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THE HUNTRESS

"Cadillac Dreams"

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. SAN FERNANDO VALLEY INDUSTRIAL STREET - DAY

A LOW-RIDER car, full-size body, teeny little wheels, SCREECHES around a corner and tears along the street laying rubber all the way.

Careening after it, then straightening out, is Dottie's car, DOTTIE at the wheel, BRANDI white-knuckling it beside her. They ROAR past CAMERA as:

The low-rider is cut off by a truck coming out of a loading dock driveway. The driver of the low-rider, who we will learn is OSCAR RAMOS, an early 20 gangbanger type, slams on the brakes and whips the steering wheel to the side, and the car skids past the truck and flips over.

Dottie jams on the brakes, the tires smoking as her car slows but not quickly enough. WHAM! She and Brandi plow into the back of the low-rider just as Oscar squirms out the window and runs for the warehouse that the truck just left.

Shotguns in hand, Dottie and Brandi push open the doors of Dottie's squished car, continuing after their quarry as:

DOTTIE

Look at my car! That truck didn't even look before it pulled out!

BRANDI

Guess the driver didn't figure on some crazy skip trying to bang by at 80.

DOTTIE

I thought Ricky said this was going to be an easy one.

Dottie and Brandi keep their eyes on Oscar as he races past the men working the dock and vanishes inside its open door.

BRANDI

Like Dad always told us -- there are no easy ones, Mom.

DOTTIE

Another reason it's time we found something better to do for a living.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRANDI

This is better than a living. It's a lifestyle.

DOTTIE

Honey, Ralph Thorson and "lifestyle" are two words even Martha Stewart wouldn't put in the same sentence.

They're at the loading dock now, and Brandi nods to her mother, continues alongside the building, toward the front. The workmen exchange impressed looks as, her gun at the ready, Dottie moves through the open doorway and into:

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Aisle after aisle of shelves piled to the high ceiling with big boxes of electronics. Dottie sees Oscar hightailing it up the center aisle.

DOTTIE

Oscar Ramos! Hold it right there!

Oscar speeds up, and turns a corner. Dottie rushes after him. This second aisle looks exactly like the first -- except that there's no sign of Oscar at all.

Dottie hesitates, looking around -- and we hear a stir behind her, WIDENING TO SEE Oscar hanging from one of the shelves -- and pushing a pile of boxes at her.

Dottie ducks back, and the boxes CRASH to the floor before her, blocking the aisle. Oscar leaps down and starts sprinting up the aisle -- but suddenly we hear the GUNNING of a motor as a forklift bears down on him.

Oscar bangs into the lowered forks, tripping and falling, and with a WHINE the forklift raises upward to its full 12 foot height, Oscar dangling upside down, baggy pants caught. He swings back and forth, struggling wildly.

Finally, he breaks free and falls to the ground...and finds himself looking up at first one shotgun barrel, directly in front of him, then another, alongside it.

WIDENING, we SEE Dottie standing before him holding the first gun and Brandi leaning out from the cab of the forklift, which she's been driving, holding the second.

BRANDI

End of the trail, dirtwad.

Dottie slaps a set of cuffs on Oscar, turns to Brandi.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOTTIE

I didn't know you could drive one of those.

BRANDI

Remember that guy I used to date, the one Dad hated?

DOTTIE

He hated them all, dear.

BRANDI

Sure, but I'm talking Frankie, with the big ears? He taught me.

A FOREMAN comes puffing up to them.

FOREMAN

What the hell's going on? You can't barge in here and --

BRANDI

(showing I.D.)

Bail Enforcement Agents, Bozo. Meaning we sure as hell can.

DOTTIE

This man's a dangerous felon.

FOREMAN

(suddenly interested)

Yeah? What'd the son of a bitch do?

Dottie hesitates, takes out the paperwork on Oscar.

DOTTIE

He's been accused of -- tagging.

BRANDI

Hey, today's graffiti is tomorrow's mass murder. You know how these things grow.

And, as they propel Oscar back down the aisle --

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF TEASER

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

An RTD BUS pulls away from a bus stop across the street from a Valley police station, dropping off three passengers: Dottie, Brandi, and the handcuffed Oscar. Brandi yanks him into the crosswalk and they head to the station house.

BRANDI

Move it, Oscar. Your luxury apartment's waiting.

OSCAR

Hey, compared to where we've been it's the Playboy Mansion. I can't believe you made me use public transportation!

DOTTIE

You're the one who made us take the bus, Oscar. If you hadn't wrecked my car --

OSCAR

What? You couldn't call Budget? I woulda waited.

DOTTIE

Budget's out of our budget. Sorry.

OSCAR

It's a matter of principle, is all. Losers ride the bus, dudes. Losers!

BRANDI

Yeah, and you're a real gold medalist, I know.

She propels him inside:

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

The usual bustle, with one exception. RICKY, waiting at the front desk. He sees the trio enter, rushes over.

RICKY

About time you showed up. It's two hours since you called and said you had him. What took so long?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOTTIE

How about a little old lady who slugged a guy for not giving up his seat and then faked a coronary to get mine?

BRANDI

Know how long we had the bus had to wait for that ambulance? 911 is definitely not all it's cracked up to be.

Dottie and Brandi bring Oscar to be booked, Dottie handing over his paperwork, taking back her cuffs, etc. The procedure continues under the following:

DOTTIE

Usually you're the one who keeps us waiting. Why all this personal concern for a spray can jockey, Ricky?

OSCAR

Yeah, Ricky, why don't you tell her?

Ricky glares at Oscar. Then, to Dottie and Brandi:

RICKY

This "spray can jockey" has a record longer than a Dallas Cowboy's. Tagging, petty theft, possession of stolen property -- and every time he's been arrested he's skipped.

BRANDI

So how come you keep shelling out the bail?

OSCAR

Yeah, Ricky, tell her how come. Go on...

Ricky looks miserable. His voice is a whisper.

RICKY

Oscar's my cousin.

OSCAR

On the good side of the family. As in I am so not a Guzman --

RICKY

Oscar --

Ricky's voice is a warning. Oscar's prepared to ignore it, but Dottie sees the storm coming.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DOTTIE

Family loyalty is a wonderful thing,
right, Brandi?

BRANDI

Seems to me that from Ricky any kind of
loyalty would be more than wonderful.
It'd be a miracle.

Oscar barks out a laugh, and Ricky gives him another hard
look. Before he can say anything, the BOOKING OFFICER looks
up.

BOOKING OFFICER

That's everything. Let's go.

OSCAR

Waitaminnit! I wanna call my P.D. Get
new bail set. I've gotta get outta here.
Big things're waiting on me!

RICKY

(he's had it)

Not this time, cuz. This time the
"Guzman's" gonna blow off the "Ramos."

Ricky starts for the door. With a quick look at Oscar,
Dottie and Brandi move after the bondsman.

DOTTIE

Just a sec, Ricky. We've got some
settling up to do. A matter of five
thousand dollars --

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Ricky is walking to the parking lot, toward his car, Dottie
and Brandi coming after.

BRANDI

We need our fee, Ricky. You never know
when the RTD's gonna raise its fares.

RICKY

Not as much as that damn kid's bond keeps
going up! And does he appreciate what I
do for him? Do any of them -- ?

Ricky breaks off. His eyes are on a Cadillac sedan that's
pulling into the lot. As it pulls into a space we SEE that
Dottie too is staring at the car, which has every custom
feature known to GM, and probably several that aren't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gold trim, textured top, spoked wheels...the thing is beautiful. No doubt about it: Dottie's in love, and Brandi sees it.

BRANDI

Mom?

RICKY

(re the Cadillac; disgusted)
Great...just great...

The front doors of the car open, and out come NELDA RAMOS, about 60, dressed so expensively that the very conservatism of her clothing becomes showy, and her daughter, ALVA, a couple of years older than Oscar.

NELDA

You! Ricky Guzman, you're the one responsible for all this! My Oscar's a good boy at heart, I know!

RICKY

Aunt Nelda...how nice to see you. And Cousin Alva...

Ricky's voice is deferential. He's like a little boy in the presence of the most adult of adults. Dottie and Brandi exchange surprised glances. Alva starts to reply, but her mother cuts her off, pointing to the police station.

NELDA

Is Oscar in there?

BRANDI

Oscar's your son?

NELDA

You know him?

Ricky speaks quietly and dutifully:

RICKY

Aunt Nelda, Cousin Alva, this is Dottie Thorson and her daughter Brandi. Associates of mine.

DOTTIE

We've met Oscar, yes.

BRANDI

Met him? We --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DOTTIE

(quickly)

We spent the day with him. He's quite the boy, isn't he?

Again Alva starts to respond, and again her mother cuts her off.

NELDA

Oscar has more potential in his little finger than some people --

(a look at Ricky)

-- have in their whole bodies. But he can't seem to keep out of trouble.

(beat)

The neighborhood gangs don't help -- and neither has Ricky and his business.

RICKY

I'm sorry, Aunt Nelda. Honest, I thought letting Ricky hang out at my office would be a deterrent.

NELDA

So much for your thoughts. But you have a living to make, no matter how distastefully. That's why I brought this.

Nelda indicates the custom Cadillac.

NELDA (CONT'D)

Maybe Oscar will learn something if he has to be responsible for his own bail this time. I want you to use his car as security.

DOTTIE

This is Oscar's car?

ALVA

(at last!)

He just bought it a couple of days ago. Isn't it wonderful?

RICKY

I dunno, Aunt Nelda. I don't really need another car...

DOTTIE

I do. The way bodyshops work, mine might not be running till next year.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Dottie goes to the Cadillac, rubs her hand over its perfect finish.

DOTTIE (CONT'D)

You owe me, Ricky. But I'm willing to take this off your hands instead of cash.

RICKY

Aunt Nelda, can I talk to you?

He moves off with Nelda and Alva, and we see the three of them talking in b.g., with a lot of hand waving and an occasional raised voice, while:

BRANDI

Mom, are you crazy?

Dottie opens the drivers door, gets behind the wheel. She rubs her hand over the leather.

DOTTIE

Leather seats, power everything -- oh, look, GPS so we can never get lost --

BRANDI

Mom, it's a gas-guzzling, environment-eating pig!

DOTTIE

It's a Cadillac, Brandi.

BRANDI

Exactly!

DOTTIE

Don't you understand what this car means? All their lives, my parents wanted a Cadillac more than anything else in the world. When I met your father and he was driving one, they knew he was the man for me.

BRANDI

I heard that story. Unfortunately it was repossessed the next day.

DOTTIE

This one won't be.

The SOUND of Ricky and the others "discussing" the situation stops. Ricky approaches Dottie and Brandi, brandishing a pink slip.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

RICKY

Ladies, I believe we have a deal.

He signs the slip and hands it to Dottie. Brandi reads over her mother's shoulder.

BRANDI

"Oscar Ramos?"

RICKY

I've got power of attorney.

Dottie turns to Brandi.

DOTTIE

See what I mean?

INT. TINY'S BAR - DAY

TINY's bringing in a crate of whiskey from the back room, to the bar, where Dottie and Brandi sit.

DOTTIE

...Did you see that radio? You can operate it from the steering wheel so you don't have to look away from the road.

TINY

Yep, I can see how that'd be a useful feature for the driving challenged. How's she handle?

BRANDI

Like a truck.

DOTTIE

But a comfortable truck. I didn't know Cadillacs were so heavy.

TINY

Keep you safe. The Harley Hog of luxury cars. Drive her in good health.

Tiny raises an unopened bottle as though in toast, and Dottie "clinks" an imaginary glass against it. Brandi looks disgusted as Dottie's and Tiny's eyes meet, but before anyone can say anything more:

CLAUDE (O.S.)

Tiny! Just the man we want to see!

CLAUDE (the Van Damme wannabe), JAKE BLUMENTHAL, and LITTLE LEO enter the bar, Claude sauntering as usual.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRANDI

Why? You got paper on him?

JAKE

We wanna make a deal.

LITTLE LEO

We need some beer, and figured you could get us a good price.

CLAUDE

Wholesale, mon ami. Rock bottom.

DOTTIE

What do you guys want all that beer for?

TINY

Maybe Jake's being Bar Mitzvahed.

JAKE

For your information, it's duck hunting season. And that means one Acme State of the Art Great Weekend's coming up.

LITTLE LEO

Two glorious days of sitting in a duck blind on the Truckee River, shotguns searching the sky for migratory fowl. Pow! Pow! Pow!

BRANDI

How many of you are going?

CLAUDE

All of us. Could be as many as a dozen bail enforcement agents, relaxing in the traditional manly way.

BRANDI

Sounds great. When do we leave?

JAKE

"We," kimosabee?

CLAUDE

Oh, my poor deluded Cherie...

Claude takes Brandi's hand, kisses it. Then, laughing, the men head for a table. Brandi shakes the cooties off her hand.

BRANDI

What'd I say?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DOTTIE

Your father used to go "duck hunting" every year, till I figured out what was really happening.

BRANDI

Yeah?

DOTTIE

The "duck blind" is really a bunch of seedy motel rooms in Tahoe. The ducks are whatever women they can find. And the shotguns --

BRANDI

Okay, okay, I get the idea.

TINY

Chill, ladies. It's no big deal, just a guy thing.

BRANDI

A bonding thing, you mean. My chance to cement my place in the bounty hunting fraternity.

DOTTIE

Except for one little detail. You aren't invited.

(beat)

We aren't part of the "bounty hunting fraternity," honey. And I don't think that's such a bad thing.

Off Brandi's frustration:

EXT. THORSON HOUSE - NIGHT

ANGLING PAST the custom Caddy, TO the garage. The door is open, and the light is on -- almost the only light on the otherwise dark street. Hey, it's late.

INT. THORSON HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT

Dottie's hard at work, dragging boxes of precious junk, trying to make enough room in the crowded place for her new car. As she lifts a box, its bottom falls out, and some souvenir China plates CRASH to the floor.

Brandi comes in from the house, dressed for bed, sees her mother grabbing a broom and a garden shovel to sweep up the pieces.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRANDI

Mom? What're you doing?

DOTTIE

Garages are supposed to hold cars, not junk, and now that I've got a car worth garaging...

BRANDI

(indicating a stack of boxes)
But this is all Dad's stuff. From the office.

DOTTIE

It's time, Brandi. Time to put it away. And move on.

BRANDI

(pointedly)
To Tiny?

DOTTIE

To everything...

Dottie trails off, looking at the shards. A big piece of plate has a picture of a lake and says "Tahoe."

DOTTIE (CONT'D)

Speaking of Tahoe.

Brandi grabs a garbage bag, gets down beside Dottie to help.

BRANDI

The box says "Family Vacations," so we must've gone with Dad sometimes.

DOTTIE

Family vacations that include everybody are for functional families, dear.

BRANDI

I'll lay you odds Ricky isn't exactly invited to all his family's outings either.

(beat)

What bugs me is that today, around the Ramoses, he actually seemed ashamed of what he does.

DOTTIE

And that surprised you? Brandi, the bail bond business isn't exactly high society.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DOTTIE (CONT'D)

And on the totem pole of life Ricky's ten notches above us.

Brandi stiffens. She knows where this is heading.

BRANDI

Okay, Mom, I get it. I don't need any more lectures on how we really don't belong --

DOTTIE

How about the one on how you should be paying more attention at school, so you can find a better place for yourself?

BRANDI

While you're at it, why don't you hit me with how screwed up I am with Farrell and his damn cop friends too?
 (flinging the now full garbage bag across the room)
 The hell with family vacations! And the hell with fitting in!

DOTTIE

Brandi!

But Brandi whirls, stomps back into the house. Dottie looks after her, unsure of what to do. With a sigh, she turns and surveys the garage. Still no room for a car. Dottie goes to a corner of the room, picks up a brand new car cover.

DOTTIE (CONT'D)

(unhappily)

Can't help one baby anymore...

(beat)

But I can still protect the other...

EXT. THORSON HOUSE - NIGHT

Car cover in hand, Dottie moves toward the Cadillac, stops as she sees a shadowy figure in the driver's seat.

DOTTIE

Hey --

The car's ENGINE STARTS, and the Caddy pulls away from the curb. Dottie runs after it.

DOTTIE (CONT'D)

Stop! Stop, you sonofabitch --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She sprints to the driver's door, grabbing onto the handle, and the thief turns to gaze at her. We recognize his face immediately:

DOTTIE (CONT'D)

Oscar?

Oscar hits the gas, and the Caddy surges forward with a ROAR, the door handle pulling from Dottie's grasp. Unbalanced, she goes sprawling in the street, the car cover falling free. Instantly, Dottie looks up.

DOTTIE (CONT'D)

Oscar! That's my car now, Oscar! Damn
you! It's mine!

ANGLE TO the car cover, rolling down the street, then beyond it, to the Caddy, tires SQUEALING as it vanishes around the next corner...

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. THORSON HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

An aggravated Dottie is pacing around the kitchen, talking on the phone. Behind her, Brandi is walking from the room with two DETECTIVES here to take down the report of the Cadillac's theft.

DOTTIE

What're you saying, Leonard? That my new car wasn't insured? We could buy a summer home with that premium!

(beat)

Oh...the binder...right...The car was stolen before the insurance could even go through...

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Brandi turns to the Detectives as they move across the room to the front door.

BRANDI

I told her it wasn't a good idea to do all our business on the Internet. Victoria's Secret I can understand, but State Farm's phone isn't nearly as busy...

She opens door to show the two men out.

FIRST DETECTIVE

Look at the bright side. That Cadillac didn't really belong to her anyway.

JOEY (O.S.)

I'll say it didn't. That car is mine.

Brandi and the others turn, see JOEY MATTSSEN, a giant of a man wearing designer sweats. The detectives nod and continue outside, and Joey steps -- make that stomps -- into the room.

BRANDI

And what zoo did you escape from, pal?

JOEY

Save it, babe. I've heard every four hundred pound gorilla joke there is. I'm a private trainer -- the best. Two hundred bucks an hour.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRANDI

And with those rates you're going door to door in this neighborhood?

Joey holds a pink slip in front of her face but won't let her touch it.

JOEY

Some cops called. They said my Caddy'd been found -- and then lost again.
(sarcastic)
Way to go.

Dottie is entering the room, looks puzzled.

DOTTIE

Your Caddy? That was my car. Here.

Dottie pulls the pink slip from her purse, holds it up before Joey -- exactly the way he held it up to Brandi.

DOTTIE (CONT'D)

I suppose yours had the custom paint--

DOTTIE (CONT'D)

The special differential, the optional rear seat package --

JOEY

The special differential, the optional rear seat package --

The two of them stop. Brandi tries to explain to Dottie.

BRANDI

The detectives told me they had a report. Sorry, Mom. Last night wasn't the first time Oscar stole that thing.

JOEY

Oscar? Oscar Ramos?

DOTTIE

You know him?

JOEY

The little greaser did some odd jobs for me. Trimmed some trees, washed the car --
(breaking off)
I knew I couldn't trust him! Jealous little runt. He didn't just steal my car, he stole my -- my "me," you know? My way of showing the world I'm not just a musclehead, I'm a rich musclehead!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DOTTIE
Hold that thought, muscles.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Dottie comes back in, reaches for the phone.

INT. RICKY'S OFFICE - DAY - INTERCUT AS NEEDED

Ricky's plugging in a brand spanking new electric can opener, the just-opened box on his desk. He grabs a can of coffee, starts trying to open it as the phone rings. He picks up the phone, continues screwing with the can opener (which never works properly) throughout the following conversation:

RICKY
Bail Bonds --

DOTTIE
Ricky, it's Dottie. And you still owe me five thousand dollars. Plus pain and suffering!

RICKY
Five thou? Pain and suffering? What're you talking about?

DOTTIE
Oscar's car wasn't Oscar's car! The pink slip was a fake!

RICKY
Of course it was. The Vin number was for a Toyota. Anyone who's ever had to wait for six hours at the DMV would know that.

DOTTIE
You've got to make it good, Ricky.
Brandi and I are entitled to our fee --

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUE TO INTERCUT AS NEEDED

Joey snatches the phone away from Dottie.

JOEY
Listen, "Ricky," whoever you are, if you're involved with Oscar Ramos, then I'm holding you personally responsible --

RICKY
Responsible? Responsible for what?
What's going on?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOEY

What's going on is you're getting my car back! And you're delivering it to my door in its usual condition -- pristine. Otherwise I'll find you, and you'll see what it's like to wake up with a fifty pound dumbbell jammed down your throat!

Joey slams down the phone, looks from Dottie to Brandi and then back again.

JOEY (CONT'D)

He's one of 'em, isn't he?

BRANDI

One of what?

JOEY

You know, Oscar's kind. You can't trust 'em. No way. No how. What happened to my car is living proof.

Joey storms out. Dottie and Brandi stare.

DOTTIE

Just once I'd like to have a sympathetic client.

Off their disgust:

INT. RICKY'S OFFICE - DAY

Ricky's still holding the phone. He hangs it up.

RICKY

The bail bond business! You gotta love it! Talk about surging adrenaline!

(turning back to the can opener)

You, on the other hand --

Ricky breaks off as we hear a KNOCK on the door.

RICKY (CONT'D)

C'mon in.

But the door is already opening. A slim, well-dressed man we can call the FIRST BODYGUARD enters gracefully, followed by another man of the same type, who would be, yes, the SECOND BODYGUARD. The First Bodyguard goes to the chair Ricky keeps across from his desk, takes out a handkerchief and wipes it carefully, making sure there isn't a speck of dust.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICKY (CONT'D)

Make yourself at home, why don't you.

DIOGENES (O.S.)

Their job is to make me feel at home.

A third man enters: DIOGENES PARTRIDGE, an immaculate African-American who looks like he just stepped out of the pages of "Vogue." You know the type: The male model so great-looking that his presence with the reigning supermodel gives the final validation to whatever it is she's selling.

Diogenes regards the office with distaste, sits on the cleaned-up chair. The other two men stand. Ricky looks at his visitor wonderingly, thrusts out his hand.

RICKY

Ricky Guzman...

Diogenes ignores Ricky's hand. The Second Bodyguard hands Ricky a business card.

RICKY (CONT'D)

"Diogenes Partridge...?" You? We've done business before, right?

DIOGENES

Only by proxy. I prefer to keep to myself.

Diogenes wears gloves. Seeing the can opener, he takes them off, starts fussing with it.

RICKY

Well then, to what do I owe this honor? Guess you don't need me to get you out of jail. I mean, you're here so --

The First Bodyguard puts a finger to Ricky's lips, motioning for him to keep quiet. Diogenes sighs.

DIOGENES

Are you familiar with Shakespeare, Mr. Guzman? I love Shakespeare.

(as though onstage)

"He who steals my purse steals nothing. Tis trash. Twas mine, tis his, twill be mine again. But he who steals my good name --"

(stopping)

Your nephew, Oscar Ramos, has stolen something very important to me, Mr. Guzman.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RICKY

You too? I don't know what I'm gonna do with that kid. I'll tell you, Diogenes -- Mr. Partridge -- I'm at my wit's end --

Another finger to Ricky's lips. It touches harder and stays longer. Ricky shuts up.

DIOGENES

On one level, what Oscar stole was trash. But on another, he has vandalized my reputation. After all, if he gets away with his crime, I'm not the man I'm supposed to be, am I?

Ricky starts to answer, realizes the question is rhetorical. So instead he just swallows and nods.

DIOGENES (CONT'D)

And in my business, that could prove fatal. So, since you are an expert at finding people --

RICKY

You want me to find Oscar --

The Bodyguards glare. Again, Ricky stops.

DIOGENES

I want you to find what he took from me. A certain Cadillac sedan. Otherwise...

Diogenes gestures, and the two Bodyguards suddenly go into action. As messy as the office was before, it soon becomes a complete disaster, as their hands sweep out and they smash and stomp everything in sight. All the TVs, the stereos, even a mirror and the phone and the window for good measure.

It's like a whirlwind, taking only seconds, and when they're done the only thing left intact is the can opener Diogenes has been playing with on Ricky's desk. Diogenes puts the can of coffee into place, presses the lever, and the can opener works perfectly, the can whirling open.

DIOGENES (CONT'D)

That's the problem with small appliances. They never work straight out of the box. There's always that extra adjustment that we have to make.

Diogenes dons his gloves and rises, the Bodyguards following him from the scene of destruction, and, off Ricky's terror:

INT. THORSON HOUSE - FRONT HALLWAY - NIGHT

The DOORBELL RINGS, o.s., and BRANDI moves INTO SHOT.

BRANDI
I'll get it.

The BELL RINGS again...not an endearing sound. Brandi reaches the door.

BRANDI (CONT'D)
Knock it off, willya? If the thing starts sticking again, you're fixing it --
(opening the door)
Ricky?

Ricky pushes past her, into the house. He's carrying a bulging attache case.

BRANDI (CONT'D)
(sarcastic)
Hey, Ricky, c'mon in, take a load off.

Dottie walks in, half ready for bed, hair up in a towel.

DOTTIE
Ricky?

Ricky's nervous as hell, but still filled with his usual bravado.

RICKY
Hey, ladies, very good, very good.
Ricky, Ricky, Ricky. You've made the I.D.

BRANDI
That mean you're wanted? Can we cash you in?

RICKY
Don't be ridiculous. Why would I be on the run? No sir, ladies, I've come to give you a golden opportunity. The chance of a lifetime.

DOTTIE
You're selling "Disco Faves of the 80s" for KTEL?

RICKY
Let's not go overboard. I'm taking pity on your never-ending financial plight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRANDI

Ricky, the only way you'd take pity is if it was an amount on a check.

RICKY

No, no, no, I mean it. I have a job for you. I want you to get Oscar's Cadillac back.

DOTTIE

Don't you mean you want us to get Oscar?

RICKY

For all I care, my little cousin can stay wherever he is, the farther the better. I want the car.

BRANDI

How much is it worth to you?

Ricky hesitates, then opens the attache to pull out his big company checkbook. A toothbrush and some men's underwear spill out.

DOTTIE

You want to pay us in toiletries?

Ricky fills out a check, doing everything but signing it. He hands it to Dottie.

RICKY

This is what I'm paying you. The boxers are for me. I'm staying here till you bring me the car.

DOTTIE

Ten thousand dollars? Sounds good --

BRANDI

It'd sound better if he signed it.

Brandi takes the check from Dottie, hands it back to Ricky, who's been busy picking up his stuff.

RICKY

You want me to pay in advance?

DOTTIE

You want to tell us why you need to stay here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BRANDI

What's the big deal with that stupid car anyway? Why's everybody want it so much?

Ricky hesitates. Then, caving:

RICKY

I don't know why. But I know what's going to happen to me if I don't come up with the damn thing.

(throat-slitting motion)

Courtesy of Diogenes Partridge, a guy who makes Al Capone look like the star of "Touched By An Angel."

And that's all the women need to hear...

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Brandi's gone off to bed, and Dottie's helping Ricky make up the couch so he can sleep on it. Nearby bottles show us that they've each had a couple of beers.

RICKY

Never bedded down on a lady's couch before -- without secretly wanting to get into her bed.

DOTTIE

I'll bet that you were never as secret about it as you thought.

RICKY

A lot you know. Ask my friends. They all know me as the great stone face.

Dottie puts down a pillow from her bedroom. Ricky fluffs it up.

DOTTIE

You weren't exactly hiding your emotions yesterday, when you were talking to your Aunt.

RICKY

Aunt Nelda's always been a nutcracker. My uncle cut out on her first chance he got. When I was a kid I thought she hated me, and I couldn't figure out why.

(beat)

When I got older I realized it was my old man she couldn't stand.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICKY (CONT'D)

Didn't think he was good enough for my mother because he was a stone mason, who worked with his hands instead of his brain.

Ricky's defenses are down. He's being real for a change. He plops down on the couch. Dottie sits at the other end.

RICKY (CONT'D)

I was tainted by his blood. Meaning I'm not good enough either -- no matter what I do.

DOTTIE

What about your mother? Is Nelda close to her?

RICKY

As close as my mother will let her be. The way Aunt Nelda looks at things, my mother's still a Ramos, no matter what.

DOTTIE

You know, when I married Ralph my family went ballistic. No way a man like that could be good enough for me.

(beat)

But they didn't see things quite the way your aunt does. I was the one they looked down on, for not having the "sense" to fall in love with a "better" man.

RICKY

You and Ralph were together a lot of years.

DOTTIE

I was in love. I knew what I was doing was right. If the family couldn't accept it, the hell with them.

RICKY

They ever come around?

DOTTIE

Nope.

Ricky fluffs up the pillow again...just can't seem to get it right.

RICKY

So you're a black sheep, just like me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DOTTIE

And it hurts. It still hurts. But I'm
okay with it. Now.

Ricky nods thoughtfully.

RICKY

'Night, Dottie.

DOTTIE

'Night...

Dottie leaves the room. Ricky stretches out on the couch,
squirming into the most comfortable position he can find...

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A major disaster area, with every burner on the stove heating
away under an overflowing pot, mixing bowls everywhere, and
the table set perfectly for three.

Ricky, in his boxer shorts, is dancing from place to place,
preparing the meal of a lifetime while singing and dancing
along with a lively Spanish language song ("La Vida Loca" or
whatever we can clear). No doubt about it: Last night's
talk has put him into one mighty fine mood.

As Ricky does a whirling dance step, Dottie and Brandi rush
into the kitchen in their robes, eyes widening at the sight.

BRANDI

What the hell -- ?

Ricky sees Brandi just in time to keep from smacking into
her. He holds a pot and a spoon to her mouth.

RICKY

Good morning, ladies! Have a taste?

BRANDI

What is it?

RICKY

Sofrito! Think of it as the Puerto Rican
national sauce.

Brandi waves off the spoon, goes to the coffee maker to join
Dottie in taking a cup of coffee.

DOTTIE

Smells --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICKY

Great, I know. Now sit down, sit down...

He directs them to their chairs, goes back to the counter.

RICKY (CONT'D)

Here we are...fine Island cuisine fit for a king and his queens.

He brings them some plates piled high.

RICKY (CONT'D)

Go on, go on...dig in...

DOTTIE

Could we have just a little clue about what we're digging into?

RICKY

Twice fried bananas, what else? I mean, you didn't have any plantains. Covered with adobe marinade. Tomato sauce, salted pork, ham, minced onion. Not to mention pepper, garlic, cilantro --

BRANDI

Garlic for breakfast?

RICKY

What better way for a passionate people to start the day?

Ricky starts to join them. The phone RINGS, and he jumps up, races to it.

RICKY (CONT'D)

The guy who invented Call Forwarding should have a holiday named after him.
(into receiver)

Bail bonds...

BRANDI

"Bail bonds?!" Mom, what's he doing? He's taking over our house!

RICKY

Freef! What'd they get you for this time, man?

(beat)

You're kidding...How many truck stops in one week?

DOTTIE

Ricky has issues, honey. I'll talk to him after we've tasted his "fine Island cuisine."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Reluctantly, Brandi follows her mother's lead, and they both take a bite of their breakfasts...and react as though their heads are going to blow off. Ricky glances up from his conversation.

RICKY

Good, huh?

They hurry from the room. Ricky's a little puzzled, but he has to get back to business.

RICKY (CONT'D)

(into receiver)

A hundred grand's no problem. But no, I'm not taking a rack of Travel Guides as collateral...

EXT. THORSON HOUSE - DAY

Fully dressed, Dottie and Brandi put their shotguns into the backseat of Brandi's car and get inside.

DOTTIE

Okay, so I'll talk to him when we get back.

BRANDI

I don't think I ever wanted to be out on the job more than I want to be out there now...

Brandi gets behind the wheel, STARTS THE ENGINE.

DOTTIE

The best way to find the car is to find Oscar. Let's see what Aunt Nelda can tell us --

(beat)

And pick up some Egg McMuffins on the way.

They pull away. We HOLD as they disappear up the street and another car, an N.D. sedan, pulls up to the house from where it's been parked down the street. Two men get out -- Diogenes' Bodyguards.

INT. THORSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The MUSIC is off, but the TV set is on, tuned to whatever gabby morning show we can clear. Ricky, also dressed now, comes in from the kitchen, pulling the phone cord as tightly as it'll go as he carries the phone to the couch and sits back, feet up on the coffee table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Just as he gets comfortable, we hear a THUNK as a back door is kicked open and the Bodyguards burst inside. Ricky reaches for his lifeline -- the telephone receiver -- and the First Bodyguard grabs the cord and rips it out of the wall.

Leaping to his feet, Ricky tries to back away, but the two men come closer.

RICKY

Now hold on, you guys --

He wheels around, trying to sprint for the door, and the Second Bodyguard grabs him, slamming Ricky against the wall. The First Bodyguard moves in, and we TIGHTEN ON the TV, the LAUGHTER of the Studio Audience almost -- but not quite -- covering up the O.S. SOUND of body blows as we FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. NELDA RAMOS' DRESS SHOP - DAY

A boutique featuring upscale women's casual wear, both the clothing and the decor the epitome of conservative good taste -- just like Nelda herself.

Alva is showing a customer some outfits when the bell over the door rings and Dottie and Brandi enter and take the place in. Dottie's impressed. Brandi isn't.

DOTTIE

Look at this place. It's so...so...

BRANDI

Yesterday?

Dottie reaches out to a rack of capri's.

DOTTIE

How can you say that? These fashions are timeless.

BRANDI

I'll say. I've seen pictures of you in high school wearing the same things.

DOTTIE

But not with the same labels. Look at this. I never knew Versace made Bermuda shorts.

Alva leaves the customer to join them.

ALVA

Can I help you --
(realizing)

Oh -- you're the ones with Oscar's car.

DOTTIE

Not exactly "with."

BRANDI

And not exactly "Oscar's."

Alva looks puzzled. Before she can say anything the door to an adjacent room opens and Nelda emerges with two business-suited accountant types, walking them to the store's entrance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NELDA

Thanks for coming by, gentlemen. I'll talk to you soon.

The men leave, and Nelda turns, sees Dottie and Brandi.

NELDA (CONT'D)

Mrs. Thorson! How good to see you. Shopping for a new fashion look?

BRANDI

If we were, would we be here?

Dottie shoots Brandi a look that Brandi of course ignores.

DOTTIE

Actually, Mrs. Ramos, we wanted to talk about Oscar.

BRANDI

You know the drill. Friends. Associates. Hangouts --

NELDA

(insulted)

You make it sound quite -- official.

BRANDI

It is. You haven't seen him, have you? In the past couple of days?

ALVA

Is Oscar in trouble again? I've been so worried --

NELDA

(cutting her off)

Your customer needs you, Alva.

Alva is uncertain, but her mother isn't about to take any arguments. As Alva moves back to the customer, Nelda starts toward the counter. Dottie and Brandi move with her.

NELDA (CONT'D)

I really don't have much time. Besides all the usual hustle and bustle I'm busy with expansion plans. The two men who just left are with the country's largest franchising service.

BRANDI

Starting your own little empire?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NELDA

If you omit the "little."

Brandi tries not to gag. Dottie knows she has to step in.

DOTTIE

If anyone ever deserved her success it's you, Mrs. Ramos. I know how hard it is to establish a career while raising one child by yourself. And you've done it with two!

NELDA

I hope you don't think the business has consumed all my time. I've tried to be a good mother...

She stops, upset. After a beat of internal struggled:

NELDA (CONT'D)

I get so worried about Oscar. He doesn't seem to have any appreciation for the life I've given him.

(beat)

And his values -- the way hanging around with his Uncle Ricky...and that street gang...have twisted them...!

DOTTIE

I know what you mean, Nelda. Lack of appreciation? Tell me about it!

(even more concerned)

And this gang -- you wouldn't happen to know the names of any of the leaders?

Dottie puts her arm around Nelda's shoulder sympathetically, and, as Nelda starts to talk:

EXT. THORSON HOUSE - DAY

As Brandi's car pulls into the driveway, Dottie and Brandi getting out and heading up the front walk.

BRANDI

How many ways can you say, "We blew it, Brandi?" Outside of -- zip -- nada -- nothing --

DOTTIE

Don't forget "No comprende." Funny how I went all these years not knowing that was gangbanger for "Buzz off."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRANDI

If I had a mother like Nelda I'd join a gang too. And look what she's made Alva into. I'll bet that girl's never had a thought of her own.

DOTTIE

Well, we certainly can't say that for you. But what's wrong with wanting to better yourself...?

Dottie stops. Brandi's listening to something -- but not her. She follows her daughter's gaze to the front door. It's wide open.

BRANDI

Shouldn't we be hearing some music, courtesy of Ricky the Salsa King?

Dottie nods, the two of them hurry forward to:

INT. THORSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

As Dottie and Brandi enter -- and stop, stunned, at the sight of the place. Wrecked. Shot up. Chairs overturned. The stuffing ripped out of the couch. TV blown out. The homeowner's worst nightmare. Dottie's worst nightmare.

DOTTIE

Oh my God...

BRANDI

One thing you can say for Ricky. He sure knows how to make a mess.

From O.S. comes the sound of someone CREAKING toward them from the hallway. It's a tense beat as Brandi pulls out her 9mm, springs forward --

BRANDI (CONT'D)

You're busted, jerko --

She stops. Her gun is screwed to Joey Mattsen's huge chest.

JOEY

What the hell? You'll break my chain!
And that's real gold!

BRANDI

Where's Ricky? What'd you do to him?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOEY

Hey, I just got here, chickie. I came to check up on you -- and found all this.

Reluctantly, Brandi lowers the gun. She turns to Dottie, and sees that her mother is still standing there, stunned.

BRANDI

Mom...?

JOEY

Waitaminnit...this mean you two geniuses still haven't found my car?

Joey glowers furiously. Off Brandi's look -- which is far deadlier than any gun...

EXT. SAN FERNANDO VALLEY PARK - DAY

ANGLING WITH Brandi as she heads toward the kids' playground area -- swings, monkey bars, jungle gym. She's talking into the cell phone.

BRANDI

What the hell's wrong with you guys?
Ricky Guzman's an officer of the court.
You should be busting your butts to find him!

(beat)

Yeah, yeah, the age of miracles is over,
I know. Do what you can.

She reaches the sandbox where Dottie sits, watching the kids play. LEONARD, who is dressed like the insurance agent he is, nods to Brandi as he moves away.

BRANDI (CONT'D)

(to Dottie)

How'd it go with our favorite insurance agent?

DOTTIE

Let's put it this way -- I'm definitely getting to know him too well. Want to know how little of the damage is actually covered by our homeowner's policy?

BRANDI

Let me guess -- bullet hits take a separate rider, right?

Dottie nods.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOTTIE

Maybe I've been too hard on Ralph. At least there were no home invasions when he was alive.

BRANDI

So how long you figure to be hiding out in the playground?

DOTTIE

I'm not hiding. It's my new office.
 (at Brandi's doubtful look)
 Honey, you saw the house. To me, that was -- I dunno -- the ultimate violation. Like our whole life was just raped.

A couple of little kids come running by them, yelling joyfully. One of the them skids into Dottie, who moves quickly, with all the acquired skill of motherhood, and sweeps the child up before any impact, swinging him around and setting him on his feet again to run off.

DOTTIE (CONT'D)

Don't worry, I'll be going home and facing reality soon enough. For now I just need to be someplace peaceful. And what could be better than the park I used to take you to everyday as a kid?

The CELL PHONE RINGS. Brandi flips it open.

BRANDI

Yeah?

INT. DIOGENES' CHOP SHOP - OFFICE - DAY - INTERCUT AS NEEDED

(NOTE: We don't know it's a chop shop yet, only that we're in a small but luxuriously paneled room.) The Second Bodyguard is wiping all the wooden surfaces with spray cleaner. The First Bodyguard is standing behind Ricky, who is shackled to a chair mouth covered by duct tape. And Diogenes Partridge sits behind a desk with everything on it squared off and perfectly in place, talking into a speakerphone.

DIOGENES

Ah, would this be Mrs. or Miss Thorson?

BRANDI

It would be the only Thorson you're going to get. Who're you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIOGENES

Consider me Ricky Guzman's host.

EXT. SAN FERNANDO VALLEY PARK - DAY - CONTINUE TO INTERCUT AS NEEDED

Brandi motions for Dottie to come closer, holds the phone up so they can both hear.

BRANDI

You've got Ricky? How is he?

In response, Diogenes gestures for the Bodyguard to remove the duct tape. It hurts like hell, and Ricky YELPS!

RICKY

Jeeze! What're you trying to do, rip my lips off --

Diogenes gestures again, and a new piece of tape gets slapped over their captive, silencing him to a muffle. Dottie grabs the phone.

DOTTIE

If you've hurt him --

DIOGENES

Mr. Guzman is in good health. He is destined, however, have a major heart problem if you do not retrieve the Cadillac within eighteen hours.

(calmly)

That is to say he will be as heartless as his clients have often said. Literally.

(as Ricky groans in fear)

I'll be in touch.

Diogenes clicks the connection closed. Dottie looks at Brandi.

DOTTIE

We've got to find that car.

BRANDI

Look at the bright side. Ricky -- no Ricky. It's kind of a win-win situation.

But Brandi's really all bravado, and Dottie knows it.

DOTTIE

Let's get to work...

INT. TINY'S BAR - DAY

Where, dropped off by Brandi, Dottie sits at a table, huddling with Tiny.

DOTTIE

All I can go by is what Ricky said -- that this Diogenes guy is a dangerous customer.

TINY

I thought I knew all the hard cases, but this one's new to me. Sure Ricky wasn't just running off at the mouth?

AHMED is at the bar, cleaning glasses. He has overheard the conversation.

AHMED

Diogenes Partridge is after your time, Tiny. He started as an East Valley gangbanger while you were in the joint, and he's been moving up steadily.

DOTTIE

How steadily?

AHMED

As soon as one body falls down a rung of the ladder, Diogenes climbs over it. But his hands are always clean...mainly because he wears gloves -- and uses kids from the local gangs for the dirty work.

DOTTIE

Sounds pretty smart. But he must've made some mistakes.

AHMED

Not yet. He's got a piece of just about every kind of action -- car theft, gambling, hookers, drugs. Giving the big boys a run for their money.

TINY

If Diogenes is such a winner, what's he want that Cadillac for? It's not like it's a work of art or something, like, say, a '57 Harley flathead.

Dottie still loves the car. Defensively:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOTTIE

Easy, Tiny. How many Harleys do you know can go over the Grand Canyon without the driver feeling the suspension dip?

(beat)

But this really is the million dollar question. Why should one car mean so much to a guy who can steal -- or even buy -- anything he wants?

AHMED

Don't you have some old saying? "There's no accounting for taste?"

If there's one thing Tiny doesn't want, it's Dottie's disapproval. He gets up from the table, going to the phone.

TINY

Lemme reach out on this, Dottie. See what I can find.

(turning back to her)

TINY (CONT'D)

You're gonna wait, right? I mean, you've got a few minutes?

DOTTIE

(a glance at her watch)

As of now I've got seventeen tense hours. And no ride.

AHMED

Ah, Tiny, the lady is at your mercy.

It's a joke, but Tiny responds seriously.

TINY

Way I see it, I'm at hers.

He starts dialing, still looking at Dottie intently. Off her reaction...

INT. RICKY'S OFFICE - DAY

MATCHING SHOT - BRANDI, on the phone at Ricky's desk, going through his drawers and files as, into the receiver:

BRANDI

Leo, listen to me. This is Ricky I'm talking about! He needs us --

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRANDI (CONT'D)

You can run your errands for this weekend later. What, the sporting goods store's gonna run out of duck blinds?

We hear a CLICK as Leo hangs up. Brandi starts to slam down the receiver, thinks better of it. She punches in another number. Then:

BRANDI (CONT'D)

Claude? It's Brandi Thorson --

(beat)

Yeah? Well the only place my legs'll be wrapped is around your neck in a scissors hold! I'm calling about Ricky. He's in trouble --

(beat)

He's your friend! How can getting the decoys be more important -- ?

Another CLICK as Claude hangs up. Again, Brandi can barely keep herself from slamming down the phone. She tries once more. After a ring, words tumbling out at once:

BRANDI (CONT'D)

This is Brandi Thorson, Jake. I know you're busy getting ready for the big weekend that you didn't even have the courtesy to invite me to so I could turn you down, and you don't have time to save Ricky Guzman's life, and I want to tell you that stinks! You hear me? Stinks!

And this time she does it, slams down the receiver so hard that the phone echoes.

DOTTIE (O.S.)

Brandi! Didn't I bring you up better than that?

Dottie and Tiny enter the office.

BRANDI

(exasperated)

Bounty hunters! They're -- they're --

DOTTIE

Impossible?

BRANDI

(catching herself)

My kind of guys.

TINY

Just like the lady said.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Brandi glares. Tiny gives her his best smile.

DOTTIE

Don't worry about it. Tiny's found us a lead.

TINY

A guy who used to ride with a guy who used to ride with me is an expert on L.A. car theft rings --

BRANDI

You mean he's a hot-wire king.

DOTTIE

I'm trying to think of him as an aficionado.

TINY

Bottom line is that a few days ago a booster matching Oscar Ramos' description was bragging about a Caddy he'd lifted...

DOTTIE

He said it was his ticket to the Good Life, with enough money to get so far away even Diogenes couldn't hurt him.

BRANDI

What's Diogenes have to do with it?

DOTTIE

That's still in the to-be-determined file. The important thing is that Oscar had a buyer lined up somewhere up the coast. But where?

Brandi gets an idea. She goes through some of the papers she's been looking at, pulls out one.

BRANDI

Here it is. Last time Oscar was arrested it was in Malibu, at some beach cafe.

DOTTIE

That's definitely the coast. It's worth a shot.

The three of them start for the door. Tiny stops Dottie.

TINY

If you were gonna do all the talking, what'd you need me for?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DOTTIE

That '57 Harley...

(beat)

For a start...

Tiny smiles. Off his look of hope:

EXT. MALIBU BEACH CAFE - DAY

Called "SUNDOWNERS" (or some other cleared name) and overlooking the ocean. The place is trendy and upscale, but at the far end of the parking lot, beyond the Yuppie-mobiles, is a group of Harleys owned by the meanest-looking bunch of bikers you ever saw. (They're so tough they don't even need leather, instead wearing Levi jackets emblazoned with the name "Amen Brothers," and we'll soon see why.)

We FIND Oscar amid the bikers, talking to their leader, SKYRIDER.

OSCAR

Skyrider, dude, I'm telling you -- it's foolproof.

SKYRIDER

That's what the devil always says, when he works his corruption.

OSCAR

Yeah, yeah, the devil, right. You're just trying to lower the price. That's what it's all about -- getting a better deal.

SKYRIDER

Even the best deal isn't going to be worth anything if we have to pay the ultimate retribution.

OSCAR

"Retribution?"

(a revelation)

You're afraid, aren't you? It's not heaven you're worried about, it's Diogenes. Fine, forget it. I'll find somebody else --

Oscar starts away...but the bikers all around him stay where they are. He's completely blocked.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SKYRIDER

There's nobody else, Ramos. "Vengeance is mine," says the Lord, but in your case it'll be up to Diogenes.

(beat)

Once we've brought you to him, instead of incurring his wrath, we'll be partners. With profits to help our good works.

Oscar doesn't need to hear more. He throws himself forward, trying to break through the ring of bikers, and the two nearest guys grab him and wrestle him to the ground.

THE PARKING LOT ENTRANCE - DAY

Where Brandi is pulling in, Dottie beside her, Tiny scrunched up uncomfortably in back. They see the commotion, and Brandi steps on the gas --

BACK TO THE BIKERS

Oscar's thrashing around on the pavement, Skyrider moving in, about to kick him in the face. Suddenly, Brandi's car SCREECHES to them, and Dottie and Brandi burst out, shotguns aimed.

DOTTIE

Bail Enforcement Officers! Don't move!

Skyrider doesn't go through with the kick. He looks at the two women, startled -- and then we SEE three more bikers, women this time, move in on Dottie and Brandi from behind, grabbing at Dottie and Brandi and the guns.

Dottie's only got one attacker on her, and she whirls, pulling away, then body blocks one of the two who are on Brandi. Brandi yanks the shotgun back, cocks one barrel --

And stops as Tiny finally extricates himself from the backseat of the car and gives Skyrider a grim look.

TINY

Long time, Skyrider.

Skyrider looks at Tiny closely. Frowns. A beat. And then a smile:

SKYRIDER

Tiny! That really you?

TINY

In the flesh, Preacher Man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SKYRIDER

And the spirit! Once a wild rider,
always a wild rider, huh, bro?

They slap hands, the other bikers joining in happily.

Dottie turns to Brandi, speaks quietly.

DOTTIE

Men! Look at them. What is this, a
fraternity?

BRANDI

Kind of like another fraternity we know.
Once a bounty hunter, always a bounty
hunter, isn't that what they say?

Dottie frowns. In b.g., the bikers holding Oscar are hauling
him to his feet as, to Skyrider:

TINY

You still spreading the Good News?

SKYRIDER

Wherever we can. 'Course, the real fun
comes when we get to pound it into
unbelieving heads.

Skyrider looks at Oscar meaningfully. Tiny shakes his head,
jerks a thumb at Dottie and Brandi.

TINY

Sorry, Skyrider, not him. He belongs to
the ladies.

SKYRIDER

And these sweet little daughters of Eve
are...?

Everyone turns to Dottie and Brandi, who are still pointing
their guns. It's the moment Oscar needs, and, taking
advantage of the distraction, he pulls out of the grip of the
men holding him and leaps onto a bike, coming down and
GUNNING it to a start all in one motion.

A pop of the clutch, and the Harley ROARS and SCREECHES to
life, barrelling forward. The bikers scatter, but, like two
minds with a single thought, Dottie and Brandi both react at
the same time, thrusting their guns outward, each into the
spokes of a different wheel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

The bike goes over as though it hit a brick wall, taking Oscar with it. He lies there, pinned but relatively unhurt, looking up at them entreatingly.

OSCAR
Get me outta here!

BRANDI
Why?

Skyrider likes that, grins approvingly to Tiny.

SKYRIDER
You always did know how to pick 'em.

And, as Tiny nods solemnly:

BRANDI
We've got Oscar. That's one down.

DOTTIE
(getting in close to him)
Let's hear it, Oscar. Where's the damn car?

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. THORSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Hands cuffed, Oscar stands in the center of the room with an exasperated Dottie, Brandi, and Tiny. They've obviously been here awhile.

DOTTIE

Look at the people you're dealing with,
Oscar! Look what they did!

Oscar doesn't respond. Tiny's had it. His big hand closes around the back of Oscar's neck, and he shoves Oscar's head up close to one shot-up piece of wreckage after another.

TINY

That's a 9mm hole. And that -- and that.
Kinda small in a sofa cushion, but they
do the job in a man.

BRANDI

Diogenes is gonna fill Ricky full of
those little holes, Oscar. Unless you
tell us where to get that car!

Oscar jerks his head up, turns on the others angrily.

OSCAR

You think I care if Diogenes kills Ricky?
Why should I? He doesn't care about me.
(mimicking Ricky exaggeratedly)
"Hey, you want my cousin's car? You got
my cousin's car. He's just a jerk who
doesn't count anyway!"
(harder)
Ricky makes like he's my friend, but he
disses me as much as anybody. Him and my
mother -- they betrayed me!

BRANDI

Oscar, you haven't begun to see "dissed."
But you will, right now...

Brandi's about to clobber him. Dottie comes between them.

DOTTIE

That's it. Out. Everybody out.

Brandi and Tiny look at her, not getting it. She propels them toward the kitchen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOTTIE (CONT'D)

Go get yourself a cup of coffee. Better yet, go clean up all the pieces of cup from the floor. Mr. Ramos and I have some talking to do.

Brandi and Tiny continue to the kitchen. Dottie turns to Oscar, unlocks his cuffs. She points to a slashed chair.

DOTTIE (CONT'D)

Sit...Please.

The "please" gets him. Oscar sits.

DOTTIE (CONT'D)

So you hate him, huh?

OSCAR

Ricky? "Mr. Words," I used to call him when I was a kid. I'd ask him a "yes or no" question, and he'd give me a twenty minute story that added up to "maybe."

DOTTIE

Ah...just like you're doing right now. Know what I think? I think you two are more alike than you want to admit.

(beat)

Neither one of you feels like you belong in your family. And both of you have just a teeny problem with your mother.

OSCAR

(thinking about it)

Yeah, you know she's always made Ricky feel like he wasn't good enough. I'd see it whenever they were together.

DOTTIE

And she makes you feel that way too, doesn't she?

OSCAR

Hey, this is my mother you're talking about!

DOTTIE

You said she betrayed you. But I've been where you are. Don't you kind of feel like you betrayed her?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OSCAR

Bullshit! I didn't betray nobody. I'm just out there trying and trying --
(breaking off)

The thing with the Cadillac, it was a sure winner. It was gonna make me rich. Rich enough to bankroll that stupid chain of stores my mother wants so much...rich enough to make her love me...

Oscar trails off, realizing what he's said. Dottie reaches out to him, takes his head in her hands.

DOTTIE

You've got to love yourself, Oscar. And that'll be kind of tough, won't it, if you cause your cousin's death?

Oscar thinks...hard. Then:

OSCAR

I can't tell you where the car is. But I can show you...

Off Dottie's relieved smile:

EXT. THORSON HOUSE - DAY

Brandi's car pulls away, carrying her, Dottie, Tiny, and Oscar. As they disappear up the street, another car comes into view -- an obvious rental...driven by Joey.

Joey looks out the windshield, seeing Brandi turn the corner. Face set angrily, he starts to follow...

EXT. SAN FERNANDO VALLEY JUNKYARD - DAY

A veritable sea of cars, some together, some in pieces, stretching as far as they eye can see. Big dogs -- Rottweilers, Dobermans, whatever -- are chained at strategic intervals, looking like they're just waiting for the chance to get in a good chomp.

We FIND Dottie, Brandi, and the others atop a pile of rusted-out hulks, Tiny standing there like the king of a not-so-desirable mountain.

TINY

Now this brings back memories!

BRANDI

Really? Doesn't look much like a prison yard to me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TINY

(ignoring the dig)
Got my first bike in a place just like this, up in Fresno. Well, pieces of it anyway. Put 'em all together and ended up with a real treasure.

DOTTIE

Right now I'm interested in Oscar's "treasure."

OSCAR

Here!

Oscar scrambles to the other side of the mound, where a ragged tarp completely covers a vehicle we can't see. Oscar pulls off the tarp and unveils -- the Cadillac, still shining in the sun.

BRANDI

I don't believe it. He actually came through.

DOTTIE

Most people will, honey. Once you show them that they can.

OSCAR

Listen, before you turn this thing over to Diogenes, there's something you should know.

He gets down on the ground, reaching around under the rear bumper. Oscar's hands find what he's looking for, and we hear a CLICK as a section containing a closed compartment swings out from the frame.

BRANDI

Boy, these Cadillacs have everything. Even a special compartment where the old ladies can keep their blue hair.

Tiny opens the compartment, takes out a couple of baggies filled with white powder.

TINY

This isn't exactly hair dye.

OSCAR

There's compartments like that all around this thing. It adds up to about three million bucks in coke.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BRANDI

Three million dollars!

DOTTIE

No wonder the car didn't handle so well.

OSCAR

Diogenes wanted a drugmobile for a big deal set up for tomorrow. He needed something so fly that nobody'd think it could be muling.

(beat)

I figured that if anybody ever deserved a good car theft it was Joey.

DOTTIE

And then, after Diogenes got it all tricked out and ready, you stole it from him.

OSCAR

Three million bucks! Y'know, we could still do our own deal, split it three ways --

JOEY (O.S.)

I'm thinking we don't need to split it at all.

Joey approaches from the far side of the pile, holding a .45 on the others. To Oscar, pointedly:

JOEY (CONT'D)

You dishonest little tamale, I figure if anybody ever deserved a fortune in coke, it's me.

BRANDI

Touch that stuff, and what you'll get is a shallow grave in the desert. Along with Ricky Guzman.

DOTTIE

She's right. No way Diogenes will let anybody who knows about this live.

BRANDI

He's definitely a hunt-'em-down-and show-'em-no-mercy kinda guy.

Joey considers. The nearest guard dog BARKS, and he turns to look at it. Immediately, Tiny's hand sweeps out, grabs Joey's gun away. Joey sighs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JOEY

Man, I never get a break! Know how sick I am of counting reps for fat, rich, disgusting people?

BRANDI

Don't you like anybody?

JOEY

I love my car...

He puts his hand out to caress it, stops himself. Reaching into a pocket, he takes out a doeskin cloth, wipes a fender with that instead.

DOTTIE

We're still going to have to give it to Diogenes.

(to Oscar)

You know where to find him?

OSCAR

Sure. But he's got a small army around him. We can't go in there alone.

DOTTIE

Who says we are?

And, as she pulls out her cell phone:

INT. DIOGENES' CHOP SHOP - OFFICE - DAY

Ricky's still shackled to the chair, his mouth duct-taped. He's frightened and miserable, all bravado gone. In front of him, the Second Bodyguard is eating a sandwich. Ricky looks at it longingly, and the Bodyguard reaches out as though to take the tape off his mouth -- and then changes his mind.

At his desk, Diogenes is at the speakerphone, which is ringing and ringing. At last we hear a RECORDED VOICE:

CELL PHONE VOICE

The cellular customer you are calling is either out of the area or --

Diogenes flicks off the phone, looks over at Ricky.

DIOGENES

According to my watch -- which is tuned to the atomic clock at Denver -- the deadline is up. Your trusted allies have failed as badly as MacBeth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Diogenes turns to the Second Bodyguard.

DIOGENES (CONT'D)

Time to make good on my promise.

The Second Bodyguard nods knowingly, pulls a 9mm from his jacket. Ricky's sweating bullets, shaking his head and moaning, "no, no, no..."

Suddenly, the office door opens, and the First Bodyguard steps inside.

FIRST BODYGUARD

It's here -- the Cadillac!

Off Ricky's look:

EXT. SAN FERNANDO VALLEY INDUSTRIAL STREET - DIOGENES CHOP SHOP - DAY

A street like the one in the TEASER, where a kind of "cavalcade" is in progress. Driving up slowly is the Cadillac, Dottie at the wheel, Joey beside her. Behind the Caddy is Brandi in her car, with Oscar in the passenger seat. And behind them is Tiny, on his Harley.

All are heading for a driveway that goes around behind the "Partridge Body Shop," which features a multitude of signs advertising quick service and excellent insurance settlements. (Diogenes steals 'em and then the insurance companies end up paying a ransom.)

As Dottie and the others move around to the large parking lot in the back of the shop, about a dozen men pour out of the place, all packing heat, and all taking up positions so that Dottie, Brandi, Tiny, Oscar, and Joey are clearly going to be dead meat in any crossfire.

(NOTE: This sequence should be like the climax of a modern-day Sergio Leone Western, with lots of cuts of the various good and bad guys getting into position and reacting to each other, the tension increasing as:)

Dottie stops just inside the parking lot, Brandi's car staying behind her. Tiny pulls up next to the Cadillac, and he and Dottie exchange looks. Then the back door of the body shop opens again, and the First Bodyguard comes out, followed by Diogenes.

Diogenes gestures to Dottie, and she drives forward, stops in front of him. He motions for her to get out of the car, but Dottie shakes her head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Diogenes nods, gestures behind him, and the Second Bodyguard emerges with a tight hold on Ricky, whose legs and wrists are still shackled, duct tape still in place.

In the Caddy, Dottie turns off the engine, starts to take out the ignition key. Joey can't stand it. His hand moves out to stop her. Their eyes meet -- "Not now! You'll blow everything!" is what Dottie's face says -- and reluctantly Joey pulls his hand away.

Now Dottie gets out, stands before Diogenes. He goes to a front wheel well, feels around until a compartment CLICKS out. Opening the compartment, he finds bags of coke just like those we saw. Satisfied, he holds his hand out to Dottie for the keys. She gestures to Ricky. Diogenes nods to the Second Bodyguard, who pushes Ricky forward, and Dottie drops the keys in Diogenes' hand.

Immediately, in a practiced move, Diogenes grabs Dottie, while the First Bodyguard yanks Ricky back. Now they have the Ricky, Dottie, and the Cadillac.

TINY

Dottie!

DOTTIE

I'm okay, Tiny.

DIOGENES

And she will remain that way as long as the rest of you do as you're told. Over here. All of you!

Diogenes' gunmen re-train their weapons. Tiny gets off his bike. Brandi, Oscar, and Joey step out of their cars, Brandi holding her shotgun.

BRANDI

We knew you'd pull something like this.

DIOGENES

Throw down your gun.

Dottie and the others are so outnumbered that Brandi doesn't have a chance with it anyway. But she holds onto the gun.

DOTTIE

No. You don't get it. We knew you'd pull this.

She puts her fingers to her lips and lets out a whistle --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

And the second part of a Sergio Leone scene occurs -- as none other than Claude appears on the rooftop of the nearest building, armed to the teeth. Then Little Leo appears at the driveway, two guns aimed. Then Jake, slipping out from between two cars in the lot, his guns at the ready as well. Other bounty hunters appear on more roofs and nearby stations. The odds now are completely even.

DOTTIE (CONT'D)

What'll it be, Diogenes? A bloodbath --
or a fair exchange?

Diogenes hesitates. Looks all around. We take our time, building the tension as he makes up his mind. He looks to his bodyguards, and we're expecting the signal to fire. But:

DIOGENES

"The better part of valor -- " Take him,
and get the hell out!

Dottie wastes no time. She grabs Ricky, hustles him toward Brandi's car. It looks like it's all over, we're in the clear --

Except Joey just can't stand it any longer. He leaps out of the Cadillac, jumping at Diogenes and trying to grab the keys.

JOEY

No! You can't have it! It's my car!

SERIES OF SHOTS

As, thanks to Joey, all hell breaks loose! One of the bad guys starts SHOOTING, and then everyone is.

Brandi rushes to help Dottie to the safety of the car, and even Oscar redeems himself by doing the same to hustle Ricky to safety.

The Bodyguards pull Joey off Diogenes, the three of them getting down for cover.

A bullet HITS the Cadillac. ANOTHER. Joey stares as it takes more hits.

JOEY

My baby! No!

He tries to shield it with his big body. Another shot RICOCHETS just beside him. The Caddy's being reduced to junk, and this idiot's going to get himself killed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TINY

Do you mind -- ?

Tiny punches him (hooray!), and Joey goes down. Quickly, Tiny drags Joey to his bike, throws him onto the back. Joey has just enough awareness left to hold on as Tiny SQUEALS away from the action.

WIDENING, we SEE Brandi back out of the lot and ROAR away with Dottie, Ricky, and Oscar, Tiny speeding past them. Claude, Jake, Little Leo, and the rest of the bounty hunters cover them with a FUSILLADE and then melt away from the action.

Only Diogenes and his men remain, and as they stop shooting we hear another SOUND: POLICE SIRENS getting closer and closer. Diogenes stands there, the keys to the Cadillac in his hand, the Caddy before him. Nowhere to go. No way to ditch the evidence in time.

The mobster is screwed...

EXT. RICKY'S OFFICE - DAY

Dottie and Brandi pull up in Brandi's car, stopping to drop off Ricky and Oscar. As they pull away, Ricky starts for the door...and sees Nelda and Alva standing there waiting.

NELDA

Oscar!

She rushes to her son and embraces him, then slaps his face.

OSCAR

Ma! What's that for?

NELDA

Do you want the whole list, or can I just issue a general summary? It's for stealing, for running off, for -- for --
(eyes resting on Ricky)
For being just like him!

Ricky literally flinches, takes a step away -- and then stops himself, stepping forward again to face his aunt at last!

RICKY

You think there's something wrong with being like me? All my life you treated me like a loser, some low class lowlife polluting your air!

(harder)

But I'm better than that.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICKY (CONT'D)

I've succeeded at everything I've tried.
I run a good, honest business that helps
people in need. People in trouble, with
nowhere to turn. I give them a chance to
go on with their lives instead of rotting
in an eight by six cell!

OSCAR

You tell her, Cuz.

RICKY

Don't "Cuz" me, Oscar. For years your
mother called me the "black sheep," but
you're gonna be the real outcast, unless
you straighten out.

(beat)

It's time to stand up for yourself,
Mister. Against guys like Diogenes.
Against the gangs.

(glaring at Nelda)

Against her.

Ricky moves past them, to unlock his office door. Oscar,
Nelda, and Alva gape.

NELDA

Ricky Guzman, that's enough out of you --

She gets no further as, for the first time in her life, Alva
interrupts.

ALVA

Shut up!

(at their incredulous reaction)

Guzman! Ramos! Mother, those names
don't mean a thing. Know who the real
loser around here is? YOU!

Alva throws her arms around Ricky, gives him a kiss.

ALVA (CONT'D)

Ricky...thank you.

She turns and starts away, triumphant, her own person at
last, the shocked Nelda hurrying after her.

NELDA

Alva? Alva...?

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT FOUR

TAG

FADE IN:

INT. TINY'S BAR - NIGHT

CLOSE ON A GROUP OF GLASSES, held high in toast, each holding a different booze of choice. (Boy, you can't get these bounty hunters to agree on hardly anything!)

JAKE (O.S.)

To our ladies of the evening -- for making our day!

Everyone CLINKS, and we WIDEN TO SEE Dottie and Brandi at the center of several tables pushed together, surrounded by Claude, Jake, Little Leo, and several of the other bounty hunters who were at the swap with Diogenes.

DOTTIE

I'm not sure about this "ladies of the evening" thing, but I'm overwhelmed.

(genuinely moved)

Thank you all. For coming to our aid.

CLAUDE

No, mon cher, it's we who must thank you. Without your plan to save Ricky, we might all be looking for square jobs.

LITTLE LEO

And if there's one thing I don't ever want to do again it's punch a time clock.

BRANDI

I've seen you fight, Leo. Maybe you'd do better against something that couldn't punch back.

JAKE

Man, it was just like the old days. All of us kicking butt together. What a gang!

He and the others start doing the macho guy hug thing with each other -- and including Dottie and Brandi.

Tiny has been at the bar, getting something we can't see. He moves to the group of tables, hands behind his back.

TINY

(to Dottie)

Pick one. Go on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dottie considers, points to Tiny's right hand. He frowns, makes a quick and obvious switch...and holds out a single red rose to her.

TINY (CONT'D)

Go on.

Dottie takes it tentatively.

DOTTIE

I need a glass of water to put it in.

TINY

No you don't. It goes in your hair.

He pulls a bobby pin from his pocket, hands it to her.

TINY (CONT'D)

Just don't ask where I got it.

Dottie takes the bobby pin, and as she pins the rose into her hair Tiny moves to Brandi, and extends the hand that has remained hidden. In it is a little rubber duckie.

BRANDI

What's this?

DOTTIE

How quickly they forget. All those hours of Sesame Street -- gone!

TINY

(as Brandi takes the duck)

Just a little reminder. Being a member of the bounty hunter fraternity is more than going away for the weekend with a bunch of gorillas trying to escape their wives.

(beat)

You were born a member of this club.

The bounty hunters AD LIB their approval: "You're one of us, kiddo! "Say hey!" and other good stuff. Brandi starts to tear up.

BRANDI

It's good to be home...

The guys love this, pounding her on the back and slugging back more of their drinks. Tiny goes over to the jukebox and makes a selection. A slow song starts, and he turns to Dottie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TINY

May I have this dance?

Dottie pauses, then gets up. We ANGLE WITH her and Tiny as they start to dance. She's quiet, pensive.

TINY (CONT'D)

Dottie? You all right?

DOTTIE

I was just thinking. For the first time in a long time, I feel like I'm home too...but I guess I'm still trying to figure out if it's right.

Tiny's face starts to fall...and Dottie can't have that. She adjusts her rose to a jaunty angle, presses herself close, giving herself to the music and her partner. Off their mutual smiles...

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW