

We Could Be Heroes

A screenplay by  
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WGA # 1303976

FADE IN:

EXT. PAINTBALL RANGE, FIELD, PASADENA - DAY

MARTY MCMANUS, 30, is running, crashing through thick brush.

Then, a noise, like a fly swatter.

Marty stops to inspect a paintball splatter on his sleeve.

Looking up, he sees a red flag hanging from a branch a few feet from his grasp.

MARTY

I'm hit! I'm hit! I'm out!

Marty takes another hit, this one in the shoulder.

As Marty whirls around, several more paintballs whiz by, some of them connecting.

He drops to the ground, writhing.

MARTY (CONT'D)

What the hell! C'mon! I said I was hit!

TOM LARGENT, 28, solid build, square jaw, appears from behind a tree ten yards away.

Both men are in full camouflage, helmet, goggles, gloves.

TOM

Sorry, Marty. Guess I didn't hear you call out.

MARTY

Jesus, Tom. You wearing your iPod again?

Tom points to the red flag hanging from the tree.

TOM

You nearly made it. But not quite.

MARTY

What the hell's wrong with you?

TOM

Where's the worst place to take a hit?

Marty gathers himself up, rubbing his arm.

MARTY

What?

TOM

You know, what part of your body?

MARTY

What are you talking about?

TOM

I think the back of the thigh is the worst. That really smarts.

MARTY

Sure, whatever. I'm heading back to base.

As Marty turns, Tom takes aim and fires a single round that strikes Marty on the back of the thigh.

MARTY (CONT'D)

AHHH!

Marty staggers forward momentarily, then swings around to face Tom.

MARTY (CONT'D)

What the hell is wrong with you?

TOM

You didn't answer my question.

(beat)

You were my prisoner.

MARTY

You're not ... right in the head, are you?

Tom begins walking forward, the paintball gun still aimed from his waist at Marty.

TOM

My marker is tuned to exactly three hundred feet per second, Marty.

That's about 200 miles an hour.

Marty freezes as Tom closes in on him.

TOM (CONT'D)

I bet that stings, huh?

Marty can only blink with Tom in his face.

TOM (CONT'D)

You're a novice, McManus. You're a friggin' rookie, and you know it. No matter how long you play, you'll always be a rookie...

Tom hears a movement behind him and dashes into the brush for cover.

EXT. PAINTBALL RANGE, PARKING LOT, PASADENA - DAY

Marty and Tom are at a standoff in the parking lot.

Marty's teammates, MICHAEL MOONEY, 30, and DARRYL MORRIS, 30, stand behind Marty, while Tom's teammates, GUNNAR LARSEN, 35, and TONY LASARATO, 28, stand behind Tom.

TOM

I said I was sorry, okay? I had a couple too many beers.

(a beat, a smile)

Anyway, you're not that much of a rookie.

MARTY

Now I feel a whole lot better, knowing there's a drunk on the field.

TOM

You know, for a little guy, you got a pretty big mouth.

MICHAEL

All right, all right, guys. Break it up. What's gotten into you two?

MARTY

Tom doesn't hear very well.

(beat)

He doesn't think all that well, either.

TOM

Watch it, McManus.

Gunnar steps in between them, his sheer size a total blockade.

GUNNAR

Hey, we're all friends here, right? What's the matter with you?

TONY

Yeah, take it easy, Marty.

MARTY

He needs to keep it together,  
that's all.

GUNNAR

All right, all right. We all keep  
it together, right? Why don't we  
all go home and keep it together  
there, eh?

Marty and Michael get into Marty's car. Marty slams the  
door, revs the engine and peels out.

TOM

Sounds like his timing chain is  
loose.

Darryl lights a cigarette and accidentally drops the lit  
match into his shirt.

Tony cackles as Darryl flails to extinguish the match.

Tony is the smallest of the group, fierce, insinuating and  
aggressive.

TONY

Maybe I should smoke that for you.

DARRYL

(ignoring Tony)  
Did something happen out there  
today, Tom?

TOM

Your buddy doesn't know how to take  
a joke, that's all. Something else  
must be bugging him.

DARRYL

Okay ... none of my business.  
(beat)  
Say, you think you might be able to  
squeeze in that job I mentioned?  
We're planning a camping trip and--

TOM

--What was that again, a heater  
core? For your truck?

DARRYL

Yeah, I guess so. There's coolant leaking into the cab.

TOM

Yep, core's busted, for sure. Don't think I've got any on hand, but I could bypass it for your trip, if you don't need the heater.

DARRYL

(eying the sun)

I don't think that's going to be a problem.

TOM

Okay, bring her by tomorrow morning and I can take care of it for you.

DARRYL

That's great, thanks, Tom. And don't worry about Marty. Like you said, must be something on his mind.

INT. MARTY'S HOUSE, OFFICE, HUNTINGTON PARK - DAY

Marty is at a computer in his home office, writing.

The room attempts expansiveness, but fails. There's too much stuff crammed into every space.

A door behind him opens and his wife, LISA McMANUS, 29, enters.

LISA

Honey, I'm not disturbing you, am I?

She picks up an empty plate and a coffee cup, swipes some crumbs.

LISA (CONT'D)

I thought you were taking the day off ... Owen wants to play with his Dad.

MARTY

I'll be right out, honey. I've just got to make one quick call.

Lisa flicks his head with a finger.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Ouch!

And laughs as she walks away.

MARTY (CONT'D)

You know, hugs are an acceptable way of expressing tenderness too.

Marty reaches for the phone and dials a number as the door closes behind Lisa.

As the conversation continues, we move around the room: books and papers; a diploma in journalism from USC; a high school chess championship trophy; a photo of Marty with a group of nerds, including Michael and Darryl, under which reads, "The Master Debaters, Phi Kappa Phi."

MARTY (CONT'D)

Hey, Michael. It's Marty.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Hey. How's it going?

MARTY

I don't know...

MICHAEL (O.S.)

What's up, buddy?

MARTY

Well, it's just ... I'm not sure if I want to come out any more.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Whoa, what are you talking about? You're not gay--

MARTY

--What? No ... what did you say? I'm talking about the paintball. I'm not sure if I want to come out any more.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Oh, okay, phew. But how come? Because of Tom?

MARTY

Yeah--

MICHAEL (O.S.)

--Ah come on, Marty. Tom's not a bad guy. He's just got a couple of screws loose, that's all.

MARTY

I know. I've seen them popping out of his head.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Do you remember how long it took to get our teams together? We'd have to find another squad all over again, and reschedule everything--

MARTY

--Yeah, I know. It's just I've got a bad feeling--

MICHAEL (O.S.)

--I thought you gave up on feelings. Besides, Darryl told me Tom's going to fix his truck for free. So, how bad can the guy be?

MARTY

Yeah ... okay.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Listen, I've got to run. I have a date with a bombshell junior prosecutor looking to blow up my balls in court.

MARTY

Better wear your Kevlar jock strap, then.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

See you on Sunday?

MARTY

Okay. Bye.

INT. MARTY'S HOUSE, BACK YARD, HUNTINGTON PARK - DAY

Marty and his son, OWEN, 8, are playing catch in the back yard.

The yard is small, cluttered, fenced on all sides with chain link. Toys, balls and garden equipment are scattered about.

Owen throws the ball hard.

Marty ducks, and the ball tips off his glove and sails over the fence.

OWEN

C'mon, Dad! You should have got that.

MARTY

Why do you have to throw so hard?

OWEN

Because the runner will get on.

MARTY

What runner? We're just playing catch.

OWEN

Jeez, Dad. For a writer you sure don't have much imagination.

MARTY

I can imagine you going to get the ball.

Owen shakes his head and walks towards the fence.

As he passes his father.

OWEN

I could throw a lot harder, you know. You're such a lightweight, Dad.

Owen scales the fence in one bound as Marty looks into his glove.

INT. PAINTBALL RANGE, LOUNGE, PASADENA - DAY

A bar and grill at the paintball range with paint splatters on the walls, sporadic framed action photos and waitresses in camouflage tank tops.

Large window booths look out onto the range, where fatigued figures dart and dash.

On one side of a booth sit Marty, Michael and Darryl. Across are Tom, Tony and Gunnar.

Laughter, animated gestures, burgers and fries.

With Darryl on a far side, looking out the window, listless.

TOM

What's the matter, Darryl? Your truck conk out again?

Darryl lilts back into the camaraderie as Marty gives him an elbow jab.

MARTY

He may not be handy. But he can make money out of money ... and then make it disappear again.

DARRYL

I told you a thousand times, you've just got to hold your position. Come on, get a grip.

GUNNAR

Hah! You guys really not much good with your hands, eh? Hah-hah!

MARTY

It's the mind that directs the extremities, Gunnar.

TONY

Spoken like a genuine unpublished writer.

TOM

Don't mind him. He's just ornery 'cause his old lady stopped blowing him after he put a ring on her finger.

Tony scowls.

TOM (CONT'D)

Speaking of blowers, I got that heater core for you, D-man. If you want I can install it before you go on safari with the tribe.

DARRYL

Not going camping.

TONY

Trouble with the wife? On the couch again? Using your hands again?

Guffaws, obscene gestures.

DARRYL

At least I don't use 'em to clean  
shit out of other people's pipes.

TONY

Fuck you.

TOM

Jeez, what's up your asses, if it  
ain't shit?

More laughter.

DARRYL

We're not going camping because my  
kid's bike was stolen.

(beat)

And then Tamara and I had an  
argument about it.

TONY

I knew it.

DARRYL

Shut up.

TOM

So buy a new bike! You're a  
fucking stock broker, you can  
afford it.

DARRYL

That's what I wanted to do. But  
Tamara's pissed ... you know,  
outraged, socially. She wanted me  
to do something, go to the police,  
go look, put up posters, something.  
Show Kirsten that her father cares.

MARTY

So why didn't you?

DARRYL

Because it wouldn't do any good.

MARTY

Why not?

DARRYL

Because I know who took it.

TOM

Huh? So get it back!

DARRYL

Sure, Tom. I'll just head on down to the crack house and ask for it back. They're punks, gangsta types, you know? And I'm not about to risk my life for some lousy bike.

MARTY

So what are you going to do?

DARRYL

Buy a new bike and some more hand lotion.

TONY

Fucking bullshit, if you ask me.

MICHAEL

Lotion, really? You use lotion?

GUNNAR

There's no ganstas in Sweden, but plenty of lotion, that's for sure, hah-hah!

TOM

You know where they live?

DARRYL

Yeah. A few blocks from my place. I saw some punk-ass kid riding Kirsten's bike out front. Might as well be on the moon.

MARTY

I heard some guy bought the lunar rover, you know, that dune buggy thing they drove around up there? He bought it on eBay for like forty grand.

TONY

Seems pretty cheap.

DARRYL

It's still on the moon, moron.

MARTY

Well, you could probably ship it ... for about 2.5 billion dollars.

TONY

Ahhh...

TOM  
 (leaning in, intense)  
 I know how we can get that bike  
 back--

TONY  
 (out the window)  
 --Whoa, did you see that? Now that  
 guy's got some balls!

EXT. MARTY'S HOUSE, DRIVEWAY, HUNTINGTON PARK - MORNING

Marty's washing his car with a brush attached to a hose.  
 Some suds cling to his chin like a goatee.

Michael drives up in a red convertible. He revs the engine  
 loud and grins.

Michael is everyone's ideal best friend, loyal, sensible,  
 humorous and elevating.

MARTY  
 Test driving again?

MICHAEL  
 You wouldn't believe how this baby  
 corners.

As Michael gets out of the convertible.

MARTY  
 How come you never buy any of them?

MICHAEL  
 Buy them? Where's the fun in that?

Marty unscrews the brush and hoses down his soapy car.

Michael motions to his chin.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 You've, uh, got some suds there,  
 Col. Sanders.

MARTY  
 (backhand wipe)  
 Oh.

MICHAEL  
 Listen, Marty. I've been thinking  
 about the ... raid.

MARTY  
Me too. That's all I seem to think  
about.

MICHAEL  
And?

MARTY  
I think we should do it.

MICHAEL  
Really?

MARTY  
Darryl's up for it.

MICHAEL  
Yeah, I know.

MARTY  
And the others.

MICHAEL  
Duh. Those guys would build a  
bridge and then jump off it if Tom  
told them to.

MARTY  
You're still not sure?

MICHAEL  
I'm not sure it's legal.

MARTY  
Listen, five out of six is okay,  
you know.

MICHAEL  
You really think it's a good  
idea...

MARTY  
Of course not.

MICHAEL  
Not making any sense here--

MARTY  
--Yeah, that's sort of the point.

MICHAEL  
You swallow some of those suds?

MARTY

Why does everything have to make sense all the time? Why can't we leave the outcome to the universe once in a while?

MICHAEL

Well--

Owen steps out of the house. He's got the mitts and a ball.

OWEN

--Hi, Michael.

MICHAEL

Hey, Owen! How's the universe treating you?

OWEN

All right, I guess. Want to play some catch?

MICHAEL

Sure, just make sure you don't hit my new car here.

OWEN

Sounds like something my dad would say.

INT. GUNNAR'S VAN, FRONT, SOUTH GATE - NIGHT

Gunnar drives, with Tom to his right. Tom looks up from a sheet of paper.

TOM

Next left. Jackson Avenue. Then a couple hundred yards.

GUNNAR

Okay.

TOM

(looking back)  
Pretty fancy map you made, Darryl.

DARRYL (O.S.)

It's just a print-out from Google, Tom.

TOM

Sure, whatever ... All right, boys, get set. We're almost there.

INT. GUNNAR'S VAN, REAR, SOUTH GATE - NIGHT

In the back along the sides of the van, sandwiched between rakes, shovels and bags of manure, Marty and Michael face Darryl and Tony.

They're dressed in black, their faces darkened with paint smears.

INT. GUNNAR'S VAN, FRONT, SOUTH GATE - NIGHT

Tom is leaning out the window, looking back.

TOM

The covering is starting to pull loose. You should have used stronger tape.

GUNNAR

It'll hold.

TOM

If that comes off, Swedish Touch Landscaping will be a mark all over the 'hood.

Tom rolls up the window and watches in the side view mirror, then turns to Gunnar.

TOM (CONT'D)

You've got to be the only God-damned Swedish landscaper in LA. I thought you had to speak Spanish to get into that racket.

GUNNAR

I do speak Spanish.

Tom looks at him, unsure about that.

INT. GUNNAR'S VAN, REAR, SOUTH GATE - NIGHT

TONY

You got any cigarettes, Darryl?

MICHAEL

I could use one too.

DARRYL

Sorry, guys. I had to quit smoking to get back into the bedroom.

(MORE)

DARRYL (CONT'D)  
I've got some nicotine gum if  
you're up for a stomach ache.

MICHAEL  
I'll try some.

TONY  
Gum's for kids.

Darryl pops a piece out of a foil wrapper and tosses it  
towards Michael. It lands on top of a manure bag.

TONY (CONT'D)  
Nice throw.

Michael picks it up, blows on it, and pops it into his mouth.  
The van jerks violently and recovers.

MARTY  
What is it? What's happening?

TOM (O.S.)  
Calm down, Marty. Gunnar nearly  
squashed a cat, that's all.

MARTY  
Did you happen to notice what color  
it was?

EXT. STREET, SOUTH GATE - DAY

Not a nice neighborhood. Run-down bungalows, junked cars,  
unkept lawns, white plastic bags hanging around.

The van slows, headlights off. Only the trailing letters  
"aping" have been uncovered on the side by the wind pulling  
at Gunnar's brown paper covering.

The van stops.

INT. GUNNAR'S VAN, REAR, SOUTH GATE - NIGHT

MICHAEL  
I feel sick.

TONY  
It's just that gum.

MARTY  
I don't feel great, either.

TONY  
That's because you're scared,  
Marty.

EXT. STREET, SOUTH GATE - NIGHT

The rear door opens quietly. Gunnar and Tom stand on either side holding paintball guns and ammo belts.

Inside, Tony picks up his paintball gun.

TONY  
Let's go.

The men tumble out of the van, stepping over a hitch attached to a utility trailer.

TOM  
(pointing)  
Is that the place?

DARRYL  
Yeah.

TONY  
This is going to be a cake-walk.

GUNNAR  
What?

TOM  
Forget it. Okay, you three, you know what to do, right?

Marty, Michael and Darryl stand together, unarmed. They nod.

TOM (CONT'D)  
We'll take up positions behind that hedge and behind those cars in the driveway on the other side.

He hands a walkie-talkie to Michael.

TOM (CONT'D)  
We'll signal you when we're ready, then you three move in, locate the bike, and bring it out.

DARRYL  
Roger that, Commander.

TOM

If there's any trouble, we'll cover you while you're in there. Stay in sight of each other, and whoever finds the bike, make sure the others come out with you. Then we'll follow you back to the van. Toss the bike in the trailer, get inside and we get the fuck out of Dodge. Any questions?

Darryl is looking at the house. Michael has a hand over his mouth. Marty wipes sweat from his brow.

TOM (CONT'D)

All right. We'll radio you when we're in place. Good luck, boys.

Michael, Marty and Darryl cross the street and approach a ramshackle house covered in graffiti.

The front door is open and we can see movement inside.

EXT. SIDEWALK, SOUTH GATE - NIGHT

DARRYL

Shit.

MARTY

What?

DARRYL

I see a bike, but it's not Kirsten's. Maybe they already sold it or something.

MICHAEL

Maybe we should get out of here. Maybe we should abort.

MARTY

Yeah, I think--

DARRYL

--Maybe it's in the garage. There's a shed over there too.

MARTY

Fuck.

MICHAEL

What?

MARTY  
Someone's coming out.

EXT. GANG HOUSE PORCH, SOUTH GATE - NIGHT

A lone FIGURE exits the open front door and sits in a dilapidated armchair on the porch.

He's tall, lanky, African American, in jeans and no shirt.  
He lights a joint.

EXT. SIDEWALK, SOUTH GATE - NIGHT

MICHAEL  
What do we do?

MARTY  
Wait here. Maybe he'll go back  
inside.

ANOTHER MAN, also young and black, appears in the doorway.  
He walks over to take the joint from the man in the armchair.  
The walkie-talkie erupts, loudly, on Michael's hip.

TOM (O.S.)  
Blue Collar One to Yuppie One.

Michael fumbles with the clip on his belt.

MARTY  
Turn that down!

The radio bleats static.

On the porch, the man in the chair stands up.

TOM (O.S.)  
This is Blue Collar One to Yuppie  
One ... Can you hear me, Mike?  
We're all in position here. Clear  
to proceed.

Darryl bolts across the yard.

MARTY  
Jesus!

Marty looks at Michael, who shrugs, then takes off. Marty  
slinks after him.

EXT. GANG HOUSE PORCH, SOUTH GATE - NIGHT

The man with no shirt spots Darryl.

NO-SHIRT

What do you think you're doing,  
mother-fucker?

EXT. GANG HOUSE YARD, SOUTH GATE - NIGHT

Darryl has reached the shed. He grabs a bike propped against the rear wall and turns it back towards the street as Michael and Marty stumble up.

DARRYL

Come on! I've got it! Let's go.

EXT. GANG HOUSE PORCH - NIGHT

The second man on the porch dashes into the house.

NO-SHIRT

Drop that bike, or you're a dead  
man!

A bright red paintball explodes on his chest. He falls backwards.

The other man re-appears in the doorway with a handgun.

Seeing his friend hit, he ducks for cover below the porch's half-wall.

EXT. GANG HOUSE YARD, SOUTH GATE - NIGHT

Michael and Marty turn in panic to follow Darryl. Michael trips and falls. Marty helps him up.

EXT. GANG HOUSE PORCH, SOUTH GATE - NIGHT

The shirtless guy is rubbing the red paint between his fingers.

NO-SHIRT

What the fuck?

(beat)

It's paint! It's fucking  
paintballs! Dawg, get 'em!

The other man stands, his gun searching for a target.

EXT. GANG HOUSE YARD, SOUTH GATE - NIGHT

A boy about Owen's age comes out of the shed carrying a hammer. Behind him, in the shed, is wooden birdhouse on a table, various tools surrounding it.

He steps out as Michael falls.

Marty and the boy's eyes lock for a moment.

EXT. HEDGE, SOUTH GATE - NIGHT

Tom is behind a hedge, pointing his gun, his face contorted.

EXT. GANG HOUSE YARD, SOUTH GATE - NIGHT

The boy raises his arms in submission, still holding the hammer in one hand.

A round hits the boy in the chest and a different, darker, thicker red liquid splatters around.

The boy's legs buckle and he drops.

INT. MARTY'S HOUSE, HUNTINGTON PARK - MORNING

Lisa and TAMARA MORRIS, 28, Darryl's wife, are in the kitchen.

Lisa stands, making tea, while Tamara sits at the table, mousing on a laptop. In front of her are some maps, pens and a notebook.

A clock-radio tells us it's 10:35, and Lucy's in the sky with diamonds.

TAMARA

Los Diablos canyon looks like a good one. Five mile loop around a small lake.

LISA

Los Diablos, isn't that like half-way to Palm Springs?

TAMARA

Uh ... oh, yeah. You're right. Too far, huh?

LISA

Try a search on Malibu Creek, I heard Michael talking about it once.

TAMARA

Okay.

Tamara types. The song fades on the radio.

Lisa pours water from the kettle.

A RADIO ANNOUNCER fills the void.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Ahh ... what can you say that hasn't been said about the Beatles? Fantastic, never be another group like 'em. All right, 10:36 on a clear blue Wednesday, 86 on the thermometer and rising. Looks like we're in for another scorcher...

Lisa brings the tea and some cups to the table and sits.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

...Coming up in the next set Elton John, Pat Benatar and some good old psychedelic sixties stuff from Steve Winwood and Traffic.

TAMARA

Here it is ... Malibu Creek Rock Pool, Century Lake ... 3.5 miles round trip. Hey, it says they filmed Planet of the Apes there.

LISA

No kidding?

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Still no word on who's responsible for gunning down an eight-year-old boy in South Gate last night. Police say it appears the boy was killed by some thugs stealing his bicycle from a house on Jackson Avenue ... Can you believe that, people? What is this world coming to? ... Back with more classic rock in a moment.

TAMARA

Jackson Avenue? Jeez, that's just a few blocks from our place.

Lisa passes a cup of tea to Tamara. The radio churns out pulp marketing.

RADIO (O.S.)

Are you ready to make a move? Are you looking for the comfort, luxury and security of a gated community? Then it's time you talked to a realtor about Pine Vista. Pine Vista is a new, premium, pristine community in the heart of the city--

Lisa reaches and turns off the radio.

TAMARA

--That poor kid. Killed over his bike. Say, did I mention Kirsten's bike was stolen a few days ago? Thank God we weren't home at the time.

INT. MARTY'S HOUSE, OFFICE, HUNTINGTON PARK - MORNING

Marty is standing at the window, looking out over the street.

A kid rides by on a bike. Marty shivers.

The door opens. Marty turns after the door clicks closed again.

Michael stands by the door, unmoving.

MARTY

Hey.

MICHAEL

Have you heard?

MARTY

Yeah, I heard.

MICHAEL

I can't work. I can't do anything.

MARTY

Yeah.

MICHAEL

What the hell happened?

MARTY  
I don't know. We have to talk to  
Darryl.

MICHAEL  
Yeah.

MARTY  
Why don't you come by after work,  
for dinner?

MICHAEL  
Okay.

MARTY  
Have you talked to anyone yet? The  
others?

MICHAEL  
No. You?

MARTY  
No.

MICHAEL  
Okay.

MARTY  
I'll call him. Take it from there.

MICHAEL  
Okay.

MARTY  
All right.

MICHAEL  
Guess I'll go...

Michael opens the door to leave as Marty turns back to the window.

INT. TOM'S AUTO REPAIR SHOP, COMPTON - DAY

Gunnar drives up in the van.

The garage is small, two bays, with vertical sliding doors, and a customer entrance from the sidewalk.

Tom looks up from under the hood of a car. He wipes his hands on a greasy rag and walks out of the repair bay, through the reception area and into the street.

EXT. TOM'S AUTO REPAIR SHOP, COMPTON - DAY

A few PASSERSBY are on the sidewalk.

Tom walks up as Gunnar gets out of the van.

TOM

Sounds like your exhaust manifold  
might have a leak, Gunnar. Want me  
to check that for you?

GUNNAR

You seen the news?

TOM

Nope, never bother with the news.  
I got a minute if you want to pull  
her in.

Gunnar reaches into the van to pull a newspaper off the  
dashboard. He flings it at Tom.

GUNNAR

Page three. Halfway down.

Tom opens the paper and reads, then looks up.

TOM

You mean the earthquake? I didn't  
feel a thing--

GUNNAR

--Under that.

Tom looks at the paper again. His face sets.

GUNNAR (CONT'D)

You used hard ammo.

TOM

Wait a second, now--

GUNNAR

--And it killed that boy.

TOM

(looking around)  
Shut the fuck up.

GUNNAR

What are we going to do?

TOM

Not lose our heads, that's what.

Tom pulls a key-ring from his pants, turns, and locks the door to the shop.

TOM (CONT'D)

Come on.

He pulls Gunnar's towering frame by the arm towards the van.

TOM (CONT'D)

We need to find Tony before he does something stupid. Then we have to talk to the Nerds.

INT. MARTY'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM, HUNTINGTON PARK - EVENING

At the dinner table sit Marty, Darryl, Michael, Lisa, Tamara, Owen, Darryl's daughter KIRSTEN, 8, and SUSAN BRODIE, 22, Michael's newest girlfriend.

Dinner's ending.

Owen gets up.

OWEN

Can we watch TV?

LISA

Sure, if you like.

OWEN

(to Kirsten)

Coming?

KIRSTEN

(rising)

I guess.

OWEN

Come on.

They dart out of the room.

MARTY

He's a man of few words.

MICHAEL

Like his father.

MARTY

As a writer, I'm almost certain that was an insult.

Susan gets up and starts clearing dishes off the table.

LISA  
 Oh, please, that's all right.  
 (getting up)  
 I can take care of those.

SUSAN  
 No. I insist. It's my right and  
 prerogative as a guest. Besides, I  
 like doing dishes.

Lisa helps her. Marty laughs. Michael squirms. Darryl  
 watches Susan.

LISA  
 Nice catch, Michael. A woman who  
 likes to do dishes.

DARRYL  
 What else do you like to do?

TAMARA  
 Eyes ahead, soldier.

DARRYL  
 Marriage isn't war, my dear.

TAMARA  
 Oh, yeah? You want a declaration?  
 Just keep it up.

Tamara gets up grabs a stray fork and follows Lisa and Susan  
 into the kitchen.

The dining room falls silent.

DARRYL  
 Paintballs can't kill, can they?

There's another silence.

MICHAEL  
 What about Tom? You think he could  
 have--

MARTY  
 --I don't know. Maybe.

DARRYL  
 Jesus.

MARTY  
 Have you guys spoken to the others?

Michael and Darryl shake their heads.

MARTY (CONT'D)

That means they're laying low too.  
We'll see them on Sunday, just like  
normal. Then we'll find out what  
the hell happened.

MICHAEL

Where's the bike?

DARRYL

In my garage.

MICHAEL

Has anyone seen it?

DARRYL

Seen it? Of course, I showed it to  
Kirsten this morning. My wife  
thinks I'm a hero. Wasn't that the  
whole idea?

MARTY

They think that boy was killed for  
the bike, Darryl.

DARRYL

Oh.

MICHAEL

What did you tell them exactly?

DARRYL

I told them I saw some kid riding  
it, and I nabbed it when he went  
into a 7-11. Have you said  
anything to Lisa?

MARTY

No.

DARRYL

Michael?

Michael shakes his head.

MARTY

You have to get rid of it.

DARRYL

What? How am I supposed to do  
that?

MARTY

Tell them it was stolen again, I don't care. Just get rid of it. It's evidence now.

DARRYL

I'll be back on the couch.

Susan swings through the door.

MICHAEL

Which do you prefer, a couch or a prison cot?

She smiles as she picks up empty wine glasses.

SUSAN

What are you talking about?

MICHAEL

Oh, nothing ... just a game we made up.

MARTY

Yeah ... we call it "which do you prefer."

SUSAN

Oh, I love games. Now, let's see, which do I prefer? Well, I think I'd prefer a cot because they're portable. How's that?

MARTY

What?

Susan pours herself some wine. Darryl slides his glass over.

SUSAN

How did I do ... you know, in the game?

DARRYL

You did great. Now it's your turn to ask.

SUSAN

Oooh, any particular topic?

MARTY

This can't end well.

She fills Darryl's glass.

DARRYL  
No categories. No taboos.

SUSAN  
Well in that case, which do you prefer...

Tamara walks in.

SUSAN (CONT'D)  
...a romantic walk on the beach or a quickie in the kitchen?--

TAMARA  
--All right, that's it. Casanova. Time to go.

DARRYL  
I'm a dead man.

INT. DARRYL'S HOUSE, INGLEWOOD - MORNING

Tamara's got a phone in one hand, and a glass of orange juice in the other.

TAMARA  
Yes, that's right. My husband got it back.

Darryl comes in, groggy, in gym pants, no shirt.

TAMARA (CONT'D)  
He found it outside a 7-11.

Darryl comes up close to her and lifts his eyebrows in a silent inquiry.

TAMARA (CONT'D)  
Yes, of course. Thank you.

She hangs up.

DARRYL  
What's up?

TAMARA  
I was just letting the police know we got Kirsten's bike back.

DARRYL  
The police? Why would you call--

TAMARA

--So they could close their file, I don't know. I just thought--

DARRYL

--What file?

TAMARA

Um ... the stolen property file, dear?

DARRYL

You reported it stolen?

TAMARA

What's with all the questions? Sure, I reported it. Somebody around here had to be man enough to take some action.

DARRYL

What did they say?

TAMARA

About what?

DARRYL

When you told them we had it back?

TAMARA

They said they might come by to have a look.

DARRYL

Jesus.

Tamara turns to open the fridge and refill her glass.

TAMARA

What's the matter with you? Hasn't the Beaujolais hasn't worn off yet?

She closes the fridge and turns around. Darryl is gone.

EXT. DARRYL'S HOUSE, INGLEWOOD - MORNING

A nice house in a mediocre neighborhood.

A police car pulls up.

EXT. ROGERS PARK, POND, INGLEWOOD - MORNING

Darryl is walking away from a pond, which still ripples from something breaking the water's surface.

A phone rings and Darryl pulls his cell from a pocket.

DARRYL

Yeah?

INT. MARTY'S HOUSE, OFFICE, HUNTINGTON PARK - MORNING

MARTY

Darryl, it's Marty. Where are you?  
I called your house, and Tamara  
said the cops were there.

EXT. ROGERS PARK, POND, INGLEWOOD - MORNING

DARRYL

She reported the stolen bike to the  
police, Marty. And then she called  
this morning to tell them I found  
it.

MARTY (O.S.)

What?

DARRYL

I just threw it into a pond.  
(beat)  
This is getting crazy.

INT. LAPD HOMICIDE DIVISION, OFFICE, DOWNTOWN - MORNING

Det. WILL MURPHY sits at a cluttered desk in a small office overlooking the city. He's 55, medium build, with thick, disheveled salt and pepper hair, in a wrinkled gray suit.

He's leaning back in his swivel chair, a file folder opened in his lap. He's moving a photograph in and out of focus in front of his face, as if he needs glasses.

A young COP strides in eagerly, nearly falling over a box of files placed too close to the door. Some folders spill out, scattering their contents.

COP

Oops ... sorry, detective.

Murphy leans forward as the cop stoops to retrieve the papers.

MURPHY

It's all right. Leave those. What have you got?

The cop carefully replaces the papers in disarray on the floor.

COP

We may have found the bike, but it's missing again.

MURPHY

Huh?

COP

Well, we thought we had a bike matching the description from the homicide victim report. It was called in stolen a week ago. Then the owner reported it was found, but now it's been stolen again.

MURPHY

Huh?

The cop shuffles his feet.

COP

We think it may belong to a teenager in Huntington Park.

MURPHY

Huntington Park?

The cop pulls a notebook from his shirt pocket and flips it open.

As he talks, Murphy rummages around his desk. He locates a plastic bag of brown powder, spoons some into a glass and pours water from a bottle in. He swirls it around.

COP

Let's see ... name is Kirsten Morris. I spoke to the mother this morning. She said her husband found it outside a 7-11 and brought it back on the night of the homicide.

MURPHY

Is that so?

Murphy pulls a pill out of a sliding tray from an elaborate rack at the side of the desk.

He pops the pill and washes it down with the brown liquid.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

And you say it matches the description from the homicide report in South Gate?

COP

Yeah, it was fairly unique, actually, a ...

(checks his notebook)

Poo-jot. With Hannah Montana stickers on it.

MURPHY

Peugeot.

COP

Oh.

Murphy plugs in a tiny kettle and starts rummaging again.

MURPHY

Anybody figure out how it ended up at a murder scene?

COP

Uh, no, sir.

MURPHY

Now where did I ... ah-ha!

He opens a tea packet and drops it in the glass.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

My granddaughter loves that show.

COP

Sir?

The cop wants to leave.

MURPHY

Hannah Montana. Now, when you spoke to Mrs. Morris, did she mention where her husband was?

COP

Sorry.

Murphy reaches for the kettle and knocks some papers off his desk.

COP (CONT'D)

Maybe you could requisition some shelves, detective.

MURPHY

(pointing to his head)  
Don't worry. It's all filed in the master memory bank.

(waving his arm)  
This is all just for show.

COP

I mean for that stuff you're drinking and--

MURPHY

--St. John's wort. Just as good as Prozac. And no side effects.

INT. MARTY'S CAR, PASADENA - MORNING

Marty drives, Michael beside him, Darryl in the back seat.

MARTY

I'm telling you, we have to confront him right off. We can't let him think we're scared.

MICHAEL

We should have called the police. We're fucked.

DARRYL

I've got a family, Michael. I'm not going to prison. No way.

MICHAEL

You think I'm crazy about the idea?

MARTY

Come on. Nobody's going to get caught. We just have to use our brains here, boys.

EXT. DARRYL'S HOUSE, INGLEWOOD - DAY

Det. Murphy pulls up in an unmarked squad car.

Kirsten is in front, talking to a teenaged BOY on the sidewalk.

Murphy gets out of the car, eating a granola bar.

He approaches the youngsters.

MURPHY  
You must be Kirsten.

KIRSTEN  
How did you know?

MURPHY  
How I know things is my business,  
young lady. I hear you're a fan of  
Hannah Montana.

BOY  
What do you want?

MURPHY  
And who might you be?

BOY  
None of your business.

MURPHY  
Now that's where you're wrong, son.

Tamara walks up.

TAMARA  
Can I help you?

MURPHY  
I'm hoping so, yes.

Murphy pulls a badge from his jacket and gives it to Tamara.

She looks it over and passes it back.

TAMARA  
Is this about Kirsten's bike?

MURPHY  
That's right.

KIRSTEN  
But I have it back. My dad found  
it. It's in the garage.

MURPHY  
I see you haven't been brought up  
to speed.

Kirsten looks at her mother. The boy is edging away.

TAMARA  
No, it's not, sweetheart--

KIRSTEN  
--What?

MURPHY  
Well, this certainly is a mystery,  
isn't it?

Kirsten runs towards the garage.

BOY  
Can I go?

MURPHY  
That depends.

The boy's eyes widen.

MURPHY (CONT'D)  
Do you know anything about the  
curious case of the disappearing  
bicycle?

BOY  
No ... I ... what?

MURPHY  
You're free, son.

The boy walks away quickly.

MURPHY (CONT'D)  
Guilty sort of fellow, huh? A  
friend of your daughter's?

TAMARA  
He's not from the neighborhood. I  
told Kirsten not to hang around  
him. I think he smokes a lot of  
pot.

MURPHY  
Ah, I thought I smelled something.

He smells his granola bar.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

My wife got me going on health food after I had a mild stroke a while back, but I just can't seem to get used to these snack bars. Just doesn't pack the punch of a ham and swiss, you know?

TAMARA

Is there something you wanted, Mr. Murphy?

MURPHY

Detective.

TAMARA

Right.

MURPHY

Well, to be honest with you Mrs. Morris, I smelled something strange about your daughter's bicycle as well.

TAMARA

What? You mean marijuana?

MURPHY

No, no, that was just a metaphor. May we talk inside? It's getting rather hot out. Got to watch the core temperature--

TAMARA

Of course, I'll make some lemonade.

They walk towards the house.

MURPHY

Ideal. I'm right on schedule for a pH adjustment. By the way, is your husband home?

TAMARA

He plays paintball on Sundays. He's usually back around supper time.

MURPHY

Paintball? No kidding. I've always wanted to try that.

EXT. PAINTBALL RANGE, PREP AREA, PASADENA - DAY

The six men are putting on paintball gear. Tom, Tony and Gunnar at one bench, and opposite, Marty, Darryl and Michael.

MARTY

We know what happened, Tom.

TOM

You don't know shit.

MARTY

You used pellets.

TOM

(looks around)

I don't know what you're talking about.

DARRYL

It was just a stupid bicycle, man.

Tom considers further denial, but passes.

TOM

So what? What are you going to do, huh? You guys think you can screw me over?

MARTY

We just want to know what happened.

TOM

Nothing. Just sit tight. Punks like that get shot every day in LA.

MARTY

He was just a kid.

TOM

Every day.

MARTY

Jesus.

TOM

Listen, McManus. If anyone blabs a word about this, we all go down.

(to Michael)

You're a lawyer. Tell them.

MICHAEL

Why did you do it?

TOM

The guy on the porch had a gun.  
And I was sure that kid did, too.  
Paintballs don't stop guys with  
guns.

MICHAEL

You fired the first shot.

TOM

I probably saved your friggin'  
lives.

MARTY

So how come I don't feel safe any  
more?

INT. DARRYL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN, INGLEWOOD - DAY

Murphy and Tamara are seated at the kitchen table. Murphy  
puts down an empty glass and gets up.

MURPHY

Well, thanks for the lemonade, Mrs.  
Morris. I get offered a lot of it,  
you know, and usually it's far too  
sweet.

Tamara rises as well.

TAMARA

You're welcome.

MURPHY

If anything else comes to mind,  
please give me a call. We'll do  
our best to locate your daughter's  
bike.

TAMARA

I appreciate you coming around and  
everything, detective, especially  
on a weekend. I mean, it's not  
like this is a murder investigation  
or anything.

INT. DARRYL'S OFFICE, DOWNTOWN - DAY

Marty is in Darryl's office, a bright, gleaming room full of  
computer monitors. Massive windows look out over the  
downtown core.

Darryl is at his desk, back to the window. Marty sits opposite.

Murphy is at the door.

MURPHY  
Am I interrupting?

DARRYL  
Can I help you?

MURPHY  
Darryl Morris?

DARRYL  
Did Steve send you up here? I don't usually work with clients in my office. There's a board room--

MURPHY  
--My name's Murphy. Detective Murphy, LAPD. I'm investigating a homicide and wanted to ask you a few questions.

Marty gets up.

MARTY  
Guess I'll be going...

DARRYL  
Uh ... okay ... see you later, Marty.

MURPHY  
Marty McManus?

MARTY  
That's right. How did--

MURPHY  
--I'm a detective, remember? Please, sit down. You just saved me a trip to your house.

MARTY  
My house?

MURPHY  
Please, sit down.

Marty sits. Murphy remains standing.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

Boy, you sure have a lot of computers in here. What's that one for?

DARRYL

Ah ... that displays a stochastic output from the OTC bulletin board.

MURPHY

Oh. What about that one?

DARRYL

Fluctuations in corporate bond call pricing...

MURPHY

Well, I guess you have to be pretty smart to be a stock broker after all. You look like a pretty smart guy.

Murphy loosens his tie.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

You think I could open a window? I sense a distinct lack of oxygen in here. Bad for the capillaries.

Murphy moves around behind Darryl and flips a window open. He inspects the desk on the way back.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

You're a writer, is that so?

MARTY

Freelance.

MURPHY

Another smart fellow. And there's one more, isn't there. Michael, ah, Mooney, right? A lawyer?

MARTY

He's a friend.

MURPHY

I mean, on your team. Your paintball team.

MARTY

Yes, but--

MURPHY

--Amazing what you can find on the Internet. I just ran a search on Darryl and found a whole photo album of you guys, with captions and names and everything.

Marty looks at Darryl.

Murphy takes some deep breaths.

MARTY

Detective?

MURPHY

It was a boy, in South Gate, a couple of nights ago. He was shot during what looked like a raid by a bunch of paintballers.

A silence.

DARRYL

A raid?

MURPHY

Seems it was all over a bicycle.  
(beat)  
Your daughter's bicycle.

DARRYL

I don't understand.

MURPHY

No, I don't either. That's the thing.

DARRYL

My daughter's bike was stolen.

MURPHY

Yes, that's right. And, according to your wife, you found it again. Now, when and where was that exactly?

DARRYL

Uh ... Friday night. Outside a 7-11, not far from my house.

MURPHY

About what time?

DARRYL

It was pretty late, probably around midnight. I went out to buy some cigarettes.

MURPHY

Any idea how it got there? I mean, do you know who it was that took it there?

DARRYL

There was one other guy ... inside the store. I don't know, maybe it was him.

MURPHY

And this guy, what did he look like?

DARRYL

Look like?

MURPHY

Describe him, please.

MARTY

But what is this all about?

MURPHY

It seems your friend may have encountered the man who murdered that boy. You see, he took the bike, your daughter's bike, from the boy's house. And killed him while he was at it.

DARRYL

Oh, my God.

MARTY

Are you sure?

MURPHY

Death is pretty certain.

DARRYL

Do you think he followed me home?

MURPHY

It's possible, yes. Anything's possible, right? Now, can you describe him for me?

DARRYL

Well, I only sort of glanced at him. He was a tall guy, African American, maybe 18 or 19. That's all I can remember, really.

MURPHY

Clothing, mannerisms, tatoos?

DARRYL

Sorry.

MURPHY

All right. Here's my card. If you can remember anything else about this man, please don't hesitate to call, no matter how trivial you might think it is.

Darryl takes the card.

DARRYL

Of course.

MURPHY

Well, all right then...

MARTY

You said you were going to come and see me?

MURPHY

Oh, yes. Of course. I nearly forgot. Just one thing.

Murphy leans toward the window for another deep inhalation.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

Where were you on Friday night between the hours of 8 and 10 p.m.?

MARTY

Me? But--

MURPHY

--If you don't mind.

MARTY

I don't understand, you're not suggesting--

MURPHY

--I'm not suggesting anything. I'm asking you a question. Where were you on the night of the murder?

MARTY

I was with Darryl and Michael. We were all together, having dinner and drinks.

MURPHY

And where was this feast taking place?

MARTY

(beat)  
At a paintball range...

EXT. JOGGING PATH, ROGERS PARK, INGLEWOOD - DAY

Darryl and Michael are in suits, Marty in jeans, walking on a jogging path around the pond.

MARTY

I'm telling you, he knows. He knows something. He just about accused me of murder in Darryl's office.

MICHAEL

He could just be fishing, you know. Like Columbo. Do you remember that show?

MARTY

All I remember is the look on that detective's face.

MICHAEL

I think you're starting to get paranoid, Marty. You need to calm down.

MARTY

He was grinning! He knows, I'm telling you!

MICHAEL

Whatever he knows, he's not saying, is he? Which means he's got no evidence, just his gut, just a hunch.

DARRYL  
I'm not going to jail. Guys like  
us don't do well in jail.

MICHAEL  
Guys like us?

DARRYL  
Little white guys.

MARTY  
We can't leave it to chance. We  
need to shore up our alibi.

DARRYL  
How?

MARTY  
I've got an idea.

INT. PAINTBALL RANGE, LOUNGE, PASADENA - DAY

Murphy is eyeing the action on the field through a window  
etched with cross hairs near the entrance to the lounge.

A HOSTESS approaches him in a camouflage tank top and khaki  
shorts.

HOSTESS  
Hello. Table for one?

MURPHY  
Ah, no. I'm actually hungry for  
some information.

HOSTESS  
Oh, yeah?

MURPHY  
(flashing his badge)  
Detective Murphy, LAPD. I'm just  
doing some fact checking.

HOSTESS  
Is there some problem, detective?

MURPHY  
No, no. Just verifying some  
evidence. I was wondering if  
there's a way to confirm who was  
here on Friday night, you know,  
what club members were here?

HOSTESS

Oh ... Well, all members are required to sign in. It's all computerized, they swipe their member cards and their information is recorded in a database.

MURPHY

I see. And this database, is it--

More people are lining up behind Murphy.

HOSTESS

--I could get our computer guy to dig that up for you. You said Friday, right?

MURPHY

Yes.

Murphy hands her a card.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

Maybe you could just fax it over? I can see you've got your hands full at the moment.

He passes her a card.

HOSTESS

Sure thing ... thanks.

Murphy eyes a security camera on the wall on his way out.

INT. MARTY'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM, HUNTINGTON PARK - NIGHT

Marty, Lisa and Owen are twisted up on the couch, watching television.

Marty and Owen are thumb-wrestling noisily.

Lisa is trying to watch a show.

LISA

Come on you guys, I can't hear a thing. This is the best part.

OWEN

Is it almost over? UFC Fight Night is on--

LISA

--Shh.

MARTY  
You watch that stuff?

OWEN  
Yeah. Purest sport there is. Man  
against man, mano a mano. You ever  
do any fighting, Dad?

LISA  
Your father fight? That's a good  
one.

MARTY  
Shh.

OWEN  
Well?

MARTY  
The best defence is to avoid a  
fight, son.

OWEN  
Sometimes there's fights behind the  
school.

MARTY  
Sometimes kids do stupid things.

LISA  
(standing)  
That's it? That's the end? Are  
you kidding me? They never see  
each other again? After all that?

OWEN  
One, two, three four. I declare a  
thumb war.

LISA  
That's such crap!

MARTY  
Bow ... shake ... fight.

Marty and Owen scramble around, their right hands locked  
together.

OWEN  
Tap out! Yeah, baby.

MARTY  
Best out of seven?

OWEN

Give up, Dad. Face it, you're too weak.

A newscast is on the TV.

Marty's eyes move to the set. A look of horror passes over his face.

MARTY

Hang on a second--

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

--Two men suffered non-life-threatening injuries hours ago in what appears to have been a vigilante raid on a crack house in Compton. According to police, the men were injured in a hail of paintballs during a commando-style attack.

OWEN

Paintballs, did you hear that?

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Police describe the incident as a vigilante raid, similar to an incident in South Gate last week where a youth was slain. Witnesses at the scene report that tonight's attackers were shouting threats at the occupants of the derelict building, known to be a popular outlet for street drugs.

OWEN

Whoa--

LISA

(chiding)

--Say, where were you earlier, Msrty?

Marty stares at the TV like he's in a trance.

INT. LAPD HOMICIDE DIVISION, OFFICE, DOWNTOWN - MORNING

Murphy is at his desk, stirring green tea while he talks on the phone, necked crooked over the receiver.

MURPHY

Yeah, you're right. Let's assume  
it's the same perps.

He spills some tea in his lap.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

Oww! Okay, thanks, Wilson.

He lets the receiver fall as he gets up, pulling at a wet  
pant leg.

EXT. CENTURY LAKE, MALIBU - DAY

Tamara and Lisa are sitting on a weather-beaten log, watching  
a rock-climber ascend a sheer cliff at one side of the lake,  
his limbs splayed out like a spider.

A boy is fishing behind them.

The women are in hiking boots, shorts and tank tops.

Lisa unpacks a backpack with sandwiches and bottled water.

TAMARA

(passing a sandwich)

Lisa, can I ask you something?

(beat)

Has Marty been acting weird at all  
lately?

LISA

Well, yeah, sort of.

TAMARA

Darryl's been really on edge for  
like a week.

LISA

Same with Marty. I thought it was  
work. He's got a magazine  
deadline.

TAMARA

I think it might be something else.

LISA

Like what?

TAMARA

This might sound nuts, but I think  
Darryl might be ... involved in  
those paintball raids.

LISA

What?

TAMARA

Well, he was out last Friday, when that boy was shot, remember? They say it's the same guys that staged the raid on that crack house last night--

LISA

--And you think Darryl's involved somehow?

TAMARA

Well, to be honest, I thought maybe Marty too--

LISA

--That's ridiculous! Marty was with me last night. We saw it on the news together.

TAMARA

Oh.

LISA

Where was Darryl?

TAMARA

He said he went to the gym. To lift weights. He hasn't done that in 10 years.

LISA

Maybe Marty could go with him next time. He's getting a real paunch, you know?

TAMARA

Yeah, sure...

LISA

Tamara, honey. Why on earth would you think Darryl's got anything to do with that stuff?

TAMARA

I guess ... I mean, I thought. Ah, I don't know.

LISA

He wouldn't hurt a fly, hon. Maybe it's just a coincidence, maybe the market's on a down-slide or whatever.

TAMARA

Yeah, maybe.

LISA

Well, I know Marty's not mixed up in any gang. No way, he wouldn't have the stomach, or the balls, for that.

INT. TOM'S GARAGE, COMPTON - DAY

Marty pulls open a glass door and walks into Tom's garage. The place is empty.

Tom comes out of a washroom behind the counter, the toilet still flushing.

TOM

Well, look what the cat dragged in.

MARTY

Hi, Tom.

TOM

Let me guess, you got a flat and can't find your crowbar.

Tom reaches up to a shelf and pulls down a crowbar.

TOM (CONT'D)

Just so happens--

MARTY

--Have fun last night?

TOM

I was home last night.

MARTY

It was you.

TOM

Don't you see, we started a trend for copycat vigilantes.

MARTY

I knew it.

TOM

You don't know shit. All we're doing is putting a scare on them. Those fucking crack-heads had it coming.

MARTY

What if something had happened? What if you got caught?

TOM

You're joking, right? You think the cops care? They're loving this. It's the buzz of the city. Everyone's talking about us. Don't you see? We could be heroes.

MARTY

Are you out of your mind?

TOM

Listen to me, you little piece of shit. My old man started this garage when Compton was white and everyone spoke English. Business was good. Then it turned black, and now it's all turning shit brown, and I ain't going to stand by and let the Spics and Gooks take over.

MARTY

You can't do this--

Tom moves forward with the crowbar.

TOM

--Why? You going to do something about it? Huh? Why don't you get the fuck out of here.

Tom lunges at Marty, as Gunnar opens the door from the street.

MARTY

Hey!

Tom lands a blow on Marty's arm as Gunnar jumps in and wrestles the crowbar away.

MARTY (CONT'D)

You son of a bitch!

TOM  
I'll fucking kill you, McManus!  
You hear me? You pull any crap and  
you're a dead man. I fucking  
guarantee it.

Gunnar is struggling to hold Tom back.

GUNNAR  
Marty, you go! Please! Now!

Marty backs away trembling.

INT. MARTY'S HOUSE, OFFICE, HUNTINGTON PARK - NIGHT

Marty is on the phone.

MARTY  
Thanks, Rick. I really owe you,  
man.  
(pause)  
I know, I know ... I saved your ass  
in college.

Lisa comes in.

MARTY (CONT'D)  
All right. See you.

LISA  
Who was that?

MARTY  
Huh? Oh, that was Rick Hansen.

LISA  
The computer guy?

MARTY  
Yeah.

LISA  
Your machine acting up again?

MARTY  
Big blue screen of death.

LISA  
Oh, no.

MARTY  
It's all right. He said he could  
probably fix it.

LISA  
No kidding.

MARTY  
Why would I kid about that?

LISA  
Jesus, relax, Marty.

INT. GYM, - NIGHT

Darryl and Marty are lifting weights, feebly. Michael is reading a magazine on a stationary bike.

Marty gets up from a bench and flexes an arm in a mirror. He winces in pain from the aftermath of the crowbar.

Two young WOMEN watch him and giggle.

EXT. GYM ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Darryl, Michael and Marty walk out of the gym with rucksacks.

Gunnar is leaning against a tree.

DARRYL  
Gunnar? Is that you?

MICHAEL  
It's either Gunnar or King Kong is on the loose.

GUNNAR  
Hello, friends.

DARRYL  
What are you doing here?

GUNNAR  
I called your house. Your wife said you were here. I don't know what to do, guys. Tom wants to ... do another ... raid.

DARRYL  
Tell him you're not interested.

GUNNAR  
I tried that.

MARTY  
And?

GUNNAR

He's not the sort of guy you can reason with.

MARTY

Tell me about it.

GUNNAR

If I don't go, he says he'll have me deported.

MICHAEL

He's just bluffing.

GUNNAR

I don't think so. I sort of use some illegals, you know? In the business. And I do a lot of work for cash. If they find out they can deport me. I've been here on a work visa for years. Never got around to becoming a citizen.

DARRY

Are you serious?

MARTY

What about Tony?

GUNNAR

Tony? He's even crazier than Tom..

MARTY

Come with us, Gunnar. There's an ice cream place down the street. All this exercise should have a fair reward.

INT. SPORTING GOODS STORE, INGLEWOOD - DAY

Murphy is in the store with a CLERK.

He holds out a pellet in his hand.

MURPHY

You sure?

CLERK

Well, here, let me show you.

He pulls a box from a shelf and pours a few pellets onto the counter.

CLERK (CONT'D)

You see, they're the same size.

MURPHY

Well, what do you know. You sell a lot of these?

CLERK

Actually, no. I think we've had those in stock for a couple of years. Used to be a lot cheaper.

MURPHY

Oh?

CLERK

It's all tied into the price of oil, you know?

MURPHY

Of course.

EXT. SPORTING GOODS STORE, STREET, INGLEWOOD - DAY

Murphy puts his cell phone to an ear.

MURPHY

That's right. Hard plastic paintball practice pellets ... Yep, every sporting goods store within a five-mile radius of Huntington Park.

(beat)

Right ... then run it against those three names I gave you and see if there's a match

(beat)

Okay, thanks.

EXT. GANG HOUSE, STREET, SOUTH GATE - DAY

Murphy is at the scene of the first raid. He's poking around in some shrubs when he looks up.

The guy with no shirt comes outside.

NO-SHIRT

You ain't going to find shit.

MURPHY

No law says I can't try.

NO-SHIRT

I told you everything last time you was here. You just wastin' my tax dollars, man.

MURPHY

How's your brother?

NO-SHIRT

I told him I'd find the mother-fuckers for him.

MURPHY

You mean the three guys you saw. Eyes for an eye, huh?

NO-SHIRT

Damn straight.

MURPHY

When's he getting out, anyway?

NO-SHIRT

Not for another five years. No way they'll give him parole, sure as shit.

MURPHY

I'm really sorry ... I mean, about your brother's kid. It was good of you to take him in. I just wonder if--

NO-SHIRT

--Ain't no social services was gonna take him, if that's what you mean.

MURPHY

Why not?

NO-SHIRT

You're not even on the radar, man. Kids like that, mother dead, father in the can, nobody gonna take a kid like that, 'cept family. Shit knows I tried, but them social services bitches just kept shoving paper at me, said it was gonna time more time.

MURPHY

Oh.

NO-SHIRT

Sure as shit. They probably happy  
he's dead so's they can close his  
file.

Murphy sighs and looks up.

EXT. GANG NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE, SOUTH GATE - DAY

A figure in the window retreats under Murphy's gaze.

EXT. GANG HOUSE, STREET, SOUTH GATE - DAY

Murphy pushes his way through a hedge into the next yard.

He walks up the steps and knocks on the door.

The voice of a WOMAN answers from the other side.

WOMAN

I'm not buying anything, you hear?

MURPHY

I'm not selling anything.

WOMAN

Then what do you want?

MURPHY

LAPD, ma'am. I'm investigating the  
death of a boy next door last week.

WOMAN

You got some ID?

Murphy fishes his wallet and opens it badge out against a  
small window next to the door.

After a moment, the door opens.

MURPHY

Thanks. I didn't mean to alarm  
you.

WOMAN

This neighborhood ain't no good no  
more. Nobody cares about each  
other, just out for themselves.

MURPHY

How long have you lived here?

WOMAN

A long time.

MURPHY

I saw you through the window. You like to keep an eye on things?

WOMAN

Any time I see someone, yeah.

MURPHY

Did you see someone on the night that boy was killed?

WOMAN

He was a good boy. Not like the other thugs in that house. He mowed my lawn. He wanted to be an architect.

MURPHY

So help me find the three men who came here that night.

WOMAN

Three?

MURPHY

That's what the boy's uncle and the other witnesses reported.

WOMAN

Then they wasn't looking too close, in all the excitement, I guess.

MURPHY

And you were?

She pulls out a pair of binoculars from a side table next to the door.

WOMAN

You got that right. They was all painted black and all, but I still got a good look at 'em.

MURPHY

So ... how many were there?

INT. MURPHY'S UNMARKED SQUAD CARD, HARBOR FREEWAY - DAY

Murphy's chewing on a snack bar.

MURPHY

I just called the paintball range. They gave me some more names. I've got three more to run on that filter ... the plastic pellets, that's right. And add Compton to the location range. Now, let's see...

He fumbles open his notebook and swerves the car. The snack bar falls.

MURPHY (CON'T) (CONT'D)

...Here it is. Okay, first name Gunnar, last name Larsen, that's G-U-N...

INT. DARRYL'S HOUSE, OFFICE, HUNTINGTON PARK - EVENING

Darryl, Gunnar, Marty and Michael sit on chairs in pairs, opposite each other, separated by about 3 feet of empty space.

Behind them, RICK HANSEN, 28, is aiming a digital video camera at them.

RICK

Okay, just sort of make movements, like you're picking up a glass or eating or something.

MICHAEL

You really think this is going to work?

RICK

I'll make the original grainy and blend it all together. Only a really close look would tip anyone off.

MICHAEL

I don't know--

MARTY

--You got any better ideas?

RICK

They only take like a frame every minute or so, and I could even bust that down a bit.

DARRYL

I can't wait to see it.

RICK

All right, let's have some action guys. Remember try to be realistic, not jerking around and stuff. I'll be overlaying you onto real people, not robots.

MICHAEL

This is never going to work.

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT, OUTER HALLWAY, COMPTON - NIGHT

Darryl stands in front of a door, staring at the number, 666.

He knocks.

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT, INNER HALLWAY, COMPTON - NIGHT

Tom opens the door.

DARRYL

Hi, Tom.

TOM

Kinda late for a social call, isn't it?

DARRYL

I didn't wake you, did I?

Tom sidles a shoulder past Darryl for a left-right glance down the hallway.

TOM

Get inside.

He pulls Darryl in.

INT. LAPD HOMICIDE DIVISION, OFFICE, DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

Murphy is brewing tea.

The phone rings.

MURPHY

Murphy ... Okay ... Can you message them up? Thanks.

He hangs up and sits at the computer.

On his computer screen an icon is blinking. He clicks it. Some text and photographs appear.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

Well, hello there, Tom. Nice to meet you.

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM, COMPTON - NIGHT

A place where a bachelor has lived way too long. Gun racks on one wall, a photo pin-board on another: shots of cars, trucks, machinery and rednecks in caps.

Dirty clothes drape in random exposure all around, filled in with a clutter of plates, bowls and cups whose contents are in various stages of chemical decomposition.

It's somber, the shades drawn. Only a lamp in the shape of a tire dimly illuminates a corner of the room.

Darryl sits uncomfortably on a crappy couch, like the ones you see in everyone's basement.

Tom stands along the opposite wall, dimmed, arms folded, framed by the gun racks.

TOM

What about your buddies? Why aren't they in on this?

DARRYL

You kidding? No way.  
(beat)  
You can't say anything to them about this, okay?

TOM

I don't know.

DARRYL

I need the money.  
(looking around)  
And you need the money.

TOM

I'll think about it.

DARRYL

Think about what you could do with that kind of dough.  
(MORE)

DARRYL (CONT'D)

I mean, even if you didn't spend it, you could invest it in short-term--

TOM

--No offence, but I have a hard time trusting stock brokers, especially ones who are broke.

EXT. CABIN, LAKE HUGHES - DAY

Marty is shovelling dirt. At his back stands a ramshackle summer cabin, surrounded by trees on three sides, with a small lake at the back.

He wipes sweat from his brow, looks up, listens, as the wind carries the sound of a telephone ringing.

He darts towards the cabin.

EXT. FIELD, LA HILLS - DAY

Darryl, Gunnar, Tony and Tom are practice shooting.

In front of them, at a range of about 60 yards, are some cans, busted bottles, styrofoam chunks and rotten oranges.

They fire in procession, with Tom last.

TONY

Nice shootin', Tom.

TOM

Double or nothing, boys? What do you say, all in?

DARRYL

You know I'm broke.

Gunnar shakes his head.

TONY

I'm in. What's the target?

Tom scans, then his eyes fall on Darryl.

TOM

Give me one of your shoes?

DARRYL

What?

TOM  
One of your shoes.

Tom extends his arm, holding out a hand.

DARRYL  
What the hell? Come on, Tom.

Tom starts moving toward Darryl.

DARRYL (CONT'D)  
You want one of my shoes? Is that  
it? Okay, here. here!

Darryl stumbles and falls as he tries to pull off his hiking boot.

Tony laughs nervously. Tom is all business. Gunnar shakes his head, sadly.

DARRYL (CONT'D)  
Here you go. One of my shoes. Why  
not? It's all just fun, right?  
What the fuck...

He hurls the boot menacingly at Tom, who catches it deftly.

With a grin and a howl he flings the boot 40 yards out into the field, where it replies with a thud before rolling to a halt.

Gunnar coaxes Darryl up off the ground.

TOM  
You first.

Tony takes a step forward, then a look over towards Darryl and Gunnar.

TONY  
Okay.

He aims and fires. The boot twitches.

TOM  
Not bad.

Tom drops prone for his shot, propping up his rifle, legs bent and apart, squinting.

He shoots.

TONY  
Not even close! Woo-Hoo.

Tom gets up, slaps the dust of himself.

Darryl starts a trek towards his boot.

TONY (CONT'D)  
That's two hundred big ones for  
Tooon-eeey.

As Darryl passes Tony.

DARRYL  
Chump change.

TOM  
Maybe I hit the same spot you  
did...

TONY  
What?

Gunnar lowers a spotting scope, shakes his head.

GUNNAR  
I don't think so.

TOM  
We'll shoot again.

TONY  
What you mean, re-shoot?

TOM  
Double or nothing. Same target.

Tony looks out on the field as Darryl approaches his boot.

TOM (CONT'D)  
Me first this time.

Tom twirls and aims down-field.

Darryl stoops for his boot.

GUNNAR  
Darryl! Darryl, look out!

As Darryl spins around.

Tom shoots. The boot jumps. Darryl does not flinch.

TONY  
Holy shit.

TOM  
 (shouts)  
 All right, Darryl. Now we know we  
 can trust each other.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE, HUNTINGTON PARK - EVENING

Marty and Lisa stand in line behind a swaying Hispanic YOUTH,  
 on meth, or liquor, or both.

Marty's got some milk and bread under an arm. Lisa's  
 rummaging in her purse.

Marty watches the youth pass a 10 dollar bill to the SALES  
 CLERK.

The clerk gives him the change.

YOUTH  
 What's this?

CLERK  
 Your change, four dollars and  
 twenty cents.

YOUTH  
 But I gave you a twenty.

CLERK  
 You gave me a 10. Five-eighty for  
 the cigarettes and four-twenty  
 change.

YOUTH  
 (angering fast)  
 I'm telling you it was a twenty!

MARTY  
 I think you actually gave him a  
 ten. I sort of saw--

The youth spins around. Lisa starts.

YOUTH  
 --And who the fuck are you?

MARTY  
 Nobody...

YOUTH  
 That's right. So mind your own  
 damn business, nobody.

The clerk's eyes lock with Marty's.

LISA  
Marty...

MARTY  
(to clerk)  
If you call the cops, I'll back up  
your story.

YOUTH  
You some kind of good-guy bandito  
or something? You some kind of  
tough guy?

MARTY  
Yeah, I guess I am.

YOUTH  
All right, tough guy. I don't have  
time to play your game tonight.  
I'll see you round.

He brushes past Marty nervously.

CLERK  
Gee ... thanks.

LISA  
Marty, what's gotten into you?

INT. LAPD HOMICIDE DIVISION, COPY ROOM, DOWNTOWN - MORNING

Murphy pulls a scrolled paper from cubby hole along a wall in  
a room filled with copiers and fax machines.

He looks it over.

MURPHY  
Son of a bitch...

EXT. RIO HONDO GOLF CLUB, FAIRWAY, DOWNEY - MORNING

Darryl and Michael sit in a golf cart in the middle of a wide  
fairway.

A few yards away, Michael is setting up a shot.

MICHAEL  
I'm sorry I won't be there, Darryl.

DARRYL  
Shut up already.

MICHAEL  
I just don't see the point. We  
should let the police take him.

DARRYL  
I know. But it's personal, you  
know. It's a matter of pride now,  
especially for Marty.

MICHAEL  
You know, I think this whole  
experience has changed him.

DARRYL  
For the better?

MICHAEL  
Jury's still out on that...

DARRYL  
Oh, yeah?

MICHAEL  
Let's just say he's still exploring  
the acceptable boundaries of his  
new personality.

DARRYL  
And what about me?

MICHAEL  
You?

DARRYL  
Yeah. Have I changed?

MICHAEL  
What do you think?

A plink as Marty hits the ball.

Darryl and Michael look up.

DARRYL  
Nice shot. I wish I could do that.  
I suck at golf.

MICHAEL  
No, you haven't changed, Darryl.

Michael kicks off the brake and steps on the accelerator.

INT. PAINTBALL RANGE, LOUNGE, PASADENA - DAY

Murphy is at the hostess counter.

MURPHY  
Hello again.

HOSTESS  
Detective Murphy, right?

MURPHY  
You have a good memory.

HOSTESS  
You have a memorable face.

MURPHY  
I'm sorry to bother, but I was  
wondering if you keep any archives  
of your surveillance video?

Murphy points to a camera on the wall.

HOSTESS  
Oh. You're in luck. Our IT guy is  
here right now. I'll get him for  
you.

MURPHY  
Thanks.

She ducks into a doorway.

HOSTESS (O.S.)  
Rick? Rick, have you got a minute?

INT. DARRYL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN, INGLEWOOD - DAY

Lisa, Tamara and Susan sit around a table with cookies and  
tea.

SUSAN  
I feel like he's holding back, like  
he's got secrets or something.

TAMARA  
They all have secrets, darling.  
I'm pretty sure Darryl watches porn  
on the Internet.

SUSAN  
What's wrong with that?

LISA

(taken aback)

Well, whatever it is, they'll either tell you when they're ready, or eventually they get caught out in a lie. Either way, you always find out. Like today. Marty says he's playing golf, then taking Darryl up to my parent's cottage to do some fishing.

SUSAN

And you don't believe him?

LISA

It doesn't matter what I believe. If he's not, sooner or later, I'll find out ... and he'll regret it.

INT. PAINTBALL RANGE, OFFICE, PASADENA - DAY

Murphy is hovering over Rick's shoulder, squinting and moving his glasses around.

RICK

Okay, this sequence here starts at 8 p.m. It's on two-minute picture intervals. You can watch the clock at the top right.

MURPHY

Fascinating...

Rick shudders, he's starting to sweat.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

There. Stop. Stop it there.

RICK

Here?

MURPHY

No, you went past it, can you back it up?

On the screen a grainy interior panorama of the restaurant jerks along like stop-frame animation.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

There!

The sequencing stops.

MURPHY (CONT'D)  
Can you zoom in at all?

RICK (O.S.)  
(hesitates)  
Ah, no. Not with this particular  
version of the software.

Murphy frowns, shakes his head.

MURPHY  
Well, what do you know?

RICK  
Sir?

MURPHY  
I never would have believed it.

RICK  
I don't understand.

MURPHY  
Forget it. You've been a big help.

Murphy pats Rick on the back and lumbers out of the room.

Rick releases his stress with a sigh as he picks up the  
phone.

EXT. ROGERS PARK, POND, INGLEWOOD - DAY

TWO BOYS are jostling at the edge of the pond in shorts.

As they roughhouse, one falls in.

BOY 1  
Hey!

BOY 2  
You okay? Sorry.

BOY 1  
I hit my leg on something. There's  
something down here.

He ducks under, then resurfaces. He drags a bicycle out and  
up the bank.

BOY 2  
Whoa! Nice find!

The boys clear muck off the bike.

BOY 2 (CONT'D)  
Hannah Montana is so you.

INT. DARRYL'S HOUSE, BACK DECK, INGLEWOOD - DAY

Lisa, Tamara and Susan stand on a back deck, smoking. There are flowers in boxes, garden furniture and bird feeders.

LISA  
You know what I say? Let them make their mistakes, you can't stop 'em.

TAMARA  
Darryl makes a lot of mistakes.

LISA  
Men are like children, and you have to treat them that way. Their emotional lives are filled with bumps and scrapes, so you just need to carry around a kind of psychological first aid kit to settle them down.

TAMARA  
Sounds like a lot of work to me.

SUSAN  
Michael certainly doesn't want to any settling down.

LISA  
Of course not. None of them do. Until they meet a woman who lets them.

TAMARA  
Lets them what?

LISA  
Lets them be.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH, DOWNEY - DAY

Marty is in a phone booth. In the car nearby sit Michael and Darryl.

MARTY  
Yes, can you connect me with Detective William Murphy, please?  
Thank you.

EXT. CABIN, LAKE HUGHES - TWILIGHT

Inside the cabin it's small, rustic, dark.

A sofa is set against a draped window.

Darryl and Marty are kneeling on the sofa, peering through the drapes, scanning the road and driveway for movement.

MARTY

You told him 8 o'clock, right?

DARRYL

Yeah. I said they go out to an AA meeting every Friday night in Palmdale. Regular attendees, always back just after midnight.

MARTY

All right.

DARRYL

What time you got?

MARTY

Almost seven now.

DARRYL

Michael wanted to be here, you know.

MARTY

I know.

DARRYL

It's just--

MARTY

--I know.

DARRYL

I feel like it's all sort of my fault.

MARTY

What?

DARRYL

Because of Kirsten's bike, you know? And being frustrated about it.

MARTY  
Darryl, you're allowed to be  
frustrated, angry even.

DARRYL  
Yeah ... but that kid. Why did he  
have to be there?

MARTY  
I don't know. I just know Tom's  
the one who's going to pay..

DARRYL  
For him. For killing that boy.

MARTY  
Right.

DARRYL  
I could use a drink. You?

MARTY  
No.

DARRYL  
Do you mind if I--

MARTY  
--There's beer in the kitchen,  
under the counter.

Darryl stumbles over a side table as he awkwardly gets off  
the sofa.

The table shakes and a telephone on it clangs. He steadies  
himself on the table.

DARRYL  
Man, my legs fell asleep.

He doesn't notice that his stumble has pulled the telephone  
cable from the wall.

MARTY  
Come on. Keep it down. There's  
nobody home, remember?

Darryl wobbles out of the room.

INT. MURPHY'S UNMARKED SQUAD CAR, FREEWAY - TWILIGHT

MURPHY

Oh, yeah? In a pond? No kidding.

(beat)

No, just leave it in the impound yard. I'd like to return it myself, if that's all right.

(beat)

Okay, thanks.

EXT. CABIN, LAKE HUGHES - TWILIGHT

Darryl takes up a position on the couch again.

He passes a bottle to Marty.

DARRYL

I brought you one, in case you changed your mind.

MARTY

Thanks.

They both take a drink from their bottles.

DARRYL

Michael says you've changed.

MARTY

What?

DARRYL

Michael thinks you've changed since ... you know.

MARTY

How?

DARRYL

He didn't really say.

MARTY

Maybe he's right.

DARRYL

Oh, yeah?

The men let the drapes slide away and regard one another closely.

MARTY

I don't know how to say it, Darryl. But that boy's death somehow put life into me. Like I absorbed a part of his spirit. Something opened up, something that was dead before. I'd give it back to reverse what happened, but I can't, so I'm going to run with it.

DARRYL

Run with it?

MARTY

One thing I know ... we have to nail Tom Largent to the wall. That's why we're here

DARRYL

I'm just here because I'm afraid to go to jail.

MARTY

That's just your mind talking.

DARRYL

What else?

MARTY

Your soul, Darryl. Or your spirit, maybe.

DARRYL

Never met either of them.

The men take another drink.

MARTY

Do you ever feel like you're sort of just living every day hoping that tomorrow will be better? You know, if only...

DARRYL

If only what?

MARTY

Just if only ... if only this or that, him or her, up or down, whatever.

DARRYL

Like if only my wife liked sex?

MARTY

Exactly. It's like digging holes in the sand, every time you get close, it caves in on you and you have to start over.

DARRYL

Yeah. That pretty much describes my life.

MARTY

It's how everyone lives, Darryl. It's insane.

DARRYL

It's the system. It's all there is.

MARTY

No. It's just the mind. It's just the mind getting caught in a trap, not realizing there's a way out.

DARRYL

So what's the way out?

MARTY

I guess we'll find out.

EXT. DIRT ROAD, LAKE HUGHES - TWILIGHT

It's getting dark. Tom and Tony are walking away from their car towards the cabin, dressed in black. Over Tony's shoulder is a duffle bag.

TONY

You really going to cut Gunnar out?

TOM

That's right. He won't get shit. Big fucking coward, if you ask me.

TONY

He sounded pretty bad. I got food poisoning once. From lettuce. I mean, you'd think it would be from meat, or some canned stuff, but--

TOM

--You know what else? Darryl's out too.

TONY

What?

TOM

We're gonna split it, Tony. Just you and me. And those pussies won't have the balls to do anything about it.

TONY

You mean 50-50?

Tom looks at Tony. The expression on his face reads 90-10.

INT. MURPHY'S UNMARKED SQUAD CARD, FREEWAY - NIGHT

Murphy is on the phone, a map clutched over the steering wheel.

MURPHY

That's right. On the road again. Heading for, let's see...

(cocks head to see map)

...Lake Hughes. It's about 20 miles north of Santa Clarita. I'll be there in a half an hour. It won't take long, just a collar and back.

(beat)

Yes, I ate the Kiwi fruit you packed.

(beat)

Yeah, yeah, the walnuts too...

EXT. CABIN, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

Back inside the cabin. Darryl is draining his beer. He gurgles and slops as he whispers in panic.

DARRYL

What's that? Did you see that?

MARTY

What? Where?

DARRYL

(pointing)

There! You see. Fuck, they're early.

MARTY

Shh.

DARRYL  
I hope Murphy's early too.

EXT. BUSHES, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

Tom and Tony are hunched behind a bush. They're about 100 yards from the house, across a dirt road.

TONY  
You see the spot?

TOM  
Yeah. There's the apple tree.

TONY  
What now?

TOM  
We wait. Until 8:30.

TONY  
There's no car. They're gone.

TOM  
Yeah, seems that way, doesn't it?

TONY  
So--

TOM  
--So we wait.

EXT. MURPHY'S UNMARKED SQUAD CARD, DIRT ROAD, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

Murphy is navigating a rough dirt road. Ahead, a reflector shines in Murphy's headlights.

He kills the lights and the engine, rolling to a stop.

He gets out and sees Tom's truck, which has been driven off the road and into the woods a ways.

He looks around, then starts walking.

EXT. BUSHES, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

Tom and Tony are whispering, hidden behind some bushes.

TOM  
Did you hear a motor?

TONY

No.

TOM

Sounded like a Ford.

TONY

I can't hear anything.

TOM

It stopped. Something's not right.

TONY

Wait, I hear it now.

The sound of a motor increases in volume.

A car drives by.

TONY (CONT'D)

Was it a Ford?

TOM

(smiles)

Yep.

EXT. DIRT ROAD, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

Murphy is hiding behind a tree. He sees Tom and Tony as the Ford's headlights pass.

He moves silently into the forest, angling towards the cabin.

INT. CABIN, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

DARRYL

I think they're still there.

MARTY

It's too dark. Why the hell don't they come out? And where's Murphy?

A noise, a bump.

EXT. CABIN, YARD, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

Tom and Tony are slinking towards the house.

INT. CABIN, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

Marty pulls a gun out from under the couch.

MARTY  
Stand over there!

DARRYL  
Where did you get that?

Another bump, a creak.

MURPHY (O.S.)  
Marty, it's Detective Murphy.

Marty's shoulders drop, his mouth opens.

DARRYL  
Jesus!

Murphy walks in.

MURPHY  
They're out front.

MARTY  
I know. We saw them.

MURPHY  
Is that a gun?

MARTY  
I wasn't sure--

MURPHY  
--Put it away. You've had your  
fun.

MARTY  
Okay.

Marty puts the gun back under the couch.

DARRYL  
They're coming!

INT. MARTY'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM, HUNTINGTON PARK - NIGHT

Lisa and Owen are watching cops and robbers shoot it up on TV.

LISA  
I don't know if you should be  
watching this.

OWEN  
Come on, Mom. This is kids' stuff.  
Look, nobody's even getting hit.

EXT. CABIN, YARD, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

Tony is digging beside an apple tree with Tom hovering over him.

A clunk.

TONY  
There's something hollow here.

TOM  
(grabs shovel)  
Gimme that!

Tom takes over, faster, more precise.

Then stops. Stoops. Pulls out a box.

INT. CABIN, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

MURPHY  
Looks like it's show time.

EXT. CABIN, YARD, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

Tom is opening the box.

TOM  
What the fuck?

EXT. CABIN, FRONT DOOR, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

The front door to the cabin opens.

Marty emerges.

MARTY  
You like it?

EXT. CABIN, YARD, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

Tom is holding up a hockey card.

EXT. CABIN, FRONT DOOR, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

MARTY  
It's Wayne Gretzky.  
(beat)  
His rookie card.

EXT. CABIN, YARD, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

TOM  
You're dead, McManus! Do you hear  
me? You're fucking dead!

TONY  
What's going on?

Tom pulls a handgun from a belt behind his back.

EXT. CABIN, FRONT DOOR, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

Marty dives back into the cabin.

EXT. CABIN, YARD, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

Tom is racing forward. He fires.

INT. CABIN, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

Murphy draws his weapon with one hand and throws Darryl to the ground with the other as a mirror shatters beside them and Marty rolls into the room.

Another shot.

MURPHY  
Call for help!

Darryl pulls the phone down and fumbles with it.

MARTY  
He's coming in!

Murphy pulls the gun from under the couch and lobs it to Marty.

MURPHY  
Stay low.

DARRYL  
The phone's dead!

Another shot. This time a lamp shade explodes.

MURPHY  
Get into the kitchen. Move!

Murphy heads towards the door, hunched over, as Darryl and Marty scramble away.

EXT. CABIN, REAR, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

Tom is slinking around the cabin, with Tony not far behind.

TONY  
What the hell is going on?

Tom waves an arm as he dashes away.

TOM  
Stay here and watch the front.  
Stop him if he tries to run.

INT. CABIN, KITCHEN, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

Darkness. Darryl's under the counter. Marty is on the floor next to him, clutching the gun.

MURPHY (O.S.)  
Drop your weapons! This is  
Detective Murphy, LAPD. We've got  
officers in the area. Drop your  
weapons now!

INT. MARTY'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM, HUNTINGTON PARK - NIGHT

Lisa and Owen huddle on the couch.

Gunshots come from the TV.

Lisa cringes.

LISA  
Nobody gets shot, huh?

OWEN

Whoa! Did you see that? He blew that guy's head right off.

INT. CABIN, KITCHEN, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

The back door bursts open. Tom appears.

EXT. CABIN, FRONT DOOR, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

Murphy darts his head around the door. Then again. Then he bolts down the steps.

TONY (O.S.)

Hey!

A gunshot rings out.

INT. CABIN, KITCHEN, LAKE HUGHES - NIGHT

Tom hears the shot and wheels around.

Marty rises up over the counter and points his gun. He fires.

The bullet slams into the back of Tom's thigh.

Tom clutches his leg and spins back around, falling.

He fires several shots towards the counter as he drops to his knees.

Murphy bolts in and tackles Tom from behind hard, knocking the weapon out of his hand.

DARRYL (O.S.)

Ohhhh. Shit. I'm hit--

TOM

--You're going down with me, McManus, you hear me?

Murphy is wrestling Tom's arms into handcuffs.

MURPHY

Shut your mouth or I'll shut it for you. You're under arrest. Let's see, for murder, attempted murder, armed robbery ... and ... oh yeah, trespassing.

DARRYL (O.S.)  
Ohhhh.

MARTY  
Darryl?

Marty bends down under the counter.

MARTY (CONT'D)  
Darryl? You okay, buddy?

DARRYL  
I think I'm hit.

MARTY  
What? Where?

DARRYL  
Not sure.

MARTY  
Don't move.

Darryl passes out.

MURPHY (O.S.)  
You have the right to remain  
silent. Anything you say can and  
will be used against you in a court  
of law--

MARTY  
--Darryl! Darryl!

EXT. DARRYL'S HOUSE, BACK LANE, INGLEWOOD - DAY

Murphy's car pulls up. The trunk's half open, tied down,  
with a bike inside.

EXT. DARRYL'S HOUSE, BACK YARD, INGLEWOOD - DAY

Kirsten and Owen are playing catch.

Susan is curled on Michael's lap in a swing.

Darryl's in a wheelchair.

Lisa, Marty and Tamara are in deck chairs around Darryl.

DARRYL

I'm telling you, another inch in either direction and I could have lost Mr. Happy and maybe the Twins too.

LISA

I bet Tamara's sure glad about that.

TAMARA

I guess so--

DARRYL

--What?

MURPHY (O.S.)

Am I interrupting?

Murphy wheels in the bike.

KIRSTEN

Is that my bike?

MURPHY

The one and only.

Kirsten runs over to take the bike.

KIRSTEN

I can't believe it! Thank you!

Murphy smiles as she jumps on and rides.

OWEN

Hey, wait up!

He chases her around the house.

MURPHY

Puppy love, huh?

DARRYL

No way.

LISA

Why not?

TAMARA

Can I get you a drink, Detective?

MURPHY

No, thank you. I just wanted to drop off the bike and say good bye. Especially to you, Marty.

MARTY

Me?

MURPHY

You know, I could use a little stroll, stretch the legs a bit.

MICHAEL

Should I come along?

MARTY

(to Murphy)

Do I need a lawyer?

MURPHY

No, it's all right. Just wanted to ask you something.

MARTY

Okay.

LISA

If he's not back in half an hour, I'm calling the cops.

EXT. ROGERS PARK, POND, INGLEWOOD - DAY

Murphy and Marty are standing by the water.

MARTY

You found it in there?

MURPHY

Yep. Just around the corner from Darryl's house. All along.

MARTY

Weird.

MURPHY

Sure is.

A silence.

MARTY

Sorry it turned out the way it did.

MURPHY  
Two dead, two injured. Pretty  
messy.

MARTY  
But it's over, right?

MURPHY  
Is it?

MARTY  
(beat)  
You said you wanted to ask me  
something?

MURPHY  
Did I mention I have a son?

MARTY  
No.

MURPHY  
That's right. We never really got  
to know each other, did we? Well,  
he's quite a bit older than your  
boy now.

(beat)  
He's got a real talent with  
computers. I guess you'd call him  
a hacker, you know?

MARTY  
A real brain, huh?

MURPHY  
Exactly.

MARTY  
Just like his father--

MURPHY  
--I showed him the surveillance  
tapes.

MARTY  
What?

MURPHY  
You know, the ones your friend Rick  
made?

MARTY  
I have no idea what you're talking  
about.

MURPHY

Of course not. Well, anyway, Rick said he couldn't zoom in ... something about the software. So I mentioned it to my kid. And you know what?

MARTY

What?

MURPHY

I took him a copy of the tape, and he found a way to zoom in. Isn't that amazing? That boy's going to make millions, I'm telling you. He's got this talent, you know?

MARTY

I should be getting back...

MURPHY

I need to know it's over, Marty.

MARTY

It's over.

MURPHY

Because Tony didn't have to die, and I didn't have to be the one to shoot him. That's on your head.

A silence.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

Just remember, there's a line between bravery and stupidity. Make sure you don't fall over it.

Marty nods.

MARTY

What about Tom?

MURPHY

What about him?

MARTY

Do you think he'll ever get out? I mean--

MURPHY

--I think he's down for the count.

MARTY

Right.

Marty starts to walk away.

MARTY (CONT'D)

You coming?

MURPHY

I'm going to stay here a while.

Murphy pulls a sandwich from a pocket and unwraps it. He holds it up.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

Ham and cheese ... Do me a favor,  
if you ever happen to meet my wife,  
don't mention the sandwich.

MARTY

--You want me to lie for you?

MURPHY

Get out of here.

Murphy turns to face the pond as Marty walks away.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

Oh, Marty?

Marty turns. Murphy doesn't. Marty is looking at his back.

MARTY

Yeah?

MURPHY

Do you know what his name was?

MARTY

Whose name?

MURPHY

The boy.

MARTY

Oh. No.

MURPHY

It was Debraun. Debraun Wilkins.  
He wanted to be an architect.

INT. FEDERAL PENITENTIARY, CELL, ATWATER - NIGHT

Tom is in a cell, shirtless, on the top bunk, reading a magazine. He looks up.

Two huge BLACK GUYS are standing at the open cell door. They move in.

TOM

What the fuck do you want?

A scuffle ensues as Tom is overpowered by one of the men.

The other man moves around in front of them.

He pulls out a homemade knife.

BLACK GUY

Allow me to introduce myself. Sam Wlikins. You killed my boy.

He thrusts the knife forward into Tom's gut as the other guy holds a giant hand over his mouth.

WILKINS

It not very sharp. Sorry about that, mother-fucker. This might take a while...

INT. BANK, DOWNTOWN - DAY

Marty is in a bank at a teller's window. A TELLER stands across from him.

MARTY

I'd like to set up a trust account.

TELLER

Certainly. What kind of trust, sir?

MARTY

A memorial trust, for a college scholarship.

TELLER

All right ... I can help you set something up. Let's see, first we'll need a name for the fund. Did you have something in mind?

MARTY  
The Debraun Wilkins Memorial  
Scholarship Fund.

EXT. MARTY'S HOUSE, BACK YARD, HUNTINGTON PARK - EVENING

Marty and Owen are playing catch.

MARTY  
I was thinking. Your birthday's  
coming up in a few weeks--

Marty throws, Owen catches.

OWEN  
--So?

MARTY  
So what do you want?

OWEN  
I don't know. A car would be cool.

Owen throws, Marty catches.

MARTY  
I know what year you were born,  
son. You're not getting a car.

OWEN  
A dirt bike?

Marty throws, Owen catches.

MARTY  
What about your own computer?

OWEN  
Really?

MARTY  
Yeah.

OWEN  
Awesome!

Owen throws, Marty catches.

MARTY  
Not too nerdy for you?

OWEN

Dad, get with the times. Nerds are  
the cool guys these days.

MARTY

Oh, well in that case...

Marty flings the ball awkwardly over the fence, then chases  
it like a spastic, tackling Owen along the way.

They laugh and wrestle in a kind of masculine embrace.

THE END