

TEST DRIVE

Written by

Matt Venne

Heroes and Villains  
Joseph Cavalier

IAG  
Sheryl Petersen & Joe Fronk

CLOSE ON a SAINT CHRISTOPHER MEDALLION. Dangling from a rear-view mirror. Early morning CITY SCAPE blurred out through the windshield. Gray skies. First rain of the season looming over sprawling Greater Los Angeles. MALE VOICE trying to be chipper despite audible notes of tension as he drives.

MALE VOICE (O.C.)

Last day of the month. Only one car behind Gil-Man for that Salesman of the Month bonus.

Pull back to REVEAL we are...

**INT. 2016 TOYOTA COROLLA - DAY (MOVING)**

COOPER REED (30. Earnest as the family dog. Drab Polo. Worse Dockers.) continues his conversation with his wife, EMMA (Late-20s. Tired. But trying.). Their INFANT (CASSIDY. Six months old. Um, an Infant.) CRYING in the background.

EMMA (O.S.)

That's good. Cuz rent's due tomorrow, and, well, you know...

He nods. He knows.

COOPER

Things are tight.

Detritus of Family Life scattered about the cheap upholstery: Empty car seat. Kid's toys. Sippy cup. Grocery list.

COOPER

All good...

As the weight of the water they're treading becomes apparent we spy a BOX OF PAPERBACKS from a USED BOOKSTORE in the backseat. Lots of cool, vintage titles. Huh.

COOPER

I'm gonna get that Salesman of the Month bonus today - and we're gonna put that 500 bucks to good use.

Five-hundred dollars? Oh, boy.

EMMA (O.S.)

Yeah.

COOPER

Don't forget: brighter days ahead.

HARD CUT TO:

A torrential rainstorm.

**EXT. CAR DEALERSHIP - DAY**

Water coming down in buckets. Cooper's beat-up Corolla parked down the street from one of the many DEALERSHIPS on AUTO ROW. INFLATABLE TUBE MAN out front sagging under the weight of the deluge. Gonna be a hard day to make a sale.

**INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - SHOWROOM - DAY**

Big glass box. High ceilings. NEW CARS parked at various angles on the floor. You've been in a hundred SHOWROOMS just like this one. Picture that.

This particular dealership caters to American Muscle. For now let's call it a DODGE DEALERSHIP. (Dig those CHALLENGERS and CHARGERS.) But if it ends up being a CHEVY DEALERSHIP (Hello, Camaros and Corvettes.) or a FORD DEALERSHIP (Nice to see you, Mustangs.) that'll be just fine, too.

So, back inside the showroom of our DODGE DEALERSHIP:

Cooper stands at the floor-to-ceiling windows of the great glass fish bowl. Looking out. Rain pouring down. Not a customer in sight. If there were tumbleweeds in our movie, this is the moment one would blow across the rainswept lot.

**INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - CUSTOMER LOUNGE - DAY**

Complicated instant COFFEE MACHINE. Bad MORNING TV in the corner. Months-old MAGAZINES strewn about the lounge table. BROCHURES for cars we don't want in the adjacent wall rack.

Cooper straightens the magazines. Then the brochures. Trying his best to put some lipstick on this pig. From behind -

RANDY (O.C.)  
You know what they say about  
lemons...

REVEAL Cooper's boss, the Dealership's G.M., RANDY JONES (60s. Decades of cheap black coffee coursing through his veins.) standing at the HALLWAY that leads to his office.

COOPER  
Make lemonade?

RANDY  
That. And? We don't sell 'em here.

Randy GUFFAWS. Points DOUBLE-GUNNED FINGERS at Cooper.

RANDY  
Now go get 'em, kid!

Cooper DOUBLE-GUNS him back. Not a good look.

COOPER  
Will do, Randy.

**INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - DAY (MONTAGE)**

BEGIN MONTAGE. Cooper at the desk in his OFFICE. A SMALL GLASS CUBICLE just off the SHOWROOM FLOOR. Same glass office you've sat in every time you go to buy a car. Only personal touch a PHOTO OF EMMA AND CASSIDY on his desk. Generic DEALERSHIP CALENDAR and PHOTOS OF CARS he doesn't care about on the wall. BACKPACK on a hook by the door.

Cooper working at his dealership-provided DESKTOP. Fucking thing's a dinosaur. Scrolling through leads on the CRM (Customer Relationship Management) DATABASE: a long list of CURRENT LESSEES and DATES THOSE LEASES are set to EXPIRE.

Glances out the glass walls of his cubicle. Frowns:

Another SALESMAN who can only be the aforementioned "GIL-MAN" (GIL HALICKI. Mid-30s. Hair slick as his demeanor. Car Salesman personified.) inside his glass cubicle across the floor. Feet on his desk. LAUGHING as he chats-up a CRM Lead.

Gil notices Cooper watching him. LAUGHS louder. It's on.

TIMECUT: Cooper COLD CALLING a series of NUMBERS from the CRM DATABASE. Smile on his lips. Desperation in his eyes as he leaves messages. Because who answers an UNKNOWN CALL anymore?

COOPER  
Hi, this is Cooper Reed...

INTERCUT: Cooper at the window of the showroom. Raining hard. A HOMELESS PERSON shouting at nothing. POLICE SIRENS SCREAMING as SEVERAL PATROL CARS race past and continue down the street. Not a single customer in the vicinity of the lot.

INTERCUT: Cooper in his cubicle. New CRM Lead. Same message.

COOPER  
I was calling because it looks like  
your lease will be up soon...

INTERCUT: Cooper in the EMPTY Customer Lounge. Re-straightening those magazines. Re-adjusting those brochures.

INTERCUT: Cooper in his cubicle. New CRM Lead. Same message.

COOPER  
I'd love to get you inside one of  
our new vehicles...

INTERCUT: Cooper at the showroom window. Raining even harder.

INTERCUT: Cooper at his desk. Wrapping-up his latest message.

COOPER  
We've got some great deals I'd love  
to talk to you about. So give me a  
call. Thanks.

INTERCUT:

COOPER  
Thank you.

INTERCUT:

COOPER  
Thanks so much.

INTERCUT:

COOPER  
Bye now.

HANGS UP. Smile fading as fast as his hopes. END MONTAGE.

**INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - EMPLOYEE BREAK ROOM - DAY**

Cooper at a table. Cup of bad coffee. Reading one of the vintage paperbacks we spied earlier. (*Tapping the Source* by Kem Nunn.) EMPLOYEES on extended breaks. Watching *The Price is Right*. SHOUTING PRICES at the TV as they scroll PHONES.

EDDIE (O.C.)  
Whaddup, Coop?

REVEAL Head of Service & Purchasing, EDDIE RUCKER. (50s. Goatee. Neck Tattoo. Horn-rimmed glasses. Cars are his porn.) Sleeves of his DEALERSHIP COVERALLS rolled up, revealing elaborate TATTOO SLEEVES. Smile as bright as his ink.

COOPER  
Nothin' much, Eddie. Slow day, huh?

Eddie sits, unrolls the latest issue of Hot Rod magazine.

EDDIE  
Slow and low, brother. Just like I  
like it.

Cooper nods as Eddie begins flipping through his magazine. Returns his attention to that vintage paperback. *BUZZ-BUZZ*. Cooper's phone RINGS. Unknown Number. His eyes light up. Maybe it's one of his CRM Leads returning -

COOPER  
(into phone)  
Cooper Reed.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Hello, Mr. Reed. This is Stanley  
Moskowitz with CitiWide Debt  
Collections. I'm calling to follow  
up about the outstanding debt -

Cooper hangs up. Ears start RINGING. Vision BLURRING. Heart racing. Hurries from the break room as a PANIC ATTACK begins -

**INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - EMPLOYEE BATHROOM - STALL - DAY**

Cooper in one of the stalls. Square breathing.

**INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - COOPER'S OFFICE CUBICLE - DAY**

Office door closed. Cooper on the phone. AirPods in. Talking low. 'TELEHEALTH SERVICES' on his PHONE SCREEN as he does an S.O.S. CALL with his THERAPIST. (Soothing voice. In her 50s.)

THERAPIST (O.S.)  
You should be proud of yourself for  
knowing what was happening and  
being proactive about it.

COOPER  
Thank you.

THERAPIST (O.S.)  
So what can you do in this moment  
that will keep you grounded?  
Something that can also function as  
a proactive step toward alleviating  
your current financial concerns?

COOPER  
Sell a car? But seeing as there are  
no customers today...

He trails-off. Doesn't sound good. A bit hopeless if we're being honest. Therapist can hear it.

THERAPIST (O.S.)  
Are you taking your meds, Cooper?

COOPER  
Been trying to go "au natural."

THERAPIST (O.S.)  
Maybe that's not the best idea at the moment. What with everything you've been through over the past year. And with all the stress you've been under these days.

COOPER  
I'll take that into consideration.  
Seriously. Thank you, Doc.

THERAPIST (O.S.)  
Anytime. I'm glad you reached out.

Cooper hangs up. Sits in the gray silence of his office. Looks past the showroom to the rainswept skies beyond.

It feels very bleak.

Cooper realizes it. Reaches into his TOP DESK DRAWER -

Momentarily staggered - by a FUNERAL MEMORIAL CARD he forgot he'd shoved in there a while back: "HARRISON REED. Beloved Husband. Father. Teacher. Grandfather-To-Be."

Cooper's eyes well up - he pushes the Funeral Card aside to REVEAL the PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE of ANTI-ANXIETY MEDS he'd been trying to wean himself off. Pops the lid -

A KNOCK AT THE WALL OF HIS CUBICLE - Randy.

RANDY  
Mind if I, ah, take a seat?

Cooper shakes his head. Discreetly seals his bottle of meds and puts them back inside the desk drawer. Smiles.

COOPER  
Not at all. What's up?

Randy sits in one of those two uncomfortable chairs you sit in every time you're seated across from a Car Salesman.

RANDY  
This day, huh?

Cooper nods. Smiling as amenably as possible. Randy isn't.

RANDY

Look. I know it's been a tough year  
for you and your family...

Cooper adjusts in his seat. Uh-oh.

RANDY

Which is why I wanted to tell you  
in person before you heard it from  
anyone else: I'm promoting Gil.

Cooper - has no idea what Randy's talking about.

COOPER

What?

RANDY

Jerry's retiring at the end of the  
month and we need a new Associate  
Sales Manager.

COOPER

I didn't know Jerry was retiring.

RANDY

That's part of the problem.

COOPER

Problem?

Randy looks away. Yeah. Problem.

COOPER

I'm a good salesman, Randy.

Randy bobs his head. Noncommittally.

RANDY

Gil's better. Consistently  
surpasses monthlies. Manages a 6%  
on-average profit on vehicles sold.  
Salesman of the Month five months  
running - and about to make it six.

Randy shrugs: case closed. Cooper frowns.

RANDY

I like you, Cooper. I really do.  
And being a friend of your  
family's, well, I was happy to help  
you out during this difficult  
time...

Cooper braces himself. Randy sees the desperation in his eyes. Mistakes it for hunger. A family friend - and a softie at heart:

RANDY

Aw, hell - you want a shot at that promotion?

Cooper looks up. Huh?

RANDY

You wanna try and be my next Associate Sales Manager? Then prove me wrong - before the end of the day and my decision is final: Get that Salesman of the Month bonus and we can talk. What are you? Two cars behind the ol' Gil-Man?

COOPER

One.

Randy stands. Pounds his fist on the desk. Cooper flinches.

RANDY

So fuck the sunshine, kid: rain or shine, am I right? Go make some motherfucking hay!

Randy exits. Feeling like Patton himself. Cooper at the proverbial crossroads. Looks to that FRAMED PHOTO of EMMA AND CASSIDY. Two lives fully dependent on him. Grabs the photo. Studies it. Thoughts aswirl. They feel DARK. Hopeless.

Cooper sets the PHOTO down - gaze landing on the RAINSWEPT LOT beyond the showroom. INFLATABLE TUBE MAN seemingly mocking him with his big crazy eyes and soggy smile.

Cooper just stares at the Inflatable Tube Man -

Suddenly notices something. Looks more closely. Holy shit.

REVEAL a MAN out there in the rain, appearing like a MIRAGE. Moving from car to car. Considering sticker prices...

An honest-to-goodness POTENTIAL CUSTOMER.

Cooper glances to Gil's office: Gil and Randy are having what appears to be a serious conversation. The Gil Man not loving it. Neither of them have noticed The Man. Yet.

Off last-ditch hope forming in Cooper's eyes -

## EXT. CAR DEALERSHIP - LOT - DAY

Rain coming down hard as The Man continues sauntering from vehicle to vehicle like it was nobody's business. This is JIM RYDER. (Old Soul. Cool Motherfucker. Weird Witchy Energy.)

Something damned-near Mythological about the way Jim Ryder presents on-screen: Kristofferson could've written a helluva song about him - if he hasn't already.

Thrifted shearling overcoat. Billowy white V-neck shirt with light blue '70s-style pattern. Tucked into vintage-looking Honor Guard-esque navy pants - complete with funky gold piping along the sides. From behind:

COOPER (O.C.)  
Good morning, sir.

REVEAL Cooper has made his way across the lot. Umbrella aloft as he smiles his friendliest smile. Salesman Mask on tight.

Still peeking into cars:

JIM  
Afternoon, friend.

Cooper checks his watch: 12:03. Smiles beneath his umbrella.

COOPER  
I stand corrected. Good afternoon.  
Looking for anything special today?

Jim pulls his gaze from the Challenger he's currently eyeing.

Looks Cooper up and down. Sizing him up. Cooper can feel it.

A decision reached.

Jim flashes a charismatic, devil-may-care smile.

JIM  
Some good ol' fashioned American  
Muscle.

Cooper tries to keep his cool. But holy shit. He just might make that sale he needs after all. Smiles back.

COOPER  
Well, you've come to the right  
place. Cooper Reed.

Extends his hand. Jim takes hold of it. Firm grip. Holds on longer than expected. As if some deal has just been struck.

JIM  
Jim Ryder.

Cool name.

COOPER  
Offer you a cup of coffee, Jim?  
Maybe get you out of this rain?

JIM  
Sounds like a plan.

**INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - CUSTOMER LOUNGE - DAY**

Coffee dribbles into a disposable cup at the instant machine. A second cup steaming in Cooper's other hand. Cell phone between shoulder and ear as he talks in a low-whisper:

COOPER  
(into phone)  
Think I'm gonna make that sale, Em!

EMMA (O.S.)  
Are you serious?

Cooper nods. Glances at the showroom: Jim Ryder is moving from car to car with genuine interest...

COOPER  
Salesman of the Month bonus here we come! And not only that, but Randy was telling me -

CASSIDY BEGINS TO WAIL in the background -

EMMA (O.S.)  
I'm sorry, Coop - Cassidy just clunked her head. I gotta go. Go get 'em, though, okay?

Cooper nods as Emily hangs up. Ready to make that sale.

**INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - SHOWROOM - DAY**

Cooper enters the showroom. Cup of coffee in each hand. Finds Jim examining the CROWN JEWEL of the dealership:

THE CHALLENGER SRT DEMON 170. Cooper'll tell you all of its specs in a moment, but for now it's okay to just go ahead and whistle at one of the most beautiful Muscle Cars ever made.

(And for the last time: whichever Car Manufacturer is the one we decide to go with, we'll be good. Promise.)

So, for now: back to that CHALLENGER SRT DEMON 170 - Jim is studying the vehicle as Cooper approaches with those coffees.

JIM  
I like this one.

Cooper nearly drops the coffees.

COOPER  
Seriously?

JIM  
Honest as a promise.

Cooper can't help himself:

COOPER  
6.2-liter supercharged Hemi V8. 900 Horsepower. Top speed of 215 miles per hour. Zero to sixty in 1.66 seconds - only 3,000 made.

Jim smiles in appreciation of the vehicle's specs. Which brings Cooper to the make-or-break moment - the price:

COOPER  
\$96,666.00.

Jim doesn't so much as flinch.

JIM  
Cool.

Cooper stands there for a moment. Holy fuck. Coffees cooling.

COOPER  
You want to... take her for a spin?

JIM  
Yeah. Let's do that.

Trying to hide how ecstatic he is. Not succeeding.

COOPER  
Great! I just need your Driver's License and we can get rolling.

Jim nods. Reaches into his back pocket. Frowns. Pats the other pocket. Then the front pockets. Shit.

JIM  
Must've left my wallet at home.

Jim turns, starts for the exit -

JIM  
Be back...

Cooper watches Jim go. RAIN coming down hard. Lots of other DEALERSHIPS out there along Auto Row. Can feel this customer slipping away. Scans the showroom: nobody else around. Looks back to Jim. About to exit -

COOPER  
Wait.

Jim stops. At the cusp of the exit. His back to Cooper.

COOPER  
I think we can do away with the  
whole Driver's License thing...

Jim turns to face him. Cooper shrugs. Nonchalant.

COOPER  
It's just a formality anyway.

JIM  
You sure?

Cooper nods.

COOPER  
Just... Gimme a minute, okay?

**INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - "EMPLOYEES ONLY" - DAY**

Cooper moves past the EMPLOYEE BREAK ROOM. EMPLOYEES still killing time in there. SOAP OPERAS on the TV now. Cooper hurries by, unseen, through another SET OF DOORS into -

**INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - KEY ROOM - DAY**

A KEYTRAK VAULT in the center of the room: TOUCHSCREEN MONITOR atop a sleek, file cabinet-like MECHANIZED VAULT.

Cooper puts his THUMB to the KEYPAD: his SALESMAN ID PAGE pops up. Hits REQUEST VEHICLE. Scrolls through the VEHICLES currently on the lot. Comes to the CHALLENGER SRT DEMON 170.

Takes a deep breath - then hits REQUEST KEY. The MECHANIZED VAULT slides open to a cache of EVERY KEY for EVERY CAR on the lot. Each KEY in a POD with a SLOT. POD containing the CHALLENGER KEY BLINKING RED. Cooper takes a last look around.

Pulls HIS DRIVER'S LICENSE from his wallet. Then inserts it into the SLOT. GREEN LIGHT - the CHALLENGER key is RELEASED.

**INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - SHOWROOM - DAY**

Cooper saunters into the showroom. Holding the KEY to one of the fastest cars in the world.

COOPER  
Let's ride.

Who's the Cool Motherfucker now, Cooper Reed?

Off Jim's impressed smile -

**EXT. CAR DEALERSHIP - DAY**

The Challenger SRT Demon 170 exits the dealership. Wheels cutting rivulets into the rainy road along Auto Row. Potential energy palpable in the RUMBLE of its engine.

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY (MOVING)**

Jim at the wheel. Cooper in the passenger seat. Raining hard. Jim acclimating to the vehicle. Cooper seated inside two tons of steel with a perfect stranger. Yeah. It's just as awkward as every Test Drive you've ever taken, too.

COOPER  
Right at the light.

Jim nods. Hits a BUTTON. AC LIGHT indicates SEATS.

COOPER  
Ventilated seats circulate ambient air throughout the -

Jim hits another BUTTON. Car doors LOCK.

COOPER  
Uh, Power Locks -

Turns LEFT. Presses ANOTHER BUTTON. Um -

COOPER  
Child safety locks.

Jim ignores him. Turns ON the radio. HEAVY METAL.

COOPER  
Free three-month SiriusXM trial.  
Over 200 channels -

Jim scrolls past the RANTING VOICES and MUSIC you also scroll past. Finally just turns it OFF. SILENCE. Thick as the rain.

MAIN DRAG choked with traffic. Jim hits the gas. 55MPH in the blink of an eye. Nods. Pleased. Turns to Cooper -

JIM  
Only have one question.

A little uneasy. But trying to be Mr. Amenable Salesman.

COOPER  
Shoot.

JIM  
Who are you, Cooper Reed?

Cooper LAUGHS.

COOPER  
Who am I?

Jim nods. Not joking.

Cooper really needs this sale. Decides to play along.

COOPER  
Um. I'm a Car Salesman. Obviously.

Jim punches the GAS. Feels like a rebuttal.

JIM  
That's what you do. But who are you? Really?

Cooper laughs. Jim doesn't. Ahem. Okay. Let's get that sale.

COOPER  
Well. I'm a Husband. Met my wife, Emma, when we were undergrads. Been married almost five years. Just had our first kid. Cassidy - which also makes me a Father I suppose. Six months old. Cassidy not me.

Jim punches the GAS as he makes a TURN. Challenger HUGGING the road. Faster you go, better she handles. Cooper instinctively grabbing the OH, SHIT handle -

JIM

That's your Group Identity. Telling me who you are by triangulating it against who you are NOT. Defining yourself by those around you. Like an image seen only in bas-relief. So I ask you again, Cooper Reed: Who are you? Before the wife and the kid and the slinging of steel.

Cooper is desperate for this fucking sale.

COOPER

I... always loved to read?

JIM

There you go.

COOPER

And write.

JIM

Even better.

COOPER

English major in college. Read everything from The Bluest Eye to The Big Sleep.

Cooper is actually getting into this now. Beaming at the memories of that bright and hopeful time in his life. Jim glances at him. Seems to enjoy seeing this look on his face.

JIM

So why'd you stop?

COOPER

Writing?

Jim nods. Cooper taken aback. Hadn't really thought about it.

COOPER

Life?

JIM

Say what?

COOPER

Life. It just kind of... You know. Gets in the way.

JIM

Life is the way, Cooper.

Cooper nods. Admits -

COOPER  
Wrote a book. Well. Started one.  
Kind of just... petered out,  
though.

JIM  
Life?

Cooper frowns. Sort of. But...

COOPER  
Wasn't really sure I had a story  
worth telling at the end of the  
day. And. Well. You know: Mouths to  
feed. Bills to pay. All that.

JIM  
And how's that going for you?

Cooper looks to Jim. Jim holds his gaze. Knowingly. Who takes a Test Drive in the pouring rain with a guy who doesn't have any ID on him? A desperate guy. That's who.

COOPER  
Not as good as I'd like. But better  
than a lot of people.

JIM  
That your dream when you were a  
kid? Better than a lot of people?

Cooper lets that hang. Mind drifting to when he was a kid.

COOPER  
My dad was a writer - well, a  
teacher by trade. One of the most  
beloved English teachers at the  
local high school where he worked.

A glint in Jim's eyes at that.

COOPER  
But he wrote, too. Never quite made  
it as an Author, capital-A. But boy  
did he love books and authors and  
reading and writing. One of my  
favorite things was going to the  
Used Bookstore with him every  
Saturday morning. Mom still asleep.  
See what we could dig up, then put  
our haul in a big ol' cardboard  
box. Go out for donuts after.

(MORE)

COOPER (CONT'D)  
Still have some of our choicest  
finds in one of the boxes we'd use.

Ah-ha. That box of paperbacks we noticed in his car.

COOPER  
But then...

A very DARK THING creeps into Cooper's golden recollections.

COOPER  
Well. Let's just say things didn't  
work out too well in the end.

Jim nods. Turns to Cooper.

JIM  
In most of our human relationships  
we spend the majority of our time  
reassuring each other that our  
costumes are on right.

WTF?

COOPER  
Huh.

JIM  
Yeah. Spending our days crammed  
into costumes that have been thrust  
upon us - rather than wearing  
wardrobes hand-tailored to fit our  
individual life-forces.

Cooper discreetly glances at those LOCKED DOORS.

COOPER  
Interesting...

JIM  
Which is why the most fascinating  
dilemma in the world is the one our  
little tête-à-tête commenced with:  
"Who am I?" And figuring out the  
answer to that question is what  
Rudy Wurlitzer - you've heard of  
Rudy Wurlitzer?

Cooper actually has heard of Rudy Wurlitzer. Maybe that  
English Degree wasn't a *total* waste of money?

COOPER  
Experimental novelist? Nog. Flats.  
Drop Edge of Yonder.

JIM

Yeah. But he wasn't always so high-fallutin. Wrote screenplays for some pretty interesting pictures in the '70s. Two-Lane Blacktop. Pat Garret & Billy the Kid. Little Buddha. Quite the diverse filmography. Anyway. Wurlitzer called it "Hard Travel to Sacred Places." And there is no more Sacred Place than Thine Own Self - and, in turn, to Thine Own Self Being True. Hence: wardrobes tailored to fit our sacred life-forces.

Cooper is feeling off-kilter. Like an Acid Trip going south.

COOPER

What about you?

JIM

Me?

COOPER

Who are you, Jim Ryder?

Jim smiles. Good boy.

JIM

I am....

A beat. Then Cooper realizes that's the end of his sentence.

COOPER

That's it?

JIM

Not "it." "All." That's all of it. I am. And you can be, too, Cooper Reed. All you gotta do is be like Chongo. You heard 'a Chongo?

Cooper shakes his head - suddenly braces himself, eyes wide:

COOPER

Woah, woah, woah!

Presses his hands against the DASHBOARD as JIM RUNS A RED at a busy intersection. Expertly maneuvering through the cross-traffic at an incredibly HIGH SPEED. Nonplussed. Continuing as if it wasn't nothin' but a thing -

JIM

Cheap plastic souvenir they used to sell down in Tijuana. Statue of a monkey on a surfboard. Gringos nicknamed him "Chongo." Excited-surprised look on the monkey's face as he rides a big-ass wave. Chongo the most enlightened motherfucker you'll ever lay eyes on - because, as Chongo so dutifully reminds us: You can't control the waves...

That devil-may-care smile.

JIM

But you can learn how to surf.

Mind reeling from the heady concoction of SPEED and IDEAS, Cooper looks straight ahead as the ASPHALT JUNGLE zooms past -

SCREECH! - Jim hits the brakes. Going from sixty to zero in what feels like the blink of an eye. Challenger SLIDING on the WET PAVEMENT into a RED ZONE on a SIDE STREET.

Jim turns to Cooper. Smiles.

JIM

You like to surf, Cooper?

Cooper's head is spinning. No words. Jim LAUGHS.

JIM

Me, neither.

And then Cooper finds it - the role he's supposed to be playing right now. Slips into it, essentially on AUTO-PILOT:

COOPER

Drag Radial tires. 245s in the front. 315s in the back. 4-piston Brembo Black brake system.

Jim LAUGHS again.

JIM

Cool.

(beat)

You take cash?

It takes Cooper a moment to realize -

COOPER

For the car?

Jim nods. Cocks his head across the street:

REVEALING that he has parked down the street from a BANK.

Holy shit: Cooper is about to make this sale.

COOPER

Have to have it counted and signed-off by my GM - but yeah. Of course!

JIM

Great. Be right back.

Jim gets out of the car. Hustling across the street toward the BANK. Cooper exhilarated. Can't believe his luck as Jim rounds the corner that leads to the FRONT OF THE BANK.

Cooper reaches into his pocket. Pulls out his PHONE. Thrumming with elation. Hands trembling as he calls EMMA. Eyeing the corner Jim disappeared around as SHE PICKS UP:

EMMA (O.S.)

(through phone)

Hi, hon'. Just got Cas down for her nap - what's up?

COOPER

(into phone)

That sale I needed to put me ahead of Gil? I'm about to make it!

EMMA (O.S.)

Which means...

COOPER

Salesman of the Month Bonus! AND - the car I'm about to sell?

Challenger SRT Demon 170. Only 3,000 of 'em ever made. \$96,666.00 MSRP.

EMMA (O.S.)

Oh. My. God.

COOPER

Yep: factor in my commission, and I could be coming home with an extra \$1,700 dollars in my wallet.

EMMA (O.S.)

I could cry.

COOPER

Well don't start cryin' just yet...

EMMA (O.S.)  
There's more?

COOPER  
I make this sale, Randy might  
promote me.

EMMA (O.S.)  
Cooper!

COOPER  
Associate Sales Manager. That  
bungalow we were looking at?

EMMA  
We might finally be able to put a  
downpayment on it?

COOPER  
From your lips to God's ears, Em.

EMMA (O.S.)  
I'm so proud of you, Cooper!

Cooper nods - but is suddenly distracted by the sound of AN ALARM BLARING from somewhere down the street. He looks around: doesn't see anything. The ALARM CONTINUES TO BLARE...

COOPER  
Thank you, Em. I'm, ah...

Cooper's eyes go wide: a FIGURE is darting across the street. Toward the car through the heavily falling rain. Moving fast.

COOPER  
I'm proud - um, of us.

Something slung over The Figure's shoulder. Closer now.

Holy shit.

COOPER  
Em, can I...?

He trails-off. Phone still to ear. Staring slack-jawed at -

JIM RYDER. DUFFEL BAG overflowing with CASH flung over his shoulder. Cheap blue disposable MASK covering his mouth. Big-ass white-rimmed KURT COBAIN-style SUNGLASSES on. Something in his HAND. Cooper squints: what-the-fuck it's... a GUN.

EMMA (O.S.)  
Cooper? Are you okay?

Cooper can only stare, shocked, as Jim slips into the DRIVER'S SEAT. Tosses the DUFFEL BAG into the back. FADED LETTERS visible on the weathered duffel. Pulls down his mask, lifts his sunglasses, about to say something -

Notices the PHONE against Cooper's ear - flash of anger - grabs the phone - tosses it out the window - points his GUN at Cooper: COLT .357 KING COBRA REVOLVER now pressed hard against Cooper's face. Jim's teeth grit. Eyes hard as steel.

Not fucking around.

JIM  
ARE WE GOOD?

Cooper in a state of shock. His ears start RINGING.

Jim pushes the GUN harder against Cooper's face -

JIM  
I SAID ARE WE GOOD?

Snaps Cooper out of it. RINGING stops. Hands up.

COOPER  
Y - yes! We're good!

SIRENS approaching in the distance. Jim nods. Then... smiles as he pulls off disposable black LATEX GLOVES. Stuffs that GUN into the driver's side door. FIRES UP THE ENGINE to one of the fastest cars in the whole goddamned world.

JIM  
Now buckle up, Chongo: you're about to ride one helluva wave.

Cooper, struggling through his shock, nods quickly - reaches over and buckles-up. CLICK. ZIP. Ouch. REVEAL -

Jim has just ZIP-TIED Cooper's LEFT HAND to the BELT RECEIEVER immediately below the RED-LATCH BUCKLE. Pulls it tight. Off Cooper WINCING, unable to free his left hand now -

JIM  
Sorry, pard. Can't be too safe these days.

Puts the CHALLENGER into REVERSE. SIRENS closer -

#### EXT. CHALLENGER - DAY

BACKS-UP over COOPER'S CELL PHONE. EMMA'S FRIGHTENED VOICE shattering into a thousand pieces of CRACKED GLASS AND METAL -

Then HAULS ASS out of there!

Off the line fast as a racecar. TWO LAPD PATROL CARS rounding into view. Flanked by TWO LAPD MOTORCYCLES. SIRENS blaring. LIGHTS FLASHING. In Hot Pursuit, capital-H.

Beginning a CAR CHASE that would make William Friedkin proud.

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY (MOVING)**

POLICE CARS in the REAR-VIEW MIRROR. MOTORCYCLES gaining in the SIDE MIRRORS. Jim floors it - blink of an eye we're at 80MPH... Jim driving like a demon. 90MPH... Calm as can be.

JIM

Once upon a time, having sent off his disciples, Siddhartha Gautama - more commonly known as The Buddha - sat down in a grove to rest...

Cooper looks across to Jim. What in the holy fuck?

JIM

And it happened that while The Buddha was resting, some nearby Villagers' goods were stolen...

A TRUCK backs into their lane. Jim accelerates. Blows past a CAR on their left, slips in front of the car to avoid the truck - first of the two POLICE CARS SMASHING into the back of it! SECOND POLICE CAR SWERVES - makes it - continues its pursuit. MOTORCYCLE COPS alongside it. CHAOS. RAIN.

JIM

The Villagers went in search of the thief and came upon The Buddha under a tree. "Pray oh Blessed One," they asked, "did you see a Thief pass by with our goods?"

INTERSECTION in front of a FREEWAY OVERPASS. RED LIGHT. Cars crossing. Jim - FLOORS IT! Headed straight into the teeth of the TRAFFIC. Cooper is scared. Jim... is not.

JIM

The Buddha nodded: Yes indeed, he had seen the Thief pass by with their stolen goods...

HAIRPIN TURN. Jim pulls PERFECTLY into the slipstream of TRAFFIC. Just gonna go ahead and say it: you've never seen driving like this before. Ever. Millimeters to spare in the stunning maneuver as we ROCKET toward the FREEWAY ONRAMP.

JIM

And so He asked them: "Which is better for you: That you go in search of the Thief...?"

SECOND POLICE CAR unable to make the slipstream. Spins out into ONCOMING TRAFFIC. FIRST MOTORCYCLE COP dumping his bike.

SECOND MOTORCYCLE COP able to continue the PURSUIT -

**EXT. L.A. FREEWAY - DAY**

Challenger now using the SHOULDER next to the SLOW LANE like a RACE STRIP. Vehicle moving so fast it's a BLUR. Going upwards of 150MPH now.

JIM

"... Or that you go in search of Yourselves?"

The world beyond the windows of the car one big rainy smudge of brake lights and cityscape.

JIM

The Villagers instantly grasped what Siddhartha Gautama was saying...

Motorcycle Cop a receding RED-AND-BLUE DOT.

LAPD HELICOPTER suddenly visible in the STORMY SKIES above.

Jim DOWNSHIFTS - takes the NEXT EXIT.

Looks to Cooper. Holding his gaze amidst the chaos.

Jim Ryder the eye of this particular storm.

JIM

And so they sat down to learn the truth directly from The Buddha.

Wait? Are we DOWNTOWN now? L.A. freeways: nothin' like 'em.

**EXT. DTLA - DAY**

Rainy, iconic DTLA SKYLINE looming above us now. Too many TUNNELS and BRIDGES and BACK ALLEYS to choose from. CHOPPER approaching in the distance. Jim unperturbed. Turn. Gas. Another turn. More gas. Alleyway. Side street. Whoah -

## INT. CHALLENGER - DAY

PULLS THE WHEEL - maneuvering into the DARK SHELTER beneath one of the city's myriad HISTORIC BRIDGES. CHOPPER passing overhead on its now-futile search.

Jim KILLS the engine. SILENCE in the aftermath. Reaches for that GUN in the side of his door. Cooper's eyes going wide as he tries to squirm away from Jim. One hand still tightly bound, the other hand raised -

COOPER  
Please!

Jim looks to the GUN in his hand. And for just a moment we glimpse some type of MENTAL ANGUISH behind Jim's eyes. A reminder: Cool as he is, this guy is batshit crazy. Right?

He SPINS THE CHAMBER. Toys with the gun's SAFETY. Puts it ON.

Phew. Cooper relieved. But still pleading.

COOPER  
I have a wife -

Jim flicks the safety OFF.

JIM  
I don't care about that.

Puts the safety back ON. Try again.

COOPER  
I have a kid -

Flicks the safety OFF.

JIM  
Don't care about that either.

Leaves it OFF. Oh, no.

COOPER  
Please Jim...

JIM  
Only care about one thing.

Jim studies the GUN in his hand. Feeling the heft of the .357 King Cobra. Almost as if for the first time. As if...

*Maybe this gun wasn't his to begin with?*

Jim returns his attention to Cooper. Gaze piercing.

JIM  
Would you rather find the Thief...

Jim's finger slides to the TRIGGER.

JIM  
Or would you rather find Yourself?

COOPER  
M - myself?

Jim contemplates the sincerity of Cooper's answer. Mulling his next actions very carefully -

COOPER  
Please, Jim! Myself! I'd rather  
find myself!

Jim studies Cooper. Then looks to the GUN. Contemplating.

JIM  
Word "person" comes from the Latin "persona" - referring to the masks actors wore in stage plays at the time. Your "personality" thus being a compilation of the roles you play from moment to moment. And yet - while your personality is not fixed, there is a Source deep within you from which all your various personas emanate. And that Source is fixed and unique to you. So the object of the heist in which we are currently engaged, which is of more value than all the money in all the banks in all the world, is the Source lying deep within you, Cooper Reed. Buried beneath all the various personas you've mistaken for your actual Self. It's the heist of a lifetime. One that all of us, if we're lucky enough and willing to push through our fear, must embark upon to become - to remind ourselves - Who We Are.

It's okay.

Cooper doesn't know what to say either.

Is Jim Ryder certifiable? Obviously. But is he also speaking the truth? Possibly? Either way: is he carrying a big fat fucking gun? Yep.

COOPER  
Wh - why are you doing this?

Jim frowns.

JIM  
When someone gives you a gift you  
don't ask them why, Cooper. You  
accept it. With gratitude - which  
begins with a "thank you."

A beat. Cooper realizes that was his cue.

COOPER  
Th - thank you?

JIM  
You're welcome. Now -

LOUD MUSIC outside the Challenger pulls their attention.

REVEAL a A BEAT-UP MINIVAN parking beneath the bridge in the distance up ahead of them. Unaware of Jim and Cooper's presence. Jim and Cooper watching in keen silence as:

SMOKE seeps from the minivan's now-cracked windows. Hot boxing. MUSIC blaring. SKATEBOARD STICKERS plastered all over the minivan's dented exterior. SEVERAL SKATER TEENS SILHOUETTED inside. Getting high. Having fun.

Jim is contemplating what to do about the unexpected company. GUN in hand. Safety OFF. It feels dangerous... for the teens.

Off the SHEETS OF RAIN falling all around the bridge -

#### **EXT. FEDERAL BUILDING - DAY**

THOSE SAME SHEETS OF RAIN falling halfway across the city.

On the 17-story building that's an ode to cold efficiency.

#### **INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - FBI OFFICES - VCU - DAY**

A flurry of activity in the Violent Crimes Unit. The stable of AGENTS investigating the plethora of cases that fall under their purview on a daily basis: Murder. Manslaughter. Rape. Aggravated Assault. Robbery. Just to name a few.

Special Agent-In-Charge (SAC) SANDRA MENDES (40s. Lifelong Angeleno. Loves the Clippers. Hates the beach. Most observant person you'll ever meet.) hangs up her phone. Starts from her desk toward the elevators -

SANDRA  
21-13 in progress. Robber got away.

Her partner, SPECIAL AGENT DONALD KOWALSKI (20s. Rookie. "Special K" until Sandra says otherwise.) grabs his sport coat. Hustles to keep up with his Boss.

DONALD  
Holy shit...

SANDRA  
Driving what is being described as, "a street-legal race car." Likely stripped for parts and on its way to every chop-shop in the city by now. Perp probably meeting with his fence as we speak.

DONALD  
So we're headed... to the scene?

SANDRA  
Very good, Special K.

DON  
And our LAPD liaison?

SANDRA  
Meeting us there.

She hits the ELEVATOR button.

DONALD  
What about that Aggravated Assault call over at Kingsdale?

SANDRA  
Mental hospital near the Rose Bowl?

DONALD  
Pasadena, yeah.

A beat as Sandra considers that. Her supremely patient gaze cast on the ELEVATOR LIGHTS as she waits for it to arrive.

SANDRA  
Did you know that a lion is capable of capturing and killing a lemming?

Donald adjusts his collar. Even though he doesn't have to.

DONALD  
I would imagine that to be the case, yes.

SANDRA

But the energy required to do so exceeds the caloric content of the lemming itself. So a lion that spends its days hunting lemmings would actually starve to death. What a lion needs are big, strong animals - like antelope. They take more speed and strength to capture and kill, but once caught? Antelope provide a feast for the lion and her entire pride. So when you're presented with the choice between an Aggravated Assault call or an Armed Bank Robbery you have to ask yourself: "Do I want to spend my day chasing lemmings... or do I want to spend it hunting antelope?"

DING. The elevator arrives.

DONALD  
Armed Bank Robbery?

Sandra steps into the elevator.

SANDRA  
Very good, Special K.

Her young protégé following right behind her.

SANDRA  
Lions don't hunt lemmings.

Off the ELEVATOR DOORS closing -

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY**

CAR DOOR closes as Jim steps out of the Challenger.

Balling up the MSRP STICKER he's removed as we stay inside the cage of the car with Cooper. Watching from the passenger seat as Jim goes to the back of the car. POPS THE TRUNK.

From Cooper's obscured POV we can't see what Jim is doing. But the CAR rocks ever-so-slightly. Jim FUCKING AROUND with something back there. Possibly rearranging the CASH in the DUFFEL BAG? Cooper nervous...

Unsuspecting MINIVAN full of STONED TEENAGED SKATERS still parked in the darkness beneath the bridge up ahead. Oblivious to the shadowy presence of Jim Ryder.

WHAM. Trunk slams. Startling Cooper. Who can only watch as Jim comes back around the car. Tosses aside the PAPER DEALERSHIP PLATE he just pulled.

Then saunters past the Challenger toward the MINIVAN.

GUN tucked between the front of his thrifted-looking HONOR GUARD-style pants with the GOLD PIPING and his billowy white V-neck shirt with light blue '70s-pattern.

Something obscured in Jim's other hand. Cooper too focused on that GUN to be able to tell for sure. This feels BAD. Like something terrible is about to happen as Jim approaches...

COOPER

No no no...

Still ZIP-TIED to the car though. Helpless to do anything but watch from the PASSENGER SEAT as the scene plays-out from Cooper's CONTAINED POV:

Jim approaches the MINIVAN. Knocks on the DRIVER'S WINDOW. It rolls down. MUSIC HEARD LOUDER. SKATER TEEN visible in the DRIVER'S SIDE MIRROR. Smoke wafting out. WORDS EXCHANGED. Seems civil? Hard to tell. Wait. Maybe... not so civil?

Cooper concerned. Especially when the beat-up MINIVAN'S SIDE DOOR on the DRIVER'S SIDE slides open. More smoke wafting out. MORE SKATER TEENS visible inside the minivan.

Words definitely being exchanged now. Shit. And then -

COOPER

Oh fuck.

Jim pulls the .357 on the Driver. Skater Kids' hands go up. Scared shitless. Tension. Jim turns the GUN on the kids in the back of the van. Things spinning out-of-control. FAST.

Cooper yanks on that zip-tie! Hard! But can't free himself. Opens the GLOVE COMPARTMENT with his free hand. Nothing. Needs to stop the situation from spiraling. But what to do? -

HONK! Cooper presses his RIGHT HAND down on the HORN. HONK! Again. And then LAYS DOWN ON IT. A LONG LOUD HONKING SOUND!

Pulling Jim and the Skater Teens from their argument. Jim lowering the REVOLVER as he looks across the rainswept shadows beneath the bridge. Hard-to-read look on his face.

Doesn't seem to care when the SKATER TEENS slam the doors of the MINIVAN and race away!

Jim just lets them go. Makes his way back to the Challenger.

Gets inside. WINCES. Hint of a GRUNT. Likely from some old INJURY in his mysterious past. Staring straight ahead.

JIM

Was wonderin' how long it would take you.

COOPER

Take me?

JIM

To grow a pair.

COOPER

To...

Jim turns to face Cooper.

JIM

Grow a pair. Of balls. Jesus H. Christ, Cooper: had to keep those poor kids on a string way past its breaking point.

COOPER

A string?

JIM

Told 'em I was an Undercover Cop. Went well at first - but then I had to keep things going to see if you'd ever step-in...

Jim barks with LAUGHTER. A thought suddenly hitting him.

JIM

You know what's amazing? I told 'em I was an Undercover Cop - and from that moment on? For the rest of my interaction with 'em? I was one.

COOPER

An Undercover Cop?

Jim nods. Puts his full attention on Cooper. Big fat smile.

JIM

Identity. It's just so... *fluid* ain't it?

Cooper doesn't know what to say. No longer as quick with a mindless quip to fill an uncomfortable silence as he was when their Test Drive began. Jim recognizes it. Likes it.

JIM

Now, grasshopper: are you willing  
to continue our little adventure?

Cooper glances at that GUN. Not much of a choice. Nods.

JIM

My first question in the curriculum  
was Who Are You? My second question  
is thusly: What Scares You?

COOPER

What scares me?

JIM

More specifically:  
(deadly serious)  
What in the hell are you so  
goddamned afraid of, Cooper Reed?

A catch in Cooper's throat. He knows the answer to that one more quickly than he would care to admit. Sets his troubled gaze forward. Rain outside the car creating the appearance of tears running down his troubled visage.

Off the RAIN FALLING outside the WINDSHIELD -

**INT. LARGE CHAIN BANK - DAY**

RAIN FALLS outside the large BAY WINDOWS.

Controlled chaos. FEDS and LAPD OFFICERS hard at work. CSIs scouring the scene. Sandra a commanding presence - even at a remove from the action: she is currently focused on her iPAD, upon which she is reviewing the BANK'S CCTV CAMERA FOOTAGE:

An image of JIM MID-ROBBERY paused on her screen. But his cheap blue disposable MASK, big-ass Kurt Cobain-style SUNGLASSES and OVERCOAT make him all but impossible to ID.

SANDRA

*Perp didn't hurt anyone...*

Sandra continues to study the image closely - and we realize it's so she can POSITION herself EXACTLY as Jim was positioned at the moment of the HOLD-UP.

A meticulous big game hunter hard at work.

Sandra now stands in the EXACT SAME POSITION Jim had been in when he raised his gun. She looks to the SPOT where the Bank Teller would have been standing. Takes-in the entirety of her surroundings. What else can she see from here?

Donald approaches. Wet from the rainstorm. Hates to interrupt, but -

DONALD  
Getaway car had dealership plates.

Sandra... is actually impressed. Gives Donald her attention.

SANDRA  
Already got your hands on the  
Traffic Cam footage?

Donald shakes his head.

DONALD  
So much red tape I could get a head  
start wrapping next year's  
Christmas presents. Witness.

Sandra is even more impressed. Raises an eyebrow. Spill.

DONALD  
Old lady who happened to be walking  
her dog when the perp took off.  
Nearly ran her little Peaches over.

SANDRA  
Poodle?

DONALD  
Bulldog actually.

SANDRA  
Huh. Anyway.

DONALD  
Said she's one-hundred percent  
certain the car had, quote: "Those  
tacky paper license plate thingys  
that tell you what dealership the  
car came from."

SANDRA  
Happen to remember which  
dealership?

Donald shakes his head.

SANDRA  
So much for tacky paper license  
plate thingys. Make and model?

Shakes his head again.

DONALD  
Said she's not a car person.

SANDRA  
Get a look at the driver? Or is she  
not a people person either?

DONALD  
Door number Two. Just said the car  
was, and I quote again, "Moving  
faster than shit through a goose."

SANDRA  
So she's a goose person.

DONALD  
If the bird quacks...

Mulling the kernel of information they've acquired.

SANDRA  
You think it's possible he stole a  
car from a Dealership? Used it to  
pull off the bank heist?

DONALD  
Kind of brilliant, actually.

Sandra nods. It is indeed.

SANDRA  
Need to see if any robberies have  
been reported by car dealerships  
within a 50-mile radius.

DONALD  
Must be over 1,000 of 'em.

SANDRA  
So narrow it down: we know it's  
some kind of street-legal race car.  
Start with the usual suspects:  
Chevy. Dodge. Ford. Expand out to  
the higher-end dealers if needed.

DONALD  
Still probably over 500 of 'em.

SANDRA  
So get to work, Special K! Clock's  
ticking!

Donald nods, scurries off. Sandra shaking her head as she  
returns her attention to her iPad.

Resumes standing in the EXACT position Jim had been standing in. Looks around from his vantage point. Really taking in her surroundings...

Curiosity piqued by something seen from JIM'S POV as she looks outside one of the LARGE BANK WINDOWS:

From this vantage point Sandra can see the RED CURB where Jim had parked the Challenger behind the BANK. Realizes:

SANDRA

*He was keeping an eye on the  
getaway car...*

But why? She goes to the window. Looks through the falling rain. Eyes locked on that now-empty RED CURB. And...

A YOUNG WOMAN at that same spot. In the rain. No umbrella. Holding her PHONE in one hand. A BABY in the other.

Sandra intrigued by the odd sight.

Off the RAIN FALLING on the Young Woman outside the bank -

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY**

Cooper's face is streaked by the RAIN beyond the WINDSHIELD.

Lost in thought as he continues to consider Jim's query.

COOPER

I...

A catch in his throat. Nerves shot. Eyes glassy. Admits -

COOPER

I sometimes fear... my fear.

He looks to Jim. Does that make any sense? Jim nods.

COOPER

That it'll overwhelm me. Break me.  
That I'll either go crazy, or...

He trails-off. Doesn't even want to say it.

JIM

Something worse?

Cooper nods. Something way worse.

COOPER  
I've been on anti-anxiety meds. For  
the past eight, nine months. Ever  
since...

He trails-off. Doesn't want to think about "ever since."

Looks back to Jim. To that GUN.

COOPER  
Are you gonna let me go?

JIM  
You mean: am I gonna set you free?

Cooper nods. Jim smiles. Sadly. Sincerely.

JIM  
Up to you, Cooper. Always has been.

Cooper considers that. Wonders if it's true.

Suddenly wonders something else, too:

COOPER  
What scares you?

Jim nods. Good question. Fires up the ENGINE. It ROARS.

JIM  
You're lookin' at it.

He U-TURNS. Begins driving out from the cover of the bridge.

COOPER  
Driving?

JIM  
Robbing banks.

COOPER  
But you already did that - which  
means you've conquered your fear?

JIM  
Still have two more to go.

COOPER  
What?

Jim nods. That's right.

JIM  
Three banks in one day.

COOPER

But -

JIM

But nothin. Just sit back and enjoy  
the ride. Or don't. Up to you.

He puts the pedal to the metal.

Off the RAIN FALLING as they blast from the bridge -

**EXT. LARGE CHAIN BANK - DAY**

RAIN FALLS on PARKED CARS along a busy CITY STREET.

Sandra is making her way to the Young Woman still wandering  
the perimeter of the crime scene with a baby in her arms.

SANDRA

Ma'am?

The Young Woman turns -

REVEALING EMMA. Cassidy in her arms. Distraught. Especially  
when she finds the ITEM she was using her phone to look for -

EMMA

Oh my god...

Cooper's CELL PHONE. Smashed-up in the middle of the road.

EMMA

It's his.

SANDRA

Whose?

EMMA

My husband's. He hung up on me this  
morning. Stopped returning my  
calls. My texts. So I pulled up his  
location - and traced it... here.

Sandra is intrigued. Pieces possibly falling into place.  
Looks to the BANK where there's just been a robbery. Looks  
back to the distraught young wife and mother...

SANDRA

Your husband: he works at the bank?

Emma shakes her head. Distracted.

EMMA  
Car salesman.

Holy shit. Pieces definitely falling into place.

SANDRA  
Mind if I ask you a few questions?

Emma shakes her head. Holding Cassidy in her arms as Sandra leads them across the street toward the BANK.

Off Emma, picking up the SMASHED PHONE from the RAINY STREET -

**EXT. CHALLENGER - DAY**

CHALLENGER TIRES roll across RAINY STREETS.

**INT. CHALLENGER - SAME (MOVING)**

Gliding back into the stormy sprawl of Greater Los Angeles. Generic STRIP MALLS. TRAFFIC LIGHTS reflected on WET BLACKTOP. Cooper watching all of it pass by his window. Feels like a dream. Hypnotic. Grimy. Beautiful L.A.

COOPER  
Why three banks?

JIM  
Got a friend on the inside. Told me the Armored Truck company that services the banks we're knocking-over has quietly been on strike for the past two weeks - meaning each of these banks is swollen with cash right now. Ready to pop like a tick. But my buddy also told me that this strike is quickly coming to a resolution. Maybe even as soon as tomorrow. Which means if we don't hit 'em now? Poof. All that excess cash up in smoke.

Cooper nods. Considering all of this. Not sure he believes Jim. Jim wincing as he rubs his side. That mysterious old injury bothering him.

Off the building intensity of the RAINSTORM -

**INT. LARGE CHAIN BANK - DAY**

RAIN BATTERS the large bay windows.

Emma's anxious gaze affixed to the storm outside. Sitting at a desk amidst the crime scene. Cassidy fussing in her arms. Emma tries to soothe her as Sandra returns with two COFFEES.

EMMA

Thank you.

Cassidy CRIES. Emma frowns. Sets her coffee on the desk beside Sandra, who is now seated atop it. Body language casual. Gaze not so much. Donald standing behind her.

SANDRA

Where'd you say your husband works?

EMMA

Dodge dealership. Over on Colorado?

Sandra's gaze cuts to Donald - he hustles off. Emma suddenly aware she's being interrogated. Especially when Sandra slides her iPad to her - pulls up the bank's SILENT CCTV FOOTAGE:

VIA IPAD FOOTAGE: A MAN in a cheap blue disposable mask and sunglasses enters. GUN in hand. Commands everyone to get down. Points his gun at the BANK CLERK. IMAGE PAUSES.

SANDRA

Is that your husband?

Emma stares at the PAUSED image. Eyes blinking rapidly. In a borderline state of shock: how did she get here? Trying to ID her husband for a bank robbery in a car stolen from his lot?

She looks closely. Has to admit...

EMMA

I... don't know.

The mask and glasses and matching skin tone and hair color make it impossible to say it's NOT Cooper. Sandra nods as Emma looks up at her. This is A LOT.

Cassidy CRIES AGAIN. Emma nods toward her fussy baby.

EMMA

Do you mind if I...

SANDRA

Not at all.

She watches as Emma stands. Coffee untouched atop the desk.

Emma moves with gently bouncing steps across the bank floor. Trying to soothe her baby. Tenderly rocking Cassidy at one of the large BAY WINDOWS next to ANOTHER DESK.

Looking out the windows. Seeing nothing. Her mind a blur -

SANDRA (O.C.)  
Forgot this.

Emma turns. Sandra is holding her coffee. Sets the iPad on the nearby desk as she extends her hands in a gesture that says: I can take your baby for a few minutes if you'd like?

Emma... nods. Desperate for some help right now. Hands Cassidy to Sandra. Takes the coffee. Takes a sip. Ahhhh...

Sandra gently rocks the baby. And you know what? She would've been a great mom - long story short? Wasn't in the cards. Didn't want it to be. World's Greatest Auntie, though.

Emma takes another sip of coffee. Feeling more human again.

SANDRA  
You're... worried?

Emma nods. A thousand thoughts racing through her head.

SANDRA  
For your husband?

Emma takes another sip of coffee. Admits...

EMMA  
About him.

Woah. Sandra just keeps rocking the baby. Forcing Emma to fill the silence.

EMMA  
He's... been under a lot of stress lately.

SANDRA  
Financial?

EMMA  
Yes. Of course. That. Money's always tight. And it seems like it's only getting tighter by the day. And, well...

Eyes welling with tears now. Forces a smile.

EMMA  
Cooper's a good man.

Um. Nobody said he wasn't. Sandra lets that silence remain.

EMMA

Gave up his dreams of being a  
writer to provide more security for  
Cassidy and me after...

She trails-off. Long enough that Sandra finally has to ask -

SANDRA

"After?"

EMMA

After his dad... "died."

Sandra nods. Getting an idea about what happened.

SANDRA

"Died?" Like...

Emma nods. Yeah. Died. Like THAT.

EMMA

It was a real shock for all of us.  
Nobody more so than for Cooper.  
Started suffering these horrible  
bouts of anxiety. Really severe  
panic attacks. Even experienced a  
few "hallucinatory events" - which  
I had no idea could happen in times  
of extreme mental strain.  
Eventually got him on some psych  
meds. Which helped. Until...

Cassidy starts to squirm in Sandra's arms. Emma extends her hands. Takes Cassidy back. Eyes glassy. Voice trembling now -

EMMA

I'm sorry, could you grab me a  
tissue?

Sandra nods, looks around, doesn't see any - Emma motions toward the NEARBY DESK upon which Sandra had set the iPad:

EMMA

Should be some in the top drawer.

Sandra looks quizzically to Emma. How does she know that?

Opens the top drawer of the desk - sure enough: several disposable packets of KLEENEX. Hands one to Emma. Curious. Emma can tell - as she dabs at her eyes:

EMMA

We bank here.

Oh, boy. Emma nods in response to Sandra's intrigued-incredulous look. More pieces falling into place?

EMMA

Sat at this very desk when we were trying to get a loan for this cute little bungalow we had our eye on. I was having a horrible allergy attack that day and the Loan Officer we'd met with was kind enough to give me one of these disposable packets of Kleenex.

(beat)

Wasn't kind enough to give us the loan, but...

Emma shrugs. Finishes dabbing her eyes. None of this on her Bingo card when she woke up this morning. Shakes her head -

EMMA

My dad left my mom and me when I was only three, so...

She trails-off. Sandra knows what she's getting at.

SANDRA

Cooper's dad was the closest thing you had to a father.

Emma nods.

EMMA

This has been hard on all of us.

She looks away. Anger. Resentment. Sympathy. Fear. Grief. All at war in her heart. Tears spilling silently down her cheeks now. Sandra nods sympathetically.

SANDRA

I'm sorry.

She means it. Emma can tell. Appreciates it. Wipes her eyes. Blows her nose. Takes a deep breath.

EMMA

Anyway. Cooper stopped taking his meds about a week ago. Said he felt like they were a crutch. Which is ridiculous. But you can only lead a horse to water, right? And he seemed fine for the first few days. But there was an edge that had started to creep in.

(MORE)

EMMA (CONT'D)

A kind of manic cheeriness mixed  
with mood crashes that had me,  
well, like I said... worried.

Cassidy suddenly COOS. Emma and Sandra follow the infant's gaze as she reaches toward the iPad and its FROZEN IMAGE of a MAN who it's impossible to say ISN'T her Daddy. If Cassidy was old enough to say her first word, it might be "Da-da."

Off the paused CCTV FOOTAGE of the BANK ROBBER -

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY**

COOPER'S FACE distorted in the wide-angled SIDE MIRROR.

Challenger parked across the street from a SECOND BANK. This BANK as large and generic as the first one. BUSY STREET filled with TRAFFIC between our vantage point inside the CHALLENGER and the BANK across the rainy street.

Jim's CHEAP BLUE MASK at his chin. Big-ass Kurt Cobain REFLECTIVE SHADES on his head. DUFFEL BAG with FADED LETTERS on his lap. GUN ready. Casing the joint one last time.

COOPER

I... don't believe you.

Jim looks to Cooper. Curious. Cooper looks to Jim.

COOPER

About the armored truck thing.

JIM

The strike my guy told me about?  
How each of our three banks is all  
swolled-up with cash?

Cooper nods. Yeah, that.

COOPER

I'm not exactly sure why you're  
doing this. But I don't think  
that's the reason.

Jim's demeanor changes on a dime. SCARY. Smile gone. Eyes reptile cold. No mercy in his persona. A hardened criminal.

JIM

You calling me a liar?

Cooper can feel the scary shift in Jim's personality. Doesn't know what to say - especially when Jim pulls out that GUN and shoves it against Cooper's TEMPLE.

JIM

You think I'm a liar, Cooper? You  
dare to besmirch me like that? Huh?

Woah. Jim's finger on the TRIGGER. A HINT of pressure -

JIM

Is this what you're so goddamned  
afraid of? Sitting in a car parked  
halfway across the city? Brains  
splattered across the windshield  
and dashboard? Pretty little wifey  
and daughter getting the call no  
wifey and daughter ever wanna get?

*FLASHCUT: a CAR parked in an ALLEY. A MAN inside the car seen in SILHOUETTE. GUN TO TEMPLE. BLAM! -*

BACK TO SCENE: GUN shoved against Cooper's temple. Hard.

COOPER

I -

Words not coming. Finally - just nods. YES. This is what  
Cooper's so goddamned afraid of. Jim can see it. Isn't  
surprised. Has known all along in his weird witchy way.

Eases his grip on the GUN. Nods. Damned-straight.

JIM

I am many things, Cooper Reed. But  
a liar is not one of them! I have  
spoken of innumerable things  
throughout my life. Possibly even  
of ALL things in one way or another  
- and not one of them has ever been  
an untruth. I am on the Noble  
Eightfold Path and I do not lie. Is  
that understood?

Cooper nods. Quickly. Gun still pressed to his temple. Yes.  
He understands. He really does. Please.

Jim... eventually... calming down.

Lowers the REVOLVER from Cooper's temple. A hint softer. Some  
regret palpable. Probably wishes he hadn't had that outburst.  
The old charismatic shaman-charlatan returning. Jim SIGHS.

JIM

Besides: ain't no such thing as a  
lie anyway. Keep that in mind,  
you'll go places. Copy?

Cooper... nods. Realizes Jim expects him to say it back.

COOPER  
Um, Copy.

Jim smiles that devil-may-care smile. And damn if it isn't the most engaging smile we've ever seen. The kind of smile you actually want to believe - even though the person wielding it just had a gun pressed to your head. Jim LAUGHS -

JIM  
You shoulda' seen your face!

Cooper can't help it - suddenly blurts:

COOPER  
Are you insane?

Jim looks to him. Doesn't seem to be offended.

JIM  
Well, now, that's an interesting question: because going out of one's mind on occasion is tremendously important. You see: in going out of your MIND you come back into your SENSES. Because if you stay in your mind every second of every day you become over-rational. Which is just as dangerous as becoming ir-rational. Like a very rigid bridge that has no give in it. And without any give in it, that very rigid bridge is eventually going to crumble under the weight of its load. So: am I insane, to quote your rather insensitive inquiry? Possibly. But really, when it comes down to it, going a little crazy now and then is the only thing that keeps a person sane. Insanity: it's what keeps you IN-sanity.

Jim smiles. Cooper holds his gaze. Studying Jim Ryder - who suddenly closes his eyes. Ostentatiously "centering" himself as he TAKES A DEEP BREATH. Muttering a quiet MANTRA -

Abruptly opens his eyes. Ready. Pulls up his BLUE DISPOSABLE MASK. Lowers those big-ass Cobain SUNGLASSES. Slips on another PAIR OF CHEAP BLACK LATEX GLOVES. Smiles.

JIM  
Okay then. Be right back.

Off Jim slipping out of the Challenger, SLAMMING THE DOOR -

**INT. LARGE CHAIN BANK - DAY**

BANK DOORS abruptly SLAM SHUT behind Donald, hustling inside.

Striding over to Sandra with the contained excitement of having something BIG to share. Makes eye contact with Sandra, who is once again seated at the desk before Emma.

DONALD

Found him.

Sandra remains calm. Nods again: continue. Donald glances at Emma. Should he be sharing this in front of her?

SANDRA

Please, Special K, continue.

Donald nods.

DONALD

Dealership where her husband works?  
Has a Challenger SRT Demon 170  
currently checked-out for a Test  
Drive. Only one like it on the lot -  
maybe in the entire city.  
Definitely what one would call a  
"street-legal race car."

Sandra nods. Keeping cool as the information flows.

SANDRA

And the dealership's VTD?

DONALD

Damned-near impossible to get a  
signal in this weather...  
(a beat - smiles)  
But they just located it.

Not even Sandra can stifle a reaction to that: Holy shit.

SANDRA

So what are we waiting for?

Donald smiles even bigger -

DONALD

Nothing.

- as he sets a WALKIE-TALKIE atop the desk. TUNES it to the PROPER CHANNEL. Loud SQUAWKING and SHOUTING heard as a POLICE OFFICER coordinates SEVERAL VEHICLES.

DONALD  
LAPD Liaison's at the Dealership  
now - using the vehicle's VTD to  
coordinate the bust.

A thrill of energy PULLS US into the WALKIE-TALKIE SPEAKER -

**INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - KEY ROOM - DAY**

As we EMERGE out the other side of A SECOND WALKIE-TALKIE.

KEYTRAK VAULT in the back room of the DEALERSHIP being used as a BASE COMMAND for the LAPD-FBI JOINT TASK FORCE.

LAPD LIAISON OFFICER (40s) acting as DISPATCH. His WALKIE-TALKIE - the one from which we emerged - propped at the KEY SAFE beside the TOUCHSCREEN MONITOR.

ON THE MONITOR: The CHALLENGER SRT DEMON 170 PAGE. A GREEN DOT conveying the CHALLENGER'S CURRENT GPS POSITION via the VTD (Vehicle Tracking Device - a simple tracker used by all dealerships while a car is under their possession).

LAPD LIAISON  
(into Walkie-Talkie)  
Vehicle currently parked. Code-3.  
All available units to the scene...

Off BLUE DOTS indicating the GPS POSITION of the CAVALRY OF PATROL CARS descending upon the Challenger via the MONITOR -

**INT. LAPD SUV - DAY (MOVING)**

BLUE and RED LIGHTS FLASHING atop an LAPD SUV.

POLICE OFFICERS racing through rain-slicked city streets.

VARIOUS SHOTS: show MULTIPLE RESPONDING UNITS blasting across GREATER L.A. toward the GREEN DOT on their DASH DISPLAYS.

Off WATER FROM A PUDDLE spraying a patrol car's windows -

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY**

RAIN FALLS on the PASSENGER-SIDE WINDOW of the Challenger.

Cooper keeping close watch on the SECOND BANK that Jim has just ENTERED. DOORS closing slowly behind him -

Whereupon Cooper gets to work! Desperate to FREE HIMSELF from the parked car before Jim returns. He repeatedly yanks his ZIP-TIED left wrist - hard enough to draw a sliver of blood.

But it's no use. The zip-tie is too tight. Cooper glances back toward the BANK: LOOKS quiet. But he knows what's going on in there, which makes this all the more suspenseful...

He yanks his left hand one more time -

CHIRP-CHIRP. What was that?

Cooper yanks his left hand again. CHIRP-CHIRP. Wait. It's the sound of... THE CAR ALARM CHIRPING. Cooper suddenly realizes -

COOPER

*The key.*

He reaches his right hand across his body to retrieve the KEY from his left front pocket. Suspense mounting as he attempts to fish it out...

He glances toward the BANK. Still quiet. No sign of Jim - EUREKA! - Cooper lifts the CAR KEY from his pocket!

Off the gleaming CAR KEY -

**INT. LAPD POLICE CRUISER - DAY (MOVING)**

The CAR KEYS at the IGNITION of a PATROL CAR STEERING WHEEL.

Another POLICE CAR racing across the city. Nearly at that GREEN GPS DOT indicating the Charger's CURRENT LOCATION -

POLICE OFFICER

Approaching suspect. Nearly there!

Off the WALKIE-TALKIE the POLICE OFFICER speaks into -

**INT. LARGE CHAIN BANK - DAY**

Sandra's WALKIE-TALKIE atop the desk.

Sandra is glued to it. Donald at her side. Both of them listening with rapt attention to the COMMUNICATIONS -

A BABY CRIES. Cassidy. Emma still here. Trying to console her Infant. Emma's expression filled with a deep sense of concern. She rocks Cassidy as she carries her to the window.

Feels like she knows how this story is going to end.

Off the RAIN STREWN CITY STREETS beyond the bank windows -

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY**

RAIN PELTS the windows of the parked Challenger.

Cooper trying to maneuver himself into the DRIVER'S SEAT. But it's impossible: too twisted-up because of that damned zip-tie. Glances out the window:

SILHOUETTES of MOVEMENT in the BANK. Robbery that we know is taking place inside clearly heating up. Fuck! Cooper suddenly realizes something -

Moves the KEYS to his zip-tied left hand. Uses BOTH HANDS to FREE the VALET KEY from the FOB. Drops the FOB - because in his free hand he now holds the SLENDER METAL VALET KEY.

Akin to a very small, very dull BLADE.

Which he begins using to "saw" off the ZIP-TIE...

**INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - KEY ROOM - DAY**

BLUE GPS DOTS on the MONITOR converge on the GREEN DOT...

**EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY**

CAVALRY OF LAPD VEHICLES almost there...

**INT. LARGE CHAIN BANK - DAY**

Sandra glued to her WALKIE-TALKIE...

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY**

Cooper actually making a small groove in the zip-tie. Yanks his hand. Zip-tie still holds. Gets back to "sawing" at it -

ALARM BELLS. His attention snaps to the BANK - fuck:

Jim emerges. DUFFEL stuffed with CASH. GUN in hand. Sprinting across the STREET. HORNS HONKING. BRAKES skidding. CHAOS.

A TUBBY SECURITY GUARD emerges from the BANK. Look on his face making it clear he wants to play HERO. Draws his GUN.

COOPER

Oh no...

**INT. LAPD POLICE CRUISER - DAY (MOVING)**

POLICE OFFICER

We have a visual!

**INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - KEY ROOM - DAY**

LAPD LIAISON

Confirmed! You're there!

THOSE BLUE GPS DOTS right on top of that GREEN DOT now -

**INT. LARGE CHAIN BANK - DAY**

Sandra riveted -

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY**

Jim slides back into the car. Smiling as he pulls his MASK down. BANK ALARM BLARING. Tosses the DUFFEL BAG in back. Notices that Cooper has tried to escape. FROWNS -

**EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY**

As the CAVALRY OF COPS arrives. Surrounding the PARKED CAR. Wedging in there so tight we can't even see the vehicle amidst the CLUSTER OF PATROL CARS and RAINFALL. COPS EMERGE. WEAPONS DRAWN. An OFFICER via MEGAPHONE - not fucking around:

POLICE OFFICER

COME OUT OF THE VEHICLE WITH YOUR  
HANDS UP!

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY**

But Jim just continues to stare at Cooper. Disappointed that he wanted to escape. Swipes the VALET KEY from Cooper's hand -

JIM

Can't leave you alone for two  
minutes!

Cooper reaches for the KEY FOB at his feet. Presses THE ALARM BUTTON - it BLARES! - Jim swipes that too - SILENCES IT -

BLAM! One of the BACK WINDOWS is SHOT OUT!

Cooper reacts, scared shitless, glances out the window:

That tubby Security Guard continues rushing across the rainy street toward them. Weapon drawn. BLAM! Takes another shot.

Wait. What?

**EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY**

As the CAVARLY OF POLICE OFFICERS continues to surround the PARKED VEHICLE they've been tracking via the VTD - REVEALING:

A BEAT-UP MINIVAN. SKATEBOARD STICKERS all over it. Parked at one of the numerous TACO JOINTS that dot our lovely city -

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY**

As Jim HAULS ASS from the SECOND BANK. No police cavalry here. BANK ALARM STILL BLARING. Security Guard taking another shot at the CHALLENGER as it races past - BLAM! - a BULLET hits the side of the vehicle - BLAM! - and ANOTHER ONE.

Cooper REACTS! Hit! BLOOD pooling at HIS RIGHT SIDE! Jim RACING AWAY as the CHALLENGER melds into rainy city streets -

**EXT. CITY STREETS - TACO JOINT - DAY**

And the TEENAGE SKATERS emerge from their MINIVAN. Hands up. Stoned as hell. Bad case of the MUNCHIES. High taking a bad turn as they're swarmed by POLICE OFFICERS, weapons drawn -

POLICE OFFICER  
Hands where we can see them!

Hands raised almost as high as he is:

TEENAGE SKATER  
All this for a little weed?

We PUSH PAST the fracas to REVEAL:

The CHALLENGER'S VTD. BLINKING on the floor beneath the DRIVER'S SEAT of the minivan where Jim must've slipped it.

Sinking feeling evident in the faces of the gathered cops -

**INT. LARGE CHAIN BANK - DAY**

Sandra listening via her WALKIE-TALKIE as an OFFICER at the scene puts it into words:

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)  
(via Walkie-Talkie)  
We got the wrong guys...

Not even Sandra can hide her consternation at that.

**INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - KEY ROOM - DAY**

LAPD Liaison nods in confirmation on his end:

LAPD LIAISON  
Must've removed the VTD from the  
Challenger. Smart motherfucker.

An ALERT CHIMES. LAPD Liaison can't believe it. Holy shit -

LAPD LIAISON  
And whoever he is? It looks like he  
just knocked off a second bank.  
Officers in pursuit...

**INT. LARGE CHAIN BANK - DAY**

Sandra reacts. More intrigued than angry. A hint of admiration in her eyes: the game she's hunting even more formidable than she expected.

SANDRA  
This fuckin' guy...

PRE-LAP the sound of POLICE SIRENS wailing -

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY (MOVING)**

Sorry. You can catch your breath in a few minutes.

Because right now -

THREE PATROL CARS are in rapid pursuit on the RAINY L.A. STREETS. CHALLENGER a FOUR-WHEELED PHANTOM of SPEED. Check out the ODOMETER: 80MPH... 90MPH... 100MPH and counting...

Hard to tell what Cooper's more worried about: the rapidly mounting SPEED of the Challenger or the BLOOD POOLING at his right side. He lifts his shirt, checks the wound - relieved:

It appears the bullet simply grazed him...

**EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY**

A line of OFFICERS at an INTERSECTION. Laying down a massive SPIKE STRIP. Fuckin' thing looks downright medieval...

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY (MOVING)**

Cooper glances over his shoulder: PATROL CARS falling back.

ODOMETER: 110MPH and counting. WE feel the speed of the car.

INTERSECTION hurtling into view. Jim frowns. Notices:

TWO GROUPS OF COPS on either side of the INTERSECTION.

SPIKE STRIP spread across the pavement.

Jim CRANKS THE WHEEL HARD. Challenger goes UP ON TWO OF 'EM -

Makes the turn. Wow. TWO of the PATROL CARS not so fortunate: they race across the SPIKE STRIP. RIPPING their TIRES to SHREDS - one VEHICLE flips, the OTHER skids out -

A spectacular CAR WRECK.

The Police Officers eventually emerging from their vehicles.

Final remaining PATROL CAR barely able to make the turn -

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY (MOVING)**

Only one set of FLASHING RED AND BLUES in the REAR-VIEW now.

Almost home free... but -

Cooper notices something in the RAINY SKIES overhead.

COOPER  
Is that... a helicopter?

Jim glances at the sky. Grimaces.

JIM  
Worse.

Takes a HARD RIGHT. FLOORS it -

**EXT. SKY - DAY**

God's Eye View:

Floating above the rainy city as the OBJECT IN QUESTION drops down into our POV... REVEALING:

AN LAPD DRONE.

DRONE POV: a PERFECTLY CALIBRATED IMAGE of the CHALLENGER on the streets below as the DRONE sails into the action.

SWOOPING into formation just behind the THIRD PATROL CAR -

(NOTE: we can utilize DRONE POV as needed for this chase.)

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY (MOVING)**

Jim scowls as he continues to maneuver the Challenger through TRAFFIC and INTERSECTIONS and PEDESTRIANS and RAIN and -

JIM  
A fucking drone. Bunch 'a sissies.

Races past a METRO SIGN - the sign wobbling like crazy due to the FORCE with which Jim blows past it. Jim suddenly getting an idea. Off the still-wobbling METRO SIGN -

**EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY**

CHALLENGER nearing speeds of 120MPH now. Third and final PATROL CAR not able to keep up. But the DRONE is: it follows the HIGH-SPEED PURSUIT with bloodless grace.

METRO TRAIN TUNNEL looming up in the MIDDLE OF THE HIGHWAY -

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY (MOVING)**

Cooper realizes what's about to happen. Braces himself -

**EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY**

CHALLENGER cuts across ONCOMING TRAFFIC.

Into the massive CENTER DIVIDER.

Rocketing along TRAIN TRACKS toward...

The gaping mouth of the METRO TUNNEL.

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY (MOVING)**

Jim FLOORS it. Cooper's lone free hand on the dashboard. METRO TUNNEL coming up FAST. And then -

Holy fuck.

**EXT. CITY STREETS - DRONE FOOTAGE - DAY**

VIA DRONE POV: Challenger disappears into the METRO TUNNEL.

One of the most terrifying magic tricks you'll ever see:

One minute the Challenger is here. The next minute - POOF! - it's disappeared into the darkness of a Metro Tunnel.

(FYI: this is based on a real high-speed L.A. car chase.)

THIRD PATROL CAR hits brakes. Restrained by law. And sanity.

But the DRONE?

Easily follows the CHALLENGER into the tunnel.

**INT. METRO TUNNELS - DAY**

Pitch black. ENGINE ROAR. Eerie glow. VROOM! CHALLENGER blows past us. Headlights disappearing back into the obsidian darkness of the METRO TUNNEL. A beat. Then -

The DIGITAL MOSQUITO-LIKE HUM of the LAPD DRONE as it rounds the SAME BEND of the METRO TUNNEL. Casting a HYPNOTIC ARC OF LIGHT as it PURSUES the Challenger into the DARKNESS...

**INT. CHALLENGER - METRO TUNNELS - DAY (MOVING)**

We blitz down dark tunnels. FAST. Sturdy frame and wide tires of the Challenger able to handle the rough road. Wheels spitting gravel. Stout body able to straddle METRO TRACKS.

SPARKS PERIODICALLY SPRAYING as the Challenger navigates tight passageways. METAL grinding BRICK and CONCRETE. Resultant SPARKS adding SURREAL VISUALS to the proceedings -

**INT. METRO TUNNELS - DAY**

DRONE POV: the CHALLENGER and METRO TUNNELS ahead of us are tinted NIGHT VISION GREEN as the drone easily keeps pace and the SPARKS continue to fly. Literally.

**INT. CHALLENGER - METRO TUNNELS - DAY (MOVING)**

Jim grimaces. DRONE visible in the REAR-VIEW. Thought he'd lost the fucking thing. Pedal to the metal. FASTER.

Feels like the car is gonna come off the tracks any moment.

**INT. METRO TUNNELS - METRO STOP PLATFORM - DAY**

ANGELENOS milling about. NINE-TO-FIVERS. STREET KIDS. INFLUENCERS. LAKERS FANS. Cranky. Wet. Jaded. Isolated via CELL PHONES. Waiting for the train in a METRO STATION that was fashionable maybe a couple decades or so ago.

ENGINE ROAR heard in one of the tunnels. LOUD. A few Commuters waiting for the train look in that direction. That isn't the sound of a train. ROARING GETTING LOUDER...

More Commuters looking up from their phones. Peering into the darkness of the METRO TUNNEL to the LEFT of the PLATFORM -

CHALLENGER suddenly blasts from the TUNNEL!

Continuing past the Commuters waiting on the platform and into the darkness of the ADJOINING TUNNEL to their RIGHT.

Stunned, silent expressions on the faces of the Angelenos.

Hard to do in this city. Expressions even MORE stunned when:

The LAPD DRONE emerges from the same tunnel - then whizzes into the adjoining tunnel on the right before disappearing.

Off the Commuters' dumbstruck faces -

**INT. CHALLENGER - METRO TUNNELS - DAY (MOVING)**

Jim is flooring it now. Cooper slack-jawed as they rush deeper into the labyrinthine tunnels beneath the city. LAPD DRONE still behind them. Easily keeping pace. Cooper frowns -

COOPER

Jim?

Jim follows Cooper's worried gaze:

FAINT LIGHT up ahead. Daylight? Getting TOO BRIGHT, TOO FAST. Jim realizing what's happening. Hits the BRAKES - hard.

JIM

You know how they say there's  
always a light at the end of the  
tunnel? Only problem with that is -

He kicks it into REVERSE -

JIM

Sometimes that light's a train.

A METRO TRAIN rounds into view at that!

Behemoth of steel ROCKETING toward us. Jim FLOORS it. Challenger now RACING IN REVERSE down the same tunnels from which it came. LAPD DRONE merely SWIVELING and REVERSING COURSE as it continues its pursuit of the Challenger.

METRO TRAIN bearing down on both of them now!

**EXT. METRO TUNNELS - METRO STOP PLATFORM - DAY**

The stunned Commuters at the Metro Stop platform are just starting to recover -

When the CHALLENGER blasts past them in REVERSE from the tunnel into which it had disappeared! Past the PLATFORM and then re-entering the tunnel on the LEFT from which it had initially emerged. NUMEROUS CELL PHONES out this time around -

LAPD DRONE whizzing past them moments later, then gliding into the same tunnel as the Challenger. Noses immediately buried into cell phones to check the BLURRY FOOTAGE -

Until the METRO TRAIN rockets past them! Disappearing into the same LEFT tunnel as it barrels toward its next stop.

A very confused COMMUTER shaking his head in the aftermath.

COMMUTER

I think I'm at the wrong stop...

**INT. CHALLENGER - METRO TUNNELS - DAY (MOVING)**

Jim is looking over his shoulder as he drives in REVERSE. POV illuminated RED via BRAKE LIGHTS. Bright light cascading through the windshield as the METRO TRAIN roars down on them.

DRONE hovering directly in the space between CAR and TRAIN.

Jim passes A TUNNEL that juts off to his LEFT -

Hits the brakes. DRONE sails past them. METRO TRAIN almost upon them. KICKS the Challenger into DRIVE - BLASTS FORWARD into the path of the oncoming TRAIN!

DRONE has recovered. Begins zooming FORWARD into the path of the TRAIN as it continues its pursuit of the CHALLENGER -

Cooper SCREAMS. ILLUMINATED blindingly-bright by Metro Train!

**INT. METRO TUNNELS - DAY**

Jim hairpins it -

CHALLENGER NEARLY FLIPPING AS IT CROSSES TRACKS and CUTS INTO THE TUNNEL they'd passed on Jim's LEFT!

METRO TRAIN blowing past them - WHAM! - right into THE DRONE!

DRONE POV INSTANTLY CUTTING-OUT as it is smashed to bits...

And the Metro Train continues racing away down the tracks.

**INT. CHALLENGER - METRO TUNNELS - DAY (MOVING)**

Cooper speechless. Looks to Jim. Intense gaze cast upon the dark and solitary tunnels into which they continue to delve.

Wide berth passageways. Jim suddenly cranks the wheel. Left and right, left and right. A bemused smile on his face.

Intentionally grinding the metal sides of the car against the concrete barricades. SPARKS FLYING IN THE DARKNESS. Creating a transfixing LIGHT SHOW all around them.

Off Jim, savoring the surreal moment...

PRE-LAP the voice of the LAPD LIAISON:

LAPD LIAISON (O.S.)  
(via Walkie-Talkie)  
We've lost him...

**INT. LARGE CHAIN BANK - DAY**

Okay. Go ahead and catch your breath now.

Sandra at the desk where we left her. Finishes listening to the conclusion of the PLAY-BY-PLAY via her walkie-talkie -

LAPD LIAISON  
 (via Walkie-Talkie)  
 We'll send units in there on foot,  
 of course, but it's needle-in-a-  
 haystack time: fucker could be  
 anywhere beneath the city by now...

Sandra clicks OFF. Gaze landing absently on Donald.

DONALD  
 Who the hell is this guy?

Off Sandra, eyes flickering at that, some notion forming -

**INT. METRO TUNNEL - CATACOMBS - DAY**

The Challenger is parked safely in the cavernous darkness at the heart of the Metro Tunnel system. Engine cooling beneath the hood. Heat cooling on the streets above.

Jim is emptying the DUFFEL BAG of cash into the trunk. Gently runs his HAND over the GOUGED METAL SHORN OF PAINT alongside the vehicle as he returns to the car. A Roman General dreamily running his hand across ancient fields of wheat...

Gets back inside -

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY**

Tosses a RAG at Cooper.

JIM  
 Hold this to your side. It'll stop  
 the bleeding.

Cooper presses the rag where the bullet grazed him.

JIM  
 Wounds are where the light enters.

Cooper considers that. Had never thought about it that way.

COOPER  
 How's the car?

JIM  
 Some scrapes. Couple bullet holes.  
 Little "history" on it if you will.  
 Got a "story" now you know?

Hard to tell if he's talking about the Car or its Passenger:

Cooper's CAR SALESMAN POLO is ripped where the bullet grazed him. Khakis a little bloody. "Costume" as tattered as his "Persona" at this point. Cooper looks up from his uniform...

FROWNS. Struggling. Some "history" of his own in his mind's eye now. Closes his eyes tightly. Trying to will that history to go away. Abruptly opens them. Fuck it.

COOPER

My dad took his life 10 months ago.

Jim looks to Cooper. Cooper looks to Jim. The admittance hanging heavy in the air. Cooper nods. There. He said it.

Same look in Jim's eyes we've noticed whenever Cooper talks about his dad -

FLASHCUT: *previously-seen CAR in an ALLEY. MAN inside the car seen in SILHOUETTE. GUN TO TEMPLE. BLAM! -*

BACK TO SCENE: Cooper looks away. Glassy eyes now staring into the abyss of the tunnels. Abyss staring back into him.

COOPER

Parked in an alley a few blocks from the house where I grew up. Shot himself in the head. Four months before Cassidy was born. He knew Emma and I were expecting - and still he chose to leave us. I was still nurturing my dreams of being a writer at the time. Inspired, in large part, by him. By his example. But after that...

Cooper trails-off.

JIM

You were afraid the same thing could happen to you.

Cooper... nods.

COOPER

They say if you're related to someone who's done that there's a higher likelihood you'll do it too. Also say it can be "contagious" or something. All I know is I wanted to run as far and as fast away as possible from anything resembling my father's life. The man I'd been so inspired by. Had looked up to.

(MORE)

COOPER (CONT'D)

Who'd nurtured my love for reading and writing. Who was my role-model in so many ways. So I hung up my dreams in exchange for a regular job to better support my wife and daughter-to-be - and to make sure I never ended up like my dad.

(beat)

And that is how I wound up slinging steel, as you so eloquently put it.

Jim nods. Considering all of that. A beat.

JIM

You fear you are what you're not.

Cooper looks to Jim. What?

JIM

You are not your father, Cooper. But your fear that you are has grown so strong that it's deluded you into thinking it's the truth. Like a ghost feeding on your essence in order to make itself real - what you are not has morphed into what you think you are. Fueled on by the sustenance of your fear. By the stories you've told yourself. See: you gotta be careful with stories. Especially the ones we tell ourselves about ourselves. Because stories are powerful stuff. Maybe the most powerful stuff in the world - and you don't watch it, fueled on by the ghosts in your head, the stories about what you are not can, in fact, become the story of what you are.

Jim nods toward Cooper: his generic bloody DOCKERS and tattered car dealership POLO. Case in point.

JIM

That which you fear the most?

(beat)

It can meet you half way.

**INT. UNMARKED BLACK SUV - DAY**

Sandra pulls up to the DEALERSHIP. Donald next to her.

CAVALRY of POLICE CARS parked along Auto Row.

**INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - SHOWROOM - DAY**

Sandra and Donald enter. Randy awaiting their arrival like a kid who's being visited by the principal.

RANDY

Um, Agent Kowalski. Agent Mendes.  
Randy Jones, General Manager -

He extends his hand to Donald. Shakes it. Then to Sandra. Shakes hers. Turns to Donald. Nervous about all of this.

RANDY

I'd like to apologize in advance -  
but as I already told the  
investigating officers: All of our  
security cameras have been down  
since early this morning, what with  
this crazy storm and all...

Donald only nods - toward Sandra.

DONALD

Whatever SAC Mendes thinks.

RANDY

Oh! I'm so sorry. I didn't  
realize...

... that a woman was the Boss. Too busy to care:

SANDRA

All of 'em?

Randy hangs his head sheepishly. Nods.

RANDY

All of 'em.

Sandra considers that. Shares a look with Donald. This fuckin' guy, am I right? Donald nods. You are right indeed. Then she returns her attention to Randy.

SANDRA

Okay. Well. Let's start with The  
Salesman.

Off Randy nodding obediently as he hops-to -

**INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - COOPER'S OFFICE CUBICLE - DAY**

Randy holds open the glass door to the cramped space -

RANDY

Cooper Reed. Good kid. Going through it a bit these days. But he's a fine employee. Hard worker. Heart in the right place.

Sandra enters Cooper's small cubicle. Taking it all in. Has hardly heard a word Randy said. Randy can tell. Looks to Donald. Donald just smiles. Used to it. Admires it.

Sandra studies the space. Laser focused. Notices Cooper's desk chair. Positioned just-so. From the last time Cooper was here - and got up in a hurry to greet Jim Ryder.

Sandra carefully sits down in the chair without moving it. Taking in the scene from Cooper's POV: she can see out to the rainswept lot from here. That Inflatable Tube Man staring back at her just as he had been at Cooper. Realizes:

SANDRA

He had a clear view of the lot - and any potential customers...

Randy adjusts his POV, looks out. Huh. Guess she's right.

Sandra slides the chair up to the desk now. The PHONE. The dinosaur DESKTOP COMPUTER. That generic DEALERSHIP CALENDAR and PHOTOS OF CARS on the wall.

The lone previously-seen personal touch:

THAT PHOTO OF EMMA AND CASSIDY atop Cooper's desk.

Sandra looks closely at the photo from Cooper's POV...

SANDRA

He was looking at this photo.

RANDY

Yeah?

Sandra nods. Indicates the barely perceptible DUSTLESS AREA atop the desk that matches the SHAPE of the frame - but not the frame's CURRENT PLACEMENT after Cooper had abruptly set it back down earlier this morning.

RANDY

Well I'll be...

But something else has already caught Sandra's attention:

She picks the PHOTO up again, then sets it down. Picks it up, sets it down. Hears something RATTLE in the TOP DESK DRAWER each time. Slides the drawer open.

REVEALING the previously-seen BOTTLE OF PRESCRIPTION PILLS and FUNERAL CARD.

Sandra turns the FUNERAL CARD over. It tracks with Emma's story. Studies the PRESCRIPTION. Tosses the bottle to Donald -

SANDRA  
Heavy stuff.

He catches it. Gives it a look. Agrees. Shakes the bottle.

DONALD  
Pretty much untouched, too.

Sandra nods. Looks back out to the rainy lot. Empty. Save for the Inflatable Tube Man staring back at her with crazy eyes.

Sandra looks back to the pills. Getting a hinky feeling now.

SANDRA  
And now... The Driver.

Even more so off Randy's confused reaction -

RANDY  
"The Driver?"

**INT. CHALLENGER - METRO TUNNEL - DAY**

Parked in the catacombs. Cooper's admittance about his Fear and his Father hanging heavy. Abyss of the tunnels staring back into both of them. Gaze locked on its inviting darkness.

JIM  
In the mid-1950s, over in Bangkok, this huge plaster-clay statue of The Buddha began to crack during a crazy heatwave - but when the local monks began to repair it they were shocked to discover that inside of this very plain, very ordinary-looking plaster statue was a solid gold Buddha. Turns out the statue had been covered with plaster and clay over 600 years before to protect it from invading armies - but the monks who lived in the monastery at that time were all killed in the attack. So the beauty of the Buddha - its innate golden nature - had been covered over and forgotten. Lost to time, if you will - until it finally cracked.

Jim FIRES UP THE ENGINE. Loud. Powerful.

JIM  
You dig what I'm saying?

Cooper nods. Pretty sure he does. Jim smiles. Good.

JIM  
Two things in life you gotta  
remember, Coop: Your Golden Buddha  
nature. And your ATM number. The  
sacred and the profane - both of  
'em of equal importance.

Jim smiles again: that dangerous devil-may-care grin.

JIM  
So what's say we hit up that final  
bank now, huh?

Off the CHALLENGER ENGINE REVVING loud as hell -

**INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - KEY ROOM - DAY**

Sandra and Donald stand beside Randy at the KeyTrack vault. Previously-seen CHALLENGER SRT DEMON 170 PAGE on the MONITOR - indicating that the vehicle has been checked-out by SALESMAN COOPER REED. Randy entering his G.M. CODE into the KEYPAD -

A MECHANIZED SOUND as the ID of THE DRIVER is released...

And Randy hands it to Sandra:

RANDY  
The Driver...

Sandra frowns. Because as we recall:

The only ID in the KeyTrak vault belongs to COOPER REED.

RANDY  
... is The Salesman.  
(beat)  
At least according to the ID that  
was deposited to release the key.

Off COOPER'S SMILING FACE via his DRIVER'S LICENCE PHOTO -

**EXT. CAR DEALERSHIP - DAY**

Sandra stands beneath the awning. Taking shelter from the storm. Trying to fit these disparate pieces together. Looks out to the drab, rainswept street:

OTHER DEALERSHIPS and NONDESCRIPT BUSINESSES and BLAND FACILITIES as far as the eye can see within this INDUSTRIAL SECTOR of the city.

Donald steps out to check on her -

DONALD

Think it's The Salesman? Maybe he cracked under the mounting pressures of his life? Took one of their vehicles, went on a spree?

Sandra shrugs. Crazier things have happened.

Looks back out -

Suddenly notices something. Just past the sagging Inflatable Tube Man and Cooper's abandoned-looking Corolla.

Stands stone-still as she takes-in this particular POV. Feeling like she's in the eye of the storm. Like she IS the eye of the storm now. Her brow furrowed as she squints through the POURING RAIN to get a better look at...

A RED-BRICK BUILDING at the far end of the industrial street. Beyond the DEALERSHIPS. TALL GATE lining its perimeter. SIGN out front that reads: "KINGSDALE PSYCHIATRIC CARE FACILITY".

SANDRA

That Aggravated Assault call you mentioned over at Kingsdale?

Donald nods. Follows her gaze to the Mental Hospital.

DONALD

Patient attacked someone - pretty much all I know.

Sandra nods, considering that, wheels spinning rapidly now.

Donald looks to his Boss. Is she thinking what he's thinking?

DONALD

"Lemmings?"

SANDRA

Not sure...

## INT. CHALLENGER - METRO TUNNEL - DAY (MOVING)

Challenger races through the tunnels to the streets above.

JIM

You asked me why I was doing this earlier. Said you didn't think it was about the money. Well: you weren't entirely right. I mean, who doesn't love them some money? But you weren't entirely wrong either. You ever heard of Satori?

Cooper shakes his head.

JIM

Zen masters talk about it all the time. Jack Kerouac was even rumored to have experienced it in Paris - on a trip to discover the origins of his family name no less. It's basically "Instant Enlightenment." And for something to be "instant" it means that nothing has actually been built nor altered - but rather excavated. Because your Enlightened Nature - which is your True Nature - that Source I was talking about that lies deep within your Being - it's always right there inside you. Forgotten like that Golden Buddha. BUT - under the right circumstances - which are often terrifying, because they have to be scary enough to shake you from your malaise - the Enlightened Mind becomes aware of Itself. Of its True Nature. All in an instant. Like a thunderclap. BOOM! Satori.

COOPER

Sounds like a mental breakdown.

JIM

Breakdown. Breakthrough. Drill down deep enough what's the difference? Just because you're crazy doesn't mean you're not right, Cooper. And being right - Instant Enlightenment - *Satori* - is my business.

COOPER

Your business?

JIM

I am a grenade - and Enlightenment is my shrapnel. Sometimes it takes a grenade to blow a person out of the safe little boxes he's stuffed himself into. Sometimes that grenade is Psychological: A mental breakdown. A midlife crisis. The onset of some type of Anxiety Disorder. A crack in the plaster and clay that's accumulated over the course of your life. Sometimes that grenade's Physical. A health scare. An earthquake. A tornado. A force of nature - like Yours Truly. Pushing you past your Fear to discover - to re-discover - Who You Are - Who You Always Have Been - within the sacred halls of your most holy Inner Being. Your Golden Buddha Nature, if you will. Fuck Instant Karma. Instant ENLIGHTENMENT. That's my game. And THAT is my gift to you. That is what today's been about: Who Are You? What Do You Fear? Who Have You Always Been? Mix those three together - Bank 1. Bank 2. Bank 3. - Drink that motherfucker down and - voila! - satori: pleased to re-meet you, Cooper Reed!

Just because you're crazy doesn't mean you're not right.

Cooper contemplates Jim's Sermon in the Metro.

Right up there with another Prophet's Sermon on the Mount.

One thing still troubling him though.

COOPER

Why me?

Jim shrugs. Eyes on the road.

JIM

'Cuz you were there.

#### **EXT. KINGSDALE PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY - DAY**

Sandra and Donald are BUZZED into the building. Imposing because of how mundane it is. A real Mental Facility. Not some stylized gothic monument to madness like in the movies.

**INT. KINGSDALE PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY - LOBBY - DAY**

FLUORESCENT lighting. LINOLEUM floor. COAT RACK with the DAMP COATS of VISITORS by the door. Sandra and Donald pass an ARMED SECURITY GUARD on their way to the RECEPTIONIST.

A dawning thrill of horror in the pits our stomachs:

The Security Guard's UNIFORM is familiar. Camera lingering back as Sandra and Donald continue past him and we realize why: it's his UNIFORM PANTS -

NAVY BLUE. With funky GOLD PIPING along the sides.

**INT. KINGSDALE PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY - RECEPTIONIST - DAY**

Sandra and Donald continue displaying their BADGES for the RECEPTIONIST (30s). Patiently waiting as she enters their INFORMATION into her computer's VISITOR LOG.

RECEPTIONIST

You're here about the Aggravated  
Assault this morning?

Sandra nods.

SANDRA

We'd like to speak with the parties  
who were involved.

CAMERA glides over the CLUTTER at the Receptionist's DESK as she speaks - that thrill of horror in the pits of our stomachs growing: a BOX of DISPOSABLE BLUE MASKS none of us wear anymore on the counter. Next to a bottle of hand sanitizer and DISPOSABLE BLACK LATEX GLOVES.

Still entering their information:

RECEPTIONIST

Afraid that won't be possible...

SANDRA

Why is that?

Receptionist finishes typing. Hands them back their IDs.

RECEPTIONIST

Because the guard who was assaulted  
was taken to the hospital, and the  
patient who attacked him fled...

Sandra and Donald share a look. Receptionist shrugs.

RECEPTIONIST  
Cops've already been here...

Sandra looks to Donald - he nods, pulls out his phone as he hurries away to look into the LAPD's report.

RECEPTIONIST  
You're welcome to take a look around, though, if you'd like?

SANDRA  
Yeah. I'd like that.

**INT. KINGSDALE PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY - HALLWAY - DAY**

Hospital ADMINISTRATOR (60s. Official prick.) leads Sandra down a hallway. Holding a PATIENT FILE as they pass ORDERLIES tending to PATIENTS. Thrill of horror in the pits of our stomachs almost overwhelming now:

The patients all wear WHITE V-NECK style HOSPITAL GOWNS adorned with a LIGHT BLUE 1970S-STYLE PATTERN. Hospital gowns that would look like vintage, billowy, retro-cool shirts if tucked into a pair of funky-cool pants.

ADMINISTRATOR  
I already walked the police through all of this this morning. Gave a statement and everything...

SANDRA  
Which is why I appreciate you walking the Feds through it now.

Administrator SIGHS as they pass ANOTHER STAFF MEMBER:

Carrying a familiar style of DUFFEL BAG with FADED KINGSDALE LETTERS on its side. The duffel filled with HOSPITAL SUPPLIES - including ZIP-TIES to restrain patients if necessary...

**INT. CHALLENGER - METRO TUNNEL - DAY (MOVING)**

Jim's empty DUFFEL BAG folded-up in the BACK SEAT. FADED LETTERS now recognizable to us: "KINGSDALE PSYCHIATRIC". Jim driving fast through the byzantine tunnel system.

JIM  
You think you were the first dealership I visited? First salesman I talked to? No.  
(MORE)

JIM (CONT'D)

You were just the first person  
desperate enough to let me take a  
Test Drive without any ID. Meaning  
you were the person most in need of  
my services.

Cooper shakes his head. This feels cruel. The randomness of  
their encounter. Jim glances at Cooper. That same hard-to-  
read look in his eyes: Do we believe him? Entirely?

COOPER

So that's it?

A familiar refrain:

JIM

Not "it." "All." That's all of it.

COOPER

It was all just... dumb luck?

JIM

Just because it wasn't planned  
doesn't mean it was an accident.

Off the Challenger cresting from the DARKNESS of the tunnel  
system into the first vestiges of RAINY DAYLIGHT -

JIM

Or don't you believe in Fate?

**INT. KINGSDALE PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY - PATIENT ROOM - DAY**

Sandra stands in the center of the small space. Hospital  
Administrator at the doorway. Twin Bed. Nightstand. No  
windows. No personal photos. Walls adorned with images torn  
from OLD MAGAZINES. "National Geographic" to "Newsweek" to  
"People" to "Sports Illustrated" to "Scientific American".

And BOOKS. Lots and lots of BOOKS. In every nook of the room.

ADMINISTRATOR

Patient used a knife he smuggled  
from the cafeteria to stab himself  
in his room early this morning...

FLASHCUT: Jim staring absently out the windshield.

JIM

Wounds are where the light enters.

BACK TO SCENE: Sandra notices a SPOTCH of DRIED BLOOD on the  
bedsheets at that. Moves to the STACKS OF BOOKS.

Peruses them: Self-Help. Spiritual. Occult. True Crime. Movie Novelizations. Infamous tomes: The Anarchist Cookbook. Helter Skelter. The Book of the Law. Authors: Vonnegut. Ram Dass. Bachman. Kerouac. Hammett. Hesse. Plath. Iceberg Slim. Tolstoy. King. Saunders. Swierczynski. Literary Highbrow side-by-side with Dime Store Lowbrow. Like stepping directly into the PATIENT'S undeniably brilliant yet deeply troubled brain.

ADMINISTRATOR  
Assaulted the responding Security  
Guard after barricading the door.

Administrator shudders at the memory...

ADMINISTRATOR  
As violent a beating as anything  
I've encountered in my thirty-two  
years running this institution.

Sandra nods again, notices BLOOD SPLATTERS on the wall now.

ADMINISTRATOR  
Disarmed the Guard. Took his gun.  
Disrobed him and fled before we  
even realized what had happened.

FLASHCUT: A PATIENT, seen from BEHIND, saunters through the LOBBY to the EXIT. Swipes SEVERAL BLUE DISPOSABLE FACE MASKS and BLACK LATEX GLOVES from the RECEPTIONIST'S DESK. Receptionist not there at the moment. He snags her OVERSIZED SUNGLASSES then grabs a FINAL RECOGNIZABLE ITEM as he exits:

A thrifited-looking SHEARLING OVERCOAT from the VISITOR'S COAT RACK. Holstering the Security Guard's COLT .357 KING COBRA into the back of the UNIFORM PANTS he took from the guard. Self-administered BANDAGE glimpsed at his dull knife wound as he grabs an EMPTY DUFFEL BAG from atop a nearby pile. Folding it beneath his coat as he steps out into the POURING RAIN...

Then VANISHES into the gray embrace of the falling rain -

BACK TO SCENE: Sandra processes all of this. Gaze drawn to the walls and all of the OLD MAGAZINE PHOTOS taped there:

Images of the COSMOS next to FORGOTTEN CELEBRITIES and ATHLETES and OLD SCANDALS and TRUE CRIMES. Something catching her eye amidst the chaotic collage. She steps closer.

A lion hunting antelope. Her leonine gaze drawn to:

A MAP OF GREATER LOS ANGELES taped-up to the wall. Off that -

**EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY**

Downtown Los Angeles skyline visible in the rainy distance.

Challenger crossing the L.A. River as it makes its way into ELYSIAN HEIGHTS. DODGER STADIUM seen in the background of our final busy METROPOLIS within the Greater L.A. sprawl.

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY (MOVING)**

Jim navigating the SIDE STREETS that run parallel to the MAIN BOULEVARD. Weaving through traffic amidst the rainstorm. Keeping their profile low now that they're back above ground.

JIM

As with all things, Young Cooper,  
the end of our sojourn brings us  
back to where it all began...

Cooper turns to Jim: a knowing look in the charlatan-prophet's weird witchy gaze. Cooper suddenly noticing something. Deeply troubled... REVEAL:

A SPOTCH OF BLOOD pooling at the waist of Jim's 1970's-style V-neck shirt (hospital gown) that's tucked into his retro-cool navy blue (security guard) pants. Cooper instinctively reaching for his nearly-identical WOUND at the sight of it.

JIM

And we ask ourselves for the final  
time: Who. Are. You?

Mounting fear in Cooper's eyes: Jim's wound. Matches his wound. Almost perfectly. Cooper landing on the same idea that's been clawing around inside our brains. EARS RINGING. Could really use his psych meds right about now.

COOPER

Am I...

Jim nods. Go ahead.

COOPER

You?

**INT. KINGSDALE PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY - PATIENT ROOM - DAY**

Sandra focuses on that MAP of Greater Los Angeles.

Suddenly notices THREE DARTS wedged into it. As if...

She looks over her shoulder. Realizes they were -

SANDRA  
 (to herself)  
*Thrown from the bed - likely in a fit of boredom...*

She turns to the Administrator. Incredulous.

SANDRA  
 They're allowed to keep darts here?

Administrator steps forward. Only now notices the DARTS. Is clearly embarrassed. His tone especially haughty now.

ADMINISTRATOR  
 It's impossible to keep track of every piece of contraband smuggled into the rooms by the patients!

SANDRA  
 And the patient's full name...

Administrator glances at his Patient File. Looks back up:

ADMINISTRATOR  
 "Lee Earl Bunker."

The fuck?

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY (MOVING)**

Jim snakes through the TRAFFIC. RAIN FALLING harder than ever. Cooper looks extremely fragile. A shell of himself. This is what being on the verge of a mental breakdown looks like. When you're starting to wonder if the person seated next to you might actually BE you? Cousin, you're in trouble.

RINGING IN HIS EARS a constant presence now...

JIM  
 Truth be told, everyone is "You" and everyone is "I" and everyone is "Me" - that's our name. We all share that. Especially at the subatomic level where there are literally no separations. No distinctions. Everything One. Including "You" and "Me" and -

COOPER  
 I don't mean in an Existential-Bullshit, Zen-Huckster, Subatomic-Snake Oil-Salesman kind of way!  
 (MORE)

COOPER (CONT'D)  
 I mean in a Mental Breakdown,  
 Hallucinating-Fugue-State, Blackout  
 kind of way!

Real desperation in Cooper's eyes. Mentally anguished.

COOPER  
 Have I... lost it?

**INT. KINGSDALE PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY - PATIENT ROOM - DAY**

Administrator removes the INTAKE PHOTO paper-clipped to the inside of his PATIENT FILE. Hands it to Sandra, REVEALING...

ADMINISTRATOR  
 Mr. Lee Earl Bunker.

IS THE MAN WE KNOW AS JIM RYDER. Damn. Guess that name was too good to be true, huh? (Note: we'll continue to refer to him as Jim Ryder even though he made that shit up.) Jim staring into camera in a PHOTO taken about a YEAR AGO. Hair longer. Gaze distant. A bit disheveled-looking. 100% real.

ADMINISTRATOR  
 Local high school dropout...  
 criminal record... suicidal  
 tendencies... history of violence.

Sandra nods. Looking closely at the THREE DARTS. Suddenly notices... TINY WORDS scribbled into the margins of the MAP.

Reads them aloud, quietly, to herself:

SANDRA  
*"Just because it wasn't planned  
 doesn't mean it was an accident."*

Realizes something. Looks back to those THREE DARTS Jim had tossed at the map of Greater L.A. - has a sudden epiphany:

SANDRA  
 Holy shit...

Pulls out her PHONE. Puts a PIN into her MAPS APP that corresponds to DART #1. Puts a SECOND PIN into the APP that corresponds to DART #2. A THIRD PIN for DART #3.

She then enlarges PIN #1 (Dart #1). Sandra's eyes popping wide as A BANK ICON comes into view near said PIN. No way -

SANDRA  
 First bank he hit this morning...

Scrolls the APP to PIN #2 (Dart #2), enlarges it - shaking her head in disbelief as yet ANOTHER BANK ICON appears:

SANDRA  
Second bank...

Donald storms into the room, hanging-up his phone, deeply concerned about what he's learned from the LAPD's report -

DONALD  
Guy we're looking for is extremely dangerous - has a rap-sheet a mile long: Armed robbery. Assault. Abduction. You name it, he's done it. Found to be criminally insane at his last trial - hence allowed to serve out the remainder of his sentence here...  
(desperate)  
We gotta find this guy, Boss.

Sandra looks up from her phone. Antelope in her sights.

SANDRA  
Good - 'cuz I know exactly where he's headed next.

She holds out her PHONE: PIN #3 ENLARGED.

Off the BANK ICON indicating Jim's FINAL TARGET via MAPS APP -

**EXT. GREATER LOS ANGELES - DAY**

Challenger driving through those actual city streets.

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY (MOVING)**

Jim cuts down an ALLEY.

JIM  
There is one way to excavate a finite answer to your "Am I or Am I Not A Product of Your Imagination"- query:

He motions to the .357 King Cobra tucked into his door.

JIM  
Pretty drastic measure though.

Cooper looks away. Scared. Of Jim. Of himself. Of what he might do in his highly agitated-confused state.

JIM

For now, though, I - you - me - we -  
whatever the hell you wanna call  
THIS - have bigger fish to fry...

Jim PARKS the Challenger at the end of the ALLEY -

JIM

Last stop on our Hard Travel to  
Sacred Places.

KILLS THE ENGINE. RAIN POUNDING the roof as he nods at:

Their final LARGE CHAIN BANK across the adjacent boulevard.

**INT. UNMARKED BLACK SUV - DAY (MOVING)**

Sandra driving fast. Roaring down wet streets like a tank.  
Donald in the passenger seat on the TWO-WAY RADIO -

DONALD

(into radio)

Code-3 in progress! Requesting all  
available units!

**INT. CHALLENGER - ALLEY - DAY**

Jim grabs the empty KINGSDALE duffel bag from the back seat.

COOPER

And... after this?

JIM

Done.

COOPER

Then what?

Jim shrugs. Couldn't care less.

JIM

Tomorrow never knows.

Cooper looks off at that. Still uncertain if he's in a fugue  
state. The Driver and The Salesman one-in-the-same.

COOPER

And If I don't want you to do this?

Jim smiles. Mirthlessly. Motions toward that GUN.

JIM  
Then we might have a problem.

**EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY**

Sandra's UNMARKED SUV ever closer. She turns to Donald.

SANDRA  
You've done good work today, Agent  
Kowalski.

Donald doesn't know how to respond. Not sure if he's more proud of the compliment, or of having earned the use of his proper name. Settles for a sincere...

DONALD  
Thank you, Boss.

Sandra nods. Enough of the mushy stuff. Floors it.

**INT. CHALLENGER - ALLEY - DAY**

JIM  
I like you, Cooper. I really do. In fact, in another life, we maybe could've even been friends - were it not for the zip-ties and the gun and the abduction or whatever you wanna call this. But now there's something I gotta do - and like I said before: you don't like it, there's a way to put a stop to it...

Jim motions one final time to the GUN in his side door.

JIM  
Same way, coincidentally, you could find out the answer to your larger existential I - You - Me - We question once and for all. Kind of a Two Birds, One Bullet-type deal. But also like I said: pretty fuckin' drastic measure.

Cooper considers the GUN. Stainless steel of the .357 King Cobra gleaming inside Jim's door. He... looks away.

Jim smiles. Okay. Nodding as he, too, looks off. Taking in the BANK across the BOULEVARD at the end of the ALLEY.

Then...

TAKES A DEEP BREATH. "Centering" himself just as he did before. MUTTERING that SAME QUIET MANTRA pre-robbery -

Then abruptly opens his eyes. Ready. Puts on his big-ass reflective SUNGLASSES. Slips on a final pair of cheap BLACK LATEX GLOVES. Straps a DISPOSABLE BLUE MASK to his chin -

COOPER

The words you were whispering...

Jim looks to Cooper. Cooper studies Jim. Can see HIMSELF in the REFLECTION of Jim's SUNGLASSES.

COOPER

What were they?

Jim continues to regard Cooper. Sunglasses on. Thinking it over. Maybe the slightest bit... evasive. Shrugs.

JIM

Type 'a mantra.

Cooper holds Jim's REFLECTIVE gaze. Really wants to know.

A beat. And then Jim begins to repeat them aloud:

JIM

"I took a deep breath and listened  
to the old brag of my heart..."

Stunned befuddlement fills Cooper's gaze. The words are familiar. Made clear as he finishes the PHRASE in PERFECT SYNC with Jim -

JIM

"I am, I am, I am."

COOPER

"I am, I am, I am."

Jim stares at Cooper stares at Jim.

Cooper struggling to makes sense of what just happened as Jim studies him via those REFLECTIVE SUNGLASSES.

COOPER

That's... Sylvia Plath.

Jim nods. He knows.

COOPER

The Bell Jar.

Jim nods again. Knows that too.

COOPER  
My dad's favorite line in all of literature.

Jim nods once again. Tenderly. He knows. Has always known.

Cooper staring into Jim's REFLECTIVE GLASSES. Looking into HIS OWN EYES as he searches HIS OWN FACE for answers.

COOPER  
But...

How? A POLICE SIREN in the distance breaks the moment - a clarion call for Jim to the task at hand. Jim regards Cooper as the SIREN FADES back into nothingness...

Then pulls up his cheap blue disposable mask.

JIM  
See you on the other side, partner.

Cooper watches as Jim exits the car. Stunned silence. Mental ground shakier than ever.

THE RINGING IN COOPER'S EARS growing louder now...

Until it takes over the ENTIRETY OF OUR SOUNDSCAPE.

HIGH-PITCHED RINGING the only sound we hear over -

**INT. UNMARKED BLACK SUV - DAY (MOVING)**

Sandra blasting down RAINY STREETS. Donald holding tight. Vehicle swerving through TRAFFIC.

Donald looks up: TWO CHOPPERS in the sky. Sets his gaze back on the road as that SUBJECTIVE RINGING CONTINUES over -

**INT. CHALLENGER - ALLEY - DAY**

Cooper sitting alone in the parked car. Mind reeling as he watches Jim enter the third and final BANK across the street.

Chaos about to ensue therein. Lives potentially lost. Blood potentially spilled. Not entirely sure he isn't actually the one in there who's potentially going to spill it. He winces -

RINGING IN HIS EARS painfully loud now, continuing over -

**INT. UNMARKED BLACK SUV - DAY (MOVING)**

Sandra turns onto the BOULEVARD where the BANK is located.

RINGING LOUDER as it fills the otherwise silent SOUNDSCAPE -

**INT. CHALLENGER - ALLEY - DAY**

Cooper notices CHOPPERS in the sky now. Showdown looming. Busy streets. Unsuspecting PEDESTRIANS on rainy sidewalks. How to stop the potential encroaching violence?

RINGING IN COOPER'S EARS EXCRUCIATING now. He looks around -  
THE RINGING ABRUPTLY STOPS.

Leaving us in SUFFOCATING SILENCE.

The only sound COOPER'S SUBJECTIVE BREATHING as we REVEAL:

The COLT .357 KING COBRA sitting on the driver's seat.

Jim has left the gun in the car. For Cooper.

COOPER  
"Two birds, one bullet."

FLASHCUT: that devil-may-care look in Jim's eyes.

JIM  
Way to put a stop to it - Pretty  
fuckin' drastic measure though.

BACK TO SCENE: Cooper continues to regard the GUN on the driver's seat. There for the taking.

ZOOM-IN SLOWLY on Cooper as he contemplates his next move...

ZOOM-IN SLOWLY on the GUN as he considers it...

TIME PASSING in that HEAVY SUBJECTIVE SILENCE. COOPER BREATHING HARD. The silence even more intense when Cooper...

Takes hold of the gun. *Two birds. One bullet.*

Cooper is sitting alone in a car parked in an alley.

Gun in hand. Like father, like son -

FLASHCUT: Cooper's DAD'S CAR parked in an EMPTY ALLEY. Seen in SILHOUETTE. GUN TO HIS TEMPLE. BLAM -

BACK TO SCENE: Cooper grips the gun tightly in his confusion. A way to stop all of this. To make sure nobody else gets hurt. To stop himself for good if he IS in fact Jim Ryder. To bring authorities immediately to the scene even if he ISN'T.

Cooper's eyes well with tears. Of shame. Of agony. Of regret.

Finger on the trigger.

Tears spilling down his cheeks now.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD: same mise-en-scène as the opening of our film. GRAY CITY SCAPE blurred out behind us. Cooper focused solely on that gun. DOESN'T NOTICE -

ACROSS THE STREET: JIM exits the BANK. DUFFEL BAG over his shoulder stuffed with CASH. HAND in the pocket of his overcoat as he starts across the busy boulevard.

Cooper lifts the gun...

ACROSS THE STREET: Jim removes his hand from his overcoat. Nearly in unison with Cooper. INDEX FINGER and THUMB still in the SHAPE OF THE GUN he mimicked to pull off the heist.

Cooper puts the gun to his temple. Anguished...

ACROSS THE STREET: Jim puts his THUMB-INDEX FINGER-GUN to his temple, itching at his shades - but it looks like he has a raised gun in his hand.

Cooper at the crossroads. Alone in a car in an alley. Tears streaming. Gun pressed to the side of his head. Finger on the trigger. Comes to a decision. Shuts his eyes -

COOPER  
I'm so sorry.

Pulls the trigger: BLAM -

ACROSS THE STREET: Jim SPINS. Hit by a BULLET.

Hold on, hold on. What the fuck?

Cooper flinches. Eyes still tightly shut. Still alive though.

Pulls the trigger again: BLAM -

ACROSS THE STREET: Jim SPINS again. HIT by ANOTHER BULLET.

Cooper opens his eyes. Confused. Gun still pressed to his temple. Pulls the trigger again. CLICK. And again. CLICK. And again and again and again. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.

ACROSS THE STREET: BLAM. BLAM. BLAM. More GUNSHOTS as the CAVALRY OF COPS continues descending on Jim. STUMBLING across the street, wounded, as he makes his way to the Challenger...

Cooper shocked. Realizes what he almost just did. Tosses the GUN aside in revulsion.

*SOUND COMES FLOODING BACK IN WITH COOPER'S CLARITY -*

Cooper HORRIFIED by what he tried to do. And GRATEFUL. To be ALIVE. Brow furrowing as he notices something - REVEAL:

The BULLETS scattered across the FLOOR of the DRIVER'S SEAT -

Jim stumbles into the car at that. Dripping blood and rain.

COOPER

You removed the bullets!

JIM

Saved your fuckin' life is what I did!

ENGINE ROARS. Jim kicks it into HIGH GEAR. TIRES SQUEELING as he gets them the fuck outta here, racing away down the ALLEY -

Straight into the BOULEVARD of AWAITING COPS!

**INT. UNMARKED BLACK SUV - DAY**

Sandra and Donald overseeing the operation. Sandra on the TWO-WAY now, calling the shots from their perch at the corner -

SANDRA

Holy shit.

Can't believe what she's seeing: SUSPECT headed straight into the BARRICADE OF POLICE. Even crazier than she thought -

**EXT. BOULEVARD - DAY**

BULLETS FIRED by Police - Challenger headed straight into them - U-TURNING hard on the rain-slicked street - slamming into the barricade - taking numerous vehicles out - a full 180-degree turn - Challenger now staring down the barrel of the tight alley from which it had emerged -

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY (MOVING)**

Jim GUNS IT. RACES back into the alley and down SIDE STREETS -

**INT. UNMARKED BLACK SUV - DAY**

Sandra HITS the gas -

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY (MOVING)**

COOPER  
You left me the gun...

Jim nods. Eyes locked on the road. Really bleeding out now.

COOPER  
But took out the bullets.

L.A. RIVER in the distance. Straight shot to that BRIDGE.

JIM  
No take-backs if you'd 'a done that  
shit for real. But now that you  
know how much of a mistake it  
would've been? You'll never give it  
another thought. No longer afraid  
of that which you are not. Re-born  
into who you truly are.

Jim is letting the Challenger RIP: 160MPH... No chance a  
vehicle could catch them now. 170MPH... 185MPH...

JIM  
Have a little more sympathy for  
your old man now, too. For whatever  
must've been going on in his head.  
Forgive his terrible mistake. Thank  
him for his incredible blessings.

200MPH... Cooper studying Jim... now certain:

COOPER  
You knew him.

ODOMETER hits its LIMIT - 215MPH! - ENGINE SCREAMING - needle  
REDLINES - Jim... NODS:

JIM  
Was one of his students.

FLASHCUT: Cooper telling Jim about his father.

COOPER  
My dad was a writer. Well, a  
teacher by trade. One of the most  
beloved English teachers at the  
local high school where he worked -

FLASHCUT: Hospital Administrator reading Jim's PATIENT FILE -

ADMINISTRATOR  
Local high school dropout...

BACK TO SCENE: almost to the BRIDGE crossing the L.A. RIVER.

JIM

Only teacher who ever showed a lick  
of interest in me. Maybe if there'd  
'a been more like him... Well...

A world of pain and neglect in Jim's eyes. A world we could  
spend an entire film exploring. For now?

Jim simply shrugs it all away. Needle way past the odometer.  
Unchartered territory. No idea how fast we're going.

JIM

Kept a picture of his family on his  
desk.

FLASHCUT: a DESK in a HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM. The TEACHER,  
COOPER'S DAD, HARRISON REED, blurred-out in the background at  
the CHALKBOARD. PHOTOGRAPH of his FAMILY in FOCUS in  
FOREGROUND: WIFE and YOUNG COOPER (13) smiling into camera -

JIM

Loved the hell out of that family.  
Out of you - his only son.

Cooper reacts. Surprised Jim could recognize him, much less  
remember him, from the FAMILY PHOTO that used to adorn his  
father's high school desk -

JIM

I'd 'a recognized you a mile away  
with them boyish good looks. Ain't  
hardly aged a day since...

Rocketing toward that BRIDGE. Rain falling. Freedom close.

COOPER

So it wasn't just because I was  
there.

Jim shakes his head. Bleeding getting worse. Finally admits -

JIM

Read about what the only teacher  
who ever gave a damn about me did  
to himself last year. Saw your  
family's photo in the paper.  
Grieving at his funeral.

(MORE)

JIM (CONT'D)

So you can imagine my surprise when I was being transported to Kingsdale and saw you out front of that car dealership. Looking for all the world like the life had been sucked out of you. So when the idea of this "last ride" of mine popped into my head and I started thinking on it more and more - it hit me: hold up! I already got me a set of wheels. Fast as hell and unfucking-traceable and just waiting for me over at that dealership - along with the perfect wheelman.

Jim looks to Cooper at that.

JIM

Someone who could afford to be blasted from the prison of his own making. And who might even thank me for it when all was said and done.

Cooper considers that. Jim really struggling now.

JIM

And that is how a seemingly random series of events came together to create the Here and the Now of which you and I have both been fated to play a part.

Cooper nods. Holding Jim's gaze. Finally understands.

COOPER

Just because it wasn't planned doesn't mean it was an accident.

Jim smiles. Atta boy. CHALLENGER about to enter that BRIDGE and cross over the L.A. RIVER once and for all -

JIM

Very good, grasshopper.

WHAM! Sandra's SUV plows into them from the side!

**EXT. CITY STREET - BRIDGE ACROSS L.A. RIVER - DAY**

A perfectly-timed PIT maneuver: SUV clips rear bumper. Challenger spins-out on the RAIN SLICKED STREET just before reaching the BRIDGE. Coming to rest at a catawampus angle.

Jim recovers. Looks out his windshield. Frowns.

SUV now angled horizontally across the road. Blocking the bridge. A perfectly placed barricade of steel.

Behind the hood of which Sandra and Donald now stand. Taking cover. Yet defiant. JIM and SANDRA lock eyes.

Jim GUNS his engine. Sandra pulls out her GUN.

A classic stand-off.

Jim puts it into DRIVE. Sandra does not flinch.

Jim FLOORS it. Sandra levels her gun.

CHALLENGER begins rocketing toward the SUV barricade.

Bridge across the L.A. River and freedom it promises beyond.

SERGIO LEONE-esque CLOSE-UPS building in intensity:

Jim's hands gripped tightly around the wheel.

Sandra's jaw set.

Cooper holding to the OH, SHIT handle.

Donald's eyes filling with fear.

Challenger pedal all the way to the floor.

Sandra's finger white-knuckled around the trigger -

Jim's eyes set on the SUV blocking the road.

Sandra's eyes locked on the DODGE.

FASTER. Close-ups TIGHTER.

BLAM! Sandra takes aim. Blows a hole in the windshield -

Challenger doesn't stop rocketing toward her.

Jim's eyes wide. Ready for whatever comes after all of this.

Sandra takes aim again.

Unstoppable Force careening toward Immovable Object.

Collision imminent -

Cooper reaches across the seats, grabs the wheel -

YANKS it at the last moment. VRWOOOM! Challenger swerves -

DOWN the angled CONCRETE BANK and into -

**EXT. L.A. RIVER - DAY**

Our high-speed pursuit continues through the L.A. River!

CHALLENGER using the CONCRETE EMBANKMENT WALLS to avoid the FLOODWATERS in the BASIN. Racing up and over the FLOOD DRAIN TUNNELS that are cut into the embankment walls at regular intervals - the CHASMS functioning like deadly obstacles!

SUV now barreling down on the CHALLENGER.

Plowing through the flooded river basin with brute force.

**EXT. L.A. RIVER - GLENDALE NARROWS - DAY**

Both vehicles ROARING into the iconic GLENDALE NARROWS now -

CONCRETE RIVER BASIN giving way to overgrown OASES with EARTHEN BOTTOMS. Large ISLANDS OF NATURE in the middle of the concrete river bed: massive OAKS and CATTAILS and SEDGE MEADOWS and SOFT RUSH jutting up from the riverbed.

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY (MOVING)**

VROOM! BLASTING past yet another OASIS - a ROOKERIE OF GREAT BLUE HERON taking to the wet skies in STARTLED disarray! RAIN COMING DOWN hard. RIVER running wild. Difficult to see. WATER in the RIVERBED OVERFLOWING along this stretch.

SUV still able to plow through it. Gaining ground.

A MASSIVE OASIS appears before the CHALLENGER - this one extending the ENTIRE WIDTH of the RIVER BOTTOM! No way the Challenger can traverse that terrain -

But there's a HUGE FLOOD DRAIN TUNNEL in the center of the EMBANKMANET WALL Jim will have to use to avoid the OASIS. This particular CHASM running nearly to the top of the wall.

Rock and a hard place. SUV gaining. Fuck it. Jim FLOORS IT - UP THE EMBANKMENT WALL - headed straight for that CHASM!

**EXT. L.A. RIVER - GLENDALE NARROWS - DAY**

CHALLENGER racing up the rain-slicked wall! SUV following - SLAMS Jim's bumper! Nearly knocking the Challenger off-course. SLAMS it again - more forcefully now!

CHALLENGER too low on the embankment wall! CHASM looming up FAST. Challenger hasn't cleared it. Is headed straight for it. Has to get higher on the wall to clear it -

SLAMMED into by the SUV! Not going to make it...

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY (MOVING)**

Jim looks to Cooper. Holds his gaze. Accepts the inevitable.

JIM  
Been nice knowing you, Coop.

Cooper realizes what Jim is saying. No. No. No.

The CHALLENGER careens into the chasm of the DRAINAGE TUNNEL!

**EXT. L.A. RIVER - GLENDALE NARROWS - DAY**

Challenger CAROMS down the embankment wall into the BASIN of the river. Sandra caught off-guard by the same drainage tunnel. SUV tumbling end-over-end down the wall...

**INT. CHALLENGER - DAY**

SLOW MOTION. Challenger FLIPS. Experienced from inside the cabin of the vehicle as it rolls and rolls and rolls. Cooper and Jim flailing. Gravity defied in the violent car crash -

TIME RAMPS BACK TO REGULAR SPEED - as the Challenger comes to a brutal halt at the conclusion of the accident.

COOPER groggily opens his eyes. BLURRY. WATER RUNNING across the CEILING of the car. RAIN falling UPWARD. Cooper realizes -

HIS WORLD IS UPSIDE DOWN. Literally. Figuratively.

Looks out across the L.A. RIVER:

Sandra's UNMARKED SUV has also wiped-out. Lying amidst a stretch of earthen bottom at the basin of the river.

Cooper looks to the DRIVER'S SIDE of the Challenger: EMPTY.

Jim Ryder is gone.

Cooper goes to rub his eyes. Discovers the ZIP-TIE has ripped loose in the accident. Hand no longer bound. Cooper now FREE.

**EXT. L.A. RIVER - GLENDALE NARROWS - DAY**

A WHIRLWIND OF CASH flutters all around us.

Emanating from the BUSTED TRUNK of the Challenger as Cooper pulls himself from the VEHICLE into the POURING RAIN.

He shakes his head. All of the bank robberies in vain...

Looks off toward Sandra's SUV across the concrete ravine:

On its side. Sandra pulling Donald from the vehicle. Rookie Agent struggling. Head bleeding. Looks bad. Concern etched into Sandra's features as she shouts into her TWO-WAY:

SANDRA

10-13! Agent down! Needs immediate assistance! Repeat: Agent down!

CHOPPERS circling overhead. Help on the way.

Cooper looks off - notices:

A SILHOUETTED FIGURE disappearing into the RAINY WILDS of the GLENDALE NARROWS off in the distance.

Jim Ryder is getting away...

Off the stark urgency filling Cooper's eyes -

**INT. L.A. RIVER - GLENDALE NARROWS - OASIS - DAY**

Cooper moves through the oasis of wilderness at the heart of the L.A River. Trekking across GRASSES tromped-down by recent FOOTSTEPS. Past CATTAILS BENT from being hastily pushed aside. The SMARTWEED and BULRUSH smeared with BLOOD.

Cooper following the BLOOD TRAIL deeper into the WILDS...

Notices: a SILHOUETTE stumbling through the TREES up ahead.

Cooper picks up his pace... pushes into a CLEARING -

SILHOUETTED FIGURE is gone. Cooper confused. Looks around:

NOBODY there. Peers into the overgrown wilderness. Notices:

EYES OF A FERAL ANIMAL in the FOLIAGE. Watching him.

Looks more closely -

It's Jim. Injured. Bleeding. Soaking wet.

Cooper moves closer. Cautiously. As one would approach a wounded animal. Pushes aside the brush. Jim stares at him.

JIM  
When the student is ready, the  
teacher will appear...

Cooper tries to ignore Jim's words. Doesn't like this.

Simply removes the COLT .357 KING COBRA he brought along.

Aims it at Jim.

Jim smiles. Lips bloody. Teeth chipped.

JIM  
Ain't no bullets in there remember?

Cooper COCKS the trigger.

COOPER  
I found 'em.

Jim studies Cooper. Can't tell if he's lying. Is deeply impressed. Smiles even wider. Blood trickling from his mouth.

JIM  
And when the student is truly  
ready? The teacher will disappear.

Their TEST DRIVE officially over now.

Jim stands. Turns. Starts deeper into the brush. Limping away. Back turned. Cooper pointing that GUN at him.

COOPER  
Don't make me do this, Jim. Please.

Jim continues stumbling away through the brush.

On the cusp of disappearing into the wilds of the city.

His back still turned:

JIM  
Fate...

Cooper aims the gun. Hates this.

COOPER  
Jim!

Jim continues off. Almost vanished back into nothingness now.

JIM  
She's a cruel mistress, Cooper.

BLAM. BLAM. BLAM.

Jim is SHOT three times.

Falls backward in a Peckinpah ballet of blood.

Cooper shocked, turns -

REVEAL Sandra at the edge of the wilds.

The Lion has taken down the Antelope.

Gun raised as she makes eye contact with Cooper:

A meaningful look between The Detective and The Salesman.

Forever linked by the force of nature that was The Driver.

Pulls out her WALKIE-TALKIE -

SANDRA  
Requesting immediate assistance...

As Cooper rushes to Jim. Lying in the mud. Bleeding out. Gaze on the gray and rainswept L.A. skies. Aware that he is dying.

JIM  
Can't keep things buried in the  
trunk forever, Coop. Gotta let 'em  
out at some point. Expose your dark  
treasure to the light...

Breathing ragged. On the cusp of death.

JIM  
So you can finally tell your story.

Cooper nods. Jim's life-force rapidly blinking out. Jim struggles. Turns his head. Makes eye-contact with Cooper.

JIM  
Until then?

A final devil-may-care smile.

JIM  
Hang ten, Chongo.

And with that? The man we call Jim Ryder dies.

**EXT. L.A. RIVER - GLENDALE NARROWS - DAY (MONTAGE)**

MOS. Various shots in the aftermath. COOPER has a blanket over his shoulders as he is questioned by the AUTHORITIES.

CHALLENGER being dusted for prints and examined for evidence.

EMTs loading Jim's BODYBAG into the ambulance.

SANDRA listening closely to COOPER'S STATEMENT. Nods. Believes him. The word ABDUCTED heard amidst the MOS images.

CRIME SCENE PHOTOGRAPHER taking final PHOTOS of the Challenger. Evidence collection concluded. Head of Service & Purchasing, Eddie, in his coveralls. Waiting for the Challenger to be consigned back to the Dealership.

Cooper watching as the ambulance containing Jim's body drives off amidst the falling rain. Flashing red and blue lights illuminating his weary features -

EMMA (O.C.)  
Cooper?

He turns: Emma is there. Cassidy in her arms. Cooper rushes to them. Pulling his wife and daughter into an embrace.

COOPER  
God I love you so much...

Off the family hugging, grateful, reunited -

**INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - COOPER'S OFFICE CUBICLE - DAY**

Cooper is back at his desk now. AUTHORITIES wrapping things up in the showroom on the other side of the glass wall. He opens the desk drawer. Removes that PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE of MEDS. Pops a PILL. Washes it down. Already feels better.

His gaze lands on his FATHER'S FUNERAL CARD. He takes hold of it. Less of an anathema to him now than it was at the beginning of our film. He reads the inscription: "HARRISON REED. Beloved Husband. Father. Teacher. Grandfather-To-Be."

His eyes filled with compassion. The hint of a loving smile for his deceased father visible in his watery gaze. Off that -

**EXT. CAR DEALERSHIP - SERVICE DEPARTMENT - CAR WASH - DAY**

The Challenger comes out of the wash. Cooper, curious, stands beside Eddie, who is waiting to assess the vehicle's prospects. Eddie frowns as the suds clear. Darkly comedic -

EDDIE

All the soap in the world ain't  
gonna fix this one, Coop.

Eddie walks away to fill out his assessment report...

EDDIE

Total write-off, brother. Gonna  
fill out my report then send her to  
the salvage yard...

Cooper nods as Eddie disappears into the garage. Then looks back to the car. Moves closer to it. Sentimental. This was the vehicle of his enlightenment, after all...

Cooper walks alongside it: no longer the fancy new car that had adorned the showroom, it's been through it now...

And is somehow maybe even more beautiful for it.

Cooper remembers Jim's words:

COOPER

*Little "history" on it...*

He runs his fingers tenderly along the DENTED METAL and SCRAPED SIDES of the Challenger. Over the BULLET HOLES and other VARIOUS SCARS. A Roman General dreamily running his hand across ancient fields of wheat. Cooper smiles...

COOPER

*Got a "story" now.*

More of Jim's words suddenly hitting him -

COOPER

*Can't keep things buried in the  
trunk forever...*

Cooper looks to the TRUNK. Intrigued.

He POPS the trunk - revealing...

EMPTY. Oh, well. Goes to close it - STOPS. Something has caught his eye: a RECESSED WELL at the back. Its COVER discreetly labelled "VTD" - the area from which Jim had removed the Vehicle Tracking Device.

Jim's final words ringing in Cooper's ears now -

COOPER

*Expose your dark treasure to the  
light... so you can finally tell  
your story.*

Cooper opens the "VTD" well. His eyes POP wide - REVEAL: Several 10-STRAP BUNDLES of 100 DOLLAR BILLS stuffed inside. Holy fucking shit. Cooper takes a look around. Nobody here. Removes ONE of the 10-STRAP BUNDLES. Flips through the tight stack of hundreds. Looks back to the VTD well: it's filled with SEVERAL of those BUNDLES. Cooper realizing:

COOPER  
Must be over three-hundred thousand dollars in there...

He looks off into the RAIN. Abating now. INFLATABLE TUBE MAN smiling wildly as he waves goodbye amidst the GRAY DRIZZLE.

Cooper looks back to the BUNDLES OF HUNDRED DOLLAR BILLS.

PUSH-IN ON his face as he contemplates his next move...

Then smiles. Devil-may-care.

**INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - HALLWAY - RANDY'S OFFICE - DAY**

Cooper's BACKPACK is slung over his shoulder. It looks a little, ah, heavier than the last time we glimpsed it as he KNOCKS on the doorframe of RANDY'S OFFICE.

Randy looks up. Hurries around his desk to greet Cooper.

RANDY  
How you holdin' up, bud?

COOPER  
Okay. All things considered.

Randy nods. Looks nervous. Like he doesn't want any of this to boomerang back onto his Dealership. Cooper looks off. Taking-in Randy's General Manager digs - the heights to which Cooper might one day aspire:

A larger version of Cooper's cubicle. Randy clearly planning on playing out the rest of his days here: PERSONAL PHOTOS on the walls of him GOLFING WITH BUDDIES. BEACH VACATIONS and MAI-TAIS. Signed HEADSHOTS of CELEBRITIES we can't remember anymore who bought a car from Randy ages ago.

Cooper looks back to his boss. More resolved than ever now.

COOPER  
Think I'm gonna quit, Randy.

Randy nods. Happy Cooper has come to this decision.

RANDY  
That's probably a good call.

Cooper looks into Randy's eyes. Nods back.

RANDY  
Never really saw you as the car  
salesman-type, truth be told.

Cooper nods at the first thing they've ever been in complete  
agreement on. Starts from the office -

RANDY  
Hey, kid?

Cooper turns.

RANDY  
Your dad would be proud of you.

Cooper nods. He knows it. Loves to hear it nonetheless.

**INT. CAR DEALERSHIP - SHOWROOM - DAY**

Cooper walks across the floor. A FANCY NEW CAR already in the  
CENTER POSITION of the showroom. Gil laying the schmooze on  
thick as he greets a POTENTIAL NEW CUSTOMER:

GIL  
Gil Halicki: Associate Sales  
Manager. See anything you like?

Cooper passes the Gil-Man and his brand-new promotion to  
Associate Sales Manager with a nod "goodbye"...

Then heads toward the large glass doors of the fishbowl:

The rainstorm has finally passed. Sun now poking through the  
clouds and warming everything up with golden rays of light.

Cooper puts on a pair of big-ass Kurt Cobain-style sunglasses  
he must've retrieved from the wreck. Pulls that hefty  
backpack that's flung over his shoulder a little tighter...

Then steps out into the bright embrace of the city.

One helluva story to tell. And no longer afraid to tell it.

FADE OUT.