

Bronx, Inc. Pilot

By

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IN BLACKNESS:

EXT. SKY - DAY

Aerial shot: New York City.

City traffic, HORNS and SIRENS fill the air.

MUSIC UP: - "Stayin Alive" by The BeeGees.

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

A pair of crusty booths seen walking on a busy city sidewalk. Rico Russo (23), wiry frame, Italian and Puerto Rican, is city educated with a big heart. He wears a white ginny tee, open blue work shirt, Yankee cap with headphones, and holding all his gear and a small ladder. He struts down the street, losing tools, sipping a soda, checking out women while side stepping dog excrement.

MUSIC OUT.

Rico struggles with his gear near the entrance to a small midrise building.

EXT. ALARMAS SECURITY STOREFRONT - DAY

Typical city noise, foot traffic, and music blare.

A distant verbal argument becomes dominant.

Two PUNKS watch an ELDERLY BLACK LADY (late 60s) as she walks along the sidewalk. The punks strike. She pulls her purse back and swings it with all her might. She connects with the head of one of the punks.

ELDERLY LADY
You assholes don't scare me!

The door of Alarmas Security opens as the owner, FRANK RUSSO (50s) steps out.

Frank wears SUNGLASSES, a checkered blazer and white shoes. He's your stereotypical low-level Italian con artist.

RICO (V.O.)
This is my dad, Frank Russo. A Sicilian narcissist from the upper East side. I admit it, he grew up in a tough neighborhood, in a rough time. We heard all the stories.
(MORE)

RICO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 How poor he and his family were,
 the shitty jobs he worked... The
 stolen merchandise he and his
 brothers had to move for his wise
 guys friends. The good news is
 Crime is up and business is
 booming.

Frank watches the scene in front of him but does not react.
 He turns to check his reflection in the darkened glass of his
 store window, patting down his hair.

The Punks knock the Elderly Lady to the ground, rip her
 JEWELRY from her neck, snatch her purse and run.

The woman gets up on her feet, glares at Frank.

ELDERLY LADY
 Didn't you see me in trouble?

Frank puts a fresh stick of gum in his mouth.

ELDERLY LADY (CONT'D)
 They could have killed me!

Frank takes a few calculated strides closer.

FRANK
 Sounds like you could use some
 protection.

ELDERLY LADY
 PROTECTION! What I need is a gun to
 cap their ass!

FRANK
 I can also help your get one.

Frank grins then nods towards the window. The woman reads the
 sign.

POV SHOT:

ALARMAS SECURITY SIGN.

ELDERLY LADY
 I'm an old woman on welfare, I
 can't afford anything expensive.

Frank fake pouts, then lowers his sunglasses until his eyes
 peek over the rims.

FRANK
 (condescending)
 I'm sure we can come to an agreement. Ma'am, why don't you come inside for a minute and speak to our security expert.

Frank guides the woman into the store.

INT. ALARMS SECURITY - DAY

Inside the shabby store, are dated security products, ringing phones ringing, and some regular faces.

DAISY (20s) a busty, multi-talented employee, counts SCREWS and ALARM SWITCHES on a desk.

CARMINE (60s) Frank's older, mob-reject brother sports greasy thin hair, moblike shirt, and chewing an unlit cigar. He flirts with Daisy as he reads the NY POST. Headline reads 'GUN VIOLENCE ON THE RISE'.

MECHANICS play Halo and alarm bells periodically are tested.

FRANK
 (*charmingly*)
 Ma'am, you can speak about getting a cheap alarm system to our security expert, Mr. Carmine who is hiding behind the newspaper.

Frank glares at Daisy as he grabs the RINGING phone. Daisy stares back, chomping on a piece of gum, clueless. Franks listens, then:

FRANK (CONT'D)
 Now what? What! Where's the freggin van? Listen to me, you've been gone long enough. Get the job done and get your ass back here!

He SLAMS the receiver down hard.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 Son of a bitch!

The Elderly Lady looks at him with concern from across the room.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 Don't worry, we have flexible financing and the smartest and best mechanics in the Bronx.

RICO (V.O.)
 Bullshit! Our alarm systems suck.
 (beat)
 A little about me. I got a D in
 English, failed Algebra, and most
 of my classes was in a small
 trailer. Here's my story...

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

A MAN walks out of the apartment building.

RICO
 Hey! Hold the door!

Two KIDS race by Rico and slip in just before the door shuts behind them.

RICO (CONT'D)
 For crying out loud, thanks!

INT. APARTMENT LOBBY - DAY

Rico finally shuffles towards the elevator door. He stretches a finger through the ladder's rung to hit the elevator button.

The boy runs up to Rico and watches him wait. He giggles to himself.

RICO
 YO! What's so funny?

BOY
 It's broken.

The boy runs up the stairs. Rico groans again, aggravated.

INT. APARTMENT STAIRWELL - DAY

The walls of the stairwell are covered either with WATER STAINS or GRAFFITI. LOUD MUSIC can be heard from the floor above. Rico reaches the second landing.

RICO
 (muttering to himself)
 'Easy installation' my ass.

He kicks GARBAGE as he trudges up more stairs and reaches the source of the now blaring music - an opened apartment door near the landing. Two rough looking STONERS are sitting in his way on the next flight of stairs.

RICO (CONT'D)

Move!

The stoners leer at him then move aside.

Finally, he makes it to the fourth-floor landing and exhales.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Rico looks at the apartment number on the door in front of him.

POV SHOT:

APARTMENT NUMBER 4A.

Rico looks down the endless hallway.

RICO
Sweet Jesus, kill me now.

INT. APARTMENT 4J DOORWAY - DAY

Rico KNOCKS on the door. It swings open and a rode hard Hispanic woman, MRS. VEGA (late 20s) stands with a CIGARETTE dangling from her mouth.

She holds a TODDLER by the arm. She speaks with a strong Hispanic accent.

RICO
I'm Rico from Alarmas Security. I'm
scheduled to--

The toddler tries to make an escape. Mrs. Vega yanks him back.

MRS. VEGA
GET BACK IN THE APARTMENT!

The toddler CRIES and runs into the apartment.

MRS. VEGA (CONT'D)
You're late.

Rico follows her inside.

INT. APARTMENT 4J LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mrs. Vega ashes her cigarette on the floor. She points Rico towards the windows near the fire escape.

RICO
 Anything I need to know? Damage and
 whatnot?

MRS. VEGA
 Just get the job done.

Mrs. Vega grabs the toddler and heads into a bedroom,
 SLAMMING the door shut.

TWO BOYS run around, chasing and hitting each other.

RICO
 Seguro.

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - AFTERNOON

Carmine sits reading the paper.

GENO, late teens, dark hair, Frank's younger son and spitting
 image, wears a bandana around his head and always has a gold
 chain around his neck.

Geno sits behind the counter tinkering with an ALARM PANEL as
 staticky police reports come through a police scanner.

GENO
 Ay, Uncle Carmine. Whaddya think of
 me asking Daisy out this weekend?

Carmine doesn't look up from his paper.

CARMINE
 She's too old and expensive for
 you, kid. Stick to the high girls.

GENO
 I'm mature! I have money.

CARMINE
 Please. She needs a real man; I'd
 have a better shot than you. Shit,
 when I was your age, I was knee
 deep in broads.

GENO
 You?

Carmine looks up and smiles.

GarCom International commercial appears on TV set showing
 their globe reach and wealth.

Frank enters from his office.

FRANK

Is this what you two chooches are going to do all friggin day? Talk about broads and loaf around on company time? Now, throw out those dead rats in the back room, put a quarter in my meter, and get me a slice.

Geno gets up and leaves.

CARMINE

It says here that Bernard Goetz bought his .38-caliber revolver in Florida.

(beat)

You realize that guy was a hero.

Frank picks up Carmine's note and begins reading.

FRANK

Good, this woman lives on Fordham road.

(beat)

You idiot! You only wrote down six numbers for her phone number. That was a potential sale.

Carmine shrugs and goes back to his paper.

Frank looks at his watch. Then he picks up a handful of service slips and shakes them towards Carmine.

FRANK (CONT'D)

We need to call Artie the Snake and Mitch to do some of these service calls.

CARMINE

Louie Lump says place money on Fresh Frankie to show on the third race at Belmont. He's a 7 to 1.

FRANK

Today! I need this shit done today, fathead.

Carmine huffs and reluctantly takes one slip from Frank.

INT. APARTMENT 4J LIVING ROOM -DAY

Rico is up on his ladder connecting wires and sensors. He smiles getting a glimpse of Yankee stadium from the window and briefly dreams. The two boys start running around the ladder, grabbing onto the rungs shaking the ladder.

RICO
YO! Watch the friggin ladder!

The boys run away.

Rico hops down from the ladder, hitting the window causing cockroaches fall out and scurrying everywhere.

RICO (CONT'D)
(*Shouting*)
Shit! Mrs. Vega! Hey, come here!
tenemos un problema.

The two boys run back in and start stomping on the scattering cockroaches. Mrs. Vega enters.

MRS. VEGA
Que paso?

Rico points to the cockroaches, then the window frame.

MRS. VEGA (CONT'D)
So?

RICO
So! I can't finish wiring this window until someone fixes the frame and gets rid of these.

He gestures to the cockroaches.

MRS. VEGA
Okay. Are you done then?

Rico nods. He glances out the window and sees some street PUNKS messing around his car. He sticks his head out the window.

RICO
YO! Get the fuck away from my car!

Rico packs up his gear quickly.

MRS. VEGA
Here is the money. Your tip is in there too.

Mrs. Vega holds out an ENVELOPE. Rico grabs it quickly, puts it in his mouth, then rushes passed her to the door with all of his things.

RICO
(to Mrs. Vega)
Thanks.

EXT. APARTMENT STOOP - DAY

Rico rushes with his gear down the front steps. A few bicycles are leaning up against Rico's car. The punk kids grab their bikes and take off up the street.

RICO
What the hell is wrong with you!
Ay!

RICO (CONT'D)
(yelling after them)
Freggin' kids! I should kick your
asses! All of ya!

On the side of the car, there's deep scratches.

RICO (CONT'D)
Son of a bitch.

Rico slams his trunk shut after loading all his equipment.
Rico's pager goes off.

RICO (CONT'D)
What now?!

Rico checks the pager. It's a message from his (ex) girlfriend. He rolls his eyes and flies into a rage.

RICO (CONT'D)
Find another boyfriend you evil
bitch! Leave me alone!

Bystanders stare at him in his freak out.

INT. RICO'S CAR - DAY

He plops himself into his car.

He throws the envelope from Mrs. Vega in the passenger's seat and a JOINT flies out, landing on top of a COMMUNITY COLLEGE FLIER.

He looks to and from the joint and the flier.

Music plays - "Hard times" by Run DMC plays.

EXT. RICO'S CAR - DAY

Rico drives off through the streets of The Bronx.

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

PAPER PLATES and NAPKINS are scattered across the counter. Carmine sits scanning his newspaper while Geno eats a slice of pizza straight from the box.

Frank paces in front of the window, wiping his hands with a napkin and occasionally checking outside as a police scanner is heard.

FRANK

Where the hell is Rico? He shoulda been back by now.

CARMINE

Maybe there was a problem with the install?

GENO

(with a mouthful of pizza)

There's always a problem with him. Are you sure you picked up the right kid at the hospital?

FRANK

(to Geno)

Will you quit eating like a gavone, you got schmutz all over your face.
(beat)
Shush!

FRANK (CONT'D)

Did you hear that, a robbery at 1249 Walton Ave. Get your ass ready for your service call, and call Irish to check out that building. That building sounds hot.

Geno grabs a stained napkin then quickly leaves.

CARMINE

Speaking of Rico, there he is.

Frank looks out the window and they all watch as Rico tries to find a parking spot.

FRANK

Shit! He can't double park there; they give tickets there all Goddamn day! When is he going to freggin' learn?

INT. RICO'S CAR - DAY

After shoddily double parking his car, Rico sits for a moment, reflecting on his life choices.

He picks up the educational flier in his front seat.

EXT. ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

Frank steps outside of the store to light a CIGARETTE.

INT. RICO'S CAR - DAY

Rico notices Frank standing outside and his demeanor changes. He folds up the flier and puts it in his pocket, along with the envelope from Mrs. Vega.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

Rico exits his car and heads towards Alarmas. On his way, he passes two women window shopping and conversing:

VANESSA, a tall, beautiful Puerto Rican woman in her 20s. She's kindhearted but blunt. She, like Rico, yearns for something more.

FRAN, a smaller, stocky Black woman also in her 20s. She's fiery and a little rough around the edges.

Store poster on window - 80's dance party, Women free admission.

VANESSA

Say to Fran

Wow! 1980's dance party. That looks like fun. We should go. We can d...

Rico slows and gawks at the women as they pass. He catches up to them and matches their pace, walking backwards while facing them as he strikes up a conversation.

RICO

Hey, excuse me, name's Rico. I work for that alarm company right over there. I'm sure two beautiful women like you could use quality security and I can get you a great deal.

Vanessa and Fran exchange a "Can you believe this guy?" look.

Rico leans in closer to Vanessa.

RICO (CONT'D)

And you know what, I'll *personally* do your in home-hook up, on the house.

Vanessa scoffs.

VANESSA

Save your breath, hot shot. We're not interested in your cheap-ass alarms--

FRAN

--Or whatever else you're offering.

Fran looks Rico up and down. The women CHUCKLE and keep walking. Vanessa peeks back at a dejected Rico.

Rico stops and mournfully watches the women walk away.

RICO

(calling after them)

If you ever need protection, you know where to find me!

His smile vanishes as he sees his reflection on a store window.

Frank saunters up behind Rico. He stands over his shoulder watching the two women walk away, then looks at his son with disappointment.

FRANK

You better move your car before you get a ticket, Romeo. And hurry up, we got work to do.

Frank turns around and starts walking back to Alarmas. Rico sighs and heads to his car.

He finds a TICKET stuck on his windshield.

RICO

You got to be kiddin' me. Shit!

Frank is in the distance and calls out to Rico.

FRANK

I told you not to park there, numbnuts. Let's go, I'm late to a sales lead.

Rico angrily rips the ticket off his windshield along with the wiper blade.

INT. FRANK'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Frank drives his unmarked car down a busy street. Rico looks out the passenger window in thought. Staticky police calls are heard from Frank's handheld radio.

FRANK

What took you so long this morning?
It was a simple job.

RICO

Simple my ass. Rotten windows,
roaches everywhere, decaying
neighborhood. Please, the next
time, send someone else.

Frank CHUCKLES while reading the store business numbers.

PUNKS eye Frank's car then cautiously continue drug dealing.

FRANK

Speaking of decaying, see that
building over there? We lived on
the third floor when you were about
five years old. Look around.

RICO

Jesus, right in broad daylight. I
hope driving this car gives us
protection. I don't want to be shot
today.

Rico looks around scoffs as Frank drives up to a dated bodega.

FRANK

There always will be criminals.
Crime pays my mortgage.
(beat)
You know this business will be
yours one day. Steady cash flow.

RICO

Please don't threaten me.

FRANK

Ay, I busted my balls providing for
you and our family. I did alright
for myself. You should be grateful
that I'm willing to hand it over to
you so you don't have to go through
what I did.

(beat)

When we get inside the bodega,
figger out how much wire we will
need.

Frank parks his car, grabs his walky-talky and clipboard, and gets out. Rico sluggishly follows.

INT. BODEGA STORE - DAY

Frank enters the store. Rico graciously holds open the door for a young woman before he enters.

Frank walks up to the store's cluttered counter. We see Rico in the background over Frank's shoulder.

FRANK
OYE, soy de Alarmas!

The young female cleric acknowledges their presents then shout out to the back of the store.

Rico sees a rubber ball display, grabs a ball, then bounces it. He treads lightly with his words as Frank surveys the store's layout.

RICO
Y'know, Dad, I was reading that computers are revolutionizing the security business. Maybe we should think about getting one.

FRANK
Here we go again about friggin' computers. For what?

RICO
I heard computers are powerful machines. They can save information and can be programmed to do things, like the movie Terminator?

FRANK
Save information! What happens when the government decides to make a surprise visit? That's all I need, is friggin' records. And besides, no one knows how to work those things.

RICO
I can learn. Bergen Community college offers courses, cheap too.

FRANK
Sarcastic
Yeah, right, learn! It took you weeks to wire a simple open circuit alarm panel.

CHE (30s) skinny Spanish guy, muscle shirt, beret, strides out from the back area with chest puffed, aiming to make an entrance. He approaches wiping his nose and holding a HANDGUN.

Rico cranes his head passed Frank's shoulder. They both clock the gun.

FRANK (CONT'D)
(condescendingly)
 I'm from Alarmas security. Nice place you got here.

Che speaks with a heavy accent.

CHE
 Yeah. You hooked up my friend Chino last month with cameras and sensors. That's what I want, cameras and shit.

Frank listens while jotting some notes on a clipboard.

RICO
(nodding towards the gun)
 Wow, nice piece, .38?

FRANK
 Rico, why don't you wait for me by the car.

RICO
 Why? Don't you want me to...

Frank looks over his shoulder hard at Rico. Rico dejectedly leaves. Frank turns to Che and grins.

FRANK
 Mi hijo.
(beat)
 OK, your looking at three cameras, two motion detectors, a hold-up switch, and central monitoring.

Frank hands Che an invoice while a staticky police call plays.

CHE
 Yo pago cash.

FRANK
 I can start the job tomorrow morning, with cameras and sensors, but without the shit.

Frank smirks.

He looks coldly at Frank, places his gun down, then slowly unravels a wad of cash.

The camera slowly ZOOMS IN on the pistol.

EXT. BODEGA STORE - DAY

Rico leans against the car reading the college brochure while bouncing a rubber ball.

INSERT: FLIER READS- CAREER COUNSELING AT BERGEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE CALL TO SET UP AN APPOINTMENT.

He sees Frank hurrying out of the shop.

FRANK

Let's go.

(beat)

What's with the puss on your face?

RICO

Nothing. Richy and I got a bowling match and I realize I left my bowling balls by the curb on Webster avenue.

Frank eyes the neighborhood and pockets his walky-talky.

FRANK

You need to quit that goddamn sport and focus more on making money like your brother. Let's go, we got work to do.

INT. FRANK'S CAR - DAY

Frank pulls down the shifter, then chirps the car's tires. Rico holds his flier.

FRANK

This was a twenty eight hundred dollar score.

(beat)

Rule number two, number joints last less than a year before they're busted, that's why we take cash.

RICO

Sarcastic

Thank you Machiavelli.

(beat)

Did you check out that guy's .38?

FRANK

Of course. That was an old Smith and Wesson. He needs Alarmas security protection.

RICO

Protection! Are you kidding? Half the systems we install break after you turn them on.

FRANK

Remember our motto, an educated consumer is our worst customer.

At a stop sign, a PROSTITUTE walks up to Rico's window, opening her coat, revealing her naked body.

RICO

No thanks, and you should think about shaving.

She hastily covers up and walks away.

RICO (CONT'D)

Seriously, how can anyone be happy surrounded by this? I wanna get away from all this insanity.

Rico gestures to a drug deal across the street. Frank, not listening, turns the radio volume LOUDER as a subway passes.

RADIO V.O.

The last few months has seen an increase in guns and gun violence--

FRANK

--Did you hear that? There's an increase in gun trafficking. Shit, the city better start crackin' down or its gonna be difficult to make an honest living.

EXT. CITY CARDIOLOGY OFFICE - DAY

Establishing shot. Female employee, in medical scrubs, unlocks locks to security gates.

INT. CITY CARDIOLOGY OFFICE - DAY

Lots of movement from a mix of office STAFF and MEDICAL ASSSISTANTS going about their daily business.

Vanessa sits behind the counter, across from her sits MRS. Valderamma, (80s), a sweet old lady in her wheelchair holding her dated pocketbook.

Her grandson TED (40s), Grateful dead shirt, pale, malnourished burnout, stands behind her fidgeting impatiently.

VANESSA

You're all set Mrs. Valderamma.
Medicare will cover today's visit.

MRS. VALDERAMMA

Oh, thank you, sweetie.

Vanessa hands Mrs. Valderamma her insurance card. Mrs. Valderamma takes it, then holds out a few dollars in cash to Vanessa.

MRS. VALDERAMMA (CONT'D)

This is for you. I forgot to bring you cookies today.

VANESSA

Oh, I couldn't do that, Mrs. Valderamma, but thank you. Save your money, buy yourself a nice hat.

MRS. VALDERAMMA

Yes, my cat is fine. I worked for Air France many years ago you know.

Vanessa raises her eyebrows in excitement. Ted huffs.

TED

Granny, can we go? Pipes is coming over the house to jam.

MRS. VALDERAMMA

Yes, yes.
(to Vanessa)
Bye now.

Vanessa waves. Ted wheels Mrs. Valderamma away like Richard Petty.

FRAN

Look at that maniac pushing her!
What a jerk.

VANESSA

I know. She's so sweet though. She always brings me cookies. She thinks that I'm too skinny.

FRAN

You are skinny, girl, but not where it counts! Shit, if I had your ass-

VANESSA

Fran!

FRAN

I'm just sayin'! God didn't give you that thing for it to go to waste sitting in that rickety-ass stool all day.

VANESSA

You know, you're right. We deserve better chairs, and better working conditions.

FRAN

No! I meant we should go out! Get that thang on the dance floor, you feel me?

Fran hums a tune and starts moving and grooving. She gets closer and closer to Vanessa. Vanessa smiles and starts grooving along.

VANESSA

Yeah, I'm feeling you, Mamacita! Vamos á Club Cafe, mañana por la noche.

Enter DR. FERRARI, a smug, condescending, middle aged silver fox with expensive taste. He strides up behind the women enjoying themselves.

DR. FERRARI

I see you two are having a good time.

Vanessa and Fran stop and turn around quickly, embarrassed.

VANESSA

Dr. Ferrari, we were just--

DR. FERRARI

--No, no please. Who am I to interrupt your dance party? I'm just a cardiologist trying to do my trivial job with the help of my competent employees.

Dr. Ferrari looks at Fran. He directs his questions to her.

DR. FERRARI (CONT'D)
Did we get the new Gitect twelve
lead cable from PaceTech?

FRAN
No, we didn--

DR. FERRARI
--Then remind them. Did Dr. Reiner
call?

VANESSA
No.

DR. FERRARI
I didn't ask you.

Fran is about to explode. Vanessa jumps in before she can get
a word out.

VANESSA
We'll take care of it, doctor.

DR. FERRARI
Good.

Fran gets up with a few DOCUMENTS in hand, giving Dr. Ferrari
the finger behind his back before exiting.

Vanessa gets up and goes to a wall cabinet to get something.

Dr. Ferrari stands close behind her and whispers in her ear.

DR. FERRARI (CONT'D)
Wow, you smell delicious. I have
something for you.

Vanessa shrugs her shoulder to her ear and squirms away.

VANESSA
I'm sure you do.

DR. FERRARI
What's the matter?

She turns to face him. He fans out two baseball tickets and
softly brushes her name plate on her chest.

VANESSA
Cut it out! I'm in no mood.

She swats at his hand causing a slight commotion. Dr.
Ferrari's face hardens then awkwardly pretends reading a lab
report.

DR. FERRARI
 (irritated)
 Then I better not find you slacking
 off again, Miss Rios. This is a
 place of business, not some strip
 club. Get it together.

He walks away. Vanessa looks over at a few employees who
 witnessed the interaction. They snicker amongst themselves.

Vanessa closes her eyes and embarrassed.

INT. RICO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Rico enters a two-family house through the basement door.
 It's quiet and the lights are mostly out. Rico hears a voice
 coming from outside before he shuts the door.

VOICE (O.S.)
 ¡Rico! ¡Dile a tu papá
 I'll have the rent money by Monday!

Rico puts down his box of things next to some bowling pins.
 He notices voicemail light on his message machine is
 blinking.

Rico hits the play button on the machine. He goes through a
 collection of voicemails-

JOE VA (V.O.)
 Rico, letting you know that we
 scored on those Gucci bags.

Skip.

REGINA (V.O.)
 I miss you. When are you going to
 call me ba--

Skip.

GENO (V.O.)
 Ay, stunad, we going out this
 weekend or what? When's the last
 time you got lai--

Skip.

GARCOM (V.O.)
 Hello, this message is for Rico
 Russo. GarCom International has
 received your resume, and we'd like
 to set up an interview.

Rico leans towards the machine, confused but intrigued.

GARCOM (V.O.)
 If you're interested, please give
 us a call back at 856-555-1328.
 Thank you, we hope to hear from
 you soon.

BEEP.

Rico stands deep in thought, debating his next move.

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

Carmine sits in his usual spot reading the NY Post.

A young MECHANIC flirts with Daisy.

Frank is in the middle of a phone conversation.

A GAY COUPLE enter the store. Both men are Hispanic and thin.
 HECTOR carries a bright pink pocketbook that matches his
 outfit. ANGEL has a blonde afro and bright athletic wear.

They approach Carmine, looking to make an alarm payment.

HECTOR
 Excuse me, Señor, we're here to
 pay.

Carmine folds down the corner of his paper to study the men.

CARMINE
 Hey, Frank! Customer.

Frank looks up.

CARMINE (CONT'D)
 These, uh...customers are here to
 make a payment.

FRANK
*(to the person on the
 phone)*
 Hang on.

FRANK (CONT'D)
(to Carmine)
 Can't you see I'm busy, moron.
 Handle it.

Carmine shrinks behind his paper. The headline reads GAY
 COUPLE SLAIN. Hector and Angel look at each other.

The door to the shop opens, Rico enters.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Thank God, Rico, handle these customers. Your uncle is a degenerate.

RICO
Dad, I can't, I gotta go--

FRANK
--It won't take long.

Frank waves the men over to Rico.

FRANK (CONT'D)
(back to his phone call)
Sorry, Ralphie, my good-for-nothing brother is slowly ruining my friggin' business. Where were we?

Rico places down his tools, tosses an envelop on a desk, then shows the men to a desk with two beach chairs. The men avoid a MECHANIC carrying in a parking meter and sit on the chairs.

Frank is across the store in the background behind Rico's shoulder.

RICO
(to the men)
Give me your account number?

Hector's high voice barely recollects their account number and writes it down on a piece of paper.

FRANK
(to Carmine)
Did we get any money from Bronx Dentistry or Jerome avenue bike shop?

CARMINE
Bronx Dentistry?

Frank's eyes fill with rage.

FRANK
If we don't get money from those rat bastards, so help me God, I'm yanking out those alarms and shoving it up their--

RICO
(to the customers)
--Ah, your account is three months past due.

NURSE ANGEL

Yes, you see, the hospital cut down my hours, and Hector lost his job at the salon. He has been looking every day but nobody is hiring.

RICO

I'm sorry. Look, we understand your situation--

Frank, overhearing Rico's conversation, shouts from across the room.

FRANK

No we don't!

Frank storms over to the desk.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You're paying your Goddamn bill.

Hector gestures to Angel to fork over some money.

FRANK (CONT'D)

What the hell is this? That's peanuts.

NURSE ANGEL

We can't afford the full payment right now.

FRANK

Then you won't be getting our full services. Rico, pull their alarm system.

NURSE ANGEL

No, please! Our building is very unsafe. We need protection.

FRANK

You need protection? I'll give you protection.

Frank opens his jacket revealing a pistol in a holster. Before he even touches it, the men grab each other's arms, terrified.

NURSE ANGEL

Don't shoot us!

FRANK

I'm not gonna shoot you, doll. All you gotta do is give us the money you owe, and we won't pull out the system and I won't shoot.

NURSE ANGEL
 (to Hector)
 Pay him!

Hector frantically searches his pocketbook. It starts to buzz.

FRANK
 What the hell is that?

NURSE ANGEL
 Turn it off!

Hector pulls out a large buzzing sex toy and wiggles out of control.

Frank and Rico stare, bewildered.

Hector finally turns off the toy. He then finds a crisp \$100 bill in his bag and hands it to Frank.

NURSE ANGEL (CONT'D)
 That covers it, yes?

Rico clears his throat.

RICO
 Uh, yeah that covers it.

The two men SIGH in relief. They get up and exit the store.

Rico gets up from the desk and starts heading towards the door.

FRANK
 Ay, where do you think you're going?

Carmine peaks out from behind his paper.

RICO
 I got somewhere to be.

FRANK
 If you think I'm letting you leave after that fiasco, you're out of your damn mind.

Rico turns around.

RICO
 What?

FRANK

I don't run this business on this
"We understand, we're sorry"
bullshit. When the hell did you
start going soft?

RICO

I'm not going so--

FRANK

--Because you sure as hell didn't
learn it from me.

CARMINE

Oh boy.

Carmine hides behind his newspaper. Rico looks at Carmine,
then back to Frank.

RICO

Look, I was just trying to make
them feel like we actually give a
damn about their safety.

FRANK

We're a business! If we listened to
everyone's Goddamn sob stories, I'd
be broke! I thought you knew that.
Don't ever lose my money again.

Frank starts walking away.

RICO

Everything's always about you, *your*
business, *your* money. You really
couldn't give two shits about
anyone else.

Frank turns around to face Rico.

FRANK

When are you going to get it
through your thick skull that this
money, my money, is what saved you,
and your brother, and your mother
from the streets.

RICO

Oh, I know, believe me. Everyone on
the freggin block knows, you won't
let me forget that, will you? But
God forbid I try to get a real
education, a real job and make my
own money.

Rico pulls out a check from a client and slams it onto the counter.

RICO (CONT'D)
 (sarcastically)
 Here, from Mr. Ortega. I don't
 wanna bleed you dry.

Rico turns to head out the door again.

FRANK
 You have no idea how freggin good
 you have it here.

RICO
 You think this is good?! We're in
 the slums conning people out of
 their hard-earned money! Customers
 tip me with weed, and getting held
 at gunpoint is Goddamn occupational
 hazard at this point! I can't keep
 living like this!

FRANK
 You got a freggin problem with
 everything; you have no idea how
 much worse it could be! I saved you
 from the life I had, the life that
 people come in here begging for
 protection from!

RICO
 You didn't save me from shit,
 you're throwing me right back in
 it!

FRANK
 You wanna get outta here so badly?

Frank nods towards the door.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 Go ahead.

After an intense stare down between the two, Rico storms out of Alarmas. Frank watches him go with his hands on his hips.

Carmine folds his paper and sits up.

CARMINE
 Shit.

FRANK
 He'll be back.

Frank turns his back on the door and looks at the check from Mr. Ortega. He crumbles up and throws the check at Carmine.

FRANK (CONT'D)
He knows we don't take checks, and
STOP encouraging him.

EXT. RICO'S CAR - DAY

Rico walks across the street to his car. He rips a ticket out from the windshield causing the wiper blade to fly off.

INT. RICO'S CAR - DAY

Rico gets in the car, SLAMS the door shut. He looks at the time, then starts angrily POUNDING on his steering wheel. Soon, he maintains his composure then breaks a grin.

RICO V.O.
Hi, my name is Russo. Rico Russo.

INSERT: Rico's fantasy - James Bond lighting up a cigarette saying, "Russo, Rico Russo."

END FANTASY.

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

Frank stares out the window at the street and watches him drive away.

INT. RIOS HOME - NIGHT

MR. RIOS (late 50s), sits in the living room watching TV while MRS. RIOS (early 50s) mops the floor of a two family home in a rough part of the city.

Vanessa hurries in the front door, kicking off her shoes.

She kisses her mom on the cheek.

VANESSA
Hola, Mommí.

Vanessa takes down her hair as she rushes into her bedroom.

MRS. RIOS
Mija, where are you going so
quickly?

VANESSA
I'll be out with friends, Mami.

Vanessa stops in the doorway.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
Do you need my help with anything
before I go?

MRS. RIOS
No, no, go have fun. Dios te
bendiga (*God bless you.*)

Strange noises come from behind a closed, bedroom door. Mrs. Rios rushes into the room. Vanessa watches her exit, then immediately closes her bedroom door.

INT. VANESSA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Vanessa starts pulling out clothes and accessories and hurriedly placing them on her bed.

She goes to her desk and realizes something is off. She opens an old jewelry box and sifts around, then pulls out a small wad of cash. It's too light. She calls out to Mrs. Rios.

VANESSA
Mom?

No response.

INT. RIOS KITCHEN - NIGHT

VANESSA
Mom? Did Jimmy come in my room
today?

The kitchen phone starts to RING. She rushes over to answer it.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
Hello?...Oh, hi Sammy...Yeah, I'm
getting ready now...Oh?...Oh no, I
see... No problem...Maybe next
week...I was feeling tired
anyway...Okay, I hope he feels
better, bye.

Vanessa hangs up the phone in thought. She goes back into her room and softly sits on the foot of her bed. Suddenly, she jumps up.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
Hell with this, I'm going out.

Vanessa picks up the phone and dials.

EXT. RICO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Geno's car pulls into Rico's narrow driveway, inches from a car that's covered with a blue tarp. Geno blows the HORN twice. Moments later, Rico jumps in the front seat.

GENO

Rico! When are you going to get rid of that piece of shit Camaro? Your pissing Dad pissed off

RICO

When are you going to stop complaining about life, A-hole. Dad never has anything good to say.

INT. RICO'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

The two drive away, narrowly missing a passing pedestrians.

Rico hands Geno a joint.

RICO

Tip from a customer on Jerome ave.

GENO

Nicee! Benefits of working in the Bronx.

RICO

Why are we going this way? I told you that Club Cafe is having 80's night. We are not going to Roxies strip club tonight.

GENO

Well, I like the boobs.

RICO

Forget it. We are going to act like humans and find some nice, respectable girls, maybe even have a real conversation.

GENO

Yeah, right. Your dreamin'.

RICO

Club Cafe has boobs there, too.

Geno sours, then lights up the joint.

INT. RIOS HOME - NIGHT

Vanessa emerges from her bedroom dressed in a short, tight, dark blue dress, black nylons, and an oversized black leather jacket. Her hair is down and big. She wears red lipstick and dangly jewelry.

Vanessa grabs her purse from a kitchen chair. Then, she walks into the living room and gives her dad a kiss on the head.

VANESSA
Buenas noches, Papi.

Vanessa sees her mother tending to her ailing Grandmother through a partially open bedroom door. Vanessa exhales forcefully, then exits through the front door.

INT. CLUB CAFE - NIGHT

Loud bass MUSIC, neon LIGHTS, and TRENDY YOUTHS fill the club. There's lots of MOVEMENT, from the dance floor to people chatting by the bar.

Rico and Geno stand at the bar, drinks in hand. Rico wears a gray sports jacket with the sleeves pulled up over a collared shirt with skinny tie and jeans. Geno is in a ripped muscle tee, loose dress shirt, and black jeans.

Two SHAPELY WOMEN are moving to the music near them. Rico and Geno eye them up. Rico dusts himself off and steps a bit closer to them. He talks loudly over the pounding music.

RICO
Hi, my name is Rico. I couldn't help but notice you, that's a beautiful--

The two girls leave before Rico finishes his sentence.

Rico awkwardly steps back to his spot.

RICO (CONT'D)
Nice talkin' with you.

GENO
Real smooth. If we were at Roxie's right now--

Geno pats Rico on the shoulder.

GENO (CONT'D)
I'm going to check out the scores.
(like Schwarzenegger)
I'll be back.

Geno leaves Rico alone at the bar. Rico gazes out into the sea of dancing bodies searching for someone, anyone, that will catch his eye.

Finally, he sets his sights on a tall, attractive brunette dancing with her shorter friend.

RICO'S POV:

Vanessa and Fran groove to the music. A TALL BLOND MAN scooches passed them, winking at Fran as he passes by.

FRAN
Oof, did you see that! I'd like to take him home with me.

VANESSA
Go talk to him!

FRAN
Not yet. I'm saving him for later. Right now, we dance.

Fran strikes a dramatic pose. Vanessa CHUCKLES.

A familiar voice is heard from behind the two women.

RICO
Hi, there. You come here often?

Vanessa turns around revealing Rico.

FRAN
(to Vanessa)
Oh, no, it's him.

RICO
What?

A lights goes off both in Rico's and Vanessa's head.

VANESSA
Oh, God.

RICO
I remember you!

Rico reflects on not his finest moment.

RICO (CONT'D)
Oh, God. You remember me.

VANESSA
Are you following me or something?

RICO
Wha-- no, I'm--

FRAN
--Don't you work with security cameras? He could have been watching you all along.

VANESSA
Orwell might have been onto something.

Vanessa and Fran give each other a knowing look.

RICO
Orwell who? I'm not following you, I happen to be here with my brother.

VANESSA
(sarcastically)
Fate has brought us together again.

RICO
Sure.

VANESSA
(aside to Fran)
Este idiota no sabe lo que es en para. *This idiot doesn't know what he's in for.*

RICO
So, you think I'm an idiot because I find you attractive?

VANESSA
Oh! You understand Spanish?

RICO
Yeah, the monkey knows more than one language, who woulda thought.

Fran LAUGHS. Vanessa smiles - intrigued and impressed.

MUSIC: "Tell it to my Heart" by Taylor Dayne

Geno approaches Rico but before he can even open his mouth, Fran grabs his hand and yanks him away into the crowd. Vanessa and Rico watch them go off.

VANESSA
You know, you don't look like a traditional Italian chauvinist. Where all that gold jewelry.

RICO

Not me, I'm simple. A cheap chain
and a bowling ring. That's enough
for me.

Vanessa grooves to the music again. Rico nods his head
towards the dance floor.

VANESSA

OK white boy, show me your moves.

She drags him further into the crowd on the dance floor.

Rico does his best but is enamored with her beauty.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Boy, where the hell is your rhythm?

RICO

I left it in the car with my
collection of gold chains.

VANESSA

This is painful to watch. I mean,
I'm embarrassed just standing next
to you.

RICO

If I buy you a drink, will you stop
hurting my feelings?

VANESSA

I won't make any promises.

Vanessa turns to Fran and Geno and lets loose dancing. Rico
leaves for bar.

Scene: Dance Floor - Night

Bodies sway and grind, a sea of movement.

Vanessa moves with a grace that defies description. Her hair,
cascading around her face, her body fluid and powerful.

Across the room, Rico watches, mesmerized. His eyes trace the
lines of her body. He raises his glass in a silent toast to
her.

Vanessa catches his gaze across the room. Her smile widens, a
mischievous glint in her eye.

Rico takes a large gulp of his drink feeling the surge of
pride, of awe, of unadulterated love.

FADE OUT.

Vanessa returns to Rico at the bar.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
So, you work with alarms?

RICO
No, actually I'm a choreographer
for the Broadway play Cats.

Rico hands her a drink.

RICO (CONT'D)
It's my father's business. But
guess what, I got an interview
lined up with a big company.

VANESSA
What do they do at this company?

RICO
I don't really know. To be honest,
I don't even remember sending my
resume.

Rico picks up his drink and takes a sip.

VANESSA
Dios mio, you don't even know what
it's for?

RICO
I can handle it. I've talked my way
through plenty of tough situations.

VANESSA
(sarcastic)
Sure, with your sharp wit and
charm.

Vanessa sips from her straw and looks out to the dance floor.

RICO
I had to take it, alright. It's my
only shot to get outta there.

Vanessa looks back to Rico, studying him.

VANESSA
Is it that bad?

RICO
My dad sends me to all the shitty
locations. Some customers tip me
with pot. I'm getting tired of it.

VANESSA

Well, what's been holding you back?

Rico looks at her, thinking hard on her question.

RICO

My dad. I wanna get outta there,
but every time I try to leave, I
think, what's he gonna do without
me?

Vanessa looks away in thought, comparing his words to her own
life.

RICO (CONT'D)

And maybe part of me thinks 'what
am I gonna do without him?' He
taught me everything I know,
started all of this for me and our
family. What if I really can't do
anything else? He wants me to take
over the business someday.

VANESSA

What do you want?

They look at each other intensely for a beat.

RICO

I just want more out of life,
y'know? I want to do somethin'
good, be good at somethin'.
Somethin' that I get to choose.

Vanessa smiles softly, then it turns into a smirk.

VANESSA

Hey, as long as you don't choose
dancing, I think you'll be okay.

Rico LAUGHS.

RICO

What about you, huh, what do you
do?

VANESSA

I'm a medical tech.

RICO

That's cool. Do you like what you
do?

VANESSA

Y'know, I ask myself that question
a lot.

(MORE)

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Where I work, the ceiling is always leaking, the stools are always broken, and the people...

She shakes her head in a "don't even get me started" kind of way.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

But, some of these elderly patients that come in, they're terrified, y'know, they have no idea what comes next. They put their faith in us to help them. I show up every day for them, so, they know that someone is on their side. Somebody cares.

Vanessa looks down, a reflective tone in her voice as she plays with rings on her fingers.

RICO

Wow, that was beautiful.

Vanessa blushes but tries to hide it with a laugh.

MUSIC: "Tears on my pillow" by Little Anthony and the Imperials

Rico extends his hand. Vanessa hesitantly takes it. Rico guides her to the floor. Lights dim. They begin dancing to the slow rhythm. Soon, their eyes lock. Smiles slowly disappear. Bodies steadily move closer to the music.

Images of their frantic day at work play in their heads.

Rico's eyes read her lips. He move forward for a kiss.

The song ends. Vanessa regains her emotions, timidly grins, grabs Rico's hand, and leaves the dance floor towards Fran.

EXT. CLUB CAFE - LATER - NIGHT

PEOPLE enter the club as Rico, Vanessa, and Fran exit together towards the parking lot.

Rico helps Vanessa open the car door.

RICO

Hey, listen. I had a nigh-- great night. Can you have my number?

Rico catches a belch.

VANESSA

You're not on any medications, are you?

Rico LAUGHS. Vanessa pulls a PEN and paper out from her purse. She smiles at Rico, then stuffs the paper down his open shirt.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

I heard that Geno likes boobs. Here's my number. So you will find my number next to your boobs.

Rico grabs a pair of tickets from her wallet.

RICO

Yankee tickets, against Boston, nice.

VANESSA

Keep them, I have no use for them.

Vanessa and Fran get into the car. Vanessa rolls down her window.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Call me after your interview. Let me know how it went.

RICO

Absolutely. Did I tell you how wonderful and beautiful you are?

Vanessa glows then drive off.

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - MORNING

Frank stands studying a concentration of push pins on a LARGE WALL MAP of the Bronx. Carmine flirts with Daisy at the counter while she paints her nails. Mechanics tinker with alarm panels and hang out in the shop.

The phone RINGS, no one answers. Frank throws a magazine towards Daisy to get her attention. She looks at him but doesn't budge.

FRANK

Why the hell did I hire you?

Daisy gives a suggestive look and continues her nail polishing. Frank picks up the phone.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 Alarmas...Yeah, what do you got?...
 Okay...Ah, shit...Alright...Yeah,
 yeah...Alright.

He hangs up the phone.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 They got rid of all the merchandise
 from City Island. And get this, the
 gun found at that hit on Jerome Ave
 was Russian. Would you believe
 that.

Daisy, now bored, walks away from the desk, leaving Frank and Carmine conversing.

CARMINE
 Russian? Jesus Christ. That's the
 third imported gun I heard used
 this month; times really are
 changing.

FRANK
 This freggin' country is changing.

CARMINE
 That's all we need, those communist
 pricks selling guns over here.

Frank scrutinizes the wall map while taking a sip from his coffee mug. Carmine picks up his newspaper.

FRANK
 Do we have anyone at the bike shop
 in Queens? We got a shit ton of
 installs today.

CARMINE
 No, Mitch is in Manhattan and
 Roberto is in Queens. Where's Rico?

EXT. GARCOM BUILDING - DAY

Rico gets out of his car. He puts on his sunglasses, adjusts his tie, checks his gray capezios, then marvels at the building's grandeur.

INT. GARCOM THIRD FLOOR - DAY

Rico approaches a reception desk.

A young, fit RECEPTIONIST greets him.

RECEPTIONIST
Good morning, may I help you?

RICO
Yeah, I have an interview with a
guy whose last name begins with a
G. Oh, my name is Rico Russo.
That's Russo with an R.

RECEPTIONIST
Perhaps you're thinking of Mr.
Jamerson.

RICO
Yeah! That's him.

Rico bounces a rubber ball. She scoffs at him then reviews
her planner. An waiting interviewer watches with skepticism.

RECEPTIONIST
Mr. Russo, we have your appointment
scheduled for 8:30 this morning.

RICO
Yeah, I'm a little late, I know.

RECEPTIONIST
Sir, you're fifty minutes late to
an interview.

RICO
Do you dance? Because I swear you
look like a girl that...

The receptionist looks up through her trendy bifocals without
the least bit of interest.

RICO (CONT'D)
Is that your Gucci bag? What if I
told you that I can get you that
very same model in Taupe for forty
bucks.

RECEPTIONIST
I'd say you're dreaming.

RICO
Squeeze me in and I'll make it
happen.

The receptionist sizes him up.

RICO (CONT'D)
Cross my heart.

RECEPTIONIST
Right this way, Mr. Russo.

INT. GARCOM HALLWAY - DAY

Rico follows the receptionist down a hall to a closed office door.

Rico takes a card out of his wallet.

RICO
Call this number, ask for Chino.
Tell him Rico from Alarmas sent
you. He'll take care of you.

The receptionist conspiratorially takes the card, then shoves it in her bra.

A pair of Yankees tickets stick out of Rico's wallet. The receptionist swipes them.

RECEPTIONIST
I'm gonna need these too. Thank
you.

She opens the office door, thrusts him through the doorway, and quickly shuts the door.

INT. GARCOM OFFICE - DAY

RICO
Ay!

Standing patiently near his desk is meek MR. JAMERSON. He sports a conservative suit and an artificial smile.

MR. JAMERSON
Hi, Chip Jamerson. Pleased to meet
you.

Mr. Jamerson offers a strange palm up handshake. Rico looks at Mr. Jamerson's hand then tentatively shakes his hand.

RICO
I just wanna let you know, I'm not
gay.

MR. JAMERSON
Okay. Please, sit down.

Rico wipes his hand. The men sit in their respective seats.

MR. JAMERSON (CONT'D)
Did you have any problems finding
our building?

RICO
Nope, no problem. I know the guys
who pick up the garbage across the
street.

MR. JAMERSON
I see.

Mr. Jamerson reviews Rico's resume. Rico focuses his attention on the room's décor and a desk display. Mr. Jamerson's eyes teeter back and fourth from Rico to the resume.

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

Carmine reads the NY Post. Frank slams the phone down after a frustrating conversation.

FRANK
What is this friggin' country
coming to? No one wants to friggin
work anymore.

CARMINE
What do you expect? Welfare is
ruining this country.
(beat)
What time is Irma working tonight?
I need some action.

FRANK
Screw Irma... Who the hell am I
going to get to do all these
installs? Rico is MIA and the rest
of the freggin circus clowns
already got jobs.

CARMINE
That's exactly what I want to do
tonight peanut head.

A skinny, Hispanic boy, JUNIOR (20s) wearing a wrinkled green and white polo shirt, a gold earring walks into the store holding a makeshift alarm.

JUNIOR
Hi, my name is Junior. I fixed
Rico's flat tire a few days ago, he
said that you were hiring.

Frank and Carmine look at each other then back at Junior.

FRANK

We certainly are, come here and sit down.

INT. GARCOM OFFICE - DAY

MR. JAMERSON

We just learned that our company is converting to Microsoft 365. Have you heard anything about the release date?

RICO

Microsoft? Oh, yeah. That's that rich guy, Bates, Norman Bates. Nah! I haven't heard if they released him.

Mr. Jamerson, slightly stunned, takes Rico's application and leans back in his chair. He glances back at Rico, who is grooving to a song only he can hear.

MR. JAMERSON

Your application shows that you bowled four 300 games. Gee, that's very impressive. I can see how that would be useful in corporate America.

Rico nods in agreement.

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

FRANK

Tell me, what type of experience do you have?

JUNIOR

Well, I worked at Manny's Tires on Jerome Avenue near the stadium. And before that, I drove a cab for Nino's on Webster Ave, but that guy never wanted to pay me.

Junior displays his forearm.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)

This is the tattoo I got when I was there.

FRANK

Nice. I like the snake head and the dripping blood.

(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)

(beat)

What kind of skills do you have?

Junior hands Frank a resume from his pocket and places the a home made alarm on his desk. Frank shoos away a cockroach.

JUNIOR

I learned how to use a drill press at Rikers. Before that I used to install alarms for Luck's on Belmont ave.

FRANK

And did any of them work?

JUNIOR

Hell yeah. I know my shit.

Junior points to his homemade alarm. Frank hmms in thought.

INT. GARCOM OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Jamerson continues reviewing Rico's resume in silence.

RICO

I also have a little sales experience and know about landscaping.

Mr. Jamerson clears his throat.

MR. JAMERSON

You realize that GarCom has a drug policy.

RICO

Hey, if you guys are into that thing, that's your business.

Mr. Jamerson takes a deep breath.

MR. JAMERSON

As impressive as your bowling skills are, I'm afraid, you're NOT a good fit for the position we're looking to fill. In fact, I'm still perplexed as to how your resume made it this far.

RICO

How can you say that? You didn't even ask me any questions about the job.

MR. JAMERSON

That's correct.

Rico chuckles, then calmly removes his rubber ball and bounces it. Mr. Jamerson watches him while writing, moron on his resume.

RICO

Ya know, one time, I punched a guy square in the mouth for being snotty to me.

While making eye contact with Mr. Jamerson, Rico calmly gets up, walks over to the other side of the desk, and grabs Mr. Jamerson by his necktie.

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

FRANK

Look kid, I don't hire thieves or drug addicts. I run an honest place here with highly intelligent workers.

A junky pops his head into the front door and flashes a few stolen DVDs in a box. Carmine waves him over.

JUNIOR

Word! I've been clean for five months. I now play softball over by Morrisania without vomiting.

FRANK

Good.

Frank goes back to Junior's resume and continues drawing a pair of boobs. Carmine reviews the DVD and hands the junky money.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Alright, you're hired. Here's twenty bucks for traveling expenses.

JUNIOR

You don't want me to pee in a cup?

FRANK

No, those tests aren't accurate. And stay off the weed.

JUNIOR

Yeah, thanks. I'll be the best mechanic. You'll see.

FRANK

Good, 'cause you start right now.
Throw out that box of rats in the
corner.

INT. GARCUM OFFICE - DAY

The office door opens and MR. CAPUTO, an older, distinguished corporate man walks in to see Rico holding Mr. Jamerson. Rico releases him. Mr. Jamerson fixes himself.

MR. JAMERSON

Mr. Caputo! To what do I owe this
splendid surprise?

MR. CAPUTO

Mr. Jamerson, would you mind if I
take over? Corporate feels it
necessary for upper management to
get more involved in day-to-day
operations.

MR. JAMERSON

Yes! Go right ahead, I was just
leaving.

Mr. Jamerson, flush with embarrassment, swiftly leaves the office. Mr. Caputo moves to the desk picking up the resume.

MR. CAPUTO

Rico. Please sit down.

RICO

Nicky! You work here? I'm
impressed! I remember when--

MR. CAPUTO

(sternly)
--SIT.

Rico softly sits.

MR. CAPUTO (CONT'D)

My name is Mr. Caputo and you will
address me as Mr. Caputo. Do you
understand?

Rico's smile disappears.

RICO

Yeah.

MR. CAPUTO

Good.

Mr. Caputo sits down in the desk chair.

MR. CAPUTO (CONT'D)
How's your dad doing? The last time
I saw him was at Mrs. D'Vanaco's
funeral.

RICO
He's the same. I mean, his diabetes
gives him fits because he can't eat
cannolis, and his prostate acts up
occasionally. Doesn't stop him from
bustin' my ...

Mr. Caputo gestures for Rico to stop talking. He takes a
breath and leans forward on the desk.

MR. CAPUTO
Look, Rico. This company employs
over thirty-four thousand people
globally. This is serious business.
I wouldn't even be here if it
wasn't for a friend of mine who
took a chance on me. He gave me one
shot, and I took it and never
looked back. I've made an entirely
new life for myself and for my
family, and I'm glad I did.

RICO
Wow.

MR. CAPUTO
Your father and I go way back. I
know the type of business he runs.
It's very different from what we do
here.

RICO
What are you saying?

MR. CAPUTO
Rico, the corporate world has rigid
rules that I'm sure you're not
accustomed to, and being involved
in your father's business...

RICO
Are you saying that I can't do
this?

Mr. Caputo leans back in his seat.

MR. CAPUTO

I'm saying that when I walked in here, you were holding Mr. Jamerson by his freakin' NECKTIE.

(beat)

In corporate America, your patience will be tested every single day here, and we absolutely do not tolerate that kind of behavior no matter what the circumstance is. This is a place of quality business, and we must respect each other. And if you're anything like your father, then maybe it's not the best place for you to be.

Rico looks out the window in thought.

RICO

I'm tired of this life. I want to move forward, but every day's the same.

He looks back at Mr. Caputo. He sits up on the edge of the chair.

RICO (CONT'D)

Look, I met this girl, and well, she's smart, she's beautiful, she's just...I can't explain it, I never met anyone like her before.

RICO (CONT'D)

And I started thinkin' that if I ever wanna have the life that I want, somethin' that means somethin' y'know, I gotta get out of that place.

Mr. Caputo rests his chin on his fingers.

RICO (CONT'D)

I always hung out with the cool guys, the ones that didn't give a crap about learning or rules or anything like that. That's where I thought I fit in. But now I don't really feel like I fit in anywhere. And if I don't find somewhere to go, I'm gonna end up being a carbon copy of my dad. I don't want that. I wanna do this for me, y'know. I wanna be successful on my own and I wanna do it the right way.

Mr. Caputo studies Rico, seeing a reflection of his younger self in him. He sits up again and rests his elbows on the desk, folding his hands in front of him.

MR. CAPUTO

Rico, do you think you can dedicate yourself to this job and atmosphere?

Rico thinks hard about the question.

RICO

I can't keep waking up every day wishing I was somewhere else. And if that means following some rules, then yeah. I can learn.

Mr. Caputo studies him, then takes a deep breath.

MR. CAPUTO

You've got guts, kid. Let's see if you've got what it takes. I'd be taking a substantial risk on you, you know that?

(beat)

This will be an entry level position. There is no drinking or gambling, capisci?

Rico smiles, gets up. Mr. Caputo goes for a handshake, but Rico embraces him instead.

RICO

You won't be sorry Nic- Mr. Caputo.

Rico pats Mr. Caputo on the arm.

MR. CAPUTO

You better mean that.

Vince swiftly leaves. Mr. Caputo swivels his chair around facing the window. He sits quietly in thought.

INT. CITY CARDIOLOGY OFFICE - DAY

Vanessa worriedly grabs Fran's arm and pulls her into electrophysiology exam room two. Vanessa points to the monitor.

VANESSA

Check this shit out. When I was measuring Mrs. Valderamma's ventricular therapies data, I noticed this.

Fran studies the monitor.

FRAN
Looks like she's totally pacemaker dependent.

VANESSA
Now look at the atrial capture.

FRAN
Wow! At this rate, she has about two or three more months left. She will definitely need a new bi-ventricular pacemaker.

VANESSA
Get this, you know that my mom works part-time at Demaris Palmero's law office cleaning up?

FRAN
Yeah.

VANESSA
My mom knows Mrs. Valderamma from years ago as part of some school fundraiser. The receptionist told my mom that Mrs. Valderamma's idiot son came and questioned her about power of attorney stuff.

Fran grimaces.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
If Ted gets power of attorney, then we may not be able to replace the old pacemaker.

Fran's head moves a bit closer to the monitor seeing an amplitude graph depicting a downward angle.

FRAN
That shit's murder.

VANESSA
Exactly! And check this out; my mom knows that Mrs. Valderamma owns a bunch of houses over by Paxton St.

The two girls look at one another.

FRAN
Her son will inherit her estate.

VANESSA

She's got an appointment with us coming up soon.

FRAN

What can we do?

VANESSA

I'm going to ask Dr. Ferrari if he can change her pacemaker during her next appointment.

FRAN

Are you crazy woman? He'll never agree to do that.

VANESSA

What choice does that poor woman have? Ferrari has a few used pacemakers here, with plenty of battery life.

FRAN

He does?

VANESSA

In fact, I learned that Ferrari has a nice little operation with local morgues and Ortiz funeral home. He had Janice picking up the devices. The devices are supposed to be removed before cremation to prevent battery explosions.

FRAN

Wow! But he'll never agree to it.

VANESSA

I will appeal to his sense of moral values.

INT. CITY CARDIOLOGY EXAM ROOM - DAY

Dr. Ferrari stands in front of Vanessa, closely and who's sitting on a counter.

Vanessa seductively fondles Dr. Ferrari's stethoscope.

VANESSA

Just slowly stick it in. Nobody needs to know.

DR. FERRARI

WHAT! That's way too risky. If the board finds out, I could lose my license.

VANESSA

Mrs. Valderamma will die within four months if you don't change her pacemaker. Look for yourself.

Dr. Ferrari looks at a computer screen.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

What about the pacemakers Janice gets from Rodriquez funeral home or Downtown hospital.

DR. FERRARI

(nervously)

What are you talking about?

VANESSA

I'm no fool.

(beat)

Think about the time you took me to the Meadowlands Cardiology expo; the steamy hot tub, that expensive bottle of Pinot, soft music.

Dr. Ferrari nibbles on his pen cap.

DR. FERRARI

Are you sure that the end of life for that Pacemaker is four months?

Vanessa points to values on a computer monitor.

Dr. Ferrari pulls out a pack of cigarettes.

DR. FERRARI (CONT'D)

What about if we decrease the Ventricular pulse width to .5?

Vanessa confidently shakes her head no. She then softly removes the cigarette from his lips.

VANESSA

Do the right thing. She deserves to live.

Vanessa unwinds the stethoscope from the doctor's neck.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Awe look, its limp.

Dr. Ferrari bites his lip in thought.

DR. FERRARI
 Schedule her back Thursday. You're
 closing up tonight. Got it?

Vanessa smiles and jumps with joy.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

Rico sits at the bar in a smoke-filled bowling alley with a beer in front of him. He's already had a few. A SPORTS GAME plays on the TV set, a few BARGOERS huddle around it watching intensely.

BARTENDER, (30s) thick, Irish looking, fast talker, works swiftly behind the bar.

BARTENDER
 Oh, congratulations on bowling 800
 the other night. Was that your
 first 800 series?

Rico stays silent. He's in his own little world.

RICO
 Did I tell you I got a new job
 today?

BARTENDER
 I heard Richie shot 300 last night.

RICO
 Did I tell you that I met a
 wonderful Spanish girl?

Bartender abruptly leaves to service a waiting customer.

SLUGGO, 40s, uneven mustache, blue working jumpsuit, bowling alley mechanic, approaches Rico.

SLUGGO
 Hey Rico, give me fifty bucks on
 the Knicks tonight. I'll take the
 under at four points.

RICO
 I got a new job today. I work at a
 corporation. You see them on T.V.

Sluggo LAUGHS.

SLUGGO
 Fifty on the Knicks. And lay off
 the hard stuff.

Sluggo, hears a call over the loudspeakers to repair a lane and dashes away. Rico gets up and heads to the bar's wall phone.

Rico dials Vanessa's number from memory and checking the faded number on his palm. He waits for her to pick up.

INT. VANESSA'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Vanessa is home ironing when the phone rings. She answers and continues ironing.

VANESSA
Hello?

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

RICO
Hi, uh, hi, it's Rico.

Vanessa stops ironing.

VANESSA
Oh. Hi.

Rico covers one ear, then smiles sleepily at the sound of her voice.

RICO
Hi.

VANESSA
Wow, you got a way with words.

Rico CHUCKLES. There's a brief silence.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
So...

RICO
So, I'm calling you after my interview, like you said.

VANESSA
That's right, I did say that.
(beat)
Well?! How'd it go?

Nothing.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
Come on, I'm dyin' over here!

Rico LAUGHS, then:

RICO
I got the job.

VANESSA O.S.
You did?

VANESSA
Rico, that's amazing.
Congratulations.

Vanessa continues ironing.

RICO
I was thinkin' if you'd wanna go to
the batting cages with me or
something.

VANESSA
Why would I want to do that?

Rico hits himself in the head with the phone.

RICO
Okay, forget the batting cages. I
just meant, maybe you could come
out and we could celebrate.

A small smile forms on Vanessa's lips. She looks down,
thinking, then takes a deep breath. Her smile disappears.

VANESSA
I'm sorry I can't, I've got a lot
to do tonight.

RICO
Well, what about tomorrow night?

VANESSA
I have plans tomorrow night.

RICO
Can't you change them? I was really
hoping to celebrate with you.

Vanessa takes a second to think out her response.

VANESSA
Tell you what. Call me later on and
I'll let you know, bye.

RICO
Okay. I'll call--

Vanessa abruptly hangs up the phone, then reflects.

INT. GARCOM LOBBY - MORNING

Rico, wearing a white collared shirt and a Def Leppard tie, stands in the lobby studying the buildings security camera placement.

STEWART O'BRIEN, a timid, reserved, small framed, Black man in his late 20s, enters and sees Rico spinning in circles looking in the air.

STEWART
Uh, Rico Russo?

Rico stops and looks him over.

RICO
Who wants to know.

STEWART
My name is Stewart O'Brien. I was instructed to meet with you and welcome you aboard.

They shake hands. Stewart hands Rico a business card.

RICO
You don't look Irish.

Rico is still perplexed with the building's cameras.

RICO (CONT'D)
Who did your security system?

STEWART
I'm not sure, but I can find out for you later. Just follow me and I'll take you to our department and help you get set up.

INT. GARCOM OFFICE/CUBICLE AREA - DAY

Stewart walks Rico into a large, fluorescent-illuminated, stale area with several cubicles. He approaches a vacant cube. Rico studies his new surroundings.

STEWART
Here is your new work area. Please, make yourself comfortable. I suggest getting familiar with the GarCom handbook and applications on your PC. I'll get you access to our network.

Rico picks his teeth with the business card with a dirty look.

RICO
What are you sellin'?

STEWART
Selling? I don't quite follow.

Rico shrugs, nods.

STEWART (CONT'D)
Just learn what you can. I'll be
right back. Coffee is in the
kitchen area over by the copier.

Stewart leaves with a perplexed look.

Rico meanders throughout the office absorbing his new environment. He peeks in a large, conference room and beams as he pictures himself speaking to a group of GarCom employees.

INT. GARCOM HALLWAY - DAY

JOYCE, 30s, a red head, department manager, speaks with KIMBERLY LEE, 30s, Korean, attractive, powerful GarCom corporate attorney. Stewart approaches the two women.

STEWART
Morning Joyce. Good morning, Kim.

JOYCE
Stu! I happened to see your memo explaining your oversight on our monthly Q3 reports...

STEWART
Yes, I know. Don't rub it in.

Joyce smiles and nudges him playfully.

STEWART (CONT'D)
(to Joyce)
What do you think about the new
hire on our team?

JOYCE
Well, nothing yet since this is the
first I'm hearing about this. Why
am I the last to know about
everything?

Stewart gestures towards Rico.

STEWART
There he is, over there by the
conference room.

JOYCE

Huh. What do you know about him?

STEWART

Not much, only that he's from the city and may have attended community college.

JOYCE

What experience does he have with computers?

The two look over to Rico again. They witness him removing his coffee cup from the computer's CD-ROM drive.

STEWART

Does that answer your question?

JOYCE

Oh, boy.

STEWART

I need coffee.

Stewart leaves with a smirk.

KIMBERLY

Looks like you'll have your work cut out for you.

JOYCE

Yep.

KIMBERLY

At least he's cute.

JOYCE

Ms. Engaged, excuse me!

KIMBERLY

Just making an observation. You know how I like 'em. Handsome and dumb.

JOYCE

Does Alan know about this problem that you have?

KIMBERLY

Not a clue. Why do you think I agreed to marry him?

Joyce CHUCKLES. Kim eyes Rico one last time. From a corner office window, a blond male employee is seen quietly watching the action.

INT. RICO'S CUBICLE - DAY

Rico stands up, stretches, then takes notice to a picture on a neighboring desk.

SALLY, 20s, blonde, friendly, but not flirty, enters a nearby cubicle and takes notice to Rico just as he takes notice to her.

RICO
Hi, I'm Rico. Just started working here.

SALLY
I'm Sally, nice to meet you.

Rico notices the picture on her desk while bouncing his rubber ball.

RICO
Nice photo. We used to have a Shepard too, but we had to put her down because of her hips going bad.

SALLY
Oh, that terrible.

RICO
So what's the deal with all these small cubes. Its like coffins with desks. You have no room.

SALLY
Unfortunately! That's why I have this bicycle peddles under my desk, it provides some exercise and freedom.

Joyce approaches.

JOYCE
Well, I see your acclimating nicely and you've met precocious Sally.

Sally goes back to work and Rico turns around to face Joyce.

JOYCE (CONT'D)
I'm Joyce Donahue, one of the department's managers and administrative analysts.

RICO
Cool. Nice to meet you.

Joyce takes notice to Rico's attire while shaking hands.

JOYCE
Likewise. Is it Rico or Enrico?

RICO
Rico is fine.
(beat)
You know something, you guys run a nice place here.
(beat)
But you gotta do something about that coffee. Is there a cappuccino maker around?

JOYCE
Yes, it's right next to the hot dog stand.

RICO
That's great, I love a good Sabret hot dog.

Joyce smiles then checks her watch.

JOYCE
Well, I have a meeting to attend. Stewart will bring you to speed. You're in good hands. Welcome aboard, Rico.

Joyce politely rushes off. Rico looks to Stewart, who approaches with a mug filled to the brim with coffee.

RICO
Alright chief, where do we start?

STEWART
We should start at the beginning. Let's reboot the PC, start from scratch.

Rico spins around to face the computer.

RICO
Okay, yeah, reboot.

Rico wiggles his fingers, unsure where to put them.

RICO (CONT'D)
Right. Stu, what exactly is a reboot?

Stewart reaches over the keyboard and presses a few keys. The screen goes black, then turns back on.

RICO (CONT'D)
Woah, hang on, what did you do?

STEWART
I restarted the PC.

RICO
Oh! Well if you'd said it like
that!

Stewart stands behind Rico, waiting for the PC restart. Rico studies him.

RICO (CONT'D)
Stu, can I ask you a question?

STEWART
Sure.

RICO
Could you teach me to be a nerd?

Stewart raises an eyebrow.

RICO (CONT'D)
I really think I can do it, but I
don't got a lot of practice. Just
give me a few guidelines, y'know,
and I'll figure it out and shit.

Stewart looks around like he's being punked and wines.

INT. GARCOM/STEVE'S OFFICE - DAY

STEVE OLSON, 30s, blond hair, slick and aspiring director, sits at his corner office desk talking on the phone.

RALPH, 20s, Steve's accomplice, stands by Steve's desk and navigates through Steve's PC.

STEVE
I expect the Goldman contract here
by Friday or we will begin
litigation. Do I make myself clear?
Good.

Steve hangs up the phone.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Give me good news or I might get an
ulcer.

RALPH
This should take care of it.

Steve studies the screen.

STEVE
You're sure?

RALPH
Yep. I watched Seansky do this last year. But don't let him know, I don't want him breathing down my neck.

STEVE
Hmm.

Steve leans back in his chair toying with an expensive paper weight. He looks up through the window and sees Mr. Caputo in the hall speaking with an employee.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Look at Caputo's suit. \$800 Armani! Who does he think he is? You know, I was the one who landed the Lamarca account. They gave him all the credit, that prick.

RALPH
I heard he hired a new guy.

STEVE
Really! Who?

RALPH
Some greaseball named Rico that looks like he just came off a boat. He's over by titless Sally's cubicle.

STEVE
Rico! That short for The Racketeering Influenced and Corrupts Act?

Steve looks back out the window, plotting nefariously.

INT. GARCOM/KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Stewart pours himself another cup of coffee. Mr. Caputo enters and grabs a coffee mug from a cabinet. Mr. Caputo periodically glances over at Rico's cubicle.

STEWART
Oh, Mr. Caputo, I just checked in with Mark Innis about the Orlando project. He says preliminary mockups should be ready by tomorrow.

MR. CAPUTO
Oh good. How's our other project
coming along?

STEWART
Uhh...

Mr. Caputo nods towards Rico's cubicle.

STEWART (CONT'D)
Oh, Rico. Yeah, he's uhm...I guess
you could say he's coming along.
Though, computer science doesn't
exactly seem like a strong suit of
his.
(rambling)
Of course, I would never question
your reasons for hiring someone--

Mr. Caputo is preoccupied with keeping an eye on Rico.

MR. CAPUTO
--Please tell me you went over the
policies with him.

STEWART
We didn't exactly get to that yet
but--

MR. CAPUTO
--Keep an eye on him. Make sure he
gets to work on time. Remember,
you're responsible for him.

Mr. Caputo slaps Stewart on the back.

STEWART
Yes, sir.

Stewart sighs. He walks out of frame.

INT. RUSSO HOUSE - EVENING

Frank and Geno sit at a cluttered dinner table, Frank at the
head. Tina hands them each a plate of food.

GENO
Thanks, Ma.

Geno starts shoveling food into his mouth.

The backdoor that leads into the kitchen opens and Rico
enters.

RICO
What, you're starting without me?

Tina rushes to greet Rico. Rico gives her a kiss on the cheek.

RICO (CONT'D)
(to Tina)
Hiya, Ma.

GENO
What are you doing here, fuckface?

TINA
Watch your mouth at the table.

Frank and Rico exchange a look, tension still high.

FRANK
I wasn't expecting you tonight.

TINA
I asked him to join us.

RICO
I can't stay long. Just wanted to stop by and pick up my envelope I forgot last week.

TINA
Well, here, at least have some meatballs.

Tina scoops some meatballs out of a pot on the stove and into a small bowl. She gives the bowl to Rico.

Rico sits at the other head of the table, across from Frank. He locates his envelop, then starts picking at his food. Tina brings her plate of food to the last empty seat and sits.

FRANK
(to Rico)
Where the hell you been all week, huh? Geno's been working his ass off at the store picking up your slack.

TINA
Frank, don't start. Rico has some big news to share with us.

Frank leans forward, concerned.

GENO
What did ya do this time, huh?

RICO
Pipe down.

TINA
Please.

Tina nods to Rico, encouraging him. Rico makes eye contact with Frank before speaking.

RICO
I got a new job. A corporate job.
GarCom International.

Tina smiles, pleased, and squeezes Rico's arm. A silence befalls the rest of the table. Then, Geno snorts.

GENO
So, they're just handing out jobs
to any degenerate that walks in?

Tina swats Geno with her napkin.

FRANK
A new job? What's wrong with the
one you got?

RICO
You want the full list?

FRANK
Don't be a smartass.

Tina glares at Frank before taking a bite of her food.

GENO
What kind of place gave you a job?

Frank looks at Rico expectantly.

RICO
What, you think I can't get a job
myself?

Geno farts at Rico.

RICO (CONT'D)
That's the most intelligent thing
you said all week.

TINA
The two of you, ENOUGH!

Everyone goes back to eating their food.

RICO
Nicky Caputo hired me.

GENO

I knew you didn't get it yourself.

Rico rolls his eyes. Frank and Tina exchange a look.

FRANK

Did you get paid yet?

RICO

There's more to life than money you know.

Frank and Geno stare blankly at Rico. Tina turns to Rico.

TINA

I for one, am very proud of you Rico. They're lucky to have you working for them.

RICO

Thanks, Ma.

FRANK

Tina, get me the grated cheese.

TINA

You don't have anything else to say to your son?

FRANK

What, that he'd rather make peanuts than work for his family? What am I supposed to say about that?

RICO

(to Tina)

Don't bother, Ma.

Rico gets up, grabs the Parmesan off the counter and slams it on the table in front of Frank.

RICO (CONT'D)

Thanks for the meatballs, but I gotta go.

TINA

Already?

RICO

I got a date tonight.

GENO

Who's the lucky guy?

FRANK

She better not have kids. You can't even afford diapers.

RICO

That's it, I'm leaving.

FRANK

Don't forget the garbage on the way out.

Rico grabs his envelop, then slams the door, cutting Frank off.

FRANK (CONT'D)

What was in that envelop?

TINA

His recent stool sample.

Frank slams his hand on the table.

INT. VANESSA'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Vanessa sits at her desk, hair pulled back in a high, messy bun. She applies a green face mask. Stuck on her desk mirror is a newspaper ad of a two-family house. A worn copy of 'The House on Mango Street' with sticky notes sticking out from the pages as if it's been annotated.

Mrs. Rios enters with a dish towel draped over her shoulder and a jar of Vicks menthol. She brings it to Vanessa.

VANESSA

Aye, Mommí, I said I have a headache. Why are you giving me this Spanish voodoo cream?

MRS. RIOS

Vicks is good for you. When I lived in Puerto Rico--

VANESSA

--Do you hear that? I think it's Abuela coughing.

Mrs. Rios is about to leave, then realizes there was no coughing. She whacks Vanessa with the dish towel.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

(laughing)

Ow!

Mrs. Rios sits down on the bed behind Vanessa.

MRS. RIOS
 tu hermano no vino a casa anoche. I
 worry he's with bad people again.

VANESSA
 Don't say that, please, I don't
 even want to think about that
 again.

Vanessa massages her temples. Mrs. Rios sighs deeply.

MRS. RIOS
 What did I do wrong?

Vanessa turns to face her mom.

VANESSA
 What do you mean?

MRS. RIOS
 Your brother, he has many problems.
 But you, you turn out fine. You do
 everything yourself, you take care
 of this family. What did I do wrong
 with him?

Vanessa sighs deeply.

VANESSA
 Mommí, Jimmy just got wrapped up in
 the wrong crowd. He made his own
 choices. You didn't do anything to
 make that happen.

MRS. RIOS
 I worry so much about him, I can't
 sleep. I will pray for him.

VANESSA
 You can pray all you want. Just
 don't give him any more money.

Vanessa turns back to her mirror and continues applying her
 face mask.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 Speaking of money, I paid the gas
 and electric bill today. When I get
 my next check we can buy a new
 phone.

MRS. RIOS
 No *necessito* telefono nuevo. *We*
don't need a new phone.

VANESSA

Sí, esta necesito, *Yes, we need it, everyone has push buttons, not that ridiculous circle thingy.*

A beat.

MRS. RIOS

I worry about you too, Vanessa. You take good care of us, but I want for you to have a life, a family.

Vanessa pauses, looks at herself in the mirror, then at the newspaper clipping. She shakes a thought out of her head.

VANESSA

I have a life, Mamá. I love what I do, and I need to be here for the family. I don't want anything different right now.

MRS. RIOS

I know, corazón. But I wish you did not have this responsibility.

Vanessa swallows a knot in her throat.

Mrs. Rios looks at Vanessa's reflection in her desk mirror. She gets up and hugs Vanessa from behind.

Vanessa holds back tears.

VANESSA

Te amo mucho, Mommí. *I love you so much, Mom.*

The phone RINGS from another room. Mrs. Rios answers. She calls into Vanessa's room.

MRS. RIOS O.S.

¡Vanessa! Es para ti.

Vanessa composes herself, then walks into the kitchen.

KITCHEN

Vanessa takes the phone from Mrs. Rios.

VANESSA

Hello?

INT. RICO'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rico plops down on his couch while opening a can of soda. He holds the phone to his ear with his shoulder. The Daily News, an ashtray, and some mail scattered on the coffee table.

RICO
Hey. It's Rico.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

VANESSA
Rico. Hi.

Mrs. Rios raises an eyebrow at Vanessa. Vanessa waves her off. Mrs. Rios exits.

RICO
You sound surprised.

VANESSA
No, I'm no- you know what? I am a little bit surprised.

Rico sips his soda.

RICO
Why do you say that?

VANESSA
I don't know. Just thought maybe you'd get caught up in your fancy new job and forget to call.

RICO
I couldn't forget you. You were on my mind all week.

Vanessa smiles, then rolls her eyes.

VANESSA
Yeah? How many times have you used that line, Casanova?

RICO
Honest to God, never.

VANESSA
(sarcastically)
Sure.

RICO
Well, I never meant it before tonight.

Vanessa bites back a smile as she shakes her head.

Rico smiles. He leans up and sits on the end of the couch.

RICO (CONT'D)
Listen, I'd really like to see you
again. Any chance you can come out
tonight?

Vanessa checks the clock on the wall across from her. She
thinks.

VANESSA
Well, I'm pretty hungry.

RICO
I know a great Italian restaurant.
I can pick you up at seven?

VANESSA
Ok. Make it 7:30. That's 634 Main
Street, Paterson. Got it? Bye.

They both hang up.

INT. RICO'S CAR - NIGHT

Rico finds a parking space under the train's elevated station
and in front of Vanessa's house.

He quickly splashes on some cologne and gargles with Mountain
Dew. He looks up at the red Italian horn hanging from his
rearview mirror for luck, then exits the car.

EXT. RIOS HOME - NIGHT

Rico stands at the front door ringing the bell and taking in
the neighborhood. Moments after, a silhouette of a tiny woman
appears. Many locks are undone before the door opens.

RICO
Hello. I'm Rico, I'm here for
Vanessa.

MRS. RIOS
Hello, I Vanessa's madre.

RICO
Hola!

MRS. RIOS
Hola, entre.

INT. RIOS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rico enters the narrow, dimly lit hallway, marveling at the hall's 1930's floral wallpaper. Mrs. Rios leads him to the living room, where Mr. RIOS frail (70's) dementia, is sitting comfortably on the sofa. A small mutt sits near Mr. Rios's feet.

MRS. RIOS
This is Vanessa's padre.

RICO
Hola!

Mr. Rios does not respond. He laughs at a Spanish news station.

MRS. RIOS
Please, sit. Excuse, I have cooking on the stove.

Mrs. Rios returns to the kitchen. Rico sits on a sofa.

A phlegm gurgling cough refocuses Rico's attention to a partially closed door down the hall.

Rico impatiently waits while watching Mr. Rios blankly staring at the TV.

RICO
Hola, Mr. Rios. Mi llamo Rico. I'm here to take your daughter out tonight.

Rico extends his hand out for Mr. Rios to shake. Mr. Rios glances at Rico's hand, then back at the TV.

RICO (CONT'D)
Don't worry, I'll have her home early.

Mr. Rios still doesn't acknowledge Rico. It clicks in Rico's head that Mr. Rios is not mentally there.

Rico starts examining the room, walking around with his hands in his pockets, stopping to look at PICTURES and things on the walls.

RICO (CONT'D)
I'm taking her to a classy, Italian place called Buenasera.

He stops to look at a picture of Vanessa.

RICO (CONT'D)
 This high school picture of her is
 wacked. She looks better with her
 hair down.

Rico peaks at the dog then picks up a LETTER from the coffee
 table.

RICO (CONT'D)
(to the dog)
 Your an ugly little Mojón.

RICO (CONT'D)
 Maybe after dinner, I'll take
 Vanessa back to my place. Have a
 some wine, slip on some Moody
 Blues, and get to know each other,
 if you know what I mean.

Rico puts his hand out for some skin from Mr. Rios. Mr. Rios
 suddenly bursts out laughing, leaving him dry.

More coughing and gagging sounds from the partially closed
 door catch Rico's attention.

INT. RIOS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rico peeks down the hall to the door. Suddenly, Vanessa
 emerges wearing a short, tight, black dress, black nylons,
 and high boots. She quickly closes the door behind her and is
 startled by Rico standing there.

VANESSA
 Jesus! What the hell are you doing
 here?! You're early.

She notices he's holding her letter and rips it out of his
 hand.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 Do you mind?!

RICO
 I didn't know how long it'd take to
 get here, I thought there'd be
 traffic, but wow, you look
 stunning.

Vanessa adjusts her dress, grabs his arm, and pulls him out
 of the doorway and back into the living room.

She puts the letter down on the table, grabs a gold bracelet,
 then hands Rico the BRACELET.

VANESSA

Here, help me with this.

She holds out her wrist as Rico wraps the bracelet around it.

MRS. RIOS

(calling from the hall)

Vanessa, before you go, don't forget, tomorrow I need to deposit my social security check.

VANESSA

(calling back)

lo sé. Ma, you told me twice already.

Rico struggles with the clasp.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

So, where are you taking me tonight? It better be a nice place since you got a corporate job.

RICO

Yeah, there's this nice place in the city called 'Blanca Castle', very expensive, five-star cuisine.

Rico smirks and glances at Vanessa.

VANESSA

Strike two, wise guy.

Rico finally gets the bracelet on. The two finally get a good look and really take each other in.

Mrs. Rios squeezes through the small space, walking right between them with a catheter bag filled with yellow liquid. Rico jumps out of the way.

Vanessa looks up at the ceiling, her pain-riddled face and voice redirects Rico away from the horror.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Okay, I don't care where you take me, as long as we leave right now.

Vanessa turns Rico around and pushes him towards the front door, then grabs her purse off the table.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Adios, Mami, Rico is leaving now!
And never coming back!

RICO

Adios, Mrs. Rios. It was nice meeting you. Mr. Rios, maybe we can go bowling!

Vanessa keeps shoving him until they've reached the front door and pushes him out.

INT. GARCOM STEVE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Steve sits in front of his office computer speaking on the phone. His PC monitor shows a schematic of a weapon.

STEVE

Yes, I'm looking at the image as we speak. I just need a little more time to iron out the logistics with the receiving department...Yes, I understand that we can't jeopardize this opportunity. I'll do everything I can to...

Ralph pokes his head inside Steve's office.

Steve abruptly hangs up the phone, then presses a button on the PC monitor.

RALPH

Sir, I just got approval with the shipping department. It's all set. Let me know about your special delivery so I can inform Doug Engle in receiving.

STEVE (O.S.)

That info would have been useful thirty seconds earlier.

RALPH

What?

STEVE

Nothing. Get me an update from Bob Higgins on the AutoTech financials.

Ralph nods, then exits the office. Steve watches him walk away through the window then picks up the phone again.

INT. BUONASERA'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Rico and Vanessa enter a fancy restaurant and are greeted by the maître d.

RICO
My name is Russo, we have a
reservation.

The maître d. finds his name in a book, smiles, then escorts them to a table.

While seated, Vanessa takes in the restaurant's ambience while happily reviewing the menu.

A SERVANT brings a basket of bread to their table. Rico immediately pours olive oil into a small plate, seasons it with pepper, then grabs a slice of bread and dips it in the oil before taking a bite.

Vanessa watches him like she's studying wildlife.

RICO (CONT'D)
What?

VANESSA
Nothin'.

A WAITER arrives at their table and politely greets them.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
What's good here?

RICO
Get the Butternut Asiago
Tortellaci.

Rico does a chef's kiss hand gesture.

VANESSA
Wow! That sounds exciting. I'll
have what he just said.

Vanessa sticks her tongue at Rico with a snarky look.

RICO
I'll have the Fra Shrimp Diavolo.

Rico smirks at Vanessa then hands the menu to the waiter. The waiter leaves.

RICO (CONT'D)
So, uhm, back at your place, that
was--

VANESSA
--Look, we don't have to have this
conversation, alright? Not now. It
is what it is at home. End of
story.

Vanessa SIGHS. Rico picks at his bread.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

I'm just not ready to invite someone else into that part of my life. Usually people I'm dating have no idea what's going on at home.

RICO

Really? How does that work?

VANESSA

Well, I'm here with you, so what does that tell you?

RICO

So maybe it's not the worst thing that I know.

Vanessa looks at him, serious at first, but then she softens at the thought.

She grabs a piece of bread then tentatively dips it in the plate with olive oil. Rico watches her and admires her beauty.

VANESSA

What?

RICO

Nothin'.

Series of shots of the two enjoying their evening.

VANESSA

So, what about you, huh? What's your story?

She takes a bite of the bread and enjoys.

RICO

I had a typical upbringing. Born in Manhattan, raised in the Bronx. We spent the weekends in the Hamptons, summers in the South of France, I played polo when I wasn't doing charity work at church for the blind.

VANESSA

(deadpan)

Right. Now, did you become a smartass before or after the charity work?

RICO
Definitely after.

VANESSA
Uh-huh. Am I gonna get the real story or do I have to sit through your comedy act first?

RICO
You want comedy? My life began as a joke. I was born on April first. I like music, bowl a lot, and I work for my pain-in-the-ass father.

Vanessa studies him.

The waiter returns with a bottle of wine and pours them each a glass.

VANESSA
How's your relationship with your father now?

RICO
He can't stand that I got this new job. It's like I can never do anything good enough for him.

VANESSA
I can see why that bothers you.

RICO
Yeah, it drives me up the freggin' wall.

VANESSA
The people at your new job, do they think you're good enough?

RICO
I dunno. I kinda think they're all waiting for me to mess somethin' up.

VANESSA
Do they think that, or do you think that?

RICO
Are you a shrink or something?

VANESSA
I'm just saying, maybe not everyone is watching you ready to pounce the second you make a mistake.

(MORE)

VANESSA (CONT'D)

I mean, they're giving you a chance to prove that you are good enough to be there. That's gotta count for something, right?

RICO

I guess.

VANESSA

Look, I'm not gonna bullshit you. You're not always gonna be good enough at everything.

Rico looks at her, confused.

RICO

You're real good at this comfort talk thing.

VANESSA

Shh, I'm saying, you're not the only person in the world that's ever made a few mistakes. What matters in the long run is how you deal with it afterwards. Do you do the same thing again, or do you learn from your mistake and do something different?

Vanessa shrugs.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Maybe your dad's right. Maybe you are a screw up, maybe you don't know what you're doing. What are you gonna do to be better?

Rico takes in all of her words. Vanessa takes a sip of wine.

RICO

Y'know, maybe you should be a shrink.

VANESSA

And go through another three years of school? Yeah, no thanks. I already went through nursing school, that was tough enough. Thank God Dr. Ferrari helped cover some of the expense, but in some fucked up way now I feel that I owe him.

RICO

I feel the same way with my dad.

The waiter comes back and serves their food.

RICO (CONT'D)
 You musta been a good student for a
 heartologist to pay for your
 school.

VANESSA
 Cardiologist.

RICO
 See? You're smart.

Series of shots of the two smiling and enjoying their evening.

RICO (CONT'D)
 So, how's a smart, beautiful,
 respectable girl like you still
 single? Most Puerto Rican girls
 have about two or three kids at
 your age.

Vanessa drops down her fork.

VANESSA
 Hello! Must all Puerto Rican women
 have children by the age of twenty
 two?! Are you ready to be a father
 right now?

RICO
 No! I--

VANESSA
 --So, what makes you think all
 women are ready to start a family?
 Or even want that! Like we don't
 have our own lives to figure out
 first! And don't even get me
 started on financial stability,
 especially being a minority.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 You see the neighborhood I live in,
 the position I'm in right now, and
 you're really going to ask me a
 question like that?

RICO
 Look, I'm sorry, that's not what I
 mean--

Vanessa waves it off.

VANESSA

--Just forget it, alright.

Vanessa starts eating her food. Rico dejectedly starts picking at his plate.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Vanessa walks with her arms crossed and head down, to Rico's car. Rico opens the passenger door.

RICO

Wait.

Vanessa stops, but doesn't turn to face Rico.

RICO (CONT'D)

I'm really sorry about what I said back there. When I said what I said, I didn't mean it the way it came out, 'cause what I was really thinking is 'God, this girl is incredible. And how did I get so lucky to be the one here with her now?

Vanessa turns her head, just barely looking over her shoulder.

RICO (CONT'D)

I better not fuck this up or it'll be the stupidest thing I ever do...

Vanessa takes that in...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RIOS HOME - NIGHT

Rico's car pulls up to Vanessa's house. Rico puts the car in park, then gets out to open Vanessa's door. Rico walks Vanessa up to the front gate.

VANESSA

Well, Rico, despite a few things, I had a really nice evening.

RICO

Yeah, me too.

Vanessa opens the gate and closes it behind her.

RICO (CONT'D)

Again, I'm sorry. What can I do to be better?

Vanessa walks back to him, looks him in the eyes, grabs his head giving him a powerful kiss.

VANESSA

Don't fuck up.

Rico, stunned, just nods. He watches her walk into the house as he leans on the fence. His shirt gets stuck on the fence and as he turns to leave, it tears off the pocket.

INT. GARCOM OFFICE SPACE - MORNING

Rico walks to his cubicle holding a can of Coke, an envelope, and a half eaten bagel in his mouth. On his desk is a manila envelope with a post-it that reads

"Give to Ralph".

Just then, Ralph passes by with STACY and ALICE, two other employees. Rico makes mumbled noises to get Ralph's attention as he passes. Ralph and the others turn.

Rico puts his drink down and takes the bagel out of his mouth.

RICO

Hey Ralph, I got an envelope here for you.

Rico grabs the envelope and holds it out to Ralph, then continues to sloppily eat his bagel.

RALPH

Stacy, Alice, this is Rico. He's GarCom's newest, brightest mind. Rico, we were just reminiscing about college reunions, tell us, which college did you attend?

RICO

Actually, I took a few classes in physical education at-

RALPH

Now there's a fruitful curriculum! Hey, why don't Bruce Jenner run to my office, put the envelop on my desk, then run back and I'll time you.

Stacy and Alice giggle as Ralph takes the envelope from him. The three leave just as Stewart approaches Rico.

STEWART
Why's Ralph laughing? Hes never
this happy.

Rico irritably picks up the desk phone's cord in both hands, as if he were to use it to strangle someone.

STEWART (CONT'D)
Okay, let's continue learning about
our network token-ring
infrastructure.

Rico sits down in his seat and scoots over to make room for Stewart. Stewart leans over and starts typing on Rico's computer.

RICO
Hey, Stu.

STEWART
Yeah?

RICO
I just wanna let you know that I
appreciate what you're doin' for
me. You know, helpin' me and shit.
I was never good at school.

STEWART
I'm just doing my job.

RICO
Maybe, but you're not treating me
like these other pricks. You're a
good person.

STEWART
(Bronx accent)
Ah, fuhgeddaboutit. OK, let's move
on.

Rico nods in agreement while spinning a floppy disk with his index finger. He looks up and notices Ralph and Steve looking right at him, laughing every now and then.

RICO
Stu, I got a feelin that those two
dicks are in cahoots with each
other. They look like they're up to
no good.

STEWART

Well, they're not exactly the best people to be around, but I wouldn't say they're colluding.

Stewart studies Steve and Ralph again. Rico sits, conspiring.

RICO

Is there any way we can go into Steve's office and take a look at his computer? You're a computer geek, right?

STEWART

No! Well, that's not entirely true. I can look, but no one else here can. What are you thinking?

RICO

My gut's tellin' me that Steve is up to something.

STEWART

So you want to go through his computer until we find something shady? I don't think it's a good idea.

RICO

Come on, Stu. No one's gotta know, we'll be in and out. If we don't find anything, I won't bring it up again. Cross my heart.

Stewart looks back at Steve and Ralph, who walk away from the office door.

STEWART

They usually go for a coffee break right about now. If we do this, we do it quickly and quietly.

RICO

My two specialties.

Rico pats Stewart on the shoulder.

Music plays - "The Mission Impossible" theme plays.

INT. STEVE'S OFFICE DOORWAY CONTINUOUS

Rico and Stewart approach Steve's office door, trying to be inconspicuous. Stewart closely stand behind as Rico pulls out a lock picking set from his jacket pocket and removes a tool.

RICO

When I was a kid, our dad taught us
how to pick open a door lock.

Stewart calmly grabs the doorknob and opens the door.

STEWART

When I was a kid, my dad taught me
how to open a door.

Rico frowns then shoves him inside.

Music - Mission impossible music abruptly ends.

INT. STEVE'S OFFICE CONTINUOUS

Stewart rushes over to Steve's computer. He turns on the monitor.

Rico browses baseball memorabilia hanging on the walls, then focuses on a paper on Steve's desk.

RICO

Wow, this consultant makes that
much? Guess my high school teachers
were right.

The gun schematic that Steve was previously viewing pops up on screen.

RICO (CONT'D)

Woah, that's a Russian PSM semi-
automatic pistol with a double
action trigger. And an eight round
detachable clip.

STEWART

Wow! How do you know that?

RICO

Ah, I watch a lot of Magnum P.I.
Why would Steve be looking at
handguns?

Stewart ejects the floppy diskette.

STEWART

The writing on this looks Russian,
that explains the Russian gun.

Rico takes it from him and inspects it.

RICO

Huh. I thought that the Russian's
were like cold enemies and shit.

(MORE)

RICO (CONT'D)
 Why does he have a Russian
 diskette?

STEWART
 I'm unaware of any international
 projects GarCom has with Russia.

Suddenly, Steve's voice is heard outside the door.

Stewart quickly takes the diskette from Rico and puts it back
 in the drive, then shuts the monitor. Rico takes a trophy bat
 off the wall just as Steve enters.

STEVE
 What the hell are you two doing in
 here?

Rico test swings the bat's weight.

STEVE (CONT'D)
 Give me that.

Steve tries snatching the bat from Rico, but Rico pulls it
 away. Rico holds the bat out to Steve, who grabs it. Rico
 holds on a bit longer, then lets go.

STEWART
 I was just finished updating your
 PC with the newest anti-virus
 definition and cleaning out temp
 files. Didn't you get the memo?

STEVE
 NO! I didn't. Now get the hell out,
 both of you.

Stewart rushes out of the office.

Steve grabs Rico by the shoulder before he can leave. Rico
 bounces his rubber ball.

STEVE (CONT'D)
 Hey, you, clown?

RICO
 You talkin to me?
*(Rico say the line from
 the movie, 'Taxi driver')*

STEVE
 You must think you're real hot shit
 'cause Caputo risked his career by
 hiring you.

(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)

I don't know what the hell you're doin' here in this company but you better watch your back. You don't want to make an enemy of me.

Rico smirks then again repeats the line from the movie, 'Taxi driver'.

Steve snatches Rico's rubber ball then points with his imaginary gun finger.

INT. GARCOM CAFE - AFTERNOON

Stewart, Sally, and MIKE (20s, chubby nerd) sit at a table.

Mr. Caputo stand on the cafeteria food line.

Rico rushes into GarCom's cafeteria in search for Stewart repeating the phrase, 'you talkin to me', but spots Mr. Caputo paying at the register. He walks over to Mr. Caputo.

RICO

Hello, Mr. C.

MR. CAPUTO

Just the person I wanted to see.

RICO

You got a nice place here, but I gotta tell you it looks like a freggin' circus seeing these people eat.

MR. CAPUTO

I've seen you eat; you don't even chew your food. Is that all you came here to tell me?

RICO

No, actually, I wanted to ask you your take on Steve Olson.

MR. CAPUTO

I'd rather not discuss other employees. But Steve is a smart, rising manager with a strong personality. Just be professional, watch what you say. Is there anything else?

RICO

No. I just got a funny feelin' he's up to somethin'. Somethin' don't smell right about him.

Mr. Caputo shakes his head, amused.

MR. CAPUTO
 Just like your father.
 (beat)
 By the way, how the hell does your
 stool sample end up in a corporate
 meeting. Please keep personal items
 out of this building. CAPISCI!

Mr. Caputo smacks Rico with his stool envelope and leaves.

Rico approaches Stewart, Mike, and Sally sitting at a table.

MIKE
 The mass is usually harder when
 near the Rectal sphincter, but
 softer higher in the alimentary
 canal.

RICO
 What the hell are you talkin'
 about?

Rico shakes his head then leans over, whispering to Stewart.

RICO (CONT'D)
 Stu, about last night. Let's keep
 this information on the down low. I
 don't want Mr. Caputo to know. I
 got a hunch...

Rico studies the groups food.

RICO V.O.
 FISH STICKS! You gotta be kiddin.
 (beat)
 Let's get the hell out of here. I'm
 takin' you to a real place to eat.

The group looks hesitantly at one another.

INT. RICO'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Sally sits in the passenger's seat nervously watching the road. Mike plays a hand held video in the back seat.

Stewart looks out the window while holding loose bowling balls on his lap.

STEWART
 Uh, Rico, where are you taking us?
 We've been driving for a while.

Rico peaks at an Alarmas Service slip, then slams on the brakes. A grenade rolls between Sally's feet.

RICO
Before we grab lunch, I need to
make a quick stop.

STEWART
Hey, maybe you shouldn't read while
your driving.

The grenade rolls again.

SALLY
(freaked out)
Please tell me that's not real.

RICO
Relax, Artie the Snake gave it to
me. There's no gunpowder in it.
It's a riot when I bring it to a
party.

Mike leans over and whispers to Stewart.

MIKE
Stu, exactly what did Rico do
before working at GarCom?

STEWART
I don't know, but does the Witness
Protection Program sound
reasonable?

EXT. RICO'S CAR - AFTERNOON

INSERT SIGN - NEW YORK CITY NEXT EXIT

EXT. ALARMAS SECURITY - AFTERNOON

Rico parks the car in front of Alarmas. Carmine sits on a beach chair flanked by Geno standing around with a few Alarmas associates. Police officer passes by eyeing the crew.

Rico parks, quickly gets out of his car, and rushes towards Alarmas. The others inside the car hurry and lock the doors in fear of the neighborhood. Cars locks CLICK.

RICO
I'm not stayin', I'm here to talk
to dad.

Geno peaks into Rico's car as Rico goes to open the front door of Alarmas.

GENO
What are you a tour guide now?
What's with the geeks?

RICO
Just keep an eye on the freggin'
car.

Carmine notices Sally through the window and approaches the car. He knocks on her window.

CARMINE
Hello beautiful, I'm Uncle Carmine.

Sally looks out at Carmine and smiles nervously and eyes the car lock for reassurance.

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - AFTERNOON

Rico enters to find Frank and LOUIE LUMP (60s, crooked nose, dated suit, long Tiparillo cigar) in mid conversation.

RICO
Hey Louie. By the way, your son
help me rewire my electrical panel.
It must be nice to having an union
electrician the family. I may have
some work...

FRANK
Look who it is. Are you here to
work?

RICO
No, Don Vito, listen I wanted to
ask you about somethin.

FRANK
Of course What do you need.

RICO
Please, it's important.

LOUIE
Look what I have for your pretty
girlfriend.

Louie moves his holster and pulls out a black velvet box.

RICO
That relation was over long ago.
Oh,

Louie opens a black velvet box revealing a pair of glistening, diamond earrings. Rico peaks closer.

RICO (CONT'D)

Yeah, right. How much? Eighteen hundred?

LOUIE

These are a one carat, white gold, studded with a F color rating. Try thirty-two hundred. But for you, three thou.

FRANK

Are you freggin' kidding? The kid can't even afford to take his girl to Red Lobster.

(beat)

Louie put the jewelry away. Rico, seriously, I need you here to open on Saturday to set up the mechanics for a big job in Brooklyn.

Rico hands Frank an envelope.

RICO

Fine! Nelson says this is your cut.

(beat)

Dad, remember on the radio, we heard there's a rise in gun violence? Have you spoken to the G. about that?

FRANK

Why do you want to know? You herd something?

RICO

No.

FRANK

Don't lie to me.

RICO

I'm not, I swear. But I got a gut feeling about something, I just want to know if I'm right.

FRANK

What did Nicky get you into?

RICO

Nicky don't know anything about this. I got a feelin'.

Frank sighs, then moves away from a customer waiting to pay.

FRANK

All I know is, lately, there's lots of imported guns surfacing. Mostly Russian. That's all.

RICO

Russian?

Rico then rummages through a box containing phones and wires.

Frank holds out a service slip to Rico. Rico takes it and reads it.

RICO (CONT'D)

Roxie's! Really?

FRANK

I got no one else I can trust. If I give it to Mitch or Artie, they would never leave.

(beat)

Sounds like a motion detector. Make sure to bring extra magnetic contacts. You can take your time there.

Frank winks at Rico.

INT. RICO'S CAR - AFTERNOON

STEWART

Anyone else feel like we're in a Scorsese movie?

SALLY

Why does it smell like garbage and skunks?

(beat)

That slimeball Carmine is still staring at me.

MIKE

How much longer do you think Rico is going to be? I need to be back at GarCom to back up Marketing's server and migrate the data tables.

SALLY

Oh! He's coming! Thank God.

Rico acknowledges the crew, opens the car door, and jumps in.

RICO

Alright, who's ready for lunch?

INT. ROXIE'S STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

We follow two YOUNG MEN into the smoky atmosphere of Roxie's club. The club is dimly lit with neon pink and purple lights and traditional brass poles on stage.

Rico stands near the DJ booth repairing the alarm system while people watching. A RUSSIAN MAN squeeze past him revealing a weapon tucked in his jacket.

The man quickly covers it up and continues maneuvering through the bar. The Russian then sits on the far side of the bar next to a man in a business suit, who's face is blocked. They begin talking to each other conspiratorially.

Rico keeps an eye on them until the man in the suit is revealed to be STEVE.

BAR AREA

Rico finishes his repair then approaches the BARTENDER.

RICO
Hey, Nancy. Could you let Joe Va.
know I'm done here.

The Bartender, notices Rico's expression change, then follows what Rico's eyes are targeting. She presses a button underneath the bar.

Within seconds Joe Va. appears speaking with a exotic dancer, SAMONE, 20s, full figured Blond.

JOE VA
Rico, I'd like you to meet Samone.
She just started working here...

RICO
Hi. Nice cross, it's nice to see
you're a practicing Christian.

Rico grabs Joe's arm and pulls him to the side.

RICO (CONT'D)
Listen, don't make a stink, but I
saw a strange guy that came heavy,
I mean tucked in his pants heavy.

JOE VA
No shit.

RICO
He's across the bar, near the
cigarette machine talkin' to
someone that I work with.

JOE VA
Really? I thought your company was
a joke. Alright, let me get Kenny.

RICO
No, don't get that maniac involved,
he'll beat the crap outta them. I
need to know what's going on with
these guys.
(beat)
I have an idea.

BAR AREA

Steve and the Russian man converse.

STEVE
So, there were no issues with the
shipment?

The man's stone face shakes no.

STEVE (CONT'D)
A contact I know at Port Newark
says the bureau's paperwork is
sloppy... he altered the carrier's
manifest before they began
computerizing their system. So, if
we keep the weight under 50 kilos,
we avoid attention from Interpol.

BAR AREA

Samone slinks through the performing dancers and approaches
Steve and the Russian. Steve continue his one way
conversation as Samone dances sensually around them.

Stewart busts through the doors, spots Rico, and rushes over,
breathing heavily.

STEWART
Wow, what a great gentleman's
establishment. Thanks for inviting
me out for a drink.

A DANCER passes by, dragging her finger across his shoulders.

RICO
You ever been to a place like this?

STEWART
Can't say that I have. But I know
that I'm ready now. My parents
prohibited this type...

Rico points behind Stewart towards Steve. Stewart turns.

STEWART (CONT'D)
Holy molly. Is that?

RICO
Yep. Steve Olson.

STEWART
What's he doing here? If GarCom...

RICO
That guy he's talkin' to is strapped. I'm telling you; Steve is up to somethin' and it's nothin' good. And if he's doing something at GarCom, don't you want to know?

STEWART
I guess, sure.. yes.

Samone returns and approaches from behind Stewart.

RICO
(to Samone)
What do ya got for me?

SAMONE
They mostly spoke in a foreign language. The only thing I understood was that a ship is going to Gar..Gar--

RICO
--GarCom?

SAMONE
Yes! And the foreign looking guy's name is Illian. I'm sorry, but that's all I got.

Stewart is in a trance staring at Samone's cross buried between her breasts. Rico smacks him in the arm.

RICO
You hear that, buddy?

STEWART
What?

Rico looks up to see Steve and his contact leaving.

RICO

It's show time. Listen, I'm going to find out what this scumbag is up to. You can stay here with Samone and I'll catch up with you later.

Stewart weakly nods to Rico.

STEWART

I guess you know what is best for me. Whoa, it's getting hot in here.

EXT. ROXIE'S PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Steve and Illian exit through the back into the parking lot. They get into separate vehicles. Rico pulls out his keys and decides to follow the van.

EXT. TRACKSIDE BAR - NIGHT

Situated alongside railroad tracks sit several, large dumpsters, stripped cars, and the Trackside bar.

Rico's car follows the van to the bar's parking lot. The van turns the corner and goes to the back.

EXT. TRACKSIDE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Rico parks the car near the side, then stealthily gets out. He peaks through a burnt out, abandon car to get a view of the van. Illian gets out of the van. Two LARGE MEN approach the back of the van, open the rear doors, and begin removing unmarked crates.

RICO (O.S.)

What do we have here?

A face suddenly emerges from the car surprising Rico causing a ruckus. The men stop hearing the commotion and investigate. Rico then flees the scene.

INT. MR. RUSSO'S HOME - NIGHT

Frank lies comfortably in his family room watching a Hitler documentary. Mrs. Russo hands Frank a cup of coffee.

MRS. RUSSO

With the thousands of channels you get from that ridiculous television, why must you always watch the same old crap?

FRANK

This is not crap. This was real history. Besides, the Jerry Springer show doesn't start until eleven o'clock.

MRS. RUSSO

Pick up the phone, it's for you.

FRANK

Who is it?

MRS. RUSSO

Do I look like your secretary?

FRANK

At least my secretary gives great head, so I'm told.

Mrs. Russo slaps the back of Frank's head with a paperback book.

MRS. RUSSO

There, you got head.

Frank picks up the phone.

FRANK

Speak... Carmine, STOP chewing in my freggin' ear. OK, first give me the good news. Good, now ditch the car. What else... Louie Lump said that the G. is upset about what surfaced at the club? Shit!

Television shows the News about the increase of gun trafficking. Frank jams the phone down and ponders.

INT. GARCOM - SERVER ROOM - NIGHT

Ralph stealthily types on a computer, completes his task, then develops a grin. Mr. Caputo's name appears on a financial account statement.

EXT. CITY THEATHER LINE - NIGHT

Vanessa and Fran stand squished outside on a movie theater line.

FRAN

Any luck with Dr. Ferrari and Mrs. Valderamma's procedure?

Fran flirts with two ogling men from afar.

VANESSA

I hope that idiot comes through.
Mrs. Valderamma deserves to live
longer.

(beat)

Holy shit! It's Tomas?

Vanessa sees a fashionably dressed man holding a scantily
dressed, red-haired woman tightly around the waist.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

This ought to be fun.

FRAN

No me diga. I knew it. Jessica was
right about that slimeball and look
at the way he's holding that bitch.

Vanessa grabs hold to Fran's arm.

VANESSA

No, we are not going to start this
all over again. I know. Why don't
we just go to the Marriott?

Fran reluctantly flips them the finger while Vanessa whisks
her away.

INT. MARRIOTT BAR - NIGHT

Inside the Marriott, Vanessa and Fran sit at a bar drinking
their cocktails. Vanessa sees Geno nearby, then scans the
room for Rico.

EXT. MARRIOTT BAR ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Rico and Kimberly arrive at the same time. Kimberly is
wearing a modest, royal blue evening dress.

KIMBERLY

Well, hello Mr. Russo. I'm glad you
could make it.

RICO

Nice dress.

KIMBERLY

Thank you for that oleaginous
observation.

RICO

What? Oh, I forgot, you don't speak
English.

KIMBERLY

I'll have you know that I minored in Latin at Cornell. My vocabulary is quite extensive, far more comprehensive than your remedial catalogue of twelve, trifling words.

RICO

Have you been drinking?

Kimberly chuckles then grabs Rico's arm.

INT. MARRIOTT BAR - NIGHT

Kimberly and Rico enter. Fran looks up and stops grooving to the music. Vanessa follows Fran's focus then sees Rico.

Rico removes Kimberly's arm. Vince sees Geno.

RICO

Listen, you're here on your own. Go play, I'm getting a drink.

KIMBERLY

Rico, it's time that you see the big picture. If you want to be a player and climb the corporate ladder, you must mingle with the right people. Rising, young employees would be envious and kill for this opportunity. Come, I want to introduce you to the Regional Director of Marketing.

Rico moves to a bar and orders a drink. Steve and two middle-aged businessmen, TOM and GARY (40s) approach Kimberly.

KIMBERLY (CONT'D)

Good evening gentleman. I would like to introduce you to one of our newest employees, Rico Russo.

Rico turns to shake hands with Tom and Gary. Steve keeps his distance.

TOM

Welcome to GarCom Rico. So, what's your take working for GarCom thus far?

RICO

Thus far, it's been fun.

Rico raises his glass to Mr. Caputo who's across the room socializing.

TOM

Fun? Amusing adjective!

STEVE

Gentleman, this is the very man who when asked about 401 contributions replied, the detergent? The same man when asked about the IT department's migration to Oracle replied, is that country in Europe?

Steve's comments cause LAUGHTER. Rico turns and whispers to Kimberly.

RICO

(whispers to Kimberly)
Why do I sense you're enjoying this?

Rico sees Vanessa then hastily leaves.

INT. MARRIOTT BAR - NIGHT

Stewart suddenly crosses Rico's path.

RICO

What the hell are you wearing?

STEWART

This is my new black leather jacket. What do you think?

RICO

Fantastic! Now you can be an extra in a Michael Jackson video.

STEWART

So, what happened when you followed Steve.

RICO

I'll tell you later. Don't mention this shit to anyone. Got it?

Stewart follows Rico to Fran and Vanessa.

RICO (CONT'D)

Oh, great. I'm glad you guys are here.

VANESSA

So, who's the bimbo you walked in with?

RICO

Oh, her, well she works for GarCom. She's an attorney.

VANESSA

Am I supposed to be impressed?

RICO

This is Stu. He's a genius and can vouch for me.

Vanessa frowns at Stewart's attire. Rico rolls his eyes in pain as a scruffy man, HARRY (30s) GarCom maintenance man, recognizes him from across the room and enters the circle.

HARRY

Rico Revs, What's up? Hello O'Brian.

Harry tips Rico's drink with his beer. Rico leans over and whispers to Harry.

RICO

Don't call me that here.

Harry and Stewart scrutinize each other's attire.

HARRY

I thought I recognized you in GarCom's front lobby last week. But I thought to myself, what would Rico Re..., excuse me, Rico, be doing here. So, what's the spread on the Knick game tonight?

Rico walks Harry a few feet away. Vanessa scrutinizes Rico.

RICO

Not involved taking numbers anymore.

HARRY

They're on a roll! They've won seven of eight and they're home tonight. They are a five-point favorite. I'll take the over.

Vanessa looks coldly at Rico. Rico monitors Steve's actions.

STEWART

Vanessa, how did you and Rico meet?

VANESSA
(indignant)
 Rico and I met at a club.

Rico looks towards Vanessa.

HARRY
 I just want to put fifty dollars on
 the Knick game!

RICO
 Did you hear what I said? I'm not
 taking bets anymore!

HARRY (CONT'D)
 Come on, I got a good feeling on
 this one.

RICO (CONT'D)
 Look at yourself. Do you remember
 what happened the last time I took
 your bet?

Rico shakes his head in embarrassment.

RICO (CONT'D)
 See that skinny guy with that
 ridiculous shirt standing by the
 bar? That's my brother Geno.
 He'll take your action.

INT. MARRIOTT BAR - NIGHT

Kimberly unexpectedly enters the circle. Harry flees away
 seeing Kimberly.

KIMBERLY
 Hello Mr. O'Brien.
(beat)
 And who do we have here?

STEWART
 This is Vanessa. She's Rico's
 friend.

KIMBERLY
 Hi, Kimberly Lee McFeeny. I happen
 to have the good fortune of working
 alongside Rico. He's such a
 remarkable person.
(beat)
 That's funny, Rico never mentioned
 he had a girlfriend.

Vanessa stares coldly back at Kimberly.

KIMBERLY (CONT'D)

I'm terribly sorry but I thought you knew that Rico and I work closely together. I didn't intend to startle you.

VANESSA

Oh dear, I didn't mean to startle you. I know all about you rich, uptight, spoiled, brats. You think you can fool people with those pompous, polite wisecracks, and that cheap ass dress. You don't fool me. Now get those fake tits out of my face before we go at it girl.

Stewart chugs his beer bottle.

KIMBERLY

Well, it seems that you and Mr. Russo may have some romantic ties. Had Rico been forthcoming about your relationship, perhaps this entire conversation could have been avoided.

Rico returns to Stewart and Vanessa.

Vanessa gives Rico a cold look then storms away.

RICO

Great! What did you say to her?

KIMBERLY

I told her the truth.

RICO

I don't believe you. Why must you be such a bitch?

Kimberly chuckles, grabs a Jell-O shot from a passing waitress, and salutes Rico.

PHONE BOOTH

Steve listens to an excited voice over a hotel phone keeping his eyes on both Mr. Caputo and Rico.

VOICE ON PHONE

I just learned that Caputo was asking questions about Illian and his involvement with our team.

(MORE)

VOICE ON PHONE (CONT'D)
 What are we going to do because I
 didn't sign up for this bullshit.
 You do have a handle on this?

STEVE
 Don't worry. It's taken care of.

Steve hangs up the phone and quickly leaves the hotel.

INT. MARRIOTT BAR - NIGHT

Vanessa returns to where Fran is sitting.

FRAN
 Uh-oh, you got that look. What
 happened over there?

VANESSA
 Ah dose mios, dame pacencias. I
 don't know who is more idiotic,
 that blond bitch or this idiota. I
 should kick both their asses.

FRAN
 Hey, hey, easy. Que paso?

Rico returns.

RICO
 Vanessa, we need to talk.

Vanessa turns and stares at anything other than Rico. Fran
 begins talking with a tall, stylish man.

RICO (CONT'D)
 Vanessa, please! There's something
 you should know.

VANESSA
 Yeah, that you're a swine?

RICO
 Vanessa, I'm begging you. Let's go
 outside where it's quiet.

Vanessa studies Rico with trepidation.

VANESSA
 (*indignantly*)
 Fran, I'm leaving. Let me hear what
 this idiot has to say.

FRAN
 No problem girl.

Fran looks up and down Rico with suspicion then smiles at her new male friend.

Rico updates Geno to his situation.

Vanessa and Rico leave.

EXT. MARIOTT PARKING LOT - NIGHT

RICO

Listen, my house is a few minutes away. Let's just go there and talk like two civilized adults.

VANESSA

How will Fran get home?

RICO

Don't worry about it. Geno will take good care of her. In fact, Geno is probably all over her now.

Inside the Marriott, Fran is in the middle of the dance floor grinding with a man while Geno is at the bar lining up swizzle sticks.

INT. RICO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Vanessa and Rico stand in front of his building apartment door.

VANESSA

I thought you came from money?

Rico shakes his head and leads her into the building.

RICO

Make yourself at home.

VANESSA

Wow! Nice place.

RICO

Thanks. I know how to use tools. What are you having, red or beer?

Vanessa examines a photo.

VANESSA

I can't stay long. I got to be at work early tomorrow. I just want to hear what this asshole has to say.

(beat)

(MORE)

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Wow, who's the dick with the orange bell bottoms and long hair?

Vanessa removes a DVD from the couch.

RICO

Funny! OK, we are even.

(beat)

I think you're reading too much into this. Like I was trying to say before, Kimberly is a little manipulating bitch.

VANESSA

Her expensive acrylic manicure and her studded, hoop diamond earrings are inviting for most weak-minded, primitive men.

(beat)

RAGING BULL? Do you realize this movie doesn't portray women well.

RICO

It's just a freggin' movie. Relax! I tell you what. I'll give you a shoulder rub to relax you.

VANESSA

Are you kidding? You're Sicilian and Puerto Rican. I'll get pregnant just sitting next to you.

RICO

So, you think I have no willpower?

VANESSA

Think! Shit, I know you don't.

Rico places their drinks down near his blinking answer machine, takes Vanessa's hand, and looks into her eyes.

RICO

Please listen. My intensions weren't to get you jealous. I really enjoy being with you and I think you're great. I would never do anything to hurt you. That's the honest truth.

MUSIC PLAYS - "NEW YORK STATE OF MIND" BY BILLIE JOEL

Rico softly kisses her hand, then with both hands, tenderly moves her hair from her face, tucks it behind her ears, and moves in for a kiss.

Rico's answering machine picks up and we hear the BEEP.

The message plays

"Rico this is Stu, something terrible happened to Mr. Caputo and...

Rico quickly picks up leaving Vanessa cold.

RICO (CONT'D)
 Stu, slow down. What! When? Where
 is he now? St. Joseph's Hospital?
 Alright, thanks for letting me
 know.

INT. HOSPITAL RECEPTION AREA - NIGHT

Rico and Vanessa arrive at St. Joe's hospital's busy ER.

VANESSA
 Stay here, I know the women at the
 front desk.

Rico stands by a cigarette machine waiting as Vanessa returns with badges.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 Here, put this on.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Rico and Vanessa locate Nick resting. A NURSE tends to Mr. Caputo.

RICO
 Aye, Nicky, can you hear me?

Mr. Caputo slowly opens his eyes and acknowledges Rico.

RICO (CONT'D)
 What the hell happened?

MR. CAPUTO
 I was run over by a freggin car,
 that's what happened.

RICO
 Really!

Rico ponders

RICO (CONT'D)
 Have you noticed any un unusual
 things going on at GarCom?

MR. CAPUTO

Nothing out of the ordinary.

RICO

What about Steve lately and his butt plug friend Ralph? Anything odd about them?

MR. CAPUTO

Steve? No! The last conversation we had, concerned a new consultant working in his team, but nothing...

RICO

Was the consultant's name Illian?

MR. CAPUTO

Yeah, how did you know?

RICO

I came across an invoice with his name on Steve's desk, and get this, Illian carries a piece.

MR. CAPUTO

I don't believe it... Steve's preparing an important presentation for a big client. I can't image he would hire someone shady...

(beat)

How do you know this? Oh, I forgot, you're Frank's son.

Rico's facial expression changes Mr. Caputo's outlook.

MR. CAPUTO (CONT'D)

That can't be. That weasel.

(beat)

Funny! All the years I worked in the Bronx with your father, not once were we taken advantage of... All I know is that I can't focus on this right now - we got this AutoTech presentation. We agreed to come up with solutions to market the company's global audience. How are we going to help...

(winces in pain)

...develop and pitch a presentation while I'm lying here on my ass?

(beat)

I'm not Steve's biggest fan, but, if his team gets the contract, I'm afraid things here will get dicey for us.

RICO

I'll come up with an idea and pitch the presentation. It's a slam dunk. Stewart explained a lot to me. Stu can help me. Don't worry. I'll figure this shit out.

Mr. Caputo stares at Rico pacing around the room.

RICO (CONT'D)

I know you think I'm not ready, but I can do this.

VANESSA

That's right! He has great ideas.

RICO

Oh, I forgot, this is my friend, my girlfriend, Vanessa.

MR. CAPUTO

So, this is the girl who turned your life around.

Rico looks at Vanessa and smiles. Mr. Caputo studies Rico. Nurse returns and nudges everyone out.

MR. CAPUTO (CONT'D)

You do have a competent team.

Mr. Caputo slowly nods in favor. Rico develops a smile.

NURSE ANGEL

Don't worry. We will take good care of Mr. Caputo. And by the way, Pedro and I are thankful for Alarmas' protection.

Nurse Angel winks at Rico. Rico's eyes widen as he suddenly recognizes the nurse.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Rico is quiet as he and Vanessa drive from the hospital.

VANESSA

So, I'm your girlfriend. That's strange, I don't recall discussing a long-term relationship with you.

Rico nibbles on a fingernail. Vanessa stares down Rico, waiting for a response.

RICO

It's that presentation that worries me, ALRIGHT! I don't believe Nicky talked me into this.

(beat)

Executives! Board room! What the hell was he thinking?

VANESSA

HIM! You told me before that all you wanted was a chance to prove yourself. Well, here's your chance, not only to Mr. Caputo and your father, but to yourself. That you have the ability to compete at the corporate level.

RICO

Yeah, but I'm not a smooth talker like all those smart business guys. I sound like I received speech lessons from Sylvester Stallone.

VANESSA

Rico... I know you can.

(beat)

If fact, if you go down, we all go down.

Rico looks to Vanessa, absorbs her words, then softly kisses her hand.

INT. RICO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Rico arrives home exhausted. He grabs a drink and plops down. His eyes intensively scan the room in thought.

He picks up a Mad magazine from his coffee table and desperately scans through it. He thumbs pass a few pages and suddenly, his eyes widen. He reaches for a napkin and begins drawing.

INT. CITY CARDIOLOGY - MORNING

Fran and Vanessa are behind the reception desk performing clerical duties.

FRAN

So how did it go last night with the Italian stallion? Was he two timing you?

A delivery man drops off a bouquet of flowers and leaves.

Fran silently reads the note attached to the vase.

FRAN (CONT'D)

Interesting! By the looks of this card, you must of givin' him...

VANESSA

EXCUSE ME! And NO, nothing happened for your information!

(beat)

I believe that this bimbo bitch is playing around with his head. I don't believe he's got a thing for her...

FRAN

Which head?

VANESSA

Girl, you have some serious issues.

Fran giggles as Vanessa picks up a phone.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

We had some wine and some soft music. I thought he'd be all over me, but he just held me softly and kissed me. That's all.

FRAN

THAT'S IT? What's wrong with him?

Vanessa internalizes.

VANESSA

He held me.

(beat)

I hope this pendejo knows what he's doing.

FRAN

Well, you told me that he's intelligent.

VANESSA

No, I told you that he says some intelligent things, that doesn't make him intelligent.

Vanessa reflects in thought.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Do you know that he stopped by my house when I wasn't home and installed a new phone line for my mother? She was very happy.

(MORE)

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 Who does that shit?
Que hombre hace esa mierda?

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 Then I got Mommi's health issues,
 Papi's Alzheimer's, my student
 loan. I can't even save for a three
 family house that we need.
 (beat)
 Do you think it's me?

Vanessa wipes away a tear.

FRAN
 Hey, it's not you, so don't even go
 there. Your mom and dad are strong,
 God will provide for them. By the
 sounds of this Rico character, he
 seems like a project. Maybe you
 should...

FRAN (CONT'D)
 Look! Mrs. Valderamma and her dumb-
 ass son just waked in. What do you
 want to do?

Vanessa abruptly hangs up the phone and gets professional.

VANESSA
 Hello, Mrs. Valderamma! It's nice
 to see you. Oh, what a beautiful
 blouse you're wearing today.

MRS. VALDERAMMA
 Yes, I came from my house.

Ted sticks his fat head in the small window opening.

TED
 These are signed Power of Attorney
 forms for my grandmother.

Vanessa finds a smile and takes the papers from Ted. Ted
 catches a glimpse of Fran's figure. Vanessa closes the
 reception window on his fingers.

TED (CONT'D)
 Ouch!

VANESSA
 I'm terribly sorry.
 (beat)
 Mrs. Valderamma, it's time to come
 in. I'm going to take you into room
 two. We are going to check your
 pacemaker.

Vanessa pushes her towards a room and purposely past her son causing Mrs. Valderamma's cane to jab Ted in his private area.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
Sorry, my fault.

Ted, and his High Times magazine, looks over Vanessa's shoulder with a look of worry.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
There's no need to worry Ted. Wow,
you must work out.

Her touch temporarily paralyzes him. Vanessa slowly guides him back to the reception area.

INT. GARCOM/RICO'S CUBICLE - MORNING

Car keys, bubble gum, and a drawing on paper are tossed onto a desk. An energized Rico picks up his desk phone and makes calls.

Steve scrutinizes his every move from his office.

INT. CITY CARDIOLOGY - EXAM ROOM - MORNING

Vanessa changes a setting on the medical programmer while eyeing Mrs. Valderamma and Dr. Ferrari.

DR. FERRARI
We've made some small changes. How
do you feel now Mrs. Valderamma?

MRS. VALDERAMMA
That's better. I feel much better,
thank you.

Mr. Ferrari pats Vanessa's rump. Vanessa looks up to the ceiling in disgust then purposely opens a cabinet door, smashing Dr. Ferrari's forehead.

INT. GARCOM OFFICE - MORNING

BEGIN MONTAGE

-- In a GarCom conference room, Rico's napkin drawing of his idea is taped to an easel. He stands in front of a group explaining his idea.

-- Mike disconnects a computer and swiftly takes it.

- Rico, inconspicuously, steals an office phone.
- Stewart reviews plans.
- Sally creates financial graphs at her desk.
- Sluggo and Rico review a schematic in the back of a noisy bowling alley, and near a broken Spy Hunter video game.
- Rico scoots a few union workers, with hard hats and tools, through GarCom's shipping bay.
- Ralph and Steve watches nefariously from his office, Caputo's team working.

END MONTAGE

INT. STEVE'S OFFICE - MORNING

Steve is behind his desk listening to a phone conversation.

RUSSIAN MAN

The packages are being loaded for shipment as we speak. I'll contact you once all parties are satisfied.

The man hangs up.

Steve hangs up his phone. Ralph pops his head into Steve's office.

RALPH

The presentation is about to start.

STEVE

Is everything set?

Ralph nods then quickly leaves Steve's office.

Steve opens a draw revealing a German Lugar and drugs. He reaches into the draw.

INT. GARCOM - MAIN CUBICLE AREA - MORNING

Sally, Mike, and Stewart, worried, congregate near a cubical. Mike plays with his handheld video game.

SALLY

Where's Rico? The meeting is about to start.

STEWART

Maybe he had a stupid service call
in the Bronx.

(beat)

Check out who arrived.

The group observe a team of business executives slowly
entering the conference room.

RICO

Who's calling my service calls
stupid?

SALLY

Oh, Rico, thank God you've arr--

--Sally is galvanized by Rico's rich business suit and newly
stylish appearance. She hands him a folder.

RICO

Mike, is everything set with you
and Sluggo?

MIKE

Wait... Wait... YES. We are good.

RICO

Stu, are we good?

Stewart nods. Rico extends his hand out. The others place a
hand onto Rico's hand.

RICO (CONT'D)

We all worked hard on this
presentation. Everyone, stick to
the plan. Kick ass on three, ready!
One, two...

INT. GARCOM CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

Rico enters Garcom's conference room. Inside, GarCom and
AutoTech executives are slowly finding their seats.

Rico, confident, makes his way to an available seat. Sitting
regally at one end of the table and with his is AutoTech team
is CEO, JEFFERY DICKINSON. He's plump, tan, 60's, cowboy hat.

STEVE

Where is Caputo?

(beat)

Oh, that's right, he received a
boo-boo and perhaps having some
legal issues with corporate.
Typical criminal. Oh, before I
forget, here..

Steve hands Rico his rubber ball.

STEVE (CONT'D)
 Since you don't have any, here's
 your good luck ball.

RICO'S FLASHBACK:

While Steve laughs and executives converse, Rico recalls Alarmas employees drinking alcohol, devouring Chinese food, and counting cash like animals devouring their prey...

END FLASHBACK.

Steve begins the marketing presentation by signaling for the projector to be started.

EXT. ALARMAS FRONT - MORNING

Army truck pulls in front of Alarmas. Louie Lump and a few Alarmas employees stand waiting. Artie The Snake jumps out of the truck eating a White Castle hamburger.

ARTIE
 Louie, Rico was right on.

Artie gives Louie Lump five.

ARTIE (CONT'D)
 We arrived at the place just like
 Rico told us.

ARTIE (CONT'D)
 That shit was off the hook. Those
 guys saw we weren't playing and
 drop their guns faster than Hearn's
 dropping Duran.

Series of shots showing ARMY MEN rustling up a few gun traffickers' and securing the gun crates. Artie opens the truck's rear curtain.

ARTIE (CONT'D)
 Tadaa!

Sitting alongside a few armed Army Men, and on top of several crates, are bound and beaten gun traffickers.

ARTIE (CONT'D)
 Once we unload the merchandise,
 we'll bring them to the Army annex
 on 189th street. It's boxing and
 martial arts day. We can use them
 for practice.
 (beat)
 (MORE)

ARTIE (CONT'D)
 OK you faggots, unload this shit
 into the store.

INT. GARCOM CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

STEVE
 ... then the AutoTech logo follows.
 We have two Academy award actors on
 board jockeying for the voice over
 advertisement dialogue.

The conference room's lights are turned on.

STEVE (CONT'D)
 Gentleman, if you turn to page
 three in the presentation report
 you can see that our team's data
 shows projected revenue...

All eyes focus on Mr. Dickinson.

Mr. Dickinson repositions his large cigar to the other side
 of his mouth.

MR. DICKINSON
 I understand and respect GarCom's
 stellar reputation. This
 presentation is touching targeting
 human emotions during difficult
 times.
 (beat)
 Is there anything else you have?

Rico takes a deep breath then stands.

RICO
 (composed)
 Men, and women, my name is Russo,
 Rico Russo. I'm filling in for Mr.
 Caputo who unfortunate couldn't
 make it today.
 (beat)
 We all know the reason you're here.
 It's to regain control of your
 product market. Let's face it,
 last year you guys blew it with
 that ridiculous commercial.

Mumbling noises is heard as some executives become appalled.
 Kimberly Lee looks down in embarrassment.

STEVE
 I apologize for Mr. Russo's
 marketing insensitivity and
 inexperience.
 (MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)

(beat)

I assure you sir that GarCom's position is to align our Stella, global reputation with AutoTech's impeccable--

MR. DICKINSON

--Sit down son.

Rico dejectedly sits.

MR. DICKINSON (CONT'D)

Not you, Mr. Olson.

Steve uncomfortably sits back down.

MR. DICKINSON (CONT'D)

Mr. Russo, I'm waiting.

The conference doors burst open. Stewart rolls in a large device covered with a black satin cloth.

STEVE

What's going on here?

RICO

Mr. Caputo was the lead for our concept design. Mr. Caputo felt that this device could fill a niche in the PC industry and add money, I mean, revenue using some of AutoTech's subsidiaries.

Stewart swiftly plugs the device into a wall.

RICO (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Millennium, the AutoPOD 2000.

Rico removes the black cover while

All eyes are glued to the device that resembles a morphed arcade, video gaming machine on steroids.

RICO (CONT'D)

Please excuse its crudeness. Due to Mr. Caputo's sudden accident, we didn't have time to make it look pretty. But check this sh... out. This machine not only has a computer, but the capability to generate electricity while working.

The crowd moves in closer for a better look.

RICO (CONT'D)

Mounted inside AutoTech's AutoPOD is a GarCom or AutoTech computer. This POD also contains the Merlin phone system, coaxial cabling for advanced data communications, and all other necessary office amenities...

The suits marvel at the devices' interior technology.

RICO (CONT'D)

Employees park their chair in front of the AutoPOD. Workers push the racing pedals creating an electrical charge while working. That charge is sent through a standard 12-3 UL cable to a standard 220 wall outlet. The charge is sent to an inverter receiver down in the utility room's main panel. This receiver then redirects the charge back to the utility company collecting energy credit from various energy suppliers.

Rico smiles at Stewart.

RICO (CONT'D)

And if you have been paying attention to local and national news, you would know that there's a shortage of electrical power on the grid. Imagine a product which not only benefits the workers, but saves the environment, helps generate energy, and makes the company money.

Many executives share their enthusiasm.

RICO (CONT'D)

We wouldn't have to outsource our business to companies overseas. Stewart has all the data and logistics, is that the right word?... and cost manufacturing.

Stewart gives Rico a thumbs up.

AUTOTECH EXECUTIVE #2

We can create energy credits.

AUTOTECH EXECUTIVE #3

I recently read an article about human energy driven power generators. This could lead into large, grid energy storage.

AUTOTECH EXECUTIVE #2

This type of renewable energy can be big.

RICO

I don't know a lot about energy, but what I do know is that electricity is produced, not found like gas and oil. Prices of electricity are bound to increase.

Rico points to Mr. Dickinson to enter the POD.

Mr. Dickinson carefully sits. The AutoPOD's computer screen illuminates showing the Auto-Tech logo. The monitor then shows a surveillance video of Steve standing at the buildings loading docks.

VIDEO PLAYS:

The guns will be arriving from our Bronx facility for distribution. The crates will be ready for departure. I've got Ralph assisting me with our off-shore accounts. All the blame will be pointing to Caputo and that idiot Rico.

RICO

I noticed that the shipping bays where not adequately fitted with current surveillance cameras, so my father's company donated a few, free of charge. Mike helped with the setup, Sally investigative work, and Stewart help bring it all together with some interesting footage as you can see.

Everyone turns to Steve and Ralph. Rico looks at a wall clock.

RICO (CONT'D)

And as we speak, friends of my father are working alongside law enforcement assisting in the recovery of Mr. Olson's merchandise.

Series of shots showing army men rustling up a few gun traffickers' and securing the gun crates.

EXT. GARCOM FRONT ENTRANCE - MORNING

Geno, Joe Va, and Carmine are standing around looking at surveillance photos.

Ralph rushes through GarCom's main doors. Geno trips Ralph and grabs him by the hair.

Steve stealthily passes by and exits the front entrance.

CARMINE

There he is! Get the fuck over here
you rat bastard.

Carmine throws the rest of his food at Steve. Joe Va drops a surveillance photo and quickly grab hold of Steve.

STEVE

You have nothing on me. I know my
rights. My lawyer--

--Carmine punches Steve in the stomach dropping him to his knees. Carmine stands over him wiping his mouth.

CARMINE

I was all set to meet Daisy and get
some action. I'm ready to conquer
the world, but, no, I get a service
call from my fathead brother.

(beat)

Nicky was right, you look like a
weasel.

The men take Steve outside and thrust him into a car. Steve screams as the door catches his ankle.

CARMINE (CONT'D)

You better not get any blood on
these seats.

GENO

Nicky says to drop him off at the
43rd precinct. Tape this note to
this scumbag's body. Nicky will
follow up, just don't leave any
marks on him.

INT. GARCOM CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

RICO

So, what do you think?

MR. DICKINSON

Well, Mr. Russo, I was very moved
by your presentation.

(MORE)

MR. DICKINSON (CONT'D)
 You speak from the heart and I like
 that. I would like to learn more.

RICO
 Thanks, Mr. D. for listening. My
 father once told me to give it to
 them straight.

Mr. Dickinson is suddenly surprised by Rico's city hug.

RICO (CONT'D)
 I'd love to continue this, but I
 have some business with my father.

MR. DICKINSON
 That's wonderful to see. City folk
 still embracing family values.

INT. GARCOM LOBBY - MORNING

Vanessa sees Rico walking through the lobby and approaches.

VANESSA
 Rico, I have wonderful news. You
 would never believe what happened
 this morning... Oh, before I tell
 you, how did your presentation go?

RICO
 It went good. Wow! For the first
 time in my life, I feel I
 accomplished something important. I
 did something good without screwing
 up... Thanks for believin' in me.
 It was your encouragement that
 inspired me.

Rico reflects in thought.

RICO (CONT'D)
 It somehow feels like the movies
 where the good guy spoils the crime
 and gets the pretty girl at the
 end.

Vanessa smiles, gives Rico a big hug, then the two exit the
 building.

EXT. GARCOM FRONT ENTRANCE - MORNING

Frank and Nicky Caputo slowly approach the front area. Nicky
 walking with one crutch while Frank takes in the
 surroundings.

FRANK

I got to handed to you Nicky. I was pissed off for you leaving Alarmas for this... After a while, I sensed that you were happy with your life. That's what I want for Rico, to be happy.

MR. CAPUTO

It's hard for us to let go. We don't want them to experience the shit we went through.

Rico approaches Frank and Mr. Caputo holding Vanessa's hand.

RICO

Nicky, Dad! Cool. Dad, listen. before you start bustin' my balls, there...

FRANK

No. Stop and you listen. It looks like I might have been wrong about what is best for you. Nicky filled me in on what happened. By you taking care of those bastards, the G. is very appreciative. Makes all of us look good.

(beat)

You might have a future with this Mickey Mouse Company after-all.

Frank and Nicky salute Rico with their Styrofoam cups.

RICO

Dad, thanks. All this time I thought you were against me working for a legit company. It was you who sent Nicky my resume.

FRANK

Thank your mother. She kept bustin' my cogliones.

(beat)

By the way, do you have something for me?

Frank signals with his fingers for the cash. Rico reluctantly reaches into his wallet and hands his father cash.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You must be Vanessa? Wow. I can see why my son is suddenly successful.

Rico yanks the box from Frank's hand, then softly hands the velvet box to Vanessa. Vanessa opens the box and marvels at the gift.

VANESSA

WOW!

RICO

A little something for being so wonderful and believing in me.

VANESSA

...and intelligent, sophisticated..

RICO

Let's get outta hear. I want to hear all about this wonderful news.

Rico reaches for her hand.

Music plays - "Like gold" by Angie Rose

Mr. Dickinson waves his cowboy hat towards Rico to enter his parked limo.

Rico and Vanessa smile at one another.

THE END