

A Bank Robber's Handbook

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FADE IN:

EXT. PARAMOUNT CA -- DAY

A BLUE CHRYSLER 5TH AVENUE exits a freeway offramp onto a gritty, urban city street. A siren wails in the distance.

SUPER: June 3, 1986 9:52 AM Paramount, CA

Gray skies dim the sun's rays, casting shadows onto the BANC OF CALIFORNIA building that flashes by.

The car glides to stop one block from the bank, where an alley ends and the neighborhood begins.

INT. CAR -- DAY

Inside, TOM BECKER, 23, in the driver's seat, slugging a tall can of Old English 800. Fearless, fast on his feet, bombastic, he'll turn a phrase on a dime. Turns loud music down.

TOM
Showtime, road dog.

Next to him, MICHAEL "NATTY" NATOLONE JR, 21, baby-faced, older brother type, border-line OCD, relies on routine and structure, is chopping lines of meth on a cassette tape case.

MICHAEL
I know, I know. Hold up one sec, I need to get ready.

TOM
You said the cops' shift change is --

MICHAEL
-- yeah, ten.

TOM
It's 9:56.

Michael snorts dirty white powder up his nose. Slowly. Reverently. A thin white thread of crank swirls around an invisible stream of air into his nostril.

He sniffs once, passes the case and straw without looking at Tom.

MICHAEL
OK, OK. Here. I'm almost ready.

Tom vacuums up the line in a swift single flourish, throws his head back.

TOM
Sheee...iiiittt. This is some dank-ass crank. Knock your dick off.

Tom exhales slowly, shakes his head violently.

TOM (CONT'D)
Woowwee... OK. Where's your throwaways?

Michael reaches behind seat, pulls a dingy jacket out, begins to put it on.

MICHAEL
Yeah. Gonna ditch this and --

Puts on a beanie.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
-- this.

Puts on sun glasses.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
What do you think of these?

TOM
Sophisticated.

Michael ignores Tom. Turns volume back up and pulls visor mirror down. Adjusts glasses. He tugs on his jacket, a nervous habit.

Nodding to the music, he buttons and unbuttons his tear away track pants. Exhales slowly and loudly. One last chug of Old English, crushes can in his fist and burps.

MICHAEL
OK, I'm ready.

TOM
All right, big G. Do ya thing. See you in six.

INT. BANC OF CALIFORNIA -- MOMENTS LATER

Michael pushes the bank door open, steps in, lets the door shut. Tugs on his jacket and scans the tellers one by one.

Three at their station, young man, young woman and ELDERLY WOMAN TELLER. Choosing his mark, he heads to her.

ELDERLY WOMAN TELLER
Good morning, how can I help you?

MICHAEL
Yes, I'd like to make a withdrawal.

Places piece of paper on counter, slides it toward teller, keeps fingers on it. Teller reads the note, face hardens.

She looks defiantly at Michael.

ELDERLY WOMAN TELLER
No.

Michael stares back. Tugs on his jacket. Pushes note closer to teller.

MICHAEL
Did you read the note? I'm not kidding. This isn't a joke.

ELDERLY WOMAN TELLER
I don't care... No.

MICHAEL
Well, fuck me running sideways.

Michael yanks the note from the counter, stuffs it into the pocket of his jeans underneath track pants, then --

-- pulls a snub-nose .25 caliber gun and --

-- heavily plops it onto the counter. Leans close to teller.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Wanna know what I don't like about banks?

She frowns.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Tellers.

Her gaze is steady but a small twitch between her eye and cheek reveal the emotion underneath.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Not good for you. So ... you better place 20's, 50's and 100's on the counter --

Like a hammer, smacks gun nose onto counter with heavy clunk.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

-- now!

With a start, the teller pulls back and reaches into drawer. Puts stacks of bills onto counter.

Michael thumbs through each stack before pulling towards him. Pushes one stack back.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

No dye packs.

Nodding, she places two more stacks on counter.

ELDERLY WOMAN TELLER

That's it. I don't have anymore.

MICHAEL

(politely)

Have a nice day.

EXT. PARAMOUNT CA -- MOMENTS LATER

Back outside, distorted traffic noises, then a loud horn, blast Michael. He blinks, sways. Turns left.

He walks, does not run, through bank parking lot, into alley. His jacket forever creeping up his neck.

At end of alley, he stops at dumpster, wildly tears off jacket, dunks it in dumpster.

Then glasses, beanie and track pants, into dumpster. A siren wails in the distance.

He listens. Then, purposely, he saunters onto residential street without a care, toward the running car. Once there, he bolts inside.

INT. CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Michael smooths his shirt, nods at Tom.

MICHAEL

OK. Let's go.

TOM

You're the fuckin man.

Tom blasts the radio and stomps on it just as sunlight breaks from the clouds and washes the day bright.

EXT. PARAMOUNT - PASSAGE ST -- DAY

SUPER: Six Months Earlier

A BEAT-UP '68 IMPALA slowly creeps down an alley. It passes carports, dingy apartments, kids playing in dirt courtyards.

The radio thumps loud hip-hop. Smoke billows out occasionally from rolled down windows.

Two Hispanics in their 20's sit up front, a younger white male in the back, all sporting wife-beaters, blue bandanas and hard looks.

At the end of the alley, the car turns onto street that ends in a cul-de-sac. The street sign reads "PASSAGE STREET, CITY OF PARAMOUNT."

Michael and his gang are perched on a picnic bench blasting hip-hop while drinking Old English 800 and smoking weed.

The men in the car drive by and yell out the window "Passage Street!" to which the Passage Street gang respond "Paramount!"

RICKY, 18, member of the gang, side eyes Michael. He needs glasses, won't get them, so squints a lot.

RICKY
(squinting)
You writing in that thing again?

MICHAEL
Damn straight. From last night. The tire shop, you remember?

RICKY
Yeah.

MICHAEL
What was it, two-thirty?

Ricky snorts.

RICKY
Two thirty-three, you said.

MICHAEL
Right, two thirty-three. Now we know.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Cops on Lakewood and Alondra at two
thirty-three. I wrote that shit
down.

BENO, 18, is the de-facto second in command.

BENO
(to Ricky)
It's the gangster bible. You gotta
write everything down.
(to everyone else)
I mean, what all's in there?

He holds up fingers, one at a time, to tick off each point.

BENO (CONT'D)
The cop shift schedules.

Holds up his thumb.

BENO (CONT'D)
Who fronts what dope and for how
much.

Holds up thumb and index finger.

SAUL, 17, Beno's younger brother pipes up.

SAUL
Who buys the shit we steal!

Beno nods, holds up thumb, index and middle finger. Continues
his list.

BENO
Which businesses have alarms.

Holds up four fingers.

BENO (CONT'D)
What else?

MARTIN, 58, retired, on disability, is a friend of the gang.

MARTIN
Where they sell Budweiser tall can
singles.

Beno nods definitively, holds up all five fingers.

MICHAEL
Martin, how can you drink that cat
piss, man?

All but Martin laugh, murmurs of "piss water" and "8-ball where it's at" are heard.

MARTIN
Can't stand that skunk beer you
kids drink.

On cue, all but Martin chug down gulps of beer in unison.

Ricky wipes his mouth.

RICKY
(to Michael)
You know -- motherfuckers want that
book.

MICHAEL
Damn straight. It's what puts us on
the map -- gives us respect.

BENO
Gives you respect.

MICHAEL
Us, B. There's no me, it's us.

BENO
To hear you tell it.

Michael spits. Continues to write.

Beno spots a man strolling toward the group from the street.
Nudges Michael and nods in the direction of the street.

MICHAEL
Be cool, gents. Customer.

The group takes hits off a joint, nods their heads to the
music, drinks from their respective beers as a Hispanic HOT
SHOT GANG BANGER approaches.

HOT SHOT GANG BANGER
(to Beno)
What's up esa?

BENO
De nada, wey. Que quieres?

HOT SHOT GANG BANGER
How much is a teener?

MICHAEL
Eighty.

HOT SHOT GANG BANGER
Get the fuck out here, whetto. I
can get it for fifty.

MICHAEL
Not right now, you can't.
Everyone's out. We got some, but
it's eighty.

SAUL
Hey, what's your jacket say? You
from Jackal Grove?

HOT SHOT GANG BANGER
That's right, esa. Sur trece Jackal
Grove.

MICHAEL
That's cool, we get along. We know
your homeboy Blaze.

Hot Shot Gang Banger nods his head.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
But ... when in our neighborhood
you take your jacket off. You know
the rules.

HOT SHOT GANG BANGER
What? I ain't taking shit off. Your
cracker-ass sure ain't going to say
shit about it.

MICHAEL
Whoa, dude. No need to get bent.
Respect to you and your set,
brother. It's the rules, man.

HOT SHOT GANG BANGER
Fuck you, bitch. How's that.

Michael stands up, followed by Beno, Ricky and Saul.

MICHAEL
OK. Take it off or we will.

Hot Shot Gang Banger lunges at Michael --

-- who dodges his initial move. Flurry of fists, grunts and
dirt ensue like a pack of wolves on a wounded rabbit until --

-- the gang overpowers and wrestles him to the ground.

Struggling, the Hot Shot Gang Banger is pinned by the gang, arms behind his back.

Saul takes his jacket from him, one arm at a time.

Dirt plumes from his nostrils, as the Hot Shot Gang Banger breaths hard, angrily.

HOT SHOT GANG BANGER
Give me my jacket back, bitch.

Beno bursts up and --

-- smashes his shoe heel on to the back of the Hot Shot Gang Banger's head.

He screams. Blood splashes into the dirt.

HOT SHOT GANG BANGER (CONT'D)
Pinche cabrone

The rest of gang pop up and stare at each other, breathing hard. Saul holds the jacket up, high, like a victory flag, looks at Michael, then Beno.

BENO
(to Michael)
We made our point.

MICHAEL
Fuck that.
(to Hot Shot Gang Banger)
Tell Blaze to hit us up if you want your jacket back. Now, get the fuck outta here. We're keeping your jacket.

The Hot Shot Gang Banger slowly lifts himself up. Limpes away holding his side.

HOT SHOT GANG BANGER
I'll be back motherfuckers!

Ricky, Saul and Michael plop back down in the dirt. Beno remains standing.

BENO
We shouldn't have done that. Now we got problems with them.

Michael stares up at Beno. Stands up to face him.

MICHAEL

Man up, dude. What's wrong with you?

Beno tightens his jaw.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

We fight and defend our street. Period. He broke the rules.

(to Saul)

In fact, Saul, you got lighter fluid?

Saul gets up.

SAUL

Yeah?

MICHAEL

Go get it.

Saul tosses the jacket high in the air to Michael and runs towards his porch.

Now everyone standing. Ricky squints at Michael.

RICKY

You gonna burn it?

MICHAEL

(looking at Beno)

Damn straight. Burn the motherfucker.

Saul returns and squirt lighter fluid over the Jackal Grove jacket. Michael kneels and lights it.

Flames shoot up and all stand back as gang-style letters "JACKAL GROVE 13" burn and curl from the heat of the fire.

EXT. PARAMOUNT - PASSAGE ST -- DAY

Michael is at the picnic bench sipping his 40 oz, watching kids play and cars drive by.

The late afternoon orange sky washes over the street as only the smog-induced LA sky can.

He waves occasionally as neighbors come home from work or street hoods acknowledge him as they walk by. One stops to talk.

STREET HOOD

Hey, Natty.

MICHAEL

What's up player.

STREET HOOD

I've heard all kinds of crazy shit about this book you got.

MICHAEL

Oh yeah, like what?

STREET HOOD

Like it lists all the undercover cops, their addresses. Combos to safes.

MICHAEL

(laughs)

It's got a little of everything.

STREET HOOD

Well, I got this little hustle, wanted your advice. Maybe it's in your book?

Michael sits up, leans forward.

MICHAEL

At your service, my brother.

STREET HOOD

I got my eye on this Accord. Lowered, nice rims, tricked out. Real sweet ride. It's brand new, I think it's this year's model.

From jacket pocket, pulls a bulky ring of keys out, cycles through a few keys, selects one and holds it up.

STREET HOOD (CONT'D)

I've got shaved keys for '82 through '84. Will these still work for this year's model?

Visibly energized by the question, Michael grabs his handbook, begins thumbing through it.

MICHAEL

(enthusiastically)

I remember hearing about this year's Accord, hold on, hold on, I know it's here.

Stops at a particular page, taps it with his finger.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 (nodding, smiling)
 Here it is! Yeah, I remember now.
 Dude from Lakewood said '84 keys
 work for this year's model too.
 You're --

A nearby car blares its horn and Michael looks up to see his father MICHAEL NATOLONE SR, 56, waving at him.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 -- golden, dude! Gotta go, brother,
 good luck.

As Michael jogs toward his dad's car, the street hood shouts at him.

STREET HOOD
 Thanks, man, I owe you!

Michael waves him away and walks up to his dad's car.

MICHAEL
 Hey, Dad, been waiting for you.
 Burrito surprise tonight?

Michael Sr is a family man first, but hard-core partier, second. Balding, with glasses, his too-long mustache betrays, to the astute observer, a checkered past.

He looks at his son Michael proudly as he approaches. Grabs his arm.

MICHAEL SR
 It's "Natty Daddy" to you --

Michael laughs, flexes his forearm away from his dad's grip, draws back and mimics a punch as Michael Sr counters with a jab at him.

MICHAEL SR (CONT'D)
 -- and hell no, we ain't eatin' no
 ghetto filled burritos tonight --

Lifts fast food bags from front seat.

MICHAEL SR (CONT'D)
 (grinning)
 -- nothing but the best for us,
 Jock-en-la-box a la carte.

MICHAEL

The best! I'll be right up, Dad.

INT. NATOLONE FAMILY APARTMENT -- MOMENTS LATER

Michael and Michael Sr eat from TV trays. TV blares local news.

Michael Sr pushes his tray to the side, pulls back the lever of his easy chair and reclines back.

He lights a Camel non-filter cigarette, inhales deeply, then blows the smoke upward. Reaching for remote, he mutes the TV.

MICHAEL SR

There's something I need to tell you, son.

MICHAEL

OH NO! "Son." Let me guess, you're not my Daddy?

MICHAEL SR

I'll always be your Natty Daddy and don't forget it, junior... No, it's something else. Not really a big deal, but it's something.

MICHAEL

OK, Dad, sure, what's up?

Michael Sr looks at his cigarette. Looks at Michael. Draws a long drag, exhales the smoke slowly toward the ceiling.

Turns to Michael.

MICHAEL SR

Turns out I have... lung cancer.

Michael frowns, confused. Tilts head as if cannot place the meaning behind the words he has heard.

MICHAEL

Cancer? ... What?... What do you mean? How can that --

Michael Sr. waves his cigarette to interrupt.

MICHAEL SR

You know I smoke... And, when I worked at the airport... well, the pipe insulation causes cancer... apparently.

Michael gets up, sits closer to his dad. Looks at him intently.

MICHAEL

Wha-- what the fuck, Dad?

Michael Sr shakes his head in anger, forcefully crushes the burning ember into the ashtray. Looks at Michael.

MICHAEL SR

Bottom line. They categorize this into stages. I'm at stage three, which is still treatable. I'm going to miss some work --

MICHAEL

No -- I'll help! You know I will. You don't have to --

The word gets caught in his throat.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

-- miss work. Just let me know Dad. What can I do?

MICHAEL SR

I don't know, junior. But yeah, I'll let you know.

Both Michael and Michael Sr stare away. Silence.

MICHAEL SR (CONT'D)

Hey! Listen, junior. I'll be fine. I'm going to go in Monday to start treatment. It's not --

A knock at the door interrupts them. Michael Sr shrugs, nods toward the door. Michael opens it.

BENO

Can you come out? I gotta talk to you.

Michael looks at his dad. Michael Sr waves his hand.

MICHAEL SR

Go, we'll talk more. I'll be fine.

Michael opens his mouth, closes it. Nods his head.

MICHAEL

OK, Dad. I love you, man.

MICHAEL SR

You better, junior, I got dirt on you.

Michael laughs, grabs his book and steps out.

EXT. PARAMOUNT - PASSAGE ST -- CONTINUOUS

Beno is waiting for Michael on the railing.

BENO

I told you we'd have problems.

MICHAEL

What's up?

BENO

Blaze is here. Asking for you.

MICHAEL

Blaze is not a problem, B. He needs to keep his peeps in line.

Beno looks away, says nothing. Michael grips Beno's shoulder.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Just like we do.

Beno shakes away from Michael, spins and stomps down the stairs. Calls back to Michael.

BENO

He's waiting for us.

EXT. PARAMOUNT - PASSAGE ST -- MOMENTS LATER

A LOW-RIDER idles at the end of the cul-de-sac. It blares hip-hop music, heavy bass thumps the air. Ricky and Saul talk to the occupants.

Four Hispanic gang bangers sit in the car. Old English stenciled white letters on back window read "JACKAL GROVE 13."

In the driver seat is BLAZE, 21. Astute, intelligent, dangerous. Neck tattoos, teardrops and scar under left eye. Aura of a rattler in the bush, steer clear.

He spots Michael.

BLAZE

Yo, Natty! Bring your book!

Michael waves his book in the air, walks up to the car. They do the gang bang handshake and bump. Two others nod their heads, Michael nods back.

Squinting, Michael stares at third passenger. It is the original Hot Shot Gang Banger whose jacket was burned. He stares back.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

What up, Natty? How you doing carnal?

MICHAEL

I'm good, Blaze. What's up with you?

BLAZE

I'm a little fucked up right now, Nat. The homie here says you have his jacket. What's up with this shit?

All motion and talking stop. Everybody looks at Michael. By habit Michael grips his shirt, tugs on it tightly.

MICHAEL

He broke the rule. He wore his shit in our neighborhood.

Blaze glances in his rearview mirror to glare at the Hot Shot Gang Banger

BLAZE

He fucked up. He knew better.

Looks back at Michael, eyes blazing, the look that earned his moniker.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

But why the fuck did you keep it, Nat. That shit wasn't right.

MICHAEL

I had to make a point.

Nodding, Blaze gazed over to the picnic table where Saul, Beno and Ricky drifted over to sit. Looks back to Michael.

BLAZE

You fucked up.

Michael's fist clenches, curls the book he holds in his hand. Steps a foot closer to the car.

MICHAEL

He fucked up.

Blaze again looks to the picnic table.

BLAZE

Who tagged your wall?

Michael turns to look to see what Blaze is talking about, when --

SNATCH! Blaze grabs the handbook from Michael, who --

-- swirls around --

-- swats at the book but --

-- Blaze jerks it into the car.

It's inside.

MICHAEL

What the fuck!

Ricky, Beno and Saul run up to the car. Blaze snaps his head to see them coming when --

-- Michael leans in the car to swat at the book again but --

-- Blaze jerks it back, throws it to the homie in the back seat.

BLAZE

Hey, hey, hey! Look motherfuckers!

Blaze lifts his shirt to expose a glimmering handgun in his waistband. Places his hand around the handle.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

Don't get stupid, all of you. Just back the fuck up.

The gang backs up a step or two. Michael remains where he is.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

I said, back!

Blaze pulls the gun, points it at Michael. "Whoa" and "Hold up" is heard from the gang. Saul takes a step forward.

MICHAEL

Don't.

Through a snarl and gritted teeth, Blaze yells to Saul.

BLAZE
I told you back!

BANG! Fire spits from the nozzle. Gravel and rock kick up from the street surface. Sound of ricochet then --

-- Saul screams, drops to the ground, holding his knee.

The gang run to Saul, surround him. Michael backs up from the car.

MICHAEL
OK, ok. I backed up.

Blaze returns the gun's direction to Michael.

BLAZE
Listen, Nat. I don't want this fucking book. I want our jacket back... Get it.

MICHAEL
Impossible. It's gone.

BLAZE
All right, then.
(nodding to the book)
How much is it worth?

MICHAEL
I'm not playing this game.

BLAZE
All the shit I hear about this pinche book, what do you think --

Blaze glances at the homies.

BLAZE (CONT'D)
-- what's a good number...?
trece... thirteen... hundred?.

The homies in the back seat nod. Turns back to Michael.

BLAZE (CONT'D)
By Wednesday, esa.

Blaze glares at Michael for an extended moment. Michael's grip on his shirt tightens. Says nothing. Blaze puts the car in gear.

BLAZE (CONT'D)
(to gang)
Passage Street!

The gang does not respond, but watches the low-rider drive down Passage street, hip-hop music blaring, afternoon sun glaring, all down upon "JACKAL GROVE 13" back window.

FADE TO:BLACK

FADE IN:

EXT. CA STATE PRISON CORCORAN -- DAY

Razor wire fences surround concrete buildings atop a barren landscape. Keys, clanking metal, men's echoing voices drift from the buildings.

Guards in uniform and prisoners in jumpsuits walk about.

INT. CA STATE PRISON CORCORAN -- CONTINUOUS

Tom slouches on his bunk reading HIGH TIMES magazine when NO NONSENSE GUARD inserts key, unlocks door.

NO NONSENSE GUARD
Becker, let's go. You got a visit.

NOSY CELLMATE
(to Tom)
It's not visiting day. What's this shit?

TOM
Fuck, who knows.

NO NONSENSE GUARD
Legal visit. Bring your legal docs if you want, but make it quick.

NOSY CELLMATE
Ahh, new case, brother. Going to re-up, huh? Good luck, man.

TOM
Yeah, whatever.

INT. CA STATE PRISON CORCORAN -- MOMENTS LATER

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ, 38, is a burly, intimidating cop. He is slow to anger, methodical, but considers himself fair.

He straightens as Tom approaches.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ
Hello Tom. Have a seat.

TOM
What are you doing here?

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ
I'll ask the questions, Tom. What
are your plans when you get out
next week?

TOM
None of your business.

Detective Dominguez taps his pen on the table as he looks at Tom.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ
Look. Like it or not, I'm the cop
you're stuck with... at least until
we solve your dad's murder --

Tom snorts. Dominguez tries a different approach.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ (CONT'D)
-- And, I have an interest in your
well-being, frankly. I think what
you went through at your age was
bullshit.

TOM
Yeah, a lot you've done to help.

Detective Dominguez stops the tapping. Approach didn't work.
Stares at Tom.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ
You haven't been the most
cooperative witness either, Tommy-
boy.

TOM
What do you want?

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ
I spoke with your mom. She says you
can't stay with them when you get
out.

TOM
Fuck...

Tom stares out the thick window, onto the prison yard.

TOM (CONT'D)
 Whatever, man. How's my sister?

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ
 She's good. Misses you. So, I'll
 ask again. What are you doing when
 you get out?

TOM
 None of your business. And, how do
 I know! You just told me I can't go
 to my mom's.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ
 Let's get this straight. It is my
 business. I'm still working your
 dad's case. You're a witness.

Every muscle in Tom's body tightens. His chiseled features
 harden into a scathing scowl.

TOM
 It's been six fucking years,
 Dominguez!

Spittle flies from Tom's lips. Dominguez remains cool.

TOM (CONT'D)
 "Still working the case." Why not
 work on helping my sister get right
 after what she saw that day!

Detective Dominguez waits until Tom is finished. Taps his pen
 onto the table again, several taps, watches each tap closely.
 Looks at Tom.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ
 I hate what you and Ashley went
 through, Tom... Unfortunately,
 motorcycle clubs aren't exactly
 eager to talk to cops.

TOM
 Jesus, how hard can it be? It was a
 fuckin' Pounder!

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. CA FREEWAY -- DAY

Tom's dad JEFF BECKER, 42, hardened, proud, rides at front of
 pack of long line of Fury motorcycle gang bikers.

TOM (V.O.)
 It's simple. You know my dad was
 the president of the Fury
 Motorcycle Club and the Pounders
 always hated him.

INT. BIKER BAR -- NIGHT

Smoky bar packed with loud, boisterous bikers from different clubs. They drink, laugh and grab women's asses.

Jeff Becker aggressively pursues DONNA BECKER, 36, shifty, cautious, streetwise. Jeff pulls her head back from her hair and kisses her on the mouth.

TOM (V.O.)
 Hell, he took my mom from one of
 the Pounder lieutenants.

Angry POUNDER BIKER pushes Jeff, vicious fight explodes.

TOM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Naw, I know it wasn't that guy. I
 would have recognized him.

INT. BECKER FAMILY APARTMENT -- NIGHT

A 17-year-old Tom wakes to loud angry voices in living room, opens door to hallway where his younger, scared and wide-eyed sister ASHLEY, 6, looks with fear to Tom.

Together they peek into living room where Jeff sits at a table with stacks of money, two kilos of meth, arguing with a man whose back is to them.

TOM (V.O.)
 No, it was someone else, I never
 saw him before.

The man points gun at Jeff and --

BANG! BANG! BANG! He fires three times, which causes --

-- Jeff's head to snap back. Blood, brain smatter the wall.

Jeff's head lolls forward, his body follows until --

-- CLUNK. His head lands on the table. Pool of thick blood spreads, then drip from the table. Man pokes at him then --

-- rips money and meth from table, plunges out the door.

Donna runs from the darkness of hallway and joins Tom and Ashely screaming toward the lifeless Jeff.

BACK TO PRESENT

TOM

(head in hands)

My sister hasn't been the same.

(looking up)

It's been six years. What have you actually done, Dominguez?

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ

Everything I can. Believe me. I want this guy.

TOM

Don't let me find him first. I can tell you that.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ

That will only land you in more trouble than you're already in. Wouldn't it?

Tom looks away. Shifts in his chair. Silence. Dominguez pulls from pocket a piece of paper. Hands to Tom.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ (CONT'D)

I've got a place for you to stay. It's a halfway house in Paramount.

Stands up.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ (CONT'D)

Stay out of trouble, Tommy. Don't do anything stupid. I'll be checking on you.

TOM

(head back in hands)

Yea, whatever.

EXT. PRIDE HOUSE -- DAY

An Hispanic male with "JACKAL GROVE 13" tattoo etched across his back strides down a typical South Central LA low income neighborhood.

A community van pulls up from which Tom and another parolee get out. Both hold string laundry bags filled with possessions.

They look upon a small apartment complex converted to a halfway house.

A black iron gate opens and shuts electronically as an occasional parolee waves at front office staff member who let them in and out.

A sign reads "PRIDE HOUSE - RE-ENTRY HOUSING FACILITY - STATE OF CALIFORNIA."

Tom and the parolee head to the gate and are buzzed in.

Through an open window, a male staff member beckons them over.

PRIDE HOUSE STAFF

Name?

TOM

Becker. Tom.

PRIDE HOUSE STAFF

CDC number?

TOM

E-37695

PRIDE HOUSE STAFF

You're in 17.

Hands Tom manila envelope.

PRIDE HOUSE STAFF (CONT'D)

Your key is inside. You meet your Parole Officer, Mr. Solorano at four. Until then, get unpacked, you're restricted to the property.

TOM

Got it, thanks. Hey, is there a phone here?

PRIDE HOUSE STAFF

(pointing)

Collect calls only, just like prison.

TOM

I'm feeling at home already.

EXT. PRIDE HOUSE -- LATER

Tom is making a call.

TOM
Hi Mom. I'm out.

INT. DONNA BECKER APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Donna has visibly aged since we saw her the night of her husband's death.

A cigarette dangles from her lips causing her to squint which accentuates the wrinkles around her eyes.

Boxes are piled around her. She is in perpetual chaos mode and speaks fast.

DONNA
Tommy - I'm sorry you can't stay with us son. I wanted to tell you but it's been hectic, we just moved. I didn't know when you were getting out. There's no room here anyway. Where are you?

EXT. PRIDE HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

TOM
In Paramount. Place called Pride House. How's Ash?

DONNA (V.O.)
Ashley is excited to start a new school. She asks about you. You want to come see us? We could use some help with all of these boxes.

TOM
Sure, Mom. When?

DONNA (V.O.)
Come tonight. I won't tell Ashley and you can surprise her. Make it six, I'll get some pizza.

TOM
OK, I'll be there. What's the address?

INT. DONNA BECKER APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Donna looks out the window before answering.

DONNA

Our new place is in Paramount too.
We're close to Downey and Alondra -
-

She sees a CITY STREET SIGN at the end of the cul-de-sac.

DONNA (CONT'D)

-- on a street called Passage
Street. Address is 5555 Passage
street.

INT. PRIDE HOUSE -- NIGHT

Tom's parole officer MR. SOLORANO, 54, black, street-wise, is
interviewing Tom.

MR. SOLORANO

I have to say, Mr. Becker, it's
unusual that you have a police
detective as your advocate. Want to
tell me about that?

TOM

He's investigating my dad's murder.
Why? What's that have to do with
anything?

MR. SOLORANO

He nearly personally vouched for
you. It's uncommon for law
enforcement to put their name on
the line for --

TOM

-- what? A convict?

MR. SOLORANO

Correct.

TOM

Yeah, well don't put much into it -
I'm certainly not. He hasn't done
shit for my dad's case.

MR. SOLORANO

OK, then, what is it you have going
for you - do you have job prospects
lined up? Anywhere to live after
this? The state puts you here for
thirty days, that's it.

TOM
I'm working on it.

MR. SOLORANO
You'll have to do better than that,
Mr. Becker. You'll need to provide
me your success plan.

TOM
(slouches in seat)
Like I said, I'm working on it.

MR. SOLORANO
In the plan you submitted while in
prison, you say you would be
staying with your mother and
sister. What happened to that plan?

TOM
I don't know, why don't you ask
them?

Mr. Solorano stares at Tom.

MR. SOLORANO
Mr. Becker, I've reviewed your
file. By the looks of it, you are
well on your way towards making a
career of this. I've been doing my
job for thirty something years now
and I can either be your worst
nightmare or I can be just an
inconvenience. It's up to you.

Tom stares back for a moment, then, shoulders slouch,
exhales.

TOM
OK, the truth is, I don't have shit
going for me. I don't even have
clothes.

MR. SOLORANO
Well, now, I can help you there.

Stands up, unlocks closet door.

MR. SOLORANO (CONT'D)
Help yourself. Take from the boxes,
but not the bins. Stuff in bins
you can't have.

Tom goes to closet, begins rummaging through boxes and
clothes, starts tossing items into a pile.

MR. SOLORANO (CONT'D)
 All right. So, today's Tuesday.
 Beginning tomorrow --

Tom eyes the bins, sees a good set of sneakers. Looks at Solorano who's still talking.

MR. SOLORANO (CONT'D)
 -- I want you to go to Labor Ready,
 the day labor place on Lakewood
 Blvd., and sign in each day --

Takes the sneakers out, adds to his pile.

MR. SOLORANO (CONT'D)
 -- take whatever job they give you.
 Save your day-sheets and bring them
 to me next time we meet --

Solorano glances at Tom, who is eyeing the bin again.

MR. SOLORANO (CONT'D)
 -- not the bin, Mr. Becker.

Tom jerks his hand away, glances at Solorano.

TOM
 Oh yeah, ok.

MR. SOLORANO
 Anyway. We'll meet again next
 Monday the 23rd, 2 o'clock.

A jacket lays in the bin, turned inside out. The liner says "Tommy Hilfiger" and custom pockets line the interior. Tom shoots a look at Solorano. Writing in book. Tom acts.

MR. SOLORANO (CONT'D)
 We'll start working on your success
 plan one thing at a time --

Tom snatches it, quickly tosses it in his pile.

MR. SOLORANO (CONT'D)
 -- and Mr. Becker. Try to stay out
 of trouble until then.

The jacket lands in his pile of clothes, a small fold of cloth exposing the patch on jacket's exterior: "Jackal Grove 13."

INT. DONNA BECKER APARTMENT -- EVENING

Donna, Ashley and Tom lounge among boxes and a disheveled living room, eating pizza and laughing.

ASHLEY

I can't believe you haven't heard
of New Kids on the Block! Where
have you been?

Donna and Ashley look at Tom. Silence. Then burst of laughter from all three.

TOM

I've been kicking it with Mr.
Rogers and Captain Kangaroo. You
know them, right?

ASHLEY

Stoopid!

TOM

Oh, yea, all three of us, high-
tailing it right here, to see you,
the new kid on this block.

ASHLEY

(rolling eyes)
Stoopid!

Tom rubs his knuckle on top of Ashley's head.

TOM

I wonder how long I can do this on
top of your head?

Ashley tries to wiggle away, Tom holds her while continuing the knuckling.

ASHLEY

OK! OK! Jeesh! I'll tell you about
school!

Tom lets her go, raises hands in air, releasing the prisoner.

TOM

I love you, sis. I just want to
know how you're doing. What's up
with school?

DONNA

We have an appointment with the
school counselor next week.

ASHLEY

(to Tom)
I don't know...

TOM

What is it?

ASHLEY

Some things I just don't get.
Everyone else seems to get it, but
I don't.

DONNA

(to Ashley)
It'll be fine, honey. We'll figure
it out... Hey! Why don't you and
your brother go to Thrifty's and
get some ice cream!

ASHLEY

Yay! Can we get Neapolitan? It's
three ice creams in one!

TOM

(to Donna)
Good idea, Mom.
(to Ashley)
Of course we'll get Neapolitan.
What other kind is there? Get your
jacket, it's cold out. Grab mine
too.

As Ashley leaves the room, Donna gets up and rummages through
boxes, puts things away, in constant motion.

DONNA

They think it's a learning
disability.

Tom gets up, follows Donna. Grabs her wrist.

TOM

Mom, stop.

She stops, spins, looks at her son. Her upper body rocks
back and forth her tongue moves around in her mouth. Her eyes
dart around, can't stay on Tom.

TOM (CONT'D)

Are you doing that shit?

Donna jerks away.

DONNA
I need something. I'm all alone
out here, Tommy.

TOM
Fuck! You can't do this, Mom.

DONNA
You're one to talk. How about you?
You gonna start back where you left
off?

TOM
You need to stay off the meth for
Ash.

Donna's hands shake as she rummages in her purse, jerks money
from her wallet and hands it to Tom.

DONNA
She looks up to you, Tom. Stay out
of trouble this time. Be here for
her. For me, son... I'll work on...
slowing down.

TOM
More than slowing down! I'm going
to Labor Ready tomorrow to get --

Ashley bursts into the room.

ASHLEY
I'm ready, let's go!

Hands Tom his jacket, grabs his hand, pulls him toward door.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
Come on, let's get this party
started.

Tom looks at Donna, laughs.

TOM
(to Ashley)
You're an odd one, Mr. Grinch.

Tom looks at the jacket, sees gang patch "JACKAL GROVE 13."

TOM (CONT'D)
Shit.

DONNA
What?

TOM
I didn't see this. It's got gang
shit on it.

DONNA
So? It's cold. Wear it.

Tom looks at the patch, shakes his head. Puts jacket on
roughly.

TOM
Whatever. If they have a problem
with it, joke 'em if they can't
take a fuck.

ASHLEY
Come on, let's go, let's go!

Tom and Ashley walk out door, the "JACKAL GROVE 13" letters
of Tom's jacket receding into the night.

EXT. NATOLONE FAMILY APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Michael descends the stairs from his apartment. Beno appears
in the courtyard breathing hard.

BENO
We got another Jackal Grove wearing
his shit on our street.

Michael's face hardens.

MICHAEL
(scowling)
Let's get the motherfucker.

EXT. PARAMOUNT - PASSAGE ST -- MOMENTS LATER

Beno and Michael walk briskly on Passage Street, looking into
apartment courtyards.

MICHAEL
So, where is he?

BENO
Saul saw him walking with a kid. A
girl.

MICHAEL
Where?

BENO
By Ricky's house.

MICHAEL
Shit, man, he's probably gone by
now. Where's Ricky?

BENO
Him and Saul are looking down
Perilla Avenue, they should be here
in a sec.

MICHAEL
OK, let's head toward Alondra, that
way we'll be where he needs to exit
if he's still here.

EXT. PARAMOUNT - PASSAGE ST -- CONTINUOUS

Tom and Ashley turn onto Passage Street.

TOM
Nintendo? Why do they call it that?
What does it even mean?

ASHLEY
I don't know! It doesn't matter,
it's a game you play on the TV.
It's like you are in control of
your very own cartoon character --

A loud whistling pierces the night air.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
-- and you run around eating things
to earn points.

Looking behind and down a passing alley.

TOM
Weird. And you're into this?

ASHLEY
Yes! I want one. Jessica's sister -
-

EXT. PARAMOUNT - PASSAGE ST -- CONTINUOUS

Ricky and Saul watch as Tom and Ashley pass through an
apartment courtyard. Saul whistles and they both run toward
Michael and Beno.

EXT. PARAMOUNT - PASSAGE ST -- CONTINUOUS

Tom and Ashley continue to walk down Passage Street.

ASHLEY

-- she says it cost over a hundred dollars, but it comes with three games already.

Tom frowns and stops. Listens. Ashley looks up at him.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

What?

TOM

Nothing. Thought I heard running. And what's with the whistling?

ASHLEY

The older kids around here whistle all the time. It's soooo annoying.

EXT. PARAMOUNT - PASSAGE ST -- CONTINUOUS

Ricky and Saul run up to Michael and Beno.

SAUL

(out of breath, pointing)
There he is! That white dude.

MICHAEL

White dude? Why is a white dude wearing Jackal Grove?

RICKY

He looks like one of us, except for the jacket.

MICHAEL

(to Ricky)
Dude, you're Mexican!

RICKY

So!

MICHAEL

(to Saul)
You say anything to him?

SAUL

No, he didn't see us.

MICHAEL
OK, let's go check it out

The gang walks out of an apartment courtyard and onto Passage Street, heading directly toward Tom and Ashley.

EXT. PARAMOUNT - PASSAGE ST -- CONTINUOUS

Tom and Ashley see the gang emerge from the shadows and stop walking.

TOM
Are these the older kids?

ASHLEY
(whispers)
Maybe.

TOM
OK, come on, let's just keep walking.

ASHLEY
But, we can't get to our house without crossing their path.

TOM
It'll be fine. We'll say "Hi."

ASHLEY
I don't think --

Michael shouts to them, while Ricky, Saul and Beno spread out wide, to form a virtual net.

MICHAEL
Hey! Where you going?

TOM
(shouting in return)
Wherever I want. What's it to you?

Michael continues to walk toward Tom and Ashley then stops ten feet from them. Ricky, Saul and Beno form a circle around them.

MICHAEL
So, what, you're a tough guy?

TOM
This ain't my first rodeo. You want to sling 'em, getty-up.

MICHAEL

You're not from Jackal Grove. I can see that. Why you wearing their jacket?

TOM

Come again?

MICHAEL

The jacket you have on. By wearing it, you claim Jackal Grove.

ASHLEY

(pulls Tom's hand)
Can we go home?

MICHAEL

(to Ashley)
Not yet.

TOM

(fiercely to Michael)
Wha'd you say?

MICHAEL

(to Tom)
No one's going anywhere until --

Tom bursts toward Michael, causing --

-- Ashley to scream. At the same time --

-- Saul and Beno lunge toward Tom to intercept him.

Michael is caught off guard and --

-- stumbles backward, trips and falls to the ground.

A tangle of arms, legs and fists along with grunts and occasional "motherfucker" for several seconds then --

-- from the pile Tom violently shakes the gang off and stands up and --

-- yanks the jacket off and tosses it to the still unorganized mass of bodies that are Michael, Ricky, Beno and Saul.

TOM

Take your fucking jacket, jerk-offs.

Grabs Ashley's hand.

TOM (CONT'D)
Come on, sis, let's go have some
ice cream.

On his hands and knees, Michael watches as Tom and Ashley walk off. His head turns to stare at the jacket, laying on the ground.

FADE OUT:BLACK

FADE IN:

SUPER: One Week Later

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

The gang is in Martin's sparsely decorated apartment which is currently filled with young, partying adults.

At the kitchen table Saul's knee is bandaged, is with Beno playing the drinking game "Quarters" along with two attractive young women.

Michael talks with two more women on the couch with him. Martin sips on a Budweiser tall can.

Rock music and the TV compete with each other. Martin leans to hear the TV.

MARTIN
-- get no goddamn peace around
here.

JANI, 19, is a lollipop with a smile; sultry and sassy, defiant and demure, wrapped in banging body.

JANI
(partially shouting to be
heard)
Did you say something, Martin?

MARTIN
(shouts)
You kids need anything?

JANI
Aww ... you're so sweet... May I
have some of your cock?

Martin's mouth opens, but no sound comes out. Jani and her friend burst into laughter and lean into each other whispering.

Jani's hand rests on Michael's thigh, close to his crotch.
He glances up, smiles at her, leans close.

MICHAEL
Are you being a tease?

JANI
To you, or Martin?

MICHAEL
Oh, shit, Martin? Don't be a tease
to him. His balls couldn't get any
bluer.

JANI
(laughing)
No, I'm just trying to make you
feel better about your book.

MICHAEL
That's business. This --

Places Jani's hand squarely on his crotch.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
-- is pleasure.

Smiling, Jani leans toward Michael and closes her eyes.

Michael's hand moves to the back of her neck and begins
pulling her toward him when shouting startles them both.

SAUL
Look, it's ice cream boy!

Tom stands in the doorway, holding a six pack of tall can
Budweiser's and faces off with Saul, Beno and Ricky.

TOM
Keep talkin' and --.

MARTIN
I see you all have met --

Reaches for the bag in Tom's hands.

MARTIN (CONT'D)
-- I'll take these.

The room is still. Music and TV play. Tom looks around.

TOM

(to the room)

Look -- I'm happy to go round for round with you, but peace. For one night.

Nothing. The gang stares at him. Music and TV plays on.

TOM (CONT'D)

I owe old man Martin; he gave me a ride to Labor Ready. I'm repaying him with a couple beers. After that, you want to play Cowboys and Indians --

Tom raises his hands.

TOM (CONT'D)

-- I'll be right here.

The gang stares at him. Slowly at each other. No one speaks up. Martin gives a beer to Tom.

MARTIN

There will be no fighting in my house when beers are to be drank. Sit down, young man.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT -- HOURS LATER

Everybody is gathered around the kitchen table. Tom holds a quarter poised to bounce into the cup. The entire room is chanting "Last Drink!, Last Drink!, Last Drink!"

Tom closes one eye, adjusts slightly and bounces it dead center into the cup. The entire group bursts out in applause and chants of "Woot-woot."

TOM

(to Michael)

Drink up!

Michael is wobbly, but smiles. Picks up the cup and raises it.

MICHAEL

It's -- is... Wait. It. is.... not like I haven't had -- I mean, I haven't had enough... yet!

He gulps it down with a single motion, beer streams down his chin and neck. The group roars its approval.

TOM
Me either! How are we going to get more?

RICKY
(in unison with Saul)
BEER RUN!

SAUL
Yeah, let's do it!

RICKY
Natty -- which one? Where can we go tonight?

MICHAEL
Get the book!

Ricky get's up, then stops. Looks at Michael.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Fuck! No book!

Michael shakes his head violently. Tugs down on his jacket.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
OK, OK. I re- remember. Paramount Liq-- Liquor on Rosecrans. The clerk -- he is that clerk -- he is an old man -- Asian -- with a cane.

TOM
(to Martin)
We need your car. We'll grab you tall cans.

MARTIN
OK, if you drive. If you get caught, you stole my car.

TOM
Deal. I'm driving. Who's going in?

BENO
I'll do it. My brother's down, I'm up.

Jani's friend, CHARLENE, 21, is practical, outspoken, and a worrier, although her teased blonde hair, and too thick eyeliner give her an air of toughness.

CHARLENE
(to Tom)
Be careful, please.

Tom and Charlene's eyes lock. Charlene pulls back the hair from her eyes, attempts to hold his gaze, but can't, looks away with a smile she tries for the life of her to hide.

TOM

I will.

MICHAEL

I'm riding shotgun. If we get -- in a jam -- I know which jam ... alleys can save us.

BENO

Let's do it.

EXT. CAR -- NIGHT

Tom, Michael and Beno sit in the car parked around the corner from PARAMOUNT LIQUOR.

MICHAEL

OK, B, you ready?

BENO

Yeah, ready. What am I getting?

MICHAEL

It's easier to get 12-packs. Grab a -- Ice -- Natty -- and Budweiser, for Martin.

BENO

(to Tom)

And you're going to keep the car running, right.

TOM

No doubt, man.

BENO

All right, I'm out.

Beno exits the car, walks toward the store.

INT. PARAMOUNT LIQUOR -- MOMENTS LATER

An ELDERLY ASIAN MAN sits on a stool partially blocking the doorway of the liquor store. A cane is propped against entryway close to him.

BENO
 (under his breath)
 Shit.
 (aloud)
 Hello.

The elderly Asian man nods. Beno heads to the beer section. Finds the first 12-pack, glances to the front of the store. Notices a YOUNG CLERK coming out from storeroom.

BENO (CONT'D)
 Fuck, fuck, fuck.

Beno opens another glass door, pulls the second 12-pack out and walks toward counter.

Young clerk watches him approach suspiciously. Beno smiles at him. When he is within 10-feet, he speaks up.

BENO (CONT'D)
 Yo, how's it going tonight?

The young clerk opens his mouth to reply when --
 -- Beno bolts toward the door causing the Young Clerk to --
 -- shout, alerting the elderly Asian man to --
 -- swipe at Beno's shins with his cane as he runs by.
 Beno stumbles, feet skip and slide on the pavement, leans --
 -- looks like will recover, but --
 -- eventually tumbles to the ground, sliding several feet still desperately clutching the 12-packs.
 Both the young clerk and elderly Asian man run toward Beno.

INT. CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Both Tom and Michael hear the commotion. Tom leaps out of the car, yelling to Michael as he does.

TOM
 I'll get him. You drive!

Michael stumbles, climbs into driver seat.

EXT. PARAMOUNT LIQUOR -- CONTINUOUS

Beno jumps up from his fall, faces running young clerk and hobbling elderly Asian man.

Young clerk has nunchucks, elderly Asian man has cane.

Beno gets into fighting stance, turns toward young clerk who --

-- arrives spinning nunchucks.

YOUNG CLERK
Leave the beer and get out!

Tom runs up from behind Beno.

TOM
Grab the beers! I got this guy!

Tom runs to, then stops within a foot of young clerk and --

-- jerks his head and fist at him in mock punch causing the young clerk to --

-- bobble back, but still --

-- swings nunchucks at Tom who --

-- ducks, uses young clerk's imbalance to push him toward elderly Asian man, who --

-- both fall to ground.

Beno grabs the 12-packs and runs toward street where car is parked. Tom turns and runs, follows Beno.

EXT. CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Breathing hard, with the two 12-packs, Tom and Beno jump into the car.

TOM
(unison with Beno)
Go, go, go!

Michael guns it, tires squeal. Young clerk runs to the street corner, chucks nun chucks in direction of Martin's speeding car.

Stands with fists on hips watching it disappear into the night.

INT. NATOLONE FAMILY APARTMENT -- MORNING

Digital alarm clock abruptly buzzes at 7 AM.

Michael groans, smacks it off, rubs his eyes and temple.

Opens and closes mouth. Michael Sr pounds bedroom door.

Michael winces.

MICHAEL SR (V.O.)

Time to get up, son. You're taking
me to my appointment today... Five
minute warning.

Michael rolls to bed's edge. Picks up half filled water
bottle, downs it. Sees unopened Natural Ice, pops it, downs
several deep slugs. Exhales. Rolls out of bed.

INT. CANCER CENTER -- MORNING

An I.V. drips chemo therapy into Michael Sr. He lounges with
eyes shut. Michael sits next to him flipping through
magazines.

MICHAEL SR

Hard night?

MICHAEL

(strained)
Drank too much. Played quarters.
Lost.

MICHAEL SR

(laughs)
That and strip poker -- the only
games you wanna lose.

Michael laughs, then winces when he does.

MICHAEL

Funny, Dad.

Michael picks up another magazine. Michael Sr opens his eyes.
Glances at Michael. Closes them again.

MICHAEL SR

You know, this cancer shit gets you
thinking.

MICHAEL

Dangerous, Dad. You sure you want
to do that?

MICHAEL SR
 (smiling)
 Not my best suit, I admit.

MICHAEL
 I don't know, you've had some
 pretty good ideas... the video
 rental idea -- turns out you should
 have done that.

MICHAEL SR
 (nodding)
 Yeah, you see they're everywhere
 now.

MICHAEL
 Yep.

MICHAEL SR
 But, I've also made some mistakes,
 too.

MICHAEL
 I count the time you put liver in
 our goulash one of them, Dad.

MICHAEL SR
 (laughs)
 You've never forgiven me for that,
 junior.

MICHAEL
 Never will, Dad.

Michael Sr smiles, looks at his son. Michael shoots him an
 "I'm joking, but not really" look.

MICHAEL SR
 A man makes mistakes. We all do.
 Owing up to them, making them
 right, is the measure of his
 manhood.

MICHAEL
 Pretty heavy Dad.

MICHAEL SR
 It's why I gave you that book you
 keep writing in.

Instinctively, Michael reaches for it. Winces.

MICHAEL SR (CONT'D)
 What?

MICHAEL

Nothing.

Irritated. Hung over. Tugs his shirt. Pulls tight, stretching the material. Back to magazine pages.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You gave me the book so I can measure your manhood? Pretty sick Dad.

Michael Sr dutifully smiles, but the smile fades away as fast as it appeared.

MICHAEL SR

Hilarious, son. No. Man up to my mistakes. Share them with you. So you don't make 'em.

MICHAEL

You mean, make up for them?

MICHAEL SR

I've been doing that all my life, son.

Michael pauses his perusing magazine pages to look at this dad. He finds Michael Sr's gaze already on him, piercing, intense.

MICHAEL

We're good Dad. It's me that has some making up to do.

Pride washes over Michael Sr.'s face. He smiles.

MICHAEL SR

Damn straight, Natty. You owe me. Big. Don't forget it.

Michael smiles, picks up another magazine. Flips pages.

MICHAEL SR (CONT'D)

Still. There's a little something I've been wanting to give you. You know for the gourmet goulash mistake.

MICHAEL

You'll never make up for that.

MICHAEL SR

How about the Harley in the garage? That make up for it?

Michael stops flipping magazine pages. Looks at Michael Sr.

MICHAEL
(surprised)
What?

MICHAEL SR
Yeah. It just sits there anyway...

MICHAEL
I thought about clucking it, here
and there.

MICHAEL SR
(laughing)
I'm surprised you haven't
already... So what do you say? Take
it off my hands?

MICHAEL
Sure, Dad, I'll --

Does air quotes.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
-- take it off your hands. Shit.
Thanks, Natty Daddy.

MICHAEL SR
You're welcome, junior. I'll take
it to the shop this week to get it
ready for you.

Michael Sr closes eyes, lays head back.

MICHAEL
Does it run? I don't remember you
ever riding, really.

MICHAEL SR
Oh it runs. Like a champ. Better
believe it. Just needs some minor
work.

Michael nods. Rummages through magazine pile until spots
chopper magazine. Crosses legs, leans back and starts
flipping pages.

Michael Sr.'s I.V. continues to drip fluid into the clear
barrel holding life-saving medicine. Drip. Drip. Drip.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT -- DAY

The gang congregates around Martin's dining room table.

Tom is there. Slouches, all limbs and legs. Beno sits at attention, second in command.

Saul sits rubbing his bandaged knee. Ricky, the observer, squinting, stands outside of the circle.

Michael paces, pulls on his shirt.

MICHAEL

It's fucking war. Defcon-5, thermal mother-fuckin nuclear war.

BENO

I'm ready. I'll take that punk-ass Blaze. Shove that piece right up his culo.

TOM

What's the big deal about this book, anyway?

Michael stops pacing.

MICHAEL

It's mine. That's what.

BENO

Ours. There is no just you.

Michael and Beno's eyes lock. Michael clenches his teeth. Once more starts to pace.

MICHAEL

I don't want to hear that shit right now.

TOM

Seems like it ain't no fun when the rabbit has the gun, huh?

Michael stares at Tom. Tugs his shirt in the direction of Tom. Continues pacing.

MICHAEL

Temporary set back. And stay the fuck out of it.

Tom shrugs, slouches deeper in the chair.

BENO
So, what's the plan?

MICHAEL
Number one objective is get the
book.

Tom snorts. Ricky squints at Michael.

RICKY
You need the money. How you gonna
get it?

Silence. Everybody is looking at something else. No one at
each other.

TOM
I know how.

Michael stops pacing, faces Tom.

MICHAEL
How?

TOM
Go to where the money is. Get the
money from a bank.

The room bursts into sneers, snorts "yeah right," and "dumb-
ass."

MICHAEL
Stay the fuck out of it like I
said. I don't have a bank account.

Tom shrugs.

TOM
Whatever. I didn't mean from your
account, asshole. I meant, hit the
bank.

Michael stares at Tom, frowns. Beno slides his chair back,
crosses his legs. Ricky rubs his neck.

MICHAEL
Hit a bank?

TOM
Sure, why not. It's easy, man.

MICHAEL
You've done it?

TOM

I was the driver. Was going in next time but my crime partner got popped.

MICHAEL

(looking around)

Where's my --

(grimaces)

-- oh yeah, don't have the fucking book.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(to Tom)

I remember a couple things. Something about two minute window, dye packs are heavy.

TOM

That's right. You got two minutes once they know they're hit. Throw back heavy stacks of money -- dye pack.

RICKY

Dye pack?

TOM

Yeah that's --

MICHAEL

Red dye --

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(to Tom)

-- go ahead.

TOM

They put red dye in some of the bills.

SAUL

Why?

MICHAEL

Hundred yards from the bank it explodes, red dye everywhere.

Saul rubs his knee.

SAUL

Shit. That would suck.

TOM
Gotta watch for it, is all.

Michael sits down. Looks at Beno.

MICHAEL
What do you think?

BENO
(nods toward Saul)
I'm good with hitting a bank. What about my brother?

MICHAEL
(to Saul)
I promise you, we will deal with that separately, and he will pay for that, in-fucking-kind.

Saul makes a gun with his thumb and forefinger, mimics shooting in Michael's direction.

SAUL
Ratty-tat-tat, jackal on his back.

Beno nods his OK. Michael looks at Ricky.

RICKY
You need the money... yeah.

Michael leans back, looks to the ceiling. Contemplates.

MICHAEL
OK, fuck it. I'm in. Who will drive?

TOM
Me. And I want half --

Tom straightens up in his seat.

TOM (CONT'D)
-- or do you want me to stay the fuck out of it?

Michael and Tom stare at each other. Hard. Ricky rubs his neck, Saul his knee. Beno looks on.

MICHAEL
OK. You drive.

Tom eases up from his slouch to stand.

TOM
Easy job for me, new hustle for
you.

Tom shoves his hand out over the table for Michael to shake.
Taking it, he nods his head.

MICHAEL
Damn straight.

EXT./INT. PRIDE HOUSE -- DAY

The sun glimmers off a city patrol car parked in front of
Pride House. Convicts mill about, go in and of black gate.
Inside, Mr. Solorano and Detective Dominguez meet with Tom.

MR. SOLORANO
Mr. Becker, if you remember, I said
specifically to save all of your
labor day sheets. Did you work the
days you don't have sheets for?

TOM
I'm missing two... Two. Yeah, I
worked 'em.

MR. SOLORANO
Let me remind you, you owe
restitution. Miss restitution, go
back to jail.

Tom sneers in exasperation.

TOM
Restitution? These --

Waves at the day sheets.

TOM (CONT'D)
-- shit jobs don't even cover rent,
food, transportation.

MR. SOLORANO
I get it, Mr. Becker. I suggest
getting better jobs.

TOM
I'm working on it.

Mr. Solorano looks at Tom, glances at Detective Dominguez.

MR. SOLORANO

OK, listen. This one is on me, Mr. Becker. Next one is on you. Don't have missing sheets again.

TOM

(slouches)

I'll do my best.

Dominguez rummages through Tom's day sheet slips.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ

Says here you worked at a car body shop. The one on Artesia. That right?

TOM

Yep.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ

That's interesting. What'd you do there.

TOM

Some body work. Sanded some, paint masking. Cleaned the shop.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ

Huh. That's funny. The reason I came today is to tell you we have a small break in your dad's case.

TOM

(sitting up)

What?

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ

What's interesting is, the break comes from this shop you worked in.

TOM

What?

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ

We never found your dad's chopper, you remember?

TOM

Yeah?

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ

It turned up.

Fully engaged, sitting up, Tom leans forward for more.

TOM
(excitedly)
It was in the shop I worked at?

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ
Yes and no. The gas tank was.

TOM
So, you know who it is! Who is it?
When are you going to pop his ass?

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ
Well, it's not that simple. He covered his tracks. We're working on finding out... Actually we were very lucky to even catch this. Our snitch who works there recognized it.

TOM
(impatiently)
OK, ok. Got it. We're lucky, we're working on it, come on, cut to the chase, when can you pop this dude!

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ
Look, I want to put this guy away. I know you do too. But I need to do it right. Keep your nose clean, I'll keep you posted.

MR. SOLORANO
And that means having all of your labor day sheets, Mr. Becker, and making your appointments with me.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ
I'll come to your next appointment with Mr. Solorano. I'll have an update then. How's that sound?

TOM
Sounds like I've got a date with a cop and a probation officer... Aren't I lucky.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT -- EVENING

Tom and Michael pore over papers strewn about the kitchen table. Hand-drawn graphics, maps and crumpled papers litter the surface. Martin sips on a tall can in the living room.

MICHAEL

OK, so we agree Martin gets five hundred bucks for use of the car.

TOM

Yep.

MARTIN

And you stole it, if you get caught.

TOM

(unison with Michael)

Yes.

MICHAEL

We'll hit it at ten, since we know cop shift change is then.

TOM

Yep.

MICHAEL

It'll either be First National or Banc of California.

TOM

Either is fine, but for your first, Banc of California.

A THOMAS GUIDE map book is open, several "x" marks dot the page. Michael points to one of them.

MICHAEL

Because it's closer to the freeway.

TOM

(pointing elsewhere)

They're both close. Banc of California has an alley.

(tapping twice)

That's a sweet buffer between the bank and where we'll park the car.

MICHAEL

(challenging)

Farther distance to walk.

TOM

A place for you to ditch the clothes.

Michael stands, paces. Pulls on his shirt once. Looks out the window. Sits back down.

MICHAEL
OK... OK. Banc of California.

TOM
Good. Now let's walk through the
whole thing.

Michal nods, stands again. He paces while he talks.

MICHAEL
We park the car on California
Avenue around 9:55 --

FLASHBACK TO:

When Blue Chrysler 5th Avenue glides to stop one street from
bank.

BACK TO SCENE

MICHAEL
-- I have on the jacket and track
pants we got from the --

TOM
-- Jacket needs to be zipped up all
the way

MICHAEL
-- thrift store. Jacket needs to be
zipped up all the way. Track pants
over my jeans so I can yank them
off quick.

Tom nods his head, motions Michael to continue.

FLASHBACK TO:

When Michael enters bank, surveys tellers.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
Use jacket sleeve to open door. If
there's a line, wait in line. If no
line, pick a teller who won't cause
trouble.

BACK TO SCENE

Michael glances at Martin.

MICHAEL
Older the better.

Martin gives Michael the finger.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
(smiling)
Slide note toward them --

FLASHBACK TO:

When Michael slides note to teller, the exchange with teller.
Michael stuffing note in jeans, pulls gun.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
-- but keep my fingers on it so
they don't take it and fingerprints
aren't on countertop. Make sure to
take the note with me.

BACK TO SCENE

Michael pauses, sneaks glance at Tom, continues.

MICHAEL
As the teller puts the money on the
counter --

FLASHBACK TO:

When Michael thumbs through bills, pushes stack back to
elderly woman teller.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
-- run my finger along the edges.
If I can't see halfway into the
stack - probably a dye pack.

BACK TO SCENE

TOM
Preach, brother.

MICHAEL
Once I've passed the note, I have
two minutes. Go by my gut, feel the
two minutes. Leave when it feels
right.

MARTIN
Need a watch?

TOM
No watch. Another thing a teller
can identify and you can pay too
much attention to time. No watch.

MARTIN
But what about the four minutes?

TOM
Yeah, the four minutes is an
average time it takes a cop to get
any one place from where they are
at time they get the call. Walking
normal, you can walk almost a
quarter mile in four minutes.

Martin raises his tall can, toasts Tom's knowledge.

MICHAEL
OK, I use my jacket sleeve to exit,
don't run --

FLASHBACK TO:

When Michael exits bank.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
-- running is noticed.

FLASHBACK TO:

When Michael walks to alley.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
-- Get to alley --

FLASHBACK TO:

When Michael tosses throwaways into dumpster

MICHAEL (V.O.)
-- ditch clothes in dumpster --

FLASHBACK TO:

When Michael walks to blue Chrysler 5th Avenue.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
From there, it's all about walking
calmly to the car and --

MERGE INTO EARLIER SCENE:

INT. CAR -- MORNING

MICHAEL (V.O.)
-- getting the fuck outta there.

Michael smooths his shirt, nods at Tom.

MICHAEL
OK, let's go.

TOM
You're the fucking man.

Tom blasts the radio and stomps on it just as sunlight breaks from the clouds and washes the day bright.

EXT. PARAMOUNT CA -- CONTINUOUS

The blue Chrysler 5th Avenue travels to the end of the residential street --

-- turns once, twice, then --

-- merges onto wide city street among multitude of other cars, but in the distance, on the same street --

-- three patrol cars with angry flashing lights and wailing sirens speed to the bank, before --

-- coming to a screeching halt in parking lot just as --

-- the blue Chrysler 5th Avenue squirts up the onramp --

-- integrates with the pulsating flow of traffic, barely recognizable among the throng of cars in its wake.

FADE OUT:BLACK

FADE IN:

EXT. PARAMOUNT - PASSAGE ST -- NIGHT

The cul-de-sac night sky erupts with blinding bursts of light and deep explosions. Fireworks scream towards the tree tops, explode, sizzle their way to the earth festively.

A crowd of neighbors mill about. Some wait in line for BBQ chicken, hamburgers and hot dogs from the grill manned by Martin. Michael pumps and pours beer from a keg.

Tom unpacks fireworks. Saul lights them. Donna and Ashley make their way to Tom.

ASHLEY

Fireworks! Can I light one?

DONNA

Aren't you firecracker enough, honey? Besides, you'll get hurt.

TOM

It's OK, I'll do it with her.

DONNA

Well ... okay, just one.

ASHLEY

(pointing)

Yay! Let me have that one!

SAUL

The biggest one!

ASHLEY

I know. That's why I picked it.

SAUL

(to Tom)

Yep, your sister.

TOM

In blood and glory, brother, better believe it.

Tom unwraps and places the explosive in front of Ashley.

Hands her a lighter.

TOM (CONT'D)

Go ahead, light it, sis.

Ashley steps cautiously but grins grandly. Tries a couple of practice lighter sparks. Touches flame to fuse.

TOM (CONT'D)
Now stand back!

Saul, Tom, Donna and Ashley stand back. The spark threads its way down the fuse toward the explosive's barrel, then --

-- disappears. Apprehension. Nothing. And then --

-- WHOP! A blinding streak of light explodes and streaks into the night sky and --

-- bursts into colorful streaming flames.

ASHLEY
Awesome!

DONNA
(to Tom)
So what are we celebrating?

TOM
My friend over there --
(pointing)
-- Natty, just likes to party.

DONNA
The man with the mustache, balding?

TOM
What? -- No. I don't know who that is. The younger dude next to him, at the kegger.

Ashley tugs at her mom's pants.

ASHLEY
Can I have a hot dog?

DONNA
(to Ashley)
Yes, honey, stay in this area.
(to Tom)
Ah, well I do know who the man with the mustache is. That's Michael Natolone.

TOM
Wait, who?

DONNA
An old special friend, son. Someone I never thought I'd see again.

Tom jerks her aside.

TOM

Mom, listen carefully. I want you off meth. Don't go seeing old friends.

DONNA

What? Wait. You telling me what I can and can't do?

Frowning, looking down at her wrist held by Tom.

DONNA (CONT'D)

Let go of me.

TOM

I can't keep paying for everything while you keep doing dope!

Donna jerks her arm away, backs away. Points her finger between Tom's eyes.

DONNA

You don't own me son. I'm your mother for god's sake. You just mind your goddamn business.

She spins and storms off, leaving Tom to watch her go.

EXT. PARAMOUNT - PASSAGE ST -- LATER

The cul-de-sac party has whittled down. Donna and Michael Sr chat away as old friends. Ashley throws a tennis ball to a dog who chases it. The gang loiters around the picnic table.

Tom and Michael lean against the brick wall. Tom watches his mom and Michael Sr. Glances at Michael.

TOM

So how much you got left?

MICHAEL

After your half, five hundred to Martin for the car and this party -

-

Michael reaches into his pocket and pulls a grotesquely thick wad of cash just far enough out to be seen, then pushes it back down.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

-- six fucking grand.

TOM
What I tell you, man?

MICHAEL
Fuck. I mean, fuck.

TOM
I know.

Both watch Ashley throw the ball away from the dog. The dog barks, runs to it and faithfully brings it back to her.

TOM (CONT'D)
So, when are you going to get your book back?

MICHAEL
Tomorrow? Maybe this weekend. Thinking what's the best way to get it done.

TOM
You gonna play it cool first, just get the book?

MICHAEL
That's the plan.

TOM
Need someone to ride with you when you do? Watch your back?

Michael spots Saul hobbling around with a bandaged knee. Beno looking, glaring, at Michael and Tom every few minutes. Ricky sleeping on the bench.

MICHAEL
Yeah, that would be cool. I appreciate that.

TOM
Damn straight, brother. Damn straight.

INT. LABOR READY -- MORNING

Men wearing work boots, orange vests and baseball caps sit in brightly colored plastic chairs sipping coffee.

The clock reads 6:32 AM. Low murmur of conversation. They wait.

Tom slouches as best he can in the uncomfortable chair. He shifts, sits up straight. Looks back at the clock. 6:39 AM.

Occasionally the phone rings. Several minutes pass, then names are called.

7:04 AM, Tom and 15 men. 7:18 AM, Tom and 8 men. 7:40 AM, Tom and 3 men.

At 7:48 AM, Tom gets up and approaches the counter top. A middle-aged, WOUND TOO TIGHT MAN wearing short sleeve dress shirt and outdated tie, greets him.

WOUND TOO TIGHT MAN

Yes?

TOM

Hey, how you doing?

WOUND TOO TIGHT MAN

I'm fine, thank you. How can I help you?

TOM

There's only four of us left, I was wondering if you think there'll be any work?

WOUND TOO TIGHT MAN

I'll call your name if there is.

TOM

I understand that. Yeah, I get you need to wait for a phone call first.

WOUND TOO TIGHT MAN

That's right.

TOM

The thing is ... You see, I'd like to leave, but I need one of those day-sheets, proving --

The phone rings.

The man holds his finger up to Tom and takes the call.

Tom plops back down. The phone call ends, Tom hops back to the counter.

WOUND TOO TIGHT MAN

You were saying?

TOM

I was wondering if you could give me one of those day-sheets, proving I was here.

WOUND TOO TIGHT MAN

You're free to go if you like. We don't pass out day-sheets until noon.

TOM

Yeah, I know, but just doesn't seem like there'll be any work today.

WOUND TOO TIGHT MAN

(looking down)

I just got a body shop job.

TOM

Wait - a body shop?

WOUND TOO TIGHT MAN

Yes, that's right. Kono's Auto Body and Paint on Artesia.

TOM

Whoa. I'll take it.

WOUND TOO TIGHT MAN

That's not exactly how it works. I need to place the right --

TOM

-- I know, I know. But, I already worked there; last week, look me up.

WOUND TOO TIGHT MAN

Last name?

TOM

Becker. B-E-C-K-E-R.

WOUND TOO TIGHT MAN

Yep, you sure did - OK, you want this one?

TOM

Damn straight.

INT. KONO'S AUTO BODY AND PAINT -- DAY

Tom hunts down the owner KONO (42), a friendly, hard working Samoan man whose slight limp causes him to wince occasionally. Tom hands him a paper.

TOM

I'm here from Labor Ready. I was here last week too.

KONO

Ah, yes, I remember you. Hard working, I seem to recall. Good. We need your help...
(shifts, winces)
what'd you do last time?

TOM

Paint masking. Masked a Buick with fender damage. Worked with ... I think Gary?

KONO

Yep, that's him. Go see him, he'll set you up.

Tom turns and walks in the direction of the paint bay.

After several steps, a hand slaps onto his shoulder unexpectedly. Tom jumps, swirls to see who it is.

BLAZE

Do I know you?

Tom's head tilts, looks at the face with teardrop tattoos, scar under eye.

TOM

I was here last week.

Blaze looks around quickly, puts his arm around Tom's shoulders and guides the two of them away from others.

BLAZE

No, no. What I mean is, aren't you from Passage Street? One of Natty's boys?

TOM

Who are you?

BLAZE

Blaze. I'm a homie, don't trip.

INT. KONO'S AUTO BODY AND PAINT -- HOURS LATER

Tom kneels behind the back quarter panel of a car, masking the chrome bumper.

Squinting to properly align the tape, his line of sight spots Blaze talking with a familiar figure.

In the parking lot Blaze leans against a car. In front of him is the unmistakable figure of Detective Dominguez.

Blaze is speaking and gesturing, Dominguez, nodding, writing.

Tom snickers and shakes his head, gets back to work.

EXT. TACOS AL VAPOR -- NIGHT

Tom and Michael eat tacos at a hole in the wall taco shop.

Sloppy, messy and steaming hot, each one is devoured with reverence and devotion. Cold bottled beers wash them down.

TOM

Did you talk to Blaze?

MICHAEL

No, I took my dad to his chemo appointment. Thirty-five hundred they wanted.

Michael drops a slathered taco into his mouth.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Think I'll have to do more... hustling soon.

TOM

Gouging him with more than needles, huh?

MICHAEL

Got that right. Gouging him hard.

TOM

Motherfuckers.

MICHAEL

Yeah. But, my dad's all I got. So ...

TOM

How about your mom?

Michael's taco was halfway to his face, then stops. Looks at Tom. Then, it continues its glorious ascent to his lips.

MICHAEL

Don't want to talk about it.

Tom watches Michael dig into another one.

TOM

OK. Anyway -- I *did* talk to Blaze.

Michael puts down the beer he was lifting. Looks at Tom.

MICHAEL

How's that?

TOM

He was at the body shop I worked at today.

MICHAEL

No shit? Wow. How did that go down?

TOM

Chill.

MICHAEL

He's got my book?

TOM

He says he does. I told him you got the money, he says cool.

Michael nods slowly.

TOM (CONT'D)

He says no hard feelings. It's just business.

Michael smirks. Takes a long slug of his beer, puts it down. Speaks in a measured voice.

MICHAEL

Fuck. That. Dude. Fuck him.

TOM

I got you, bro. And agree. Whole mutha-fuckin-heartedly.

Michael wipes his hands, looks at Tom.

MICHAEL

So when can I get my book?

TOM

He says if I bring the money
tomorrow, he'll give it to me.

MICHAEL

How you going to see him tomorrow?

TOM

The shop hired me full time.

MICHAEL

Nice. Congrats, man.

TOM

Yeah, I need a job for parole, this
place is good.

MICHAEL

So, what about --

Michael glances around.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

-- banks? Does it mean just the one
time?

Tom shrugs.

TOM

That would be my smartest move.

MICHAEL

(laughs)

Dude, if you got a job and are on
parole, you should lay low, man.

TOM

Just like your dad, I'm getting
gouged too. Who isn't... I don't,
know, we'll see.

Michael watches Tom. Nods his head.

MICHAEL

You just call it, I'm down.

Tom nods his head.

TOM

I'll let you know.

INT. PRIDE HOUSE -- DAY

Tom slouches in the seat in front of Mr. Solorano's desk.

Mr. Solorano thumbs through papers. Detective Dominguez watches from a corner of the room behind him.

MR. SOLORANO

Good job, Mr. Becker. Everything seems to be here.

Tom shrugs, nods.

MR. SOLORANO (CONT'D)

But, tell me something. Why did I get a call from Recovery? You missed your payment?

TOM

My mom just moved. She needed help with furniture, groceries.

MR. SOLORANO

I recall we had a specific conversation about this.

TOM

I got hired full time at the body shop. I'll make it up next paycheck.

MR. SOLORANO

OK. Congratulations on your new job, this is good, but you need to make your payments or you'll be heading back to your favorite place.

Dominguez steps up to the desk, stands next to Mr. Solorano.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ

I'm not convinced it's good.

(to Tom)

Are you saying it's a coincidence you were hired at the same shop your dad's gas tank was located?

Tom sits up, his hands on the chair's arms, leans forward.

Glances at Solorano, then directs blazing eyes to Dominguez.

TOM

What do you care? Is it a crime to work where I can finally get some fucking answers?

Dominguez remains silent. Takes a slow walk around the desk, leans against it, faces Tom.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ

Trust me. It's been too long without answers. But you're going to let me do my job, Tom.

TOM

Let me guess. Stay the fuck out of it.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ

Exactly.

Tom's arms slump. He leans back. No change in blazing eyes.

TOM

You told me you'd update me. What do you have?

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ

That depends. I need you to answer a couple of questions.

Tom does not move a muscle, waits.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ (CONT'D)

Has your mom talked about knowing anyone in the neighborhood she moved to?

Tom shifts. Glances at Solorano. Back at Dominguez.

TOM

Yeah. She has... Some dude down the street.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ

Has she mentioned his name to you?

Tom rubs the back of his neck.

TOM

Maybe. Michael?

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ

Yes, Michael Natolone. Known former ranking lieutenant of the Pounders motorcycle club. Suddenly quit the club around the time of your dad's death.

Tom looks away. Frowns. Looks back at Dominguez.

TOM

Is he the one who killed my dad?

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ

I don't know. Right now its only a coincidence.

Dominguez bends down, leans close to Tom.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ (CONT'D)

But let me be clear, Tommy. Stay away. Do not come in contact with him. Do not talk to him. Keep your nose clean. If he is the one, I can't have you tangled up in this.

Tom looks away. Stares at the swinging gold badge hanging from Dominguez neck.

MR. SOLORANO

Detective Dominguez is giving you good advice, Mr. Becker. I'd advise you follow it.

Glances at Mr. Solorano. Back to Dominguez.

TOM

Whatever, Dominguez. But let *me* be clear. Don't fuck this up. I'm not going to let you fuck this up.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ

Stay out of my way, Tommy, and I'll get him. I promise you that.

TOM

You better. That's all I got to say. You better.

Dominguez's bulky body looms over Tom. Anger fires from his eyes.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ

Watch your mouth, sport. One more word like that and you'll be eatin' carpet.

Tom and Dominguez eyes lock. Muscles tight, chests heaving, hot air from nostrils.

Tom folds. Crosses arms, slouches back. Looks away.

EXT. KONO'S AUTO BODY AND PAINT -- DAY

Break time at the body shop. Workers mill around outside break area. Blaze smokes a cigarette by a tree away from the others. Tom spots him, nods and swaggers over.

TOM

So, you got the book?

BLAZE

You got the money?

Tom pulls a paper bag from his back pocket wrapped in the distinct shape of money. Flashes it, puts it back.

TOM

Shit howdy, I got the money. Let's see the book.

BLAZE

Give me the money now, I'll bring it to you after our shift.

TOM

Don't play that sucker shit with me. I don't trust you any more than you trust me.

BLAZE

Yo. Why the heat? This is business. Don't hate.

Tom leans in and snarls his response.

TOM

'Cause I know you're a snitch. That's why.

Blaze launches his cigarette toward Tom's feet with a violent flick of his wrist.

BLAZE

You're lucky I don't shimmy the guts right out of your stomach, whetto. Watch your fuckin' mouth with that shit --

It's Blaze's turn to lean in.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

-- you hear me, bitch.

TOM

Is your shimmy broken, motherfucker? Bring it -- all you have is air and fear in your way... and not much air, really.

It takes Blaze a minute to register Tom's response. And when it does, he laughs.

BLAZE

That's pretty good, I like that. I'll have to use that.

Tom is not amused and remains stoic.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

Like I said, give me the money and I'll get you the book after work.

TOM

Fuck the book. What did you tell Detective Dominguez?

Blaze looks sharply at Tom, then nods knowingly.

BLAZE

I see now what you're thinking. No man, that's me just doing my civic duty. That cop was asking about a missing property case or something.

TOM

No. He wasn't. He was asking about the gas tank you painted.

BLAZE

How do you know about this shit, dude?

TOM

Whoever brought that gas tank killed my dad.

The surprise on Blaze's face is genuine. His eyebrows raise and his mouth opens.

BLAZE

Oh, shit. That was your dad? The biker who got blasted over two keys of meth?

TOM

Yeah, that's right.

BLAZE

Dude, I'm sorry, man. I mean that. But, the person who brought the gas tank in didn't kill your dad.

TOM

What?

BLAZE

No, man. That's why I know I'm not snitching on nobody. Who blasted your dad --

A buzzer blasts in the break area, interrupting Blaze. He looks up and begins to walk back to the shop. Tom follows.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

-- was the Mexican Mobsters.

TOM

The Mexican Mobsters?

BLAZE

Yeah, man. Your dad wasn't supposed to be dealing in their territory.

Blaze stops, turns to Tom.

BLAZE (CONT'D)

I might be able to help you find out who, but it can't get out I'm involved ... the Mexican Mobsters are the homies.

TOM

What are you saying?

BLAZE

Maybe we can work something out. I'll get back with you.

Blaze turns and walks back to the shop, the cut of his wife-beater shirt revealing the Jackal Grove 13 tattoo on his back.

EXT. PARAMOUNT CA -- DAY

Two major freeways converge and wind about a tough, working class neighborhood. Weeds grow through cracks in sidewalks.

Small, worn shops stand among newer strip malls.

Martin's blue Chrysler 5th Avenue exits an offramp, turns onto an aging city street. The car passes BANK OF THE WEST, set between a barber shop and insurance agency.

Turning right, an alley between the bank and a parking lot flash by. Another right, a residential street with single family working homes.

The car smoothly stops underneath a tree, close to the corner of the street, one block from the bank.

INT. CAR -- DAY

In the driver's seat, Michael stares into the rear view mirror. Glances at the side mirrors. Tom slouches comfortably in the passenger seat, chops lines on a cassette case.

MICHAEL

I should have known that motherfucker wouldn't have the book.

TOM

He's a cold piece of work. No doubt about it.

MICHAEL

I'm going to his house. I know his whole fucking family. I can't believe this shit.

TOM

No. Don't do that. I will get your book back. This is on me now.

MICHAEL

On you now? No. No, it's not. It's my book, he took it from me, I'm getting it back.

Tom snorts the line of crank with a single, quick blast up his nose.

His face binds into a contorted bundle of muscles. He stiffens, shakes his head violently.

TOM

Arrgghh... Sheeeiit... I need to tell you something.

Tom passes the case to Michael.

TOM (CONT'D)

The reason why getting your book back is on me is because it's about my dad's murder.

A thin strand of white powder slowly, smoothly glides atop a stream of air into Michael's nostrils.

He sniffs once, frowns, turns to Tom.

MICHAEL

What? What are you talking about? What does my book have to do with your dad's murder?

Tom puts his head down, exhales slowly. Puts one hand on each knee. Looks at Michael.

TOM

My dad was killed by a biker who rode with the Pounders. The cop on my dad's case says your dad was a Pounder.

Instinctively, Michael's hand grips the buttons on his shirt. White knuckles grip the folds of the material.

MICHAEL

Hold the fuck up. How does a cop know about my dad?

Tom's eyes blaze. Controlled anger comes through his teeth.

TOM

You wanna take this shit outside?

MICHAEL

I asked you a question. How the fuck does a cop know about my dad?

TOM

My fucking mom, that's how. She knows him.

MICHAEL

Well, that doesn't prove shit. So my dad was a Pounder, doesn't mean he killed your dad.

TOM

Did he recently send a chopper to the shop to get painted?

Michael stares in the rearview mirror. Puts his hands on the wheel, followed by his head. Shakes his head.

MICHAEL

Look, I'll make this simple. My dad didn't kill anyone. You need to stop talking to cops, motherfucker.

TOM

Slow down, killer. The cop is a detective on my dad's case.

Michael exhales slowly. Puts his head back.

MICHAEL

OK, OK. Look. Right now, we work together. My dad didn't kill yours and you're not a rat.

TOM

That's right. We're solid. And that's where your book comes in. Blaze says the Mexican Mobsters killed my dad... The cops say your dad did.

Michael shakes his head.

MICHAEL

Fuck.

TOM

Yeah, fuck. I'm guessing your book can help figure this shit out.

Michael frowns, looks away, nods his head. Tom reaches behind seat, puts on hat, sunglasses. Looks at himself in visor mirror.

TOM (CONT'D)

Fuck all that shit right now. I'm not trying to think of that right before robbing this motherfucking bank.

MICHAEL

Damn straight. Go get us some motherfuckin' paper. I'll be right here waiting.

TOM

Shit howdy. See you in six.

INT. BANK OF THE WEST -- DAY

Tom walks into a very busy bank. A line of people wind around the length of a deposit slip table. Only two tellers on duty, young, attractive smiling women.

A customer is saying thank you, turning to leave as Tom approaches the line. Tom quickens to the head of the line, just as a middle aged man was to take his turn.

TOM

Excuse me, sir. I just need to talk to her, she's my girlfriend. Won't take a sec.

DISGRUNTLED CUSTOMER

I've been waiting for fifteen minutes.

TOM

I'm sorry. I'm going to tell her to speed it up.

The man steps back.

DISGRUNTLED CUSTOMER

(a little loudly)

They need to get more tellers, here.

Tom steps to the counter, pulls from pocket piece of paper.

The attractive teller rakes her eyes over Tom, locks eyes, smiles.

FLIRTY TELLER

Well. I heard what you said. My husband would be surprised to learn about us, but I told him one day I'd bring home the bacon.

Tom smiles. Says nothing, displays the robbery note at her eye level, a foot from her face.

Her mood changes. Face flashes fear. Tom lowers the note.

TOM

It's okay honey. Now just fry up that bacon and put it in the pan, right here on the counter for me.

The teller is frozen in fear. Doesn't move. Begins to shake.

TOM (CONT'D)

Come on now, you can do this. I'm not going to hurt you. Just get me out of here.

FLIRTY TELLER

(sobs)

Oooooh mmyy gggod. Plleease don't huuurtt mmmeee.

From the line of customers a voice says "Is she all right?"

TOM

I'm not going to hurt you, but you need to act quick for me now, baby, OK? You hear, me? Reach into that drawer right now and pull me out everything you got.

FLIRTY TELLER

Ooh ka -- kaay.

With shaking hands, reaches into drawer and quickly places stack upon stack of bills on counter. Tom hurries to check each stack by running his thumb through them.

From the line another voice "What's going on? I thought he was her boyfriend. He cut in line!" Tom turns to the line.

TOM

This is between me and her. Stay out of this!

FLIRTY TELLER

Tha - that's all of it.
(sniffles)

TOM

You did good, beautiful. If I wasn't in a hurry, I'd hop over and fuck you silly right on this counter.

FLIRTY TELLER

Fuck off, asshole.

Tom blows her a kiss and swivels toward the door. From the line another voice, this one authoritative.

HERO CUSTOMER

Hey buddy. Come here.

Tom ignores the voice, continues walking toward the door.

Five feet from freedom, the voice again, closer, layered with the huff and puff of walking fast.

HERO CUSTOMER (CONT'D)

Hey! I said come here.

Tom bolts through the door, looks back to see --

-- a man is running toward him.

EXT. BANK OF THE WEST -- CONTINUOUS

Tom sprints from the door, then --

-- breaks into full run in alley. Gaining speed he --

-- runs through parking lot, sound of running feet behind him, then --

-- stops and spins around, Glock .45 in hand. Shouts to the hero.

TOM

Don't make today your last! Stop. Turn around. Walk back to the bank, now!

The hero slides to a stop, puts his hands up.

HERO CUSTOMER

Ok, Ok, I'm not armed.

Tom advances toward him, gun pointed at the man.

TOM
I said turn around! Right now, or
I'll shoot.

The hero motions for Tom to calm down. Slowly turns around
with hands still up. Looks back.

TOM (CONT'D)
Don't look back! Keep walking. If
you look back, I'll shoot!

The man abides, walks back toward alley. Tom gives him
several seconds, then he himself turns, walks toward the
residential neighborhood and waiting car.

INT. DONNA BECKER APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Donna closes the door after Tom. Before she is seen, Ashley
is heard running down the hallway.

Ignoring numerous bags Tom is holding, she leaps up and bear
hugs him as several bags plummet to the ground.

ASHLEY
Tommmeeeeyy!

TOM
Hey sis! How you been, smarty
pants?

ASHLEY
Gooooood!

TOM
I heard! Kicking academic butt in
school now, huh?

ASHLEY
Yessss!

Tom drops all bags, drops to his knees, hugs Ashley back.

TOM
I am sooo proud of you sis.

Grinning from ear to ear, proudly makes a pirate swift swing
of her fist in victory, having gained the spoils.

ASHLEY
Thank you!

TOM
 I got you a congratulations gift.
 (handing her a bag)
 Here you go.

Ashley rips through the bag, pulls out retail box.

ASHLEY
 Nintendo! Oh my gosh, you got me
 Nintendo!
 (kissing on cheek)
 Thank you!

TOM
 (standing up)
 You're welcome, keep up the good
 work.

Donna hugs her son, eyes welling up. Sniffs once and composes
 her self while hugging.

DONNA
 Thank you. She is doing so good,
 I'm proud of you both. And ... I'm
 sorry about the other night.

TOM
 It's OK Mom. I have a lot of making
 up to do too. You and Ash.
 (lifting bags)
 Here - Let's eat!

INT. DONNA BECKER APARTMENT -- LATER

Donna sits and Tom slouches at the kitchen table. Turned over
 chicken bucket, crumpled napkins and chicken bones litter the
 table. Ashley plays Nintendo in the other room.

DONNA
 So how do you like your new job?

TOM
 It's a job. Still working for the
 man, though.

DONNA
 True... But, if you didn't have to
 work for the man, what would you
 do?

Tom downs the rest of a beer.

TOM

Retire.

DONNA

That's funny, Tommy. I'm just thinking of your future, son. Do you have plans for the future?

TOM

Yeah. Make a ton of money and settle down with a hot wife.

DONNA

Well, that's nice but --

From the living room, Ashley shouts in the sing-song voice like when telling on your little sister.

ASHLEY

Mom ... has... a ... boyfriend!

DONNA

-- you will need to ...

Tom sits up, puts his hand on Donna's shoulder.

TOM

What? Is this true? It's not that Michael guy is it?

Donna stands up, picks up plates, trash. Looks directly at Tom.

DONNA

First off, Tommy, who I see is my business.

She continues to tidy the table.

DONNA (CONT'D)

And second, yes it is. I've always trusted him, even in our previous lives.

Tom stands. Grabs Donna's wrist. Voice strained and volume up.

TOM

Trust? How can you trust him? Do you know who he is?

Donna frowns, yanks wrist from Tom's grip. Answers in an even tone, on edge of outright shouting.

DONNA

Yes, Tom, I do. He's someone from the past that I trust... And son, someone you should too.

Tom's eyes grow wild. His fist grips the chair back with white knuckles, he shouts in disdainful anger.

TOM

He's a fucking Pounder Mom! A Pounder! You know - the gang who killed Dad. I will never - never - trust him!

DONNA

You don't know the whole story, son. There's more to it than that.

TOM

Whole story! What? No Mom, there is no whole story. There's no more to it than he's a fucking Pounder. The people who killed Dad.

Tom lifts and slams the chair down, sweeps everything that was on the table off of it.

TOM (CONT'D)

And you need to stay away from him or I'll make sure you do.

Tom storms out of the room, stomps through the living room and out the front door with a loud slam.

EXT. NATOLONE FAMILY APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Detective Dominguez looks at his wrist watch, 4:21 AM. He looks at the street, the alley and staircase leading to Michael Sr and Michael Jr's apartment.

Patrol cars, unmarked police vehicles and a SWAT van litter the street and alley. Hum of idling cars with parking lights on.

Men line the staircase leading to the Natolones' door. They wear vests with "POLICE" strapped across their chest. They hold assault rifles at the ready; point to the closed door.

Dominguez signals with single swift motion of his hand.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ

(into radio)

Go!

Two officers with a battering ram slam its head onto the door
--

-- BAM. Splintering wood fragments fly about the deadbolt as
the door hurtles inward, followed by --

-- a stream of shouting men pouring into the apartment --

-- shouting "Police, Search Warrant," the sounds crashing the
morning silence and reverberating between buildings.

INT. NATOLONE FAMILY APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Several officers burst into Michael Jr's room which --

-- startle naked Michael and Jani who --

-- sit bolt upright. Jani covers her breasts just as --

-- the officers shout "Hands on top of your head."

JANI

I'm naked!

GUNG HO OFFICER

Do it now! Hands on your head!

With a nasty look, Jani complies. The Gung Ho Officer points
rifle barrel at Michael.

GUNG HO OFFICER (CONT'D)

You -- get out of bed slowly ...
face the wall ... keep your hands
on your head. Do it now.

Michael twists his body strategically to preserve his modesty
in an effort to face the wall without revealing his manhood.

GUNG HO OFFICER (CONT'D)

OK - on your knees. Now!

Michael complies. Gung Ho Officer yanks Michael's wrists
behind his back, zip ties them. Pulls free blanket from bed,
drapes it over Michael's shoulders.

GUNG HO OFFICER (CONT'D)

(to Jani)

Stay put. I'll have a female
officer get you shortly.

MICHAEL

At least let her cover herself!

GUNG HO OFFICER
 (to Jani)
 Where's your top ma 'am?

JANI
 On top of the dresser.

Two officer's assault rifles remain trained on Jani and Michael. The Gung Ho Officer gingerly steps over clothes, bottles strewn about the floor.

Looking atop the dresser, he spots a woman's top among food containers and cassettes. He glances at Jani, who --

-- nods in the affirmative, that's it. He grabs it, but when he does --

-- he disturbs what is underneath, and --

-- twenty, fifty and hundred dollar bills spill and flutter slowly to the floor, which reveal --

-- large remaining stacks of bills where Jani's top sat.

INT. NATOLONE FAMILY APARTMENT -- LATER

Michael Jr and Jani sit at the kitchen table, each wrapped in sheets and blankets, Jani with top on.

Michael Sr sits across in a robe, bald from chemo. He coughs. Looks tired.

The Gung Ho Officer stands nearby. Officers mill about, some carry paper bags of evidence out the door.

MICHAEL SR
 (coughs)
 I'm waiting for my copy of your search warrant.

GUNG HO OFFICER
 In time, sir. Let the officers do their job.

MICHAEL
 They can do their jobs while we look at the search warrant.

The officer does not reply. Detective Dominguez steps into the kitchen.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ
 (to Jani)
 So you say the money is yours?

JANI
 That's right.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ
 How did you come about --

Michael Sr coughs and breaks in.

MICHAEL SR
 I've been asking to see a copy of
 the search warrant. I don't think
 any of us should answer any
 questions until we see it.

Dominguez looks at Michael Sr. Sighs, pulls paper from
 pocket, unfolds it, places it on table in front of Michael
 Sr.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ
 (back to Jani)
 How exactly did you come into
 possession of thirteen thousand --

Takes notebook out, refers to it, then continues.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ (CONT'D)
 -- four hundred and twenty-three
 dollars?

Jani stares defiantly at the cop. Glances at Michael Sr
 apprehensively. Returns look back to Dominguez with a hint of
 pride mixed with defiance.

JANI
 I strip. At Fantasy Castle in Long
 Beach. That's two weeks worth of
 tips. I haven't deposited them yet.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ
 Tips, huh? Since when does the
 clientele at Fantasy Castle tip
 girls with twenty, fifty and
 hundred dollar bills?

MICHAEL SR
 (coughs)
 Wait. Hold up. It says here your
 search is limited to --

Michael Sr looks at Dominguez.

MICHAEL SR (CONT'D)
-- and I quote --

Attention back to the paper, reads.

MICHAEL SR (CONT'D)
"... any article, information, or documents pertaining to a 1973 Harley Davidson and a handbook containing information of such."

Looks back to Dominguez.

MICHAEL SR (CONT'D)
(coughs)
What does her hard-earned money have anything to do with a 1973 Harley or handbook?

Dominguez snatches the search warrant from the table in front of Michael Sr. Leans in close, speaks slowly, menacingly.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ
I don't care that you have cancer, Natolone. We both know you shot Jeff Becker in cold blood because of some Pounders club business.

Unfazed and with complete calm, Michael Sr answers.

MICHAEL SR
Did you find what you were looking for, Detective?

Dominguez's jawline clenches. Slowly shakes his head.

MICHAEL SR (CONT'D)
Then, let us go and get out of my house.

Michael Sr has coughing fit. Dominguez stands up straight.

Turns to the Gung Ho Officer, nods.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ
Let 'em go.

Dominguez strides into the living room and shouts to the remaining officers.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ (CONT'D)
OK, let's wrap it up.

Dominguez pauses, looks directly at Michael Sr.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ (CONT'D)

And leave the money. For now. Mr. Natolone will need it sooner than later, given his upcoming ... legal trouble.

Dominguez pulls the search warrant out and slings it to the living room floor in disgust.

He pivots neatly, militarily on one foot, and marches out the door.

EXT. TACOS AL VAPOR -- NIGHT

Michael and Jani sit across from Tom and Charlene. Tacos and beers all around.

CHARLENE

(to Jani)

I can't believe they made you flash your boobs. Pervs.

JANI

I know! And Michael had a morning wood, too.

CHARLENE

What! Really?

JANI

Yeah, I felt it when --

Jani and Charlene chat and laugh. Michael and Tom have a more serious conversation.

MICHAEL

Is he bringing the book?

TOM

He didn't say. Just said he had good news.

Michael snorts.

MICHAEL

Good news. With him that could mean anything from his dog died to he's married the devil's daughter.

TOM

(laughs)

Yeah, well, he's a snitch.

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

I think he's the one who sent the cops to your house. I bet his good news was your dad's in jail.

MICHAEL

He probably doesn't know we're not.

TOM

Nope.

Michael leans forward, lowers voice.

MICHAEL

All I gotta do is --

Jani leans into Michael, puts her head on his shoulder, interrupts.

JANI

He's here.

Michael and Tom look to the parking lot where three low rider cars pull up. Michael downs his beer, Tom wipes his hands.

MICHAEL

We'll be back.

Charlene pulls on Tom's arm, lowers him to her lips.

CHARLENE

Don't kill anybody, gangster.

Jani squeezes Michael's hand.

JANI

Go get your book, baby.

Tom nods to Michael, they stroll to meet with the devil's own.

EXT. TACOS AL VAPOR PARKING LOT -- CONTINUOUS

Blaze smokes a cigarette while leaning against his car. His homies encircle him, dressed in full cholo regalia of creased pants, creased white t-shirts and bandanas.

Hot Shot Gang Banger glares at Michael when he and Tom approach. Michael tugs his shirt and spits.

BLAZE

Yo, look, it's the Passage Street boys... Vatos are like the Hardy boys but not so ... hardy.

The homies snicker and sneer.

TOM
You wanna know what's hard ... my
dick when you talk dirty to me like
that.

Smile disappears from Blaze's face. Snickers and sneers
vanish.

MICHAEL
(to Blaze)
Got my book?

HOT SHOT GANG BANGER
Got my jacket?

TOM
Yeah, I got your jacket -- look.

Tom points to Charlene and Jani sitting at the table.

Charlene holds up jacket with "Jackal Grove 13" emblazed on
it.

Michael shoots Tom a perplexed look. Tom shrugs.

TOM (CONT'D)
Give me the book, you'll get your
jacket.

BLAZE
Yeah, well, sorry, brotha'. The
price went up. Heard the cops were
looking for it.

TOM
Whoa, Kemosabe. Other way around.
You want to get caught with that
thing? Price is cut in half.

BLAZE
Tell you what. We're all sons of
Paramount here --

The homies respond in unison with "Para - mount."

BLAZE (CONT'D)
-- and you did bring the jacket --

Michael glares at the Hot Shot Gang Banger who takes his turn
spitting on the ground.

BLAZE (CONT'D)
 -- so I'll honor the original price
 of thirteen hundred --

Michael nods his head, reaches into his pocket. Tom turns toward Charlene to motion her for the jacket.

BLAZE (CONT'D)
 -- But.

Michael and Tom freeze and look at Blaze.

BLAZE (CONT'D)
 -- you need to buy two keys of
 meth.

Tom and Michael look at each other. Michael frowns, Tom shakes his head.

MICHAEL
 We got our own hustle, we don't
 want no meth.

BLAZE
 Ahh, but you want this meth.
 (to Tom)
 It's the same two keys your dad was
 killed over, the Fury brand is
 still on it.

Tom's jaw tightens, lip curls to a snarl.

BLAZE (CONT'D)
 You can take it to your people,
 confirm it's the same... then you
 know I'm right about who killed
 your dad.

TOM
 How much?

BLAZE
 Homie prices, fifty.

MICHAEL
 What! Fuck that. Normal price
 should be forty. Twenty a key.

The Hot Shot Gang Banger snorts. Blaze shoots him a look, nods his way then turns his attention back to Michael.

BLAZE
That's my price Natty.
(to Tom)
Take it or leave it.

TOM
Deal.

MICHAEL
Whoa, whoa, let me --

TOM
No. Deal. It's done.

BLAZE
All right! Get me that jacket and
I'll get the book. When do you want
to pick up the meth?

TOM
One week.

Blaze nods. Looks around to his homies, back to Michael and Tom.

BLAZE
OK, let's do this. Get the jacket.

Tom and Michael turn and walk toward Jani and Charlene.

MICHAEL
What the fuck? How you planning on
coming up with fifty grand?

TOM
We, Natty. We're going to hit banks
like a mutha-fucker.

MICHAEL
You shoul'da fucking said something
to me before you got us hemmed up
into a fifty k dope deal.

Swirls on Michael, stops both in their tracks.

TOM
I helped you, you need to help me.
I need to find out who gunned down
my old man in cold blood. I owe it
to him and my sister.

Michael holds onto the front of his shirt. Pulls down on it.
Looks at Tom. Nods.

MICHAEL

OK. Yeah, you got it man.

TOM

Thank you brother.

EXT. TACOS AL VAPOR PARKING LOT -- MOMENTS LATER

Michael and Tom return to the parking lot with jacket in tow. Blaze and his homies sit in their respective cars.

BLAZE

I'll take the money. Give the homie his jacket back.

Michael hands the wad of cash to Blaze at the same time Tom hands jacket to Hot Shot Gang Banger in back seat.

Michael squints into the car, waits for the book. Nothing. Then --

-- Blaze puts his low rider into drive, causing --

-- Michael to lurch toward the car.

MICHAEL

Hey!

Blaze looks at Michael and --

-- shoves his foot on the brake, causing the car to --

-- shift and stop.

BLAZE

Oh yea, right. OK.

He looks at the Hot Shot Gang Banger through the rear view mirror and nods. The book is passed to Blaze.

He opens it, leafs through it, then --

-- RIP! He rips half of the pages from it, then --

MICHAEL

What the fuck!

-- Michael and Tom leap toward Blaze, both reaching for the ripped pages but --

-- Blaze swiftly dodges their hands and --

-- hurdles the remaining book out the window past both of them, keeping the ripped half. That's when --

-- Michael scrambles toward the book and --

-- chunks of gravel spit up around him while --

-- the tires make chirping sounds as they bite the asphalt.

Blaze shouts out the window as --

-- his car dances out of the parking lot.

BLAZE

You'll get the rest when you get
the meth!

Michael sits on the pavement, book in hand, watching Blaze and the homies' cars disappear.

FADE OUT: TO BLACK

FADE IN:

MONTAGE - TOM AND MICHAEL GET BUSY ROBBING BANKS

-- Martin's Blue Chrysler 5th Avenue exits and enters several different freeways

-- The car makes numerous turns, past several banks.

-- First, one bank robbery note, then another, then another and then many bank notes are slid across bank counters.

-- First, one stack, then two stacks, then three stacks, then multiple stacks are pushed toward Tom and Michael, again and again.

-- Tom and Michael ditch outfits into dumpsters and trash cans. Baseball caps, British flag leather jacket, executive chef hat, parachute pants and security guard outfit.

-- Tom, Charlene, Michael and Jani laughing and drinking through the moonroof of a limousine.

-- Michael carefully, slowly doing a long line of meth. Tom sucking a long line up with a flourish, followed by sequence of grimaces, jerky dance moves and yelps.

-- First Michael and Jani, then Tom and Charlene walking in a mall laden with countless bags from multiple stores

-- Michael walks out of bank, tugs on his jacket, turns left, ditches jacket, hat, glasses, track pants, jumps into car.

END MONTAGE

EXT./INT. KING INN -- DAY

An empty lot with overgrown weeds and a self-serve carwash border the King Inn. It's a dump barely hanging on.

Inside room 13, stacks upon stacks of cash sit on top of the motel bed.

Tom is counting out loud, finishing one stack, placing it down, starting another stack.

Charlene is at mirror applying makeup. TV drones in the background.

TOM

... forty-eight, twenty, forty,
sixty, eighty, three hundred ...
twenty, forty ...

Michael and Jani lounge together on another bed, beer in Michael's hand, Jani in his other. TV cuts back from commercial to anchor in newsroom.

SMOKIN HOT TV ANCHOR

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's
department has announced the
formation of a task force to
address the recent rash of bank
robberies in the cities Paramount,
Compton and Long Beach --

Michael lifts his beer to the TV and shouts.

MICHAEL

Woo hoo! Task force unite!

Jani punches him light-heartedly on his shoulder.

JANI

Don't jinx it baby. You don't want
to mess up your cha-cha.

MICHAEL

My what?

JANI

Cha-cha. You know, your vibe. The force.

MICHAEL

I thought you had a cha-cha. I got a woot-woot.

Jani pushes his shoulder, Michael puts his beer down next to the handbook and wrestles her into submission, ending in lustful kissing and petting.

TOM

Sixty-four thousand, three hundred and eighty four dollars!

CHARLENE

Sixty-four thousand?

TOM

That's right, ladybug.

CHARLENE

What's the capital of New Mexico?

TOM

Albuquerque?

CHARLENE

No -- Sante Fe! I just won the sixty-four thousand dollar question!

Tom's eyes roll, Michael snorts and throws an empty beer can her way. Jani nods her head in support.

TOM

(to Michael)

Ready to get the better half of your book back?

Instinctively, Michael reaches for the book. He cradles it, rubs the cover. Flips it to the side where pages were ripped out.

MICHAEL

Damn straight I'm ready.

TOM

OK, let me check in with my mom and Ashley, then let's call dick wad.

Michael nods, turns his attention back to Jani. Tom lifts the phone, dials the number.

INT. DONNA BECKER APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Donna, always in motion, sniffing, is folding laundry on top of the living room coffee table.

The phone rings, she hustles to it.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION

DONNA

Hello?

TOM

Hi Mom, it's me.

DONNA

Tommy. You called. I'm sorry, son.

TOM

No, I'm sorry, Mom. I'm a jerk. Can you forgive me?

DONNA

Of course I forgive you, Tommy. You're my son and I love you.

TOM

I love you too, Mom.

DONNA

We need to talk about Michael, though. It's time you hear the whole story.

TOM

OK, Mom. We will, soon. For sure.

DONNA

I'm glad you called, Detective Dominguez is calling a lot.

Tom sneers.

TOM

Pfft. Whatever. What does he want.

DONNA

He wanted me to tell you that your co-worker Blaze is in jail.

Tom slams his fist onto the motel dresser. Michael, Jani and Charlene jump. Tom looks at Michael and shakes his head in disgust.

TOM
 (to Donna)
 I wonder why he wants me to know
 that, Mom. Did he say why?

DONNA
 He says you'd be interested to know
 where he was arrested and what he
 was doing. He didn't say anything
 else.

Tom snorts.

TOM
 He's useless, Mom. He really is. I
 think I'm closer to finding Dad's
 killer than he is.

DONNA
 I certainly hope not, son.

TOM
 Shit howdy, Mom. I swear I am.

DONNA
 OK -- when can we talk? The sooner
 the better.

TOM
 Soon, I'll call you later to figure
 it out.

EXT. KING INN -- NIGHT

Tom and Michael lean against the motel railing looking over a
 sparsely populated parking lot.

MICHAEL
 Here's what I think we should do.

TOM
 What?

MICHAEL
 Bail him out.

TOM
 What! Why the hell would we do
 that?

MICHAEL
 Because. We meet him when he's
 released.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Tell him he owes the book for the cash we spent bailing him out.

TOM

What about the meth?

MICHAEL

We don't really want the meth, you just need to know it's the same dope that got your dad killed, right?

TOM

Yeah...

MICHAEL

So, we set him up with your cop friend, tell him we know Blaze has two keys on him.

TOM

I'm not a rat.

MICHAEL

No, you're not. He is.

Michael turns to Tom, voice vehement.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

This motherfucker is just as guilty as whoever pulled the trigger. You wouldn't consider yourself a rat for putting away whoever shot your dad, would you?

Tom looks out to the expanse of the parking lot and much further beyond. Frowns. Shakes head slowly.

TOM

No I wouldn't.

MICHAEL

Then, let's do this. He goes down, we keep the money, you learn if it's the same dope when the cop tells you about it.

Nods his head slowly, then deciding, one sharp nod of his head.

TOM

Alright.

MICHAEL

Good.

EXT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL -- DAY

Serene, tree-lined street surround Los Angeles Men's Central jail. Glass double door with burnt orange framing.

Sign reads "DO NOT ENTER."

Blaze, with a bounce to his step, pops out the door, takes a deep breath of free air.

TOM

Welcome home, free bird.

THUMP! Tom punches Blaze deep in his gut, causing --

-- Blaze's lungs to expel precious oxygen with guttural surprise and --

-- he doubles over in pain. Then --

-- THUNK! Michael's uppercut fist belts his jaw with sickening deep thud --

-- snapping Blaze's head back then --

-- his knees collapse and he drops to the ground.

MICHAEL

Get up.

CRACK! Tom's hand smashes Blaze's face into his oncoming knee prompting --

-- blood to squirt and spray from his nostrils.

He wipes at it, smears it. Opens his mouth, blood clings to his teeth.

BLAZE

Fuck you bitches.

TOM

Come on, we're taking you home.

Tom pulls at his shirt, lifts him to his feet. Michael directs him to the Chrysler 5th Avenue. Thrusts him into back seat.

INT. CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Saul smiles at Blaze and --

-- Blaze look down, sees the glint of .22 pistol, then --

SAUL

Good to see you again, Blaze.

-- BANG! Saul pulls trigger, blows out Blaze's knee, who --
-- screams in pain. His jeans fabric darken with spreading blood.

Bending down, holding his knee, Blaze moans, begins to rock back and forth.

Michael jumps into drivers seat, Tom the passenger side.

The car lurches forward, Tom turns to Blaze in the back seat.

TOM

Where's the book?

Without looking up and continuing to rock, Blaze responds through gritted, bloody teeth.

BLAZE

You want to know the difference
between a gangster and a bitch?

Michael looks in puzzlement to Tom. Tom raises his eyebrows with amusement.

TOM

No, what?

BLAZE

A gangster does what he wants, a
bitch does what she's told.

Tom nods to Saul who --

-- cracks the gun's handle squarely on Blaze's bloody knee,
his --

-- scream piercing the car's interior.

TOM

That's pretty good, Blaze. I like
that. I'll have to use that.

BLAZE

I'm no bitch, but I'm going to tell you what you want, because that's what I want.

TOM

Whatever, bitch. Where's the book?

BLAZE

Natty's dad has it.

Tom and Michael exchange looks.

TOM

What?

Through the pain in his face, a glimmer of sadistic pleasure surfaces on Blaze's face.

BLAZE

I've been playing all you bitches. You and Natty's dad.

Michael swerves the car violently to the side of the road and --

-- the car comes to a screeching halt in front of abandoned and boarded store front. Michael turns --

-- grabs the gun from Saul and --

-- begins clubbing Blaze's head and face with the gun's handle, as --

-- red faced, blazing eyes, Michael screams at Blaze.

MICHAEL

You wanna play! Huh? Wanna fucking play, motherfucker!

Tom places his hands on Michael's swinging arm and slowly applies pressure, which slows, then eventually stops the blows.

With his other hand he motions Michael to ease up. Holds his palm up for the gun. Gets it. Places it on Blaze's head.

TOM

And the meth? Where's the meth.

From behind the arms used to protect his head, Blaze's muffles response.

BLAZE
Natty's dad.

BANG! Tom pulls the trigger after which --

-- an explosion of brain, skull, blood and hair blasts the car's floor, seat, window and Saul.

After initially jerking in response to the explosion, Saul and Michael look in horror at the mess of flesh and bones that was Blaze.

Tom turns the gun to Michael.

TOM
Where's your dad?

MICHAEL
Whoa, whoa -- wait brother. Hold up man.

Tom's face begins to redden. Veins bulge from his neck, jaw tightens. Anger rises as he talks.

TOM
I'm done with this. I'm sick and tired of all of it. Where's your fucking dad?

Michael raises his hands.

MICHAEL
I thi-- I think he's at his chemo appointment.

TOM
(to Saul)
Out.
(regarding Blaze)
And take that with you.

EXT./INT. CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Saul backs out of the car --

-- still facing Tom, then --

-- walks around to other side, yanks Blaze's body onto the curb.

TOM
(to Michael)
Drive.

EXT. CANCER CENTER -- DAY

Car lurches to a stop in front of cancer center medical building. Michael gets out with hands up, does not close door.

Neither does Tom. Gun trained on Michael, he waves them into the lobby.

INT. CANCER CENTER -- MOMENTS LATER

TERRIFIED RECEPTIONIST screams as Michael and Tom enter, gun pointed to Michael.

Eyes still on Michael, Tom's determined angry words come through clenched teeth.

TOM

Looking for Michael Natolone.

With shaking hands, the receptionist scans her list.

TERRIFIED RECEPTIONIST

Ro--om Thir--teen M. Down the ha --
hall to the right.

Women's screams and "What's going on" and "Oh my god" pierce and echo the hallways. Tom and Michael walk on.

INT. CANCER CENTER (ROOM 13M) -- CONTINUOUS

Donna sits, holds Michael Sr.'s hand. Fluid drips from an I.V. into a tube, into his arm, his head back, eyes closed.

Hearing the commotion, they look up --

-- see Michael enter with Tom behind, gun in hand, causing --

-- Donna to scream, bolt up from her seat. Then --

-- Michael Sr attempts to get up, but --

-- fatigue bears down. His hand slips on the armrest and he plops down, resigned.

DONNA

Tommy! Son ..?

TOM

Get out of the way, Mom. I told you
not to see this piece of shit.

Tom swings the gun from Michael Jr to --

-- Michael Sr. Then he --

-- walks to him slowly and --

-- Donna and Michael Jr back away.

DONNA

Wait, son. I need -- I need to tell you something.

TOM

Don't try to stop me. He killed Dad! I've been waiting for this for six fucking years.

(to Michael Sr)

Ready to die, motherfucker?

A crowd has gathered outside room 13M. In the distance a siren wails. Then a second, then a third.

MICHAEL SR

Do what you gotta do, son.

Tom screams his response.

TOM

You're damn straight I'm going to do what I gotta do. I just want to know one thing - Why? Huh? Why'd you have to fucking kill him.

MICHAEL SR

I was --

Donna lurches forward, screams desperately.

DONNA

Because I asked him to!

Tom frowns. Keeps his eyes on Michael Sr for a second then --

-- blasts a quick look at Donna --

-- then back to Michael Sr.

TOM

What the fuck are you talking about Mom?

DONNA

I've been telling you I need to talk, Tommy.

Tears stream down Donna's face. She begins to sob as she speaks.

DONNA (CONT'D)

I nev -- never told you because I was scared. I wou -- would have been thrown in jail too.

Tom holds firm with gun on Michael Sr. Quick glances to Donna as she cries and speaks.

TOM

Wha-- what are you saying?

Detective Dominguez eases himself into the room, gun drawn, pointed to Tom. Uniformed police follow suit.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ

Put the gun down, Tom. Do it now.

Neck veins bulging, blazing eyes, Tom screams at Dominguez.

TOM

It was you! You should have done your fucking job. I had to do it for you.

DETECTIVE DOMINGUEZ

This isn't worth spending the rest of your life in jail. Put the gun down.

DONNA

Do it, son. Please.

TOM

(to Donna)

What do you have to tell me!

A new burst of deep rooted sobbing and tears wrack Donna's body. Dropping to the ground, she covers her face in her hands.

DONNA

Jeff is -- isn't your da -- dad, Tommy. I'm so sorr-- sorry.

Tom holds the gun on Michael Sr but watches his mother.

Frowns, shakes his head.

TOM

No ... no. No way.

DONNA

Yes! Yes, son. He's not your dad.
He was abusive. He'd hit me. He was
jealous. Jealous of --

She looks up through her hands at Michael Sr.

DONNA (CONT'D)

Jealous of Michael.

Tom slowly looks at Michael Sr. Back to Donna. Donna nods.

DONNA (CONT'D)

Yes. That's right. Michael is your
dad. Not Jeff.

Tom stares at Donna. A burst of sobs and wails shake her
body, her head in her hands.

His gaze moves to Michael Sr. Michael Sr's face shows
concern. Love.

Back to his mother. Stares at her. Beyond her.

He looks above her, out the window, then --

-- a light breeze gently sway trees. The sun's rays --

-- dance about the shadows. Birds chirp.

Calm.

TOM

Arrgggghhh!

SMASH! Tom hurdles the gun through the window and --

-- glass shards explode, scatter wildly --

-- splintering the sun's rays into useless, insignificant,
tiny beads of broken pieces.

FADE OUT:BLACK

FADE IN:

SUPER: Nine Years Later

EXT./INT. MICHAEL JR FAMILY HOME -- DAY

A quiet suburban neighborhood on a lazy summer day.

Set among other tract homes with well-manicured lawns, this one is no different than the others.

Inside, on a sofa table, several framed photos sit among potted house plants.

Center photo contain Tom, Michael Jr, Donna, Jani and Charlene in front of painted mural of prison grounds.

In the photo Tom is in prison garb, everyone else, street clothes.

Another photo; family photo. Michael Jr, now thirty years old, Jani, twenty-eight, and DEVIN, eight.

Finally, an urn rests on the table, the decorative box contains the words "RIP 1987 MICHAEL NATOLONE SR."

INT. MICHAEL JR FAMILY HOME (DEVIN'S ROOM) -- CONTINUOUS

Devin laying on his bed, legs crossed, hand behind his head. Smart, a thinker. Doesn't let anything get by him.

DEVIN

So that's how Uncle Tommy met Grandpa?

The years have seasoned Michael Jr well. With light beard and glasses, he has a thinking man's aura.

MICHAEL

Damn straight, Dev. Cops and all.

DEVIN

And all for that?

Devin looks at the object Michael is holding in his hand.

MICHAEL

Well ...

Michael looks down at it. The handbook.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Not exactly just for this. It's more than that.

DEVIN

More? Like what?

MICHAEL

Uncle Tommy wanted to set right a wrong. A wrong he felt responsible for.

DEVIN

Grandpa killed the biker.

MICHAEL

Yes.

DEVIN

Is it true he was also the Mexican Mobsters' boss?

Michael smiled. Shook his head in amazement.

MICHAEL

That was a surprise, but yes, that's true too.

DEVIN

I'm just glad Grandpa married Grandma before he died. I love Grandma.

Michael stares at Devin in wonderment. And love.

MICHAEL

Me too, Dev.

A light breeze flutters the curtain. Devin contemplates further, staring at the ceiling. Michael waits.

DEVIN

What about you Dad? Why did you rob banks and all?

MICHAEL

I wanted to prove Uncle Tommy was wrong about Grandpa.

DEVIN

But he wasn't.

MICHAEL

No, he wasn't. Grandpa did the wrong thing for the right reason.

DEVIN

For family.

Michael looks at his son. Tears well up.

He reaches over and ruffles Devin's hair affectionately.

MICHAEL
Damn straight, little man. For
family.

Michael stands, turns.

DEVIN
Dad?

Pauses, turns back around.

MICHAEL
Yes, little buddy?

DEVIN
You did it for that too, didn't
you?

Devin points. Michael looks to see where.

It's his kid-sized desk littered with baseball cards, Sega games and Star Wars figures.

But, there on top, a hardcover book. The title reads "A BANKROBBER'S HANDBOOK" and a picture of Michael. A starburst screams "NY TIMES BESTSELLER!"

Michael laughs.

MICHAEL
Wasn't exactly my first idea, but
your Grandpa convinced me.

Michael thumbs through the pages, lands on the dedication page that reads:

"TO MY SON, DEVIN, WHOSE HANDBOOK
FOR LIFE WILL BE HIS FATHER'S
GUIDANCE, HIS MOTHER'S NURTURING,
AND LOVE FROM BOTH. DAMN STRAIGHT."

Devin's voice shakes Michael from his reserve.

DEVIN
What about the actual book, Dad?
Whatcha' going to do with that?

Michael looks at his other hand that he unknowingly had clenched tight and curled the book into a tube.

MICHAEL

It's going where it belongs son.
And where it should have gone a
long time ago.

Finds the trash can under Devin's desk, slams the book in it
with emphasis.

Both look down at the book in the can. There, a single
crumpled, stained page sticks out.

Partially ripped, with a dark stain on it, a single gang
patch reads "Jackal Grove 13."

FADE OUT: BLACK

THE END