

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 plays - Grandmaster flash - ("White lines")

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 school
 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

Oh, by the way, Dave called from Alpha Wave studios stating zone three is not working.

(beat)

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 grabs his toolbelt, exits his car, then heads towards Alarmas. On his way, he passes two women looking at a poster on a store window.

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

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.

VANESSA
Say to Fran
Wow! 1980's dance party. That looks
like fun. We should go.

Rico slows and gawks at the women.

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.

The women CHUCKLE and keep walking. Rico mournfully watches the women walk away. Vanessa peeks back at a dejected Rico.

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 away.

Rico finding a TICKET stuck on his windshield.

RICO

You got to be kiddin' me. Shit!

Frank calls out to Rico.

FRANK

I told you not to park there, numbnuts. Let's go, I'm late to a sales lead. We'll take my car.

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

INT./EXT FRANK'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

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

FRANK

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

RICO

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

Frank CHUCKLES while reading the store's address numbers.

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

POV SHOT:

FRANK

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

RICO

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

FRANK

Ay, rispetto. These criminals help
pay my mortgage. They provide good,
steady cash flow.

(beat)

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.

Rico peeks towards the back seat then looks forward and
treads lightly with his words.

RICO

Y'know, Dad, I was reading that we should upgrade that shitty computer we have. It only makes labels and shows porn. Newer computers can make invoices.

FRANK

Here we go again about friggin' computers. SAVE INFORMATION! What happens when the government decides to make a surprise visit? That's all I need, is friggin' records. And besides, no one knows how to work those things.

RICO

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

FRANK

Sarcastic

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

(beat)

Listen, when we get inside the bodega, *figger* out how much wire we will need and where to power the panel.

Frank's car pulls up to a dated Bodega. Two young locals stand outside making a discrete drug transactions, see the car, then slowly walk away. Frank grabs his walky-talky and clipboard, and gets out. Rico sluggishly follows.

INT. BODEGA STORE - DAY

A young, energetic female customer takes her merchandise and dances to the counter. She places the item down on the counter.

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

FRANK

OYE, I'm from Alarmas security.

A young CLERIC (20s), tough looking helps a female customer, acknowledges Frank then shouts out to the back of the store.

STORE CLERK

Che? Yo Che, some alarm guy is here to see you.

Rico grabs a Hostess cake from the rack and analyses it.
Female customer leaves.

RICO
This cake is over two years old.

FRANK
What do you expect, its a numbers
joint. The merchandise is just a
front. Besides, the 43rd precinct
is around the corner. He'll be out
of business in four months.

Rico places the cake back, grabs a rubber ball from the
display, then bounces it.

CHE (30s) Puerto Rican guy with a goat tee, muscle shirt, and
beret strides out from the back area with chest puffed. He
approaches wiping his nose and holding a HANDGUN down low.

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

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

Che speaks with a heavy accent.

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

Frank listens while jotting some notes on a clipboard.

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

FRANK
(*Annoyed*)
Rico, why don't you wait for me by
the car.

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

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

FRANK
Mi hijo.
(beat)
(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)
 OK, your looking at three cameras,
 two motion detectors, a hold-up
 switch, and central monitoring.

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

CHE
 Yo pago cash.

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

Frank smirks.

Che looks coldly at Frank, places his gun down, then slowly
 unravels a wad of cash. We see Rico leaning against the car
 while Che hands Frank cash.

The camera slowly ZOOMS IN on the pistol.

EXT. BODEGA STORE - DAY

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

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

Frank exits the Bodega. Frank sees a drug dealer by the front
 of the store. Frank turns to the dealer, asks for the drugs,
 then points with his walkie talkie for the drug dealer to
 scam. A police call plays from the walkie talkie. Dealer
 reluctantly hands over a bag then slowly leaves.

FRANK
 (to Rico)
 Let's go.
 (beat)
 What's with the puss on your face?

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

Frank eyes the neighborhood and pockets his walky-talky.

FRANK

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

Frank and Rico get into the car.

INT. FRANK'S CAR - DAY

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

FRANK

This was a twenty eight hundred dollar score.

(beat)

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

RICO

Sarcastic

Thank you Machiavelli.

(beat)

Did you check out that guy's .38?

FRANK

Of course. That was an old Smith and Wesson, probably stolen. He needs Alarms security to feel fully protected.

Frank chuckles. Rico takes another quick peak towards the back seat.

RICO

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

FRANK

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

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

RICO

No thanks, but 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.

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.

Rico, again peaks into the back seat. A large, menacingly Alarmas employee sits in the back seat looking forward with no expression.

EXT. CITY CARDIOLOGY OFFICE - DAY

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

INT. CITY CARDIOLOGY OFFICE - DAY

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

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

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

VANESSA

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

MRS. VALDERAMMA

Oh, thank you, sweetie.

Vanessa hands Mrs. Valderamma her insurance card. Mrs. Valderamma puts the card in her pocketbook then pulls out cash.

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
I don't have a cat, I have a dog.
Her name is Sophie.
(beat)
I worked for Air France many years
ago you know.

Vanessa smiles. Ted huffs.

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

MRS. VALDERAMMA
Yes, yes.
(to Vanessa)
Bye now.

Ted whisks Mrs. Valderamma away like Richard Petty. Vanessa
begins entering information in a chart.

FRAN
Look at that maniac pushing her!
What a jerk.

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

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

VANESSA
Fran!

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

VANESSA

You know, you're right. We deserve better chairs, and better working conditions. Ferrari could send us to the National Cardiology convention at the Meadowlands or gets us lunch every once in a while.

FRAN

No! I meant we should go out! It's been months since you broke up with Victor. You need to 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 softens up, smiles, then 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.

(beat)

Bye the way, have you seen Mrs. Valderamma's ventricular therapies data recently?

DR. FERRARI

I'm waiting for a call from Dr. Barr. We have a golf outing today at 4:15.

Fran grabs a few DOCUMENTS in hand, gives Dr. Ferrari the finger behind his back, then leaves.

Vanessa gets up and goes to a cabinet.

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

DR. FERRARI (CONT'D)

Wow, you smell delicious. I have something for you.

Vanessa shrugs her shoulder to her ear and squirms away.

VANESSA

I'm sure you do.

DR. FERRARI

What's the matter?

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

VANESSA

Cut it out! I'm in no mood.

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

DR. FERRARI

(irritated)

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

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

Vanessa closes her eyes and embarrassed.

INT. RICO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

Skip.

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

Skip.

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

Skip.

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

Rico leans towards the machine, confused but intrigued.

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

BEEP.

Rico stands deep in thought, debating his next move.

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

Carmine sits in his usual spot reading the NY Post.

A young MECHANIC flirts with Daisy.

Frank is in the middle of a phone conversation.

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

They approach Carmine, looking to make an alarm payment.

HECTOR

Excuse me, Señor, we're here to pay.

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

CARMINE

Hey, Frank! Customer.

Frank looks up.

CARMINE (CONT'D)

These, uh...customers are here to make a payment.

FRANK

(to the person on the phone)

Hang on.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(to Carmine)

Can't you see I'm busy, moron. Handle it.

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

The door to the shop opens, Rico enters.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Thank God, Rico, handle these customers. Your uncle is a degenerate.

RICO

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

FRANK

--It won't take long.

Frank waves the men over to Rico.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(back to his phone call)

Sorry, Ralphie, my good-for-nothing brother is slowly ruining my friggin' business. Where were we?

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

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

RICO

(to the men)

Give me your account number?

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

FRANK

(to Carmine)

Did we get any money from Bronx Dentistry or Jerome avenue bike shop?

CARMINE

Bronx Dentistry?

Frank's eyes fill with rage.

FRANK

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

RICO

(to the customers)

--Ah, your account is three months past due.

NURSE ANGEL

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

RICO

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

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

FRANK
No we don't!

Frank storms over to the desk.

FRANK (CONT'D)
You're paying your Goddamn bill.

Hector gestures to Angel to fork over some money.

FRANK (CONT'D)
What the hell is this? That's peanuts.

NURSE ANGEL
We can't afford the full payment right now.

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

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

FRANK
You need protection? I'll give you protection.

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

NURSE ANGEL
Don't shoot us!

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

NURSE ANGEL
(*to Hector*)
Pay him!

Hector frantically searches his pocketbook. It starts to buzz.

FRANK
What the hell is that?

NURSE ANGEL
Turn it off!

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

Frank and Rico stare, bewildered.

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

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

Rico clears his throat.

RICO
Uh, yeah that covers it.

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

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

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

Carmine peaks out from behind his paper.

RICO
I got somewhere to be.

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

Rico turns around.

RICO
What?

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

RICO
I'm not going so--

FRANK

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

CARMINE

Oh boy.

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

RICO

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

FRANK

We're a business! If we listened to everyone's Goddamn sob stories, I'd be broke! I thought you knew that.

Frank starts walking away.

RICO

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

Frank turns around to face Rico.

FRANK

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

RICO

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

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

RICO (CONT'D)

(sarcastically)

Here, from Mr. Ortega. I don't wanna bleed you dry.

Rico turns to head out the door again.

FRANK

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

RICO

You think this is good?! We're in
the slums conning people out of
their hard-earned money! Customers
tip me with weed, and getting held
at gunpoint is Goddamn occupational
hazard at this point! I'm tired of
living like this!

FRANK

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

RICO

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

FRANK

You wanna get outta here so badly?

Frank nods towards the door.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Go ahead.

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

Carmine folds his paper and sits up.

CARMINE

Shit.

FRANK

He'll be back.

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

FRANK (CONT'D)

He knows we don't take checks, and
STOP encouraging him.

EXT. RICO'S CAR - DAY

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

INT. RICO'S CAR - DAY

Rico gets in the car. He SLAMS the door shut, pounds on the steering wheel, then yells at the top of his lungs. Soon, he maintains his composure, puts the car in drive, then merges into the city traffic.

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

Frank softly stares out the window watching Rico 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 DRIVEWAY - 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

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

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

INT. RICO'S CAR - NIGHT

The two drive away, narrowly missing a passing pedestrians.

GENO
 So how did Irish's installation on
 Webster ave go?

Rico hands Geno a joint.

RICO
 Typical crap. I don't know how he
 gets these people to by our shitty
 alarms.
 (beat)
 Here, a tip from the customer.

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, and a
 tight, dark blue dress. Her hair is down she has 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 does this big company do?

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 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. Where I work, the office conditions could be better, leaky ceiling's, uncomfortable chairs, perverted doctor, and the people...

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

VANESSA (CONT'D)

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

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

RICO

Wow, that was beautiful. Your amazin.

Vanessa blushes but tries to hide it with a laugh.

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

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

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

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

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

EXT. CLUB CAFE - LATER - NIGHT

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

Rico helps Vanessa open the car door.

RICO

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

Rico catches a belch.

VANESSA

You're not on any medications, are you?

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

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 I heard that Geno likes boobs.
 Here's my number. So you will find
 my number next to your boobs.

Rico grabs a pair of tickets from her wallet.

RICO
 Yankee tickets, against Boston,
 nice.

VANESSA
 Keep them, I have no use for them.

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

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 Call me after your interview. Let
 me know how it went.

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

Vanessa glows then drive off.

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - MORNING

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

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

FRANK
 Why the hell did I hire you?

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

FRANK (CONT'D)
 Alarmas...Yeah... Okay...Ah,
 shit...Alright...Yeah,
 REALLY...Alright.

He hangs up the phone.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 They got rid of all the merchandise
 from City Island.
 (MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)

And get this, the gun found at that hit on Jerome Ave was Russian. Would you believe that. The G. Said that they are movin in.

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

CARMINE

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

FRANK

This freggin' country is changing.

CARMINE

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

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

FRANK

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

CARMINE

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

EXT. GARCOM BUILDING - DAY

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

INT. GARCOM THIRD FLOOR - DAY

Rico approaches a reception desk.

A young, fit RECEPTIONIST greets him.

RECEPTIONIST

Good morning, may I help you?

RICO

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

RECEPTIONIST
Perhaps you're thinking of Mr.
Jamerson.

RICO
Yeah! That's him.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RECEPTIONIST
I'd say you're dreaming.

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

The receptionist sizes him up.

RICO (CONT'D)
Cross my heart.

RECEPTIONIST
Right this way, Mr. Russo.

INT. GARCOM HALLWAY - DAY

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

Rico takes a card out of his wallet.

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

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

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

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

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

INT. GARCOM OFFICE - DAY

RICO
 Ay!

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

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

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

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

MR. JAMERSON
 Okay. Please, sit down.

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

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

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

MR. JAMERSON
 I see.

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

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

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

FRANK

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

CARMINE

What do you expect? Welfare is ruining this country.

(beat)

What time is Irma working tonight? I need some action.

FRANK

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

CARMINE

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

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

JUNIOR

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

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

FRANK

We certainly are, come here and sit down.

INT. GARCOM OFFICE - DAY

MR. JAMERSON

We just learned that our company is converting to Microsoft 365.

(MORE)

MR. JAMERSON (CONT'D)
 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. GARCUM OFFICE - DAY

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

MR. JAMERSON

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

MR. CAPUTO

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

MR. JAMERSON

Yes! Go right ahead, I was just leaving.

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

MR. CAPUTO

Rico. Please sit down.

RICO

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

MR. CAPUTO

(sternly)
--SIT.

Rico softly sits.

MR. CAPUTO (CONT'D)

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

Rico's smile disappears.

RICO

Yeah.

MR. CAPUTO

Good.

Mr. Caputo sits down in the desk chair.

MR. CAPUTO (CONT'D)

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

RICO

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

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

MR. CAPUTO

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

RICO

Wow.

MR. CAPUTO

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

RICO

What are you saying?

MR. CAPUTO

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

RICO

Are you saying that I can't do this?

Mr. Caputo leans back in his seat.

MR. CAPUTO

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

(beat)

In corporate America, your patience will be tested every single day here, and we absolutely do not tolerate that kind of behavior no matter what the circumstance is.

(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. CITY CARDIOLOGY OFFICE - DAY

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

VANESSA

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

Fran studies the monitor.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Now look at the atrial capture.

FRAN

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

VANESSA

Exactly. Ferrari doesn't give a shit. Get this, Damaris, who works at Palermo law on Main street told my mom that Mrs. Valderamma's idiot son now has power of attorney.

Fran grimaces.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

If Ted denies us upgrading her to a new pacemaker, then she may not live.

Fran's looks at the monitor seeing an amplitude graph depicting a downward angle.

FRAN

That shit's murder.

VANESSA

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

The two girls look at one another.

FRAN

Her son will inherit her estate.

VANESSA

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

FRAN

What can we do?

VANESSA

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

FRAN

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

VANESSA

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

FRAN

He does?

VANESSA

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

FRAN

Wow! But he'll never agree to it.

VANESSA

I will appeal to his sense of moral values.

INT. CITY CARDIOLOGY EXAM ROOM - DAY

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

Vanessa seductively fondles Dr. Ferrari's stethoscope.

VANESSA

Just slowly stick it in. Nobody needs to know.

DR. FERRARI

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

VANESSA

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

Dr. Ferrari looks at a computer screen.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

What about the pacemakers Janice gets from 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...

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 fondles the doctor's stethoscope.

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.

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 reaches over the bar, grabs a phone, and dials Vanessa's
number.

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.

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, young 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 shaking his head.

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's 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 promptly gets back to work. 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.

(MORE)

JOYCE (CONT'D)
 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.
 (MORE)

RICO (CONT'D)
 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 a cup of coffee. Mr. Caputo enters and
grabs a coffee mug from a cabinet. Mr. Caputo looks over
towards 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 corporate 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 as Mr. Caputo walks out of frame.

INT. RUSSO HOUSE - EVENING

Frank and Geno sit at the kitchen table, Frank at the head. MRS.RUSSO (60's) a few streaks of grey hair and loving demeanor, 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?

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

GENO

What are you doing here, fuckface?

MRS. RUSSO

Watch your mouth at the table.

Frank and Rico exchange a look, tension still high.

FRANK

I wasn't expecting you tonight.

MRS. RUSSO

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.

Rico reaches over the table and grabs his envelop.

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.

MRS. RUSSO
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.

MRS. RUSSO
Please.

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

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

Mrs. Russo smiles, pleased, and squeezes Rico's arm. A
silence befalls the rest of the table.

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

Mrs. Russo 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.

Mrs. Russo 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.

MRS. RUSSO
The two of you, ENOUGH!

Everyone goes back to eating their food.

RICO
Nicky Caputo hired me.

GENO
I knew you didn't get it yourself.

Frank and Mrs. Russo exchange a look.

FRANK
Did you get paid yet?

RICO
There's more to life than money you
know. Like your health. That's why
corporations now make you take a
physical. Didn't you know that?

Frank and Geno stare blankly at Rico. Mrs. Russo turns to Rico.

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

RICO
Thanks, Ma.

FRANK
Mrs. Russo, get me the grated
cheese.

MRS. RUSSO
 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 Mrs. Russo)
 Don't bother, Ma.

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

RICO (CONT'D)
 Alright, I'm outta here.

MRS. RUSSO
 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 secures his envelop, then slams the door, cutting Frank
 off.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 What was in that envelop?

MRS. RUSSO
 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 frail (70's) dementia, is sitting comfortably on the sofa. A small mutt sits near Mr. Rios's feet.

MRS. RIOS
This is Vanessa's padre.

RICO
Hola!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He stops to look at a picture of Vanessa.

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

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

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

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

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

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

INT. RIOS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

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

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

VANESSA (CONT'D)
Do you mind?!

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

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

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

VANESSA
Here, help me with this.

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

MRS. RIOS
(calling from the hall)
Vanessa, before you go, don't forget, tomorrow I need to deposit my social security check.

VANESSA
(calling back)
lo sé. Ma, you told me twice already.

Rico struggles with the clasp.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
So, where are you taking me tonight? It better be a nice place since you got a corporate job.

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

Rico smirks and glances at Vanessa.

VANESSA
Strike two, wise guy.

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

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

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

VANESSA (CONT'D)
Okay, I don't care where you take me, as long as we leave right now.

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

VANESSA (CONT'D)
Adios, Mami, Rico is leaving now!
And never coming back!

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

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

INT. GARCOM STEVE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

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

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

Ralph pokes his head inside Steve's office.

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

RALPH

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

STEVE (O.S.)

That info would have been useful thirty seconds earlier.

RALPH

What?

STEVE

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

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

INT. BUONASERA'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

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

RICO

My name is Russo, we have a reservation.

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

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

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

Vanessa watches him like she's studying wildlife.

RICO (CONT'D)

What?

VANESSA

Nothin'.

A WAITER arrives at their table and politely greets them.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

What's good here?

RICO
Get the Butternut Asiago
Tortellaci.

Rico does a chef's kiss hand gesture.

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

Vanessa sticks her tongue at Rico with a snarky look.

RICO
I'll have the Fra Shrimp Diavolo.

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

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

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

Vanessa SIGHS. Rico picks at his bread.

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

RICO
Really? How does that work?

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

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

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

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

VANESSA

What?

RICO

Nothin'.

Series of shots of the two enjoying their evening.

VANESSA

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

She takes a bite of the bread and enjoys.

RICO

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

VANESSA

(deadpan)

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

RICO

Definitely after.

VANESSA

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

RICO

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

Vanessa studies him.

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

VANESSA

How's your relationship with your father now?

RICO

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

VANESSA

I can see why that bothers you.

RICO

Yeah, it drives me up the freggin' wall.

VANESSA

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

RICO

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

VANESSA

Do they think that, or do you think that?

RICO

Are you a shrink or something?

VANESSA

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

(MORE)

RICO (CONT'D)

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 and opens it. Vanessa's arms are
folded across.

VANESSA

Well, Rico, despite a few Freudian
slips, I had a nice evening.

RICO

Yeah, me too.

Vanessa closes it behind her.

RICO (CONT'D)

Again, Freudian and I am sorry.
What can we 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 Freud.

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 tears off the pocket as he leaves.

INT. GARCOS 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 infrastructure.

Rico sits down in his seat and scoots over to make room for Stewart. Stewart sits down, removes a novelty coffee mug with breasts, and places it in a draw. Stewart gives Rico a dirty look then begins 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's smile vanishes as he notices Ralph and Steve looking right at him, chuckling.

RICO

Stu, I got a feelin that Steve and his girl friend are 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

Stu, is there any way we can go into Steve's office and take a look at his computer? He looks like a sneaky porn attic. You're a computer geek, right?

STEWART

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

RICO

My gut's tellin' me that Steve is up to something, and it ain't good.

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 sees Steve and Ralph walking away.

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.

Music - Mission impossible music abruptly ends.

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

Rico frowns then shoves him inside.

INT. STEVE'S OFFICE CONTINUOUS

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

Rico browses around then focuses on a paper on Steve's desk.

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

A gun schematic pops up on the 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

How do you know that?

RICO

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

Stewart ejects the floppy diskette.

STEWART

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

Rico takes it from him and inspects it.

RICO

Huh. Why does he have a Russian diskette? I thought that the Russian's were like cold enemies and shit.

STEWART

I'm unaware of any international projects GarCom has with Russian companies.

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

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

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

INT. GARCOM CAFE - AFTERNOON

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

Mr. Caputo stand on the cafeteria food line.

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

RICO

Hello, Mr. C.

MR. CAPUTO

Just the person I wanted to see.

RICO

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

MR. CAPUTO

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

RICO

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

MR. CAPUTO

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

RICO

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

Mr. Caputo shakes his head, amused.

MR. CAPUTO

Just like your father.

(beat)

By the way, how the hell does your stool sample end up in a corporate meeting. Please keep personal items out of this building. CAPISCI!

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

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

MIKE

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

RICO

What the hell are you talkin' about?

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

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

Rico studies the groups food.

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

The group looks hesitantly at one another.

INT. RICO'S CAR - AFTERNOON

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

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

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

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

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

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

The grenade rolls again.

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

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

Mike leans over and whispers to Stewart.

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

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

EXT. RICO'S CAR - AFTERNOON

INSERT SIGN - NEW YORK CITY NEXT EXIT

EXT. ALARMAS SECURITY - AFTERNOON

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

Rico quickly gets out of his car, and rushes towards Alarmas. Rico's entourage hurriedly lock the doors in fear of the neighborhood.

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

Geno peaks towards Rico's car.

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

RICO
 Just keep an eye on the freggin'
 car.

Carmine notices Sally sitting in the passenger seat and approaches the car. He knocks on her window.

CARMINE
 Hello beautiful, I'm Uncle Carmine.

Sally smiles nervously then checks the car door lock.

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - AFTERNOON

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

RICO
 Hey Louie. By the way, your son
 helped me rewire my electrical
 panel.

(MORE)

RICO (CONT'D)

It must be nice to having an union electrician in the family. I may have some work...

FRANK

Look who it is. Are you here to work or bullshit?

RICO

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

FRANK

Of course What do you need.

LOUIE

(to Rico)

Look what I have for your pretty girlfriend.

Louie moves his holster and pulls out a black velvet box. He opens box reveling a pair of glistening, diamond earrings.

RICO

That relation was over long ago.

LOUIE LUMP

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

Rico peaks closer.

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 for an important service call.

Rico hands Frank an envelope.

RICO

Fine! This is from the Washington Heights salon job.

(beat)

Dad, remember on the radio, we heard there's a rise in gun trafficking? Has the G. mention anything about?

FRANK
 Why do you want to know? You herd something?

RICO
 No.

FRANK
 Don't lie to me.

RICO
 I'm not, I swear. I'm just curious.

FRANK
 Listen, we don't want the G. in our business. We are nickel and dime operation. He's the real thing.
 (beat)
 What did Nicky get you into?

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

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

FRANK
 Besides all those losing horse tips Louie gives us, I believe him saying there maybe a Russian crew moving guns.

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)
 Alpha Wave! What about Roberto?

FRANK
 He's got an install at that adult store on 187th on the Concourse. If I give it to Mitch, he'll just fuck it up. I got no one else I can trust.

Rico pockets the slip and leaves.

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 around here?

(beat)

That creepy uncle 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 jumps in side the car.

RICO

Alright, who's ready for lunch?

Rico blasts the car radio with classical Hip Hop music.

INT. ALPHA WAVE RECORDING CLUB - NIGHT

We follow young partiers into Alpha Wave Recording Studio, number one live recording club in the Metropolitan area. The club is dimly lit with a heavy New York City vibe. The line inside the club is lengthy.

Hip Hop act performs on stage - Cypress Hill - Insane In The Brain

INT. ALPHA WAVE STUDIO C - NIGHT

Rico peeks into a recording studio checking out the security system. A few people sit around listening to a track while the Engineer signals him to be quiet. Rico quickly checks the system then quickly bids Farwell.

INT. ALPHA WAVE CLUB - NIGHT

Rico continues assessing his security concerns while weaving through the club. A stocky RUSSIAN MAN squeeze past him revealing a weapon tucked in his jacket.

The man gives Rico a quick stare then continue through the club until he approaches a person in a business suit. To Rico's surprise, the man in the suit is revealed.

INT. ALPHA WAVE STUDIO A - BAR AREA - NIGHT

Rico finishes his device repair on a wall. He folds away the instructions, then approaches the BARTENDER.

RICO
Hey, Nancy. I finished repairing
the security system. Do you know
where Geno is hiding?

The Bartender points towards a location while serving customers.

INT. ALPHA WAVE STUDIO B - NIGHT

Rico finds Geno standing with MILAN, 20s, sexy, rising Hip-hop performer and her entourage.

GENO
Hey Rico, just in time. I'd like
you to meet Milan. She just
finished her first album and will
be performing soon. She's going to
be the next Cardi B.

RICO
(anxiously)
Hi, congratulations, nice cross.

Rico grabs Geno's arm, pulls him to the side, and points with his head.

RICO (CONT'D)
Listen, see that foreign looking
stocky guy by the back table talkin
to that suit. That suit happens to
work at GarCom. And guess what, he
came heavy, I mean tucked in his
pants heavy.

GENO
No shit! I thought Dad said your
company was a joke.
(beat)
Alright, let me get Kenny and Tiny.

RICO
No, don't get those maniacs
involved, they'll beat the crap
outta them.

(MORE)

RICO (CONT'D)

I first need to know what's going on with these chooches. I work for GarCom now, so I have Nicky C's back.

(beat)

I have an idea.

Rico turns and looks to Milan.

INT. ALPHA WAVE STUDIO A - NIGHT

Steve and the Russian man converse. Milan walks around, greeting people, signing autographs while eavesdropping on to the men.

STEVE

To Russian man

You know why there were no issues with the shipment? Because 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, by keeping the weight under 50 kilos, we avoid attention from Interpol. Boy, am I good.

MILAN

I hope you gentleman will enjoy my show. Do you like what I'm wearing?

Steve continue his one way conversation while admiring Milan's attributes.

Stewart eagerly enters the club, spots Rico, and rushes over to him.

Rico brings Stewart's tie back onto his chest.

STEWART

Excited

Wow! What a fascinating place. Look, a Midas M32 40 channel mixer and DMX Lighting Intel Movers. Not to mention full color band lights. This place rocks! Thanks for inviting me.

Rico points over Stewart's shoulder. Stewart turns.

STEWART (CONT'D)

Holy molly. Is that?

RICO
 Yep. Steve Olson.

STEWART
 What's he doing here?

RICO
 I don't know but that guy he's
 talkin' to is strapped.

STEWART
 Strapped?

RICO
 Yes, carrying a gun. I'm telling
 you; Steve is up to somethin' and
 it's nothin' good.

Milan returns to Rico, Geno, and Stewart.

RICO (CONT'D)
 (to Milan)
 What do ya got for me?

MILAN
 Not much. They mostly spoke in some
 foreign language. The only thing I
 understood was a ship is going to
 Gar..Gar--

RICO
 --GarCom?

MILAN
 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 Milan's cross buried
 between her breasts. Rico smacks him in the arm.

RICO
 Did you hear that buddy?

STEWART
 What? Yeah, yes.

Rico and Geno see Steve and his contact leaving.

GENO
 Rico! If Louie Lump finds out that
 a gun slipped through security, it
 will get back to the G.
 (beat)
 That's it, I'm calling Dad.

RICO

No! I'm going to first find out what this scumbag is up to.

(beat)

Stu, you can stay here and catch Milan's performance. I'll catch up with you later at the Marriot.

Stewart weakly nods yes.

STEWART

That's an excellent plan. 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. RAILROAD ROAD - 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 swiftly 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... Tonight! Geno
 told you that? Maron.. If the G.
 finds out about what surfaced at
 the club that's gonna bring heat on
 us.

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

INT. GARCOM - SERVER ROOM - NIGHT

Ralph covertly types on a computer, completes his task, then
 develops a grin. Mr. Caputo's name appears on a financial
 account statement.

EXT. CITY THEATER LINE - NIGHT

Vanessa and Fran stand squished outside on a movie theater line. Fran flirts with two ogling men from afar.

FRAN

Any luck with Dr. Ferrari and Mrs. Valderamma's procedure?

VANESSA

I hope that idiot comes through. Mrs. Valderamma deserves to live longer. Did you know that Mrs. W...

(beat)

Holy shit! It's Tomas?

Vanessa sees a fashionably dressed man holding a scantily dressed, red-haired woman tightly around the waist.

FRAN

No me diga. 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. We need to maintain our dignity. Listen crazy woman, let's 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.

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 as he sees Geno waving.

RICO

Listen, you're here on your own. Go play, I'm getting a drink.

KIMBERLY

Rico, it's time that you see the big picture. If you want to be a player and climb the corporate ladder, you must mingle with the right people. Rising, young employees would be envious and kill for this opportunity. Come, I want to introduce you to the Regional Director of Marketing.

Rico moves to a bar and orders a drink. Steve and two middle-aged businessmen, TOM and GARY (40s) approach Kimberly.

KIMBERLY (CONT'D)

Good evening gentleman. I would like to introduce you to one of our newest employees, Rico Russo.

Rico turns to shake hands with Tom and Gary. Steve keeps his distance.

TOM

Welcome to GarCom Rico. So, what's your take working for GarCom thus far?

RICO
Thus far, it's been fun.

Rico raises his glass to Mr. Caputo who's across the room socializing.

TOM
Fun? Amusing adjective!

STEVE
Gentleman, this is the very man who when asked about 401 contributions replied, the detergent? The same man when asked about the IT department's migration to Oracle replied, is that country in Europe?

Steve's comments cause LAUGHTER. Rico turns and whispers to Kimberly.

RICO
(whispers to Kimberly)
Why do I sense you're enjoying this?

Rico sees Vanessa then hastily leaves.

INT. MARRIOTT BAR - NIGHT

Stewart suddenly crosses Rico's path.

RICO
What the hell are you wearing?

STEWART
This is my new black leather jacket. What do you think?

RICO
Fantastic! Now you can be an extra in a Michael Jackson video.

STEWART
So, what happened when you followed Steve.

RICO
I'll tell you later. Don't mention this shit to anyone. Got it?

Stewart follows Rico to Fran and Vanessa.

RICO (CONT'D)
Oh, great. I'm glad you guys are here.

VANESSA

So, who's the bimbo you walked in with?

RICO

Oh, her, well she works for GarCom. She's an attorney.

VANESSA

Am I supposed to be impressed?

RICO

This is Stu. He's a genius and can vouch for me.

Vanessa frowns at Stewart's attire. Rico rolls his eyes in pain as a scruffy man, HARRY (30s) GarCom maintenance man, wearing a gaudy Polo shirt who 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 sees Kimberly
 then quickly flees away.

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 management questions about Illian and his involvement with GarCom. You do have a handle on this predicament?

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

(indignantlly)

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 apartment 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)
Wow, who's the dick with the tight
pants and long hair?

Vanessa removes a DVD from the couch.

RICO

Funny! OK, we are even.

(beat)

Like I was saying before, I think you're reading too much into this. Kimberly is a little manipulating bitch.

VANESSA

Her expensive acrylic manicure and her 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 candy 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 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 team is also preparing an important presentation for our 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 contin...

(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.

(MORE)

RICO (CONT'D)

Stewart explained a lot to me. Stu can help me. Don't worry. I'll figure this shit out.

Mr. Caputo stares at Rico whose 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 a unique way of sincerely expressing his 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)

Rico, listen. You do have a competent team at GarCom. Use all necessary resources to land this client. And remember, the new service call, handle STEVE.

Mr. Caputo winks in favor. Rico develops a grin.

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!

(beat)

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, think about this. If you go down, we all go down.

Rico looks to Vanessa, absorbs her words.

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. A delivery man drops off a bouquet of flowers and leaves.

FRAN

So how did it go last night with the Italian stallion? Was he two timing you?

Fran reads the note attached to the flower 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 smells the flowers then 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 and phone for my mother? She was very happy. *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. 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 are here.

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 over the counter.

TED

These are signed Power of Attorney forms preventing any unnecessary procedures for Grandma.

Vanessa finds a smile and takes the papers from Ted. Ted catches a glimpse of Fran's figure.

VANESSA

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. She purposely passes 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.

INT. GARCOM/RICO'S CUBICLE - MORNING

Car keys, bubble gum, and a crude drawing are tossed onto a desk. Rico swiftly picks up his desk phone and begins working.

Steve scrutinizes Rico 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 minor 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 groin.

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, Rico'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. I hope he's not on 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 gives a thumbs up. Rico extends his hand out. The others place a hand onto Rico's hand.

RICO (CONT'D)
Listen, I'm not a big talker. All I
know is that we all worked hard on
this project. I'm glad that I'm
part of this team. I wont let you
down.
(beat)
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 confidently makes his way to an available seat next to Sreve. Sitting regally at one end of the table and with his is AutoTech team is CEO, JEFFERY DICKINSON. He's plump, tan, 60's, Texan with a cowboy hat.

STEVE
Sarcastic
Where is Caputo? 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 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, skinny, spanish mechanic, Army reservist, 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 a Tyson fight.

FLASHBACK:

Series of shots showing ARMY MEN rustling up a few gun traffickers' and securing the gun crates.

END FLASHBACK:

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)

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)

What else do 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.

(beat)

(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)

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.

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 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 rely on overseas companies. Stewart has all the data and logistics, is that the right word?... and cost manufacturing.

Stewart gives Rico a thumbs up.

AUTOTECH EXECUTIVE #2

Creating energy credits, interesting. I like were your going with this.

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. The AutoPod should improve the employee's overall health which should off set company salaries and health benefits.

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.

VIDEO ENDS:

RICO

I noticed that the shipping bays where not adequately fitted with current surveillance cameras. We call them dead spots. I contacted the metropolitan's leading security company, Alarmas. They donated a some equipment. 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

Steve stealthily passes through the lobby and exits the front
 entrance.

Geno and Carmine are standing near their car waiting.

GENO
 There he is!

CARMINE
 Get the fuck over here you rat
 bastard.

Carmine throws the rest of his food at Steve. Geno 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.

Steve reaches for his Lugar behind his back. Carmine quickly
 disarms him.

CARMINE
 Give me that. Nice Lugar.

Carmine pockets the Lugar.

CARMINE (CONT'D)
 I was all set to hook up with Daisy
 and 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 thrust Steve into their car. Steve screams as the
 door catches his ankle.

CARMINE (CONT'D)

You better not get any blood on these seats you cock sucker.

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. D.?

MR. DICKINSON

Well, Mr. Russo, I was very moved by your presentation. 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

Excited

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.

(MORE)

RICO (CONT'D)

It was your encouragement that inspired me.

Vanessa smiles, gives Rico a hug, then walk towards the exit.

INT. GARCOM FRONT ENTRANCE - MORNING

Frank and Nicky Caputo slowly enter the front lobby. Nicky walking with a crutch while Frank takes in the surroundings.

FRANK

I got to handed to you Nicky. I was pissed off when you left Alarmas for this... After a while didn't care. 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 things go. We don't want them to experience the shit we went through. They're just kids.

Rico approaches Frank and Mr. Caputo holding Vanessa's hand.

RICO

Mr. Caputo, 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 after-all. 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.

(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)

(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 velvet box from Frank's hand, then hands it to Vanessa. Vanessa opens the box.

VANESSA

WOW! You got some great taste in
jewelry. So, what's this for?

RICO

A little something for believin in
me. But more importantly, being
wonderful.

(beat)

Rico reflects in thought.

RICO (CONT'D)

Ya know, it somehow feels like the
movies where the good guy spoils
the crime and gets the pretty girl
at the end.

(beat)

Let's get outta here. I want to
hear all about this amazin' news.

VANESSA

Italian voice

Fine, and we are going to practice
the art of listening. Capici!

Vanessa give him a kiss then playfully slaps him in the head.

Pretending he's a gentleman, Rico guides Vanessa out the building.

Music plays - "Like gold" by Angie Rose

EXT. GARCOM FRONT ENTRANCE - MORNING

Mr. Dickinson waves his cowboy hat towards Rico to enter his parked limousine.

Rico and Vanessa look at one another and smile.

THE END