

**"High Speed Pursuit"**

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. LOS ANGELES CITYSCAPE - DAY

Floating high above the city we travel across the skyline, past skyscrapers and other landmarks as we speed towards:

THE INTERSTATE FREEWAY

Where vehicles motor along below like tiny matchbox cars.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Here in Los Angeles, there's over nine hundred miles of freeway. To put this in perspective, if you left the city heading east, nine hundred miles later you'll end up in El Paso, Texas. Add to that the more than twenty-one thousand miles of surface streets and you get an idea of the sprawling urban canvas that makes up greater metropolitan L.A.

We hear a faint POLICE SIREN in the distance.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

With that much open road it's no surprise we have as many police chases as we do.

Drawing nearer, the shrill grows to multiple sirens. Then as if the volume has been turned up, we hear the steady - *Whup, Whup, Whup* - beat of a HELICOPTER in the background.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And in this diverse city where black, white, yellow, red, brown, and every other color of the human rainbow mixes in an overpopulated stew of simmering resentment and mistrust, the one thing that brings everyone together is their love of a good high speed pursuit.

FREEWAY GROUND LEVEL

A silver BMW BLOWS PAST us, chased by a handful of black and white cruisers.

As it weaves through traffic, we look up to see our earlier POV was from that of a TV news helicopter hovering overhead.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Like snowflakes, no two are the same and we've seen all kinds, from every make of vehicle: foreign and domestic, high-end sports cars that cost more than most houses, to beat-up pickups on their last leg. There was even an eighteen-wheeler hauling a load of watermelon spilling out the back, and an honest-to-God M60 tank that rampaged through the streets one afternoon. At this point there isn't much that would surprise us.

MONTAGE:

-- Of local stations interrupting their programming to show breaking news of the chase.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Last year there were over seven thousand police chases in the state of California -- the most by far of any in the U.S. -- and nearly eighty percent of those took place in L.A., making it the high speed pursuit capital of the world.

-- Yuppies and other professionals lunching at an outdoor café, when cell phones and Blackberry's RING simultaneously with incoming message alerts.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

To say that the police chases are popular is an understatement, as soon as one airs viewer ratings quadruple.

-- A health club, where patrons put their workouts on hold to watch on overhead TV's and critique the escape route.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Most are over within two minutes, and unless it goes past the ten-minute mark, you probably won't even see them on TV; that's usually how long it takes a news crew to fly over and televise the event.

-- And various other scenes: of people watching from home; employees around a work cubicle sharing a radio; pedestrians

and the homeless alike staring into an appliance store at the display of televisions inside, all tuned to the chase.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But on those occasions when a fleeing suspect eludes the police long enough for news helicopters to mobilize to the scene, we catch a glimpse of the city's favorite pastime.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

We observe the fleeing BMW again from our birds-eye view.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

My name is Jack Horner, and I've been a traffic chase reporter here for the past nine years. And yes, the irony that I'm the one being pursued isn't lost on me.

INT. BMW

At the wheel is JACK HORNER (mid-thirties, roguish) dressed in a designer sports jacket, collar open. In the passenger seat is STAN GALE (40-ish) wearing a rumpled polyester suit, who sits with eyes closed, breathing in and out deeply in a state of meditation -- they're both covered in red dye.

Outside, billboards race by, and we see one plastered with a local news advertisement, from which a giant image of Jack's head grins back at us, flashing a thumbs-up.

The caption below reads: "L.A.'s #1 Action News Reporter".

JACK HORNER (V.O.)

And in theory, one might think that a person who's covered police chases for the better part of a decade would have a pretty good handle on how to elude authorities; or at the very least avoid the most common mistakes that a suspect on the run tends to make.

A CLOSE UP on Jack shows him in a totally wired state: eyes wide, forehead beaded with sweat, with a white-knuckled grip on the steering wheel.

JACK (V.O.)

But theory doesn't take into account the gallon and a half of adrenaline pumping through your veins, or the fact you might be barreling down the freeway in a stolen vehicle. And it most definitely does not factor in the presence of an armed and suicidal bank robber sitting next to you.

Pan across to the passenger, meditatively serene, holding a pistol in his lap.

JACK (V.O.)

Who also happens to be your best friend.

SUPER: ONE WEEK EARLIER

INT. KNOB (CHANNEL 16) NEWSROOM

An open-air office filled with the usual: cluttered desks, banks of overhead monitors, phones ringing off the hook, and the daily non-stop bustle and activity of a news staff preparing its segments.

In the corner we spot an INTERN, sporting a mouth full of braces, at a desk manning a police scanner.

And as he breaks into a yawn, through the staticky crackle we hear: *...attention all units ...officer in pursuit.*

He nearly falls out of his seat.

BRACES

Chase!

Everyone stops what they're doing.

INT. NEWS EDITOR'S OFFICE

We find its occupant, LISA BARRINGTON (harried, no-nonsense) at her desk in the tiny office, the few photos and personal effects hidden by stacks of files and paperwork.

We also notice takeout containers jutting out from her over-filled trash bin, definitely an office with a lived-in feel.

The door bursts open, and it's her assistant (SHERRY).

SHERRY

Lisa, we've got a runner.

That's all she needs to hear, and Lisa springs out of her chair and races outside to:

THE NEWSROOM

Where it's full-blown chaos as Lisa and Sherry, notepad in hand, conduct a walking meeting.

LISA

Sherry, tell the studio we're going live.

SHERRY

Already done.

LISA

And we'll need to send a crew down to the police station to cover the press junket.

A pimply-faced station gopher (HAROLD) makes a beeline for her, but before he can open his mouth.

LISA

Harold, I need you to find Ted and get him over to the set pronto. And tell Colin he'll be covering the press conference downtown.

He tries to say something, but again gets trumped.

LISA

Let's go, we've got a breaking story here, chop-chop. Check the break room.

She waves him off and turns to Sherry.

LISA

Get a van crew ready to roll ASAP. I'll be down in studio if you need me.

Elsewhere, we turn to SUZANNE MERRIMAN, a mane of frizzy red hair, at her desk talking a mile-a-minute over the phone. She sees Lisa approach and covers the receiver.

SUZANNE

The call came in over the scanner two minutes ago.

LISA

Details?

SUZANNE

The rabbit's in a blue Mustang headed east on Santa Monica.

LISA

Any accidents?

SUZANNE

Not yet, but police are clearing the highway.

INT. BREAK ROOM

The door opens and Harold's head pokes in.

HAROLD

Ted?

TED WASSERMAN (mid-forties, beginning to plump) glances up from behind the lid of a donut box, pastry in hand.

INT. NEWS STUDIO

Ted races inside, with Harold trailing, and MAKEUP in step, trying to both keep up and powder his face at the same time. They scuttle over to the anchor desk where Lisa waits.

As she briefs Ted on the details, camera operators and line staff in the b.g. set up. And from behind comes a yell:

STAGE MANAGER

Ten seconds!

A flurry of activity before the signal's given and everyone scatters leaving Ted alone at the desk. He clears his throat.

STAGE MANAGER

Five, four...

He goes silent, counting down with his fingers: three, two, one, points to Ted, mouths "you're on."

POV OF THE NEWS CAMERA:

TED

We interrupt your regularly scheduled programming to bring you breaking news of a high-speed chase in progress.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

Ted's broadcast plays from one of the static monitors above, as Lisa begins clicking through stations with a remote.

TED

And we have our number one Action News Correspondent, Jack Horner, at the scene live, reporting from our Channel Sixteen News Helicopter. Jack?

ON MONITOR:

We find Jack positioned dramatically in front of the open cockpit hatch, winds gusting all around.

JACK

Thanks Ted, we're following the pursuit along the I-Ten corridor.

The feed cuts to a WIDE ANGLE view captured from the craft's nose-mounted aerial cam.

JACK (O.C.)

Where the suspect in the blue Mustang has been running from police at speeds approaching one hundred miles an hour.

BACK TO SCENE:

Lisa finishes scrolling through the other stations: which air a variety of soaps, daytime talk shows, commercials, sitcoms -- none yet reporting the chase.

JACK (O.S.)

And we here at KNOB are first on the scene with a live report.

Behind her, the production room erupts in APPLAUSE.



INT. NEWSROOM

ON LISA, with a group of station employees around her, as they watch the situation unfold on the monitors.

INSERT MONITOR:

JACK

What we just witnessed was an attempt at a PIT maneuver, which is short for Pursuit Intervention Technique, also known as tactical ramming.

A REPLAY of the clip shows the Mustang accelerate and veer, just as a black and white swerves to clip its rear fender, narrowly avoiding the bump.

JACK (O.S.)

Police tried to tap the rear bumper at an angle in order to cause a spinout.

The live coverage resumes as the car kicks into OVERDRIVE.

JACK (O.S.)

But seeing as how that hasn't been successful, at this stage in the chase, if the pursuit continues along its current route we're most likely going to see a spike strip ahead.

As if on cue, the Mustang speeds along and its tires EXPLODE in a shower of sparks, as naked rims grind against asphalt. The vehicle loses control and careens into the median.

Skidding to a halt, the DRIVER exits the vehicle and attempts to flee on foot, and is immediately tackled by police.

JACK

(delivering his sign-off)  
And there you have it folks... just another day in L.A.

Lisa CLICKS off the monitor signaling everyone back to work. Suzanne approaches, offering a mug of coffee.

SUZANNE

This makes five straight we've come in first, that's gotta make Morty happy.

Lisa gives her a doubtful look, but she maintains her smile.

SUZANNE

Why don't we celebrate after work?

LISA

I'd like to, Suzanne, but I need to stay and go over the demographics report. It appears Ad Sales is pressuring corporate to get us to air stories that target a more "youthful" audience.

(rolling her eyes)

If they had their way, the evening news would be reported by a bunch of teenage girls in hotpants.

EXT. KNOB NEWS BUILDING - DAY

The news helicopter descends onto the rooftop landing pad.

INT. NEWSROOM

The room breaks into APPLAUSE as Jack enters, followed by his  
CAMERA OP.

JACK

Thank you, thank you. I love you all.

A VOICE

How'd you beat everyone to the scene, Jack?

JACK

Instinct. What every good reporter needs.

CAMERA OP

That, and a personal contact down at the police station.

ANOTHER VOICE

Hey Jack, who picked out your tie?

He's sporting a striped silk Hermés tie.

JACK

It's the same one I wore yesterday. I consider it my lucky tie.

It appears this ritual takes place after every chase.

THIRD VOICE

Jack, you think you'll be nominated for another local Emmy this year, and if so, do you deserve to win?

JACK

The work is its own reward, my friend, and I mean that in all sincerity.

VOICE

Whatever you say, Jack.

INT. LISA'S OFFICE

We find Lisa at her desk, buried in reports. There's a KNOCK and Jack enters without prompt.

JACK

You busy?

LISA

Nice job up there, cowboy.

JACK

You know me. So what'd you think of my call on the spike strip, did I nail it or what? Pardon the pun.

LISA

(exhaling a sigh)  
Forty-eight percent of chases are ended by the strip, which makes calling it like flipping a coin -- you'll be right half the time.

JACK

I call 'em way more often than that, and let's not forget who got there first.

Looking down at his tie, she scowls and returns to her work.

JACK

I picked up a copy of the new Hunter S. Thompson biography down at Borders. Did you know he received a divinity degree from a mail-order church?

JACK (cont'd)  
(pondering to himself)  
I wonder if that allows him to preside  
over weddings and funerals?

LISA  
Jack, I'm very busy. Is this really what  
you came to discuss?

JACK  
Actually, I wanted to see what you were  
doing for dinner. Oh, and tell you about  
the new trim I got for the Porsche. You  
should see it, it's sharp. I'll take you  
for a ride afterwards.

LISA  
I already have plans.

JACK  
Don't tell me you're going to hole up in  
your office, and order takeout again. Do  
you even remember the last meal you had  
that didn't come with a plastic fork?

LISA  
Well, unlike you, my day isn't over the  
minute I climb out of the helicopter.

JACK  
Touché, and as a matter of fact, my days in  
the chopper may be coming to an end.  
(this gets her attention)  
Oh, I guess you haven't heard; CNN is  
interested in me. They're developing a new  
show: a roving reporter/action news series.  
Once that takes off, I'm blowing this pop  
stand. I'll tell you all about it over  
dinner, whaddya say?

LISA  
The answer is no, Jack. No dinner, no  
drinks, no dropping by my apartment for  
random visits whenever you just 'happen' to  
be in the neighborhood.  
(massaging her temples)  
The answer is always no. How many times  
do I have to tell you?

JACK

You can't stay mad at me forever.

LISA

(pointing to the door)

Out.

JACK

Suit yourself.

He turns to find MORTY DENNIS (white-haired, general manager) standing in the doorway. Morty's approaching retirement age and speaks a little too loudly for comfort.

MORTY

Am I interrupting something?

LISA

Not a thing Morty. Jack was just leaving.

MORTY

So how's my favorite assignment editor doing these days?

LISA

Busy. The new quarterlies are out.

MORTY

That's what I like about you, Lizzie. You're a workaholic, a regular pack mule! Wish I had a dozen more like you.

LISA

There's nothing a girl appreciates more than to be compared to a barn animal. And I'd really prefer it if you didn't call me Liz-

But before she can finish, he's already glad-handing Jack.

MORTY

And Jack, outstanding job as always! I guess that's why we pay you the big bucks around here.

Grinning, he delivers a friendly punch to Jack's ribs.

LISA

So, is this a social visit?

MORTY

I was down talking to the bean counters in Ad Sales, and they tell me that the male eighteen to thirty-four audience is our primary source of revenue. See if you can come up with more stories that target them, will ya Lizzie?

(turning again to Jack)

And as for you, you old dog, how 'bout I take my favorite newsman out to dinner? You don't already have plans do you?

Jack glances at Lisa, who returns an exasperated look.

JACK

No plans whatsoever.

MORTY

Lizzie, you mind getting us a reservation somewhere? You can pick the place, but just make sure it isn't Thai; had a bad experience the last time. And no Mexican either.

JACK

Would it be okay if Stan joined us? He's been a little down lately, and I think it might cheer him up to have dinner with the boss.

MORTY

Why the hell not? Lizzie, make that a table for three.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Jack shares the table with Morty and Stan.

MORTY

So Stanley, how's the wife?

STAN

We're getting divorced.

MORTY

(his joviality unfazed)  
That's a shame. What about those kids of yours, how are they doing?

STAN

Rachel won't let me see them until the custody hearing.

MORTY

What about you, Jack? How're things between you and Lizzie?

JACK

We sort of broke it off.

MORTY

I thought the two of you were getting hitched, what the hell happened?

JACK

It's a long story.

MORTY

That's alright, when it comes to office romances it's best I don't know. Well as they say in Italy: *cest la vie*, right boys?

Jack motions to a passing waiter.

JACK

Can we get another bottle of wine?

INT. LISA'S OFFICE

A KNOCK and Suzanne's at the door.

SUZANNE

It's Margarita Madness down at the Plaza, you should come. It'll be fun -- like a girls night out.

Lisa gives her an apologetic look.

SUZANNE

Well maybe next time. I heard Morty took Stan and Jack out to dinner.

Lisa's expression turns dark.

SUZANNE

Don't let it bother you, Lise, it's a guy thing. I mean, just because Morty's never taken you or me out to lunch, or golfing, or to a Lakers game...

Her expression continues to darken.

SUZANNE

-doesn't mean he doesn't appreciate the work we put in. In fact, right before he left, Morty told me I was his workhorse, and gave me a Starbucks gift certificate.  
(her initial smile turning into a look of bewilderment)  
And then he asked if I had any ideas for attracting eighteen-year-old males -- what's *that* about?

Lisa pushes aside her paperwork.

LISA

You know what, I've changed my mind. I think I will join you after all.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

MORTY

There's a new story out every week about some congressman jerking off with an intern or another company caught cooking the books, and the truth of the matter is the viewer at home doesn't give a shit anymore. Their main concern is what the morning commute is like and whether they should pack an umbrella. That's what we have the two of you for.

(turning serious)

Now, what's this I hear about CNN?

JACK

One of their producers called my agent. They're interested in me for a new show they're programming.

Morty's eyes narrow.



MORTY

Is this about money, because if it is I'll give you a raise. In fact, I'll match whatever they're offering!

JACK

Morty, it's not about money.

STAN

(lifting a hand)

I could use a raise.

MORTY

Sorry Stanley, it's not in the budget.

(returning to Jack)

Then what is it? You want the anchor spot, is that it?

JACK

I don't want to be stuck behind the desk, I've already told you that. Besides what would we do with Ted?

MORTY

I'll bump Ted down to weatherman tomorrow if that'll make you happy!

STAN

Hey!

JACK

There's no need to reassign anyone.

MORTY

How about a reserved parking space, huh? Just say the word and I'll give you my own VIP spot; it's there right next to the exit doors.

JACK

I've already got the space beside yours.

MORTY

So that's *your* Porsche.

(he laughs)

Sometimes I forget. How's she drive?

JACK

Zero to sixty in under four and a half seconds; she can outrun anything this side of a Lamborghini.

Morty's cell phone RINGS. He checks the caller.

MORTY

Damn, it's Edna.

JACK

Everything okay?

MORTY

Yeah, she's just checking up on me. I have to go. If I'm not home on time, she might call in and report the Jag stolen. She's done it before.

(muttering darkly)

Damn sheriff's deputy pulled me over last week and nearly took me in! And you know what, for a second, I had my foot on the gas and was *this* close to gunning it! If I had another drink or two I would have.

He muses a second, savoring the thought, then exits.

STAN

Did you know that statistically the average divorce costs more than the average wedding nowadays? I looked that up on the Internet.

JACK

Stan, we have got to get you drunk.

INT. PLAZA - NIGHT

Festive mariachi music plays in the background as Suzanne, Lisa, and a man in a smart pin-striped suit (COOPER) share a pitcher of margaritas.

COOPER

Then there was the time I was shopping at Saks, when guess who I saw trying on a pair of gloves... Judge Ito. You know, from the O.J. trial.

SUZANNE  
(elbowing Lisa)  
No way.

COOPER  
I swear on my life, and I went up to him  
and asked if they fit.

Cooper and Suzanne erupt in laughter. They turn to Lisa, who  
joins in nervously as well.

COOPER  
Excuse me, looks like we're a little low  
on refreshments.

Taking the empty pitcher, he saunters to the bar. Lisa turns to  
Suzanne, hissing under her breath.

LISA  
I can't believe you're trying to set me  
up with Cooper. What happened to girl's  
night out?

SUZANNE  
Honey, it's for your own good.

LISA  
You sound just like my mother.

SUZANNE  
Well, mothers are usually right... that is  
unless she picked out that blouse.

LISA  
Excuse me?

SUZANNE  
Shhh, he's coming back.

He returns grinning, like a conquering hero, with a fresh  
pitcher of margaritas.

COOPER  
So, Lisa, Suzanne tells me you're not  
currently seeing anyone.

Lisa shoots Suzanne a quick glare.

SUZANNE

Her Ex is a sleaze, dumping him was the smartest thing she could have done.

COOPER

Same thing happened to me when I found out my ex-girlfriend was sleeping with her therapist. Though, I should have known something was up when she suddenly doubled her number of weekly sessions.

LISA

What Suzanne failed to mention was that it was my ex-fiancé who abandoned me at the altar.

Suzanne gives Lisa a look that says, "don't do it."

LISA

It's a good story. The night before the wedding he hops in his Porsche, along with a stripper from the bachelor party, and ends up in Las Vegas; which is where he calls me from at four in the morning to inform me that the wedding's off.

Cooper glances to Suzanne, who returns a pained nod.

LISA

So there you have it, you're looking at damaged goods. Although in retrospect it was for the best, because marrying Jack would have been the biggest mistake of my life. Nevertheless, it is a humiliating way to end a relationship, wouldn't you agree, Cooper? But here's the best part: we still work together. So day after day, we see each other and pretend like nothing happened -- even though everyone knows and it's officially turned into the office taboo. Can you imagine what it's like to have *that* elephant in the room?

Shaking her head, Suzanne puts a hand over her face.

LISA

What?

INT. HASKELL'S BAR - NIGHT

It's your typical tavern: neon beer signs, well-worn tables and chairs, and a counter that runs the length of the room.

The two straggle in, and are immediately waved over by the barkeep, NICK HASKELL (mid-fifties, leather tough).

NICK

Was wondering when you two would show.

They join the gang already seated at the counter: RAY MURPHY, FRED WISNEWSKI and Nick's son TONY, all dressed casual with a working class edge.

TONY

Some chase, huh? After the perp's wheels got spiked, I heard pops served a round of drinks on the house.

NICK

What can I say... I get generous whenever there's a chase.

JACK

Were any of you in on this one?

TONY

I was out patrolling Burbank.

FRED

We were down at the station filling out paperwork all day.

(looking out the corner  
of his eye at Ray)

Which we've been doing a lot of since you started dating the Captain's niece.

RAY

Hey, don't blame me.

It turns out that Haskell's is a cop bar.

TONY

I wish we coulda been there. Here's to the spike strip.

He raises his glass in toast, and the rest follow suit.

NICK

And to the twenty-four-hour news cycle  
that lets us watch it all in real time.

JACK

Last but not least, the idiots who run,  
the *stars* of our show.

As the group downs their drinks, Stan produces a prescription  
bottle and shakes out the last couple pills.

TONY

Looks like you need a refill.

NICK

Is it okay to take those with alcohol?

Stan shrugs, pops them in his mouth, and chases it down with a  
beer. Jack examines the container label.

JACK

What are you taking antidepressants for?

STAN

My psychiatrist prescribed them. In case  
you haven't noticed, my life isn't  
exactly full of sunshine and rainbows.

JACK

You're seeing a shrink too? Since when?

STAN

What do you care?

JACK

Stanley, Stanley, Stanley... the last thing  
you need is to pay someone an hourly rate  
to listen to your problems. Therapy is  
for celebrities and bored housewives with  
way too much time on  
their hands. Take a working class Joe  
with a wife, kids, and a thirty-year  
mortgage; and I guarantee you he's not  
obsessing about self-actualization or  
achieving wholeness, or any of that other  
navel-gazing nonsense the self-help gurus  
and daytime talk show hosts beat to death  
each afternoon.

INT. PLAZA

Cooper's gone, and it's now just Lisa and Suzanne.

SUZANNE

I haven't seen an exit that fast since Roger found out the pregnancy test came up negative. Was that really necessary?

LISA

He did make a fast getaway.

SUZANNE

Like Wiley Coyote -- he all but left a cloud of dust.

LISA

You know Jack might be leaving to CNN.

SUZANNE

Oh my god, are you serious?? That's great! This is what you've been waiting for! He'll finally be out of your life!

(studying Lisa)

Why aren't you more excited? Do not tell me you're going to miss him.

LISA

It's not certain yet.

SUZANNE

If CNN gave Wolf Blitzer his own show, I'd say it's close to a lock.

LISA

We'd have to find someone new to ride the helicopter.

SUZANNE

Please, a monkey could handle that job. In fact, why don't we do that? Once Jack leaves, we hire a chimp from the zoo as his replacement. All we'd have to do is strap a helmet with a camera on its head and dangle him out the cockpit.

(framing a shot with her hands)

SUZANNE (cont'd)

We'll call it our "Monkey Cam," and our promos can be to tune in for primate news -- we don't monkey around. We'd *kill* in the ratings, and on top of that he'd be paid in bananas, so it's cost-effective!

She puts up a hand and Lisa gives her a reluctant high-five.

LISA

You're right.

SUZANNE

Of course I am, let's bring this up at the next meeting. I'll call the zoo.

LISA

I meant about Jack. In spite of it all, I think a part of me would miss him -- a very small part.

SUZANNE

If you can forgive Jack, you're Mother Theresa, Gandhi, and the Dalai Lama all rolled up in one.

LISA

Okay, let's not get carried away, I still rank Jack somewhere between a cockroach and nail fungus.

(beat)

You want to know who his idol is?

SUZANNE

(eye-roll)

Let me guess... Hemingway.

LISA

How did you know?

SUZANNE

Every male journalist cites Hemingway as his hero, he's the literary equivalent of John Wayne. Either him or Murrow. I went out with a guy like that in college, and to hear him tell it, you haven't come of age until you've gone big game hunting in Africa and bagged yourself an elephant.



LISA

Or climbed the Himalayas.

SUZANNE

They read a Hemingway novel and they're suddenly convinced that their purpose in life is to drink, gamble, and womanize. God, I'm so sick of that, "real men die of liver disease" bullshit. And the cigar smoking... talk about pretentious.

LISA

Jack collects first editions. I think he's even got some that are signed.

SUZANNE

(stunned)

You know how much those are worth?

Lisa shrugs.

INT. HASKELL'S

NICK

You really thinking of leaving?

JACK

There's more to life than just covering chases. I don't wanna be doing this the rest of my career.

TONY

I thought you liked the chases.

JACK

If you've seen one, you've seen 'em all. By the time he was my age, Hemingway had driven an ambulance in World War One, received the Pulitzer and reported first hand on the Spanish Revolution. Mailer fought in the South Pacific, wrote a best seller, and ran for mayor of New York. Even Hunter S. Thompson, crazy as he is, made his mark with gonzo journalism. But what have I done? I report on the idiots who lack the brains to pull over when the police try and ticket them for expired plates or a broken tail-light.

TONY

But you have your own billboard, how many people can say that? Stan doesn't have his face on a board.

He takes in Stan's baleful glare.

TONY

Sorry, pal. It'd help if you got the weather right.

JACK

We might be number one in our market, and average more than a quarter-million viewers a day, but local news is still minor leagues. At any given time there are earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, plane crashes, terrorist attacks, dams breaking, levees overflowing. The world is full of disasters, and I want to be out there covering it all. And with CNN knocking this may finally be my chance.

The door opens and in struts CARLOS, Jack's bookie.

CARLOS

Eyyy, Jack, thought I'd find you here. And Nicky, good to see you again. Nice place, strictly a gin and whiskey sort of joint.

NICK

It's Nick.

CARLOS

Whatever.

NICK

I'd offer you a drink, but my guess is you're not staying.

Carlos looks from Nick over to Tony, who stares back at him stonily with arms crossed, and breaks into a grin.

CARLOS

You got that right, chief. I'm just here to pay my pal Jack a visit.

(turning to Jack)

CARLOS (cont'd)

So, the Packers and Bears Monday night;  
should be one helluva game. C'mon, you  
know you can't turn down a bet.

Nick's look says, "Don't do it." After a beat.

JACK

What's the spread?

INT. NEWSROOM

Everything buzzes along, as Jack strolls through the office.

JACK

(raps on Stan's desk)

We're going to Nicky's later to catch the  
game, right?

STAN

I have to buy presents for my kids.

JACK

You can do that anytime. I've got a small  
fortune riding on this. Drinks are on me.

Nearby, we notice Lisa overhear and roll her eyes.

INSERT: TELEVISION SET

It's the Monday Night game, and Brett Favre lobs a pass over  
the Bears defender en route to a touchdown -- the crowd goes  
wild! The scoreboard shows the Packers ahead: 35-14.

ANGLE OUT TO NICK'S BAR:

The gang's assembled, with Jack's head down on the counter.

NICK

Why'd you bet against Green Bay again?

JACK

I heard from someone who knows someone  
who works the grounds at Lambeau that  
Favre was playing with a broken thumb.  
This was inside stuff! You would have  
done the same.

TONY

Guess those rumors were exaggerated. How much you lose?

JACK

Sixty grand.

Tony chokes on his drink.

JACK

With CNN calling, I thought my luck had turned around, so I put thirty on the Bears with the spread, and doubled down with another thirty on the under. Favre was playing hurt, there's no way I could have known they'd light it up like that. If Green Bay had scored just one less field goal I would have broken even!

Nick just shakes his head, "I told you so."

STAN

Anyone know what time the mall closes?

INT. LISA'S OFFICE

Jack knocks and as usual, enters without prompt.

JACK

I need to split for a couple hours. Can you do me a favor and order me a ticket to Atlanta? It's for tomorrow, my meeting with CNN got pushed up. We can put this on my expense account, right?

LISA

May I ask where you're going?

JACK

Atlanta. I thought I said that already.

LISA

I meant this afternoon.

JACK

Just some business to take care of with my bookie, that's all.

LISA

You know you could make up an excuse rather than tell me you're taking time off work to further your gambling.

JACK

You asked, and for all the times I may have screwed up, I never lied to you.

Lisa slumps in silent surrender.

JACK

You should try and relax. I know, why don't we catch the Dodger's game after work? I've got season tickets. Or we can watch a movie instead, that remake of Breakfast at Tiffany's is still playing -- you know the one starring what's-her-name from the tabloids.

LISA

(frustrated)  
Charity McNeal.

JACK

Yeah, who she's dating now?

LISA

I don't know. I don't care. And I most definitely do not want to see a remake of Breakfast at Tiffany's.

JACK

We could see something el-

LISA

-or any other movie.

EXT. DILAPIDATED WAREHOUSE - DAY

The Porsche pulls up in a low rent part of town.

INT. BOOKIE'S DEN

Jack follows Carlos through the seedy establishment. They walk past a pair of thugs parked in front of a TV.

CARLOS

Tank. Abbot.

They grunt in response, eyes still fixed on the set: where we see Oprah chatting up a guest.

JACK

Your muscle?

CARLOS

You been watching too much Sopranos,  
Jack.

They head into Carlos' small dingy OFFICE.

INT. NEWSROOM

Sherry heads for Lisa's office, another fire to report.

INT. HALLWAY

And together they're in lockstep to the STUDIO.

SHERRY

I'm sorry to bother you, Lise, but I  
really thought you should see this.

They make their way to the WEATHER STAGE, where we find Stan in front of the green screen doing a practice run.

STAN

We have a cold front coming in from the  
North, and a warm front moving in from  
the West. The two meet and it creates a  
pressure system.

Hair in an unruly mop, he wears a suit that looks slept in.

STAN

(clenching his fists)  
And the pressure just keeps on building  
and building and building...

We see that he's sweating profusely under the lights.

SHERRY

They were about to pre-tape the evening  
weather, and well...

LISA  
(sighs)  
I'm glad you got me.

She approaches the weather stage.

LISA  
Stan, why don't we take a break?

INT. CARLOS' OFFICE

CARLOS  
Did I ever tell you the story about the widow who played the lottery?  
(launches in immediately)  
The day after her husband kicks off she starts buying lottery tickets. And rain, sleet, or shine, never misses a week -- always using the same numbers: her dead husband's birthday. She's convinced that they're the winning combination. So the old bag goes down to the corner store to buy tickets every week and does this for eight years! And sure enough, her number comes up and it's the grand prize winner: for a forty million dollar jackpot!  
(leans in, grinning wide)  
But as it turns out, that's the one week she didn't play, because it was in the middle of January and on her way to the store she slips on some ice, falls and breaks her hip in three places. So now she's watching from the hospital as the wind machine spits out her numbers, and all she can do is turn blue in the face.

Carlos lets out a hyena-like laugh.

JACK  
And the moral of your story is?

CARLOS  
When you least expect it, life will fuck you up the ass, so make sure you lube up. But now that we got the small talk out of the way, how about we discuss business. Sixty large is a lot of green.

JACK

I want to go double or nothing.

CARLOS

I'll need to see some collateral.

Jack opens up a manila folder, hands Carlos a sheet.

JACK

My stock portfolio.

CARLOS

(perusing it)

Tech stocks, Pharmaceuticals, startups...  
you like to take risks, don't you Jack.  
What, just because I operate, how shall we  
put it... outside of legal parameters doesn't  
mean I'm not partial to safe returns.  
Personally, I prefer blue chips and index  
funds, but what the hell do I know I'm just  
a dumb bookie, right?

(beat, grins)

What'd you expect, that I keep my money  
under my mattress at home, or in a wall  
safe hidden behind an oil painting of  
dogs playing poker? Given me a fucking  
break. But this still ain't gonna cover a  
hundred and twenty G's.

JACK

And these.

He holds up his car keys, the Porsche insignia visible.

CARLOS

The Jack-mobile, huh? Now we're talking.

Carlos grins, picks up a newspaper, and tosses it to Jack.

JACK

This isn't the sports page.

CARLOS

Check today's forecast, what's it say?

JACK

High of seventy-eight, with a fifty  
percent chance of rain.



CARLOS

Which you want, rain or no rain? It's fifty-fifty, we see by the end of the day if there's water on the ground. If it makes you feel better we can bet on whether today's ballgame gets rained out. Whaddya say, it's practically a coin toss.

JACK

(hesitates)

Let me make a phone call first.

INT. NEWSROOM

We find Stan seated at his desk, with a bunch of stray pills scattered in front of him.

We watch as he takes them, one by one, and carefully stacks them in a column. The stack wavers and collapses, and as he begins another column, the phone rings.

STAN

Hello?

INTERCUT: with Jack in the hallway on his cell.

JACK

Stan, I need to ask you something very important: is it going to rain today?

STAN

That's your question -- is it going to rain? Why are you asking me?

JACK

Because you're a fucking weatherman!

STAN

First, I prefer the term meteorologist to "fucking weatherman." And second, I don't know, maybe, it could go either way. Why, did you forget your umbrella?

JACK

Goddammit, Stanley!  
(beat, a forced calm)

JACK (cont'd)

I need to know in your *professional* meteorological opinion, will it rain today -- yes or no?

STAN

In that case, let me check my Doppler Radar.

He takes out a quarter and flips it.

INT. BOOKIES DEN

Carlos and Jack emerge from his office.

CARLOS

Always a pleasure doing business with you, Jack.

But as they make their way to the exit, the room erupts in a swarm of excitement. The bookies have a police scanner, and we hear dispatch announce the start of a chase.

CARLOS

Tank, mark the time!

(to Jack)

Another runner, eh?

(points upward, grinning)

That's where you should be, instead of out playing hooky.

INT. NEWSROOM

It's chaos, with Lisa again directing traffic. She approaches Suzanne's desk.

LISA

Suzanne, we need to get someone in the chopper ASAP.

SUZANNE

Where the hell is Jack?

Lisa grits her teeth.

LISA

Colin's available, right?

SUZANNE

Yeah, but he's afraid of heights.

INT. BOOKIES DEN

Jack, Carlos, and the thugs stare at the set.

CARLOS

Got scooped huh? What, you don't think I notice who's usually first to the scene?

Calls come pouring in, as phones start ringing in chorus.

JACK

What's going on?

CARLOS

Shit, you don't know?

GAMBLING MONTAGE: scenes from casinos and riverboats, slot machines spitting out tokens, cards flipped over on tables, cash exchanging hands at a trackside betting window, sports handicappers taking phone calls with message lights blinking on all lines, and various other scenes of gambling excess.

JACK (V.O.)

Last year over ninety million dollars was gambled on the Super Bowl -- that's the official line we get from Vegas, but you can guess that this is only a fraction of the bets that took place off the books. The overall scope of the gambling industry is anyone's guess, but even conservative estimates put it at well over a hundred billion a year. And if you add up all the casinos throughout the country, gambling halls, bingo parlors, illegal bookmaking operations, scratch-it lottery tickets, fantasy football, back-alley dice games, office basketball pools, betting on the ponies at the track, or with your buddy Steve on the weekend's Giants-Cowboys game; you have an industry that's right up there with our other favorite vices: porn and illegal drugs. And when it comes to our favorite pastimes if there's a way to gamble on it, you can bet that someone somewhere will figure out how.

BACK TO SCENE:

CARLOS

Whenever there's a chase we take bets on it: like how long it lasts, how the cops will stop the perp. People will even put money on if the suspect gets tazered.

(he goes into mock spasms)

Then, of course, there's the chance we could see a new record being set, but it's a long shot, which is why there's thirty-to-one odds.

JACK

Record?

CARLOS

For longest chase. The rules are: it has to be televised continuously, and it has to end with the suspect being taken down. If the guy gets away, or the cops break off pursuit all bets are off. Watch this.

(he calls to one of the thugs)

Hey Tank, what's the record?

TANK

Four hours, nineteen minutes, and forty-eight seconds. And it's stood for over twelve years and counting.

CARLOS

He's a big fan of the chases. He knows everything there is to know about them. Watch this, Yo Tank, how many chases we take bets on last year?

TANK

Two hundred and seventeen, and a hundred ninety-eight ended with the suspect being apprehended by police.

CARLOS

Ha ha... like fucking Rain Man!

INT. PARKING GARAGE

Jack's Porsche skids to a stop in his designated space.

INT. NEWSROOM

Lisa stares at the monitor, rubbing her temples.

LISA

Sherry, this isn't working. Tell the studio to cut to the desk and have Ted give the play-by-play. Or at the very least, pipe in his audio over the wide cam and keep it focused on the action.

Jack bursts through the doors.

JACK

Got here as fast as I could.

LISA

Biggest police chase of the year and you missed it, Jack.

(off his blank look)

You're aware of who they're after... you mean you don't know?

She clicks the monitor over to a rival newscast (KTLA).

KTLA ANCHOR

If you're just joining us we've learned that the SUV is registered to none other than actress Charity McNeal, who starred in the recent remake of 'Breakfast at Tiffany's,' but who is perhaps better known for her various exploits in the gossip columns and tabloids.

She CLICKS to another station.

KCBS REPORTER

The incident began when a van driven by paparazzi pulled alongside and started photographing McNeil and boyfriend Dave Rattner -- frontman of the band 'Madder Than Ever' -- who was reportedly driving the vehicle at the time. But in a fit of road rage Rattner rammed the SUV into the side of the van, running it off the road. The pair then fled and have been on the run since.

CLICK. And we see an overhead shot of the SUV. The camera zooms in to capture the tiny image of a dog, with its nose pressed against the window.

KNBC ANCHOR

What you're looking at is Ms. McNeil's Sharpei -- we'll confirm the pet's name here in just a moment.

JACK

Jesus.

KNBC ANCHOR

We've just received word that the dog's name is Gingersnap and that she is indeed a purebred.

FEMALE CO-ANCHOR

Well, let's just hope Gingersnap isn't traumatized by all this.

They cut to footage taken alongside the highway, where people cheer from an overpass, holding up signs and banners.

KNBC ANCHOR

We'll now take you to the scene, where our very own Patty Lane is standing by with the driver of the van.

CUT TO: a live remote interview.

PATTY LANE

Thanks, Len. I think we're all a little stunned by these recent events.

(turning to the driver)

Can you tell us what happened?

PAPARAZZI

Yeah, I'll tell you what happened. We were taking pictures when that bastard slammed into us. He's probably on drugs!

PATTY

Yes, thank you, but could you please tell us more about-

Ignoring her, the Paparazzi grabs the microphone.

PAPARAZZI

You're nothing but a one hit wonder, man!  
Yeah I heard your last album. We wouldn't  
even give a shit about you if you weren't  
boning that slut.

PATTY

Give me that-

Patty and the paparazzi struggle for control of the mic.

PAPARAZZI

You're next week's episode of Behind the  
Music! Get ready to play bottom corner  
on Hollywood Sq-

The feed cuts back to studio. The anchors chuckle nervously.

KNBC ANCHOR

Well, that's what happens when you do  
live interviews.

BACK TO NEWSROOM:

Jack stares in stunned silence, then turns for the door.

LISA

Where are you going?

JACK

To the set.

LISA

Jack, don't.

Ignoring her, he exits. She hurries after.

INT. STUDIO

They enter, and we see Ted at the anchor desk. Jack motions  
for the stage manager to cut away, but he shakes his head.

Jack becomes even more insistent, and the director looks to  
Lisa, who raises her hands in a helpless gesture.

TED

We'll now send it over to Colin.

They break, and Jack heads for the desk.

TED  
What's going on?

JACK  
Give me your mic clip.

TED  
What?

JACK  
I'm taking over.

TED  
Like hell you are!

JACK  
Ted, you better get your donut-eating ass out of that seat or so help me God I will dropkick you into next week!

TED  
(to Lisa)  
He's insane! I can't work like this!  
Do something! Get him out of here!

STAGE MANAGER  
Colin's floundering up there, we've got to return to studio.

She watches helplessly as Jack grabs Ted by the lapels and tries to yank him from the seat.

TED  
Somebody help!

A CRASH as Ted falls out of his chair and spills onto the floor, dragging Jack down along with him.

Lisa looks completely lost.

TED  
Call security!

JACK  
Shut up!



STAGE MANAGER

That's it, studio's down. Get ready to  
cut to commercial.

As the ensuing chaos spins out of control, something within her  
finally snaps.

LISA

**ENOUGH!!!**

Everyone freezes... you can hear a pin drop.

She turns to Jack.

LISA

Jack, I'd like you to leave now.

He looks up from the floor, where he's got Ted in a headlock.

JACK

But-

His protest immediately pre-empted by her withering glare.  
Next, she turns her attention to the stage director.

LISA

And we're not going to commercial, if we  
break now we'll lose what's left of our  
audience.

(looking down at Ted)

Ted, get up. It's time to go back on.

(to everyone)

Okay, show's over. Back to work.

As order's restored it becomes readily apparent to Jack that  
he's the odd man out.

INT. PORSCHE - FREEWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Jack drives along in a mood. In the distance looms Dodger's  
stadium. He takes the ballpark exit.

INT. DODGER'S STADIUM - MID-LEVEL SECTION

Jack leans back in his seat and stares distantly.

There's a RUMBLE overhead and it begins to sprinkle. People  
start putting on jackets or shield themselves with programs.

Jack awakens from his reverie and looks up at the sky.

JACK

Shit.

The scattering of rain turns into a DOWNPOUR.

JACK

No, no, no, no, no!

On the field below, ground crews begin rolling out the tarp and the Announcer's voice booms over the PA SYSTEM.

ANNOUNCER

Sorry folks, it looks like we're being rained out here. The game will have to be rescheduled for next week.

Jack makes his way down the aisle through the exiting crowd. He reaches the railing and is directly over the dugout.

JACK

What's the matter, afraid you'll melt?  
There's only a couple innings left, get  
out there and play you assholes!

From below someone yells, "Fuck you."

INT. KNOB STUDIO

TED

This just in, today's game between the  
Dodgers and Giants has been rained out,  
and it appears there was a disturbance on  
the field. We'll take you there now.

ONSCREEN: We watch a video feed of Jack as he climbs over the railing and tumbles onto the field. He's met immediately by security and quickly disappears under a pile of bodies.

Exit out to NEWSROOM where Lisa watches it all, mouth agape.

INT. HASKELL'S - NIGHT

Slumped over the counter, drunk, Jack motions for a drink.

NICK

I think you've had enough.

Jack SLAMS the empty tumbler down. Nick sighs and pours him another.

NICK

So you got thrown out of a Dodger game, big deal. I'm sure no one even noticed.

As he downs the drink, Nick switches on the TV set to a local roundtable of pundits discussing Jack's meltdown. He clicks to another channel and it's a replay of the fiasco. He clicks again, same thing. Finally, he turns the set off.

NICK

What's wrong?

JACK

I lost another bet. You don't want to know how much I owe.

NICK

What on this time?

JACK

The game I was at.

NICK

But it got rained out.

JACK

I bet it wouldn't.

NICK

You gambled on the weather? Jesus Jack. I guess that explains things. Can you cover, is that what's bothering you?

JACK

It's more than that. Every bet I make is a loser. I'm fucking up at work... nothing's going right for me.

NICK

Like you lost your center?

Jack looks up at him. Bingo.

INT. LISA'S OFFICE

Jack knocks and as usual, enters without prompt.

LISA

Jack, just the person I wanted to see, and thanks for knocking by the way. So I heard you swung by Dodger's stadium after leaving us yesterday. How was the game? Did you have any peanuts while you were there, or maybe some Cracker Jack? What about the seventh inning, do people still actually get up and stretch?

JACK

I'm banned the rest of the season.

LISA

You want to tell me what that was all about? Did it have anything to do with what happened in studio?

JACK

No, it was something else entirely.

(to Lisa's raised eyebrow)

Look, I'd prefer not to discuss it. I just wanted to say I'm sorry.

LISA

(coldly)

Save your apologies for Ted.

(she hands Jack an envelope)

Your ticket. Good luck. I hope everything works out for you -- it always does.

She waits for him to leave, but he lingers in the doorway.

LISA

What, do you need a ride or something?

JACK

Lisa, I was just wondering... if we were still together, and I got an offer to leave, would you have gone with me?

A long pause. She fixes him with a stare, and he shifts uncomfortably.

LISA

Are you seriously asking me this? What do you want to hear, Jack? Do you want me to say 'yes,' that I'd drop everything and move in a heartbeat, just to be with you? Or would you rather me say no and confirm you made the right choice in calling it off. Which is it, which answer would you prefer?

JACK

Lisa...

LISA

You are, by far, the most egomaniacal person I've ever had the misfortune of knowing. And it doesn't help that this city is so mad about police chases you're given the red carpet treatment wherever you go. Furthermore, I hate when truly newsworthy stories get put on hold the instant some idiot decides to go for a joyride in this town. And because of this morbid fascination, a hack like yourself -- lacking even a *shred* of journalistic integrity -- can springboard his career into the limelight!

At first he's taken aback by the outburst, but as the berating continues, a slow smile creeps over his face.

LISA

What?! What the hell are you grinning about? Are you enjoying this?! You are so insufferable I can't even begin to describe it! Even when you're being yelled at, you like the attention! You're sick. You are a truly disturbed individual! You need professional help!

It's all he can do now to keep from cracking up.

LISA

What the hell is the matter with you?!

JACK

I'm sorry, it's just... I've never seen you like this before.

JACK (cont'd)

It's a whole new side. I may even be a little turned on right now.

LISA

(rubbing her temples)

Oh my god, you're doing this on purpose. You're actually trying to induce me into an apoplectic fit.

JACK

I have no idea what that means.

LISA

Get out!

He doesn't budge.

JACK

I'm not leaving until you've had the chance to say everything you have to say.

LISA

Get out of my office NOW!

JACK

Not until we're through, and for what it's worth, you're off to a good start. I liked that part about me being a hack.

She slumps back in her chair, deflated.

LISA

You are out of your mind, and you want to drive me crazy too. Well that's it, Jack, I'm not playing your game.

JACK

This isn't a game.

LISA

What is it then?

JACK

You and me expressing our differences -- having a fight if you will. Which, by the way, is something we should have done more of when we were together.

LISA

Please just leave.

JACK

Whenever we disagreed on anything, you always gave in. I mean, even after the Vegas incident you didn't cut loose. You just shut down emotionally and started burying yourself in work. Now I'm no Dr. Phil, but I don't think that's healthy.

LISA

What do you want from me, Jack? Can't you see I'm exhausted?

JACK

See, now that's what I'm talking about. Just when we're finally communicating, you go right back in the tank.

Eyes closed, she shakes her head wearily.

JACK

And for the record, we had problems in our relationship *before* I went for that drive.

Lisa stiffens.

LISA

Are you seriously trying to put this on me?! You are unbelievable! Just when I think you couldn't outdo yourself, you take a flying leap into the crazy end of the pool. Okay, you really wanna do this?

JACK

Lay it on me, sister.

LISA

First of all, you're not half as clever or adventurous as you'd like to think. You're all flash, no substance, which makes you a lousy reporter because your bloated ego gets in the way of the story. In that sense, you remind me of... *Geraldo*.

JACK

Rivera?

He ponders this a moment and smiles, liking the comparison.

LISA

You're just as emotionally needy, and an even bigger attention whore!

JACK

Ouch.

LISA

And you want to know what else? I hate the fact you still wear the goddamn ties I bought you! Do you have any idea how irritating that is? It's like seeing a daily reminder of everything that's gone wrong in my life!

He looks down at the tie.

JACK

Just because you don't care for them anymore doesn't mean I have to stop.

She gives him a hard stare.

LISA

Don't you have a plane to catch?

INT. NEWSROOM

Jack exits and heads to his desk. He dials a number.

JACK

Carlos, it's me.

Intercut:

CARLOS

Speak of the devil. Saw you on the news yesterday. Boy, when you got dogpiled by security, I nearly died laughing. Wish I'd tivo'd it so I could watch it again.

(a turn to serious)

Now, we got a lot to discuss, I think you should come by for a visit today.



JACK  
Can't. I'm flying out of town, got a  
business meeting.

CARLOS  
With who?

JACK  
CNN.

CARLOS  
What is this, a fucking job interview?  
You ain't leaving without paying me.

JACK  
We'll discuss payment when I get back.

CARLOS  
No, we'll talk before you leave! Don't  
forget -- I own you now!

JACK  
Sorry, I've got a plane to catch.  
(hangs up)

CARLOS  
Jack?!? Goddammit!!!  
(slams down the receiver)

INT. NEWSROOM

Jack heads for the elevator, but is intercepted by Morty.

MORTY  
Jack, what the heck were you thinking?

JACK  
Temporary insanity, Morty.

MORTY  
Well, it's not as if there weren't times  
I wanted to heckle them myself. Lousy  
team hasn't won a pennant in twenty  
years, but they *still* charge through the  
nose for tickets!

Meanwhile, we see Lisa standing in her doorway, and she's  
caught enough of the phone conversation to be concerned.

MORTY

So you want to borrow my beach house in Monterey? Anytime you want the keys are yours. You're not still thinking about that cable network are you?

Once the elevator doors close, she heads over to Jack's desk.

Looking down at the phone Lisa hesitates a moment, then picks up the receiver and hits REDIAL.

INT. CARLOS OFFICE

Carlos picks up the ringing phone. Intercut:

CARLOS

(yelling outside)

Change the fucking channel! I don't wanna hear another goddamn minute of Maury Povich! Yeah?

LISA

Um, hello?

CARLOS

It's Carlos, what do you want?

LISA

Who?

CARLOS

Carlos. Who the hell is this?

EXT. NEWS BUILDING - DAY

Jack waits impatiently outside the entrance as Stan pulls up in a shiny new silver BMW. He climbs in.

JACK

Where the hell have you been, and what happened to the Toyota?

STAN

My ex-wife took it back. You mind if we stop by the bank on the way?

With a muffled roar, the BMW pulls away from the curb.

INT. LISA/CARLOS' OFFICE

CARLOS

So you're Jack's honey. I wish you'da sent me a wedding invitation.

LISA

The wedding was cancelled.

CARLOS

Still it woulda been nice to be invited. Now, to what do I owe this honor?

LISA

Does Jack owe you money?

CARLOS

I normally don't like to discuss my client's business with third parties.

LISA

How much?

CARLOS

Well, I might be willing to share that information with you, if you'll tell me something I wish to know in return.

A pause. She knows she's making a deal with the devil.

LISA

Like what?

CARLOS

Like where he went on his little trip this afternoon, what flight he's on, that sort of thing. You tell me what I wanna know, I tell you what you wanna know. Whaddya say?

EXT. VENTURA BLVD - DAY

The BMW stops in front of a Savings and Loan.

STAN

I'll be just a minute. When I get back, you wanna take the wheel?

Jack looks around and nods appreciatively at the vehicle's polished leather interior and luxury amenities.

EXT. SAVINGS AND LOAN LOBBY - DAY

Stan enters the building, shopping bag in tow.

ON MONITOR: MSNBC

Paparazzi gather to photograph a young woman obscured by a sun hat and oversized sunglasses, cradling a Sharpei, as she hurries her way through the crowd towards the gated entrance of an upscale clinic, flanked by her publicist and assistant.

Below, on the banner scrolls the message: "Charity McNeal enters rehab for prescription medication addiction."

CLICK.

We're now watching CNN breaking news of a major drug recall.

CNN ANCHOR

Our top story today is the recall of the anti-depressant drug, Polaraxia. The FDA ordered its recall when studies found it to cause erratic behavior in subjects. Symptoms include paranoia, insomnia, mood swings, and extreme compulsive behavior. Both Ms. McNeal and her companion were reportedly taking the medication prior to their now infamous police chase.

INT. NEWSROOM

Lisa watches the coverage when she's interrupted from behind.

MORTY

That's one heckuva train-wreck, ain't it Lizzie?

LISA

Morty, what are you doing here?

MORTY

What, can't I drop by just to say hello?

(he breaks into a grin)

Okay, I came by to deliver something, it's waiting in your office.

LISA

It's not a gift certificate to Starbucks,  
is it?

She turns to find Sherry at her side.

SHERRY

We've got a bank robbery downtown.

INT. BMW

They cruise along, with Jack behind the wheel.

JACK

Nice handling, this a rental or a lease?

No response from Stan, whose total concentration is fixed on  
adjusting the radio.

JACK

Hello, Stan? I'm talking to you.

They enter the airport thoroughfare and follow the sign to the  
Delta terminal, where they pull up curbside.

JACK

Well thanks for the lift. See you when I  
get back.

Dismissing Jack with a wave, Stan continues to fiddle with the  
radio.

EXT. BMW - DAY

Jack gets out of the car, pops the trunk and removes a carry-  
all bag. He makes his way to the skycap station when he sees  
Tank and Abbott standing at the entrance doors.

JACK

(under his breath)

Shit.

They spot him as well, and move towards him.

JACK

Hey, what're you guys doing here, are we  
on the same flight or something?

TANK

You plannin' on leaving without seeing Carlos?

JACK

C'mon guys, I'm on a tight schedule. I'll see him first thing when I get back.

ABBOTT

Why don't we take care of it now?

JACK

I really don't want to miss my flight.

As they move to "escort" him to a nearby black Lincoln town car, Jack tosses his bag in the face of the nearest thug and bolts for the BMW.

INT. BMW

Jack hops in, puts the car in gear, and peels out, right as the thugs race over and pound on the hood. Stan turns to him with an inquiring look.

JACK

Change of plans, Stan.

Stan shrugs, his attention goes back to the radio.

EXT. AIRPORT THOROUGHFARE - DAY

The BMW exits the lane -- followed by the black Lincoln.

INT. BMW

Jack glances in the rearview.

JACK

Buckle up.

Without looking, Stan reaches over and fastens his seatbelt with one hand, while adjusting the tuner with the other.

JACK

What's the matter with you?

He finally settles on a station, and turns to Jack beaming.

STAN

There. You like reggae right?

INT. NEWS STATION

Lisa stares up at a monitor.

RECEPTIONIST

Lisa, you have a call on line one.

LISA

Take a message.

RECEPTIONIST

It's from the police station.

She hurries to her OFFICE and picks up the phone.

INT. BMW

STAN

You owe these guys money or something?

JACK

Don't ask.

STAN

They gonna break your thumbs?

JACK

You've been watching too much Sopranos.

(glancing in the rearview)

Watch this, I saw a guy pull this move on the cops once during a chase.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The BMW speeds ahead of a lumbering semi, and as the Lincoln tries to follow after them, the BMW ducks behind the other side of the eighteen-wheeler, and over to a merge lane in a perfectly timed maneuver that leaves their pursuers behind.

INT. BMW

JACK

I can't believe that worked.

Jack's cell rings. Intercut:

LISA  
Jack, where are you?

JACK  
The freeway.

LISA  
Are you with Stan?

JACK  
Now's not a good time. I just missed my flight.

LISA  
*Is Stan there with you?!*

JACK  
Yeah, he's in the passenger seat. Why? What's wrong?

LISA  
Were you at a Savings and Loan earlier?

JACK  
How did you know?

LISA  
*Because he robbed it!*

JACK  
Who?

LISA  
Stan!

EXT. FREEWAY - OVERHEAD SHOT

The BMW cloverleaf's its way onto an intersecting freeway.

INT. BMW

JACK  
I'm sorry, it sounded like you said Stan robbed a bank.

LISA  
He did, and *you* were his getaway driver!



JACK

Is this a gag? I know I told you to loosen up, but-

LISA

Your friend Tony called; he was one of the officers that responded to the alarm. According to him the teller ID'd Stan, said she watches his weather report every night, and someone else asked him for an autograph on the way out.

JACK

Did he wear a bandana over his face and say "stick 'em up?"

LISA

(an exasperated sigh)

He waited his turn in line until he got to the teller and tried to withdraw cash. When he was told that he couldn't without authorization, he opens up his jacket and shows her a gun. Then after the till's emptied, he put the money in his sack and walked out just like that. A silent alarm was triggered, and none of the other customers even knew.

JACK

See, I'm not sure which part I find more unbelievable: Stan signing an autograph while robbing a bank, or the idea of him having a loyal viewer. Is he in on this?

LISA

For chrissakes Jack, this isn't a joke. The car you're in, it's a BMW, right?

(beat)

*It's stolen!*

JACK

What? No, it's a rental.

He turns and looks to Stan for confirmation.

LISA

It's a stolen vehicle!

LISA (cont'd)

He carjacked it earlier before picking you up. And the bag of cash he walked out with, is it there? Do you see it?

He looks down in the footwell, and spots the bag. Frowning, he reaches down, and just as he opens it, a hidden dye pack EXPLODES -- splattering both in a wash of red.

FREEZE FRAME as Jack looks over to Stan in disbelief. Stan stares ahead unperturbed.

SUPER: Earlier that day.

INT. TOY STORE

We find Stan waiting in line as the CASHIER scans his item and places it in a sack. He pulls out a debit card and hands it to her. She runs it and they wait... the card machine BEEPS.

CASHIER

Declined.

STAN

That's got to be a mistake I'm sure.

CASHIER

(snotty)

Well maybe you should call the bank.

STAN

(snotty back)

Maybe I will.

(hands her a twenty)

EXT. MALL PARKING - DAY

Stan exits the mall, cell phone at his ear.

STAN

What do you mean my wife closed it? She can't do that. It's my account!

(pause)

It was a joint account?

He's too distracted to notice the young man sitting behind the wheel of the Toyota.

STAN  
No, I will NOT hold!  
(gets put on hold)  
Dammit!

He finally notices the fellow, busy going through a ring of keys trying to find the right one, and raps the car window.

STAN  
Hey you, I'm calling the police!  
(dials furiously)  
Hello? Hello?!? 9-1-1???

VOICE (O.S.)  
Sir, the bank manager will speak to you  
now.

STAN  
Tell him to go fuck himself!

REPO GUY  
Your wife authorized us to repossess your  
car.

He flashes Stan a repossession notice, fires up the engine and pulls away, leaving Stan holding the bag.

EXT. NEWS BUILDING - DAY

A metro bus pulls up, and Stan exits.

INT. NEWS OFFICE

The newsroom is again in a state of turmoil, but oblivious to the chaos, Stan ambles over to his desk and plops down.

He produces a bottle of pills and downs a couple straight. Looking down, he spots a tray of paperclip on his desk and picks one up.

LATER

Lisa passes by to find Stan occupied in twisting paper clips into a sort of bizarre stationary sculpture.

LISA  
Oh, you're back.

STAN

You want to finish the weather report?

LISA

Later. Have you seen Jack? Do you know if he's left for the airport yet?

STAN

Probably not. I'm supposed to drive him. Thanks for reminding me... Can I borrow your car?

LISA

What?

STAN

Never mind.

He gets up and ambles leisurely to the exit, shopping bag in tow, leaving Lisa looking after him puzzled.

INT. BMW

Stopped at a red light, an obnoxious MAN barks into his cell.

OBNOXIOUS MAN

Tell Anderson that he better have those depositions filed by tomorrow, or he's fucking lunchmeat.

TAPPING on the side window.

OBNOXIOUS MAN

What?

He turns and stares at the barrel end of a pistol.

INT. BMW - BACK TO PRESENT

Jack blinks hard.

LISA

Tony was following up on the carjacking, when he heard about the robbery over the radio and hotfooted it over. That's when he called me and between us we managed to piece together what happened and figured out that you were his likely accomplice.

JACK

But I didn't have anything to do with-  
wait, Tony knows?

LISA

We're the only ones who know about your  
involvement, and so far the police have  
kept Stan's name off the radio but once  
this thing breaks... it's going to turn  
into a circus.

JACK

Shit, and I thought I had problems when I  
ran into those thugs at LAX.

LISA

That's my fault. I had to give Carlos your  
flight information.

JACK

What?! Why??

LISA

I'll explain later, but right now it's  
important you know that the vehicle  
you're in has a GPS Navigator. They're  
tracking it as we speak, which is why you  
need to go to the police, give the money  
back and turn yourselves in. You don't  
want to be charged with evasion on top of  
everything else.

JACK

Stan, I am so going to-

LISA

Jack, focus! We don't have time for that  
now -- the police are on their way!

Behind them, sirens and flashing lights converge.

JACK

Too late, they're already here.

LISA

Okay, pull over. We'll just have to face  
the music. Both Tony and I can vouch for  
your being an unwilling accessory, and-

JACK

Lisa, I'm gonna have to call you back.

Pan across to see that a gun's been placed to the side of Jack's head.

LISA

Jack, wait- Jack?!?

But the line's dead.

INT. BMW

They're back on the road speeding through traffic. Neither says anything, the gun resting on Stan's lap. Jack taps his fingers on the steering wheel... he finally breaks down.

JACK

You want to tell me what happened at the bank?

STAN

I went in and made a withdrawal.

JACK

Is that what you're calling it?

STAN

Rachel had the bank freeze my account. I did what I had to, to get my money. She also repossessed the Toyota, the bitch.

Jack starts hitting himself on the forehead in frustration.

STAN

Try to relax. Here, breathe with me.

He closes his eyes and starts inhaling a series of short, shallow breaths followed by a deep exhale, and repeats.

JACK

What the hell are you doing?

STAN

Meditative breathing, it helps centers your *Chi*. I learned it from a holistic practitioner down in Chinatown when I went to get some herbs for my prostate.

JACK

Why'd you have to make me an accomplice?

STAN

I needed a getaway driver, that's how it's done, right? Don't worry, I'll tell them it wasn't your fault.

JACK

Yeah, I'm sure the grand jury will understand. Where'd you get that thing?

STAN

What, this?

He looks at the pistol, then levels it at Jack and squeezes the trigger -- water sprays Jack's face.

STAN

The toy store.

JACK

You could have just told me it was fake! Is that what you used carjack the Beemer?

STAN

I didn't hear you complaining on the way to the airport. Besides, I plan on giving it back, the owner's name and address is on the registration here somewhere.

(he rifles through the glove box)

JACK

Right, the guy's probably sitting at home waiting for his car.

He catches something in the rearview mirror and swerves the wheel hard, narrowly avoiding a rear PIT attempt.

JACK

Motherf- that bastard almost rammed me!

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

The BMW weaves through traffic as another black and white joins the growing retinue of police cruisers.

INT. BMW

Resume from the script's opening scene.

We can see that Jack is experiencing an adrenaline overload, while Stan looks on completely unruffled, calm as a Zen monk.

JACK

When we stop, put your hands up and let me do the talking, okay?

(glances in the rear view)

Great, just what we need.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

We watch as a TV news helicopter beelines over to the scene.

INT. BMW

STAN

I prefer to keep going.

JACK

Are you out of your mind?

STAN

If you stop the car, I'm going to point my weapon at the cops.

JACK

What. The squirt gun?

STAN

They won't know the difference.

On Jack and Stan, as the two lock eyes. Jack now knows his friend is suicidal.

INT. LISA'S OFFICE

The phone rings. Intercut:

LISA

Jack?

JACK

It's me.



LISA

What are you still doing on the road?!  
Why haven't you stopped??

JACK

I was going to, but Stan pointed a gun at  
me and told me to keep driving.

LISA

Oh, god.  
(reacting off the monitor)  
Watch out for the-

He torques the wheel hard to avoid a lumbering semi.

JACK

He's not really armed, turns out he held up  
the bank with a water pistol. Hey, I don't  
see our chopper out here.

LISA

We got a late start on the liftoff. I'm  
following the KTLA broadcast right now.

JACK

That won't be good for our ratings.

LISA

Just try and pay attention to the road.  
Wait, what am I saying? Pull over, you  
idiot!

JACK

Stan isn't ready to give up yet.

LISA

You need to stop the car now, Jack. This  
isn't a game.

JACK

I think he just needs time to decompress.

LISA

He can decompress all he wants down at the  
police station, that's what holding tanks  
are for!

(her eyes narrow)

LISA (cont'd)

Wait, this isn't about Stan is it... this is about you! Are you trying to turn this into another publicity stunt -- like what happened at the stadium?

JACK

What? No-

LISA

Or does it have something to do with the betting that goes on during chases?

JACK

How did you-

LISA

I know all about your gambling, Jack. I talked to your bookie. He even suggested I place a bet with him sometime.

JACK

Son of a-

LISA

Let me take a wild guess: after years of covering them, you're finally in one yourself, and now that you've had a taste you don't want to quit. Right now you're experiencing the same adrenaline rush that every other idiot who's run from the police has felt.

JACK

That's not-

LISA

Wait a second, I know what you're up to... you're trying to set a new record aren't you! You want to own the record for the longest chase! God, you are unbelievable!

JACK

Wait, no-

LISA

Fine, have it your way, you selfish son of a bitch! As of now I'm breaking this

LISA (cont'd)

story wide open and every station in the city is going to run with it. Hell, the

coverage might even go national and you may just get your wish, Jack; you'll be on every TV set across the country. It's what you've always wanted, right?!?

He clicks the phone off, stifling a yell.

INT. LISA'S OFFICE

Lisa SLAMS the phone down on her end.

Then she notices the envelope sitting in her in-box. After taking a moment to compose herself, she opens it and stares in disbelief.

INSERT: It's a bonus check for four thousand dollars

INT. BOOKIES

Carlos paces the room. We hear the chase in the background, along with a medley of phones ringing off the hook.

CARLOS

Goddammit! I can't believe you assholes let him ditch you! I want you to go find that motherfucker now!

TANK

Um, Carlos...  
(he points to the TV)

ONSCREEN:

Reading from fresh copy.

TED

This just in, we've learned that one of our very own reporters, Jack Horner-

MONTAGE: of local news stations running with the story.

KTLA ANCHOR

Jack Horner, traffic news reporter at our sister network-

KNBC REPORTER

In an unusual twist, KNOB reporter Jack Horner-

KCAL

Making news again is Jack Horner-

KCBS/KCOP/KTTV

Jack - Jack - Jack Horner -

TED

-is involved in a chase that started a short while ago. But in an ironic turn of events, he's the one running from police.

EXIT TO NEWSROOM:

ON LISA, with Morty at her side staring up at the monitor.

MORTY

Well I'll be a monkey's uncle.

INT. BMW

As they speed down the freeway, we see that their number of pursuers has grown to a dozen cruisers.

JACK

Geez Louise, it looks like they've got half the squad cars in the city after us. You've been awful quiet there, anything you'd care to discuss -- like maybe when would be a good time to surrender?

(no response)

Okay Stan, read any good books lately? Been to any new art exhibits? How about movies... see anything you'd recommend?

But Stan continues with his meditative breathing, eyes shut in concentration, and sensing his opportunity Jack grabs the fake pistol and tosses it out the window.

JACK

There. You've got nothing to flash at the cops now. I guess we can put an end to this.

STAN

(eyes still closed)

I don't need the squirt gun, Jack. I could just keep my hand behind my back, or in my jacket, the way they do in the movies. As long as the cops *think* I'm packing they'll do what they have to.

DREAM SEQUENCE - FROM JACK'S MIND'S EYE

The BMW hits a spike strip, and its tires EXPLODE. Trailing sparks it veers off the highway and comes to a dead stop.

Police box them in, as officers jump out with weapons drawn.

OFFICER

(on the bullhorn)

Exit the vehicle with your hands up!

Jack opens the door and climbs out, hands in the air.

JACK

Don't shoot! We're unarmed!

OFFICER

(to Stan)

Sir, exit the vehicle now!

Stan gets out, keeping one hand hidden behind his back.

OFFICER

Put your hands where I can see them!

JACK

He's not armed, he's only pretending. He wants you to shoot.

OFFICER

I'm not asking again! Put your hands in the air now!!

SLOW MOTION as Stan brings his hand forward, drawn as if holding a pistol, and without hesitation the officers let bullets fly.

Stan's body jerks spasmodically as round after round rips through him, and Jack watches it all in helpless horror.

BACK TO REALITY:

Jack blinks several times, trying to dislodge the image.

JACK

Fuck.

EXT. HIGHWAY - OVERHEAD HELICOPTER VIEW

More fancy driving from Jack as he continues evading police.

INT. BMW

JACK

I've got to hand it to you, of all the cars to be stolen, you could have done a lot worse. I'm glad we're not trying to outrun the cops in a Civic or Miata.

Stan reaches in his jacket for a bottle of pills. He's about to open it, when Jack snatches them.

STAN

Give it!

JACK

Oh no. The last thing we need is for you to get all hopped up on...

He looks down at the label and his eyes bulge. Stan makes a grab for them, but Jack plays keep-away.

JACK

When'd you start taking these, Stan? How long?!

But Stan folds his arms petulantly, going incommunicado, and Jack rolls down the window and pitches them out.

INT. NEWSROOM

The crowd gathered before the monitors watch as a small foreign object flies from the car into the grassy median.

SUZANNE

Jeez, why don't those morons give up?

MORTY

Where's your spunk, Suzie?  
(raising a fist)  
Go you bastards, go!

SUZANNE

You realize that they're involved in a  
criminal activity, right?

INT. BOOKIES DEN

CARLOS

That's it, cut it off! We're not taking  
any more bets!

(resumes his pacing)

You realize what's happening here? That son  
of a bitch knows every goddamn trick the  
cops will try and use to stop him, he'll be  
one step ahead of them at every turn! And  
if everyone bets on that motherfucker --  
we're fucked!

(gesturing to the screen)

Look at that, he's just toying with them!

EXT. HIGHWAY

The BMW skids off the freeway, plows through the median, and  
merges with traffic in the opposing lane.

The pursuing police attempt a similar maneuver, but find their  
tires shredded by the spike strip Jack's avoided.

INT. NEWSROOM

SUZANNE

I wonder how long they can keep this up.

MORTY

You know what I wonder whenever I watch a  
chase -- where the hell is the traffic? I  
mean, I can't get on the freeway without  
getting stuck in an hour of gridlock, but  
whenever one of these schmucks decides to  
run, there's nothing but wide open lanes.  
Can someone explain that to me?

SUZANNE

I just hope they don't get hurt.

MORTY

What about you, Lizzie? Think this'll end in the next hour or so, or will this cut into primetime?

LISA

Morty, will you excuse me.

INT. BMW

JACK

Don't know how long we can keep this up.  
(glancing down at the gauge)  
Even if the police don't stop us, we're going to run out of gas soon.

He dodges another PIT attempt and ducks in front of a Hummer.

JACK

Jesus, these guys are persistent.

STAN

Bet you wish you had your Porsche right now, huh?

A pause.

JACK

Stan, you have just given me an idea.

EXT. FREEWAY - OVERHEAD VIEW

The BMW exits off the freeway, and heads downtown.

INT. LISA'S OFFICE

She's on the phone. Intercut:

LISA

Isn't there anything you can do to keep your friends from using force?

TONY

Negative. When I talked to the dispatch commander, he told me to fuck off. We've got a hot car used in conjunction with a bank robbery, there's no way in hell to get force suspended on this fiasco.



LISA

What if the situation were different?

TONY

What do you mean?

INT. NEWSROOM

They watch as the chase detours off onto surface streets.

MORTY

What are they up to now?

(squinting)

Wait a minute, they're...

SUZANNE

-headed towards us.

INT. BMW

JACK

We've only got one shot at this, so we need to make the handoff quick, okay?

STAN

Afterwards, you think we can swing by an In-and-Out? I could really go for a milkshake.

Jack grinds his teeth in frustration.

EXT. DOWNTOWN L.A. - LATE AFTERNOON

The BMW continues down the street with their police entourage in tow. We see the KNOB news logo looming ahead.

INT. NEWSROOM

MORTY

You really think they're coming here?

SUZANNE

God, I hope not.

Lisa emerges from her office into the commotion.

LISA

What's going on?

She looks up at the monitor, and does a double take.

EXT. KNOB NEWS BUILDING

The BMW makes a sharp turn into the building's ground level parking garage entrance and disappears inside.

INT. PARKING GARAGE

They speed past rows of parked cars, towards the reserved spaces adjacent the exit doors.

Jack turns the wheel hard, bringing the BMW to a skidding stop sideways -- completely blocking the lane.

JACK

Let's go!

He jumps out and races for the Porsche, while Stan ambles on after. Jack turns and grabs him, dragging him along.

EXT. NEWS BUILDING - NEWSCAM VIEW

An overhead shot as police circle the entrance.

REPORTER

What they're planning we don't know, but the suspects have entered the building, and are considered armed and dangerous.

EXIT OUT TO NEWSROOM:

MORTY

Bet you weren't expecting anything like this when you were buttering your bagel this morning, right Suzie?

SUZANNE

I usually skip breakfast.

MORTY

Where'd Lizzie run off to this time?

INT. PARKING GARAGE

The pursuing cops are stopped by the BMW blocking the lane. The exit doors burst open.

Lisa races out just in time to see Jack's Porsche peel out.

Watching them burn rubber down the exit lane, she puts a hand to her forehead in a grimace, but moments later, Lisa steels herself and heads back inside.

INT. NEWSROOM

And she enters again all business.

LISA

They switched cars -- they're in Jack's Porsche. Get the copy ready!

MORTY

The old switcharoo! Ha ha... I guess they're not giving up after all!

SHERRY

Lisa, Tony's on line two. He said you'll want to hear this.

EXT. NEWS BUILDING - NEWSCAM VIEW

REPORTER

We've received word that the suspects have changed vehicles and are on the run again, this time in a red Porsche.

INT. PORSCHE

JACK

We did it! I can't fucking believe it!

(yelling out the window)

C'mon, coppers, bring it on! Wait 'til you see what this baby can do!

He revs the engine and grins at Stan, putting a palm up for a high-five, but Stan just stares back at him crossly.

JACK

What's wrong?

STAN

Why did you take Candy from me?

JACK

What?

STAN

You stole my girlfriend! You took off with her after the bachelor party!

JACK

Stan, Candy's not your girlfriend, she was an exotic dancer. And I'm pretty sure that's not her real name.

STAN

We had something special!

JACK

Okay, first of all, I didn't know you two were involved, I thought she was there as entertainment.

STAN

She wasn't just some stripper!

JACK

Second, she's the one who asked me for a ride. And third, maybe this explains why you're getting divorced!

Jack's cell phone rings. Intercut:

LISA

I have good news, Jack. But first I feel it's my duty to say what you're doing is absolutely irresponsible, not to mention completely idiotic and more than a little insane. However if you choose to continue on your present course, you should know the police have been ordered not to try and stop you, so long as you obey traffic rules and don't do anything stupid. And I can't emphasize the latter enough.

JACK

They're backing off... how?

LISA

Just try and keep it under sixty-five, okay hotshot? And when you finally get through screwing around maybe I'll come visit you in jail.

JACK  
Stan's suicidal.

LISA  
What?

JACK  
That's why I haven't stopped. He said  
he'd provoke the cops into shooting if I  
did.

LISA  
Tell me you're joking.  
(off his silence)  
Fuck... I'll call Tony and explain the  
situation, and maybe-

JACK  
The police aren't going to take any  
chances if they think a suspect is armed,  
you know that.

LISA  
Well then you'll just have to talk him  
out of it.

Jack glances at his passenger -- not going to be easy.

INT. NEWSROOM

Lisa exits her office.

MORTY  
Everything alright?

A brief hesitation reveals her anxiety, but she quickly puts on  
a smile that projects all is well

LISA  
This might take a while. It looks like  
we've got another O.J. on our hands.

MORTY  
What, so we just watch them drive around  
until they get tired and give up?

SUZANNE  
That or run out of gas.

MORTY

How about we order a pizza? I'm buying.  
Just don't get anything with pepperoni,  
gives me heartburn. Will you take care of  
that, Suzie?

As Suzanne departs, Morty reaches in his jacket and pulls out a pair of cigars. He hands one to Lisa.

MORTY

Cohibos. Genuine Cubans. Don't ask me how  
I got them.

Lisa stares at the cigar. Coming from Morty this gesture means something -- she's finally one of the boys.

LISA

Mind if I save this for later. I'm not  
sure I'm ready to celebrate just yet.

MORTY

Fair enough. How 'bout some coffee  
instead.

INT. PORSCHE

Stan dials a number on his cell.

JACK

What're you doing?

STAN

I'm calling my psychiatrist.

JACK

Now? We've got half the LAPD after us.  
On second thought, that's a good idea. You  
should definitely give him a call.

INT. BOOKIES

Carlos and crew observe the lull in activity.

CARLOS

Box 'em in! Ram that son of a bitch! Why  
aren't they trying to stop them?  
Do something, you pigs!

He mops sweat from his brow with a sleeve.

CARLOS

Tank, what's the time.

TANK

Two hours and thirty-eight minutes.

CARLOS

Fuck!

INT. PORSCHE

STAN

(into the phone)

I've been more assertive lately. I'm not letting people walk all over me anymore. I haven't been taking no for an answer either, like at the bank.

(pause)

What do you mean, am I doing this in a constructive manner?

As he listens to the exchange, we can see Jack getting more and more frustrated, until finally he snatches the phone.

JACK

Yeah, hi, sorry to interrupt, my name's Jack. I'm a friend of Stan's. So you're his shrink, huh?

INT. NEWSROOM

Morty and Lisa sit across from one other, each nursing a mug.

MORTY

(sniffing his cup)

This isn't decaf, is it?

LISA

Morty, I saw the check in my office. I don't know what to say.

MORTY

Well, it ain't a Starbuck's coupon, but you earned it. Thought you might use it to take a vacation. Sometimes you look like you could use one.

She raises an eyebrow, and Morty returns an avuncular grin.

LISA

Any suggestions where I should go?

MORTY

It's not where you go, but who you go with that matters.

LISA

Is that supposed to be a hint?

MORY

I can be subtle.

INT. PORSCHE

JACK

Stan just needs to get over it. His marriage is over and all the therapy in the world isn't going to change that.

(to Stan)

Life gives you lemons, pull your head out of your ass and make lemonade.

(back into the phone)

And what's with the prescriptions? He's been popping pills nonstop! Do you have any idea what this lunatic's gotten us into?! Just turn on your TV!

Stan grabs the cell and chucks it out the window.

EXT. HIGHWAY

The Porsche speeds by as the cell phone flies end over end, skittering to a stop on the asphalt, and gets ground under the tires of a pursuing cruiser.

INT. PORSCHE

JACK

You realize that was your phone right? I'm pretty sure that's not covered in the warranty.

Stan crosses his arms, and goes silent again.



JACK

You know I'm the one who should be pissed right now. That's the last time I come to you for a weather forecast. On top of that if it weren't for you, I'd be on my way to meeting with CNN. I had my pitch ready and everything: Jack Horner doesn't report the news... he makes it. What do you think, too much?

(Stan's a sounding board)

Look, I know what you're going to say, but let's be real -- objectivity as good journalism is a facade. In a war zone, the bombs wouldn't distinguish between a combatant and a photographer, right? It's like in quantum physics: the act of observation changes the very outcome observed. If you need proof, just stick a camera in someone's face and see if they behave differently.

(beat)

That's what Hunter Thompson discovered when he went undercover for that story on the Hell's Angels. A reporter isn't some impassive observer -- he's a *participant*. Our job is to be a surrogate for the viewer watching at home, by offering a firsthand account of what it's like to be there. That's why we should be reporting what we're seeing, thinking, feeling... everything that's going through us at that moment. Guys like Mailer and Hunter were pioneers. They understood what Twenty-first Century journalism was going to be about: the reporter as rock star.

STAN

Would you please just shut up. I'm sick of your bullshit. Do you ever get tired of hearing your own voice?

JACK

Man, I liked you better when you weren't speaking.

STAN

You think you have all the answers.

JACK

Hey, the last thing I need is a lecture from you. Jesus Christ, you whine more than anyone I know.

STAN

You look at me and see a loser, with his failed marriage and history of emotional problems; while you're on your way to the big leagues, soon to be network star, broadcasting to millions of viewers out there in TV land, and think you have it all figured out.

JACK

Are we getting to a point anytime soon?

STAN

Do you remember the happiest day of your life?

For once Jack has no reply.

STAN

Mine was the day the twins were born.

And the anger evaporates.

JACK

I was there. I waited with you through five hours of childbirth and drove you home afterwards.

STAN

Remember how tiny they looked.

(a wistful sigh)

You know what was another good day? The day I married Rachel.

JACK

I'm surprised to hear that, given you're getting divorced.

STAN

Doesn't change it, I still remember how I felt when I saw her walking down the aisle. (sighs again)

STAN (cont'd)

You probably think I'm nuts, don't you.

JACK

More than a little.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MAGIC HOUR

The sun dips below the horizon.

INT. PORSCHE

JACK

You know, my life isn't what you think it is, things aren't so great.

STAN

Whatever.

JACK

I'm serious. I'm in so deep with Carlos he's practically got my nuts in a vice. And once our little joyride is through, lord knows how much trouble we'll be in.

Silence, as Jack contemplates his bleak future.

JACK

Who would have thought that after all this time reporting them, I'd finally be in a police chase myself.

STAN

I never thought I'd rob a bank; guess there's a first time for everything.

JACK

Just make sure you comb your hair before this is over. The last thing we need is a mug shot of you looking like Nick Nolte coming off a three-day bender. By the way you're not still thinking of following through on what you said earlier?

STAN

How about we go to Mexico instead?

JACK

You know how long border crossing is?  
It makes airport security look efficient.

STAN

Las Vegas?

JACK

We'd run out of gas halfway in the  
desert. And even if we could make it,  
that's the *last* place I'd want to go.

STAN

I guess Lisa would be watching right now,  
huh? You know, you're the only person I  
know who's gone to Vegas to *avoid* getting  
married.

JACK

Very funny.

EXT. FREEWAY - NIGHT

The Porsche speeds ahead, followed by its police escort, along  
with a fleet of police and news helicopters overhead.

INT. BOOKIES OFFICE

Carlos sits slumped over, with a bottle of Tequila lying beside  
him, what's left of its contents trickling out onto the desk.  
From outside comes a yell.

TANK

Four hours!

His head rises to take another swig from the bottle.

INT. LISA'S OFFICE

Lisa's phone rings. Intercut:

JACK

Hey, it's me.

LISA

Is everything okay? Is Stan alright?

JACK

Actually, I wanted to talk about us. I've had a lot of time to think since all this started, and I wanted to tell you...

(pauses, at a loss)

LISA

It's okay, Jack. Whatever it is you can tell me later.

JACK

Lisa, I wanted you to know that I still care about you... a lot.

(beat)

Boy, that came out dumb. Look, I know I screwed up, there's nothing I can do to change that, but I promise you I'll do everything I can to make things right; that is, if by some miracle I can avoid major jail time when this is over.

(beat, silence)

Lisa? Baby, say something.

LISA

Have you lost your mind?

JACK

Not the response I was hoping for.

LISA

And even if you did mean what you said, it's what you're feeling now; it doesn't mean you'll feel the same way tomorrow.

JACK

No, listen to me-

LISA

What you're experiencing is an adrenaline high. Right now you're in a super-charged emotional state produced by the euphoria of being pursued. But once that wears off you're going right back to being you, Jack.

JACK

It wore off a while ago. I'm completely lucid, and I meant every word.

LISA

You know what else means something? When you run off the night before your wedding with another woman!

JACK

I didn't sleep with her, if that's what you think. Nothing happened between us, I promise. I was just giving her a ride home, that's all.

LISA

Don't tell me she lives all the way out in Las Vegas. How did you end up there? Please explain to me how something like that even happens!

JACK

We got in the car; she said it was a nice night for a drive, next thing you know... we were outside city limits. I don't know why I couldn't stop. I just kept on going. I'm sorry. It was a huge mistake.

LISA

It wasn't a mistake, Jack, you were following your instincts, and they told you to get as far away as possible.

JACK

I wasn't running from you. In fact, I'm through running, metaphorically speaking that is. Can we start over? This isn't going the way I planned.

LISA

Why should I believe you, that you're any different? You weren't ready for a commitment when we were engaged. Four hours into a chase, and you suddenly turn into Ward Cleaver? And who's to say I even want you back.

JACK

You're not gonna make this easy are you?

Stan takes the phone from Jack.

STAN

Hey, it's me.

LISA

Stan? Are you okay? I mean, how are you doing? By the way, we're all concerned and want you back in one piece.

STAN

Yeah, everything's hunky-dory. Anyway, this is about Jack. We both know he's a grade A moron, but he cares about you and you should give him another chance. I know that may be hard to believe, and I don't blame you, but I've known the son of a bitch long enough to tell you it's true. So I hope you'll take this turkey back, even though he'll probably just screw it up again. You don't have to say anything, just think about it.

And with that he clicks the phone off and hands it back.

JACK

Um, thanks.

STAN

No problem.

INT. LISA'S OFFICE

She stares at the dead receiver, and slumps back in her chair in a mix of emotions.

INT. PORSCHE

JACK

We'll be running on fumes soon. I need to know that you are not going to try anything stupid. Promise me, Stan!

No response.

JACK

Okay, you may not give a shit, but the people around you don't want to see you get turned into swiss cheese.

STAN

Why not? Look at my life. I'm divorced. I can't see my kids. My ex-stripper girlfriend dumped me the night she ran off with you. And I'll probably be fired from the station once this is over. SBC isn't sounding too bad right now.

JACK

SBC?

STAN

Suicide by cop. That's how I wanna go out -- like Dillinger, in a hail of gunfire.

JACK

You may fancy yourself a desperado, but think about me... I could get shot too!

STAN

Try and look at it this way -- if you survive, you'll be famous.

Jack gives him an incredulous look.

STAN

Yeah. This'll be the story of the year! After leading the police on a four-hour chase, LA traffic reporter, Jack Horner, is caught in a shootout that takes the life of his companion, local weatherman Stan Gale. The press will go bananas! You'll be on the cover of every magazine from Time and Newsweek to Guns and Ammo. I bet the networks will ante up at least half a mil just to interview you. Hell, Barbara Walters would probably blow you for the chance. Then you can leverage all that attention and public sympathy into the dream job you've always wanted. And not only that, a civil suit against the police will get you millions. I bet it won't even go to trial, not after Rodney King, the city will settle just to avoid the publicity. When this is over you'll have more money than you'll know what to do with.



They stare at each other for a moment, then Jack reaches across and smacks him upside the head.

STAN

Oww! What was that for?!

JACK

For being an asshole!

STAN

I'm giving you everything you've ever wanted; you should be *thanking* me!

JACK

Yeah, and all it's going to cost is my immortal soul, right Mephistopheles?  
(to Stan's blank look)  
From Faust. Mephistopheles is the devil that tempts Faust... *read a book!*

STAN

You're telling me you don't want it?

JACK

Stan, you're lucky I'm driving right now, or else I'd shove my foot so far up your ass you'd be able to guess my shoe size.

Jack pulls off onto the exit ramp.

STAN

Where are we going?

EXT. RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT - NIGHT

The Porsche, followed by its police escort, speeds through the neighborhood and turns into a cul-de-sac. It heads for a white-picketed house.

The Porsche plows through the fence and skids to a stop on the lawn -- the engine finally sputtering dead.

The door opens and out steps RACHEL GALE. The sight of Stan emerging from the vehicle produces an instant scowl, but her expression transforms into one of disbelief when she sees the fleet of police cruisers moving in after them.

In the doorway behind her are the TWINS staring wide-eyed at the spectacle taking place in front of their house. But once they see their father, they race out to embrace him.

EXT. PORSCHE

Meanwhile Jack gets out of the car with hands raised and despite his surrender, gets taken down hard by police.

INT. NEWSROOM

Watching Jack get manhandled, Lisa can't help but smile; but then as the camera pans over to capture Stan's tearful family reunion, she blinks back a tear.

And she finds Suzanne at her side. The two share a hug as the newsroom breaks into applause -- just another day in L.A.

INT. BOOKIES

Carlos stumbles out of his office in a drunken stupor.

CARLOS

Time?

TANK

Four hours, twenty minutes, and eight seconds. A new record.

The color drains from his face, and he falls back in a swoon.

INT. HOLDING CELL

Jack's sits alone in the cell, staring at the tiles, when Tony appears outside the bars.

TONY

There's the fugitive. Boy, you took everyone on one helluva chase.

JACK

You here to bail me out?

TONY

Nope, you're being released.

JACK

What?

TONY

All charges have been dropped.

INT. HASKELL'S BAR

Bar's closed and it's Nick, Tony and Jack at counter.

TONY

Lisa thought that if we could convince the higher ups that this was a hostage situation and not your standard robbery and evasion, that might get the Captain to suspend force. And that's when they stopped trying to ram you. Then later, when Stan confirmed he ordered you to drive at gunpoint, we were able to get the judge to issue your release.

JACK

But it was a squirt gun.

TONY

You thought it was real, right?  
(he winks)

JACK

And what about Stan?

NICK

Under observation at the psych ward.

TONY

We think those pills he's been on may have influenced his behavior.

JACK

Wait, how'd you know about...

FLASHBACK: ALONGSIDE HIGHWAY - DAY

A police cruiser is parked along the shoulder. And we find Ray and Fred stooped over, searching for something amid the overgrown grass.

RAY

Man, I hate scavenger duty. This is worse than paperwork.

FRED

You *had* to break up with her...

RAY

Shut up and keep looking.

(reaches down)

Bingo!

He holds up a pharmaceutical vial.

BACK TO SCENE:

TONY

It was the same stuff those celebrities were taking; I bet half of L.A. wants to try it now. And once news broke that he robbed a bank and carjacked a Beemer, Stan's turned into a celebrity. He's like a freakin' rock star. People have started posting his weather clips on Youtube.

JACK

You can't be serious.

NICK

They'll keep him under watch for the mandatory seventy-two hours; afterwards he'll be released into a rehab clinic.

JACK

He robbed a fucking bank!

TONY

You could make the case it was the drugs that were making him crazy; that and the stress of his divorce. And technically, he did have an account there so he wasn't exactly out of line in asking for money.

Jack sports an incredulous look, and Tony returns a grin.

TONY

With that drug recall situation going on, if Stan gets himself a decent lawyer, he may get off with a minimum sentence, or community service and AA. Who knows, when it's all said and done Stan might even end up with his own billboard.

INT. LISA'S OFFICE

A knock and Jack enters, holding a cardboard box.

LISA  
How was jail?

JACK  
Don't wanna go back there again.

LISA  
You were only detained overnight.

JACK  
Long enough.

LISA  
I didn't get a chance to tell you, Jack,  
the way you handled the Stan situation... I'm  
glad things turned out okay.

JACK  
Yeah, well, he is my best friend, even if  
he is a whacked-out nut.

She reaches in the box and takes out an old, weathered book.

JACK  
'For Whom the Bell Tolls,' first edition,  
signed by Hemingway. It's probably worth in  
the ballpark of six grand. We'll know for  
certain after they've been appraised.

LISA  
You're auctioning your collection?

JACK  
No choice. I have to sell them, along with  
the Porsche to pay Carlos. Gotta face my  
problems, right? Can't keep running  
forever.

LISA  
And then what?

JACK  
Then I give up gambling, I guess.

LISA

Is that a promise? What if I told you that you didn't have to sell everything?

Jack raises an eyebrow.

INT. BOOKIES - CARLOS' OFFICE

Hung-over and disheveled, Carlos stares at the numbers sheet.

Tank pokes his head in.

TANK

Boss, you okay? You been in there all night.

CARLOS

We're fucked. I can't cover all of last night's bets. Someone even bet big on a new record.

TANK

How much?

CARLOS

Four grand.

TANK

At thirty-to-one odds that's...

INT. LISA'S OFFICE

LISA

One hundred and twenty thousand dollars, that's how much I won last night, which is what you owe your bookie, right?

JACK

You bet on me?

LISA

Before you get too full of yourself, I was gambling with found money. We have Morty's bonus to thank for that.

Kicking back, she pulls out the Cohibo, bites an end off and lights it, propping her feet up on the desk.

She takes a long puff and blows a smoke ring at Jack.

LISA

Carlos doesn't own you anymore... I do.

It's a Hemingway moment.

INT. PORSCHE - AFTERNOON

Lisa leans back in her seat, the convertible top down and wind blowing through her hair, with Jack behind the wheel.

He pulls out a voice recorder and begins dictating.

JACK

Here in Los Angeles, there's over nine hundred miles of freeway. To put this in perspective-

LISA

What are you doing?

JACK

Recording my memoir.

(beat)

I was in the longest running chase in L.A. history; this is the kind of thing people will be interested in. Plus, who knows more about the subject than me? This could be my 'Paper Lion.'

LISA

Please don't bring up George Plimpton.

(she grabs the recorder)

You'll get it back later. I'm not going to be listening to this the entire way. And while we're on it, you still haven't said where we're going.

JACK

Don't you want it to be a surprise?

LISA

Jack, at this point, I could do without any more surprises. I can't believe you talked me into taking a vacation, what did Morty say?

JACK

Are you kidding? He couldn't have been happier to get you out of the office. He even suggested I kidnap you if that's what it took. Plus, Suzanne'll cover all your duties while you're away; you won't even be missed.

LISA

Wow, I've never felt more dispensable.

JACK

At least *your* replacement isn't coming from the zoo.

Lisa grins.

LISA

What about CNN?

JACK

(shrugs)

There are more important things than CNN. Besides, I need a vacation.

Just then a pickup charges past them, followed by a state trooper with its lights and sirens flashing.

They turn and look at each other.

EXT. HIGHWAY

And as the chase continues along the Interstate, we observe from a high, the Porsche take the LAS VEGAS exit.

LISA (O.S.)

Tell me that's not where we're headed.

JACK (O.S.)

What did you expect?

(beat)

Can I have my tape recorder back?

LISA (O.S.)

No.

JACK (O.S.)

Please?



LISA (O.S.)

Absolutely not.

JACK (O.S.)

When'd you start smoking cigars?

And we watch as they cruise off into the desert.

FADE OUT