

"PINK SLIP"

by  
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Current Revision:  
Dated April 23, 2007 12:59:05 PM

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## INT. MATT'S PORCHE-MATT - DAY

MATT (thirty, upwardly mobile) slouches in his seat, deathgrip on the wheel, slack-jawed, staring zombie-like through the windshield. His expensive shirt is wrinkled, sweaty, slept in, his power tie askew, coif in revolt. Underneath we can make out the drone of the traffic report on the radio.

## EXT. MATT'S PORCHE

Sits dwarfed by SUV's, pickups and delivery trucks that surround it. Nobody is moving.

## EXT. FREEWAY

The mother of all traffic jams- a glacier of fume-belching, overheating vehicles wavering in the summer heat. The glare of the afternoon sun bounces everywhere-aching on the eyes, grating on the nerves.

## INSERT- PORCHE GEARSHIFT

Matt's hand suddenly grips the logo-topped ball, slamming it into first as-

MATT'S EYES narrow fiendishly. We HEAR the MOTOR REDLINE and-

## EXT. FREEWAY

Matt's Porche screams out of his lane blowing blue smoke, tires screaming, motor howling.

## INTERCUT

## EXT. MATT'S PORCHE

Weaves in and out of traffic madly, passing everything on the road.

## INT. MATT'S PORCHE- MATT

Total focus- balls forward, body in perfect sync with machine as-

The Porche roars around cars left, then right, then left like a pinball, cutting in front, braking then rocketing ahead like a high-tech death wish dance.

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Matt slams gears- third- fourth- back to third. His feet two-step clutch and brake like Fred Astair at the Ritz.

The TACH bounces at the top of the guage, the MOTOR pressed to the limit and beyond, winding out.

His jaw is chiseled granite, his eyes steely.  
Determined, controlled, in the moment.

Out his window the cars, buildings, landscape blurs.

EXT. OFFRAMP

Matt's Porche goes airborne, slamming onto the pavement and bounces through the stop sign at the bottom, sending surface traffic in every direction.

EXT. HIGHWAY

The Porche roars into the distance, heading for open ground.

EXT. COAST HIGHWAY- DUSK

The setting sun casts an orange glow over the cliffs and the endless Pacific as the Porche races through the winding highway slipping, sidewinding through corners, roaring out of them until-

EXT. TURNOUT-DUSK

The Porche hooks a one-eighty and slides to a stop on the edge of a cliff turnout, throwing up a dense cloud of dust that obscures everything for a moment.

As the cloud dissipates, the shape of Matt and his car become visible. He strides to the edge of the cliff overlooking the ocean, facing the setting sun.

Throwing his arms wide, Matt gulps in the salty onshore breeze, basking in the fading light. Master of the world.

Freedom. Sparticus unbound. The crashing breakers below roar approval, the triumph sounds a new era...

EXT. MATT'S CAR- FREEWAY

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Insistant, annoyed HORNS HONKING jolt Matt upright as traffic begins to creep past him. With a sigh, he gently eases into the flow.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET

Matt eases through the traffic, changes lane, turning into-

EXT. MINIMART

The one on every corner with the overflowing garbage can, chained newspaper rack and window plastered with the beer price specials and calling card posters showing exotic locales for only 59 cents per minute.

Matt parks close to the door and pulls himself out, pointedly button-locking the car. In the window is a hand-lettered sign HELP WANTED. Matt looks at it for a too-long moment and slouches into the store

INT. MINIMART

The turbaned Punjab CLERK at the counter watches Matt as he shuffles to the soft drink machine. From somewhere the wailing of INDIAN MUSIC filters through the store.

Matt fills a cup with ice and places the cup beneath the spigot, pressing the button. Nothing comes out. He moves the cup to another spigot, which sputters out soda and foam spastically. Finally, he fills the cup and wrestles an ill fitting lid onto the cup. He turns to the counter where-

The Clerk has been joined by an OLD WOMAN, about three feet nothing, a thousand years old, wrapped in a sari. Both the Clerk and the Old Woman converse pointedly in Hindi without taking their eyes off Matt as he approaches. The Old Woman finally growls something and toddles into the back office as Matt reaches the counter. The Clerk speaks in an overly friendly singsong manner.

CLERK

Good afternoon, sir. I hope you  
are having a good day, sir.

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Matt grunts noncommittally as he reaches for his wallet.

CLERK

Would you like something else,  
sir? A hot dog?

Matt glances at the rotating hot dog warmer. The last time these dogs saw action the Brooklyn Dodgers were in town.

MATT

No thanks, just the soda.

CLERK

Thank you sir. One dollar and  
twenty-nine cents, sir.

Matt counts out the change and hands it to the Clerk.

MATT

(nodding toward the  
sign)

Any luck finding help?

CLERK

Nobody wants to work, sir. I  
don't understand it. Everybody  
wants a suit and tie and a desk.  
Like you sir. You would not want  
to work here, would you?

Before he can answer, the door opens and two youths enter. The TALL KID turns to the back of the store and disappears among the shelves and the BLONDE KID scopes out the candy rack up front. The Clerk watches both of the youths as he talks.

CLERK

You see, nobody wants to work  
these days. Everybody wants to  
be the big boss and make lots of  
money, you know?

Now Matt can't resist surreptitiously watching the youths.

CLERK

(MORE)

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CLERK (cont'd)

They won't sweep, they won't  
clean. All they want is a pay  
and they all steal you blind. I  
don't know how I stay in  
business. It's just Mama and me,  
you know... and

(overly loud)

Security man with a gun hidden,  
in case somebody tries anything.

Matt didn't miss the not-too-subtle hint and freezes,  
unsure of what to do. He eyes the door and begins  
backing toward it.

The Tall Kid has made the orbit of the store and joins  
the Blond Kid at the counter. Everyone knows why they  
are here, even the Old Woman, who begins angrily  
jabbering in a high-pitched voice as-

Tall Kid pulls a pistol and points it directly at the  
Clerk.

BLONDE KID

Come on, Habib, this is a  
robbery.

From the back room, the Old Woman really kicks the  
howling into high. The Clerk glares back at Blonde Kid.

CLERK

You really piss me off.

BLONDE KID

Come on, come on. I ain't got  
all night.

Matt is only halfway to the door when he catches the eye  
of Tall Kid. Matt freezes.

TALL KID

Where d'ya think yer goin'?

Tall Kid waves Matt back with his gun, then trains it on  
the Clerk, who still hasn't made a move toward the cash  
register. Blonde Kid is impatient.

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BLONDE KID

Come on, get with it. Gimme the bills. I don't want the change. Put it in a bag. Come on!

The Clerk glares at Blonde Kid and slowly reaches for a paper bag.

CLERK

(to Matt)

This is what I am speaking.  
Nobody wants to work for money.  
Always wants to take, take,  
take. In U. S. of A people are  
lazy and uncouth.

The Old Woman's howling reaches an ear-splitting level. Blonde Kid looks around the Clerk.

BLONDE KID

Hey Granny, cork it and get on out here. Do you hear me?

The Clerk moves aside, revealing the Old Woman holding a GIANT PISTOL, almost as big as she is, aiming at Blonde Kid.

Matt reacts as-

Blonde Kid shrinks back and-

Tall Kid raises his pistol toward Old Woman and-

The Clerk raises a pistol toward Tall Kid.

For a moment, a standoff. Then-

The store erupts in gunfire.

Matt dives to the floor.

Canned goods, bottles, boxes explode everywhere and the bullets fly.

On the floor, Matt is pelted with goo and pickles and powdered sugar as he crawls for the door. Gunfire mixes with yelling in two languages by four people and glass

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shatters and cans thud to the floor and ricochet bullets ping off metal and the wailing of a Hindi popular singer. All is confusion.

Matt finally makes it to the door and crawls through it to-

EXT. MINIMART

where he huddles against the outside wall, breathing heavily. Through the glass door flashes of light and the staccato of gunfire hint at the battle inside. Matt wearily sips through the straw until the noise dies down. He cocks his head toward the door, then carefully peeks through the glass.

The door opens and the Clerk, now spattered with blood, looks around and then down at Matt. A huge smile erupts on his face.

CLERK

Oh there you are, sir. I thought

you would want your change.

Well? Do you?

Matt stares at the Clerk. Is he crazy?

INT. MINIMART.

The Clerk stares at Matt.

CLERK

Well, sir. Do you want your  
change?

Matt blinks and reaches out as the Clerk drops coins into his hand.

CLERK

Will there be something else,  
sir?

Matt shakes his head, pockets his change and heads for the door.

CLERK

Have a nice day, sir.

## EXT. SUBURBAN STREET

The tree-lined street is lined with upper middle-class houses- over-priced, over-blown tract homes with neat little lawns, swept sidewalks, drearily monotonous symbols of mobility.

Matt's Porche cruises past similar cars all parked in the driveways: Mercedes, Escalades, Lexus: all carefully waxed and polished. Conspicuous consumerism at its most blatant.

The Porche turns into one driveway and comes to a stop.

## INT. MATT'S PORCHE- MATT

He sits at the wheel, troubled, reluctant. He reaches for the key and the rumble of the motor dies.

## EXT. MATT'S HOUSE- FRONT DOOR

Matt approaches the door, stops. Fear, resignation, determination play across his face as he stands at the door. Finally-

## INT. FOYER

The door opens and Matt enters, quietly closing the door behind him. He looks around hopefully.

MATT  
(calling out)  
Honey. I'm home.

## INT. LIVING ROOM

He walks through a living room out of Pottery Barn-Mission reproductions, overstuffed Italian leather, wrought iron tables, patterned rugs, decorative objet d'art on the wall- catalouge showroom.

## INT. KITCHEN

Bright and airy. Everything just so. At the stove, a young, athletic woman (SHEILA) stirs a steaming pot. She turns, her eyes lock on Matt's. Radiating joy, she welcomes him with a million-watt smile.

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SHEILA

Wait until you hear about my day, honey, you are going to just die. Well, after you left today Carol called and said they needed a fourth because one of the girls who usually goes called up and said she couldn't make it and...

Matt makes a feeble attempt to get a word in, but...

SHEILA

So I rushed down to the club and just made it. Well, I was hitting pretty well and everything was fine until the eighth hole, you know, the one you always lose a ball on? Well, I hit it perfectly onto the green and birdied the hole, which put our team in the lead...

Matt- is there a point to this story?

SHEILA

And from there it was just playing par, and you know how good Carol and that bunch is about that, so it turns out that we win the prize today. Guess what it was.

Matt shrugs.

SHEILA

I was so excited I immediately went down to the travel agency and booked us a flight. I know it's not the off season and I should have tried one of those discount ticket places, but I figured "What the hell. Since the hotel is free, we can splurge a little." and got first class all the way, round trip. And  
(MORE)

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SHEILA (cont'd)

then I went with Carol and we  
went to the mall to get some new  
outfits to wear- oh wait until  
you see what I got, you will  
just die...

Matt's mouth moves, but no words come out.

SHEILA

Then I went to the market and  
picked up this lamb and a good  
bottle of wine to celebrate. I  
know you are going to be  
thrilled like I am because we  
were just saying the other night  
how someday we'd like to take  
time off to go to Hawaii. Well,  
honey, today is the day. What do  
you think of that?

Matt stands stunned for a long moment, then-

MATT

Honey, I lost my job today.

Sheila stares at Matt, her glitter evaporating, replaced  
by something darker.

INT. LIVING ROOM

A SCREAM- primal, long and agonizing.

Something- a dish, a cup, whatever- flies through the  
air and crashes against a wall o.s. A beat, then  
another, and another- a fusillade of fine China.

Matt backs his way into the living room, arms covering  
his head as dishes, cups, pots and pans pummel him. His  
retreat brings him to the-

INT. FOYER

And the safety of the front door is within reach as  
porcelain explodes around him. He reaches back for the  
door and-

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WHAM

A soup pot scores a direct hit on his melon and-

EXT. MATT'S HOUSE- FRONT DOOR

Matt's hand hovers over the knob, reluctant to touch it. He stares inwardly for a beat, then-

INT. FOYER

Matt strides through the door, confidently strutting through the-

INT. LIVING ROOM

to-

INT. KITCHEN

Where Sheila busies herself over the steaming pots. She turns to see him. In one motion he drops his briefcase on the counter and flings his coat off, takes her into his arms and bends her backward, planting a long, passionate kiss on her lips that goes on forever.

Finally, he lets her up. Sheila sways, gasping for breath, flushed, eyes glazed. Matt grips her shoulders.

MATT

I've made a crazy decision. What do you say we go away to someplace and leave all of this behind.

SHEILA

What?

MATT

Just go. Just pack up and move to someplace where they never heard of computers and freeways and Pier 1 Imports and all of this junk and just live a simple life.

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SHEILA

Are you crazy or something?

MATT

No, I mean it. We can be happy just the two of us, no phone, no cable, no shopping malls. Just you and me and live on love. Someplace like...

SHEILA

You are out of your mind. Why would I give up my house, my job and my tennis lessons. Forget it.

MATT

But, haven't you wanted to get away from all the...complications?

Sheila stares at him, completely puzzled.

SHEILA

For a vacation, Matt. A vacation. I don't want to live like that. God, what is wrong with you?

(looking past him)

Oh my God!

Matt follows her look and sees-

HIS COAT on the stove completely in flames. Matt reacts, stumbling to pull the burning cloth from the burner, upsetting the boiling pot on the stove and dousing himself with scalding water. He screams in agony and-

EXT. MATT'S HOUSE- FRONT DOOR

His hand hovers over the knob as he stares inwardly, brows wrinkled. Finally, he grasps the knob, turning and-

INT. FOYER

The door swings open. The room is darkend. He proceeds to-

INT. LIVING ROOM

Where grey filtered light from the curtained windows barely lights the room. It seems deserted, devoid of life.

MATT  
(calling out)  
Honey!

INT. KITCHEN

Dark, unused, deserted. Matt stands near the stove, completely puzzled.

MATT  
Honey?

INT. BEDROOM

The room is immaculate, but frozen in time. The only sign of occupancy is a slightly open closet door. Matt haltingly walks to the closet, easing the door open to see-

INT. CLOSET

Nothing but empty hangars and shoe boxes. It is neatly organized, but obviously missing a lot.

INT. BATHROOM

Matt peeks around the door. The room is spic and span, even in the half light. Something is written on the mirror, but unreadable at this angle. Matt enters the bathroom for a better look.

MATT'S P.O.V.

The mirror swings into view. The words are written neatly in red lipstick.

I never see you anymore. You  
love your job more than me.  
Fine. Have a nice job. I'm  
leaving.

FADE OUT

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