

Bronx, Inc. Pilot

By

Frank Picciotto

Email: fpicciotto@optonline.net
Phone: 201.819.0117

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:

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In the heart of New York City...
where opportunity wears a thousand
faces... one family runs a business
that's anything but legit.

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 and foot traffic.

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, about how poor his family were or all the stolen merchandise he and his brothers had to move for his wise guys friends. The good news is crime is up... so protection is just a word... It's the hustle that counts.

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. ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

Inside the shabby store, are dated security products, 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 a 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 down the receiver.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Son of a bitch!

The Elderly Lady looks at him with concern.

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. APT 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. APT BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

Rico finally reaches the elevator door. He stretches a finger through the ladder's rung to hit the elevator button. His demeanor deepens further as he discovers the elevator is broken.

INT. APT BUILDING STAIRWELL - DAY

The walls of the stairwell are covered with 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. APT BUILDING - FOURTH FLR 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. APT BUILDING DOORWAY - DAY

Rico KNOCKS on the door. Moments later, 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
You're late.

Rico follows her inside.

INT. APT BUILDING - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mrs. Vega 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 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 shoots a devilish smile towards Geno.

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.

(MORE)

CARMINE (CONT'D)

(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. APT BUILDING - LIVING ROOM - DAY CONTINUED

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 bangs the window causing cockroaches to fall out and scurry 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, then focuses out the window
He sticks his head out the window.

RICO (CONT'D)
YO! Get the fuck away from my car!

Mrs. Vega calls him while holding out an ENVELOPE.

Rico grabs it quickly, puts it in his mouth, then rushes passed her to the door with all of his things.

EXT. APT BUILDING STOOP - DAY

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

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

After loading all his equipment, he notices scratches to his car. Rico slams his trunk shut.

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

Shush!

FRANK (CONT'D)

Did you hear that, a robbery at 1249 Walton Ave. Call Irish to check out that building. That building sounds hot and tell him he better no come back with shitty contracts.

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.

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

Rico slams the shifter in park, picks up a flier in his front seat, then sits motionless for a moment, reflecting on his life. Rico notices Frank standing outside.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

Rico grabs his toolbelt and envelope, while eyes 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.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 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. 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!

(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)

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*)
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 scram. 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 Alarmas 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 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 back her insurance card.

MRS. VALDERAMMA (CONT'D)

This is for you. I baked them last night. I know they are your favorite.

VANESSA

Ah, you're so sweet.

MRS. VALDERAMMA

I worked for Air France many years ago before I was a secretary 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. Have a wonder...

Ted whisks Mrs. Valderamma away like Richard Petty.

Vanessa continues writing information down 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.

EXT. RICO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Rico pauses in front of a basement door at a two-family house through the basement door. It's quiet and the lights are mostly out. Rico hears a voice coming from outside an open window.

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

INT. RICO'S APT. - NIGHT

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.

Message #1

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 takes notice.

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.

Rico enters the store.

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 customers 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 reaches into his jacket and removes a pistol. 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.

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 buzzing sex toy. wiggling 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. Frank holsters his weapon.

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. Daisy gets up and scats away.

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.
(MORE)

RICO (CONT'D)

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. Frank watches him go with his hands on his hips.

Carmine folds his paper and sits up.

CARMINE
Shit. He seems pissed. Nice goin'
peanut head.

FRANK
He'll be back.

Frank looks down on his desk, grabs the check, crumbles it 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

Once in the car, he pounds on the steering wheel. Soon, he maintains his composure, then merges into the city traffic.

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

From the store window, Frank solemnly stares out the window watching Rico drive away.

INT. RIOS HOME - NIGHT

MR. RIOS (late 50s), frail and showing signs of dementia, sits in the living room watching TV.

MRS. RIOS (late 50s), grey hair in a bun, her face and body showing signs of decades of hard work, mops the floor of a two family apartment.

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 going out with friends, Mammí.

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 then closes her bedroom door.

INT. VANESSA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Vanessa places clothing on her bed.

She then realizes something is off. She opens an old jewelry box and sifts through out a small of cash. She calls out to Mrs. Rios.

VANESSA
Mommí?

INT. RIOS KITCHEN - NIGHT

VANESSA
Mom? Did Jimmy come in my room today?

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

VANESSA (CONT'D)
Hello?...Oh, hi Sammy...Yeah, I'm getting ready now...Oh?...Oh no, I see...

(MORE)

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 No problem...Maybe next week...I
 was feeling tired anyway...Okay, I
 hope he feels better.

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?

(MORE)

RICO (CONT'D)

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. 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)

(MORE)

CARMINE (CONT'D)

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

FRANK

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

CARMINE

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

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

JUNIOR

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

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

FRANK

We certainly are, come here and sit
down.

INT. GARCOM OFFICE - DAY

MR. JAMERSON

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

RICO

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

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

MR. JAMERSON

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

Rico nods in agreement.

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

FRANK

Tell me, what type of experience do you have?

JUNIOR

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

Junior displays his forearm.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)

This is the tattoo I got when I was there.

FRANK

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

(beat)

What kind of skills do you have?

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

JUNIOR

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

FRANK

And did any of them work?

JUNIOR

Hell yeah. I know my shit.

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

INT. GARCOM OFFICE - DAY

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

RICO

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

Mr. Jamerson clears his throat.

MR. JAMERSON

You realize that GarCom has a drug policy.

RICO

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

Mr. Jamerson takes a deep breath.

MR. JAMERSON

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

RICO

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

MR. JAMERSON

That's correct.

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

RICO

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

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

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

FRANK

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

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

JUNIOR

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

FRANK

Good.

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

FRANK (CONT'D)

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

JUNIOR

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

FRANK

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

JUNIOR

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

FRANK

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

INT. GARCOM OFFICE - DAY

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

MR. JAMERSON

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

MR. CAPUTO

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

MR. JAMERSON

Yes! Go right ahead, I was just leaving.

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

MR. CAPUTO

Rico. Please sit down.

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

MR. CAPUTO
(sternly)
--SIT.

Rico softly sits.

MR. CAPUTO (CONT'D)
My name is Mr. Caputo and you will
address me as Mr. Caputo. Do you
understand?

Rico's smile disappears.

RICO
Yeah.

MR. CAPUTO
Good.

Mr. Caputo sits down in the desk chair.

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

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

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

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

RICO
Wow.

MR. CAPUTO

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

RICO

What are you saying?

MR. CAPUTO

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

RICO

Are you saying that I can't do this?

Mr. Caputo leans back in his seat.

MR. CAPUTO

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

(beat)

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

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

FRAN
That shit's murder.

VANESSA
 Exactly! Coincidentally, 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.
 (beat)
 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 Ortiz
 funeral home. He has Janice
 picking up the devices at the
 funeral home before the bodies are
 cremated, you know, 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.

DR. FERRARI
 You want me to do WHAT?

VANESSA

You know, just slowly stick it in.

DR. FERRARI

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

VANESSA

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

Dr. Ferrari looks at a computer screen.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

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

DR. FERRARI

(nervously)

What are you talking about?

VANESSA

I know about your little operation with certain funeral homes. 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 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? Come on, I'm dyin' over here!

Rico LAUGHS.

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 his forehead with his beer bottle.

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 also.

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 slightly grimaces in pain then 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. They approach 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. GARCOM 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. You're in good hands. Welcome aboard, Rico.

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

RICO

Alright chief, where do we start?

STEWART

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

Rico spins around to face the computer.

RICO

Okay, yeah, reboot.

Rico wiggles his fingers, unsure where to put them.

RICO (CONT'D)

Right. Stu, what exactly is a reboot?

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

RICO (CONT'D)

Woah, hang on, what did you do?

STEWART

I restarted the PC.

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

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

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

STEWART
Sure.

RICO
Could you teach me to be a nerd?

Stewart raises an eyebrow.

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

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

INT. GARCOM - STEVE'S OFFICE - DAY

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

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

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

Steve hangs up the phone.

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

RALPH
This should take care of it.

Steve studies the screen.

STEVE
You're sure?

RALPH

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

STEVE

Hmm.

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

STEVE (CONT'D)

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

RALPH

I heard he hired a new guy.

STEVE

Really! Who?

RALPH

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

STEVE

Rico! That short for The Racketeering Influenced and Corrupts Act.

Steve looks back out the window, plotting nefariously.

INT. GARCOM - DEPT. 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. MR. RUSSO'S KITCHEN - 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 an 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, and 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 Paxton Street' with sticky notes sticking out from the pages as if it's been annotated.

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

VANESSA

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

MRS. RIOS

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

VANESSA

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

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

VANESSA (CONT'D)

(laughing)

Ow!

Mrs. Rios sits down on the bed behind Vanessa.

MRS. RIOS

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

VANESSA

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

Vanessa massages her temples. Mrs. Rios sighs deeply.

MRS. RIOS

What did I do wrong?

Vanessa turns to face her mom.

VANESSA

What do you mean?

MRS. RIOS

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

Vanessa sighs deeply.

VANESSA

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

MRS. RIOS

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

VANESSA

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

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

VANESSA (CONT'D)

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

MRS. RIOS

No necessito telefono nuevo.

VANESSA

Sí, esta necessito, 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 Buonasera.

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.

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
Nefariously
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

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 tears into bread and starts devouring his kill.

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. 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. Vanessa walks up to the front gate while Rico worriedly follows.

VANESSA
Well, despite a few Freudian slips,
and watching you eat, I had a nice
time.

RICO
Yeah, me too.

Vanessa closes the gate behind her.

RICO (CONT'D)
Again, Freudian and I am sorry.
What can we do to make things
right?

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. GARCOM OFFICE SPACE - MORNING

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

"Give to Ralph".

Just then, Ralph passes by with two GarCom employees, STACY and ALICE.

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

RICO

Hey Ralph, I got an envelope here for you.

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

Well, I took a few classes in Physical Education at-

RALPH

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

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

STEWART

Why's Ralph laughing? He's never this happy.

Rico irritably picks up the desk phone, wraps the cord around his hand in preparations to strangle someone.

STEWART (CONT'D)

Okay, let's continue learning about our network infrastructure.

Stewart grabs a chair and sits alongside Rico. Stewart angrily removes a novelty coffee mug with breasts, from Rico's desk and places it in a draw. Stewart gives Rico a dirty look then begins typing.

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. GARCOM - 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. GARCOM - 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 CD.

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 CD?
 I thought Russians were communists.

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 CD from Rico and puts it back in,
 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, run a chkdsk on C:,
 and run a netsh winsock reset.
 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', just need to make
a drop off and quickly talk to dad
before I go back to my real job.

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. An older woman with a grocery cart browses.

RICO
Hey Louie. By the way, your son
helped me rewire my electrical
panel. It must be nice to having an
union electrician in the family. I
may have some work for him.
(beat)
Oh, is it true, Uncle Carmine said
you hit a guy over the head with a
hammer last week at a bar in upper
Manhattan?

LOUIE LUMP
Some people need a beatin. He's
lucky that I didn't kill him.

The older woman hastily leaves.

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 a box revealing a pair of diamond earrings.

RICO
That relationship 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
What did Nicky get you into?
(beat)

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

FRANK
Whispering
Listen, we don't want the G. in our
business. We are nickel and dime
operation. He's the real thing.

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

FRANK (CONT'D)
Besides all those losing horse tips
fuckin' Louie gives us, I believe
him saying there maybe a Russian
crew moving guns over by Jerome
avenue.

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! Why, you couldn't get
Roberto?

FRANK
He's got an install at that adult
store on 187th. If I give it to
Mitch, he'll just fuck it up or
never leave Alpha. 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 trash 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 run back-ups and patches for the Marketing servers 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 cranks 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, studio A - Cypress Hill - Insane In The Brain

INT. ALPHA WAVE STUDIO C - NIGHT

Rico peeks into a recording studio C checking out the security system. A few people sit around listening to a sound track on a monitor while the Engineer works. Rico swiftly checks the security system then quickly bids Farwell.

INT. ALPHA WAVE CLUB - HALL WAY - 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 spots Geno, folds away the instructions, then approaches.

INT. ALPHA WAVE STUDIO B - NIGHT

Geno stands talking with MILAN, 20s, sexy, rising Hip-hop performer and her entourage.

GENO

(excited)

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. 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 continue conversing. 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 system update. And, 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.

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 fixes Stewart's appearance, then 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. ALPHA WAVE 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 cautiously parks his car then stealthily gets out. From the ruins of a burnt out car, Rico peaks through watching Illian. Three shady CHARACTERS 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 pause. One goon signals another to 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.

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 THEATHER 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.

After a few contemplating seconds, Fran flips them the finger then is whisked away by Vanessa.

INT. MARRIOTT BAR - NIGHT

Inside the Marriott, Vanessa and Fran sit at a bar having a cocktail. Vanessa notices Geno roaming nearby, then scans the room for Rico.

EXT. MARRIOTT BAR ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Rico and Kimberly arrive to the front entrance at the same time. Kimberly is wearing a modest, royal blue evening dress.

KIMBERLY

Well, hello Mr. Russo. I'm glad you were able to attend.

RICO

dismissively

Nice dress.

KIMBERLY

Thank you for that oleaginous observation.

RICO

What? Don't you 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.

(beat)

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 GarCom employees, 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, hum, 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), Hawaiian shirt and a GarCom maintenance man, recognizes him from across the room. Harry 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. 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.
 (MORE)

KIMBERLY (CONT'D)

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. Que paso?

VANESSA

Ah dose mios, dame pacencias. I don't know who is more idiotic, that skinny bitch or this idiota. I should kick both their asses.

Rico returns.

RICO
(*sternly*)
Vanessa, we need to talk.

Vanessa turns and stares at anything other than Rico. Fran begins talking with a tall, stylish man.

RICO (CONT'D)
Vanessa, please! There's something you should know.

VANESSA
Yeah, that you're a swine?

RICO
Vanessa, I'm begging you. Let's go outside where it's quiet.

Vanessa studies Rico with trepidation.

VANESSA
(*indignantly*)
Fran, I'm leaving. Let me hear what this idiot has to say.

FRAN
No problem girl.

Fran looks up and down Rico with suspicion then smiles at her new male friend.

Rico signals to Geno that he's leaving.

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

Rico leads Vanessa past his shabby front door and into his apartment.

VANESSA
I thought you came from money?

Rico shakes his head and turns on a light.

RICO
Make yourself at home.

VANESSA
(*impressed*)
Wow! Nice place.

RICO
Thanks. I know how to use tools.
What are you having, red or beer?

Vanessa examines a photo on a wall.

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. Turn around, 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 think you're great and I really enjoy being with you. 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 takes notice of the medical equipment while pondering.

RICO (CONT'D)
Have you noticed any unusual things
going on at GarCom?

MR. CAPUTO
No. Why do you ask?

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... 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 demeanor.

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. 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.

(beat)

Rico, we have a NEW SERVICE CALL, take care of the STEVE thing.

Mr. Caputo winks in. Rico develops strength and 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.

(MORE)

RICO (CONT'D)
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.

(beat)

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.

INT. GARCOM/RICO'S CUBICLE - MORNING

Rico works feverishly at his desk on the phone and reviewing documents.

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 to your device. How do you feel now?

MRS. VALDERAMMA

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 video arcade games.

-- 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. GARCOM - 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 new, 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 won't 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 Steve. Sitting regally at one end of the table and with his is AutoTech team is CEO, JEFFERY DICKINSON. He's plump (60s) Texan, tan, sporting an expensive Stetson.

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 signals to start the presentation. All attendees turn and focus on the board room's screen.

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
 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.
 (MORE)

MR. DICKINSON (CONT'D)

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)

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.

(MORE)

RICO (CONT'D)

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.

Executives inch closer.

RICO (CONT'D)

Mounted inside AutoTech's AutoPOD is a standard computer. This POD also contains Voice over Internet protocols, coaxial cabling for advanced data communications, unified messaging, call-recording 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 oversea companies. Stewart has all the data and logistics, is that the right word?... and manufacturing costs.

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.

STEVE

Renewable energy? You can't be serious. What's next, playing video games!

RICO

I don't know a lot about energy, but what I do know is that electricity is produced, not found like gas and oil. Prices of electricity are bound to increase.

Rico points to Mr. Dickinson to enter the POD.

Mr. Dickinson carefully sits. The AutoPOD's computer screen illuminates showing the Auto-Tech logo. The monitor then shows a surveillance video of Steve standing at the buildings loading docks.

VIDEO PLAYS:

The guns will be arriving from our Bronx facility for distribution. The crates will be ready for departure. I've got Ralph assisting me with our off-shore accounts. All the blame will be pointing to Caputo and that idiot Rico.

VIDEO ENDS:

RICO

I noticed that the shipping bays had dead spots. I contacted the Bronx's leading security company, Alarmas. They donated a some extra cameras and microphone equipment. Mike helped with the setup, Ms. Horan helped provided with internal contacts, 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 as Geno places handcuffs on Steve.

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

CARMINE
Give me that.
(beat)
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.

Geno begins unraveling duck tape.

INT. GARCUM 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 approaches Rico walking through the lobby.

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.
(beat)
Wow! For the first time in my
life, I feel I accomplished
something important. I did
something good without screwing
up... Thanks for believin' in me.
It was your encouragement that
inspired me.

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

INT. GARCOM FRONT ENTRANCE - MORNING

Frank and Nicky Caputo enter the front lobby. Nicky hobbles
with a cane while Frank takes in GarCom's rich surroundings.

FRANK
I got to handed to you Nicky. I
was pissed off when you left
Alarmas for this... After a while I
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 family go.
We don't want them to experience
the shit we went through.

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 here. Everyone seems impressed with your ideas and your passion. Also, by you taking care of those Russian 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 a purposeful nod.

RICO

Dad, thanks. All this time I thought you were against me working for a legit company. It was you who sent Nicky my resume.

FRANK

Thank your mother. She kept bustin' my cogliones.

(beat)

By the way, do you have something for me?

Frank signals with his fingers for the cash. Rico reluctantly reaches into his wallet and hands his father cash.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You must be Vanessa? 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

So, what's this ...

(beat)

WOW! You got some great taste in jewelry.

Rico gently grabs Vanessa's face and pulls her in with a soft kiss.

RICO

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

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.

Rico regally escorts 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