Gettin' brewskis.

EVANS  
For the last time, there is NO  
drinking between operations, you  
got it?!

RICKS  
How we gonna stay loose?

Evans reaches under the bed, drags out a suit bag.

(CONTINUED)

EVANS

Contrary to your beliefs, we are here to work.

He pulls it open. Inside, STACKS of hundreds.

EVANS

That's a cool three mil.

CHO

Three point five.

EVANS

Funds taken from people who prey on weakness.

MARK

Bet that makes you a hit with dealers.

CHO

As a matter of fact it does.

EVANS

(pats his gun)

Hence, the hardware.

DWYER

Think of it as collecting unpaid debts.

MARK

For who?

EVANS

Every school-aged kid in this god-forsaken part of town.

The door slams. Everyone with a gun draws. Mark ducks expecting gunfire.

AT THE DOOR

A GARGANTUAN man with a brown paper bag. Meet Tom Welch, (40s), Bald. Easily six-ten or better.

WELCH

No Light. Just regular.

The weapons disappear.

(CONTINUED)

RICKS  
How the fuck do we not hear  
bigfoot?!

DWYER  
He was supposed to knock.

WELCH  
You fags thirsty or not?!

EVANS  
Cross, this is special agent Jack  
Welch.

WELCH  
(to mark)  
So you're Meth boy.

MARK  
That was years ago.

WELCH  
You'd better not be a snitch.

CHO  
Who would he snitch to?!

WELCH  
YOUR'E ON THIN ICE CHINAMAN!

CHO  
Ko-re-an, asshole!

WELCH  
Got no love for rats. Real men  
don't know how to rat.

MARK  
Um. Aren't we on the same side.

WELCH  
Snitch is a snitch.

EVANS  
Alright guys, saddle up! It's the  
kids first night, and he's going in  
hot. Cho, You're gonna show the  
rook how to count.

DWYER  
It's nine o'clock.

CHO  
Too early.

EVANS  
Not where I'm going.

RICKS  
Only one spot poppin' this time.  
Twenty-eighth and C.

CHO  
(to Mark)  
He really is bringing you in hot.

MARK  
(to evans)  
You said the job was counting!

EVANS  
It is. After tonight.

RICKS  
It's risky. Them cats know us.

DWYER  
They'll be ready.

EXT. LAY-Z-DAYS MOTEL LOT - NIGHT

The crew stands by a black cargo van. Evans stands at the door.

EVANS  
(to Mark)  
We may be grunts, kid. But we ride  
in style

He slides the door open.

Inside it's a treasure trove of tack gear. Vests, shotguns.  
Safety harnessed seats line the walls.

RICKS  
We call it "the bus".

DWYER  
Last ride some of us ever take.

MARK  
Alright, Time out! I've done crazy  
stuff before, but I'm a desk-guy,  
-not a Navy Seal!

(CONTINUED)

RICKS  
You'll be fine.

CHO  
Yeah. If you don't die tonight,  
you'll live to get offed in some  
other caper.

EVANS  
(to Mark)  
Tonight you just observe. Whatever  
happens, just try to relax, and let  
it all sink in.

MARK  
I'm Sorry but I am not getting into  
this van!

EVANS  
Suit yourself.

He gives Welch a nod.

INT. CARGO VAN - CONTINUOUS

Mark sits strapped to a seat as the van rumbles down the  
road. Directly across, Welch flips through a magazine.

MARK  
There anything you guys *don't* do by  
force?

CHO  
'Fraid not.

The driver, Ricks, makes a hard left. A S.W.A.T helmet falls  
from overhead, hits Mark in the face.

MARK  
Ow!

The helmet lands near Dwyer, -busy on his laptop.

RICKS  
Like a dude told me once... Life  
is ten percent what goes down,  
-ninety percent how you work it.

Evans pats Ricks on the shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

EVANS

(to Mark)

Everyone plays a part, son. People play theirs, -we play ours.

MARK

(perks up)

Where'd you hear that?

EVANS

Right here.

(points to his head)

The old steel trap.

DWYER

Alright folks, hi-res satellite shows major foot traffic!

RICKS

Spot's busy.

DWYER

And dangerous.

WELCH

Good. I could use the rush.

DWYER

Might not be the best time for junior, here.

EVANS

Bullshit. You're ready, aren't you, Cross?

MARK

No. But that argument seems lost on you people.

DWYER

I got police activity two blocks south! Gonna have to be quick!

EVANS

Entry point?

DWYER

Yard entrance on twenty eighth. Infra-red shows no dog.

EVANS

Take Remy just in case.

Welch grabs a Remington twelve-gauge from a compartment.

(CONTINUED)

EVANS

Alright, people! Suited and booted  
in five!

Cho grabs a kevlar vest, hands it to Mark.

CHO

Your new observation suit.

Frightened, Mark eyes the vest.

MARK (V.O)

And then I heard it... wafting  
through the air like a gentle hymn.  
The sound of every vague,  
disjointed lecture I'd ever  
endured. The familiar drone of my  
dad's dark rationale uttered in the  
voices of these men. These men who  
if they had any virtues at all, had  
traded them for something else.  
-Something more valuable in a world  
of sinful people, and outdated  
moral code. Every lie does in fact  
need a taker. Real time results of  
actions are truly almost never  
predictable. I sat there pondering  
a question older than Western  
Culture or any of the dogmas it  
serves. It was the original  
question. The seminal thought that  
gave birth and life to them all:  
"So now what?"

OUTSIDE

A series of stoplights turn GREEN.

A YOUNG TAGGER sprays a blank billboard as the van rolls  
past.

FADE OUT

END PILOT

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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