

MERCURY

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OVER BLACK

HOLLOWAY (O.S.)  
She's in here.

A garage door opens, cutting LIGHT INTO DUSTY SHADOWS,  
revealing--

Fragments of metal. Chrome. Glass. Polished to perfection.

We're inside a--

**INT. GARAGE - DAY**

A figure steps inside the meticulously organized garage. A 75yr old man, HOLLOWAY, clear eyes, strong posture.

HOLLOWAY  
The 1969 Ford Mercury Cyclone GT.  
Original parts through and through.  
Wide whitewall tires, all vinyl  
interior, special handling package.

He turns to face -- another silhouette. A young man, mid 20s, slender, soft handsome features, kind eyes framed by rimmed spectacles. This is MICHAEL SMITH.

MICHAEL  
She's... beautiful.

HOLLOWAY  
She is. Isn't she? And lightning  
fast. Fastest car of the year, back  
then. Set a world record speed of  
189.22 at Daytona.

MICHAEL  
Wow, that's...

Michael nods. A beat. Holloway smiles.

HOLLOWAY  
But you already knew that.

MICHAEL  
Yeah.

A spark in Michael's eyes.

HOLLOWAY

Good. I wouldn't want to pass her along to someone who doesn't know what he's getting into.

Holloway opens the front door and looks up at Michael. An invitation.

Michael slowly steps up. Squats. Lets his gaze wander over the perfectly kept leather cabin.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry for asking, sir. Mr. Holloway. But a car like this... that you've had for so long..?

HOLLOWAY

Why am I selling?

MICHAEL

Yeah?

HOLLOWAY

I bought her to impress my future wife. Be the kind of man who owns a set of wheels like these, you know? Strong. Resolute. Free.

Michael blinks. Holloway gently touches the roof of the car.

HOLLOWAY (cont'd)

Since she passed, *this* relationship has been... complicated.

MICHAEL

Of course. I'm sorry.

HOLLOWAY

It's okay. Real question is... Why are you *buying*?

Michael stands. A vulnerable beat.

MICHAEL

I guess... it's not that far from your own story. Sir. I drove one just like this many years ago and it... changed my life. I'm just hoping... it can change my life again?

Holloway sees through him. Smiles.

HOLLOWAY  
Someone special?

Michael blinks. A slight blush.

MICHAEL  
Might be? I hope so.  
(beat)  
Waited long enough.

Holloway nods.

HOLLOWAY  
Fifty years I've shared with this  
lady. Taught me one thing. She might  
not give a man what he wants? But she  
always... gives you what you need.

Holloway lifts up -- THE KEY.

HOLLOWAY (cont'd)  
That's why she comes at such a price.

A grave beat between them. Then. Michael reaches out...

And takes it.

**EXT. HOLLOWAY'S GARAGE - DAY**

The MERCURY rolls out into the light.

We linger on Holloway in the garage door for just a beat.  
And another. As he watches Michael Smith drive away.

His smile fades. Gravity in his eyes. Then he closes the  
garage door on us and we--

SMASHCUT TO:

**TITLE SEQUENCE - AERIAL SHOTS**

The Mercury roars through dense Los Angeles traffic. We  
track it from above, never taking our eyes from it, never  
losing sight of it.

As we never will. Throughout this entire movie.

**EXT. SILVER LAKE BUNGALOW - DAY**

The Mercury rolls up outside a small, run-down bungalow, just off Sunset.

Michael stays behind the wheel. Stops the engine. Gently touches details of the immaculate interior. Wood. Leather. Chrome. All in mint condition.

Outside -- distant shouting, dogs barking, sirens wailing. Michael doesn't notice.

He opens a DATING APP, and finds--

"LAURA" - mid 20s, short ruffled hair, cute. She's ONLINE.

Michael's heart skips a beat. He hesitates. Considers what to do, then - with a casual shrug - types--

MICHAEL (TEXTING)  
*We still on for tonite?*

A beat. Another. Then -- *DING*.

LAURA (TEXTING)  
*Yup.*

MICHAEL (TEXTING)  
*Got a surprise for you.*

(...) (...) *DING*.

LAURA (TEXTING)  
*You're green, ten feet tall and wear  
ripped, purple pants?*

Michael smiles.

MICHAEL (TEXTING)  
*How did you know?*

LAURA (TEXTING)  
*Specs in your profile pic gave you  
away, Dr. Banner.*

MICHAEL (TEXTING)  
*I'll pick you up at seven.*

LAURA (TEXTING)  
*I'll be on my corner...*

A beat. Another. And another.

*DING.*

LAURA (TEXTING) (cont'd)  
*Looking 4wrd 2 finally meeting U.*

Michael blushes. Takes a beat. Then replies with another casual shrug--

MICHAEL (TEXTING)  
*Me 2.*

Laura goes OFFLINE.

Michael looks up and makes eye contact with himself in the mirror. Takes off his glasses. Contemplates the look. Then puts them back on.

He reaches out to adjust the mirror. Accidentally smudges it in the process. Tries to clean it. Making the smudge worse. He frowns. Gets out of the car.

We stay inside the Mercury. It's eerily solitary in here. Empty. Quiet. We can almost hear the car breathe. Then--

TIMECUT TO:

**INT./EXT. MERCURY, PARKED - LATE AFTERNOON**

WHOOOOOOOO -- Michael vacuums the car. Polishes it. Crawls around, picking up diminutive dirt specs from the floors and seats. Polishes some more.

As he does, he practices opening lines to himself--

MICHAEL  
 "Hey. I'm Michael."  
 (beat)  
 "You look... amazing. Great. You look great. Is that an uh... a bag? That's definitely a bag."  
 (beat)  
 "I don't normally do this. These apps. They feel... cold. And I never thought I would..."

He pauses. A vulnerable honesty grows in his voice.

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
 With you it was just... different.  
 Natural.  
 (MORE)

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
 And I know it happened quickly. It's  
 just been... great talking to you  
 these last couple of weeks, and I  
 just... I think I'd like to--

BAM!

Michael JUMPS, startled, when a LEATHER SOCCER BALL slams  
 into the hood of his car.

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
 HEY!!!?

Michael jumps outside, just catching a glimpse of a couple  
 of LAUGHING KIDS running off with the ball.

He polishes the already spotless hood. Pauses as he suddenly  
 becomes aware of other people in the street around him--

Another group of kids playing. Two adult friends chatting. A  
 couple walking hand in hand. A family. Groups. Everywhere.  
 None of them notices--

Michael. Invisible. All alone. With his Ford Mercury  
 Cyclone. He looks down. A beat. Then back up as -- the sun  
 sets in the horizon.

A decisive beat. Then, he gets in behind the wheel. Starts  
 the engine.

And drives.

CUT TO:

**EXT. BEVERLY HILLS CORNER - EARLY EVENING**

The night is young and warm. The wealthy and carefree stroll  
 between high-end stores and restaurants.

The Mercury appears. Michael is behind the wheel. He spots  
 her from miles away.

LAURA (24). She's on the corner of Wilshire and South  
 Beverly. Listening to what is clearly a favorite song of  
 hers, immersed in the music, singing along to herself,  
 discrete dancing. Then, not so discrete.

Michael stops the car. Takes a beat. Smiling. Enjoying the  
 sight of her. Then he drives the last bit and--

Pulls over close by. Steps out of the car. She finally sees  
 him. Freezes. Takes off her headphones.

MICHAEL  
Hey... Laura?

LAURA  
What the effing *fuck*!?

She marches toward him. And... right past him.

MICHAEL  
What?

LAURA  
What *is* this!?

She steps up to the Mercury.

MICHAEL  
Oh, it's just... it's just my car.

LAURA  
Your *car*!? Are you insane? That's a  
Ford Mercury Cyclone, what... 69? 70?

Michael lights up.

MICHAEL  
69, you know *cars*?

LAURA  
This *yours*!?

MICHAEL  
Yeah.

LAURA  
No way! Can I try?

MICHAEL  
Uh... sure.

LAURA  
Yeah?

MICHAEL  
Go ahead.

He holds out the key. She reaches out for it. Then freezes.  
Grows pale. Steps back. Equally agitated and embarrassed.

LAURA  
Oh My God, I'm so sorry.

MICHAEL

What?

LAURA

I'm such a cock block, I almost took  
your wheels, I'm so sorry, never take  
a guy's wheels, please, I just got so  
excited, I didn't mean to, you know,  
demascu...li... nate you like that,  
is that a word?

Michael smiles. Still holding the key.

MICHAEL

It's okay.

LAURA

No-no-no, let's start over.  
(clears her throat)  
Hello. You must be Michael?

MICHAEL

I am. And you must be Laura. Great to  
finally meet you.

LAURA

You too. You're less... greenish.  
Than I thought.

MICHAEL

That's because I'm in a good mood.

LAURA

Yeah?

MICHAEL

Changes when I get angry.

LAURA

You wouldn't like him when he's  
angry.

MICHAEL

As long as I eat, I'm fine.

LAURA

Me too. God, I'm hungry. I eat a lot,  
I hope you're okay with that.

MICHAEL

Great. I love... food.

She smiles. A beat.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

What?

LAURA

"When did you know, Grandma'?", "When he looked at me and said in the sweetest way... 'I love... food.'"

Michael blushes. A beat. Awkward. Sweet.

MICHAEL

I uh... brought us a picnic.

LAURA

Of course you did.

He opens the front door for her. Offering her another chance to take the wheel.

MICHAEL

Yeah?

LAURA

No way. Your car. You drive.

She moves to the passenger side and gets in.

**INT. MERCURY, PARKED - EARLY EVENING**

Michael gets in behind the wheel. Laura clears her throat.

LAURA

Okay, before we go, I have to apologize.

MICHAEL

For what?

LAURA

For what'll happen when you turn that key.

MICHAEL

What will happen?

LAURA

Just... you know.

MICHAEL

Shit, I'm not--

LAURA

I'm not gonna puke or pee myself or anything, just... just bear with me. Okay?

He raises his eyebrows. Cautiously inserts the key. Turns it. The Mercury roars to life. And the second it does--

Laura bursts out laughing. A big, charming, uncontrollable laugh. Michael is surprised. But smitten.

MICHAEL

What?

LAURA

Nothing!

MICHAEL

*What!?*

LAURA

I said I'm sorry!

Michael smiles.

MICHAEL

Why are you laughing?

LAURA

I can't... I can't help myself, it's just... This is so fucking awesome!

He reaches out to kill the engine. She puts her hand on his.

LAURA (cont'd)

Keep it running.

She removes her hand again. A quick touch. But it was there.

She closes her eyes. Gets her laughter under control. Just sits there. Feeling the engine. The deep vibrating roar.

Impressed--

LAURA (cont'd)

Damn.

MICHAEL

You okay?

LAURA

Oh yeah.

She opens her eyes and smiles at him.

LAURA (cont'd)

Let's go.

MICHAEL

Buckle up.

LAURA

Yes, sir.

She does. Click. He smiles and nods.

Then FLOORS it.

**EXT. GRIFFITH PARK - NIGHT**

A spectacular spot. Beautiful views of a glittering L.A.

The Mercury is parked here. Michael and Laura sit close by. A blanket. Asian beef salad and beer.

Laura is gulping it up. They're close. Mood is light.

LAURA

Mmm... mmm... *this*? Is insane, where did you get it, wait... let me guess...

(beat)

Pine & Crane?

MICHAEL

Nope.

LAURA

Bulan Thai? Daw Yee?

MICHAEL

I made it.

LAURA

Like... you made it with your *hands*?

MICHAEL

A couple of ingredients too.

LAURA

No effing fuck!? What did you use for this? Magic?

MICHAEL

Yeah.

LAURA  
Shut up. Seriously?

MICHAEL  
Okay, seriously? There is this place in Koreatown. You go in there on Saturdays, only on Saturdays, and on a shelf there in the very back... You'll find a top hat, and a rabbit... and a magic wa--

SMACK - she hits his shoulder. Hard. Ouch!

LAURA  
Why does your profile picture look like a mugshot?

MICHAEL  
It's my passport photo.

LAURA  
You used your passport photo for your dating profile?

MICHAEL  
International man of mystery.

LAURA  
Why does your passport photo look like a mugshot?

MICHAEL  
I don't know, I guess I just...  
(shrugs)  
I look like every other guy.

LAURA  
Says who?

MICHAEL  
I uh...

He tries to come up with a snappy answer. Fails. Smiles awkwardly and shakes his head. She realizes she overstepped.

LAURA  
I like the Hulk. I think he's undervalued. People just see him as strong and stupid. He's not. He's really sensitive and... he acts on his urges. I like that.

A beat. Michael considers whether to just embrace the compliment. Then admits--

MICHAEL  
My favorite was always Superman.

LAURA  
Of course it was.

He raises his eyebrows - what do you mean, of course?

LAURA (cont'd)  
Well. The *cocky* boys always go for  
*Spider-Man*. Kids in beanies and  
shorts and no sense of  
responsibility. Gotta avoid those.  
*Batmans*? *Psychos* who live in man-  
caves, *really* gotta avoid those,  
trust me.

Michael nods. A beat.

MICHAEL  
I wouldn't know.

Laura realizes.

LAURA  
God, I'm sorry.

MICHAEL  
No no, it's just... I'm kinda... new?  
To this whole... dating app thing?

Laura grows serious. Honest.

LAURA  
I'm not.  
(beat)  
And I know.

He nods. Looks down. Until--

LAURA (cont'd)  
Superman? Has always been... an  
outsider. Alone. Maybe because he's  
not... like the rest of them, he's  
more like... an angel?  
(beat)  
Strong. But also... vulnerable.  
Romantic. Good. Just... just good.

Michael shifts in her closeness. Drawn by, but also uncomfortable with, the sudden intimacy.

She reaches out for his face. And ever so gently... takes off his glasses.

He pulls back a bit. Avoids her gaze. Feeling somehow exposed. Demasked. Naked. His gaze flickers until finally - he makes eye contact.

And holds it.

A long beat between them. As they look each other in the eye. Her, softly--

LAURA (cont'd)  
Take me home.

MICHAEL  
Uh... sure? I didn't mean to... I  
don't want to uh...

LAURA  
Me neither. I just... this is  
perfect. I'd like to end our first  
date on perfect.

A beat.

LAURA (cont'd)  
Then we can fuck it all up on our  
second date.

He smiles.

MICHAEL  
I'd like that. Very much.

He gets up. Reaches down to help her up.

She looks up at him. Then -- takes his hand.

**INT. MERCURY, DRIVING - NIGHT**

Michael and Laura drive through the warm night. Laura is scrolling through radio stations. Impressed with the Mercury's immaculate interior.

LAURA  
How long have you had this?

MICHAEL

Uhm... that would be around... twelve hours now?

She looks up at him.

LAURA

You got this *today*!?

Michael shrugs.

MICHAEL

The Mercury Cyclone was never as popular as the Torino Cobra, The Dodge Super Bee or the Plymouth Road Runner. But I always felt, I don't know... connected.

LAURA

Why?

MICHAEL

(beat)

Drove one once. With my brother, Jonathan. On a night just like this one. Different life. Been looking for one for ages, and when this beauty showed up, this *morning*, I just... saw it as a sign, that... you know...

LAURA

What?

MICHAEL

That this would be a good day.

She gives him a look. A slight smile.

LAURA

Yeah?

MICHAEL

I know. It's pathetic.

He shakes his head. She places a gentle hand on his arm.

LAURA

Not at all. It's very sweet.

(beat)

Very.

She blinks when the radio shifts to a melancholy POP-ROCK SONG. That echoes loneliness and longing. A favorite of Laura's.

LAURA (cont'd)  
Oh, this...

She closes her eyes and drifts away to the music. And as she does, everything else falls away but the music, the moment, and the two of them - a man and a woman, driving through the night.

Together.

Michael drives but can't take his eyes off her. Something glimmers in his eyes. Gratitude. Hope. A sense of destiny, possibly fulfilled. The moment is so perfect. She turns to look at him. He looks her in the eye--

!!!WHAM!!!???

Michael and Laura are thrown forward in their seats, when--

THEY'RE RAMMED FROM BEHIND! Rear-ended by a BLACK SUV that pulls back, then speeds up and--

!!!BAM, BAM... BAM!!! Hits them again, again, AGAIN!

MICHAEL  
FUCK!!??

Laura screams. Michael sways to the side, then makes a tire screeching 90-degree turn off the main road, and down--

A side road. The SUV SWOOSHES past them onwards on the main road and disappears behind them.

They drive on, gasping for air, it all went so fast.

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
You okay!?

Laura nods. But is clearly shocked.

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
What the fuck...!??

He struggles to grasp what just happened when--

BEEP, BEEP, BEEP, BEEP

They jump. Laura's cell phone rings. She checks the display. Grows pale. Eyes and mind racing. She rejects the call.

A beat. Then--

BEEP, BEEP, BEEP--

She rejects it again. Michael looks at her.

BEEP, BE--

Cut.

Silence.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

You okay?

LAURA

Yeah.

She's clearly not.

DING.

A text comes in.

DING.

DING.

DING. DING. DING.

She reads them. Her eyes grow dark. Her whole demeanor changes. Alert. Protective. Like we haven't seen her before.

LAURA (cont'd)

I uh... I need to get out.

MICHAEL

Wh...!? Now!?

LAURA

Yeah. Just over here.

MICHAEL

No way, this is not... safe, we should--

LAURA

Please!

(beat)

Please.

Michael gives her a long look. Clenches his teeth. Then nods, finds a spot and pulls over. The empty road stretches into the night ahead and behind them.

They sit for a beat. Long tense pauses between them.

MICHAEL  
What's going on?

LAURA  
Nothing, I just... Nothing.

She looks away. Out the window. Into the dark.

MICHAEL  
What happened?

She shakes her head.

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
You don't have to tell me anything.  
Just... let me take you home.

LAURA  
I'm sorry, I'm not... This was  
just...

She looks back at him. Wells up. Can't keep it back. Silent tears flow. Michael repeats, ever so gently now--

MICHAEL  
What happened?

LAURA  
There's this guy. I used to see.  
Jason. He's... not well. And he uh...

MICHAEL  
He's the guy who just hit us?

She doesn't know. Fears it.

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
He's the one who called?

She nods.

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
Is he... following you?

LAURA

He's... involved with some pretty bad people. He's... a pretty bad person himself.

MICHAEL

What's he done to you?

LAURA

Nothing.

(beat)

Yet.

MICHAEL

Jesus. The police?

LAURA

I tried, they said as long as there hasn't been an actual assault, they can't do anything. I hadn't heard from him in a while, I thought he'd gone away, and now he's just...

MICHAEL

*That... was an assault! And if he's been threatening you...*

LAURA

I can't... do this. I'm sorry. You and me.

(beat)

I shouldn't have brought you into this. I just thought... maybe...

She grimaces. Then leans over. Gives him a gentle kiss. It's brief. But it holds so much longing. Then--

She opens the door and hurries off. Back into darkness.

Michael sits abandoned behind the wheel. Stunned. Mind and heart racing. A beat. Another. A third. Then--

He starts the car, yanks it in reverse, roars backward until he's back beside her where he STOPS. Screeching tires.

They make eye-contact through the open passenger window.

MICHAEL

Please.

She hesitates. Torn. Really wants to. Then -- marches on.

Michael clenches his teeth. Gets out of the car.

**EXT. DESOLATE ROAD - NIGHT**

Michael steps out of the Mercury. Calls for her.

MICHAEL

What are you gonna do? 'you just  
gonna run off and let this guy ruin  
your life?

She stops. Looks down.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Seriously, what are you gonna do?

She turns. Looks at him.

LAURA

I'll find my way. I always do.

MICHAEL

Let's go to the police. I'll come  
with you. Help you talk to them.

She looks down. A beat. Then back up at him.

LAURA

I have a place. South of the border.  
Small. Secluded. By the sea. If I get  
down there... maybe...

(beat)

There's a new start for me.

Michael scoffs. Shakes his head. Can't believe this.

MICHAEL

I can't just leave you here.

LAURA

Please. Go. I can't... let him see  
me. With you. It's not safe for you.

Michael looks her in the eye. Struggling. She's right there.  
Walking away from him. Just as he had finally found her.

MICHAEL

Get in.

LAURA

No.

MICHAEL

I'll take you, get in.

She stares at him. As she realizes that he means--

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
South. Mexico. Where ever you need to go.

(beat)  
I'll take you.

LAURA  
No.

MICHAEL  
You're not alone.  
(beat)  
You don't have to be.

LAURA  
I can't ask you to do this.

MICHAEL  
You're not.

He opens the passenger door. Looks at her.

A long tense beat. She's torn in her dilemma. Then. Slowly--  
She walks back toward him.

Up to him.

Looks him in the eye.

Puts a gentle hand on his chest.

And gets back inside the Mercury.

Michael nods. A grave decision. He moves back to the driver's seat. Gets in.

And drives off.

We follow the car as it moves...

WE SLOWLY PULL UP ABOVE IT...

FURTHER UP...

AND FURTHER...

UNTIL WE'RE HIGH UP IN AN--

**EXT. LOS ANGELES / AERIAL SHOT - NIGHT**

Tracking the Mercury. Making its solitary way through the winding roads of Hollywood Hills.

Relentlessly forward. Down toward the city below.

And the night that now awaits.

**INT. MERCURY, DRIVING - NIGHT**

Michael clenches the wheel. Laura by his side.

LAURA

If we actually do this... before we go...

(beat)

I have three stops I need to make.

Michael nods.

MICHAEL

Tell me.

LAURA

I need to go home. Pick up a few things. Clothes. Passport.

MICHAEL

Where in Beverly Hills?

She shakes her head.

LAURA

Downtown. Skid Row. I Ubered to that corner. I didn't wanna tell you.

MICHAEL

Why not?

LAURA

I wanted you to like me.

MICHAEL

Why wouldn't I?

She looks at him from the shadows. With quiet gratitude. Interrupted by--

DING. A new text. She reads it. Grows pale.

LAURA

Fuck!

She looks back over her shoulder. Out the window. Up and down the hills and houses rushing by outside.

MICHAEL

What?

LAURA

He saw us.

MICHAEL

What!?

LAURA

In Griffith Park. You too. He saw me with you.

Laura shows her phone, revealing -- a LONG-LENS SHOT of Laura and Michael sharing what they thought was an intimate sunset picnic.

MICHAEL

How did he...!?

LAURA

I don't know, he's... it's always been like this with him, he... creeps under my skin, he's... always there, no matter what I do, like a fucking disease... no matter... what I do! I can't... I can't do this anymore!

Increasing desperation in her voice.

MICHAEL

I'll get you away from him.

She looks up at him.

LAURA

I saw him beat a guy to a pulp once. He just kept going. After the guy went down. He just...

She can't finish the sentence.

MICHAEL

Three stops. And you're free.

She nods. Swallows. So grateful.

Michael gears down and speeds up. The Mercury roars onto the 101 heading South East toward--

Downtown L.A.

**EXT. DOWNTOWN L.A. - NIGHT**

High-Rises in the night. The Mercury moves between them.  
Always there in our center.

**INT. MERCURY, DRIVING - NIGHT**

Laura signals--

LAURA  
Up here.

Michael pulls up outside a three-story apartment complex.

LAURA (cont'd)  
Wait here.

MICHAEL  
'you sure?

LAURA  
I won't be long.

She exits the car, crosses the empty street and disappears inside the building.

Michael watches. Waits. A light comes on inside.

Michael holds his breath. Tense seconds pass. Before he suddenly notices--

LIGHTS IN HIS REAR VIEW MIRROR.

A car. Approaching slowly from behind. It stops, some distance away.

A BLACK SUV. Toned windows. Whoever is driving it stays inside behind the wheel.

Michael stares at the black car in his mirror. Gets an eerie feeling. Finds his phone and texts Laura inside--

MICHAEL (TEXTING)  
You have another way out?

LAURA (TEXTING)  
*Backside. Why?*

MICHAEL (TEXTING)  
*Use it.*

Another glance in the mirror.

MICHAEL (TEXTING) (cont'd)  
*Now.*

He starts the Mercury, and as gently as he can, pulls back into the street and drives forward.

Eyes on the mirror. The black car still there. Not moving.

Michael turns a corner.

No sign of the black car behind him.

Another corner brings him to--

**EXT. NARROW BACK ALLEY - NIGHT**

Michael stops a slight distance from -- a single door in the wall. A beat. Then--

Laura comes out. Bringing a BIPOLIMERO SUITCASE, and wearing a LAVENDER BACKPACK as well as a CAP that shields her face.

Michael steps out of the Mercury to help her. He walks to the door, grabs the suitcase, carries it back to the car. He lifts it into the trunk, before he notices that--

Laura is still by the door. He signals her to come, but she can't move. Pale. Scared. Eyes darting everywhere and nowhere, scanning for threats.

He gets back in the car and drives over there, and--

**INT. MERCURY - CONTINUOUS**

Laura jumps in and they drive on.

MICHAEL  
'you okay?

She nods. Isn't really.

LAURA  
What happened?

Michael clenches his teeth when -- the lights reappear in his mirror. The black SUV. Pulls around the corner. And stops. Once more.

MICHAEL

That.

Laura looks back over her shoulder. Grows pale.

LAURA

Fuck...

MICHAEL

Don't worry. I got this.

Michael drives. Calmly. Toward an intersection.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Buckle up.

She frowns. She forgot. Once more. She fastens her seat belt. He makes sure she has. He then turns a corner, and as soon as he has--

He FLOORS IT.

The Mercury's V8 engine ROARS like a lion, as they're KICKED BACK by tremendous force.

Michael moves quickly between scattered cars driving half his speed. He spots something up ahead, times his move then--

Pulls the handbrake and--

SCREECHES into a 90-degree slide, that sends the Mercury directly into a--

HIDDEN SIDE ALLEY

He drives a good bit down the alley. Slows down. And stops.

Michael checks the mirror. Waits. Waits. And...

*There it goes. The SUV. Swooshing past and onward in the main street behind them.*

Michael and Laura catch their breaths. Relieved that this trick worked once more.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

It's fine. We're good.

Another beat. Then--

A shadow grows behind them. The SUV slowly backs up. Stops. Turns...

And ROARS THIS WAY.

LAURA

Fuck!

Michael floors it once more. They thrust forward. Directly toward--

A FENCE

The Mercury PLOWS into it, MOWS it down and continues into--

**EXT. DOWNTOWN STREETS - NIGHT**

A man jumps for his life, when--

The Mercury thunders back onto the main street. A beat. Then--

The BLACK SUV follows. And sets chase.

We cut IN AND OUT between dark streets and the--

**INT. MERCURY, DRIVING - NIGHT**

Michael is clenching the wheel. Timing his turns, brakes and accelerations by the milliseconds.

MICHAEL

Hang on.

He edges BETWEEN TWO SLOW MOVING CARS and picks up speed.

Behind them -- the SUV goes around the two cars and sets chase.

The Mercury is as fast a vintage car as they come. But it is 50yr older than the car chasing them.

The SUV quickly closes in on them, and--

WHAM! - RAMS them from behind!

BAM! BAM! Again. And again!

The last hit makes Michael lose control. The Mercury sways dangerously close to a nearby building.

Metal grinds. Sparks fly.

Then -- back in the street. The ROAR of the V8 echoing between the buildings rushing by outside.

The SUV speeds up and places itself on their right side.

Laura looks out in quiet desperation. Staring at the dark window only a few feet away from her. She knows he's in there. Looking straight at her.

For a moment, the two cars seem frozen in time. As they thunder through the night. Side by side. The world rushing by in a blur around them. Then--

SLAM!

The SUV RAMS them.

Michael STOMPS the brakes and the SUV flies off ahead.

Michael turns off the street and plows into and across--

#### **EXT. PERSHING SQUARE - NIGHT**

A square city park. Palms, playgrounds, a small concert stage.

Michael throws the Mercury UP a set of concrete stairs. Then--

Into and through the small park. He sways back and forth to stay on the bumpy, narrow walking paths.

He makes it across and onto another set of stairs leading out. A moment of hope, before they again spot--

The SUV. It has gone around the park, but now spots them and heads this way.

Michael scans for new options. And finds one.

#### **EXT./INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT**

A five-story parking structure is - as indicated by two signs outside - both "Full" and "Closed".

Michael speeds up, RAMS through the gate, and flies onto the ramp.

Clenching the wheel, he thunders up the swirling spiral. Floor by floor in the fully packed parking structure.

LAURA

There's no room!

MICHAEL

I know.

LAURA

Is there a way out up there?

MICHAEL

No.

Laura frowns and looks at him. Then what the hell is he doing? She's about to find out.

Michael reaches the--

ROOF TOP

He spins the Mercury around and stops. Front now facing the ramp down.

He rolls down the window. Waits. Waits. Then he HEARS it.

The SUV. Coming up after them. He listens closely. Noting every turn and acceleration. Every floor the SUV ascends.

He clenches the wheel. The gearshift.

When he HEARS it reach the floor right beneath them, Michael throws the Mercury in gear and DOWN THE RAMP.

When the SUV turns the last corner--

The Mercury is RIGHT THERE, smashing through on the INSIDE of the SUV's last turn. And down.

The SUV stops. Backs up. Rams into a parked car. Struggles to turn around. On what we now realize is the narrowest passage in the parking structure.

#### EXT. PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT

The Mercury bursts back outside in the night. A sign above the wide streets points toward a FREEWAY ENTRANCE close by.

Michael doesn't go for it. Instead, he throws the Mercury right ACROSS THE STREET and into a small--

PARKING LOT

--right across from the main structure.

Only 15-20 older cars are left here in the dark. Abandoned in the shadows.

Michael quickly and quietly slides the Mercury between two of them, disappears in one of three rows and kills the engine and lights.

**INT. MERCURY, PARKED - NIGHT**

Michael and Laura sit in tense silence.

MICHAEL

Wait.

She holds her breath.

Here it comes. The SUV barges out of the parking structure and stops. A beat. Probably as Jason searches for where they went. Then--

The SUV turns right and RACES OFF toward the freeway.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Wait.

They just sit there. On needles. For what seems like forever... before Michael finally nods.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Okay.

LAURA

Jesus fuck!!?

MICHAEL

You okay?

LAURA

Where did you learn to drive like that?

MICHAEL

I like cars.

LAURA

No shit!?

(beat)

Are you like... a race car driver or something?

MICHAEL

Wanted to be. Never happened. I drive Ubers. I have an old Prius, I use for that. Keeps things... under the limit.

She looks at him. Stunned. Impressed. Realizing that--

LAURA

You never told me what you did.

He knows. Admits that--

MICHAEL

The other guys in those apps... always have these fancy jobs and... great careers and I just... wanted you to like me.

LAURA

Why wouldn't I?

He looks up at her. Her question is real. Open. Honest.

MICHAEL

You got your stuff?

LAURA

Yeah.

MICHAEL

Where to next?

She hesitates. Looking at him.

LAURA

Why are you doing this?

MICHAEL

You need a new start. I can help you.

LAURA

We just met.

MICHAEL

We met two weeks ago.

LAURA

Online. That's not the same. You  
don't know me.

MICHAEL

I know enough to know that I uh...

He stops himself. Nods. Laura wells up. So grateful.

LAURA

I don't know what to say.

(beat)

Thank you.

Michael nods. Shrugs it off. Restraining deep feelings of  
heroism. Sacrifice. Purpose.

MICHAEL

What makes you think he won't come  
after you?

LAURA

He has to stay in L.A.

MICHAEL

Why?

LAURA

Someone here... owns him. He has to  
deliver. He always has to deliver.  
And I don't wanna be part of it  
anymore.

MICHAEL

You won't.

LAURA

He's gonna kill me. If I don't come  
back to him. That's what he wrote.  
He's gonna kill us both.

Michael looks up. They make eye-contact for a long beat.  
Then -- Michael starts the engine.

MICHAEL

Second stop?

Laura swallows. Nods.

LAURA

Venice.

MICHAEL  
What's in Venice?

LAURA  
My family.

Another beat. Then - they drive off.

**EXT. I-10 - NIGHT**

The Mercury drives west on the freeway.

**INT. MERCURY, DRIVING - NIGHT**

They glide through the quiet night.

LAURA  
My sister has a small place near the canals. She won't be happy...

MICHAEL  
You're lucky you have each other.

LAURA  
We're not close.

MICHAEL  
Still.

LAURA  
You have family?

A beat. One more.

MICHAEL  
My mom passed away when I was eight. Pancreatic cancer. My old man, he's... We haven't spoken in years.

LAURA  
Why not?

MICHAEL  
My uh... my brother. Jonathan. Taught me everything. School. Cars. One night, I'd just turned sixteen. We borrowed a set of wheels from a locked up police lot. Took her spinning. The streets were empty. Until they weren't.  
(MORE)

MICHAEL (cont'd)

This homeless guy had fallen asleep in the middle of the road. Jonathan veered and crashed. The guy was unharmed. So was I. Jonathan... was crushed behind the wheel.

LAURA

Jesus.

MICHAEL

I tried to pull him out, but I couldn't. Then the cops came, and I just... you know... who would they believe? So... I ran. I left him there. And he... He didn't make it.

LAURA

It was an accident.

MICHAEL

Yeah, well... My old man was a cop. Pulled some strings that made it go away. But after that...?

Michael shakes his head.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

We were supposed to leave L.A. that weekend. He wanted us out of this city. New life. Father and sons...

Michael scoffs a tense smile. The irony. Laura notices his white knuckles clenching the wheel of the Mercury and realizes--

LAURA

That car. Was it... a...?

MICHAEL

Yeah.

She stares at him from the shadows. Suddenly realizing the weight this Mercury carries.

LAURA

I'm sorry.

Michael shrugs it off.

MICHAEL

Anyway, now I'm just me. It's fine.

But at some point, you know...

(MORE)

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
I'm hoping to have a family of my  
own. Lots of kids. I love kids.

LAURA  
Yeah..?

MICHAEL  
Something about... that innocence.  
Someone who needs you more than  
anything. Someone you'd do anything  
for. You know?

On Laura. A long serious beat. In the shadows.

LAURA  
Yeah.

She looks out the window. Turning her face away from him. He  
frowns. Sensing it.

City lights flicker across her face. As she keeps her  
thoughts and emotions shielded from him.

**EXT. VENICE - NIGHT**

The Mercury rolls through sleeping Venice streets.

**INT. MERCURY, DRIVING - NIGHT**

Laura is texting someone, while looking for her sister's  
place. She checks the CLOCK in the car - half past  
midnight - then signals--

LAURA  
Over there. Green house.

Michael stops a small distance away from a small and worn-  
out wooden GREEN BUNGALOW. It's a poor place. Lights are  
still on inside.

A woman is still up. Laura's SISTER (30s). Pacing the living  
room.

LAURA (cont'd)  
Wait for me.

MICHAEL  
Of course.

Laura gets out. Michael watches her go up there. She knocks.  
Waits. Her sister comes to the door and lets her in.

A beat. Another. Then, Michael can see the two of them through the living room window. A serious conversation. Laura explaining. Her sister not taking it well.

The sister walks off. Laura gathers strength. Then the Sister returns with--

A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL.

Michael shifts in his seat. When he sees Laura squat in front of the girl. She speaks directly to her. Seriously, honestly, with sadness, clarity, necessity.

Michael JUMPS when suddenly--

The door opens, a figure jumps in behind him and--

PRESSES A SWITCHBLADE AGAINST MICHAEL'S NECK.

JASON  
Michael... Smith.

Michael freezes. Sensing the figure in the back more than seeing him. Dark eyes. Rasp voice.

JASON (cont'd)  
You know who I am?

MICHAEL  
Jason...

JASON nods. He's more or less the same age, height and stature as Michael. In the shadows, these two men are not that unalike. Jason looks up at Laura in the window.

JASON  
Did you fuck her?

MICHAEL  
Jesus... no.

JASON  
Do you want to?

MICHAEL  
(beat)  
No.

JASON  
No? You don't think she's hot? You don't think my woman's hot?

Jason pokes him with the knife with every. Next. Question.

JASON (cont'd)  
Then why? Are you taking her? Away  
from me?

The knife draws drops of blood. Michael struggles to stay  
calm.

JASON (cont'd)  
You look like a smart guy. Michael.  
Are you a smart guy?

MICHAEL  
How do you know my name?

JASON  
This is what's gonna happen. She's  
gonna come back out here. And you're  
gonna keep quiet about our little  
meeting.

Jason puts a piece of paper in Michael's chest pocket.

JASON (cont'd)  
You're gonna take her to this  
address. And deliver her to me. And  
then? You're gonna drive away. And  
forget all about her.

Michael closes his eyes.

JASON (cont'd)  
If you do? She'll be fine. I'll take  
good care of her. If you don't?  
(beat)  
I will find you both again. I will  
kill her. I will kill you. And then  
I'll come back here... and kill her  
baby girl.  
(beat)  
You hear me, brother?

Michael slowly opens his eyes. Looks back at Laura inside  
the house. Having the worst of conversations. With what  
Michael now realizes... is her daughter.

MICHAEL  
I hear you.

JASON  
Smart guy.

Jason slides back out the car. And disappears. As quietly as  
he came.

Michael gasps, touches his neck, wipes off the blood, struggles to stay composed, when--

Laura comes back out the house, hurries over, gets inside the car.

LAURA

Let's go.

Michael hesitates. Still marked by what just happened.

LAURA (cont'd)

Go. Please, just... just go!

He drives.

Away from this place. Into the dark.

Laura sits in silent agony. Until Michael finally breaks the silence.

MICHAEL

What's her name?

Laura doesn't answer.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

How old is she?

LAURA

I don't... wanna talk about her.

MICHAEL

She's not your sister's. She's yours.  
Isn't she?

Laura looks up at him. Moist eyes.

LAURA

I don't know what to do.

MICHAEL

Bring her with you.

She shakes her head.

LAURA

She's been staying with my sister  
since... since Jason. I can't risk...  
(beat)  
She's better off with her.

MICHAEL  
Is he the father?

She shakes her head.

LAURA  
Her father never wanted her. Or me.  
She only ever had me and I've... done  
nothing right for her.

Michael clenches the wheel.

MICHAEL  
He came. To the car. While you were  
inside. He came and he threatened me.  
He threatened... all of us.

LAURA  
Jason!? What did he want?

MICHAEL  
He wants you back. He wanted me to  
take you to him.

She stares at Michael for a long beat. An inevitable  
decision growing inside her.

And finally landing.

LAURA  
Do it. Let's go.

MICHAEL  
You can't go back. We'll... go to the  
police. We have a direct and violent  
threat now and--

LAURA  
I had five of those before, the last  
cop I spoke to threatened to take my  
girl away, since I clearly couldn't  
keep her safe!

A desperate beat between them.

LAURA (cont'd)  
Let's go.

MICHAEL  
No.

LAURA

I have to talk to him. Tell him this  
is over. Make him understand.

MICHAEL

He threatened to kill you.

She sees him struggle. And hates putting him through this.

LAURA

It's okay, Michael. I don't want you  
involved in this. Thank you. For  
everything you've done for me.

She nods. Ready to leave him. She opens the door.

MICHAEL

Wait...

She stops. Hesitates. Then turns to face him.

LAURA

Third stop. The last. Then I can come  
back here and get her. Bring her  
along. Fresh start.

(beat)

For all of us.

CLOSE ON Michael.

LAURA (cont'd)

I have to end this. Tonight. Or it  
never will.

Michael clenches his teeth. Then -- he pulls out the  
address, Jason gave him. Pins it on the dashboard.

And drives.

**EXT. CENTINELA TRAILER PARK - NIGHT**

A vast, sleeping trailer park spreads into the night. A dark  
labyrinth of tragic fates.

The Mercury rolls in and slowly makes its way down gravel  
pathways, connecting this community of isolated lives.

There's rain in the air. A distant thunder.

**INT. MERCURY, DRIVING - NIGHT**

Michael and Laura drive in silence.

LAURA

B505...

At the far end of the gravel path, they find TRAILER B505. It's dark. No lights inside. But parked outside--

There's Jason's BLACK SUV.

Michael stops. A good, safe distance away from the car and trailer. They sit for a long, tense beat. Then Laura leans back, opens her backpack and pulls out --

A SEMI AUTOMATIC HAND-GUN.

MICHAEL

Jesus fuck!!? You have a *gun* in your bag!? Why do you have a gun in your bag!?

LAURA

I'm just gonna talk to him.

MICHAEL

Then what do you need *that* for!?

LAURA

Nothing. If he stays calm. And listens. And accepts my decision.

(beat)

It's only for protection.

MICHAEL

Fuck...

LAURA

Stay here. I'll be right back.

She leans in -- and kisses his cheek. Then she exits the car.

Michael watches her walk toward the trailer. So frail. He's torn. A beat. Then - fuck - he steps out and follows her.

**EXT. TRAILER B505 - NIGHT**

Laura steps up to the closed trailer door, hesitates, looks back over her shoulder when she senses--

Michael stepping up behind her. A glance between them. Quiet gratitude.

Laura knocks. Waits. Knocks again. Waits. Nothing.

Another glance. Then, clenching the gun, Laura slowly pushes the door open and steps inside the--

**INT. TRAILER B505 - NIGHT**

Laura enters a dimly lit man cave on wheels. Takeaway and trash. Plastic bags of unknown origin and content.

Laura is on needles, gun trembling in her hand, slowly moving through shadows. Michael appears behind her.

MICHAEL

He's not here. Let's go. Laura?

LAURA

His car is out there. He's here somewhere.

MICHAEL

I know, and this was a bad idea, let's go.

LAURA

I have to do this.

MICHAEL

Laura, please.

They both JUMP, startled, when -- the WIND suddenly kicks the door open and it SLAMS against the wall behind them.

Reacting on instinct, Laura spins around and UNLOADS three rounds into the wooden door--

BLAM, BLAM, BLAM!!!

A shocked beat. Smoke. A distant dog barking.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Fuck!

Laura blinks and drops the gun, raises her hands in the air as if it burned her as much as frightened her.

Michael hurries over, picks it up, unloads the weapon and pockets the bullets.

Laura wells up and turns her back on him. Her shoulders tremble. Michael speaks softly.

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
It's okay. Nothing happened.  
I'm here.

Michael looks up when he hears -- distant police sirens.

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
We need to leave.

Laura stays standing. Her back turned. Face shielded.

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
Laura? We need to get out of here.

Laura stays. Back turned. An eerie figure in the shadows.

LAURA  
You should.

MICHAEL  
The cops...? Let's go before they get here and... misunderstand this whole thing.

Her voice still trembling.

LAURA  
They will. That's the whole point.

Michael frowns. Doesn't understand.

LAURA (cont'd)  
You see. They've been searching for you. Michael. Smith.

She slowly turns to face him. Her tears dry out. Her gaze grows hard and determined. Michael freezes. As an icy calm overtakes her voice.

LAURA (cont'd)  
Mid-twenties, 6 feet tall, dark hair, brown eyes. Rough past, police record, nothing to lose. And driving a newly restored... 1969 Ford Mercury Cyclone.

He stares at her in utter disbelief. As sirens close in.

MICHAEL  
What is this...?

LAURA

This? Is where you make your choice. Step outside. Turn yourself in. And make the best of your situation. Or stay. And see how well you do, when they barge in here and find you with that gun in your hand... those bullets in your pocket with your prints all over them...

(beat)

...and I start screaming how you just tried to kill me.

Michael feels his whole world collapse. He looks down at the gun in his hand. Back at the three holes in the door. And up at the sound of--

A POLICE CAR pulling up outside. A harsh radio voice barks--

RADIO VOICE

*THIS IS THE LA-PD! STEP OUT OF THE VAN WITH YOUR HANDS OVER YOUR HEAD!*

MICHAEL

What the fuck IS this!?

LAURA

Nothing personal. And for what it's worth? I'm sorry.

RADIO VOICE

*MICHAEL SMITH!? WE KNOW YOU'RE IN THERE! COME OUT WITH YOUR HANDS OVER YOUR HEAD!*

MICHAEL

Go out there... and tell them nothing happened...!

LAURA

You tell them.

RADIO VOICE

*THIS IS YOUR LAST WARNING!*

Michael clenches his teeth. Torn. Laura screams--

LAURA

HELP HELP!!!?? HE'S GOT A GUN!!!  
PLEASE DON'T HURT ME!!!

Michael can't believe her. He hears the cops move for the trailer. He desperately looks for another way out, spots a narrow backside window, and--

Jumps for it.

**EXT. TRAILER PARK - NIGHT**

Michael tumbles out the backside window and hits the ground running.

A quick glance back at -- a POLICE CAR parked outside the trailer. The silhouette of TWO UNIFORMED COPS. One of them sees Michael... and sets chase.

Michael RUNS through the trailer park. Dust and dark shadows.

The BARKING DOG comes charging out of nowhere and snaps at him. Snarling. Michael wrestles it, THROWS IT ASIDE, gets back on his feet and pushes on.

He looks back over his shoulder at -- the UNIFORMED COP closing in on him.

Michael turns a corner between two vans, and almost bumps right into--

A neighbor. Big guy, tattoos.

TATTOOED GUY  
HEY! YOU! STOP!

Michael spins, runs the other way, right into -- Tattooed guy's FRAIL GIRLFRIEND. Michael PUSHES her aside and runs.

TATTOOED GUY (cont'd)  
HEY ASSHOLE!!!!?

Tattooed guy sets chase.

Michael tries to find his way out, when suddenly -- there's THE OTHER COP! SO CLOSE!

Michael dives, rolls UNDER A TRAILER, holds his breath as...

The other cop moves right past him.

Michael gasps for air. Waits. Waits. Then... back up!

Michael runs between the trailers. Searching for and finally spotting--

THE MERCURY. He runs back toward it. Final push.

The cops see him. Tattooed guy sees him. Friends and neighbors see him. Distant shouting as everyone tries to reach him before--

Michael makes it to and jumps inside--

**INT. MERCURY, DRIVING - CONTINUOUS**

Michael starts the engine and PLOWS backwards, away from the crowd. As soon as he has room, he PULLS THE HAND BRAKE and makes a--

180-degree spin.

WHAM! A MAN throws himself on the hood, trying to stop him.

Michael floors it. Yanks the wheel back and forth until--

He SHAKES the guy off.

Michael races out of there. Heart thumping. In his rear-view mirror he can see--

The angry mob shouting and running after him. And behind it, he catches a brief glimpse of--

LAURA. Sliding quietly away from Jason's trailer, unseen by the crowd, and into Jason's black SUV unnoticed. She starts it. And drives off in the opposite direction.

Disappearing. Into the night.

Michael stares ahead. As he reaches the exit and--

Bursts out of the trailer park.

**EXT. LA CIENEGA BLVD - NIGHT**

A desolate spot just off La Cienega. The pumps of INGLEWOOD OIL FIELD tower in the dark horizon.

The Mercury pulls up and stops. It is a marked vehicle now. Bumps, dents, dust and scratches.

Michael steps out and paces the grounds. A silhouette struggling to grasp what just happened. Then coldly realizing--

HE'S BEEN PLAYED. DOESN'T YET KNOW WHY. BUT IS SURE TO FIND OUT. WITH RENEWED ENERGY AND FOCUS--

Michael finds his phone, and checks his DATING APP.

Laura's profile is now suddenly: "UNAVAILABLE"

Their CHAT-ROOM is now: "EMPTY"

He searches for... "LAURA".

The app asks for a "SURNAME" and Michael realizes--

He doesn't know.

He opens the trunk to check Laura's suitcase. Finds the trunk EMPTY. The suitcase is gone.

Heart and mind racing, Michael freezes when he suddenly hears--

....sirens.... coming... THIS... WAY!

He ducks behind the Mercury just as --

TWO PATROL CARS blast right past him and onward. Back toward where he came from. The trailer park.

Michael stays hidden for a while. Heart thumping. Mind racing. Then--

An idea strikes. He gets back up. And we CUT TO--

**EXT. VENICE - NIGHT**

The GREEN BUNGALOW. Dark inside.

The Mercury pulls up right outside. Michael exits the car, steps up to the door and knocks. Again. Again. Until--

A light comes on inside. Steps. The door opens a couple of inches. Laura's sister looks out - and grows pale.

MICHAEL

I need to talk to you.

She tries to close the door again. Michael puts his foot in the door and leans in. Keeps his voice low and under control. A silhouette in the shadows.

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
 We can do this out here. Nice and  
 quiet. Or I can barge inside  
 screaming like a fucking mad-man.  
 (beat)  
 Which is better for the girl?

She stares at him, at the Mercury in the street, and back at  
 the shadow of a man outside. Michael has Laura's gun in his  
 belt and makes sure she sees it. She closes her eyes. Then  
 slowly - opens the door again.

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
 What did she tell you? Laura? About  
 where she's going?

The sister shakes her head.

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
 No?

SISTER  
 I don't know.

MICHAEL  
 What's her name? Full name?

SISTER  
 Please. I don't know anything.

The sister wells up. Shakes her head.

MICHAEL  
 You don't know? Your own sister's  
 name!? Alright--

Michael pushes his way through the door.

SISTER  
She's not my sister!

Michael freezes. Stares at her in disbelief.

SISTER (cont'd)  
 I don't know her. She came up to me  
 and Emily in the street one day and  
 said she'd pay me a thousand dollars.

MICHAEL  
 A thousand dollars for what?

SISTER

If she could just... just come to our house tonight. And talk to her. That was it.

MICHAEL

The girl is *yours*?

SISTER

Yes.

MICHAEL

Talk about what?

SISTER

She never said.

MICHAEL

When was this?

SISTER

I don't... a couple of weeks ago.

MICHAEL

She said she'd come *tonight*!? And you haven't seen her since?

The "sister" shakes her head.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

She paid you?

SISTER

Yes.

MICHAEL

Show me.

A beat.

SISTER

She said... If I ever told anyone...

Michael clenches his teeth.

MICHAEL

Show me the fucking money she gave you.

The "sister" pulls out an envelope containing -- ten 100-dollar bills. Crisp. Brand new.

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
What did she tell your daughter? I  
saw them talking through the window?

SISTER  
Nothing, she just said... stand by  
the window. And look at me. Just look  
at me, all the time. She said that if  
Em looked away... that she would kill  
us both.

Michael closes his eyes. Jesus. A beat. Then--

EMILY (O.S.)  
Mom? Moom?

The voice of a frightened girl, who woke up alone.

Michael stares at the "sister". Who swallows in fear. Afraid  
that Michael will hurt her daughter.

Michael keeps the envelope with the 1000 dollars. Takes it  
with him. Then heads back toward the Mercury.

**INT. MERCURY, DRIVING - DAY**

Michael races through the night. Tries the DATING APP again,  
but "Laura's" profile remains "UNAVAILABLE".

He throws the phone aside.

Turns the wheel. And speeds up.

**EXT. I-10 - NIGHT**

The Mercury swooshes by, roaring back toward--

DOWNTOWN L.A.

**INT. MERCURY, DRIVING - NIGHT**

Michael drives slowly up to and past -- Laura's apartment  
building. Scanning it closely as he does. It's dark inside.

He drives around the building and arrives on--

**EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT**

THE BACK SIDE of the building. He stops. Focusing on--

The inconspicuous back door, where Laura came out.

He exits the car. Steps up toward the door, but stops when he suddenly spots something above him, which he didn't see the first time he was here--

A SURVEILLANCE CAMERA -- on the opposite wall.

Michael hesitates. Stays where the camera can't catch him.

A SIREN wails. Further down, at the far end of the alley, a POLICE CAR pulls up on the main road outside and pauses.

Michael stares at it. Inside it, two silhouettes look this way. Michael is shielded in shadows. Have they seen him?

He looks back at his Mercury, parked in the opposite end of the alley. Then back at the police car. These two vehicles suddenly represent the choice, Michael is facing. He could go to the police now. Should go to them. Tell them everything.

Instead... he pulls back. Slowly. Then more quickly. Turns his back on the police. And runs back toward the Mercury.

He makes it out of the dark alley, almost reaches the Mercury, when--

BAM! He is--

SLAMMED OUT OF FRAME!

SMASHCUT TO:

BLACK

SILENCE

A hazy fog.

Through it, Michael regains consciousness. We're in--

**INT. HOUSE IN THE HILLS - NIGHT**

Michael blinks. And looks out at -- a spectacular nighttime view of the Los Angeles skyline.

He realizes that he's lying on wide, hand crafted wooden floor boards. Looking out at the city through a wall of windows. A polite voice reaches him--

BURKE

Ah. He made it. For a moment there,  
we thought we'd lost you, kid.

Michael looks up at -- a slender, delicately dressed and well-groomed man named BURKE (50s). We're in his home. It reeks fuck you money, spent with subtle and exquisite taste.

Michael frowns. His head pounding. Raspy voice.

MICHAEL

Wh... what happened?

BURKE

You were hit pretty badly.

MICHAEL

By what?

BURKE

Well? By my associate Doctor Jones,  
here.

Burke smiles at Michael. Who now notices the second man in the room. A silent mountain known as DR JONES (40s). Not smiling. Ever.

Michael frowns. Tries to sit up, and realizes that -- his hands are tied with a PLASTIC STRIP behind his back.

MICHAEL

What's going on...?

BURKE

Hm? Oh, call it a little treasure hunt.

MICHAEL

What're you looking for?

BURKE

Judging by where we found you? Same thing you are.

Burke leans right into Michael's face. Deadly serious now.

BURKE (cont'd)

My. Fucking. Money.

Burke stands and walks. Frustrated. Michael grows pale. His eyes dart everywhere and nowhere. His gaze lands on -- his MERCURY, parked outside. An armed GOON is guarding it.

BURKE (cont'd)

Doctor Jones, would you be so kind as to elevate our guest into a position more suitable for civic conversation?

DR. JONES reaches down and pulls Michael up on a chair. Roughly. It hurts. Dr. Jones knows. It was supposed to.

Burke finds a remote and turns on a massive wall screen TV.

BURKE (cont'd)

Let me show you a little something, son. Recognize this place?

A SURVEILLANCE SHOT -- the back alley from before.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

BURKE

Of course you do, since that's where we all just had our little encounter, have you ever been there before?

MICHAEL

(beat)

No.

BURKE

No? Then please, indulge me... who is this?

Burke presses PLAY. The image rolls. Clearly showing -- the Mercury rolling to a stop earlier that night. Michael steps out, walks through and out of frame. A beat. Then he returns carrying Laura's SUITCASE, which he places in the trunk of his car. He signals someone unseen. Then gets back behind the wheel and drives.

Burke freeze-frames. Michael closes his eyes.

MICHAEL

I don't know.

BURKE

Really? Because that... sure as hell looks like you? Let's replay that, shall we? Rewind... and play... rewind... and play... rewind... and--

Burke replays the bit, clearly revealing Michael, until--

MICHAEL

I was... helping a friend pick up  
some stuff.

BURKE

Yeah? That's sweet. What friend?

MICHAEL

This girl. I never met her before  
tonight. We went on a date. I  
thought... we were on a date.

BURKE

Yeah? Where did you go?

Michael blinks. Unsure.

MICHAEL

Griffith park...?

BURKE

Great choice. Romantic. What did you  
do?

MICHAEL

...dinner.

BURKE

Excuse me?

MICHAEL

We had dinner.

BURKE

Yeah? Who paid for that?

Michael clenches his teeth.

MICHAEL

There's been... a huge  
misunderstanding.

BURKE

Sure.

MICHAEL

My name is Michael Smith. I live in  
Silverlake. I drive Ubers.

BURKE

Of course you do.

## MICHAEL

She set me up. This girl, Laura. My name is *Michael Smith*. I met her online... two weeks ago. I never saw her before tonight. We went to Griffith Park. This guy Jason comes after her, ex-boyfriend, she wanted to get away from him, she needed her... her stuff and I just...

(darkly realizing)

...I just wanted to help her. I just wanted to help.

Burke smiles. His smile grows in to a laugh. A good, long, heartfelt, bellowing laugh.

## BURKE

Aw. You got screwed by a girl? That's so sweet. And *inspiring*, actually. Empowering. *Modern*. In its blunt rejection of traditional gender stereotypes. A proudly erect middle finger *right* in the degenerate old faces of our misogynistic generation, isn't that so, Dr. Jones?

Dr. Jones frowns. Burke points his remote back at the TV.

## BURKE (cont'd)

Rewind... and... play... and... stop. This place? While it may look inconspicuous to people like you? Is where people like myself like to store and exchange merchandise with peers of similar privilege and interest.

(beat)

The 'stuff' that you so kindly helped your girlfriend pick up? You know what's in that suitcase?

## MICHAEL

No.

## BURKE

That was a rhetorical question, you're not supposed to answer those, please let me finish: You know what's in it?

(beat)

Untraceable bonds valued at six. Million. Dollars.

(MORE)

BURKE (cont'd)

(beat)

I want it back, Michael. And if you've placed it in the hands of others? I trust you to get it.

DR. JONES steps forward and--

MICHAEL

I don't have--

--WHAM! Dr. Jones hits Michael hard. Burke freaks out.

BURKE

WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING!? WE'RE TRYING TO HAVE A PRODUCTIVE, CIVILIZED CONVERSATION, YOU FUCKING IDIOT!!??

BAM! Burke hits Dr. Jones in the face. BAM, BAM! Dr. Jones just takes it. BAM! WHAM! He sinks to his knees. Grunting.

BURKE (cont'd)

...fucking moron.

Using Dr. Jones' own clothes, Burke wipes his blood off his hand, annoyed that the hand now hurts. Then, he reaches into his pocket and produces -- Michael's smartphone.

BURKE (cont'd)

Your phone. I've gone through it and detect a troubling lack of contacts. You should get some friends, Michael. As you get older, you will appreciate the value of a genuine human connection.

Burke puts the phone in Michael's pocket.

BURKE (cont'd)

Keep it on you at all times. It will allow me to call you if you get lonely, and find you if you get lost. With that? I trust you to retrieve what you have misplaced.

(beat)

You have until sunrise to find that suitcase. And bring it to me. If you're not here by then, I will come to you and slowly take one of the following, of your freely preferred choice: Your toes, your teeth or your testicles. Before I kill you.

(MORE)

BURKE (cont'd)  
Same applies should you feel tempted  
to involve the authorities. Do you  
understand?

Michael struggles to not lose it. He nods.

BURKE (cont'd)  
I'm sorry?

MICHAEL  
I do.

Burke nods. Then, to Dr. Jones--

BURKE

Now.

Dr Jones frowns. Burke, annoyed, signals Michael--

BURKE (cont'd)  
Now would be a good time.

Dr. Jones steps over, raises his giant fist once more and--

MICHAEL  
No--!

WHAM!

SMASHCUT TO:

BLACK

SILENCE

Michael GASPS back to--

**EXT. DESOLATE SPOT IN THE HILLS - LATER**

Where is he? What time is it? He winces. His head pounding.

He tries to move but -- his hands are still stripped behind his back. Behind him, is his Mercury. They dumped both him and the car somewhere remote and left him there.

He falls back in the dust. Exhausted. He winces. ROARS his desperation out. His cries echo off into the night.

For a moment he just lies there. Blood down his chin. Ready to give up. Then--

No.

He refocuses on -- The MERCURY. Battered and dirty. Sections are smashed up. A SHARP PIECE OF METAL hangs loose.

Michael crawls over there. Turns his back on the car. And tries to cut the plastic strip that ties his hands. He ROARS again. This time in defiance.

The strip finally gives in with a... SNAP.

Michael exhales. Then -- stands. He looks out over the city.

He receives A TEXT. From Burke: "3 hours till sunrise."

Michael grows. From despair to determination. He turns around -- and moves back toward the Mercury.

TIMECUT TO--

The Mercury spins in the dust. Makes a 180-degree turn. And roars back toward the city.

**EXT. SECLUDED HOUSE IN COMPTON - NIGHT**

The Mercury approaches... and pulls up outside a small, secluded home. Some distance away from the closest neighbors. This area is poor. This house hasn't been cared for in years.

Michael looks up from behind the wheel. Hesitates. Gathers strength. Then steps out and up toward the house.

Michael steps up to the door. Empty bottles and trash litter the porch. He hesitates. Until suddenly--

The door swings open and--

A SHOTGUN is pointed right in his face. Michael winces, raises his hands, then finally looks back at--

The man in the door. Early 50s. Grey stubble. Leathery skin. Cold, grey eyes that have stopped caring about anything but protecting his property. This is... RICHARD SMITH.

A long. Tense. Glance. Then Richard blinks. In disbelief.

RICHARD

M... Michael... ...?

MICHAEL

Hey... Richard.

RICHARD  
What are you doing here?

MICHAEL  
I just...

RICHARD  
Come in.

MICHAEL  
No, I just uh... I need a favor.

Richard stares at him.

RICHARD  
I heard there's an APB out on you!?

MICHAEL  
It's... it's a giant  
misunderstanding.

RICHARD  
Gunshots? Evading arrest?

MICHAEL  
It's not what it looks like. I need  
to find someone.

RICHARD  
Come in.

Michael shakes his head.

MICHAEL  
I'm looking for this girl. She  
probably has a record. I need to find  
her. Tonight. Now.

RICHARD  
I'm long off the force, I can't...  
pull that kind of strings no more.  
What happened?

MICHAEL  
It's... complicated. What about  
Frank? You guys still in touch?

RICHARD  
I need to know more if I have to...  
make those kinds of calls, come  
inside and we'll talk and--

MICHAEL  
I NEED THIS NOW!!!

Michael regrets his outburst the minute it comes out.  
Richard looks at him with sadness, empathy and great regret.  
Michael looks down. Regains control.

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
Can you help me or not?

RICHARD  
I thought you left town?

MICHAEL  
Of course I didn't go, why didn't  
you?

RICHARD  
Couldn't leave without you.

Michael looks away. Shouldn't have come.

RICHARD (cont'd)  
Where have you been?

MICHAEL  
Around.

RICHARD  
You never came to his funeral.

Michael scoffs a hard smile.

MICHAEL  
I caused his funeral...

RICHARD  
It was an accident.

MICHAEL  
He stole a car and I should've  
stopped him.

RICHARD  
You were just a kid.

MICHAEL  
I was more than old enough.

RICHARD  
He saved a man's life.

MICHAEL

I left him. Behind the wheel. I  
couldn't save him, and I... I just...

RICHARD

You lost a brother.

MICHAEL

Yeah, well, you lost a son and it was  
my fault.

RICHARD

It was no one's fault. And I lost  
two.

A long vulnerable beat. Richard steps aside, signaling the open door behind him.

RICHARD (cont'd)

Please.

Michael struggles. Then--

MICHAEL

I gotta... I gotta go.

Michael turns his back on him, and moves back toward the Mercury. Halfway there, he starts running.

Richard can do nothing but watch. As his youngest son gets back inside a car the same age, brand and model that killed his oldest. And races back into the night.

**INT. MERCURY, DRIVING - NIGHT**

Michael is on a freeway. Gliding through the night. We're close on him. His eyes behind rimmed spectacles. Cracked since the beating he got from Dr. Jones.

Echoes from earlier that night taunt him as he drives.

LAURA (V.O.)

*Before we go, I have to apologize.*

MICHAEL (V.O.)

*For what?*

LAURA (V.O.)

*For what'll happen when you turn that key.*

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*What will happen?*

Michael slides into the fast lane and speeds up.

LAURA (V.O.)  
*He... creeps under my skin, he's... always there, no matter what I do!*

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*I'll get you away from him.*

Michael scoffs. Freeway lights flickering across his face.

LAURA (V.O.)  
*Before we do this... / I need to go home.*

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
*Where in Beverly Hills?*

LAURA (V.O.)  
*Downtown. Skid Row. I Ubered to that corner. I didn't wanna tell you.*

Michael frowns. As an idea sticks. And grows.

LAURA (V.O.) (cont'd)  
*I Ubered to that corner...*

He turns off the freeway.

**EXT. STREET CORNER - NIGHT**

The Mercury pulls over and stops.

**INT. MERCURY, PARKED - NIGHT**

Michael finds his phone. Activates his UBER APP and swipes to the "DRIVER" section.

He finds a CONTACT number. Calls. Waits. Gets SOMEONE on the line.

MICHAEL (ON THE PHONE)  
*Yeah, this is Michael Smith, driver number 0...5...7...6...3...0...? I have a customer information request? Sure...*  
(MORE)

MICHAEL (ON THE PHONE) (cont'd)

(waits)

Yeah, I had this woman, who got in my car with no booking, and when I couldn't take her she freaked out and left it in a total mess, and I need to find her to bill her?

(beat)

I don't know, she said "Laura", but she might've given me a false name?

(beat)

I know she took an Uber to Beverly Hills earlier last night. Corner of Wilshire and South Beverly. She arrived close to seven pm?

(beat)

Thanks.

Michael waits in tense silence. Lights up when--

MICHAEL

Yeah?

He scrambles for pen and paper.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Sarah... Scott? Might be her, you have her original pick-up spot?

Michael freezes.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Which motel?

(beat)

Thank you.

He disconnects. Just as he does, his phone rings again. Michael picks up--

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Yeah?

BURKE (V.O.)

*Mr. Smith. So kind of you to respond. I hope your journey is evolving prosperously. Just checking in to remind you that you have two hours till sunrise.*

MICHAEL

I know.

BURKE (V.O.)

*Oh, and also? Such a relief to follow  
your path and learn that you are,  
after all, not completely alone in  
this world. Your father none the  
less. Should you fail to deliver...  
we will know where to go.*

Burke hangs up. Michael eyes turn dark. He looks up at his battered face in the mirror. His cracked spectacles framing his hard gaze.

LAURA (V.O.)

*Superman? He's more like... an angel?  
(beat)  
Strong. But also... vulnerable.  
Romantic. Good. Just... just good.*

Michael scoffs. And turns the key.

**EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT**

The Mercury starts with a ROAR, makes a rubber-burning 180-degree SPIN, and--

Races off in the night.

**EXT. SUPER 8 MOTEL - NIGHT**

A cheap, worn out motel. Dark and quiet. Except in--

One of the ground floor rooms. A dim light is on inside. Through dirty windows and heavy drapes we sense the SILHOUETTE OF A YOUNG WOMAN moving quickly around in there. Packing up stuff.

Michael is watching from his Mercury. Parked in the shadows. Anger in his eyes. Then -- determination.

Michael pulls out the gun, Laura gave him. The bullets, he took out of it. A tense beat. Then he reloads the gun. And exits the car.

Michael walks toward the room. Clenching the gun.

He leans against the wall, beside the door. Waits for her to come out. Waits. Waits until--

The door opens and -- A CLEANING LADY (late 20s) exits.

Michael gasps and hides the gun just before she -- jumps, startled, that he was right there.

MICHAEL  
I'm sorry, I didn't mean to scare  
you.

She's carrying a big PLASTIC BAG containing sparse CLOTHES AND PAPERS from inside.

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
Is this uh... Sarah Scott's room?

CLEANING LADY  
Who are you?

MICHAEL  
I'm her friend, what's going on?

CLEANING LADY  
She left this morning. Didn't check out. Didn't pay. Now, we clear the room.

Through the half open door, Michael can see that the room is empty. A TV is on, running THE LOCAL NEWS.

MICHAEL  
She uh... she had an accident. She's in the hospital. She told me to come get her things.

CLEANING LADY  
I'm sorry. She'll have to come herself.

MICHAEL  
She's in the hospital.

CLEANING LADY  
I'm sorry, sir, please talk to reception.

MICHAEL  
I'll pay for the room of course.

CLEANING LADY  
Talk to reception.

A tense beat. Then -- their attention is drawn to the room behind them, as a new segment starts on the TV inside.

The sound is barely audible, but images show footage from the back alley surveillance camera, the trailer park... ending on a pixelated closeup of Michael.

NEWS ANCHOR

*The LAPD have issued a warning after a suspected robber released multiple gunshots inside the Centinela trailer park in Inglewood earlier this evening. The fugitive is considered armed and dangerous, and was last seen driving a 1969 Ford Mercury Cyclone.*

The cleaning lady looks back at Michael. And grows pale. Her eyes drift towards -- the Mercury parked in the shadows. Back on Michael. Whose gaze turns hard.

MICHAEL

One thousand dollars. For you. Right now. Just give me her stuff.

The cleaning lady swallows.

CLEANING LADY

I'm sorry, sir.

She looks down. Then walks away from Michael. Carrying Laura's things.

He marches up to her, past her, in front of her and--

--STICKS LAURA'S GUN RIGHT IN HER FACE.

MICHAEL

Give me. The fucking. Bag.

The cleaning lady stares at him.

**INT. MERCURY, DRIVING - NIGHT**

The BAG is in the passenger seat. He races out of there. The Motel disappears in his rear-view mirror.

**EXT. MERCURY, PARKED - NIGHT**

Somewhere. Dark and isolated. The Mercury lights up in the night. We sense Michael rummaging around in there.

**INT. MERCURY, PARKED - NIGHT**

Michael is going through Laura's stuff. Sparse clothes, toiletries, and a number of NOTES, SKETCHES and PHOTOS.

But no bonds. And no money. He's searching for something, anything that might help him.

He stops, freezes, when he finds an envelope containing--

A PILE OF PHOTOS.

One shows a wooden house in Tulum, Mexico. Small. Secluded. By the sea.

Others show key locations from the night Michael has just gone through: The trailer park, Laura's "sister's" home, the back alley, the surveillance camera.

Then, eerily -- photos of Michael. His profile picture. A number of TELE LENS SHOTS of him taken outside his home.

A final photo shows Laura and Jason. It's a selfie. They're so happy, innocent. Young and in love.

Michael closes his eyes. Puts down the photo.

Sits there for a while. Winces. Feelings of loss and betrayal clashing with the anger. With her. And with himself. That he's been so horribly naive.

Then he frowns. When he, in the pile of curled up papers beside him, spots something else that draws his attention--

A "NATIONAL" CAR RENTAL FORM.

A BLACK SUV, matching the one Jason drove and Laura took over in the trailer park. According to the form, the car is to be returned to...

LOS ANGELES AIRPORT.

Michael calls a number on the form. A young woman responds.

"NATIONAL" EMPLOYEE  
*"National", how may I help you?*

## MICHAEL

Hi, I'm just calling to confirm the return time and place for my SUV, rental number 66590?

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
*Of course, sir. The vehicle is to be delivered to our LAX-return site on 1192 West Hillcrest at 7AM this morning at the latest, sir.*

Michael looks up. With gravity and determination.

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
Thank you. I'll be there.

He hangs up. Looks up. Mind racing. Finds again, the photo of the wooden house in Mexico.

LAURA (V.O.)  
*I have a place. South of the border. Small. Secluded. By the sea. If I get down there... maybe... there's a new start for me there.*

Michael is just about to start his engines when--

WEEEEEOOOOW!

Lights and sirens. A POLICE CAR pulls up behind him. An OFFICER steps out. Walks this way.

Michael grows pale. A fucking police car.

He hides the form and photos beneath Laura's clothes. Shoves his gun beneath the seat. He rolls down the window and--

A flashlight BLINDS HIM. And us. The officer wielding it remains a faceless silhouette.

MICHAEL  
Good evening, officer.

OFFICER  
License and registration, please?

MICHAEL  
Sure.

Michael fumbles for his wallet and flips through it. Stalling. The officer looks at Michael for a painfully long time, before--

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
Uh... I can't... seem to find it...

Flashlight still in his face. Blinding him.

OFFICER

Name?

MICHAEL

(beat)

Anderson. Philip.

OFFICER

What happened to your car?

MICHAEL

I uh... I actually don't know. I left it in a public parking lot last night, and when I came out to get it, it looked like this. Someone must've rammed it.

OFFICER

Where?

MICHAEL

(beat)

Pasadena.

OFFICER

You live there?

MICHAEL

No, I was... visiting a friend.

OFFICER

What friend?

MICHAEL

Uh... guy named Jimmy.

A long. Tense. Silent. Beat. Michael struggles to keep calm.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Is there... a problem here, officer?

OFFICER

We're investigating an incident at the Centinela trailer park, and have a report of a vehicle resembling the one you're driving.

The flashlight is right in his face. Scrutinizing every twitch of every muscle as Michael struggles to stay neutral.

MICHAEL

What incident?

Another long beat.

OFFICER  
What's your friend's last name?

MICHAEL  
Huh?

OFFICER  
Your friend. In Pasadena.

MICHAEL  
(beat)  
Uh, Patterson. Jim Patterson. He's in  
real estate.

A long tense beat. The officer remains a dark silhouette  
behind the blinding flashlight.

OFFICER  
You know what I think? I think you're  
a lying sack of shit.

MICHAEL  
Listen. Officer. I'm sorry, I'm  
not.... I'm looking for this girl.

OFFICER  
Yeah?  
(beat)  
Did you fuck her?

MICHAEL  
!?.... Excuse me...?

OFFICER  
Did you want to?  
(beat)  
Don't you think my girl is hot?

Michael stares at the police officer. Who, finally, slowly,  
lowers his flashlight and reveals that--

HE IS JASON!

Or, as he is known to everyone else but us and Michael,  
officer DAMON OLSEN. Fully dressed in LAPD-uniform.

JASON  
Step out of the car. And come face  
the music. Or run. And let's see just  
how far you make it.

Michael stares at him. Paralyzed.

ALL SLOWS DOWN. ALL SOUND FADES. Until we're left with nothing but his thumping heartbeat.

Thud-thud. Thud-thud. Thud-thud.

Michael closes his eyes.

Exhales.

Then, calmly, with nothing more to lose--

Michael looks straight ahead. At the dark asphalt stretching into the night...

...and floors it.

WE EXPLODE BACK IN REAL TIME. As the 1969 Ford Mercury Cyclone SPRAYS GRAVEL, SWINGS back on the road and--

ROARS OFF ON SCREECHING TIRES.

Jason closes his eyes. A smile. Under his breath--

JASON (cont'd)  
Oh God, I was so hoping you'd do  
that.

He SHOUTS back toward the police car.

JASON (cont'd)  
SUSPECT ON THE RUN, LET'S GO-GO-  
GO!!!!

WREEEEOOOOWWW! The police car lights up and comes wailing.

Jason jumps in. AND SETS CHASE.

**EXT. LA STREETS / AERIAL - NIGHT**

Los Angeles stretches out ahead. The horizon is brightening. Dawn is near.

We close in on one street below as -- the Mercury SWOOSHES past us and forward.

The patrol car comes after. Sirens and lights. As the two cars race through the dawning city at lightning speed.

We briefly pause as the Mercury ROARS past a ROAD SIGN revealing that Michael is at the place it all started.

GRAFFITH PARK.

**INT. MERCURY, DRIVING - NIGHT**

Michael looks back over his shoulder. The patrol car is closing in on him. Wailing horns.

It tries to overtake him. Michael swings the Mercury to the side to keep the cops behind him and--

CRASH - smashes their right front light with his bumper.

The police car pulls a bit back. Tries to time another attack.

They go so fucking fast through the night.

Once more. Up on the side of him.

BAM!

Michael RAMS them again. The police car swings left, barely stays on the road, falls back.

Michael focuses ahead when he sees that--

The road leads toward -- THE GRAFFITH PARK TUNNEL.

He pushes forward.

The cops give it a third shot. Try to pass and stop him before he reaches the tunnel.

BAM! They try to force him off the road. He forces back.

SPARKS FLY. METAL GRINDS.

Michael shakes them and edges just ahead of them, right before he thunders into the--

**EXT. GRAFFITH PARK TUNNEL - NIGHT**

The roaring engines cast a deafening echo between the rocks.

Michael pushes his Mercury to the max. Sirens screaming right behind him.

Muffled darkness. And the brutal pressure of stone walls rushing right by at immense speeds.

We cut BACK AND FORTH IN- AND OUTSIDE THE MERCURY.

Michael approaches the END of the tunnel. But the hope in his eyes fades when he sees--

A new light approaching out there. An oncoming car. RED AND BLUE. It's ANOTHER POLICE CAR. And it's coming right at him.

Michael struggles to reach the exit, before the oncoming B&W reaches the tunnel.

He doesn't make it.

The oncoming police car thunders into the tunnel. Speeds up.

Michael shifts to the LEFT LANE. Playing a deadly game of chicken with the police car coming...

Closer... CLOSER.... *CLOSER!!! AND--*

Michael YANKS the wheel to the right and SLAMS his Mercury up against the RIGHT WALL. PLOWING forward. TEARING metal.

Almost making it past the oncoming B&W, which swirls and-- RAMS into his left side. RIPPING OFF his front door.

The door SLAMS up into the tunnel roof, flies RIGHT PAST the first police car still chasing him, then rattles off behind them.

Michael ROARS when sparks from grinding metal burn his face.

He swings the car back on the road and finally makes it-- OUTSIDE the tunnel.

BACK INSIDE IT -- The first B&W thunders past us.

The second makes a 180-degree turn and-- Sets chase.

#### **INT. MERCURY, DRIVING - NIGHT**

Michael looks back over his shoulder. Two police cars now chasing him.

They pull closer.

....zzzzZIP -- CRACK!

Michael grows pale and focuses on -- A HOLE in his windshield. Realizing--

They're SHOOTING AT HIM.

He yanks the wheel. Sways to the side. Back and forth. To dodge the shots.

Zip... zip-zip... CRACK! Another hole, so close to his head.

BAM! The first police-car rams him from behind. BAM! Again.

The second pulls up beside him. The officer in the passenger seat starts shooting at his tires.

BLAM, BLAM... BLAM! BLAM!

Bullets RIP into asphalt, SLAM into metal.

Michael clenches his teeth. There are steep slopes leading into the roughs of Griffith Park on both sides of him now.

He looks back up at Jason outside. Who now aims his gun directly at him, and....

Michael STOMPS THE BRAKES.

The two police cars FLY RIGHT BY!

Michael turns the Mercury and forces it OFF THE ROAD. UP A SLOPE. Spraying soil and gravel as he makes it into the park itself and onto--

**EXT. GRIFFITH PARK, GRAVEL ROAD - NIGHT**

A narrow hiking path lights up in the night when--

The Mercury comes BLASTING down the path. Inside the--

**INT. MERCURY, DRIVING - NIGHT**

Michael struggles to focus. On the gravel path ahead of him. Trying to shake--

A light in his rear view mirror. Fuck. They're back.

**EXT. GRIFFITH PARK, GRAVEL ROAD - NIGHT**

Three cars push close to a 100 mph down the narrow hiking path.

Lights flicker between the trees. As the battered Mercury struggles to keep its distance from the two B&W Dodge Charger's closing in.

Again - they make it up here. And OPEN FIRE.

Michael throws the Mercury OFF THE PATH and into--

**EXT. GRIFFITH PARK, THE ROUGH - NIGHT**

The Mercury plows into the rough. Racing way too fast between the large, dark trees.

**INT. MERCURY, DRIVING - NIGHT**

Branches WHIP across the windshield, as Michael SLAMS through the dense greenery.

Barely avoiding the trees, plowing through bushes, he's gaining some distance on the police cars following him.

He finds new hope, when he catches a flickering glimpse of--

A SMALL LAKE ahead and below. He aims for it and throws the Mercury -- Downhill.

**EXT. LAKESIDE - NIGHT**

Michael bursts out of the bushes, and makes a brief stop at the edge of a small, calm lake.

The horizon is brightening, revealing -- another gravel path running around the lake.

Michael gears down. Floors it. Drives off just as--

The two police cars burst out the bushes and set chase. Relentlessly in pursuit.

Michael races along the lake. Trees and bushes rising to his right, keeping him locked on the path.

He goes as fast as he can, and barely sees it before it's too late:

He STOMPS the brakes. Gasps for air. Right in front of him--

The lake has FLOODED the next section of the pathway. The next 200 feet is covered in KNEE-DEEP MUD.

Fuck! Michael desperately looks around.

Lake to his left. Solid greenery to his right.

No way out!

He looks back over his shoulder. Sees the two police cars fast approaching. And.... Jason. Inside the car in front.

Michael looks back at the mud. His eyes grow dark. Then, he puts the Mercury in first gear.

And drives.

The Mercury sinks in. Bottom half of all four wheels locked in sticky, heavy mud.

Michael pushes forward. The vintage V8-engine struggling like never before.

It moves. 5 miles per hour. But it moves. Foot by foot, forward, forward.

The cops come speeding up behind him. The first Dodge plunges right into the mud and is instantly stuck there. The other police car is locked behind it, unable to pass.

They're no more than 30 feet away.

Jason jumps out of his car and runs after the Mercury. He sinks in to the knee. Is stuck there.

He pulls his weapon, aims... and shoots.

BLAM-BLAM... BLAM! BLAM!

**INT. MERCURY, DRIVING - NIGHT**

Michael SCREAMS his frustration out as bullets ZIP right past him.

The Mercury spins, revs, screaming out its last efforts, DRAGGING its way through the mud.

Still moving.

Still moving!

So fucking slowly!

Shots ring. Zip... ziiing... CRACK! Zip-zip...

MICHAEL  
AAAAAAAARRRRRRGHHHH!!!

Until finally--

**EXT. LAKESIDE - NIGHT**

The Mercury PULLS out of the mud and back onto a new gravel path. On the other side of the mud pool.

INSIDE THE CAR -- Michael pauses. A beat. Gasping for air. A last glance back at the two police cars stuck on the other side of the mud pool. And Jason. Knee deep in mud. Teeth clenched. He lowers his gun.

Michael looks ahead. And drives. Away from this place. Leaving--

Jason and the police cars behind.

**EXT. LOS ANGELES / AERIAL - SUNRISE**

A slow sailing scope of a dawning Los Angeles. Deep below-- The Mercury.

**INT. MERCURY, DRIVING - SUNRISE**

Michael races through the city in silence. Wind tears his hair from the hole where his front door used to be. His carefully chosen shirt is now torn and bloody. His face is beat up and covered in dried mud.

He squints as THE SUN RISES over the horizon and hits his eyes. His phone rings. Michael picks it up without speaking.

BURKE (V.O.)  
*Sun's up, kid. You're not here. So.  
I'm coming to get you.*

Michael never answers. Burke hangs up.

Michael stares at his phone. Realizing that this is how Burke is tracking him.

Angrily, he rolls down the window to throw out the phone. But then... pauses. As an idea strikes. And grows...

He turns the phone OFF, puts it back in his chest pocket, and looks back out at the road with renewed sense of purpose. He makes a turn toward the inevitable end.

He passes a ROAD SIGN that says he's closing in on--

**"LAX - LOS ANGELES AIRPORT"**

**EXT. "NATIONAL" CAR RENTAL, RETURN SITE - MORNING**

Dusty tires roll across the one-way SPIKE BARRIERS, marking the entrance and exit to--

A GIANT PARKING LOT. A car rental return site.

The tires belong to... THE BLACK SUV. We follow the SUV, as it pulls up and into an empty return-line. A young woman steps up to the window. Smiling to the yet unseen driver--

"NATIONAL" EMPLOYEE

Good morning, Ma'am. Returning your vehicle?

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Yes, please.

"NATIONAL" EMPLOYEE

Someone will be right with you.

The employee moves on. The SUV-door opens and--

LAURA steps out. Almost unrecognizable. Dressed in urban chic, she now looks like an upscale business woman, the last to ever be singled out in an airport line. In the passenger seat beside her is -- her lavender Backpack.

Laura waits in the early morning sun. She grows pale, when she hears a metallic rattling and the muffled roar of an old V8 engine pulling up right behind her.

She closes her eyes. Keeps her back turned. Even when the driver of the car behind her steps out. Until he finally speaks.

MICHAEL

Sarah.

She slowly turns to face him. A long tense beat. She looks like a million bucks. He looks like he's been through hell. All around them, travelers are returning their cars, moving suitcases, smiling and chit-chatting in the morning sun.

Laura lights up in a curious smile.

LAURA  
Do we know each other?

MICHAEL  
Don't. Burke got to me. He wants his  
money back. I know... everything.

LAURA  
I'm... sorry mister, I think you're  
mistaking me for someone else--

MICHAEL  
Open the trunk.

Laura's smile fades. A long. Tense beat. Michael keeps under  
total control. No one around them notices the tense but  
subtle confrontation.

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
You put a gun in my hand. Don't force  
me to use it.

LAURA  
I'll scream.

MICHAEL  
No you won't. You want attention as  
little as I do.

Laura stares at him. Then nods. Opens the trunk. Revealing  
it -- EMPTY!

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
Where is it?

LAURA  
I simply don't know what you're--

MICHAEL  
WHERE IS IT!?

Michael's outburst attracts attention unwanted by them both.  
In the distance they hear -- SIRENS APPROACHING.

LAURA  
I have a plane to catch. So here's  
what's gonna happen.

She leans in. Smiles and holds him. As if they were a loving  
couple parting ways. She speaks so softly in his ear--

LAURA (cont'd)

I worked for that scumbag for years.  
We planned this shit for months. And  
I didn't get *this* far to drop the  
ball in the fucking Red Zone. So.  
You're gonna turn around, and get  
back inside that piece-of-shit junk  
heap of yours. You're gonna drive off  
and become whoever they think you  
are. And if you go right now? You  
might still have a chance.

He stares at her. So angry. Betrayed. Speaks equally softly.

MICHAEL

I just wanted to help.

LAURA

I know. It was very romantic.

MICHAEL

You *knew* I would. That's why you  
chose me.

LAURA

I *hoped* you would. That's what  
Supermen do. Spin the world  
backwards. To save their Lois Lanes.

Michael struggles. Stares at Laura. Sirens come closer.  
They're interrupted by a new employee, breaking the moment.

"NATIONAL" EMPLOYEE

I'm sorry to keep you waiting, I just  
need the keys and you're set to go.

LAURA

Of course. Thank you so much.

"NATIONAL" EMPLOYEE

I trust everything has been to your  
satisfaction?

LAURA

Completely.

The employee walks on. Laura turns her back on Michael. And  
walks. Two steps, before -- Michael grabs on to her.  
Stopping her. Sirens are almost here.

LAURA (cont'd)

You should run, little boy. While you still can. That's what you always do. Isn't it?

MICHAEL

We stay. Both of us. And tell them everything.

LAURA

Ah. Bold. We *should*. Do the right thing. But then again...

(beat)

Who would they believe?

She smiles. Michael looks at her radiant smile. Her perfect outfit. His own totally trashed appearance. And knows she's right. He lets her go. And backs slowly toward his Mercury.

LAURA (cont'd)

Good choice. For what it's worth...

Michael nods. He knows.

MICHAEL

It's not personal.

Laura turns her back on him. Walks away. And boards an airport SHUTTLE BUS that will take her to the terminals. Her lavender backpack is over her shoulder.

Michael jumps when -- WEEEEEEOOOOOW -- sirens wail and a trashed and far too familiar POLICE CAR arrives and comes to screeching halt. Causing a commotion on the parking lot.

Two officers jump out. Jason, and an older colleague whom we see for the first time, now -- a tough silver haired police officer in his early 50s.

Michael frowns when he recognizes him. This is--

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Frank...? FRANK!!??

The silver haired cop reacts. And spots him. Michael shouts.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Frank DeMarco!? I'm Michael Smith.  
Richard's son! I'm... I need your help!

FRANK frowns as something dawns on him... recognition. Jason sees it and cuts between them. Pointing harshly at Michael--

JASON  
HEY!!!

MICHAEL  
(to Frank)  
I'm being set up! I need--

JASON  
GET DOWN WITH YOUR HANDS OVER YOUR  
HEAD!

Michael raises his hands. Keeps shouting.

MICHAEL  
FRANK!!? IT'S A SETUP, HE'S IN ON IT,  
I'M INNOCENT, I--

JASON  
GUN!!!

Jason OPENS FIRE! SHOOTING AT MICHAEL! BLA-BLA-BLAM!!!

People start screaming and running. Michael dives behind the Mercury!

ZIP, ZING, CRASH!

He jumps inside, starts the engine--

ZIP...

It ROARS to life. Michael pulls a handle that POPS THE TRUNK OPEN, then throws the car IN REVERSE, and floors it.

He plows BACKWARDS towards Jason, who fires but - ZING, ZANG - only hits the metallic lid of the open trunk.

Jason jumps aside, just as Michael thunders right past him.

Michael pulls a 180, screeches a half circle, then races toward the exit.

Jason jumps back inside the police car and gives chase. Alone this time. Leaving Frank behind.

#### **INT. AIRPORT SHUTTLE - MORNING**

Inside the shuttle bus, shocked travelers look out the windows, all frightened and in uproar, except--

Laura. Who sits calmly in her seat. She makes eye contact with--

A kid. Right across from her. Staring right at her. Laura smiles a comforting smile.

LAURA  
So shocking, huh? You okay, honey?

The kid just stares at her. Somehow senses what she is.

LAURA (cont'd)  
Remember; the police are your friend.  
They're here to help.

The bus moves. Laura looks forward. To the horizon.

CUT TO:

**EXT. AVIATION BOULEVARD - MORNING**

Jason's WAILING B&W roars into frame. Searching for Michael and finding him sooner than expected when--

SLAM!!!

The Mercury RAMS into his rear side, coming out of nowhere, sending both of them into a DOUBLE SPIN, before they--

STOP. Smoking tires. The two men stare at each other through smashed up windows.

Jason raises his gun and points it right at Michael. Suddenly. Here. Now. This is it. Michael flinches when --

Jason pulls the trigger.

CLICK.

Jason -- Fuck! Empty!

Michael... blinks. And raises the gun, Laura gave him.

Jason throws his weapon out the window. ROARS off.

Michael sets chase.

**EXT. STREETS OF LOS ANGELES - MORNING**

Jason's POLICE CAR comes blasting. Horns and lights.

Michael catches up with him... and...

BAM! Rear-ends him. BAM! Again, and...

Jason speeds up. Heads directly for a RED LIGHT!  
And BLASTS RIGHT ACROSS!  
Crossing cars break with screeching tires, barely missing--  
Michael's Mercury when it -- swooshes right after.  
Jason tries to shake the Mercury, but--  
Michael stays right on his tail. Bumper-to-bumper close.  
Letting Jason's horns and lights plow their way through  
traffic.  
Jason yanks the wheel and throws his police car into a 90-degree drift into a--

**EXT. ONE WAY STREET - MORNING**

Jason thunders against ONCOMING TRAFFIC.  
Oncoming cars break and sway to avoid collision.  
Michael is still right on Jason's tail.  
Jason tries to shake, draw and force Michael into an open lane, where he'll be hit by an oncoming car. But Michael stays glued to his bumper. Using Jason as a shield. As--  
CARS RUSH BY THEM AT IMMENSE SPEED.  
Jason STOMPS the brakes and--  
SMASH!  
Michael REAR ENDS the police car. Is thrown forward in his seat.  
Jason speeds up. Pulls away. Gains distance.  
Michael regains focus. Accelerates more slowly. But the Mercury Cyclone was, back in its day, the fastest car ever built.  
The V8-engine ROARS as Michael speeds back up and--  
!!!BAM!!! REAR-ENDS the police car once more. Jason makes another turn, and--

**EXT. PEDESTRIAN STREET - MORNING**

Silence. Birdsong and bright morning sun. A quiet, empty pedestrian street. Is disrupted by--

The wailing B&W SCREECHING into the street, and speeding down it. The Mercury in close pursuit. Rushing past--

Closed storefronts and planted greenery. Wooden benches and ice-cream stands waiting to open.

Michael pulls up beside the B&W. Looks over at Jason. A hard glance between the two men as the world thunders by. Then--

BAM!!! -- Michael SLAMS the Mercury into the left side of the police car and... forces it up against the wall.

Grinding the car. Screaming metal. Sparks fly.

Michael tries to stop Jason, who struggles to free his vehicle from the Mercury's grasp. Neither man sees that, straight up ahead--

--an older SANITATION WORKER is emptying garbage cans into a rolling container. He's wearing headphones, listening to music, in his own world.

He frowns when he senses something. Slowly turns. And freezes in fear at the sight of--

THE WALL OF THUNDERING DEATH about to hit him.

INSIDE THE MERCURY -- Michael spots him too late - right in front of him - and faces a lightning choice. Jason or this man's life. He acts on instinct--

Michael pulls left, LETTING GO OF JASON, sways off into the street, barely and just avoiding--

The sanitation worker, who gasps in shock, when the two smashed up vehicles BLAST BY - THREE FEET APART - ON EACH SIDE OF HIM.

Smashing his rolling container to pieces. Leaving him miraculously unharmed.

INSIDE THE B&W -- Jason looks back over his shoulder at the Mercury losing traction and speed behind him. Jason accelerates, pulls away, he made it. Jason flashes a victorious smile, looks back once more at Michael and the Mercury disappearing behind him. He doesn't see--

THE GARBAGE TRUCK, which backs out of a side alley right in front of him and--

!!!SMASH!!! -- Jason CRASHES RIGHT INTO IT!

INSIDE THE MERCURY -- Michael sees the brutal collision.

He heads for it, slows down, heart thumping. And stops.

**EXT. STREET CORNER - MORNING**

Michael staggers out of the Mercury, and runs with a limp toward the smoking B&W. Inside it, he spots--

Jason, head leaning against the wheel. Grunting. Gasping. Still alive. But seriously hurt.

Michael steps up to the car. Opens the door, which FALLS OFF with a CLANG. Michael leans in. Over the wounded Jason. And finds the handle that -- OPENS THE TRUNK.

He moves to the back of the car. And... there it finally is.

**THE BIPOLYMERO SUITCASE.**

Michael holds his breath. Reaches down. And opens it.

He blinks. A long beat. Because--

THE SUITCASE IS EMPTY.

Behind the wheel, Jason coughs a gargling laugh.

JASON  
... stupid... fucking... idiot.

Michael grows pale. Staggers back from the trunk.

Slowly looks up. At the blue morning sky.

**INT. PASSENGER BOARDING BRIDGE - MORNING**

In the door of a BOEING 787, a FLIGHT ATTENDANT welcomes passengers on board, and greets--

FLIGHT ATTENDANT  
Boarding pass, please?

--Laura. She shows her Boarding pass. A smile--

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (cont'd)  
First Class is to your left. Your  
private airline hostess will be there  
with you shortly. Welcome aboard.

LAURA

Thank you.

Laura smiles. And steps on board the airplane. Over her shoulder... is the LAVENDER BACKPACK.

**EXT. STREET CORNER - MORNING**

Inside the police car, Jason coughs blood when -- the car STARTS TO BURN behind him. Smoke and fire everywhere.

Michael steps up. Slowly. Squats and looks at Jason. Jason feels the flames and slowly struggles to free himself, but in vain. Too wounded and weakened.

He sees Michael and smiles. Coughing blood. Flames growing.

JASON

Here to see me burn?

MICHAEL

This was all just...? You and Sarah.  
You did all this just to set me up?

Jason smiles. Blood on his teeth.

JASON

We stole six million dollars worth of untraceable bonds. We double crossed the mob. We couldn't just disappear, they'll never stop chasing us, we needed to leave behind...

MICHAEL

...a villain.

They both look up when they hear -- DISTANT SIRENS.

JASON

This is it. Time to run.

Behind Jason - WHOOOOFFF - the police car flames up.

Michael looks back and forth between Jason and the horizon, where the sirens come closer. A final choice. Then, resolutely--

Michael reaches in, pats Jason down and finds--

The SWITCHBLADE Jason originally pressed against Michael's neck, the first time they met. Using it--

--Michael CUTS Jason's seat-belt. Freeing him. Puts his arms around him. And, with great effort and flames reaching out--

MICHAEL LIFTS JASON OUT OF THE BURNING POLICE CAR.

AND AWAY FROM IT.

JASON (cont'd)  
What the fuck are you doing?

MICHAEL  
You wouldn't know.

They look up when -- POLICE CARS come wailing.

JASON  
They'll never believe you.

MICHAEL  
You're probably right. But  
hopefully... they'll believe you.

Jason frowns. Off Michael's glance, he looks back at the burning police car, and sees that, inside it--

THE POLICE RADIO IS BLINKING. IT IS TRANSMITTING. He looks back up at Michael, and grows pale when he realizes, as do we, in a--

FLASH: When Michael first leaned in over Jason to open the trunk, Michael discretely and deliberately... SWITCHED ON THE POLICE RADIO. Transmitting to: All channels.

BACK IN THE STREET -- they're surrounded by police cars. Officers swarm out, weapons drawn. One of them is Jason's colleague FRANK from the airport. Jason yells--

JASON  
Officer wounded! Suspect is armed and dangerous!

Michael puts his hands in the air to show the cops that he means no harm. Jason screams at his colleagues--

JASON (cont'd)  
YOU HEAR ME!? TAKE HIM OUT!!!

Frank shouts back at Jason with calm authority.

FRANK

We heard you, officer Olsen. Loud and clear! Over the radio! Mr. Smith, please step away from the suspect. And Olsen? Put your fucking hands in the air!

Michael blinks. He lowers his arms. And takes a step away from Jason. Jason grows pale. Sees Frank and a CIRCLE OF COPS aiming their weapons at him.

FRANK (cont'd)

It's over, Olsen. We know what you did. We know everything.

Jason's gaze grows hard. As he sees Michael walk away from him. Toward the cops. Then--

Jason lunges out at Michael, grabs from his belt THE GUN Laura gave him. Aims it at Michael and--

BLAM, BLAM, BLAM!!!

Michael jolts. Freezes. Staggers. And slowly turns to see--

Jason sink to his knees. And fall. Michael looks back at-- Frank. Pistol still smoking in his hands.

Cops come running. To ensure Jason is down and neutralized.

Michael takes in the whole thing. His gaze lands on--

THE MERCURY. The 1969 Ford Mercury Cyclone. That brought him throughout this entire endeavor. Now a total wreck.

Michael turns his back on it. And walks away from it. Toward Frank by his police car. While he does, Michael's answering machine responds to a final phone call--

MICHAEL (V.O.)

*This is Michael. Please leave a message.*

A harsh voice does--

BURKE (V.O.)

*Here's the thing, Mr. Smith. Switching off your phone does not prevent me from tracking it. I've found you. I see you. And I'm coming now to take the two things you have that are mine.*

(MORE)

BURKE (V.O.) (cont'd)  
*My six million dollars. And your  
 pathetic fucking excuse for a life.*

Michael reaches Franks police car. A final glance up at the blue morning sky. Where--

--an AIRPLANE glides past high above.

**INT. AIRPLANE, FIRST CLASS - MORNING**

Laura sits in her First Class seat, looking out at the blue horizon. Clouds pass by. A bright sun. Freedom.

She opens her LAVENDER BACKPACK to put back her boarding pass, revealing - only to her and us - a brief glimpse of the only other thing inside her bag--

INVESTMENT BONDS. 6 MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF THEM.

As she puts the boarding pass back in, she finds something unexpected. And freezes. From the side pocket she produces--

Michael's phone.

She frowns. Heart and mind racing. She is struck by a--

*FLASH: Back in the "National"-parking lot. When Laura leaned in close to quietly threaten Michael... he discretely PLACED HIS PHONE IN THE SIDE POCKET OF HER BACKPACK!*

BACK IN THE PLANE -- Laura freezes, when a FIGURE sits in the empty seat beside her.

VOICE (O.S.)  
 Miss Scott. What a pleasant surprise to see you again.

She slowly looks up at -- Burke!

BURKE  
 I believe you have something else in that bag. That doesn't belong to you.

Laura grows pale. An AIRLINE HOSTESS arrives with two glasses of--

AIRLINE HOSTESS  
 Champagne?

Burke takes them.

BURKE  
I'll take both. *She'll* need  
something... a little stronger.

The Airline Hostess nods and moves on. Burke empties both glasses. Laura stares straight ahead. Pale as a ghost.

Damn.

**INT. POLICE CAR - MORNING**

Michael is in the back seat, wrapped in a blanket, when the car starts moving. Frank behind the wheel.

FRANK  
You okay, kid?

Michael nods.

MICHAEL  
Thanks Frank. Good to see you again.

FRANK  
You too. Been awhile. Somewhere I can take you?

Michael shakes his head. Then--

MICHAEL  
Actually. There is.

**EXT. SECLUDED HOUSE IN COMPTON - DAY**

A door opens, answering a knocking. Richard looks out. Freezes. When he sees--

Michael. A long beat. Before Michael finally speaks.

MICHAEL  
Hey dad...  
(beat)  
I've had a rough night. But it's over now.  
(beat)  
Can I come in?

Richard wells up. Smiles. And opens the door for him.

Michael smiles.

And steps inside.

DISSOLVE TO:

**EXT. HOLLOWAY'S GARAGE - DAY**

A garage door rolls op. Holloway steps into the warm sun. Walks to the curb. Opens his mailbox and flips through the mail. He frowns when in the pile he finds--

A POSTCARD. A sunny picture from "Tulum, Mexico". A wooden house. Small. Secluded. By the sea. Nothing else.

A TRUCK pulls up curbside. The DRIVER calls out the window--

TRUCK DRIVER  
Holloway?

HOLLOWAY  
Yes?

TRUCK DRIVER  
Courtesy of the Los Angeles Police  
Department.

A crane lifts a huge, yet unseen object off the lid and--

**!SLAM!**

--dumps SOMETHING BIG AND METALLIC on the street outside Holloway's home. We hold it back till the end.

The truck drives on and leaves Holloway behind. He looks back at the postcard. Flips it, revealing a simple hand written...

"Thank you."

Nothing more. Holloway looks up. And smiles.

He walks back inside. We stay. Finally revealing it.

Smashed up. Barely holding together.

Still beautiful.

THE MERCURY.

CUT TO:

BLACK

THE END