Formula Rise

An original screenplay by

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JESSE M. BENEDICK 2093 WEST LYMINGTON WAY SAINT AUGUSTINE, FL. 32084 (941) 504-6154 JESSE.M.BENEDICK@GMAIL.COM BLACK SCREEN:

SUPER: "Racing is life. Anything before or after is just waiting." - Steve McQueen

FADE IN:

EXT. A DESERTED MIDWEST ROAD - DUSK

SUPER: MIDWEST, 1990's...

As the scene fades in, the wide open landscape of the midwest is seen. The wind slightly blows as the wheat fields shift from side to side. Heat lightning crackles in the sky like an earthquake fault line.

CAMERA ANGLE is placed directly on the middle of the open road.

In a perfect crescendo, the sound of a 1960's era American muscle car is heard in the distance. Steadily getting louder, the car finally passes directly over the camera.

Off into the distance the taillights of a 1969 Chevy Comaro in California Raisin Purple with matching black graphics, shines as it fades away.

EXT. A SEPARATE MIDWEST ROAD WITH A LOAN TRAFFIC LIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

From above, a 1969 Ford Mustang, candy-apple red with dual black racing stripes, creeps up to the red light. Nobody is around.

REVEAL:

Inside the Mustang, TOMMY is looking around. With his baseball cap on backwards, he looks older than eighteen. He could easily pass for twenty-five, with his short dark hair and medium build. The red and white dice in the mirror are rocking back and forth.

> TOMMY Alright Airhart, here I am...

CU - TOMMY'S WATCH (8:15)

TOMMY (O.S.) (CONT'D) A quarter past eight...

Just then, the roar of a car engine spooks Tommy, as he jumps in his seat.

TOMMY'S P.O.V.

REVEAL:

Straightening the mirror back to where he likes it, Tommy grabs the top of the leather wheel with his left hand, while grabbing his custom skull shifter with his right, squeezing.

TOMMY'S P.O.V.

From the ghost passenger in tommy's car looking directly across him out the window. The purple Comaro steadily roles forward until even with Tommy's Mustang.

Rolling his clear window down, the window tint on the Comaro is about four percent, the same as a celebrity's limousine.

FROM STREET LEVEL, THE CAMERA IS ANGLED UP BETWEEN BOTH VEHICLES, REVEALING TOMMY'S WINDOW DOWN. As the traffic light about above changes to green, the Comaro lowers its passenger window.

REVEAL:

ADRIAN is sitting in the passenger seat. With long and wavy dark hair, his left ear is pierced and he has a smirk across his face worthy of a jester.

BACK TO HUCK

TOMMY (CONT'D) I thought this bet was between you and me?

ADRIAN Oh it is... I'm upping the ante.

TOMMY'S P.O.V.

Still smiling, Adrian leans back revealing MICHAEL behind the wheel. About sixteen years of age, his face has a boyish look of innocence. What isn't seen is the natural talent, that exudes from his pores.

BACK TO HUCK

TOMMY Ha-ha, Michael! Okay -- what's at stake?

ADRIAN I win -- you wash my car every weekend for the entire year -- spotless. TOMMY

(nodding) And if I win?

ADRIAN

I'll not only give you this car, but a grand on top of it... A good thing we don't have any extra unwanted weight.

REVEAL:

Pausing for a moment, a seed of doubt has been planted into Tommy's head. Then, trying to shrug it off, he agrees to the bet.

TOMMY

(smiling) Oh man! You guys have lost it!

Turning his head forward, Tommy straightens his hat firmly backwards, as he roles the window up.

TOMMY'S P.O.V.

Out of the corner of his eye Tommy notices Adrian still staring at him. Looking over, Adrian smiles as he unfolds his dark sunglasses placing them across his face. Even though it's now night time, Adrian is very confidant.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

As Adrian raises the window he turns towards Michael, lowering his smile only when his head is completely turned.

ADRIAN Smoke'em Mike. Smoke'em! Smoke'em Michael!!! Smoke'em!!!

REVEAL:

Hearing Adrian's words is like adding jet fuel to Michael's engine. He taps into the gift.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Focusing with intensity Michael squeezes the wheel, then looks to light as the dice in the mirror vibrate.

BACK TO HUCK

FROM THE STREET LEVEL, THE CAMERA SHOWS BOTH CARS SEPARATED BY A LONE RED TRAFFIC LIGHT BETWEEN THEM.

As the light shifts to green both cars ROAR off into the distance.

SUPER: FORMULA RISE

INT. AIRHART HOUSE - MORNING

SUPER: 4:00AM, PRESENT DAY

Inside the house its almost completely black as the sun won't be rising for a few hours still. The hallway light is on, casting shadows across the many picture frames hanging on the wall.

REVEAL:

A twenty-something Michael is standing in the hallway, cast as a black shadow.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

As he flicks the light switch on, Michael scans the photographs around the living room.

The majority of the photo's are from his old man's racing days. Various race tracks from all around the world, newspaper clippings, autographed photos with other famous drivers, etc. The newer photos on the wall track Adrian's as well as his rise through the youth circuits.

REVEAL:

Taking one of the frames off of the wall, Michael manages a grin.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Analyzing the photo with his fingertips, he and Adrian are standing side by side with his dad in the middle. Each of them has a large champagne bottle, spraying the bubbly into the air.

BACK TO HUCK

Standing in the hallway now, ANGELO, his father is there with his race day clothes, polo and jeans. His dark crazy moustache is frizzy as he forgot to comb it.

ANGELO Whatcha lookin' at?

MICHAEL

(grinning) Ah, just an old photo. I remember that champagne bottle was as big as I was...

ANGELO

Yeah, you're mom was worried you might drop it. I had to remind her us Airhart's can hold our liquor... Let me see that.

Handing the photo to his dad, Angelo analyzes the picture.

REVEAL:

That same grin that was on Michael's face only a moment earlier now washes over Angelo's face.

ANGELO (CONT'D) That day was the pinnacle of my career.

BACK TO HUCK

Stopping and standing back a moment, Angelo is taken aback.

ANGELO (CONT'D) That year was tough. Just the adversity and competition combined with my guts. You know -- I guess some of it was probably luck -- but not all of it. Getting to that place took every ounce of sweat, every time trial, repair part, and one hell of a team behind me. I was never going to go any higher...

REVEAL:

Michael is studying his father's expression, and the raw emotion that the photo inspires in him.

BACK TO HUCK

MICHAEL (O.S.) Come on dad. We got a race to catch...

EXT. ST. PETERSBURG GRAND PRIX, FLORIDA - MORNING

SUPER: ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

SUPER: Opening Day

Large trailers and pop-out race team buses are everywhere. Tents are set up all around with black and white checkered flags hanging from various supports. Large meals consisting of chicken, hamburgers, hot dogs, steak, potato salad, etc. are prepared underneath each one to feed entire race teams.

The scene is reminiscent of the large feast an army regiment may dine on before heading into battle.

Nearby to each teams multiple busses, indy race cars are a plenty, some teams having two, completely staked out by twelve foot flags of each team's drivers.

Under the canopies the cars tune and wait like fighter jets preparing for war. The aerodynamics regarding the sleek nose of the car, as well as the rear spoiler are unique to the style and speed of racing, where pure aerodynamics create impeccable speed.

Surrounding the cars, numerous mechanics can be seen fine tuning engines with metal tools as well as laptop computers.

INT. ADRIAN'S BUS - MORNING

Stepping inside the bus, Angelo leads the way as Michael follows.

CUTAWAY TO: KITCHEN TABLE

In the extended kitchen area, Adrian is talking with his crew chief, L.B. HOLIDAY. Over the years he's picked up the nickname DOC for having a quick tongue like the real life gunslinger.

Little in stature Doc is a somewhat oddly intimidating figure. A stern, southern man, he's a veteran crew chief most notably known from his racing history dating back to his days with Angelo. Also, as a recovering alcoholic, his past has somewhat tarnished his image, leaving something left to prove.

Sitting at the table is next to Doc is Tommy. Since his teenage years, he later followed Adrian into racing and landed a spot on the team. Working his way up, he's now an integral part of the pit crew.

REVEAL:

Acknowledging Angelo and Michael walking in, Tommy gets up to greet them. Extending his hand he shakes Angelo's hand in a sign of respect.

> TOMMY Mr. Airhart, Sr... Good to see you.

Nice to see you too Tommy.

Stepping around Angelo, Tommy also greets Michael, extending his hand.

TOMMY Good to see you Mike. And no I'm not going to wash your car.

MICHAEL

(smiling) You're sure now? I brought some wax just in case...

TOMMY Ha-ha... but seriously I just picked up a new bike. You'll have to see it...

CUTAWAY TO: KITCHEN TABLE

Meanwhile at the table, Adrian and Doc have been in such a technical discussion, neither one of them even heard the two enter. Adrian's hair is now a little shaggy.

DOC And I'm telling you this is our year... I haven't had a points champion since Angelo, which was almost fifteen years ago, but I know this car can do it...

Without hesitation, two hands come to rest on Doc's shoulders.

DOC (CONT'D) With turn three -- what the hell?!?

REVEAL:

Snapped out of the conversation they both look up at Angelo.

ADRIAN

Dad!

DOC Angelo you bastard. You know I thought it was getting a little warm in here, and it seems we found the source of the hot air...

Laughing, Adrian spots Mike.

ADRIAN

Hey Mike!

Removing his hands, Angelo is smiling.

ANGELO Whoa -- easy there Cisco... It's good to see you Doc.

Shaking each other's hands, Angelo and Doc share a moment.

DOC Yeah, you look like me if I was a little taller, a little uglier, and couldn't grow a respectable moustache... All joking aside glad to have you with us today sir.

With a joking tone, Doc's kind of an asshole, but being that he's been working with the Angelo for over thirty years, they talk to each other like family, even though Angelo being the owner, is technically his boss.

> DOC (CONT'D) Well let me get out of your lane here... Come on Tommy...

ADRIAN'S P.O.V.

As Tommy and Doc exit, Angelo asks Adrian what's really on his mind.

ANGELO

So are you ready?

ADRIAN

Yeah dad. Ever since the time trial yesterday, I've done nothing but studying the turns and telling Tommy and Doc my thoughts on fine tuning the car. They say this year, we've got the fastest car in the circuit...

MICHAEL

So I guess that means last years rookie blues are gone???

ADRIAN

Ha-ha Michael, but you only have room to talk when you make it to this level.

Smiling and halfway laughing, something about Adrian's words really sticks with Michael.

ANGELO

Well you know your coming out year is always going to be the one they remember you for... If you make a statement today, then they won't be able to get you out of their heads.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Looking at Michael Adrian comments on his father's statement.

ADRIAN I know dad. I'm ready...

CUTAWAY TO: TRAILER DOOR

Just then, the bus door swings open as Tommy pops his head in.

TOMMY They're ready in gasoline alley...

EXT. PIT ROW - CONTINUOUS

All of the cars are steadily being rolled out to pit row in their various colors, sponsored logo's, team names, and driver insignia.

Already on the track are the cars of premier racers GEORGES PIERCE of France, MOSSIMO COSTA and PRIMO ROSSI of Italy, EBENEZER ACKLAND of the United Kingdom, AKIRA YOSHI of Japan, IGOR SILVA and PAULO PINTO of Brazil, ALERON RAINEAU and LANCE DESCHAMPS from Canada, PASCUAL ALVAREZ of Spain, as well as an assortment of ROOKIES.

Arriving towards the end of the pack among the remaining no name drivers is Adrian's Airhart Racing red devil number twelve, followed by DIANA BERTRAND's car out of Canada.

Entering last, usually for entertainment value as well as intimidation is the solid black widow maker, driven by the six-time defending champion, SOLOMON GAGE of Greece. Sol, as he's known the drivers has been almost unstoppable, thus earning him the respect of every driver, but one.

Surrounding the cars, are numerous PIT CREWS, CREW CHIEF'S, RACING STAFF, WIVES, MODEL GIRLFRIENDS, FAMILY MEMBERS FRIEND, PROMOTIONAL GIRLS, TV REPORTERS and OWNERS.

CUTAWAY TO: GRANDSTAND

The grandstand is filling up with thousands of RACE FANS, decked out in clothes and hats supporting their favorite drivers, teams, and car makers.

The serious fans even wear large rented headsets, while the leisurely fans dine on beer and concessions.

BACK TO HUCK

As the driver's start to enter pit row they give one last wave to the crowd before putting on their fire retardant hoods and extra sleek racing helmets. Once ready they begin hopping into their cars.

REVEAL:

Walking towards his car Adrian waves to his fans all through the grandstand as Angelo and Michael follow from behind.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Walking past them, heading the opposite direction is Diana Bertrand.

With long blond hair and striking good looks one might mistake her for a model. However, she's quite the tomboy with not only her speech, but also because she works in a field of men. She's very competitive. Acknowledging Adrian, she comments.

> DI Opening day... Hope you're ready!

Passing Angelo and Michael, she locks eyes with Mike as they share a brief smile.

REVEAL:

Looking over his shoulder Michael, watches as she struts away.

EXT. AIRHART RACING PIT AREA - CONTINUOUS

Arriving at the Airhart pit area, Adrian grabs his hood first, pulling it over his head, before taking his helmet from one of the CREWMEN. Pulling it down until snug, he looks back at Angelo and Michael with the visor up.

ADRIAN

Wish me luck!

ANGELO Good luck son. You memorized your turns right?

ADRIAN

Yeah dad.

MICHAEL

Good luck Ad.

Turning away and speaking with Doc for one moment, Adrian nods and hops into the car, sliding down and into the snug cockpit. As a mechanic hands him the detachable steering wheel, he reconnects it.

DOC

Alright! Lets get him out there!

Upon hearing Doc's words, the crew mobilizes like a set of ants moving a caterpillar. As they wheel Adrian out he'll be starting the race in forth place due to his fourth place qualifying run from the day before.

REVEAL:

Looking past the Airhart Racing pit to the adjacent pit area, Michael spots SOLOMON GAGE. With a shaved head and dark black glasses, he's got an electric guitar around his neck. Next to him he has two GIRLFRIENDS, one with black hair and one blond, both knockout gorgeous, in tight summer clothes.

Taking off the guitar and tossing it to a teammate, Gage passionately makes out with each of them, before hopping into his car. Placing the hood over his head, he secures his jet black helmet. Attaching the removable steering wheel his game face is on, cold and black.

CUTAWAY TO: STARTING BLOCK

As the fifth place car of Paulo Pinto is rolled into place, Michael suddenly notices the black widow maker being rolled in directly behind Adrian in seventh.

REVEAL:

A feeling of UNEASINESS washes over. Feeling the need, Michael points him out to his father.

MICHAEL (pointing) Gage.

ANGELO

I know.

CUTAWAY TO: ADRIAN'S RACE CAR

Adrian is sitting his car with the his visor up, somewhat nervous with the first-race-of-the-season jitters. Directly behind him, Sol has his the black visor on his black helmet down, solid black. AERIAL SHOT: STREETS OF ST. PETERSBURG ROAD/STREET COURSE

EXT. GRANDSTAND CENTER STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

As the singing of the National Anthem of the United States wraps up, a squadron of F-18 fighter jets, ROAR directly over the race track as everyone looks up, spectators, race teams, drivers, staff, etc.

Then, a world famous ROCKSTAR takes the microphone.

ROCKSTAR Gentlemen -- and ladies! Start -your -- engines!!!

CUTAWAY TO: STARTING BLOCK

As the cars come alive, their engines ROAR with ferociousness. Following the Yellow Ferrari pace car's lead, they steadily trickle down the track, swerving back and forth to warm up the tires and test the suspension.

EXT. GRANDSTAND - CONTINUOUS

Sitting in the lower levels of the grandstand, Angelo and Michael have each got their binoculars up as they follow the cars out of sight around turn one. They both lower their binoculars at the same time.

MICHAEL

Well -- race one. I think as long as he gets a good race out of the car he should be fine...

ANGELO Yeah. He was studying those turns well, so I think he'll take advantage of the aprons.

Feeling a sense of nervousness between them Michael pats his father on the back in an attempt to comfort him.

MICHAEL Dad, its alright. Adrian knows what he's doing.

ANGELO (nodding) Yeah, you're right.

As the cars steadily get louder they've almost completed the lap. As the crowd begins to rise for the start of the race, Angelo and Michael stand up. Rounding the final turn, the pace car exits into the pits.

CUTAWAY TO: TOWER

Waving the checkered flag, the indy cars roar by underneath as the race is underway.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

As the pack flies by, Michael follows them into the tight right in turn one. Due to the condensed nature of the opening lap, there's almost a collision, causing one car to spin out!

CUTAWAY TO: TURN ONE

Pounding his fists on the car, Paulo Pinto of Brazil guns it, spinning the car back around and into the race, thus avoiding the caution in the process. Unfortunately, he's now in last place.

EXT. ADRIAN'S RACE CAR - MOMENTS LATER

ADRIAN'S P.O.V.

Flying around the track at speeds exceeding one hundred sixty miles per hour, Adrian makes tight turns, as he not only upshifts, but also downshifts with the ease of his thumbs. Checking his mirrors he can see Sol closely behind him along with Ebenezer Ackland of the United Kingdom.

Flying around the turn he catches the apron, then another and so forth. Going for a pass, he gets around another Brazilian, Mossimo Costa, just before flying down the straight away.

EXT. GRANDSTAND - CONTINUOUS

As both Angelo and Michael spot the pass a sense of EXCITEMENT overwhelms them.

ANGELO You see that pass!!!

MICHAEL Yeah dad! He's doing great!

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Following Adrian's car, Michael watches as he heads back into turn one and out of sight as Gage is in hot pursuit.

EXT. PIT ROW - MOMENTS LATER

As cars begin their needed stops into pit row, Doc chimes in to Adrian.

DOC

Alright, now they're starting to come in. I don't want you to do that! We're going to use every last bit of them tires!

CUTAWAY TO: ADRIAN'S RACE CAR

Talking in his helmet, Adrian responds as sweat has begun to bead around his forehead.

ADRIAN (V.O.) I don't know Doc, we're running hot right now. If I can catch a break on eight and ten I can probably get you three!

INTERCUT: DOC AND ADRIAN

DOC You wanna be a gunslinger, you're going to have to make a shot from a thousand yards. Give me four!

ADRIAN (V.O.)

Alright!!!

Pushing the headset mic away from his mouth, Doc looks back at Tommy.

DOC We're gonna get five!

Fortunately for Adrian, Doc talks so loud that he hears him say five. Managing a smile he races on over another apron.

EXT. GRANDSTAND - LATER

Sitting in the grandstand both Angelo and Michael are on the edges of their seats.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Following Adrian's car, Michael watches it as it comes into pit row.

REVEAL:

Both Angelo and Michael have their binoculars up.

ANGELO What's that? His second one? MICHAEL Yeah! He had the one earlier, and now he's back in.

ANGELO If he can pull this off he may take third!

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Watching the speed of the pit crew, Mike is psyched up for his brother.

REVEAL:

EXCITED, both Angelo and Michael are now standing.

MICHAEL Or second! Damn, they're moving fast!

CUTAWAY TO: PIT ROW

Disassembling Adrian's car in a matter of seconds, the team replaces all four tires, starting first with the two closest to the track, followed later by the inside tires. Giving him fuel and spraying the windshield, Adrian speeds off.

BACK TO HUCK

Angelo is anxiously studying his watch.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

And he's out!

Looking up, Angelo comments on the time.

ANGELO Fourteen seconds!!! That's one hell of a stop!

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Following Adrian's car out of pit row, there's a heated battle taking place at the exact same time between Sol and Pascual Alvarez, going into to turn one. Drafting behind Alvarez, Sol swings it out wide for a risky pass on the outside of turn one.

As Adrian makes the turn to exit the pits, Michael spots Sol's car as he and Pascual both hit the gas. Their engines roar around the corner and out of sight.

Just then, the OFFSCREEN sound of the crowd collectively gasping is heard.

REVEAL:

As Michael lowers his binoculars he and his father have no idea what just happened.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Spotting the replay on the jumbotron, it appears that Sol and Pascual became tangled up, thus shooting Pascual's car at a ninety degree angle straight across the pit exit, where he viciously collided with Adrian, tearing Adrian's car in half.

MICHAEL

No!!!

Instantly, he and Angelo run down the steps, hopping the wall into pit row.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

The ambulance rumbles past, sirens blaring as the tow truck is also in hot pursuit. Looking back Michael spots the YELLOW caution flag being waved in a figure eight through the air.

Then, looking towards Adrian's pit, Doc is standing there, holding his headset in his hands not saying a word. As he and Michael lock eyes, they both feel an overwhelming sense of dread wash over as Adrian may be in deep trouble.

INT. HOSPITAL - EVENING

Sitting as well standing throughout the waiting room are Angelo, Michael, Tommy, members of the pit crew, as well as Adrian's girlfriend JEANIE. A wholesome brunette, she has the look of an All-American girl, with a heart of gold. Noticeably absent, Doc is nowhere to be found.

Everybody has been waiting for hours by this point in what has seemed like an eternity.

Breaking the monotony, the DOCTOR, an older African-American gentleman, opens the door. Looking down, he check his clipboard for the family name.

DOCTOR

Airhart?

ANGELO (somber) Yeah that's us...

As he steps forward with caution the doctor is quickly surrounded as everyone is anxious.

When we received Adrian -- due to the severity of the crash -- both legs had been severed...

REVEAL:

Hearing his words, everyone begins to cringe as Jeanie holds her hand over her mouth. Beginning to cry in complete disbelief, she doesn't want to believe it. Attempting to comfort her, Angelo holds her tight.

BACK TO HUCK

DOCTOR (CONT'D) Thus our only option was a clean amputation to prevent further infection as well as the further loss of blood.

JEANIE

Oh my god...

DOCTOR

He also suffered a broken Humerus to his left side, three broken rib bones, two broken fingers, a fractured right wrist, three fractured discs in his spinal cord, a collapsed lung, and a severe hematoma to the brain, causing it to swell badly.

REVEAL:

Taken aback, everybody's tears begin to fall, as it feels like the wind has been completely sucked out of the room as hopes diminish.

BACK TO HUCK

DOCTOR (CONT'D) He's currently in a coma, and his condition is critical.

Shocked, Angelo is beginning to break down.

ANGELO Doc -- are you telling me my boy is going to die???

DOCTOR Its too early to tell... I'm sorry...

REVEAL:

Stepping away and back through the operating doors, the doctor exits the room as everyone shares a large group hug.

INT. ADRIAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Sitting completely in the dark, Michael is propped up in one of the chairs in Adrian's room. The only one there, Angelo took Jeanie back to her room, and the rest of the pit guys and guests have since came and went.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Studying the clock, the time 3:13AM. Looking down towards Adrian's bed, he still just can't believe it.

REVEAL:

Michael is just staring at Adrian.

INT. LOCAL BAR - DAY

Stepping inside the bar, Michael walks through the door, followed by Angelo. Looking around there's only one reason they're here.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Spotting Doc, sitting alone at the bar, he has a few empty shot glasses in front of him, followed by a fourth glass filled with straight whiskey.

CUTAWAY TO: BAR

Approaching Doc, Michael walks right up to his side. Spotting Michael in his peripheral vision, Doc's head doesn't turn as Michael states exactly what's on his mind.

> MICHAEL I want to take his place.

DOC Yeah, that's nice...

MICHAEL I'm serious Doc!

Turning to the side and looking at Michael, Doc responds.

DOC Yeah I am too... You know, what do you think this is? His training was over a year in the works! He studied every track! What have you done?!? Huh?!?

MICHAEL I know I can do it!

Looking past Michael to Angelo, Doc looks to him to relieve Michael's barrage.

DOC

Will you talk some sense into this kid? I don't know if he has death wish, but clearly he's lost his marbles...

Turning back around Doc slams the rest of the whiskey. Walking over the BARTENDER, pours him another shot.

REVEAL:

Grabbing Michael by the shoulder, Angelo looks him in the eye then pulls him to the side. Instinctively, Michael know to step away as Angelo sits down next to Doc.

BACK TO HUCK

ANGELO You remember 85'?

DOC Hells Bells... That was a fine year... One of the best performances of all time.

ANGELO

You know we were pushed to the brink that year. Not just once, but quite a few times...

DOC I figured at Watkins we were done, but somehow you pulled a rabbit out of that ten gallon hat.

ANGELO Its the same thing today Doc.

REVEAL:

Hearing the word today, Doc's smile instantly turns right back into a frown.

BACK TO HUCK

DOC How is it the same today?!? (MORE)

DOC (CONT'D)

I don't remember you ever going to the hospital with injuries that severe! Hell, I haven't had so much as an itch to drink a glass of anything for the last twenty-five years, but today it's the only thing I could think about... Dulling the pain...

ANGELO

(sighing)

I'm hurtin' Doc. He was my boy. Never did I think that would happen to him, and I also never thought I would be begging you to let Michael drive in his place, but that's where we are today.

(pausing) The team needs a driver and I'm not going to go looking for a new pit chief. Mike has racing in his blood...

DOC

But I don't need his blood on my hands! I'm the one who sent Adrian into the pits!

ANGELO

That guilt isn't your to bear... Nobody has more guilt than me. These kids got into racing because of me, and as much as I don't want to see what happened to Adrian happen to Michael, he's either going to be racing with us or someone else...

REVEAL:

Stopping for a moment, Angelo clasps his hands together as if he were praying to the bartender.

ANGELO (CONT'D) We're a family...

Hearing his words, Doc takes a deep breath as the glass is still clenched in his hand.

DOC

May the gods turn their blind eye...

Still clenching the glass, doc is finished drinking.

EXT. GRAND PRIX OF LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA - MORNING

AERIAL SHOT: STREETS OF LONGBEACH ROAD/STREET COURSE

SUPER: TIME TRIALS, LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA

Speeding around the track in Adrian's red devil number twelve, Michael, performing the time trial in order to determine placement.

EXT. ADRIAN'S RACE CAR - MORNING

Doing surprisingly well, Michael is making great time around the track, yet Doc is being very hard on him and still somewhat stubborn towards accepting him to the team.

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

Chewing gum and talking at the same time, Doc is swinging his clipboard as he marches back and forth.

DOC Those first set of turns you better memorize, because on game day, you're not gonna have that much room...

INTERCUT: MICHAEL AND DOC

MICHAEL (V.O.) Alright, I got it.

DOC Yeah, I hope so!

Shaking his head back and forth Michael loses focus for one moment as he cuts an apron a little too wide almost spinning out, but managing to hold on.

> MICHAEL (V.O.) Son of a bitch!!!

DOC Took the apron a little too fast... You're driving tighter than a flea's ass over a rain barrel! That's a rookie mistake! Better fix it now, before the cavalry is on your ass!

MICHAEL (V.O.) Alright! Got it!!! EXT. GRAND PRIX OF LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA - AFTERNOON

AERIAL SHOT: STREETS OF LONG BEACH ROAD/STREET COURSE

SUPER: GRAND PRIX OF LONG BEACH

Racing around the track at a terminal velocity Diana Bertrand is leading the race followed by Massimo Costa, Sol, Igor Silva, Lance Deschamps and Michael in sixth.

For his first race in the big leagues, Michael is doing surprisingly well, despite the immense pressure from the veteran drivers as well as Doc.

EXT. PIT ROW - CONTINUOS

As Michael enters the pit, Doc hollers to his team.

DOC Give me four tires, partial fuel!

As the team rushes to change the tires, Michael flips his visor up, chiming in with his opinion.

MICHAEL (V.O.) Partial?!? I need more than that!!!

DOC

No you don't kid! A little lighter and we may place!

Shaking his head, Michael has no time to disagree as the jack drops, and he hits the gas.

DOC'S P.O.V.

Exiting the pits, Michael has rolled ahead one place into fifth. It appears the quick pit stop paid off.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Screaming around the track, Michael is trying to take advantage of every extra bit of speed the car has. Combined with Doc's strategy they just might place.

TOWER P.O.V.

The official order coming into the final lap is Ebenezer Ackland, Solomon Gage, Diana Bertrand and Michael in fourth.

DIANA'S P.O.V.

Checking her mirrors Diana can see Michael trying to make as tight of turns as possible.

Unfortunately for him, Michael can't seem to get a pass on her as she's effectively blocking him out of any kind of momentum, as well as outmaneuvering his drafting abilities.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Coming around turn number eight and further through turn number nine, the speed of Michael's car is continuing to be outplayed by a veteran driver.

Once into the final stretch, the order holds as Michael crosses the finish line placing fourth.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

Shit!

BACK TO HUCK

Standing in the pit row, Doc is shaking his head, as he knows as well as Michael does that they had a good chance to place.

> DOC Ah, don't sweat it kid. You still took points and finished higher than guys who have been racing twice as long...

EXT. AIRHART RACING PIT AREA - LATER

Pulling his car into the pit, Michael flips up his visor as he pulls his gloves off. Climbing out of the car he steps to the side as the team instantly tends to the car, jacking it up for cooling.

Removing his helmet, Michael hands it to one of the crew members, just before taking off his fire retardant hood. Once off he grabs an Airhart Racing cap, clearly upset with himself.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Finishing up his victory lap Ackland is now doing donuts throughout the middle of the track.

REVEAL:

Clearly distracted, Michael doesn't even notice Diana as she walks up behind him on her way to the stage. Once passing him, she decides to toy with him.

> DI Nice race out there today, greenhorn.

Winking at him, Michael is caught completely off guard.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Watching her strut away, Michael can't help but check her out with that long blond hair, and female racing suit.

REVEAL:

Stepping up behind Michael, Tommy places his arm on his shoulder, as Michael looks over.

TOMMY Hell of a driver. She's got more moves than she'll ever let on...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Back in his hotel room, Michael is sitting on the bed with his back against the headboard and his ear to the receiver of the phone.

> MICHAEL I wish he could have been there today... I thought I had a pretty good shot until she schooled me at the end...

CUTAWAY TO: ADRIAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Standing inside the hospital room, Angelo is watching over Adrian from his bedside, while talking to Michael on the phone.

ANGELO

I noticed you tried to draft on her but couldn't get a break. You know it takes patience -- timing -- and she flat out ran a great race... Next time you'll just have to push a little further...

INTERCUT: MICHAEL AND ANGELO

MICHAEL

(smiling) Yeah -- I will... That sounds like a good idea. Hey I had a question for you too...

ANGELO Yeah? What's that?

MICHAEL What the hell is a greenhorn?

EXT. KANSAS SPEEDWAY - AFTERNOON

AERIAL SHOT: KANSAS SPEEDWAY

SUPER: KANSAS SPEEDWAY, KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

From the air, the jampacked grandstand and large oval race track are shining as the cars speed their away around the forty-five degree incline.

The camber of the car has been tuned specifically for the tack, however Michael, not being used to the track, is having trouble.

EXT. MICHAEL'S RACE CAR - AFTERNOON

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Racing in the pack Michael is currently in sixth place, and can't seem to manage any worthy passes, as each time he goes to make a move, someone else beats him to the punch. Becoming agitated, he vents his frustrations to Doc.

> MICHAEL (V.O.) I don't know Doc -- the camber feels totally off... My turning ability isn't matching this incline for shit and I'm losing position!

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

Pacing back and forth Doc is chewing his trademark gum. Pulling the headset microphone in, Doc responds.

> DOC Yeah, well I think you got a case of the ovals! The camber's fine... You just need to run that circle a few more times!

CUTAWAY TO: FINISH LINE

Continuing to struggle around the track, Michael loses a position to Pascual Alvarez of all people before finally finishing the race in seventh.

REVEAL:

As Michael crosses the finish line in seventh, Doc slams his clipboard to the ground, stomping on it, just before tossing his headset to the side.

EXT. AIRHART RACING PIT AREA - LATER

As Michael pulls into the pit and exits the car, Doc lets loose his frustrations with Michael, and his rookie driving during the race. Staring Michael down he's looking for an explanation. Frustrated, Michael responds.

MICHAEL

What?!? The damn camber was off!

DOC

Oh, don't piss down my neck and tell me its raining! We could have had sixth!!!

REVEAL:

As Doc storms away, Tommy walks up next to Michael as the two watch him leave.

MICHAEL (referring to Doc) What the hell is his deal?

Shrugging, then managing a grin before looking back at Michael, Tommy responds.

TOMMY Stubborn... Competitive... Experience...

MICHAEL

Yeah, well the car was running like the marbles on the outside had thrown the camber off...

Raising his hands in the air, Tommy makes an ambivalent facial expression, as both he and Michael deep down know that it was Michael's driving that lost them the race.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) Ah, I've got to cool down.

As Michael walks away, Tommy hollers one last comment.

TOMMY Don't forget the five hundred's next...

REVEAL:

Hearing those words, Michael becomes even more frustrated with his Kansas results as he shakes his head with frustration.

EXT. AIRHART RACING BUS - MOMENTS LATER

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Almost to the bus now, Michael spots Diana talking with her CREW CHIEF. A large bear of a man he looks more like a lumberjack than a crew chief. He's well respected.

It just happens by chance, that Diana's bus is parked right next to Michael's.

REVEAL:

Deciding to take advantage of the moment, Michael walks over to congratulate her on a fourth place finish.

CUTAWAY TO: DIANA'S BUS

Reaching them Diana's crew chief decides to step away. Extending his hand Michael introduces himself.

> MICHAEL Hey -- Michael Airhart.

DI I know who you are.

Shaking his hand, Di opens up.

DI (CONT'D) Nice to meet you Mike. You can call me Di. How's your brother by the way?

MICHAEL Not too well actually...

DI I'm sorry... He was one of the best guys on the tour. There was a lot of hype about the speed he had this year. I guess you have it now...

MICHAEL Well, you probably couldn't tell by how I finished today...

DI Rookie blues... Happens to all of us. Hey, I think myself and a few other drivers are going out for drinks tonight. You should join us.

Smiling, Michael agrees. As his pissed off mood has been replaced by something good, brewing.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Stepping inside the restaurant, Michael looks around for Diana. Tables surround the main bar in the middle of the restaurant, where bar tops surround the bar. The walls are lined with memorabilia in pop culture and sports.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Spotting Diana at a round bar top with two other drivers, Diana spots him and waves him over.

CUTAWAY TO: BAR TOP

Approaching the table, Diana introduces Michael to other drivers.

DI Hey Mike! Glad you could make it. This is Aleron Raineau, Akira Yoshi, and Lance Deschamps.

Shaking the hands of both ALERON and AKIRA, before Michael can shake LANCE's hand he lowers to one knee, hanging his head down, as if the Queen of England was standing in front of him.

LANCE Sire. King Airhart. My pleasure to meet a member of race car royalty.

REVEAL:

Laughing, Michael is somewhat embarrassed as PATRONS from other tables are beginning to look over. Seeing a man one knee usually symbolizes a marriage proposal in the United States, which Lance knows.

Getting up, both Lance and Michael sit down.

LANCE (CONT'D) Alright! Shall we order some ale???

Signaling the WAITRESS over, she's shorter, sweet, and most likely in college. She's also used to handling bar tables.

WAITRESS

Yes honey???

LANCE

(smiling) Hello! My friends and I would like to order a few drafts. I suppose I'll have a Molson and they'll have... WAITRESS This is Kansas honey. We don't have Molson...

LANCE (surprised) You know the Queen could have you beheaded for that... Treasonous where I come from...

Looking down at the menu, then closing it quickly, Lance responds.

LANCE (CONT'D) (enthusiastic) Make that a pitcher of Budweiser!

WAITRESS Okay babe! You got it!

Smiling and laughing, the crew appreciates Lances antics. Before the waitress leaves however, Di has the last word oneupping the boys.

> DI Oh, and I'll have a Guinness.

INT. RESTAURANT PARKING LOT - LATER

With the tailgate down in the back of Michael's pickup, both he and Diana are sitting on the back. Michael's first impression of Lance was clearly as a complete goofball, while Aleron was humble, and Akira very reserved.

> MICHAEL (smiling) Wow, Lance is a funny guy. He's kind of like a life-size wind up toy...

DI Yeah, he's a trip, but an overall great guy.

Pausing for a moment Diane decides to ask a question that's on her mind.

DI (CONT'D) So -- something is on my mind, and I want to ask you, but I don't want you to get offended.

Caught a little bit off guard Michael plays off her statement.

MICHAEL What? You can ask me... I promise I won't be offended. Nodding, she spits it out. DI Why are you doing all this? MICHAEL Hmm -- You first... DI Are you asking why I race? MICHAEL Well, yeah... How'd you get into it? Flustered a little, Diana responds. DI Um, I don't know... It was a long time ago, and... MICHAEL Hey -- its okay. Looking into Michael's eyes Diana lets her guard down. DT I didn't have a very good childhood... My father was both mentally and physically abusive on pretty much -a regular basis. I got my ass kicked... **REVEAL:** Hearing the seriousness in her voice, Michael's expression changes from curious to understanding. INT. BERTRAND HOUSE - DAY - FLASHBACK Inside the house, Di's MOTHER and FATHER are arguing and screaming at each other, when her father grabs her mother by

the throat and slams her against the kitchen wall. DI (O.S.) He and my mother used to fight all the time, and one day I just couldn't take it anymore.

REVEAL:

An eight year old DI, watching the scene ensue cannot take anymore, as she runs past the two, grabbing the car keys off the kitchen table.

> DI (O.S.) (CONT'D) I stole his keys and took off in his car... I was eight years old.

END OF FLASHBACK

MICHAEL

Oh my god...

DI It felt good. Not just taking something away from him, but the freedom that I had.

DI (CONT'D) I drove that fucking car as fast as I could...

Somewhat laughing, Diana's expression turns serious again.

DI (CONT'D) Needless to say, he continued to abuse both me and my mother.

Becoming emotional now, a single tear runs down Diana's face, she wipes it away.

DI (CONT'D)

I left home when I was twelve and she followed a year later. When I finally told him that I wanted to race, he laughed in my face. Then he told me I wouldn't amount to shit.

Pausing for a moment, Diana continues.

DI (CONT'D) So if you're asking why I race, I guess the answer is to get away from my father, but also to prove to him how wrong he was.

Taking a deep breath, Diana wipes her face with her hands before looking back at Michael.

DI (CONT'D) So what about you? Why are you racing? MICHAEL Huh... Well -- I guess it also goes back to childhood.

INT. MRS. AIRHART'S DODGE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Inside the car, MRS. AIRHART is driving, while a young Michael is in the passenger seat. With lovely shoulder length brown hair and colorful dress, she fumbles with the rearview mirror.

> MICHAEL (O.S.) When I was eleven years old, my mother and I were on our way home from the grocery store. We were heading down University in the left, and it was -sunny...

INTERCUT: PRESENT DAY AND FLASHBACK

REVEAL:

Looking into his eyes, Diana can sense something is wrong.

BACK TO HUCK

MICHAEL (0.S.) (CONT'D) Coming up on seventh the red changed to green, so we never stopped.

Pausing for a moment, Michael is just staring at the street.

MICHAEL (O.S.) (CONT'D) Some guy ran the light at seventh and hit the driver's side somewhere around sixty miles an hour.

A horrific collision ensues where the driver of the other car completely broadsides the driver's side of the Dodge, as the car collapses like a tin can.

END OF FLASHBACK

DI Oh my god...

MICHAEL When I woke up -- she was gone, and I didn't have a scratch on me...

Pausing again, the topic twists Michael's nerves, as he moves on from those painful days. MICHAEL (CONT'D) You know -- my dad really didn't have time to grieve. He had two boys to raise and handle a career as a professional driver.

Taking a deep breath Michael exhales.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) I guess after that we all just entrenched ourselves deeper into racing. Adrian and I were in the youth circuits and my father up against the best drivers in the world.

Putting her hand on his, Michael looks down at it, then smiles briefly.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) Now with Adrian...

Looking down at his watch, Michael realizes its about 2:30AM. The parking lot is completely empty of customers and all of the employees have gone home.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) Wow, its getting late...

Looking at Diana, they share a moment where they lock eyes. Leaning in, they share a passionate kiss under the moonlight.

EXT. INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY - MORNING

AERIAL SHOT: INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY

SUPER: INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY, INDY 500

The grandstand of Indianapolis 500 is completely packed as fans are on the of their seats with anticipation of who will win the greatest race of the indy car circuit.

EXT. MICHAEL'S RACE CAR - CONTINUOUS

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Rounding turn number three, Michael notices that his center of gravity seems to be off as the wheel is vibrating. Having trouble, the back end feels as though he's losing traction.

> MICHAEL (V.O.) Doc! I've got to come in. The back end's feeling loose!

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

Surprised, Doc responds.

DOC What?!? Loose?!? Give me till the yellow flag!

INTERCUT: MICHAEL AND DOC

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

MICHAEL (V.O.) Yellow flag?!? I can't make till the next yellow. I'm comin' in now!

DOC

What?!?

DOC'S P.O.V.

Then spotting Michael coming into the pits, Doc is pissed.

DOC (CONT'D) Holy Antonine Caesar!!! That may have just cost us the race!

REVEAL:

Infuriated, Doc spits out his gum, before yelling at Michael while the team replaces his tires.

DOC (CONT'D) You better get your ass back out there and make up for the pit stop you didn't need!!!

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Tense, Michael takes off out of the pit as the team sprays the back of the car. Leaving pit row however he suddenly notices the yellow flag.

> MICHAEL (V.O.) Doc! Yellow flag!!!

> > DOC

What?!?

DOC'S P.O.V.

Turning towards the flag bearer Doc can't believe it. Then, turning his eyes on the track he spots the Chevy Corvette Pace Car in the lead. DOC (CONT'D) Alright, we got a yellow! We're back in it! If we run a smart race we've got a chance.

EXT. INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY - LATER

Passing Akira Yoshi, Michael moves ahead one place as the speed in his car is really visible now on the oval of the Indy 500.

EXT. INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY - LATER

REVEAL:

Michael's head turns inward with each left to the inside.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Reaching speeds in excess of one hundred sixty miles an hour, Michael makes another move, passing Diana.

DIANA'S P.O.V.

Watching Michael, he slips by her, as his car accelerates past.

EXT. AIRHART RACING PIT AREA - LATER

Coming to a halt in the Airhart pit area, the team replaces Michael's inside tires while only filling him up with a partial tank of fuel.

Waving his arm in a swinging underhand motion similar to the windup of a softball pitcher, Doc is jumping up and down. He's now got about three sticks of gum in his mouth.

> DOC Go! Go! Go!!!

DOC'S P.O.V.

Exiting the pit at a quick pace, Michael rounds the corner.

EXT. INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY - LATER

GRANDSTAND P.O.V.

On the final lap Michael is in third place as Sol is in second and Primo Rossi is in first.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Spotting the set up of their three cars in a row, Michael is ready to make a move.
MICHAEL (V.O.) Doc! I'm going to cut it inside on the last turn. I think I can make it!

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

Hearing Michael's words, Doc stops for a moment. Then, hitting him like a punch in the face, he knows its the wrong move.

DOC No! Don't do it! Cut to the outside and you may be able to edge out Gage!

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

MICHAEL (V.O.) What?!? I'm going inside!

BACK TO HUCK

Rounding the final turn, Michael cuts inside. However, just like Doc predicted, Gage cuts to the outside while Rossi cuts inside, forcing both he and Michael to collide.

Hitting Rossi's back tire, Michael completely spins him out of the lead, while Michael's car fires at forty-five degree angle straight into the right side concrete barrier, snapping the wishbone and badly damaging the body.

The majority of the remaining cars miss both Michael and Primo, with the exception of Ebenezer Ackland, who hits Michael's back end, partially taking off the nose of his car.

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

Slamming his hat to the ground, Doc stomps on it as he tosses his clipboard.

BACK TO HUCK

Stuck in the crevice of the wall, Michael sits, shocked.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

In the distance Michael can see Gage doing donuts just before the tow truck completely blocks his view as it heads into his direction.

INT. AIRHART RACING BUS - LATER

Sitting on the bus, Michael has head in his hands as he can't believe how close he was and that he lost it all.

He crashed out of one of the most important races of the year, the Indy Five Hundred. CUTAWAY TO: BUS DOOR Snapping Michael awake, the door flies open as Doc marches onto the bus. BACK TO HUCK Not wanting to hear it, Michael shakes his head. DOC Where'd you learn how to drive -the Stevie Wonder School of Driving?!? MICHAEL Aw -- dammit! You gotta come in here now... DOC Yeah, aw dammit is right! You know how close were out there today?!? Huh?!? MICHAEL I know! DOC Do you?!? That's the Indy 500!!! The biggest race of the year!!! MICHAEL I know, alright! DOC That last move was about as useful as a trap door on a canoe! We trained all year for that and you threw it away with a greenhorn mistake!!! Now all we've got to show for it is a battered hunk of twisted metal! **REVEAL:** Shaking his head, Michael is getting pissed. DOC (CONT'D) You know what?!? Forget it!!!

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

In a huff, Doc turns to walk away, then realizes he has one more thing to say.

DOC (CONT'D)

You know its obvious who you're racing for out there, and it sure as hell isn't this team!!! I never should have taken you on because you're not ready!!!

Storming out, Doc SLAMS the door as the trailer rattles.

REVEAL:

Sitting in the trailer Michael looks to the ceiling and screams as loud as he can.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

CU - HOTEL PHONE

The phone begins to ring as the red light for line one illuminates. One ring, two rings, three rings, then a hand picks up the phone.

REVEAL:

Michael sitting on the bed, places the phone to his ear.

MICHAEL

Hello?

CUTAWAY TO: ADRIAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Sitting in his chair near Adrian's bedside, Angelo is on the line.

ANGELO

Mikey?

INTERCUT: ANGELO AND MICHAEL

MICHAEL

Hey dad...

ANGELO How you doin'?

Shaking his head back and forth Michael is somewhat frustrated.

MICHAEL I don't know... I guess I figured racing on the circuit would just come naturally -- so far though I feel like I've just let everyone down.

ANGELO

You know how proud of you I am. And I know for a fact you're the only one Adrian would ever agree to drive his race car.

REVEAL:

Pausing for a moment Angelo looks at Adrian in the bed.

ANGELO (CONT'D) You just have to be patient, and when the right opportunities present themselves, you take em'. You hear me?

MICHAEL

Yeah dad...

ANGELO

You see Mike, what you've got to realize is that the same drive that's pushed you this far, could now be hindering you, but only if you let it.

Hearing his father's words, Michael suddenly feels a little bit better, as he knows his father is right.

ANGELO (CONT'D) If you can get control, you're natural talent along with Doc's experience is going to be pretty damn tough.

MICHAEL Huh, Doc! I really pissed him off today. (laughing) I heard he spit out his gum, stomped his hat, and even snapped that clipboard of his...

For a moment Michael and Angelo share a laugh.

ANGELO Hey in all seriousness though, there's no better crew chief in the circuit. Make amends and he'll take you to the top.

REVEAL:

Hearing Angelo's words Michael nods his head

Sitting at the bar, Doc is there, by himself, drinking a cup of coffee. Staring blankly at the bar, he clearly has a lot on his mind.

MICHAEL (O.S.) This seat taken?

Surprised, Doc looks up to find Michael directly to his left. Offering the chair, Michael sits down.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) I wanted to -- I want to apologize for today. When I was coming around the track...

Interrupting, Doc cuts in.

DOC

Save it kid. I've decided that clearly I don't have the same grasp on this team that I used too.

MICHAEL

(shocked) What are you saying?

DOC

I'm saying its time for me step out. Head for greener pastures. You know what the hell I'm saying... Que the music!

MICHAEL

No. You're not quitting on us. What happened today was my fault -all of it. If I had followed your instructions we could have won, and the fact that we didn't is on me.

DOC

Well why the hell didn't you listen? Damn greenhorn mistake at the five hundred of all places! And that lousy snake Gage took it from us.

MICHAEL Yeah he did. But you know what...

DOC (fired up) What's that?!? MICHAEL We've still got thirteen more races...

Pausing for a moment Michael gets to the point.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Look. I'm willing to do whatever it takes. If you want me to study turns, I'll study turns. If you want me to improve in qualifying, I'll try my hardest to shave seconds. The bottom line is what ever you think is best is what goes... I'm willing to do whatever it takes -- for the team.

REVEAL:

Turning forward Doc twists his glass.

DOC Whatever it takes huh...

Sipping his coffee, Doc instantly spits it out.

DOC (CONT'D) This coffee's strong enough to float an iron wedge!

Seeing the fire back in Doc's eyes, Michael knows its on, as he smiles and nods at Doc's displeasure.

EXT. MILWAUKEE MILE - MORNING

As the sun rises over the oval track, the OFFSCREEN sound of a screaming indy engine is heard.

SUPER: THE MILWAUKEE MILE, A few days prior to qualifying...

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Accelerating through turn three Michael fires past turn four, sling-shotting down the straight away. Roaring around the oval he's reaching speeds close to one hundred-fifty miles per hour.

CUTAWAY TO: PIT ROW

Standing in pit row with the rest of the team Doc is pacing back and forth. Talking into the headset, he informs Michael of his times.

DOC Shaved off a few more milliseconds. Lets get five more before we go to reds.

INTERCUT: MICHAEL AND DOC

MICHAEL (V.O.)

(confused) Reds on pre-qualifying?

DOC

You bet your ass! I want to know exactly what those tires can do for us and when. Blacks may be fast, but when that track gets about as congested as a bull race in Pamplona, I want to know that we ain't slippin' on no tomatoes!

MICHAEL (V.O.) Good one Doc... Your first worldly reference.

Having a little chuckle to himself, Doc responds.

DOC You'd be surprised...

Putting the mouthpiece of the headset down Doc motions to Tommy behind him.

Listening into his helmet Michael can still hear Doc talking because his voice is so loud.

DOC (V.O.) (CONT'D) Evidently Jerry Lewis is driving for us today!

EXT. MILWAUKEE MILE STARTING GRID - DAY

AERIAL SHOT: MILWAUKEE MILE

Zig-zagging back and forth behind the Dodge Viper Pace Car, the drivers are warming up their tires around the oval as they prepare for the start of the race. The Grandstands are packed with race fans.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

After a few days of sufficient practice Michael managed to land third place in qualifying, thus the only two cars in front of him are that of Gage as well as Igor Silva.

CUTAWAY TO: GREEN FLAG

As the pace car exits the track, the green wave is being waved wildly at the starting line as everyone tries to make a move.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Shooting up even with Silva, Gage makes a move to the inside, just as Yoshi makes a move for the outside! In an instant they're three across into turn one. Catching up on Michael's right side, Alvarez is running even with him as Diana, visible in his mirror is just behind him.

BACK TO HUCK

Making there way around the front half of the oval, numerous cars almost collide, due to the density of the pack. Upon evening out and the heat of competition with attempting to draft off each other, the rear half of the oval isn't as fortunate.

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

DOC Alright -- alright -- watch that flank! We don't need to give away position! How the reds handling?

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

MICHAEL (V.O.) Reds are tight.

INTERCUT: DOC AND MICHAEL

DOC Good! That son of a bitch Gage is running blacks.

BACK TO HUCK

Just then, coming around the turn, Silva and Yoshi collide! Making a regretful yet opportunistic mistake for the other drivers, Yoshi's cut to the inside locks up and wrecks both he and silva as the rear of Gage is spun out, unharmed, yet completely lost in position.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Dodging the chaos, Michael cuts to the outside as Di follows his lead.

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

Following the scene Doc jumps into the air as Michael has now taken first!

DOC (CONT'D) Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! DOC'S P.O.V.

Following Michael's car as he roars past, Doc looks straight to the tower as the YELLOW FLAG is now being waved in a full course caution.

BACK TO HUCK

DOC (CONT'D) Full course caution! Alright, we need to hold this lead long enough to switch to blacks!

EXT. AIRHART RACING PIT AREA - LATER

Gearing up in the Airhart pit, the team is ready with tires, gas, air guns and a jack.

DOC Baby needs shoes!

CUTAWAY TO: MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Round the rear oval, Michael eyes pit lane. Following George Pierce, another rookie, Michael eyes his pit.

MICHAEL (V.O.) I'm bringing her in!

BACK TO HUCK

Suddenly the pit is messed up as Pierce overshoots his pit and stalls out halfway into Michael's.

As Michael slows down to a stop the team shoves Pierces car backwards as he does not have reverse. They then attempt to work on Michael's car, however due to the odd angle, cannot seem to gas up the car as the hose won't reach.

Rushing out front Doc is having a fit.

DOC Get that piece of shit out of our pit! Jack! Jack! Jack!

Flipping up his visor, Michael starts hollering.

MICHAEL

Come on!!!

Shifting the car back, then forward, they've already lost valuable seconds as Pierce exits the pit followed by Di and Ebenezer Ackland.

As the team slams the blacks on, Tommy waves his hand giving Michael the go. Peeling out of the pit Michael flies onto the track.

EXT. MILWAUKEE MILE - LATER

SUPER: FINAL LAP

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Racing behind Di and Ackland, Michael stalks, going through the first turn.

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

Chewing his gum in a mashing fashion Doc is watching feverishly.

DOC Okay... Back oval you make your move...

INTERCUT: MICHAEL AND DOC

MICHAEL (V.O.) I'm all over him...

Coming through the final turn Michael hits the gas, knowing full well he has the fastest car and a good chance.

DOC Outside!!! Outside!!!

Swinging up, then outside, Michael excels but can't quite pass Ackland.

CUTAWAY TO: FINISH LINE

By less than a nose Ackland takes Michael as he places third.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Rounding the front oval Michael is shaking his head as he knew if he had only gotten a better pit stop, he could have taken the race.

> MICHAEL (V.O.) I thought we had em' Doc...

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

Looking back around at his teammates, then concentrating back on the track, Doc manages a smile.

Eh, it was a hell of a strategy today, but in the end the heat got to us. When it happens again, you'll know what to do...

EXT. PODIUM - LATER

Standing on the Podium in third Michael can't help but stare at Diana as she raises the first place trophy.

REVEAL:

Happy for her, Michael's facial expression is mixed as he clearly wanted this one for himself.

Breaking his stare, Ackland suddenly hoses Michael with champagne, as Michael in turn sprays Diana. The bubbly from the extra large champagne bottles goes everywhere.

EXT. AUTOGRAPH TENT - DAY

Walking with Diana, she and Michael approach the tent as they are directed to sit down at the seats behind the table. With them under the tent are additional drives, Igor Silva, Primo Rossi, George Pierce, Paulo Pinto and Gage.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Combing the through the other drivers, Michael's gaze finally rests on one driver in particular, Solomon Gage. Sitting there with his leather pants, loose, shirt and necklaces, he looks more like a rock star than a driver.

REVEAL:

No longer laughing Michael's expression changes.

BACK TO HUCK

For a moment, Sol and Michael share a stare down, just before Di finally pulls Michael to his seat. Attempting to ignore Gage, his anger is like a dormant volcano destined to go off when it's least expected.

EXT. AUTOGRAPH TENT - LATER

As the final RACE FANS get their autographs, Michael signs a photo followed by a t-shirt. Last, he's presented with a photo of he and Adrian.

REVEAL:

Studying the photo for a moment, Michael signs his name making sure not to touch Adrian at all.

As the fan thanks him, Michael briefly smiles before eyeing Gage again.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Noticing Michael staring at him, Gage stands up. Walking around the table he heads for Michael and Di, as Michael slides of out of his seat with tension.

BACK TO HUCK

Noticing what's about to happen, Di jumps to her feet, grabbing Michael by the chest.

DI

No Mike!

SOL (approaching) What is all the fuss about??? Would you like my autograph to hang on your wall???

Staring back at Gage, Sol comments on Diana.

SOL (CONT'D) Hello Diana. I see you've met our newest rookie sensation. We'll see if he completes two seasons.

As Michael's blood begins to boil Di can feel him tense up.

DI Get the hell out of here Sol.

SOL Don't worry, I'm sure we will meet again young rookie.

As Sol walks away, Michael shakes his head in frustration.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Continuing to stare, Michael follows Gage until he's out of sight.

EXT. TEXAS MOTOR SPEEDWAY - DAY

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Following Lance and Sol in front of him, Michael rounds back oval of Texas Motor Speedway.

SUPER: TEXAS MOTOR SPEEDWAY

Checking his mirror the pack is in pursuit, however Michael clearly has the fastest car, and just a slight edge.

MICHAEL (V.O.) He's right in my sights Doc.

Edging closer Michael is almost to the point of drafting past Sol as he nears his rear bumper.

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

Watching the scene around the track, Doc is all to familiar with Sol's antics.

DOC Don't get to close. That son of a bitch is unpredictable.

INTERCUT: MICHAEL AND DOC

MICHAEL (V.O.) I've got more speed.

Pacing back and forth, Doc goes against his better judgment and gives Michael the go ahead.

> DOC Ah shit... Alright -- I want you to hit it on the next straight away. Draft him to the outside.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

As Michael edges closer, he lets off just before flooring the gas on the straight away.

SOL'S P.O.V.

Spotting Michael in his mirror Sol quickly reacts, cutting inside just as predicted but letting off the gas enough to cut back over into Michael's rear inside left fender.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V

On the receiving end of the pit maneuver, Michael's tires begin to spin as tries to keep the car from going off the track.

> MICHAEL (V.O.) He just hit me!!!

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

Running back and forth to see the track, Doc's nerves are on edge.

DOC Hold the wheel dammit! Do not lose it!!!

INTERCUT: MICHAEL AND DOC

Spinning to the left, then to the right, then back left again. Michael regains control just before going into the infield. In the meantime he's completely lost position by about three places falling into fifth place.

CUTAWAY TO: FINISH LINE

Crossing the finish line, Lance, Sol, Paulo, and Georges Pierce, each make it across the line before Michael.

EXT. AIRHART RACING PIT AREA - CONTINUOUS

Pulling the car into the pit, Michael pulls himself out of the car. Right in front of them coincidentally, Sol's pit is celebrating a second place finish.

Throwing his helmet down, Michael heads straight for Sol before being ambushed by his own teammates and Doc who hold him back.

MICHAEL Son of a bitch! He doesn't deserve shit! You tried to spin me out!

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Spotting the commotion, Sol brushes off accusations at first, then turns around furious.

SOL Have you forgotten St. Petersburg?!?

REVEAL:

Hearing his words, Michael is furious as he struggles with the team holding him back.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Becoming even more furious, Sol makes a threat.

SOL (CONT'D) Cross my path... You will not finish this season...

REVEAL:

DOC is now holding Michael back with everything he's got.

DOC

Michael! Michael! Get a hold of yourself! Don't let him get in your head! You're better than this!!!

Realizing Doc is right, a frustrated Michael stands down.

MICHAEL Let me go! Let me go!

Spitting out his gum, Doc shrugs in frustration.

DOC Ah shit -- we'll get him next week... Pulling stunts like that, his luck is right about like water in a desert, about due to dry up.

INT. HOSPITAL - MORNING

Walking through the hospital Michael is anxious to see not only Adrian, but his father, whom he hasn't seen since that first fateful race.

CUTAWAY TO: ADRIAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Knocking once before stepping inside the room, Angelo looks up to find Michael standing in the doorway.

Sharing a moment, they embrace each other with a loving hug, before both turning towards Adrian's bed.

ADRIAN'S BED

Looking over the bed, oxygen tubes are wrapped around Adrian's face. Still in casts, his torso looks odd, as he has no feet under the covers of the hospital sheets.

MICHAEL Hey -- where's Jeanie at?

Continuing to study Adrian without looking up Angelo responds in a despondent manner.

> ANGELO She's not here Michael.

Looking at his father's face, Michael can tell something isn't quite right.

ANGELO (CONT'D) She stayed for the first month, but just couldn't handle it being here day in and day out. What?

ANGELO (looking up) It's not her fault Mike. She went through lot...

MICHAEL But to leave -- now???

As tears begin to form, Angelo rubs his eyes.

ANGELO I couldn't make her stay...

Seeing his dad cry for one of the only times in his life Michael, puts his hand on his father's shoulder.

> ANGELO (CONT'D) (gathering himself) But I'm not going anywhere...

Changing the subject, Angelo brings up the race.

ANGELO (CONT'D) So I saw the race on Sunday. You had him Mike. It just takes patience...

Walking back and sitting in the chair against the wall, Michael leans his head back.

MICHAEL He tried to spin me out.

ANGELO You know there are always guys like that. I remember back when I was racing I had a few run-ins...

Hearing his father's words, Michael decides to ask for advice as he feels he's caught up in the situation.

> MICHAEL What did it take?

Looking at Michael in the eyes, the answer is painfully obvious.

ANGELO

Patience.

Sighing, Michael looks to his side.

ANGELO (CONT'D) You know with guys like that, you have to let them make the first move and sink themselves. Like a prize fighter with two or three big shots. When he goes for uppercut you dodge, and when comes back with the overhand right, you counter with a body shot...

Listening to his words, Michael knows his father is right. Clasping his hands in a preying fashion, Angelo wishes he had given the same advice to Adrian.

> ANGELO (CONT'D) It's all about the counter... All about the counter...

INT. AIRHART HOUSE - NIGHT

The offscreen sound of the doorbell is heard. Then again...

CUTAWAY TO: FRONT DOOR

Approaching the front door, Michael looks through the peephole, then opens the door to find Di standing in the doorway. Leaning against the wall she has one leg up.

MICHAEL

Hey!

DI I'm looking for this race car driver...

MICHAEL

Yeah???

DI Yeah, I heard he was this cute guy...

MICHAEL Well my dad's not home...

Smiling, Michael and Di share a brief laugh.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Come on in...

INT. AIRHART HOUSE LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Following Michael into the living room, Di stops, observing all of the race photos that line the while, while Michael continues on to the kitchen. MICHAEL (O.S.) Can I get you a drink?

DI (studying the photos) Yeah... What do you have?

MICHAEL How about some pop?

DI Eh -- you got any soda?

MICHAEL

Nope...

DI Okay -- then pop will do.

The OFFSCREEN sounds of Michael rummaging through the fridge then opening and pouring the cola into the glass, he returns to the living room.

REVEAL:

Standing there, Diana cannot get over all of the great photos of Angelo as well as Adrian and Michael's junior circuit days. Handing her the glass of cola and a napkin Michael follows the photos as well.

> DI (CONT'D) You guys have some great photos here... I recognize Watkins Glen...

DIANA'S P.O.V.

Then looking to the photo of the three of them with the large champagne bottles, it catches her eye.

REVEAL:

DI (CONT'D) Wow... The champagne bottle was bigger than you were!

Smiling and nodding, that photo is clearly one of Michael's favorites as well.

MICHAEL Yeah... You can just feel the heated competition between us. We had to see who could spray the most champagne.

Smiling and laughing Di's curiosity is peaked.

Can I ask how old you were?

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Looking at the photo, Michael remembers.

REVEAL:

MICHAEL

I think I was about ten right there. That's the day my dad won the points championship... It was one of those days that really showed what's waiting for you when you overcome adversity.

Diana studies Michael's reaction. Feeling compelled to explain himself, Michael reveals what he was talking about.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) That was the same year of my mother's accident...

DI

I'm sorry...

Changing the subject, Michael decides to take Di into the garage.

MICHAEL Hey, I've got something to show you. Come on...

DIANA'S P.O.V.

Following Michael through the house to the door leading to the garage, Michael opens the door revealing a black room. Fumbling for the light switch, he finally finds it, as he hits the switch.

Like removing a painted vale, the illumination reveals Adrian's 1969 purple and black Chevy Comaro amongst the tools, work bench, race posters, rock band posters and centerfold girls.

CUTAWAY TO: COMARO

Approaching the car, and running her hands across the graphics, Di is clearly impressed with the car.

DI (giddy) This car is -- awesome...

Rubbing the hood, Michael responds.

This is Adrian's 1969, Chevy Comaro --California Raisin Purple...

Still overjoyed with the car itself Di knows that she has to ask about its history.

DI How did he ever land it?

MICHAEL

Well, Chuck, a friend of my father's was the original owner, and the shell had just been sitting in a little garage behind his auto shop. So one day he had the garage open and Adrian spotted it... Love at first site. He made a deal with him, that he would help Chuck fix up his house as well as help out at the auto shop if he could fix up the Comaro in his spare time. A few years later, Chuck's house was one of the nicest in the neighborhood, and he gave Adrian the Comaro!

DI

(smiling)

Wow...

MICHAEL

It's very special -- to all of us... Adrian is the only one who can give the go ahead to take it out...

Changing the subject, Michael motions to the other vehicle in the garage, the older black pick-up.

> MICHAEL (CONT'D) (smiling) The only things that are mine are a few of the rock band posters and the pick-up behind you... That's mine...

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Turning around, Di, looks at the truck, then back at Michael and smiles.

EXT. MICHAEL'S PICK-UP TRUCK - LATER

Off the beaten path in a wide open field, the black pick up truck, is parked with the faint sound of its radio playing in the background.

CUTAWAY TO: TAILGATE

Laying down across a comforter in the back, both Michael and Di are looking up at the stars.

DI The sky is so clear, as if you photoshop'd clarity around each star... I bet you take all the girls out here...

Sharing a moment looking at each other, both Michael and Di start laughing.

DIANA'S P.O.V.

As the joke winds down Diana focuses on Michael's face as he stares into the heavens above.

MICHAEL I've never been active in any religion, yet you can't help but get the sense that there's a higher power involved in all of this. From the stars through the earth... I just don't know what it means, or why...

REVEAL:

Looking at Michael, Di feels a sense of sadness as the underlying truth to Michael's words is that Adrian is still in the hospital and may not recover.

DIANA'S P.O.V.

MICHAEL (CONT'D) And now -- I'm in the circuit. (pausing) You know what's crazy?

BACK TO HUCK

Rolling onto her back Di, stares up again.

DI

What's that?

MICHAEL That in my drive to make my father proud I secretly wish that he would leave Adrian just once to see me race. It kind of makes me sick when I think about it.

REVEAL:

Rolling back towards Michael, DI tries comfort him as she looks into his eyes.

DI Well -- they do have a tv in the hospital room right?

BACK TO HUCK

Breaking the monotony, Di's words snap Michael back to reality.

MICHAEL

What?

Just then Michael begins to laugh at Di's unintended joke. Noticing his expression she smiles.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Come here...

As Di leans in, she and Michael starting with a cautious embrace, fully let go, engaging each other as two people who have been deprived of love for far too long.

EXT. IOWA SPEEDWAY - AFTERNOON

SUPER: IOWA SPEEDWAY

REVEAL:

Racing around the track, Michael is in fourth place just behind three other drivers.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Rounding the rear oval Michael, floors the gas as the engine roars.

CUTAWAY TO: FINISH LINE

As the first three drivers cross the finish line, Michael's car crosses, unchallenged in fourth place.

EXT. RICHMOND INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY - NIGHT

SUPER: RICHMOND INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY

REVEAL:

Flying around the oval, three cars are competing for the race including Di, Massimo Costa, and Michael.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Going into the final oval, Michael is gaining on Costa, as he can also see Gage in his rearview mirror. Knowing he has to make a move, he begins to accelerate. Slowing down for just a second, coming out of the turn he slams the gas!

REVEAL:

Faking inside, then cutting outside Michael with the fastest car on the raceway, steadily accelerates on the right side of Costa.

CUTAWAY TO: FINISH LINE

As the checkered flag is waved violently back and forth, Michael passes Costa by a nose placing second behind Di.

EXT. AIRHART RACING PIT AREA - CONTINUOUS

Thrusting his fist in the air like an uppercut, Doc looks back to Tommy.

DOC Yes!!! You teach him that?!? I sure the hell didn't!!!

REVEAL:

Raising his hands into the air, Tommy makes a surprised expression as he and Doc share a smile.

INT. ADRIAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

CU - TV above the bed

As the picture turns on the channels are changed until the race is found. Offscreen announcers can be heard commentating as the shot on the television is an AERIAL SHOT of Watkins Glen International.

CHIP (O.S.) Watkins Glen -- the unofficial home of road racing for over fifty years. We're glad you can all join us today for this wonderful trip to New York.

INT. WATKINS GLEN INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Sitting in the booth are only two men. The one to the left, CHIP is a middle-aged man with glasses and a fresh haircut sitting alongside TERRY, a larger man, wearing a cowboy hat with black sunglasses and a seasoned mustache. Each of them has a headset on with matching microphone mouthpieces. CHIP But, just like any other race at The Glen, I'm sure today will have a few surprises in store...

TERRY

I'll tell you what it's going to come down to Chip...

CHIP

What's that?

TERRY

Pit strategy. The weather report is calling for rain this afternoon. I'd be willing to bet there's going to be a few drivers that are going to gamble with the blacks, but I guarantee most of the drivers are probably going to start this race with rain tires. If they time it right it could pay off, but if not were talking ice skates.

CHIP And on that note lets send it to Tracy Smith on Pit Row.

INT. ADRIAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

CU - TV

As the television cuts away from the booth, the CAMERA ANGLE is now on TRACY SMITH in the Airhart Racing pit. Decked out in a full fire retardant race suit, her model good looks would give Di a run for her money if only she were a driver.

Coming into view to her right, Doc is standing there with his trademark black hat, gum, clipboard and yellow headset around his neck.

> TRACY I'm here with L.B. Holiday, crew chief for Airhart Racing. So Doc, tell us, what's your pit strategy going to be like today?

Leaning into the microphone, Doc has to speak loudly, as well as listen to the questions as best as he can, due to the OFFSCREEN sound of race car engines in the background.

> DOC Well sometimes you gotta shoot the moon and today we're going for it.

TRACY Even with the forecast calling for rain these clouds could break at any moment.

DOC

Yeah, we're going for it. I'm hoping we don't toss up a whopper... Excuse me...

Stepping aside and out of the camera, Michael steps in.

TRACY

And now we have Michael Airhart before us. Michael since stepping in for your brother Adrian, you've been coming on strong as of late. Is that your plan today?

Somewhat smiling, Michael responds.

MICHAEL

Well, we started the year behind and ran into a few rough patches. I don't know if I've necessarily planned to come from behind the last couple races, but the car has been driving great, and the Airhart Racing Team has been doing one hell of a job in the pits.

Pointing to the tires, Tracy inquires about them.

TRACY

Can I ask what you're starting with today? Rumor is most of the field is going with rain tires and you guys are going blacks.

Leaning in, Michael responds.

MICHAEL You got it. Excuse me...

Stepping away, Tracy quickly looks to her left and begins to walk as the camera follows her.

TRACY Well we know what Airhart's doing, lets see what Solomon Gage is planning...

Spotting Gage, Tracy calls him as the CAMERA FOLLOWS HER.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Sol... Sol...

Turning around Sol, spots Tracy and smiles.

SOL

Hello

TRACY

The words across pit row is that a lot of guys are starting with the rain tires today, how about you guys?

SOL

We are racing for strategy and strategy is with the blacks.

TRACY Well it would seem great minds think alike as Airhart Racing is also going black. Are you expecting a tight competition.

Somewhat laughing, Sol brushes off her comments.

SOL Look, I've been racing a long time and I've seen many rookies. They come and go. Eventually there luck -it runs out...

Stepping out of the camera angle Tracy turns directly towards it.

TRACY And there you have it Chip. Back to you and Terry in the booth...

BACK TO HUCK

Sitting along Adrian's bedside Angelo looks up at the race, then back at Adrian.

ANGELO'S P.O.V.

Looking at Adrian's closed eyes, Angelo puts his hand over Adrian's.

ANGELO (O.S.) You hear that? The Glen... It's going to be a hell of a race.

EXT. WATKINS GLEN INTERNATIONAL - LATER

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Speeding around the track, Michael is in fifth place. In front of him as well as in his mirrors behind him, he can see many cars, but the only one he's focused on is that of Gage.

MICHAEL (V.O.) I'm gaining on em' Doc!

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

Reading his clipboard, Doc periodically looks up at the track before checking his watch.

DOC Hey, you're driving great kid. That last lap was faster than green grass through a goose! Now just hold her steady and hopefully by the time we're near lap twenty-five...

REVEAL:

Just then, the first rain drops begin to fall as Gage, currently in second place, is in the middle of trying to make a pass on Di to the outside. Accelerating in her blind spot, his car suddenly loses control and collides with her as she swings outside.

Hitting her right rear tire, both cars go careening straight into the wall, where his car becomes airborne, spinning violently across the fence until finally landing and sliding down the track upside down, grinding his helmet across the pavement.

INTERCUT: MICHAEL AND DOC

Spotting the ensuing chaos, only one thought is on Doc's mind.

DOC (CONT'D) Gun it, god damn it! Gun it!!!

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Accelerating, Michael just misses Gage and DI, as he cuts into second place and narrowly avoids a growing field of debris.

> DOC (V.O.) (CONT'D) Easy! Easy! Easy!

Checking his mirror, Michael can see a few other cars collide, as another goes into the infield amidst the growing cloud of debris.

DOC'S P.O.V.

Doc, checking the tower, spots the yellow flag being waved in a full-course caution.

REVEAL:

Pacing back and forth, Doc's anxiety is moving him as knows they're about to pull a maneuver.

DOC (CONT'D) Full course caution god damn it! Slow down! Bring her in on the next pass!

MICHAEL (V.O.) You got it...

GRANDSTAND P.O.V.

As Michael rounds the final turn he heads straight into pit row, followed by a few other drivers. Swapping tires and giving him, a short burst of fuel, he's back out within seconds.

> DOC Alright, now we're cooking with gas!!!

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Accelerating out of the pit, Michael is back in the line-up, hardly giving up a place as almost everybody pitted due to the large debris field.

INT. ADRIAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Sitting next to Adrian with his arms folded, Angelo is watching the race intently on the television in Adrian's room.

CUTAWAY TO: HOSPITAL HALLWAY OUTSIDE ADRIAN'S ROOM

The OFFSCREEN sound of race engines can be heard roaring from the tv speakers down the hall.

NURSE STAND

At the nurse stand TWO MIDDLE AGED MALE NURSES as well as an interning FEMALE NURSE look at each other, sharing a moment, before nodding. One of the male nurses mouths out the word Airhart.

EXT. AIRHART RACING PIT AREA - LATER

Pulling the car in for one last pit, the team gives Michael the needed fuel to finish the race, as well as a fresh set of tires.

Finishing the pit within a flash, Michael is back out into the lineup as he exits pit row.

DOC (V.O.) Alright. You should be good to go, the rest of the way out.

EXT. MICHAEL'S RACE CAR - LATER

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Racing around the track at excessive speeds, Michael is running a flawless race up to this point. Gaining on the leader, Massimo Costa, he's following him closely.

> MICHAEL (V.O.) I think I can make a move on him Doc...

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

Watching the race ensuing around the track, Doc chewing gum, has decided to play this one safe.

DOC Easy... I'm thinking we make our move with about ten laps left. The moment you lap the rear car, punch it and take him on the straights.

BACK TO HUCK

Rounding the turns Michael is still in hot pursuit, when suddenly the rear car pops out of nowhere.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Cutting to the outside, Costa instantly gives up ground as Michael, timing it just right, shoots the gap for the straight away on the inside. Taking the lead, Michael is amped.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

Got him!

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

DOC You got it kid! (MORE) DOC (CONT'D) Cool as a moose and twice as hairy! Now, hold -- that --lead!!!

BACK TO HUCK

Accelerating, Michael can see Costa in his mirror, yet Michael definitely has the faster car as Costa cannot seem to catch him.

INT. ADRIAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Watching he race, Angelo as well as all three of the nurses are standing there watching the race. Pumped up over Michael's pass Angelo is high-fiving the others.

> ANGELO Yes! He's got it! He's got the glen! You see that! My boy's got the glen!!!

EXT. WATKINS GLEN INTERNATIONAL - LATER

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Rounding the final turns, Michael hugs them just right with his rain tires, making sure not to give any ground. Heading down the final one, Michael accelerates towards the finish line.

CUTAWAY TO: FINISH LINE

As the checkered flag is waved above, Michael passes the finish line for his first victory on the major circuit.

BACK TO HUCK

REVEAL:

Waving his fist in the air, Michael's sense of accomplishment is overwhelming him.

> MICHAEL (V.O.) What do you think of that one Doc?!?

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

Jumping up and down, Doc, and the rest of the team are completely ecstatic as Michael has finally won a race.

BACK TO HUCK

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Rounding the track, the other drivers pass Michael congratulating him on winning his first race with various good-willed hand gestures.

EXT. AIRHART RACING PIT AREA - CONTINUOUS

Driving the car into the pit, Michael stops. Pulling off the steering wheel he removes his helmet followed by the fire retardant hood, and jumps out of the car. Greeted by the team, they instantly hoist him up onto their shoulders, then back to the ground in celebration.

INT. ADRIAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

CU - TV

Tracy Smith is on the tv in the Airhart pit area with an excited Doc.

TRACY (V.O.) Well Doc, you got your first win out there today. What are your thoughts?

Removing his hat to wipe the sweat off his brow, Doc responds.

DOC (V.O.) To win here today -- its been a long time in the making for us. And the guy we've got behind the wheel could really give his brother as well as his father are run for their money. We had a rough start to the year, but since then, as a team we've been improving week in and week out. Its going to be a hell of a points race...

Just then Michael enters the camera angle, smiling, and filled with joy as he and Doc and share a moment. Following, Doc exits the screen as Michael speaks with Tracy.

TRACY (V.O.) Michael -- congratulations on your first series win. How does it feel?

MICHAEL (V.O.) Oh it feels great! You know, the moment I stepped in for Adrian I didn't know if this moment would ever come...

Pausing Michael has to compose himself, so he doesn't let his emotions get the best of him. MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D) But here today, this is just the beginning. The fact that we're getting closer as team and faster in each race, its making for one hell of a difference in the points competition, and as soon as we leave here, practice begins for Toronto...

TRACY (V.O.) Tell us what you were thinking when Solomon Gage and Diana Bertrand collided. It seemed that was the break you needed.

MICHAEL (V.O.) Yeah it definitely was. Di was clearly in front, and it seemed that Gage tried for too much. It's just too bad he took her out in the process, but sometimes its unavoidable in competition.

TRACY (V.O.) Well once again, congratulations on your win out there today.

MICHAEL (V.O.) Thanks Tracy. And let me just to say to my brother Adrian and my father by his side in St. Petersburg, Florida, you're going to get better Adrian. This one was for you...

INT. DIANA'S CORVETTE - AFTERNOON

Inside the car, Diana is behind the wheel with Michael in the passenger seat. With her black sunglasses on, she's driving this street corvette just like she would her race car.

> MICHAEL Are you sure this is the right thing to do?

Looking over at Michael, Diana responds.

DI Yeah Michael -- I am...

Sighing, Di explains her viewpoint a little bit more.

DI (CONT'D) It's the right thing to do... Nodding, Michael accepts the verdict with the seriousness in Di's voice.

INT. HOSPITAL - LATER

Walking down the hospital hallways, the feeling is all too familiar for Michael as he glances in each room they pass. Knowing that Adrian is still in Florida, Michael's emotions fade into the background.

DI'S P.O.V.

Spotting Georges Pierce outside of one of the doors, Di points him out.

DI There's Georges...

CUTAWAY TO: OUTSIDE SOL'S HOSPITAL ROOM

DI (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Georges!

Turning around Georges is greeted by Di and Michael, who approach.

GEORGES Hey Diana. Hi Michael. Thanks for coming by.

Looking at Michael, Georges reassures Michael for coming.

GEORGES (CONT'D) I'm sure this must be awkward for you, but being a driver with the rest of us, you're now part of the family, even if its somewhat dysfunctional at times...

Just then, the DOCTOR and one of his NURSES exit the room.

GEORGES (CONT'D) Come on. Lets go in...

INT. SOL'S HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stepping inside, Georges enters first followed by Di. Laying in bed with his arm in a sling, Sol looks over revealing a badly bruised black eye.

> GEORGES Hello Sol. Di is also here.

Stepping forward, Di spots him.

DI

Hey Sol.

Nodding, Sol somewhat confused is surprised to see Diana. Then he spots Michael stepping through the door.

SOL Why is he here?!?

Looking over at Michael then back at Sol, Georges responds.

GEORGES Come on Sol... We're all spokes in the same wheel.

Frustrated Sol turns his head back as he stares at the ceiling.

DI Why'd you go for that move? You know you took me out too, and I could just as easily be laying in that bed next to you!

Acknowledging Di, Sol looks back over.

SOL (struggling) I'm sorry... But I don't understand why you brought -- him...

Stepping forward Michael stands up for himself.

MICHAEL You know why I'm here.

After the slight barrage of steady chinks in Sol's armor, he raises his defenses.

SOL I will be back. Even if I miss a race...

Becoming frustrated, yet feeling sorry for Sol, Georges cuts in.

GEORGES Sol. The doctor's say it's going to be at least three weeks...

Taking sever offense to Georges statement Sol fires back at the three.

SOL This is my year! I am points champion and I will not lose! I don't care if it kills me. I have to win!!!

Taken back by Sol, the three of them step back, giving up on the moment. As they exit the room, Sol looks at the ceiling tense and frustrated. As he swings the fist of his free arm into the mattress a tear runs down the side of his cheek.

EXT. STREETS OF TORONTO - AFTERNOON

SUPER: STREETS OF TORONTO

AERIAL SHOT: STREETS OF TORONTO

While the pack accelerates through the checkered flag, Michael is somewhere between fifth and eighth. Slowing through turn one, multiple cars collide. Michael, making a hard right, sneaks by as he accelerates through turn two and into the straight away.

EXT. AIRHART RACING PIT AREA - LATER

Speeding into the pit, the team jacks up the car as Michael flips up the visor on his helmet. Spotting the que Tommy tosses him a water bottle, where just as soon as he takes a sip, he tosses it back, just in time for the car to be dropped on four new tires and a full tank of fuel.

Accelerating, Michael exits out of the pit in a cloud of dust.

EXT. STREETS OF TORONTO - LATER

Rounding turns nine and ten, Michael, following three other cars hits the gas through turn eleven.

CUTAWAY TO: FINISH LINE

As the checkered flag is waived, Michael crosses in fourth place.

EXT. EDMONTON CITY CENTRE AIRPORT - EVENING

SUPER: EDMONTON CITY CENTRE AIRPORT

As the flag bearer waves the green flag, the field accelerates through turn one as Michael drops a few places, being passed by three different cars.

CUTAWAY TO: TURN NINE

At turn nine, the field collectively steps onto the gas through the straight away.

Nobody has collided on the opening lap.

EXT. MICHAEL'S RACE CAR - LATER

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Gripping the wheel with both hands, Michael is shifting up and down with this his thumbs across the buttons of the steering wheel, while following closely behind the back end of Alvarez. In his rearview mirrors the pack shadows him like a string through the breeze in his rearview mirrors.

EXT. AIRHART RACING PIT AREA - LATER

Pulling into the pit area, the Airhart Racing team hustles to remove a piece of plastic debris from the front of Michael's car as well as change out the nose.

Finally securing the new nose in place, Michael accelerates out of the pits, as Doc swings his clipboard in frustration.

EXT. EDMONTON CITY CENTRE AIRPORT FINISH LINE - LATER

AERIAL SHOT: FINISH LINE

The flag bearer is violently waving the checkered flag back and forth, while the pack, accelerating through turn fourteen, heads for the finish line. Numerous cars cross the line before Michael, as his car finally comes by in eighth place.

EXT. KENTUCKY SPEEDWAY - NIGHT

SUPER: KENTUCKY SPEEDWAY

As the bright stadium lights above shine down over the track, Michael is in second place, right behind Ackland, as they fly through turn one, fading through turn two.

EXT. AIRHART RACING PIT AREA - LATER

Changing tires, the team drops the jack as Michael's car accelerates out of the pit with two other cars right behind him. The members of the Airhart team, high five each other as they had the fastest pit of the three.

EXT. TROPHY PRESENTATION - LATER

Standing on the podium in third place, Michael is alongside Yoshi who placed first and Di, who placed second. Shaking up their champagne bottles, the three begin to hose each other, as champagne goes everywhere, effectively soaking all three, as the race crowd cheers.
EXT. MID-OHIO SPORTS CAR COURSE - AFTERNOON

AERIAL SHOT: MID-OHIO SPORTS CAR COURSE

SUPER: MID-OHIO SPORTS CAR COURSE

Charging under the green flag the pack makes its way towards turn one with Michael in hot pursuit of first place.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Making the cut through turn one, Michael misses a gear, forgetting to downshift as he avoids a complete spin out by driving through the grass and dropping a few places.

REVEAL:

Accelerating back onto the track, Michael emerges right behind the eighth place car.

EXT. MID-OHIO SPORTS CAR COURSE - LATER

Following the Lamborgini Pace Car, everyone in the pack is attempting to keep their tires warm by swerving back and forth as they proceed through the course.

EXT. MICHAEL'S RACE CAR - LATER

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Heading through the rear straight away, Michael sees the car's behind him fade into the distance as he accelerates with his the thumbs through all of his gears, reaching top speed faster than any other car.

REVEAL:

Downshifting through the next zig-zagging section of the track, Michael makes a pass, moving up one place.

EXT. MID-OHIO SPORTS CAR COURSE GRANDSTAND - LATER

From the crowded grandstand, race fans are cheering on their feet, as the pack heads through the last turn. Heading for the finish line, and the checkered flag, Michael crosses in fifth place.

EXT. INFINEON RACEWAY GRANDSTAND - EVENING

SUPER: INFINEON RACEWAY - SONOMA, CALIFORNIA

Watching the pack accelerate past the grandstand through the first set of turns, everybody's heads turn as they follow the cars through the beginning of the raceway.

EXT. AIRHART RACING PIT AREA - LATER

Coming to a quick halt into the pit, the Airhart team hoists the jack, tearing off Michael's blacks and replacing them with new reds.

REVEAL:

From road level of the turn one marbles, the line up cruises by, as the number eight car spins out. Being completely turned around, the next two cars almost hit him before he's finally able to accelerate again, as a puff of smoke is released from the car.

EXT. AIRHART RACING PIT AREA - LATER

Pacing back and forth as Doc usually does when his nerves are acting up, he starts hopping up and down as Michael passes the pits, thick in the pack. The amount of gum Doc has in his mouth is way too much, but he's too distracted with the race.

EXT. MICHAEL'S RACE CAR - LATER

Coming into turn five on the outside, Rossi makes a move to the inside just as Michael cuts in, sending Michael careening off the track to the outside.

Sliding out of control Michael smashes into the outer wall breaking the left wishbone as his front left tire flops back and forth like a broken appendage.

REVEAL:

Michael, still in the car is pounding his fist across the top before removing his steering wheel and hopping out of the car. Upset, he takes out his frustration by kicking the outer wall.

EXT. INFINEON RACEWAY FINISH LINE - LATER

Waving the checkered flag, the pack crosses the finish line, with Michael's car noticeably absent.

INT. ADRIAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Stepping inside the hospital room the NURSE, a middle-aged attractive mom, flips on the light switch.

CUTAWAY TO: ADRIAN'S BED

Approaching Adrian's bed the nurse stops for a moment before checking Adrian's vitals on the machine next to the bed. Talking out loud, she enjoys talking to him, even if he cannot hear her. Checking the machine and replacing the bags of fluid she tends to him.

NURSE (CONT'D) Let's just change these on out, and you should be all set.

Placing her hand across his forehead, Adrian is still completely unconscious.

NURSE (CONT'D) Well, I know this is the first night you've been alone, but I do have a surprise for you... (whispering) There's a race tonight.

Grabbing the remote the nurse turns on the tv, changing the channels until she finds the indy car race.

NURSE (CONT'D) If they ask if you were up late, deny it till the end.

Smiling, the nurse props up his hospital bed, and tucks him in before leaving the room.

REVEAL:

Closing the door, the scene is somewhat serene as Adrian unconscious, is listening to the race.

CU - TV, which is showing the Chicagoland Speedway.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHICAGOLAND SPEEDWAY - NIGHT

AERIAL SHOT: CHICAGOLAND SPEEDWAY

SUPER: CHICAGOLAND SPEEDWAY

TRACKING SHOT on Michael as he heads down pit row to the Airhart Racing Pit.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Looking at the large grandstand, the crowd is cheering loudly for their favorite drivers being announced. Upon hearing his name from the OFFSCREEN ANNOUNCER, Michael waves to the crowd.

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

Reaching the pit, the team is getting set up for the race. Spotting Doc, Michael approaches him.

> MICHAEL We gonna win one out there today?

DOC I hope so... As long as you ate your Wheaties.

Smiling, Michael takes his helmet from one of his teammates. Then hearing the crowd cheer, he turns around to see what the commotion is about.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Looking a few places behind them, Gage is standing in the pit being interviewed by Tracy Smith.

REVEAL:

Studying Gage, Michael realizes that this race is going to be much more competitive than he originally anticipated.

Walking up next to him, Doc spots Gage as well.

DOC (CONT'D) Well hells bells, I forgot to mention that our favorite competitor was returning this week... Better not lock up. He will be gunning for you...

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Gage, seemingly in a great mood, is laughing with Tracy and shaking the hands of those around him. Then, out of nowhere, Tommy calls Michael, snapping him out the daze.

TOMMY (O.S.)

Michael!

REVEAL:

Turning back towards the race car, the team is waiting for him to hop in.

TOMMY (CONT'D) You ready to go?

As a wave of confidence washes over Michael's face he smiles as he grabs his flame retardant mask. MICHAEL You better believe it.

BACK TO HUCK

Heading towards the car, Michael is just about to hop in when he hears a familiar voice behind him.

ANGELO (O.S.)

Michael.

As Michael turns around, Angelo is there completely unexpected.

MICHAEL

(shocked) Dad!

Meeting each other they share a father to son embrace. Michael caught off guard is slightly confused.

> MICHAEL (CONT'D) What are you doing here? What about Adrian?

> > ANGELO

I made a game time decision. After the nurse assured me that they would keep him company in my absence, I decided I needed to be here. She's even going to turn on the race in his room...

MICHAEL

Yeah?

ANGELO

Yeah... My other boy needed my support with the return of his rival. You're on a hell of a run Mike, and I don't think anybody saw it coming, but Gage is back now and he's going to be gunning for you.

MICHAEL

I'm ready...

Sharing a moment, the two, in agreement, embrace once again.

ANGELO

Good luck...

Grabbing his hood and pulling it over his head, Michael puts on his helmet and hops into the car. After securing the steering wheel he fires up the engine. EXT. CHICAGOLAND SPEEDWAY - LATER

As the pace car rounds turn number four and heads into the pit, the pack coming through turn three and four accelerates as the green flag is waved overhead.

Instantly spreading wider, Di, currently in fifth place, cuts to the outside.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Currently in seventh due to a less than stellar qualifying round, Michael spots Di as she cuts outside.

Rounding turns one and two, she stays outside, yet on three and four she briefly cuts in before cutting out again. Trying this on the following lap, the back end of Di's car starts to slide out as she comes out of turn four, careening into the outer wall. The pack narrowly avoids her.

Heading past and into the next lap, Michael spots the yellow flag being waved overhead as Doc pipes in.

DOC (V.O.) Better watch those turns close. We can't afford to lose the back end like Bertrand...

EXT. MICHAEL'S RACE CAR - LATER

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Driving in the pack, Michael spots the black widow maker of Gage in his gaining in his mirror. Only one car separates them, and just as fast as that one car was there, Gage makes a move, passing and falling in behind Michael in seventh.

> MICHAEL (V.O.) Gage is gaining on me Doc.

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

Watching the race with Tommy to his side, Doc responds into the headset.

DOC You better watch that son of a bitch. He's more unpredictable than a bag full of squirrels. Just look for the breaks and whatever you do, do not give him an inch!

BACK TO HUCK

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

As doc finishes the sentence two of the lead cars collide as one of them goes vertical.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

Oh shit!

Cutting just by the vertical car, Michael and Gage slide by as the car lands on two others, officially taking out four cars.

> MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D) Whoa! You see that Doc? A little too close...

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

Turning around, Doc looks back at Angelo as he wipes the sweat from his brow.

EXT. AIRHART RACING PIT AREA - LATER

As everyone comes into the pits at once, the team hustles as they jack the car, replace tires, and give Michael a little less fuel so he can beat the pack out. Dropping the car, Michael peels out of the pit.

> DOC Go! Go! Go!

During the mass exodus from the pits, two more cars collide.

EXT. CHICAGOLAND SPEEDWAY - LATER

Accelerating through turns one and two, Michael cuts to the inside as Gage cuts outside with Ackland in the middle going three wide.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

With Ackland right next to him, Michael can see Gage on the outside.

DOC (V.O.) Alright Mike, we've got no margins for error. You guys are three deep, and Gage is going for it!

Coming out of turn two Michael hits the gas going towards turn three as both Ackland and Gage are right there with him.

> MICHAEL (V.O.) I know Doc. We're running low on fuel though!

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

Stressing out in the pit Doc is rushing back and forth.

DOC Alright, we're going to make it through. I just need you to hold on!!!

BACK TO HUCK

Three wide, they come through turn four as the white flag is waved indicating the final lap.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Hugging the inside as tight as he can, Michael is up by a matter of a nose as the Ackland and Gage struggle to keep pace.

MICHAEL (V.O.) I think I got it by the nose!

BACK TO HUCK

Rounding turns three and four, Gage times the turn just right as his car slingshots with speed, not giving up an inch, while Ackland holds his own in the middle.

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

As his nerves are jumping a tensed up Doc, watches the final turn.

DOC Come on! Pay off! Pay off!!!

BACK TO HUCK

Rounding turn four the three are even.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Just then, Michael feels the loss of power as his gas gauge is bottoming out.

MICHAEL (V.O.) No, no, no!!!

CUTAWAY TO: GRANDSTAND P.O.V.

Heading towards the finish line, Michael's car begins to fall back as Gage takes the race, followed by Ackland, and Michael in third. Coming into the pit, Michael stops the car and raises his hands into the air frustrated.

Pulling the steering wheel off, Michael hops out of the car, removing his helmet and hood, before grabbing an Airhart racing hat and talking with Doc.

MICHAEL We totally had them going into that final turn and I ran out of gas with about fifty feet to go...

DOC Yeah I saw it, and it was my mistake. I'll take the heat for this one...

ANGELO You gave it a good shot son...

Just then Angelo's cellphone begins to vibrate, as he reaches into his pocket and pulls it out. Putting one hand over his ear opposite of the receiver he listens in to the call, while Michael and Doc continue to discuss the race.

> MICHAEL Ya know I just feel bad for the team on this one cause we worked so hard all week...

Hearing Michael, Tommy chimes in.

TOMMY Hey, don't forget we still made a lot of points and you lead quite a few laps.

MICHAEL

Yeah... you know you're right. We're looking good going into Japan, and I think if we're...

Suddenly Angelo cuts Michael off as he hollers his name in a sobering tone.

ANGELO

Michael...

Breaking his train of thought, Michael and Angelo share a moment looking into each others eyes as Angelo is speechless. Just then it hits him, that something's wrong. Noticing their expressions, both Tommy and Doc, realize what's happened. Lowering his head, Doc covers his eyes. INT. CHURCH: ADRIAN'S WAKE - MORNING

Standing like a book end at the end of the casket, Angelo is dressed in black. Next to him, Adrian, in a somber position with his hands placed by his stomach is dressed up for his final appearance. Michael, is noticeably absent.

Before him, random members of the local community are present, including NEIGHBORS, FRIENDS, and other FAMILY MEMBERS.

Angelo'S P.O.V.

Walking into the room with her MOTHER, Angelo spots Jeanie dressed in dark overtones with tears in her eyes. Holding her mother they approach the casket, as Angelo steps forward welcoming them.

BACK TO HUCK

ANGELO Thanks for coming...

JEANIE (crying) I'm so sorry...

Sharing a hug, Angelo kisses her on the head as he attempts to console her.

ANGELO Its not your fault...

Then, looking into the casket at Adrian, both Jeanie and her mother break down further upon touching Adrian's cold lifeless hands. Turning away, they head back towards the row of pews completely distraught before sitting down.

ANGELO'S P.O.V.

Spotting the doors open again, Doc walks into the room along with Tommy and the rest of the Airhart Racing Team. Sharing a glance, Doc lowers his head as they approach.

Stepping forward they each take a view of Adrian, just shocked by the moment. Turning towards Angelo, Doc says a few words.

> DOC He was one the best driver's I've ever had the privilege of working with.

> > ANGELO

I know Doc...

How's Michael handling it?

Shaking his head back and forth as if he's about to burst into tears, Angelo doesn't say a word.

Looking back at the casket once more, Doc sighs then pats Angelo on the shoulder before turning around and heading back for a seat.

DOC'S P.O.V.

Sitting down, Doc, looking around the room, realizes Michael is not present.

REVEAL:

Lowering his head again, Doc claps his hand as he says a prayer.

CUTAWAY TO: ENTRYWAY DOORS

While the doors open once more, the entire circuit of drivers begins to walk into the room. Di, Lance, Ackland, all of them. Even Gage is in attendance, walking through the door.

Heading to the casket, one by one, those in attendance look on as the drivers mourn the passing of one of their brothers.

BACK TO HUCK

Reaching the casket, they each say a few words to Angelo as well as shaking his hand and patting him on the back. Lance even gives him a hug, before they each look at the body.

Stopping last, Sol stands before Angelo feeling compelled to express his emotions.

SOL (somber) In the heat of competition, I sometimes say and do things that I don't mean, but...

ANGELO Sol. It's okay...

Breaking down, Sol begins to cry.

SOL

I'm so sorry...

Lowering his head, and wiping his eyes, Sol's shield is down.

Placing his hand on Sol's shoulder, Angelo consoles him as he's not an angry man, and has never been one to carry a grudge. Trying to always be strong and set a good example for his boys, over the years he's learned to keep his composure in the most difficult of times.

> ANGELO It's alright Solomon. I forgive you...

Upon hearing those words, Sol looks up. Nodding and wiping a tear from his eye, Sol walks back towards the pews.

EXT. MICHAEL'S GRAVE SITE - MORNING

Standing in the open plains on a cloudy morning, Angelo, Jeanie, her mother, friends, neighbors, family members, Doc, each of the race car drivers, and their entire race teams surround as the PREACHER shakes the last of the holy water over the closed casket.

The wind blows lightly as the branches of the large tree behind the marker sway like rippling ocean waves.

CU - ADRIAN'S GRAVE MARKER

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MICHAEL'S GRAVE SITE - EVENING

CU - ADRIAN'S GRAVE MARKER

As the camera PANS OUT, Michael is sitting on the freshly shifted dirt, staring at the marker. With his arms wrapped around his knees, he's rocking back and forth periodically burying his face into his arms.

REVEAL:

As Michael looks up, the hurt in his eyes is immense as he can hardly bare to read Adrian's name. Standing in the distance behind him, Angelo stopped, decides to approach him.

BACK TO HUCK

Placing his hand on Michael's shoulder, Angelo attempts to console his son, knowing how upset Michael must be to have missed the funeral.

ANGELO If you're going to be mad at anybody, you should be mad at me. He chose this path because of me... Frustrated, Michael shakes his head as he shrugs off Angelo's hand. Standing up, Michael walks away.

REVEAL:

Standing there Angelo attempts to call Michael back.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

Michael...

Letting him go, Angelo finally realizes that he needs to let Michael process Adrian's death in his own way.

Collapsing down, he sits in almost the very same position in front of Adrian's grave marker as I Michael was earlier. The large tree branches, swayed by a gust of turbulent wind, move like the raw emotion currently between the Airhart family.

EXT. TWIN RING MOTEGI - MORNING

SUPER: QUALIFYING, TWIN RING MOTEGI, JAPAN

Walking out towards her car, Di watches as Primo Rossi accelerates around the track for a competitive qualifying time.

DI'S P.O.V.

Looking around the pit she finally spots the Airhart Racing Team pit area, along with Michael's race car. The team appears to be ready for a trial run, yet Michael is nowhere to be found.

REVEAL:

With an ambiguous expression across her face she makes a brief frown before putting on her hood and helmet, and turning away towards her race car.

EXT. TWIN RING MOTEGI - AFTERNOON

AERIAL SHOT: TWIN RING MOTEGI

SUPER: TWIN RING MOTEGI

As the crowd cheers loudly for their favorite drivers, there's not a seat open in the house. The only other sound in the air is of engines roaring as the drivers and teams ready for the race.

CUTAWAY TO: PIT AREA

Lined up in the pit are multiple convertibles set with the task of driving two drivers each around the track for an introduction to the crowd.

DI'S CONVERTIBLE

In Di's convertible, she and Lance have been paired together.

REVEAL:

Making small talk while waving to the ruckus crowd, Di lets out what's on her mind.

DI Did you see Michael at all today?

LANCE Nah... Why, did you?

DI

No. I haven't seen him at all and that's not like him... I mean I saw his team yesterday getting ready for qualifying, but I never actually saw him in the car. I haven't seen him since Chicago.

LANCE Ah -- I'm sure he's around here somewhere. He'll turn up.

Attempting to smile, Di continues to wave to the crowd.

INT. AIRHART HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CU - TV

Flipping through the channels, the picture finally settles on an aerial shot of the Twin Ring Motegi in Japan. The same two commentators, Chip and Terry are commenting on the upcoming race.

> CHIP (V.O.) And noticeably missing from the race today is Michael Airhart and the Airhart Racing Team. Having just lost his brother to an accident earlier this year in St. Petersburg, he must be going through a lot.

TERRY Yeah it's a sad story Chip. (MORE)

TERRY (CONT'D)

You know there were so many goals and aspirations set forth for Adrian this year, and it was tragically cut short. I can only imagine what Michael is going through...

As the tv turns off, the OFFSCREEN SOUND of a pair of keys is heard among the rustling. Immediately following is the sound of the door opening, followed by its slamming.

As the 1969 Chevy Comaro in the garage ROARS to life, the race photos that cover the wall begin to rattle, calming only with the OFFSCREEN SOUND of SCREECHING TIRES that steadily fade into the distance.

EXT. AN OPEN MIDWEST ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Cutting through the silent night breeze, the 1969 Chevy Comaro roars with excessive speed.

REVEAL:

Behind the wheel, Michael is gripping the wheel with both hands as tears run down his face.

Down, shifting, the RPM's jump as Michael slams the gas, accelerating into the night.

INT. AIRHART HOUSE ENTRY WAY - AFTERNOON

The OFFSCREEN SOUND of the doorbell as heard, as Michael letting ring too many times to just be somebody passing by, he finally answers the door.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Standing before him Di is leaning against the wall, upset with her arms crossed.

REVEAL:

Standing there looking as if he had been hit by a dump truck, Michael, unshaven, depressed, and wearing only jeans and white t-shirt, looks into her eyes.

BACK TO HUCK

Sharing a moment, Di leans in to hug Michael, who instantly breaks down into her arms.

EXT. A DESERTED MIDWEST ROAD - EVENING

With the Camaro parked off the side of a loan deserted midwest road, Michael and Di lay on top of the hood with their backs against the windshield as they stare into the sky.

Feeling the need to communicate effectively and say what's on her mind, Di calls Michael out.

DI You know we missed you in Japan.

Silence from Michael as he doesn't say a word. As she begins to say more, Di starts to cry.

DI (CONT'D) And it wasn't just me... Your team needed you out there... You know that they were never informed that you never left for Japan? They even set up the car for qualifying...

As her sadness begins to turn to anger, it's being fueled even more by Michael's silence.

> DI (CONT'D) And what about the funeral?!? Your dad was all alone!!! Do you know how hard that was -- for all of us?!?

Stumbling to respond, Michael doesn't know quite what to say.

MICHAEL

I -- I'm sorry...

DI You should have seen the look on his face... He needed you out there!!! We all needed you!

Responding nervously Michael speaks.

MICHAEL I was -- too upset -- with myself...

DI

What?!? That's not good enough!

Cutting in Michael blurts out what's eating away at his nerves.

MICHAEL He died alone Di!!! Taken aback, the words sting Di just as hard as they do Michael, hearing them out of his own mouth. MICHAEL (CONT'D) In a hospital bed -- with nobody!!! None of us were there! I wasn't there, my father wasn't there, and Jeanie had left him a few weeks earlier... Trying to compose himself Michael wipes his eyes. MICHAEL (CONT'D) It's my fault he was alone! Т abandoned him to race -- and my dad -only left his side to see me race that night in Chicago! DT Well what about the season??? Are you at least going to finish the circuit??? Taken back by her statement, Michael throws it back at her. MICHAEL What? No! We lost him to racing -and in that I lost myself... Leaning up, Di is pissed off now. DI All those people -- the team -- your fans -- the other drivers... You know you have a chance to do something that's never been done... Hearing her words, deep down Michael knows she's right, but like driving through fog, he can't find his way out from where he is. DI (CONT'D) I knew you were competitive, but I never would have pegged you for a coward.

Hearing her scathing words they cut through him like a knife. Then, getting up, Di begins to walk away catching Michael completely off guard. Sitting up he calls after her.

MICHAEL

Di!

Raising her hand in the air is if she's heard enough, she shakes her head and leaves, willing to find her own way home.

INT. AIRHART HOUSE ENTRY WAY - MORNING

SUPER: The following morning...

OFFSCREEN SOUNDS of the door bell are heard once, twice, and a third time, before Michael, dressed in his pajamas, answers the door. Looking through the peephole, he opens the door.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Standing there in his doorway is Solomon Gage.

EXT. HOMESTEAD-MIAMI SPEEDWAY - MORNING

While the grass is still wet with dew, the looming race track is completely dry.

SUPER: HOMESTEAD-MIAMI SPEEDWAY, QUALIFYING

CUTAWAY TO: PIT ROW

Pulling her car into the pit, Di hops out, looking first at her posted time, then talking with a teammate for a brief moment. Stopping suddenly, something catches her eye.

DI'S P.O.V.

Further down the track, the Airhart Racing team is gearing up.

REVEAL:

Looking for a moment longer, Di turns her back as she heads back to her bus.

EXT. AIRHART RACING PIT AREA - LATER

As the team gears, prepping the car as well as the pit, Doc stops.

DOC'S P.O.V.

Spotting the faint figure of a silhouette with the sun in the distance, he appears to be heading his way.

REVEAL:

Also stopping and spotting the same figure Tommy nudges one of the other guys as they look on.

DOC'S P.O.V.

From the pit, Michael is visible now as he's walking up, full suit, carrying his helmet.

BACK TO HUCK

Approaching the team everyone stops.

MICHAEL

Hey guys...

Doc, though clearly excited, tries to play it off.

DOC Well -- look who it is... Where ya been?

Humbled, Michael responds.

MICHAEL I was in a dark place, that I don't ever want to go back to. It took a good kick in the ass along with a surprise visit to my house from Gage.

FLASHBACK - INT. ADRIAN'S COMARO - NIGHT

Sitting inside the Comaro with the garage door closed, Sol is in the driver's seat while Michael is in the passenger seat. Both doors are open, while Sol checks the mirror, before gripping the wheel one last time and looking over at Michael.

> SOL You race for family while I race for fame... In the end there is no black without white.

Extending his hand, Sol and Michael shake hands in a mutual understanding of each other's role in the circuit.

END OF FLASHBACK

EXT. AIRHART RACING PIT AREA - DAY

MICHAEL That really let me know how selfish I was -- and for that I want to apologize -- to all of you. I let you down once -- but I won't let you down again.

Quiet, everyone just looks on, unsure of what to say next. Breaking the silence Doc chimes in.

> DOC You mean to tell me I'm not driving today???

Smiling, Michael shrugs...

DOC (CONT'D) Well lets see what you got.

Just then Tommy chimes in as the rest of the guys get ready.

TOMMY Good to have you back Mike.

REVEAL:

Nodding, Michael stops for a moment, looking out over the race track in observation.

EXT. MICHAEL'S RACE CAR - LATER

Flying around the large oval track, Michael is attempting to post one of the best times of the day.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Rounding turn one and going into turn two, Michael hugs the inside before breaking out into the straight away.

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

Standing in the pit, Doc has his hand on his face, as he knows they need a solid qualifying position.

DOC Now we need a solid qualifier if we're going to make a run for the title.

INTERCUT: MICHAEL AND DOC

MICHAEL (V.O.) The car feels good Doc.

DOC'S P.O.V.

Watching Michael round turn four Doc follow's him as he excels through the finish line.

EXT. HOMESTEAD-MIAMI SPEEDWAY - AFTERNOON

AERIAL SHOT: HOMESTEAD-MIAMI SPEEDWAY

SUPER: HOMESTEAD-MIAMI SPEEDWAY, FINAL RACE

The Grandstand is packed as race fans are anxiously anticipating the final race of the year.

All of the cars are in there respective pits, teams scurrying like ants to tend to their every need, for the ultimate peek performance in the most important race of the year.

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

As the team tends to the race car, Michael is with Tommy looking at the computer specs, as the rest of the team paces with ideas and anticipation. From behind Michael hear's his name called.

> TRACY Michael... Michael...

Turning around, Tracy from the TV is their with her cameraman. Acknowledging them, Michael walks over to answer her questions.

MICHAEL

Hey...

Taking the queue, Tracy begins the interview.

TRACY

We're here live with Michael Airhart of Airhart Racing. Michael, you were noticeably absent from the last race, the Twin Ring Motegi. Where were you and what made you come back for Homestead?

Nodding, Michael responds with the truth.

MICHAEL

The loss of Adrian was very hard. I'm still not over it, but I eventually realized that I was letting a lot of people down -- some of which physically let me know in their own unique ways. I also knew that I couldn't let our team down, especially after all of the support that they've given me this whole year...

Nodding Tracy responds with a follow-up while holding up a standings chart.

TRACY

I'm not sure if you're aware, but even after missing the Twin Ring Motegi, coming into today's race you're third in the points standings behind Ebenezer Ackland and Solomon Gage... What's your strategy going to be today? Looking down at the chart, a surprised Michael, he was completely unaware.

MICHAEL We really are that close aren't we? Well I think you know my answer Tracy. I'm going for the win. With a little luck and a few breaks... Its going to be a great race.

Stepping aside, Tracy looks back towards the camera.

TRACY And there you have it. He's back to stay.

In the background the announcer exclaims Michael's name.

ANNOUNCER Michael -- Airhart!!!

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

CHEERING LOUDLY, the fans are in a standing ovation for Michael's return.

REVEAL:

Taken aback, Michael smiles and waves to the crowd.

EXT. HOMESTEAD-MIAMI SPEEDWAY STARTING GRID - CONTINUOUS

Walking out to the starting grid, a popular FEMALE SINGER is welcomed by the announcer to sing the National Anthem.

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

As she begins to sing, Michael and the rest of the team, remove their hats, placing them over their hearts.

REVEAL:

Closing his eyes and breathing deeply Michael takes in the moment, and brings himself to state of clarity as the breeze flows through his hair.

Opening his eyes, he looks to one side for Di.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Spotting Di, she notices his glare. Turning her head straight, she looks over the track attempting to ignore him, though she can quite obviously still feel his gaze.

REVEAL:

Looking back straight, Michael now turns to his right.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Spotting Gage, Michael watches him with poise. Acknowledging the stare, Gage looks back at Michael, as both competitors know its going to be a battle.

Finishing the National Anthem, three F-18 fighter jets roar directly over the track, as the OFFSCREEN SOUNDS of the crowd cheering wildly are heard. Gage nods his head as if to say game on.

REVEAL:

Acknowledging the nod with a slight grin, Michael, ready to race, grabs his helmet as a familiar voice behind him, calls his name.

ANGELO

Hey Mike...

Turning around, Michael spots his father.

MICHAEL

Dad!

Sharing a quick embrace, Angelo wishes him well.

ANGELO Good luck out there today. You're a hell of a driver and a great son. Adrian would be so proud of you...

Taking in the kind words, Michael smiles.

MICHAEL Thanks dad... See you after the race. This one's for you...

Pulling his hood on, Michael follows up with the helmet before hopping into the car.

EXT. HOMESTEAD-MIAMI SPEEDWAY STARTING GRID - LATER

Positioned in the staring grid due to their qualifying times, Michael is beginning the race in seventh place, while Gage is in sixth.

CUTAWAY TO: WALL IN FRONT OF THE GRANDSTAND

Standing on the wall a LOCAL CELEBRITY from Miami speaks in Spanish first, then in English:

LOCAL CELEBRITY Gentlemen -- Start your engines!!!

BACK TO HUCK

As the cars come alive the engines begin to roar all around.

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

Looking back Tommy and shaking his arms a little bit, Doc comments on the start-up.

DOC Still gives me goose bumps!

Smiling Tommy looks out towards the track.

EXT. HOMESTEAD-MIAMI SPEEDWAY - LATER

Zig-zagging to and fro, every driver in the pack is warming their tires behind the Aston Martin Pace Car.

CUTAWAY TO: STARTING LINE

Crossing under the tower, the flag bearer holds the white flag straight out, meaning one more lap.

GRANDSTAND P.O.V.

Following, the cars behind the pace car round turns one and two, while the pace car accelerates through straight away. Going into turns three and four, it pulls away towards the pits as the pack accelerates.

STARTING LINE

Waving the green flag violently over head the race has begun as the pack instantly spreads, becoming three wide in multiple areas going into turn one and two. Just as this happens, two cars collide on the inside, spinning out one and sending the other towards the wall.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Spotting the ensuing crash, Michael having no time to react, cuts hard to the inside right behind Gage barely missing the crash, yet cutting so far into the inside that they slide wildly through the infield.

Following Gage back onto the track in a jiff, both he and Michael managed to avoid the wreck. Dropping two places each though, Gage and Michael are now ninth and tenth.

> MICHAEL (V.O.) You see that Doc?!?

DOC Yeah I did. We lost two places but we're still in the race. No matter what, you cannot lose Gage...

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Following Gage like a shadow, Michael stalks behind him as they follow the pace car through the yellow flag.

EXT. HOMESTEAD-MIAMI SPEEDWAY - LATER

Rounding turn one going through turn two, Michael is right behind Gage as they're still ninth and tenth in the running order.

Gunning it through the straight away, Gage's car is fading from side to side as if he's going to go for a move. Just then, two more cars collide on turn three, drifting into a third, as all three of them suffer irreversible damage.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Following Gage again, both he and Michael cut inside, gaining three places, as they narrowly avoid the racing mayhem to their right.

CUTAWAY TO: CHIP AND TERRY IN THE BOOTH

In the booth upstairs, Chip and Terry comment with great surprise at the second crash of the day.

CHIP And oh! Paulo Pinto collides with Aleron Raineau, sending Raineau into Lance Deschamps!!!

Shaking his head, Terry can't believe it.

TERRY The final race of the year, and another three go down, its just too bad Chip...

Responding Chip brings up an important fact.

CHIP Yes indeed, but all eyes remain on our leader, Ebenezer Ackland, as well as Solomon Gage and Michael Airhart, who both managed to dodge the pileup. All three points leaders are still alive!

EXT. AIRHART RACING PIT AREA - LATER

Peeling into the Airhart Racing pit, Michael comes to a sudden stop as the team hustles to throw on new tires and add fuel.

Pounding his hand on the hood of the car, Michael never even motions for water. Meanwhile on the outside, Doc is swinging his arm in a windmill fashion, encouraging the team to hurry as he gallops back and forth.

Poised in front of the car, Tommy, leaning on it with his left hand, gives Michael the signal, the moment the fuel hose is pulled from the car, Michael accelerates out of the pits. Following his car, other cars in the same scenario exit at random state of madness.

DOC'S P.O.V.

Racing out of the pit, Michael is once again, right behind Gage.

EXT. HOMESTEAD-MIAMI SPEEDWAY - LATER

GRANDSTAND P.O.V.

Following the pack as they cross the line signaling the beginning of another lap, Ackland is leading the race, followed by Di in second place and Pascual Alvarez in third. Gage and Michael round out the top five.

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

DOC'S P.O.V.

Following the leaders, Doc watches as they come out of the turn four heading into the straight away. Michael is right with Gage as they're running even.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Looking to his left, Gage is barely edging him out as the two are almost even.

MICHAEL (V.O.) Doc, I'm running even with him! On the next lap or so I might have him!

INTERCUT: DOC AND MICHAEL

DOC I don't know kid... You better watch out that you're not buying into snake oil! He may be setting you up...

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Looking to his left at Gage, Michael spots Ackland in front of him. Completely losing his traction around turn one, Ackland cuts violently towards the wall. Impacting with force, Ebenezer then cuts sharply back into the track, spinning Di out completely.

Navigating through once more like an electrical charge, Michael goes outside, following Alvarez.

CUTAWAY TO: CHIP AND TERRY IN THE BOTH

Jumping in their seats, both Chip and Terry are in complete shock.

CHIP

Oh my!!! Just like that Ebenezer Ackland is out the race, taking Diana Bertrand with him!!!

Shaking his head, Terry knows that crash may have cost him the points title.

TERRY

He must have hit some marbles... Going into turn one, to wreck like that at this point in the race. And for her at least she only spun out, but the position lost is going to be tough to make up at this point.

CHIP

Wow... you really have to feel for Ackland, as that not only cost him the race, but maybe even the points championship...

TERRY

I'll tell you, if I'm Solomon Gage or Michael Airhart, this race just got a lot more interesting...

Grinning at Terry's statement Chip completely agrees.

CHIP

You can say that again.

EXT. HOMESTEAD-MIAMI SPEEDWAY - LATER

Rounding turn three Michael is right behind Alvarez.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Hugging the inside, Michael is almost to the point of drafting Alvarez, but even more important, he still has eyes on Gage, who's following him like a shadow in his rearview mirrors. MICHAEL (V.O.) He's right behind me Doc! What do you want me to do?!?

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

As the team watches in anticipation, Doc is running from side to side, spinning like a ballet dancer. Swinging his clipboard, he pulls the microphone to his mouth.

> DOC You gotta hold the reigns on that stallion!!! When Alvarez pits, you pit! Whatever you do, do not give up that place to Gage!!!

DOC'S P.O.V.

Following Alvarez, Michael and Gage are both in pursuit as the top three come out of turn four. All three drivers are running very fast. Even still, Michael, having the fastest car has been gaining on Alvarez.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Rounding turns one and two, Michael accelerates through the straight away going into three and four. Watching Alvarez like and eagle, Michael spots him make a sudden cut to the inside pits.

MICHAEL (V.O.) He's going for it!!!

Grandstand P.O.V.

As Alvarez guns it into the pits, Michael follows while Gage playing follow the leader, also comes in.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Seeing Gage in his mirrors behind him, Michael knows the team has to hustle, as he makes his way into the Airhart pit.

AIRHART PIT

Throwing on a fresh set of blacks, the team is working as fast as they can to give Michael an edge over Alvarez. Flipping up his visor, Michael is yelling for the team to hurry.

> MICHAEL (CONT'D) Go! Go! Go!!!

REVEAL:

Spotting the near collision the entire team, including Doc, jumps at the suspense, then shakes their heads collectively in relief as Alvarez races by.

EXT. HOMESTEAD-MIAMI SPEEDWAY - LATER

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Following Gage like his shadow, Michael's competitive nature is peaking, as the two play a cat and mouse game. Each time Michael cuts outside, Gage cuts outside. When Michael cuts inside, Gage cuts inside.

CUTAWAY TO: CHIP AND TERRY IN THE BOOTH

Standing with eager anticipation like a children on Christmas morning, both Chip and Terry are leaning on the glass.

CHIP And with that, on the final race of the year, its coming down to a cat and mouse game, between one of racing's most dangerous drivers along with one of its most talented new drivers. I'll tell you Terry, the odds makers in Vegas have got to be sweating bullets on this one!!!

TERRY Hell, I'm not even racing and I'm sweating!!!

BACK TO HUCK

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Spotting the rear of Gage's widow maker, Michael suddenly hears a faint whisper of Adrian's words from the past.

ADRIAN (O.S.) (whispering) Smoke em Mike! Smoke em...

Gripping the wheel with a sudden burst, Michael know he has to make a move.

MICHAEL (V.O.) I'm gonna bait him doc!!! Let's take him back to Indianapolis!!!

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

Wiping his brow, Doc doesn't know what to think as he looks on helplessly.

> DOC (panicked) Indy??? What??? Oh shit!!!

BACK TO HUCK

Gaining on Gage, Michael is a few inches off of his rear bumper.

GAGE'S P.O.V.

Spotting Michael in his mirrors Gage is trying to anticipate where Michael's going. He knows full well that Michael has the fastest car, so whichever side, Gage needs to completely block him.

CUTAWAY TO: TOWER

As the flag bearer waves the flag signaling the final lap, the entire grandstand crowd rises to its feet.

GRANDSTAND P.O.V.

Following the two drivers, they cross the line battling each other into turn one and two.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Coming out of turn two, Michael lets up briefly before completely flooring it.

GAGE'S P.O.V.

From his rearview mirrors going into turns three and four, Gage suddenly spots Michael cut outside, then hard to the inside, as Gage goes for the close, he completely takes the bait.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Not going inside though, Michael accelerates to the outside again, as Gage completely unaware, left the door wide open for him!

CUTAWAY TO: AIRHART PIT

Standing there watching with their nerves on end, Doc and the rest of the team can't have even blinked in the last minute.

REVEAL:

With nervous anticipation Angelo knows this may be it.

CUTAWAY TO: CHIP AND TERRY IN THE BOTH

CHIP And on the final straight away Airhart makes a move as he fakes Gage to the inside!!!

BACK TO HUCK

GRANDSTAND P.O.V.

Exiting turn four, Michael steadily gaining on Sol is almost completely even with him.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Only able to see Gage in his peripheral vision, Michael goes for everything the car has!

CUTAWAY TO: FINISH LINE

SFX: Pausing in real time as if a polaroid photo were being snapped, Michael manages to pass Sol by a nose.

EXT. AIRHART PIT - CONTINUOUS

Jumping for joy, both Doc and Angelo leap into the air with excitement and disbelief, as the entire team explodes like a fireworks display!

INT. HOMESTEAD-MIAMI SPEEDWAY UPSTAIRS BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Jumping out of their chairs, both Chip and Terry can't believe is a Terry knocks his hat off in joy.

> CHIP And Airhart takes the race!!! Airhart takes the race!!! Oh my!!! Against all odds Airhart takes Homestead!!!

EXT. HOMESTEAD-MIAMI SPEEDWAY - CONTINUOUS

REVEAL:

Taken aback Michael, in complete shock, is pumping his fist into the air.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Congratulating him, Gage as well as the rest of the remaining drivers congratulate him with various hand gestures, with

the exception of Di, who pulls next to him, but does not motion.

GRANDSTAND P.O.V.

Continuing through his victory lap, Michael, bringing the car across the finish line once more, takes it through multiple donuts in the infield as the crowd cheers wildly. High-fives are had all around in celebration.

Smoke and dirt is kicked up all around as a symbolic release on par with the struggles of the entire year.

EXT. AIRHART RACING PIT AREA - CONTINUOUS

Pulling the car into the pit, Michael hops out, throwing his helmet off as the entire team is jumping for joy. Shaking Doc, he and Michael share a hug. Then, finding his father, Michael and he share a hug, where neither one will let go, as tears begin to stream down.

ANGELO

You did it! You actually did it! Adrian would be so proud of you!

Kissing Michael on the cheek, Angelo lets go as Michael knows there's one more person he needs to see. Running towards Di's pit area, he spots her putting away her helmet, completely unaware that he's running towards her.

CUTAWAY TO: DI'S PIT AREA

Stopping just short Michael calls her name.

MICHAEL

Di!

Caught off guard, she turns around to find Michael as well as many others behind him. Looking into his eyes, she knows how much this meant to him.

> MICHAEL (CONT'D) I couldn't have done it without you...

As Michael's eyes become even more tear soaked and bloodshot, he and Di finally give in to instinct as they lock lips in a passionate embrace.

GRANDSTAND P.O.V.

From the grandstand, the crowd cheers wildly as Michael and Di share an emotional kiss.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.

Stopping to take in the moment Michael looks one hundred and eighty degrees taking in the moment.

REVEAL:

Briefly lowering his head for only a moment, his fist suddenly fires to the sky, clenched, as if to say, we did it.

END CREDITS:

FADE TO BLACK: