

"RIGHT HAND MEN"

Written by

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RIGHT HAND MEN

FADE IN ON:

EXT. CENTURY CITY HIGH-RISE - DAY

A granite slab out front identifies the building as the corporate headquarters of 'HARDCASTLE INTERNATIONAL'.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Expensive cars pull into reserved parking spaces - Mercedes, Porsches, BMWs. A dirty VW Rabbit pulls in next to them, looking very out of place. The car's engine continues to knock as two young executive-types climb out (KYLE MERIDETH and NELSON FURBISCH).

NELSON

(hits car hood)

Do you know why I can't advance in this company?

KYLE

Because you're a lazy, irresponsible flake?

Nelson moves to a sign on the wall reading 'THIS SPACE RESERVED FOR RICHARD DORTCH'. He pulls a similar sign from his briefcase which reads, 'THIS SPACE RESERVED FOR NELSON FURBISCH', sticking it into place over the first sign.

NELSON

Besides that. It's my name. Nelson Furbisch. Nobody can say it, nobody can spell it, so they don't promote me. We'd be at the news conference to announce our promotions and they'd introduce the new vice presidents Kyle Merideth and Nelson...

(coughs, covering mouth)

That's why. Why couldn't I have a good business name, like...

KYLE

Iaccoca?

NELSON

Too obvious. How about Rockefeller?

A group of PARKING VALETS standing near the garage entrance call out angrily.

VALET #1

Hey, you jerks - we're supposed to drive the cars in.

VALET #2

Yeah. Trying to stiff us on the tip again, Forflush?

NELSON

Furbisch. You guys don't need a tip. You probably make more than us as it is.

VALET #1

Jeez, I hope so. I gotta keep up the payments on my Porsche. By the way, how much did that VW set you back?

The Valets laugh as Kyle and Nelson move off.

NELSON

(grumbling)

This is why I spent four years in college - to be laughed at by parking valets...

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH-RISE - LOBBY - DAY

The names of the corporations various subsidiaries are listed on one wall:

HARDCASTLE INTERNATIONAL, INC.  
NATIONAL ATOMIC  
HARDCASTLE PETROLEUM  
HARRISON AIRCRAFT  
MR. FREDDY'S TEDDY BEARS, INC.

A crowd of men and women gather at a bank of elevators, the lines six and seven people deep, all pushing and jostling for position. Kyle and Nelson step up, surveying the scene.

KYLE

This isn't worth it. We have to go through hand to hand combat just to get to our office.

Nelson glances down the hall, where an elevator stands with its doors open and compartment empty. A uniformed boy stands beneath a sign reading 'EXECUTIVES ONLY'.

NELSON  
(nudges Kyle)  
Hey, look.

KYLE  
Oh no, not again. We almost got caught last time.

NELSON  
No, it'll be okay. It's a new kid.  
C'mon.

He grabs Kyle, pushing through the crowd. Affecting a limp, Nelson hobbles up to the elevator, Kyle helping him. The ELEVATOR BOY eyes them uncertainly.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
Let me through...the pain... the pain!

KYLE  
Get us to the twentieth floor, quick! This man was just mugged!

ELEVATOR BOY  
He looks all right...

NELSON  
(slipping bill in boy's pocket)  
All I could save was this ten dollar bill... if only I could get up to my office and sit down...

ELEVATOR BOY  
Right away, sir...

Kyle and Nelson step into the elevator as PALMER HARRISON steps on board. In his early fifties, Harrison is the senior vice president of the corporation, and obviously not a man to be fooled with. Kyle and Nelson freeze as he notices them.

HARRISON  
What are you two doing here? This elevator is reserved for executives, not secretaries.

NELSON

We're sorry, Mr. Harrison - but as we were trying to get on the other elevators someone tripped me and I think I sprained my ankle.

HARRISON

(suspiciously)

Judging by past rides on this elevator I'd say you sprain your ankle quite often, Mr. Flatbush.

NELSON

Furbisch. I used to play a lot of hockey when I was a kid. Really tore up my ankles. One time I actually ripped the muscle right off the bone. They had to glue it back with this epoxy like stuff...

The elevator doors slide shut.

INT. NINETEENTH FLOOR - LOBBY

The doors to the executive elevator slide open - Nelson still describing surgical procedures while Kyle and Harrison listen sickly.

NELSON

... so they grafted the skin from my armpit to my ankle, but then when I hit puberty all this hair started to grow...

HARRISON

(stepping out)

If I ever catch you two on this elevator again I'll see to it you're fired. I don't care who your boss is. Understood?

Kyle and Nelson grin, speaking politely - and flipping Harrison off behind his back as the doors close in front of them.

KYLE & NELSON

Oh, yes sir... thank you for your kindness, sir... don't accidentally fall out of a window, sir...

CUT TO:

INT. HARRISON'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

DARCY VANDERWOOD, Harrison's personal secretary, sits at her desk, speaking patiently to an eager YOUNG EXECUTIVE. In her mid-twenties, Darcy has the kind of beauty that men find irresistible - and intimidating.

YOUNG EXECUTIVE

You're not giving me a chance. I'm bright, a good worker. Here...

(pulls folder from  
briefcase)

... this is my resume. It gives my complete history - schooling, past jobs, credit history, references.

DARCY

Look, I'm sorry Mr. Willard, but I already have a date Saturday night.

Harrison bursts in, stalking into his office.

HARRISON

In my office, Miss Vanderwood. Now.

Sighing, Darcy grabs a pad and pencil, following Harrison.

INT. HARRISON'S OFFICE

Harrison enters his office, Darcy close behind. She takes a seat while Harrison steps to an oil painting of himself, using it almost as a mirror - combing his hair and adjusting his suit as he speaks.

HARRISON

I want to dictate a letter. To J. Austin Hardcastle, Chairman of the Board...

(considers)

Dear Fuckface: This letter is in response to your idiotic reply to my proposal for testing of the space laser system that I presented last month. I would like to meet with you to discuss your dull-witted complaints. Or better yet why don't you just die and let me take over the company, which would be doing everyone a favor, you senile old fart.

Darcy takes everything down, reading it back.

DARCY

'Dear Mr. Hardcastle: I would like to schedule a meeting to discuss our differences over the proposed space laser system I presented at our last board meeting.'

(looks up)

How should I sign it?

HARRISON

'Your loving nephew, Palmer.'

CUT TO:

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

A large sterile office, separated from the rest of the floor by thick glass walls. Kyle and Nelson sit at their desks, name plates displayed prominently (Nelson's name has been misspelled, a 'c' handwritten between the 's' and 'h' in 'Furbisch'). Kyle works at a computer terminal while Nelson thumbs through a copy of 'Sports Illustrated'.

NELSON

(thoughtful)

I suppose my name could be worse. At least Furbisch is uncommon. Do you know how many Smiths there are in the mail room? How long until lunch, I'm bushed.

KYLE

You know, one way to get promoted is to do some work once in a while.

NELSON

I did some work. I went through and organized all the office betting pools. I did the baseball pool, the basketball pool, the interoffice tragedies pool ...

KYLE

You bet on interoffice tragedies?

NELSON

Sure. The latest bet's on how many kidney stones Mr. Irving's going to pass. We have someone accompanying him into the men's room at all times.

KYLE  
That's horrible!

NELSON  
(shrugs)  
Well, nobody bets on hockey  
anymore.

They jump as suddenly an alarm clock on Kyle's desk rings, he and Nelson exchanging miserable glances.

CUT TO:

INT. HARDCASTLE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Kyle opens the shutters, light flooding into the large, plush bedroom. Nelson stands by an ornate king-size bed, staring down at the sleeping figure of J. AUSTIN HARDCASTLE. In his mid-seventies, his position as one of the wealthiest, most powerful men in the country has obviously taken its toll. Kyle and Nelson speak softly.

KYLE  
I hate this. He's always so cranky  
on Mondays.

Nelson leans over Hardcastle, who lays on his back, mouth gaping open. He nudges the old man gently.

NELSON  
Mr. Hardcastle? Rise and shine,  
sir. Time to get up and make our  
lives miserable...

Hardcastle doesn't stir. Kyle steps up.

KYLE  
Anything?

NELSON  
Nothing.  
(grabs poker from  
fireplace)  
Poke him.

KYLE  
I'm not going to poke him. You do  
it...

NELSON  
Oh, no. I did it last time.



Taking the poker, Kyle reluctantly steps to the bed, poking Hardcastle gingerly in the arm. There is no response. Kyle and Nelson exchange nervous glances.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Harder.

Nodding, Kyle jabs Hardcastle in the arm. Hardcastle lets out a yelp, bolting upright.

HARDCASTLE

What the hell's going on?

Kyle and Nelson jump back, Kyle quickly tossing the poker away. Hardcastle glances at the clock on his bedside table.

HARDCASTLE (CONT'D)

You're two minutes late! You have specific instructions to wake me at precisely ten o'clock every morning! Can it be that difficult?

KYLE & NELSON

No, sir...

Hardcastle grabs a small remote control device from his bedside table.

HARDCASTLE

It will not happen again. Is that clear?

Hardcastle presses a button, guiding a motorized wheelchair toward the bed - and over Kyle and Nelson's feet. They grimace, speaking through clenched teeth.

KYLE & NELSON

Yes, sir ...

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

A hot, steamy bathroom. Kyle and Nelson stand by uncomfortably while Hardcastle sits in a Jacuzzi-style tub, their jackets hanging near the towel rack. Both men studiously look everywhere but at their naked boss as he issues orders.

HARDCASTLE

What's on the agenda today, Kyle?

Kyle reads from a legal pad on a clipboard.

KYLE

There needs to be some decision made about Mr. Freddy's Teddy Bears merging with Mrs. Funnybunny.

HARDCASTLE

Tell them that we're not in favor of a merger at this time. Research shows that the teddy bear market has peaked. Besides, it's bad enough having someone named Mr. Freddy on the board of directors, we don't need to add anyone named Funnybunny.

NELSON

I can do that.

HARDCASTLE

Kyle can do it. Hand me my towel, Nelson.

Staring uncomfortably toward the ceiling, Nelson gropes for the towel rack - grabbing Kyle's coat and handing it to Hardcastle.

CUT TO:

INT. SALON - DAY

Nelson combs Hardcastle's hair, while Kyle reads from his clipboard, patches of suds clinging to his soaked jacket.

KYLE

You need to give final approval to go ahead with computerizing the payroll department. And we'll have to give the staff their two week notice.

HARDCASTLE

Fine.

Kyle frowns, looking to Hardcastle uneasily.

KYLE

I don't mean to step out of line, sir - but is that really fair? Some of those people have been with the company a long time, and...

HARDCASTLE  
(interrupting)  
Of course it's not fair. It's  
business. You've got to learn to  
keep personal feelings out of  
business dealings, Kyle. Everyone  
is expendable.

Nelson grabs an aerosol can from a shelf, spraying a paint-  
like substance on Hardcastle's head to cover his bald spot.

NELSON  
I can take care of it.

HARDCASTLE  
No. Kyle will handle it.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Hardcastle sits at the head of a long table, finishing his  
breakfast as Kyle hands him a slip of paper.

KYLE  
We got a memo from Mr. Harrison. He  
wants a meeting to discuss the  
space laser system he's developing.

Hardcastle takes the memo, reading it tiredly.

HARDCASTLE  
Take my advice, Kyle - if you're  
ever in my position, never hire  
relatives. Especially idiot  
relatives.

KYLE  
(smiles)  
Yes, sir.

Nelson enters, wearing an apron with the words 'HAIL TO THE  
CHEF' printed across the front. He begins to clear the dishes  
off the table.

HARDCASTLE  
I'm too old for this crap. Twenty  
years ago I negotiated with the  
most powerful men in the world  
every day. And now I worry about  
how to deal with a power hungry  
nephew.

KYLE

You don't have to deal with him. I can just tell him your schedule is full ...

Hardcastle shakes his head firmly as Nelson wheels him away from the table. Kyle follows as they head out of the room.

HARDCASTLE

No, this is one meeting I'd better take. Palmer's been making noises about how he'd like to run this business when I'm gone. I think I should let him know that I'm not gone yet.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Nelson pushes Hardcastle into a large restroom, which looks more like the men's room at a fancy restaurant than a private bathroom. Kyle enters, making a few notes while Nelson helps Hardcastle out of his wheelchair, supporting him as he stands over the urinal.

KYLE

I'll schedule the meeting for this afternoon at three o'clock. Will you need anything - drinks, cigars, a gun?

HARDCASTLE

(laughs)

I don't suppose there's any way I could just toss him out a window and be done with him, is there?

NELSON

I'll do it.

HARDCASTLE

(sighs)

All right, three o'clock it is. Is there anything else, Kyle?

Kyle refers to his clipboard as Nelson lowers Hardcastle back into his wheelchair.

KYLE

Uh... not much. The limousines need to be washed...

Hardcastle turns to Nelson.

HARDCASTLE  
Nelson - you can do that.

CUT TO:

INT. HARRISON'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Kyle enters as the Young Executive speaks with Darcy pleadingly, showing her items from her wallet.

YOUNG EXECUTIVE  
... I swear, I'm a really nice guy.  
Here's a picture of my parents...  
this is my dog... here's my  
Porsche... my bank statement...

Noticing Kyle, the Young Executive quickly closes his wallet, smiling wanly as he leaves the room. Kyle steps to Darcy's desk apprehensively.

KYLE  
Hello.

DARCY  
(tiredly)  
Hi. Can I help you?

KYLE  
Yeah. My name is Kyle Merideth. I'm  
Mr. Hardcastle's secretary...

DARCY  
I know. You work with that  
obnoxious guy who sends me  
pornographic messages on my  
computer terminal every morning.

KYLE  
He'll be flattered you remembered.  
(hands her envelope)  
I came down to see if you had any  
openings this afternoon.

Darcy takes the envelope, a knowing smile on her face.

DARCY  
You guys have used that joke  
already.

KYLE  
Pardon?

DARCY

Look, I'm busy this afternoon, all right? And before we even get into it you should know that I have a date Saturday night.

KYLE

(confused)

I'm very happy for you, but I think there's been a misunderstanding. I'm here because Mr. Hardcastle would like a date with Mr. Harrison at three o'clock.

Embarrassed, Darcy opens the envelope, reading the memo inside. She looks to Kyle, flustered.

DARCY

Oh, jeez - I'm sorry... I just thought...this other guy...

(glances at appointment book)

Three o'clock is fine. I'll tell him. Anything else?

Kyle smiles playfully.

KYLE

Yes. What're you doing Friday night?

DARCY

(grins)

I'm sorry, Mr. Merideth...

KYLE

Kyle.

DARCY

... but I don't date men from the office. It's nothing personal ...

KYLE

Then I'll quit my job. Would you mind going dutch? I'll be a little short on cash...

Loosening up, Darcy laughs, shaking her head.

DARCY

How about you keep your job, but give me a call if you're ever fired in disgrace.

KYLE

Well, at least I have something to shoot for...

Kyle and Darcy turn as the office door opens, Harrison sticking his head into the room.

HARRISON

Miss Vanderwood, have you heard...

(sees Kyle)

What do you want?

KYLE

Mr. Hardcastle wanted me to tell you that he'd like a meeting this afternoon.

HARRISON

I don't want you bothering my secretary, Mr. Merideth. In the future please send interoffice communications through the normal channels.

Kyle grins sweetly.

KYLE

Yes, sir. I'll miss these warm talks we've shared, sir. Shall I flip you off now or after you close the door?

Darcy bites her lip to stifle a laugh as we...

CUT TO:

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

CLOSE on Nelson as he works, muttering to himself.

NELSON

... Let's see, 'Gibson' ... Nelson Gibson...Vice-President Nelson Gibson... no... 'Redford' ... Nelson Redford...Vice-President--

A voice calls out, interrupting him.

VALET #1 (O.S.)

Hey Nelson, you missed a spot...

We PULL BACK to see Nelson, jacket off and pant legs rolled up, using a bucket and a sponge to soap down one of Hardcastle's limousines. The Parking Valets look on in amusement.

VALET #2

You are going to Armor All the car,  
aren't you? The seats, the dash,  
the bumpers...

VALETS

(in unison)

... and especially the tires!

They collapse in hysterics. Nelson looks up, irritated.

NELSON

Shouldn't you guys be around back  
sneaking a smoke or rifling through  
glove compartments or something?

VALET #1

Nelson - will you do my car next?  
I'll give you a dollar.

NELSON

Look, peons, you may think this is  
funny, but at least I work in the  
building. I park in this garage,  
and that means you work for me.

As Nelson speaks one of the Valets waves a tow truck past,  
Nelson's VW. Rabbit hitched to the rear.

VALET #2

Then may I respectfully suggest  
that you park in the correct space  
next time. Sir.

He tosses Nelson his fake reserved space sign. Nelson catches  
it, glaring at the Valets hatefully as we...

CUT TO:

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

A 'Mr. Freddy the Talking Teddy' sits on Kyle's desk. Fully  
automated, the doll speaks in a cheerful voice while Kyle  
scribbles dictation.



MR. FREDDY DOLL

... and while profits were up 5% on the Mr. Freddy dolls last quarter, sales of Missy Betty, Grammy Netty and Rich Uncle Getty were down...

Kyle looks up as an elderly man enters, carrying a large sack. This is EDWIN NORMAN, taxidermist and friend of Hardcastle's for many years. Kyle switches off the 'Mr. Freddy' doll as Edwin hoists the bag up onto his desk.

EDWIN

Hi, Kyle. Is Austin in?

KYLE

Where else would he be? Your appointment's in a couple of minutes. What's in here?

Kyle opens the top of the bag to find a dead, stiff beagle staring back at him. He jumps in surprise.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Shit! What... this is Frisky! He died last month. I thought Nelson was supposed to throw him out.

EDWIN

(proudly)

Nope. He brought him to me. We figured I've stuffed all the animals Austin's killed in his life, it might be a nice gesture to preserve an animal he loved.

(picks up 'Mr. Freddy' doll, frowns)

I can't believe the shoddy workmanship these days. Now I could create a teddy bear that would really make a child scream in terror.

Edwin tosses the doll back onto the desk in disgust. Nodding uneasily, Kyle uncovers the dog to find casters attached to its feet.

KYLE

Yes. Frisky looks... very lifelike.

EDWIN

I pride myself on my expressiveness. Look at that face - like he's about to jump up and lick you.

KYLE  
(stepping back)  
Right.

EDWIN  
This was a tough case, though. See, Frisky here died with an erection. Which is not uncommon, but by the time I got to him rigor mortis had set in. So I had to take my hammer and hacksaw and...

KYLE  
(cuts in)  
Well it's been great talking to you. I'm sure Mr. Hardcastle will be very surprised. You can go in now. And thank you for the lovely visual.

Edwin takes Frisky, rolling him to the door to Hardcastle's inner office. Before going in he nudges the dog's tail, which has been set on a spring to wag. Opening the door he tiptoes in, calling out happily.

EDWIN  
Look who's here to see his poppy-woppy!

HARDCASTLE (O.S.)  
Frisky!

Edwin closes the door behind him, Kyle shaking his head in wonder. He looks up as Harrison enters, frowning impatiently.

HARRISON  
I have a three o'clock appointment.  
In case you're too busy to remember.

Feigning ignorance, Kyle flips slowly through his appointment calendar.

KYLE  
Let's see... three o'clock, three o'clock... Harrison... Oh, yes, here we are. You can bother Mr. Hardcastle in a few minutes.

Nelson steps in, carrying his shoes in one hand and dripping wet socks in another.

NELSON

Hey, Kyle - do you have an extra pair of socks in your briefcase?

(looks up, seeing Harrison)

How about you, Mr. Harrison? Or is it just a change of underwear you carry?

HARRISON

You two are pimples on the butt of American business. When I inherit this company I'm going to squeeze you out of here.

KYLE

You've got a talent for metaphors, sir.

The door to Hardcastle's office opens, Edwin stepping out. Inside we can hear Hardcastle making dog sounds as he plays with Frisky.

NELSON

Edwin! Did you finish? How'd it go?

EDWIN

Fine, fine. No problems.

NELSON

How'd you get rid of the boner?

EDWIN

Well, as I was telling Kyle...

Harrison glares at the three men with contempt as he heads into Hardcastle's office.

HARRISON

Do you mind if I miss this?

KYLE & NELSON

Please.

Harrison steps into the office. Kyle and Nelson exchange glances, rushing to the door in an attempt to eavesdrop.

## INT. HARDCASTLE'S OFFICE

Hardcastle's office is a large room, walls covered by dozens of hunting trophies - the heads of various exotic animals have been stuffed and mounted, all staring glassy-eyed toward Hardcastle sitting at his desk. Harrison takes a seat as Hardcastle pets Frisky, who stands on his desk.

HARRISON

Hello, Uncle Austin.

HARDCASTLE

Hello, Palmer. What do you think of Frisky? Look...

Hardcastle sets the dog's tail in motion. Harrison gives a strained smile.

HARRISON

Very... heartwarming. I wanted to discuss your objections to the space laser system we've been developing. The government has expressed interest. A project this large can only be beneficial to the company.

HARDCASTLE

My objection is that it doesn't work.

HARRISON

Our researchers assure us it is accurate enough to destroy a moving car from outer space. We've already had one successful test firing from the prototype system launched last month.

HARDCASTLE

Successful? It blew up a station wagon in the middle of the San Diego freeway!

HARRISON

It was a qualified success. It's just a matter of time until we teach it which moving car to destroy.

Hardcastle suddenly turns to the office door, calling out.

HARDCASTLE

Can I help you two with something?

After a beat the door opens, Nelson grinning sheepishly as he steps to the desk.

NELSON  
(points to Frisky)  
I was just wondering if you wanted  
me to brush Frisky. It is my day to  
groom the animals, isn't it?

As Hardcastle and Harrison glance at Frisky, Nelson quickly switches on the intercom on Hardcastle's desk.

HARDCASTLE  
Nelson, I can't even get you to  
brush your own hair. It can wait.

NELSON  
Yes, sir.

Nelson hurries out of the office, Kyle whispering to him as the door closes.

KYLE (O.S.)  
Did you hear anything? What'd they  
say... ?

NELSON  
Shhhhh!

Harrison turns back to Hardcastle desperately.

HARRISON  
Harrison Aircraft needs this  
contract. You know our financial  
situation.

HARDCASTLE  
All too well. Which is why I plan  
to cancel this project.

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OUTER OFFICE

Kyle and Nelson are hunched over the intercom on Kyle's desk, listening intently while Edwin sits to one side, tinkering with the 'Mr. Freddy' doll.

HARRISON  
(over intercom)  
This is ridiculous! It's impossible  
to deal with you. Every time a new  
idea comes across your desk you  
kill it.

(MORE)

## HARRISON (CONT'D)

You ignore memos, you're never at board meetings anymore - it's like trying to do business with the invisible man!

Kyle and Nelson jump as Edwin places the 'Mr. Freddy' doll back on the desk - now sporting large, realistic eyes, fangs and sharp claws.

## INT. HARDCASTLE'S OFFICE

Hardcastle stares at Harrison, speaking softly.

## HARDCASTLE

I suppose you think this corporation should be run by a younger man.

## HARRISON

As a matter of fact I do. We need someone who can move things forward rather than living in the past.

## HARDCASTLE

Someone like you, for instance?

The two men pause, turning at the sound of Kyle and Nelson groaning from the next room. Ignoring them, Harrison leans over Hardcastle's desk, giving the old man a friendly smile.

## HARRISON

Why do we spar like this every time we talk? Why don't you just step down and turn things over to me. I'm the natural choice to take over the reins.

## HARDCASTLE

Just because we're related doesn't mean I'm obligated to turn this company over to a man responsible for building a computer system stupider than most household pets.

## HARRISON

We can do this easy, or we can do this hard, Uncle Austin. But I will run this corporation. Even if I have to prove to everyone that you're a senile old bastard who's forgotten how to run this business.

Harrison stands, motioning to Frisky.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
And I always hated that smelly,  
disgusting dog! Always walking  
around with a hard-on!

With that, Harrison turns sharply, heading for the office door.

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OUTER OFFICE

Kyle and Nelson scramble to their seats, pretending to work as Harrison bursts through the door and storms into the hallway. They flip him off as he leaves - as does Hardcastle, who can be seen as the office door swings shut.

CUT TO:

INT. HARRISON'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Harrison storms in, barking at Darcy impatiently as he heads for his office.

HARRISON  
My office. Now.

DARCY  
There's someone here to see you,  
sir.

Harrison turns to see FRANKIE MASON, a short man in a garish polyester suit, sitting on the sofa, large manila envelope in hand. Glancing around uncomfortably, Harrison whispers to Frankie hoarsely.

HARRISON  
What are you doing here? Did anyone  
see you come in?

FRANKIE  
Take it easy. I came up in the  
service elevator.

Annoyed, Harrison motions Frankie into his office.

INT. HARRISON'S OFFICE

Harrison and Frankie step into the room, Harrison closing the door behind them. He turns to Frankie expectantly.

HARRISON  
Well? Did you do it?

Frankie smiles, opening the manila envelope. He pulls out a copy of the 'National Enquirer' - the front page bearing the headline 'UFO ATTACK BLOWS CAR OFF L.A. FREEWAY!', a full color photo of a crater in the middle of the freeway printed underneath.

FRANKIE

I didn't have any trouble getting them to print this one. My publisher ate it up.

HARRISON

(grins)

I can't believe people are stupid enough to actually believe this crap.

FRANKIE

People are bored enough to believe this crap. Hell, I'd rather read about a UFO attack than what's really going on any day.

Harrison tosses the paper on his desk, moving to the bar.

HARRISON

I'll have my secretary cut you a check. The usual amount. Can I get you something to drink?

FRANKIE

No, I've got to get going. There's a rumor that Madonna's going to expose the one body part she's never shown before. I think it's her kidney.

HARRISON

Forget it. I've got another job I'd like to discuss with you. A big job.

(hands Frankie a drink)

I want you to follow my uncle and get as many... unflattering photos of him as possible.

Frankie laughs, setting his drink on a table and heading for the door.

FRANKIE

Oh, sure. Need any shots of Bigfoot while I'm at it? Nobody's got a decent picture of that guy in years.



HARRISON  
The job pays \$250,000. Fifty now,  
the rest on delivery.

Frankie pauses, suddenly interested.

FRANKIE  
I retain copyright?

HARRISON  
(nods)  
Of course. But nothing is to be  
released until I say so.

Thinking it over a moment, Frankie picks his drink off the  
table, taking a sip.

FRANKIE  
I don't want to sound nosy or  
anything, but it seems like the  
only thing these pictures could be  
used for is to blackmail the old  
guy out of a job.

HARRISON  
He should have retired years ago.  
I'm doing it for the good of the  
company.

Frankie takes a seat, resting his feet on Harrison's desk.

FRANKIE  
Of course you are. It's just that  
pictures alone usually aren't  
enough. You need someone on the  
inside. Is there anybody close to  
him you can buy off? A secretary?  
Nurse?

Harrison shakes his head angrily.

HARRISON  
The only people who see him are his  
secretaries. Kyle Merideth and  
Nelson Fartface. They're the worst  
kind of scum - loyal, honest,  
protective. They won't help us.

FRANKIE  
Who says they have to know about  
it? All you have to do is handle  
them like any young, incorruptible  
men.

(MORE)

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Hire some chick to seduce them.  
It's a time honored tradition in my  
business.

Harrison smiles, intrigued.

HARRISON

That's a viable option... do you  
know anyone we can contact? Someone  
we can trust?

FRANKIE

Usually I'd suggest my wife, but  
she's having her monthly three-week  
bout with P.M.S. There's got to be  
some ambitious young thing that  
wouldn't mind doing you a favor.

CUT TO:

INT. HARRISON'S OFFICE - LATER

Darcy sits before Harrison's desk, shaking her head  
adamantly.

DARCY

Oh, no. I'm a loyal employee, Mr.  
Harrison, but if I'm not willing to  
sleep with someone to get myself a  
promotion, I'm certainly not doing  
it so you can.

Harrison leans against his desk, grinning dangerously as he  
hovers over Darcy.

HARRISON

That's not what I'm asking. I just  
want you to be friendly, show some  
interest, get a little information.  
Is that so terrible?

DARCY

Look, no offense, but I'm just a  
secretary. I'm not sure it's so  
smart to be spying on the Chairman  
of the Board.

HARRISON

But it's very smart to do favors  
for the man next in line for the  
job. Much smarter than getting  
fired over something so petty.

Getting the message, Darcy stares at Harrison uncertainly.

DARCY

(sighs)

All right. I'll spy on them, lie to them, take advantage of them - but I won't sleep with them.

HARRISON

Of course not. There's no reason to compromise your morals.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP GARDEN - EVENING

The sun sets, tinting the smog a rusty orange. Kyle wheels Hardcastle through the lush garden, the old man bundled tightly against any breeze, dark glasses protecting his sensitive eyes. Nelson follows, walking Frisky - who rolls smoothly on his casters. Hardcastle seems disturbed.

HARDCASTLE

If Palmer gets control of this company it will be bankrupt inside a year.

(frowns)

And I always thought he liked Frisky.

KYLE

Can't you fight him? You've dealt with takeover bids before.

HARDCASTLE

Not from within the family. And not in quite a few years.

(smiles fondly)

Maybe I could adopt you, Kyle. Then you'd be my closest heir and I'd know the business was in good hands.

Surprised and flattered, Kyle isn't sure how to respond.

KYLE

I don't think my parents would be too happy with that plan.

NELSON

(brightly)

My parents wouldn't mind.

Hardcastle stares at Nelson a moment, then turns to Kyle.

HARDCASTLE

Perhaps Palmer's right, it's time for me to step down. It's become obvious that I don't have the energy to run things anymore. You do all the hard work, I just delegate authority.

KYLE

Delegating authority is the hard work. I can't believe you'd turn this company over to someone like Mr. Harrison...

HARDCASTLE

I said I was tired, not senile. I'm talking about going public. Selling stock. I want this company to be run by shareholders, not one man. Not Palmer.

NELSON

I still vote for throwing him out a window.

Hardcastle laughs as Kyle wheels him to the edge of the roof. He looks down as commuters jam the streets at the end of the work day.

HARDCASTLE

This business has taken every minute of my adult life, I'd like to relax for a change. Maybe call in some political favors - become the Secretary of the Interior, head of the F.C.C., vice-president. Some bullshit job.

KYLE

Shouldn't you think about this, sir? You don't want to make any hasty decisions.

HARDCASTLE

I've been considering this for quite awhile. I've even had a brokerage house working on a prospectus the last few months.

Kyle's jaw drops in surprise. Before he can say anything Hardcastle turns, speaking sharply. The decision made.

HARDCASTLE (CONT'D)

Kyle - call the lawyers, tell them to get any final paperwork in order. There shouldn't be any trouble pushing this through the S.E.C. We'll need to call a press conference as soon as everything's been put into motion. I want this transition to be as public as possible. And Nelson - don't spit!

Caught, Nelson leans back over the edge of the roof, smiling sheepishly as he swallows.

NELSON

Yes, sir.

KYLE

(scribbling notes)

Are you sure you want to do this?

HARDCASTLE

It's the only way to keep Palmer from gaining control of the business.

(grins)

I've often thought that when I die they better bury me deep, because if I hear that idiot's been given my job, I'm coming back!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FRATERNITY ROW - UCLA - NIGHT

A party is going on in one of the frat houses, banner hanging above the porch reading 'THETA CHI ALUMNI PARTY'. Nelson's VW pulls up to the curb, he and Kyle climbing out.

NELSON

I hate these things. They always make me feel like such a failure.

KYLE

We're not failures. We're the personal secretaries to the richest man in the country.

Kyle and Nelson step onto the porch, where two FRAT BROTHERS sit at a table, passing out name tags with old college I.D. photos laminated to them.

FRAT BROTHER #1  
Name?

KYLE  
Kyle Merideth. Class of '87.

FRAT BROTHER #1  
(searches through tags)  
Here it is... How much money did  
you make last year?

KYLE  
That goes on the button? A hundred  
thousand.

The Frat Brothers look Kyle over skeptically.

KYLE (CONT'D)  
Okay, fifty thousand.

FRAT BROTHER #2  
Didn't you guys just pull up in a  
Volkswagen?

KYLE  
(annoyed)  
Just write fifty thousand and give  
me the damn name tag. Wait 'till  
you get out in the real world...

Frat Brother #1 hands Kyle his name tag as Nelson steps up.

NELSON  
Nelson Furbisch. One-hundred-and-  
fifty-thousand.

Nelson gives Kyle a playful grin. Frat Brother #2 finds his  
name tag, looking at the photo suspiciously.

FRAT BROTHER #2  
This picture doesn't look like  
you...

Nelson glances at the photo, quickly messing up his hair and  
affecting a tired, hung-over expression. The Frat Brother  
hands him the name tag.

FRAT BROTHER #2 (CONT'D)  
Okay, now I see it.

Pinning on their name tags, Kyle and Nelson step inside the  
house.

CUT TO:

## INT. FRAT HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Party in full swing, the house is filled with well groomed, successful looking alumni and students. Kyle and Nelson enter, making a beeline for the bar. They each grab a mug of beer as ALLAN MELVILLE steps up behind Nelson, slapping him on the back.

ALLAN

Hey, Nelson. Allan Melville, class of '88. How've you been?

NELSON

Thirsty.

ALLAN

Haw! I know that feeling. Listen, I just heard the wildest thing - do you remember Artie Phillips?

NELSON

(grins)

The guy who used to get stoned at parties then crawl under tables and look up girls' dresses?

ALLAN

He's a vice-president with Microsoft, can you believe that? By the way, what do you do now?

Nelson stares at Allan in shock, chugging down his mug of beer.

NELSON

I get another drink...

CUT TO:

## EXT. FRAT HOUSE - PATIO

Kyle steps onto the patio, where formally dressed middle-aged couples dance to sixties protest records. He stands to one side when a voice calls to him from the bushes.

BOB ROTHMAN (O.S.)

Kyle! Kyle Merideth!

Curious, Kyle steps into the bushes, where he finds BOB ROTHMAN urinating into the foliage. Bob extends his free hand, Kyle shaking it delicately.

BOB ROTHMAN (CONT'D)

Bob Rothman. Class of '90. I was a sophomore when you were a senior.

KYLE

(wiping hand on pants)

Sure. How've you been, Bob?

Actually graduated, huh?

BOB ROTHMAN

Oh, hell yeah. I'm with General Motors now. Executive in charge of foreign operations. So what about you? Last I heard you were stuck in some dead end secretarial thing, but that was years ago...

KYLE

(improvising)

Oh yeah. Now I'm personal aide to J. Austin Hardcastle. He comes to me for advice, and I assist him in all business decisions...

Bob steps back, zipping his fly.

BOB ROTHMAN

Still stuck in a dead end secretarial thing, huh?

CUT TO:

INT. FRAT HOUSE - DINING ROOM

Kyle steps back into the house, moving to the bar for a refill. As he waits he turns to the man next to him, smiling in recognition.

KYLE

Hey, Fred! Fred Chambers! How's it going?

FRED

Couldn't be better. My father died and left me his business. So I sold out to a big eastern conglomerate and retired to my condo in Hawaii. You know, I never really appreciated my father until after he was dead.



Kyle smiles weakly as we...

CUT TO:

INT. FRAT HOUSE DINING ROOM

Nelson sits at a table, drinking from a bottle of gin. Another alumnus (WALLACE WILCOX) and his wife watch him uncomfortably.

WALLACE

So, Nelson - I hear you're working  
as a secretary now.

NELSON

(tenses)

What's wrong with that?

WALLACE

Nothing, nothing. In fact, every  
day I sit in my plush, air  
conditioned office in Beverly Hills  
wishing I had taken typing in  
junior high so I could get where  
you are.

Wallace laughs good naturedly when his wife suddenly screams, jumping out of her chair. Nelson glances beneath the table, calling out in recognition.

NELSON

Artie! How's it goin' at Microsoft?

CUT TO:

INT. FRAT HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BEDROOM

The room is dark. The door opens, Nelson stepping inside, bottle of vodka in hand. He hits the light switch, startled to see Kyle sitting on one of the beds.

NELSON

Kyle! I didn't know you were in  
here.

Kyle nods, glancing around the room nostalgically.

KYLE

Our old room...

NELSON

I think I recognize some of the garbage.

(laughs)

Remember that time we got a sound effects record with a nuclear attack on it? You played it full blast out the window and I shot flares off the roof?

KYLE

We almost got expelled for that one. A kid down the street thought it was the end of the world and threw himself out the window. Broke both his legs.

NELSON

Harmless college hijinx.

Nelson takes a swig from the bottle. He offers it to Kyle, who shakes his head.

KYLE

You know, when we were in school I always thought I'd bank my first million by the time I was thirty. I'll be lucky if I can pay off my student loan.

NELSON

Come on, it's not that bad. We're personal secretaries to the richest man in the country, remember?

Kyle stands, moving to an open window. He looks down at the people on the patio.

KYLE

I've spent the last hour listening to all my old classmates laugh at what I do for a living. I remember when they were all horny, drunk economics majors. Now they're all frustrated, alcoholic business executives, and I'm supposed to feel inferior to them. And the shitty part about it is, I do.

Nelson steps to the window, depressed. He takes another hit from the bottle.

NELSON

Maybe we should enroll here again  
and start over.

KYLE

It's like when we were in school we  
were more alive. I spend a lot of  
time wishing I still felt like  
that.

Nelson suddenly leans out the window, throwing up on the  
patio below. We hear the screams of the guests as he turns  
back to Kyle, a grin on his face.

NELSON

Right now I feel like I did in  
college...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HARDCASTLE INTERNATIONAL - PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Parking valets stand at the garage entrance as Nelson's VW  
pulls in, laughing and shouting insults.

CUT TO:

INT. HARDCASTLE'S BEDROOM

Kyle opens the shutters, stepping to Hardcastle's bed. He  
shakes the old man gently.

KYLE

Mr. Hardcastle... time to get up,  
sir...

Hardcastle stirs, glancing at the clock. He chuckles softly.

HARDCASTLE

Ten o'clock on the dot. Now that  
I'm leaving you finally get it  
right.

(sits up)

What's on the agenda today, Kyle?

KYLE

Happy birthday, sir.

Kyle opens the door, Nelson pushing in a large birthday cake  
on a cart - 76 candles blazing away on top. Hardcastle can  
only stare as the cake is wheeled next to the bed.

KYLE (CONT'D)  
Blow out the candles, sir.

HARDCASTLE  
All of them? I think we'd better  
use the fire extinguisher.

NELSON  
Don't forget to make a wish.

HARDCASTLE  
I wish there weren't so many  
candles on my birthday cake.

Hardcastle blows out the candles, Kyle and Nelson helping him  
with the last few. Nelson pulls gift wrapped boxes from  
beneath the cart, setting them on the bed.

KYLE  
(reading card)  
This is from King Faud of Saudi  
Arabia...

Hardcastle opens the package, pulling out a solid gold  
shaving cream dispenser in the shape of an oil derrick.

KYLE (CONT'D)  
... And there's a camel in the  
parking lot.

HARDCASTLE  
(sighs)  
Another one? Call the zoo ...

Kyle reads the card from the next gift.

KYLE  
This one's from Mr. Trump...

HARDCASTLE  
That flash-in-the-pan.

Hardcastle opens the box, pulling out a bronze bust of  
himself.

HARDCASTLE (CONT'D)  
(laughs)  
Another head for the trophy room!

KYLE  
And there's another camel in the  
parking lot.

HARDCASTLE  
I wonder what he got from Saudi  
Arabia on his birthday...

NELSON  
(reads card)  
This next one's from Mr. Harrison.

Hardcastle opens the next gift, removing a bottle of cologne.

HARDCASTLE  
Wonderful. Another bottle of cheap  
aftershave...

Reaching out, Hardcastle opens a drawer in his night table,  
dropping the bottle of cologne in with a dozen identical  
bottles. Kyle hands him a large, sloppily wrapped package.

KYLE  
This is from me.

Hardcastle opens the package to find the head of a Mr. Freddy  
teddy bear mounted on a plaque.

HARDCASTLE  
Thank you, Kyle. My only regret is  
not having had the pleasure of  
shooting it myself.

NELSON  
(handing Hardcastle  
envelope)  
Here's something from me.

Hardcastle opens the envelope, pulling out a coupon book.

HARDCASTLE  
Fifty coupons to Jiffy Car Wash. I  
should've known...

NELSON  
Happy birthday, boss. We're going  
to miss having you around.

HARDCASTLE  
I'm going to miss being here. I  
only hope the business doesn't miss  
me.

KYLE  
Don't worry - if Mr. Harrison tries  
anything stupid we'll personally  
bring you back to kick his butt.

NELSON

If he doesn't fire us first.

Hardcastle gives them a smug grin.

HARDCASTLE

He won't fire you. I've already taken care of that.

KYLE & NELSON

(gleefully)

You're demoting him?

HARDCASTLE

(frowns)

No, I'm promoting you.

A moment of silence. Kyle and Nelson turn to one another, dumbfounded.

KYLE

Pardon me?

HARDCASTLE

Kyle, you're our new 'Vice-President in charge of Overseas Payroll and Expansion'. And Nelson, you're now 'Vice-President in charge of Extracurricular Employee Function and Morale'.

NELSON

What's that?

HARDCASTLE

Basically it's what you do now, but with your own office, a company car and a healthy pay raise.

NELSON

(smiles)

Cool.

HARDCASTLE

The lawyers are drawing up the contracts now. They should be ready in a day or two. It's my way of saying thank you for five years of service.

Stunned, Kyle looks to Nelson, who smiles calmly.

NELSON

Excuse me while I get a knife for  
the cake.

Nelson steps out of the bedroom, closing the door quietly  
behind him. Kyle turns back to Hardcastle in disbelief.

KYLE

I don't know how to thank you, sir.

HARDCASTLE

It's not charity, Kyle. You've  
earned it.

A primal, joyous scream suddenly bursts from the next room,  
pictures on the walls rattling from the vibration.

KYLE

Nelson thanks you, too.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OFFICE - DAY

The office is a mess. A mountain of wrapping paper is piled  
in one corner, birthday presents strewn everywhere: Persian  
rugs, various oil portraits of a much younger Hardcastle,  
luggage, golf clubs, an exercise bike, etc. Sitting at his  
desk, Hardcastle opens a box, pulling out various gifts.

HARDCASTLE

Look at this. Ted Turner sent me a  
set of ginsu knives, a 'Sounds of  
the Seventies' tape and a pocket  
fisherman.

Turning, he calls to Kyle, who fiddles with the knobs on a  
projection TV with a large bow tied around it.

HARDCASTLE (CONT'D)

How's it coming, Kyle? Almost got  
it figured out?

KYLE

I don't know. Maybe Nelson should  
do this, I think I'm color blind or  
something.

Nelson sits on the floor next to a half-assembled H.O. train  
set, eating a piece of cake from a plate. He shakes his head,  
wiping frosting from around his mouth.

NELSON

Oh, no. We agreed - I put together  
the train set and you do the TV.

A news broadcast plays on screen, the ANCHORMAN'S face  
turning green, then blue, then beet red as Kyle struggles to  
adjust the color.

HARDCASTLE

There you go, you're getting closer  
to skin tone all the time.

KYLE

Are you sure you wouldn't prefer  
black and white? It's classic...

Suddenly an old photo of Hardcastle's face is flashed on the  
TV screen. The old man's smile fades as he calls to Kyle.

HARDCASTLE

Kyle, turn up the sound, will you?

Kyle glances at the screen, quickly turning up the volume.

ANCHORMAN (ON TV)

... In financial news - J. Austin  
Hardcastle, the reclusive Chairman  
of the Board of Hardcastle  
International, has scheduled a  
press conference for tomorrow  
morning. Rumors that the elderly  
business czar may finally be  
stepping down have all of Wall  
Street a-buzzin'. We'll return in a  
moment...

The news is replaced by a used car commercial featuring an  
obnoxious salesman in a jewel-encrusted cowboy suit pulled in  
a cart by a tiger while he screams at the camera. Hardcastle  
frowns, looking to Kyle angrily.

HARDCASTLE

The public's right to know is only  
superseded by the press' right to  
speculate. Get on the phone to  
every newspaper and television  
station in town to deny the rumors.  
I don't want the board of directors  
to panic. Until tomorrow.

Nelson stands, plate of cake in hand.



NELSON  
(mouth full)  
I can do it.

HARDCASTLE  
Kyle can do it.

KYLE  
Yes, sir. Is there anything else?

HARDCASTLE  
Yes.  
(points to TV)  
Buy that car lot and fire that man!

Only half listening, Nelson calls out automatically.

NELSON  
I'll do it.

HARDCASTLE  
All right, Nelson. It's all yours.  
It's time you earned your  
promotion.

Shocked, Nelson chokes on a mouthful of cake, coughing. Kyle slaps him on the back, steering him out of the office. Regaining his composure, Nelson looks to Kyle unhappily.

NELSON  
Jeez, why do I get all the crappy  
jobs?

CUT TO:

EXT. P.O.V. - THROUGH CAMERA LENS

We find ourselves staring into Hardcastle's office from the outside, through the picture windows behind the old man's desk. Kyle and Nelson leave the room, Hardcastle turning the television to an old 'Mr. Magoo' cartoon.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Frankie Mason sits at the window, peering through a camera mounted on a tripod. It's huge telephoto lens is trained on the building across the way - zeroed in on Hardcastle's office. The phone rings, Frankie answering it.

FRANKIE

Yeah. Hey, Sammy! How's it going?  
Yeah, yeah, I'm working on this  
week's cover now...

As he speaks, Frankie turns to the coffee table, where he works on a photo of Sharon Stone walking arm in arm with a man in a tuxedo. Rummaging through a shoe box, he removes a cut-out of Don King's face, placing it over the face of the man in the photo.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

I know this is an important issue,  
but I've got something really  
special this time...Yes, even  
better than Arnold Schwarzenegger  
raised by apes...  
    (replaces King's face  
    with Charles Manson)  
... Better than Elvis living in a  
trailer park in Georgia...  
    (replaces Manson with the  
    Pope. Smiles. )  
... Trust me, Sammy, this one'll  
get you sales and news coverage.  
I'll send it over this afternoon...  
No, I can't come in person, I'm on  
assignment... No, I can't tell you  
about it...

Frankie leans forward, squinting through the camera once again.

EXT. P.O.V. - THROUGH CAMERA LENS

We see into Hardcastle's office, where the old man sits - back to us - laughing as he watches the cartoon. We hear the click as Frankie snaps a photograph.

FRANKIE (O.S.)

...But I promise - when this one  
hits, it'll make us all rich men...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Kyle sits at his desk, speaking tiredly into the phone.

KYLE

...No Mr. Freddy, Mr. Hardcastle asked me to assure you there's no truth to the rumors... No, sir. He's absolutely not stepping down... That's right... Yes, sir... Say hello to Mrs. Freddy for me...

Kyle sighs, hanging up as Darcy steps into the office. He looks up, surprised to see her.

DARCY

Hello.

KYLE

(by rote)

No, there's no truth to the rumors.

DARCY

(confused)

What rumors?

KYLE

You're not here about the stuff on the news?

DARCY

No. I got to thinking about yesterday. I was really flattered that you asked me out. I felt bad that I couldn't give you an answer.

Kyle sits back, intrigued.

KYLE

You did?

DARCY

(stiffly)

Yeah. So... I was wondering... if you'd still like to go out sometime...

Kyle can only stare at her a moment, in shock.

KYLE

With you?

DARCY

No, I was just wondering in general.

(a beat)

That's a joke...

Kyle laughs, relaxing.

KYLE

Oh. Sure, I'd love to go out. When did you have in mind?

DARCY

How about tomorrow night?

KYLE

(rambling)

Sure. We could meet after work for a drink... or dinner... maybe take in a movie... drive to Tijuana for a quick wedding...

DARCY

(laughs)

Let's see how dinner goes first, okay?

KYLE

Okay. Tomorrow night.

Darcy nods, giving Kyle a smile as she exits. He watches her go, a satisfied grin on his face.

KYLE (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Shit... maybe things aren't so bad after all.

CUT TO:

EXT. USED CAR LOT - DAY

Plastic flags snap in the wind over 'TEX ALBERTSON'S STRAIGHT SHOOTIN' USED CARS'. A long, black limousine is parked at the curb, looking out of place among the cheap cars on the lot.

INT. TEX'S OFFICE

TEX ALBERTSON, decked out in a bright yellow cowboy outfit, ushers Nelson and four lawyers into his office. Taking a seat behind his desk, Tex seems confused by his well dressed visitors.

TEX

Come right on in, gentlemen. Have a seat.

Nelson sits, the lawyers standing silently behind him.

TEX (CONT'D)

So... what can I do ya for, boys?

NELSON

I'll get right down to business,  
Mr. Albertson...

TEX

Tex. Call me Tex, son. Only my wife  
and the mechanics call me Mr.  
Albertson.

Tex laughs heartily, propping his feet on his desk and  
lighting a cigar.

NELSON

All right - Tex. My name is Nelson  
Furbisch. The gentlemen with me are  
corporate lawyers. We represent  
Hardcastle International. You've  
heard of us?

TEX

(laughs)

Hell, who hasn't? I may be a dumb  
redneck, but I'm also a  
businessman.

NELSON

Hey, terrific. The reason I'm here  
is that Mr. Hardcastle himself saw  
your advertisement on television  
this morning, and was so impressed  
he authorized me to come down and  
purchase every car on your lot.

Tex takes his feet off his desk, nearly spitting his cigar  
across the room in surprise.

TEX

Every car? That's a lot of  
impressed, boy. What's he want to  
do with them?

NELSON

That's not important. What is  
important is that I have the funds  
to pay the full retail price of  
every car in cash.

Nelson sets his briefcase on the desk, opening it to reveal  
bundles of hundred dollar bills. Tex's eyes light up in  
delight.

TEX

Well son, it looks like we have a deal.

(extends hand)

It's a pleasure doing business with you.

Nelson sits still, ignoring Tex's hand. He speaks coolly.

NELSON

What particularly impressed Mr. Hardcastle was your obvious self-sacrifice and dedication to your job. I believe in your commercial you promised to - and I quote - 'eat a bug to sell you an automobile'. Is that correct?

TEX

(shrugs)

Sure, I guess so...

NELSON

We do have a tape of the ad in question if you'd like to refresh your memory.

Beginning to feel uneasy, Tex eyes Nelson suspiciously.

TEX

Naw, I said it all right. So what?

NELSON

So our research tells us that you have 537 cars on this lot. So...

Nelson nods to the lawyers, who open their briefcases to remove fifteen jars of live insects. Tex watches in horror as they are lined up on his desk.

NELSON (CONT'D)

... bon appétit.

TEX

Now wait a minute. I didn't really mean that eatin' a bug stuff. It was just a ploy to bring in the customers.

Muttering to each other, the lawyers pull out yellow legal pads, taking notes. Tex watches anxiously as Nelson stands, closing his briefcase.

NELSON

Sounds like a blatant case of false advertising to me, Tex. See you in court.

TEX

Hold on a second...

Staring at the insects in the jars, Tex pushes a button on his intercom.

TEX (CONT'D)

Peggy - bring me a bottle of Jack Daniels and a pitcher of water.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RESTAURANT BAR - NIGHT

The bar is filled with young executives meeting after work. A crowd is gathered around a big screen TV, watching the financial news and cheering the action on Wall Street like a prize fight. Kyle and Nelson sit at the bar, working on their third or fourth round of drinks.

NELSON

(laughing)

... So he gets through about the fifth jar of bugs, and I'm starting to get worried. I never figured the guy would be crazy enough to actually do it.

KYLE

That's horrible! What kind of bugs were they? Big ones?

NELSON

Big ones! I mean, these were things you don't even want to step on, forget about eating them. That's when he decided that maybe selling the car lot wasn't such a bad idea. Good thing, too - I think I was about to lose the lawyers.

(drains drink)

God I love big business!

Kyle can only shake his head. Nelson looks to him, concerned.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Hey, what's wrong? This is one of the best days of our lives and you're sitting there moping. We got promoted, Kyle! This is what we've been waiting five years for. Now we can go to frat reunions and throw up on people with our heads held high.

KYLE

I don't know. I've been thinking it over, and I'm not sure I even want to stay on. He may not get total control, but you know Harrison's still going to run things. I don't think I'll fit in.

NELSON

What, are you worried you're not sleazy enough? Most people in that building would lay off their grandmother for their own parking space. But you care. They're going to need more people like you when Harrison gets control.

(grins)

They'll still go bankrupt in three months, but it'll be a nice change of pace.

Kyle looks up at Nelson, breaking into a smile.

INT. RESTAURANT BAR - BOOTH

Darcy sits across the restaurant with a group of women. They've all had a few drinks, laughing as they unwind after a long day.

SECRETARY #1

So tell us, Darcy, is it true? Did you really ask Kyle Merideth to go out with you?

Darcy tosses back her drink, looking to the other women defensively.

DARCY

What's wrong with that?

The other women laugh knowingly.



SECRETARY #2

What's wrong? You can't go out with him. He's a secretary.

DARCY

So?

SECRETARY #1

So do female plumbers lust after male plumbers? You have to look for something better.

Darcy stares at Kyle and Nelson across the room, speaking thoughtfully.

DARCY

I don't know - he's kind of cute. He looks like he was the kind of boy who'd carry your books home from school.

Nelson notices the women looking over at them. Grinning, he pulls out his wallet and opens it, flashing his credit cards.

SECRETARY #2

What about the guy with him.?

DARCY

He looks like the kind of boy who'd steal your books and try to trade them for a blow job.

INT. BAR

Nelson slips his wallet back into his pocket as the women stand and leave. Kyle continues to talk, oblivious.

KYLE

The problem is that to succeed in business you've got to be a cruel, vicious asshole. It's the only way to survive.

NELSON

You've got it backwards. Once you become a powerful businessman you're allowed to act like a cruel, vicious asshole. It's one of the perks.

KYLE

I'm not sure I'd want to run some huge corporation.

(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)

It'd be nice to be able to do things the way I wanted, but I wouldn't want all the pressure. If I could do it and still be anonymous, that might be okay.

Nelson shakes his head in disbelief.

NELSON

(loudly)

Are you crazy? Being famous is the best part of it! All the attention, the power. Do you think I want to be promoted just so I can read reports and attend meetings all day? I want groupies, hangers-on. I want to be brown-nosed!

Applause breaks out from other junior executives at the bar. Nelson nods graciously.

KYLE

Okay. Seriously - if you were suddenly in charge of Hardcastle International what would be the first thing you'd do? Honestly.

Nelson thinks it over a moment.

NELSON

The first thing? I'd hire someone else to wash the old man's cars.

Kyle and Nelson both laugh as we...

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Frankie sits at the window, dressed only in boxer shorts and a t-shirt, still staring through the camera. Beer cans and half-eaten room service sandwiches are strewn about the room. There is a knock at the door, Frankie calling out distractedly.

FRANKIE

Yeah, it's open.

The door opens, a beautiful woman stepping into the room. This is BOBBI MASON, Frankie's wife. She tiptoes up behind him, placing her hands over the camera lens.

BOBBI

Guess who?

FRANKIE

Hey, Bobbi! Come on, don't touch the lens. Can't you see I'm working?

BOBBI

Jeez, loosen up. I was only trying to inject some fun into our lives.  
(peers out window)  
Who're you spying on?

Frankie sits back, rubbing his eyes tiredly.

FRANKIE

J. Austin Hardcastle. Probably the richest man in the country.

Suddenly interested, Bobbi takes a look through the camera.

BOBBI

Oooh! What's he doing - dressing in women's clothes?

FRANKIE

No, he's sleeping. First he was sitting at his desk reading the paper, and now he's sleeping. This has got to be the most boring job I've had yet. I don't think the guy's moved for the last hour.

Bobbi smiles, putting her arms around Frankie as she sits on his lap.

BOBBI

Good. Then maybe you and I could take advantage of this nice hotel room and nice king size bed. I won't even get mad if you keep your boxer shorts on again.

FRANKIE

Listen honey, I'd love to, but I've got to keep an eye across the street. What if we're in here screwin' around and he wakes up and decides to put on a dress?

Bobbi stands angrily.

BOBBI

So an old man in drag is more attractive to you than I am?

FRANKIE

No, baby. You don't understand, there's a lot of cash involved here. We're talking a quarter mil for one embarrassing photo. The guy picks his nose and we're on easy street!

BOBBI

I don't care. I'm tired of taking second place to your work. You never take me out anymore. I always sit at home while you're out hobnobbing with celebrities.

FRANKIE

I don't hobnob. I don't even mingle. I jump out of bushes at them.

BOBBI

So now you finally call and tell me we're going to spend the night in a nice hotel, and it turns out you're planning to sit at the window all night staring through your camera like some peeping tom. It's enough to give a girl a complex.

Bobbi begins to cry, rushing into the bathroom. Exasperated, Frankie stands, stepping away from the camera.

CUT TO:

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OUTER OFFICE - NIGHT

It's after hours, and the lights in the office have been dimmed. Kyle and Nelson step in, weaving slightly from the effects of the liquor.

NELSON

So - you want to hear the best part about getting promoted?

KYLE

Let me guess... now you'll have a secretary to organize all the betting pools.

NELSON

Nope. It's the women. They love men with power. Hell, I love men with power, so you can imagine how hot it makes women.

Kyle laughs, pulling a pack of gum from his pocket. He gives a piece to Nelson.

KYLE

Here. Get rid of our beer breath. You know how he gets.

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OFFICE

The door opens, Kyle and Nelson stepping inside. Trying to maintain, they walk as though taking a drunk test on the highway. Hardcastle sits behind his desk, slumped in his wheelchair, asleep. A copy of the 'Wall Street Journal' in his hands.

NELSON

(whispering)

You have to put him in his pajamas tonight.

KYLE

No way! It's your turn tonight.

NELSON

Come on, I took him to the bathroom six times today. Give me a break.

KYLE

Okay, okay...

(steps to Hardcastle,  
shaking him gently)

Mr. Hardcastle? Time to wake up and go to bed, sir.

Hardcastle doesn't stir. Kyle sighs, glancing up at Nelson.

NELSON

Poke him.

KYLE

I'm not going to poke him.

NELSON

It worked before.

KYLE

Sir? Time to get up, sir...

Kyle shakes Hardcastle harder - the old man's head rolling limply to one side. Kyle and Nelson both jump back in shock, Kyle wiping his hands reflexively on his pants.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Oh no!

NELSON

Oh shit!

Hurrying forward, Kyle drags Hardcastle's limp body out of the wheelchair, laying him gently on the floor. He begins a crude attempt at C.P.R., looking to Nelson anxiously.

KYLE

Give me a hand, would you?

NELSON

What do I do? Try to scare him?

KYLE

Try mouth-to-mouth or something.

Nelson kneels uncertainly over Hardcastle, pinching the old man's nose and breathing into his mouth.

CUT TO:

EXT. P.O.V. - THROUGH CAMERA LENS

We watch through the window as Kyle pounds desperately on Hardcastle's chest while Nelson administers mouth-to-mouth. In the background we can hear Frankie speaking to Bobbi through the bathroom door.

FRANKIE (O.S.)

I swear honey, just a couple more days. The old guy's bound to do something flaky. I'll snap the picture, collect the check and we'll take off to Bermuda. How's that sound?

BOBBI (O.S.)

You're sure it'll only be a couple of days?

FRANKIE (O.S.)

Positive. Old eagle eyes here never misses his chance. Now will you come out of the bathroom?

CUT TO:

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OFFICE

Bent over Hardcastle, Nelson suddenly looks up at Kyle, concerned.

NELSON

Wait a second - what if he's contagious?

KYLE

Is anything happening?

NELSON

Yeah, I'm about to throw up. I don't think this is going to work.

KYLE

(desperate)

Maybe if we walk him around the room he'll snap out of it...

Nelson takes Kyle's hands from Hardcastle's chest.

NELSON

Forget it, Kyle. He's dead. His lips are cold. I haven't felt anything like it since I was married.

Kyle stands, only to drop into the nearest chair, staring at Hardcastle's body in disbelief.

KYLE

This is crazy. I've never found anybody dead before. Shouldn't we throw a blanket over him or something?

In a state of shock, Nelson moves to the windows, drawing the curtains out of habit.

NELSON

He's not the only thing dead here. Our careers are dead, too. He was the only one who could okay our promotions.

KYLE

That's a crappy thing to say.

NELSON

It's crappy, but it's true. When Harrison finds out about this he's going to fire our heads so fast it'll make your butt spin... or something like that.

Kyle ignores Nelson, muttering to himself.

KYLE

I guess we should call the coroner...

Nelson suddenly brightens, speaking excitedly.

NELSON

Hey! Why do we have to call anyone? We're the only ones who know about this.

KYLE

Which is why we have to call someone.

NELSON

No, what if we don't tell anyone? People don't ever see him, he never goes out in public, we're the ones who do most of the dirty work for him - who's to know?

Kyle stands, looking to Nelson in disgust.

KYLE

I hope you're still drunk, Nelson, because that's the nastiest thing I've ever heard.

NELSON

(defensive)

What's nasty about wanting to fulfill a dead man's last wish?

KYLE

(wary)

What're you talking about?

NELSON

He spent his last days doing everything he could to make sure this company wouldn't be taken over by Harrison. And that's just what's going to happen once it gets out that he's dead.



Kyle laughs, shaking his head numbly.

KYLE

That's pretty weak, Nelson. And besides that, it's highly illegal.

NELSON

Hey, I'm a businessman, I'm not interested in what's legal and what's not. When Hardcastle was alive he was willing to make a sacrifice to save this company. Now that he's dead we have to make a sacrifice to see to it his legacy doesn't die.

Kneeling by Hardcastle's body, Nelson gently strokes the old man's hair.

NELSON (CONT'D)

He trusted you, Kyle. He even said you could run the business better than Harrison. He even talked about adopting you, for chrissake.

Nelson stands, noticing that the palm of his hand is covered with the spray used to cover Hardcastle's bald spot. Sighing, Kyle stares at Hardcastle's body sadly.

KYLE

There's no way, Nelson. It's not like we're dealing with some faceless hermit here. He's a famous man - the richest man in the country. He can't just disappear.

NELSON

How long can it take to go public? Most of the paperwork's already done. What're we talking about, a couple days, a week?

KYLE

Two weeks. Minimum. I talked to the lawyers this afternoon.

Nelson frowns, glancing around the room thoughtfully. His eyes fall on the hunting trophies hanging on the walls.

NELSON

I think I have an idea...

CUT TO:

## INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Nelson tries to force Hardcastle into the back seat of his Volkswagen as Kyle finishes tying the wheelchair to the roof. Stepping back, he watches Nelson wrestle with the body.

KYLE

Maybe we shouldn't be putting him in the back seat. It doesn't seem right.

NELSON

(impatiently)

So what do you want me to do? If we cram him in the hatch he might stiffen up that way.

KYLE

No, I mean maybe I should ride in back and let him have the front. To show some respect.

NELSON

We're showing respect. We put him in his best suit, didn't we? Give me a hand, I think he's caught on something.

Kyle moves to help Nelson as we...

CUT TO:

## EXT. L.A. FREEWAY - NIGHT

Nelson's VW. speeds down the freeway, looking anything but inconspicuous with Hardcastle's wheelchair tied to the roof.

## INT. VOLKSWAGEN

Nelson drives, Kyle riding shotgun. Hardcastle is wedged awkwardly into the back seat, dark glasses covering his eyes. Nelson hits the brakes, causing the body to lurch forward - head resting on Kyle's shoulder. Letting out a scream, Kyle pushes Hardcastle back into place, shuddering miserably as we...

CUT TO:

## EXT. DOWNTOWN OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

Nelson's car is parked outside a run-down office building.

## INT. OFFICE BUILDING - STAIRWELL

Kyle and Nelson struggle to get Hardcastle and his wheelchair up the narrow stairwell. Nelson pulls on the handles at the top, while Kyle pushes from the bottom.

KYLE

Do me a favor - if I have a heart  
attack just bury me, okay?

They reach the top of the stairs, panting as they lean on the wheelchair. Nelson cries out, slapping his forehead in disgust.

NELSON

Oh, crap!

KYLE

What? What's wrong?

NELSON

I just realized - I won the 'When-  
Will-Hardcastle-Kick-the-Bucket'  
pool and I can't tell anyone!

Kyle glares at Nelson.

KYLE

Where is it?

Nelson looks around, pointing to a door with the words 'EDWIN  
NORMAN - TAXIDERMIST TO THE STARS' painted on the frosted  
glass window.

## INT. EDWIN'S OFFICE

Kyle and Nelson wheel Hardcastle into the empty office. The room is decorated with every example of the taxidermist's art imaginable, the most impressive piece a moose head hanging on the wall behind the reception desk.

KYLE

You think he's out?

NELSON

The door was open...

Nelson reaches out, ringing the bell on the desk. He and Kyle jump back as the moose head on the wall comes to life - ears wiggling, eyes blinking, and speaking in a slow, dopey voice.

MOOSE-HEAD

Howdy, friends! Welcome to the studio of Edwin Norman, 'Taxidermist to the Stars'. We're open 24 hours a day to serve all your post-mortem needs. If you'll have a seat, Mr. Norman will be with you in a moment.

The moose head lets out a 'Hyuk' as it runs down. Kyle seems doubtful.

KYLE

I still can't help but feel we're exceeding our authority somehow.

NELSON

Come on, it's not like we're selling drugs or something. Think about it. The most influential men of all time have been stuffed - King Tut, Lenin, Mao, L. Ron Hubbard...

KYLE

L. Ron Hubbard?

NELSON

The guy who wrote 'Dianetics'. He's still updating it even though he's been dead for years. Have I ever told you how 'Dianetics' changed my life... ?

Kyle and Nelson look up as Edwin steps through a door behind the desk, surprised to see his three guests. He moves forward eagerly, wiping his hands on a towel and sniffing his fingers before shaking Kyle and Nelson's hands.

EDWIN

Well, hello! I usually don't get much business this time of night. Just kids playing pranks or stealing prosthetics. What a nice surprise.

Kyle and Nelson frown, sniffing their fingers as Edwin extends his hand to Hardcastle, who obviously doesn't respond.

NELSON

We've got another surprise for you.

Kneeling, Edwin takes Hardcastle's hand sadly.

EDWIN

Oh my. When did this happen?

KYLE

We found him about an hour ago.

EDWIN

I'm sorry to hear it. He was a great man.

KYLE

(nods solemnly)

A good boss.

NELSON

A snappy dresser...

EDWIN

Why did you bring him here?

Nelson shifts uneasily. The moment of truth has arrived.

NELSON

We want to hire you. To... preserve him.

Standing, Edwin places his hand on Hardcastle's shoulder. He seems puzzled.

EDWIN

How did you know?

KYLE

How did we know what?

EDWIN

When Austin and I were on safari in Kenya in '72 he became very ill. He made me promise that when his time came I'd take care of him.

KYLE

(shocked)

He did?

Edwin begins pinching Hardcastle's cheeks, checking the tightness of the skin.

EDWIN

He always admired the quiet power and dignity of preserved animals. The noble moose, the ferocious tiger...

NELSON  
(excited)  
L. Ron Hubbard!

EDWIN  
Exactly. I think we should stuff  
all our great leaders. Presidents,  
scientists, artists, sports  
figures, newscasters. That's  
strictly a professional opinion, of  
course.

Kyle looks to Hardcastle apprehensively.

KYLE  
How long will it take?

EDWIN  
This is a big job. I don't normally  
carry human accessories. It takes a  
few days to order them from back  
east ...

NELSON  
Can't you improvise or something?  
We could be in an awkward situation  
here.

Edwin thinks it over for a moment.

EDWIN  
Coffee's brewing. You might as well  
make yourselves comfortable, it's  
going to be a long night.

Edwin pushes Hardcastle through the door to his workshop,  
Kyle and Nelson staring after him.

KYLE  
(frowns)  
The more I sober up the more  
impossible this seems.

Nelson steps to the coffee maker, pouring himself a cup.

NELSON  
What do you mean? Things are going  
great.

Through the window in the workshop door we see Edwin  
arranging and examining a tray of surgical tools and human  
prosthetics.

KYLE

Great, huh? We find our boss dead,  
don't tell anyone, then get him  
stuffed so we can run the business.  
This isn't your traditional Horatio  
Alger story.

NELSON

(shrugs)

Times change. Besides, you act like  
we're doing this for ourselves.  
We're saving the business,  
remember?

Kyle sits at the desk, head in his hands.

KYLE

This situation never came up in  
ethics class...

They look up as Edwin steps into the room, opening a pizza  
box on his desk and removing a nasty looking cutting tool.

EDWIN

Here it is...

Edwin moves back into his workshop, closing the door behind  
him. Nelson looks to Kyle patiently.

NELSON

What else can we do? Even a dead  
Hardcastle can run things better  
than a live Palmer Harrison. It's  
ideal. Hardcastle is now the  
perfect businessman - no brain, no  
soul, no conscience.

KYLE

This is beginning to sound like  
'The Wizard of Oz'. Who, I might  
add, got caught trying this sort of  
thing.

Edwin moves past the workshop door, lugging a stiffened  
Hardcastle over his shoulder. He draws the shade as Nelson  
sits on the edge of the desk, not noticing.

NELSON

He got sloppy, he didn't use good  
business sense. Anyway, it's a  
little late for debates.

Kyle grimaces as the whine of a cutting tool starts in the next room.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EDWIN'S OFFICE - DAY

The first rays of sunlight are beginning to peek through the blinds. Nelson is asleep on the couch, clutching one of Edwin's stuffed owls as though it were a teddy bear. Wide-eyed, Kyle stands at the coffee maker, pouring the last drops from the pot into his cup. Tie loosened, sleeves rolled up, shirt untucked - it's obvious Kyle hasn't slept a wink. He jumps as Nelson suddenly bolts upright, awakening with a yell.

KYLE

What's the matter? Are you okay?

Nelson shakes his head, tossing the owl aside in revulsion.

NELSON

Oh, man - I just had the weirdest dream. I dreamt Edwin did Hardcastle and made him wear a tutu like those stuffed toads in Tijuana.

(rubs eyes tiredly)

What time is it?

KYLE

It's almost six.

NELSON

Haven't you slept?

KYLE

Ten mugs of beer topped off by fifteen cups of coffee - I may never sleep again.

NELSON

Good thing. You'd probably wet the bed and drown yourself.

Kyle and Nelson turn as the door to the workshop opens, Edwin wheeling Hardcastle into the room. The old man looks great - his cheeks are rosy, his posture straight, he's even got a slight grin on his face.

KYLE

Is he... ?



EDWIN  
(proudly)  
He's all done.

Kyle and Nelson can only stare at the body, impressed.

NELSON  
God, Edwin. He's... beautiful. He  
looks more alive than when he was  
alive.

KYLE  
That'll give us away for sure.

Edwin leans over the body, picking and preening, adjusting  
Hardcastle's clothing.

EDWIN  
It was a challenge doing it without  
all the right parts. Had to take a  
few shortcuts I normally wouldn't,  
but that can't be helped. Also...

Edwin hands Nelson a spray bottle full of pink liquid.

EDWIN (CONT'D)  
... spray him with this once a day.  
It'll keep his skin soft and  
supple. And try to keep him in a  
cool place. As a matter of fact, if  
you know anyone who owns a meat  
locker...

Nelson moves to shake Edwin's hand.

NELSON  
Another great job, Edwin. How much  
do we owe you?

EDWIN  
Owe me?

NELSON  
Well, yeah. You put in a lot of  
work here.

Edwin seems genuinely offended.

EDWIN  
That's not the point. I did this  
out of love and respect. Working on  
Mr. Hardcastle was an honor that  
could only be tainted by accepting  
money.

NELSON

I'm sorry, Edwin. I just wanted to show our appreciation...

EDWIN

Actually, there is something you could do. I publish a small taxidermy magazine, and any donation would be a great help.

Smiling generously, Nelson takes out his checkbook.

NELSON

How much is a subscription?

EDWIN

A hundred thousand dollars.

Laughing weakly, Nelson sniffs his fingers, Edwin flashing a cunning grin as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. HARDCASTLE INTERNATIONAL - PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Nelson's VW pulls into the garage during the morning rush hour.

INT. VOLKSWAGEN

As they wait in a long line of cars Kyle looks to Nelson anxiously - shielding his eyes from Hardcastle in the back seat with his hand.

KYLE

We're going to get caught, I can feel it. We would have to get here just as everyone else is arriving for work.

(nods to body)

And your air conditioner picked a hell of a time to go on the fritz.

NELSON

If you hadn't made me stop six times so you could go to the bathroom maybe we'd have gotten here a little quicker.

The car inches past the guard station, a group of Parking Valets stepping out when they see Nelson's car. One of the men leans in the drivers window, grinning smugly.

VALET #1  
Hold on, Fartface. Where do you  
think you're going?

NELSON  
(calmly)  
Furbisch. I'm going to park. This  
is a parking garage.

VALET #1  
But this section is reserved for  
executives only. And unless hell  
froze over and I didn't hear about  
it, you aren't an executive.

NELSON  
But we do have an executive in the  
car.

Nelson motions to the back seat, where Hardcastle sits.  
Recognizing their passenger, the Valet's mouth drops open in  
surprise. Nelson flashes a cocky smile.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
Can I park now, please?

VALET #1  
(snaps to attention)  
Yes, sir. Will there be anything  
else, Mr. Furbisch?

NELSON  
(considers)  
Now that you mention it - would you  
be so kind as to wash my car?  
There's a dollar in it for you.

VALET #1  
(tight lipped)  
Yes, sir.

Turning to Kyle, Nelson raises his eyebrows playfully.

NELSON  
Piece of cake.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH-RISE - LOBBY - DAY

The usual snarl of workers crowd the lobby, fighting their  
way onto the elevators as Kyle and Nelson enter, pushing  
Hardcastle.

Everyone turns, a hush falling over the lobby at the sight of the old man. Kyle speaks out of the corner of his mouth.

KYLE

If we turn around right now we  
could probably make it to the  
airport before the police...

NELSON

Just be nonchalant. Don't attract  
attention.

KYLE

(sickly)

What if I throw up?

NELSON

Only if we need a diversion.

Kyle and Nelson begin to wheel Hardcastle through the crowd, the mob parting reverently to let him through. Nelson steers the wheelchair, a huge grin on his face, while Kyle looks as though he's about to create a diversion.

WORKERS

Hello, Mr. Hardcastle... Good  
morning, sir... Nice to see you,  
Mr. Hardcastle...

They make their way to the executive elevator, where the Elevator Boy greets them graciously.

ELEVATOR BOY

Hello, Mr. Hardcastle. It's an  
honor to have you ride my elevator.  
Well, your elevator, actually. But  
it's still an honor, sir.

Nelson wheels Hardcastle into the elevator, Kyle following. As the doors slide shut Nelson turns to Kyle, whispering smugly.

NELSON

Piece of cake.

CUT TO:

INT. HARRISON'S OFFICE - DAY

Golf club in hand, Harrison lines himself up with a ball resting on a plastic tee. Bringing the club up slowly he suddenly swings - driving the ball out an open window. He sets up another ball when Darcy steps into the office.

DARCY

Excuse me, sir. Mr. Howard from the legal department is here to see you.

HARRISON

Howard? What does that little slug want now?

DARCY

I don't know. He says it's important.

HARRISON

All right, send him in. But if he's not out in five minutes buzz me with an urgent phone call or something.

DARCY

Yes, sir.

Harrison puts the club back into his golf bag as MR. HOWARD enters. A short, nervous looking man, he seems very intimidated by Harrison. Sweat stains spreading under the arms of his suit coat, he speaks like a machine gun firing.

MR. HOWARD

Hello, Mr. Harrison. Thank you for seeing me without an appointment, sir.

HARRISON

Yes, yes. What is it, Howard?

MR. HOWARD

Well, you see, Mr. Harrison, I was working in my cubicle downstairs in the legal department when I overheard the man in the next cubicle - you see, the walls are only made of plasterboard and they're only five feet high, so it's very easy to overhear conversations even without trying...

Taking a seat behind his desk, Harrison cuts in impatiently.

HARRISON

Get to the point, please.

MR. HOWARD

Oh, yes sir. Of course. I'm sorry if I digressed there for a moment from the main thrust of my narrative...

Harrison glares at Mr. Howard angrily, causing him to speak even faster.

MR. HOWARD (CONT'D)

... Anyway, as I was saying, I overheard the man in the next cubicle - a Mr. Lowry - speaking over the phone to one of Mr. Hardcastle's secretaries and it seems that the reports on the TV were true, Mr. Hardcastle has made the decision to retire from the company...

Eyes glinting, Harrison stands, grabbing Mr. Howard by the tie and dragging him halfway across his desk.

HARRISON

He's retiring? Are you certain?

MR. HOWARD

(choking)

Yes, sir. Positive.

Harrison lets Mr. Howard go, the lawyer slumping to the floor.

HARRISON

I don't believe it - he's giving in without a fight. That's not like him.

(chuckles nastily)

Maybe he's sick...

MR. HOWARD

(kneeling)

Excuse me, sir - but that's not the only thing...

Grabbing Mr. Howard by the lapels, Harrison yanks him to his feet.

HARRISON

What do you mean?

MR. HOWARD

(faster than ever)

I mean that I also overheard them say that Mr. Hardcastle plans to retire after placing the company on the New York Stock Exchange. They said something about not wanting one man to run the company. I got the impression they were talking about one particular man, as they kept using terms like 'asshole' and 'dickhead' and such. They're holding a press conference this morning to announce their decision.

HARRISON

This morning? When this morning?

MR. HOWARD

Regrettably I failed to catch that part of the conversation.

Harrison lets go of Mr. Howard's lapels, looking to him in desperation.

HARRISON

What can I do to stop this?

MR. HOWARD

(in one breath)

Actually sir, if you let the process continue you could conceivably form a consortium to buy a majority of stock, thereby guaranteeing the right to pick your own board of directors, while installing yourself as the chairman of said board. But if you insist on trying to stop the sale of stock altogether I'd suggest you try to prove your uncle senile and incapable of making daily business decisions. As his only living heir and logical next in line to inherit this company that might be an effective course to navigate in a situation such as you find yourself now.

Dizzy, Mr. Howard takes a deep breath, leaning against the desk for support. Harrison grins.

HARRISON

Do it.

MR. HOWARD  
(gasping)  
Excuse me, sir, but do what?

HARRISON  
You take care of the legal stuff,  
and I'll take care of my uncle.

Mr. Howard backpedals to the door.

MR. HOWARD  
The legal stuff... yes. sir. Thank  
you once again for seeing me on  
such short notice. Well, no notice  
actually. I appreciate the fact  
that you're such a busy man and yet  
still find time to see a lowly  
employee like myself...

Stepping out of the office, Mr. Howard closes the door behind  
him. Harrison presses a button on his intercom.

HARRISON  
Miss Vanderwood. In my office. Now.  
(no reply)  
Miss Vanderwood?

Still no reply. Grumbling, Harrison moves to the door -  
opening it to reveal Mr. Howard standing on the other side,  
flipping him off. Jumping back in surprise, Mr. Howard  
quickly scurries away. Harrison glances around the empty  
reception area angrily.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
(shouting)  
Miss Vanderwood!

CUT TO:

INT. LADIES LOUNGE - DAY

Darcy sits on the couch, thumbing through a copy of  
'Backlash'. She ignores the Young Executive, who pleads with  
her through a crack in the door.

YOUNG EXECUTIVE  
Just give me a chance. I've got a  
great personality... Look, I'm  
sliding the keys to my Porsche  
under the door, you can check it  
out... keep it... !



Darcy sighs as a set of car keys slide under the door.

CUT TO:

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OFFICE - DAY

The door bursts open, Kyle and Nelson hurrying inside. Kyle quickly closes the door behind them.

KYLE

I can't believe nobody stopped us.  
They just took it for granted that  
he was alive.

NELSON

What did you expect them to do -  
stop and take his pulse?

KYLE

Yes.

Nelson wheels Hardcastle into place behind his desk.

KYLE (CONT'D)

So... what do we do now?

NELSON

The same thing we do every day.  
It's got to be like nothing's  
happened. Business as usual.

(opens curtains, turning  
to Kyle)

What's on the agenda today?

KYLE

I don't know. The appointment  
book's on my desk. And if I'm lucky  
there'll be a gun in the drawer.

Kyle starts for the door.

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OUTER OFFICE

Kyle steps into the office, surprised to see a man waiting. A PHOTOGRAPHER, he carries a camera bag slung over his shoulder.

KYLE

(startled)

What are you doing here?

PHOTOGRAPHER

Uh, I have an appointment. I'm here to take a photo of Mr. Hardcastle for the year-end stockholders report.

Frowning suspiciously, Kyle rifles through his appointment book. He slumps forward, elbows on his desk and head lowered.

KYLE

Oh, shit. You are.

PHOTOGRAPHER

(shrugs)

Sorry.

The Photographer watches, confused, as Kyle begins cleaning out his desk, dumping the contents of the drawers into his briefcase. After a moment Nelson steps in, sizing up the situation.

NELSON

What're you doing?

KYLE

Clearing out my desk.

NELSON

Why?

Kyle cooks his thumb at the Photographer.

KYLE

This guy's here to take pictures of Hardcastle.

PHOTOGRAPHER

(shifts uneasily)

Sorry.

A grin breaks out on Nelson's face as he steps forward, shaking the Photographer's hand and slapping him on the back.

NELSON

Don't worry about it. You just caught us by surprise, that's all. I'm sure Mr. Hardcastle will be more than happy to sit still for a few photos.

Ushering the Photographer into Hardcastle's office, Nelson turns back to Kyle.

NELSON (CONT'D)

I'll take care of this, you deal  
with whatever's next on the agenda.

Kyle glances at the appointment book, looking up at Nelson, panicked.

KYLE

It's the press conference.

NELSON

When does it start?

KYLE

Five minutes ago.

NELSON

Piece of cake.

Flashing a reassuring grin, Nelson gives the thumbs-up sign. Kyle rolls his eyes heavenward as we...

CUT TO:

INT. PRESS ROOM - DAY

Kyle rushes into the room from a side door, finding himself on a small stage. The room is stuffed wall to wall with reporters, cameramen and photographers, who glare up at him impatiently. Stepping to a podium, Kyle winces as the TV cameras turn on their flood lights. He tries to smile as he speaks into the microphone.

KYLE

I'm sure you're wondering why I've  
called you all here today.

Kyle laughs weakly, staring out at a sea of stone faces. He improvises his announcement, flustered and unprepared.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Right. Anyway, I'm Kyle Merideth,  
and I've been asked to announce  
that J. Austin Hardcastle, founder,  
Chairman of the Board and sole  
owner of Hardcastle International  
will step down after supervising  
the transfer of ownership from  
himself to the public. Did that  
make any sense?

There are mumbles and shrugs from the press corps.

KYLE (CONT'D)

He's retiring after making stock  
available to the public.

A murmur of comprehension sweeps the room, flashbulbs popping  
furiously as reporters shout questions to Kyle.

TIMES REPORTER

Mr. Merideth - Los Angeles Times.  
What prompted Mr. Hardcastle's  
decision?

JOURNAL REPORTER

Wall Street Journal. What impact  
will this have on the business  
financially?

PEOPLE REPORTER

People magazine - is Mr. Hardcastle  
dating anyone at the moment?

Kyle holds up his hands in mock surrender.

KYLE

Hold it, hold it. I'm afraid I  
can't answer your questions. All I  
know is what I've told you.

Suddenly a familiar voice rings out from the back of the  
room.

HARRISON (O.S.)

I can answer your questions.

Everyone turns as Harrison strides to the front of the room.  
Kyle lowers his head, speaking under his breath - his words  
picked up by the sensitive microphone.

KYLE

Oh, shit...

He looks up, embarrassed, as Harrison takes the stage.

HARRISON

'Oh, shit' is right, you little  
asswipe.

TIMES REPORTER

(calls out)

What can you tell us about this,  
Mr. Harrison?

HARRISON

I can tell you that my uncle is not himself. He's a shell of the man he used to be. Nothing more than a pawn, manipulated by those in his inner circle for their own interests.

(points to Kyle)

People like this man, who wheel him around like a piece of baggage while running the business for themselves.

As Harrison speaks, Kyle edges slowly off the stage. He grins uneasily, speaking to a couple of reporters standing near the side door.

KYLE

Pardon me, but I have some cleaning to finish up. It's been nice talking with you...

Kyle slips out the door as reporters continue to question Harrison.

CUT TO:

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Eyes glassy, Kyle steps into the office - silently continuing to clear out his desk. The door to Hardcastle's office opens, Nelson and the Photographer stepping out.

PHOTOGRAPHER

I can't believe it. I mean, I've taken Mr. Hardcastle's picture before and he was always so cranky and fidgety. But this time he was so cooperative.

NELSON

It's part of his new image.

PHOTOGRAPHER

I knew there was something different when I saw him. He looks healthier. He's filled out some, put on a little weight.

NELSON

He's on a high fiber diet.

Nelson opens the door, the Photographer giving a friendly nod as he leaves. Kyle stares at Nelson in disbelief.

KYLE

He didn't notice anything wrong?  
Like the fact that he wasn't moving  
or breathing?

NELSON

All he wanted was to get his  
pictures and get out without a  
hassle. How'd the press conference  
go?

KYLE

Wonderful. Halfway through Harrison  
bursts in and announces that his  
uncle is a shell of his former self  
and is being manipulated by others.  
You want me to clean out your desk,  
too?

Nelson shrugs, unconcerned. He grabs the spray bottle that  
Edwin gave him from his desk.

NELSON

Lucky guess. I'm gonna give the old  
man his daily squirt. Give me a  
buzz if something comes up.

INT. 20TH FLOOR - LOBBY

The Photographer stands waiting for the elevator. The doors  
slide open and he steps in as across the room the doors to  
the executive elevator open, Harrison stepping out. He makes  
a beeline for Hardcastle's office.

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OUTER OFFICE

Kyle jumps as the door bursts open, Harrison storming in.  
Noticing Kyle's desk, Harrison gives him a nasty grin.

HARRISON

Going somewhere?

KYLE

Uh, no... I mean yes. Um... Nelson  
and I are trading desks, so I  
thought I'd pack my stuff up so  
nothing gets lost in the move.

HARRISON

Cut the crap. I want to see my  
uncle.

KYLE

You can't.

HARRISON

Like hell I can't.

Harrison starts for the door to Hardcastle's office. Moving quickly, Kyle switches on his intercom as he lunges to block Harrison's way.

KYLE

No, really. He's very busy right  
now. I can check his schedule, I  
think he could fit you in in about  
two months...

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OFFICE

Nelson squirts Hardcastle's face with the spray bottle, wiping him down with a rag like the windshield of a car. He glances up as Harrison's voice comes over the intercom.

HARRISON (V.O.)

I'm going to see my uncle, you  
little shitheel. And I don't care  
if I have to go through you and the  
door to do it.

NELSON

Uh-oh...

Tossing the spray bottle and rag in a desk drawer, Nelson frantically wheels Hardcastle around the room, looking for a place to hide.

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OUTER OFFICE

Beginning to sweat, Kyle continues to block the door, speaking to Harrison calmly.

KYLE

Honestly, don't you think you're  
getting just a little hostile here?

Harrison grabs Kyle by the arm, shoving him aside as he opens the door.

## INT. HARDCASTLE'S OFFICE

Bursting into the office, Harrison stops short. A grimace on his face, Kyle steps in, shocked to find the room empty - Hardcastle nowhere to be found. Harrison turns to Kyle suspiciously.

HARRISON

I thought he was in here.

KYLE

(baffled)

So did I...

Moving to the nearest door, Harrison throws it open to reveal Hardcastle's bedroom. Empty. He moves to the next door, only to find the dining room. Also empty. Stepping to a third door, he opens it to find...

## INT. BATHROOM

... Hardcastle sitting on the toilet, pants around his ankles and a copy of the Wall Street Journal in his outstretched hands. There is a grunt of annoy and surprise as...

## INT. HARDCASTLE'S OFFICE

... Harrison takes a step back, calling to his uncle apologetically.

HARRISON

Oh! Excuse me, I didn't know... I mean... I'll come back later.

Flashing Kyle a hateful, embarrassed glance Harrison hurries out the door. Kyle looks into the bathroom as the shower curtain is drawn back, Nelson standing in the stall. Kyle stares at him grimly.

KYLE

(sarcastically)

Piece of cake...

Nelson grins sheepishly.

CUT TO:

## INT. HARRISON'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Harrison storms in, barking at Darcy impatiently as he heads for his office.



HARRISON

Miss Vanderwood - in my office.  
Now.

DARCY

Mr. Mason is here to see you, sir.

Harrison turns to see Frankie sprawled on the sofa, asleep.  
He steps over, nudging the photographer roughly.

HARRISON

What are you doing here? You're  
supposed to be keeping an eye on my  
uncle's office.

Frankie wakes with a start, sitting up. Groggy, he takes an  
envelope from his pocket, handing it to Harrison.

FRANKIE

(yawns)

I have been. Here's the pictures I  
got yesterday.

Harrison takes the envelope, pulling out a series of  
photographs showing the back of Hardcastle's head as he sits  
at his desk, reading the paper... watching TV... sleeping.

HARRISON

No, no, no - these are no good. You  
can't even see his face.

(finds photo through  
window of women's  
restroom)

This one's not bad...

FRANKIE

What do you expect? It's dead in  
there. The guy barely moves. I  
don't even think he goes to the  
bathroom.

HARRISON

(frowns)

Yes, well, I can vouch for that...

FRANKIE

Maybe we should try something else.  
I'm not sure if I'm gonna get  
anything peeking through the  
window.

Harrison examines a series of photographs showing Hardcastle  
waking up in his chair to catch Kyle and Nelson watching a  
Playboy video on the big screen TV. He turns to Darcy.

HARRISON

Miss Vanderwood - have you made  
contact with one of his secretaries  
yet?

Darcy nods unenthusiastically.

DARCY

Yes, sir. I have a date with one of  
them tonight.

HARRISON

Which one?

DARCY

Kyle Merideth.

Harrison shakes his head worriedly.

HARRISON

I'd rather have you work on  
Fosditch. He seems... hornier.

Darcy gives him a dirty look.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

No matter. Just be sure to get  
whatever you can out of him.

Turning, Harrison finds Frankie back on the sofa, asleep. He  
kicks his feet, waking him.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

And you get back to your post!

FRANKIE

(sighs)

All right, all right - but I'm  
telling you, nothing ever happens  
up there...

CUT TO:

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

The room is filled with reporters, flashbulbs flashing as  
they press toward Kyle and Nelson, who desperately guard the  
door to Hardcastle's office. Kyle calls out over their  
questions.

KYLE

I'm sorry - you'll all have to  
leave!

(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)

Mr. Hardcastle is not speaking to anyone. You heard his statement at the press conference.

TIMES REPORTER

Weld like him to comment on allegations that he's unfit to run the business.

Nelson jumps on top of his desk, calling out wildly.

NELSON

I'm Mr. Hardcastle's personal secretary. I can answer any questions you may have.

JOURNAL REPORTER

What about Mr. Harrison's charge that thieves and opportunists are now running the business in Mr. Hardcastle's place?

NELSON

No comment.

TIMES REPORTER

Are you one of the men Mr. Harrison was referring to?

NELSON

No comment.

PEOPLE REPORTER

If you are one of the men - are you dating anyone at the moment?

NELSON

That's all Mr. Hardcastle has to say at this time. Leave now or we'll be forced to call the police.

Nelson glances to Kyle, who shakes his head anxiously.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Okay, we won't call the police, but you'll be sorry...

The reporters leave the office, grumbling unhappily. Nelson hops off the desktop as Kyle steps forward, mechanically continuing to clear out his desk.

NELSON (CONT'D)

I should run for office. What're you still doing that for?

KYLE

We'll never pull this off, Nelson.  
Not after all this...

NELSON

Come on, look at the bright side  
for a change. If we got through  
this we can get through anything.  
How much worse can it get?

KYLE

Considering that it's not even  
lunch yet, I don't really want to  
think about it.

NELSON

You worry too much. The hard part's  
over. If we can just minimize our  
surprises everything should be  
okay.

The 'ding' of an elevator arriving can be heard from the  
lobby. Kyle looks up to see Darcy heading toward the office.  
He turns to Nelson, smiling weakly.

KYLE

Surprise.

Darcy steps into the office. She moves to Kyle's desk,  
glancing uneasily at Nelson, who stares at her dumbly.

DARCY

Hi. I thought I'd come up and  
refresh your memory. We're still on  
for tonight, right?

KYLE

(lying)

Oh, yeah. I remembered. It's been  
the only thing on my mind. I didn't  
even sleep last night.

Darcy smiles, flattered.

DARCY

Okay, great. I'll see you tonight.

KYLE

Right. Tonight.

As Darcy turns to leave Nelson stops her, shaking her hand.

NELSON

Hi, I'm Nelson's friend Kyle.

DARCY  
No, you're Kyle's friend Nelson.

NELSON  
(nods agreeably)  
Okay.

Giving Nelson an odd look, Darcy removes her hand from his, hurrying out the door. Nelson turns to Kyle in amazement.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
You actually asked her out? And she said yes?

KYLE  
In a roundabout sort of way...

Nelson watches as Darcy walks across the lobby, stepping into an elevator.

NELSON  
(teasing)  
I knew it. She digs me, I can tell.

KYLE  
Digs you? I'm the one she's going out with!

NELSON  
Sure - to get to me. Why do you think she was giving me the eye in the bar last night? And why didn't you tell me about this?

KYLE  
(irritated)  
I forgot. I've had a few other things on my mind, all right?

Kyle turns, heading into Hardcastle's office, Nelson on his heels.

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OFFICE

They enter, Kyle heading straight for the bar, where he mixes himself a strong drink. Nelson flops into a chair in front of Hardcastle's desk, where the old man sits, staring into space.

NELSON  
So where are you taking her?

KYLE

I don't know. I didn't make any reservations. You think she'd mind eating at Denny's?

NELSON

You don't take a girl like that to Denny's. You've got to take her someplace nice - someplace like Spago, Morton's, Marie Calendar's.

Drink in hand, Kyle paces the room miserably.

KYLE

There's no way I'm going to get a table anywhere like that. I just want a place where they don't have puzzles and games on the place mats.

Nelson grins as an idea hits him. He swivels the chair to face Kyle.

NELSON

You know, that's always been your problem - no imagination.

KYLE

What do you mean, no imagination? Right now I'm imagining that I'm perfectly sane. And why are you smiling like that?

Nelson stands, gesturing to the room around them.

NELSON

Look around you. You're in control of one of the richest businesses in the world and you're worried about whether or not you can get a table at a fancy restaurant? Christ, Kyle - if J. Austin Hardcastle wants a good meal he doesn't go to a restaurant, the restaurant comes to him.

KYLE

I don't know, Nelson. I don't want to abuse our position...

NELSON

Forget that. We're the ones taking a risk here...

(MORE)

NELSON (CONT'D)

(puts hand on  
Hardcastle's shoulder)  
... not him. He's already done his  
part. But us - if we get caught,  
we're in trouble. I say we take  
advantage of the situation while we  
can. What do you say?

Kyle looks to Nelson, a grin spreading slowly across his face  
as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

One of Hardcastle's limousines cruises down the street -  
wheelchair tied to the roof.

INT. LIMOUSINE

Nelson drives, Hardcastle propped up in the back seat.  
Steering with one hand, Nelson holds a car phone in the  
other.

NELSON

(into receiver)  
Edwin. This is Nelson. I'm bringing  
Mr. Hardcastle in for the new eyes  
you called about. How do they  
look?... No, I know they don't look  
- are they realistic?... No, I  
don't want to go with the 'Paul  
Newman Blue'. I want them the same  
color as before. I'll be there in  
about twenty minutes.

As Nelson hangs up we hear a loud BANG, the car swerving  
violently to one side. Fighting the steering wheel, Nelson  
accidentally tears the receiver from the car phone. He calls  
back to Hardcastle, who tips over to one side.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Hold on, sir... ooops, I mean...  
oh, forget it...

EXT. CITY STREET - CURBSIDE

The limousine comes to a halt in front of a downtown  
nightclub. A crowd of people stare with interest as Nelson  
climbs out, spotting a flat front tire.

NELSON

Great. Why do these things always  
happen to me?

Glancing at the phone receiver in his hand, Nelson stuffs it into his coat pocket. He steps to the nightclub box office, speaking to the TICKET GIRL. He doesn't notice the crowd of people gathering around the limousine, curious to see who's inside.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Can I use your phone? One of the  
tires on my car is broken.

TICKET GIRL

There's a phone inside.

Relieved, Nelson starts for the club entrance.

NELSON

Great, thanks.

TICKET GIRL

(calling out)

That'll be fifteen dollars.

NELSON

No, you don't understand. I just  
want to use the phone...

TICKET GIRL

Fifteen dollars to go in.

Scowling, Nelson pulls out his wallet, slipping the Ticket Girl some bills. Turning back to the limousine he sees several kids opening the back door, looking inside.

NELSON

Hey! Get away from that car! It's  
private property!

Hurrying to the curb Nelson shoos the kids away. Sighing, he unstraps the wheelchair from the roof, setting it on the sidewalk. Reaching into the back seat he pretends to help Hardcastle into the chair as best he can. A fashionably dressed YOUNG MAN steps forward, gazing at Hardcastle intently.

YOUNG MAN

What's wrong with him? He looks  
like he's dead or something.

Nelson's hand pistons out, grabbing the Young Man by the shirtfront. Eyes flashing, he speaks slowly and deliberately.



NELSON

He's not dead. He's just very old.  
Got it?

YOUNG MAN

(surprised)

Yeah, yeah. No problem!

Releasing his grip, Nelson wheels Hardcastle toward the nightclub entrance - the Ticket Girl calling out:

TICKET GIRL

That'll be fifteen dollars!

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP GARDEN - NIGHT

The lights of L.A. stretched out before them, Kyle and Darcy sit in the garden, enjoying a candlelight dinner. Darcy is enchanted by the lush setting, violins playing softly in the background.

DARCY

This is amazing. I didn't even know  
this was up here.

KYLE

Hardly anyone does. Mr. Hardcastle  
calls it his 'private island'.

DARCY

Oh, really? How long has he allowed  
his secretaries to bring dates up  
here?

KYLE

It's a new policy. More wine?

Darcy nods, Kyle taking a bottle of wine from an ice bucket and refilling their glasses. Darcy looks around the garden.

DARCY

You know, Mr. Hardcastle never  
struck me as the kind of person  
who'd spend his money this way.

KYLE

That's one of the problems with  
staying out of the public eye as  
long as he has.

(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)

People figure he's either some tight-fisted tyrant or a crazy old man who pees in mason jars.

(pauses)

I'm sorry. That's not the nicest thing to say as you're pouring wine.

DARCY

(smiles)

This is all very impressive. The setting, appetizers from Spago, the main course from Morton's...

A WAITER steps up, setting a platter of desserts on the table before them.

WAITER

Your dessert from La Maison du Merde...

Kyle hands him a credit card.

KYLE

Mr. Hardcastle is paying. I'll sign.

WAITER

Yes, sir. It's an honor to serve friends of Mr. Hardcastle.

(snaps fingers, a violinist stepping up)

We're pleased to supply a violinist at no extra charge.

The violinist begins playing, Kyle frowning distractedly.

KYLE

You, too? Just put him with the others...

Kyle points to a group of violinists standing amongst the foliage, playing softly.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Nelson and Hardcastle sit at a table, having a drink with two YOUNG WOMEN.

NELSON

... Then these terrorists try to hijack the limo and kidnap me and J. Austin here. So I flip open a panel on the dashboard and press the button that activates the machine guns...

YOUNG WOMAN #1

(impressed)

Your limo has machine guns?

NELSON

A few. Machine guns, flame throwers, a compact disc player. Do you want to see? It's right outside.

The second Young Woman looks at Nelson skeptically.

YOUNG WOMAN #2

I don't believe this for a minute.

NELSON

It's true! It's got lasers and everything - great for traffic jams. I'm prepared for every emergency. By the way, do either of you know how to fix a flat tire?

INT. NIGHTCLUB - BAR

Bobbi Mason sits at the bar with a girlfriend (SHIRLEY), speaking loudly as she surveys the dance floor.

BOBBI

I swear, it's been forty-eight hours of pure boredom, Shirley. We're given a thousand dollar a night hotel room, a huge expense account, and all my lump of a husband does is sit at the window staring through a camera, drinking beer and eating cheese puffs. This is the first time I've been out in days.

SHIRLEY

(concerned)

Maybe you should slow down a little, Bobbi. I think you've had a few too many.

BOBBI

I haven't even had a drink yet!

Bobbi's eyes light up as she recognizes someone on the dance floor. She laughs bitterly.

SHIRLEY

What is it?

BOBBI

That guy my jerk husband is trying to photograph. He's here dancing while Frankie is sitting on a porta-potty wondering why nothing's happening.

SHIRLEY

Are you sure?

Taking a pen from her purse, she scribbles instructions onto a napkin.

BOBBI

You bet I'm sure. I've been staring at him for two days straight.

(slides napkin to Shirley)

Here. Give me five minutes, then call every newspaper in town and tell them to watch this address. I think it's time I taught my husband a lesson.

Grinning cruelly, Bobbi steps away from the bar.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - DANCE FLOOR

Nelson and Hardcastle dance with the two Young Women - Nelson maneuvering the wheelchair around the dance floor in time with the music. The second Young Woman eyes Hardcastle strangely.

YOUNG WOMAN #2

Your friend sure doesn't say much.

NELSON

He's been through a lot lately. Just a shell of his former self. Right, boss?

Laughing, Nelson slaps Hardcastle on the back - his dark glasses falling off to reveal a pair of glass cat eyes.

The Young Women shriek, everyone on the dance floor turning as Nelson hurriedly retrieves the glasses, putting them back in place. He calls after the Young Women, who scurry away.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
See? What a joker, huh? Contact lenses. Had them made special. What about my flat tire?

Bobbi steps up behind him, placing her hand on his shoulder and whispering in his ear seductively.

BOBBI  
Hello, Nelson. Having fun?

Surprised, Nelson turns.

NELSON  
Excuse me?

BOBBI  
(smiles)  
You're Nelson Florsheim, and if I'm not mistaken, the gentleman in the wheelchair is J. Austin Hardcastle.

NELSON  
Furbisch. Do I know you?

BOBBI  
No. What would you say if I told you I wanted to go back to your office and fool around?

NELSON  
(thinks)  
Can you change a flat?

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP GARDEN - NIGHT

Glasses of champagne in hand, Kyle and Darcy wander through the gardens... followed by at least a dozen violinists.

DARCY  
You know, all night I've been dying to ask you something.

KYLE  
No, this isn't a toupee.

Darcy laughs, Kyle joining her politely.

DARCY

No, seriously. What's it like to work for Mr. Hardcastle? It must be pretty exciting.

KYLE

It has its moments.

DARCY

Well, what's he like? Is he a tough boss?

Kyle smiles uneasily.

KYLE

He's very quiet. Look, I don't mean to be rude, but could we talk about something besides business? It's been a hard couple of days.

Darcy stops in her tracks, surprised.

DARCY

You're kidding. I never thought I'd hear that.

KYLE

What?

DARCY

A man who doesn't want to talk business. It seems like that's all they want to talk about anymore. It's the new machismo. Men don't want to be judged by the bulge in their crotch, just the one in their wallet.

Kyle grins, a little taken aback.

KYLE

Yeah, well I tried stuffing toilet paper into my wallet once but it didn't help.

Darcy laughs, Kyle looking at her seriously.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Can I ask you something? I want you to be honest. Why did you decide to go out with me tonight? Did someone put you up to this?

Darcy chokes on her champagne, quickly regaining her composure.

DARCY

What?

KYLE

Did Nelson bribe you to go out with me? One time in college I had a crush on this girl, and he got her to go out with me by telling her I had a terminal disease. You're acting like she did.

DARCY

I am? How am I acting?

KYLE

Like you're trying awfully hard to look like you're enjoying yourself. But at least you're not wearing a surgical mask and rubber gloves.

DARCY

I am enjoying myself. I'm here because I want to be, Kyle. No other reason.

KYLE

Are you sure?

Darcy gives him a reassuring grin.

DARCY

I'm sure.

Kyle smiles. They step to the railing, looking out over the lights of the city as the violinists continue to play.

EXT. P.O.V. - THROUGH CAMERA LENS

We watch through Frankie Mason's camera as Kyle and Darcy lean against the railing. He grumbles, bored.

FRANKIE (O.S.)

Jesus, this guy would take three hours to make a pass in a brothel.

CUT TO:

## INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Frankie leans back in his chair, rummaging through the cracker boxes and potato chip bags at his feet. He grabs a bag of cheese puffs, licking his fingers to pick up the crumbs at the bottom.

FRANKIE

(mutters)

I sit up here for three days so I can photograph the back of some old guy's head. I never should've quit taking baby pictures at K-Mart. At least I got more action.

Leaning forward with a sigh, Frankie peers through the camera.

## EXT. P.O.V. - THROUGH CAMERA LENS

Kyle and Darcy still stand at the railing, talking. The camera tilts downward to Hardcastle's office, where the curtains have been opened. The room is dark, but we can make out the figure of a woman standing in front of Hardcastle's wheelchair, slowly undressing. Back to us, the figure in the wheelchair sits very still, half empty bottle of wine in hand.

FRANKIE (O.S.)

All right! It's about time you woke up, you dirty old man. Now if only you'd do it with the lights on I'd be in business...

The woman drunkenly removes her bra, stepping to the wheelchair.

## INT. HOTEL ROOM

Moving quickly, Frankie pops the lens off his camera. Rummaging through a duffel bag he pulls out a bigger lens, laughing to himself as he twists it into place.

FRANKIE

A million from 'People'... a million from the 'Enquirer'... and, if they turn the chair around, a million from 'Celebrity Skin'...



EXT. P.O.V. - THROUGH CAMERA LENS

More powerful lens in place, Frankie can see into the room more clearly as the woman gives the figure in the wheelchair a long, lingering kiss. Frankie's voice hisses as he urges them on.

FRANKIE (O.S.)  
Come on, baby... let's see you...  
show your face... show everything,  
for that matter...

The woman pulls back from the kiss. As she looks up, straight into the camera, we see that it is Frankie's wife Bobbi. A nasty smile on her face, she flips him off before returning to the figure in the wheelchair.

EXT. HOTEL ROOM - BALCONY

Shocked, Frankie tosses the camera aside. He throws open the sliding glass door, rushing out onto the balcony.

FRANKIE  
(shouting)  
Bobbi! What are you doing? Turn the  
chair around...!

Frankie jumps as suddenly flashbulbs begin erupting from every window in the hotel, the cameras of other photographers whirring away. He calls out desperately.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)  
Stop! No photographs! That's my  
wife in there! Isn't anything  
private to you people?

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OFFICE

Bobbi straddles the wheelchair, sitting on Nelson's lap. Back to the window, he doesn't notice the flashbulbs popping in the building across the street.

NELSON  
What do you say we go into the  
bedroom?

Bobbi suddenly stands, moving to the window and drawing the curtains. Nelson watches, confused, as she picks up her clothes, dressing hurriedly.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Hey, wait a minute. What's going on? I thought you wanted to fool around...

BOBBI

We did.

NELSON

Uh... did I miss something?

Bobbi hops to the door, pulling on her shoes.

BOBBI

Thank Mr. Hardcastle for me. Tell him I'm sorry I couldn't stay. He was a real gentleman.

She exits, Nelson staring dumbly after her. Grabbing the wheelchair's remote control he wheels himself to the closet, opening the door to reveal Hardcastle wedged inside.

NELSON

What do you have that I don't?

Nelson sighs, frustrated, as we...

CUT TO:

INT. HARRISON'S OFFICE - DAY

A dozen newspapers sit on Harrison's desk, all bearing murky photos of a nude Bobbi Mason embracing a man in a wheelchair. Voice barely under control, Harrison reads the headlines aloud.

HARRISON

Listen to this - 'Hardcastle To Retire, But Not Slow Down'.  
'Hardcastle Substitutes Business For Pleasure'.

(holds up New York  
'Post')

And this one's my favorite - 'Big Boss Boogies, Boffs Babe'. He's more popular now than he ever was!  
How the hell did this happen?

Frankie is slumped sullenly in a chair, mumbling bitterly.

FRANKIE

I'm gonna get that son of a bitch.  
I'm gonna expose him and drive him  
out of business...

HARRISON

What do you think I've been paying  
you a thousand dollars a day for?

FRANKIE

Yeah, but now I'm really going to  
start trying.

(slams fist on arm of  
chair)

How could she do this? I'll be a  
laughing stock.

HARRISON

Yes, well we've all got reasons to  
be upset.

Frankie stands, grabbing a newspaper off the desk and waving  
it in the air disgustedly.

FRANKIE

My own wife... with the guy I'm  
watching... and for no money! Who  
could possibly be more upset about  
this than me?

CUT TO:

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Nelson sits at his desk, a horrified look on his face as he  
watches a portable TV. On screen two NEWSCASTERS laugh, while  
the photo of Bobbi and 'Hardcastle' is displayed behind them.

NEWSCASTER (ON TV)

Boy, when he said he was going to  
go public, he wasn't kidding.

Hearing the 'ding' of an elevator, Nelson looks up to see  
Kyle step into the lobby. He quickly switches off the TV,  
trying to look busy as Kyle enters, whistling happily.

NELSON

You're in a good mood.

Kyle nods, tossing Nelson a set of car keys.

KYLE

Oh yeah. Thanks for letting me use your car last night.

NELSON

What are friends for? As long as I was using the limo I figured there was no one I'd rather have borrow my car than the single best friend I've ever had.

Kyle takes a seat at his desk, giving Nelson an odd look.

KYLE

Uh-huh. Everything go okay last night?

NELSON

(nonchalantly)

Of course. Hell, easy. But what about you? How was the big date?

A satisfied grin on his face, Kyle leans back in his chair, hands behind his head.

KYLE

It was great. Like every adolescent fantasy I ever had of the perfect date.

Nelson stands, moving eagerly to Kyle's desk.

NELSON

You had sex?

KYLE

Okay, not every adolescent fantasy. But I'll tell you, it was closer than I ever thought I'd get. A beautiful woman, a starry sky, a delicious meal, and someone else's credit card.

One of the elevators in the lobby 'dings', a DELIVERY BOY stepping into the office. He dumps an armful of mail onto Kyle's desk - a copy of the L.A. Times resting on top. Nelson notices the photograph on the front page, speaking abruptly.

NELSON

Gee, sounds nice. I've got to do something...

He scurries into Hardcastle's office. Kyle watches him, confused, as he grabs the newspaper.

## INT. HARDCASTLE'S OFFICE

Curtains conspicuously drawn, Nelson brushes the stuffed boar, wincing as Kyle's voice booms through the closed door.

KYLE (O.S.)

What!?

The office door bursts open, Kyle storming into the room. Paper in hand, he looks to Nelson in amazement.

KYLE (CONT'D)

What the hell did you do last night? You tell me you're going out to get some eyes and the next morning you're all over the front page! I thought you wanted to cut down on our surprises.

NELSON

It's not that bad. You're the only one who knows it's me, everyone else thinks it's an eccentric old man having one last fling.

Kyle tosses the paper onto the desk in front of Hardcastle.

KYLE

But it's not. It's you. The last thing we want is to attract any more attention and you're out barhopping with a corpse!

Nelson steps to a deer head mounted on the wall, brushing it gently.

NELSON

What happened last night happened by accident. I didn't plan to have a flat tire in front of a nightclub, but I did. I didn't plan to be picked up by a beautiful woman, but I was. There are times in your life when you just don't question fate.

KYLE

I don't know, Nelson. Stuffing him is one thing, but using him to pick up girls is kind of gross.

NELSON

Wait a second - you used him to pick up girls as much as I did.

KYLE

How do you figure that?

Nelson moves to where Hardcastle sits, brushing the old man's hair.

NELSON

Whose credit card did you use last night? Whose name did you use when you called the restaurant?

KYLE

That's different.

NELSON

How is it different?

KYLE

(shouts)

I didn't have sex!

NELSON

(shouts)

Neither did I!

Kyle comes up short, looking at Nelson quizzically.

KYLE

You didn't?

NELSON

(points to photo)

She left. Took off. Right after that. I think she was more attracted to Hardcastle than to me, how's that for a kick in the old ego?

Nelson begins to laugh, Kyle's stern expression giving way to an understanding smile.

NELSON (CONT'D)

I'll tell you, Kyle - the way I see it, some men are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them. And then there's guys like us. I don't think anyone could blame us for getting a little carried away.

KYLE

Okay, so we both used him a little bit. The point is we can't put ourselves in this situation again.

(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)  
Everything's got to be business as usual. Agreed?

NELSON  
(nods earnestly)  
Absolutely. Business as usual.

CUT TO:

EXT. DARCY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

A man in a dark suit rings the doorbell. After a moment Darcy opens the door in her bathrobe, hair unbrushed and make-up half applied. The man smiles obediently.

CHAUFFEUR  
Miss Vanderwood?

DARCY  
Yes...

CHAUFFEUR  
Your limousine, madam. I'm here to drive you to work. Compliments of Mr. Hardcastle's office.

He gestures to the street, where one of Hardcastle's limousines is parked. Darcy stares, awestruck, as we...

CUT TO:

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Two parking Valets strain to position a heavy cement marker at the head of a parking space, the name 'NELSON FURBITCH' printed in block letters. Nelson watches, calling out angrily.

NELSON  
Wait a minute - the name's not right. It's Furbisch. F-U-R-B-I-S-C-H. Take it back and do it again.

VALET #1  
(grumbling)  
Yes, sir...

The Valets struggle to lift the marker, muttering under their breath as Nelson smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OFFICE - DAY

Kyle sits at Hardcastle's desk, working on a stack of papers. He comes across a thick document, the words 'HARRISON AIRCRAFT - SPACE LASER SYSTEM - PROPOSED BUDGET' on the title page. Kyle immediately slaps a rubber stamp down on the cover sheet, the word 'CANCEL' printed in bright red letters. Kyle forges Hardcastle's signature under the stamp, a triumphant grin on his face.

At the window behind him we see Frankie Mason, disguised as a window washer. He peers into the office, snapping photos with a camera hidden in a sponge.

CUT TO:

INT. HARRISON'S HOME - NIGHT

Harrison sits in an overstuffed chair, watching the evening news on TV. Onscreen we see Kyle standing on a stage, posing with another man as he presents a giant check from Hardcastle International.

ANCHORWOMAN (ON TV)  
... In our 'People File' - famed  
businessman J. Austin Hardcastle  
today donated \$100,000 to help  
renovate three downtown missions  
which serve as safe haven for many  
in the city's homeless community.

Harrison talks back to the TV, laughing.

HARRISON  
Giving money away. That'll kill  
your credibility on the stock  
market for sure, you old fart.

An old photo of Hardcastle is flashed onscreen behind the Anchorwoman.

ANCHORWOMAN (ON TV)  
As a footnote to this story -  
consumer and human interest groups  
have lauded Hardcastle  
International for recent charitable  
efforts, causing the expected  
initial interest price of stock to  
skyrocket before even being offered  
to the public. Wall Street insiders  
are drooling more than usual as the-

-



Harrison rises with a scream, kicking in the television screen.

CUT TO:

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OFFICE - DAY

Nelson sits at Hardcastle's desk, speaking on the phone as two workmen apply mirrored sheets of mylar to the windows.

NELSON  
(into phone)  
Okay, I'll trade you the department store chain for Wilcox Limited, plus three million in cash... What?... Okay, the department store chain, three million and the Vietnamese fast food outlets, and you throw in season tickets to the Raiders...

One of the workmen calls to Nelson.

WORKMAN  
All finished.

Nelson turns, cupping his hand over the receiver.

NELSON  
You're sure no one'll be able to see in?

WORKMAN  
Positive. Why - you got a dead body up here or something?

The workmen laugh, Nelson joining in weakly.

CUT TO:

INT. WALLACE WILCOX'S OFFICE - DAY

A SECRETARY enters the office, stepping to the desk of Wallace Wilcox - one of Kyle and Nelson's smug fraternity brothers. She hands Wallace an envelope.

SECRETARY  
This just arrived. Special delivery. It looks important.

Wallace takes the envelope, laughing when he reads the return address.

WALLACE

Important? It's from Nelson Furbisch, an old frat brother. Real loser. He's probably asking for a job or a loan or some such nonsense.

Opening the envelope, Wallace reads the letter. His smile fades, replaced by a look of shock.

SECRETARY

What's the matter?

WALLACE

This company has been sold to Hardcastle International. And Nelson Furbisch is in charge of the takeover...

Wallace falls forward, forehead hitting his desk with a thud as we...

CUT TO:

INT. HARDCASTLE'S DINING ROOM - DAY

Kyle dusts the room with a rag and a can of Lysol, Hardcastle sitting quietly nearby. As he wipes down the dining room table Kyle finds himself next to the old man. Frowning, he looks to Hardcastle - giving him a quick squirt of Lysol before continuing on.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Nelson happily watches while Wallace Wilcox washes Hardcastle's limousines.

NELSON

You know, Wallace - I wish I'd taken a car washing class in high school so I could get where you are today.

Nelson smiles as Wallace gives him the dirtiest of looks.

CUT TO:

INT. HARRISON'S OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Howard stands before Harrison's desk, manila folder in hand. Harrison speaks impatiently as the sweat stains spread on Mr. Howard's suit.

HARRISON

What is it, Howard? It had better be important.

MR. HOWARD

I think it's important, sir. That is if you think it's important then it's important, whereas if you don't think it's important...

HARRISON

(shouts)

What is it?

Mr. Howard opens the manila folder, removing a canceled check and handing it to Harrison.

MR. HOWARD

I found this check when I was going through the records. It's made out to Edwin Norman, who's Mr. Hardcastle's personal, private taxidermist and has stuffed all the hunting trophies that hang on his walls. That is that I've heard hang on his walls. You see...

HARRISON

(reads check)

One hundred thousand dollars? What did he want stuffed, a dinosaur?

MR. HOWARD

(laughs nervously)

Good one, sir. Actually, that's what I asked Mr. Furnish when I called him about it - though I wasn't as quick in the humor department as you, I regret to admit...

Harrison stands, glaring at Mr. Howard.

HARRISON

What did he say?

MR. HOWARD  
(flinching back)  
He said it was for 'Uncle Growly'.

HARRISON  
(frowns, puzzled)  
'Uncle Growly'? Who's 'Uncle  
Growly'?

CUT TO:

INT. HARRISON'S HOME - DEN - NIGHT

CLOSE on a small TV screen, where we see news footage of various toy stores crowded with parents and children buying 'Mean Uncle Growly' dolls - copies of the teddy bear to which Edwin added claws, fangs and glass eyes. A NEWSCASTER speaks into the camera.

NEWSCASTER (ON TV)  
... 'Mean Uncle Growly' went on sale in toy stores across the nation today. He is the latest teddy bear from the famous Mr. Freddy line, but with a difference. 'Uncle Growly' looks a little more vicious than your average teddy bear, and when you pull the string, he sounds different, too.

A child pulls the string on an 'Uncle Growly' doll for the camera.

UNCLE GROWLY DOLL (ON TV)  
Grrrrr! I'm 'Mean Uncle Growly'. I crave human flesh!

PULL BACK to see Harrison sitting in his den, sore foot soaking in a bowl of warm water. The Newscaster continues onscreen.

NEWSCASTER (ON TV)  
Whereas children love 'Uncle Growly', consumer groups are not so enthusiastic. But sales are brisk, adding to the reputation of parent company Hardcastle International before their highly publicized sale of stock next week. Save your pennies, kids. It'll be expensive...

Harrison staggers to his feet, kicking in the TV screen with his good foot.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Nelson steps to his new parking space, only to find that a dumpster has been wheeled next to it, overflowing onto his car. He turns to see the Valets standing nearby.

VALET #1  
Gee, we're sorry, Mr. Fergis - I  
guess we missed the can...

The Valets laugh, Nelson staring at them coldly.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOWL - NIGHT

Kyle and Darcy sit in a roped off area near the stage, a sign reading 'RESERVED FOR J. AUSTIN HARDCASTLE'. They enjoy a picnic dinner, sipping wine and listening to the symphony. We PULL BACK to see Frankie Mason sitting nearby, snapping photos with a camera concealed in a watermelon slice. He absently spits seeds on the people in front of him as we...

CUT TO:

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

After hours. Kyle sits at Hardcastle's desk, still wearing his suit from the Hollywood Bowl, swamped by paperwork. He looks exhausted, dark circles beginning to form under his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKING GARAGE - ENTRANCE - DAY

The garage entrance where the Valets once stood is now manned by a toll booth with a wooden arm. Nelson pulls up in his VW., taking a ticket as he drives through.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH-RISE - LOBBY - DAY

Nelson struts up to the executive elevator. The 'Executives Only' sign has been replaced by a sign reading 'RESERVED FOR MR. MERIDETH AND MR. FURBISCH'. Nelson steps inside, a satisfied grin on his face as the doors close.

CUT TO:

INT. BOARD ROOM - DAY

Kyle stands at the head of a long table, making a presentation to the Board of Directors. Using a pointer, he illustrates his points with a graph labeled 'NET PROFITS' - the line rising sharply.

CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A doctor stands in front of Kyle, pointing to a graph labeled 'BLOOD PRESSURE' - the line rising sharply.

CUT TO:

INT. HARDCASTLE'S OFFICE - DAY

The company photographer stands behind a tripod, snapping photos of Hardcastle at his desk, an 'Uncle Growly' doll propped on his lap. Nelson stands to one side, watching as the Photographer shakes his head.

PHOTOGRAPHER  
(to Hardcastle)  
Please, sir - can't you smile a  
little more?

Nelson leans next to Hardcastle, as if listening closely. He looks to the Photographer.

NELSON  
He says he wants to look dignified,  
yet still vibrant and alive. A lot  
of magazines are going to want  
these pictures. You can do that,  
can't you?

The Photographer shrugs his shoulders, stepping back behind the camera.

CUT TO:

## MONTAGE - MAGAZINE COVERS

We see a montage of newspapers and magazine covers featuring Hardcastle's picture: A Wall Street Journal profile; the cover of 'Fortune' magazine ('HARDCASTLE GOES OUT A WINNER'); 'Time' ('BUSINESSMAN J. AUSTIN HARDCASTLE - PROVING IT'S NEVER TOO LATE'); 'Playgirl' ('THE LIVELIEST BILLIONAIRE'); and the 'National Enquirer' ('J. AUSTIN HARDCASTLE WEDS DARYL HANNAH IN SECRET CEREMONY').

CUT TO:

## INT. HARRISON'S HOME - DEN - NIGHT

Both feet soaking, Harrison watches the news on a portable black and white TV. Hardcastle's picture is projected behind the ANCHORMAN.

## ANCHORMAN (ON TV)

The president today announced the names of three citizens selected to receive this years Medal of Freedom at a ceremony in Washington next week. Heading the list was billionaire, humanitarian and teddy bear tycoon J. Austin Hardcastle, as well as Archbishop Michael Gary and TV personality Urkel. In a statement read by one of his aides, Mr. Hardcastle expressed his regrets at being unable to attend.

Nelson appears onscreen, reading from a sheet of paper.

## NELSON (ON TV)

...And while Mr. Hardcastle is honored by this selection, he will unfortunately be unable to attend the award ceremony due to poor health. He's been working twelve hour days to create a new teddy bear to follow the success of 'Mean Uncle Growly', tentatively named 'Stupid Nephew Palmer'.

Able to take no more, Harrison lunges for the TV, falling feebly to the floor. He looks up to see Frankie Mason's doctored photo of Sharon Stone and the Pope flashed onscreen.

## ANCHORMAN (ON TV)

Here's Linda Donnely to fill us in on those rumors of romance between Sharon Stone and the Pope...

Harrison drops his head to the floor with a whimper.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT TEST SITE - DAY

An elaborate test site has been constructed in the middle of the desert. A bunker-like building faces a large open space, where a half dozen cars are towed in a line behind a tractor. As men in white coats scurry about, making last minute adjustments, a limousine pulls into the parking lot, Harrison and Darcy climbing out. Harrison walks gingerly, both feet swathed in heavy bandages and a cane in hand. A SCIENTIST hurries forward, greeting Harrison nervously.

SCIENTIST #1

Good afternoon, Mr. Harrison.

HARRISON

Is everything ready? I'd like to blow up as few innocent bystanders as possible this time.

The Scientist leads Harrison and Darcy to a set of bleachers overlooking the test site.

SCIENTIST #1

Uh, some of the guys wanted me to ask you, sir - there's been a rumor that the satellite project has been canceled by Mr. Hardcastle.

HARRISON

(snaps)

I am in charge of this project, not Mr. Hardcastle. Your orders come from me and me alone. Is that understood?

SCIENTIST #1

Yes, sir. Uh... the satellite has been completely reprogrammed and the laser system is operating flawlessly.

(gestures to test site)

As you can see, we've lined up a number of cars to be pulled by the tractor. We've instructed the computer to locate the car with the 'X' painted on the roof and fire the laser to that exact coordinate.



Harrison smiles, satisfied.

HARRISON  
When will it fire?

SCIENTIST #1  
In two minutes, sir. If you'll  
excuse me...

The Scientist hurries off, glancing at the sky uneasily as he puts on a hardhat. Harrison turns to Darcy impatiently.

HARRISON  
Well, Miss Vanderwood, how are things going between you and Mr. Merideth? You've been seeing him for nearly two weeks now - I'd have thought you'd have something to report by this time.

Darcy seems uncomfortable, shaking her head slowly.

DARCY  
There just isn't anything scandalous going on. As far as I can tell, Mr. Hardcastle seems to spend all his time giving money to charities or working on business reforms.

HARRISON  
I don't understand - donations, new employee benefits, increased salaries. The son-of-a-bitch doesn't know how to run a business anymore.

DARCY  
Actually, I wish he was like this when I first started...

HARRISON  
That's just it - he's never been like this. It's ludicrous. There's no place for compassion in business. It's financial suicide.

A group of technicians make last minute adjustments to the cars. Nervously looking to the sky, they don't notice as a scientist steps up behind them, snapping a photograph of the scene - the technicians diving to the ground as the camera's flash bar goes off.

DARCY

But it's had a positive effect on the public. Kyle says that profits are up 13%.

HARRISON

That's another problem - suddenly everyone wants to buy into the company when it goes public. It's going to be harder to come up with a clear majority of stock.

DARCY

(nods)

Kyle says that we should sell over twelve million 'Mean Uncle Growly's' by the end of the year. It's the biggest toy on the market since the 'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles'.

Harrison frowns, anger mounting as he speaks.

HARRISON

Mr. Merideth seems to have a lot of data at his fingertips for a secretary. And he still claims he doesn't know why my uncle has suddenly decided to change his policies? Are you sure he's telling you everything?

Darcy grins fondly.

DARCY

Oh, yes. We've had quite a few intimate conversations.

A voice booms out over the P.A. system.

P.A. ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Laser firing in thirty seconds...

The technicians bolt and run from the test site, leaping into foxholes as Harrison looks to Darcy suspiciously.

HARRISON

You're not becoming too attached to him, are you? It could jeopardize this whole operation. And it frightens me to think of either of those idiots reproducing...

Darcy wipes the smile from her face, sitting up seriously.

DARCY

No, sir. Absolutely not.

HARRISON

Good. When we get back to the office I want you to call a press conference. I think it's time I stirred things up a little.

P.A. ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

... five... four... three... two... one... FIRE!

The only humans left out in the open, Harrison and Darcy watch the cars as suddenly a beam of light splits the sky behind them - striking Harrison's limousine, which disappears in an enormous fireball. Harrison grimaces as he turns, watching the debris land in the parking lot.

P.A. ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Computers show a successful discharge at 3:05 p.m. and thirty seconds. Target destroyed.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SEASHORE - DAY

Sunset. Hardcastle and Frisky are positioned on a jetty, gazing out at the ocean while Nelson bustles about with a camera, taking photographs from various angles. Kyle stands to one side, nervously keeping watch.

KYLE

You still haven't explained why we're doing this. It's not because he's too pale.

NELSON

It's for 'Life' magazine. They love this kind of stuff. You don't think it looks too posed...

KYLE

Oh, never. They're only slightly less animated than the rocks.

NELSON

You're right. Maybe Frisky's tail should be wagging...

Kyle shakes his head, stepping between Nelson and Hardcastle. He bends down, putting his face in front of the camera lens.

KYLE

Nelson, we only have one day to go - don't you think we should just lay low? I mean, it's only a matter of time before someone notices that he hasn't changed expression, moved, or more importantly, breathed, for weeks.

Nelson reaches into a bag, pulling out a Broc-a-brella hat.

KYLE (CONT'D)

There'll be an investigation, they'll find out he's dead, there'll be an autopsy, and when they open him up all they'll find is a bunch of wadded up newspapers.

NELSON

(placing hat on  
Hardcastle's head)

Newspapers? I thought Edwin promised to do a quality job. Doesn't he have any respect for the dead? Besides, nobody's going to start an investigation. We're home free.

Kyle stares at Hardcastle, Broc-a-brella hat on his head, and groans as we...

CUT TO:

INT. PRESS ROOM - DAY

Harrison is onstage, standing at the podium as he addresses the media.

HARRISON

I haven't seen my uncle in weeks. He could be dead for all I know. I do know that if he were really in charge he'd never have made the decision to go public. He'd want this company to stay in the control of the family, of which I am his only surviving heir. I believe others have made this decision, and that there should be an investigation.

Flashbulbs pop as reporters shout questions.

HERALD REPORTER

Mr. Harrison - Los Angeles Herald.  
Do you have any proof to back these  
allegations?

JOURNAL REPORTER

Wall Street Journal. Will you try  
to prevent the sale of stock this  
week?

U.S.A. REPORTER

U.S.A. Today - could you condense  
your speech down to ten words or  
less?

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Hardcastle's limousine glides down the street, wheelchair  
strapped to the roof.

INT. LIMOUSINE

Nelson drives, Kyle riding shotgun while Hardcastle sits in  
back.

KYLE

I'm serious, Nelson. This has got  
to stop. Things are crazy enough  
without wheeling him around in  
public.

NELSON

Yeah. Actually, I've been thinking  
that this thing is starting to go  
too far.

KYLE

(laughs)

Starting? Don't tell me the guy who  
wanted to get a dead body it's own  
light beer commercial is beginning  
to feel guilty.

NELSON

No.

KYLE

Then why the sudden change of  
heart?

Frowning, Nelson gestures to Hardcastle in the back seat.

NELSON

Because I do all the work and he gets all the credit. I've never worked so hard in my life. He gets all the TV coverage and magazine covers and I get the ulcers. Now I know how Edgar Bergen must've felt.

EXT. HARDCASTLE INTERNATIONAL

The limo turns a corner, where a throng of news vans and TV crews crowd around the building entrance. They swarm toward the limo as it screeches to a halt.

INT. LIMOUSINE

Kyle and Nelson stare in shock as the news crews charge the car, flood lights from their cameras glaring through the windshield.

NELSON

(shielding eyes)

What's all this?

KYLE

I don't know, but something tells me we'd better get out of here. I don't think our boss has anything to say...

EXT. HARDCASTLE INTERNATIONAL

The limo quickly backs up the way it came, careening around the corner. The news crews turn, making a mad dash for their cars.

INT. LIMOUSINE

Nelson turns the car around, gunning the engine.

NELSON

That didn't look too suspicious...  
Now what?

KYLE

We just have to hide him one more day.

(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)

We'll get the final papers from the lawyers in the morning and all the legal stuff will be finished. That way we save the company and fulfill Hardcastle's wishes.

NELSON

Right. Then what?

Kyle looks at him blankly.

KYLE

Pardon me?

NELSON

Then what do we do?

They ride in silence for a moment.

KYLE

I don't know. What do you think we should do?

NELSON

(shrugs)

I don't know. I figured you'd know.

KYLE

(voice rising)

Me? Why should I know? This was your idea, remember? You've had two weeks to think about this. It's not like you've been doing anything else.

NELSON

(defensive)

Not been doing anything? I've been busting my butt the last two weeks!

KYLE

(shouts)

Doing what? Arranging the 'Who'll-Die-From-A-Horrible-Brain-Aneurysm' pool?

EXT. CITY STREET

A derelict wanders drunkenly into the street, clutching a bottle in a brown paper bag to his chest. He stumbles across the road, humming a jingle from a car commercial.

INT. LIMOUSINE

Kyle and Nelson continue to argue, neither paying attention to the road as they exchange insults.

NELSON  
At least I haven't spent all my  
time trying to get Harrison's  
secretary into bed!

KYLE  
What do you mean, 'trying'?

NELSON  
Oh, great! I suppose that means I  
lost the 'Who'll-Get-Into-Darcy-  
Vanderwood's-Pants-First' pool!

KYLE  
Oh yeah? Who won?

NELSON  
NOBODY!

Kyle turns, glancing out the windshield to see the derelict stumble into their path. He cries out:

KYLE  
Nelson - look out!

Nelson turns, seeing the derelict too late. He slams on the brakes.

EXT. CITY STREET

The limo slams into the derelict, knocking him into the gutter. Onlookers cry out, gathering around the man as Nelson hurries out of the car.

NELSON  
He jumped right out in front of me.  
There was nothing I could do...

Nelson pushes through the crowd, kneeling to help the derelict. He gently rolls him over onto his back to reveal...

CLOSE - TEX ALBERTSON

Slowly opening his eyes, he focuses on Nelson's face.

TEX  
You...



EXT. CITY STREET

Nelson jumps back in shock as Tex slowly rises to his feet, pointing at him accusingly.

TEX

This bastard ran me out of business! He's the one who put me here. It's all his fault!

NELSON

(to crowd)

The guy's obviously delirious...

TEX

He kicked me into the gutter! It's only fitting he should hit me with his car!

Nelson tries to back through the crowd, who are beginning to mutter threateningly.

NELSON

If you'll let me through... I've got some band-aids in the glove compartment...

TEX

It's true! He works for that bastard J. Austin Hardcastle. I'll bet that's him in the car... !

One of the bystanders peers into the limo. He calls out to the others as Kyle hurriedly rolls up his window.

BYSTANDER #1

Hey! It is J. Austin Hardcastle!

BYSTANDER #2

Somebody call the police!

INT. NEWS VAN

A camera crew from a local TV station sits at an intersection. The DRIVER spots the commotion around the limo.

DRIVER

Isn't that the limo we're looking for?

REPORTER

Only one way to find out.

EXT. CITY STREET

The crowd turning ugly, Nelson tries to make his way to the limo. Panicked, he pulls out his wallet, handing Tex some money.

NELSON

Look, here's twenty bucks. Let's call it even...

TEX

(pocketing money)

Somebody call the paramedics - I'm gonna sue this son-of-a-bitch for everything he's got!

Nelson looks up just as the news van pulls to the curb, camera crew hopping out the back.

NELSON

Shit! That's it...

Nelson makes a run for the limo, diving inside. The camera crew rush forward as Tex cries out desperately.

TEX

Stop them! I want justice!

The limo pulls away, bystanders jostling for position in front of the camera crew.

BYSTANDER #2

They're getting away! That's J. Austin Hardcastle's limousine and it just did a hit-and-run!

INT. LIMOUSINE

Nelson punches the accelerator, speeding crazily as Kyle watches the road behind them.

KYLE

Okay, now what do we do? We can't take him back to the office, and we can't drive around in this thing all night.

NELSON

Don't worry. I'll get us out of this. You just make sure we're not followed.

KYLE  
(puzzled)  
How?

CUT TO:

EXT. KYLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kyle closes the garage door, the limousine parked inside. He steps onto the porch, unlocking the front door as Nelson wrestles Hardcastle's wheelchair up the steps.

NELSON  
How come I always have to push the  
wheelchair?

KYLE  
Karma?

INT. KYLE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Stepping inside, Kyle turns on the light to find Darcy sitting on the couch, stroking a large calico cat. Kyle's jaw drops in surprise as she stands, obviously upset.

DARCY  
Hello, Kyle.

Kyle blocks the doorway, motioning frantically to Nelson behind his back.

KYLE  
(loudly)  
Darcy! Great to see you! I gave you  
a key to my house!

Nelson ducks, hurriedly bumping Hardcastle back down the steps. Kyle steps inside, closing the door behind him.

EXT. KYLE'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD

Nelson begins to wheel Hardcastle back down the walkway, freezing when he spots a news van patrolling the street. Performing a quick about-face he pushes the old man around the side of the house.

CUT TO:

INT. KYLE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Kyle embraces Darcy, giving her a kiss on the cheek. She gives him a peculiar look.

DARCY

Is something the matter? Did I come at a bad time?

KYLE

No, of course not. You just surprised me, that's all. I didn't see your car out front...

DARCY

I walked over. I had some thinking to do. We have to talk...

CUT TO:

EXT. KYLE'S HOUSE - BACK YARD

Nelson strains to reach a high window, balanced precariously on top of Hardcastle's wheelchair. He claws at the windowsill, lifting himself up to see inside as it begins to rain.

INT. KYLE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Kyle glances to the window, where Nelson clings desperately, mouthing obscenities in the pouring rain. He takes Darcy by the hand, steering her around so her back is to the window.

KYLE

Couldn't we talk later? It's been kind of a long day, and I'm really tired...

DARCY

No, Kyle. This is really important...

Suddenly Nelson slips from the windowsill, landing with a crash. Darcy turns to the window, alarmed.

DARCY (CONT'D)

What was that?

KYLE  
 Uh, probably just the neighbor's  
 dog in the trash again...

CUT TO:

EXT. KYLE'S HOUSE - BACK YARD

A large wet mud stain on the seat of his pants, Nelson wheels  
 Hardcastle underneath another window. Forcing it open, he  
 tries to shove the body through, having some difficulty.

CUT TO:

INT. KYLE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Kyle and Darcy sit on the couch. Darcy apparently having some  
 trouble saying what she came here to say.

DARCY  
 I don't know how to say this...

Kyle stares at the window, preoccupied.

KYLE  
 It's best just to say it quickly.

DARCY  
 (sighs)  
 I've lied to you, Kyle. For as long  
 as we've been seeing each other.

Kyle reaches over, patting her head impatiently.

KYLE  
 So? Everybody lies occasionally.  
 What do you say we forgive each  
 other and drop the whole thing.

DARCY  
 You don't even know what I've  
 done...

There is a SPLASH from another room, Kyle speaking loudly to  
 cover the noise.

KYLE  
 And I don't want to know. Let's not  
 spoil the relationship by revealing  
 ugly little secrets to each other.

DARCY  
(flatly)  
Harrison ordered me to go out with  
you and find out what I could about  
Mr. Hardcastle.

Kyle stands, eyes flashing indignantly.

KYLE  
You whore!

CUT TO:

INT. KYLE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM

Nelson stands in the bathroom trying to pull Hardcastle  
through the window from the inside. He removes his foot from  
the toilet, shaking the water off.

CUT TO:

INT. KYLE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Darcy stands, looking to Kyle defensively.

DARCY  
I didn't tell him anything! Jesus,  
do you think I'd be telling you  
this if I had? I've been driving  
myself crazy not knowing what to do  
- don't tell Harrison anything and  
lose my job, or give him  
information and lose you.

Kyle looks to her uncertainly.

KYLE  
And you decided to tell me, even if  
it cost you your job?

DARCY  
Yes.

Kyle steps forward, giving her a hug.

KYLE  
I'm sorry. I should've trusted you.

Looking over Darcy's shoulder Kyle sees Nelson sneak down the  
hallway, carrying Hardcastle over his shoulder. His shoe  
makes a damp squishing sound as he walks.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Let's keep a pact to always trust  
each other from now on.

DARCY

And never keep any secrets.

Kyle steps back, pretending to stifle a yawn.

KYLE

Right. I'm glad that's settled. I  
should really get to bed...

DARCY

(grins)

You want some company?

Nelson flashes across the hallway with Hardcastle, rushing  
out of Kyle's bedroom. Putting an arm around her shoulders,  
Kyle steers Darcy toward the front door.

KYLE

I don't think that's such a good  
idea. I think I'm coming down with  
a cold, and I'd hate to give it to  
you...

DARCY

Are you sure? You're not mad at me  
are you?

KYLE

No, no. Of course not.

DARCY

Let me make you some hot tea, then.

There is a crash from the kitchen.

DARCY (CONT'D)

What was that?

KYLE

Must be the cat...

Before he can stop her Darcy makes a beeline for the kitchen.

INT. KYLE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Darcy steps in, followed by a panicked Kyle, to find Nelson  
and Hardcastle sitting at the kitchen table playing cards.

NELSON  
... Okay, dealer takes four...  
(looking up)  
Oh, hi Darcy.

DARCY  
(surprised)  
Excuse me, I didn't realize...  
(to Kyle)  
Kyle, I'm sorry, I...

Kyle takes Darcy aside, speaking quietly.

KYLE  
It's okay. But now you know why you  
can't stay. Mr. Hardcastle needed  
somewhere to hide from the press.  
He's got some big decisions to  
make...

DARCY  
(nods)  
Of course, I understand.  
(to Hardcastle)  
Congratulations on your nomination,  
sir. My name is Darcy Vanderwood -  
I work for your nephew...

Hardcastle doesn't answer. Nelson speaks softly.

NELSON  
I think he's asleep. Must've nodded  
off mid-hand.

Kyle grabs Darcy's arm, trying to steer her out of the room.  
They don't notice as the calico cat saunters in.

KYLE  
(whispers)  
I'll see you in the morning. I  
figure if we leave work tomorrow by  
three we can take the company jet  
to New York in time to see a show,  
maybe have a late dinner...

As Kyle speaks the cat ambles to where Hardcastle sits.  
Stopping at his feet, the cat calmly begins to sharpen it's  
claws on Hardcastle's leg. Hearing a loud scraping sound,  
Darcy looks down. Gasping, she steps forward, kicking the cat  
away.

DARCY  
Shoo! Get away from there!



The cat runs off, tail in the air. Concerned, Darcy kneels beside Hardcastle.

DARCY (CONT'D)  
Are you all right, sir?

She jars Hardcastle, his dark glasses falling away. His eyes stare blankly ahead. Darcy stands, reflexively wiping her hands on her pants.

DARCY (CONT'D)  
Oh my God - he's dead!  
(stares at body closely)  
And he's been stuffed!

NELSON  
(shocked)  
Stuffed? I can't believe it - he  
was fine this morning!

Darcy turns to Kyle accusingly.

DARCY  
You stuffed your boss? How long has  
this been going on?

Kyle sits at the table, cradling his head in his hands.

KYLE  
A few weeks, a year... I don't know  
any more...

NELSON  
But we have a good excuse.

DARCY  
A good excuse? How can you possibly  
justify this?

NELSON  
(thinks)  
Youthful exuberance?

As Kyle, Nelson and Darcy talk we notice something move in the window behind them. A flower pot on the sill outside rises up to reveal Frankie Mason, who wears the pot strapped to his head. He does a double-take when he sees Hardcastle sitting at the table.

KYLE  
We just found him like that one  
night.  
(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)

Before he died we promised him we'd never let Harrison get control of the company. It was his last wish.

DARCY

Was it his last wish to be stuffed like an animal?

Kyle and Nelson exchange looks, deciding not to answer that question.

KYLE

It was only supposed to be until the company could go public.

DARCY

You couldn't let the board of directors handle it? They might not have given Harrison control, you know.

KYLE

Right. Who're they going to give it to - Mr. Freddy?

In the window, Frankie raises a camera to his eyes - then lowers it, frowning. He opens it to reveal that there's no film inside. Frankie desperately searches his pockets for film as the argument continues.

DARCY

I don't care what your excuses are - this is morally, legally and aesthetically wrong!

KYLE

Darcy, try to understand...

DARCY

I understand, Kyle. You've stuffed your boss, run the company illegally and lied to me all along. I understand perfectly.

With that, Darcy rushes out of the kitchen. Kyle jumps up, calling after her weakly.

KYLE

Darcy! Wait!

The front door slams shut, Kyle looking to Nelson helplessly. In the window we see Frankie frantically rummaging through his camera bag.

NELSON

Why didn't you try to stop her?

KYLE

And tell her what? How could I make her accept this?

NELSON

Tell her you love her... tell her we had a good reason... tell her we'll give her a hundred thousand dollars to keep it quiet...

Kyle sits, slouching over the table tiredly.

KYLE

It's no use. It's over. The woman I love is going to call the police and send us to jail for the rest of our lives.

NELSON

Well... you're probably better off without a girl like that, anyway.

Kyle and Nelson both slump forward, heads in hands as in the window Frankie does the same.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HARRISON'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Darcy steps into the office, tossing her purse onto her desk. She looks haggard, as though she hasn't slept all night. Hearing a muffled voice coming from Harrison's office, Darcy moves to the door cautiously.

INT. HARRISON'S OFFICE

Slowly opening the door, Darcy is surprised to see Harrison sitting at his desk, yelling at someone over the phone. He looks like he's been up all night, too.

HARRISON

(into phone)

Don't panic... Listen, I wasn't even sure who was up there until this morning. Washington, Lincoln, and two other guys. Nobody'll miss him...

DARCY  
Mr. Harrison? Can I talk to you,  
sir?

Harrison jumps when he sees Darcy standing in the doorway.

HARRISON  
Jesus! Never sneak up on me like  
that.

DARCY  
I'm sorry. I didn't expect you in  
this early, and when I heard  
voices...

Harrison nods distractedly, putting his hand over the  
mouthpiece of the phone.

HARRISON  
You wouldn't happen to know any  
good sculptors, would you? We had a  
small glitch with the space laser  
last night.

Darcy sits, preparing herself for the worst.

DARCY  
What happened?

HARRISON  
Do you remember Mount Rushmore?

DARCY  
(horrificed)  
You blew up a national monument?

HARRISON  
Not all of it. Just Teddy  
Roosevelt. He never belonged up  
there anyway.

Darcy leans back in shock.

DARCY  
I guess that puts a crimp in your  
takeover plans.

HARRISON  
Don't worry. It's in situations  
like this that I really shine. I'll  
give the entire thing a face lift,  
maybe even have it painted. I could  
end up a national hero.  
(into phone)  
(MORE)

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Are you still there? Listen, I don't care where the problem is. You guys built the thing, now fix it. And if you insist on blowing up national landmarks, aim it at my uncle!

Harrison slams down the phone as Frankie Mason bursts into the room, a crazed look in his eyes.

FRANKIE

I did it! We've got him!

HARRISON

Can't you knock before coming in?  
(makes a face)  
Or at least bathe?

FRANKIE

I've got evidence that Hardcastle is unfit to run the company.

HARRISON

In what way?

FRANKIE

(smiles)  
He's dead.

Harrison's jaw drops in amazement.

HARRISON

He's dead? Uncle Austin's dead?  
(grins)  
Outstanding! Where are the pictures?

Frankie frowns, embarrassed.

FRANKIE

Uh... I didn't get any.

HARRISON

(angry)  
You didn't get any? You finally find out what I hire you to find out and you don't take any pictures?

FRANKIE

Well, I kind of ran out of film.  
(points to Darcy)  
But she was there, too. She was right in the room with them.

(MORE)

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

The old guy looked pretty good, too. A little stiff, but pretty good.

Harrison turns to Darcy.

HARRISON

Is this true, Miss Vanderwood?

DARCY

(hedging)

Uh, yeah. I'd say he looked pretty good...

Sitting back, Harrison shakes his head in wonder.

HARRISON

God. How long has this been going on? They probably had to find some way to preserve him... so they take him to their friendly neighborhood taxidermist... that would explain the \$100,000 check... nobody can get in to see him... only seen in still photographs... they run the company the way they want to...

(laughs)

I should've given those clowns more credit. I wish I'd have thought of it. How long have you known about this, Miss Vanderwood? Miss Vanderwood... ?

Harrison looks up to find Darcy gone, the office door swinging shut. He stands, gesturing for Frankie to follow as he heads out the door.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Come on. She'll take us right to them.

FRANKIE

(looks at watch)

Do you need me? My editor called - I'm supposed to get pictures of some UFO attack in North Dakota...

CUT TO:

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Kyle and Nelson stand beside the limousine, glancing around nervously as they untie the wheelchair from the roof rack.

KYLE

I laid awake all night listening for sirens. All I could hear was you strangling the cat.

NELSON

(defensively)

I wasn't strangling the cat. I was kicking it. What are we doing here, anyway? Don't you think if they want to find us this'll be the first place they look?

Lowering the wheelchair to the ground, they open the back door, helping Hardcastle into the chair.

KYLE

We've got to pick up the papers from the lawyers so we can end this nonsense. I don't want to live the rest of my life this way. Two weeks was bad enough.

NELSON

So who says we have to live this way? We could be on a jet halfway to Rio by now. Let's just pin the papers to his shirt and get out of here...

As they strap Hardcastle into the wheelchair Kyle glances up to see Darcy rushing toward them.

KYLE

Oh, Christ. Here we go...

NELSON

(looks up)

Okay, listen - you hit her high, I'll hit her low, and by the time she wakes up we'll be in Rio, drunk, dancing and having our pockets picked by beautiful women.

Darcy steps up, Nelson ready to pounce when Kyle grabs his arm.

DARCY

Kyle! I'm glad I found you. Harrison knows all about what's going on.

NELSON

And we want to thank you for that.  
Sincerely.

DARCY

I didn't tell him, he found out himself. He had this photographer following you and... and what are you doing here, anyway?

KYLE

We have to get some papers from the legal department, and then deliver them to the S.E.C. so that we can finalize the company going public. That really is why we did this.

(gestures to Hardcastle)

It was his last wish that Harrison not get control of the company.

Darcy nods knowingly.

DARCY

After this morning I can believe that...

The sound of footsteps echo across the garage, everyone turning to see Harrison and Frankie approaching. Harrison calls out, a smug grin on his face.

HARRISON

You know, I can understand wanting to preserve his memory, but don't you think this is a little extreme?

Nelson quickly grabs the wheelchair, trying unsuccessfully to lift it back onto the roof.

NELSON

Time to go.

KYLE

(to Harrison)

Fine. We give up. Call the police and let's get this over with.

HARRISON

Not so fast. I have a proposition. If you help me out I'll see to it you're not charged with murder.

KYLE

Murder? We didn't murder anyone.



Straining, Nelson begins pushing the wheelchair up the back of the car and onto the trunk.

NELSON

Time to go!

HARRISON

I'm prepared to make this deal on two conditions. One, that you tell the press my uncle approved the laser test this morning, right before his tragic heart attack...

KYLE

What laser test?

DARCY

The disastrously misfired one.

KYLE

(nods)

Of course. What else?

HARRISON

That you drop the plans to go public and let control of the company fall to me.

Having wrestled the wheelchair into place on the roof of the limo, Nelson pauses, calling down to Harrison.

NELSON

That's it? We do that and you'll let us go free?

HARRISON

(laughs)

No, I said I wouldn't charge you with murder. There are at least fifty other laws that you've broken. As well as every rule of taxidermy.

Nelson starts strapping the wheelchair onto the roof rack.

NELSON

Yup, time to go...

DARCY

That's not fair!

HARRISON

Fair? Why should I be fair? I own their asses.

Nelson jumps down from the top of the car, Kyle meeting his glance.

KYLE & NELSON

Time to go!

They both dive into the limo, Hardcastle wobbling slightly as Kyle starts the engine. He calls to Darcy.

KYLE

Darcy - get the papers. There should be instructions telling you what to do. They have to be delivered by ten o'clock!

Harrison and Frankie rush forward, pounding on the hood as the limo pulls away.

HARRISON

Stop, you bastards! I know what you did and I'm going to tell!

(to Frankie)

Do you have a car?

FRANKIE

What?

HARRISON

A car! Do you have a car?

FRANKIE

Oh, yeah. C'mon.

Frankie and Harrison race across the garage. Hopping into Frankie's beat-up Pinto, they peel out after the limousine. Darcy starts toward the elevators, breaking into a dead run.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

The limo speeds out of the garage and up onto the street - Hardcastle sitting quietly in his wheelchair on the roof. Cars swerve to avoid the limousine as Frankie's Pinto rockets out of the garage. Harrison sits in the passenger seat, gesturing wildly as they race after the limousine.

CUT TO:

INT. LEGAL OFFICES - DAY

Darcy rushes into the legal department. She hurries to the first person she sees - Mr. Howard.

DARCY

I need the papers that Mr. Merideth was going to pick up. He asked me to deliver them.

Mr. Howard shakes his head adamantly.

MR. HOWARD

Oh, no. I'm sorry Miss Vanderwood, but Mr. Harrison called not fifteen minutes ago and told me to guard these papers with my life and not to let anyone have them no matter what happened and I assured him...

Darcy suddenly reaches out, grabbing Mr. Howard by the lapels.

DARCY

(growling)

Now.

MR. HOWARD

(gulps)

Okay.

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTURY CITY - DAY

The limo moves through Century City, doing its best to weave through traffic. The smaller, more agile Pinto is gaining ground.

INT. LIMOUSINE

Kyle concentrates on maneuvering through traffic while Nelson sticks his head out the window, glancing behind them. He turns to Kyle.

NELSON

They're right behind us. Hurry up!

KYLE

What do you want me to do? This thing handles like an aircraft carrier.

NELSON

Then get on the freeway. Just get moving!

EXT. FREEWAY ONRAMP

A C.H.P. car sits by the onramp, the officers inside watching traffic when suddenly the limo streaks by, Hardcastle's hair blowing in the wind. The Pinto is right on their tail. Looking to one another in disbelief the officers hit their siren, taking off in pursuit of the cars.

CUT TO:

EXT. FEDERAL BUILDING - DAY

Pedestrians scramble out of the crosswalk as a Toyota speeds through a red light, screeching to a halt in front of the Federal Building - half on and half off the sidewalk. Darcy climbs out of the car, heading for the entrance as a MAN calls to her.

MAN

Hey - you can't park there!

DARCY

(waves papers)

Diplomatic immunity! Delivering an arms agreement with Switzerland...

She hurries into the building as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

The limousine weaves wildly through traffic - morning commuters staring at the old man in a wheelchair riding on the roof. The Pinto follows, with the C.H.P. close behind.

INT. LIMOUSINE

Kyle drives nervously, glancing into the side-view mirrors.

KYLE

Do you hear a siren?

NELSON

Don't worry about it. Keep going.  
They can't want us...

CUT TO:

INT. PINTO

Frankie looks into the rear view mirror.

FRANKIE

Shit! The cops. What do we do now?

HARRISON

Keep going. Who do you think  
they're going to arrest - you for  
speeding, or them for driving with  
a dead guy on the roof?

CUT TO:

INT. C.H.P. CAR

One of the officers concentrates on following the other cars  
as his partner calls in.

C.H.P. OFFICER

(into radio)

... You heard me - a black stretch  
limousine with an old man in a  
wheelchair on the roof. And I think  
it's that J. Allen Hardcastle guy,  
too. Isn't there a warrant out on  
him for a hit-and-run... ?

CUT TO:

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - S.E.C. OFFICE - DAY

An elderly man sits at his desk, slowly going through the  
legal papers while Darcy watches impatiently. She glances to  
a clock on the wall, which reads 9:55.

DARCY

Uh, I don't mean to rush you, but  
these papers have to be okayed by  
ten o'clock or they'll be invalid.

The elderly man pauses, looking up at Darcy. He just stares at her a moment before returning to the papers, painstakingly examining every line. Darcy sighs, fidgeting nervously.

CUT TO:

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

The chase continues, with a half dozen more C.H.P. cars joining in, lights flashing and sirens blaring.

INT. LIMOUSINE

Kyle rambles miserably, not paying attention to the road.

KYLE

I mean, really, what's the worst that would've happened? Harrison takes over, he fires us, and we find new jobs. Is that so terrible?

NELSON

Isn't it a little late in the game to be having this convers--  
(horrificed, points out windshield)  
Kyle!

Kyle looks up as...

EXT. FREEWAY

... a school bus drifts into their lane, cutting in front of the limo. Swerving, Kyle stomps on the brakes - the wheelchair breaking loose from the roof rack, rolling down the windshield, across the hood and onto the freeway.

INT. LIMOUSINE

Kyle and Nelson watch as Hardcastle careens away down the freeway. They turn to each other, eyes wide.

KYLE & NELSON

Shit!

Kyle floors the accelerator, speeding after the wheelchair.

CUT TO:

INT. PINTO

Harrison sees the wheelchair rolling down the freeway and begins to laugh.

HARRISON

Oh, this is too good. I can't wait to see them try to get out of this one.

CUT TO:

INT. C.H.P. CAR

The officer shouts into the radio.

C.H.P. OFFICER

You heard me - an elderly man in a wheelchair. Speed clocked at 65 miles per hour. I'm not kidding around...

CUT TO:

INT. STATION WAGON

A family heads for the beach, the youngest daughter playing with a 'Mean Uncle Growly' doll. She pulls its string, making it talk.

UNCLE GROWLY DOLL

Grrrrr. I am a rabid animal. I want to eat your face off.

The FATHER snaps, annoyed.

FATHER

Shut that thing up, willya? It's hard enough to concentrate with all the kooks on the road...

His voice trails off as he watches Hardcastle speed past the car in his wheelchair.

EXT. FREEWAY

The wheelchair continues down the freeway, narrowly missing cars, the concrete divider, assorted debris.

INT. LIMOUSINE

Kyle looks to Nelson, concerned.

KYLE

We've got to find some way to stop him!

Nelson reaches into the glove box, pulling out the remote control to Hardcastle's wheelchair. He points it out the window at the wheelchair. Frowning, he shakes the remote angrily.

NELSON

Aw, shit! I forgot - we broke the 'stop' button when we were drag racing in the hallway the other night.

KYLE

What do we do now? He's gonna hit something.

Nelson thinks for a moment, giving Kyle a cocky grin.

NELSON

Piece of cake.

Leaning out the window, Nelson aims the remote toward the speeding wheelchair.

EXT. FREEWAY

The wheelchair races straight for the breakdown lane, where a motorist nervously changes a flat tire. At the last minute the chair swerves, avoiding a collision. Using the remote control, Nelson skillfully steers Hardcastle through traffic, Kyle keeping the limousine close behind.

CUT TO:

INT. PINTO

Frankie and Harrison watch as Nelson guides the wheelchair.

FRANKIE

Hey! How're they doing that?

HARRISON

(rummaging through glove box)

Do you have a gun in here?



FRANKIE

What're you going to do? Shoot a dead man?

HARRISON

No, a live secretary. Don't tell me you don't have a gun. And you call yourself an L.A. driver...

CUT TO:

INT. LIMOUSINE

Guiding Hardcastle with the remote control, Nelson suddenly begins to laugh.

KYLE

What the hell's so funny?

NELSON

Did you ever have one of those moments when you realize you've become your father?

Kyle gives Nelson an odd look as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT TEST SITE - DAY

The laser test site is a mess. Everything is burned to a crisp. The bleachers, the tractor, even the bunker-like control center has obviously taken a few direct hits from the laser. In fact, everything in the area has been destroyed - except the car with the 'X' painted on the roof, which has been left untouched.

INT. CONTROL CENTER

Scientists sit before computer screens in what's left of the bunker, staring out at the car hatefully.

SCIENTIST #1

I don't know about you guys, but I'm about to go out and throw a lit match into it's gas tank.

SCIENTIST #2

We've punched in every conceivable coordinate. I don't know what else to do...

SCIENTIST #1  
 (thinks)  
 Punch in the words stenciled on the  
 trunk.

The Scientist nods, typing in the words 'PROPERTY OF  
 HARDCASTLE INTERNATIONAL'.

CUT TO:

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

As Hardcastle careens down the freeway we notice the words  
 'PROPERTY OF HARDCASTLE INTERNATIONAL' stenciled to the back  
 of the wheelchair.

CUT TO:

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - S.E.C. OFFICE - DAY

The elderly man continues to review the legal papers. Darcy  
 anxiously looks between him and the clock, which now reads  
 10:01. She sighs, defeated, as the elderly man closes the  
 file. Swiveling slowly in his chair he reaches onto the shelf  
 behind him, where he inserts the papers into a time clock.

S.E.C. MAN  
 Approved.

The time clock stamps the papers, which the elderly man hands  
 to Darcy. She looks at the stamp, which reads 9:59. The man  
 gives her a playful smile.

S.E.C. MAN (CONT'D)  
 Clock on the wall's a mite fast.

CUT TO:

INT. DESERT TEST SITE - CONTROL CENTER - DAY

The scientists stare out at the test area, tinted goggles  
 over their eyes.

SCIENTIST #1  
 ...three... two... one... FIRE!

Scientist #2 pushes a button on the computer.

CUT TO:

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

Nelson continues to guide the wheelchair, turning to Kyle.

NELSON

We better figure out what we're going to do. It's only two hundred miles to the border, but I don't think the battery in the wheelchair will last that long...

There is a sudden, blinding flash of light, followed by a huge explosion. Kyle and Nelson shield their eyes, the limousine swerving violently.

CUT TO:

INT. DESERT TEST SITE - CONTROL CENTER - DAY

Lowering their goggles, the scientists stare out at the target car, which remains untouched.

SCIENTIST #2

(confused)

I guess it didn't fire...

CUT TO:

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

The limousine comes to a screeching halt at the rim of a huge, smoldering crater - followed by the Pinto and the police cars. Harrison jumps out of the car, shaking his fist at the sky.

HARRISON

Not again, you idiots! Not now!

Kyle and Nelson climb out of the limo, staring open-mouthed at the hole in the middle of the freeway.

NELSON

Jesus! Did you see that?

Two C.H.P. Officers step up behind them, slipping handcuffs onto their wrists.

C.H.P. OFFICER

Yes, we did.

Harrison races forward, calling to the C.H.P. Officers.

HARRISON  
Officers! Thank God you've got  
them. These men killed my uncle!

Kyle and Nelson exchange frightened glances as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PRISON - VISITING ROOM - DAY

Inmates and visitors sit on opposite sides of a wire mesh screen. Kyle sits in one cubicle, a melancholy look on his face as he talks with Darcy.

DARCY  
So how have you been?

KYLE  
I think prison life agrees with me.  
Notice my rosy cheeks and hearty  
laugh? How have you been?

DARCY  
All right, I guess. Ever since  
Palmer was demoted for blowing up a  
national monument things have been  
a little slow. You know, right up  
to the end he was trying to  
convince everyone that you guys had  
stuffed his uncle. But without any  
pictures or the body no one would  
believe him.

Kyle lets out a bitter laugh.

KYLE  
Thank God. Five to ten for  
manslaughter is bad enough. They'd  
probably have to invent a  
punishment for what we did.

Kyle and Darcy look up as Nelson is led into the room by a  
GUARD. He steps to the cubicle, giving Darcy a smile.

NELSON  
Sorry I'm late - I've been shining  
shoes in the laundry room.

Darcy nods, speaking hesitantly.

DARCY

I'm glad you're here, Nelson. I have some news that concerns both of you. They read Hardcastle's will yesterday.

KYLE

Don't tell me, let me guess - Harrison got everything, right?

DARCY

Not exactly. You did. His money, control of the business, everything. You and Nelson were to split it fifty-fifty.

NELSON

Neat!

KYLE

(wary)

What do you mean 'were'?

DARCY

Well, seeing as you were both convicted of causing his death, the will is being contested by the board of directors and Mr. Harrison. Palmer's been desperate for money ever since his demotion. He's been put in charge of some little business we acquired a few months ago.

Beginning to hyperventilate, Kyle turns to Nelson, speaking quietly.

KYLE

You mean we did this for nothing? We went through all this and we didn't have to? If we hadn't done this we not only wouldn't be in jail, we would be two of the richest, most powerful men in the country?

Nelson shrugs his shoulders helplessly.

NELSON

Hey, it was a bad call. What can I say?

Kyle lunges at Nelson with a scream, grabbing him by the throat. Two Guards rush forward to separate them, Nelson speaking in a constricted voice.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I'll make it  
up to you. You can have all my soap-  
on-a-rope...

The Guards pull Kyle off Nelson, holding them both by the scruff of the neck.

GUARD  
All right, convicts. The warden  
wants to see you. I think his car  
needs washing again.

Kyle and Nelson groan miserably as the Guards laugh. Kyle waves sadly to Darcy as he and Nelson are led away.

CUT TO:

INT. WARDEN'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Kyle and Nelson are led into the office by the Guards. The WARDEN'S SECRETARY sits at her desk, watching a portable TV. Onscreen we see Palmer Harrison in a cowboy outfit, pitching used cars while a pig pulls him in a cart.

GUARD  
Prisoners 354327 and 354329 to see  
the warden.

NELSON  
(correcting)  
354328.

The Secretary nods, never looking up from the TV screen.

WARDEN'S SECRETARY  
Go on in.

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE

The Guards bring Kyle and Nelson into the warden's office. The first Guard calls to the WARDEN, who sits behind his desk, high-backed chair turned toward a picture window.

GUARD  
Prisoners 354327 and 35432...  
(looks to Nelson, who  
opens his mouth)  
... 8 to see you, sir.

Grinning at Nelson, the Guards step out of the room, closing the door behind them. Kyle and Nelson stare at the back of the Warden's chair expectantly. Kyle speaks uncertainly.

KYLE  
Excuse us... sir?

No answer. Shrugging, Nelson steps to the desk, putting his hand on the Warden's shoulder.

NELSON  
Sir? I don't mean to be rude, but  
we just washed your car  
yesterday...

The chair slowly turns to reveal the Warden - mid-sixties, grey hair, and dead as a doornail. Nelson grabs him by the wrist, checking his pulse. He looks up at Kyle, a sneaky smile on his face. Kyle shakes his head, taking a step back toward the door.

KYLE  
Oh, no. No way, Nelson. Not  
again...

NELSON  
Piece of cake.

Nelson just grins as we...

FADE TO BLACK

**THE END**