

THE
HOT
CLUB



THE HOT CLUB

by ALEX COX

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"I DO NOT KNOW HOW MANY
FUTURE GENERATIONS WE
CAN COUNT ON BEFORE
THE LORD RETURNS."

--- JAMES G. WATT

SECRETARY OF
THE INTERIOR

1981

THE HOT CLUB:

VANCE SALVEAUX soldier of misfortune

GENERAL WALKER commander of Central American Ops

PADRE JAMAAL VANCE's chaplain, WALKER's confidant

BUBBA RAM LEE 16-year-old spiritual master

HARLEY SATELLE dying mastermind, disciple of BUBBA RAM

SANTO BENARES Cuban hit man, crony of SATELLE

GLORIA computer specialist and terrorist

DARLENE GLORIA's girlfriend and bodyguard

DIRK PULER teenage psychopath

KYDD inept mechanic, ex-realtor

PROFESSOR NAKADAI nuclear physicist, kidnapped

MICHELLE SALVEAUX VANCE's wife, missing

ALI & SALINDA their children, missing

"PONY" TRAGGERS British agent of the plutonium police

DIGBY TRAGGERS' aide-de-camp

BOSS NOBLE urban warlord

BENTLY FBI special-agent-in-charge

AGENT ROGERSZ BENTLY's top op

THE HOT CLUB (CONT.):

"SKIP" TRACER	her ivy-league proteges
MARK HUNTER	
SENATOR CONRAD	venal politician
GERALD SORREL	his lawyer
FRITZ	AGENT ROGERSZ' friend
RICHARDSON	
McGILL	VANCE's comrades, presumed KIA
JEFFERSON WHITMAN	mayor of L.A.
BARNEY HOLDEN	police chief, later mayor of L.A.
DETECTIVE SQUIER	bent cop
KIP LEE	would-be sheriff
BLYSS	a landlord
PERCY & SASCHA	twin hermaphrodites



FOREST CLEARING EXT NIGHT

An Army supply depot behind the lines. Surrounded by impenetrable foliage. Strings of lightbulbs crisscross rows of tents. Ted Nugent echoes from the speaker system.

TWO GUARDS stand at the perimeter. A MAN and a WOMAN, dressed in combat gear. They carry M-16s and wear night-sight goggles.

Suddenly the crickets and the nightbirds fall silent. The rock & roll continues in the camp.

GUARD 1
Hear something?

GUARD 2
No.

A BUNCH OF BANANAS lands between them in the mud. The GUARDS leap apart as if it were a bomb.

GUARDS
Who's out there? Who the fuck?

VANCE SALVEAUX steps into the lamplight. 30 or a little more, wearing bermuda shorts and flack jacket. He has a bundle over his shoulder.

GUARD 2
Salveaux! What you doing outside the wire, man?

VANCE
My laundry.
(picks up the bananas)
Want one?

GUARD 1
Okay.

VANCE gives them bananas, marches on into an aisle of tents. The Nugent tape ends and in the silence a JAMAICAN STEEL BAND can be heard.

GUARD 2

One fine night... just wait and see.

VANCE passes several soldiers who are drunk. One of them tunes a guitar. The sound of the steel band is louder.

TITLE: CENTRAL AMERICA SOON

BIBLE TENT INT NIGHT

A SHAKER CEREMONY is in progress as VANCE enters. A dozen young MEN & WOMEN, most of them in uniform, bopping ecstatically to steel band music. Canvas pews and portable altar. VANCE sits down at the back and bows his head.

PADRE AL JAMAAL turns the tape off. JAMAAL is 42, dog collar, sergeant's stripes on his cassock.

JAMAAL

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, be kool.

CONGREGATION

BE KOOL!

JAMAAL

At this point the Communicants perform the Second Approved Ritual. Packet B.

The CONGREGATION break open plastic sachets and consume the contents: wafers and red winelike liquid sucked thru straws. VANCE sits with his head bowed. JAMAAL lights incense sticks.

JAMAAL

This evening's fragrance is
Transcendent Embers by Jovan. (CONT.)

JAMAAL (CONT.)
(he wafts the vapors)
Watch over thine unworthy servants Lord,
during the testing time to come. DISMISS.

The CONGREGATION rises, starts to hurry thru the tent flaps.
JAMMAL pulls off his dog collar, dons a black beret.

JAMMAL
Salveaux! Richardson! McGill!
Where d'you thing you're going?

RICHARDSON
You said we was dismiss.

JAMAAL
Padre Jamaal dismissed you, Richardson.
Sergeant Jamaal has a productive task
for you to perform. Fall in behind
the Chemmy Tent in fifteen minutes.

JAMAAL pulls several lightweight silvery items out from
behind the altar. Throws them at the pressganged MEN.

VANCE shakes his out. It is a fireproof protective suit
with smoked-glass visor.

LOADING ZONE EXT NIGHT

THREE PRIVATES clad in silvered suits hump METAL CYLINDERS
from a stockpile into the flatbed of an Army pickup.

The CYLINDERS bear skulls and crossbones and the stencilled
words, LIQUID GB NERVE REAGENT -- WETEYE -- DO NOT EXPOSE TO
AIR.

McGILL
Where's this shit going, Sarge?

JAMMAL
You wouldn't want to know, McGill.
Be careful.

VANCE lays a canister precisely down. He looks up and sees a strange figure seated in a jeep - a warped cadaverous man in gaudy COLONEL's regalia - arguing with a U.S. INTERPRETER

INTERPRETER

No es possible, mi Coronel.
Los insurgentes --

The COLONEL shouts something unintelligible. VANCE and McGILL bump helmets.

VANCE

Who's that weird dude?

McGILL

Colonel Ramirez Lupo. Some drug smuggler our side's cozy with. These cans we're loading - bet you they full of SMACK and headed STATESIDE --

VANCE

In that case I'm going with 'em.
Richardson --

RICHARDSON looks skyward and misses the CANISTER passed by VANCE.

It lands heavily in the mud. All freeze. JAMAAL starts to button his protective suit. SOUND OF ROTOR BLADES.

JAMAAL

Dog damn you if you cracked that can --

RICHARDSON

I didn't. There's someone upstairs,
Padre.

JAMAAL

(listening)
Fourteenth Aircav. Back from crop dusting. Let's see you pick that up.

RICHARDSON bends down, restricted by his suit. The COLONEL gestures angrily. JAMAAL pulls down his visor and secures it. ROTOR BLADES are very loud --

THE CAMP ERUPTS IN FLAMES.

VANCE hits the dirt as an EXPANDING FIREBALL engulfs the tents.

A heatwave washes over him. The truck's gas tank bursts. VANCE's visor mists over reflecting LIVID NAPALM FALLING FROM THE SKY...

TV SCREEN

VANCE's face fills the monitor. A microphone intrudes. He's lying, thickly bandaged, on a hospital trolley.

REPORTERS

(off screen)

Tell us how it happened, Private.
In your own words. Take your time.

VANCE

Got burned in a napalm raid on the Eighteenth Supply. Based in Silencio, Honduras. We were bombed by the Fourteenth Air Cavalry.

REPORTERS

Why'd they do that? Where did the planes come from?

VANCE

They were helicopters. Bells.
Flying close to the treeline.

REPORTERS

The Pentagon has stated you were strafed by Chinese fighters hijacked by Guatemalan rebels trained in Cuba.

VANCE

I don't know about no fighters. These were Bells. Like the phone company.

REPORTERS

How many U.S. advisors died in the attack?
A ball-park figure, guesstimate --

VANCE

Everybody. Everybody died.

GENERAL WALKER'S QUARTERS INT NIGHT

GENERAL J.D. WALKER, compact, lantern-jawed career man, switches stations. VANCE's face appears again. WALKER snorts and turns the TV off.

PADRE JAMAAL fills chunky glasses with Ron Rico rum. He moves with difficulty. His badly-burned face is covered with recent skin grafts.

JAMAAL

Another contradiction. He's alive, and so am I. And so are several others. His story has enough holes in it to sink the Nimitz.

GENERAL WALKER accepts his drink in silence. PADRE JAMAAL sits down beside him on the leather couch. Rain spatters gently on the metal roof.

JAMAAL

I really don't believe there's cause to worry, General. This whole thing will blow over.

WALKER

I thought we had an understanding with him.

JAMAAL

It seems not. But I don't see what harm this man can do. The media has a very short attention span. In two weeks they'll have forgotten Salveaux entirely --

WALKER

Who?

JAMAAL

Salveaux, sir. Private Vance Salveaux.

WALKER

Save the semantics for your pulpit, Padre. I'm winning this war in the field but losing it on television thanks to creeps like this. He's headed for the PSYCHO WARD.

A telephone rings. Thunder.

JAMAAL

I can't help feeling... that it's wrong to send this fellow to the V.A., General. I assure you he's as sane as the next man --

LOW ANGLE ON WALKER, SMILING.

WALKER

I am the next man, Padre.
Fix me another drink.

STATE CAPITOL SACRAMENTO EXT DAY

POLICE and NEWSPEOPLE throng the steps. Buses filled with National Guard wait in the alleys. A YELLOW CAB rolls to a halt. Like all the other vehicles we shall see, it's in bad shape and covered with GRAFFITI.

SANTO BENARES emerges and crosses the street.

A Cuban in his forties wearing a toupee.
Business suit, no tie, briefcase.

STATE CAPITOL INT DAY

SANTO stands in a line of TOURISTS who are being searched.
The search is thorough. Painfully he knots a spotted tie.
He grips his briefcase twixt his knees.

GUARD

Next.

SANTO shuffles forward. Young and impassive, the GUARD
checks him out.

SANTO

My name is John. I am a stranger here.

The GUARD nods imperceptibly. He frisks SANTO, glances
down at SANTO's case but doesn't put it thru the metal
detector.

He straightens SANTO's tie.

GUARD

Me too. Enjoy your stay.

STAIRCASE INT DAY

SANTO mounts the marble. He takes the stairs one at a
time. TWO PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS smoking a joint ignore him.
At the top of the STAIRS, SANTO turns towards a tall,
ornate door. TWO GUARDS see him, turn and walk away.

ANTE ROOM INT DAY

TWO MEN at a table in a vaulted chamber. Both grey-templed,
tanned, distinguished, anxious. SENATOR CONRAD and his
lawyer, GERALD I. SORREL. A single pencil lies between
them on the desk.

SENATOR
How long will I have to be with the
Committee?

SORREL
Twenty minutes. Thirty at the most.

SENATOR
That's half an hour, Gerald. They
can ask a lot of questions in half
an hour. I don't know how I'm
going to answer them.

SORREL
We've all been thru this before,
Senator. All you have to do is smile
and keep our good friends out of it.
Tonight you'll be on a plane --

A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. SENATOR CONRAD looks up in alarm.
GERALD SORREL pats his hand.

SORREL
Come in.

SANTO enters deferentially. He shuffles his feet.

SANTO
Excuse please. Senator Conrad?

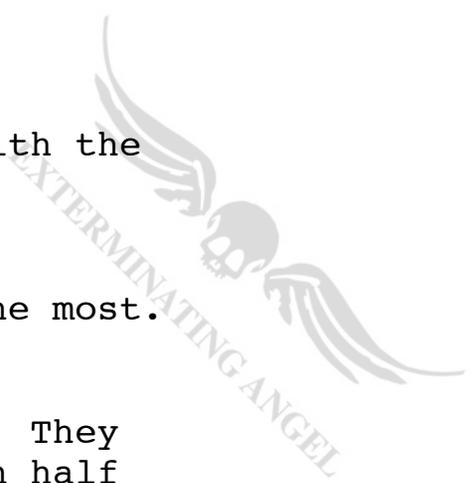
SORREL
That's him.

SENATOR
No it's not!

The SENATOR leaps up and rushes to the window.

SANTO takes a silenced Star .45 automatic from his
briefcase.

SENATOR CONRAD wrestles with the window latch, shouting
into the street.



SENATOR

Help me, you fools! They're trying
to murder me! I may be a crook but
I'm still your elected repre --

SANTO shoots SENATOR CONRAD in the back.

A neat hole appears in the glass in front of him.

The SENATOR slumps to the floor.

SANTO steps up and shoots him once again.

SORREL

How desperately some people cling
to life. Like animals.

SANTO

What else did you expect?

SORREL

A little dignity. Some measure
of decorum at the last.

SANTO

Let's see if you do any better.

SORREL

I beg your pardon?

SANTO shoots SORREL between the eyes. He wipes the pistol
clean and wraps SORREL's fingers around it. Leans back
against the door and mops his brow.

LATER

Flashbulbs pop. The room is full of COPS and plainclothes
SECRET SERVICE. A FAT DETECTIVE is on the telephone.

DETECTIVE

(into phone)

Murder and then suicide, right. (CONT.)

DETECTIVE (CONT.)

His lawyer. We're theorizing on
some kinda pact...

An ENGLISHMAN modeled after T.E. Lawrence enters frame.
He wears a safari suit and carries an umbrella. "PONY"
TRAGGERS. His aide-de-camp, the portly, proletarian
DIGBY, enters crossways to confer.

DIGBY

Inside job, gov'nor.

TRAGGERS

No doubt about it, Digby.

They part and stroll across the room. More flashbulbs.
The SENATOR's corpse is zipped into a plastic BODY BAG.

RAILROAD CAR INT DAY

SANTO sits bolt upright watching the Pacific flicker by.
His train is heading south thru Vandenburg Air Force Base.
Missile launchers surrounded by scarred ground.

SANTO takes a hefty swig from his hipflask.

SHORELINE EXT DAY

A walled mission-style enclosure by the San Diego sea.
Minarets and spires peek out above a white wall topped with
broken glass.

Below the Mission, TWO MEN stroll beside the sea.

HARLEY SATELLE, bald and skeletal, straight-backed in his
forties. BUBBA RAM LEE, his guru, sixteen years of age.

BUBBA

I was but thirteen when the stigmata
first appeared. Till then I had not
known I was The Chosen. I had been (CONT.)

BUBBA (CONT.)
guilty of the Sin of Modesty. Then
all at once, identical wounds opened
on every fingertip and bled in unison.

SATELLE
I came to you for advice, Bubba Ram.

BUBBA
Your mind is made up.

SATELLE
Not entirely. If you tell me I'm wrong...

BUBBA
You might prevaricate, but in the end --
you are the instrument of destiny, Satelle.

SATELLE
Spiritual Master. I must have your blessing.

BUBBA
The waves look nice, don't they.

HILLTOP EXT DAY

TWO FBI AGENTS lie in the damp sand. "SKIP" TRACER and
MARK HUNTER. SKIP pops a shot off with his Pentaroid --
the exposed print glides smoothly out beneath the lens.

MARK trains a rifle mike on the distant SATELLE and
BUBBA RAM.

AGENT ROGERSZ
Can you hear them yet?

AGENT BETSY ROGERSZ sits in the front seat of their Matador.
A peach-blonde California idyll of 31. She wears a black
eyepatch and has a scar.

MARK
All I'm getting is the waves.
They're walking in the sea on purpose.

SKIP

They haven't taken their shoes off.
Agent Rogersz, we could bust them
for that.

AGENT ROGERSZ shakes her head. She takes her GUN out and begins to clean it.

V.A. HOSPITAL EXT DAY

An ancient oily bus deposits smoke and PASSENGERS in the hospital grounds. A line of BLINDED SOLDIERS, their eyes wrapped in dirty rags, straggles along.

MICHELLE SALVEAUX, VANCE's Creole wife, strides towards the ivy-covered Psycho Unit. She has in tow their two children SALINDA and ALI.

MICHELLE is 28 and tough and ravishing.

CLERK'S VOICE

I'm sorry, but I checked the micro-
data and there's no one by the name
of Salvage listed --

MICHELLE'S VOICE

Don't bullshit me. SALVEAUX.
I know what room he's in. I know
his specialist's unlisted number.

CLERK'S VOICE

Well anyway it's impossible to see a
patient in the Psychotherapeutic Wing.
A lot of them are chronic masturbators --

MICHELLE'S VOICE

Takes one to know one. I want to
see my husband. NOW.

VISITING ROOM INT DAY

MICHELLE and her CHILDREN face an opaque glass reflection of themselves. A video camera monitors them.

The lights kick on in the next room. VANCE is led in by TWO ORDERLIES. ALI and SALINDA hammer on the glass.

ALI & SALINDA

Daddy! We love you! Buy us toys!

VANCE sits down heavily opposite MICHELLE. The ORDERLIES eye her salaciously. VANCE is thoroughly doped.

MICHELLE

How are you feeling, Vance?

VANCE

(very slowly)

Not too... How's the kids?

MICHELLE

They're right here with me now.
Say hi to daddy.

SALINDA

Mom - what gives with Dad?

ALI

He stoned.

MICHELLE

No he isn't, Ali. That's his medication
that he has to take. Isn't that right,
Vance? What have they got you on?

For a second VANCE's eyes seem to clear. His pupils flick from side to side. Scanning the GUARDS.

VANCE

Feeling fine. Real good.

MICHELLE

You're coming home soon, aren't you?
Did they tell you when?

VANCE shakes his head. He does not comprehend.

MICHELLE

You have to make an effort, Vance.
You have to tell them you feel well
enough to leave. No more making up
stories. You have to get well
and get out.

VANCE

I'm having trouble... did Jamaal call?

MICHELLE

No, he didn't. I don't think you
can count on him. You have to get
well quickly. On your own.

VANCE

You look real pretty, Marcia.

MICHELLE

Michelle.

She stares at him for a blank second. Then she grabs
their offspring. Drags them to the door.

ALI

Aww! Ma! You promised you'd ask
him if I could have a JET PACK!

The door closes. The ORDERLIES haul VANCE away.

TV SCREEN

VANCE'S HEAD and shoulders on an operating slab.
An automated CAT SCAN PLATE slides smoothly past his face.
Figures print out in the corner of the screen.

TECHNICIAN'S VOICE
Tape rolling. 5/16. Deep Cat Scan
kicking off with 5,000 millirem
exposure in the lower gammas.
Repeat as necessary. Go.

A BRILLIANT LIGHT whites VANCE's face - his x-ray skull
appears. The light dies.

TECHNICIAN'S VOICE
Again.

The LIGHT obscures his face again - the skull - darkness.

TECHNICIAN'S VOICE
Again.

V.A. HOSPITAL EXT EVENING

Christmas carols waft into the night. Loud insect freeway
hum. VANCE sits in a wheelchair with a rug over his knees.
He drools.

TWO ORDERLIES smoke crack on the verandah. They talk very
loudly. VANCE does not seem to hear.

ORDERLY 1
They shipping him upstate tomorrow.
No Returns Ward.

ORDERLY 2
Too bad for him.

ORDERLY 1
Too bad for us. This sure has
been an easy ride.

ORDERLY 2
Yah. I'm not into veggies, man.
I like a patient with some balls.
One you can PUNCH OUT now and then.
(rubbing his eyes)
Go get that bottle from my car.

ORDERLY 1 grunts and strolls towards the parking lot. He hums a Christmas song. VANCE sits and slavers. ORDERLY 2 leans in close to his face.

ORDERLY 2

Dumbass bastard. If you knew what you're in for, you'd be running for that fence right now. I'd have to shoot you and you'd thank me for it.

(he stubs his cigarette out on his PATIENT's cheek)

You deaf or something, bitch?

VANCE lashes out a steel-hard hand and grabs his jugular. The ORDERLY makes feeble clucking sounds. VANCE rises, lifts him off the ground.

ORDERLY 2

G... gg... gkk...

VANCE holds the ORDERLY by the throat. His neck CRACKS. VANCE tosses the body off the porch, picks up his blanket, dons it, poncho-style.

VANCE takes off at a fast sprint for the PERIMETER. The MOON is rising behind buildings of old stone.

TV SCREEN

ROCKET TAKING OFF, HIGH-SPEED TRAIN, ROBOTS ON FACTORY PRODUCTION LINE. Cheap video titles: "SCIENCE REPORT."

CUT to a GLOSSY HIGH-RISE surrounded by cliffs, palm trees and decay. Video subtitle: "STRAND CORPORATION, CALIF."

CUT to LECTURE THEATER INT. A handful of students is addressed by PROFESSOR NAKADAI - studious, slightly shabby, 37.

A radio is playing in the background.

NAKADAI

Constructing nuclear weapons is no longer difficult. A well-read physics major can design one in an hour. A well-stocked hardware store has almost everything you need. Why, then --

WAREHOUSE INT NIGHT

SEVERAL FIGURES clustered in the TV glow. HARLEY SATELLE, immobile, clad in a nylon rainsuit. GLORIA, a crewcut woman in her twenties. Green cat's eyes. DARLENE, a lot like GLORIA but a different color. DIRK PULER, a teenage psycho who's always cleaning guns or honing knives.

SATELLE watches NAKADAI intently.

NAKADAI

(on TV)

-- don't I live on a South Sea atoll? Because! One thing is missing from the dangerous equation. The fissionable thing. PLUTONIUM. You have a question?

The TV CAMERA pans across the lecture room.

Focuses fuzzily on GLORIA, wearing a yellow wig.

GLORIA

Look! Look! That's me! On TV!

DARLENE

How'd you get in there, Gloria?

GLORIA

Student card.

SATELLE

Be quiet.

The TV GLORIA asks PROFESSOR NAKADAI her question.

GLORIA

But hasn't some plutonium gone missing,
Professor? From, like, reactors?

NAKADAI

We've all heard stories, of course, of
a black market in plutonium smuggled
out of the former Soviet Union...
fortunately most of these cases
have turned out to be POLICE STINGS,
the work of JOURNALISTS!

GLORIA

But isn't there a market in more
dangerous substances, Professor?
For instance - Red Mercury, or MOX?

ANGLE ON DARLENE

Throwing her arm around GLORIA's shoulders.

DARLENE

Who told you all that stuff?

GLORIA

(indicating SATELLE)

He did.

SATELLE turns the volume up.

NAKADAI

(on TV)

Red Mercury does not exist. It's
a fantasy. MOX is reactor fuel -
a mixture of plutonium and uranium
oxides. It could be useful to a
TERRORIST - the plutonium is
enriched to 87 per cent - but
only if the bomb maker were in
possession of CERTAIN KNOWLEDGE
which is fortunately known only
to SCIENTISTS LIKE MYSELF...

ON TV, PROFESSOR NAKADAI smiles at his STUDENTS.

DIRK starts a slow handclap.

SATELLE stares fixedly at the screen.

OLD GODFATHERZ RESTAURANT INT NIGHT

Hollywood-themed decor with WAITPERSONS in Brando, Lugosi, Karloff and Marilyn get-up.

PROFESSOR NAKADAI dines on the Evening Special, hotcakes and bits-o-flesh. The DJ emits endless commercials.

RADIO

Win \$50,000 - Just For Being Born!

NAKADAI chews each morsel carefully.

The DOORS BUST OPEN and TWO WOMEN charge in, brandishing Uzi automatic weapons. They wear latex Frankenstein masks and nylon rainsuits, and are initially mistaken for WAITERS.

WOMAN 1

On your knees! Noses against the wall!

No one reacts. Thinking the help is acting up, the YOUNG MANAGER approaches.

MANAGER

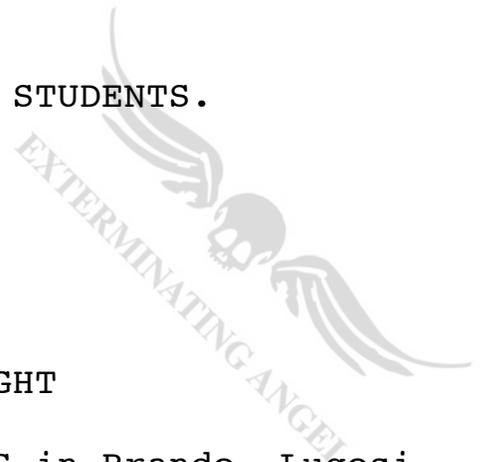
What is this? Get back to work --

ONE OF THE WOMEN SHOOTS HIM.

The CUSTOMERS immediately hit the deck.
Banknotes and plastic money start to appear.

WOMAN 2

Credit cards, IDs, and drivers' licenses. Large denominations bills. No fives, no ones.



A rain of valuables lands on the Batman linoleum.
WOMAN 1 prowls the line, collecting the belongings.
An OLD MAN clutches at her knees.

OLD MAN
Don't kill me! Kill all the others
if you have to but not me! I'm old!

WOMAN 2 ruffles his grizzled head. WOMAN 1 stoops to
pick up a fallen credit card. She reads it.

WOMAN 1
(pleasantly)
Whose BobKard is this?

No answer. Bowed heads study the floor. WOMAN 2 fires a
burst of 9mm shells over their heads. Screaming. Smoke.

NAKADAI
It's mine.

WOMAN 1
(extends hand, helps
NAKADAI to his feet)
Enchante, Professor. Please step
this way. Your car awaits.

NAKADAI
What car? Where are we going?

She hustles him towards the door. Her PARTNER covers her.

NAKADAI
You're making a mistake. I put my
money on the floor. Look - do you
want my watch? It has two dials -
tells time in Tokyo and Denver -
never needs winding --

WOMAN 2 thrusts a black bag over his head.

A STREET PERSON CUSTOMER jumps up, leveling a MAGNUM --

CUSTOMER
N.R.C. FREEZE!

He has the drop on both the WOMEN.

ANGLE ON ANOTHER CUSTOMER - SANTO BENARES -

Jumping to his feet, shooting the UNDERCOVER CUSTOMER --

OLD GODFATHERZ EXT NIGHT

Machinegun fire within. The MASKED WOMEN pile out,
dragging NAKADAI. SANTO follows.

The WOMEN wait on the corner. A POLICE CAR drives past.

The WOMEN avoid eye contact with the COP CAR. It turns
the corner. A PICKUP TRUCK arrives.

PICKUP CAB INT NIGHT

WOMAN 1 handcuffs NAKADAI to the roll bar. WOMAN 2 and
SANTO slide in beside the driver. The driver is DIRK
PULER.

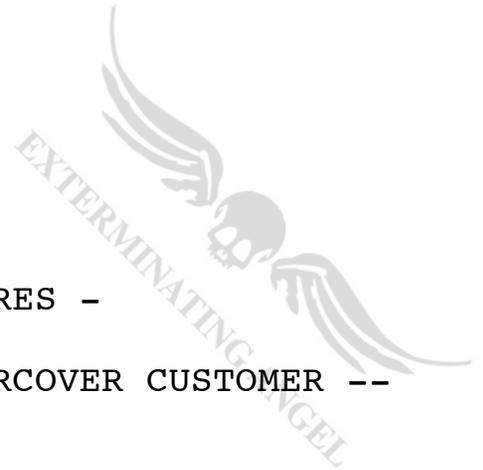
WOMAN 2
Where were you?

DIRK
I had to get gas.

WOMAN 2
You're never driving us again.

WOMAN 1 leaps thru the window with a whoop. She embraces
WOMAN 2, pulls her mask off. WOMAN 2 is DARLENE.

SANTO puts his foot down. No cops pursue them. GLORIA
removes her own mask and proceeds to snort anti-knock
additive for diesel engines from a greasy canister.
DARLENE accepts the bottle, does the same.



They both have laughing fits.

INDUSTRIAL STREET EXT NIGHT

Lined with derelict abandoned cars. The PICKUP passes.

WILSHIRE CORRIDOR EXT DAWN

Two files of skyscrapers running to the coast. Most of them half-way built, abandoned. Surrounding districts like flat and ashen, as if devastated by a fire.

Campfires burning as the sun appears.

ROOFTOP EXT DAWN

Tents and several huts surround a campfire. The occupants are very poor and dirty. VANCE talks to a MAN lying in a semi-tent, BLYSS. BLYSS is 39 and obviously dying.

VANCE

Her name's Michelle. Michelle Salveaux. She has two children. Here's a photograph.

BLYSS

I don't know any Michelles.

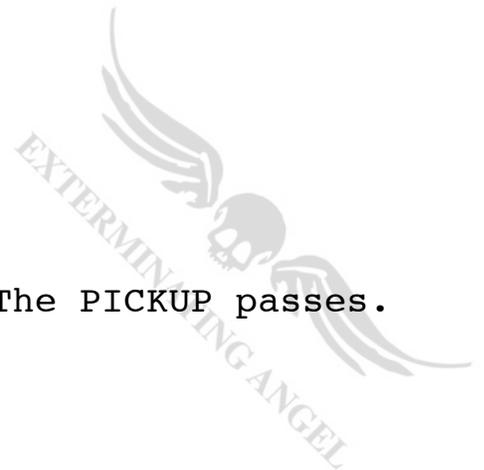
VANCE

Yes you do. You came round to our

house twenty, thirty times. Whenever the rent was late. We lived in your building.

BLYSS

The building - I don't have it any more. They tore it down. By accident --



VANCE

I know that. Where'd they go?

BLYSS

How do I know - not my place to -
I don't know these people anyway.

VANCE makes as if to strike him. BLYSS coughs hackingly.
VANCE looks away - and his eyes are caught by BLYSS's
television - where a piercing hypnotic LOGO swirls...

TV SCREEN

Flashing frames of EXOTIC LOCALES and EROTIC IMAGES mingled
with SKULLS and DEATH - stirring fanfares play as a
SALESMAN'S VOICE intones --

SALES VOICE

Come with me now! Tune in to the
Upgrade Level in Interactive Video!
REMOCON ushers in a New Age in Home
Entertainment! Call up your most
exotic fantasy in REM-TIME!
Experience the outer reaches of
the Cosmos - the ultimate in Ecstasy -
without leaving the room! NOW!!
With the REMOCON 2000!!

VANCE stands, transfixed by the beauty of the ad's
subliminals, reflected in the TV EYE.

BEL-AIR WESTGATE EXT DAY

RENTACOPS in paramilitary gear stop and search random limos.
Caught in the queue of cars is AGENT ROGERSZ' Matador.

MATADOR INT DAY

SKIP and MARK in front. AGENT BETSY ROGERSZ smoking slim
panatellas in back. A RENTACOP taps on the window with

his shotgun. MARK winds the window down.

RENTACOP
Where do you bozos think you're goin'?

MARK
(promptly)
1177 Lookout, Officer.
The Noble Residence.

RENTACOP
Lemme see your invitation.

AGENT ROGERSZ taps MARK on the shoulder.

AGENT ROGERSZ
Ask him how much he wants.

MARK
That won't be necessary, Ms Rogersz.

MARK flashes his shield at the glowering RENTACOP.

MARK
Mark Hunter of the Agency.
We're on the same side, buddy.

RENTACOP
Feds? Get out of the car.

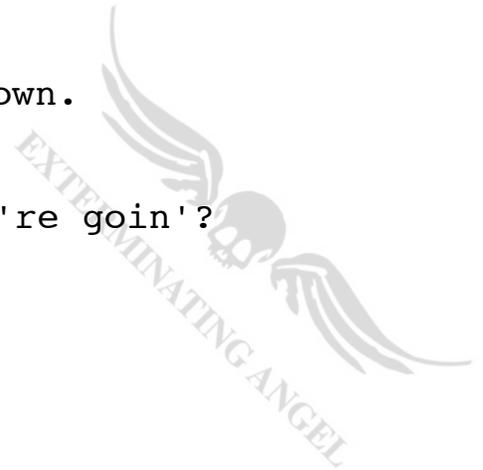
AGENT ROGERSZ sighs. ANOTHER RENTACOP raises the barrier to admit a battered VAN. The VAN bears the words,

APEX PEST SERVICE.

MANSION EXT DAY

Large and once-impressive automobiles covered in GRAFFITI on the gravel drive. A view of rolling hills and glinting pools and smog. RENTACOPS with rifles prowl the grounds.

The APEX VAN crawls up to the tradesmen's entrance.



HARLEY SATELLE emerges via the rear door. Followed by SANTO and DARLENE. All three wear nylon suits that say "APEX."

MANSION INT DAY

SATELLE, DARLENE and SANTO strip off their rainsuits in an upper corridor. They wear tuxedos/evening dress beneath.

Below them, SCINTILLATING PARTYGOERS mingle on the stairs. SATELLE surveys the elite scene. MARIACHIS play.

SATELLE

That's him. Boss Noble.
Watch me now.

SATELLE strides down the staircase with his hand outstretched. DARLENE and SANTO fall in and follow him towards BOSS NOBLE - gregarious, expansive city-father-racketeer and friend to the famous. Surrounded by a thick circle of ADMIRERS and BODYGUARDS.

SATELLE

Boss Noble! Sorry to be late!

SATELLE cuts thru the circle. BOSS NOBLE scowls. SATELLE seizes his hand.

SATELLE

Harley Satelle, Boss Noble.
And let me say at once this is a
pleasure and a privilege. Yes siree!

BOSS NOBLE

Uh. Youse have egg on your tux.

SATELLE

(glances down at stain)
Just testing, Boss Noble! You'd be
surprised how few people notice.
Have you met my aides yet, Santo
Benares and Darlene?

BOSS NOBLE notices DARLENE. His GUARDS notice SANTO.

BOSS NOBLE
What's da game?

SATELLE
No game, Boss Noble. Fat Freddy
told me to give you a call.
He's in an isolation cell now -
not expected to survive --

BOSS NOBLE
Duke! See Freddy gets a card.
Boss Noble never forgets a friend.
(kisses DARLENE's hand)
And wha brings you to town, li'l lady?

DARLENE
The Gay and Lesbian Karate Finals.

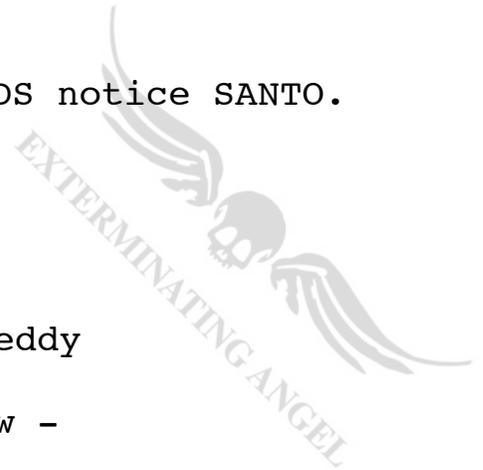
SATELLE
She's only kidding, of course, Boss
Noble. In fact she's all alone in
the world. I found her sleeping in
a dumpster. I'm in the Import/Export
Business since you ask. Harley Satelle.
Closing a little action on the Far
West Side...

The click of safety catches. Somebody laughs, quickly
shuts up. Everyone stares at BOSS NOBLE and SATELLE.

BOSS NOBLE
The Far West Side is mine.

SATELLE takes a step back. BOSS NOBLE seizes his lapels.
The MARIACHIS and the GUESTS drift from the line of fire.

BOSS NOBLE
Word's out some renegades shook
down one of my THEME RESTAURANTS
last night. Word's out they stole
a very important person, too. (CONT.)



BOSS NOBLE (CONT.)
Without my permission. How strange --

SATELLE
That's why I'm here, sire - only -
I thought - you'd prefer --
(fumbles in pockets)
-- to have this on your BIRTHDAY!
Fat Freddy made it for you.

SATELLE produces a knotted handkerchief. SANTO - hand in pocket - tries to keep a clear eye on BOSS NOBLE.

SATELLE uncovers a crude plastic artifact depicting a BANANA AND TWO PLUMS. The thing is on a piece of string.

SATELLE
It was the last one he turned
out before his eyesight went.

BOSS NOBLE peers at SATELLE. SATELLE returns the stare.

BOSS NOBLE
HA HA HA HA HA!

BOSS NOBLE embraces SAATELLE and dons the necklace.

BOSS
Give these boys anything they want!

The MARIACHIS start playing again. Champagne corks pop.
BOSS NOBLE whisks DARLENE to the stair rail.

SATELLE
Get me to a bathroom.

BAROQUE BATHROOM INT DAY

SATELLE vomits into the marble urinal. SANTO drinks from his hipflask. Party sounds outside.

SATELLE
That motherfucking tub of guts!
Nobody's got the right to freak me
out that way! If I applied my
mental powers to him, he'd come
apart like - like --

SANTO
Poodles in a microwave.

SATELLE
Exactly. Anyway. We got what
we came for. Is he still
talking to Darlene?

SANTO opens the door a crack and watches. Nods.

SANTO
Looks like we bought ourselves a
friend. You oughta eat something.

SATELLE
Not hungry. Got my fit?

SANTO
Look at them. Pretty people.
All of them are pretty. Why?

SATELLE
They got nothing to make 'em old.
My fit.

SANTO
Who's this Fat Freddy, by the way?

SATELLE
Some friend of Noble's. Lifer at
San Luis. I saw his picture on TV -
c'mon - he's gonna die real soon -
Santo - my fit. Now.

SANTO
Oh. Yeah.



SANTO hands him an olive drab pouch. SATELLE opens it. Spoons, brown powder, needles gleam within.

STAIRCASE INT DAY

BOSS NOBLE monopolizes DARLENE. His GUESTS are throwing food around. His GUARDS rough up the WAITERS.

BOSS NOBLE

You should come on by and check out my gym, too. It's on the fifty-second floor - built-in jacuzzi and automassage. Bring your girlfriend. The pair of you can work out any time...

Past NOBLE hurry PONY TRAGGERS and DIGBY, the latter wearing a pith helmet and carrying TRAGGERS' briefcase and umbrella.

DIGBY

Sorry to drag you away like this, sir, but there's 'ell of a flap on. One of the Northrop Chaps has disappeared. A fusion feller - name of Nagasaki -

TRAGGERS

Nakadai? Not Katsumi Nakadai?

DIGBY

That might be it. These nip names all sound the same to me.

TRAGGERS

Careful with that tongue, Digby. You're not in England now.

BAROQUE BATHROOM INT DAY

SATELLE removes the needle from his vein. He's hunched up underneath the wash basins. A pinstripe-suited BUSINESSMAN is washing his hands.

BUSINESSMAN
Didn't I see you talking to Boss Noble?
I'd sure appreciate a word in his ear.

SATELLE
I'll...
(vomits, coughs)
I'll see what I can do. Your name?

BUSINESSMAN
Jefferson Whitman.

SATELLE
Aren't you the Mayor or something?

WHITMAN
I am, yes. And if there's anything --

DOWNTOWN STREET CORNER EXT DAY

VANCE SALVEAUX, wrapped in his V.A. blanket, stands at a street corner POLICE VIDEO ALERT BOOTH. He feeds banknotes into the machine. Finally the VIDEO MONITOR illuminates --

ON SCREEN

The rheumy face of DETECTIVE SQUIER. Eyes watering. Clad in a check suit.

VANCE
I want to report a missing person.
Three missing persons --

DETECTIVE SQUIER
Know how many people go missing
in this city every day? One hundred
seventy-nine. Know how many turn up?
Five. And four of them are dead.

VANCE
My wife isn't dead.

DETECTIVE SQUIER
Who said she was? You got a guilty
conscience, son?

(no response)

Okay, okay. You want results, why
don't you get yourself a private eye?
I can recommend a couple used to
work here --

VANCE
Can't afford it.

DETECTIVE SQUIER
Well, if you need some money why not
come and work for us? Earn good wages.
Get a free car and perks. Insert twenty
more dollars and I'll tell you how to
apply -- where are you GOING?

DOWNTOWN EXT DAY

VANCE wanders the streets. He's worn his soles clean thru.
His V.A. blanket flaps around him. He tries to show a
PASSER-BY his wife's photograph.

VANCE
Hey, bro, can you help me out?
I'm looking for this --

PASSER-BY
Fuck you, Jack.

The PASSER-BY passes by. VANCE grabs a chunk of fractured
paving stone and starts to throw it. Changes his mind and
lays the fragment down. He sees a ROACH lying in the road.

VANCE studies the joint. He hesitates. ETHEREAL CHOICE
MUSIC plays. Cracked pavement radiates like a spider's
web. VANCE picks the roach up.

BANK EXT DAY

VANCE trudges up the sidewalk. Outside the Bank a PONTIAC is parked. VANCE glances at the driver. Recognizes him.

VANCE
McGill! Lenny McGill!

McGILL is alarmed. His neck and one side of his face is horribly burned. VANCE grabs his hand and pumps it.

VANCE
Lenny, man. How you doing, bro?
You the first friendly face I've seen
since Nixon died. What's happening?

LENNY
Nothing. Listen, I --

VANCE gets into the car.

PONTIAC INT DAY

McGILL is very nervous. VANCE is over the Moon.

VANCE
Been going crazy, man. Looking for
my wife and kids. I nearly killed
a dude with a stone. No reason.
You haven't seen 'em, have you?
I guess not. Look here, I found a
roach. You want a toke? Here, let
me fire it up. Today must be my
lucky day!

McGILL
Vance. This is not a good time.

VANCE
It's a great time, Lenny. You wouldn't
believe the weird shit that's been --

Alarm bells ring. THREE ROBBERS burst out of the Bank, blasting the interior. They pile into the car, surrounding VANCE.

McGILL guns the motor and the PONTIAC roars away.

INDUSTRIAL AVENUE EXT DAY

The APEX PEST SERVICE VAN tools past abandoned factories and junkyards. It weaves drunkenly across the road.

VAN INT DAY

SATELLE is crashed out in the back. SANTO and DARLENE are conscious but the worse for wear. They wear party hats. The Van is driven by KYDD, a scientific type with thick prescription lenses and a pony tail. KYDD cannot drive.

DARLENE

Kool it, Kydd. Stop weaving all over the road.

(glances at SATELLE)

Is he all right?

SANTO

Will be. The chief can't handle alcohol. The Indian in him. Salud!

He drinks from his flask - the VAN lurches - SANTO spills -

KYDD

Look out there - cops! I'd like to take 'em out right now. C'mon, huh? Let's go back and GIT SOME!

SANTO

They're not after us.

KYDD

They're fucking pigs, man. That's reason enough.

DARLENE

Just try and get us home intact,
okay? And watch those - Kydd!
LOOK OUT!

KYDD looks back instead and stares at her. Ahead of them
a SPEEDING PONTIAC darts out across the road - DARLENE
seizes the steering wheel --

STREET EXT DAY

The VAN sideswipes the CAR. The PONTIAC mounts the curb
and hits a lamppost. MCGILL flies thru the windshield.

KYDD tries to back up. Their bumpers are locked.

KYDD

Shit! We'll have to bounce 'er!

KYDD jumps out of the cab. DARLENE and SANTO follow.
No one moves inside the PONTIAC. SATELLE awakes.

DARLENE

(studying the rear window)
How about that. Bullet holes.
These must be... criminals.

SANTO tugs a corpse's cheek. SATELLE appears.

SATELLE

Crime does not pay.

SANTO, KYDD and DARLENE bounce on the trunk and try to
free the bumper. SATELLE opens the passenger door.

VANCE SALVEAUX gets out. Concussed, confused, alive,
clutching his V.A. blanket.

SANTO

This one's not dead.

SANTO walks round the car, unholstering his Star .45.
He takes aim at VANCE's head. VANCE squints.
SATELLE knocks the gun aside.

SATELLE
It was no accident.
This man is one of us.

SANTO
Now don't get started, Harley.
Leave him here. Forget it.

SATELLE
Put him in the van.

SATELLE hauls VANCE out of the PONTIAC. A flood of STOLEN
BANKNOTES follows. The GANG gathers round.

TV SCREEN

VANCE and DARLENE make love in an ARABIAN NIGHTS TENT.
He wears a turban, she leg warmers and a veil. The
landscape outside is LUNAR. A crescent Earth is rising.
Incense swirls.

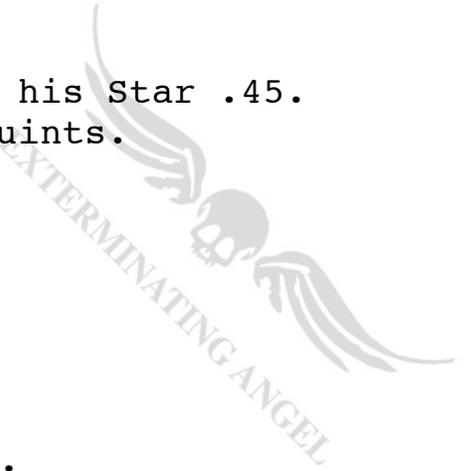
WAREHOUSE INT NIGHT

VANCE and DARLENE sit upright in two chairs. Electrodes
pasted to their wrists. Their eyes closed.

The ARABIAN NIGHTS FANTASY plays out on a TV screen in
front of them. The monitor bears the logo of REMOCON
INTERACTIVE VIDEO, INC.

SATELLE studies the screen. GLORIA twiddles dials.

SATELLE
Can you - decide - exactly what
they dream?



GLORIA
Up to a point. I can implant suggestions. It's easier with one person than two. There are so many variables.

SATELLE
How's his brain look?

GLORIA
It works. The cortex is a little fried. Too many x-rays, I guess. But the motor functions are all there. He'd make a great mechanic.

SATELLE
Keep poking around. Darlene seems to be enjoying herself.

GLORIA
(coldly)
She's only dreaming.

SATELLE crosses to the WORKSHOP AREA. PROFESSOR NAKADAI is chained to a lathe. DIRK and KYDD harrass him.

SATELLE
Is he working yet?

DIRK
Still playing hard-to-get, chief.
Shall I break his glasses?

NAKADAI winces as SATELLE steps into hard bench light. But SATELLE does not hit him. Instead he straightens his lapels - brushes his hair - prods him playfully -

SATELLE
What is it now, Professor? Gone on strike, have we? I thought we'd reached a gentleman's agreement...



NAKADAI

This has nothing to do with our "agreement." I cannot work with the materials provided.

SATELLE

Why not?

NAKADAI

Because they're junk. You can't create a pristine steel encasement on a pot metal lathe. Not even if you want to.

DIRK

Sears make fine tools!

KYDD

You said we could buy whatever we needed at the corner hardware store.

NAKADAI

I said the average terrorist could do that. The average terrorist has a very short life expectancy. By contrast, mine is very long.

KYDD

You want a bet?

SATELLE

(slapping KYDD)

You're absolutely right, Professor. Give Gloria a precise list. There'll be no substitutions and no corners cut. Then we'll get down to talking FISSION...

NAKADAI does not seem to hear. Something bleeps in SATELLE's pocket. He extracts a CELL PHONE.

SATELLE

Yes?



SANTO'S VOICE
(via phone)
Four cops coming up the fire escape.
You've got a minute to get tidy.

DICK and KYDD seize NAKADAI. SATELLE stamps across to GLORIA. She's studying DARLENE and VANCE's communal dream.

SATELLE
Pull him out. I need him.

GLORIA
It isn't safe, Satelle.
They need time to resurface --

SATELLE rips the electrodes off VANCE's wrist. VANCE spasms and his eyes fly open. His TV image disappears...

FIRE ESCAPE EXT NIGHT

FOUR DETECTIVES crouch outside a lighted window. Their weapons are drawn. DETECTIVE SQUIER pants up the rattling metal staircase. Prepares to kick the window in.

SANTO opens it.

WAREHOUSE INT NIGHT

SANTO helps the DETECTIVES inside. SATELLE and KYDD and GLORIA are playing Monopoly. DIRK has turned the Remocon to Super Donkey Gorilla Bros mode.

SATELLE
Detective Squier! Always an unexpected pleasure. You ought to use the elevator some time. It's so much quieter than the fire escape. Dirk! Chairs!

SQUIER
No need for that. What were you doing at Noble's yesterday?

SATELLE
Boss Noble's? Was that yesterday?
Let's see - that would be - Santo?

SANTO
Death Watch Beetle.
Emergency Extermination.

SATELLE nods assent. SQUIER'S DETECTIVES poke around.

CLOSET INT NIGHT

VINCE and NAKADAI are pressed together amid spare exterminator suits and roach poison. VANCE still hasn't come out of his television trance. He holds a GUN to NAKADAI's temple.

NAKADAI
(whispering)
I don't know who you are but I know
you're not one of them - listen -
you're their prisoner - like me -
there are policemen here - all we
need to do is call out and --

NAKADAI edges for the closet door. VANCE cocks the revolver and NAKADAI freezes. VANCE's eyes are blank.

WAREHOUSE INT NIGHT

SQUIER and his COLLEAGUES wander thru the dusty debris of machines and poison cans. They seem disappointed. SATELLE accompanies SQUIER.

SATELLE
Yes, the old Death Watch Beetle.
Or if it isn't that, Termites.
Even in the very best of homes.
Fair makes you weep to see a
stately mansion rotten to the core...

GLORIA
(rattling the dice)
Your turn, Satelle.

SATELLE
Excuse me.

SATELLE returns to the Monopoly board.
DETECTIVE SQUIER rounds up his men.

SQUIER
Let's go, boys.

The COPS head to the freight elevator.
SQUIER pauses by the Monopoly game.

SQUIER
You got something for me?

SANTO
Rent's not due today, Squier.
Don't be too greedy.

SQUIER smiles and kicks the table over. It lands on KYDD,
who tumbles off his chair. The other PLAYERS stay put.

Laughing, SQUIER enters the elevator. One of the
DETECTIVES sprays graffiti on the walls. The doors close.

DICK and GLORIA clear junk from the closet door. A
trembling NAKADAI staggers out. VANCE follows him.

SATELLE
Good work.

VANCE steps past SATELLE. Drops the revolver. Still
dragging his V.A. blanket, he walks rigidly towards the
elevator.

SATELLE
Where are you going, Salveaux?



VANCE pays him to attention. He presses the elevator CALL.

SATELLE

Are you crazy? Walking out into the night without even a sidearm? Better get straight, Vance. Pick yourself a gun. Load up. Plug back into the machine. I treat my employees good, know what I mean?

VANCE

I'm not your employees.

The lift arrives. VANCE gets in. SATELLE holds the doors.

SATELLE

We won't argue. Hey, Kydd. Let me have the pickup keys. Vance and me are going for a ride...

FREEWAY EXT NIGHT

SATELLE'S PICKUP burns inland. It has a wailing siren and revolving lights. The city, mostly in darkness with fires and pockets of neon light, sprawls in all directions. A traffic sign warns,

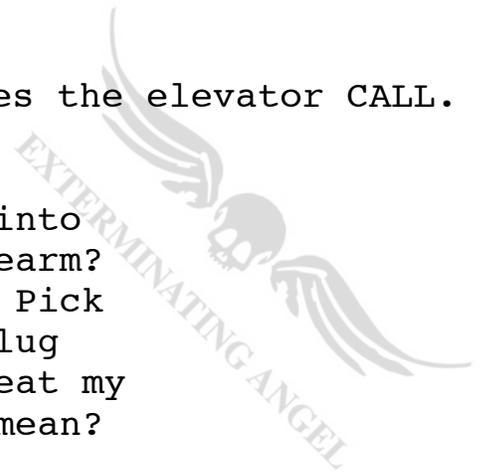
CARRY HANDGUNS IN YOUR CAR.

PICKUP CAB INT NIGHT

VANCE drives. SATELLE stares into the headlight glow and talks a mile a minute. There are no other cars.

SATELLE

I don't know where you've been, Vance, but the whole world changed while you were there. You're lucky we ran into you.



VANCE

That was the first and last time.
I will not do shit like that again.

SATELLE

Shit like what? You mean the Prof?
That was nothing. The gun wasn't
even loaded.

VANCE

I don't care. I'm not a crook.

SATELLE

Neither am I. I have a motor pool
needs taking care of. Are you
interested?

VANCE

What's the pay?

SATELLE

In the short term, almost nothing.
In the long... maybe a million.

VANCE

A million dollars to work on cars?
Shit. You're crazy.

SATELLE

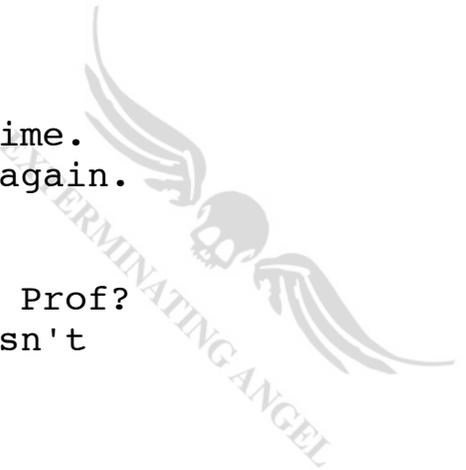
Think that if you like. But things
are moving awful fast right now.
Fortunes get made at the push of a
button.

VANCE

Not by the likes of us.

SATELLE

And that's not all. There's money
but there's more. A chance to change
things. To take the way things are
and make 'em... different...



VANCE

What kind of cars am I supposed to fix?
I won't work on Volkswagens.

No answer. VANCE drives in silence. He glances at SATELLE. SATELLE is hunched up in a corner looking sick. VANCE pulls off the road.

ROADSIDE EXT NIGHT

The PICKUP is parked beside a glittering OIL REFINERY. Gas burnoff is reflected in the black Pacific waves.

VANCE takes a piss. In the cab, SATELLE rolls up his pants leg. His fingers fumble as he sticks a HYPO in his thigh.

SATELLE

This isn't what it looks like.
Got that?

VANCE says nothing.

SATELLE

I only do it cause I have to. Cause
I couldn't function without - DAMN!

The needle breaks. He pulls it out and fixes VANCE with piercing pinpoint eyes. VANCE watches the waves.

SATELLE

I'm dying. I lost my intestines
years ago. Supposed to eat six,
seven meals a day. My liver's
giving out. Now I have leukopenia.

VANCE

What's that?

SATELLE

New kind of cancer. Santo's got it,
too. Did you meet Santo? The Cuban.
We were in the service. What (CONT.)

SATELLE (CONT.)
mellow places oil refineries are...
Nevada... I could stay here...
the Desert Tests...

FLASHBACK TO --

ARMY BASE NEVADA EXT DAY

A dust storm whips furiously thru the base camp of the 82nd Airborne Provisional Company. Ragged sandstone bluffs beyond. A sandblasted welcome sign reads,

CAMP DESERT ROCK NV. 82ND AIRBORNE P.C.
POPULATION 3,200
"A GOOD PLACE TO THROW USED RAZOR BLADES"

DRILL HALL INT DAY

The wind beats at the screens. A LECTURE is in progress. Fatherly P.R. COLONEL displaying slides to the ASSEMBLED TROOPS. The slides depict atomic structure and artistic mushroom clouds.

P.R. COLONEL
Fallout. You can't smell or taste
or see or feel it. But that's no
reason to fear it. Not many of you
can explain electricity I'll bet.
And yet you've learned to live with
it and use it. It's the same with
radiation.

A pneumatic PIN-UP appears on the screen. The bored RECRUITS whistle and applaud - The younger SANTO and SATELLE among them. The COLONEL smiles a perfect P.R. smile.

P.R. COLONEL
The radiation from an Atom Bomb
exploded in the air, for instance,
is all gone within a minute and a half...



NEVADA DESERT EXT DAWN

The SOLDIERS mingle expectantly at first light. In the middle distance a TALL METAL TOWER catches the early rays.

SATELLE V/O

We lined up halaf a mile from Ground Zero. Sixty seconds before the blast, they told us to sit down and cover our eyes.

The SOLDIERS settle. SATELLE and SANTO exchange a thumbs up. They face the distant glowing hills.

A BRILLIANT FLASH eclipses everything. The SHOCKWAVE sends them face-down in the dirt. Swirling dust descends.

SATELLE V/O

Five minutes later they marched us into the blast zone. I had my picture taken at Ground Zero, in the crater.

VANCE V/O

What was this for?

SATELLE V/O

P.R. To prove atomic fallout wasn't harmful. None of us were volunteers.

IN FLASHBACK

DOCUMENTARY FOOTAGE of U.S. SOLDIERS marching into a nuclear crater, SHOTS of YOUNG SATELLE having his photo taken. The mushroom cloud rises behind him.

SATELLE V/O

On the way out, we passed these things like GIANT MAILBOXES. The Army had lined 'em with different materials - metal, lead, wood, aluminum - and then put hogs in 'em.

ANGLE ON YOUNG SATELLE AND SANTO

Walking among the giant, smoking, shattered MAILBOXES.

SATELLE V/O

When the FIREBALL came it FRIED
THE PIGS. That was the idea, to
see level of protection they'd
get from different materials.
Some of the pigs were still alive...

ANGLE ON A BURNING MAILBOX

Shaking pitifully.

SCIENTISTS clad in full-length FALLOUT SUITS make notes
as the uniformed SOLDIERS march past. DUST SWIRLS.

SATELLE V/O

We didn't know it then but we were
worse off than those hogs. You
ought to see my buddies now.

TWO SOLDIERS in the FLASHBACK wave and smile.

SATELLE V/O

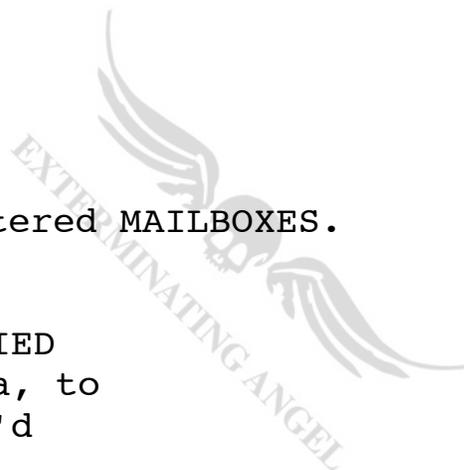
Hairless, toothless, sterile quadro-
plegics, man. Deaf and dying of
leukemia. Tears filled my eyes when
I saw that cloud, and my heart
swelled with pride.

PICKUP CAB INT NIGHT

BIG CLOSEUP ON SATELLE, burning oil wells beyond.

SATELLE

It was the finest feeling of my life.



WAREHOUSE INT NIGHT

SANTO wakes up on the couch. He coughs a trail of blood onto his army blanket. He coughs and stumbles to the fridge and finds a bottle of Bacardi, gulps the contents down.

SANTO hears a crackling sound. Clutching his bottle, he tiptoes to the window. He hears the sound again. It is RADIO STATIC from a walkie-talkie, drifting down the fire escape. SANTO waits and listens.

KYDD'S VOICE

This is Birthday Boy, over. They've moved Broken Arrow. Don't know where yet, but I'm working on it. No clear picture yet. But SOON...

ANGLE ON SANTO, listening.

FEDERAL BUILDING EXT DAY

Sandbagged doorways. Lone DEMONSTRATOR with a blank sign. CLOSE IN on a narrow upper window with drawn blinds.

BENTLY'S OFFICE INT DAY

AGENT ROGERSZ and her SUPERIOR, MR BENTLY, listen to a DAT unroll. BENTLY wears white Guccis and gold medallions.

The VOICE of KYDD issues from the tiny tape.

KYDD'S VOICE

... request additional backup. May go overground. Please advise. 10-17.

The DAT stops.

BENTLY

Your man sounds paranoid.
What's "Broken Arrow?"

AGENT ROGERSZ
Broken Arrow is the physicist they
kidnapped. Katsumi Nakadai.

BENTLY
Munitions?

AGENT ROGERSZ
Possibly. I'd like permission to
get proactive with Satelle, ASAP.

BENTLY studies SATELLE's file. He reads aloud from it.

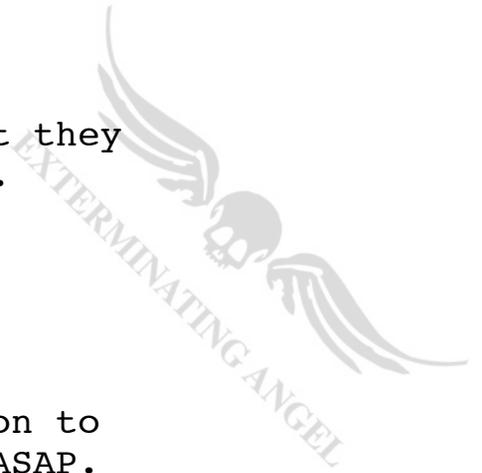
BENTLY
Harley Roy Satelle. Born Seligman, AZ.
Educated, conscripted, discharged.
Did not see action, did not rise above
the rank of private. Applied for a
passport in '71 but never made it to
the post office. Member of Peace and
Freedom Party, lapsed. Sign painter,
brush salesman, religious evangelist,
telephone sales. Currently part
owner of the Apex Pest Extermination
Service. Hmm.

BENTLY puts down SATELLE's file.

BENTLY
You've spent a long time on this case,
Agent Rogersz.

AGENT ROGERSZ
I think it's worth it, sir.

BENTLY
I'm sure you do. But I must say
in all honesty that I don't agree
with you. This man Satelle seems
very ordinary to me. Another two-
bit, downhome fuck-up with an axe
to grind. You telling me he's
stockpiling FERTILIZER?



AGENT ROGERSZ

No, I'm not, sir. I'm saying he's kidnapped a nuclear physicist. I'm saying that his every action suggests he has a MASTER PLAN. That he's OBSESSED --

BENTLY

As you appear to be. Now look, I've been entrusted with this new domestic op, KONTROLOKON. We've been instructed to stamp out foul language on the Internet. I'd like to see you play a MAJOR ROLE in this --

AGENT ROGERSZ

I request Continuance.

BENTLY

Denied. Here. League of Women Voters. Apparently some of these crazy housewives are convinced the Nation's voting system's rigged. See if you can get in there and make 'em commit illegal acts. Get 'em to advocate abortions --

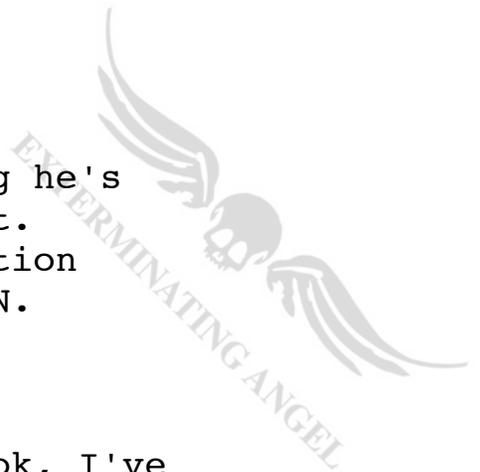
AGENT ROGERSZ

Is that an order, sir?
(BENTLY nods gravely)
Care for some kinky sex?

BENTLY's chin begins to tremble. His jaw drops.
AGENT ROGERSZ relieves him of SATELLE's file.

OFFICE INT DAY

Wall maps and listening devices. Radio Shack Computer.
Photographs of PROFESSOR NAKADAI. "PONY" TRAGGERS and
DIGBY both talking on the phone.



DIGBY

Nakadai. N-A-K-A- No, I don't
want to hold. Last time I held
you cut me off. Hello?

TRAGGERS

This is Traggers of the PPE.
Calling to see if you've any leads
on Nakadai. Professor Nakadai.
The missing person.

DIGBY

NAKADAI. N-A-K-A-D- No, D.
As in Desperate --

TRAGGERS

Good afternoon, Inspector. Pony
Traggers here. Of the PPE.
Just calling to remind you I'm still --

The muffled sound of an EXPLOSION nearby. The brick
building rocks gently and the windows shake. Plaster sifts
down from the ceiling. BOTH THE PHONES CUT OUT.

EL MONTE TRAILER PARADISIO EXT NIGHT

Muted crackle of HIGH TENSION WIRES. Jabbering TVs.
We TRACK past endless rows of firmly-rooted mobile homes.
Dogs bark and growl. A loud THUMP! is heard.

TRAILER INT NIGHT

The lathe and workshop are now situated here. PROFESSOR
NAKADAI is still shackled to them. He's sitting in a lotus
position among the metal parts. GLORIA slaps him twice
across the face. He does not appear to feel it.

GLORIA

He's not responding.



DIRK

We oughta stick his fingers in a vice.
Snap 'em off one by one and feed 'em
to 'im. Then he'll talk.

SATELLE

Run out and get us burgers, Dirk.

DIRK

Where's the money.

SATELLE shoves DIRK into the night. The screen door slams.
GLORIA leans in close to NAKADAI and shouts.

GLORIA

Nakadai you asshole where's the FISSION?
We don't need much - a kilogram'll do -
MOX or straight Weapons Grade Plutonium
- it's all the same to us - WHERE IS IT?

She slaps him once again. Nothing. SATELLE crouches in
front of NAKADAI. He passes one hand back and forth across
his eyes.

SATELLE

Professor. I don't understand why
you are doing this. Didn't I explain
my plans to you? And didn't they
make sense?

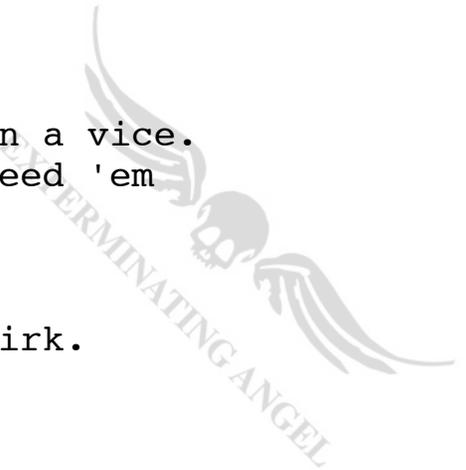
A faint light returns to NAKADAI's eyes.
When he speaks his lips don't move.

NAKADAI

Nothing makes sense. I can't be
a party to other people's madness.

SATELLE

Bullshit. You're up to your neck
in madness - you're a fucking nuclear
physicist. You are involved.



NAKADAI
Not now. Not any more.

SATELLE
Forget it! I have this guru, see.
He's oriental too and twice as zen
as you. He says the world is on the
brink of total devastation and it
could care less! We have to make
the world AWARE. Together -
you and I --

GLORIA
He isn't listening.

SATELLE
Damn it! When did he last eat?

GLORIA
Yesterday, maybe. Or the day before.

SATELLE paces. The screen door clatters. DIRK returns.

DIRK
I got three triple chili cheeses
and two bacon-fried hefties -
who wants what?

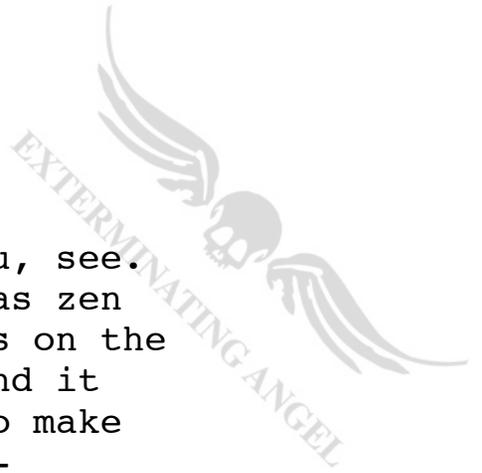
SATELLE
Give them all to him.

DIRK sulks and grumbles. He passes out of frame.
SATELLE looks on as DIRK attempts to force-feed NAKADAI.
The struggle is messy and intense.

GLORIA
Dirk. Let me have a bite.

WAREHOUSE INT DAY

VANCE welds a truck axle. His V.A. blanket is wrapped



around him like a poncho. KYDD is sprawled on a decaying sofa reading Scientific American. He squints at VANCE.

KYDD

How come you always hanging onto that blanket. Hey! Jimmie! Talkin' to you.

VANCE looks at KYDD thru his goggles. Shakes his head.

VANCE

Every time I look at you I get a bad feeling. Like something real bad's gonna happen to you. You sure you in the right place?

KYDD glares at VANCE. SANTO enters, nods to VANCE, sits down backwards on an upright chair, staring at KYDD.

KYDD becomes uncomfortable under SANTO's gaze.

KYDD

Go to hell.

SANTO

Watching you, Kydd. Watching you.

The phone rings. VANCE looks to KYDD and SANTO. Neither will answer it. VANCE turns off his thermal arc and picks the phone up.

DARLENE appears on a tiny VIDEO SCREEN.

DARLENE

Vance. You and the others better come on over to the trailer. Something bad's happened.

She hangs up and her picture vanishes. SANTO rises and hauls KYDD to his feet. He tosses VANCE an M-16.

EL MONTE TRAILER PARADISO EXT DAY

The VAN and the PICKUP are parked beside the TRAILER. SANTO sits on the steps throwing stones. The others are all inside.

SATELLE'S VOICE

You idiot! How could you let it happen! How?!

TRAILER INT DAY

DIRK cowers beside the CORPSE of NAKADAI, cross-legged and stiffening on the floor beneath the workbench.

Sitting the workbench is the shell of an unfinished NUCLEAR BOMB.

DIRK

I did exactly like you said, Jefe. Fed him a burger ever hour. And two beers. He smiled at me.

SATELLE seizes DIRK and shakes him. Two heavy pistols fall from DIRK's belt and hit the floor. On of them GOES OFF, the bullet ricocheting away into the night with a cartoonish sound.

Everyone else jumps. SATELLE calms down slightly.

GLORIA

He must have taken poison or something.

DARLENE

Maybe he had a heart attack.

VANCE

I knew this Chinese dude could slow his body functions down to almost nothing. Said he could go the whole way, in a pinch.

SATELLE
(enraged again)
You are very erudite today, Salveaux.
But I like my motor pool dumb.
Remember that.

VANCE
Fuck you.

VANCE exits, slamming the screen door.
DARLENE watches him walk away.

DARLENE
Goodbye, Vance. Goodbye five million
smackeroonies. Had you all spent, too.

SATELLE
Nothing has changed.
We have the detonation system.
All we need is FISSION.

GLORIA
But without the Professor --

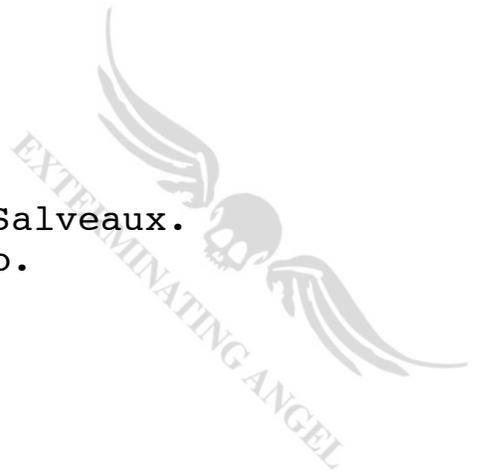
KYDD
(eagerly)
There are other sources. I can dig
into the NRC's computer codes --

SATELLE closes NAKADAI's eyes, and rises.

SATELLE
Where did Vance go?

DARLENE
Who cares?

SATELLE
Go after him. Make some excuse
for my rudeness. Bring him back.
I'm going to need him later.



DIRK
What for, boss? We don't need
no lightweights --

SATELLE punches DIRK in the head. DIRK recoils.
SATELLE pats DIRK's flattop affectionately.

HIGHRISE CONDO EXT DAY

Smog hangs in heavy layers round the lower storeys.
AGENT ROGERSZ' Matador is parked at street level with its
motor running.

SKIP and MARK sit in the front seat reading "Federal
Government Intelligencer." SKIP is cutting out an ad
that reads, "Train To Be An Astronaut In Your Spare Time."

AGENT ROGERSZ
(via radio)
Skip and Mark! Upstairs!
There's been a foreign presence
in my apartment!

AGENT ROGERSZ' APARTMENT INT DAY

White-painted walls. Minimal floorspace. Murphy bed.
The weirder Beardlsey prints in frames. AGENT ROGERSZ is
in a frenzy as SKIP and MARK pile in, their guns drawn.

AGENT ROGERSZ
FRITZ! Where are you, Fritz!
AAIIEE! NNOOO! He's gone!
He's GONE!

The wall-inset TV SET springs to life. The suave features
of "PONY" TRAGGERS appear. He lights his briar pipe.

TRAGGERS
(on TV)
Good afternoon, Agent Rogersz,
I'm "Pony" Traggers and I've got (CONT.)

TRAGGERS (CONT.)

Fritz. He will be dead within 48 hours - very horribly dead, I might add - unless you meet me tomorrow afternoon at 1500 hours precisely. Sorry to be so drastic. Ciao!

AGENT ROGERSZ

Wait!

TRAGGERS

What..?

AGENT ROGERSZ

You didn't say where to meet you.

TRAGGERS

Didn't I..? Oh, um... well...
Damn it! I'll call you back.

TRAGGERS' face vanishes. MARK and SKIP look in horror from the screen to AGENT ROGERSZ, who screams and starts demolishing her pad. SKIP tries to restrain her. She massacres him.

The phone rings. MARK answers. The face of DIGBY appears.

DIGBY

(on TV)

Mrs Rogers?

MARK

Mark Hunter, FBI. Who's this?

DIGBY

I'm Digby, sir, Mr Traggers' man. Just calling about the arrangements for tomorrow. Mr Traggers would like to meet Mrs Rogers two miles due west of San Clemente, if convenient --

MARK

Due West? You're talking Pacific Ocean.

In the background AGENT ROGERSZ douses SKIP with anaesthetic spray.

DIGBY

That's right sir. In a small boat,
my master said. And no tricks --

DIGBY disappears. AGENT ROGERSZ stands over the prone form of SKIP, staring at the TELEPHONE SCREEN.

LANDFILL EXT DAY

A sleek black Limo and a dirty Apex Pest Co. Van approach each other across a baked flat wasteland. They stop several meters distant. The City broods in an industrial haze. Campfires.

SATELLE'S VOICE

He isn't getting out. He ought to get out. I made the first move last time.

SANTO'S VOICE

Why don't you wait all day.

SATELLE'S VOICE

The adolescent! I'm hip to his game. I'll meet him half way. I don't care.

SATELLE climbs out of the Van. His looks like his joints are stiff. He walks half way. He stops. He waits. No one emerges from the Limo. SATELLE walks the rest of the way.

SATELLE

Hey, Nobe, glad you could make it.
Great day for a TRACTOR PULL, isn't it?
I'm thinkin' of making up a team,
if you'd like to be considered.

SATELLE offers the tinted window a hand. It slides partially down. BOSS NOBLE sits between TWIN HERMAPHRODITES clad in translucent attire.

SATELLE
(staring at the TWINS)
Uh. Forget what I was going to say.

BOSS NOBLE
Low rent punk. You got thirty minutes to get out of town.

SATELLE
What? I wasn't listening -
What are those?

BOSS NOBLE
Never you mind! The dude you kidnaped just turned up in a garbage bag IN MY DISTRICT! Get the picture?

SATELLE
Are you insinuating something?

BOSS NOBLE
Fuck you! You got twenty-eight minutes of life left, DICKBRAIN.

SATELLE
Don't make me lose my temper now. I called this meeting to ask you a favor --

BOSS NOBLE
Fuck you! Git goin'! 23-Skidoo!
Fuck your momma!

SATELLE
MY... mother..? Wanna fight?

BOSS NOBLE
Spit on my car.

SATELLE spits on BOSS NOBLE's car.

The TWIN HERMAPHRODITES giggle excitedly.

BOSS NOBLE throws the door open and steps out --

-- and instantly an ARMED HORDE appears on every hilltop.
SATELLE'S CREW and BOSS NOBLE'S VASTLY LARGER GANG.

BOSS NOBLE
Stay out of this, boys.

SATELLE
Yeah. You stay out of it too.

SANTO
No problem.

BOSS NOBLE loosens his tie. SATELLE starts taking off his jacket. BOSS NOBLE BUTTS SATELLE BETWEEN THE EYES.

SATELLE
(concussed)
Right then! No mercy!

BOSS NOBLE deals SATELLE a roundhouse punch. SATELLE's arms are still stuck in his jacket. BOSS NOBLE kicks him in the balls. SATELLE falls to his knees. BOSS NOBLE breaks his nose. SATELLE hits the dirt. BOSS NOBLE stamps on his ribs.

SATELLE
You won! I'm leaving!

BOSS NOBLE glances at the TWINS. One gives him the thumbs-up. The other the thumbs-down. BOSS NOBLE shrugs and raises both arms in a Nixonian peace-salute. His gang cheers. SATELLE's gang cheers as well.

BOSS NOBLE
Half an hour.

SATELLE tries to get up. BOSS NOBLE runs back and kicks

him in the stomach.

BOSS NOBLE
That's for spitting on my car!

DIVE BAR INT NIGHT

VANCE and DARLENE at the counter. VANCE drinks heavily.
DARLENE doesn't. Cockfighting on TV.

VANCE
Maybe she took the kids to Tahoe.
She wanted to be a dancer. Maybe
I should go take a look.

DARLENE
How old is she?

VANCE
Twenty-eight.

DARLENE
She isn't going to be a dancer.
You crack me up. Moaning for lost
mommy like you really cared.

VANCE
I DO care! I love my wife.
I've looked everywhere.
(twisting his blanket
in his hands)
Sometimes I think I'm going crazy.

DARLENE
What bullshit. How many days did you
spend looking for her? Two? Or three?

VANCE
(drunk)
I don't remember. More than that.



DARLENE

You men are like clockwork. Lose track of your old lady and you cry for a couple of days, then start having a great time. Join a gang. Soon things'll get real hairy and you'll forget her name.

VANCE

What the fuck do you know? Fuckin' dyke. You don't know nothing about love and marriage and responsibility and... I'm gonna puke.

VANCE tries to rise. He knocks his stool over.

DARLENE grabs him before he falls.

PARKING STRUCTURE INT NIGHT

SATELLE sits before a tiny TV camera on a tripod. He wears a powdered toupee and a tie. Make-up barely conceals his bruises and his broken nose.

GLORIA sits in a TV TRUCK watching his picture on a battery of monitors. SANTO holds a microphone over his head.

GLORIA

Try and angle the mike, Santo. Point it at him. Okay. GO!

SATELLE

My name is Ozymandius. I am a soldier and a citizen of the United States. The nuclear powers have the cacapity -- oh shit.

GLORIA

Tape's still rolling. Go again.

SATELLE

My name is Ozymandius. I am a shitizen --

GLORIA
One more time.

SATELLE
My name is - JESUS CHRIST! That
fat bastard thinks he made a fool of
me! I want his scalp in front of me
in half an hour! SANTO!

SANTO
Forget it, ace. We're leaving
town in five minutes.

SATELLE
No we're not. We're going to do
a job on Bastard Noble. You and me.
Just like the old days. Yes?

SANTO
No.

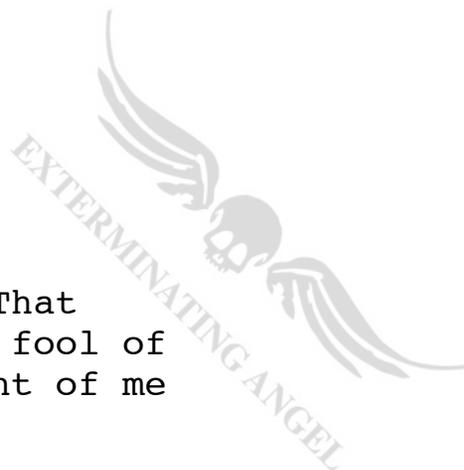
SATELLE
Santo, we have to. We can't let
him get in the way at this stage.
Too much is at stake.

SANTO
It's personal. Forget about it.

SANTO walks away.

GLORIA
Satelle. Here's your Man.

SATELLE turns his attention to the TV screens. On one of
them, the FREIGHT ELEVATOR is seen. DARLENE and VANCE are
locked in an embrace within as the elevator rises...



ALAMEDA STREET EXT NIGHT

SANTO emerges from a side entrance. The front door is barricaded. "Exterminators" graffiti has been obliterated.

SANTO looks up and down the street. TWO WINOS coughing in a doorway. He sets off past them - the WINOS flash badges at him and pull guns. AN UNMARKED CAR appears.

POLICE STATION INT NIGHT

SANTO is admitted to a darkened room. A BRIGHT LIGHT shines on him. SANTO shields his eyes and considers the COPS wearing happy-face badges in the shadows.

SANTO
Good evening, Inspector Squier.

SQUIER
It's pronounced SQUIRE, Santo.

SANTO
(sniffs the air)
What's cooking?

A hand holding a bulging hand-rolled cigarette appears in the lamplight. Powder dripping from the unlit end...

SQUIER
China white.

TV SCREEN

VANCE walks thru the streets of a decaying WESTERN TOWN. He wears a cowboy outfit and carries a futuristic GUN. He stalks a cadaverous figure in black - SATELLE.

PARKING STRUCTURE INT NIGHT

VANCE is hooked into the REMOCON dream realizer. His eyes are closed. GLORIA runs the machine. SATELLE is shooting

up. Suddenly he sees HIMSELF on screen.

SATELLE

What the hell am I doing in there?
Get me out of there!

GLORIA

Relax, Harley. It's just an
image. In his dream.

SATELLE

No. There's something -- I --

WESTERN STREET EXT HIGH NOON

SATELLE staggers into VANCE's dream. He runs for cover,
stumbling in the street. VANCE appears on the wooden
boardwalk.

SATELLE slaps leather. VANCE's bullets cut him down.

PARKING STRUCTURE INT NIGHT

SATELLE lies on the floor of the TV TRUCK. DARLENE cracks
an amyl nitrate capsule under his nose. He sits up and
stares at VANCE, still sleeping, hooked to the machine.

SATELLE

What happened? I thought I was -
I thought I was dead.

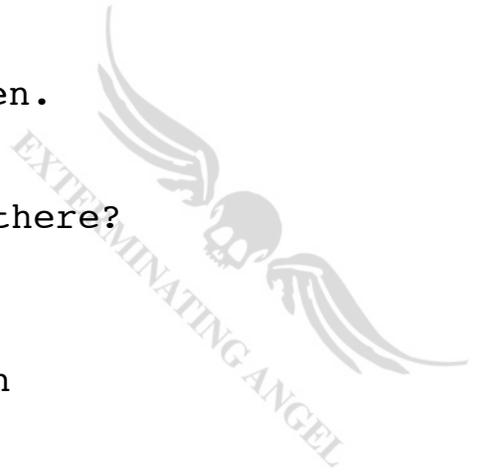
GLORIA

He's tougher than we anticipated.
We must proceed with caution.

She taps the computer keyboard.

ON THE TV SCREEN

GLORIA - clad as a Frankensteinian scientist - flicks
switches in her MAD LAB.



OFF SCREEN GLORIA offers SATELLE a microphone.

SATELLE
(shaking his head)
You do it.

GLORIA
(into mike)
Vance? Can you hear me, Vance?
This is Michelle, your wife. I'm
dying, Vance. Can you hear me?

CLOSE on VANCE's face. We hear MICHELLE's voice echoing via his headphones - saying the same words.

MICHELLE'S VOICE
Boss Noble killed me, Vance. He
killed our children too. Ali and
Salinda, killed by Boss Noble. Boss
Killer Noble. KILL BOSS NOBLE.
VANCE. KILL NOBLE NOW ...

TIGHT on VANCE's face. We do not see what he "sees" on the screen. But we can hear the screams.

NOBLE TOWERS CENTURY CITY EXT NIGHT

VANCE crosses the windswept concrete forecourt of TWO MASSIVE GLASS & CONCRETE TOWERS. Helicopter rotors hover overhead.

PENTHOUSE INT NIGHT

BOSS NOBLE stands on his balcony. He leers and raises his champagne glass to the city. The TWO HERMAPHRODITES sit on a couch within.



BOSS NOBLE

With power comes responsibility.
My health!

He hurls his glass over his shoulder. It shatters on a glass-topped coffee table. BOSS NOBLE's eyes glow red.

BOSS NOBLE

I love the sound of breaking glass.
What images does it conjure for you,
dear hearts?

TWINS

Gee, we don't know, Boss Noble.
Glass breaking, maybe?

BOSS NOBLE

For me the sound suggests a slew of
schoolchildren being dropped thru an
endless succession of skylights.

(suddenly turning sour)

Who broke that glass?

The TWINS quake. BOSS NOBLE eyes the fragments angrily.
He takes a paperweight and grinds them to fine powder...

TWINS

Oh no, Boss Noble, no, not that!

BOSS NOBLE draws the POWDERED GLASS into two lines. He produces a gold, diamond and ruby encrusted tube and extends it to the quaking TWINS.

The phone rings.

BOSS NOBLE

Get that, one of you.

TWINS

Which one, Boss Noble?

BOSS NOBLE

Percy.

Gleeful PERCY scampers for the phone. BOSS NOBLE forces the other TWIN's face towards the ground glass.

The phone is brought to him.

BOSS NOBLE
Boss Noble on the line.

SURVEILLANCE CENTER INT NIGHT

A black-shirted, bandanna'd SECURITY GUARD speaks into his desk-mounted microphone. Words flash across and Info Board between him and the windows.

SECURITY GUARD
This is Kotzwinkle in Surveillance Building Two. We're experiencing selective power failures on the lower floors. It might be wise to activate your Code Blue Defenses --

The lights go out. The Info Board is dark.

NOBLE TOWERS EXT NIGHT

One building glows, every floor a bright panel of light. The other building's lights are dying, one level at a time.

PENTHOUSE INT NIGHT

BOSS NOBLE sets the phone down in its ornate Taiwan cradle. He ruffles the hair of the TWIN snorting broken glass.

BOSS NOBLE
Dare for another blow? Ha ha!
I'm only joking, Sascha. You've proved your love for me.
(the phone rings once again.
He picks it up. It's dead)
Percy. Get me my Daddy's Gun.

LOWER ROOFTOP EXT NIGHT

VANCE emerges from the fire exit. He wears nightsight goggles. A rope with grappling iron is slung around his neck. He peers up at the HANGING GARDENS OF THE PENTHOUSE and uncoils his rope.

PENTHOUSE INT NIGHT

BOSS NOBLE stands before a glowing panel labeled EMERGENCY POWER - CODE BLUE DEFENSE SYSTEM. He pushes a red button marked "ACTIVATE".

He consults his pocket watch. By the dim light we see a picture of BUBBA RAM LEE in the lid. BOSS NOBLE smiles and shuts the instrument.

PERCY enters carrying an ancient Thompson Submachine Gun.

BOSS NOBLE

My father told me, son, he said to me,
this is my most treasured hairy loom.
When I am gone to my reward, it will
be yours. Five minutes later it was
mine!

A GRAPPLING HOOK hits the parapet with a clatter. It jerks back into space. BOSS NOBLE strolls towards the balcony.

BOSS NOBLE

My father was a great man and I miss
him. Yet I feel no guilt. Guilt
is a luxury only the truly humble can
afford. And, sadly, humility is the
one virtue I lack. An occupational
hazard among the very great.

The GRAPPLING HOOK appears again. This time it catches in the window box. BOSS NOBLE tiptoes to it. The nylon line strains as VANCE heaves himself up and over --

-- and activates the CODE BLUE DEFENSE SYSTEMS --

-- which squirt VANCE and the PATIO with QUICK-DRYING,
RUBBER CEMENT-LIKE BRIGHT BLUE GLUE.

Frozen in place, VANCE finds himself staring at BOSS NOBLE'S
DADDY'S GUN.

BOSS NOBLE

Bye.

BOSS NOBLE pulls the trigger. Nothing happens. He looks
back into the apartment. In the shadows, PERCY displays
the BULLETS in his palm.

BOSS NOBLE

My pockets are full of sand...

VANCE hurls the grappling iron. Its three hooks sink into
BOSS NOBLE's chest. BOSS NOBLE stumbles forward.
VANCE takes out a Walther PPPK and shoots BOSS NOBLE in the
arms and legs. BOSS NOBLE sprawls on the slippery hardened
glue and stares at VANCE. VANCE shoots him in the eye.

VANCE

Jive ass cracker.

VANCE pulls out a glinting Bowie knife, starts cutting his
feet free of the glue. The TWINS applaud.

ROOFTOP EXT NIGHT

VANCE sprints across the windblown concrete. The other
NOBLE TOWER sways gently fifteen feet away. VANCE stops -
backs up - laces his shoes and runs flat out for the edge --

He leaps into space --

FLASH CUT

To VANCE, still attached to the Remocon, eyes suddenly opening --

CUT TO VANCE

Landing, rolling, on the roof of the other building.

APEX WAREHOUSE INT NIGHT

KYDD hangs out the window. DIRK PULER holds him by his heels. SATELLE observes dispassionately. DARLENE and GLORIA sharpen their switchblade knives.

SATELLE

Who are you working for?

KYDD

No one - only you I mean!

DARLENE

Your cover's broken, lamebrain.
Santo sussed you out last night.

DIRK

My arms are getting tired.

SATELLE

Sorry to hear that, Dirk. Who is it, Kydd? Public agency or private party? Secular or religious entity? Animal, vegetable or mineral?

(no answer)

Let him go.

KYDD

NO! WAIT! I've been consulting! With the Bureau! But I didn't tell them anything they didn't already know! My daughter has to live in a spacesuit and they've been paying the bills!

SATELLE and EIRK haul KYDD back inside. KYDD weeps and clings to them. DARLENE and GLORIA circle, prodding him with their blades.

KYDD

I'm sorry. Really, truly. If it weren't for little Donna I never would have honest...

SATELLE

You've told the truth, Kydd. And you are forgiven. Simple, wasn't it?
(loudly)
Let us kneel and pray!

PICKUP CAB INT NIGHT

VANCE drives fast along the freeway. He is alone. His hand, covered in blood, sticks to the steering wheel.

He reaches out into the hot night - letting his hand dry in the wind...

A POLICE CAR swerves up next to him. The COP within shouts into his microphone --

COP

Get your hand back inside the car!
Keep both hands on the wheel at all times!

VANCE flips the driver off. SIRENS WAIL.

POLICE STATION INT NIGHT

SANTO and the DETECTIVES are intoxicated. Several plastic bags of heroin and bottles of whiskey lie on the table. DETECTIVE SQUIER pins a happy face badge on SANTO's lapel. The COPS laugh delightedly.

COPS
Now you're really one of us!

SANTO
So come on. Tell me. Why'd
you boys invite me over?

SQUIER
We like you, Santo. You're a
prince among men .

SANTO
Sure. You must have another job
for me. What is it this time -
another Senator?

The COPS all laugh. SQUIER puts his fingers to his lips.
He opens a drawer and pushes a slim folder at SANTO.
SANTO starts to open it. SQUIER grabs his wrist.

SQUIER
Not here, Santo. We don't want
to know who it is, do we?

The DETECTIVES shake their heads. SQUIER hands SANTO a
packet of powder. SANTO puts the two items away.

SANTO
Well, can't say it ain't been grand.

SQUIER
(stumbling)
... see you to the door ...

CHARGE ROOM INT NIGHT

SQUIER and SANTO amble thru the outer office heading for the
doors. SANTO stops short. He sees VANCE, sitting
handcuffed to a bench. VANCE's clothes are drenched with
someone else's blood.



SANTO
That feller. He's my driver.

SQUIER
You ain't got a car.

SANTO
Vance! Let's go!

VANCE looks up in surprise --

PICKUP CAB INT DAWN

VANCE and SANTO ride in silence thru deserted streets.
VANCE looks at SANTO several times. Finally --

VANCE
You a cop, Santo?

SANTO
Do me a favor. You?

VANCE
I don't think so.

SANTO
Then we can trust each other.
Vance, today's the day. Today we
bite the big one. Today we go
for broke. Today...
(he breaks off, dispirited)
Ah, shit.

He breaks up coughing. There is BLOOD in his spit.

They pass DIRK PULER haranguing a crowd of rough and seedy
MEN in a soup kitchen line. DICK stands beneath a banner
which proclaims "FREE BEER".

SANTO goes on coughing. Blood trickles down his chin.



OPEN SEA EXT AFTERNOON

AGENT ROGERSZ, SKIP and MARK bob in a bright red dinghy.

SKIP tugs repeatedly at the outboard motor cord. No luck. The dinghy drifts. ROGERSZ consults the road map.

AGENT ROGERSZ

You're sure these are the right coordinates? You didn't read them upside down?

MARK

Certainly not, sir. This is where Traggers said he'd meet us. Give or take a nautical yard or two.

AGENT ROGERSZ

Well, I don't see him. Unless he's coming in a submarine. That isn't likely, is it? No.

They peer over the rubber craft's sides. No sign.

SKIP

Bandits at five o'clock!

POWER BOAT EXT AFTERNOON

The PROW of a fast-moving COAST GUARD vessel bears down on the dinghy. The power boat circles, creating an enormous wake. The rubber raft is tossed mercilessly.

PONY TRAGGERS leans over the rail. He wears a white sailor suit and shouts into a loud-hailer.

TRAGGRS

Agent Rogersz? Sorry to be late!
I'm Pony Traggers! Care to come aboard my boat?

DECK EXT AFTERNOON

AGENT ROGERSZ is helped aboard by TWO COASTGUARDS. TRAGGERS attempts to hiss her hand. She instantly adopts a karate stance.

AGENT ROGERSZ

Don't fuck around with me, Traggers.
What have you done with Fritz?

TRAGGERS

Ah yes, Fritz. I can assure you
he's in excellent hands. Let's
talk about SATELLE.

AGENT ROGERSZ

(guardedly)

What do you know about Satelle?

TRAGGERS

About as much as you do. It seems
we've been duplicating our efforts.
Tripping over each other's tails.

AGENT ROGERSZ

Who are you with? I've run a check
on you. You're not with any of our
agencies. Who are you? BOSS?

TRAGGERS

Hardly. I'm with the PPE.

(French accent)

LE POLICE PLUTONIUM EUROPEEN.

An international secret service charged
with the recovery of stolen nuclear
substances and the suppression of atomic
terrorists. Perhaps you've heard of us.

AGENT ROGERSZ

I think maybe... Wasn't there a TV
movie about you guys?

TRAGGERS

With Robert Goulet, yes. A series, actually. Several of the stories were drawn from my private files...

ZOOM past TRAGGERS to the red dinghy.

SKIP and MARK are paddling towards something they've seen...

DINGHY EXT DAY

SKIP and MARK are almost within reach of their objective. A large grey object almost totally submerged.

SKIP

What do you think it is, Mark?
A submarine surveillance unit?

MARK

I don't know, Skip. It reminds me of something I saw at Cape Cod as a child. We used to put pennies in it for the Sailors' Widows...

SKIP

Well, let's reel it in and take a look!

SKIP reaches for one of the OBJECT's protruding PRONGS --

COASTGUARD VESSEL EXT DAY

TRAGGERS and ROGERSZ are thrown from their feet as the MINE EXPLODES. The boat is tossed. Fragments of dinghy rain down on the deck. DIGBY hurries up from the galley.

DIGBY

What the devil was that, Mr Traggers?

TRAGGERS

I don't know, Digby. There's a nuclear power facility down the coast. I pray to God there's been no --

AGENT ROGERSZ leaps to her feet and mans the MACHINE GUN set into the prow. She scans the churning waters.

AGENT ROGERSZ

Where's my dinghy got to?
Skip? Mark? Boy-ees?

SATELLE'S OFFICE INT DAY

SATELLE sits watching his speech played back on a TV screen. SANTO and VANCE observe from the doorway. Much activity in the WAREHOUSE SPACE beyond.

SATELLE

(on TV)

-- do not think badly of me. Like you, I have drunk cool spring water on a summer's afternoon. I have sat down to fried squirrel and jack salmon with black eyed peas and wild raspberries. Thank you and God Bless. Good night.

SATELLE stops the tape and runs it back.

VANCE

Black eyed peas? Raspberries?

SANTO

You oughta tell it like it really was. "I can remember when you could go out to your car without packing. When a can of beer only cost a buck."

SATELLE

It wouldn't be acceptable.
Want to watch it from the start?

SANTO

No thanks. I'm going to wash up.

SATELLE

(seizing SANTO's sleeve)
Hey, say and watch it, man. I spent
all night getting this right.
This is important!

SANTO

Here.

SANTO pulls out the bag of heroin and hands it to SATELLE.
He walks into the WAREHOUSE. VANCE sticks around.

SATELLE

He should have stayed. He doesn't
have to act the asshole all the
time. Sit down, Salveaux. Let me
show you this from the beginning --

VANCE

I seen enough.

SATELLE

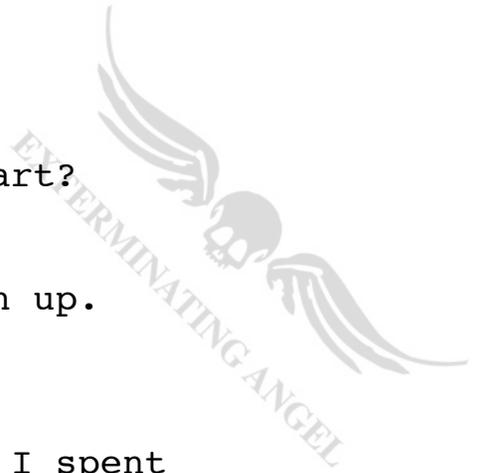
I said sit down! Won't take a minute

VANCE

Later.

WAREHOUSE INT DAY

VANCE crosses the warehouse. A SCORE of new APEX
OPERATIVES are seated in tidy rows. They wear nylon
rainsuits. Fugitives from breadlines and the law. DICK
and KYDD are handing out FREE BEER. DARLENE and GLORIA
tape electrodes to the NEW MEN's wrists.



SANTO pisses in the sink. VANCE joins him.

SANTO

You should have watched his tape.
Then you'd understand what's going on.

VANCE

I don't need to understand. All I
need to see is my millions. FIVE
OF 'EM. Right?

SANTO

There is no doubt in my mind.

A LOUD ELECTRIC WHINE distracts them. Beer cans hit the floor with a clatter. The NEW MEN stare in total fascination at a large TV SCREEN. They are hooked into the REMOCON.

ON SCREEN, GLORIA's face appears.

GLORIA

We are an organic whole. There are
no individuals and no one is dispensable.
Your heart doesn't know why it beats.
Yet it beats. We each have a position
and a purpose. There are no quitters
here. All will soon be revealed --

HEARTBEAT FX on the sound track. The NEW MEN's eyes glaze over. Warm waves of color flow across the screen.

VANCE watches, fascinated. SANTO has seen it all before.

GLORIA

When you leave here, take the Harbor
Freeway to San Pedro. Rendezvous
beneath the arches of the ruined bridge.
At 1850 hrs you will raid the Main
Gate of the Naval Weapons Stockpile.

SANTO nudges VANCE. Across the room, KYDD is seruptitiously fiddling with his ear. He wears a hearing aid.

ROOFTOP EXT DAY

DIGBY fools with the dials of a backpack radio transceiver.

GLORIA's voice comes in loud and clear --

GLORIA V/O

Do not expect to get beyond the first
fence. Your attack is a diversion --

BENTLY'S OFFICE INT DAY

AGENT ROGERSZ and PONY TRAGGERS stand on either side of
BENTLY, who is seated in his chair. BENTLY squirms, as if
he wishes he weren't hearing.

GLORIA V/O

-- while we hijack a STRATEGIC
WEAPONS TRANSPORT. At 1857 hrs
you may abandon the attack and
regroup here for debriefing and
your pay.

WAREHOUSE INT DAY

SATELLE stands in front of the SCREEN. He lifts his hands
in benediction of the hypnotized RECRUITS.

SATELLE

Ask not on the order of your going.
Simply go, and walk forever in the
path of righteousness. Our Lord
Jesu's Words, my friends. Let us
all bow our heads and pray.

Nobody moves. The GOONS all stare at the glowing TV
screen.

GLORIA
They can't hear you, Harley.

BENTLY'S OFFICE INT DAY

BENTLY rearranges his collection of Hummel Figures.

PONY TRAGGERS and AGENT ROGERSZ pace intently up and down.

BENTLY
You're sure? You're absolutely sure?

AGENT ROGERSZ
Yes we are. It fits the profile perfectly. Distract security while you get the real goods out back.

BENTLY
But what do they propose to do with this - strategic material - if they get it?

TRAGGERS
Commit some act of nuclear terror. They already have the casing and the detonators for a bomb. My Agent thinks they may blow up Mt Rushmore.

BENTLY
Oh, my. I'll e-mail the Director, first thing tomorrow.

AGENT ROGERSZ
IDIOT! By then we'll all be DEAD! You have to send the S.W.E.A.T. Squad out immediately.

BENTLY
I can't do that. These Naval Dockyards run a tight ship --

TRAGGERS

Sir, time is slipping thru our fingers. You have about ten minutes in which to save your country from a PLUTONIUM HOLOCAUST. Do you know what that is?

BENTLY

No, I don't. But I do know that it's 8 p.m. in Washington, and there's no possible way for me to authorize --

AGENT ROGERSZ steps in, pulls Fotomat pockets from her coat.

ROGERSZ

Know what these are, Benders?

She scatters photographs on BENTLY's tidy desk.

BENTLY

(whitening)
You wouldn't dare.

ROGERSZ

Call out the S.W.E.A.T. Team. NOW!

ALAMEDA STREET EXT DAY

SATELLE'S OPERATIVES rev their V-8 engines, kick their cycles over, ingest amphetamines and Rainier Ale.

SATELLE strides among them, wearing a nylon cape over his rainsuit. He carries himself like the Last General In The World.

SUDDENLY an unmarked CAR rounds the corner. It is packed with SQUIER and his DETECTIVE FRIENDS. The NEW OPERATIVES become very quiet. SQUIER gets out of the car.

DETECTIVE SQUIER

A real bad thing happened last night. Somebody ofted Boss Noble. Word is out --

SANTO

There he is! The killer! Quick!
Don't let him get away!

VANCE leaps on KYDD and floors him. SANTO pins his flailing arms. They frogmarch him to the DETECTIVES' CAR.

SANTO

This here's your man, Detective Squier.
Had my eye on him for some time. Name's
Kydd. The Mad-Dog Murderer. He used
to be a realtor.

They throw KYDD against the car. Puzzled, the DETECTIVES frisk him. SANTO offers them handcuffs. SATELLE looks on, astonished and bemused.

DETECTIVE SQUIER

Any evidence against him?

SANTO

Look in his pockets.

A DETECTIVE pulls BOSS NOBLE'S SCALP out of KYDD's pocket.

DETECTIVE

Pretty conclusive.

SANTO

Give him the works, boys. Boss
Noble was a Good Man.

DETECTIVE SQUIER

No he wasn't. He was an Important Man.

The COPS shove KYDD into a vehicle full of ANGRY DOGS.
The APEX GANG peel off in strict formation.
SATELLE stands with his mouth open.

SANTO

Don't thank me, Harley. Any time.

SATELLE
(consulting watch)
We're running late.

VANCE sits in the Pickup turning the ignition key.
Nothing.

HELICOPTER INT DAY

The PILOT peers thru glass and smog and goggles at the
bridge beneath him. An antlike CONVOY can be seen.

PILOT
Redskins heading south on Harbor.
They don't suspect a thing...

STORM DRAIN INT DAY

PONY TRAGGERS splashes thru the filthy water with two black-
garbed members of the S.W.E.A.T. SQUAD. He wears fisherman's
waders. The S.W.E.A.T. CAPTAIN talks to AGENT ROGERSZ,
who sports a white eyepatch.

CAPTAIN
We have the access routes surrounded,
Ma'am.

AGENT ROGERSZ
Sharpshooters on every overpass?

CAPTAIN
Yes, Ma'am.

TRAGGERS
Excellent work, Captain.
And the reporters?

CAPTAIN
The Networks are deployed along the
rooftops. The local stations are
in the culvert.



AGENT ROGERSZ
You've got all the bases covered, Pony!

TRAGGERS
Beg pardon?

AGENT ROGERSZ
And I just LOVE your accent!

She impulsively embraces him. The sound of ROTOR BLADES.

ALAMEDA STREET EXT DAY

VANCE has the hood up and is considering his engine.
The Pickup is the only vehicle on the street.
Suddenly SATELLE's Van appears. SANTO gets out.

SANTO
What's up, Vance? Miss the bus?

VANCE
All my plugs have gone.

SANTO
Oh yeah? Here. Have these.

He hands VANCE four dirty spark plugs.

PICKUP CAB INT DAY

VANCE, DARLENE and SANTO follow SATELLE's Van.
VANCE is extremely angry. DARLENE files her nails.

VANCE
This ain't the way to San Pedro.

SANTO
(grinning, coughing)
We aren't going to San Pedro.



VANCE

FINE!

VANCE puts his foot down and tailgates SATELLE furiously. DIRK sticks his head out and makes back-off motions. VANCE deliberately bumps the Van.

DARLENE

You have to realise, Vance. Satelle never reveals his true intentions. Not to anybody. Not even to himself.

VANCE

He's a fucking madman, then.

DARLENE

Could be. That doesn't mean he isn't going to make us rich.

DIRK hurls a toolbox out of the window. It bounces in the road. VANCE backs off to avoid the tools. DIRK laughs.

SANTO

We did this job one time. Harley and me, in this strange town. We stayed six weeks, rehearsing every day. The day we were supposed to off the dude, Harley tells me, pack your bag. We were the decoys and I never knew. Someone else did the job.

OFF SCREEN, AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE - EXTREMELY LOUD.

NAVAL WEAPONS BASE SAN PEDRO EXT DAY

Acrid smoke hangs in the air. The road is littered with the bullet-riddled wrecks of motor vehicles and their riders.

GUNFIRE still echoes off the bridge supports. A helicopter.

TRAGGERS

What a mess! A total botch-up!
Who's in charge here?

CAPTAIN

They returned out fire. The Manual
is very specific about returned-fire situations.

TRAGGERS

Your men knew we needed prisoners.
Yet they blew everyone away.

Single bursts of gunfire. AGENT ROGERSZ storms up.

AGENT ROGERSZ

Captain Thor! Your men are shooting
the wounded! I demand the right to
speak to them before they're shot!

CAPTAIN

I'm sorry, Ma'am. But I have orders
from above.

He gazes at the distant overpass. BUBBA RAM LEE stands
looking down. PRESS CAMERAS roll around him.

DESERT RAILROAD SPUR EXT SUNSET

Decrepit BOXCARS on two sandstrewn tracks. They have not
rolled in a long time. A RADIO plays a cover of the Ted
Nugent song heard in Scene One.

Signs peeling in the desert heat declare,

U.S. GOVT RESTRICTED AREA - KEEP OUT

TWO YOUNG MARINES, one male, one female, gyrate to the boom
box. A THIRD rolls joints of speed industriously.
A FOURTH sunbathes on the roof of a boxcar.

Their guns and helmets and protective gear lie in a pile.

MARINE 1
Hear something?

MARINE 2
Sure. WHOO-EEE! AAALLL RIIIIIGHTT!

GLORIA bounces out of a ravine and BLASTS THEM with her Kaleshnikov. They're dead in mid air. THIRD MARINE tries to hide under a wagon. DARLENE shoots him from the other side.

DARLENE
All clear!

SANTO and SATELLE and DIRK emerge from the ravine. FOURTH MARINE, eyes rolling in terror, crawls towards the edge of the roof. He meets VANCE half-way up the ladder.

VANCE
Run for it.

VANCE hangs off the boxcar to let the MARINE slip by. He climbs onto the roof.

Below him, DIRK applies a portable pneumatic drill to the rusted padlock on the central car. GLORIA and DARLENE take each other's picture among the corpses.

THE LOCK BURSTS OFF. SATELLE slides the door open --

RAILROAD CAR INT SUNSET

Twenty metal CYLINDERS are piled beneath a thick coating of dust and spider's webs.

DIRK dons an overall protective suit and scrambles inside.

SATELLE
Be careful. Watch for hairline fractures in the tanks.

DIRK runs rubber fingers over the canisters. He finds a single WIRE and traces it to a SMALL GATLING GUN aimed at the door. He snorts and kicks the GUN over.

DIRK
Very crude.

SATELLE enters the car. He wears a protective suit. Slowly he rubs the dust off the cylinders. Emerging metal bears a SKULL AND CROSSBONES and the words,

LIQUID NERVE REAGENT - WETEYE - DO NOT EXPOSE TO AIR

SATELLE is breathing hard.

SATELLE
Let's move 'em out.

RAILROAD SPUR EXT SUNSET

VANCE stands atop the car on guard as DICK and SANTO load the canisters onto the pickup. He glances at the far horizon.

The tiny figure of the FOURTH MARINE is struggling up a sand dune. GLORIA spots him and downs him with a single round.

OUTER SPACE

A trapezoid COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE in orbit. The white disc of the Earth pivots at the corner of the screen.

A PLETHORA OF LANGUAGES is heard. Simultaneous broadcasts from across the planet. Suddenly a LASER INTERCEPT transfixes the satellite. The voices die away.

SATELLE'S VOICE comes thru LOUD & CLEAR...

TV SCREEN

SATELLE's face with his toupee and tie.

SATELLE

My name is Ozymandius. I am a soldier and a citizen of the United States. By the time you hear this, I shall be in possession of twenty cylinders of U.S. Army "Weteye" Nerve Gas. I will use this gas to commit twenty acts of mass murder, unless my demands are met.

TV SCREEN

SATELLE's face in black and white. RUSSIAN SUBTITLES.

SATELLE

My demands are these. ONE: immediate shut-down of all U.S., Russian, British, French and Chinese nuclear weapons systems, and TWO: immediate termination of all programs to develop further weapons of this type, followed by --

TV SCREEN

SATELLE's face in Uniden Color. CHINESE SUBTITLES.

SATELLE

THREE: deactivation and decommissioning of all nuclear missiles, bombs, gas and nerve weapons within a year. FOUR: rechanneling of funds saved into solar energy, veterans' aid, and family farm programs --

HEADQUARTERS OF THE HOT CLUB GENEVA INT NIGHT

The LEADERS of the NUCLEAR NATIONS gathered before individual TV SCREENS. Their faces are but dimly seen. There is a RIOT going on outside.

SATELLE

FIVE: a fifty million dollar reimbursement and the Nobel Peace Prize for my time and trouble. I trust the Nuclear Nations of the world can raise this sum within 48 hours. Do not think badly of me. Like you, I have drunk cool spring water on a summer afternoon. I have sat down --

VOICES

It has to be a hoax --
It's absolutely genuine --
I can be in New York in five hours --
I can be in Peking this evening --
What time is it?

PARKING STRUCTURE INT DAY

DETECTIVE SQUIER and his COHORTS throw themselves against the door of SATELLE'S TV STRUCK. The door gives way and they all fall inside.

SATELLE grins at them from the TV SCREENS.

SATELLE

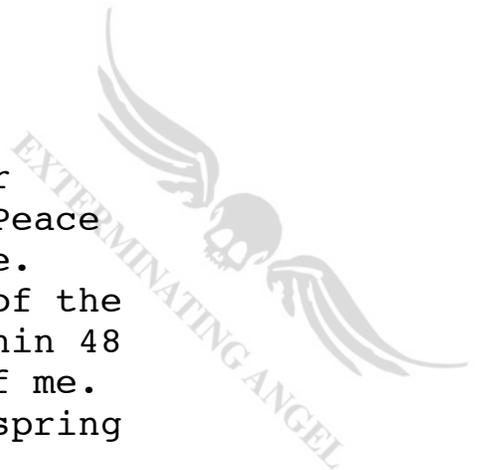
-- and Gold Bless. Good night. This tape will self-destruct in three seconds.

APEX WAREHOUSE INT DAY

The muffled sound of an EXPLOSION in the Parking Structure. FBI MEN take photographs. PONY TRAGGERS stares out of the window. AGENT ROGERSZ rifles thru SATELLE'S files.

AGENT ROGERSZ

What kind of files are these?
Super hero comic books! She-Hulk (CONT.)



AGENT ROGERSZ (CONT.)
and the Silver Surfer!

TRAGGERS

It makes perfect sense. The man's
a child. He thinks he can scare the
planet into behaving itself. Who
knows? Perhaps he's right.

A fly crawls up the window. TRAGGERS tries to kill it.

AGENT ROGERSZ

Are you kidding? The Russians and
the Chinese have already broken
diplomatic relations with us.
Mexico and Canada have closed
their borders.

TRAGGERS

Fair weather friends. So what?
Satelle won't elude us next time.

AGENT ROGERSZ

Don't you understand? This is YOUR
FAULT! I wanted to go in and bust
this bastard weeks ago, but oh no!
Where is he, Traggers? WHERE?

TRAILER PARK EXT DAY

A cluster of ragged palms and mobile homes surrounded
by desert. SATELLE'S TRAILER is parked in a far corner
under a big Joshua Tree. The distant mountains are
COVERED IN SNOW.

TV VOICE

-- described the broadcast as a "Cuban
inspired hoax" and called for renewed
effort against International Terrorism.
U.S. planes have bombed Havana for
the second day --

TRAILER INT DAY

SANTO lies on the couch studying the envelope SQUIER gave him. DIRK takes his gun apart and starts to clean it. GLORIA looks out the window at SATELLE. SATELLE is doing awkward tai chi passes in the dust.

A NERVE GAS CANISTER is propped against the bar.

GLORIA

The plan isn't working. They aren't buying it. They're using us as an excuse to settle all their fucking scores!

SANTO

It's too early to say.

GLORIA

The deadline's past, Santo. And what's Napoleon doing about it? His exercises!

DIRK

(laughing)
Napoleon, ha ha ha! Who was Napoleon?

SANTO

What can he do? What can any of us? We have to sit quiet and wait. Sooner or later, they'll decide to talk.

GLORIA

Is that what Satelle thinks? You know the plan was --

SANTO

The plan no longer applies.

The screen door clatters. SATELLE steps inside.

DIRK

Hey, Satelle. What do you say?

You gonna stick it to the city
fathers like you promised? Ha ha ha!

SATELLE ignores DIRK. He opens a kitchen drawer and
extracts a pair of rubber gloves. GLORIA looks to
SANTO.

SANTO

Where are you going, Harley?
Isn't it about time for your FIX?

SATELLE

They haven't listened. They must
be made aware.

SATELLE crosses to the CANISTER. He dons the rubber
gloves.

GLORIA

WHO must be made aware? Joe Blow or
the Government? They're two different
things. You won't convince the
Government by killing off another
load of Blows...

SANTO

They're gonna play ball, Harley. I can
feel it. Sit down. Do up a little of
this here. I'll join you.

DIRK

Me too!

SATELLE scans the trailer. His eyes light on a Persian
rug. He pulls it up and wraps it round the CANISTER.

SATELLE

No thank you.

SANTO

Harley, sit down. Where are you
going with that?

SATELLE

You know. The Hot Club thinks I'm just another of the others. Another politician, impotent and ranting. I wasn't bluffing, won't back off.

He moves towards the door.

SANTO

No one said you're backing off. I'm telling you to wait a while. SIT DOWN.

SATELLE

It's demonstration time.

SANTO sets his flask aside. He rises. SATELLE is opening the door. SANTO draws his automatic. SATELLE hears the safety catch and freezes.

SANTO

Put the tank down, Harley. And step back inside.

SATELLE

You won't shoot me.

GLORIA

Shoot him, Santo.

SATELLE

He won't. If I fall the cylinder falls too. And if it breaks.

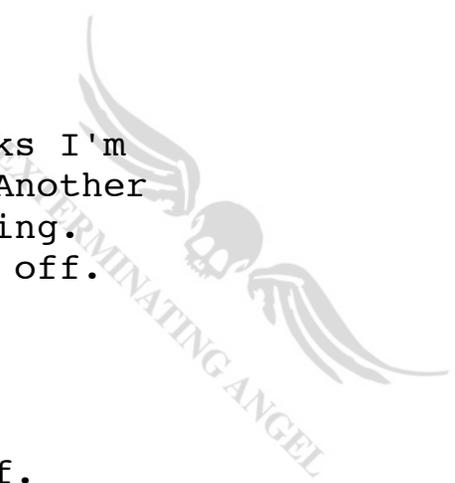
He holds the CYLINDER in front of him. The gravel ground is a long drop away...

DIRK

Better not to, Santo.

SANTO

Stay out of this, Dirk.



SATELLE takes a step away. DICK's disassembled gun clatters together lightning fast. SANTO takes aim.

A SHOT.

SANTO hits the trailer floor. DICK has put a bullet in his shoulder. SATELLE walks on, bearing the CANISTER.

VAN INT AFTERNOON

SATELLE is at the wheel. He talks to someone sitting next to him. CLOSE on SATELLE's face.

SATELLE

You know, Bubba Ram Lee. We always seem to meet up at exactly the right time. Just when I'm feeling kinda low or doubtful. And you know what? Whenever I come to see you I have a shitload of questions to ask. But I always realise I won't get a straight answer and so I never ask 'em. And yet I always leave feeling like I know what to do. Know what I mean?

We PULL BACK slowly. SATELLE is quite alone.

HIGH DESERT EXT SUNSET

DARLENE's finely-muscled body glistens. She shovels the last clods of earth onto a burial mound of NERVE GAS CYLINDERS. Indian artifacts surround.

VANCE sits in the Pickup cab attaching the MARINES' radio to the electronics.

RADIO VOICE

Win \$50,000 - Just For Being Born!

DARLENE slings her spade into the flatbed. She gets in next to VANCE. He lets the pickup trundle down the

steep incline.

VANCE

Check out that sunset. Beautiful.

DARLENE

I hate the desert. Full of sinkholes and snakes. Give me the Chagal Lounge at the Dunes any day.

VANCE

What dunes? I don't see any.

DARLENE

THE Dunes, man. What's the matter, never seen a billboard? VEGAS.

VANCE

Does it still exist? I haven't been.

DARLENE

Haven't BEEN? Well hell, let's get some! We'll rent a Semi-Presidential Suite and get ourselves a mindhook. Plug straight into the spa. Ever mindhooked and fucked in a jacuzzi?

VANCE

Never been in a jacuzzi.

DARLENE

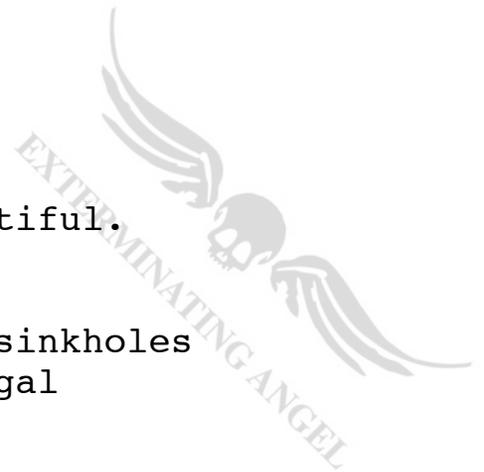
Neither have I. But that's all going to change. Five million dollars buys a lot of... what are they called?

VANCE

Sunsets. There's more to this than money, Darlene. There are our demands.

DARLENE

What? Oh, right. Keep dreaming, lover. And tell me how rich we are.



VANCE

We are pretty fucking rich. We're only going to get richer. Going to move to South America and parasail and watch the war between the US and the Chinese on TV. Going to make us a KILLING...

DARLENE licks the dust out of his ear. She moves on down his chest, unbuttoning his tattered shirt. He intones optimistically. She disappears below the dash.

VANCE weaves across the mottled road.

RED & BLUE LIGHTS flicker in his rearview mirror.

DESERT ROADSIDE EXT DUSK

The Pickup is parked beside the road. The SHERIFF'S CAR, lights revolving, behind it. The SHERIFF'S DEPUTY walks round the Pickup looking for Illegal Things.

VANCE sits bolt upright. DARLENE cannot be seen.

VANCE

(whispering)

Get up. He'll see you down there.

DARLENE

I can't.

VANCE

Why not.

DARLENE

I'm wanted. Felony Self-Abortion rap. If they catch up with me it's eight to ten in the Baby Pen. Got a gun?

VANCE shakes his head. The SHERIFF'S DEPUTY raps on the window. VANCE rolls it down. The SHERIFF'S DEPUTY has a red face, a pony tail and a red beard.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY
What kind of firearms you carrying?

VANCE
We're not.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY
Y'ought to. These roads ain't safe.
City feller?

VANCE
Not any more. Me'n'the little woman
just bought ourselves a Fleetwood
down in Stoker Springs.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY
That right? Then you're both
residents of Cabrones County!
(extends a hand)
I'm Kip Lee!

VANCE
Ricardo Montalban.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY
Glad to know you, Rick. Ma'am. I'm
running for Cabrones County Sheriff
this September. Sure would 'preciate
your votes.

DARLENE
You got 'em!

KIP LEE tips his hat. He heads for his car. Then he turns around and walks back. VANCE holds his breath.

KIP LEE produces a cheap little DERRINGER with his NAME etched in the stock. He hands it to VANCE.

VANCE

What's this?

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY

A little present for you and the missus. From the future Sheriff of Cabrones County. Kip Lee, remember!

KIP LEE gets back in his PATROL CAR and plows away into the gathering gloom. A banner taped to his trunk reads, ELECT KIP LEE FOR SHERIFF.

DARLENE spits. VANCE puts the derringer in his pocket.

TRAILER PARK EXT NIGHT

A wind tosses the ragged palms as VANCE pulls off the highway. He parks diagonal to the Trailer and leaves his headlights on. He and DARLENE are drunk.

VANCE & DARLENE

(singing)

Go right to the source and ask the horse
He'll give you the answer that you endorse
He's always on a steady course
Talk to MISTER ED!

VANCE opens the screen door and DARLENE enters carrying the booze. VANCE follows her. The TV glows in darkness.

SATELLE'S TRAILER INT NIGHT

The first thing VANCE and DARLENE see is SANTO sitting on the couch. His hands and feet are tied. The second thing they see is DIRK, training an Uzi on them...

GLORIA

Drop the booze, Darlene. Both of you assume the position.



DARLENE

If I drop these bottles they'll
break.

VANCE kicks her. She drops them and they break. VANCE
and darlene lean up against the wall with arms and legs
akimbo.

GLORIA flicks the lights on. She wields a Bren 10mm as
she frisks them, finds VANCE's Derringer and drops it on
the floor. DIRK chews a toothpick and giggles.

DARLENE

Hey, Gloria. It's Darlene.
Remember me?

GLORIA

No.

VANCE

Where's Satelle?

DIRK

Ask his boyfriend.

VANCE looks at SANTO. SANTO's suit is caked with blood.
He watches POLITICIANS on the silent TV screen.

DIRK

He hasn't had a drink in hours.
His hands are shaking.

SANTO

Harley doesn't think the Feds
will bite. He thinks they're
going to need a demonstration.
I tried to stop him. Little
Dirk shot me in the back.

GLORIA

He didn't understand the issues then.

SANTO

Oh. That makes it all right.

SANTO glares darkly at DIRK. DIRK puts an arm round GLORIA and menaces the others with his MACHINE GUN.

VANCE

Where's he going to stage his... demonstration?

SANTO

Your guess is as good as mine. Where would you choose?

VANCE & DARLENE

(promptly)

L.A.

DIRK

My mother lives in L.A.!

DARLENE

My whole family lives there. I think it's great. You guys are pretty tight now, huh?

GLORIA

We're partners in whatever we can get. How about you, Vance? Want to go to the authorities and work out some kind of DEAL?

DIRK

Yeah! A DEAL with the AUTHORITIES! Whaddyasay?

VANCE

Somebody's coming.

GLORIA

The lights! Quick! Stay put on that couch or you're iced!

DIRK puts the lights out. Gravel crunches outside.
A Figure in a Sheriff's Hat appears. KIP LEE.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY
You in there, Riccardo? It's Kip Lee!

VANCE
Hi, Kip. I'm... sleeping.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY
I just came off duty, buddy. Wondered
if you'd care to stop by the Duck Blind
with me for a coupla frosties It's
my Daddy's bar --

TENSION snaps DIRK's fevered brain. He opens up with
his machine gun.

DIRK
ALL COPPERS DIE!!

The blast blows KIP LEE and the screen door to atoms.
GLORIA is hit by bullets too. VANCE and DARLENE hit
the floor and stay there. SANTO dives sideways, grabs
VANCE's Derringer --

GLORIA
You fucked up Dirk - the couch -

DIRK blasts the sofa. His clip runs out. SANTO rises
to his knees and shoots DIRK as he reloads. DIRK
falls spraying the Trailer with lead.

GLORIA shoots SANTO. SANTO shoots her back.

DIRK's magazine ejects its last cartridge. Smoke and
silence fill the air. Water drifts from shattered
storage tanks. PROPANE GAS HISSES.

VANCE and DARLENE feel their bodies cautiously.

VANCE
All there. All there?

DARLENE

All there.

GLORIA moves beneath the smoking TV set, then lies still. DARLENE checks her vital signs. DIRK tries to rise. He can't.

DANTO's corpse is propped up staring at VANCE. There is a crumpled envelope in SANTO's hand. VANCE takes it and the hand relaxes...

TRAILER PARK EXT NIGHT

The park's few PATRONS gape sleepily at the shattered. They back away as DARLENE and VANCE emerge, bristling with guns. DIRK is slung over VANCE's shoulder.

VANCE dumps DIRK in the flatbed.
Hands DARLENE the KEYS.

DARLENE

What's this?

VANCE

You take the truck. Head for the cylinders. I'll meet you there.

DARLENE

Trying to stick me with the crap?
Forget it.

VANCE

I have to go after Satelle.
This isn't finished yet.

DARLENE

Sure it is. Cut your losses.
We'll dump Dirk and head for the border. I know a place --

VANCE

I got wages coming.

DARLENE
You'll never find him, Vance.
They'll find you first.
Remember the future.

VANCE
I love you, Darlene.
Do as I say.

DARLENE
Asshole!

He jumps in KIP LEE's patrol car, guns the motor.
DARLENE climbs in the Pickup, reverses up the drive.
VANCE speeds off across the desert, siren wailing.

GREYHOUND BUS DEPOT EXT DAY

DEPARTING PASSENGERS squeeze thru broken automatic doors
and are immediately hassled by INDIGENTS, PSYCHOS and
THIEVES. SATELLE is the last to leave...

He walks quickly, rigid like a maniac. His pants legs
are too short. He's missing a sock. He carries a
ROLLED-UP PERSIAN CARPET.

He is so strange that no one bothers him.

SATELLE stops by a series of NEWS TVs. The headlines
read, PRESIDENT REFUSES TERROR TERMS; WORLD COMMUNITY
UNITED AGAINST HOAX.

He crosses the street, headed for a POSTMODERN-DECO
SKYSCRAPER.

STRANDCO LOBBY INT DAY

Mantovani muzak. SATELLE dons a nylon rainsuit outside
on the sidewalk. TWO GUARDS eye him suspiciously.



The GUARDS hitch up their belts. SATELLE pulls his visor down. He carries his carpet towards the doors. They open with a subtle hiss. The GUARDS intercept him.

GUARDS

Okay, bunky. Let's see your appointment slip.

SATELLE

Exterminator.

SATELLE pulls an extension hose from his carpeted bundle. He twists the nozzle and releases a short burst of NERVE GAS.

The GUARDS die instantly of massive seizures sealed with floods of tears. The RECEPTIONIST dies a second later.

SATELLE enters the elevator, spraying as he goes...

TV SCREEN - NEWS CREDITS ROLL

TV NEWSROOM with dentured, coiffured NEWSPEOPLE.

CAMERA centers on the ASIAN NEWSWOMAN.

NEWSWOMAN

Top item at this hour is a mass homicide in downtown City of the Angels. Here will full details of this fast-breaking story is Channel Ninety's on-the-beat reporter Carmelito Baxter. What's the good word, Carmelito?

CUT TO beige-suited CARMELITO standing before a police barricade. COPS with gas masks and the STRANDCO BUILDING beyond.

CARMELITO

The scene Downtown tonight is (CONT.)

CARMELITO (CONT.)
indescribable. I've counted at
least a hundred bodies lying in
the street. Old people, children,
and their pets --

NEWSWOMAN
What happened?

CARMELITO
It appears a deranged former
employee forced his way into the
Offices of California-based STRANDCO
late this afternoon and opened fire
with an as yet unidentified weapon.
He's made his way up to the roof,
loosing off - ah - deadly fire
on every floor.

NEWSWOMAN
The roof? Is he still up there now?

CARMELIO
Well, if he is he's laying low.
You can see the police choppers
circling the Building, and there's
speculation he may be back inside
the Building.

NEWSWOMAN
I know a lot of our viewers may be
asking, what is STRANDCO, INC?

CARMELITO
It's kind of a Think-Tank, I believe.
Used by businesses and the energy
people to develop new technology,
things like that --

NEWSWOMAN
No political significance?



CARMELITO

None at all. I've spoken with Chief of Police Barney Holden and he's assured me we're dealing with a lone assassin, that is madman, situation. Just a moment --

The CAMERA pans to the roof of the building. A LONE FIGURE is visible against the evening sky.

ROOFTOP EXT NIGHT

SATELLE stands on the parapet in plain sight. He has taken off his visor. He raises the GAS CANISTER and shows it to the crowd.

SATELLE

This is what it's about!
This is what it's all about!
My name is Ozy --

We hear the pop-pop-pop of silenced sniper rifles. SATELLE staggers. He tumbles backwards, out of sight.

The CANISTER falls gracefully into the street.

MOTEL ROOM INT NIGHT

VANCE watches the action on TV. Cockroaches crawl up the walls. He sprays them with a can of Raid. Beside him, on the bed, lies SANTO's envelope.

NEWSWOMAN

(on TV)

What did he throw, Carmelito?

CARMELITO

I can't tell - I - that's funny -
oh - my eyes --

The TV CAMERA hits the concrete. BLACK OUT.

NEWSWOMAN

We seem to have lost contact with
our mobile team. On the
international front -

VANCE turns the TV off. He picks up SANTO's envelope
and scans the contents for the hundredth time.
The envelope contains picture of BUBBA RAM LEE and a
computer profile.

SATELLE appears at the foot of his bed. Bathed in a
blue-gray TV glow. He stares at VANCE and shakes his
head.

VANCE considers BUBBA RAM LEE's file. He points his
fingers at it, like a gun. SATELLE shakes his head.

VANCE

Why not?

SATELLE spreads his hands. They bleed.

VANCE

Harley, you're still a sucker
for that stuff.

VANCE throws the can of Raid at SATELLE.
It passes thru his shimmering image and hits the wall.

SATELLE'S GHOST smiles and disappears.

CITY CATHEDRAL EXT NIGHT

A MAN approaches the once-imposing gothic pile, now
dwarfed by the SKYSCRAPERS of banks.

He wears a wretched, ripped-up blanket.

CONFESSIONAL, CITY CATHEDRAL INT NIGHT

VANCE kneels by the booth, speaks to an unseen PRIEST.

VANCE

Forgive me, father, for I have
way sinned.

PRIEST O/S

How long has it been since your
last confession.

VANCE

Don't know. Not important anyway.
Listen, dads, you know what just went
down at that big military operation,
STRANDCO? Terrible tragedy. All
those innocent people. I was involved
in that. I mean, I wasn't. But I
know who was...

TRACK into the PRIEST's booth, thru the curtains.

The PRIEST is PADRE JAMAAL.

JAMAAL

Go on, my son...

CITY HALL EXT NIGHT

The streets are empty. Roadblocks have been set up.

AGENT ROGERSZ V/O

Don't be an idiot, Mister Mayor!

COUNCIL CHAMBER INT NIGHT

Six people sit in special session. PONY TRAGGERS; AGENT
ROGERSZ; MR BENTLY; GENERAL J.D. WALKER; POLICE CHIEF
HOLDEN; and JEFFERSON WHITMAN, Mayor.

BENTLY

Agent Rogersz! How dare you use such language in the presence of the Mayor? You must apologise immediately.

AGENT ROGERSZ

These assholes have twenty cylinders of Weteye nerve gas. They opened one of them here today. A thousand people died.

MAYOR WHITMAN

Don't get me wrong, I greive, I greive.

TRAGGERS

Right then. You must declare martial law. It's simple.

MAYOR WHITMAN

Nothing is simple, Mr Teabags, ah, Traggers.

TRAGGERS

This is. There are nineteen canisters of chemical death at large in your community. You track them down. You will have to tread on toes to do so.

MAYOR WHITMAN

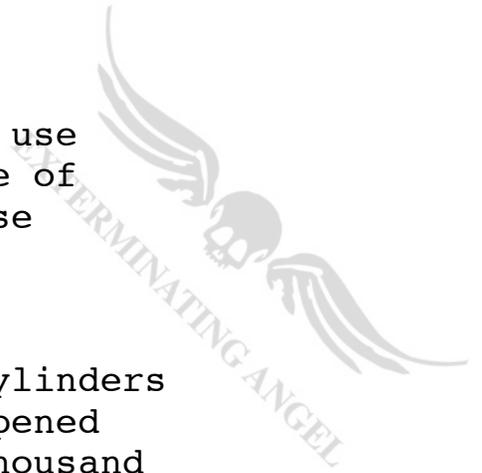
Believe me, I do sympathize. But, in all conscience, I cannot jeopardize the First Amendment rights of every --

GENERAL WALKER

Do it. Now.

MAYOR WHITMAN

What did you say, General?



GENERAL WALKER

On behalf of the Joint Chiefs' Combined Emergency Forces I demand total control over the basin area for as long as the Emergency persists.

MAYOR WHITMAN

Out of the question. Chief Holden, what progress has been m --

GENERAL WALKER unholsters his pistol and SHOOTS MAYOR WHITMAN DEAD. The MAYOR falls from his chair.

TRAGGERS

I say. That's a bit stiff, isn't it?

AGENT ROGERSZ

(indicating BENTLY)

General Walker. Would you mind shooting him as well?

GENERAL WALKER

Not at all.

WALKER blasts BENTLY too. The dust settles. WALKER addresses POLICE CHIEF HOLDEN.

WALKER

With your permission, Mister Mayor...

HOLDEN

Granted, granted.

The telephone rings. MAYOR HOLDEN picks it up. He hands it to the GENERAL.

HOLDEN

It's for you.

CATHEDRAL INT NIGHT

PADRE JAMAAL stands at a payphone in the outer nave.

He wears a richly-tailored cassock. His scars have healed. Monks chanting Abba songs on the Muzak.

JAMAAL

Johnnie, this is Al. Yes. No. I don't care - get this: I just took confession off of Vance Salveaux. You remember him? Well, never mind. Johnnie, hold on - this Salveaux knows where the gas is stashed. THE gas. That's right. No. No. I already made a deal with him. He said he'll show us where it's at - us, you and me, yes, for FIFTY GRAND. Yeah, yeah, "alone". Right. Tomorrow. Got a pencil?

The CAMERA pulls back as JAMAAL speaks. Behind a gothic column, in the shadows, a man stands. VANCE, listening to every word.

ANGELES CREST HWY EXT MORNING

Four-foot snowdrifts line the winding road. A shake-built DINER half-covered in snow. Smoke rises from the chimney.

PADRE JAMAAL and GENERAL WALKER stand in the window drinking from steaming mugs. Like a Christmas card.

DINER INT MORNING

The dining room is full of S.W.E.A.T. SQUAD members. DIGBY fixes a radio bug to the folds of JAMAAL's robes.

DIGBY

This'll be fine provided it don't snow again. You'll bleep a signal fifty miles or more.

TRAGGERS

And the weather forecast is completely clear.

JAMAAL

The Lord looks kindly on our work today.

DIBGY nods and kisses JAMAAL's ring. In another corner, a TV NEWS TEAM films the S.W.E.A.T. squad and AGENT ROGERSZ.

REPORTER

(to CAMERA)

There is a sense of tense elation in the air. A feeling for these trained professionals that the final pieces of the puzzle are about to snap difinitively into place --

A S.W.E.A.T. MAN touches AGENT ROGERSZ' arm. He indicates the doorway - where PONY TRAGGERS stands and beckons. AGENT ROGERSZ follows him outside.

WOODSHED INT MORNING

AGENT ROGERSZ clamps her hands over her eyes. Her breath hangs crisply in the air. TRAGGERS delves into the coal bin and comes out with something wet and furry. He places it under her nose.

It is a ratty CHOW DOG.

AGENT ROGERSZ

FRITZ!

The CHOW yaps and wags its tail. AGENT ROGERSZ embraces it. It licks her lips and nostrils. TRAGGERS leans in bashfully and kisses the dog on the ear.

TRAGGERS

Rest assured your Fritz has had the finest care, Agent Rogersz. (CONT.)

TRAGGERS (CONT.)

We British are the most dog-loving nation on Earth.

AGENT ROGERSZ

Except for we German Americans.

He defers to her. They embrace.

DINER EXT MORNING

A battered DODGE DART pulls up outside the diner. It has "Exterminators Rule" graffiti on its sides. VANCE sits behind the wheel. He hits the horn.

PADRE JAMAAL steps out onto the porch. GENERAL WALKER hovers in the doorway. JAMAAL carries a thermos flask.

JAMAAL

Some coffee, Vance. To keep us going. You know General Walker, don't you? General, this is Pte. Salveaux of Eighteenth Supply.

VANCE

Get in the car.

DINER INT DAY

The S.W.E.A.T. SQUAD and REPORTERS cluster round the transceiver. Sinewaves and radar blips crisscross on its TV screens. DIGBY interprets.

DIGBY

They're heading east on Two. Out of Charlton Flat and rising. They can't go much further or they'll hit the snow...



DODGE DART EXT DAY

VANCE drives headlong up an icy firebreak. He's left the road behind. Snow is piled high on either side. Branches form a tunnel overhead.

HIGHWAY EXT DAY

S.W.E.A.T. and ARMY VEHICLES leave the highway, start following VANCE down the firebreak road...

HELICOPTER overhead.

DODGE DART INT DAY

VANCE drives fast, chews gum and babbles.

VANCE

When I saw Satelle on TV I thought, that's it, forget about it. But then he showed up in my room! Stood there and showed me it was down to me! Hell! 'Scuse me, Padre. Suddenly I'm the sole possessor of a ton of Weteye - enough to wipe out everyone in California. There's no way I'm not gonna make some money off this thing!

JAMAAL and WALKER, in the back, exchange a glance. A WIRE MESH separates them from VANCE.

JAMAAL

You're absolutely right, Vance.

WALKER

Slow down, Soldier. You're going too fast.

VANCE

Did I ask your opinion of my driving?
SHUT YOUR FUCKING FACE! I'm in the (CONT.)

VANCE (CONT.)
POWER POSITION HERE! You're both
pretty fresh considering you might
be sitting on a trunk full of NERVE
GAS!

JAMAAL and WALKER become very quiet. VANCE throws the
DART around a corner and slams into a drift. Snow falls
covering the car.

VANCE turns the motor off. He leans around. The squat
barrel of an M-16 points at WALKER's face. VANCE chews
his gum excitedly.

VANCE
Good cars these Dodge Darts.
I'd recommend 'em to anyone.
Why don't you both start taking
off your CLOTHES?

DINER INT DAY

DIGBY looks sick. All radio sounds have ceased.
He twiddles dials. He checks his fuses. Nothing.

DIGBY
That's funny --

AGENT ROGERSZ and TRAGGERS breeze in, flushed and ready
for further action. FRITZ scampers after them.

AGENT ROGERSZ
Everything OK?

FIRE ROAD EXT DAY

The PURSUIT VEHICLES pull up beside the abandoned DART.
The snow is falling heavily, obscuring all tracks...

SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS EXT DAY

A vast expanse of rugged peaks layered with pines and snow.
WE CLOSE in slowly on a distant SNOWFIELD.

THREE FIGURES can be seen. Two of them stagger and stumble,
herded briskly by the third.

SNOWSCAPE EXT DAY

VANCE marches WALKER and JAMAAL ahead of him. He wears
the GENERAL's cap and dress jacket over the PADRE's
cassock. The remains of his ragged V.A. blanket are
knotted round his neck.

JAMAAL and WALKER wear thin exterminator suits
that offer no protection from the freezing cold.

Their BARE FEET sink into the snow.
JAMAAL carries a briefcase.

VANCE shifts his M-16 from hand to hand. He sings.

VANCE

(singing)

Y'lift 15 tons and whaddyou get?
Another day older and deeper in debt
Saint Peter don't call me cause I can't go
I owe my soul to the Company Sto'!

He makes a snowball, hurls it. It hits WALKER on the head.

VANCE

What's the matter, General? Don't
you know the words? Keep walking!

WALKER

Look, Private --

JAMAAL

He wants us to call him Vance.

WALKER

Vance. The critical material. It wasn't in the trunk. Where is it?

VANCE

(laughing)

You're walking on it General! It's ALL critical material! Now c'mon sing! Y'LIFT SIXTEEN TONS --

HELICOPTER INT DAY

The chopper's shadow sweeps across the snow. AGENT ROGERSZ and PONY TRAGGERS crowd the PILOT. DIGBY scans the white expanse with field glasses. FRITZ yaps.

AGENT ROGERSZ

You should have stayed the hell out, Traggers. You had no right busting in on my investigations.

TRAGGERS

I should co-co! You'd still be rooting thru Satelle's dustbins if I hadn't held your hand! Why don't you shut your bloody dog up!

AGENT ROGERSZ

Fritzie has every right to bark! He's been deprived of my affections for a whole week! Held hostage by a limey ponce who can't even get a hard-on in the woodshed!

TRAGGERS roars with rage. He grabs the DOG and tries to throw it out the skylight. AGENT ROGERSZ gets him in a chokehold. DIGBY peers thru his binoculars, shouts --

DIGBY

I see them! There they are!

TREELINE EXT DAY

VANCE sees the CHOPPER turn. GENERAL WALKER and PADRE JAMAAL lie exhausted underneath the trees. Their naked feet are frostbitten, too cold to bleed.

JAMAAL

They're coming, Salveaux - Vance.
Put down the gun, man. Let them
see you drop it!

VANCE watches as the HELICOPTER closes in. Slowly he lifts his M-16 - sets it for single bursts - sights down the barrel - holds his breath and becomes very still -

WALKER

It's hopeless! Do as the Padre says!

VANCE pulls the trigger, loosing off a single round.

HELICOPTER EXT DAY

VANCE's bullet hits the "JESUS BOLT" connecting the anti-torque driveshaft to the rotor blades.

ROGERSZ and TRAGGERS are seen fighting within as the HELICOPTER spins out of control and drops from frame...

TREELINE EXT DAY

VANCE pulls on mirror shades. A BRIGHT EXPLOSION is doubly reflected in the glass. He turns to WALKER and JAMAAL.

VANCE

Rest period over.

JAMAAL

I can't walk any further, bro.

VANCE

Sure you can.

JAMAAL shakes his gray head. VANCE slams the M-16 back into automatic. The TWO MEN struggle weakly to their feet. THE SKY IS CLOUDING OVER.

SNOWFIELD EXT LATER

WALKER stumbles thru a field of whiteness. SNOW falls in thick sheets all around. It crystalizes in his hair and clipped mustache.

Suddenly TWO FIGURES loom ahead. The GENERAL quickens his frozen pace and tries to shout thru broken lips - it is JAMAAL and VANCE. JAMAAL is on his knees, singing.

JAMAAL
... sixteen tons ...

VANCE
Welcome back, General. Sit down.

GENERAL WALKER keels over in the drifting snow. VANCE aims his M-16 at PADRE JAMAAL.

JAMAAL
Forgive me, father. I'm about to sin again.

WALKER
Salveaux. Wait.

VANCE
Be with you in a moment, General.

WALKER
Don't kill him. I'll - I'll tell you what you want to know.

VANCE kicks thru the snowstorm towards him.

VANCE

There is something, isn't there?
Something I want to know. What
is it?

WALKER

Before you were sent to the V.A.,
Vance. You came to see me.
With Jamaal. Remember?

VANCE tries. He shakes his head.

WALKER

Yes. You must. Something you saw
- after the choppers left -

A gust of white snow masks the GENERAL's face.

A FLASHBACK FLASH OF NAPALM --

VANCE opens his eyes.

WALKER

What did you see?

GENERAL WALKER'S QUARTERS INT NIGHT

GENERAL WALKER reclines in his dressing gown. The bandaged
VANCE stands at attention before him. JAMAAL waits in the
background. It's raining outside.

VANCE

I don't know, sir. But it was
something very strange. Something
like... I never saw. After the
choppers went over.

GENERAL WALKER

War does strange things to a man,
Soldier. We imagine things.



VANCE
I can't say otherwise.

JAMAAL
Nobody's asking you to lie, Vance.
Just keep silent. Remember
you're an American.

VANCE
I don't think I can do that, sir.

FLASH FURTHER BACK --

ARMY CAMP EXT NIGHT

VANCE lying on his back in his charred, blackened
Protective Suit, the ground burning all around.

HIS POV --

CIRCULAR FLYING MACHINES pass overhead, following the
helicopters, illuminated by the FLAMES.

SNOWSTORM EXT DUSK

TIGHT ON WALKER, icy blue.

WALKER
We're talking ALIENS. Intelligences
from another planet or another time.
They don't explain much to us - all
they do is give us hints and clues -

GENERAL WALKER'S QUARTERS INT NIGHT

VANCE
What do they want?



JAMAAL

They want many things. To share our knowledge. To learn of our diverse cultures, to learn about Lord Jesus, to learn about...

VANCE

Yes?

GENERAL WALKER

Give him the straight dope, Padre. They want to learn about our WARS.

SNOWSTORM EXT DUSK

A fit of coughing seizes GENERAL WALKER. PADRE JAMAAL has passed out in the snow. VANCE waits.

WALKER

Now do you understand, Vance? About the war in Central? The stockpiles of gas and poison? The Nuclear Thing?

VANCE

No.

WALKER

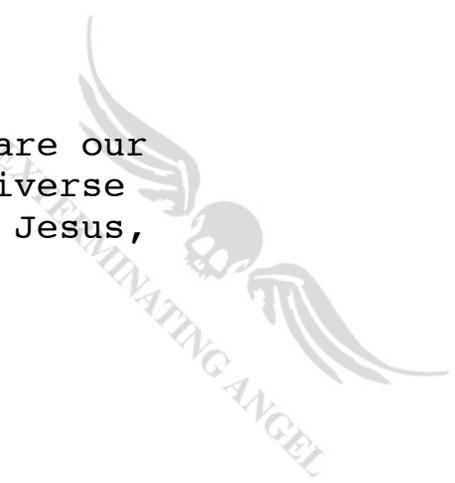
We never intended to fight the Russians. Vance, they weren't our enemies. Nor were the Chinese. Why do you think our military budget kept on going up steadily - long after the Cold War ended?

VANCE

Military runs all those countries. Those in charge get what they want.

WALKER

No, Vance. Not at all. The truth is, the whole World is secretly united for the first time ever, Vance. United in its fear of THEM.



VANCE
And yet you teaching them to fight.

WALKER
We have to, Vance. It's what they want. We can't afford to displease them - their technology is FIFTEEN CENTURIES ahead of ours. Their culture --

The GENERAL coughs again. VANCE rises, shouldering his gun.

VANCE
Been real interesting talking with you, General.

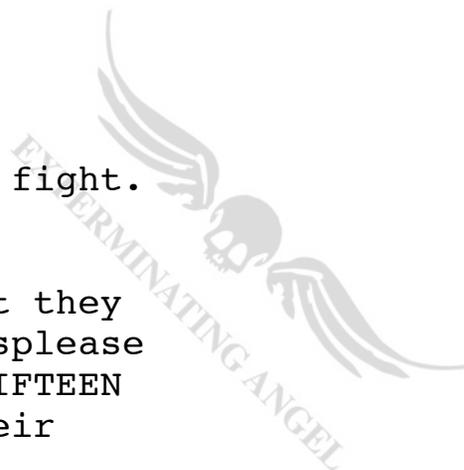
WALKER
Where are you going, Vance? You're involved now - one of the few who know - you can't walk away from that - you have to help us -

VANCE
How's that?

WALKER
Some of them have taken human form. They masquerade as politicians - teachers - holy men - Jamaal knows more about it than me - you have to get us to a doctor - so we can fight them -

VANCE
Want to hear something funny?
I think it's pretty funny. I don't know if I'm sleeping or awake.
I can't tell. Not since the V.A.

WALKER
Vance, you're awake! Help me - help us - This is real - I swear it!



VANCE
(smiling)
Well, you would, wouldn't you?

VANCE steps back and vanishes into the SNOWSTORM, carrying the briefcase. The GENERAL tries to rise, falls back in agony. His legs are frozen.

HIGH DESERT EXT NIGHT

DIRK opens his eyes. He's lying in the shallow basin where DARLENE buried the CYLINDERS. She sleeps nearby.

ANGLE ON DIRK

Terrified by what he sees.

DIRK
Darlene! It's started again!

DARLENE wakes and rubs her eyes.

A few meters away, the earth is moving. Slowly the BURIED CYLINDERS are working their way to the surface.

Several of them protrude at eerie angles. Glinting in the waning Moon.

DARLENE
I've had enough of this. Let's pack up and head for the road...

TV SCREEN

The COUNCIL CHAMBER at CITY HALL. MAYOR HOLDEN faces the CAMERA. He's flanked by two anonymous AIDES, one in military uniform, the other in black suit and tie.

MAYOR HOLDEN

My fellow citizens. The so-called
Weteye raid on a private business
in Los Angeles turned out to be no
more than a tragic air conditioner
malfunction --

TV SCREEN

ASIAN WOMAN NEWS ANCHOR --

NEWS ANCHOR

A re-count of U.S. Army stockpiles
showed no chemical reagents
unaccounted for. It was all
apparently a FALSE ALARM --

TV SCREEN

WHITE TOUPEED MALE ANCHOR --

MALE ANCHOR

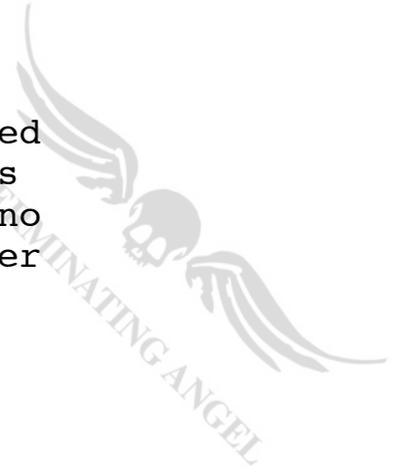
Two bodies found in the San Gabriel
Mountains have been identified as
those of teenage hikers. Their names
have been withheld until their parents
can be notified.

For a second the IMAGE DISTORTS and the NEWS ANCHOR MAN
becomes a weird, insectoid creature with bug eyes and two
pulsating brains --

-- then the screen is blank.

DESERT HIGHWAY EXT DAY

A DODGE DART coasts towards the distant hills.



Two HITCH HIKERS stand beside the road. The DART pulls up just past them.

The HITCH HIKERS are DARLENE and DIRK, on crutches.

The DRIVER is VANCE. He wears a dog-collar. They, dusty hiking gear.

DIRK

Hi! I'm Pat Brewster and this is my sister Cerise. We're hitching round this big ol' country just to see what we can find.

VANCE

Arch Waldgrove. Nashville, Tennessee. Headed for Vegas to catch some of the stars.

VANCE helps DIRK into the back seat. DARLENE hands DIRK his sticks. She gets in and shuts the door. VANCE drives on.

DODGE DART INT DAY

DARLENE

Well just fancy! We thought we might take a look at Vegas, too. And also see about an Inheritance us two kids got coming.

DIRK

Yup! Something about an ol' radium mine. Don't place much credence in it myself, but heck! If sis is game, I'm up for it, by jimminy!

VANCE turns on the radio. The car cruises.

RADIO VOICE

Win \$50,000 - Just For Being Born!

DIRK studies VANCE'S BRIEFCASE on the back seat.

He opens it. It is full of MONEY.

DARLENE produces cigarettes.

DARLENE

D'you have a light, Mr Waldgrove?

VANCE hands her a matchbook. She lights up, using the last match.

DARLENE

There's a number written on this match book. Want me to save it?

DESERT PHONE BOOTH INT DAY

VANCE dials the number written on the book. DARLENE and DIRK drink coca-cola in the car. VANCE listens --

SHORELINE EXT DAY

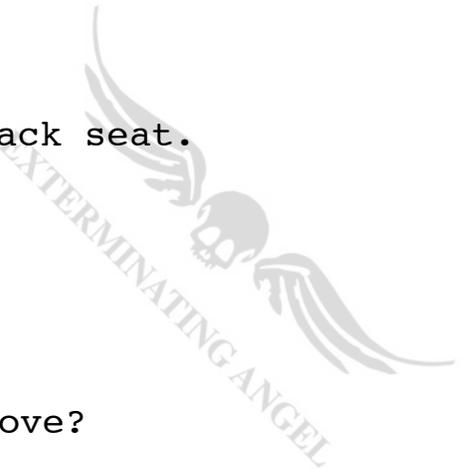
Walled mission-style enclosure by the San Diego sea. Minarets and spires and surf breaking. A PHONE RINGS.

RECEPTION AREA INT DAY

Posters depicting BUBBA RAM LEE on ever wall. ALI and SALINDA study texts before the reception desk. MICHELLE SALVAUX is the Receptionist. She picks up the phone.

MICHELLE

Divine Acceptance Mission.
How can I direct your call?



PHONE BOOTH INT DAY

VANCE hears his WIFE's voice, hesitates the briefest moment.

VANCE
Wrong number.

DESERT HIGHWAY EXT SUNSET

The DODGE DART burns away up the straight-arrow highway.
The upraised voices of its OCCUPANTS are heard.

VANCE, DARLENE & DIRK
(singing)
Bright light city gonna get my soul
Gonna set my soul on fire
Got a whole lot of money that's
Ready to burn
So set those stakes up higher --
Oh that blackjack, poker and roulette
Wheel
A fortune lost on every deal
All you need is silver and nerves of
Steel

So viva -- VIVA -- LAS VEGAS...

