

DOLAN'S CADILLAC

written by
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based on the story by
Stephen King

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NOTE: This screenplay is not in correct screenplay format; this is a rough approximation I use when composing drafts, prior to importing into Final Draft for clean-up.

FADE IN:

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

PARAMEDICS CRASH through a pair of swinging doors pushing a gurney ahead of them.

The unconscious man strapped to the gurney is named ROBINSON, but he's almost unrecognizable as a human being behind a mask of caked blood and sand. His clothes have been stripped and ice packs stacked around his body, between his legs, underneath his arms. The exposed skin is a livid, cherry red -- and dry as paper. One paramedic rhythmically squeezes an oxygen bag over his mouth. An IV bag swings above his head like a lantern.

PARAMEDIC #1

-- road crew found him out west of Vegas. Severe heat stroke, possible second or third degree burns. Pulse is jumpy, all over -- already went flat once on the drive. Stick a fork in him, ladies and gentlemen, he's done.

The gurney swivels into a trauma bay, acquiring a DOCTOR, a NURSE, and some orderlies along the way. They lift Robinson onto the bed. He's quickly intubated -- a tube shoved down his throat to assist breathing -- and electrodes attached to his chest. An EKG begins BLIPPING irregularly, reflecting his pulse.

DOCTOR

Get a CBC. And someone get some more ice and a chill blanket. Jesus, how long was he out there?

PARAMEDIC #2

No idea, but from the look of 'em I'd say way too long. Car must've broken down on the way back from LA over the holiday.

The doctor pries open one of Robinson's eyelids and shines a penlight into his pupil. She shakes her head.

DOCTOR

Or he had Dante for a travel agent...Jesus...

The paramedic shrugs. As the orderlies scurry in several directions and the doctor continues her work, the SOUND FADES.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

Elizabeth...did I ever tell you...tell you that...no. No, I suppose I didn't. *La venganza es un plato mejor servido frio.* "Revenge is a dish best served cold."

(beat)

And Beth, I'm so very cold here.

The sound SLAMS TO FULL VOLUME, filled to bursting with the flatlining HUM of the EKG.

Robinson's heart has stopped.

NURSE

He's crashing!

The doctor grabs a pair of paddles from a defibrillator machine on a nearby cart, pauses to let the nurse squirt some gel onto the metal plates, and then places them flush against Robinson's naked chest. The nurse pushes a button on the machine and stands back along with everyone else.

NURSE

Charging.

The defibrillator WHINES for a second and then BEEPS.

DOCTOR

Clear!

The doctor SHOCKS Robinson. His body convulses spasmodically.

SMASH CUT

to a car exploding.

BACK TO SCENE

No response. The doctor delivers another SHOCK.

SMASH CUT

to a shovel striking dirt, blood running down the haft.

BACK TO SCENE

Still no response. And another SHOCK.

SMASH CUT

to BLACK.

The ceaseless hum of the EKG gradually becomes an INHUMAN SCREAM before stopping entirely. Then SUPER:

LAS VEGAS, 3 YEARS AGO

INT. CONDO/BEDROOM - DAY

An alarm clock is CHIMING.

Robinson lays in bed next to his wife, ELIZABETH. Their bedroom is tasteful but not extravagant. On the walls are hung a few contemporary paintings, a Kandinsky, a Paul Klee, maybe a Georgia O'Keefe. Things collected by two people in a marriage.

Robinson reaches over to shut off the alarm clock. Lying next to the clock is an ANTIQUE GOLD POCKETWATCH.

He turns over to kiss his wife lightly on the cheek. She stirs slightly, murmuring something wordless.

INT. CONDO/BATHROOM - DAY

Robinson is looking in the mirror, shaving. He's a balding, slightly pudgy man; not unattractive, but certainly unthreatening. Elizabeth dresses behind him, pulling on her stockings and skirt.

ELIZABETH

Are you going to be late?

ROBINSON

Jean's covering first period. No reason for you to get up this early.

ELIZABETH

You do it every morning.

ROBINSON

A teacher's burden. Mad dogs, Englishmen, all that kind of thing. When's your car going to be ready?

ELIZABETH

Tomorrow, I hope. But I doubt I'm that lucky.

Robinson finishes shaving, sets the razor down on the sink next to his toothbrush. His WEDDING RING lies nearby.

When he looks in the mirror again he SEES HIS WIFE, half-dressed, WATCHING HIM --

-- as he reaches for the toothbrush without looking and brushes his thumb ACROSS THE RAZOR BLADE instead. He recoils in pain, knocking the razor and toothbrush into the sink and sending his wedding ring SKITTERING across the floor. Blood smears the white porcelain.

Elizabeth rushes over, sees the cut, reaches past him to open the medicine cabinet.

ELIZABETH

For God's sake, put some pressure on it.

He holds his thumb close to his face and stares in fascination as a THICK RUBY DROP wells from the cut. The drop grows, slides down his finger, turns into a small river. He twists his hand back and forth watching the tributary of blood snake down his palm and across his wrist.

Elizabeth douses a cotton ball in alcohol, grabs his hand, and shoves the cotton against the cut. He gasps a little, broken from his trance. The cotton ball slowly turns scarlet.

ELIZABETH

So were you just going to stand there and bleed to death?

She smiles and removes the cotton ball. Blood begins to seep from the cut again.

ROBINSON

I just...

ELIZABETH

Poor baby, doesn't even know what to do at the sight of his own blood.

She takes his thumb...and puts it in her mouth, sucking the blood away. Something mischievous plays around her lips. She removes his finger and neatly wraps a bandage around it. Looks up at him.

They lean in close. He puts a hand behind her neck, nuzzles her shoulder. She sighs but begins to push him away.

ELIZABETH

I can't...I've got to get to work...

ROBINSON

(murmuring)

Stay with me.

Robinson begins to kiss her, but she pulls back, smiling.

ELIZABETH

Later, my mighty English mad dog.

She gives him a quick peck on the lips.

ELIZABETH

Now go find your ring before I become a woman of ill-repute.

He raises an eyebrow.

ELIZABETH

DOn't even think about saying it.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - DAY

Robinson pulls his car up in front of a modern office building. The car is something mid-range, affordable; it hasn't been washed in ages.

INT. CAR - DAY

Robinson turns off the engine.

ELIZABETH

So how late can you pick me up?

ROBINSON

I'll kill some time grading papers. How's six?

ELIZABETH

Six is fine. Then maybe we can go house hunting...dinner at Casey's -- my treat.

ROBINSON

You're feeling magnanimous today.

ELIZABETH

Don't worry. You'll work it off later.

She kisses him, bites him lightly on the lip. He playfully pulls back.

ROBINSON

See if I let you do that again.

ELIZABETH

Something to remember me by.

She grabs her briefcase, opens the door, gets out of the car.

ROBINSON

And how will you remember me?

ELIZABETH

I never forget you.

She leans into the car for a last kiss and then closes the door. Robinson can only watch as his wife walks away, a thoughtful look on his face.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Elizabeth strides towards the elevators and passes an expensively dressed man wearing glasses heading out the front door: his name is RALEIGH. A GLANCE passes between them as he walks by.

INT. CAR - DAY

Robinson checks his gold pocket watch, noting the time. He snaps the cover shut and LOOKS UP into the rearview mirror as an ominous shape looms into view. A HUGE SILVER CADILLAC.

EXT. CADILLAC - DAY

Raleigh walks up to the Cadillac. It PURRS like a jungle cat that's recently eaten.

The rear passenger door opens.

He hesitates for a moment before getting in.

INT. CAR - DAY

Robinson starts the car and drives away, GLANCING into the rearview mirror once more -- just in time to see the rear passenger door of the Cadillac close.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

If I'd known what he was, Beth, if I'd really known, I never could have done it...even with your help.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

All dark leather and tinted windows. Raleigh is seated next to DOLAN. Dolan's face is obscured, but his most notable feature is a magnificent silver mane, like an old Byronic poet. Same color as the Cadillac. He wears a finely tailored business suit, a Rolex glinting at his wrist, and smokes an arty European cigarette.

Dim streets can be glimpsed through the polarized windows as the Cadillac begins to move. In the front seat are MARK and MIKE, Dolan's bodyguards. Mark drives while Mike looks straight ahead. They're classic goons, both built like bull elephants, the last rung on nature's evolutionary ladder of intimidating mammals.

DOLAN
Hello, Raleigh.

RALEIGH
I hope this won't take too long -- I've got a meeting in a half-hour.

DOLAN
No, shouldn't take long at all. I appreciate your meeting with me on such short notice.

Raleigh smiles, a practiced reflex.

RALEIGH
My pleasure, particularly for such a valued client.

DOLAN
(nodding)
You should buckle-up.

Raleigh looks confused, not quite sure if he heard right. Dolan gestures vaguely towards the seat with his cigarette.

DOLAN
Seatbelt. It's safer.

Still a little confused, Raleigh complies and buckles his seatbelt.

INT. CUBICLE - DAY

Elizabeth drops her briefcase onto the desk and has just enough time to log into her computer before SU stops by.

SU
Hey, Beth. Wanna grab some coffee?

ELIZABETH
You know I just sat down all of five seconds ago.

SU
And...what?

Elizabeth stares at the computer screen for a moment.

ELIZABETH
I suppose you're going to Starbucks?

SU
Yeah. It's a nice day, what the hell.

Elizabeth sighs, notices the mailing tube sitting on her desk.

ELIZABETH
Okay, look, I've got to run something down to the mail room so it heads out this morning. Can you hold on that long?

SU
Yeah, sure.

ELIZABETH
I'll make it quick.

Su leaves and Elizabeth grabs the mailing tube, hurrying out of her cubicle.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

DOLAN
You know I'm an influential man in the community.

RALEIGH
Of course.

DOLAN
I got that way by working with good people and treating them with respect. I find that when I treat people with respect, they're more likely to look out for my own interests.

RALEIGH
It's only good business. It's why we've always been happy to have you as a client.

DOLAN
And we've done good business together.

Raleigh nods, makes a noise of assent.

DOLAN

Do you understand what that means? To be in business with someone?

RALEIGH

Well..I -- I like to think that it means we have a relationship built on mutual respect, one that...that the both of us can profit from.

Dolan looks directly at him, locking his eyes. Wanting him to see what's in there.

DOLAN

You're a cocksucker, Raleigh -- you didn't deserve my respect, but I gave it to you anyways. I gave it to your firm. But you thought you could fuck me over.

And now Raleigh is nervous.

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

Elizabeth trots down the stairs, the mailing tube tucked under one arm.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

Raleigh's smile flickers and fades. Something he did -- or was planning to do -- is catching up with him very quickly. But if he can just talk fast enough, he still might be able to run away from it.

RALEIGH

Well, um, I-I don't know that that's a, uh, really, a...constructive way of addressing whatever problems you might have with the firm. I'm sure that if -- if we could take a moment to examine the specific issues --

MARK

Mr. Dolan?

The car pulls to halt.

Dolan puts out his cigarette and begins to unbuckle his seatbelt.

RALEIGH

-- and address them individually, then I'm confident that we could resolve them in a way that would --

Dolan turns and SLAMS HIS FOREARM into Raleigh's windpipe. Raleigh gurgles, his eyes wide with shock. Dolan reaches down with his other arm, removes an ICE PICK from an ankle sheath, and SHOVES it through Raleigh's glasses and INTO HIS EYE SOCKET. Raleigh's body FLAPS about in the seat as he gasps for breath, but Dolan holds him down and HISSES in his ear.

DOLAN

You motherfucker, you shit-eating little bottom-feeder, you were gonna turn me in! You didn't think I'd find out?

He gives the ice pick another shove for good measure.

DOLAN

I knew every secret you had the moment I met you. Afraid you'd shit your pants and hating yourself for it. I could smell it on you, like piss on a hot day. Thought you were smarter than me. That's what you thought, right?

Raleigh's body stills. A thin trickle of blood falls from his ruined socket.

DOLAN

Fuck you.

Dolan JERKS the ice pick out and Raleigh's body slumps over in the seat.

The car starts moving again as Dolan sits back down and buckles his seatbelt.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Really a cul de sac with one end a featureless brick wall and the other end open to the street. Elizabeth opens a door on one side of the alley; across the way is the mail room door, a short-cut.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

Dolan leans back in his seat, lights another cigarette, his heavy breathing slowing.

DOLAN

Find some place to pull over so we can dump this piece of shit.

MIKE

I'm not sure that's such a good idea, Mr. Dolan. Here in the city, middle of the day and all.

Dolan takes a long drag on his cigarette, exhales, then reaches into Raleigh's front pocket and removes his wallet. He tosses the wallet up front.

MIKE

Mr. Dolan...?

Dolan takes a pistol from a shoulder holster hidden beneath his jacket. He puts the gun to the back of Raleigh's head and pulls the trigger. The shot is DEAFENING. BLOOD AND BRAINS SPRAY EVERYWHERE.

Dead silence. Cordite-tinged smoke hangs in the air. Dolan takes another drag on his cigarette, unconcerned.

DOLAN

He was just mugged. Now pull the fuck over.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Just as Elizabeth reaches the mail room door she HEARS something and turns --

The rear passenger-side door of Dolan's Cadillac opens and a BODY ROLLS OUT. It's RALEIGH, or what's left of him.

And for that one moment the lighting perfectly illuminates Dolan's face as Elizabeth SEES HIM in the rear seat...gun in hand...covered in blood.

The door slams shut and the Cadillac speeds away...but Elizabeth's eyes reflect the terrible knowledge of what she's seen.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

Dolan looks out the window as cars and buildings blur past. For the first time he seems to notice the gun and the blood.

DOLAN

I want this mess cleaned up. Like it never happened.

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

The room is cramped, cheap, and utilitarian. Robinson and Elizabeth sit across a table from DETECTIVE CASTILLO, a large man in a rumpled, off the rack suit.

Spread out on the table in front of him are several glossy black and white photos. One of them is Dolan.

Elizabeth points to Dolan's photo.

ELIZABETH

Him.

Robinson grasps her arm.

CASTILLO

Are you sure?

She can't take her eyes off the photo.

ELIZABETH

Yes. In the photo he's not covered in blood.

Castillo looks at her, taking her measure.

CASTILLO

They usually aren't.

He collects the rest of the photos, leaving Dolan's on the table. He seems rather pleased.

ROBINSON

Who is he?

CASTILLO

Pet project of mine. Dolan. Owns a bunch of legitimate businesses around town -- clubs, catering, restaurants, that kind of thing. Even has his own modeling agency. Stays away from the casinos. Also moves a considerable amount of

drugs, racketeering, typical goombah stuff. He's just smarter about it.

ROBINSON

So...so can you put him away for this?

Castillo laughs ruefully, and it's quite clear that his laughter is directed towards Robinson's ignorance.

CASTILLO

Yeah, sure. Right away. Of course there's no evidence. We picked him up tooling around in his Caddy an hour or so ago, but there's no sign of a murder. Nothing like your wife described.

Elizabeth looks up.

ELIZABETH

But -- but the blood...it was everywhere...

CASTILLO

I'm sure it was. He still likes to get his hands dirty from time to time. But he was clean when they found him.

ROBSINSON

What about the car?

CASTILLO

He's got four of 'em, simple enough to switch one out, and by the time anyone gets a warrant the others'll be as sterile as an operating room. This guy doesn't do shit half-assed -- take those Cadillacs. Same type they build for South American dictators, armored like a battleship, self-sealing tires, the whole nine yards.

ROBINSON

So what happens?

Castillo leans back in his folding metal chair.

CASTILLO

What happens is your wife agrees to testify or he's back walking the street inside of a few hours.

ROBINSON

No. No, there's got to be another way.

CASTILLO

(to Elizabeth)

It'll go to a grand jury. We'll turn you over to the Feds, they'll take care of you. You'd be safer than the President, have yourself a nice vacation, and Dolan goes away for a long while.

ROBINSON

If she does then he'll know. You can't tell me prison will stop him from finding some way to --

Elizabeth puts a hand over his, still grasping her arm. She turns to look into his eyes.

ELIZABETH

He killed someone. What kind of world is that? People just...killing someone, for no reason, because they can. It's not the kind of place I want to live in.

ROBINSON

It's a horrible thing, but we can't do anything about it.
(beat)

It happens, and its terrible, but the only thing I can do is protect you.

ELIZABETH

If we don't do this -- if I don't do this -- then there isn't any protection. Not from people like that, not ever.

Robinson takes her hand in his.

ROBINSON

You can't. He's not worth it, not worth what could happen if --

There's a KNOCK and the door opens. A FEMALE COP pops her head in.

FEMALE COP

Ma'am? I need you to come with me so I can take your statement.

Elizabeth looks at Castillo and he nods.

She gets up and kisses Robinson on the forehead.

ELIZABETH

It's the right thing to do. Don't worry, everything'll be fine.

The female cop and Elizabeth leave. Awkward silence fills the room.

CASTILLO

She's right. There's really nothing to worry about.

ROBINSON

I don't know that I believe that.

Castillo laughs, gets up, walks over to him and leans against the table -- close enough to make Robinson visibly uncomfortable.

CASTILLO

You had a nice, normal life before this, didn't you? Thought this was the kind of thing that only happened to poor people, or junkies, people who were asking for it? And then this comes crashing into your world, and suddenly the late fees on your video rentals don't seem so important.

Robinson won't look at him.

ROBINSON

This is what people like you are supposed to protect us from.

CASTILLO

This is a wake-up call. What do you know about gangsters that you didn't pick up from "The Godfather"? This is the real shit. And here's the truth -- if you're wife doesn't testify, she's dead, and there ain't a damned you can do about it.

Castillo leans in closer.

CASTILLO

You let me deal with it. You let the Feds deal with it. And then maybe you and your wife can go back to the life you thought you had and just bury all this like it never happened.

Robinson says nothing. There's nothing he can say.

EXT. POLICE PARKING LOT - TWILIGHT

The sun has just dipped below the horizon, the sky gone a cold gray. Robinson and Elizabeth embrace passionately as Castillo, the female cop, and a few other officers stand at a discreet distance.

ELIZABETH

They say I can get in touch with you tomorrow, after they hand me over to the FBI.

She stops, laughs.

ELIZABETH

God, that sounds so strange.

ROBINSON

As soon as I can, I'll be with you. We'll get through this.

ELIZABETH

I know we will.

They kiss once more.

ELIZABETH

Don't look so glum. Like he said, it's a vacation.

A PLAINCLOTHES OFFICER leads Elizabeth away to a waiting unmarked car.

Castillo approaches Robinson, puts a hand on his shoulder.

CASTILLO

This really is for the best.

Maybe Robinson notices the odd-looking MECHANIC strolling by, or maybe he just wants to say something to his wife, but he shrugs off Castillo and walks towards the car.

INT. CAR - TWILIGHT

Elizabeth settles herself in the back seat as the plainclothes officer climbs into the front. Away from her husband she sags a little, the tension and stress finally bubbling to the surface.

ELIZABETH

I hope this isn't too far. I've had a long day.

She laughs at the understatement.

OFFICER

Not too far, ma'am.

Elizabeth turns, SEES HER HUSBAND walking towards the car. She puts a hand on the officer's shoulder --

ELIZABETH

Wait --

-- as the officer puts the key into the ignition and turns it.

EXT. POLICE PARKING LOT - TWILIGHT

The car EXPLODES in a hellish orange fireball against the darkening blue-gray sky. Robinson is slapped to the ground. Wreckage CLATTERS all around him. SHOUTING AND SCREAMING everywhere.

After a moment he lifts his head, face to face with the inferno that's just consumed his life. His mind can't process what it's seeing. Somewhere inside of that burning hulk is his wife. And he has to get to her. He drags himself across the asphalt, tears streaking his face.

He doesn't get very far. Castillo and two other cops attempt to haul him back from the raging heat, but Robinson fights them like an animal, flailing ineffectually, kicking, growling, grunting unrecognizable syllables of loss.

The car burns.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A piercingly bright day. Robinson stands near an open grave along with friends and family as Elizabeth's coffin is lowered into the ground. His wedding ring GLEAMS in the sun.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

The funeral reception. Robinson moves as if in a dream as various people stop to whisper their condolences and then

move on. JENNY KIEFER, another teacher at Robinson's school, stops him with an awkward touch. It takes a moment before he recognizes her.

ROBINSON
Jenny.

JENNY
Oh, hi...I -- I'm so sorry. They announced it at school and I thought I should come. I know I'm not family --

ROBINSON
It's okay.

JENNY
Thanks. Look, I'm going to try and not embarrass myself. People say the stupidest things at times like this, and I know it can't mean anything to you. It's just -- I am sorry. She meant a lot to you, we could all tell that. Someday it will be better.

ROBINSON
I know.

Jenny hugs him.

JENNY
We'll see you back at school. Take care.

Robinson gives her a wan smile as she leaves.

He turns and NOTICES CASTILLO standing at the edge of the crowd. Something burns in Robinson's eyes that wasn't there before -- something that isn't grief -- and Castillo turns away.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Robinson sits in his chair watching as a CHILD draws a rectangle on the chalkboard. He stares at the geometrical figure and sees --

EXT. GRAVE - DAY

-- Elizabeth's OPEN GRAVE. The pitch black hole yawns wide, swallowing everything around it.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

CHILD

-- Robinson? Mr. Robinson? Is that right?

Robinson stirs himself.

ROBINSON

...yes, yes that's a rectangle. Now how is a rectangle different from a square?

INT. CAR - DAY

Robinson gets into his car and closes the door. He puts his head down on the steering wheel, the keys still dangling from his hand. Finally he puts the key into the ignition and pauses before turning it: *maybe I'll get lucky and the car will explode*. He turns the key...the ENGINE STARTS, the RADIO BLARES.

Disgusted, Robinson shifts the car into gear and drives away.

INT. CONDO/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Robinson sits in a chair in front of the television, a bottle cradled in his lap, a glass perched on the arm of the chair. He hasn't changed out of his work clothes, a teacher's uniform of slacks, cheap Oxford shirt, and department store tie. The television is muted, but a song is playing on the stereo -- "MOONDANCE" by VAN MORRISON. It's THEIR SONG. He watches the images on the television without really seeing them.

ON THE TELEVISION

is a local news program. Two talking heads cut to the opening of a casino. Dolan is there, Byronic, redolent of nice things, silk shirt, cufflinks, a gorgeous woman. He steps from a silver Cadillac flanked by two goons.

BACK TO SCENE

The bottle drops to the floor, spilling cheap alcohol onto the carpet.

Robinson stumble-falls from the chair, crawls to the television, and tentatively reaches out to touch Dolan's face, now in CLOSEUP. Dolan smiles a small, confident smile that seems to be saying "I win. Fuck you."

The music has STOPPED, but Robinson doesn't notice.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)
He did this.

It's ELIZABETH'S VOICE, clear and completely natural, as if she were somewhere in the room.

Robinson swings about wildly looking for the source of his dead wife's voice.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)
Dolan.

He scrambles backwards, wedging himself into the alcove between the television and a stereo speaker.

ROBINSON
No...

Almost whining. Pleading. Begging not to lose whatever claim he has to sanity.

Now the voice comes from the speaker next to him.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)
He made you a widower. Made me dead.

ROBINSON
Elizabeth...

ELIZABETH (V.O.)
But I never forgot you.

Robinson stares at the speaker, caught between his love for his wife and the abject terror of hearing her speak from beyond the grave.

After a moment, THEIR SONG begins playing again, drowning out the sounds of Robinson's sobbing.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

It's raining. Robinson sits in the driver's seat with his hands clenched on the steering wheel at 10 and 2. The engine is off and he sits in darkness. He is parked far down the street and out of sight from an expensive restaurant: DEL TORO'S.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

Everyone goes mad once in a while...at least that's what I've heard. And at first that's what I thought you were, a little madness, a little company from some howling place deep inside. But wherever you came from, you were right about Dolan and what he did.

Dolan is getting into one of his ubiquitous silver Cadillacs, two new women on either arm. Several umbrellas are held overhead to insure that not a drop of water touches his silver mane. His gold Rolex SHINES LIKE A BEACON.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

I knew what you wanted. I just didn't know if I could do it.

The headlights of an approaching car FLASH in the rearview mirror. Robinson starts the car, flips on the headlights, and pulls out. He drives past Dolan and the Cadillac.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

School teachers and high-priced hoodlums don't have the same freedom of movement, after all.

EXTREME CLOSEUP - PICTURES

A Kandinsky, Klee, O'Keefe. Each is removed in turn revealing bare wall, nails and hooks pried loose from the plaster.

INT. CONDO/BEDROOM - NIGHT

The bed and all the other furniture has been pushed up against one wall, the pictures piled on top of the bed. Opposite the bed is a huge expanse of featureless white wall where pictures once hung. Robinson stands on a stepladder using a power drill to attach track lighting to the ceiling in front of the blank wall.

INT. CONDO/BEDROOM - LATER

Robinson flicks a switch and the track lights illuminate the blank wall, flooding it with bright white emptiness. In the middle of that pristine emptiness Robinson tacks a large newsprint photo of Dolan, carefully trimmed from the newspaper. He stands back to admire his work. And the work he has yet to do.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Robinson is seated across from a clearly uncomfortable PRINCIPAL HANNING. The principal is toying with his pen, trying to decide how to start, and Robinson's resolute silence is not helping. After a moment he deliberately sets the pen to one side and gathers himself to speak.

PRINCIPAL HANNING

I find that these meetings, while they can be awkward, can also be of some benefit. Now, you know that myself and the rest of the administration are certainly sympathetic to the...unfortunate events that have recently occurred.

ROBINSON

Of course.

The principal blinks, this unexpected token of even-tempered politeness putting him on firmer ground.

PRINCIPAL HANNING

Yes. But this absenteeism is unacceptable. On several occasions in the last three months you've simply not shown up to work without warning or explanation. Several parents found you --

He flips a sheet of paper.

PRINCIPAL HANNING

-- "unprepared" and "unfocused" during conferences and --

ROBINSON

I know, and I can't apologize enough for any problems I might have caused. This won't happen again, I promise you.

Principal Hanning considers this, looking back and forth between Robinson and his papers before he takes a deep breath.

PRINCIPAL HANNING

I hope not. It puts us -- all of us -- in an awkward position. Now given the amount of stress you've been under lately, I don't think there's any need to raise this to the level of a disciplinary action -- but with the summer break coming up I hope you'll use the opportunity to think about what you want to accomplish here. Maybe take a vacation. Feel better.

ROBINSON

Absolutely, and I really appreciate the patience you and everyone else have shown. It's been a...difficult time, and I'm afraid I haven't always dealt with it in the best possible way.

PRINCIPAL HANNING

Well, I'm sure you've done as well as any of us could have under the circumstances.

ROBINSON

Thank you. I think that with everyone's support I'll be able to move on.

PRINCIPAL HANNING

That's why we're here.

There is an uncomfortably long pause as Principal Hanning struggles to find some note of consolation on which to end the meeting.

PRINCIPAL HANNING

And it will get better.

Robinson smiles in a way that is meant to convey positive optimism for the future -- a difficult but successful road to recovery. Instead it looks like a man grinning on his way to the gas chamber.

ROBINSON

Yes, I'm sure it will.

INT. GAS STATION - DAY

A natty stop in the middle of the desert between LA and Las Vegas. Robinson is buying an LA street map, some assorted

junk food and a soda from the scraggly CLERK behind the counter.

CLERK

So ya headin' to LA? Gonna catch the movie stars?

ROBINSON

Just a little vacation.

He laughs to himself as he hands his money to the clerk.

ROBINSON

You know, get away for a while, think. Feel better.

EXT. DOLAN'S LA HOUSE - NIGHT

A very tony neighborhood. Robinson watches Dolan's house from the shadows of the trees lining the street. It's obvious from the cars and noise that Dolan is having a PARTY.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

A cheap LA flophouse. YELLING can be heard through the thin walls separating this room from the next. Cheesy GUITAR ROCK and red neon from the strip joint across the street creep in through the open window. The AC is broken, the only compensation a limp summer breeze.

Robinson lies sweating, naked on the bed. Staring into the darkness.

EXTREME CLOSEUP - NEWSPAPER

clipping from a gossip column headlined "MR. DOLAN'S WILD NIGHT," thumbtacked next to a photocopied review of the restaurant Del Toro's on Robinson's bedroom wall.

INT. RENTAL CAR - DAY

Robinson watches as maids unload equipment from a van marked "BIG JOE'S CLEANING SERVICE" into Dolan's house. He writes something on a pad in his lap, hidden beneath a street map he's unfolded over the steering wheel to give the impression that he's lost and just pulled over to check his directions.

SERIES OF SHOTS

as Robinson goes about his business in LA. "MOONDANCE"
PLAYS OVER.

- A) Robinson attempting to describe something to a disdainful clerk in a jewelry store on Rodeo Drive; she hands him a brochure when it becomes clear he has no interest in buying anything.
- B) EXTREME CLOSEUP of a glossy Rolex brochure, pinned to Robinson's bedroom wall like a butterfly.
- C) Robinson purchasing a PO box under an assumed name, paying with cash.
- D) EXTREME CLOSEUP of an LA street map, now covered in circled locations, travel routes, and notes.
- E) Robinson retrieving a thick manila envelope from his P.O. box. The return address is GENERAL MOTORS.
- F) EXTREME CLOSEUP of photocopied General Motors brochures. There is a diagram of a Cadillac and yellow-highlighted phrases such as "bulletproof glass," "8 cylinders," and "armor."

ROBINSON (V.O.)

I had to be careful. A thing like Dolan, almost more animal than man, would have sensed anything too obvious. It was better to be a mouse behind the baseboards...a snake slithering in the basement...a spider high up in the rafters...

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Robinson is watching a movie.

ON THE TELEVISION

is an old '70s film about thieves robbing an armored car in the desert. The guards are killed in particularly lurid, Peckinpah fashion.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

A road sign: "103 MILES TO LAS VEGAS." Dolan's silver Cadillac THUNDERS PAST. Many, many cars back Robinson follows.

INT. CAR - DAY

Robinson's eyes are fixed on the horizon in grim determination. He drives past roadwork and detour signs, turns off onto the rutted detour, and --

-- Dolan's car is there, by the side of the road. One of the goons peeking under the hood. Steam rises into his face. Dolan stands nearby, immaculate and cool even under the harsh sun. His eyes slide across Robinson's face without any more recognition than would be given a gnat.

SCENES FROM THE MOVIE

Robinson was watching in his LA motel room are replayed, thieves brutally slaying armored guards in the middle of the desert.

BACK TO SCENE

Robinson continues driving.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

It's the first day of the new year and Robinson is hurrying to his class as the BELL RINGS.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Robinson enters but the room is deserted. All the background noise, the hustle and voices, all gone. QUIET. His name is written on the chalkboard: "MR. ROBINSON."

Robinson looks around, walks hesitantly to his desk.

A children's book is lying on the desk. The title is "REVENGE FOR ELIZABETH OR HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION."

CLOSEUP - BOOK

as Robinson opens it to the first page, showing a picture of Elizabeth's car exploding drawn in cartoonish child-like crayon.

He turns the page.

Another picture drawn in crayon. A house. Upstairs is a stick-figure Dolan with silver hair. Downstairs is a bottle with gas escaping from its top; a skull and crossbones are drawn on the bottle label.

The next page shows Dolan's car in the desert, a stick-figure Robinson shooting it out with Dolan like the thieves in the movie. Dead stick-figure goons hang out of the shattered windows, X's drawn for eyes.

ROBINSON
No...he'd know...

He turns to the next page.

A wolf with Robinson's smiling face cuts off a silver colored Dolan-sheep from the herd.

Robinson slowly turns to the last page.

A cartoon Robinson dressed as part of a roadside construction crew, holding up a sign that says "DETOUR."

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Robinson is asleep at his desk, head in his arms. He wakes up, knocking a vase of desert flowers onto the floor. The room is empty, after school. Robinson begins to pick up the flowers and pieces of vase off the floor, then stops. He goes to the window. Outside he SEES A CROSSING GUARD with a red stop sign holding traffic as children cross the street.

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

Robinson is drawing a rectangle on the chalkboard. He doesn't notice Jenny until she knocks on the doorframe.

JENNY
Hey there...busy?

Robinson looks up, then begins to erase the rectangle.

ROBINSON
No, just trying to work something out.

Jenny walks in, looks around.

JENNY

So...they gave you the big room this year?

ROBINSON

Stroke of luck. Next year they'll move me to the janitor's closet.

Jenny laughs politely.

ROBINSON

What's up?

JENNY

I just wanted to see how the little monsters treated you on the first day.

ROBINSON

Aside from the little girl who insisted there was a tiger in the restroom, fine.

JENNY

Funny, I had a boy who said there was a lion.

Robinson finishes erasing the chalkboard and begins to gather his things from the desk, putting them into his briefcase.

JENNY

Did you, uh, do anything interesting over the summer?

Robinson looks at her for just a moment, then goes back to his briefcase.

ROBINSON

No, nothing really. Sat around the apartment. Took some walks. Rented a few videos.

JENNY

Really...that's great. No mad orgies down on the strip?

ROBINSON

No.

He snaps his briefcase shut.

ROBINSON

Hey, look, I'm really sorry, but I've got to be
someplace...

JENNY

Sure, no problem, we'll catch up a little later.

Robinson brushes past Jenny and leaves. A disgusted look
descends on Jenny's face.

JENNY

Dammit. Brilliant, absolutely brilliant. Maybe next time I
should try "So how's the dead wife? You two getting along
okay?" That would go over almost as well.

INT. CONDO/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Robinson sits on the floor, his back against the bed,
staring at the wall and its collage of information. He
cradles a half-filled shot glass between his knees.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Robinson is running through the multiplication tables for
the class on the chalkboard when the BELL RINGS. The kids
file past him on their way out of the room.

ROBINSON

Remember, I want you all to do the multiplication table for
your threes tonight!

Principal Hanning is at the end of the line; he's been
evaluating the class from the back of the room.

PRINCIPAL HANNING

The kids are okay?

ROBINSON

Yeah, they're a good class.

PRINCIPAL HANNING

Well, they seem to have taken to you. Good job. I hope your
break went well?

ROBINSON

Very relaxing. Though I always wish they were longer.

He laughs a little.

ROBINSON

But really, I'm glad to be back at work.

PRINCIPAL HANNING

Good...good...

Principal Hanning awkwardly pats Robinson on the shoulder.

PRINCIPAL HANNING

Let me know if you need to talk about...anything.

ROBINSON

Thanks.

Principal Hanning leaves. Robinson sits down at his desk and removes a pad of graph paper from his briefcase. He begins to sketch on it. After a few moments he stops, rips off the top page, crumples it into a ball and -- oddly -- puts the discarded wad in his briefcase. He starts sketching again on the new page.

The sounds echo in the empty room.

INT. CONDO/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Robinson is sitting on the floor again, sheets of graph paper covered in rectangles and calculations spread around him. One of the Cadillac brochures peeks from between a couple pages. Robinson is drinking what is obviously not his first drink. He kneads his forehead.

ROBINSON

This is just insane...

He gets up, goes over to the wall.

ROBINSON

Sure, it's easy once you're dead. Leave all the hard work to the rest of us...little voices in our heads...

He stops, begins fingering the papers tacked to the wall.

ROBINSON

God, listen to me. What am I doing?

He looks around the bedroom.

ROBINSON

This isn't you, Beth...this isn't us...

He sways a little, leans against the wall, and slides to the floor.

ROBINSON

I can't carry this all by myself. I can't cry for you anymore. I just want it to end.

He cradles his head between his knees.

ROBINSON

When does it end?

(beat)

When do you let me go?

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - DAY

Robinson is filling his mug of coffee. He looks tired, dark circles under his eyes.

Jenny is sitting at a table nearby grading papers. After a moment's consideration, Robinson sits down across from her. She looks up with a noncommittal expression.

JENNY

Hey.

ROBINSON

Sorry I had to cut and run the other day.

JENNY

No big thing. You said you had someplace else to be.

ROBINSON

Yeah...it's a side-project I've been working on.

She raises an eyebrow.

ROBINSON

A little construction project. It's nothing, really. I just wanted to say I was sorry.

He seems about to say something else, but gets up to leave instead. Jenny's expression melts a little.

JENNY

Hey...look, maybe this isn't really the best time, and if it isn't, fine, but if you really wanted to apologize you'd let me buy you a drink.

ROBINSON

I need to --

He stops, looks away for a second.

ROBINSON

Never mind. It can wait. I'd appreciate a drink.

He gives her a faint smile.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

An unassuming bar without much personality, but it does have the benefit of being both dark and relatively quiet. Robinson and Jenny sit at a booth in back.

JENNY

So no leads?

ROBINSON

They know who did it. The cops and the Feds say it's only a matter of time. But...

JENNY

But what?

ROBINSON

It won't matter. So they get him for tax evasion or money laundering or some other murder. It won't be for Beth. He'll go free for that.

JENNY

Does it really matter? I mean the how or the why, as long as he's put away somewhere or...whatever.

ROBINSON

Wouldn't it matter to you? If someone killed your mother or your father, would it be enough to know that they'd be

lying in a grave someday of natural causes, right there
along side them?

JENNY

I don't know. I mean, of course I'd want that person
punished, maybe even dead. But if it became everything to
me...the only thing...then I might as well be in the grave
with them.

She shakes her head.

JENNY

I didn't mean -- I'm sorry, I didn't think --

ROBINSON

It's okay. Everyone steps around me like the mention of her
name is going to send me over the deep end. It's good to
talk about it. Makes it seem like it's not just something
in my head.

She smiles, touches his hand, but he doesn't quite seem to
register it.

ROBINSON

The funny thing is you love someone, you become better than
you are -- you do it for them. And then they go away. Like
an amputation, and you're left with a...a phantom limb. You
still feel them after they're gone. Everything you had,
everything you might have been together, it all starts to
weigh down on you and you wonder if...

He stops, smiles wanly.

ROBINSON

I'm sorry. I'm being maudlin. I haven't had a lot of social
contact lately.

JENNY

You were being poetic.

(beat)

Look, there's no...no timetable for this. No right way to
grieve for her, or for yourself. You've got to feel this,
otherwise you'll never be able to understand it.

ROBINSON

I don't think there's anything to understand. God lets
monsters loose in the world, and how can you fight

monsters? I just want to do whatever will let us be at peace. Both of us.

JENNY

I know. But for better or for worse, time kills all monsters.

ROBINSON

I thought time healed all wounds?

JENNY

That too.

ROBINSON

Maybe.

He looks off into the distance for a second, then finishes his drink with a resolute swallow.

ROBINSON

Want to get out of here?

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Robinson walks down the steps of the bar and is looking in the wrong direction when he BUMPS into a woman hurrying down the street.

ELIZABETH

Excuse me.

He looks up, startled at the voice that sounds exactly like Elizabeth.

And it is Elizabeth. Her face turned away as she continues to walk away down the street, but her hair, her clothes, all exactly the same as on the day she died.

Robinson is rooted to the spot, a statue, powerless to move until she turns the corner out of sight. He could run after her, but he already knows it would be pointless.

Jenny exits the bar and slides her arm into his.

JENNY

Walk me to my car?

ROBINSON
Yeah...yeah, sure.

As they walk away, they pass another WOMAN -- this one looks nothing like Elizabeth, but her rapid, one-sided conversation on a cell phone draws his attention anyways.

WOMAN
...the car should be ready tomorrow, but I doubt I'm that lucky. No, I won't forget. You know I could never forget you. Well put a bandage on it -- you are such a baby. It's just blood...

INT. CONDO/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Robinson slams the door shut and walks to the middle of the living room, briefcase dangling limply from his hand. He looks around.

ROBINSON
Where are you?

No reply. Something slips inside of him, tectonic plates of emotion grating against each other.

ROBINSON
WHERE ARE YOU?!

Still no reply.

He throws the briefcase across the room, then strides to a bookcase and pulls down a shelf of books.

ROBINSON
Are you back there?

He pulls down another shelf, frantic, books and trinkets all tumbling to the floor.

ROBINSON
Or back there?

He pulls down more books, knocks aside a picture of he and Beth on honeymoon, turns and kicks over the stereo speaker.

ROBINSON

What, no goddamned fucking voices?! Where are the voices now, Beth?!

Even this little exertion and he's spent; sweating and breathing heavily he drops to his knees, looking about the room. His eyes come to rest on the briefcase. The lock has popped open and graph paper spills from its mouth. He starts to crawl across the room towards it.

ROBINSON

What kind of ghost are you...can't even spare a few moments for your grieving husband...the one who let you burn...I'll never forget you, Beth...and you'll never let me, will you?

He reaches his papers and starts to sort through them, each one covered in precisely drawn rectangles. He stares at them, tries to stack them neatly, but is finally overcome by a wave of anguish and exhaustion. The papers crumple in his fists as he begins to sob.

ROBINSON

...so sorry, Beth...I'm so sorry...I just want to see you again, and I-I think I'm going crazy...please help me...tell me what you want...I'm so sorry...so sorry I let you die...

INT. HEALTH CLUB - DAY

Robinson is pumping the handlebars of an exercise machine, sweating, grunting.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

And that was that. I decided to get healthy. I told myself I was moving on, feeling better, and for a time I think I even meant it.

Robinson makes one last push, then drops the handlebars the last inch or two, exhausted.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

But even then I think part of me knew, and was preparing.

INT. MALL - DAY

The mall is awash in Christmas decorations and packed with people. Robinson and Jenny do their best to push their way through the crowds.

JENNY

Thanks for coming with me -- I hate going Christmas shopping alone. Feels like I've been condemned to one of the circles of Hell Dante never got around to cataloging.

She looks around.

JENNY

Did you know the walls are painted red with the blood of Christmas shoppers caught after hours?

ROBINSON

I was not aware of that.

JENNY

True fact.

They come within sight of a toy store.

JENNY

Let's go in there -- I need to find something for my cousin. It'll be quick, I promise.

Jenny begins to drag Robinson in that direction by his hand.

INT. TOY STORE - DAY

Robinson and Jenny are quickly separated in the throng of children and their parents. Robinson wanders down one aisle filled with action figures and other toys, idly looking for a present. Something catches his attention, something that GLITTERS beneath a pile of toys on one side of the aisle.

He reaches down to pick it up. It is a toy Cadillac. Silver.

Robinson drops the toy as if bitten, looks up and down the aisle.

ROBINSON

(whispering)

Leave me alone!

Somewhere nearby a woman LAUGHS.

Jenny lays a hand on his shoulder and Robinson starts.

JENNY

I thought I'd lost you to the mall.
(off his face)
Hey, are you okay?

ROBINSON

Yeah, just a touch of claustrophobia. Think we can get out
of here?

JENNY

Sure.

They wade through the mass of children.

JENNY

I know the feeling. Being in a crowd of people can feel
like being buried alive sometimes.

EXT. MALL - DAY

As they leave the mall Robinson happens to glance across
the parking lot and SEES A SILVER CADILLAC. This one is
life size, though: the real thing, and Dolan's goons are
loading gaudily wrapped boxes into its trunk. Dolan is
nowhere in sight.

Robinson stops dead in his tracks.

ROBINSON

Jesus. It's him.

JENNY

Who?

ROBINSON

Dolan. The man who killed my wife. That's his car.

JENNY

Are you sure?

ROBINSON

Of course I'm sure!

Jenny recoils a bit at his vehemence.

He stares at the car for a long, tense moment, hands clenched into fists at his side.

JENNY
(quietly)

I guess even monsters have to go Christmas shopping.

ROBINSON
He's buying presents for his family and all his friends, don't you see? It'll be perfect. The presents will be wrapped with big fat bows under a nice big tree and everything will be covered in decorations and ornaments and a fire will be burning in the hearth --

JENNY
Don't...don't do this to yourself.

ROBINSON
-- That's what they call it in those big mansions, isn't it? A hearth? And they'll all be there. His family, his friends, his goddamned women. The little ones will crowd around him asking for their presents. "Uncle Dolan!" they'll say, "Uncle Dolan!", and one at a time he'll hand them each a package, smiling...smiling at them...

Robinson's eyes bore holes through the armor-plated car.

JENNY
Come on. Let's go. I'm cold.

Jenny grabs his arm, physically pulling him away. Robinson resists for a second and then allows himself to be dragged from the awful sight -- but his face remains stony and cold. Jenny begins to nuzzle his chest in a way that is surprisingly intimate, but Robinson doesn't seem to notice or care.

INT. RESTARAUNT - NIGHT

An expensive restaurant, packed with a New Year's Eve crowd. Robinson and Jenny sit at a table sipping from glasses of wine.

ROBINSON
This is one of my last drinks, you know.

JENNY

What do you mean?

ROBINSON

I'm giving it up. New Year's resolution.

JENNY

That seems somewhat drastic.

ROBINSON

It hasn't been the comfort it used to be.

JENNY

Not the company, I hope?

ROBINSON

No...no, not yours. And what's your resolution?

JENNY

I knew you were going to ask me that. I can never come up with anything suitably dramatic. "Be a nice person" or..."Read more Shirley Jackson." Something like that, you know, personally enriching.

ROBINSON

Who's Shirley Jackson?

JENNY

Famous author. Wrote that short story about the woman getting stoned by the town after she wins the lottery.

ROBINSON

Oh, yeah. I remember reading her in college. She wrote horror stories, right?

JENNY

Something like that. She did a lot of other stuff, too, most of it pretty disturbing. The horror in everyday life, cheerful things like that.

Robinson ponders this.

ROBINSON

And that's your resolution?

JENNY

No -- give me a second.
(beat)

To take chances. On the things that are important. It's not exactly going to house small orphans or anything...but that's it, that's my resolution.

ROBINSON

And what are the important things?

Jenny smiles, about to say something, but changes her mind.

JENNY

I won't know until I take a chance. That's why it's a resolution. Now I've got a question for you.

ROBINSON

What's that?

Jenny points to his hand.

JENNY

You still wear your wedding ring.

Robinson glances at his hand.

ROBINSON

Yeah. It just never occurred to me to take it off. So what do you think? Too morbid?

JENNY

No. I mean, I know it's important, I just wondered what it meant...to you.

Robinson laughs a little ruefully, twisting the ring back and forth on his finger.

ROBINSON

I don't guess it means anything anymore. Till death do you part. And one of us is certainly that.

He looks up, smiling.

ROBINSON

Sorry. Little black humor. I guess now it's more of a reminder.

(beat)

You know I can't even picture her face anymore? I can still see the rest of her, clear as day, but the face is almost a blur.

JENNY

That happens to everybody. You can't beat yourself up over it.

ROBINSON

But I owe her so much. For the time we spent together, for the person she helped me become. I feel like there's this debt that I've got no idea how to repay.

JENNY

You don't have any debts. If she was here, she'd tell you that.

Robinson's expression changes slightly, his attention caught by something in Jenny he hadn't noticed before.

ROBINSON

And what would you tell me?

A WAITER swoops by their table before she can answer and deposits two flutes of champagne.

WAITER

Ten minutes to midnight.

And then he swiftly moves away.

Robinson takes his glass and raises it in toast.

ROBINSON

To new beginnings.

Jenny likewise raises her glass and they clink together.

JENNY

New beginnings.

INT. CONDO/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Robinson and Jenny stumble in the door, laughing and obviously drunk. Jenny is hanging off Robinson. They begin to kiss and hurriedly tug at each other's clothes.

INT. CONDO/BEDROOM - NIGHT

-- as they fall into bed together, Jenny struggling out of her dress, laughing, kissing Robinson as he responds in kind. She looks at him hungrily, begins to slide down his chest. Robinson smiles blearily as he pulls his wallet and change and the gold pocket watch from his pants, placing them on the nightstand. Almost without thinking about it, he removes his wedding band and places it next to the other things as Jenny moves back up his chest towards his mouth. They kiss.

Draped in shadows, the picture of Dolan tacked to the wall watches them from the other side of the room.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

A flat expanse of featureless asphalt.

A SOUND is repeated over and over. A rolling sound, plastic on pavement.

Robinson is standing in the middle of the parking lot looking around. He turns towards the sound and SEES CASTILLO, down on his hands and knees like a child, rolling a toy silver Cadillac back and forth. He looks at Robinson and shoves the toy car forward.

Robinson LOOKS DOWN as it bumps against his foot.

When he looks up again Castillo is gone but now he SEES A CAR, the same car that Elizabeth was in before she died. He can see her in the car. He knows what's coming next. He begins to run for the car. Elizabeth turns slowly to face him.

But it's not Elizabeth. It's Jenny.

INT. CONDO/BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark, moonlight filtering through the blinds.

Robinson opens his eyes. Jenny is wrapped in his arms. He slowly begins to stroke her hair. She makes a contented noise and snuggles closer to him.

INT. CONDO/BEDROOM - DAY

When Robinson opens his eyes again, he's lying in bed alone. He pushes himself up on his elbows and looks around. Jenny sits cross-legged on the floor nearby, wearing his shirt. She's staring at the bedroom wall. Staring at the shrine to Elizabeth's murderer so carefully assembled over the many months since her death.

For a long time Robinson struggles to find something to say until Jenny finally speaks. She doesn't turn around.

JENNY

We slept here last night...made love with all this in the room.

ROBINSON

I'm sorry, it's not...I forgot that...

JENNY

Forgot. Somehow it doesn't seem like it was ever far from your mind. Were you thinking about it while we fucked? Were you thinking about her?

ROBINSON

No, I...I don't know, I'm just trying to figure out some way to -- to --

Robinson stops, swallows hard.

ROBINSON

The man killed my wife, Jenny. What am I supposed to do? How am I supposed to feel? Should I let it go? And then the next time someone comes along, takes something I care about, what then?

Jenny puts her head in her hand and it becomes obvious that she's weeping.

JENNY

Don't...just don't...

ROBINSON

He killed my wife. He stole our future, and now he walks around like some goddamned angel.

She wipes her eyes, shakes her head, still unable to look at him.

JENNY

I've hated myself, you know that? Hated myself for...how I feel about you. But it didn't change anything. It didn't make me want to be with you any less. Last night wasn't the drinks, it wasn't the holidays. It was just me...just me wanting to be with you.

ROBINSON

I feel the same way about you.

Jenny laughs. It is not a pleasant sound.

JENNY

All that talk about feeling better, and every night you'd come home to this.

ROBINSON

(deliberately)

It's not like that.

(beat)

Maybe I'll find something, something the police overlooked, some detail, some --

JENNY

No. No, you're not looking for him.

Jenny waves at the wall as she stands up.

JENNY

You're looking for her, somewhere inside all that. Or maybe whatever's left of yourself. I don't know, and I don't care.

She turns to face him for the first time.

JENNY

I'm sorry she died.

(beat)

And I think I might be in love with you.

She walks out of the bedroom, closing the door behind her.

Robinson makes no move to follow her or call out. After a few moments he hears the front door SLAM SHUT.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Robinson stands in a darkened doorway a little ways down from a fancy restaurant. Dolan's silver Cadillac is parked out front.

Dolan's two goons exit the restaurant, casually professional in the way they observe the street. Dolan and his newest lady exit behind them, laughing.

Robinson turns the corner and walks down the street towards the restaurant, hands thrust in pockets, eyes on the ground.

One of the goons, Mark, opens the rear passenger door for Dolan and his woman while Mike stands guard, eyeing Robinson dismissively.

Robinson keeps walking, drawing even with the Cadillac.

As Mark closes the door for Dolan, Robinson suddenly SWERVES towards the Cadillac, hands coming out of his pockets. He doesn't make it more than a few steps before Mike grabs his arm and twists it behind his back, spinning him around and slamming him down onto the hood of the car in one smooth motion. Robinson grunts. Mike leans down to whisper into his ear.

MIKE

Now just who the fuck are you, sunshine?

Mark pats Robinson down, checks his pockets, removes his wallet.

MARK

He's clean.

MIKE

Let's have a talk with Mr. Fuckup.

Mike frog-marches Robinson around the corner into an alley, shoving him face first against the wall. Blood trickles from his nose.

MIKE

What the fuck do you think you're doing?

ROBINSON

I just wanted to talk.

Mark stands nearby, looking at Robinson's wallet.

MARK

His name is Robinson.

MIKE

And what do you do Mr. Robinson? You a reporter?

ROBINSON

No. I'm a school teacher.

Mark laughs.

MIKE

A teacher.

He leans in closer.

MIKE

Well, "teacher," I have a lesson for you. Do you know who's in that car?

ROBINSON

Dolan.

Mike punches Robinson in the kidney. Robinson lets out a cry of pain and sags against the wall.

MIKE

That's Mr. Dolan. He's a very important man. Does Mr. Dolan know you?

ROBINSON

(gasping)

No.

MIKE

Then you've got no reason to talk to each other.

He lets go of Robinson. Robinson turns around, starts to rub the blood away from his nose and mouth when a huge, meaty FIST impacts the side of his face, driving him to the ground. He lands in a puddle. A hard kick to the stomach and he doubles up.

MIKE

(to Mark)
Come on. He's waiting.

Mike leaves. Mark follows, stepping over Robinson and dropping his wallet nearby.

MARK
Go back to school.

He laughs again.

Robinson lies there, writhing in a mess of gravel and oil-slicked water. He chuckles painfully, softly. Alone.

INT. CADILLAC - NIGHT

Dolan is in the back seat, the woman unbuttoning his shirt, sucking on his nipple. The goons are in the front seat, Mark pulling the car away from the curb.

DOLAN
Is there a problem?

MIKE
No problem, Mr. Dolan. Just some teacher.

DOLAN
A teacher?

Dolan grabs the woman by her hair and jerks her head up.

DOLAN
Not so hard, bitch. Bite me like that again and I'll fucking take your nose off.

She leers at him, giggles, obviously coked up.

Dolan laughs.

DOLAN
You think that's funny?

He kisses her hard, pushing her down onto the seat.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Robinson walks quickly across the parking lot trying to catch Jenny.

ROBINSON
Jenny!

She ignores him and keeps walking. Robinson finally catches up to her at her car and grabs her arm. She whirls around shaking him loose.

JENNY
What --

She stops when she sees his face. There's a fading but still distinct bruise along the orbit of his eye and his cheekbone. She raises her hand to his face, tracing the outline of the bruise without touching it.

JENNY
What happened?

ROBINSON
I slipped, hit the edge of a table.

JENNY
That doesn't look like a table.

Robinson says nothing. Jenny withdraws her hand, her attitude notably chilling.

JENNY
What do you want?

ROBINSON
We need to talk.

JENNY
About what?

ROBINSON
I want to apologize. I'm sorry.

JENNY
I don't care if you're goddamned sorry.

She chokes up a little.

JENNY

How do you think I feel?

ROBINSON

I can't imagine...I'm just sorry that --

JENNY

Quit fucking saying that. It doesn't make anything better.

ROBINSON

There are some things I need to do, that I need to work out on my own. I can't do that while I'm with you, and I can't be with you until I do.

Jenny nods, biting back tears.

JENNY

We could work through this together.

ROBINSON

Not this. It's not you, Jenny. You have to believe that.

JENNY

No, I suppose it isn't.

(beat)

I've got to go.

She turns away and unlocks her car door, opens it and gets inside.

ROBINSON

Jenny --

She stops but refuses to look at him.

ROBINSON

I love you.

She closes her eyes, collecting her strength -- and then shuts the car door and drives away.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

A desert highway, the high heat of the afternoon coming off the ground in waves. Summer again. Robinson walks up to the foreman, a heavy slab of a man named HARVEY BLOCKER. The NOISE OF CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT makes conversation

impossible, so Robinson simply holds up a piece of paper; Harvey takes it from him in a way that clearly communicates "I don't have time for this shit." After reading it over he looks at Robinson, shakes his head in disgust, and gestures towards a nearby tent.

INT. TENT - DAY

Harvey takes a seat in a folding metal chair behind a makeshift desk and throws down the piece of paper. It is a job application stamped "APPROVED" by the Nevada Highway Department.

HARVEY
What is this shit?

ROBINSON
I thought it was a job application.

HARVEY
A job application?

Harvey looks him up and down.

HARVEY
You've got to be fucking kidding me.

ROBINSON
They've already approved me and said I should talk to the foreman out here. I assume you're the foreman.

HARVEY
I'm God on this site as far as you, the Nevada Highway Department, or anyone else is concerned, and you're not working on my goddamned crew.

ROBINSON
Why's that?

HARVEY
Lemme see your hands.

Robinson shows him.

HARVEY
So what do you do, 'cuz you sure as hell didn't work crew before this.

ROBINSON
(pausing)
Math teacher. Third grade.

HARVEY
Oh honey, and this is how you want to spend your summer vacation? You ain't got nothin' on you but a few health-club muscles. Out there's an anvil. West of Indian Springs it'll go to a hundred and seventeen. I've seen grown men cry in that kind of heat.

ROBINSON
I can handle myself.

HARVEY
No, no damn way you're gettin' on my crew. Go tell the Highway Department they can fuck themselves.

As Harvey gets up to leave, Robinson reaches into his pocket. He was expecting this. He removes his GOLD WATCH and lets it dangle from its chain. Harvey stops, curious in spite of himself.

ROBINSON
My great-grandfather worked on the last stretch of the transcontinental railroad. He was there when they hammered that gold spike home, and this is the watch they gave him. It's gotta be worth a thousand or more.

Harvey just looks at him for a moment.

HARVEY
This a bribe?

Robinson holds the watch, letting it twist back and forth.

HARVEY
First damn person I've ever seen trying to go and bribe his way into hell.

ROBINSON
It's not a bribe. It's yours, you just let me on the crew. First time you don't think I can hack it, I'll walk off the job. You keep the watch. No argument.

Harvey, thinking, watching the watch hang a few feet from him.

HARVEY

You give the watch to my man Tinker to hold?

ROBINSON

Can you trust him?

HARVEY

Sure as you can trust me.

ROBINSON

Then he can hold it until you call it quits or I go back to teaching in September.

HARVEY

And what do I put up?

Robinson puts the watch on the table and points at his job application.

ROBINSON

Sign that.

Harvey considers, then picks up a pen and scrawls his signature on the piece of paper.

HARVEY

Long as you understand.

ROBINSON

I do.

HARVEY

No, you don't --

Shoving the piece of paper across the table.

HARVEY

-- but you will.

EXT. VEGAS STRIP - DAY

Robinson walks behind a slowly moving truck, shoveling hot patch off the back and tamping it down. Everything has gone blurry in the heat. He looks bad, like a cancer patient.

Pale, trembling, sweaty, gaunt. But he keeps going. He LOOKS UP and there's TINKER, a large man with an easy-going smile, sitting atop his front-end loader, relaxing in the shade of his cab. Tinker holds up the gold watch, WINKING IN THE SUNLIGHT, and grins.

INT. CONDO/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Robinson lies curled up in a fetal position on the bed, shivering and teeth chattering.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

A stretch of desert highway outside of Vegas. Robinson stands swaying under the hot sun, trying to support himself on his shovel. He closes his eyes -- seemingly on the verge of collapse -- and then opens them again, turning to rejoin the work crew.

INT. JENNY'S APARTMENT/ENTRY - NIGHT

There is a KNOCK on the door. Jenny opens the door to find Robinson standing there; he's obviously just come from working on the road crew, covered in sweat and grime and still wearing his hardhat.

ROBINSON

Look, I...know this must seem a little strange, but before you...before you...I just wanted to --

He collapses in her hallway.

INT. JENNY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jenny is cradling Robinson on her bed. She's stripped off his shirt and pants and has done her best to clean him up. He's delirious with heat and exhaustion, shaking almost uncontrollably. She tries to get him to take sips of water but he coughs up nearly as much as he swallows.

ROBINSON

So cold. Feels like I'm digging a grave. Digging my own grave...and you just keep digging, and the only way to keep going is to make yourself cold inside...and then you're freezing all the time. Christ, Jenny, I'm so cold -- why am I so cold?

Jenny makes quiet, soothing sounds.

JENNY

Don't talk. Just drink. I don't know what you've been doing, but you're dehydrated. Probably gave yourself a heat stroke.

Robinson laughs.

ROBINSON

I'll freeze to death...before that. It's so hard, she wants so much, and I don't no how much further I can go.

JENNY

You don't have to go anywhere. Just be quiet. Relax.

ROBINSON

I want to be normal again, have a wife and a family...and then I think of him. He's like poison, like a snake, and he's infected me. I couldn't protect her, Jenny, couldn't protect her...and I can't protect you...if I don't bury them both, I'll never...ever be free...

He is silent for a moment.

ROBINSON

(under his breath)
...I love you, Beth...

Jenny pauses.

JENNY

I know.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

Robinson sits by himself on his lunch break. His eyes are sunken. His skin is an angry red. He raises a thermos in one shaky hand when a SHADOW falls across him. It's Harvey.

HARVEY

Deal's off.

Harvey drops the gold watch in Robinson's lap.

HARVEY

You ain't strong. I keep looking over, expect'n to see you face down in the road but you keep not doin' it. But you're gonna.

ROBINSON
No. I'm not.

HARVEY
Yeah, you are. Hottest part of the summer's comin' up. Cookie-sheet weather. Take your goddamn watch. I'm calling this deal off.

ROBINSON
Fire me, and I'll take it to arbitration.

HARVEY
I'm not gonna fire you. I'm gonna get Tink to teach you how to run a front-end loader. That satisfactory to you?

ROBINSON
Why?

Harvey looks at him with a mixture of admiration and disgust.

HARVEY
I'm not a murderer. I'm not gonna watch you die. Some people take root in the sun, some whither up and die. You're dyin', and you won't move into the damn shade.

Robinson says nothing, but takes the watch and puts it in his pocket.

HARVEY
Sorriest motherfucker I ever saw.

He walks away.

INT. CONDO/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Robinson is half-dressed, sitting on the floor of the bedroom. He is noticeably tan, nearly brown, with traces of muscles popping out on his arms and torso. He feverishly sketches on a large sheet of white paper, drawing the by now familiar rectangle, but this time he adds a curve that arcs from the upper edge of the rectangle on one side to its lower edge on the other side. He starts punching

numbers into a calculator, noting the results near the curve.

The PHONE RINGS from somewhere else in the condo and then the answering machine picks up.

ROBINSON (V.O.)
Hi, leave a message.

The machine BEEPS, but Robinson shows no signs of noticing even as Jenny begins to speak.

JENNY (V.O.)
Hi. I hope you're doing better -- I mean, of course I hope you're doing better because you looked like fucking hell when I saw you the other night.

Robinson draws another rectangle, then takes a ruler and starts drawing lines across the width of the rectangle at regular intervals, twenty all told.

JENNY (V.O.)
You were talking about a lot of stuff -- I don't even know if you remember or not -- but some of it was about her and...look, this is hard for me. You know I care about you. I...was hoping things could be different. Everyone hopes, I guess, even if they know it's not the way things are.

Robinson sits back on his haunches to admire his diagram. After a moment he adds something, widening one end of the rectangle into an opening that resembles a mouth leading into a long throat.

ROBINSON
(to himself)
All the better to eat you with, my dear.

JENNY (V.O.)
But I do know I can't do this, not anymore. I want to be with you, to help, but I can't -- this isn't helping. It's like you're on the other side of this river and I'm just watching you cut yourself with a knife, and no matter how much I shout you just keep doing it.

Robinson draws a line bisecting his modified rectangle from one end to the other.

JENNY (V.O.)

And then you'll look at me, and see me, and keep on cutting. That's the worst part. That...look. I know that doesn't explain much, but it's all I can do.

(beat)

I'm sorry.

The line clicks off. Robinson continues to work.

INT. FRONT-END LOADER CAB - DAY

Robinson is running the controls on the loader under Tinker's watchful eye. He pushes a lever forwards and the loader's shovel bites into the dirt.

TINKER

You're gettin' it...you're gettin' it...we're gonna make a first class dozer jockey out of you yet. Not as good as me, 'course.

ROBINSON

You're a piece of work, Tink.

Robinson raises the shovel-full of dirt.

TINKER

You're some piece of work yourself, Teach. You know, it ain't any of my damn business what you're doin' or why, but God help anyone who gets in your way while you're drivin' twenty tons of rolling stock.

The loader lurches forward and Tink nearly falls off his perch.

TINKER

Careful! You got to baby these things.

ROBINSON

You said you'd teach me how to hotwire one of these.

TINKER

Next lesson, Teach. First you get the basics down, then we move on to extra credit.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Robinson is in the check-out line purchasing a jumble of items including lengths of wooden struts, a roll of canvas, a stapler, a shovel, a tan tarp, and cans of gray paint.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

The summer was like a fever dream, and after that school passed in a blur -- but then, I had my own plans and little projects to keep me busy.

INT. CONDO/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

An area has been cleared in the center of the room and drop cloths laid on the floor and over the furniture. Robinson is wearing a disposable mask and is hard at work painting an unrolled section of canvas gray.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

But despite all my preparations there was still a certain element of chance at work. Like an eclipse, a conjunction of events needed to occur before I had any hope of putting my plans into motion.

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE

Robinson sits at a table scribbling on his pad of graph paper. At the next table over sits Jenny along with a couple other teachers. They're talking and laughing. Jenny surreptitiously casts a glance at Robinson before turning back to her conversation.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

First, a national holiday that would occasion travel for Dolan -- and vacation for me -- and second, a repaving job on the highway between Vegas and LA during that same period of time.

EXTREME CLOSEUP

on four letters: "RPAV."

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

that they are part of a larger, no less cryptic message: "JULY 1-JULY 22 (TENT.): U.S. 71 MI 440-472 (WESTBND) RPAV."

CONTINUE PULLING BACK TO REVEAL

that the message is printed on a newsletter called "NEVADA ROAD SIGNS," and eventually that the newsletter is part of the jumble of information tacked to the wall in Robinson's bedroom. The wall is now completely filled, an artifact of monomania made complete.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

They were long odds. I could've waited years...a decade or more, and I would have. But sometimes the old gods smile, and smile they did when it happened the following summer.
July 4th.

INT. - CONDO/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Robinson sits on the bed, staring at the wall.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

There was only one, last detail.

INT. - CONDO/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Robinson is on the telephone. He has a pen and a piece of paper with a thin book to write on. He dials a number, waits for a response.

ROBINSON

Yes...I need a listing for Los Angeles, "Big Joe's Cleaning Service."

He notes something on the paper, thanks the operator, and then hangs up and dials another number. He visibly gathers himself for a moment.

ROBINSON

Hi, this is Bill at Rennie's Catering -- I was really hoping you could help me out here, I'm in kind of a bind. We've got a party Saturday night at 1121 Aster Drive in Hollywood Hills, and I wanted to see if one of your girls could check for Mr. Dolan's big punch-bowl, in the cabinet over the stove.

Pause. Robinson doodles a picture of a car that vaguely resembles a Cadillac.

ROBINSON

He won't arrive until Sunday? At three? Let me double-check my schedule.

Robinson flips through the book he was using to write on; it's a third grade math textbook.

ROBINSON

Oh hey, look, my mistake. I'm terribly sorry -- the party's Sunday night and my big punch-bowl will be back from a wedding reception in Glendale by then. No, I agree, better to make sure Mr. Dolan is taken care of. Thanks.

Robinson hangs up the phone, a satisfied look on his face.

INT. CONDO/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Robinson throws random items into a duffel bag: nutrition bars, a bottle of pills, jumper cables, etc. Several gallon jugs of water and a sleeping bag are arranged nearby.

Someone KNOCKS on the door.

Robinson checks the peephole. Steps back. There's another KNOCK, more insistent. He opens the door a crack; Castillo is standing there.

CASTILLO

Robinson. We need to talk.

ROBINSON

This really isn't the best time.

CASTILLO

It's important -- it'll just take a moment, I promise.

ROBINSON

It can't wait? I'm --

CASTILLO

No, it can't wait. Police business.

ROBINSON

Beth?

CASTILLO

Something along those lines.

Robinson opens the door wider and Castillo walks inside. He stands looking around the living room for a moment, noting the sleeping bag and bottles of water.

CASTILLO
Going somewhere?

ROBINSON
I decided to get away for a while, take a camping trip.
It's summer break for us.

CASTILLO
Yeah, I know.

He looks at Robinson, noticeably more fit and tan than when Castillo last saw him at Beth's funeral.

CASTILLO
Someone kick sand in your face?

ROBINSON
So what is it? I'm running late already.

Castillo nods, as if this confirms something.

ROBINSON
Did they finally nail him?

Castillo wanders about the apartment, rather indelicately nosing about, opening drawers and the like.

CASTILLO
Hmmm? Oh, Dolan. No, and I don't suppose they ever will.
He's a smart man with a lot of money, and as I'm sure you know, in this world smart men with a lot of money can pretty much do whatever they want.

He toes the contents of the duffel bag. Robinson is getting nervous, but waiting to see where this is going.

CASTILLO
You don't have caller ID do you? No, I expect you wouldn't. It's funny, because people don't think about it -- like a lot of things, I guess. But say you had caller ID and someone calls you claiming they're a local business, but the caller ID shows a different area code. You'd be a bit suspicious wouldn't you?

ROBINSON

What does this have to do with anything?

CASTILLO

Let's say it would raise a concern in your mind. And if you were smart -- and rich -- you could pay people to look after your concerns.

And that's when Castillo removes his GUN, a sleek black Glock semi-automatic. He points it in Robinson's general direction.

CASTILLO

But I think you know exactly what I'm talking about.

ROBINSON

I...don't understand. What's going on? What's with the gun?

CASTILLO

What's with the gun is that I'm going to kill you. What's going is that for a teacher you are one stupid son of a bitch. When I heard someone called Big Joe's claiming to be a catering service from LA but with a residential Vegas number it tripped a few alarm bells. I pulled your phone records just to be sure.

ROBINSON

Look, I don't know what the hell you're talking about. There's got to be some explanation...a wrong number? I don't know why this...would need a gun --

Castillo makes an exasperated sound and shakes his head.

CASTILLO

You should've left fucking well enough alone. You should've learned from what happened to your wife. But you couldn't, could you? Two peas in a pod.

Robinson slumps into a chair, his carefully constructed expression of surprise and dismay slipping away.

ROBINSON

My wife?

CASTILLO

Yeah. She was going to die no matter what, but you -- you could have just gone off, found someone else, popped out a few kids. Lived a normal life. But I'll tell you what's going to happen now -- I'm going to put a nine millimeter cap in your head and bury your body somewhere in the desert. Happens all the time. More than you might think.

ROBINSON
You...killed her?

Castillo takes a pillow from the couch and advances on Robinson.

CASTILLO
No, but I let it happen. Does that make you feel better?

ROBINSON
No.

CASTILLO
I didn't think so, but then what would? Now get on your knees, and face the wall.

Robinson does nothing.

CASTILLO
I was in your place, I'd be thinking that the longer I dragged this out, the better chance I had of figuring some way out of it. There isn't, but if you want to believe that, fine. But I can make this hurt real bad before it's all over.

He points the gun at Robinson's crotch.

After a few tense seconds Robinson gets down on his knees, turns to face the wall.

CASTILLO
I don't know what the hell you were planning to do, but it wouldn't have worked. People like you don't have what it takes, but they come crying to people like me just the same.

Castillo puts the pillow against the back of Robinson's head.

ROBINSON

Don't do this.

Castillo stops, amused.

CASTILLO

"Don't do this?" That's it? That's the best you can manage?
God you are a sorry bastard. I can't believe you ever got
with someone like her in the first place.

A noise from the kitchen, the sound of BREAKING GLASS.

Castillo glances away but doesn't move the gun from
Robinson's head.

CASTILLO

Who else's here?

ROBINSON

No one.

Castillo cocks his arm and slams the pistol butt into the
side of Robinson's head, sending him sprawling onto the
floor.

CASTILLO

Let's try that again.

ROBINSON

There's...no one.

Castillo looks around, a bit more nervously than before.

CASTILLO

Get up. Slow.

Robinson gets to his knees, then his feet.

CASTILLO

Into the kitchen.

Robinson turns and walks towards the kitchen, Castillo
staying behind him with the gun held at arm's length and
pointed directly at the back of Robinson's head.

INT. CONDO/KITCHEN - DAY

Robinson stands in the kitchen doorway, Castillo behind him.

Robinson glances down and SEES SHARDS FROM A BROKEN GLASS lying on the floor directly in front of him but obscured from Castillo's view.

Castillo looks around. Nothing.

The PHONE RINGS. Castillo starts -- only a little -- but visibly.

CASTILLO
You have a machine?

ROBINSON
Yes.

The phone keeps RINGING. The machine does not pick up.

CASTILLO
Why isn't it picking up?

ROBINSON
I don't know.

Castillo thinks as the phone keeps ringing. The sound seems unnaturally loud in the quiet room.

CASTILLO
Answer it. And remember, I can make this painful. Painful for you, and for whoever else might be calling.

Robinson reaches over to the counter next to him and picks up the cordless phone. He listens, nods, and then holds the phone over his shoulder.

ROBINSON
It's for you.

CASTILLO
(whispering)
What?

ROBINSON
It's Beth.

Castillo snatches the phone from Robinson with his free hand and holds it up to his ear, the gun still trained on Robinson's head.

CASTILLO

This is Detective Castillo.

(beat)

Hello? Hello?

Robinson takes a step forward, deliberately STEPPING OVER THE PILE OF GLASS SHARDS.

CASTILLO

Hey -- hey, stop right there motherfu--

Castillo takes a step forward, one foot coming down on a particularly NASTY, JAGGED PIECE OF GLASS. He lets out a shout of pain and looks down just as Robinson swings around and KNOCKS the pistol out of his hand.

The pistol goes SPINNING across the kitchen floor.

Robinson SLAMS HIS FOOT DOWN onto Castillo's, grinding the glass in even deeper as Castillo cries out in pain and rage -- he shoves Robinson across the kitchen, sending him FLYING into the stove.

Castillo drops the phone and makes a dive for the GUN. Robinson tackles him. They go down in a sprawl, sliding into a bunch of cabinets. Castillo begins to claw his way up Robinson's body, grunting, as Robinson struggles to free himself.

Robinson SPIES AN EXTENSION CORD dangling over the edge of the cabinet. He makes a grab for it, MISSES. He manages to drag both himself and Castillo a few inches across the linoleum, makes another grab, and pulls a LARGE TOASTER onto the floor with a crash.

Robinson grabs the toaster and proceeds to brain Castillo with it OVER AND OVER AND OVER. At first Castillo makes some attempt to shield himself, but Robinson rolls on top of him with a shout of pure rage and keeps BASHING the toaster into his arms, his face, until the toaster is covered in blood and bone and Castillo lies limp.

Robinson sits there straddling Castillo, panting. He puts the toaster down, gets up, surveys the kitchen.

The phone is lying in one corner. He picks it up, puts it to his ear.

Dimly, "MOONDANCE" can be heard playing through the speaker.

INT. CONDO/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Robinson drags Castillo's body into the center of the room -- Castillo's head and upper torso are covered by a black plastic garbage bag. Robinson leaves and returns a moment later with an entire box of garbage bags. He shakes a bag loose and lays it out next to Castillo's body, then gets another and continues the process.

EXT. VAN - DAY

Robinson is loading the jugs of water into the back of a beat to hell '70s van that already contains an air compressor, jack hammer, duffel bag, sleeping bag, a portable spotlight, rolls of gray painted canvas, and a tan tarp. As the jugs of water are stacked up they conceal a LARGE BUNDLE wrapped in garbage bags beneath the pile of other items. The last jug hides the bundle from view, like the final brick being put in the wall of the poor unfortunate in Poe's "Cask of Amontillado."

INT. CONDO/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Empty.

INT. CONDO/KITCHEN - DAY

Silent. Clean.

A bottle of disinfectant and another of floor shine sit on the table.

INT. CONDO/BEDROOM - DAY

Quiet. Dim. Lifeless.

INT. CONDO/BATHROOM - DAY

The door to the medicine cabinet is swung wide open. It is obvious that Robinson was rummaging about in the cabinet for various items.

CLOSEUP - TUBE OF SUNBLOCK

sitting on a shelf in the medicine cabinet, forgotten.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

Robinson's van -- the only vehicle visible -- passes an orange sign that says "CONSTRUCTION AHEAD PASS AT YOUR OWN RISK."

ROBINSON (V.O.)

It was a long weekend, but traffic was light -- most people took the Interstate to the south. But Dolan was a creature of habit; he always took US 71. That gave me three days.

Robinson's van passes another orange sign, this one saying "DETOUR AHEAD 6 MILES."

ROBINSON (V.O.)

Three days to turn a dream of revenge into a hole in the desert.

EXT. DETOUR - DUSK

A large white and orange striped traffic barrier with an orange sign emblazoned with the words "ROAD CLOSED USE DETOUR" blocks the road, a row of traffic cones sitting in front of it. On the other side of the barrier the road rises to a low hill. The sun is setting on the other side of the hill, the sky turning a bruised purple color.

To one side of the barrier is a blinking road-arrow quietly HUMMING on battery power, pointing the way down an old fence-line road that's been widened and smoothed.

Robinson's van pulls up to a stop near the traffic barrier, its headlights illuminating the sign. After a moment, the van starts to nose around the cones and the barrier, finally pulling back onto the road and driving over the hill.

EXT. ROAD - TWILIGHT

On the other side of the hill the sun has dropped below the horizon and the light is dying, but some ways in the distance can be seen construction equipment and piles of gravel -- the road work that is occasioning the detour.

Robinson's van drives down the hill and pulls off part way down the road, well before reaching the construction site. The van circles around and comes to a stop so that its headlights pick out a section of asphalt.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

That same section of asphalt, now illuminated by the portable spotlight mounted on a tripod and connected to a car battery. Robinson is using a tape measure and chalk to mark off the dimensions of the hole he is going to dig in the westbound lane.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT - OVERHEAD - DRAWING

From above, it looks exactly like the diagram Robinson was drawing earlier, but this one is much larger: six feet by nearly forty two feet, its "mouth" facing east. Robinson has already drawn twenty vertical lines across the box, dividing it up into strips nearly two feet wide, and is just finishing drawing a line down the middle, breaking the entire diagram up into forty two roughly equal squares and the forty third square of the mouth.

CLOSEUP - ROBINSON'S GLOVED HAND

yanking the starter cord on the air compressor. After a couple of tries, it thunders to life.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Robinson is using the jackhammer to carve up the squares he's marked out on the asphalt. He's wearing heavy work gloves and a pair of safety goggles. His face is slick with sweat. Dust and road grit swirl around him, sticking to his exposed skin.

EXT. ROAD - LATER

It's evident that Robinson has been at this for quite a while and has made progress, cutting through maybe two-thirds of the squares.

The air compressor sputters, catches, sputters again, and then dies, the jackhammer dying with it.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

The work went faster than I had any right to hope, but not as fast as I dared dream.

EXT. VAN - NIGHT

Robinson is attempting to unscrew the gas cap on the van. His hand is clenched like a claw and he has a difficult time making his fingers grasp the cap. He eventually unscrews the cap and is about to thread a plastic tube into the pipe when a whiff of gasoline hits him and he falls to the ground coughing and gagging.

He lays on the ground, a thin trickle of saliva escaping from his mouth. Gasping for breath.

ROBINSON

I can't...I can't do this...

A VOICE comes from the darkness.

ELIZABETH (O.S.)

Yes, you can.

Robinson LOOKS UP to see a shadow standing near the van, but out of range of the spotlight. Its shape resembles that of a woman, and it talks with Elizabeth's voice.

ROBINSON

Beth...

Nearly sobbing.

ROBINSON

Oh, Beth...it's impossible, it's insane...I can't...

ELIZABETH

Yes, my darling. Yes, you can. You still have two days.

Robinson pulls himself together somewhat.

ROBINSON

There's not enough time...

ELIZABETH

The blast tore me to pieces, dear. There wasn't enough of me left to bury. You know, you were there.

Elizabeth moves forward a bit so that a sliver of light is thrown across her face -- what it implies is horrible.

ELIZABETH

And you know Dolan is driving here in his coffin.

EXT. VAN - DAWN

Robinson wakes with a start. He has passed out on his back next to the van.

He begins to rise and then screams, falling to the ground and clutching at his back.

INT. VAN - DAWN

Robinson opens the door and crawls slowly, painfully into the seat.

He opens the duffel bag lying on the floor of the passenger side and removes a bottle of prescription pain pills. He dumps a few into his hand then dry swallows them, grimacing, before lying across the seat.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Robinson stands to one side, watching the jackhammer's skin bake in the morning sun.

ROBINSON

(croaking)

I loved her...and she was in pieces...

He staggers back towards the van.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

As a cheer it would never replace "Go, Bears" or "Remember the Alamo," but it was the best I had.

EXT. VAN - DAY

Robinson sucks on the plastic tube he's slipped into the van's gas tank and then gags as he gets a mouthful of gasoline. He quickly puts the end of the tube into a nearby gas can.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Robinson attempts to pull start the air compressor. His right hand refuses to grasp the starter cord handle and he has to use his left hand to wrap the fingers of his right around it. Each yank elicits a grunt of pain until finally the compressor starts.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Robinson jackhammers away again, the sun's heat beating down on him in transparent waves. Sweat flies from him. His teeth are gritted together. He looks like a thing sentenced to eternal torment in Hell.

INT. VAN - DAY

Robinson is catching his breath. He begins to pull off one work glove and cries out in pain. Slowly, removing the glove, he sees that his hand is a MASS OF WEEPING BLISTERS streaked with blood. He removes the other glove to find the same thing. When he LOOKS in the rearview mirror he sees that the skin of his face is red and irritated. He puts a finger to his balding pate and jerks it away, wincing.

He forgot the sunblock.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Robinson wanders through the site like a drunk until he finally sees what he needs: a big yellow bucket-loader with grapple-and-pincers on the back.

INT. BUCKET-LOADER CAB - DAY

Robinson is beneath the dash, stripping insulation from each one of the red, blue, yellow, and green wires attached to the ignition. He finishes and ties together the red and green wires with another small twist of wire.

He climbs up into the driver's seat and leans over to touch the two remaining wires together.

There's a SPARK and the bucket-loader LURCHES FORWARD. Robinson slams his head into the dash, opening a wide bloody gash on his forehead.

ROBINSON
Goddamn it.

He puts the stick-shift in neutral and tries again. The ignition turns over and over but won't catch. He pulls the wires apart, then puts them back together.

ROBINSON
Come on, come on, come on...

The ignition keeps turning over. The wires begin to smoke. Finally, the engine sputters, catches. Robinson gooses the throttle a bit and it settles down into a chugging idle.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Robinson drives the bucket-loader from the construction site back to where he's been carving up the road. The WIND has picked up and sand skirls across the open desert.

EXT. ROAD - DUSK

Robinson uses the grapple-and-pincers to lift the chunks of asphalt he's carved from the road and set them in a pile to one side. The sun is setting and the light has turned everything a bloody red.

INT. BUCKET-LOADER CAB - DUSK

The engine is turned off. Four pain killers are in Robinson's mangled hand. He dry swallows them, pauses, and then begins to stiffly climb down from the bucket-loader.

EXT. ROAD - DUSK

Robinson drops to the ground, stumbles, and then lurches towards the bare patch of ground he's excavated from the road. His face is covered with dried blood. He stands there, looking at it.

ROBINSON
(hoarsely)

For you...

SERIES OF SHOTS

all CLOSEUPS.

A) The shovel plunging into the dirt beneath the harsh glare of the spotlight, sparks flying whenever it catches a stone the right way.

B) Robinson's hand shoving one of the bucket-loader control levers forward. Blood from his hand drips down the lever.

C) The pile of asphalt slabs being buried in a torrent of dirt.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

Excavating an entire grave would've been almost impossible.

But luckily, I only had to dig half a grave. The rest of the dirt formed a gentle slope leading from its mouth at one end, all the way to the bottom of the pit at the other.

An arc. The "arc of descent."

(beat)

It was a phrase I'd fallen in love with.

EXT. HOLE - NIGHT

Robinson kneels in his partially dug hole. He's using a carpenter's level to measure the slope of the floor. He straightens up into a hunchbacked stoop, his whole face twisting in agony.

INT. BUCKET-LOADER CAB - NIGHT

Robinson manipulates the controls of the bucket-loader, dumping another load of dirt onto the growing pile.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The bucket-loader raises another shovel of dirt from the hole. The hole is about a third complete, getting deeper at its far end. The WIND kicks up clouds of sand and dirt.

INT. BUCKET-LOADER CAB - NIGHT

Robinson's face is a mask of blood, sweat, and dirt. A clear full moon hangs in the sky behind him.

EXT. HOLE - NIGHT

Robinson stands on the floor of the hole, the lip nearly above the top of his head. The hole seems about two-thirds complete. He kneels with the carpenter level in one hand, but as he does, there's a DIM CRACK and he falls to the ground screaming.

Robinson looks up and SEES the first faint glimmer of daylight touching the sky to the east.

INT. DOLAN'S VEGAS HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAWN

The room is the very definition of opulence. A servant enters and opens the drapes to a beautiful morning. Dolan stirs in his enormous four poster bed, resplendent in silk silver pajamas that match his hair. An anonymously attractive woman lies next to him.

EXT. HOLE - DAWN

Robinson drags himself up the incline of the hole he's dug, moving like a crab.

INT. DOLAN'S VEGAS HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Dolan looks at himself in the mirror, tugging at the sleeves of his jacket. He flashes a predatory smile.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Robinson crawls across the desert floor towards the van. Sand WHIPS across his face. The wind is picking up even more.

INT. DOLAN'S VEGAS HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Dolan fastens a heavy gold Rolex around his wrist. A SERVANT ducks his head through the door.

SERVANT

Your car is ready, Mr. Dolan.

INT. VAN - DAY

Robinson drags himself onto the front seat. The sun is above the horizon now. He grabs the bottle of pain killers and shakes the last three into his hand, swallows them, and then crawls into the back of the van to lie there.

INT./EXT. DOLAN'S VEGAS HOUSE - DAY

Dolan walks out the front door of his enormous mansion. The Cadillac is NOT VISIBLE for reasons that will become obvious later.

INT. VAN - DAY

Robinson is a wreck, a shell, a shattered, wretched thing that simply refuses to let go.

ROBINSON
(moaning)
She was in pieces...

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

Dolan sits in the back seat, his goons up front. Mike's driving as usual.

DOLAN
How you doing, Mike?

MIKE
Just fine, Mr. Dolan, thanks for asking.

Dolan fastens his seatbelt. The car begins to move.

INT. BUCKET-LOADER CAB - DAY

Robinson climbs back into the seat. He slams the control levers forward with grim determination.

CLOSEUP - SUN

rising high in the sky.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Robinson climbs down from the bucket-loader and walks to the mouth of the grave he's dug.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

It was a grave fit for a king -- or his Cadillac.

He looks over his shoulder at the road to the east.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

All for you, Beth.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Robinson unrolls the length of gray-painted canvas over wooden struts that have been wedged into the lip of the hole every two feet. The resulting camouflage is near perfect -- there's even a yellow hyphen marking the canvas where the broken passing line should be.

INT. VAN - DAY

Robinson gets into the driver's seat of the van. He looks at himself in the rearview mirror again and, if possible, he looks even worse than the day before.

ROBINSON

Christ.

He attempts to use his shirt to wipe away the worst of it.

A HAND is laid on his shoulder, a gold wedding band on the middle finger.

ELIZABETH (O.S.)

You look beautiful dear.

ROBINSON

(unconcerned)

Thank you, Beth.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The van drives back up the hill.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

Robinson looks down on his work. From this distance the illusion is seamless -- it appears that the road continues into the distance uninterrupted.

He raises a pair of binoculars and PEERS in the opposite direction. Satisfied that no cars are coming, he hurries back to the van.

EXT. DETOUR - DAY

Robinson parks the van near the detour. He gets out, opens the rear doors, then proceeds to throw the traffic cones inside.

CLOSEUP -- BATTERY

as Robinson uses a hammer and chisel to break the plastic O-ring protecting the cable that connects the HUMMING battery to the blinking road-arrow. Robinson yanks the cable loose and kicks sand over the battery.

EXT. VAN - DAY

Robinson shoves the now dim road-arrow into the back of the van.

EXT. VAN - DAY

Robinson jacks up the rear of the van. He fumbles with the lug nuts on one of the rear tires, finally removes all four and shoves them into his pocket. He wrestles the tire loose, panting and groaning, and throws it into the back of the van. There's a CRASH of breaking glass as the tire falls on top of the bulbs in the road-arrow.

EXT. DETOUR - DAY

Robinson removes the antique gold watch from his pocket and CHECKS THE TIME, then raises the binoculars again and looks east.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

There were about seventy five miles between me and that damned Cadillac, and the driver must be closing that gap at somewhere around sixty miles an hour. I was running out of time.

THROUGH THE BINOCULARS

he sees a loose string of three cars, coming down a low rise in the distance. The first is a luxury car, the second

a pick-up, and the third nothing but flashing steel and chrome.

EXT. DETOUR - DAY

He lowers the binoculars, relaxing slightly.

EXT. DETOUR - LATER

Robinson sticks out his thumb as the luxury car approaches. The expensively dressed woman behind the wheel gives him a horrified glance and speeds down the detour.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

Dolan sits serenely in the back reading the Wall Street Journal.

EXT. DETOUR - DAY

Robinson stands beside the road, thumb out, as the pick-up fishtails onto the detour. The PICKUP DRIVER shouts out the window.

PICKUP DRIVER
Get a fuckin' job!

The driver hits the accelerator, crunching on gravel, and then is gone.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

MIKE
We're making good time, Mr. Dolan. We should be in LA early.

DOLAN
Don't rush. No reason to be reckless.

THROUGH THE BINOCULARS

as Robinson peers at the last car in line, the one he couldn't make out before.

It's a Cadillac.

A green Cadillac.

EXT. DETOUR - DAY

Robinson rips the binoculars from his eyes.

ROBINSON
Damn.

He starts to move towards the detour sign, stops.

ROBINSON
Dammit.

He raises the binoculars. Lowers them.

ROBINSON
A green Cadillac...but he always drives silver Cadillacs.
Always...but he could drive any color Cadillac he wants...

Robinson starts to move towards the detour sign again.

ROBINSON
He never changes his routine...and...and...

He raises the binoculars again.

THROUGH THE BINOCULARS

he sees that the car is much closer, but it's impossible to
make out the occupants through the tinted windows.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

Mark, the goon in the passenger seat, gestures out the
window.

MARK
There's something going on up ahead, Mr. Dolan.

Dolan lowers his paper.

EXT. DETOUR - DAY

Robinson stands next to the detour sign.

ROBINSON
Got to do it...only chance...it's the only chance...

He begins to push the detour sign over to the side of the road.

ROBINSON

No! Have to stop...stop and think...Christ, Beth, help me!

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

MARK

Should we stop for him?

DOLAN

No. Keep driving.

EXT. DETOUR - DAY

Robinson's expression suddenly turns bright and clear.

ROBINSON

No...you're right...

He walks back to the van just as the green Cadillac turns down the detour. It's filled with chorus girls and an older man wearing a cowboy hat and Foster Grants. One of the chorus girls moons him.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

Dolan watches dispassionately through the tinted windows as they pass a WRECKED CAR on the side of the road. A man is standing near the car, jumping up and down and waving for help.

EXT. DETOUR - DAY

Robinson raises the binoculars once more.

THROUGH THE BINOCULARS

he sees a silver Cadillac approaching.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

This time, I knew. I knew as surely as I've ever known anything in my life. I didn't know if he could smell me --

EXT. DETOUR - DAY

Robinson slowly lowers the binoculars as an evil, ghoulish grin appears on his face.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

-- but I sure as hell could smell him.

Robinson suddenly breaks into a run (or the best he can manage) for the traffic barrier. With some grunts and adrenaline-fueled shoves he manages to push the barrier off the road and tip it over into the sand. He then races back to the van and removes a sand-colored piece of tarp from the back.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

On the horizon something shimmers in the heat. A silver bullet blur heading this way fast.

EXT. DETOUR - DAY

Robinson throws the tarp over the barrier then heads back to the van.

EXT. CADILLAC - DAY

Speeding down the highway.

INT. VAN - DAY

Robinson crouches in the back, out of sight, but peering intently through the front window. The wind is HIGH AND KEENING, covering the sound any approaching engine might make.

He removes his gold watch and snaps it open, WATCHING the second-hand tick around the face.

He waits.

And waits.

Robinson shakes his head.

ROBINSON

...maybe he turned off...something wasn't right...

The watch STOPS, the second-hand freezing where it is. A thin crack SPLITS the watch face.

And the Cadillac HURTLES past, blithely ignoring the detour. The van rocks on its hinges in the Cadillac's wake.

EXT. VAN - DAY

Robinson scrambles from the back of the van and stumbles up the hill just as the Cadillac crests the top and begins disappearing out of view down the other side.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

Robinson climbs to the top of the rise. The Cadillac is driving away, retreating into the distance, floating down the road and away.

The brake lights never even come on.

The Cadillac appears to SINK beneath the road, descending into the camouflaged trench like a luxury submarine submerging into an asphalt ocean. Wood struts and gray canvas SPLIT and TEAR.

The car disappears completely and then there's a dull THUD, the sounds of CRUMPLING METAL AND BREAKING GLASS. A PUFF OF DUST rises from the other end of the trench.

EXT. HILL - DAY

Robinson whips around and slides, tumbles back down the hill.

EXT. DETOUR - DAY

He makes it to the bottom, drags the tarp off the traffic barrier, and manages to push it upright. He turns to SEE a cloud of dust rising from the dirt road serving as a detour. Another car is coming this way, heading east towards Las Vegas.

Robinson strains to drag the barrier back onto the highway. He's pulling as hard as he can, but can only move it a foot or so each time.

He pulls again -- the barrier catches on something, wobbles, nearly falls over.

An ENGINE can be heard faintly in the distance.

With a guttural SCREAM Robinson makes one final, desperate tug. The barrier is mostly on the highway, somewhat askew, but he's out of time.

APPROACHING CAR'S POV - VAN

up on a jack near the intersection of the detour and the road. Robinson's leaning inside the rear of the van, his back to the driver -- no doubt looking for a tool. A perfectly normal sight, a tire that probably got blown on some protruding bit of rock along the detour.

INT. VAN - DAY

Robinson's hands are splayed on the floor of the van, supporting him upright as his chest heaves for breath. Behind him the car passes and turns onto the highway, a cloud of dust billowing behind it and washing over him. He doesn't move. The sound of the car's ENGINE is quickly overwhelmed by the WIND and then lost entirely.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Robinson walks down the highway towards the freshly dug grave and its occupants. He's carrying a shovel balanced on one shoulder. He walks casually, almost sauntering. A slight smile tugs at his face.

SCREAMING can be heard faintly from the grave. Someone is in terrible pain.

EXT. HOLE - DAY

Robinson leans over the side of the hole. Splintered ends of the wooden struts still stick out from its edges.

The Cadillac is crunched against the far end, the hood and engine compartment accordioned from the impact and covered in a spray of dirt. Some kind of fluid is DRIBBLING from the engine. The gray tarp lies ripped and twisted across the length of the car like a discarded snake skin.

All the windshields and windows are scratched but otherwise intact. There's enough room for the doors to open maybe an inch.

Pale white hands can be seen weakly pawing at the front passenger-side window. Mark is burbling in pain. Mike, the driver, is presumably dead.

MARK (O.S.)

Jimmy, Jesus Jimmy, my legs...Mike's dead...I can...I...

Robinson kicks some dirt onto the top of the car.

DOLAN (O.S.)

Hello? Hello! Somebody out there? We need some help down here!

Despite the situation, Dolan sounds eerily calm and composed. Robinson waits, smiling.

DOLAN (O.S.)

Hello! Anyone there?

MARK (O.S.)

...I can see the bones in my leg, Jimmy, oh God, there's bones...

DOLAN (O.S.)

(to Mark)

Shut the fuck up.

Mark keeps MOANING, but quieter.

DOLAN (O.S.)

Hello?

ROBINSON

I'm here, but I'm not the help you're looking for.

Robinson kicks some more dirt onto the car.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

Dolan is brought up short.

DOLAN

Hello.

(beat)

May I ask who I'm talking to?

ROBINSON (O.S.)

That bulletproof glass sure is nice stuff, isn't it? Won't break no matter what, not even in a crash.

DOLAN

I don't get you, what're you talking about?

ROBINSON (O.S.)

And I'm sure you're too smart to try shooting the glass out. You'll just get a lead slug ricocheting around inside that luxury coffin you've built for yourself.

Dolan's quiet. The pitch of the goon's pain is RISING again.

ROBINSON (O.S.)

Power windows don't work either, do they? Battery's probably nothing but squashed plastic and metal.

(beat)

So how does it feel to be prince of the world?

EXT. HOLE - DAY

Robinson stands at the edge of the hole, truly enjoying -- no, savoring -- the experience, and for the first time in days he feels no pain.

DOLAN (O.S.)

Who are you?

ROBINSON

I'm nobody. A nobody who's got good reason to put you where you are right now.

A pause.

DOLAN (O.S.)

Robinson. Is your name Robinson?

Robinson's smile fades. Even now, even with the man trapped at the bottom of a trench with no way out, he's still frightened by the viperish instincts of this thing he's caged.

He regains his composure.

ROBINSON

My name doesn't matter. What matters is what happens next.

The goon is SCREAMING now.

MARK

Oh, God, it hurts, I'm so sorry Jesus and Mary, so sorry...I accept Christ, please just make it stop...

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

Dolan is thinking, his face impassive.

DOLAN

(to Mark)

Shut. The fuck. Up.

(to Robinson)

Look, what did you say? I can't hear you over all the goddamn screaming.

EXT. HOLE - DAY

Robinson crouches and leans further out over the hole.

ROBINSON

I said --

Just then sudden realization enters his eyes. He falls over backwards as FOUR PISTOL SHOTS split the air right in front of his face.

DOLAN (O.S.)

Did I get you, you fucking asshole?

Robinson crawls back to the edge of the hole and peers down at the car. Four holes have been opened in the roof of the Cadillac, little round black eyes.

ROBINSON

No, no you didn't.

The goon is both weeping and screaming now.

MARK

...so sorry, Mom, I repent, I repent...oh God, forgive me -

-

There's another PAIR OF PISTOL SHOTS, a fan of blood across the front windshield, and all is quiet.

DOLAN (O.S.)

There. He ain't hurting anymore and we can talk in peace.
Now, I'd like to make a proposal.

Robinson says nothing.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

Shafts of light shine through the bullet holes in the roof.

DOLAN

My friend?

Robinson is quiet. The first edge of panic begins to creep into Dolan's voice.

DOLAN

Hey! You! If you're still up there, talk to me!

ROBINSON (O.S.)

That was six shots you fired. I'm thinking maybe you should've saved one for yourself, if that was all you had.

DOLAN

What're you planning?

EXT. HOLE - DAY

ROBINSON

I think you've already guessed. I've spent the last thirty-six hours digging the world's longest grave, and now I'm going to bury you and your fucking Cadillac.

Now there's a very long pause.

DOLAN (O.S.)

Look...look, before you do anything you might regret later, you want to hear my proposal? Robinson?

Robinson stands up, takes the shovel, and throws some dirt onto the hood of the Cadillac.

DOLAN (O.S.)

Hey! Hey! Robinson! What's going on up there?

ROBINSON

Yes, I'll listen to your proposal. And when you're finished, I may make a counter-proposal.

DOLAN (O.S.)

Yeah, yeah...that's reasonable. We can work this out like reasonable people.

Robinson shovels more dirt onto the car.

Dolan begins to speak faster, more urgently.

DOLAN (O.S.)

Okay I'm offering you a million dollars, but just as important, maybe even more important --

More dirt hits the car.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

DOLAN

Hey, just stop that for a moment, listen to me!

ROBINSON (O.S.)

I'm listening, but idle hands do the devil's work.

Dirt is piling up on the rear windshield.

DOLAN

A million dollars and my personal guarantee that no one will ever touch you -- not me, not my men, not anyone else's men.

ROBINSON (O.S.)

Keep talking.

DOLAN

You don't have to do this. This is crazy. Just crazy.

EXT. HOLE - DAY

ROBINSON

You got that right.

The rear deck of the Cadillac is covered in dirt, the rear windshield almost entirely obscured.

DOLAN (O.S.)
Two million.

Robinson starts shoveling dirt onto the front windshield.

DOLAN (O.S.)
Five.

Robinson says nothing. Dirt continues to fall, pebbles RATTLING across the roof and the hood of the car.

The rear passenger door opens, banging into the side of the pit. A GOLD ROLEX can be seen on the wrist of the hand holding the door handle. Robinson quickly throws a few spadefuls of dirt into the opening. The door jerks shut again.

DOLAN (O.S.)
Fuck! You're a dead man! A dead man, Robinson!

Robinson stops shoveling and kneels painfully, using the shovel to support himself. Blood from his hands trickles down the haft.

ROBINSON
No, I don't think so *Mr. Dolan*. I think that Cadillac is such a fine piece of machinery that after I'm done people will drive back and forth over your rotting corpse for years before it finally collapses. And when it does, they'll just assume it was a marsh-hole, repave, and life will go on. Believe me, that is exactly what will happen.

Robinson leverages himself to his feet and begins shoveling again.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

DOLAN
Jesus Christ! You can't fucking do this! It's fucking insane!

Robinson knows the truth of this, but says nothing.

DOLAN

For God's sake, just let me out! I'll do anything,
anything, whatever you want, you just name it.

Dolan's voice is splintered with bright fear.

ROBINSON (O.S.)

Are you ready for that counter-proposal I mentioned?

DOLAN

Yes, Christ yes! Anything!

EXT. HOLE - DAY

Robinson stops shoveling and looks thoughtful for a moment.

ROBINSON

Scream. That's the counter-proposal. I want you to scream
for me. If you scream loud enough, you have my word on my
wife's grave that I'll let you out.

DOLAN (O.S.)

You can't be serious.

Robinson starts shoveling. The front windshield is almost
entirely covered now.

Dolan screams timidly.

ROBINSON

Oh, come on. You can do better than that.

Dolan screams again, a more honest one this time.

ROBINSON

Not bad, but still nowhere near good enough.

Another long pause, then Dolan screams piercingly.

ROBINSON

Not bad. At this rate, you might get there, you really
might.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

Dirt trickles through the bullet holes in the roof. The
light has perceptibly dimmed.

DOLAN
(croaking)
Twenty million. Everything I own.

ROBINSON (O.S.)
I think not.

EXT. HOLE - DAY

Robinson stops shoveling again.

ROBINSON
But if you can make a sound come out of your mouth which is as loud, let us say, as eight sticks of dynamite taped to the ignition switch of a car, then I will let you out, and you may count on that.

EXT. ROAD - DAY - LONG SHOT - HOLE

Robinson stands by the grave. Dolan's SCREAMS are heard faintly before being carried away by the wind.

ROBINSON (V.O.)
He did indeed scream very loudly, although I judged he never screamed louder than two sticks of dynamite taped to the ignition switch of a car. Three at the most.

EXT. HILL - DAY

The bucket-loader crests the hill, a black package in the bucket. Castillo's body, still wrapped in garbage bags.

INT. BUCKET-LOADER CAB - DAY

Robinson drives up to the hole and puts the bucket-loader into park before climbing down.

EXT. HOLE - DAY

Robinson walks over to the edge of the hole. There is no sound.

ROBINSON
Scream, Dolan.

Nothing.

ROBINSON
Scream!

After a moment, harsh barking sounds can be heard from the hole.

Robinson smiles again.

ROBINSON
That was good...really, that was very good. Just to show that I'm gracious about these things, I thought I'd leave you with a little company.

Robinson climbs up to the bucket-loader and pulls a lever. Castillo's body goes tumbling into the hole, thuds onto the roof of the Cadillac, and then rolls onto the hood. Robinson walks back to the edge of the hole.

ROBINSON
I believe you already know Detective Castillo. I thought you two should be together.

Dolan begins to make a noise. A weird, insane sound echoing from a broken mind that soon resolves itself into laughter. Mad, screaming laughter.

Robinson looks nonplussed. Then he, too, begins to chuckle. Eventually his chuckling turns into laughter as well, matching the madness of Dolan's own.

EXT. HOLE - NIGHT

Robinson works the bucket-loader by moonlight, dumping huge piles of dirt into the hole. He is sweating and the cut on his head has opened again, but every now and then he laughs to himself. The wind is now ROARING past carrying waves of sand along with it.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Robinson settles the last piece of asphalt into its place in the road by hand, fitting it snugly against its neighbors. He's wearing goggles as protection against the wind which is just on the verge of turning into a full fledged SANDSTORM. Sand settles into the seams around the square of asphalt.

Robinson stands back to admire his work. In the moonlight and sandstorm it looks nearly perfect.

CLOSEUP - ROBINSON

puts his ear to the ground over the Cadillac's grave. Despite the roaring wind, very distantly can be heard the sound of Dolan's broken LAUGHTER.

ROBINSON
(whispering)

Dolan, I've changed my mind and decided to let you out.

The laughter goes on and on without end.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Robinson staggers away from the construction site, heading back towards the hill. He stops, removes his wedding ring, and PITCHES it far into the night and the HOWLING WIND before continuing on.

EXT. VAN - NIGHT

Robinson opens the back doors of the van. He pulls the tire out of the wreckage in back.

It's flat. Jagged bits of glass jut from it, pieces of the broken light bulbs in the blinking road-arrow he'd carelessly thrown it on top of. No spare.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Robinson climbs into the front seat. He settles down as if to go to sleep. He looks up into the rearview mirror and SEES DOLAN, lips pulled back from his teeth in a bloody grimace, his eyes PERFECTLY BLACK, his silver hair wild.

Robinson screams, turns around. Nothing in the back of the van but shadows.

EXT. VAN - NIGHT

Robinson pulls his sleeping bag under the van and crawls inside. Sheets of sand blow across him but there's no way he'll sleep inside of the van.

He closes his eyes.

BLACKNESS

A click, and a lighter FLICKERS. In the faint light it's apparent that Robinson is sitting in the back seat of a Cadillac.

He turns to SEE DOLAN lighting a cigarette. Dolan's hair obscures his face, but the hand lighting the cigarette is a charred cinnamon color, the skin stretched over it like the hand of a mummy. The gold Rolex SHINES on its wrist.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Robinson awakens in a hospital bed, thrashing about as a NURSE attempts to restrain him.

NURSE

Sir! Sir! It's all right, it's all right!

Slowly, Robinson comes to his senses. His face and hands are covered in bandages -- patches of visible skin are dark red, nearly black from exposure. Tubes and wires are attached to him all over.

ROBINSON

Where...?

His voice is rough from disuse.

NURSE

A hospital. You were dreaming just now. It's all right.

ROBINSON

Am I...am I alive?

NURSE

Just barely. What were you thinking, sleeping outside in a storm like that? It was one of the worst we've had in years. You're lucky the road crew found you, sprawled out in the middle of the construction site and boiling in the sun. It was a close call.

ROBINSON

...my van...broke down...

NURSE

Heat stroke, exposure -- then you went into cardiac arrest. And my God, your back...lower spinal dislocation and three slipped discs. Did you try to lift that van all by yourself?

Robinson looks at her uncomprehendingly.

The nurse checks the monitors and pats him on the arm.

NURSE

Well, in any case, just relax. Rest. Feel better. I'll send someone in with a sedative.

ROBINSON

How...I mean, how did you know I was dreaming?

NURSE

When I came in you were talking in your sleep.

ROBINSON

What was I saying?

NURSE

I'm not entirely sure. It sounded like "it's dark in here, let me out" -- but I could be wrong. Just a nightmare. No cause for worry. Oh, and this must be yours.

She removes a GOLD WEDDING BAND from her uniform and hands it to him.

NURSE

We found it in your pocket. We thought you'd want it once you were conscious again.

The nurse leaves as Robinson stares dumbly at the ring.

When he looks up again, he SEES JENNY standing in the doorway. She watches him for a moment, then walks away without a word or a look back.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The stretch of desert road where Dolan lies buried. A car - a nice, recent model of car -- comes over the hill and pulls to the side of the road. An antique GOLD WATCH hangs from the rearview mirror like a rosary. The time is stuck

at the exact moment Dolan's Cadillac raced down this same stretch of road.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

They never found them. The storm almost buried the section of 71 that the detour had closed, and when they got around to repaving they just routed up the sand and the asphalt at the same time. No one ever noticed that the paving beneath the blade broke up into neat geometric pieces.

Robinson gets out of the car and walks to the center of the road, standing directly over the buried Cadillac. He is NOT wearing his wedding ring.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

(continuing)

Few tears were shed. A columnist in the Las Vegas Sun suggested that Dolan might be shooting pool somewhere with Jimmy Hoffa. Perhaps that wasn't too far from the truth. Castillo was eventually declared missing and a service was held with all due honors.

Robinson checks either horizon. No cars in sight.

He unzips his pants.

A steady stream of urine arcs to the ground and splashes onto the road -- a final act of desecration on an unmarked grave.

Robinson zips his pants and LOOKS AROUND AT THE DESERT a trifle apprehensively -- as if he expects to see Dolan come shambling out of the wasteland -- and then quickly gets back into his car.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

That was the last time I was on 71. Now I take the Interstate.

The car starts up and Robinson drives away.

ROBINSON (V.O.)

And Elizabeth?

(beat)

Like Dolan, she has fallen silent.

FADE TO BLACK.