

DEAD SERIOUS

Short Screenplay

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SMALL MOUNTAIN BAR - NIGHT

Several cars scattered in front. KRESKO (40s), permanent frown, wrinkled features, casually dressed, walks out and heads for a late-modeled blue sedan.

Passes a news-rack: "Mountain Serial Killer Still at Large." He is cut-off by WEBB (30s), clean-cut, full beard, wearing jeans, sweatshirt and tennis shoes.

WEBB

Excuse me, Sir. Someone messed up my car engine. Triple A can't get here for three hours.

Gestures to a fairly new car.

WEBB (CONT'D)

Got a job interview in Sanchez tomorrow morning. If you're going that way may I catch a lift?

Kresko toys with him.

KRESKO

My father told me to never offer strangers a ride.

Webb removes a ten-dollar bill from his wallet, hesitates, adds another five.

WEBB

Fifteen bucks for gas money?

KRESKO

Keep it, pal. Get in.

INT. BLUE SEDAN MOVING - NIGHT

Kresko snorts a couple hits from an inhaler as they continue along a narrow road.

KRESKO

COPD. I'm heading to Mesa Verde and this blasted altitude's playing hell with my breathing.

WEBB

I was born there. It's a thousand feet higher than here.

Large truck barrels by them, makes the car wobble. Kresko sizes up Webb.

KRESKO
So whaddya do?

Webb slips a revolver out of his waistband.

WEBB
I'm a serial killer.

Kresko's taken aback.

KRESKO
The Mountain Killer?

WEBB
That's me...

Kresko collects his thoughts.

KRESKO
Wow! Five states, nine kills.

WEBB
Ten. One guy hasn't been found yet
in the High Sierras.

Kresko eyes the gun in Webb's hand.

KRESKO
So I picked up a Serial killer.
What're the odds?

WEBB
Million to one?

KRESKO
Not just the serial killer part.
(amused)
I'm a Hitman.

WEBB
You serious?

KRESKO
Dead serious. In fact, I'm on my
way to an assignment.

Kresko wheezes, his breathing's labored.

WEBB
(floored)
You talking contract stuff?

KRESKO

Yeah. But not sure I'll be able to carry it off due to this New Mexico thin air.

Webb relaxes a bit, lowers the gun.

WEBB

Where you from?

KRESKO

Detroit. Just landed the biggest job I've ever had--

Pulls quickly to the right shoulder. Webb freaks--

WEBB

What're you doing?--

KRESKO

Easy, trigger-boy. I gotta pee. Also have a weak bladder.

ROADSIDE - TREE LINE

They're seen from behind, urinating in shrub. Kresko wheezes.

KRESKO

I just experienced a brain-buzz. It's Hitchcock-ian.

WEBB

What the hell does that mean?

They zip-up. Face each other.

KRESKO

Alfred Hitchcock, the spooky movie director?

WEBB

That fat Brit who made Psycho?

KRESKO

Strangers on a Train too. Couple guys meet, both wanna kill someone. So they trade targets.

They saunter toward the car. Webb's mind swims.

WEBB

To throw off the cops?

KRESKO

Correct. Anyway, you're in it for the thrills, right?

(Webb shrugs)

Well I'm a pro. Do it for bucks.

Kresko looks around furtively. Nobody or vehicles evident. Removes a thick wad of cash from his pocket.

KRESKO (CONT'D)

I got ten-thousand up front. Forty more's on the line.

Slaps some of the money in Webb's hand.

KRESKO (CONT'D)

Here, five-grand. After my pigeon's iced we'll score twenty more.

Webb gawks unbelievably at the greenbacks. Another big truck shoots by, rattles them... They relax.

WEBB

You - you sure about this?

KRESKO

Yeah. If the air's lighter where my target lives my lungs could shut down.

Webb's mind does hoops.

WEBB

I'm tempted. So what about this guy? He due to testify in a trial against some mob-type?

KRESKO

Already did. The mob dude drew twelve years in the joint. So pick out who to hit, let me carry it out, and visa-versa.

WEBB

I'm in. Who's the mark?

KRESKO

Fred Meeks. Lives at 14802 Crowe Lane, Mesa Verde. You familiar with the area?

WEBB

Sure am. I grew up near there.

Webb lifts a pen from his pocket.

WEBB (CONT'D)

Best I write it down. I got this condition where I tend to transpose numbers and letters.

At the car, Webb jots the address on an empty candy bar wrapper. They bump fists.

KRESKO

Deal. We're now partners.

WEBB

I'll need some wheels.

KRESKO

Use this car. Is there some place other than a motel where I can hang till you get back?

WEBB

Why no motel?

KRESKO

Don't wanna mix with anyone who could I.D. me. Nor leave a paper trail. I use cash only.

WEBB

There's a road cut-out two miles from here. Rest place for truckers and the like.

KRESKO

That should do.

INT. CAR MOVING - NIGHT

Kresko eases along an empty highway. Webb snickers.

WEBB

About my car having engine trouble?
I don't have a car.

KRESKO

Why am I not surprised?

Webb giggles. Slaps his own thigh.

KRESKO (CONT'D)

Well, in that it's confession time,
I copped this one.

WEBB

It's hot? What if the cops stop us?

KRESKO

Hasn't been reported. Owner's in the trunk.

They pass car with a flat tire on the shoulder.

KRESKO (CONT'D)

If you get caught they'll assign some Shrink to you.

WEBB

Yeah, I know. But their only real interest is about the patient's sad childhood, stuff like that. Then they write a damn book.

KRESKO

True. They don't realize that some people are downright evil.

EXT. ROADSIDE CUT-OUT - NIGHT

Parked trucks, a few cars, among pine trees. Kresko pulls up, stops. Climbs out. Webb slides behind the wheel, drives off. Kresko slips into the trees.

INT. DARK BEDROOM - NIGHT

Barely visible MAN asleep. A silencer-fixed pistol ENTERS FRAME. Discharges, hits him in the head.

EXT. ROADSIDE CUT-OUT - NIGHT

Webb arrives in the car. Scoots over as Kresko piles into the driver's side.

INT. CAR MOVING - NIGHT

Webb's giddy. Kresko, serious.

WEBB

Went perfect.

KRESKO

There's always a snag. Tell me what it was.

Webb clams up. Kresko barks.

KRESKO (CONT'D)
I'm waiting!

WEBB
That candy bar wrapper is missing.
May've dropped it at the house.

EXT. LOW-RENT HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

Cops, patrol cars. FEMALE SGT. (40s), on phone, has the candy bar wrapper. CHEERS, LAUGHTER, SHOUTING (O.S.).

SHERIFF
Candy bar?

SERGEANT
Fred Meeks and his address are written on it. He's that plumber who testified last fall in the Detroit mob case.

SHERIFF (ON PHONE)
So you think he was the intended victim?

SERGEANT
I do, Sheriff. He lives across the street at 14802 Crowe. House number here is 14208. Shooter must've hit the wrong place.

Sergeant glances up at the house number: "14208" while CHEERS, LAUGHS, SHOUTS build (O.S.).

SHERIFF (ON PHONE)
Maybe the shooter's dyslectic.
(beat)
By the way, what the hell's all that noise about?

SERGEANT
The neighbors are celebrating. Seems our deceased is a convicted child molester.

SHERIFF (ON PHONE)
Makes sense.

SERGEANT
Guess so. So far I've turned down three offers of beer.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - TURN-OFF - DAY

Kresko rolls to a stop on a downward slope. Webb wakes up beside him. Scopes the area.

KRESKO

Pee time.

They get out, stretch. Grey sedan pulls to a stop in the b.g. Kresko nods to the unseen driver.

Webb stiffens. Kresko whips out an ice pick, sinks it to the hilt into Webb's gut--

Webb gasps, stumbles. Kresko pops the trunk. Muscles Webb inside, next to the apparent car OWNER'S body. Filches the cash from Webb's pocket.

WEBB

You dub - double crossin'...

KRESKO

Wrong. I'm fulfilling your request--

Kresko wheezes, grimaces, presses his chest. Fumbles with his inhaler, takes a couple blasts.

KRESKO (CONT'D)

You wanted someone dead. Anyone.
Well you were my choice. This saves
me twenty-five K!

Slams the lid shut. Circles to the driver's door, leans inside. Releases the emergency brake. The car rolls slowly down the slope... gains speed--

Sails off the edge - CRASHES (O.S.). Kresko on his phone, ambles toward the grey sedan.

KRESKO (CONT'D)

Done, boss. Heading to Jersey...
Called off...? Cost saving effort
my ass!

Pistol protrudes our the grey sedan drivers window.

Four BURSTS drop Kresko. He moans, squirms then goes still. Dead still.

Grey sedan kicks up dust digging out - disappears down the highway within seconds.

FADE OUT.