

THE HUNTRESS

(STORY/OUTLINE)

"CADILLAC DREAMS"

WRITTEN BY

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TEASER

1. EXT. EAST VALLEY STREET - DAY. DOTTIE and BRANDI, wearing 1950s style formal gowns are in a car chase after OSCAR RAMOS, a gangbanger who has been charged with a series of petty thefts, and who has skipped on Ricky. Oscar's car flips, and Dottie's crashes into it. Oscar staggers out and runs into:

2. EXT./INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY. Continuing an apparently ongoing argument about the future of their bounty hunter careers (Dottie sees bounty hunting as something she's doing until something more appropriate comes along; Brandi loves the life) Dottie and Brandi climb from their partially wrecked car. (The wreck prompts the argument.) Dottie follows Oscar inside the warehouse while Brandi goes around to the front door. Dottie almost gets him, but Oscar makes a last desperate lunge for her—and finds himself staring at the gun Brandi has on him. Gotcha.

ACT ONE

1. EXT./INT. POLICE STATION - DAY Dottie and Brandi get off a city bus with Oscar, who is totally humiliated about being transported, handcuffed, on public transportation. They point out that it's his fault for wrecking their cars. In the police station they find RICKY and learn that Oscar is Ricky's cousin, a fact that embarrasses both men, but which is the reason Ricky is here to quickly after getting Dottie's call. Oscar's lack of gratitude (he doesn't even want to be seen around Ricky) angers Ricky so much that he stomps out without paying the bail—teaching the kid a lesson—and Dottie and Brandi follow, demanding their money.

2. As Ricky heads for his car, his AUNT NELDA RAMOS and COUSIN ALVA, Oscar's mother and sister, pull up in a gorgeous custom Cadillac sedan. We learn that Ricky's father's side of the family (the Guzmans) is looked down upon by his mother's side (the RAMOSES). The Ramoses are a "respectable" middle-class family. Ricky's aunt and cousin blame him for Oscar's behavior...associated with gangbangers, getting in trouble like this. If he hadn't let Oscar hang around his place...Ricky's defense is that he thought it would be a deterrent, but Brandi can tell he's just covering up a true sense of guilt. She's surprised by Ricky's behavior around his aunt and cousin: subdued, deferential, tongue-tied. (As we'll discover, although Ricky is proud of his success as a bondsman, he has a buried sense of unease that he isn't living up to his potential, at least, in the eyes of his mother's family. Ricky's story -- coming to terms with family expectations -- will parallel Dottie and Brandi's story -- dealing with conflicting expectations for themselves.)

3. Meanwhile, Dottie thinks the Caddy is the most beautiful thing she's ever seen--her dream car--and when she finds out it belongs to Oscar and the women are bringing it as security for bail she offers to take the car from Ricky as payment for bringing in Rudy. After all, they sure as hell need it. Brandi thinks her mother's nuts--who wants a *Cadillac*, for crying out loud? After a short Ricky family argument, it's a done deal.

4. INT. TINY'S BAR - DAY. Dottie has shown off the Caddy to TINY, who has to admit he's never seen a car quite like it. Definitely one of a kind. Several of the other BOUNTY HUNTERS who work for Ricky are also there, busy making plans for a big weekend of "duck hunting"--which really means getting away from their wives and getting drunk and playing poker. (Among the bounty hunters are some familiar faces: CLAUDE (the Van Damme wannabe), JAKE BLUMENTHAL, and LITTLE LEO, among them. Brandi wants to go along on the duck hunt, sees this as a great chance to bond with her fellow bounty hunters, but the men make it very clear they aren't interested in having her hang with them. On Brandi's frustration:

5. INT. THORSON HOUSE - NIGHT. Dottie comes out of the garage pushing boxes, trying to move all the junk around and make room for her new car. She and Brandi talk a bit about Ricky's family and his behavior toward them. Brandi

comments it's like Ricky is ashamed of his career. This prompts Dottie to comment that it is a less-than-classy business, and after all, it isn't something anyone should want to do forever. More discussion re: Dottie and Brandi's differing views of the bounty hunter life and their place in it. This isn't what Brandi wants to hear, and she angrily voices her frustration about not really fitting in with the other bounty hunters. This, after her recent experience with Farrell's cop friends, makes her wonder if she fits in anywhere.

6. EXT. THORSON HOUSE - NIGHT. Deciding the garage is still too crowded for the Caddy, Dottie goes outside to cover it—and escape the argument with Brandi. But as much as she wants to baby the car, she can't—because Oscar is busy stealing the car! Dottie tries to stop him, but she's too late, watching helplessly from the street as he peels away. FADE OUT.

ACT TWO

1. INT. THORSON HOUSE - DAY. As detectives investigating the car theft leave, in comes JOEY MATTSSEN, the real owner of the car, who's on a major tirade about the situation. The pink slip was forged. Even the engine number's a fake—it's for a Toyota! The car is unique, all right, because Joey, a neighbor of the Ramos' has had it transformed as a true "understatement of his wealth." Joey is a middle class businessman with a very high opinion of himself, a guy who is very proud of what is really very little. A bullying giant of a man who's convinced that Oscar's Puerto Rican family is a nest of thieves, Joey's in a fury, screaming at Brandi that he wants the Caddy back *now*.

2. Dottie's on the phone with Ricky, demanding that he make good on the car and their bounty fee, and Ricky blows up, "How is this my fault? I paid you, the car is your problem now!" He's very defensive -- and Dottie realizes Ricky is still stinging from his aunt's rebuke. He wants to wash his hands of Cousin Oscar and the whole Ramos family. Joey grabs the phone, and expresses a very simple point of view on this: Either Ricky gets the car back to him, or Ricky's as good as dead...literally.

3. INT. RICKY'S OFFICE - DAY. Ricky's unfazed. He hangs up and finds himself getting a little visit from DIOGENES

and his bodyguards. Diogenes is one very expensive dude, well-dressed, educated, articulate, and fussy about the dust in the office. He's a former gangbanger gone upscale, and he wants Oscar--and that damn car as well, Especially the car. *Now*. Where is it? Ricky says it's gone, but he can get Diogenes another Cadillac if necessary. But Diogenes wants this Cadillac, and decides, since Ricky's an expert at finding people who want to be lost, he should find the Caddy. If he doesn't, he's toast. Not one to dirty his own hands, Diogenes sits back and lets his guys smash up the office, showing Ricky just how serious--and dangerous--he is. When the mobsters leave, Ricky knows that while he blew off Joey he can't do the same to this guy, which is why he hurries urgently to:

4. INT. THORSON HOUSE - NIGHT. Ricky shows up, trying to hide his terror with charm. Apologizing for his earlier attitude, he humbly asks Dottie and Brandi to search for the car, and even offers to pay them. They cut a deal, Ricky haggling even now. He reveals how much trouble he's in, though, when he asks the ladies if he can stay here a couple of nights. Just until they come back with the car. What's so important about this Cadillac? Ricky doesn't know, just knows he has to find it.

5. INT. THORSON HOUSE - NIGHT (LATER) Brandi has gone off to bed, and Dottie is helping Ricky make up the couch. They have one of those late-night, let-your-guard-down conversations in which Dottie prods Ricky to open up about his family issues. Ricky reveals how ambivalent he feels about his family -- particularly Aunt Nelda, who always looked down on Ricky's father, and now looks down on Ricky. Dottie is touched by Ricky's obvious need for family approval, and offers her own insights -- talking about her family's reaction to Ralph. Nobody approved of Ralph, and everyone looked down on Dottie for marrying him. But she was in love, she knew it was right, and if her family couldn't accept that -- the hell with them. Ricky wants to know if they eventually came around. Nope. And it hurts. But Dottie's okay with it. They say good night... it's a sweet, friendly moment... and Dottie goes off to bed.

6. INT. THORSON HOUSE - DAY (MORNING) Dottie and Brandi wake up to strange smells from the kitchen, and come downstairs to find Ricky cooking some weird Puerto Rican spicy breakfast egg dish for everyone. Our ladies try it

politely but it burns their mouths. Ricky hardly notices, he's jazzed up, running his business from Dottie's phone, playing Salsa music, enjoying himself. Dottie and Brandi decide it's time to start looking for Oscar's car; and the best way to is to find Oscar. They exit, planning to pick up some Egg McMuffins on their way to Nelda's dress shop...

7. INT. THORSON HOUSE - DAY. Meanwhile, Ricky settles in nicely, putting out all his stuff and shoving the women's things away, doing his business by phone as usual. Just as he gets comfortable, his feet up, the TV on, the back door bursts open, and in come Diogenes' thugs. Ricky tries to hotfoot it away, but they grab him as we FADE OUT.

ACT THREE

1. INT. NELDA RAMOS' DRESS SHOP - DAY. A reasonable nice, upper middle class dress shop with potential for expansion. (Dottie loves the clothes, can't stop touching them; Brandi thinks they're old news.) In fact Nelda is going over franchising plans when Dottie and Brandi arrive to ask about Oscar's friends, habits, all that important stuff. At first Nelda's resistant, especially when Brandi gets pushy, but Dottie eases things by playing to Nelda's pride in her establishment. She gets Nelda to express her disappointment with Oscar -- leading to an admission she's worried about the boy -- and ultimately, Nelda starts to open up. She'll tell what she knows...

2. INT. THORSON HOUSE - DAY. Dottie and Brandi return home after getting nowhere with Nelda's leads, Brandi commenting on how if she had a mother so determined to move up socially, she'd probably go bad too. Dottie wonders what's wrong with wanting to better yourself? Nothing, says Brandi, if you're really making things better. We realize this is a continuation of their what's-in-the-future-for-us debate. As they trade aggravated quips, they suddenly discover the place is completely shot up, wrecked, and, of course empty. They also discover Joey, who maintains his bluster but swears he only came to check up on how they were doing and found this. Concealing her concern, Brandi sighs. Man, that Ricky sure makes a mess. As Brandi and Joey trade accusations, Dottie calls the cops...

3. EXT. PUBLIC PLAYGROUND - DAY. Amid the swings and

jungle gym, with her homeowner's policy in hand, Dottie is meeting with an INSURANCE AGENT while Brandi works the phone, pressing the cops to find out what happened to Ricky. No joy. Meanwhile Dottie is finding out how little of last night's damage is actually covered by her insurance. The guy leaves apologetically, and Brandi tells her mom how nuts she is for hiding out in a playground. I'm not hiding out, Dottie says. What happened to their home feels like the ultimate violation, and she just plain can't be there right now. She needs to be someplace peaceful and sheltered. What could be better for that than the same playground Brandi went to as a tot?

INTERCUT - DIOGENES' CHOPSHOP - DAY. As they're talking the cell phone rings, and Brandi answers, expecting a callback from the cops. Instead, it's Diogenes, calmly elucidating the fact that if Dottie and Brandi don't retrieve the Cadillac in 24 hours Ricky is a dead man, and death could come even sooner if they involve the police. The call finishes with an anguished cry for help from Ricky himself. Brandi says she doesn't think that Ricky being offed is such a bad idea, but it's just bravado. Reluctantly, Dottie leaves the playground with her daughter in Brandi's car. Time for the two of them to get down to work. If tracking Oscar through his family was a dead end, maybe tracking the Caddy itself is the way to go...

4. INT. TINY'S BAR - DAY. Dropped off by Brandi, Dottie is here to pick Tiny's brain for anything he knows about Diogenes. This isn't Tiny's area of expertise, but AHMED has heard about how dangerous and ambitious Diogenes is, with a complete rundown of his way of using the local gangs as farm teams for up and coming thugs. Diogenes is a genuine rival for the more well-known criminal organizations, into everything from car theft to gambling, hookers, drugs, you name it. Tiny's intrigued. With all this at Diogenes' command, what's so important about this particular Cadillac? He's going to put out feelers-

5. INT. RICKY'S OFFICE - DAY. Brandi goes through it looking for anything she can find about Oscar while calling the other bounty hunters in Ricky's stable to see if they'll help save him -- CLAUDE, JAKE, LEO, et al. One after another each one passes. Hey, they're busy getting ready to get out of town and do the duck thing, you know? Brandi sees this not as a rejection of Ricky but of her mother and herself as fellow bounty hunters, and she gets

more and more angry, until she explodes, giving Jake Blumenthal an earful.

6. She's interrupted by the arrival of Dottie and Tiny. He's found a lead. A guy who knows a guy who knows a guy who knows the car theft rings in LA says a thief answering Oscar's description was bragging about a Caddy he'd lifted. Apparently this thief -- presumably, Oscar -- said the Caddy was his ticket to the Good Life, including enough money to get so far away even Diogenes couldn't hurt him. Oscar had a buyer lined up, somewhere up the coast. All this about the car still doesn't make sense, but some deal was definitely waiting to go down. The question is, where up the coast? Brandi has a brainstorm, remembering something she just read in the files. When Oscar was last arrested it was at a beach cafe near Malibu. That's on the coast. Worth a shot...

7. EXT. BEACH CAFE - DAY. Dottie, Brandi, and Tiny arrive at a nice roadhouse-style cafe, very trendy and upscale except on Sundays, when part of it turns into a biker hangout. (Think of Sagebrush Cantina in Calabasas.) Well, it's Sunday, and the bikers are in town -- and things aren't going well at all for Oscar. Whatever it is he's selling, SKYRIDER, the Bible-quoting biker honcho, doesn't want to do business if it means crossing Diogenes. In fact, to get in Diogenes' good graces, he's about to pop the gangbanger--

8. Our guys step in. For a tense moment things look pretty bad -- until Skyrider recognizes Tiny, and everybody relaxes. Once a member of the biker fraternity, always a member. (In an aside to Dottie, Brandi draws a pointed parallel to the bounty hunter fraternity.) Taking advantage of that momentary relaxation, Oscar bolts, grabbing a bike and roaring out of there. To everyone's surprise -- particularly Dottie -- it's Brandi who jumps to it first, grabbing another bike and speeding after him. The pursuit doesn't take long and before Oscar can get away, Brandi pulls up beside him and kicks his bike over. Oscar is caught -- but the question remains, where's the damn car? FADE OUT.

ACT FOUR

1. INT. THORSON HOUSE - DAY. Dottie, Brandi, and Tiny

have brought Oscar back to L.A., but he refuses to tell them where the Cadillac is because he's p.o.'d at how his family "betrayed" him, showing no respect for him at all by just handing his car over to Dottie. Let Diogenes kill Ricky. He doesn't care. Dottie recognizes false bravado and the same kind of reverse defensiveness Ricky displayed earlier. ("My family betrayed me" actually means "I betrayed my family.") She probes this and finally breaks through Oscar's defenses -- provoking an eruption of anguish and self-hatred. After a catharsis in which we learn that Oscar's true motivation for his latest caper was to become rich enough to gain his family's approval, Oscar finally agrees to lead them to the Cadillac. As they leave, we see Joey pull up, and continue behind them.

2. EXT. JUNKYARD - DAY. Oscar takes them to where the car is tarped and hidden amid rusted out hulks (and guard dogs). In a last desperate effort to buy his way out, he reveals \$3 million in coke in secret compartments in the vehicle. Turns out that Oscar stole the car for Diogenes to use because Diogenes wanted something upscale, and Oscar couldn't stand Joey anyway. Diogenes then had his chopshop operation turn it into a drugmobile for a very big coke deal set to go down tomorrow. (That's why Diogenes needs the Caddy back before then.) Oscar, of course, decided that he could use the fortune more than Diogenes could and stole the car back from Diogenes for himself.

Joey shows up, demanding the car, but our guys point out that he's now in as much trouble as they are. No way Diogenes is going to let any of them live if they give him back the car--he'll assume they know too much, and they do. So what can they do? Dottie says, we'll bring in the cops. Neither Brandi nor Tiny thinks this is a good idea; a guy like Diogenes probably has a line in to the police, and he's said he'd kill Ricky at the first sign the cops are involved. We have to handle this ourselves. Oscar thinks this is nuts: Diogenes has a small army at the chop shop. You can't go in there alone. Dottie ponders. Then she takes out her cell phone, snaps it open...

3. INT. DIOGENES' CHOP SHOP - DAY. As Ricky looks on nervously, Diogenes is phoning Dottie and getting no answer. He's filled with controlled anger. Deadline's up. Looks like Ricky has to die -- And that's when Diogenes' guys tell him the Caddy is pulling up outside.

4. EXT. CHOP SHOP & STREET - DAY. Everyone takes a pre-established position, and we play a big exchange scene...like a modern version of a Sergio Leone confrontation. In the street, driving the Cadillac, is Dottie, with Joey beside her. Behind her is Brandi in her car. Oscar handcuffed in back. Beside Brandi is Tiny on his bike. Diogenes' guys, however, are everywhere, moving along the street, guns out. There's no doubt they could cream our heroes.

As the tension builds, Dottie turns over the Cadillac. But in a pre-planned, well choreographed move, Diogenes grabs Dottie despite Ricky's shouted warning. Now he has her as well as Ricky. Surrounded by Diogenes' thugs, who are closing in, Brandi and Tiny look screwed too. True to Oscar's prediction the mobster decides he has to get rid of everyone so his operation will be safe. Things look bleak.

And then, one after another, Ricky's other bounty hunters show up -- Claude, Jake, Little Leo, et al, armed to the teeth. Now the odds are even, a complete Mexican standoff. Dottie, coolly, points out Diogenes has no choice. Either there's a bloodbath or he takes the car and lets everyone go. Up to him. Ricky, hearing this, expresses admiration for Dottie's negotiating technique. Dottie smiles -- she learned it from him.

After a tense moment (eyes shifting, hands wavering over guns, fingers resting on triggers, sunlight pouring down, sweat beading) -- this could go either way -- Diogenes finally gives in. Give me the car, you can go.

But it still isn't over: Joey can't stand to see his car in a place like this. He strides forward demandingly, and his appearance sets off a gunfight, with Joey desperately trying to keep his car from being hit and finally ending up saved by Tiny, who has to punch his lights out first to quiet the guy down. Dottie gives the word, and soon Diogenes' men are shooting at nothing as the others drive/ride out.

Diogenes breaks open the secret compartments to reveal his huge stash of coke -- just in time to hear SIRENS APPROACHING. No way to get rid of the coke, and his fingerprints are all over the car. As Diogenes realizes he's royally screwed...

6. EXT. RICKY'S OFFICE - DAY. Dottie and Brandi drop off Ricky and Oscar, who find Aunt Nelda waiting to take charge. Aunt Nelda will make sure Oscar makes his court date. Now Ricky and Nelda have a long overdue confrontation, forcing Ricky to face squarely his ambivalent feelings about his career and his family's expectations. Oscar pushes a button when he accuses Ricky of siding with the Ramoses, who think he's low class. Nelda seems to think Oscar and Ricky are one and the same, both outlaws. Ricky explodes -- years of pent-up feelings finally erupting: I'm not an outlaw, what I do is a good thing, it helps people who have nowhere else to turn -- and we see (once again) that Ricky, despite his hard case attitudes, is really a Stand Up Guy. Oscar, stunned, is left reeling as Ricky ends with, "The only black sheep in this family is you." And then Ricky turns to Nelda, "And with a son like him, I wouldn't be so quick to call me low class." Off Ricky, restored to cockiness, as he strolls into his office...

TAG

1. INT. TINY'S BAR - NIGHT. With the bar closed for the night, the bounty hunters are having a private party -- toasting Dottie and Brandi, in effect welcoming them into the fraternity. Dottie discovers, to her confused delight, that she's pleased and proud; maybe this is something she can be happy doing the rest of her life. Tiny points out to Brandi, meanwhile, that she doesn't have to go away for the weekend with a bunch of men who are really just trying to escape their wives to be accepted into the fraternity of bounty hunters. Bounty hunting is in her blood -- she was born a member of this club. As Dottie and Brandi accept their new-found sense of belonging, and try to figure out whether that's a good thing or a bad one, we

FADE TO BLACK