

Bronx, Inc. Pilot

By

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IN BLACKNESS:

EXT. SKY - DAY

Aerial shot: New York City.

City traffic, HORNS and SIRENS fill the air.

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

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

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

MUSIC OUT.

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

EXT. ALARMAS SECURITY STOREFRONT - DAY

Typical city noise, foot traffic, and music blare.

A distant verbal argument becomes dominant.

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

ELDERLY LADY
You assholes don't scare me!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ELDERLY LADY
Didn't you see me in trouble?

Frank puts a fresh stick of gum in his mouth.

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

Frank takes a few calculated strides closer.

FRANK
Sounds like you could use some
protection.

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

FRANK
I can also help your get one.

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

POV SHOT:

ALARMAS SECURITY SIGN.

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

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

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

Frank guides the woman into the store.

INT. ALARMS SECURITY - DAY

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

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

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

MECHANICS play Halo and alarm bells periodically are tested.

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

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

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

He SLAMS the receiver down hard.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 Son of a bitch!

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

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

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

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

A MAN walks out of the apartment building.

RICO
Hey! Hold the door!

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

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

INT. APARTMENT LOBBY - DAY

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

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

RICO
YO! What's so funny?

BOY
It's broken.

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

INT. APARTMENT STAIRWELL - DAY

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

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

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

RICO (CONT'D)

Move!

The stoners leer at him then move aside.

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

INT. FOURTH FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

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

POV SHOT:

APARTMENT NUMBER 4A.

Rico looks down the endless hallway.

RICO
Sweet Jesus, kill me now.

INT. APARTMENT 4J DOORWAY - DAY

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

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

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

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

MRS. VEGA
GET BACK IN THE APARTMENT!

The toddler CRIES and runs into the apartment.

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

Rico follows her inside.

INT. APARTMENT 4J LIVING ROOM - DAY

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

RICO
Anything I need to know? Damage and
whatnot?

MRS. VEGA
Just get the job done.

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

TWO BOYS run around, chasing and hitting each other.

RICO
Seguro.

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - AFTERNOON

Carmine sits reading the paper.

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

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

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

Carmine doesn't look up from his paper.

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

GENO
I'm mature! I have money.

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

GENO
You?

Carmine looks up and smiles.

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

Frank enters from his office.

FRANK

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

Geno gets up and leaves.

CARMINE

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

(beat)

You realize that guy was a hero.

Frank picks up Carmine's note and begins reading.

FRANK

Good, this woman lives on Fordham road.

(beat)

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

Carmine shrugs and goes back to his paper.

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

FRANK (CONT'D)

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

CARMINE

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

FRANK

Today! I need this shit done today, fathead.

Carmine huffs and reluctantly takes one slip from Frank.

INT. APARTMENT 4J LIVING ROOM -DAY

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

RICO
YO! Watch the friggin ladder!

The boys run away.

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

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

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

MRS. VEGA
Que paso?

Rico points to the cockroaches, then the window frame.

MRS. VEGA (CONT'D)
So?

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

He gestures to the cockroaches.

MRS. VEGA
Okay. Are you done then?

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

RICO
YO! Get the fuck away from my car!

Rico packs up his gear quickly.

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

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

RICO
(to Mrs. Vega)
Thanks.

EXT. APARTMENT STOOP - DAY

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

RICO
What the hell is wrong with you!
Ay!

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

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

RICO (CONT'D)
Son of a bitch.

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

RICO (CONT'D)
What now?!

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

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

Bystanders stare at him in his freak out.

INT. RICO'S CAR - DAY

He plops himself into his car.

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

He looks to and from the joint and the flier.

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

EXT. RICO'S CAR - DAY

Rico drives off through the streets of The Bronx.

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

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

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

FRANK

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

CARMINE

Maybe there was a problem with the install?

GENO

(with a mouthful of pizza)

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

FRANK

(to Geno)

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

FRANK (CONT'D)

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

Geno grabs a stained napkin then quickly leaves.

CARMINE

Speaking of Rico, there he is.

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

FRANK

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

INT. RICO'S CAR - DAY

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

He picks up the educational flier in his front seat.

EXT. ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

Frank steps outside of the store to light a CIGARETTE.

INT. RICO'S CAR - DAY

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

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

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

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

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

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

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

Rico slows and gawks at the women.

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

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

Rico leans in closer to Vanessa.

RICO (CONT'D)

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

Vanessa scoffs.

VANESSA

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

FRAN

--Or whatever else you're offering.

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

RICO

(*calling after them*)

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

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

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

FRANK

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

Frank turns around and starts walking away.

Rico finding a TICKET stuck on his windshield.

RICO

You got to be kiddin' me. Shit!

Frank calls out to Rico.

FRANK

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

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

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

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

FRANK

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

RICO

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

Frank CHUCKLES while reading the store's address numbers.

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

POV SHOT:

FRANK

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

RICO

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

FRANK

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

(beat)

You know this business will be
yours one day.

RICO

Please don't threaten me.

FRANK

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

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

RICO

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

FRANK

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

RICO

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

FRANK

Sarcastic

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

(beat)

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

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

INT. BODEGA STORE - DAY

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

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

FRANK

OYE, I'm from Alarmas security.

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

STORE CLERK

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

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

RICO
This cake is over two years old.

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

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

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

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

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

Che speaks with a heavy accent.

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

Frank listens while jotting some notes on a clipboard.

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

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

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

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

FRANK
Mi hijo.
(beat)
(MORE)

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

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

CHE
Yo pago cash.

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

Frank smirks.

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

The camera slowly ZOOMS IN on the pistol.

EXT. BODEGA STORE - DAY

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

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

Frank exits the Bodega. Frank sees a drug dealer by the front
of the store. Frank turns to the dealer, asks for the drugs,
then points with his walkie talkie for the drug dealer to
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 and MEDICAL ASSSISTANTS going about their daily business.

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

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

VANESSA

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

MRS. VALDERAMMA

Oh, thank you, sweetie.

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

MRS. VALDERAMMA (CONT'D)
This is for you. I forgot to bring
you cookies today.

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

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

Vanessa smiles. Ted huffs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

VANESSA
Fran!

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

VANESSA

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

FRAN

No! I meant we should go out! It's been months since you broke up with Victor. You need to get that thang on the dance floor, you feel me?

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

VANESSA

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

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

DR. FERRARI

I see you two are having a good time.

Vanessa and Fran stop and turn around quickly, embarrassed.

VANESSA

Dr. Ferrari, we were just--

DR. FERRARI

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

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

DR. FERRARI (CONT'D)

Did we get the new Gitect twelve lead cable from PaceTech?

FRAN

No, we didn--

DR. FERRARI

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

VANESSA

No.

DR. FERRARI

I didn't ask you.

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

VANESSA

We'll take care of it, doctor.

(beat)

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

DR. FERRARI

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

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

Vanessa gets up and goes to a cabinet.

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

DR. FERRARI (CONT'D)

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

Vanessa shrugs her shoulder to her ear and squirms away.

VANESSA

I'm sure you do.

DR. FERRARI

What's the matter?

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

VANESSA

Cut it out! I'm in no mood.

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

DR. FERRARI

(irritated)

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

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

Vanessa closes her eyes and embarrassed.

INT. RICO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

Skip.

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

Skip.

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

Skip.

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

Rico leans towards the machine, confused but intrigued.

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

BEEP.

Rico stands deep in thought, debating his next move.

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

Carmine sits in his usual spot reading the NY Post.

A young MECHANIC flirts with Daisy.

Frank is in the middle of a phone conversation.

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

They approach Carmine, looking to make an alarm payment.

HECTOR

Excuse me, Señor, we're here to pay.

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

CARMINE

Hey, Frank! Customer.

Frank looks up.

CARMINE (CONT'D)

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

FRANK

(to the person on the phone)

Hang on.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(to Carmine)

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

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

The door to the shop opens, Rico enters.

FRANK (CONT'D)

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

RICO

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

FRANK
--It won't take long.

Frank waves the men over to Rico.

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

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

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

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

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

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

CARMINE
Bronx Dentistry?

Frank's eyes fill with rage.

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

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

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

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

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

FRANK
No we don't!

Frank storms over to the desk.

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

Hector gestures to Angel to fork over some money.

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

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

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

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

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

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

NURSE ANGEL
Don't shoot us!

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

NURSE ANGEL
(to Hector)
Pay him!

Hector frantically searches his pocketbook. It starts to buzz.

FRANK
What the hell is that?

NURSE ANGEL
Turn it off!

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

Frank and Rico stare, bewildered.

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

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

Rico clears his throat.

RICO
Uh, yeah that covers it.

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

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

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

Carmine peaks out from behind his paper.

RICO
I got somewhere to be.

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

Rico turns around.

RICO
What?

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

RICO
I'm not going so--

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

CARMINE

Oh boy.

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

RICO

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

FRANK

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

Frank starts walking away.

RICO

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

Frank turns around to face Rico.

FRANK

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

RICO

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

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

RICO (CONT'D)

(sarcastically)

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

Rico turns to head out the door again.

FRANK

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

RICO

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

FRANK

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

RICO

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

FRANK

You wanna get outta here so badly?

Frank nods towards the door.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Go ahead.

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

Carmine folds his paper and sits up.

CARMINE

Shit.

FRANK

He'll be back.

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

FRANK (CONT'D)

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

EXT. RICO'S CAR - DAY

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

INT. RICO'S CAR - DAY

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

RICO V.O.

Hi, my name is Russo. Rico Russo.

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

END FANTASY.

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

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

INT. RIOS HOME - NIGHT

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

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

She kisses her mom on the cheek.

VANESSA

Hola, Mommí.

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

MRS. RIOS

Mija, where are you going so quickly?

VANESSA

I'll be out with friends, Mami.

Vanessa stops in the doorway.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Do you need my help with anything before I go?

MRS. RIOS

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

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

INT. VANESSA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

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

VANESSA

Mom?

No response.

INT. RIOS KITCHEN - NIGHT

VANESSA

Mom? Did Jimmy come in my room today?

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

VANESSA (CONT'D)

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

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

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Hell with this, I'm going out.

Vanessa picks up the phone and dials.

EXT. RICO'S 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.

Rico hands Geno a joint.

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

RICO
Typical crap. I dont know how he
gets these people to by our shitty
alarms.
(beat)
Here, a tip from the customer.

GENO
Nicee! Benefits of working in the
Bronx.

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

GENO
Well, I like the boobs.

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

GENO
Yeah, right. Your dreamin'.

RICO
Club Cafe has boobs there, too.

Geno sours, then lights up the joint.

INT. RIOS HOME - NIGHT

Vanessa emerges from her bedroom dressed in a short, and a tight, dark blue dress. Her hair is down she has dangly jewelry.

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

VANESSA
Buenas noches, Papi.

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

INT. CLUB CAFE - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

The two girls leave before Rico finishes his sentence.

Rico awkwardly steps back to his spot.

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

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

Geno pats Rico on the shoulder.

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

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

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

RICO'S POV:

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

FRAN

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

VANESSA

Go talk to him!

FRAN

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

Fran strikes a dramatic pose. Vanessa CHUCKLES.

A familiar voice is heard from behind the two women.

RICO

Hi, there. You come here often?

Vanessa turns around revealing Rico.

FRAN

(to Vanessa)

Oh, no, it's him.

RICO

What?

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

VANESSA

Oh, God.

RICO

I remember you!

Rico reflects on not his finest moment.

RICO (CONT'D)

Oh, God. You remember me.

VANESSA

Are you following me or something?

RICO
Wha-- no, I'm--

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

VANESSA
Orwell might have been onto something.

Vanessa and Fran give each other a knowing look.

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

VANESSA
(sarcastically)
Fate has brought us together again.

RICO
Sure.

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

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

VANESSA
Oh! You understand Spanish?

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

Fran LAUGHS. Vanessa smiles - intrigued and impressed.

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

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

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

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

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

VANESSA
OK white boy, show me your moves.

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

Rico does his best but is enamored with her beauty.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
Boy, where the hell is your rhythm?

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

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

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

VANESSA
I won't make any promises.

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

Scene: Dance Floor - Night

Bodies sway and grind, a sea of movement.

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

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

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

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

FADE OUT.

Vanessa returns to Rico at the bar.

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

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

Rico hands her a drink.

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

VANESSA
What does this big company do?

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

Rico picks up his drink and takes a sip.

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

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

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

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

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

Vanessa looks back to Rico, studying him.

VANESSA
Is it that bad?

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

VANESSA

Well, what's been holding you back?

Rico looks at her, thinking hard on her question.

RICO

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

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

RICO (CONT'D)

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

VANESSA

What do you want?

They look at each other intensely for a beat.

RICO

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

Vanessa smiles softly, then it turns into a smirk.

VANESSA

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

Rico LAUGHS.

RICO

What about you, huh, what do you
do?

VANESSA

I'm a medical tech.

RICO

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

VANESSA

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

(MORE)

VANESSA (CONT'D)

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

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

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

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

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

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

FRANK

We certainly are, come here and sit down.

INT. GARCOM OFFICE - DAY

MR. JAMERSON

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

RICO

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

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

MR. JAMERSON

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

Rico nods in agreement.

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

FRANK

Tell me, what type of experience do you have?

JUNIOR

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

Junior displays his forearm.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)

This is the tattoo I got when I was there.

FRANK

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

(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)

(beat)

What kind of skills do you have?

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

JUNIOR

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

FRANK

And did any of them work?

JUNIOR

Hell yeah. I know my shit.

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

INT. GARCOM OFFICE - DAY

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

RICO

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

Mr. Jamerson clears his throat.

MR. JAMERSON

You realize that GarCom has a drug policy.

RICO

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

Mr. Jamerson takes a deep breath.

MR. JAMERSON

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

RICO

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

MR. JAMERSON
That's correct.

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

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

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

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - DAY

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

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

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

FRANK
Good.

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

FRANK (CONT'D)
Alright, you're hired. Here's twenty bucks for traveling expenses.

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

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

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

FRANK

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

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

Fran grimaces.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
If Ted denies us upgrading her to a new pacemaker, then she may not live.

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

FRAN
That shit's murder.

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

The two girls look at one another.

FRAN
Her son will inherit her estate.

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

FRAN
What can we do?

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

FRAN

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

VANESSA

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

FRAN

He does?

VANESSA

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

FRAN

Wow! But he'll never agree to it.

VANESSA

I will appeal to his sense of moral values.

INT. CITY CARDIOLOGY EXAM ROOM - DAY

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

Vanessa seductively fondles Dr. Ferrari's stethoscope.

VANESSA

Just slowly stick it in. Nobody needs to know.

DR. FERRARI

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

VANESSA

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

Dr. Ferrari looks at a computer screen.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 What about the pacemakers Janice
 gets from Rodriquez funeral home or
 Downtown hospital.

DR. FERRARI
(nervously)
 What are you talking about?

VANESSA
 I'm no fool.
(beat)
 Think about the time you took me to
 the Meadowlands Cardiology expo;
 the steamy hot tub, that expensive
 bottle of Pinot, soft music.

Dr. Ferrari nibbles on his pen cap.

DR. FERRARI
 Are you sure that the end of life
 for that Pacemaker is...

Vanessa points to values on a computer monitor.

Dr. Ferrari pulls out a pack of cigarettes.

DR. FERRARI (CONT'D)
 What about if we decrease the
 Ventricular pulse width to .5?

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

VANESSA
 Do the right thing. She deserves to
 live.

Vanessa fondles the doctor's stethoscope.

Dr. Ferrari bites his lip in thought.

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

Vanessa smiles and jumps with joy.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

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

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

BARTENDER
Oh, congratulations on bowling 800
the other night.

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

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

BARTENDER
I heard Richie shot 300 last night.

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

Bartender abruptly leaves to service a waiting customer.

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

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

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

Sluggo LAUGHS.

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

Sluggo, hears a call over the loudspeakers to repair a lane and dashes away.

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

INT. VANESSA'S BEDROOM - EVENING

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

VANESSA
Hello?

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

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

Vanessa stops ironing.

VANESSA
Oh. Hi.

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

RICO
Hi.

VANESSA
Wow, you got a way with words.

Rico CHUCKLES. There's a brief silence.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
So...

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

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

Nothing.

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

Rico LAUGHS, then:

RICO
I got the job.

VANESSA O.S.
You did?

VANESSA
Rico, that's amazing.
Congratulations.

Vanessa continues ironing.

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

VANESSA

Why would I want to do that?

Rico hits himself in the head with the phone.

RICO

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

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

VANESSA

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

RICO

Well, what about tomorrow night?

VANESSA

I have plans tomorrow night.

RICO

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

Vanessa takes a second to think out her response.

VANESSA

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

Vanessa abruptly hangs up the phone, then reflects.

INT. GARCOM LOBBY - MORNING

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

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

STEWART

Uh, Rico Russo?

Rico stops and looks him over.

RICO

Who wants to know.

STEWART

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

They shake hands. Stewart hands Rico a business card.

RICO

You don't look Irish.

Rico is still perplexed with the building's cameras.

RICO (CONT'D)

Who did your security system?

STEWART

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

INT. GARCOM OFFICE/CUBICLE AREA - DAY

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

STEWART

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

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

RICO

What are you sellin'?

STEWART

Selling? I don't quite follow.

Rico shrugs, nods.

STEWART (CONT'D)

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

Stewart leaves with a perplexed look.

Rico meanders throughout the office absorbing his new environment.

He peeks in a large, conference room and beams as he pictures himself speaking to a group of GarCom employees.

INT. GARCOM HALLWAY - DAY

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

STEWART

Morning Joyce. Good morning, Kim.

JOYCE

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

STEWART

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

Joyce smiles and nudges him playfully.

STEWART (CONT'D)

(to Joyce)

What do you think about the new hire on our team?

JOYCE

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

Stewart gestures towards Rico.

STEWART

There he is, over there by the conference room.

JOYCE

Huh. What do you know about him?

STEWART

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

JOYCE

What experience does he have with computers?

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

STEWART
Does that answer your question?

JOYCE
Oh, boy.

STEWART
I need coffee.

Stewart leaves shaking his head.

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

JOYCE
Yep.

KIMBERLY
At least he's cute.

JOYCE
Ms. Engaged, excuse me!

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

JOYCE
Does Alan know about this problem
that you have?

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

Joyce CHUCKLES. Kim eyes Rico one last time.

From a corner office window, a blond male employee is seen
quietly watching the action.

INT. RICO'S CUBICLE - DAY

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

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

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

SALLY

I'm Sally, nice to meet you.

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

RICO

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

SALLY

Oh, that's terrible.

RICO

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

SALLY

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

Joyce approaches.

JOYCE

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

Sally promptly gets back to work. Rico turns around to face Joyce.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

I'm Joyce Donahue, one of the department's managers and administrative analysts.

RICO

Cool. Nice to meet you.

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

JOYCE

Likewise. Is it Rico or Enrico?

RICO

Rico is fine.

(beat)

You know something, you guys run a nice place here.

(beat)

But you gotta do something about that coffee. Is there a cappuccino maker around?

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

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

Joyce smiles then checks her watch.

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

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

RICO
Alright chief, where do we start?

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

Rico spins around to face the computer.

RICO
Okay, yeah, reboot.

Rico wiggles his fingers, unsure where to put them.

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

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

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

STEWART
I restarted the PC.

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

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

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

STEWART

Sure.

RICO

Could you teach me to be a nerd?

Stewart raises an eyebrow.

RICO (CONT'D)

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

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

INT. GARCOM/STEVE'S OFFICE - DAY

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

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

STEVE

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

Steve hangs up the phone.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Give me good news or I might get an ulcer.

RALPH

This should take care of it.

Steve studies the screen.

STEVE

You're sure?

RALPH

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

STEVE

Hmm.

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

STEVE (CONT'D)

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

RALPH

I heard he hired a new guy.

STEVE

Really! Who?

RALPH

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

STEVE

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

Steve looks back out the window, plotting nefariously.

INT. GARCOM/KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Stewart pours himself 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.

(MORE)

STEWART (CONT'D)

Though, computer science doesn't exactly seem like a strong suit of his.

(rambling)

Of course, I would never question your reasons for hiring someone--

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

MR. CAPUTO

--Please tell me you went over corporate policies with him.

STEWART

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

MR. CAPUTO

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

Mr. Caputo slaps Stewart on the back.

STEWART

Yes, sir.

Stewart sighs as Mr. Caputo walks out of frame.

INT. RUSSO HOUSE - EVENING

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

GENO

Thanks, Ma.

Geno starts shoveling food into his mouth.

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

RICO

What, you're starting without me?

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

GENO

What are you doing here, fuckface?

MRS. RUSSO

Watch your mouth at the table.

Frank and Rico exchange a look, tension still high.

FRANK
I wasn't expecting you tonight.

MRS. RUSSO
I asked him to join us.

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

Rico reaches over the table and grabs his envelop.

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

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

Frank leans forward, concerned.

GENO
What did ya do this time, huh?

RICO
Pipe down.

MRS. RUSSO
Please.

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

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

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

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

Mrs. Russo swats Geno with her napkin.

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

RICO
You want the full list?

FRANK
Don't be a smartass.

Mrs. Russo glares at Frank before taking a bite of her food.

GENO
What kind of place gave you a job?

Frank looks at Rico expectantly.

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

Geno farts at Rico.

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

MRS. RUSSO
The two of you, ENOUGH!

Everyone goes back to eating their food.

RICO
Nicky Caputo hired me.

GENO
I knew you didn't get it yourself.

Frank and Mrs. Russo exchange a look.

FRANK
Did you get paid yet?

RICO
There's more to life than money you
know.

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

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

RICO
Thanks, Ma.

FRANK
Mrs. Russo, get me the grated
cheese.

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

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

RICO
(to Mrs. Russo)
Don't bother, Ma.

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

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

MRS. RUSSO
Already?

RICO
I got a date tonight.

GENO
Who's the lucky guy?

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

RICO
That's it, I'm leaving.

FRANK
Don't forget the garbage on the way
out.

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

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

MRS. RUSSO
His recent stool sample.

Frank slams his hand on the table.

INT. VANESSA'S BEDROOM - EVENING

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

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

VANESSA

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

MRS. RIOS

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

VANESSA

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

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

VANESSA (CONT'D)

(laughing)

Ow!

Mrs. Rios sits down on the bed behind Vanessa.

MRS. RIOS

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

VANESSA

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

Vanessa massages her temples. Mrs. Rios sighs deeply.

MRS. RIOS

What did I do wrong?

Vanessa turns to face her mom.

VANESSA

What do you mean?

MRS. RIOS

Your brother, he has many problems. But you, you turn out fine.

(MORE)

MRS. RIOS (CONT'D)

You do everything yourself, you take care of this family. What did I do wrong with him?

Vanessa sighs deeply.

VANESSA

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

MRS. RIOS

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

VANESSA

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

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

VANESSA (CONT'D)

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

MRS. RIOS

No necesito telefono nuevo. We don't need a new phone.

VANESSA

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

A beat.

MRS. RIOS

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

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

VANESSA

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

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

Vanessa swallows a knot in her throat.

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

Vanessa holds back tears.

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

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

MRS. RIOS O.S.
¡Vanessa! Es para ti.

Vanessa composes herself, then walks into the kitchen.

KITCHEN

Vanessa takes the phone from Mrs. Rios.

VANESSA
Hello?

INT. RICO'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

RICO
Hey. It's Rico.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

VANESSA
Rico. Hi.

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

RICO
You sound surprised.

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

Rico sips his soda.

RICO
Why do you say that?

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

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

Vanessa smiles, then rolls her eyes.

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

RICO
Honest to God, never.

VANESSA
(sarcastically)
Sure.

RICO
Well, I never meant it before
tonight.

Vanessa bites back a smile as she shakes her head.

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

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

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

VANESSA
Well, I'm pretty hungry.

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

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

They both hang up.

INT. RICO'S CAR - NIGHT

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

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

EXT. RIOS HOME - NIGHT

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

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

MRS. RIOS
Hello, I Vanessa's madre.

RICO
Hola!

MRS. RIOS
Hola, entre.

INT. RIOS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

MRS. RIOS
This is Vanessa's padre.

RICO
Hola!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He stops to look at a picture of Vanessa.

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

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

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

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

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

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

INT. RIOS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

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

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

VANESSA (CONT'D)
Do you mind?!

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

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

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

VANESSA
Here, help me with this.

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

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

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

Rico struggles with the clasp.

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

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

Rico smirks and glances at Vanessa.

VANESSA
Strike two, wise guy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INT. GARCOM STEVE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

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

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

Ralph pokes his head inside Steve's office.

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

RALPH

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

STEVE (O.S.)

That info would have been useful thirty seconds earlier.

RALPH

What?

STEVE

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

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

INT. BUONASERA'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

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

RICO

My name is Russo, we have a reservation.

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

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

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

Vanessa watches him like she's studying wildlife.

RICO (CONT'D)

What?

VANESSA

Nothin'.

A WAITER arrives at their table and politely greets them.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

What's good here?

RICO
Get the Butternut Asiago
Tortellaci.

Rico does a chef's kiss hand gesture.

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

Vanessa sticks her tongue at Rico with a snarky look.

RICO
I'll have the Fra Shrimp Diavolo.

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

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

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

Vanessa SIGHS. Rico picks at his bread.

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

RICO
Really? How does that work?

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

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

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

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

VANESSA

What?

RICO

Nothin'.

Series of shots of the two enjoying their evening.

VANESSA

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

She takes a bite of the bread and enjoys.

RICO

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

VANESSA

(deadpan)

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

RICO

Definitely after.

VANESSA

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

RICO

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

Vanessa studies him.

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

VANESSA

How's your relationship with your father now?

RICO

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

VANESSA

I can see why that bothers you.

RICO

Yeah, it drives me up the freggin' wall.

VANESSA

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

RICO

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

VANESSA

Do they think that, or do you think that?

RICO

Are you a shrink or something?

VANESSA

I'm just saying, maybe not everyone is watching you ready to pounce the second you make a mistake. I mean, they're giving you a chance to prove that you are good enough to be there. That's gotta count for something, right?

RICO

I guess.

VANESSA

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

Rico looks at her, confused.

RICO

You're real good at this comfort talk thing.

VANESSA

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

Vanessa shrugs.

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

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

RICO
Y'know, maybe you should be a
shrink.

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

RICO
I feel the same way with my dad.

The waiter comes back and serves their food.

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

VANESSA
Cardiologist.

RICO
See? You're smart.

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

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

Vanessa drops down her fork.

VANESSA

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

RICO

No! I--

VANESSA

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

VANESSA (CONT'D)

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

RICO

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

Vanessa waves it off.

VANESSA

--Just forget it, alright.

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

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

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

RICO

Wait.

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

RICO (CONT'D)

I'm really sorry about what I said back there. When I said what I said, I didn't mean it the way it came out, 'cause what I was really thinking is 'God, this girl is incredible.

(MORE)

RICO (CONT'D)
And how did I get so lucky to be
the one here with her now?

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

RICO (CONT'D)
I better not fuck this up or it'll
be the stupidest thing I ever do...

Vanessa takes that in...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RIOS HOME - NIGHT

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

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

RICO
Yeah, me too.

Vanessa opens the gate and closes it behind her.

RICO (CONT'D)
Again, I'm sorry. What can I do to
be better?

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

VANESSA
Don't fuck up.

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

INT. GARCOM OFFICE SPACE - MORNING

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

"Give to Ralph".

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

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

RICO
Hey Ralph, I got an envelope here
for you.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rico sits down in his seat and scoots over to make room for
Stewart. Stewart sits down, removes a novelty coffee mug with
breasts, and places it in a draw. Stewart gives Rico a dirty
look then begins typing on Rico's computer.

RICO
Hey, Stu.

STEWART
Yeah?

RICO

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

STEWART

I'm just doing my job.

RICO

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

STEWART

(Bronx accent)

Ah, fuhgeddaboutit. OK, let's move on.

Rico's smile vanishes as he notices Ralph and Steve looking right at him, chuckling.

RICO

Stu, I got a feelin that Steve and his girl friend are up to no good.

STEWART

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

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

RICO

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

STEWART

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

RICO

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

STEWART

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

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

Stewart sees Steve and Ralph walking away.

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

RICO
My two specialties.

Rico pats Stewart on the shoulder.

Music plays - "The Mission Impossible" theme plays.

INT. STEVE'S OFFICE DOORWAY CONTINUOUS

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

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

Stewart calmly grabs the doorknob and opens the door.

Music - Mission impossible music abruptly ends.

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

Rico frowns then shoves him inside.

INT. STEVE'S OFFICE CONTINUOUS

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

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

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

A gun schematic pops up on the screen.

RICO (CONT'D)

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

STEWART

How do you know that?

RICO

Ah, I watch a lot of Magnum P.I.

(beat)

Why would Steve be looking at handguns?

Stewart ejects the floppy diskette.

STEWART

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

Rico takes it from him and inspects it.

RICO

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

STEWART

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

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

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

STEVE

What the hell are you two doing in here?

Rico test swings the bat's weight.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Give me that.

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

STEWART

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

STEVE

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

Stewart rushes out of the office.

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

STEVE (CONT'D)

Hey, you, clown?

RICO

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

STEVE

You must think you're real hot shit 'cause Caputo risked his career by hiring you. I don't know what the hell you're doin' here in this company but you better watch your back. You don't want to make an enemy of me.

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

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

INT. GARCOM CAFE - AFTERNOON

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

Mr. Caputo stand on the cafeteria food line.

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

RICO

Hello, Mr. C.

MR. CAPUTO

Just the person I wanted to see.

RICO

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

MR. CAPUTO

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

RICO

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

MR. CAPUTO

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

RICO

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

Mr. Caputo shakes his head, amused.

MR. CAPUTO

Just like your father.

(beat)

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

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

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

MIKE

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

RICO

What the hell are you talkin' about?

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

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

Rico studies the groups food.

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

The group looks hesitantly at one another.

INT. RICO'S CAR - AFTERNOON

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

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

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

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

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

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

The grenade rolls again.

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

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

Mike leans over and whispers to Stewart.

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

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

EXT. RICO'S CAR - AFTERNOON

INSERT SIGN - NEW YORK CITY NEXT EXIT

EXT. ALARMAS SECURITY - AFTERNOON

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

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

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

Geno peaks towards Rico's car.

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

RICO
 Just keep an eye on the freggin'
 car.

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

CARMINE
 Hello beautiful, I'm Uncle Carmine.

Sally smiles nervously then checks the car door lock.

INT. ALARMAS SECURITY - AFTERNOON

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

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

(MORE)

RICO (CONT'D)

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

FRANK

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

RICO

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

FRANK

Of course What do you need.

LOUIE

(to Rico)

Look what I have for your pretty girlfriend.

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

RICO

That relation was over long ago.

LOUIE LUMP

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

Rico peaks closer.

FRANK

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

(beat)

Louie put the jewelry away. Rico, seriously, I need for an important service call.

Rico hands Frank an envelope.

RICO

Fine! This is from the Washington Heights salon job.

(beat)

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

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

RICO
No.

FRANK
Don't lie to me.

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

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

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

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

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

RICO
Russian?

Rico then rummages through a box containing phones and wires.

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

RICO (CONT'D)
Alpha Wave! What about Roberto?

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

Rico pockets the slip and leaves.

INT. RICO'S CAR - AFTERNOON

STEWART

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

SALLY

Why does it smell like garbage and
skunks around here?
(beat)
That creepy uncle Carmine is still
staring at me.

MIKE

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

SALLY

Oh! He's coming! Thank God.

Rico jumps in side the car.

RICO

Alright, who's ready for lunch?

Rico blasts the car radio with classical Hip Hop music.

INT. ALPHA WAVES RECORDING CLUB - NIGHT

We follow two YOUNG WOMEN into the electric atmosphere of
Alpha Waves Recording Studio, number one live recording club
in the Metropolitan area. The club is dimly lit with a heavy
New York City vibe.

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

Rico finishes a security repair in a recording room then
weaves through the eclectic atmosphere settling to a wall
with a digital keypad. He starts fiddling with the systems
buttons while enjoying the act on stage. A short RUSSIAN MAN
squeeze past him revealing a weapon tucked in his jacket. The
man gives Rico a quick stare then continue maneuvering
through the club. The Russian man approaches a person in a
business suit, who's face is blocked.

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

INT. BAR AREA - NIGHT

Rico finishes his repair, folds away the instructions, then approaches the BARTENDER.

RICO
Hey, Nancy. I'm finish
reprogramming the keypad. Do you
know where Geno is hiding?

The Bartender points towards a location while serving a drink.

INT. STUDIO B AREA - NIGHT

Rico finds Geno sitting on a sofa with a few friends. A man playing un unplugged guitar, and SAMONE, 20s, sexy bar fly.

GENO
Just in time. Rico, I'd like you to
meet Samone. She just started
working here...

RICO
Hi. Nice cross.

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

RICO (CONT'D)
Listen, see that foreign looking
short guy by the back table. He
came heavy, I mean tucked in his
pants heavy.

GENO
No shit! I thought 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 need to know what's
going on with these guys first. I
work for GarCom so I have Nicky C's
back.
(beat)
I have an idea.

Rico turns and looks to Samone.

INT. AREA - NIGHT

Steve and the Russian man converse. Samone approaches the men. She begins wiping down a table while flaunting her figure.

STEVE

To Russian man

You know why there were no issues with the shipment? Because a contact I know at Port Newark says the bureau's paperwork is sloppy... he altered the carrier's manifest before they began computerizing their system. So, if we keep the weight under 50 kilos, we avoid attention from Interpol.

SAMONE

Is there something I can get you two gentleman?

Steve continue his one way conversation while admiring Samone'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 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.

Samone returns to Rico, Geno, and Stewart.

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

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

RICO
--GarCom?

SAMONE
Yes! And the foreign looking guy's
name is Illian. I'm sorry, but
that's all I got.

Stewart is in a trance staring at Samone's cross buried
between her breasts. Rico smacks him in the arm.

RICO
Did you hear that buddy?

STEWART
What? Yeah, yes.

Rico and Geno see Steve and his contact leaving.

GENO
That's it, I'm getting Kenny.

RICO
No! Listen, I'm going to find out
what this scumbag is up to. Stu,
you can stay here with Samone and
I'll catch up with you later at the
Marriot.

Stewart weakly nods yes.

STEWART
I guess you know what is best for
me. Whoa, it's getting hot in here.

EXT. ROXIE'S PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Steve and Illian exit through the back into the parking lot. They get into separate vehicles. Rico pulls out his keys and decides to follow the van.

EXT. RAILROAD ROAD - NIGHT

Situated alongside railroad tracks sit several, large dumpsters, stripped cars, and the Trackside bar.

Rico's car follows the van to the bar's parking lot. The van turns the corner and goes to the back.

EXT. TRACKSIDE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Rico parks the car near the side, then stealthily gets out. He peaks through a burnt out, abandon car to get a view of the van. Illian gets out of the van. Two LARGE MEN approach the back of the van, open the rear doors, and begin removing unmarked crates.

RICO (O.S.)
What do we have here?

A face suddenly emerges from the car surprising Rico causing a ruckus. The men stop hearing the commotion and investigate. Rico swiftly flees the scene.

INT. MR. RUSSO'S HOME - NIGHT

Frank lies comfortably in his family room watching a Hitler documentary. Mrs. Russo hands Frank a cup of coffee.

MRS. RUSSO
With the thousands of channels you get from that ridiculous television, why must you always watch the same old crap?

FRANK
This is not crap. This was real history. Besides, the Jerry Springer show doesn't start until eleven o'clock.

MRS. RUSSO
Pick up the phone, it's for you.

FRANK
Who is it?

MRS. RUSSO
Do I look like your secretary?

FRANK
At least my secretary gives great
head, so I'm told.

Mrs. Russo slaps the back of Frank's head with a paperback
book.

MRS. RUSSO
There, you got head.

Frank picks up the phone.

FRANK
Speak... Carmine, STOP chewing in
my freggin' ear. OK, first give me
the good news. Good, now ditch the
car. What else... Louie Lump said
that the G. is upset about what
surfaced at the club? Shit!

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

INT. GARCOM - SERVER ROOM - NIGHT

Ralph 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.
(beat)
Holy shit! It's Tomas?

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

VANESSA (CONT'D)
This ought to be fun.

FRAN

No me diga. 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. Why don't we just go to the Marriott like I suggested?

Fran reluctantly flips them the finger while Vanessa whisks her away.

INT. MARRIOTT BAR - NIGHT

Inside the Marriott, Vanessa and Fran sit at a bar enjoying their cocktails. Vanessa sees Geno nearby, then scans the room for Rico.

EXT. MARRIOTT BAR ENTRANCE - NIGHT

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

KIMBERLY

Well, hello Mr. Russo. I'm glad you could make it.

RICO

Nice dress.

KIMBERLY

Thank you for that oleaginous observation.

RICO

What? Oh, I forgot, you don't speak English.

KIMBERLY

I'll have you know that I minored in Latin at Cornell. My vocabulary is quite extensive, far more comprehensive than your remedial catalogue of twelve, trifling words.

Kimberly chuckles then grabs Rico's arm.

INT. MARRIOTT BAR - NIGHT

Kimberly and Rico enter. Fran looks up and stops grooving to the music. Vanessa follows Fran's focus then sees Rico.

Rico removes Kimberly's arm as he sees Geno waving.

RICO

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

KIMBERLY

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

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

KIMBERLY (CONT'D)

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

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

TOM

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

RICO

Thus far, it's been fun.

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

TOM

Fun? Amusing adjective!

STEVE

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

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

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

Rico sees Vanessa then hastily leaves.

INT. MARRIOTT BAR - NIGHT

Stewart suddenly crosses Rico's path.

RICO
What the hell are you wearing?

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

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

STEWART
So, what happened when you followed
Steve.

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

Stewart follows Rico to Fran and Vanessa.

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

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

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

VANESSA
Am I supposed to be impressed?

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

Vanessa frowns at Stewart's attire. Rico rolls his eyes in pain as a scruffy man, HARRY (30s) GarCom maintenance man, wearing a gaudy Polo shirt who recognizes him from across the room and enters the circle.

HARRY
Rico Revs, What's up? Hello
O'Brian.

Harry tips Rico's drink with his beer. Rico leans over and whispers to Harry.

RICO
Don't call me that here.

Harry and Stewart scrutinize each other's attire.

HARRY
I thought I recognized you in
GarCom's front lobby last week. But
I thought to myself, what would
Rico Re..., excuse me, Rico, be
doing here. So, what's the spread
on the Knick game tonight?

Rico walks Harry a few feet away. Vanessa scrutinizes Rico.

RICO
Not involved taking numbers
anymore.

HARRY
They're on a roll! They've won
seven of eight and they're home
tonight. They are a five-point
favorite. I'll take the over.

Vanessa looks coldly at Rico. Rico monitors Steve's actions.

STEWART
Vanessa, how did you and Rico meet?

VANESSA
(*indignant*)
Rico and I met at a club.

Rico looks towards Vanessa.

HARRY
I just want to put fifty dollars on
the Knick game!

RICO
Did you hear what I said? I'm not
taking bets anymore!

HARRY (CONT'D)
Come on, I got a good feeling on
this one.

RICO (CONT'D)
Look at yourself. Do you remember
what happened the last time I took
your bet?

Rico shakes his head in embarrassment.

RICO (CONT'D)
See that skinny guy with that
ridiculous shirt standing by the
bar? That's my brother Geno.
He'll take your action.

INT. MARRIOTT BAR - NIGHT

Kimberly unexpectedly enters the circle. Harry sees Kimberly
then quickly flees away.

KIMBERLY
Hello Mr. O'Brien.
(beat)
And who do we have here?

STEWART
This is Vanessa. She's Rico's
friend.

KIMBERLY
Hi, Kimberly Lee McFeeny. I happen
to have the good fortune of working
alongside Rico. He's such a
remarkable person.
(beat)
That's funny, Rico never mentioned
he had a girlfriend.

Vanessa stares coldly back at Kimberly.

KIMBERLY (CONT'D)
I'm terribly sorry but I thought
you knew that Rico and I work
closely together. I didn't intend
to startle you.

VANESSA
Oh dear, I didn't mean to startle
you. I know all about you rich,
uptight, spoiled, brats. You think
you can fool people with those
pompous, polite wisecracks, and
that cheap ass dress.
(MORE)

VANESSA (CONT'D)

You don't fool me. Now get those fake tits out of my face before we go at it girl.

Stewart chugs his beer bottle.

KIMBERLY

Well, it seems that you and Mr. Russo may have some romantic ties. Had Rico been forthcoming about your relationship, perhaps this entire conversation could have been avoided.

Rico returns to Stewart and Vanessa.

Vanessa gives Rico a cold look then storms away.

RICO

Great! What did you say to her?

KIMBERLY

I told her the truth.

RICO

I don't believe you. Why must you be such a bitch?

Kimberly chuckles, grabs a Jell-O shot from a passing waitress, and salutes Rico.

PHONE BOOTH

Steve listens to an excited voice over a hotel phone keeping his eyes on both Mr. Caputo and Rico.

VOICE ON PHONE

I just learned that Caputo was asking management questions about Illian and his involvement with GarCom. You do have a handle on this predicament?

STEVE

Don't worry. It's taken care of.

Steve hangs up the phone and quickly leaves the hotel.

INT. MARRIOTT BAR - NIGHT

Vanessa returns to where Fran is sitting.

FRAN

Uh-oh, you got that look. What happened over there?

VANESSA

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

FRAN

Hey, hey, easy. Que paso?

Rico returns.

RICO

Vanessa, we need to talk.

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

RICO (CONT'D)

Vanessa, please! There's something you should know.

VANESSA

Yeah, that you're a swine?

RICO

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

Vanessa studies Rico with trepidation.

VANESSA

(*indignantly*)

Fran, I'm leaving. Let me hear what this idiot has to say.

FRAN

No problem girl.

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

Rico updates Geno to his situation.

Vanessa and Rico leave.

EXT. MARIOTT PARKING LOT - NIGHT

RICO

Listen, my apartment is a few minutes away. Let's just go there and talk like two civilized adults.

VANESSA
How will Fran get home?

RICO
Don't worry about it. Geno will
take good care of her. In fact,
Geno is probably all over her now.

Inside the Marriott, Fran is in the middle of the dance floor grinding with a man while Geno is at the bar lining up swizzle sticks.

INT. RICO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Vanessa and Rico stand in front of his building apartment door.

VANESSA
I thought you came from money?

Rico shakes his head and leads her into the building.

RICO
Make yourself at home.

VANESSA
Wow! Nice place.

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

Vanessa examines a photo.

VANESSA
I can't stay long. I got to be at
work early tomorrow. I just want
to hear what this asshole has to
say.
(beat)
Wow, who's the dick with the orange
bell bottoms and long hair?

Vanessa removes a DVD from the couch.

RICO
Funny! OK, we are even.
(beat)
I think you're reading too much
into this. Like I was trying to
say before, Kimberly is a little
manipulating bitch.

VANESSA

Her expensive acrylic manicure and her studded, hoop diamond earrings are inviting for most weak-minded, primitive men.

(beat)

RAGING BULL? Do you realize this movie doesn't portray women well.

RICO

It's just a freggin' movie. Relax! I tell you what. I'll give you a shoulder rub to relax you.

VANESSA

Are you kidding? You're Sicilian and Puerto Rican. I'll get pregnant just sitting next to you.

RICO

So, you think I have no willpower?

VANESSA

Think! Shit, I know you don't.

Rico places their drinks down near his blinking answer machine, takes Vanessa's hand, and looks into her eyes.

RICO

Please listen. My intensions weren't to get you jealous. I really enjoy being with you and I think you're great. I would never do anything to hurt you. That's the honest truth.

MUSIC PLAYS - "NEW YORK STATE OF MIND" BY BILLIE JOEL

Rico softly kisses her hand, then with both hands, tenderly moves her hair from her face, tucks it behind her ears, and moves in for a kiss.

Rico's answering machine picks up and we hear the BEEP.

The message plays

"Rico this is Stu, something terrible happened to Mr. Caputo and...

Rico quickly picks up leaving Vanessa cold.

RICO (CONT'D)

Stu, slow down. What! When? Where is he now? St. Joseph's Hospital? Alright, thanks for letting me know.

INT. HOSPITAL RECEPTION AREA - NIGHT

Rico and Vanessa arrive at St. Joe's hospital's busy ER.

VANESSA
Stay here, I know the women at the
front desk.

Rico stands by a candy machine waiting as Vanessa returns
with badges.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
Here, put this on.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Rico and Vanessa locate Nick resting. A NURSE tends to Mr.
Caputo.

RICO
Aye, Nicky, can you hear me?

Mr. Caputo slowly opens his eyes and acknowledges Rico.

RICO (CONT'D)
What the hell happened?

MR. CAPUTO
I was run over by a freggin car,
that's what happened.

RICO
Really!

Rico ponders.

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

MR. CAPUTO
Nothing out of the ordinary.

RICO
What about Steve lately and his
butt plug friend Ralph? Anything
odd about them?

MR. CAPUTO
Steve? No! The last conversation we
had, concerned a new consultant
working in his team, but nothing...

RICO
Was the consultant's name Illian?

MR. CAPUTO
Yeah, how did you know?

RICO
I came across an invoice with his name on Steve's desk, and get this, lillian carries a piece.

MR. CAPUTO
I don't believe it... Steve's team is also preparing an important presentation for our client. I can't image he would hire someone shady...
(beat)
How do you know this? Oh, I forgot, you're Frank's son.

Rico's facial expression changes Mr. Caputo's outlook.

MR. CAPUTO (CONT'D)
That can't be. That weasel.
(beat)
Funny! All the years I worked in the Bronx with your father, not once were we taken advantage of... All I know is that I can't focus on this right now - we got this AutoTech presentation. We agreed to come up with solutions to market the company's global audience. How are we going to contin...
(winces in pain)
...develop and pitch a presentation while I'm lying here on my ass?
(beat)
I'm not Steve's biggest fan, but, if his team gets the contract, I'm afraid things here will get dicey for us.

RICO
I'll come up with an idea and pitch the presentation. It's a slam dunk. 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
Thant's right! He has great ideas.

RICO
Oh, I forgot, this is my friend, my
girlfriend, Vanessa.

MR. CAPUTO
So, this is the girl who turned
your life around.

Rico looks at Vanessa and smiles. Mr. Caputo studies Rico.
Nurse returns and nudges everyone out.

MR. CAPUTO (CONT'D)
You do have a competent team.

Mr. Caputo slowly nods in favor. Rico develops a smile.

NURSE ANGEL
Don't worry. We will take good care
of Mr. Caputo. And by the way,
Pedro and I are thankful for
Alarmas' protection.

Nurse Angel winks at Rico. Rico's eyes widen as he suddenly
recognizes the nurse.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Rico is quiet as he and Vanessa drive from the hospital.

VANESSA
So, I'm your girlfriend. That's
strange, I don't recall discussing
a long-term relationship with you.

Rico nibbles on a fingernail. Vanessa stares down Rico,
waiting for a response.

RICO
It's that presentation that worries
me, ALRIGHT! I don't believe Nicky
talked me into this.
(beat)
Executives! Board room! What the
hell was he thinking?

VANESSA
HIM!
(beat)
You told me before that all you
wanted was a chance to prove
yourself. Well, here's your
chance, not only to Mr. Caputo and
your father, but to yourself. That
you have the ability to compete at
the corporate level.

RICO

Yeah, but I'm not a smooth talker
like all those smart business guys.
I sound like I received speech
lessons from Sylvester Stallone.

VANESSA

Rico... I know you can.
(beat)
If fact, think about this. If you
go down, we all go down.

Rico looks to Vanessa, absorbs her words.

INT. RICO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Rico arrives home exhausted. He grabs a drink and plops
down. His eyes intensively scan the room in thought.

He picks up a Mad magazine from his coffee table and
desperately scans through it. He thumbs pass a few pages and
suddenly, his eyes widen. He reaches for a napkin and begins
drawing.

INT. CITY CARDIOLOGY - MORNING

Fran and Vanessa are behind the reception desk performing
clerical duties. A delivery man drops off a bouquet of
flowers and leaves.

FRAN

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

Fran reads the note attached to the flower vase.

FRAN (CONT'D)

Interesting! By the looks of this
card, you must of givin' him...

VANESSA

EXCUSE ME! And NO, nothing happened
for your information!

(beat)

I believe that this bimbo bitch is
playing around with his head. I
don't believe he's got a thing for
her...

FRAN

Which head?

VANESSA

Girl, you have some serious issues.

Fran giggles as Vanessa picks up a phone.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

We had some wine and some soft music. I thought he'd be all over me, but he just held me softly and kissed me. That's all.

FRAN

THAT'S IT? What's wrong with him?

Vanessa smells the flowers then internalizes.

VANESSA

He held me.

(beat)

I hope this pendejo knows what he's doing.

FRAN

Well, you told me that he's intelligent.

VANESSA

No, I told you that he says some intelligent things, that doesn't make him intelligent.

Vanessa reflects in thought.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Do you know that he stopped by my house when I wasn't home and installed a new phone line and phone for my mother? She was very happy. *Que hombre hace esa mierda?*

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Then I got Mommi's health issues, Papi's Alzheimer's, my student loan. I can't even save for a three family house that we need.

(beat)

Do you think it's me?

Vanessa wipes away a tear.

FRAN

Hey, it's not you, so don't even go there. By the sounds of this Rico character, he seems like a project. Maybe you should...

FRAN (CONT'D)

Look! Mrs. Valderamma and her dumb-ass son are here.

Vanessa abruptly hangs up the phone and gets professional.

VANESSA

Hello, Mrs. Valderamma! It's nice to see you. Oh, what a beautiful blouse you're wearing today.

MRS. VALDERAMMA

Yes, I came from my house.

Ted sticks his fat head over the counter.

TED

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

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

VANESSA

Mrs. Valderamma, it's time to come in. I'm going to take you into room two. We are going to check your pacemaker.

Vanessa pushes her towards a room. She purposely passes her son causing Mrs. Valderamma's cane to jab Ted in his private area.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Sorry, my fault.

Ted, and his High Times magazine, looks over Vanessa's shoulder with a look of worry.

INT. GARCOM/RICO'S CUBICLE - MORNING

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

Steve scrutinizes Rico from his office.

INT. CITY CARDIOLOGY - EXAM ROOM - MORNING

Vanessa changes a setting on the medical programmer while eyeing Mrs. Valderamma and Dr. Ferrari.

DR. FERRARI
We've made some minor changes. How
do you feel now Mrs. Valderamma?

MRS. VALDERAMMA
That's better. I feel much better,
thank you.

Mr. Ferrari pats Vanessa's rump. Vanessa looks up to the ceiling in disgust then purposely opens a cabinet door, smashing Dr. Ferrari's groin.

INT. GARCOM OFFICE - MORNING

BEGIN MONTAGE

-- In a GarCom conference room, Rico's napkin drawing of his idea is taped to an easel. He stands in front of a group explaining his idea.

-- Mike disconnects a computer and swiftly takes it.

-- Rico, inconspicuously, steals an office phone.

-- Stewart reviews plans.

-- Sally creates financial graphs at her desk.

-- Sluggo and Rico review a schematic in the back of a noisy bowling alley, and near a broken Spy Hunter video game.

-- Rico scoots a few union workers, with hard hats and tools, through GarCom's shipping bay.

-- Ralph and Steve watches nefariously from his office, Rico's team working.

END MONTAGE

INT. STEVE'S OFFICE - MORNING

Steve is behind his desk listening to a phone conversation.

RUSSIAN MAN
The packages are being loaded for
shipment as we speak. I'll contact
you once all parties are satisfied.

The man hangs up.

Steve hangs up his phone. Ralph pops his head into Steve's office.

RALPH
The presentation is about to start.

STEVE
Is everything set?

Ralph nods then quickly leaves Steve's office.

Steve opens a draw revealing a German Lugar and drugs. He reaches into the draw.

INT. GARCOM - MAIN CUBICLE AREA - MORNING

Sally, Mike, and Stewart, worried, congregate near a cubical. Mike plays with his handheld video game.

SALLY
Where's Rico? The meeting is about to start. I hope he's not on a stupid service call in the Bronx.
(beat)
Check out who arrived.

The group observe a team of business executives slowly enter the conference room.

RICO
Who's calling my service calls stupid?

SALLY
Oh, Rico, thank God you've arr--

--Sally is galvanized by Rico's rich business suit and newly stylish appearance. She hands him a folder.

RICO
Mike, is everything set with you and Sluggo?

MIKE
Wait... Wait... YES. We are good.

RICO
Stu, are we good?

Stewart gives a thumbs up. Rico extends his hand out. The others place a hand onto Rico's hand.

RICO (CONT'D)
Listen, I'm not a big talker. All I know is that we all worked hard on this project. I'm glad that I'm part of this team. I won't let you down.

(MORE)

RICO (CONT'D)
 (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, confident, makes his way to an available seat. Sitting regally at one end of the table and with his is AutoTech team is CEO, JEFFERY DICKINSON. He's plump, tan, 60's, cowboy hat.

STEVE
 Where is Caputo?
 (beat)
 Oh, that's right, he received a
 boo-boo and perhaps having some
 legal issues with corporate.
 Typical criminal. Oh, before I
 forget, here..

Steve hands Rico his rubber ball.

STEVE (CONT'D)
 Since you don't have any, here's
 your good luck ball.

RICO'S FLASHBACK:

While Steve laughs and executives converse, Rico recalls Alarmas employees drinking alcohol, devouring Chinese food, and counting cash like animals devouring their prey...

END FLASHBACK.

Steve begins the marketing presentation by signaling for the projector to be started.

EXT. ALARMAS FRONT - MORNING

Army truck pulls in front of Alarmas. Louie Lump and a few Alarmas employees stand waiting. Artie The Snake jumps out of the truck eating a White Castle hamburger.

ARTIE
 Louie, Rico was right on.

Artie gives Louie Lump five.

ARTIE (CONT'D)
 We arrived at the place just like
 Rico told us.

ARTIE (CONT'D)
 That shit was off the hook. Those
 guys saw we weren't playing and
 drop their guns faster than Hearn's
 dropping Duran.

Series of shots showing ARMY MEN rustling up a few gun
 traffickers' and securing the gun crates. Artie opens the
 truck's rear curtain.

ARTIE (CONT'D)
 Tadaa!

Sitting alongside a few armed Army Men, and on top of several
 crates, are bound and beaten gun traffickers.

ARTIE (CONT'D)
 Once we unload the merchandise,
 we'll bring them to the Army annex
 on 189th street. It's boxing and
 martial arts day. We can use them
 for practice.
 (beat)
 OK you faggots, unload this shit
 into the store.

INT. GARCOM CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

STEVE
 ... then the AutoTech logo follows.
 We have two Academy award actors on
 board jockeying for the voice over
 advertisement dialogue.

The conference room's lights are turned on.

STEVE (CONT'D)
 Gentleman, if you turn to page
 three in the presentation report
 you can see that our team's data
 shows projected revenue...

All eyes focus on Mr. Dickinson.

Mr. Dickinson repositions his large cigar to the other side
 of his mouth.

MR. DICKINSON
 I understand and respect GarCom's
 stellar reputation. This
 presentation is touching targeting
 human emotions during difficult
 times.
 (beat)
 Is there anything else you have?

Rico takes a deep breath then stands.

RICO
 (composed)
 Men, and women, my name is Russo,
 Rico Russo. I'm filling in for Mr.
 Caputo who unfortunate couldn't
 make it today.
 (beat)
 We all know the reason you're here.
 It's to regain control of your
 product market. Let's face it,
 last year you guys blew it with
 that ridiculous commercial.

Mumbling noises is heard as some executives become appalled.
 Kimberly Lee looks down in embarrassment.

STEVE
 I apologize for Mr. Russo's
 marketing insensitivity and
 inexperience.
 (beat)
 I assure you sir that GarCom's
 position is to align our Stella,
 global reputation with AutoTech's
 impeccable--

MR. DICKINSON
 --Sit down son.

Rico dejectedly sits.

MR. DICKINSON (CONT'D)
 Not you, Mr. Olson.

Steve uncomfortably sits back down.

MR. DICKINSON (CONT'D)
 Mr. Russo, I'm waiting.

The conference doors burst open. Stewart rolls in a large
 device covered with a black satin cloth.

STEVE
 What's going on here?

RICO
 Mr. Caputo was the lead for our
 concept design. Mr. Caputo felt
 that this device could fill a niche
 in the PC industry and add money, I
 mean, revenue using some of
 AutoTech's subsidiaries.

Stewart swiftly plugs the device into a wall.

RICO (CONT'D)
Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to
the Millennium, the AutoPOD 2000.

Rico removes the black cover while

All eyes are glued to the device that resembles a morphed
arcade, video gaming machine on steroids.

RICO (CONT'D)
Please excuse its crudeness. Due
to Mr. Caputo's sudden accident, we
didn't have time to make it look
pretty. But check this sh... out.
This machine not only has a
computer, but the capability to
generate electricity while working.

The crowd moves in closer for a better look.

RICO (CONT'D)
Mounted inside AutoTech's AutoPOD
is a GarCom or AutoTech computer.
This POD also contains the Merlin
phone system, coaxial cabling for
advanced data communications, and
all other necessary office
amenities...

The suits marvel at the devices' interior technology.

RICO (CONT'D)
Employees park their chair in front
of the AutoPOD. Workers push the
racing pedals creating an
electrical charge while working.
That charge is sent through a
standard 12-3 UL cable to a
standard 220 wall outlet. The
charge is sent to an inverter
receiver down in the utility room's
main panel. This receiver then
redirects the charge back to the
utility company collecting energy
credit from various energy
suppliers.

Rico smiles at Stewart.

RICO (CONT'D)
And if you have been paying
attention to local and national
news, you would know that there's a
shortage of electrical power on the
grid.

(MORE)

RICO (CONT'D)

Imagine a product which not only benefits the workers, but saves the environment, helps generate energy, and makes the company money.

Many executives share their enthusiasm.

RICO (CONT'D)

We wouldn't have to outsource our business to companies overseas. Stewart has all the data and logistics, is that the right word?... and cost manufacturing.

Stewart gives Rico a thumbs up.

AUTOTECH EXECUTIVE #2

We can create energy credits.

AUTOTECH EXECUTIVE #3

I recently read an article about human energy driven power generators. This could lead into large, grid energy storage.

AUTOTECH EXECUTIVE #2

This type of renewable energy can be big.

RICO

I don't know a lot about energy, but what I do know is that electricity is produced, not found like gas and oil. Prices of electricity are bound to increase. The AutoPod should improve the staff's overall health which should off set company salaries and health benefits.

Rico points to Mr. Dickinson to enter the POD.

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

VIDEO PLAYS:

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

VIDEO ENDS:

RICO

I noticed that the shipping bays where not adequately fitted with current surveillance cameras. We call them dead spots. I contacted the metropolitan's leading security company, Alarmas. They donated a some equipment. Mike helped with the setup, Sally investigative work, and Stewart help bring it all together with some interesting footage as you can see.

Everyone turns to Steve and Ralph. Rico looks at a wall clock.

RICO (CONT'D)

And as we speak, friends of my father are working alongside law enforcement assisting in the recovery of Mr. Olson's merchandise.

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

EXT. GARCOM FRONT ENTRANCE - MORNING

Geno and Carmine are standing around looking at surveillance photos.

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

GENO

There he is!

CARMINE

Get the fuck over here you rat bastard.

Carmine throws the rest of his food at Steve. Geno quickly grab hold of Steve.

STEVE

You have nothing on me. I know my rights. My lawyer--

--Carmine punches Steve in the stomach dropping him to his knees. Carmine stands over him wiping his mouth.

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

CARMINE
Give me that. Nice Luger.

Carmine hands it to Geno.

CARMINE (CONT'D)
I was all set to meet Daisy and get some action. I'm ready to conquer the world, but, no, I get a service call from my fathead brother.
(beat)
Nicky was right, you look like a weasel.

The men take Steve outside and thrust him into a car. Steve screams as the door catches his ankle.

CARMINE (CONT'D)
You better not get any blood on these seats.

GENO
Nicky says to drop him off at the 43rd precinct. Tape this note to this scumbag's body. Nicky will follow up, just don't leave any marks on him.

INT. GARCOM CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

RICO
So, what do you think?

MR. DICKINSON
Well, Mr. Russo, I was very moved by your presentation. You speak from the heart and I like that. I would like to learn more.

RICO
Thanks, Mr. D. for listening. My father once told me to give it to them straight.

Mr. Dickinson is suddenly surprised by Rico's city hug.

RICO (CONT'D)
I'd love to continue this, but I have some business with my father.

MR. DICKINSON
That's wonderful to see. City folk
still embracing family values.

INT. GARCOM LOBBY - MORNING

Vanessa sees Rico walking through the lobby and approaches.

VANESSA
Rico, I have wonderful news. You
would never believe what happened
this morning... Oh, before I tell
you, how did your presentation go?

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

Rico reflects in thought.

RICO (CONT'D)
It somehow feels like the movies
where the good guy spoils the crime
and gets the pretty girl at the
end.

Vanessa smiles, gives Rico a big hug, then the two exit the
building.

INT. GARCOM FRONT ENTRANCE - MORNING

Frank and Nicky Caputo slowly approach the front area. Nicky
walking with one crutch while Frank takes in the
surroundings.

FRANK
I got to handed to you Nicky. I
was pissed off for you leaving
Alarmas for this... After a while,
I sensed that you were happy with
your life. That's what I want for
Rico, to be happy.

MR. CAPUTO
It's hard for us to let go. We
don't want them to experience the
shit we went through.

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

RICO

Nicky, Dad! Cool. Dad, listen.
before you start bustin' my balls,
there...

FRANK

No. Stop and you listen. It looks
like I might have been wrong about
what is best for you. Nicky filled
me in on what happened. By you
taking care of those bastards, the
G. is very appreciative. Makes all
of us look good.

(beat)

You might have a future with this
Mickey Mouse Company after-all.

Frank and Nicky salute Rico with their Styrofoam cups.

RICO

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

FRANK

Thank your mother. She kept bustin'
my cogliones.

(beat)

By the way, do you have something
for me?

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

FRANK (CONT'D)

You must be Vanessa? Wow. I can
see why my son is suddenly
successful.

Rico yanks the box from Frank's hand, then softly hands the
velvet box to Vanessa. Vanessa opens the box and marvels at
the gift.

VANESSA

WOW! You scored some points today.

RICO

A little something for being so
wonderful and believing in me.

(beat)

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

Music plays - "Like gold" by Angie Rose

Rico nods at his father. Rico takes Vanessa's hand and the couple leave the building.

EXT. GARCOM FRONT ENTRANCE - MORNING

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

Rico and Vanessa smile at one another then happily proceed to the limo.

THE END