

**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.

FRANK

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

RICO

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

Frank CHUCKLES while reading the store business numbers.

PUNKS eye the unmarked car then continue drug dealing.

RICO (CONT'D)

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

FRANK

See that building there? We lived  
on the third floor when you were  
about five years old. Look around.

Rico looks at the world around him and Frank drives up to a dated bodega.

**EXT. CITY STREET - DAY**

A PROSTITUTE hang out on the corner smoking cigarettes while SIRENS blare from a few blocks away.

**INT. FRANK'S CAR - DAY**

FRANK

You know this business will be  
yours one day.

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)

(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)  
 When we get inside, *figger* out how  
 much wire well need.

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

**INT. BODEGA STORE - DAY**

A bell attached to the door rings as Frank and Rico enter the Bodega.

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

FRANK  
 OYE, soy de Alarmas!

The young woman acknowledges their presents then summons out.

CHE (30s) skinny Spanish guy, muscle shirt, beret, strides out from the back area with chest puffed, aiming to make an entrance.

Che 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)*  
 Nice place you got here.

Che speaks with a heavy accent. Rico sees a rubber ball display, grabs a ball, then bounces it.

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)*  
 Nice piece, nine-millimeter?

Che just glares at Rico without answering.

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  
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.

Che looks coldly at Frank then slowly unravels a wad of cash.

**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  
What's with the puss on your face?

RICO  
Nothing. Richy and I got a bowling match against Rudy Revs and the beep-er.

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 guys numbers joint will be busted in three months, that why we take cash. That was a twenty eight hundred, dollar score.

RICO

Did you check out that guy's gun?

FRANK

Of course. It was an ASP nine. Rare, collectors piece. I don't know how the hell he got it. They're hard to get in the US.

Frank looks out the window seeing YOUNG MEN playing basketball at a school yard.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Nobody freggin' works anymore. When I was twenty-two, I was already married, working, and had you.

A silence. Rico treads lightly with his words.

RICO

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

FRANK

Here we go again about computers. For what?

RICO

I heard computers are powerful machines, they can save information and can be programmed to do things. Didn't you see the movie Terminator?

FRANK

No, I didn't, and besides what happens when the government decides to make a surprise visit? All I need is friggin' records. And besides, no one knows how to work those friggin things.

RICO

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

Frank scoffs.

FRANK

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

RICO

I figured it out!

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

RICO (CONT'D)

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. CARDIOLOGY OFFICE - DAY**

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

**INT. 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 an eyebrow. 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, she always  
brings me cookies. Tells me 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.

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 a dirty look and giving him 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)

I have something for you.

Vanessa shrugs her shoulder to her ear and moves away from him.

VANESSA

I'm sure you do.

DR. FERRARI

What's the matter?

She turns to face him. He adjusts the name plate on her chest. She swats at his hand.

VANESSA

Cut it out! I'm in no mood.

Dr. Ferrari's face hardens. A few other employees walk by. He brushes off his lab coat.

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 sighs, embarrassed and enraged.

**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! Tell your dad 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. I'm with GarCom  
International. We have 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, and 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 anything from Bronx  
 Dentistry?

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 that alarm system 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.

NURSE ANGEL  
We are paying?

Hector gestures to the money he handed Rico.

FRANK  
What the hell is that? That's  
friggin' 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 and reveals a pistol in a holster on his hip. 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. The two men are relieved. Frank and Rico are flustered.

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

Rico clears his throat.

RICO  
Uh, yep, 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

It's all about you, right?

Frank stops in his tracks. He looks over his shoulder back at Rico.

RICO (CONT'D)

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.

Rico hesitates. Frank strides closer to Rico.

FRANK (CONT'D)

See? It's not the job, or me, or this, that, the other thing that's the problem here. You don't have the balls to go.

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 the 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 reluctantly 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's melody.

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

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

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

**EXT. CLUB CAFE - LATER - NIGHT**

PEOPLE come and go through the entrance of the club. Rico, Vanessa, and Fran exit together towards the parking lot.

Rico follows Vanessa to her car, then helps her 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.

Vanessa and Fran get into the car.

Vanessa rolls down her window.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Rico?

RICO

Yeah?

VANESSA

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

Rico nods. Vanessa and Fran 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.

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.

(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. GARCOM 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.

(MORE)



MR. CAPUTO (CONT'D)

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. 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 on that device. She will definitely need a new bi-ventricular device.

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. Wiess 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. 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 Rodriguez 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 hired me.

FRANK  
Nicky Taveroni?

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.

GENO  
Like what?

RICO  
Like...your health.

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 necesito 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 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 leans over and whispers 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 guys are so  
 uncultured.  
 (beat)  
 Let's get the hell out of here. I'm  
 takin' you to a real place to eat.

The group looks hesitantly at each other.

**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. isi upset about what surfaced at the club? Shit!

Television shows the News about the increase of gun trafficking. Frank jams the phone down.

**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 suddenly 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 enjoying 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 already?

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 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.

They shake hands with Rico and 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**