

DOWN HOME BLUES

By

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FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - EARLY MORNING

We start on a nice pair of black-and-white Nike sneakers casually strolling INTO OUR FRAME.

We slowly pan up to reveal RUSSELL BLUES, (28, black), cool but stern, sluggishly stopping at an apartment.

He pulls out a slip that says "STRODE BAIL BONDS" at the top. At the bottom, there's a picture of a Latino man. He is BIG DANNY, huge -- 300 pounds huge.

RUSSELL

Well, here I go...I'm about to free Willy.

Russell KNOCKS on the door.

BIG DANNY (O.S.)

(sluggish)

Who the hell is it?!

RUSSELL

(proper voice)

Hi, is Danny Nunez home?

BIG DANNY (O.S.)

(sluggish)

I'm Danny Nunez. Who are you?

RUSSELL

(proper voice)

Mr. Nunez, my name is Clarence Parker. I'm from Publisher's Clearinghouse, and I'm proud to announce that you're our winner of the \$10,000,000 jackpot!

BIG DANNY (O.S.)

(awake)

Yeah! I won! I won! I won! I'm rich, bitch!

(singing)

'Money, money, money, money! MONEY!
Money, money, money, money! MONEY!'

BIG DANNY, in full view -- 300 pounds smaller, answers the door. He is shocked to see Russell.

RUSSELL

Whassup, Big Danny! Damn, you lost some weight, you look good! How come you ain't been by Strode's to see us? You know we miss you.

BIG DANNY

Oh shit!

INT. BIG DANNY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Big Danny tries to shut the door on Russell. Russell blocks the door with his right foot and bursts in. Big Danny throws an empty rose vase at him. As Russell ducks, Big Danny jumps out of his third story window.

RUSSELL

I'm gonna kick your ass!

Russell jumps out of the window and takes off after him.

EXT. INNER CITY BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

The chase is on! Russell chases Big Danny all up the sidewalk. Big Danny is leaving our boy in the dust. They are ducking and dodging pedestrians.

The chase jumps into the streets. They are ducking and dodging busy oncoming traffic. Big Danny edges out an oncoming car.

DRIVER (O.S.)

Watch where you're going, you crazy ass bastard!

Big Danny flips off the driver. Big Danny and Russell jump back on the sidewalk. They duck and dodge more pedestrians.

Big Danny spots a motorized wheelchair in front of a barbershop. He hops on it and takes off. An ELDERLY MAN rushes out of a barbershop, furious.

ELDERLY MAN

Hey, come back with my wheelchair, you crackhead son of a bitch!

Russell searches for an alternative option. He spots a 10-speed Huffy parked on the curb. Russell hops on it and goes after Big Danny. A PRE-TEEN BOY walks out of a convenient store and notices his bike is missing. He sees Russell riding it up the street. He is pissed!

PRE-TEEN BOY
Gimme my bike back, asshole!

Russell catches up with Big Danny. Big Danny puts more speed on the wheelchair and burns rubber. Russell is peddling with all his power to edge closer to him.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Big Danny makes a quick turn into the alley. He ditches the motorized wheelchair and goes back on foot. Russell makes a sharp turn and pedals hard after him.

Big Danny spots a fence at the end. Russell is a couple of steps behind him. Russell catches up to him. Too late! Big Danny jumps over the fence. Russell hops off the bike and jumps over the fence.

We pan over to a tattered sign that says "BEWARE OF THE DOG". We hear the BARKING AND SNARLING of a ferocious pit bull.

BOTH
Oh shit!

They JUMP back over the fence.

BIG DANNY
(sticks out both hands)
I'll go with you.

Our boy slaps the cuffs on Big Danny and escorts him OUT OF FRAME.

EXT. PRISON PARKING LOT - NIGHT

DR. MAYNOR, (60s), walks over to his Chrysler 300 and unlocks the door.

INT. CHRYSLER 300 - NIGHT

Dr. Maynor gets in the car, puts his keys in the ignition. He starts up the engine. Suddenly, he is startled by a menacing VOICE.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Hello, Dr. Maynor.

Dr. Maynor looks in his mirror and sees DeMARCO RENO, (30s), a ruthless-hearted criminal, sitting in the backseat.

DR. MAYNOR
What the hell are you doing in my
car?!

RENO
Relax, Doc. If you do what I say,
and don't try anything stupid; you
won't be hurt. Just drive.

Reno ducks down deep in the backseat. They back out and pull
off.

INT. CHRYSLER 300 - MOVING - MOMENTS LATER

Dr. Maynor drives through a backstreet. Reno rises back up
from the backseat.

RENO
Pull over. I just realized
something.

Dr. Maynor parks on the curb.

DR. MAYNOR
What?

RENO
(pulls out a syringe)
I have no use for you anymore, Doc.

DR. MAYNOR
Come on Reno, don't do this! I'll
give you anything you want! Please,
just don't kill me. No, don't!

He unscrews the syringe, and shoots up Dr. Maynor with a
speedball in his arm. Dead instantly. Reno gets out of the
car, puts the corpse near the dumpster. He gets in car and
drives off.

EXT. CHICAGO - MORNING

The Windy City is alive! A bright humid day, no clouds in the
sky. As the city's in full bloom, we see SEVERAL SHOTS of the
real people who make up Chicago. It seems everybody moves to
the same beat.

EXT. STRODE BAIL BONDS - MORNING

A North Side storefront. A 1987 Chevy El Camino pulls up in
front of the bail bonds. Russell gets out and darts inside.

INT. STRODE BAIL BONDS - CONTINUOUS

All bail bond offices are junky. This one is no exception. The secretary JENNY, (26), stops Russell in his tracks.

JENNY

Russell, Mia said she wanted to see you when she got back ASAP.

RUSSELL

Did she say what for?

JENNY

No. You changed your mind about going to your family reunion?

RUSSELL

My answer is the same today as it was three days ago: no, no, and hell no. I don't feel like dealin' with my dysfunctional-ass kinfolk and that's that.

MIA STRODE, (50), enters with two boxes of Krispy Kreme doughnuts.

MIA

Russell, I need to see in my office.

She sits the boxes on Jenny's desk. Everybody gets their first dibs on the doughnuts. They walk over to her desk. The two sit across from each other.

RUSSELL

So, whassup, Mia. What you need to see me about?

MIA

First of all, I just got off the phone with a pissed off father who claimed "someone" that fitted the description of my bounty hunter stole his 12-year-old son's bike.

RUSSELL

Boss lady, I didn't know that was the lil' boy's bike--I swear.

Mia isn't buying it.

MIA

Cut the bullshit, Russell! That may work on these poot butt crooks out there on the streets! But, that ain't gonna work on me! I was a cop for over 20 years.

RUSSELL

Sorry.

Mia hands Russell a folder. Russell opens it.

CLOSE-UP ON: A MUGSHOT OF EL BANKSTON, a three-time loser.

MIA

That's your next assignment.

RUSSELL

El Bankston?! Ain't that the dude who was in the big diamond heist four years ago? Then he killed the rest of his crew, ripped off his ex-partner and took off with the diamond?

MIA

Right, right, right and wrong, Russell. Yes, he was a part of that diamond heist four years ago, he did kill the other crew members. And, he did rip off his ex-partner, but it wasn't just any ex-partner.

(beat)

It was DeMarco Reno.

INT. LOUISIANA SUPERDOME - VENT - MORNING

EL BANKSTON, (28, white), unscrews the door open with a silent drill. El crawls into the vent with a flashlight. Pause.

MIA (V.O.)

You wanna hear the punch line?

RUSSELL (V.O.)

What?

MIA (V.O.)

I bailed out Bankston.

He spots something, he shines the flashlight on a duct-taped 'X' over a black jewelry box.

MIA (V.O.)
If I knew it was him; I wouldn't
have put up the bond.

El excitedly rips off the 'X', opens the box and takes out a diamond. It's The Sancy Diamond. El is excited!

EL
Welcome home, beautiful.

He kisses the diamond.

INT. STRODE BAIL BONDS - CONTINUOUS

MIA
And, now to make matters worse Reno
just escaped from jail last night.

RUSSELL
How?

MIA
Well, according to my friends down
at the prison; he broke in the
prison doctor's car and killed him.
Even took off with the man's car.
They found him a block away from
the prison this morning.

Beat.

RUSSELL
The doc got some medicine he didn't
prescribe.

MIA
That's not the point Russell. The
point is that the shit's about to
hit the fan. I need you to find
Bankston and I need you to find him
fast. 'Cause if you don't two
things are gonna happen.

(beat)
One, Reno's gonna find him and off
him. Or, two the Feds are gonna
convince him to testify against
Reno. Either way, I'm out of
business and on the street. So, I
need you to go and get him,
Russell.

RUSSELL

No, Mia, this sound too risky. Give it to somebody else, or why don't you go get him.

MIA

Russell, I've tried giving it to everybody else. They don't want this job.

RUSSELL

Add my name to the list.

MIA

Russell, you are my last resort. I don't have any other bounty hunters to turn to.

(a beat)

I'll make it worth your while: I'll pay you \$50,000.

Russell ponders the proposal, instantly changes his mind.

RUSSELL

OK.

MIA

Yes! Thanks, Russell. You are a lifesaver. You gotta have him back here by Tuesday at midnight. Beat him, cuff him, taser him, do whatever you gotta do.

Russell is heading out the door.

RUSSELL

You won't regret this, Mia.

MIA

I hope not. If I do, you're last name ain't just gonna be Blues, but you're gonna be singin' them at the unemployment office.

INT. '87 CHEVY EL CAMINO - MOVING - AFTERNOON

Our boy cruises through the busy South Side streets. Russell checks out an attractive lady walking by. Russell notices a car pulling out on the curb.

RUSSELL

Oh shit!

He instantly SWERVES out of harm's way. His cell phone RINGS twice. Russell answers it.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Hello.

INT. NICE HOUSE IN SHREVEPORT - INTERCUT

BETTY BLUES, Russell's sweet and carefree mother, (55, black), is on the other end. She's in the kitchen cooking dinner.

BETTY

Well, well, well. I think my youngest son forgot he has a loving mother.

RUSSELL

(laughs)

Hey, Mom. How you doing?

BETTY

I've been fine. I should be askin' you that question. You the one up there in The Windy City with all the gangstas, thugs, pimps, and criminals.

RUSSELL

I'm doing good. How's Pop?

BETTY

He's fine, he went fishing with Mr. Bond. He'll be back soon.

(slight pause)

So are you coming to the family reunion this weekend?

RUSSELL

No, I'm gonna be busy this weekend.

BETTY

Where have I heard that excuse before? You been busy for the last eight years. You should never be too busy for your family, baby. Are you ashamed of us or something?

RUSSELL

No, it's not that, Mama.

BETTY

Well, what is it, Russy Dusty?

Russell doesn't answer.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Russell, I know you and your father don't always see eye-to-eye on things. But, he does miss you, he just got a funny way of admitting to it. June and Jodie really wanna see you again. Your niece and nephew gettin' bigger by the day. They just growing like weeds.

(sighs)

It's a shame because I had a surprise for you, too.

RUSSELL

What?

BETTY

(beat)

It's not 'what', it's 'who'.

RUSSELL

Who?

BETTY

I'm not tellin' you. I just told you it's a surprise. If you come to the reunion, you'll know who it is.

(beat)

But, you're "too busy" to come. So, you ain't gonna know.

Russell parks on the curb.

RUSSELL

Mom, I gotta go; I'll talk to you later. I love you.

BETTY

Love you too, baby. Be careful.

RUSSELL

I will, Mom.

They hang up.

INT. LI'S CHINESE RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Every Chinese restaurant is greasy and decorated with Chinese artifacts and posters. This one is no exception. Russell walks through the door.

RUSSELL

Li! Li! You back there?

LI, (28, Chinese-American), emerges from the kitchen and sees Russell.

LI

Whassup, Blues. How you been? Long time, no hear from.

RUSSELL

I'm good. You been staying outta trouble?

LI

Man, hell yeah. Ever since you busted my ass four years ago, I've been flyin' on the straight and narrow. I've been running this joint, and trying to expand my endeavors.

(beat)

Matter of fact, let me show one of them in the back.

Russell walks through the kitchen with him.

INT. BACK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The pair stop at the door.

LI

Playa, open your eyes 'cause you ain't never seen nothin' like this before.

(opens the door)

Welcome to Paradise, Blues.

A full blown massage parlor has taken over the back room. Three fine Masseuses, (various races), giving relaxing massages to clients.

RUSSELL

This is sweet!

LI

That's not all. Gina, can you open the doors please?

She does. Behind the double doors, THIRTEEN BEAUTIFUL MASSEUSES, a la Rush Hour 2. Russell is truly in paradise.

RUSSELL
This is paradise for real.

LI
Yessir, it is.

RUSSELL
Can I take a couple of 'em home?

Beat.

LI
Oh, no, my brother. You got to get your own.

RUSSELL
Damn! But for real, I'm really here to ask you a question about El Bankston. Have you seen him lately?

LI
No. No, man. I haven't seen him.

Russell gives him a look -- Don't B.S. me.

LI (CONT'D)
I'm tellin' you, Russell. I haven't seen El.

Russell gives him the look again.

LI (CONT'D)
OK. He came by the other day, we laughed, talked, and had a few beers. He said he was going back to New Orleans to be with his girl. She's pregnant.

RUSSELL
Did he say anything about the diamond?

LI
No.

Russell walks out the back room.

RUSSELL
Thanks, Li.

LI
No problem, anything to help. Next time the massage is on me!

INT. RUSSELL'S APARTMENT - EVENING

A typical bachelor pad. Clean but little furniture. Russell sits on the couch eating dinner and watching "Good Times". He checks through his mail. Bills, bills, and student loans. Someone KNOCKS at the door, Russell gets up and answers the door. It's SPECIAL AGENT RICHIE DAMERON, (53, white).

RUSSELL

Hello. May I help you?

DAMERON

Hello, Mr. Blues.

(flashes his badge)

I'm Special Agent Richie Dameron of the FBI. I just need to come in to ask you a few questions. If that's okay with you.

RUSSELL

Yeah, come on in.

Dameron enters the apartment.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Can I get you anything? Pop, beer, juice, water?

DAMERON

No thanks. I came here to ask you some questions about El Bankston.

RUSSELL

Never heard of him, Agent Dameron.

DAMERON

(beat)

I think you have. Your company Strode Bail Bonds has hired you to look for him. That's one lesson you learn real quick, Russell. Never lie to the government because we know everything.

RUSSELL

Well, thank you for that American Government lesson.

DAMERON

OK, smart ass, let's cut the bullshit. You stay away from our case. Bankston is my shot to get DeMarco Reno, and I'm bringin' him into Federal Court.

(MORE)

DAMERON (CONT'D)

I've been on this case for the last four years. And, I'm not about to let be pissed away by some amateur, wanna-be cop. Do we understand each other?

RUSSELL

Hey, you the man.

DAMERON

Thank you and have a nice evening.

Dameron leaves the apartment.

INT. CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Russell moves through the robbery division with DETECTIVE CHAMBERS. Other Detectives sit and work at their desks. The joint is JUMPING as usual.

RUSSELL

My man Chambers!

CHAMBERS

Uh-oh. Here we go again.

RUSSELL

What you mean by 'Uh-oh'?

CHAMBERS

Everytime you say that shit, you want something. So what do you want this time, Russell?

RUSSELL

I don't want nothing. I just came by to see you.

CHAMBERS

Negro, you can see me at my house anytime. You gotta try harder.

Russell unwraps his Mr. Goodbar and starts eating it.

RUSSELL

Alright. I need a small favor.

CHAMBERS

How small is it?

RUSSELL

I need the booking slip for this dude named El Bankston.

CHAMBERS

Hold on a second, I'll get it for you.

RUSSELL

Thanks.

Chambers looks up the arrest sheet on the computer, prints it and gives it to Russell. Russell glimpses at it, and sees a number with a "504" area code. He grins from ear to ear.

CHAMBERS

What's up?

RUSSELL

Gimme a scrap piece of paper.

He does. Russell jots down the number.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Five-oh-four.

(beat)

I'm headin' to The Big Easy, baby.

EXT. DOWNTOWN BLOCK - DAY

Reno strolls down the street blending in with the crowd. He digs into his pocket and finds a crumpled piece of paper. Reno takes a glance at it.

CLOSE-UP ON: THE PAPER

A name that says "The Phantom", and under it a phone number that says "312-555-9294".

He stops a male Pedestrian who is in a deep conversation on his cell phone.

RENO

Excuse me, sir. May I please borrow your phone?

Reno cold cocks him in the face and takes his phone. He dials the number. The phone rings.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

(distorted)

Hello.

RENO

May I speak to The Phantom?

THE PHANTOM (O.S.)
 (distorted)
 This is me, Mr. Reno. I hit the
 jackpot in the lotto by findin' an
 old friend of yours, El Bankston.

RENO
 What's in it for you?

THE PHANTOM (O.S.)
 (distorted)
 About two-thirds of the diamond.
 You're ready for his address?

Reno retrieves a pen from his pocket.

RENO
 OK, I'll cut you in. I'm ready.

THE PHANTOM (O.S.)
 (distorted)
 It's 7109 Prytania Street,
 apartment three. It's in New
 Orleans.

Reno scribbles down the address.

RENO
 OK. Thank you very much.

THE PHANTOM (O.S.)
 (distorted)
 Glad to help.

INT. RENO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is junky. Clothes everywhere. Reno sits at his
 computer booking plane tickets online. Confirmed.

RENO
 El, you're about to have a surprise
 visitor. I'm reclaiming what
 belongs to me.

INT. PLANE - NIGHT

Russell relaxes in his coach seat, soaring toward New Orleans
 on the red-eye. He lets his seat back, puts his headphones on
 and turns on his iPod. Michael Jackson's classic "Bad" BLARES
 over the headphones. He bobs his head to the music.

RUSSELL
 (singing)
 'You know I'm bad, I'm bad. You
 know it. I'm bad, I'm bad. C'mon!'

Russell hears the KID next to him, snickering. He looks over next to him, and spots the Kid, no more than eleven, looking at a porno magazine. He takes off his headphones.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
 Whoa, little man. Don't you think
 you a little young to be reading
 that?

KID
 I got it from my daddy's suitcase.
 My teacher said that I need to read
 more to help my vocabulary.

RUSSELL
 (laughs)
 No. It's vocabulary.

KID
 Whatever. I've learned some new
 words.

RUSSELL
 Like what?

KID
 (points to the words)
 'Measurements', 'bust', and 'Triple
 Ds'.

The Kid's Mom instantly jumps up and turns around.

KID'S MOM
 (snatches it from him)
 Derek, where the hell did you get
 this from?

KID
 From Daddy's suitcase.

KID'S MOM
 Oh really?

She wakes her husband up.

KID'S DAD
 (aggravated)
 What?!

KID'S MOM
(shows him the magazine)
You mind explaining this.

KID'S DAD
That ain't mine.

Beat.

KID'S MOM
That's not what your son's saying.
He said he found this in your
suitcase.

KID'S DAD
I don't know how it got in my
suitcase.

He turns around and goes back to sleep.

KID'S MOM
Bullshit!

The Kid's Mom BEATS HIM UP. The Dad is trying to get her off
of him.

KID'S DAD
Baby, c'mon. Stop! Stop! You're
makin' a scene.

KID'S MOM
So, I don't give a rat's ass if I'm
making a scene!

KID
Mommy! Daddy! Stop!

Russell laughs, puts his headphones back on.

EXT. AIRPORT - EARLY MORNING

The plane TOUCHES down on the runway.

INT. CONTINENTAL TERMINAL - CONTINUOUS

Weary faces drag off the red-eye. The terminal is busier than
usual. A well-rested Russell moves with purpose. He takes out
his cell phone and dials a number. The party on his line
RINGS and picks up.

SECRETARY (O.S.)
 Good morning, New Orleans Police
 Department. How may I help you?

RUSSELL
 Yes, Detective Jimmy Karman please.
 (a beat)
 Whassup, Jimmy, I need an address
 on El Bankston.
 (writing down the address)
 The address is 7109 Prytania
 Street, apartment three? Good
 lookin' out, man.

Russell hangs up. Unbeknownst to Russell, his plane ticket
 falls out of his pocket. He walks out the airport.

INT. EL'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

The apartment is decorated with art deco and old furniture.
 El packs a suitcase. He spots a thong and throws it out of
 the suitcase. TONYA, El's beautiful and very pregnant
 girlfriend, (27), sits on the couch relaxing.

TONYA
 El, hurry up! My mom will be here
 any minute.

EL
 Baby, why are you packing so much
 stuff? You only gonna be there for
 the weekend, you're not moving
 there.

TONYA
 Well, I'm dressin' for two now, so
 I have to pack a little heavier
 now. I can't wait to get to Vegas.
 It's gonna be fun.

EL
 (gives her \$10)
 Play a slot for me. But, don't go
 crazy with my winnings.

TONYA
 If you hit the jackpot, then I'm
 not comin' back.

EL
 Oh shit, that's cold. You would
 just take the money and run?

TONYA

Exactly.

He zips up her suitcase. A horn outside HONKS twice.

EL

That's your mom.

El helps her up and grabs her suitcases. They leave out the door.

EXT. EL'S STREET - CONTINUOUS

Tonya waddles out the door, El comes out behind her, carrying her suitcases.

TONYA

Hey, Mom.

Tonya slides into the car. TONYA'S MOM, (60s), is behind the wheel. She pops open the trunk.

TONYA'S MOM

Hey, baby.

After a beat, El waves at Tonya's Mom.

EL

(sweetly)

Hi, Mrs. Johnson.

She flips El the finger. El puts Tonya's suitcases in the trunk and slams it. He walks back around to the passenger's side. Tonya gives him a kiss.

TONYA

Baby, I'll call you as soon as we check in.

EL

OK. I love you.

TONYA

I love you too, baby.

Tonya's Mom puts her finger in her throat and fake gags.

EL

Good luck.

TONYA

Thanks.

They pull off.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

The Cab Driver drives toward El's street. The latest HIP-HOP HIT plays on the radio. Russell sits in the back seat. The cab stops across the street from the apartment building.

RUSSELL
I need you to stay out here for
five minutes.

CAB DRIVER
OK.

Russell jumps out the cab.

EXT. EL'S STREET - CONTINUOUS

Russell runs across the street over to the apartment building. He notices a Pizza Delivery Man walking up to the door.

RUSSELL
Excuse me who's that for?

He looks at the slip.

PIZZA DELIVERY MAN
El Bankston.

Russell pays for the pizza.

RUSSELL
(beat)
I'll take it. He's my brother. Keep
the change.

He gives Russell the pizza. Russell enters the apartment building. Another cab pulls up on the curb. Reno steps out of the cab. The cab pulls off.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Russell walks up the stairs with the pizza. He finds El's apartment and knocks on the door twice.

EL (O.S.)
Who is it?

RUSSELL
It's Wayne's Pizza. I have a
delivery for El Bankston.

EL (O.S.)
Lunch!

El opens the door and sees Russell. He is surprised.

RUSSELL
(flashes his handcuffs)
Hey, El.

INT. EL'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

El tries to slam the door on him. Russell holds the door off with his foot and barges in. El tries to make a run for it, but Russell pulls out his 9mm Beretta.

RUSSELL
Freeze! Up against the wall with
your hand behind your head, dumb
ass!

He does. Russell pats him down.

EL
Oh, come on, Russell. It don't have
to be like this. I got The Sancy
Diamond, it's worth a lot of money.
We can split it fifty-fifty me and
you.

RUSSELL
Now you tryin' to bribe me? That
ain't gonna work either.

EL
Russell, you seem like a reasonable
man. I'll give you a third, a
fourth, hell even a sixteenth.

RUSSELL
You are hard at hearing. No! Let's
go.

Just when they're leaving, Reno shows up at the doorway and pulls out a Glock 9.

RENO
Hi, El. Did you miss me?

Russell pushes El out the way. Reno starts FIRING at them. Russell pulls out his 9mm Beretta, and RETURNS FIRE as he's dodging bullets. An old school gun battle.

EL

(a beat)

I should've went to Vegas with my girl; if I knew I was gonna be caught up in this shit!

Russell runs out of ammo, so does Reno. They both reload with new clips. He continues to EXCHANGE FIRE with Reno. Suddenly, POLICE SIRENS begin approaching closer and closer.

RENO

This isn't over!

Reno takes off. Russell and El run over to the window and see police cars lined up outside.

EL

How the are we gonna get out of here?

RUSSELL

(dials a number)

Don't worry. I got some backup for us.

(a beat)

Yeah, can you pull around the back please?

EXT. EL'S STREET - CONTINUOUS

Russell and El step out on the balcony and JUMP. They land on the dumpster and fall to the ground. The cab pulls around, SCREECHING to a halt.

CAB DRIVER

What the hell are you doing?

They get up.

RUSSELL

We had to find an emergency exit.

They jump in the cab and they pull off.

INT. CONTINENTAL TERMINAL - DAY

Russell escorts El, handcuffed, to the ticket office. The ticket CLERK comes up to the counter.

CLERK
Hi. May I help you?

RUSSELL
Yeah, I'd like a one-way ticket to Chicago. And, I already have a two-way ticket.

He checks his pocket for his ticket. Nothing.

CLERK
Is there a problem, sir?

RUSSELL
My ticket ain't here! It's gone!

EL
(chuckles)
You have to be the dumbest asshole on the face of the earth to lose a plane ticket.

RUSSELL
Shut the hell up!

CLERK
Well, sir. You'll have to buy another ticket.

RUSSELL
OK. That's no problem.

The Clerk searches for any upcoming flights on the computer. Nothing. All booked.

CLERK
I'm sorry sir. But, we're all booked for the weekend because of The Fourth of July. The next flight isn't until Monday. Do you wanna book it for then?

Russell is very disappointed.

RUSSELL
No, thank you.

Russell and El stroll through the busy crowd.

EL
Where are we going now?

RUSSELL
To the train station.

INT. AMTRACK STATION - CONTINUOUS

Russell walks up to the ticket counter with El in tow. The last customer leaves the line and our boys come up next in line.

CLERK

Hello.

EL

Hey. How you doing?

CLERK

Good. How may I help you?

RUSSELL

Yes. Can you book two tickets to Chicago please?

The Clerk searches for any available trains. Nothing.

CLERK

I am so sorry, sir. But, they aren't anymore trains going to Chicago until Monday due to the holiday.

RUSSELL

This is like some "Groundhog Day" stuff, man! There's got to be something, anything that can get us back to Chicago by tonight!

CLERK

I'm telling you, there's nothing. You should try an airport.

RUSSELL

I already tried the airport!

CLERK

Sir, will you calm down or I will have to call security.

RUSSELL

I am calm! I've been flying on the red-eye, barely had any sleep and you sittin' here giving me the run--

The security guard, a large man, approaches them.

SECURITY GUARD

Is there a problem, fellas?

RUSSELL

(a beat)

No, I was gonna ask you where is
the nearest rental car place.

Our boys are terrified.

EL

(a beat)

But, I just remembered where it is,
and we're about to go there.

The security guard walks away. A slight pause.

RUSSELL

Looks like we ain't got too much of
a choice.

(slight pause)

We're gonna have to go to my family
reunion in Shreveport.

INT. ENTERPRISE RENT-A-CAR - CONTINUOUS

Russell walks into the office with El. He sits El down in a
chair.

RUSSELL

Don't move.

EL

I'm in handcuffs, asshole! Where am
I gonna go?

He walks over to the desk. The Customer Service REP comes up
to the desk.

REP

Hello, sir. May I help you?

RUSSELL

Yes, I need to rent a car for this
weekend.

REP

Any car in particular?

RUSSELL

Just as long as it's a nice and
running.

REP

OK, follow me.

EXT. ENTERPRISE RENT-A-CAR - LOT - CONTINUOUS

Russell strolls with the Customer Service Rep through the lot. There are next-to-little selections. He is looking around for the right car. Russell picks the car, but he's a little hesitant.

RUSSELL
It's not what I had in mind, but
I'll take it.

Cut to Reveal: A 1975 Ford Pinto.

INT. ENTERPRISE RENT-A-CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Russell comes back with the Rep. El has been anxiously impatient.

RUSSELL
El, let's hit the road, my man.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Russell is smoothly cruising on the road.

INT. '75 FORD PINTO - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Russell is behind the wheel. El is riding shotgun.

RUSSELL
Alright, El. I gotta break down a
few rules to you in my mom and
daddy's house.

EL
Get to breakin'.

RUSSELL
First, no back talk. Second, don't
look at nothin', and most of all,
don't touch nothin'.

EL
Shit, Russell, give me some credit,
dude. Yeah, I'm a thief, but I
don't steal from everybody or steal
any and everything that moves.

RUSSELL
I'm just making it clear to you. If
people ask you how you know me;
(MORE)

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
 tell them that we're friends back
 in Chicago. And, if anybody asks
 about what you do for a living;
 tell them that you own a clothing
 business.

EL
 I think I'm gonna have fun with
 your family. Moms love me--except
 my girlfriend's mom. Matter of
 fact, she flipped me off earlier
 before they left for Vegas.

Russell cracks up.

EL (CONT'D)
 That ain't funny.

EXT. BLUES' HOUSE - FEW HOURS LATER

A nice, old-fashion Southern home. Russell pulls up in the
 driveway. They step out of the car. Betty walks out on the
 porch and spots the car.

BETTY
 Who the hell brought that car back
 from the dead?

She sees Russell and El, uncuffed, in the driveway.

RUSSELL
 Mom!

BETTY
 (excited)
 Oh, my Lord! My baby's home!

Betty runs out to the driveway. She hugs him tightly.

RUSSELL
 Hey, Mom.

BETTY
 I thought you wasn't coming?

RUSSELL
 See, I had to throw you off 'cause
 I wanted to surprise you.

BETTY
 Well, this is the best surprise
 I've had in my life!
 (re: El)
 (MORE)

BETTY (CONT'D)

Who is this handsome young man
right here?

RUSSELL

Mom, this is my friend El Bankston.
El, this my mother Mrs. Betty
Blues.

EL

(extends his hand)
Nice to meet you, Mrs. Blues.

Beat.

BETTY

First of all, honey, don't you go
callin' me that. Call me Mama
Betty, Mrs. Betty, or Lady B. And,
second, you don't just come into my
house and shake my hand. You got to
come and gimme some suga.

EL

Yes, ma'am.

El gives her a hug, and Betty gives him a kiss on the cheek.

BETTY

Where y'all bags?

BOTH

They got lost at the airport.

BETTY

OK. Johnnie, come out here and look
who's here.

Russell's outspoken but fair ex-cop father, JOHNNIE BLUES,
(56), comes out on the porch and can't believe his eyes. He
walks out to the driveway.

RUSSELL

Hey, Pop.

JOHNNIE

(shakes his hand)
Hey, Russell. How you doing, son?

RUSSELL

I'm good. Oh, this is my friend, El
Bankston. El, this my father, Mr.
Johnnie Blues.

EL
 (shakes his hand)
 Nice to meet you, Mr. Blues.

JOHNNIE
 Same here, El.
 (to Russell)
 So, I see you took time out from
 chasing lowlifes in Chicago for
 peanuts, and spend some time with
 ya family.

RUSSELL
 Daddy, I like what I do, so let's
 leave it at that.

JOHNNIE
 I'm just saying, you could've
 stayed here or took that job in
 N'Orleans--

BETTY
 Guys, let's not do this here.
 C'mon, El, Russell, so you can get
 yourselves situated. Y'all gonna
 have to sleep upstairs in the
 attic.

RUSSELL
 Mama, not the attic. There ain't no
 air up there. It's gonna be hotter
 than the Devil's breath up there.

BETTY
 Baby, I'm sorry. I thought you
 wasn't coming, so I gave your
 grandmother and grandfather your
 old bedroom, Russy Dusty.

El snickers.

RUSSELL
 Shut up. That ain't funny.

EL
 Whatever you say, Russy Dusty.

El and Russell start to walk towards the house.

INT. BLUES' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

El and Russell enter the house. They still have the same
 furniture from twenty years ago. Our duo looks around.

EL
This is a nice house.

RUSSELL
Thank you.

El sees a picture and picks it up. He starts laughing.

EL
But, I didn't know that you were
sucha ugly-ass kid.

Russell's picture: A short, skinny kid with Coke-bottle
glasses and a mouthful of braces.

RUSSELL
(a beat)
Hey, don't let the pic fool you; I
got plenty of girls in high school.

EL
Were they blind, near-sighted, far-
sighted, or come with magnets on
their shoes?

MALE VOICE (O.C.)
(a beat)
Please, you got girls so ugly; if
you had cake mix, you could put
they faces in it, and make some
ugly cakes.

Russell turns around and sees JUNE BLUES, his happily married
oldest brother, (39), standing in the doorway. June walks in
and gives him a big bear hug.

JUNE
Whassup, lil' bruh! I thought you
wasn't comin' here.

RUSSELL
No, I planned on coming all along.
I just said that 'cause I wanted to
surprise y'all. How Katrina doing?

JUNE
She's good. She in the kitchen.

RUSSELL
I should've known.

JUNE
(whispers)
She gettin' meaner by the day too.

RUSSELL
I know she is.

EL
I can relate to that, too.

RUSSELL
(forgetting)
Aw, damn, I'm sorry, El. June, this is my boy El. His girl's expecting too. El, this is my oldest brother Johnnie, Jr. but we call him June.

JUNE
(shakes El's hand)
What's up, man. Nice to meet you and welcome to our home.

EL
Thanks. Nice to meet you too.

JUNE
So, how far along is your girl?

EL
Six months.

BOTH
And gettin' meaner by the day!

They both laugh.

RUSSELL
Where's Jodie?

JUNE
You know him...late as usual.

RUSSELL
Where's Grandma and Grandpa?

JUNE
They up there...you know. I'm gonna go outside, and see if I can sneak in a lil' taste test before the fish fry.

RUSSELL
Alright, sample at ya own risk.

JUNE
You know I am.

June heads out the door.

EL
I like your brother, he's cool.

RUSSELL
For a pain in the ass. C'mon let me show you the sweat box we call the attic.

EL
What are your grandparents doing?

RUSSELL
(beat)
Trust me. You don't wanna know.

EL
Are they--

RUSSELL
(nods his head)
Yes.

EL
Ew. That shit is very nasty.

They walk OUT OF FRAME.

INT. RENO'S HOTEL ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Reno sits on the edge of the bed with a mad glare on his face. Drinking heavy. "Heat" is on cable. His cell phone RINGS. Reno jumps up to answer it.

RENO
Hello.

THE PHANTOM (O.S.)
(distorted)
Hello again, Mr. Reno.

RENO
I've been waiting on you for the twenty-four hours. Where the hell you been?

THE PHANTOM (O.S.)
(distorted)
I've been trying hard to follow up on your friends: Bankston and the bounty hunter. The bounty hunter's name is Russell Blues. He works for a Strode Bail Bonds in Chicago.
(MORE)

THE PHANTOM (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I tracked them down in Shreveport what it looks to be Blues' parents house. I'll text the address to you in a few minutes. There's someone on the other line, I gotta take this call.

RENO

OK. Thanks.

He hangs up. Reno loads up his SNUB-NOSE .38, puts on his jacket and packs the gun in his holster.

RENO'S HOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The cell phone RINGS again. Reno takes out the cell to see the call. It's a text message.

RENO (CONT'D)

Yes!

He clicks on the phone to view the text.

CLOSE-UP ON: TEXT MESSAGE

The text says, "The Blues Residence", under the name it says, "3400 Darien Street. Shreveport, LA 71103."

RENO (CONT'D)

El and Russell Blues, soon you two will be out the picture. And, I'll have what belongs to me.

INT. ATTIC - LATE AFTERNOON

The attic is aging but still livable. No air conditioner, very little furniture. Our duo walks up the stairs. El looks around. Russell opens up the windows.

EL

Damn, it's hotter than a sauna up here!

RUSSELL

I tried to tell you, El. Our old air conditioner broke down a while ago. We never got it fixed since nobody slept up here.

EL

Well, we don't have much of a choice.

RUSSELL

No, sir. This is a field trip for you compared to where you've been or where you're heading soon. Which reminds me, I gotta make a phone call.

Russell dials a number on his cell phone. The line RINGS twice.

INT. STRODE BAIL BONDS - INTERCUT

The phone continues to RING. Mia picks up the phone.

MIA

Hello, Strode Bail Bonds, Mia speaking. How may I help you?

RUSSELL

Hey, Mia. This is Russell.

Beat.

MIA

Russell, if you're calling me, that means you got some good news for me.

RUSSELL

(beat)

I got good news...and bad news. The good news is I caught El Bankston.

(to El)

Say 'Hello' to your bail bondsman Mia Strode.

Russell puts the phone up to El's ear.

EL

(dryly)

Hello.

He gets back on the phone.

RUSSELL

But, the bad news is that we can't catch a flight or train back to Chicago. Everything's booked 'cause of the holiday. So, we'll be on the first flight back home Monday.

MIA
 Alright, Russell. Get him back here
 in one piece and have back here by
 Monday.

RUSSELL
 I will. See you Monday.

They hang up.

EL
 Just throw me to the wolves, huh?

RUSSELL
 It's just business.

EL
 Bullshit. How much is Strode paying
 you to bring me back to Chicago?

RUSSELL
 Fifty Gs.

EL
 If you let me go right now, I'll
 triple it.

RUSSELL
 OK. Here go the keys to the Pinto.

Russell hands him the keys.

EL
 Thanks, Russell.

El goes to grab them. Russell takes them back.

RUSSELL
 Hell no! Now, we gotta change into
 some more cooler clothes. I got
 some old clothes in my old room
 that I can get for you. So, hurry
 up.

EXT. BLUES' BACK YARD - MOMENTS LATER

The fish fry is in full swing in the backyard. A cool,
 casually-dressed throng kicking back in the shade. Maze and
 Frankie Beverly's classic "Before I Let Go" is BUMPING in the
 B.G.

Johnnie works hard on the grill. Everyone is laughing and
 talking, playing games, or dancing.

Russell goes to his grandparents FANNY and CECIL BLUES, (both 70s and black), sitting at their picnic table.

RUSSELL
Hey, Grandma. Hey, Granddad.

FANNY
Oh, my Lord, my grandbaby's finally home!

Fanny rises up to give him a big hug and kiss. Cecil gets up and gives him a hug.

CECIL
Hey, Russell. How you doing?

RUSSELL
I'm good, Granddad. You gonna finally let me drive that Cutlass?

CECIL
You got your license?

They both laugh.

FANNY
I thought those gangsters and thugs roughed up my baby in Chicago.

RUSSELL
No, I'm fine, Grandma.

FANNY
You sure?

RUSSELL
Yes, ma'am.

FANNY
(beat)
A'right, I know I gotten old, but I still keep my razor on my person. And, sorry we didn't come down when you first came in. We were...a little occupied.

RUSSELL
(uncomfortable)
It's alright. I understand. I'll see y'all later.

Russell walks away.

EXT. BLUES' BACK YARD - LATER

El, Russell, June and KATRINA, (35), June's very pregnant wife, are sitting at a picnic table playing a friendly game of Spades. Tom Browne's "Funkin' for Jamaica" is now BUMPING in the B.G.

JODIE BLUES, Russell's highly opinionated but tardy older brother, (32), joins them with a plate of food. Jodie's adorable kids CHARITY, (10), and MIKE, (7), run up to the table.

RUSSELL

Well, if it ain't the man who'll be late for his own funeral.

JODIE

Damn, nice to see you too, lil' bruh.

KIDS

Hey, Uncle Russell.

Russell gets up and hugs them. Jodie hugs Russell.

RUSSELL

Hey, Charity, Mike. Y'all gotten so big. Y'all been good?

KIDS

Yes.

RUSSELL

And, I know y'all been good in school. So, this what good kids get.

He gives each of them a ONE-DOLLAR BILL.

KIDS

Thank you, Uncle Russell!

Charity and Mike run off. Jodie sits at the table.

JODIE

Negro, speakin' of funerals we almost though we was gonna have to go to the Chi, and raise your ass from the dead. How you been, lil' broski?

RUSSELL

I've been good.

JODIE

I see chasing those bail jumpers in Chi-Town done knocked out that weight off.

RUSSELL

And, I see back here in Shreveport, you picked up all the weight I lost. Oh, yeah, this is my boy El from Chicago. El, this is my older brother Jodie.

They shake hands.

JODIE

What's up, nice to meet you.

EL

You too.

RUSSELL

So, Katrina, what y'all having?

KATRINA

A boy. A hard-head, snotty-nosed, future skirt chasin' little boy.

JUNE

Just like his daddy.

JODIE/RUSSELL

And his uncles!

The brothers make a toast.

EL

Well, I'm also gonna be a dad soon. My girlfriend's having a baby.

KATRINA

Really? How many months is she?

EL

Six months.

KATRINA

Do y'all know what y'all having?

EL

No, we decided to wait until the baby's born.

JODIE

Congratulations, El.

EL
Thanks, Jodie.

JUNE
So, El, what you do back in
Chicago?

EL
Well, I'm, uh, in the jewelry
business.

JODIE
You own a jewelry store? Do you do
appraisals?

KATRINA
Collecting? Selling?

EL
(beat)
No. Heisting.

They all laugh.

EL (CONT'D)
No, for real I do appraisals. I've
been doing it for about five years.

RUSSELL
I'm kinda glad to be back home.
This brings back a lotta memories
of these family reunions.

JUNE
Sure does. Remember back at the
reunion in '88? Bobby and Jo-Jo
burned that snake 'cause they told
us his feet'll come out.

Everybody cracks up.

RUSSELL
Yeah, I definitely remember that
one. After that snake was burnt
black and crispy, I was askin' Jo-
Jo, "Where the feet at?"

JODIE
And, he said, "The snake has
invisible feet, and he should be
walkin' any minute". Shit,
invisible feet my ass.

RUSSELL

Ey, y'all remember at reunion back in '95 in St. Louis? Uncle Peyton got so drunk, he got into an argument with Auntie Sheri. She kicked him out, and he ended up gettin' sprayed by those two skunks.

JODIE

Hell yeah. That was too funny. He had to sleep outside his hotel room in a tent. Some folk thought he was homeless, and they was giving him change. Luckily, he got rid of that shit in time before we left.

JUNE

Don't forget about the reunion here in '92 when Russell and D.J. got in that fight?

JODIE

June, if you call that bullshit a fight. Then the Tyson/McNeely fight was a brawl.

EL

Who's D.J.?

JODIE

He's another cousin of ours. He just got out of jail, you'll meet him this weekend.

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON - FLASHBACK - 1992

A twentieth-year family reunion has taken over the park. A big throng of family and friends eat and have a good time. Another Bad Creation's "Playground" BUMPS through the speakers.

We find a ten-year-old Russell running up to the cooler. He grabs a can of Sprite. D.J., (10), half Russell's size, walks up to the cooler and checks for a Sprite. They're all gone.

D.J.

Russell, gimme that Sprite.

RUSSELL

No, D.J.! I found it first!

D.J.
Grandma was saving that pop for me.

RUSSELL
You lyin', Grandma ain't say
nothin' like that.

D.J.
I said gimme the Sprite, Russell.

RUSSELL
No! Finders keepers, losers
weepers.

D.J.
Oh, yeah? I got somethin' that'll
make you weep.

D.J. PUNCHES Russell in the face. Russell starts BAWLING uncontrollably. A twelve-year-old Jodie cracks up.

EXT. BLUES' BACK YARD - PRESENT DAY

Russell is very salty. They all howl with laughs.

EL
Russell, I'm sorry, man. But, that
was some funny-ass shit.

RUSSELL
OK. It's "Clown on Russell Day".

NIKKI MEADOWS, Russell's childhood friend, an alluring woman, (Russell's age, black), unknowingly tiptoes behind Russell. Nikki covers his eyes. Russell feels on her hands.

NIKKI
(whispers)
Guess who?

RUSSELL
Halle Berry? Beyonce? Ooh, nah,
it's Janet? But, I'm feelin' nasty
today, Miss Jackson. Jill Scott?

Nikki uncovers his eyes, Russell turns around and sees Nikki.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
Nikki?!

NIKKI
Surprise! Hey, Russell.

RUSSELL

Oh, my God.

(hugs Nikki)

You look good baby. I guess can't call you Thickey Nikki anymore.

NIKKI

No, sir, you can't. How you doing?

RUSSELL

I've been good. How you doing?

NIKKI

I'm doing good, too. Hey, Jodie, June, Katrina.

ALL

Hey, Nikki.

Betty walks over to Nikki.

BETTY

Hey, Nikki. I'm glad you made it.

NIKKI

(hugs Nikki)

Hey, Mama Betty.

BETTY

I see you and Russell are gettin' reacquainted.

NIKKI

Yeah, I had to reconnect with my Russy Dusty.

El cracks up.

RUSSELL

Oh, yeah, this is my friend from Chicago, El. El, this is my friend Nikki.

NIKKI

Hey. Nice to meet you.

EL

You too. I'm gonna go grab a beer.

El gets up from the table and walks away.

JODIE

That dude looks familiar.

Russell chokes on his pop. June PATS him on his back.

JUNE
You alright, Russell?

He gives June the thumbs-up.

NIKKI
Well, I'm about to go and fix
myself a plate.

Nikki walks away.

RUSSELL
You gonna wait for me, Nikki?

She turns around and rolls her eyes.

EXT. BLUES' BACK YARD - MAGIC HOUR

The fish fry has wrapped up. Russell puts a full garbage bag in the trash can. He finds Nikki sitting in the swing.

RUSSELL
There you are. I've been looking
all over for you.

NIKKI
I'm just out here getting some air.

RUSSELL
Mind if I join you?

NIKKI
Sure. It's a free country.

Russell sits in the swing next to her.

RUSSELL
I ain't get a chance to talk to you
earlier because y'all women was
having your War Council.

NIKKI
Whatever.

RUSSELL
What you been up to?

NIKKI

Well, I just moved back here six months ago because I took a job at Shreveport Medical as the Director of Nursing.

RUSSELL

Go ahead, Miss Meadows. You handlin' your business.

NIKKI

Thank you.

RUSSELL

Are you single, married, engaged, divorced, or involved?

NIKKI

Well, I was engaged to this guy who was a doctor back in Harlem. The wedding was set, and I was about to marry the man of my dreams.

(beat)

Then guess what? It turns out that the fool was already married with two kids, and he never signed the divorce papers. So, I just left his fake bigamist ass at the altar. What about you, Mr. Blues, are you dating anyone back in Chicago?

RUSSELL

I'm so busy chasing these bail jumpers, I don't have time to date. Hell, I ain't been on date in a year.

NIKKI

Oh no, we ain't about to have that on your vacation. That's why you're going to Chili's tomorrow night with me. And, I ain't takin' "no" for an answer.

RUSSELL

I would definitely love to do that. So, I'm pickin' you up at eight?

NIKKI

(beat)

Eight o'clock on the dot.

RUSSELL

See you tomorrow night.

EXT. FREEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Reno stands on the side of the road. Hitchhiking. Cars constantly pass him by. An '06 Chevy Impala pulls up beside him. The Driver rolls down his window.

DRIVER

Excuse me. Can you tell me how to get to Shreveport? I'm lost.

RENO

(fake Southern accent)
Sure. I'll be glad to. I'm headed that way.

DRIVER

Even more better. C'mon, I'll give you a lift.

RENO

(fake Southern accent)
Thank you so much. I appreciate it.

Reno hops in the car and they pull off.

INT. '06 CHEVY IMPALA - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

RENO

Sorry, I forgot to introduce myself. My name is Manny.

DRIVER

(shakes his hand)
Corey. Nice to meet you. If you don't mind me asking. What are you heading to Shreveport for?

RENO

To see an old friend. I haven't seen him in years.

DRIVER

Bet you get a lot of catchin' up to do.

RENO

(a beat)
Oh, yeah. We got a whole lot of catchin' up.

The Driver sees the needle is close to pointing on "E".

DRIVER
 Shit, I'm about close to running on
 "E"! I gotta run in the gas station
 right quick!

EXT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

The Driver pulls into the station at a pump. He hops out of the car.

DRIVER
 I'll be right back.

RENO
 OK.

INT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

The Driver runs through the door, up to the counter. Panting.

STATION ATTENDANT
 How may I help you?

DRIVER
 Yeah, I'd like twenty on--

Suddenly, he hears his car SCREECHING. The Driver peaks out the door.

DRIVER'S P.O.V.

Reno speeds out of the station in his car.

DRIVER (CONT'D)
 Oh shit!

The driver runs out the door.

DRIVER (CONT'D)
 Hey! Come back with my car, you son
 of a bitch!

INT. BLUES' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Johnnie and El sit on the couch, talking. They are watching a baseball game on TV. Fanny and Cecil sit across from them, cuddling.

FANNY

Excuse me, El. I hear you do appraisals for jewelry. Can you take a look at my bracelet for me, young man?

EL

For what reason, Mrs. Blues?

FANNY

Well, I thought about selling it to one of those gold trade-in places, like the one you see on TV. And, I wanna see how much I can get for it.

EL

OK. I'll take a look.

Fanny walks over to him. El thoroughly examines the bracelet.

CECIL

She bought while was on vacation in California about thirty years ago.

EL

This is a very nice bracelet. It's authentic gold. You can definitely get a pretty good deal for this, especially now with the high demand for gold.

FANNY

Oooh! I am going to sell this!

(looks at the TV)

What the hell do you mean "out"?! That should've been a walk, you blind bastard!

CECIL

Shoot, you and I can see a whole lot better than that ump. You know, El, I used to play baseball.

EL

Really? What team? Which position?

CECIL

I played shortstop for the Chicago American Giants. Two-time Negro World Series champs. Then I got an offer to play for the Pittsburgh Pirates. Then somethin' more important came up.

(MORE)

CECIL (CONT'D)

(beat)

Fanny here was pregnant, so I decided to turn the offer down. So, I could be there for my family, and I don't regret one minute of it.

JOHNNIE

That's what I like about El here. This boy got a good head on his shoulders. He's lookin' at the future.

Russell walks into the living room.

JOHNNIE (CONT'D)

(a beat)

Unlike some people I know.

(hands him an application)

Here's a job application for the police department. A real job with a future and some benefits instead of that chasin' second-rate crooks for minimum wage.

Russell takes the application and rips it up. He storms out.

CECIL

Johnnie, son, that was wrong.

FANNY

You didn't have to dog the boy like that.

JOHNNIE

Mom, Pop, Russell needs to man up, and get a real job like I did. He's wasting his life with this bounty hunting crap. He keeps it up, he'll never won't amount to nothing.

CECIL

You're my son, and I love you. I would call you an asshole, but that would be complimentin' assholes. You're just a whole ass.

They walk out the living room.

INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Jodie searches through the attic and finds El's wallet. He opens it up, finds his driver's license. It's a bad picture of El next to it.

EXT. BLUES' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

El paces back and forth on the front porch, speaking on his cell.

EL
Hey, baby.

INT. MGM GRAND HOTEL ROOM - INTERCUT

Tonya is laying in the bed, on the hotel phone.

TONYA
Hey, sweetie.

EL
How you doing?

TONYA
I'm doing good.

EL
How's our baby?

TONYA
Swimming as usual.

El laughs.

EL
I'm sorry I didn't call you after first got into Vegas. But, I'm down here in Shreveport. I ran into an old friend of mine, and he asked me to come down here to hang with him for his family reunion the holiday.

TONYA
OK.

EL
Did y'all win anything?

TONYA
I won \$350. But, Mom left a slot, and the next person that got on it hit the jackpot. She got smart with the man, hollerin' and cussin' him out. Plus she was drunk and almost got us kicked out of the hotel. Luckily, I told security she forgot her meds. She's sleep now.

EL
 (laughs)
 That's not an act, Tonya. Your mom really needs medication. I keep telling you to go get her checked out.

Tonya laughs.

TONYA
 Well, I'm about to call it a night. This baby and Mom got me tired. I'll call you tomorrow.
 (blows a kiss)
 Love you.

EL
 (blows a kiss back)
 Love you, too. Bye.

They hang up. El goes back into the house. We slowly pan over to reveal the '06 Chevy Impala parked across the street.

ANGLE ON THE '06 CHEVY IMPALA

Reno sits in the driver's seat staking out the house.

INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Russell lays in bed, asleep. El climbs next to him.

EL
 Russell. Russell.

He rolls over and wakes up.

RUSSELL
 (angrily)
 What, El?

EL
 I like your family, they're seem real cool. I'd kill to have a family like yours. What was all that about between you and your dad?

RUSSELL
 Don't worry about it.

EL
 I'm just curious, that's all.

RUSSELL

Like I said, I don't wanna talk about it. It's a family affair, Bankston, and that's how I wanna keep it.

EL

Alright. But, you wanna be distant from your family. 'Cause you might try to catch up with them and they maybe distant from you.

RUSSELL

Just 'cause yo' ass buttered up my family, don't make you a part of it. You're a guest in this house, and most importantly my bail jumper. So, good night.

Russell rolls over and goes back to sleep.

EL

Russell, I'm just saying if you express your feelings more. You'd probably feel better.

RUSSELL

Man, you need to cut this out 'cause you sound like a female with all of this Dr. Phil "getting in touch with your emotions" shit.

El turns over and goes to sleep.

ATTIC/MOMENTS LATER

El lays fast asleep. He is having trouble with his allergies. HACKING and constantly CLEARING HIS THROAT. He sluggishly gets up, and goes to the dresser to his pill box.

He knocks over his two pill bottles. Pills splatter all over the floor. El picks up a sinus pill and takes it. Wrong! He picks up a Viagra pill and takes it. El lays back down and goes to sleep.

Our duo sleeps peacefully. El starts tossing and turning, smiling.

EL

Beyonce...damn, you're lookin' sexy tonight. I'll be your naughty boy, if you want me to be.

Russell grins.

RUSSELL
Janet, I'm gonna have to call you Miss Jackson right now 'cause I'm feelin' a little nasty.

EL
Shake that ass, Bey. Keep on shaking it.

RUSSELL
Miss Jackson, put me in control!

Beat.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
Girl, I'm so damn glad you dropped that leprechaun Jermaine Dupri, and came to a real man over here, baby.

El rolls over and caresses Russell's hands.

EL
Mmm! Bey you're hands are so soft and smooth like silk, baby. It's a damn shame Jigga doesn't caress them enough.

All sweet dreams go out the window when Russell suddenly wakes up. He feels something poking him in his back.

RUSSELL
El, please tell me that you got a flashlight on you.

EL
(clueless)
I do.

After a second thought, a cringed look comes across Russell's face.

RUSSELL
Wait a minute. You ain't got no damn flashlight!

El and Russell jump out of the bed.

EL
Russell, what's wrong, dude?

Russell points at El's crouch.

RUSSELL
That's what's wrong, dude!

El looks down there and sees his erection.

EL

Oh shit! Russell, I am so sorry man. I thought it was my allergy medicine, I swear. I didn't know, dude.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jodie and June walking down the hallway, and listens to the argument.

RUSSELL (O.C.)

Ya woody pokin' me in my back!

EL (O.C.)

It wouldn't have happened if you turned over the right way.

They can't believe what they're hearing.

JUNE

Jodie, you don't think Russell is...?

JODIE

I hope not.

They head towards their rooms.

BACK IN THE ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Russell grabs a sheet and his pillow.

EL

Where are you going?

RUSSELL

I'm goin' out on the back porch. I'd rather get sprayed by a skunk than deal with this. Nasty son of a bitch.

He leaves the attic.

INT. BLUES' KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

The Blues Family and El are sitting at the table having a nice breakfast. Laughing and talking. Russell walks into the house, groggy.

RUSSELL
Good morning, Family.

FAMILY
Good morning.

EL
Good morning, Russell.

RUSSELL
(mumbles)
Good morning.

BETTY
Russell, why you just come through
the back porch, baby?

RUSSELL
I was having back problems last
night, Mom. Something just kept
poking at me. It kept on gettin' on
my nerves, so I decided to sleep on
the back porch. I feel better now.

Jodie and June give two thumbs up, and mumbles "Thank you
Jesus".

JOHNNIE
Russell, if you don't wanna be a
cop. You should try to get in with
El on the diamond business. Now,
that pays a lot of good money.

RUSSELL
Pops, not now.

BETTY
He's right, Johnnie. Nobody wants
to hear that this early in the
morning. Let's just eat in piece.

FANNY
I ain't go no problem with that.

CECIL
Mmm-hmm! This breakfast is too good
here this morning.

JOHNNIE
OK.

He continues eating. Betty checks the refrigerator, and she
sees no eggs in there.

BETTY

Dammit, I'm out of eggs, milk, vanilla extract and flour. I gotta finish makin' these cakes, plus I gotta make the butter rolls for the family reunion. Can one of y'all go to the store for me?

No response.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Y'all don't speak at once now.

RUSSELL

I'll go when I get done eating.

BETTY

Thank you, baby.

JODIE

(mocks Betty)

Thank you baby.

She slaps Jodie in the back the head. The kids, June, El and Russell crack up.

EL

Russell, I'll go with you. I have to get a few things myself anyway.

Betty gives him \$30.

BETTY

Play your daddy's birthday too, four-zero-six. And, play seven-seven-nine-seven for me. Oh, I also need some butter, cake mix, plastic silverware, and paper plates and cups.

RUSSELL

Alright, Mom.

EXT. BLUES' HOUSE - MORNING

El and Russell walk up to the '75 Ford Pinto. They hop in. Russell backs up out of the driveway and pulls off.

Reno wakes up, noticing the Pinto driving away. He instantly starts his car and follows them.

INT. GROCERY STORE - MORNING

The store is busier than usual. Russell strolls through the dairy isle with a cart. He grabs a gallon of milk off the shelf, and puts it into the cart. He grabs a carton of eggs, and puts them into the cart. Russell heads for Aisle 6.

El is in the baby isle loading up his cart with Similac and Gerber baby foods. Reno walks through the front door and grabs a basket. A Cashier walks up to him.

CASHIER

Excuse me, sir. How may I help you?

RENO

Yes. Can you tell me which aisle is the...uh, sugar is in?

CASHIER

Aisle six.

RENO

Thank you.

Reno walks away. El meets up with Russell in Aisle Six with his cart. Russell puts the sugar, flour, and vanilla extract in the cart.

EL

Are you 'bout ready?

RUSSELL

I just have to get the paper plates and cups, plastic silverware, and play my mom's numbers.

EL

Alright.

(a beat)

Russell, I've been meaning to ask you this. Why do you and your dad don't get along?

RUSSELL

El, you wanna talk about why you stayed on the run for three years?

EL

OK. Yes, I admit I'm the crook in this situation. But, we're not talkin' about me, we're talkin' about you.

RUSSELL
I don't wanna talk about it, El.

EL
I think you should talk about it. I mean, I would give almost anything in the world to have a father; hell, to have a family.

RUSSELL
Whenever you ready to talk about the heist, I'll talk about me and my dad's relationship.

El cell phone RINGS twice. He answers it.

EL
Hello.

EXT. VEGAS STRIP - INTERCUT

Tonya strolls through the strip, taking in the scene.

TONYA
Hey, Ellie!

EL
Hey baby. How you doing? How's our El, Jr.?

TONYA
We're good. What's goin' on with you?

EL
Nothin'. I'm down here in Shreveport with...a friend for his family reunion, which is tomorrow.

TONYA
OK. You enjoying yourself?

EL
Yeah. Just sittin' around eating, laughing and talking. What's up with your mom?

TONYA
She's been behaving herself.

EL
That's good--

Pause. El looks up and sees who's in front of him. It's like he saw a ghost. He did. It's Reno.

TONYA

El. El, what's wrong?

EL

(panicky)

I gotta call you back baby.

He hangs up.

RENO

Hello again, El. I told you it wasn't over. Not 'til I get my baby, my rare and precious Sancy Diamond.

Reno pulls out his SNUB-NOSE .38 and FIRES at them. El runs, and finds refuge in the deli. The security guard intervenes by FIRING SHOTS from his service gun. Reno shoots him in the arm.

Employees and customers run out the store, screaming. Russell pulls out his 9mm Beretta and FIRES BACK. Reno sees a police car pulling up in front of the store. He runs out the back door.

RUSSELL

El, I never thought I'd say this!
Go out the back door!

(tosses El the keys)

And, meet me at the strip mall
across the street! If I'm not out
in ten minutes, go home!

EL

Fuck it! You ain't gotta tell me
twice!

El hauls ass out the front door. Russell tends to the security guard.

RUSSELL

You all right?

SECURITY GUARD

Yeah.

Russell takes off his shirt and wraps it around his arm.

RUSSELL

Just hang on, man.

Cops storm the store with their guns out. They spot Russell and draw their guns on him.

OFFICER
Freeze! Police! Drop you weapon and
put your hands up!

He does.

INT. BLUES' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jodie dials up a number on his cell phone.

INT. NEW ORLEANS POLICE DEPARTMENT - INTERCUT

The telephone RINGS twice. A DETECTIVE answers the phone.

DETECTIVE
Good morning, New Orleans Police
Department. Robbery/Homicide
Division, Detective Pargo speaking.

JODIE
Pargo, this is Jodie, I need to
look up somebody for me. El
Bankston.

DETECTIVE
Jo, I'm about to leave and talk to
a witness in that check cashing
robbery/murder that I'm on. So,
I'll look it up, and get back to
you. Or, I'll send it to your e-
mail.

JODIE
Alright.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

The grocery store is taped off as a crime scene. Detectives investigate for evidence, C.S.I. Team dusts for prints, and the Officers secure the perimeter. The paramedics treat the wounded security guard. Russell finishes speaking with a Detective. Agent Dameron approaches him.

DAMERON
We meet again under unpleasant
circumstances, Mr. Blues.

RUSSELL

What is it now, Dameron?

DAMERON

I think you know a lot more about El Bankston than what you lead me to believe back in Chicago. I even think you might even know where he is. Just tell me if I'm wrong.

RUSSELL

You are. I followed up on lead on Bankston yesterday, but it turned out to be something bogus. I was just here gettin' some items for my mother, and this Reno character pops out of nowhere askin' me about Bankston.

(a beat)

Then he went into this psycho rant about the Sancy Diamond. I told him I haven't seen El or know anything about the diamond. That's when he just started shooting up the damn store.

DAMERON

Well, how does he know you were looking for Bankston?

RUSSELL

How the hell should I know? He must've been following me.

DAMERON

You sure?

RUSSELL

Yeah.

DAMERON

OK. You're free to go. But, if I catch you within a hair of this investigation; I'm gonna book you on obstruction of justice charges. Do you understand each other?

RUSSELL

Understood.

EXT. STRIP MALL - CONTINUOUS

Russell runs across the street towards the '75 Ford Pinto.

RUSSELL

El, you gotta get in the back seat.

EL

What?

RUSSELL

Get in the back seat and duck down.
I'll explain everything when I get
in the car.

El jumps in the back seat and ducks down. Russell hops in on the driver's side. Russell circles around the strip mall parking lot and pulls out of it.

INT. '75 FORD PINTO - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Russell is smoothly driving through the streets.

RUSSELL

The FBI is gettin' hot on us. If they see you, they takin' you to jail on sight. And, if they see us together they gonna put me in jail for obstruction of justice. So, we have figure out something clever 'til Monday.

EL

You could let me go.

RUSSELL

I said "clever", not "stupid".

EL

Well, say every time we roll together, I can just hide in the backseat under a blanket.

RUSSELL

Alright.

EL

And, if any cop pulls up over just say, "I'm taking my friend to the hospital because he has the flu. Or, say "I'm driving my drunk friend home".

RUSSELL

Yeah, that might work.

INT. ATTIC - MAGIC HOUR

Russell stands in front of the mirror, putting the finishing touches on his ensemble. He straightens his tie and sprays some cologne of himself. Russell accidentally inhales a sample and coughs. He puts on a crisp navy blue suit.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Johnnie, Betty, Cecil, Fanny and El sit on the couch. Jodie and June sit in the kitchen chairs. Mike and Charity sits on the floor watching cartoons. Russell comes down the stairs.

JOHNNIE

Oooh-weee! Son, you might need some band-aids 'cause you liable to cut yourself for lookin' this sharp.

FANNY

Mr. Belafonte, can I have your autograph?

BETTY

My baby's a heartbreaker.

JODIE

Lil' bro, you look good, you almost look as good as me.

June gives him a thumbs up.

EL

Russell, you look sharp dude. I wanna give you something.

El gives him the chain off his neck.

RUSSELL

What's this?

EL

It's my lucky chain. It's a gift from an old friend. I wore the day I met Tonya. So, I hope that same luck rubs off on you tonight.

RUSSELL

Thanks.

CHARITY

You look good, Uncle Russell.

RUSSELL
Thank you baby girl.

MIKE
Lookin' good, Unc.

RUSSELL
Thanks, nephew. See y'all later.

Russell is gone.

CECIL
Have a good time.

EL
Don't do anything I wouldn't do.

JUNE
You better give me and Jodie all
the details.

CECIL
My grandson's gettin' lucky
tonight.

FANNY
Cecil!

CECIL
Gem, it's true. Besides, I can't
help it, he can't help, or Johnnie
help it. It's just somethin' about
the Blues men that makes women
succumb to our charm.
(beat)
It worked on you.

FANNY
Yeah, after threw my drink on you.

EXT. NIKKI'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Russell walks up to the front door. He is very nervous. Forgive him, it's been a long time since he's had a date. Russell pops a handful of Tic-Tacs in his mouth. Russell rings the doorbell twice. Nikki answers the door. She's not fully ready.

RUSSELL
(mouthful)
Hey!

The Tic-Tacs splash out of Russell's mouth.

NIKKI

(giggles)

Hey. I'm so sorry, Russell. I should've called you. But, I had to rush home from the hospital to try and get ready. So, why don't you come on in.

RUSSELL

OK.

Russell enters the house.

INT. NIKKI'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

It's decorated with new furniture and various old and new pictures.

NIKKI

Alright, now I'm gonna go upstairs and finish getting ready. I'll be back down in about ten minutes.

(beat)

So, why don't you wait in the living room.

INT. NIKKI'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nikki escorts Russell into the living room. Nikki's father, MR. MEADOWS, (60s), sits back in his Lay-Z-Boy, watching TV.

NIKKI

Daddy, look who's here.

MR. MEADOWS

(rises from his recliner)

Russell! It's been a while! Come on over here.

Nikki leaves the living room. Russell goes up to him. Mr. Meadows gives him a hug. Russell sits on the couch. Mr. Meadows lays back in his recliner.

RUSSELL

Hey, how you doing, Mr. Meadows?

MR. MEADOWS

I'm doing good. Retirement's been good to be me, got my health, my house is paid off. What more can a man could want?

RUSSELL

You ain't been chasin' no young shorties around here, have you?

They both crack up.

MR. MEADOWS

Boy, yo' ass is more crazier now than ever. What brings you back to Shreveport?

RUSSELL

Here for the family reunion this weekend.

MR. MEADOWS

OK. I know y'all gonna have some good food. Too bad I can't make it 'cause I'm going on this casino trip. So, tell your momma to save me a plate. No swine.

RUSSELL

Will do, sir.

MR. MEADOWS

What you doing with yourself these days, Russell?

RUSSELL

I'm working as a bounty hunter in Chicago.

MR. MEADOWS

Aw, that's good.

Mr. Meadows takes out a safety deposit box from under his recliner. He takes out his .357 Magnum, opens the revolver and dumps the bullets. He cleans it thoroughly. Russell is terrified. The first time he's been scared of a gun.

RUSSELL

Nikki!

MR. MEADOWS

C'mon, Russell. Don't be nervous, you used to seeing these in your line of work. But, it's always the bad guys holding 'em. You don't have to worry about that here, you know I'm one of the good guys.

RUSSELL
 Yeah. I know, Mr. Meadows.
 (a beat)
 You're a model citizen.

Mr. Meadows loads a bullet into each chamber.

MR. MEADOWS
 So, where you takin' my little girl
 to tonight?

RUSSELL
 Just going out to eat.

MR. MEADOWS
 That's it?

A slight pause. He loads the final bullet into the chamber
 and closes the revolver.

RUSSELL
 Yeah! Yeah, that's about it! Just
 dinner and right back home, Mr.--
 Mr. Meadows.

MR. MEADOWS
 No hotel, motel?

Russell doesn't answer. Mr. Meadows packs the chamber in the
 gun.

RUSSELL
 No! Hell no, sir! Why--Why do we
 need to go there? I ain't tired, I
 got my eight hours in.

MR. MEADOWS
 Russell, if you mistreat my baby
 girl, I'm gonna mistreat you. OK?

RUSSELL
 Yes, sir.

NIKKI (O.S.)
 You ready, Russell?

In slow motion, Nikki walks down the steps. She looks
 stunning. Russell basks in it.

RUSSELL
 You look fine.

NIKKI

Thank you. Daddy, you wasn't rough on Russell, were you?

MR. MEADOWS

No, baby girl. Not at all. We were just doing some catching up.

RUSSELL

Yeah, you forgettin' I'm used to dealing with rough stuff everyday. So, this was a picnic compared to that.

(shakes his hand)

Nice to seeing you again, Mr. Meadows. And, I'll tell my mom to save you that plate.

MR. MEADOWS

Alright, Russell. You two have a good time.

They're out the door.

INT. '75 FORD PINTO - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Russell is behind the wheel, Nikki rides shotgun. Babyfance and Toni Braxton's "Give U My Heart" starts playing on the radio.

NIKKI

Aw snap! This is my song! Remember when we did this at the school talent show in third grade?

She TURNS UP the volume on the radio.

RUSSELL

I sure do. We killed it.

NIKKI

(sings off-key)

"And, I will give you my heart, baby. And, I will always be true to you. And, I will love you forever".

RUSSELL

Now, you'd only kill the crowd's eardrums.

NIKKI

(laughs)

Shut up, Russell!

Russell stops at a red light. He looks in his rearview mirror, and sees Dameron's car behind them.

RUSSELL
Oh shit!

NIKKI
What's wrong?

RUSSELL
This Fed is following us.

NIKKI
The one in the green GMC Yukon?

RUSSELL
Yeah. But, that's all right, I got somethin' for his ass.

EXT. INTERSECTION - INTERCUT

The light turns green, Russell doesn't budge. A few seconds later, the light turns red again. Russell hits the gas and BURNS RUBBER.

DAMERON
Son of a bitch! I can't believe I just got outgunned by that piece of shit car! Dammit!

Dameron tries to chase after him, but a few oncoming cars CRASH into him and each other. A frustrated Dameron steps out of the car and repeatedly kicks the front tire.

BACK IN THE CAR - CONTINUOUS

Nikki and Russell crack up.

NIKKI
That was too funny! You should've saw that dude's face!

RUSSELL
I told you I had somethin' for him.

NIKKI
Why is he after you? You ain't on the run, are you? If you are, let me out right now.

RUSSELL
No, I ain't on the run, Nikki. It's complicated.

A thought pops into Nikki's mind.

NIKKI

Russell, make a left at this next light.

RUSSELL

For what? What about the restaurant?

NIKKI

Boy, the hell with the restaurant. You'll see.

Russell makes a left.

INT. SKATING RINK - NIGHT

It's couples skate. The skating rink is filled wall-to-wall with couples. They're skating to the Luther Vandross remake of "Love Won't Let Me Wait". Nikki and Russell slowly walk to the rink, in their skates.

RUSSELL

What are we doing here?

NIKKI

Since I heard you was coming back home. I wanted to surprise you.

RUSSELL

So, you made up the whole restaurant thing?

NIKKI

Yes.

RUSSELL

Girl, you still think you're slick.

NIKKI

(beat)

I'm not slick, I'm witty. Now, are we gonna spend the night talkin' or skatin'?

RUSSELL

Let's skate!

They step out on the floor and skate around the rink a few times. They're a rusty but still balanced.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Man, this rink bringin' back a lotta memories. We used to have some good times here. I used to love comin' to those skating parties in junior high. All the girls was on my tip.

NIKKI

Yes sir. But, as I correctly remember the girls were always dissin' you. You used to chase almost every girl around the rink.

She busts out laughing. They skate off the rink and sit on a bench.

RUSSELL

OK. You got jokes.
(a beat)

But, I know one girl that I never got to chase. She had every dude in school chasing her; from the pretty boys to the jocks all the way down to the nerds. My plan was to make her mine forever, but fate didn't put the ball in his court.

NIKKI

Who was she?

Beat.

RUSSELL

You.

Nikki is surprised. Before she can grasp it all, Russell moves in and kisses her. She doesn't fight it. She wraps her arms around him.

INT. BLUES' KITCHEN - LATE NIGHT

El helps out Betty with making the butter rolls. She cuts up the dough into nice squares.

BETTY

Now, El, put the butter, sugar, and a teaspoon of vanilla extract on here. Then you roll them up and put it in the pan, and sprinkle some pep milk.

El does the butter rolls one by one.

EL

Mama Betty, what are these butter rolls?

BETTY

Baby, this is an old Southern dessert recipe that my grandmother showed me when I was a little girl. Then I passed it on to my family, and they love it every year at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and family reunions. You wanna try one, El?

EL

Yeah.

El cuts one from the pan, it's hot. He blows on the butter roll to cool it off. He takes a bite and loves it. Betty smiles.

EL (CONT'D)

These are real good. I'm gonna have to tell my girlfriend about these. I wish I had some ice cream, too.

BETTY

Thank you.

EL

I have another question. Why Russell and his dad don't get along?

BETTY

It's a long story.

EL

Spare me. I got time.

BETTY

OK. Johnnie wanted all his kids to go into the police force like him. Because he wanted a family legacy of protecting and serving the community. June was on the force 'til he got in the ministry. Jodie is the only one who followed in his footsteps by being a detective.

(a beat)

But, Russell wanted to be a lawyer. Johnnie didn't agree with it 'cause he felt that he would be protectin' guilty people. They had a big fight about it.

(MORE)

BETTY (CONT'D)

But, Russell stood by his decision and try to pursue it anyway.

EL

How did he go from tryin' to be a lawyer to being a bounty hunter?

BETTY

He ran into some money problems in college, and he found a job being a bounty hunter. It was suppose to help him pay for school. But, he ended up dropping out; he found a job he liked and stuck with it.

EL

Russell didn't go against his father. He just wanted to live his own life.

BETTY

Try to tell Johnnie that, it won't register in that thick-ass skull of his. He's stubborn as an old mule. But, I can give Russell a lot of credit for is being honest about what he wants, and not selling himself short. If more people would do that, life would be so easier.

A look comes across El's face. This really hits home.

EXT. NIKKI'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Russell walks Nikki to the door.

NIKKI

Thank you for tonight, that's the best date I've been on in a while.

RUSSELL

It's the best date I've been on in awhile, too.

NIKKI

Before we say "Good night", I have to ask this.

RUSSELL

What?

NIKKI

Was my daddy hard on you?

RUSSELL

Uh--yeah. He pulled out and loaded his .357.

Nikki laughs. She gives Russell a good-night kiss on the lips.

NIKKI

I'll see tomorrow at the park. Good night.

RUSSELL

Good night.

She goes into the house. Russell does a victory dance, and trips over a crack in the sidewalk (lost cool points).

INT. BLUES' KITCHEN - NIGHT

El sits at the table sneakily eating another butter roll. Russell strolls into the kitchen. He feels like a new man, singing and dancing. Russell spots El sitting at the table.

RUSSELL

El, why the hell are you eatin' up my mom's butter rolls man?!

El takes a sip of his milk.

EL

Russell, I couldn't help it man! This was the closet late night I saw.

(a beat)

I would ask how the date went 'cause you're singin' and dancin'. Or, maybe I shouldn't because of the way you're acting.

Russell mockingly laughs.

RUSSELL

For your info, the date went well. We went to the old skating rink me and Nikki used to go to, and we skated for awhile then reminisced.

EL

(laughs)

Did you bust your ass?

RUSSELL

No. For ya information, I even got a good night kiss.

(gives him his chain)

Your lucky chain definitely paid off.

EL

No, you can keep it. Just think of it as a gift. You and your family have been grateful to me.

RUSSELL

Thanks. Have you talked to Tonya?

EL

Yeah. She's doing good, they'll be coming back Sunday night.

RUSSELL

OK.

(beat)

Since you're being so grateful. You wanna talk about that heist?

EL

I don't wanna talk about it.

A beat.

RUSSELL

I can understand that you don't wanna talk about it. Since you're about to go down for robbery, B&E, and murder--

EL

I didn't kill anybody, asshole!

(quietly)

I was set up.

A confessional moment.

EL (CONT'D)

I was working at Solider Field, and I was gettin' frustrated and pissed off about working for peanuts. Then a mutual friend of mine's made me an offer I couldn't refuse. So, he introduced me to a close friend of his: DeMarco Reno.

(a beat)

(MORE)

EL (CONT'D)

They were plottin' this heist of a shiny rare diamond on display at the Diamond Museum. The Sancy Diamond, the real blood diamond. This diamond was once believed that whoever had it was invincible, but rumor has it that it's cursed and it brings death to anyone who owns it. Many people fought, stole and died for this diamond. Even King Henry IV's messenger swallowed it, so he wouldn't get jacked by any thieves.

RUSSELL

I'm glad I ain't gettin' a cut of that diamond.

(laughs)

That ain't no blood diamond, that's a shitty diamond.

El gives him a look -- Shut the hell up.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Alright, I quit. How do you know so much about this stuff?

EL

I'm a history buff, baby. Anyway...

INT. SECOND FLOOR DISPLAY ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The room is pitch black. The heating duct door is kicked off the hinges. El and Reno climb down to the floor. They turn on their flashlights. The lights shine on The Sancy Diamond in a display case. The duo smile in awe.

EL (V.O.)

...the plays were set, now all we had to do was execute.

RENO

(whistles)

Whoo! We done hit the lotto!

EL

Yes, indeed. She's beautiful.

El takes out a glass cutter, cuts a big circle and takes out the diamond. He places it in a black jewelry box, and puts it in his pocket. They hear FOOTSTEPS creeping towards them.

RENO

Oh, shit. Somebody's coming, we gotta hide.

They quickly hide behind displays next each other. The footsteps belong to a security guard. He strolls into the room with his flashlight.

He thoroughly starts checking the area. Then the Security Guard notices that The Sancy Diamond is missing from the case. He instantly gets on his walkie-talkie.

GUARD

Scotty, this is Jeff come to the second floor now. We got a--

Suddenly, two grenades are launched right at the Guard's feet. The Guard is confused.

GUARD (CONT'D)

What the hell?

BOOM! BOOM! Tear gas EXPLODES from the grenades. The Security Guard is blinded on impact. Reno and El, in gas masks, run out the display room. El gets on his walkie-talkie.

EL

Snickers, change of plans: tell Pretty Boy Ed to bring the van around the back now!

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A '95 Chevy van SQUEALS into the alley. Reno and El runs out the back door, and hop into the van. The van backs up, and PEARLS out the alley.

INT. '95 CHEVY VAN - NIGHT - MOVING - FLASHBACK

PRETTY BOY ED is behind the wheel, SNICKERS rides shotgun. He is eating a Snickers bar. El and Reno sit in the back seats. El takes out the jewelry box to show off The Sancy Diamond. It's glistening.

SNICKERS

Damn, that shit looks nice.

PRETTY BOY ED

Yes, sir!

(Jamaican accent)

Soon we're gonna be relaxin' on the islands of Jamaica mon!

ALL
 (Jamaican accents)
 Jamaica!

RENO
 Beaches, tequilas, and cuties!

SNICKERS
 Damn, this Snickers taste more
 sweeter.

Pretty Boy Ed looks in his rearview mirror. He spots a '04 Cadillac Escalade driving too close to his bumper.

PRETTY BOY ED
 Man, I wish this son of a bitch
 would get off my ass.

The Escalade SCREECHES past them. Pretty Boy Ed SWERVES out of the their way. He is heated.

PRETTY BOY ED (CONT'D)
 This fool is driving me crazy.

RENO
 Assholes!

Beat.

EL
 Yeah, if they're lucky, they just
 might injure somebody.

SNICKERS
 The Chi is just lettin' anybody
 drive on the streets these days.
 Where did he get his driver license
 from, the toy in the Cracker Jack
 box?

They all crack up.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO STREET - CONTINUOUS - FLASHBACK

The Escalade blocks off the street at the light. Two husky GOONS stop out of the car. Pretty Boy Ed quickly SCREECHES the van to a halt.

PRETTY BOY ED
 I can't believe this shit!

EL
 What the hell is going on?

Reno pulls out a Desert Eagle on his crew members. The two Goons approach the car, pointing Glock 9s at them.

RENO
Give me the diamond.

SNICKERS
DeMarco, what the hell are you doing?

RENO
Give me the damn diamond, El!

El gives him the diamond.

PRETTY BOY ED
You snake-ass bastard!

RENO
I thought to myself this morning,
"Why split \$50 million four ways?"
And, it dawned me that I'm too
greedy for that.

Reno FIRES A SHOT into Snickers' chest. Dead on impact. Then he FIRES TWO SHOTS in Pretty Boy Ed's stomach and chest. Dead instantly. Reno turns the gun on El.

El tries to WRESTLE AND RUMBLE the gun away from him. Reno regains control, and COLD CLOCKS El unconscious with the butt of his gun. Reno takes the diamond from his pocket. He places the trigger on El's finger. Reno jumps out the van, hops into the Escalade. The Escalade makes a U-turn and drives off.

INT. BLUES' KITCHEN - PRESENT DAY

EL
I stole it back from him a few weeks later. And, I've been on the run ever since.

RUSSELL
So, Reno was the LeBron of jewel thieves? He decided splitin' the money four ways wasn't good enough, so decided to take his talents solo?

EL
Yep.

RUSSELL

Look, my brother Jodie is a detective.

EL

Russell, I know. But, we can't go to him, he'll try to have us put in jail. Plus, I think Reno is in cahoots with some type of law enforcement. He's not too smart to track us down here all by himself. That's how he caught up to us at the store. We just gotta lay low here 'til we can get back to Chicago.

RUSSELL

Yeah. Look, I'm sorry I accused you.

EL

That's OK.

RUSSELL

You're alright, El Bankston.

EL

You too, Russell Blues.

RUSSELL

But, there's another loose end that needs to get wrapped up.

EL

What?

Russell and El walk over to the window. Russell pulls down the blind. They spot Agent Dameron's GMC Yukon parked across the street.

EL (CONT'D)

I got your back.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Agent Dameron sits back in the driver's seat SNORING. El and Russell tiptoe and creep to the gas tank. El is holding a bag of sugar. Russell opens the door and untwists the nozzle. El places a funnel into the gas tank, and pours the sugar into it.

EL

He's gonna have a sweet ride now.

They both start laughing. Our duo runs back to the house.

INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING

Jodie turns on his parents' laptop, and logs into the computer. He accesses the Internet and types in the police department website. He logs onto his e-mail account, and clicks on the first message he sees. It's the e-mail from the detective.

CLOSE-UP: LAPTOP SCREEN

It's a PDF file of the FBI's Most Wanted List, it says "WANTED" at the top. Next to El's mugshot the details say, "NAME: EL BANKSTON. D.O.B: 01/27/1982. HEIGHT: 5'7". WEIGHT: 198-201 lbs. HAIR: BROWN. EYES: BROWN. REWARD: The FBI is offering a reward up to \$25,000 for information leading up to the arrest of El Bankston". Under his description it says "Summary: On November 16, 2007, stole The Sancy Diamond, a rare diamond from The Diamond Museum in Chicago. He also murdered two fellow crew members". Next to his profile is an ugly mug shot of El.

JODIE

Oh shit.

INT. DINER - DAY

Reno sits in a booth having lunch and reading his newspaper. He notices Russell and El driving past. He instantly runs out of the diner. Dining-and-ditching. A waitress walks up to the table. No pay, no tip.

WAITRESS

Hey! Hey! Come back here!

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON

The annual family reunion has taken over the park. It's in full swing. The O'Jays classic anthem "Family Reunion" is playing.

A close knit throng of family and friends mill around the picnic tables and throughout the park. Russell, Nikki and El enter the park. LEROY, the family beggar, walks over to them.

LEROY

My cousin, my cousin, my cousin!
Whassup, Russell! Damn, it's been a
long time since I seen you.

Leroy and Russell hug.

RUSSELL
Whassup, Leroy.

LEROY
Nothin'. I need a favor, loan me
\$20.

Russell reaches for his wallet, pretends to give him \$20,
closes up his hand and continues walking.

LEROY (CONT'D)
(to El)
How about you?

El does the same thing as Russell.

BASKETBALL COURT - CONTINUOUS

A very competitive game of three on three takes over the
court. Johnnie, June, and Jodie vs. Three Other Relatives:
Lance, C.J., and Percy. They stop by the court and watch.

NIKKI
Russell, I'll be over here with
your mom.

She gives Russell a kiss on his lips and leaves.

RUSSELL
OK.

EL
OOOOHHHH!

RUSSELL
Don't start.

C.J. falls on the ground. He holds his ankle and winces. They
all run to his aid.

JODIE
C.J., you all right?

C.J.
Nah. I sprained my ankle bad. I
can't go on.

JOHNNIE
What do we do? Y'all wanna forfeit?

RUSSELL
I can replace him.

JOHNNIE

You sure you wanna take your ol' pops on? You couldn't even beat your granddaddy.

RUSSELL

I'm sure. What's the game?

JUNE

Three-on-three, first team to score twenty wins. The score is fifteen-twelve in our favor.

Russell joins them on the court. Russell's team locks into a zone defense. June throws an inbound pass into Jodie. He passes it to Johnnie. Russell guards Johnnie and puts his hand in his face. Johnnie hits a baseline J anyway.

Russell gets the ball and lasers an inbound to Percy. Jodie and June double-team him. He barely gets the ball to Lance. Percy sneaks a no-look pass to Russell, on the money. Russell scores a lay-up.

Johnnie, Jodie, and June run up the court. June dribbles the ball. He passes to Johnnie, and Jodie scores a lay up. Wrong! Russell steals the ball before Johnnie can get to it. Russell runs down the court. Everybody hurries back on the other end. Russell hits a pull-up three.

The other team gets back on offense. June brings the ball up, Johnnie tries to set a screen with Jodie as the pick. Jodie comes off the pick and tries to score. Out of nowhere, Russell blocks his shot. Russell's team pushes the ball up the court. Lance throws an alley-oop to Russell, and he THROWS THE HAMMER DOWN on Johnnie. Everybody runs back on the other end.

JODIE

I never thought I'd see the day our little brother kick our asses in basketball.

JUNE

Tell me about it.

June sets up the play, Russell is covering him man-to-man. Then Percy comes over to help. June finds a wide open Jodie. Jodie comes off a screen and SWISH! He hits an elbow jumper.

Russell's team gets back on the offensive end. Lance dribbles and sets up the offense. He hands it off to Percy, and he hits a running jump hook over Jodie, a la Magic Johnson.

Johnnie tries to back down Lance in the post. Lance swats the ball out of his hands. Russell comes up with it. They're out on the fast break. Russell dishes a no-look pass to Percy and he scores a lay-up.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Alright, we tied up at nineteen apiece. The next basket wins the game.

Jodie inbounds the ball into June. June brings the ball up and sets up the play. Russell's team is now playing man-to-man D. Russell stays on Johnnie like a glove. June gets the ball into Johnnie.

JOHNNIE

(imitating Marv Albert)
Blues, for the jumper and the win!

Johnnie shoots the ball. SWISH! Nothing but net. Game over. Wrong! The ball bounces off the rim. Russell grabs the board and passes it to Lance. He sets up the play. He passes it to Russell, and Johnnie and Jodie immediately double-team him.

JODIE

Where you going, Russy Dusty?

JOHNNIE

Yeah. Where ya goin' son? You can't get around us.

JODIE

Hell, you can't even get around Charity and Mike.

Russell passes the ball to Percy. Jodie goes over to cover him. Johnnie stays on Russell.

JOHNNIE

(laughs)
C'mon son. What you gonna do? You never, ever gonna beat me.

RUSSELL

Well, Pop. Things change, and they're about to change right now.

Russell breaks Johnnie down with a smooth crossover. Johnnie falls on the ground. Russell takes it to the hole for the game-winning lay-up. Russell and his teammates celebrate their victory.

EXT. PARK - LATER

Johnnie, June, El, Russell, Nikki, Jodie and the rest of the family sit at a picnic table, eating. They're cashing in on their appetites built up from the game. Sly and the Family Stone's "Family Affair" is now playing.

JODIE

That was a good game, little broski.

JUNE

Yeah, good game, man.

RUSSELL

Thanks. I learned from the best.

They all laugh.

JOHNNIE

You know, that game today taught me some things that I had forgotten.

A heart-to-heart moment.

RUSSELL

What's that, Daddy?

JOHNNIE

I shouldn't look down on anybody for the choices they make. They have to make the choices that's right for them--not for me. And, Russell, I realize that you did what was best for you. And, I didn't support you, and that's what pushed you away from me.

RUSSELL

No, it ain't all your fault, Daddy. Somebody made me realize that I've let my pride and anger keep me away for eight years. I'm sorry, and I promise I won't do that again.

JUNE/JODIE/BETTY

That's alright. We love you.

JOHNNIE

And, I don't ever wanna push you away from me again. So, I'm sorry, for making you feel unwelcome and being an ignorant, stubborn and arrogant idiot.

RUSSELL
Apology accepted.

This is something he's wanted to hear for a long time. Russell and Johnnie get up and hug. Father and son once again.

JOHNNIE
I love you, son.

RUSSELL
I love you, too...idiot.

They laugh. It's the first time in a long time since they've laughed together. Betty comes between them and hugs them.

BETTY
This is how I like to see my favorite men.

They kiss her on both cheeks. June and Jodie flash pictures on their camera phones. Nikki looks over to El. He is crying.

NIKKI
El, are you crying?

EL
(sniffing)
No. It's just my allergies. They've been bothering me lately.

She isn't buying it.

MALE VOICE (O.C.)
Whassup, Russell.

Russell turns around and sees someone very familiar. It's D.J., still the same height with same boyishly handsome looks, but prison has hardened them.

RUSSELL
Whassup, D.J.

D.J. reaches out for a hug. The childhood memory comes back to Russell. He TACKLES him to the ground like Ray Lewis, and BEATS HIM UP like he stole something. Everyone is shocked.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Reno sits in the '06 Chevy Impala peaking out of his binoculars. Laughing.

THE PARK - MOMENTS LATER

Nikki tends to a bruised, beaten-up D.J. She puts an ice pack over his black eye. Russell has a bandage on his head. Betty walks over to them. She is furious.

BETTY

I can't believe you two. Fighting at a damn family reunion. What's wrong with you?

RUSSELL

Mom, he started it.

D.J.

Auntie Betty, he started it. He attacked me first.

BETTY

Shut up! I don't wanna hear it anymore. You know, if the branches on these trees were smaller, I'd make both of you get a switch.

The D.J. plays D.J. Jazzy Jeff and The Fresh Prince's classic "Summertime". Everybody runs out in the middle of the park for The Soul Train Line. Everybody dances up the line. Everybody is getting down and having a good time!

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

A spectacular Fourth of July fireworks display shoots up in the sky. Families and couples glance in the sky in awe. Russell and Nikki watch in amazement like little kids. Everyone ROARS and CHEERS for the fireworks. Russell gives Nikki a long, passionate kiss on the lips.

INT. NIKKI'S CONDOMINIUM - NIGHT

Nikki and Russell walks into together hand-in-hand. Laughing and talking. She has a plate in her hand. Nikki walks over to her mailbox.

NIKKI

Oh, man. I had such a good time at the reunion. It's been a while since I've had so much fun. But, you were wrong for getting into that fight with D.J.

RUSSELL

No, I wasn't.

NIKKI

Yes you were, Russy Dusty.

RUSSELL

Whatever, Nikki.

She unlocks her mailbox, and takes out her stack of old mail.

NIKKI

I've been so busy at the hospital,
I haven't had time to check my own
mail. You wanna come up?

RUSSELL

Oh, you wanna kick off some
fireworks, huh?

NIKKI

(laughs)
Not for that. Just for some water,
beer, Pepsi, Kool-Aid, a Yoo-Hoo,
or whatever. You know?

RUSSELL

(playing it off)
Girl, I know that's what you meant.
Let's go.

They continue walking. They notice someone familiar and stop dead in their tracks. It's Reno. Nikki is scared. Reno has an evil grin on his face.

RENO

Well, Mr. Blues, since you and El
have my diamond. I'll just take a
diamond just as precious.

Reno pulls out a Desert Eagle.

RUSSELL

Nikki, get down!

Nikki ducks down behind the couch. Another gun battle wages on. Reno starts FIRING SHOTS at Russell. Russell hides behind a wall, and RETURNS FIRE with his 9mm Beretta. Reno runs behind the couch and grabs Nikki. She starts screaming.

NIKKI

Russell! Help!

Russell comes out from the wall. Reno has his gun pointed at Nikki's temple. Russell points his gun at Reno's face.

RUSSELL

Reno, let her go! She ain't got nothin' to do with this. This between you, me, and El.

RENO

You're wrong. She does. I'm going to use her as a bargaining chip for your friend to return my diamond to me.

Reno drags Nikki out of the condominium. Russell goes after them.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Reno opens the door, and puts Nikki on the passengers side. Reno hops on the driver's side and BURNS RUBBER. Russell runs jumps into his rental and HAULS ASS after them.

EXT. BUSY INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS

The high-speed chase is on! Reno and Russell make sharp turns at a red light. Oncoming cars try to avoid crashing into each other. Reno and Russell dart in and out of crowded traffic.

INSIDE THE '06 CHEVY IMPALA - CONTINUOUS

Reno is at the wheel. Nikki is shaken and terrified.

RENO

Don't be scared, baby. Daddy's gonna take care of you.

INSIDE THE 1975 FORD PINTO - CONTINUOUS

Russell is at the wheel. He is trailing behind Reno and Nikki.

RUSSELL

C'mon! C'mon! Move out the damn way! You don't own the streets.

BACK ON BUSY INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS

Dameron walks out of a bar. He spots the cars SPEEDING down the street. He hops in his car and CHASES AFTER them.

DAMERON

Both of their asses are mine.

Russell peaks in his rearview mirror. Agent Dameron is trailing behind him.

RUSSELL
Aw shit! Now, my shadow decides to show up.

INSIDE THE '06 CHEVY IMPALA - CONTINUOUS

The car cuts off on Reno. He is salty. Reno tries to restart the car. The engine sputters.

RENO
Shit!

Reno notices a bus driving up the street.

BACK ON BUSY INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS

They jump out and Reno flags the bus. The driver stops in the middle of the street. The driver opens the door.

BUS DRIVER
I can't pick y'all up here. I'm sorry.

Reno shows the driver his gun.

RENO
Consider this a special pick-up.

BUS DRIVER
OK.

They board the bus. Russell loses Dameron in the traffic. But, Dameron gains up on Russell and stops him. Wrong! An 18 Wheeler blocks his car. He is pissed.

Russell gets out the car, and tries to catch the bus. The bus pulls off. Reno ducks out the window. He laughs and taunts Russell. Russell is pissed.

INT. RENO'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Reno sits in his bed watching a movie. Nikki is tied up and gagged to a chair. Reno's cell RINGS and he picks it up.

RENO
Hello.

THE PHANTOM (O.S.)
(distorted)
Did you get the girl?

RENO

Yeah.

THE PHANTOM (O.S.)

(distorted)

Good. But, I think this party would be a lot better with two girls. Bankston's girlfriend comes back from her Vegas trip tomorrow at ten-thirty. You're gonna get her from the airport. Her name is Tonya Munoz. You'll bring her back to the hotel. He won't have a choice, but to give us the diamond.

RENO

Consider it done.

THE PHANTOM (O.S.)

(distorted)

Alright. Call me and let me know when the deed is done.

RENO

OK, Phantom.

THE PHANTOM (O.S.)

(distorted)

Talk to you tomorrow.

He hangs up.

INT. ATTIC - MORNING

Russell paces back and forth. El sits on the edge of the bed.

RUSSELL

Reno got Nikki.

EL

When?

RUSSELL

Last night.

EL

Shit. We gotta come up with a plan to get her back.

RUSSELL

How? We don't know where the hell she is. He might've killed her by now, or he's gonna kill her.

EL

No, he's not gonna kill her. I got the diamond, and that's what he wants. He'll probably wanna to kill us more. Nikki isn't nothing but trade bait.

RUSSELL

So, what do we do? Just wait it out?

A beat.

EL

Yeah. That's all we can do.

BETTY (O.C.)

Russell! El! Come on down here! Breakfast is ready!

EXT. AIRPORT PARKING LOT - DAY

Tonya and her mother walk out into the parking lot with their suitcases. They approach Tonya's Mom's car. She unlocks the doors, and pops the trunk with her remote. Tonya gets in the car. Tonya's Mom puts their luggage in the trunk. Tonya's Mom gets in, they back out and pull off.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Reno camps out in a '03 Dodge Charger, staking out El's apartment building. He spots Tonya's Mom's car pulling up in front of the building. Tonya's Mom pops open the trunk. Tonya gets out the car. A neighbor gets Tonya suitcases from the trunk.

NEIGHBOR

Hey, Tonya. How was Vegas?

TONYA

It was good.

NEIGHBOR

Did you win anything?

TONYA

I won a little bit.

TONYA'S MOM

Bye, Tonya. I'll call you later.

TONYA
Bye, Mom.

Tonya's Mom pulls off. The Neighbor carries her suitcases as they walk into the building.

INT. EL'S APARTMENT - LATER

Tonya sits on the couch watching TV. Relaxing. She's eating ice cream and pickles. Suddenly, there's a KNOCK on the door.

TONYA
Who is it?

RENO (O.C.)
A friend of El's.

Tonya gets up and walks to the door. She peaks in the peephole. It's Reno. She is terrified.

TONYA
El's not here. He's out of town.

RENO (O.C.)
It's cool, Tonya. He told me to come by and get something for him.

TONYA
I don't remember tellin' me that.

Reno flashes his SNUB NOSE .38. Beat.

RENO
Do you remember now?

Tonya opens the door. Reno points his Snub Nose at her.

TONYA
(trembling)
Yeah...I remember.

INT. BLUES' LIVING ROOM - DAY

El dials his phone number on his cell. The phone rings. No answer. He hangs up.

EL
Shit!

Russell walks into the living room.

RUSSELL
What's wrong, El?

EL
Tonya's flight from Vegas should've landed over an hour ago. She ain't answerin' her phone, and she hasn't called me either.

RUSSELL
Maybe she's just relaxing from all that jet lag.

EL
No. This ain't like her, Russell. I'm gonna try one more time.

El re-dials his phone number. The phone RINGS again. No answer.

RUSSELL
Still no answer?

EL
No. I'm starting to think that she's in danger, too.

RUSSELL
Let's head back to NOLA.

El nods in agreement. They are about to leave, Johnnie stops them.

JOHNNIE
Russell, El, where y'all going? We're about to have Sunday dinner.

EL
We're going to get my sister out the tub. It requires some heavy lifting. We'll be right back.

JODIE (O.C.)
That ain't it.

Jodie enters the living room.

JODIE (CONT'D)
You wanna tell him, Russell, or do you want me to tell him?

Betty and the rest of the family enter the house.

BETTY

Tell us what?

A confessional moment.

EL

Mr. Blues, Mama Betty, everybody, I have a confession to make. I'm not a jewelry appraiser. I'm a jewel thief, and I'm Russell's latest bail jumper. I'm wanted by the FBI for a heist that I did four years ago.

BETTY

Is this true, Russell?

RUSSELL

Yeah.

JOHNNIE

Russell, what the hell's wrong with you?! You better than this! You know how much trouble we can be in for harboring a fugitive.

JODIE

I'm a detective man! I could be brought up on charges and booted off the force!

RUSSELL

I'm sorry, y'all; I was gonna take him back to my bail bondsman in Chicago. But, everything was booked, so I decided to hide him out here 'cause this would be the last place they would look.

EL

Everybody, I'm sorry that I lied to you. It's just that you guys became my family this weekend. I've been in and out of foster homes since I was little. This is the family I've been wantin' my whole life. I was gonna tell you sooner, but I got so overjoyed with having a family; I didn't wanna ruin my fantasy.

BETTY

I'm glad that you felt at home, El. But, families don't lie to each other.

(MORE)

BETTY (CONT'D)

Families tell each other the truth, no matter how ugly it may be. You gotta take responsibility for your actions.

JODIE

What about the murder charge?

EL

I didn't murder anybody. My old partner did it, DeMarco Reno. In fact, he's in New Orleans.

JODIE

OK. I'll put an A.P.B. out on him.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Our duo runs up to the door. They see a tape recorder duct-taped on the door with a Post-It note that says, "Play Me!"

EL

Oh shit!

El unseals the tape recorder.

INT. EL'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

El and Russell sit on the couch. El presses the "Play" button.

RENO (O.S.)

(on tape)

El, Russell, I'm glad I have your undivided attention now. I got two special diamonds that you both want. You got a special diamond that I want. Let's set up a meeting. Call me at 555-8188.

El writes down the number. Russell presses "Stop".

EL

Russell, if something happens to Tonya. I don't what I'll do.

RUSSELL

Don't worry. Ain't nothing gonna happen to her or Nikki. We gonna get them back.

El gets on his speakerphone and dials a number.

INT. RENO'S HOTEL ROOM - INTERCUT

Reno's cell phone VIBRATES. He answers it. Tonya is tied up and duct-taped in a chair next to Nikki.

RENO

Hello.

EL

You said you wanted to set up a meeting, let's set it up, DeMarco. Meet us at The Superdome at 3:30 today on the fifty-yard line. If our girls ain't alive, you can kiss that diamond good-bye.

RENO

OK. But no cops.

EL

Cool. No cops.

RENO

If I see, sense, or even smell a cop. I'll kill you and your buddy Russell.

(beat)

If you show up without The Sancy Diamond, I will kill all of you right on that fifty-yard line.

RUSSELL

Reno, before you go, let me speak to one of the ladies.

Reno removes the duct-taped from Nikki's mouth, and puts the phone to her ear.

NIKKI

Russell, we're okay, and we're not hurt. I'm at--

Reno puts the duct tape back on her mouth.

RENO

Now, I've broke down the rules and consequences, do you understand them?

BOTH

Yeah.

RENO

See you at 3:30.

They hang up. Russell dials Jodie's cell phone number on his cell. The phone RINGS. A beat.

EL

Russell, what the hell are you doing?

RUSSELL

Our back are against the wall. We don't have too much of a choice. So, I'm pullin' out all the stops.

EL

Reno said no cops.

RUSSELL

I know, I know. We're gonna have the cops without having the cops.

INT. BLUES' LIVING ROOM - INTERCUT

Jodie answers his cell phone.

JODIE

Hello. Why you callin' me?

RUSSELL

Big bro, I need a big favor; me and El just set up a meeting with this Reno dude. He's got Nikki and El's girlfriend. It's going down at The Superdome at 3:30. But, you gotta be covert. You gotta be a cop, but you can't look like a cop. 'Cause he said if he sees a cop, he's gonna all of kill us.

JODIE

Alright, Russell. Where at in The Superdome?

RUSSELL

On the fifty-yard line.

JODIE

OK. I'll see y'all later.

RUSSELL

Alright. Bye.

They hang up. Russell dials up another phone number.

INT. FBI OFFICE - INTERCUT

Agent Dameron sits at his desk sipping a Pepsi. He types up a criminal name on the computer. His telephone RINGS twice.

DAMERON

I can never get any work done here.
This always happens when I'm at the
office.

Dameron picks the phone.

DAMERON (CONT'D)

FBI, Robbery Division. Special
Agent Dameron speaking.

RUSSELL

Dameron, it's Blues.

DAMERON

Oh, Mr. Blues, how nice of you to
call. You've been avoiding me like
the plague for the last few days.
Now, you wanna talk.

RUSSELL

So, you wanna play that game now? I
guess you don't wanna hear the hot
deal I got on the table. Bye.

DAMERON

Whoa, whoa, wait. What's the hot
deal?

Beat.

RUSSELL

Me and El set up an exchange with
Reno. It's goin' down today at the
Superdome at 3:30. On the fifty-
yard line. And, you have to be
inconspicuous; Reno has our
girlfriends, and said if he sees
the law he's gonna us instantly.

DAMERON

Why I have a feeling there's more
to this deal, Russell?

RUSSELL

You gotta let El come back to
Chicago with me. He agreed to
testify against Reno.

DAMERON

OK. Deal.

RUSSELL

Thank you.

EXT. LOUISIANA SUPERDOME - DAY

Russell parks in a parking space near the stadium. Our boys get out the car.

RUSSELL

What's the quickest way to the fifty-yard line?

EL

(points West)

It's this way, c'mon.

Our boys head toward the entrance.

INT. LOUISIANA SUPERDOME - DAY

Reno stands on the 50-yard line. Jodie is in the first row posing as a custodian. He pushes a cleaning cart up and down the row.

Russell and El walk into the stadium. Three GOONS approach them and pat them down for weapons. Goon #1 takes Russell's 9mm Beretta from his pocket. They meet him on the 50-yard line.

RENO

You're right on time, fellas. I like that. You were always prompt, El. Maybe we should team up again. It'll be just like old times.

EL

DeMarco, I just went to a reunion yesterday, I didn't come here for another one. And, I wouldn't wanna work with you again. Plus, if I shake your hand now, I'd have to count my fingers. So, let's cut the bullshit and get this over with.

RENO

OK. Where's the diamond, fellas?

RUSSELL

Where's the ladies, Reno?

RENO
Bring them in!

The Goons walk out the stadium. They come back with Nikki and Tonya, still tied up.

NIKKI
Russell!

RUSSELL
Nikki! Are you okay, baby?

TONYA
El!

EL
Tonya! Are you all right? Did they touch you? You better not hurt them, Reno. Let 'em go!

The ladies try to run to them, but the Goons escort them out the stadium.

RENO
Fellas, I'm too much of a gentleman to hurt a lady. Now, the diamond please.

El takes the jewelry box out his pocket and gives it to Reno. Reno opens up the box and becomes in awe. The Sancy Diamond is still in mint condition from the heist.

RENO (CONT'D)
Welcome home, baby. Finally, I got my diamond.

THE PHANTOM (O.C.)
You mean our diamond?

The Phantom, in full view, walks into the stadium. It's Agent Dameron. El and Russell are stunned.

RENO
This is my partner The Phantom. You were hard to find, El, so I had to go to somebody in a very high place to flush you out.

RUSSELL
So, Dameron, he's been tailin' us all this time because of you?

DAMERON

Yeah. He contacted me from his cell a couple of months ago with an offer. I got a mortgage, an ex-wife, and two kids in college. Two-thirds of \$60 million was too much of an offer to refuse.

RENO

Agent Dameron, lately I've been thinking about your cut from the diamond. I'm gonna lower the cut on your finder's fee to zero.

Reno pulls out a Glock 9. Dameron reaches for his gun from his holster. Too late. Reno SHOTS Dameron in the chest, killing him instantly. El hauls ass like Reggie Bush out of the stadium.

Reno starts to OPEN FIRE at El. Russell takes cover behind the goal post, pulls out a Mini Desert Eagle from his sock and RETURNS FIRE. Now, it's on! An old school gunfight. Russell vs. Reno. Hero vs. villain. Good vs. evil. You know the deal.

Jodie jumps onto the field. He points his 9mm Beretta at the goons.

JODIE

Freeze! New Orleans P.D.!

The Goons point their AK-47s at Jodie. Jodie, without hesitation, FIRES TWO SHOTS into their chests. Dead instantly.

RENO

Anybody comes between me and my diamond, I'm gonna kill them!

Reno makes a run for it. Jodie stops him dead in his tracks.

JODIE

DeMarco Reno, freeze!

Reno SHOTS him in his leg and chest and runs out the stadium. Russell rushes over to Jodie.

RUSSELL

Jodie! Jodie, are you alright?

Jodie unbuttons his shirt. A bulletproof vest covers his chest. A bullet is pierced into the vest. Russell removes the bullet. Russell takes off his shirt. He tightly wraps it around Jodie wounded leg.

JODIE
I'm cool, Russell. I'm cool.

RUSSELL
Negro, stop with that hard B.S.

JODIE
(laughs)
Ten years on the force, and the first time I get shot; my little brother's my knight in shining armor. You just go ahead and get his ass. I'll be alright.

Russell runs out the stadium. Jodie gets on his radio.

INT. LOGE - CONTINUOUS

Nikki and Tonya are sitting in chairs, zip-cuffed.

TONYA
I know I don't know you that well, but I think I have a plan that might get us out of here.

NIKKI
I'm all ears, girl. What's up?

TONYA
I'm about to go into labor, follow my lead.

Nikki smiles -- I got you.

EXT. GATE G - 200 LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

Goon #3 walks around, checking the permitter. Suddenly, he hears water SPLASHING on the floor and Tonya's LOUD SCREAMING. He rushes upstairs.

INT. LOGE - CONTINUOUS

Tonya constantly SCREAMS AND PANTS in pain. Nikki tries to calm her down. Goon #3 bursts through the door.

GOON #3
What the hell is going on?

TONYA
I'm in labor, ya dumb-ass! You gotta untie us!

GOON #3
How I know you're for real?

NIKKI
Sir, I'm a nurse and she's in labor. The contractions have to be three minutes apart. This baby is on its way. Either, you can cut us so I can take care of her and the baby, or you deliver this baby.

Goon #3 takes out his knife, and cuts the zip-cuffs off their wrists. Nikki and Goon #3 carry Tonya on a couch.

GOON #3
What should I do now?

NIKKI
Call an ambulance! Now, Tonya, I need you to breathe. OK?

They breathe in rhythm together. Goon #3 turns his back and gets on his cell. Nikki gets her stun gun from her purse. She sticks it on Goon #3's nuts. BAR-BE-CUE! He falls down on the floor SCREAMING like a girl, holding his sack in pain. Tonya knocks him out with a vase. Nikki helps her up and they're gone.

EXT. GATE G - 300 LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

El strolls around the gate looking for the girls. BOOM! A swift clothesline by Reno levels El to the floor. El stares down the barrel of Reno's .357 Magnum.

RENO
This is the end of the line.

Out of nowhere, Russell kicks the gun out of his hand. He delivers a hard right to Reno's jaw. It's on! Rematch! Part two. Hand-to-hand combat. Russell vs. Reno. Brawl for it all. El cheers Russell on.

EL
Kick his ass, Russell!

Russell takes a few shots from Reno, then grabs Russell around the waist and body slams him. Russell is hurt.

EL (CONT'D)
Oh, shit. Reno's on the juice.

Russell comes back, and gives him the ass-whipping that he deserves. Russell delivers a knockout blow to Reno's face.

Reno is out cold. Russell drags Reno to a pole and cuffs his left wrist to the pole. El walks over to him and takes the jewelry box out of Reno's pocket.

EL (CONT'D)

I believe this belongs to me.

El puts it in his pocket. Our boys high-five each other. Reno wakes up, and draws a .38 Caliber pistol. El jumps out of harm's way. Russell draws his Mini Desert Eagle. He EMPTIES the clip into Reno's chest, killing him instantly.

RUSSELL

Let's go get the girls.

INT. SECURITY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tonya and Nikki sit at the control panel.

TONYA

I don't know about you. But, I could go for some nachos and a Snickers right now.

NIKKI

I never thought I'd say this, but that does sound good right now.

Our boys walk through the door. Their women hug and kiss them. They run out the security room.

EXT. LOUISIANA SUPERDOME - MOMENTS LATER

A platoon of sheriff cars and a EMS trucks are parked in the parking lot. The Superdome is now a major crime scene. Our foursome walk out into the parking lot. The EMS rolls Jodie out on a gurney. Russell runs over to him. The EMS stops.

RUSSELL

Jodie, how you feeling?

JODIE

I'm feelin' a little bit better.

RUSSELL

Thank you for helping me.

JODIE

No, thank you for saving my life. Besides, you given me the best gift in a long time. A mini-vacation.

They crack up. They roll Jodie into the ambulance. The EMS get in the truck and pull off.

EXT. BLUES' HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Russell and El hugs the family in the front yard.

BETTY

You coming back next year, Russell?

RUSSELL

Yes, ma'am.

BETTY

El, you're welcome back anytime.

(gives him a big pan)

I made some butter rolls for your girlfriend. I better not hear you been eatin' them. Love you.

JOHNNIE

I love you, son.

RUSSELL

I love y'all, too.

Our boys hug Jodie and June and say their good-byes. They get in the car. As we PULL BACK, they back out and pull off. Everybody waves good-bye.

BETTY

Bye! See you next year!

JODIE

Have a safe flight.

EXT. EL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Russell pulls up in front of El's building. El pulls out the jewelry box from his pocket, and gives it to Tonya.

EL

Take of our babies, Tonya. I'm ready to pay the consequences.

RUSSELL

You sure, El? 'Cause I was gonna let you when we got back to Chicago.

EL

Yeah, I'm sure.

TONYA
 You know I will, *papi*. I'll be
 waiting for you. I love you.

Tonya gives El a long passionate kiss on the lips. Tonya and Nikki step out of the car. El mouths "I love you, too" back to her. Nikki helps Tonya into the apartment building.

INT. CONTINENTAL TERMINAL - CONTINUOUS

A bittersweet moment. Russell, El, and Nikki stand at the gate. Nikki kisses Russell on the lips.

RUSSELL
 I'll call you when I get home. I
 love you.

NIKKI
 I love you, too.

Nikki hugs El.

EL
 Bye, Nikki.

NIKKI
 Bye, El, be good.

EL
 I will.

Our boys walk through the gate. Nikki sadly watches them leave.

EXT. CHICAGO AIRPORT - NIGHT

The plane TOUCHES down on the runway.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - NIGHT

Russell escorts El, handcuffed, to a guard. This is it and they know it.

EL
 See you in six months, Russell.

RUSSELL
 See you in six months.

Russell hugs El. The guard takes El away.

INT. STRODE BAIL BONDS - CONTINUOUS

Russell gives Mia his arrest slip. Mia is ecstatic. She hugs Russell. Mia hands him over his check. Russell walks out the door.

INT. STRODE BAIL BONDS - AFTERNOON

TITLE: ONE YEAR LATER

Russell is sitting at his desk looking at his next file. Jenny walks over to him.

JENNY

Russell, you wanna give me a third of that \$50,000 for my birthday?

RUSSELL

Call the student loan folks, the light, phone, and gas companies, and the car insurance company, Jen. 'Cause that's the only way you'll get a third of anything.

They both laugh.

JENNY

Well, you can't be mad at a girl for tryin', Russell.

A bearded UPS MAN with sunglasses enters with a gift-wrapped box. He walks over to Jenny.

UPS MAN

(Spanish accent)
Excuse me. I have a delivery for Russell Blues.

JENNY

(points to Russell)
He's over there at his desk.

The UPS Man walks over to Russell's desk.

UPS MAN

Senor Blues, happy birthday! You got a delivery here for you. Sign here please.

Russell signs for the package.

RUSSELL

Thank you. What's this?

UPS MAN

It's a birthday gift from a friend.

The UPS Man walks away. He unwraps the box. It's a "Variety Pack" box of Hershey candy bars. Russell notices a birthday card attached. Russell opens the card and sees a picture. It's a picture of El, Tonya, and their infant son. Russell smiles and reads the card.

CLOSE-UP ON: THE BIRTHDAY CARD

The card says, "Look Under The Candy For The Real Goodies".

Russell opens the box, and looks under a the rows of candy. Fresh, tight stacks of ONE HUNDRED DOLLAR BILLS! Russell grins from ear to ear. The man turns around, and pulls down his sunglasses. Russell recognizes those eyes anywhere. It's El. El winks at Russell and he is gone.

THE END