

Two Methods  
by  
Stryder Simms

Stryder Simms  
138 Cloudstone Dr.  
505-992-0849  
stryders@sprynet.com

EXT. DEPRESSED URBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Leo, a well built, sharp-dressed, handsome man, about 30 walks down the street. Indian turquoise and silver chunk up his knuckles and watchband. He looks around, reacquainting himself, stops, looks puzzled.

LEO

When the hell did this happen?

An AUTO BODY SHOP comes into view. Leo walks under the open garage door.

INT. AUTO BODY SHOP - DAY

Inside, BLAM, BLAM, somebody's beating out a dent. Brick walls, tool boxes, hoses, car pieces, a pin-up calendar and large clock.

FRICK approaches, a tall fellow in paint spattered coveralls, a decade older than Leo, throws a hammer down on an oil drum, wipes his hand on a rag from his back pocket.

Leo and Frick shake hands.

FRICK

Leo.

LEO

Frick. Seen Gritty?

FRICK

Not around here.

Leo picks up the hammer grips it like he's used it before.

LEO

It's good to see a familiar face.

FRICK

Jingles and I wanted to come see you, but...

LEO

Your lawyer probably advised...

FRICK

Rex didn't want it.

Leo throws the hammer down loudly on the workbench, but keeps a calm face.

LEO

Could have looked bad, I suppose.

Much felt, nothing spoken.

FRICK  
So, what kind of promotion did you  
get?

LEO  
I haven't seen him yet.

Frick pauses, incredulous. More things unspoken. Frick picks up his hammer, goes back to work. BLAM. BLAM...

FRICK  
He wouldn't like it that you came  
here first, Leo.

Leo starts for the door.

EXT. AUTO BEAUTY SHOP - DAY

Leo's out on the sidewalk, shouting over the din of Frick's hammer. He looks up at the sign: DION'S AUTO BEAUTY SHOP.

LEO  
So you just the manager now?

Frick hits a switch on the wall that brings the garage door down.

FRICK  
Things have changed, Leo.

Leo stands there wanting more. The garage door cuts him off.

EXT. UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Leo strides alone under a street light, turns and drops into the spiral ramp of an underground parking garage. It's four levels to the bottom. On each successive level, the cars parked progress to shabbier, more beat up junkers, and there is more and more trash and litter as we descend with Leo until he is kicking it in front of him.

He reaches ground zero in the filthy labyrinth. Leo knocks on a nondescript door. Nearby, four flashy motorcycles sit parked in a row.

The door opens, a body guard named ROLLIE let's Leo inside and down a short flight of stairs. Rollie is thick, jowly, fierce-looking, a Rottweiler.

Down a hall we are met by another guard named BUZZ. Buzz is tall, sweaty, gum-chewing, smoking, hyper-alert.

Buzz opens a door and follows them in. In contrast to the parking facility, the room is lux and large, an ultra-modern desk, leather furniture, big screen, wet bar, fine art.

Behind the desk a man, in his forties, sharp-dressed, good haircut, gold jewelry. REX FLAGG, with willful gaze, penetrating demeanor, lean, muscular physique. He's trimming his finger nail with an extremely large pair of scissors.

REX

Man of the hour, how was your vacation?

LEO

Exciting, educational...a tad long.

BUZZ

Fresh out the can.

REX

Who ask your opinion?

Buzz shrinks. Rex crosses to Leo, extends a hand, Leo shakes.

REX (CONT'D)

What's going to make it all worthwhile for you Lee?

LEO

My old job at the garage?

He walks away crosses to the bar.

REX

People would think I was... under-appreciative after what you done. Nope. You have to take the biggest piece of action you can handle now.

LEO

You heard what the yo-yo said, Rex. I'm fresh out of the can.

REX

Well, you can't stay fresh forever.

Rex pours Leo a glass of booze, then goes to his desk, opens a drawer, pulls out a vial of white powder.

REX (CONT'D)

How about a taste?

LEO

Don't tempt me.

REX  
Just testing. Good boy. How'd you  
like 10 G a month to start?

LEO  
Got to see Gritty. We're partners.

REX  
Do me a favor, ask Gritty what he  
told the narc's been nosing around.

LEO  
Gritty wouldn't give'm jack, I can  
tell you right now,

REX  
Find out. Don't say I asked.

LEO  
Let me breathe, would you?

REX  
Of course, take your time. Have a  
drink, get laid, but business is  
booming, Leo, I need you.

LEO  
So Dion's been telling me...

REX  
Seen her yet?

LEO  
I'm tired of her, she was my only  
visitor.

Rex goes into another drawer, pulls out a set of keys.

REX  
Let me show you something.

Rex tosses the keys to Buzz. Buzz opens a door we haven't  
been through yet. Down another flight of stairs, a short  
hall leads to a stylish apartment. Rex leads the way.

INT. CUSH UNDERGROUND APARTMENT

Bedroom, bathroom/workout room, kitchen, all well appointed,  
sleek furniture, sexy light, big screens, modern art.

LEO  
What goes on down here?

REX  
You can have it till you get on  
your feet. Sweet?

LEO  
No windows?

Rex slaps him on the shoulder.

REX  
You're used to that.

Out in the hall Leo spies a door that with a light over it.

LEO  
What's that?

INT. DRUG LAB - DAY

In a cone of lamp light, A GLASS MEASURING SPOON drops a DOSE OF WHITE POWDER into a TINY BLUE PACKET, expertly filled, sealed and set aside by A WOMAN'S HANDS.

A pair of large, STAINLESS STEEL BALL-BEARINGS are palmed deftly by the same hands. They belong to DION.

Dion is a full-figured female pushing 40 and currently bouncing to A BEAT COMING IN OVER A SOUND SYSTEM. Her other hand is scooping CHUNKS OF WHITE CHEMICAL into a BALL MILL with a STAINLESS STEEL MEASURING SCOOP.

We see the ball bearings go around and around in her palm before she drops them into the cylinder. She reaches for another hand-full of ball-bearings from a stainless sieve.

In the dim room we can make out SCALES, HOT PLATES, LAB GLASS. Once the cylinder is filled, she locks the lid down, places it on THE ROTATER.

Dion goes to a digital timer and sets it, 120 and counting down.

Finally, Dion pulls out a little tray with powder on it, uses a lab tool to cut out a line, bends her head to it.

A BUZZER SOUNDS. Dion stashes her outfit, wipes her nose, opens the door, throwing light on her operation. There are CHEMICALS IN JARS, BOTTLED GAS, A FRIDGE, VAULT, FIRE EXTINGUISHER.

In the doorway stands Leo with Rex and his bodyguards behind.

DION  
Hey, little brother, how does it  
feel?

Dion crosses to hug. Leo half-heartedly reciprocates.

LEO  
Hasn't quite sunk in yet.

With Dion hugging him, Leo checks out the lab, over her shoulder in wonder and amazement.

Rex looks at his watch, pulls something out of a cabinet.

REX  
Say, as long as you're going to see  
Gritty, drop this by. You'll save  
him a trip.

Rex hands Leo A ZIP-LOCK BAG OF DIME BAGS (small snow white packets by the dozens). But before it passes between them, Dion takes it from Rex, unzips it. THE TINY BLUE PACKET we saw her fill in the lab she drops in with the rest of the stash.

LEO  
Since when did he start this?

REX  
Put the cash he gives you in your  
pocket for walking around.

Dion zips the bag closed and hands it to Leo laughing.

DION  
This is such easy money, little  
brother, even Gritty is getting out  
of debt.

LEO  
You two trying to make my mind up  
for me?

Rex reaches in another pocket and pulls out a key, tosses it to Leo.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Fine custom motorcycle. Rex stomps down hard, kicking his beast to life.

Reverently, Leo approaches the bike whose keys he holds, mounts it, sits down, shoots a huge, liberated, just-got-out-of-prison smile. He finds his face in the chrome gas cap, giddy with this new toy. Dion doubles up with Leo, like brother and sister bandits re-bonded.

Buzz and Rollie turn their engines over.

Rex stares at Dion. One thumb over his shoulder indicates that she is to jump on back with Rex.

Dion sits tight, nudges Leo for backup.

LEO

Get off.

Leo hasn't spurred his pony yet and won't until she scoots.

Dion complies reluctant, rebellious, deliberately ducks Rex's probing eyes as the distance closes.

Rex scrutinizes Dion, particularly in the eyes. She's looking guilty.

DION

Stop doing that.

REX

Are you buzzed again?

DION

Me? You're on steroids.

Rex peels away abruptly. Dion can be seen holding on for life, her verbal obscenities lost beneath the din of sixteen pistons exploding like canons in that chasm beneath the city.

With bike leaning at precise tilt, Rex unscrews out of the abyss to street level followed by Buzz and Rollie.

Leo brings up the rear, spinning to the surface of a dense, polluted, metropolis.

Rex's bike hits the street and slices into traffic followed by his goons. Leo reaches daylight and stabs off in the opposite direction.

EXT. ST. CLAIR'S HOMELESS SHELTER - NIGHT

The scene is down-and-out, with DESTITUTE ADULTS and DISADVANTAGED KIDS milling about aimless and hungry. Leo curbs his bike.



AN ADOLESCENT BOY **Gilbert** looks up from reading a school book on the front doorstep of the shelter. Leo shouts at him as he cuts his engine.

LEO

Hey, go in there and tell a guy named Gritty that Leo's waiting.

Gilbert slips the book behind him when he makes out who's talking to him.

GILBERT

Yeah sure, I know Gritty. You remember me? I used to come clean up around the garage, before, um before you...

LEO

Go on, just do it.

He sighs, closes her book, goes inside. Leo gets off his bike, mills around, impatient.

Leo nods to A SPOOKY LOOKING BURNED-OUT COUPLE that are staring at him. A pale, mossy-toothed middle-aged guy DORMAT, is clinging to NOLA, an emaciated woman that once was beautiful. She holds a cigarette to DORMAT's lips, then she passes it to herself and then back it goes to him again, like oxygen.

DORMAT

Hey Leo? You're back.

LEO

Dormat, got yourself a girl?

NOLA

Whose this?

DORMAT

You don't remember Leo? He took the heat for Rex, Frick, and Jingles in that fence scam.

Leo spits and grinds it into the ground with his toe. Nola seems shocked that Dormat would blurt such a thing out

NOLA

You don't have to broadcast it. You gonna give me his shoe size next?

DORMAT

Too bad it was you instead of Rex  
Leo.

Leo turns away, shaking his head, shrugging.

Nola pulls DORMAT away. We see that DORMAT has a limp.

Gritty comes out the shelter door, an impoverished but friendly looking young man in a Mexican poncho, with an elfish black chin beard, soft, sad smile and mild case of tremors. When Leo shakes his hand, we see that Gritty wears an old, thin INDIAN SILVER BANGLE on his wrist.

Gilbert comes out with him.

GILBERT

Hey guys. Can I tag along?

LEO

What do you think?

GRITTY

Not now, Gil.

GILBERT

Come on. I won't bother you.

LEO

Go read your book.

GILBERT

I hate books. I want in on some  
action.

LEO

Listen to the kid talk like a punk.

Leo throws a lazy kick at Gilbert which he ducks.

GRITTY

I'll teach you another card trick  
later, if you do your homework.

GILBERT

Fuck you and your card tricks.

Gilbert flips them off, and fades back inside the shelter.

LEO

Little piss ant.

GRITTY

Nice machine.

Gritty approaches Leo's new ride, throws his leg over it.

LEO  
How come you're living here?

GRITTY  
Everybody here wants what I got.

LEO  
It's depressing as hell.

GRITTY  
Is it? Better'n beatin' bumpers.

Gritty looks in the rear view mirror of the bike, breaths on it, then polishes it with the edge of his poncho.

LEO  
I suppose if a dude stayed high all the time, he wouldn't notice.

GRITTY  
I'm saving money living here and getting out of debt fast.

LEO  
Rex makes it real easy doesn't he?

GRITTY  
Can't complain. So, what'd he offer you?

LEO  
Ten grand a month.

GRITTY  
Plus the bike? You're royalty now.

Leo looks around. All is quiet. Opens his jacket, flashes the stash Rex gave him for Gritty.

LEO  
Wants me to turn bags of white into bundles of green.

GRITTY  
It's easy enough, I can vouch.

LEO  
And live in his dungeon where he can keep an eye on me.

Gritty reaches for the parcel. Leo takes a step back. Gritty dismounts from Leo's bike like a kid after candy.

Reflexively, Leo looks around again.

LEO (CONT'D)  
How have the cops been?

GRITTY  
It's cool. Don't worry.

LEO  
Out of the spot light, at least.

The two men walk side by side in a familiar fashion around the corner and into a nearby alley while continuing their conversation.

GRITTY  
So, how's it feel, my man?

LEO  
Crazier than ever.

GRITTY  
Culture shock. You'll catch up. Now  
come on, gimme.

Leo hands over the drugs. Gritty scans the bag for the little blue packet, spots it. He fishes it out.

GRITTY (CONT'D)  
A little taste of pure in every  
shipment, see?

He holds up the blue packet.

GRITTY (CONT'D)  
Rex runs a class outfit.

He looks at the stuff Gritty's holding, shrugs.

LEO  
Yeah, I can see that.

Gritty pulls a roll of bills out of his pocket and hands it to Leo. Leo pockets it. Gritty returns his attention to the blue packet.

GRITTY  
Mind if I?

LEO  
So, no problems with the cops?

GRITTY  
Rex tell you to ask me?

LEO  
I told him you'd never spill.

GRITTY  
I want my old life back Leo.

LEO  
You didn't rat.

GRITTY  
Tell Rex I didn't, Leo. Rex trusts  
you.

Suddenly unsure, Leo grabs Gritty's poncho, twists it in his hands. Desperately, he looks Gritty in the eye. Gritty hangs limp as a mouse in a cat's paw, can't answer.

LEO  
I believe you.

He releases Gritty, smooths out his poncho, still looking unsure.

Gritty's still holding his dose of pure. He unfolds it as Leo watches, almost drooling.

GRITTY  
What's it like kicking?

LEO  
A million bees stings all day and  
night.

GRITTY  
Nevermind!

LEO  
Burning ashes in your throat.

GRITTY  
Don't tell me any more.

LEO  
A dog fight in your head.

GRITTY  
I'm planning on quitting, Lee,  
stop.

LEO  
Planning on quitting? Everybody's  
planning. Very few get past the  
plan.

GRITTY

No, really, Wanda's gonna help me.

LEO

Your sister? What do you hear from her?

GRITTY

No one thing, same as you, for five years, until last week, then boom she's back in the neighborhood. Old Mex is giving her work over at the bakery. Same old Wan, 'cept she does Voodoo now, tells fortunes.

LEO

She's was never going to come back here.

GRITTY

Guess she finally got over you.

LEO

Hurry up with that, I want to get my fortune told.

Gritty unfolds the tiny blue envelope, raises the powder to his nostrils.

We watch with Leo as Gritty goes from zero-to-speed-of-light in seven seconds. Gritty's eyes blare open as if thunderbolts shot out of them. He spasms, flops to the ground, grand mal.

Leo drops on one knee. Gritty's skull is bouncing off the street. Leo pulls his jacket off, stuffs it haphazard behind it. He yanks a bandana from his pocket to stuff between Gritty's chattering teeth. In that amount of time, Gritty's dead.

Leo beats Gritty's chest in panic.

As if on cue, Nola and Dormat emerge from the shadows. Like spooks from inky pools, they ooze toward the dead man. Leo stands up, backs away from Gritty, reflexive, trying to disassociate.

The burned-out couple looks suspicious at Leo. He shrugs.

LEO (CONT'D)

I don't know, I guess he...

DORMAT

Nova.

NOLA

No question.

In unison the spooks agree and, crouching down over the corpse, commence to loot it. Leo boots them, and makes them beat it.

LEO

I'll mangle you.

They retreat, cringing into darkness.

Leo stares into Gritty's flash-frozen gaze in disbelief. Gently takes his jacket out from behind Gritty's head, the bandana slides loosely through Gritty's teeth. Solemnly, Leo bends down, folds the dead man's arms across his chest, twists the SILVER BANGLE off Gritty's wrist.

EXT. REX'S NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Leo approaches Buzz and Rollie under a blaze of neon.

BUZZ

What's happening Leo?

ROLLIE

Yeah, what up?

POV LEO, we enter the club.

INT. REX'S NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

The bouncer, BOSCO, nods as Leo passes. He's a big, dark Trinidadian dressed in Tommy Bahama head to toe.

Leo spots Dion down the far-end of the super-longest, most crowded bar in town.

The place is jumping. Many people gathered, on multiple intoxicants. Pool tables, dj's, a pair of mirror balls rotate over sharp-dressers, grinding their teeth, compulsive laughing, talking too much.

Leo cuts through the center of it, ignoring all the Yo, Wassup, howyadoin' ballyhoo comes his way. Rushing past it, he can barely keep his cool.

He approaches his sister, mounts a vacant stool. Behind them slot machines wink at geeks jerking levers in rhythms only freaks on speed could sync to.

DION  
Little brother? What?

LEO  
Why did no one tell me?

He holds up Gritty's bracelet. She motions to JAKE THE BARTENDER.

DION  
Jake, what are you doing?

Jake shifts gears, scrambles over, sets Leo up a WHISKY, pronto, which Leo avoids.

LEO  
I didn't know I was going over there to nova Gritty.

DION  
If you needed to know, I'd have told you.

LEO  
Gritty was just a kid doing odd jobs when I brought him in.

A SNARKY, RAT-FACED MAN IN JC PENNEY SUIT, named **PASTY** interrupts handing Dion a CHIT with some figures on it.

DION  
How's it looking Pasty?

She checks out the figures, nods. Pasty reads Leo's expression and silently leaves. Leo grows impatient.

LEO  
Gritty didn't talk.

DION  
Your own opinion. Stash unless asked.

LEO  
No more executions for me. I'm going to tell Rex myself.

Leo launches himself off his stool.

DION  
Wait just a second, before you say any more.



He waits. Dion takes up her purse and starts digging through it, pulls out a messy wad of bills, hands them to Leo.

DION (CONT'D)

This should take some of the sting  
out of it.

Leo takes the money, reaches over and dumps it back in her purse.

DION (CONT'D)

Baby brother, you just helped me  
make my point. See, when you were  
painting cars for a living, you  
couldn't have afforded to do that.

LEO

I didn't owe anybody.

Dion hands Leo the drink that was set there for him.

DION

You got a big bad career, now, time  
to grow up.

Leo sets the drink down.

LEO

I need a clear head for this.

INT. BACK ROOM REX'S NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Leo enters, closely followed by Dion. From off screen a  
PERCUSSIVE RACKET bleeds in.

We see a pool table surrounded by ten or so shady cats. The  
squinch-faced Pasty presides over AN EXCHANGE OF CASH AND  
GOODS.

Green felt, under lamps on chains. The table supports men's  
elbows, STACKS OF CASH, BROWN PARCELS, AND A PAIR OF SOLITARY  
POOL BALLS.

Leo proceeds toward the harsh noise. Dion follows, hard on  
his heels.

Rex is playing AIR HOCKEY with Buzz. That's what the  
percussive racket was about. Rex scores.

BUZZ

Holy shit. How do you do that?

REX

I'm fucking good at this.

Leo walks into Rex's sight lines, tosses Gritty's bracelet on the air hokey table. It doesn't float like the puck. It just sits there.

Rex releases his AIR HOCKEY POKER, it glides over the jets. Buzz lets go of his at the same time, which sets off pandemonium between the POKERS and the PUCK. Gritty's bracelet gets knocked around by them.

Rex swaggers up to Leo, leans in for privacy.

REX (CONT'D)

You give him my present?

LEO

He loved it, wanted me to thank you.

REX

Bullshitter.

DION

Jokerman.

Dion shoves Leo to make him stop kidding.

LEO

Gritty nixed the cops, understand?  
Gave'em nil, nada.

REX

Maybe Leo, but I sometimes have to act on rumor, true or false.

LEO

Why?

DION

In case somebody believes it.

Res turns around, grabs one of the hockey pokers and sends Gritty's bracelet through the goal post.

Rollie fixes on Leo intensely, with menace, Leo mirrors it.

LEO

I thought I was just going over there to ask Gritty a couple questions.

REX  
Leo, look at this.

Rex stirs the table to illustrate. Haphazard pokers, and pucks, smack together and ricochet.

REX (CONT'D)  
What do you see?

Leo doesn't answer.

DION  
Somebody always loses, Leo. Be sure it's not you.

REX  
I asked Leo, not you.

Leo still doesn't answer.

DION  
He gets the idea. Chaos, right Leo? Chaos, on a cushion of air.

Rex slams the poker on the table then turns his attention on Dion.

REX  
Buzzed again?

He zooms in for a look. She slants away.

DION  
A few drinks, so what.

Dion holds up her current drink. Rex checks her eyes out, then takes the drink away from her and continues.

REX  
Maggots Leo.

LEO  
Who me? No, Rex.

REX  
Maggots like Gritty live wretched little lives dreaming of the big score. When it caves and they're down in that gutter looking up, who do you think they see?

DION  
A successful man, a great man.

REX

No, that big nose detective  
Hardshell.  
He's trying to con those maggots  
into believing they can be  
achievers by pointing me out.

LEO

Gritty was my friend, Rex.

REX

Your friend, really? A better  
friend than me?

DION

He's given you pretty much  
everything, right Leo? So shut up.

Dion goes over to Rex and tries to get her drink back.

DION (CONT'D)

And in all fairness Rex, it wasn't  
easy what Leo did for you today,  
either.

Rex downs what's left of Dion's drink and hands it to her.

REX

Sure. Sure. Pasty, a G for Leo.

LEO

Nah.

Rex takes a thick stack of twenties from one of Pasty's  
lackeys and hands it to Leo.

Leo refuses. Pasty hesitates before entering it in his  
notepad.

REX

Take it and quit crying.

Rex stands there like a money tree. Leo refuses to pluck.

DION

Stop being a punk.

REX

Never refuse money. You crazy?

Rex takes Leo by the wrist and puts it in his hand. Leo takes  
a few seconds to think about it, nods his head in agreement,  
folds it, pockets it.

Patsy enters the figure and goes back to the action at the pool table.

DION

You can't go sideways anymore Leo,  
only up or down.

LEO

Right.

Leo nods, brushes past Rollie and exits the room.

EXT. ST. CLAIR'S SHELTER - NIGHT

Back in the alley, Gritty lays there with eyes like a couple of blown fuses. A crowd of down and out looking folks has gathered. A YOUNG WOMAN with CHOPSTICKS holding her hair up, kneels, grieving over him.

24 year old, **Wanda** is weeping, a sexy waif, slight of build, wispy, birdlike, a tramp-goddess of the gutters.

Silently and with tears falling, Wanda holds a couple of cotton balls and a small, ornate tin of powder. She sprinkles some on Gritty's forehead, throat, wrists, boot soles.

Gilbert, the kid that fetched Gritty for Leo walks up. His frightened face comes into focus as he comprehends the identity of the heap in the poncho on the pavement.

He bursts into tears and runs away.

Frick is standing vigil as well, next to him a pale, middle-aged, Sad Sack named JINGLES. Jingle's stands nearest the body shaking his head.

JINGLES

I told him to keep his mouth shut.

Frick is standing next to him.

FRICK

I'd get on the next Greyhound out a  
here if I was you.

JINGLES

I aint got the means to just drag  
up.

FRICK

A man shouldn't live with a bad  
memory day after day.

JINGLES

Well, I have to, and I will.

A 40 year old homicide detective, DALE HARDSHELL walks up, wearing gold chains and high-end athletic sweats. He's large, good-looking, with the commanding presence of a proud Sioux Indian. You wouldn't mess with him.

HARDSHELL

You the boy's father?

JINGLES

Yes, I am.

HARDSHELL

Looks like an OD. Any suspicions?

JINGLES

No, none.

AN ANONYMOUS WOMAN comes out of the shelter. Walks up to Hardshell.

ANONYMOUS WOMAN

My boyfriend talked to the cops six months ago. He was poisoned.

JINGLES

Stay out of this.

ANONYMOUS WOMAN

I'm on you're side.

JINGLES

Shut up.

She backs away indignant. Jingles abruptly walks off followed by Frick. Wanda rises up over her brother's corpse.

WANDA

Why didn't you protect my brother?  
He gave you information.

Hardshell takes his time, looking Wanda over.

HARDSHELL

Honest answer? Costs too much.

WANDA

Parasite! You set him up!

HARDSHELL

I'm paid to clean up this 'hood.  
It's what I do. You aint from here  
are you?

WANDA

It's not a 'hood, rez rat,  
It's called West Capitol and yeah,  
I grew up here.

HARDSHELL

I don't know where you been, but  
its nothing like your old  
neighborhood.

OLD MEX

Unfortunately, he's right.

Next to Wanda, up walks **OLD MEX**.

OLD MEX (CONT'D)

There were jobs back then, strong  
family ties, opportunities for  
advancement.

He leans over Gritty's body.

OLD MEX (CONT'D)

As a child, this boy went to good  
schools, belonged to the Boy  
Scouts, and the YMCA but that all  
went down with the economy.

He's a small, dusty hombre, very old, with long white hair  
and beard, face like a moth, body like worn-out upholstery.  
On a sash over his shoulder, he totes a BASKET OF BREAD,  
almost bigger than himself.

He steps over to the crowd of onlookers offers his bread.  
They're all eagerly anticipating it.

Shelter people hoard around Old Mex. Hardshell takes one.  
Wanda slaps it out of his hand.

WANDA

Why not eat what you killed?

Hardshell chuckles.

OLD MEX

Shhh.

Old Mex picks up the roll, dusts it off and puts it back in  
Hardshell's hand. Wanda juts her chin at Gritty's corpse.

The ambulance arrives. Medics approach Hardshell with a clipboard. He signs it. Wanda raises her voice to get their attention.

WANDA

Just toss the meat in his trunk.

Medics shrug off her comment, open the back doors, wheel a gurney up to Gritty's body and prepare to load.

HARDSHELL

I don't know who taught you how to talk to cops, but I advise you to pass right on through Wes Cap and never look back.

WANDA

You talk like a hustler, dress like some NBA stud, when you look more like the ball. You act like my brother's murder is some sick entertainment and that's supposed to earn my respect?

HARDSHELL

Think twice, incase you need my help sometime.

WANDA

That's for sure. See how you help?

The ambulance crew loads Gritty's corpse. Hardshell hands his bread back to Old Mex and walks away.

OLD MEX

Poor Gritty. Now comes the hard work.

WANDA

Revenge?

OLD MEX

Forgiveness.

Wanda and Old Mex stand alone as the ambulance drives away.

EXT. DEPRESSED COMMERCIAL STRIP - DAY

A TEENAGE BOY bangs on a collection of INVERTED PLASTIC BUCKETS with DRUMSTICKS. Leo's shiny new bike is parked at a nearby curb. Leo, on the street corner, performs an elaborate handshake with a SHADY DUDE in BLACK LEATHER. A DISTINCTIVE DRUM ROLL can be heard, something that really grabs your attention.



Leo picks up on it, nods at the drummer. Leo and the SHADY DUDE shake hands again hastily, and part ways.

The bucket drummer locks in his tense groove. Leo sights down the street, then at his bike.

A late-model Ford rolls into the picture with the window coming down.

It flashes across Leo's chrome like the news feed in Times Square.

Determining that he could never reach his bike in time for a get away, Leo tenses his body for a foot chase. As the detective's car slowly rolls up, the tinted window lowers, revealing Hardshell's owlsh eyes as they meet his.

HARDSHELL

Want to talk about Gritty?

LEO

Have to catch me first fat man.

Hardshell rolls up his window and drives away. The drummer relaxes his patter.

Leo and the drummer share a laugh as Leo throws a combination of punches in Hardshell's direction then struts down the street, shrugging off the adrenaline.

INT. GYPSY TEA ROOM -DAY

Hardshell, in the same unmarked cruiser that just passed Leo, passes by the glass-fronted tea room. Wanda's face is darkly silhouetted in the window.

At a small table, alone, Wanda spreads out tarot cards on a silk scarf.

She lays down "The Fool" card.

The two burn-outs we saw outside the shelter with Leo are in the booth behind her, sweating, fidgeting and impatiently dipping tea bags in and out of their cups.

NOLA

Where have I seen her?

DORMAT

Last night. That's Gritty's sister.

Wanda reacts by turning around to let them know she can hear them, then draws another card, "Tower".

Dormat's so shaky he spills thimble of cream, grabs some napkins, lamely wipes at the puddle. Nola sinks in her seat propping her head in her hands.

NOLA  
My memory's fried.

DORMAT  
You really should kick the habit.

NOLA  
(to Dormat then Wanda)  
Right.  
Sorry about your brother.

DORMAT  
Yeah. Gritty was golden. I wish somebody would do something.

WANDA  
I plan to.

She gets up and begins to collect her things. As she gathers up her cards, tears begin to spill.

CAMERA PICKS UP ACTION OUTSIDE THE WINDOW.

Leo strides in to view and stops across the street. He glances in the window and spots Wanda. He brightens at the sight, as if by sudden light.

EXT. DEPRESSED COMMERCIAL STRIP -CONTINUOUS

POV Leo, across the street, looking in tea room window at Wanda. Leo talks to himself.

LEO  
(like a train pulling out  
of the station)  
Wanda, wanda, wanda, wanda, wanda,  
wanda, wanda, wanda, wanda...

POV Wanda with Leo's voice over. She catches sight of Leo. He's looking straight at her through the glass. His lips are moving. The entire form and object of Leo's attention is focused on her.

She withers. Leo emits a lusty, languorous whistle.

EXT. CLOSER ON TEA ROOM WINDOW -CONTINUOUS

POV Leo, Wanda squints, creature-like, draws a bead, attempts to recognize Leo, can't seem to at first, then does, with a look of shock.

INT. TEA ROOM -CONTINUOUS

POV Wanda. By now, Leo's whistle has made other pedestrians around him in the street curious. One of them stops too momentarily focus through the glass at Wanda.

With Leo's rapt attention weighing heavy, Wanda crams the cards into her bag. She grabs a bundle on the cushion next to her and high-tails out of there, past Nola and Dormat.

Dormat's eyes are on Wanda as she exits. Nola's are on Leo out the window.

DORMAT

What got into her all of a sudden?

NOLA

You're not too sharp yourself.  
Maybe you should get off the stuff.

DORMAT

How about we go score some instead.  
I got twenty.

NOLA

You do? What were you waiting for?

DORMAT

I though you wanted a cup of tea.

NOLA

Cause I'm out of speed stupid.

They scramble out of the booth tipping over a mug and knocking a spoon on the floor in the process.

Tea is dripping, spent tea bags are strewn about, saturated napkins drink in a puddle of cream, a comically out of proportion mess for two cups of tea.

EXT. DEPRESSED COMMERCIAL STRIP - CONTINUOUS

Wanda scurries out of the tea room opposite Leo's direction.

Leo tracks from across the street, leaving some distance.

Wanda stops at a table-top sunglass vendor. Leo stops, pretends to look in a window.

Wanda looks over her shoulder, then puts on a random pair of shades, leaves a bill in the vender's hand and walks on spouting tears.

Leo adjusts his pace. Wanda makes it a race. Other pedestrians get between them. He can't see the suffering on her face.

A few paces later, we see now some sketchy character, whom we've not been introduced to before, is coming up fast behind Leo without his knowledge.

Now we hear the distinctive drum beat of the plastic bucket drummer. For the time being, he is preoccupied with keeping his eye on Wanda.

SCATTER

Yo, Leo, what you got for me?

Leo startled, stops and turns.

It's **Scatterbrain** on his SKATEBOARD. Skating's his religion. Scatter scissors to capture speed, deft, rigid limbs, in wrist rack and braced knee. He cups a folded bill inside his hand for Leo to see.

Leo pulls a dime bag out of his secret pocket, just as a FOCUSED BEAM OF RED LIGHT blinks into his eye. He snaps his head, tracing it in.

Across the street, AN OLD GUY WITH RED-TIPPED CANE sits at a bus stop with a blinking LASER WAND.

**Blind Billy** winks over the tops of his shades at Leo while flashing red alert. Leo, tightens, feels the heat, scans ahead, then behind.

INT. HARDSHELL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

His POV shows us just how close he's come. Scatterbrain glides past Leo. Their hands almost meet. Leo stabs his hand back in his shirt.

EXT. DEPRESSED COMMERCIAL STRIP

Scatterbrain skates away.

LEO

Scatter, come back when you can stay awhile.

Scatter catches his drift and skates past.

SCATTER

Who is that motherfucker?

Hardshell's car passes again with his window down. From inside the window, he's staring Leo down.

LEO

Uh-oh, I think I'm about to lose my  
freshness.

SCATTER

I'm gone.

Leo says it while he sets foot for a run. But Hardshell slowly rolls past again.

Leo shakes off being harassed, scans for any other signs of heat.

Up the street he seeks assurance from the bucket drummer who smiles back with sticks twirling in his hands. Then he grins across the way at Billy who ducks and nods signifying coast is clear.

In a flash, Leo's back on Wanda's trail. Having almost lost the scent, he snags a peek just as she ducks inside a liquor store.

INT. JINGLE'S LIQUOR STORE - DAY

Typical slum liquor store with clerk in armored cage, taking payment and making change through a sliding two-way drawer.

Outside the cage, walk-ins shop for drinks, snacks and non-prescription potions milling among racks and shelves in rows on a worn out checkered floor.

A big slow guy's just paid for his bottle and is leaving. There's a weary looking wino in the main aisle reaching for his evening nip of Ripple.

In the cage sits Jingles minding the business of the moment while mesmerized by a ball game on a tiny TV screen.

One detail worth noting sets off this scene. There is a BEAUTIFUL SNAKE in a LIDDED GLASS TANK sitting to the left of Jingles on the counter where transactions happen.

In hussles Wanda and pounds on the cage door until Jingles lets her in. Deftly and with purpose she un-lids the tank and pulls out the snake.

JINGLE

What's wrong Wanda?

Jingles reaches under the counter for his .38.

The snake coils round her arm and rests its head on the back of her hand, slipping its tongue in and out.

She steps out of the cage positions herself at the entrance of the shop and sets her stance with the snake's head aimed at the street.

The wino has his bottle now. He hugs it distractedly in the back of the store with his eyes fixed on Wanda's snake.

Leo bounds in. Wanda leans toward him. He and the snake almost touch, nose-to-nose. Leo backs out as fast as he can.

JINGLES

Leo! Come in here, let's look at you. Wanda, put that away.

Jingles stows his piece. Leo steps back in, cautious.

LEO

What's this?

Wanda leans back then forward, studying Leo's reaction, dipping her head and chanting, under her breath, some devilish divination.

JINGLES

She put a charm on my business to ward off robbers. It's working so far.

Wanda stays fixated on Leo. He can't take her eyes off her either. She breaks her chant to shout at Leo.

WANDA

You're a punk. I don't want to see you. You won't ever grow up.

Despite her antics, Leo's turned on. He tries to close in. Wanda holds him off with the snake.

LEO

You're all grown up now, aren't you?

WANDA

You saw to that before I left.

With a free hand, Wanda dabs at a tear underneath her dark glasses.

LEO

What's that thing you got there?

WANDA

Ma Shiny.

LEO

What?

JINGLES

It's a witching snake. She don't bite.

WANDA

Why are you here?

LEO

Came to say I'm sorry about Gritty.

JINGLES

You and us both.

WANDA

Fine. You said it. Now go.

JINGLES

Wanda, now stop. Leo took some heavy heat for me.

WANDA

This punk works for Rex, Pop.

LEO

How do you know?

WANDA

Cards.

JINGLES

No name dropping in here Wanda, I'm in a precarious position.

Jingles looks out the door to see if anybody's spying, then around the shop. It's only the three of them and the wino, who huddles, frozen in space, watching the snake.

WANDA

Don't worry Pop. Me and Ma Shiney will get even with Rex, huh Ma?

LEO

What are you scheming up?

WANDA

Think I'd tell you?

LEO

I'm as mad as you are about Gritty.

JINGLES

Keep your head down Leo, you've  
been through enough.

Wanda holds Ma Shiney in front of her.

WANDA

A curse on his killer.

Wanda brings the snake closer to him. He shies from it.

LEO

I got to go.

JINGLES

Grab you something to drink, first  
Leo. It's on me.

Jingles comes out of the cage snags a fifth of Crown Royal.  
He encounters the wino and speaks to him.

JINGLES (CONT'D)

Be right with you.

Jingles puts the whiskey in Leo's hand. Leo's exclusively  
tuned to Wanda.

LEO

You be around later?

No answer. Jingles nudges Wanda toward the cage door.

JINGLES

Wanda, put the snake away. You're  
scaring the customers.

Wanda puts the snake back in its tank, returns and studies  
Leo but doesn't answer.

Leo nods "yes", for her, as he backs out onto the sidewalk.

LEO

You can read your cards for me?

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - CONTINUOUS

With Leo, we're looking in at Wanda framed just inside the  
doorway of the store. She answers with a smirk.

WANDA

They say you're a fool.

The weary wino interrupts them, brushing past Wanda and out  
the door, twisting tight the brown bag around his bottle.



Outside, he nods at Leo, desperately unscrews it and tips it on the run.

Leo looks up from him to Wanda but she's gone.

He fishes in the blue sack that jingles gave him, uncorks it, takes a big swig of Crown Royal and sets off down the street.

INT. BAKERY - NIGHT

Through the open door of a red hot industrial oven we see pale, white dough being fed in on large baking sheets.

Old Mex closes the oven door. He turns away from it looking beat, stuffs an oven-mitt under each armpit, slips his hands free, then plucks them and hangs them on a nail in one smooth, familiar motion.

The walls are faded but clean with a window in one of them, open wide onto a brick alley, and a door in each of the others. The room's just large enough for a mixer, wide work surface, cooling racks, and a small three-legged stool.

Old Mex slowly lowers his body onto the stool.

In walks Hardshell with a nod. He's dressed conventionally this time. Old Mex leans against the wall, nods back.

HARDSHELL

I've always wanted to ask you? How can you give so much bread away for free? Who pays for this?

Old Mex reflects before he answers.

OLD MEX

Before the economy crashed, the register up front rang all day long, year after year. I could have retired easy, but I liked my customers too much. They helped me. Now I help them.

HARDSHELL

There's still an elder or two like you back on the res. I hardly noticed them until they started dying. I miss them.

Old Mex struggles to his feet, pulls a rag out of his pocket, wipes his brow with it.

OLD MEX

You'll take their place someday.

HARDSHELL

I doubt that.

OLD MEX

Somebody has to.

HARDSHELL

True, or we're all in trouble.

Old Mex shuffles over and peeks in the glass window of his oven, then he points at a door.

OLD MEX

If you're looking for Gritty's sister, she's in there.

HARDSHELL

How old are you, if you don't mind?

He shuffles over to the door and gives a soft knock. Then watches for Hardshell's reaction.

OLD MEX

I turn one-hundred, next Friday.

HARDSHELL

No way!

Old Mex looks satisfied.

The door swings open with Wanda sitting on a cot. Candles burn beneath a deity on a shelf overhead. A bare bulb hangs from the ceiling. Behind her, sacks of flour, no window.

When she sees Hardshell, Wanda gets up closes the door until just her head will fit in the gap. Old Mex fishes in his breast pocket, pulls out a cigar. Heads for the back door.

OLD MEX

I'll be out back stargazing.

Wanda's peeved. She juts her chin at Hardshell.

WANDA

Where's your clown suit?

HARDSHELL

The truth is, I didn't realize Gritty was being watched so close, but that wasn't easy to admit out there, so I pretended I didn't care.

WANDA

Gritty was a good kid.

HARDSHELL

That's why I gave him a chance to help instead of locking him up.

WANDA

He was turning his life around.

HARDSHELL

I'll put his murderer in prison.

WANDA

Promise?

HARDSHELL

I need someone close to Rex, not a grunt, one of his chieftains to testify. Got any ideas?

Wanda turns away, goes over to the little altar and stares at the candles. The door swings open slowly on it's hinges. On the cot where she was sitting, there's a card overturned on top of her tarot deck. "Judgement."

EXT. MEAN STREETS - NIGHT

BEGIN MONTAGE:

Leo shows his chops as an experienced pusher. Various fly-by-nights approach on bikes, motor bikes, skate-bikes, scooters, all the quick getaway modes. He services them with aplomb.

MONEY IS PASSED to Leo in the FIRST HANDSHAKE, followed by small talk. Leo then passes little BUNDLES of DRUGS to his customer in the LAST HANDSHAKE.

CUT this RITUAL to MUSIC, with FIVE OR SIX ASSORTED CUSTOMERS, until we witnesses the opening handshake, pitter-patter, and closing handshake completely through once, but feel, in a very short time, like we've been standing there with Leo the whole evening.

Scatterbrains's voice brings us in to real time.

SCATTERBRAIN

(VO)

Ok you goddamned evil resident, what you got?

END MONTAGE:

LEO  
Yo, Scat, wass happening?

Leo removes his hand from his pocket, does the handshake.  
The loopy rebel skatesman doesn't even dismount.

CUT TO:

EXT. ACROSS THE STREET AND DOWN THE BLOCK -CONTINUOUS

Old Mex, is giving out his bread to the many down-and-outs.  
His age makes it hard for him. He stops, leans against a  
building, out of the stream traffic, where he privately  
observes Leo from across the street.

Wanda walks up to Old Mex. She holds a bundle out to him,  
pays no attention to what Old Mex was watching.

WANDA  
Gritty's poncho for you.

Old Mex puts down his basket. Unburdens himself of the  
sandwich board. Takes out a hanky and wipes his brow.

Old Mex raises the poncho over his head, smooths it down over  
his front, nods appreciatively.

REVERT TO:

EXT. MEAN STREETS -CONTINUOUS

SCATTER  
What do you think happened to  
Gritty?

They shake hands, the drugs pass.

LEO  
The same thing going to happen to  
you someday Scat. You'll get bored  
with the same old buzz, lean in a  
bit close, and wham!

Claps his hands so loud Scatter has to jump.

SCATTER  
Heartless bastard.

LEO  
Why feel sorry for Gritty? He's  
through with all this deep-shit-and-  
turmoil. We're still stuck in it.

SCATTER

That how you'd feel about someone  
slipping you a nova?

Leo pats Scatterbrain on the back in a friendly manner.

LEO

Go ahead Scat, toot up. You'll  
feel better. I'll keep a' eye.

Scatter checks both ways, unfolds, poises powder and snorts.  
Instantly, the twitch and rush comes over him. Doubled-fist  
of that dancer-on-wheels raps Leo squarely on the biceps.

Leo's not the least uptight. Sneaks a peak up the street,  
periscope-up for heat, catches sight of Wanda who offers Old  
Mex's a seat at a bus stop bench, she thumbs a lighter and  
bums a smoke.

EXT. MEAN STREETS -CONTINUOUS

Just up at the corner, Wanda and Old Mex loiter.

WANDA

I want to thank you for how much  
you helped my brother in your  
bakery.

OLD MEX

I gave him the ow you must take his  
place.

WANDA

By myself.

Now Wanda's eye catches sight of Leo. Her attention becomes  
divided the same way Leo's is with her and Scatterbrain. Old  
Mex comprehends all of it and seems amused

OLD MEX

You would need help.

Wanda turns to Old Mex, having forgotten all but Leo. Old  
Mex nods at Leo across the street.

OLD MEX (CONT'D)

Help him, first.

Wanda glances across the street again.

EXT. ACROSS THE STREET - CONTINUOUS

POV Leo, Wanda's talking to Old Mex but looking at Leo.

WANDA

He was my first you know.

Leo observes but can't hear. They're too far apart. Her words are addressed to Old Mex, but they seem to say something to Leo as well.

Wanda takes out a small, violet-glass vial, pulls the stopper, applies oil to her wrists and neck, puts the vial back in her bag, starts walking toward Leo.

REVERT TO:

EXT. ACROSS THE STREET -CONTINUOUS

Scatterbrain has become pure adrenaline. Slipping the spent speed wrapper off his fingertips, he executes an expert, martial arts-like, figure eight, ultra-tight.

SCATTER

Whoee! Fine shit! Fine, fine, fine,  
fine shit.

Leo remains glued to Wanda, distracted.

Scatter fidgets onboard.

SCATTER (CONT'D)

Call it a day, Leo. We'll find  
some fine, fine, fine, fine chicks.

LEO

Rain check.

Scatterbrain sees Wanda coming.

SCATTER

Later dog.

Scatterbrain hauls balls over curb and gutter. For a short spell we watch that stringy little scissor demon, freshly-sharpened, slitting inches off the ground.

EXT. ACROSS THE STREET - CONTINUOUS

In Gritty's poncho, Old Mex dons sandwich board, hoisting burden of bread on hip.

Leo wets his lips, points Wanda's direction, like a compass with an erection.

Wanda's cheeks blush. Music fills the swelling scene. Leo watches Wanda, on lovely legs, closing up the space between.

WAIT A MINUTE, whose POV is this? We see it, with BUZZ, of all jockeys. He's got his CELL PHONE up reporting who's where and with and blowing trains of smoke.

BUZZ

Dion's brother... Gritty's sis...

Wanda expels the cigarette from her lips. Her arms swing free at an excessive clip.

She gets to Leo, stops, hesitates to speak.

Leo takes his time, again. His eyes glow soft and sweet. Wanda puts on her hippest face, shifting on her feet.

WANDA

Got a bump?

Leo, fist in pocket, searches with blatant, phony smirk of woe.

WANDA (CONT'D)

Don't fuckwit me.

LEO

You're still using?

She attempts to ease a fifty on him but he won't shake. He checks his coordinates to duck the law then weasel's out a mini-weight of instant bliss.

LEO (CONT'D)

By all means, a taste, on me.

Wanda palms the bill. Leo pushes back with the packet.

Closes Wanda's fist over all, as if a flower or a ring. Wanda pulls away slow, holding her fifty and the little, folded-paper thing.

Now, that fox, Hardshell emerges having seen all he needs to see. It's a set up, Leo stares at Wanda, betrayed, instead of turning tail to flee.

WANDA

I did it for Gritty. Testify against Rex and you'll go free.

LEO

I aint a punk. You'll see.

Hardshell reaches out, Wanda hands him the money and drugs and backs off watching, all the while conflicted, while ten cops spring on Leo, monkeys in his tree, frisking him. They've got one of his boots off.

Someone hands Hardshell a roll of bills.

HARDSHELL  
Doing brisk business.

LEO  
Get off me.

Leo struggles with his captors. Hardshell waves off the uniforms.

HARDSHELL  
(to fellow law enforcers)  
Leave us alone a minute, please.

Cops reluctantly release Leo then back out of earshot. Hardshell gives Leo his roll of cash back.

HARDSHELL (CONT'D)  
Young girl at St. Clair's shelter  
said she saw you with Gritty just  
before he died.

LEO  
You set him up

Leo's talking loud so Wanda will hear.

Hardshell smiles, offers Leo a cigarette. Leo makes a show of taking it and breaking it in two, crushing into powder and sprinkling it on the breeze. Hardshell leans in to say something. We lean in with him.

HARDSHELL  
Listen, help me put your boss away,  
please.

LEO  
Listen, put your nose back up some  
politician's ass where it belongs,  
please!

Leo starts to leave. Cops swarm him.

Hardshell turns around.

HARDSHELL  
Give the punk a ride.



INT. COP SHOP - NIGHT

Disgusted, Dion stands at the threshold as Leo comes out of detention.

They walk out of the station in anger-chained silence.

INT. NIGHTCLUB, REX'S DEN - NIGHT

Rex springs at Leo, backhands him. Behind Rex hunches Rollie ready with brass knuckles.

REX

When I say never talk to cops.  
That means not ever. Now what am I  
going to do?

He paces in front of Leo, making Leo self-conscious.

DION

Rex gave you the best spot on the  
strip, Leo. No one has ever been  
hung up by a cop there, never.

REX

Who you talking too that you can't  
hear drums, huh? What you looking  
at you can't see lasers?

LEO

Rex, hey, they found nothing, I had  
just sold my last to...

REX

Gritty's sister? What did you  
expect?

DION

She's still in love with him.

LEO

What gives you that idea?

REX

Bring her to me, let me talk to  
her, then and only then do I  
believe you.

LEO

I can't tell her what to do.

REX

Then ask her nicely, whatever you got to do. Meanwhile, never talk to cops. Hear me?

DION

That's the last time.

REX

You're back on the drop, Lee.

LEO

The drop? Give me a break.

Rex smacks Leo with another backhand to the cheek.

Leo, stunned, rubs the sore spot.

DION

You're lucky Rollie isn't pounding your head.

Rollie approaches Leo with brutish sneer and those fancy jawbreakers.

Rex flexes a toothpick through his teeth.

REX

It was the same problem with Gritty. Too long a leash.

DION

You're back on the leash, Leo.

LEO

Oh, alright, what do you want?

REX

Look in on Gritty's memorial, then come tell me what was said.

Leo bows his head, slave among masters.

With a flick of his head, Rex calls Rollie off. Rollie backs away.

Dion walks over to Leo, pets him on the head.

DION

Doggy, get used to it.

EXT. UP ON THE ROOF - DAY

Despite Dion and Rex's orders, Leo is on the roof with Wanda.

LEO  
I'll probably go right back to  
prison thanks to you.

WANDA  
Remember when Gritty dropped the  
cherry bomb on the police car.

LEO  
He had to, to join the Bad Boys.

WANDA  
Consider it my brother's revenge.

Leo snatches the chopsticks from her hair and continues while she puts up a feisty little fuss trying to get them back. Leo fends it off neatly, finally poking the sticks into his own hairdo like devil's horns.

LEO  
You and me smooched, over there,  
with a quart of beer.

WANDA  
Huh, you felt up half the eighth  
grade up here.

LEO  
What are you?

WANDA  
Expose my brother's killer.

LEO  
Do you think Gritty spilled?

A low jet streaks overhead. They have to pause for it.

WANDA  
He did it so you could get out from  
underneath Rex, both of you.

Leo grabs Wanda's hand, desperately, similar to the way he took Gritty, by the poncho, in his clutches, with the same question. He considers Wanda's words, takes a moment to rue over them.

LEO  
God damn, then, in a way he  
deserved it.

Wanda yanks her hand away.

WANDA  
He was loyal to you.

LEO  
He should have talked to me first.

EXT. MEAN STREETS, STREET LEVEL - DAY

Leo and Wanda are back on the sidewalk where they began.

LEO  
By the way, better go see Rex  
before he comes looking for you.

WANDA  
You can't order me around the way  
your sister orders you.

Wanda pulls out a hand-calligraphied business card, hands it to Leo. Right away Leo latches on to a scent perfuming the card. He brings it to his nose.

WANDA (CONT'D)  
Tell him to come to me. I'll read  
his fortune.

LEO  
I can ask him, but...

WANDA  
Tell him it'll cost him fifty.

LEO  
Nobody tells Rex.

WANDA  
It'll turn him on, watch.

Leo sniffs the card one more time, puts it in his back pocket. They stand, just back from each other, anxious with temptation and complexity.

WANDA (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry if you have to do time on  
account of me.

LEO  
That's alright. I don't know which  
side is safer.

WANDA  
That must be the definition of a  
punk, you know, Leo?

LEO

What are you talking about?

WANDA

Someone always looking to be on the safe side.

LEO

Why you have to be so mean to me baby? I'd die for you, you know that.

WANDA

Oh, you're full of shit.

EXT. - ST. CLAIR'S HOMELESS SHELTER - NIGHT

There is a crowd of about fifty people gathered on the front steps and spilling out over sidewalk and street.

Wanda stands in front. Frick and Jingles gravitate to the front. Nola and Dormat cling to an edge. The little girl that fetched Gritty for Leo is there. Even Scatterbrain, the skater's present. Leo stands back, observing, listening.

All are holding lit candles, most singing, last lines of a soulful tune.

CROWD IN UNISON

*Long as I can see the light. Long  
as I can see the light.*

Wanda shelters her candle with her hand, looks over heads at Leo, imploring. Leo glances away.

Old Mex is interested.

OLD MEX

Anyone else have anything?

Old Mex moves among the mourners, handing out bread loaves as he goes. These loaves are different than before. Each one now is a small, ringshaped braid, handcrafted. He places one over each candle.

With pride, Old Mex thumps a loaf with his thumb and hands it out. Scatterbrain takes one and bites it.

Dormat nudges his way to the front, addresses the crowd.

DORMAT

Uh, excuse me.  
(no response)

Dormat has to get bigger than usual to be heard.

DORMAT (CONT'D)  
Listen up!

The crowd gets rambunctious.

CROWD COMMENTS  
Sit down. Nobody asked you.  
Somebody smack him.

He's uncomfortable. There is a certain bravery in the way he goes ahead.

DORMAT  
Go ahead, make fun of me.

SCATTERBRAIN  
You're an idiot.

Crowd laughter.

DORMAT  
I'm only saying what's already on everybody's mind.

SCATTERBRAIN  
Cause you lost yours.

More laughter from the crowd. Dormat searches out Wanda for support.

WANDA  
Go on.

SCATTERBRAIN  
No, don't torture us.

Again, laughter. Dormat doesn't wait for the laughter to stop. He's dead serious.

DORMAT  
Gritty didn't die by accident.

Laughter dies. Silence. Leo and Dormat lock gazes. Leo tenses.

DORMAT (CONT'D)  
I'm saying, if somebody don't do something, this time, where does it all end?

Leo looks desperate. There's mumbling in the crowd.

FRICK

That's what put Gritty where he is.

DORMAT

I'll take a chance if you will.

Dormat is looking at Leo. Crowd mumbling intensifies. Leo doesn't take kindly to Dormat's challenge and indicates with a sneer.

JINGLES

I appreciate it, but for Pete's sake, don't nobody go start something they can't finish.

Now, Wanda gives Leo a searching look.

WANDA

You were his best friend.

Leo silently pleads for understanding from Wanda.

FRICK

What? Forget it. I'd stick my own neck out before I'd let Leo do it.

JINGLES

Leave him in peace.

The crowd starts shouting down Dormat. Dormat drills his gaze into Leo's.

DORMAT

He knows why I'm picking on him.

Leo stands up.

LEO

Sit down, stand up, twirl around, do whatever, but it aint going to bring Gritty back.

JINGLES

'At's a goddam fact.

The jeering at Dormat intensifies. Dormat's attention stays glued to Leo.

DORMAT

I'm only saying what you're thinking.

SOUND OF ROARING ENGINES. Just then, Rollie and Buzz's bikes come caterwauling up, jump the curb.

Leo, a step ahead of the game, plucks Wanda out of danger just as the big bikes mow through the mourners. Rollie does a wheelie, Rollie and bike land on top of Dormat, driving him into the ground. The flock scrambles, dropping half-burned candles and bitten bread.

Scatterbrain steps between Leo and Wanda.

SCATTERBRAIN  
Are we bailing? Let's bail.

Mounts his board and scissors off.

Frightened mourners pour into the streets, hiding their faces.

Leo tows Wanda by the arm.

LEO  
Rex wants to see you.

She jerks away.

WANDA  
You taking orders from him?

He grabs her again. Wanda struggles.

LEO  
If you don't be careful, he'll consider you his enemy.

WANDA  
I am his enemy.

Leo lets her go. She walks back toward the shelter. Leo backs away slow, stunned, conflicted.

Buzz and Rollie are gone. Panicked bystanders filter back in out of the night.

Dormat lies motionless on the ground. Old Mex is there bent over the body. He looks at Wanda as she approaches. She reaches into her bag, kneels, anoints the corps.

Old Mex gets off his knees, begins picking up candles and bread off the ground.

WANDA (CONT'D)  
Sorry old man, I've tried, but I just can't forgive.

OLD MEX  
Then you will learn the hard way.



And now the ROAR OF HARLEYS comes up again. We see the marauders rushing back from the hunt, side by side, blood on chrome. Brakes engaged, the two sweep by slow, picking on Old Mex.

BUZZ

You must have a lot of dough.

ROLLIE

Ha-ha-ha.

Wanda hides between parked cars with an open vial, springs out at Buzz and Rollie, dousing them with some exotic oil. Sheer surprise causes Rollie to swerve into Buzz. Their bikes lock up.

They over compensate and spill, setting down sidelong in the sodden street. Sparks emanate from beneath the bikes, fallen riders skid on leather.

Old Mex scrambles over to these felons, just as concerned for them as someone's lost babies. Rollie and Buzz get up slow, a little bloody around the edges. Old Mex makes an all out effort to be of service. Buzz comes out of shock and smacks Old Mex, who crumples down to the ground.

Now Wanda's out in the street, her body fixed in warrior pose. She lets out a fierce cry, then begins to curse at the top of her lungs.

WANDA

You will go blind. Your testicles will shrink. All of your offspring will go insane.

She points something at Buzz and Rollie, a bone or something, concealed in her hand and begins walking toward them, fangs-bared. Buzz and Rollie look at each other to gage their own reactions. Not sure.

WANDA (CONT'D)

Everything you eat will turn bitter. It will be difficult to breathe. Falling asleep will be impossible.

Rollie's attention becomes divided. He picks up a scent on himself. Wanda flung a stream of it from her vial onto their jackets as they passed. Buzz catches the scent too, looks nervous.

OLD MEX

Don't make a big deal.

BUZZ  
Beat it, old man,

Old Mex picks himself up.

Buzz and Rollie go after Wanda. Old Mex tries to get in their way, but Rollie brushes him aside like a tree branch. He spins to the ground once again.

Now we see Leo step into the light behind Wanda.

LEO  
What's the problem?

ROLLIE  
Leo, where you been? Rex said find you.

LEO  
I'll see him when I'm ready.

BUZZ  
No. We're taking you with us, motherfucker.

LEO  
If you think you're man enough, I'd be delighted.

Rollie pulls his brass knuckles and brushes past Buzz to make history. Leo's loading all his turquoise rings on one fist. Buzz and Rollie look like they're going to attack in unison.

LEO (CONT'D)  
One at a time.

Wanda calls out from behind.

WANDA  
Hey you, catfish.

She gets Rollie's attention.

WANDA (CONT'D)  
Go ahead, try and take a deep breath, catfish.

This does little to slow the advance.

Leo's ringed knuckles form a fist. Just then a house plant comes crashing down from several stories at the feet of the bad guys.

This stops them just long enough. Distant COP SIRENS ring out through the darkness.

The thugs scramble for their bikes, help each other heave horse, leave rubber in hasty remorse.

Soon, there's a crowd around Dormat's totalled frame. SOUND OF SIRENS close in.

Sad, Old Mex loads his burden of broken bread and wax, He stops, in tears, considers for a moment, has something to say, addresses everyone in earshot.

OLD MEX

If there was any honest work left  
that paid half as good as dope and  
sex, we would still have our world  
to live in and none of these heavy  
chains.

Cops approach, an ambulance arrives.

WANDA

Glad they could make it.

LEO

That's our cue.

WANDA

But I'm a witness.

LEO

I helped you, now come on.

He grabs her hand firm, she trails like a kite-tail. Cops screech up. Leo and Wanda scurry away from the crime.

EXT. MEAN STREETS - NIGHT

Leo and Wanda are walking now, catching their breath. Leo tries to keep hold of her hand. She refuses. He stokes her hair. She pulls away.

WANDA

Those guys back there? They killed  
Gitty. I just know it. I could  
see it in their eyes.

LEO

Maybe.

WANDA

Old Mex said that holding on to resentment made as much sense as eating rat poison to kill rats.

LEO

What do you say?

WANDA

Ma Shiny don't need poison. She comes from a long line of witching snakes that began in Babylonia.

LEO

You grown intelligent since I last saw you. Why'd you come back?

Wanda seems surprised, gives a stock answer.

WANDA

Mex wrote me saying time is thin, looking for somebody to will his bread concern to.

LEO

Prideful fool, can't bare to fold aces.

WANDA

Bakery was going to Gritty. He walked off payroll two weeks ago. I was to help.

LEO

Rex don't permit soft exits.

WANDA

I wish you'd warned him.

LEO

I just found out.

WANDA

Ma Shiny will have to bring things round.

LEO

Who's this Shining aimed at?

Wanda shrugs, adjusts the chopsticks in her hair, walks away.

WANDA

We'll have to read about it in the papers.

INT. REX'S CASINO - DAY

Could be next day, could be weeks later. Leo sits alone at the deserted bar, with half-drunk beer, smoldering cig, deep in thought. Patsy comes in with a brown bag, sets it on the bar next to Leo.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

Matinee time, Leo buys his ticket, goes inside. Seconds later, walks out. Two seconds after that, A SKETCHY LOOKING CHARACTER, steps out into the squinty light, slinks off opposite.

INT. GYPSY TEA ROOM - DAY

Rex sits down in front of one of Wanda's tarot card spreads.

WANDA

Here's when you let Leo take the rap. That's when Gritty wanted out.

REX

What concerns me now is, Gritty owed me money. Who shall I collect from, you or your pa?

Rex grabs the deck off the table and deals himself a card. THE WORLD. He flips one at Wanda. It bounces off her and lands face up on the table. QUEEN OF SWORDS. He puts the deck down.

REX (CONT'D)

I never believed in this shit.

Wanda responds by turning over a card, JUDGEMENT.

Wanda flips over another card.

WANDA

This one's for pa.

DUECE OF DISKS.

WANDA (CONT'D)

Here's Leo.

Wanda turns over the JACK OF CUPS.

REX

What about Dion?

Wanda turns over the EIGHT OF SWORDS. Rex pulls out a fifty and throws it on the cards.

REX (CONT'D)  
That's enough.

WANDA  
Eight swords drawn against her.

REX  
I said, shut up.

WANDA  
You paying me to stop? That'll be another fifty.

He throws down the extra skin.

REX  
Everybody around here works for me. If you want to stay, that's how it is.

WANDA  
Whoever killed my brother is going to pay.

REX  
You listen to me you little witch. I want your answer by tomorrow.

He slips a dime bag under the fifty. It's in a blue package like the nova that Gritty took.

REX (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry about Gritty. You know what I think happened? He leaned in a little far, that's all, total accident. Poor kid.

Wanda holds perfectly still and neutral, neither agreeing or disagreeing. She's observing Rex like one fierce animal sizes up another.

INT. CAGE FIGHT ARENA - NIGHT

An enthusiastic crowd leaps to its feet.

While a pair of modern gladiators beat on each other in the pen, Leo's turquoise bedecked fingers exchange a brown bag for fat folds of cash from unidentified hands.

One of the fighters goes down, overwhelmed with rapid boots to the mouth.

The ref awards a knock out, crowd cries hosanna. Leo can't take his eyes off the sacrifice, pulls out a flask he drains in bitter swallows.

INT. PANTRY OF OLD MEX'S BAKERY - NIGHT

Wanda holds her beautiful snake up in the air and purrs at it, then lovingly returns it to the terrarium.

Old Mex is laying up a row of nine jugs of water underneath a crude, army cot. Then he stands up, unfolds a white sheet, spreads it out on the canvas sling.

INT. LEO'S HIDEOUT - DAY

Morning finds Leo in the same clothes, needing a shave. His flask tipped-over, scads of cash, a brown package ripped open. Sprawled out on the sofa, Leo drowns in a boozy stupor. He opens one eye.

Daylight cracks the sky.

Leo sits up, shakes himself awake, looks out, checks his watch. The light of this new morning aims so very far up the rear-end of his yesterday night, he reels from it.

INT. BAKERY BACK ROOM, PANTRY - DAY

Sitting on the cot with water stored beneath, Wanda holds the dime of speed Rex gave her, unwraps it, studying, unsure, she heaves a sigh.

There are sacks of flour on sturdy shelves, containers of yeast, salt, oil, all under naked light.

INT. DION'S HIDEOUT - DAY

Leo is in the lab, sipping grain alcohol from a beaker. Dion is weighing out.

DION

Rex accuses me of never being  
happy. I never even think in those  
terms do you?

Leo is distracted with his own thoughts and doesn't answer.

DION (CONT'D)

Happiness is for children, don't  
you think?

Leo sighs with exhaustion.

LEO  
I thought life was going to get  
better when I grew up, but it got  
worse.

Dion back at him.

DION  
Laugh it off anyway.

LEO  
What's so funny.

DION  
You've forgotten how to laugh?

LEO  
Prison has a way of doing that.

DION  
Well let's remind you. Come here?

A mirror is placed horizontal, it is instantly sporting a  
swath of sparkling powder which Dion grooms closely.

DION (CONT'D)  
This is the purest shit on the  
planet.

She leans forward, puts her nose to the grind, leans back,  
giggles through glittering nerve circuits and a vanishing  
sense of time.

Leo gets up, closes the blinds, pulls out a pack of smokes,  
finds it empty, visits the bathroom, mirror, hands through  
hair, water, tries to pull himself back, fails.

He rushes the kitchen. Seizes, his billfold on the table,  
peels off a skin, rolls it, perches over the powder. Dion  
expertly snakes out a white wave, Leo whiffs it through his  
twenty, comes up laughing.

INT. BAKERY PANTRY - DAY

In crude quarters, Wanda sits on cot made with sheet, pillow,  
and surplus blanket. Old Mex is standing in the background.

OLD MEX  
Dump it or bump it, either way your  
last.

WANDA  
I'm already sick.



OLD MEX  
Go ahead and shed it.

Old Mex shakes his head watching as Wanda makes a fist, shakily, dumps out the powder on the web between thumb and hand. She is about to sniff, but hesitates.

On the wall calendar, nine days blocked in red. A pencil on a string. All this in 8X10 square of dressed shelves, bare walls, concrete, no windows.

Wanda, looks at powder on her fist, starts shaking even more with dread. Her breath and trembling comprise a rising crisis. She bends her head, hesitates again.

WANDA  
Gritty told me do it this way.

OLD MEX  
I wouldn't.

WANDA  
I'm burning up already.

She lets her fist fall, her last dose mingles with traces of flour on the floor.

Wanda lays on cot, sits up again, grabs pillow and screams, lowers the pillow, gazes up at Old Mex like a cornered beast.

WANDA (CONT'D)  
It's starting to really burn.

OLD MEX  
Let it in. Let it burn.

Wanda has medicinal oils in a cloth bag. She nervously takes out a red glass vial, uncorks it, tips it on to her finger, rubs it into her hands, cups palms up to face and breathes in.

Two or three times Wanda inhales the aroma of the ointment, relaxes back on the bed, but only for half an instant.

She bolts upright, wrenches her weary frame over the edge. Both knees split through her jeans. Into the creased white linen, she shrieks, a freaky, electric-chair scream.

Old Mex frightened, closes the door, touches a little cross pressed over the post, mutters an incantation, locks the door, goes over to a rack of risen dough, opens the red hot oven and starts loading it.

INT. JINGLE'S LIQUOR STORE - DAY

Rex, followed by Buzz and Rollie, steps into the store. Jingles looks up from his tiny TV. When he sees who it is, he leaps to his feet.

REX

Hey there, Bubbles, don't get up.

JINGLES

Jingles is the name.

REX

Well you sell bubbles don't you?

JINGLES

Coming right up.

Frail and frightened, Jingles opens the cage and brings a case of champagne out in his arms.

REX

I only wanted a bottle.

It's heavy for Jingles.

JINGLES

Take it with my gratitude.

Jingles off loads it on Rex.

REX

I'm not an unreasonable man.

JINGLES

Don't mention it. You and me have a few of the same enemies.

Rex passes off the carton to Rollie.

REX

Rollie strap these bubbles to your buddy seat, and don't spill any.

Rex pats Jingles on the shoulder.

REX (CONT'D)

So, how much will you take for this place?

JINGLES

Please uh, it's all I got. It's, all I know, I can't do anything else.

REX

You'll let me know when the time comes.

JINGLES

I just have one favor to ask. It's it's, it's about Wanda.

REX

I'll offer her my personal protection. Where is she?

Jingles isn't exactly comforted.

EXT. MEAN STREETS - DAY

Rex is walking down the street with Dion. Buzz and Rollie tag along as usual. Rex walks by Old Mex who offers Rex one of his BREAD RINGS. Rex snatches it and takes a bite, then he shoves the old man away, keeps walking. Old Mex keeps up, remains engaged.

REX

How do you always happen to be around when I'm hungry?

OLD MEX

People are hungry most of the time.

REX

You give them too much hope with your bread and sympathy.

Rex tosses the bread back over his head at a passing homeless person, not bothering even to break his stride.

OLD MEX

Hope needs constant tending.

REX

Hell with hope, hunger is the best teacher.

Old Mex stops. Rex stops. Dion stops His goons stop.

OLD MEX

Your father had no friends. Everyone feared him. Now you're that man. You understand? You ought to be able to forgive him now.

REX

You scare me. You know what? You really do. You're the most fucking dangerous desperado in this town, the way you poison people's minds.

OLD MEX

How? How do I poison?

REX

You make loosing sound better than winning.

OLD MEX

If one person looses everyone does.

With a firm, but gentle backhand, Rex closes the gate on Old Mex. Old man stops to let Rex and company pass.

REX

Enough bullshit. If you're planning on going to the cops, come right out and tell me.

OLD MEX

You're more dangerous to yourself than an entire police force.

This gives Rex something to laugh about. Old Mex spots somebody to give bread to and crosses the street.

REX

He's a bad influence.

Rex watches Old Mex work the street.

DION

Things don't stay fixed permanently. You have to do repairs.

Down the block, Leo is out on the street buying smokes at a news stand. Old Mex is crossing the street toward him handing out bread as he goes.

BUZZ

Rex, there's Leo. You want me to fetch him for you?

DION

What do you mean fetch him?

(calling out)

Leo. Come here.

(to Rollie)

(MORE)

What does he look like? A newspaper?

Leo sees it's Rex and Dion and comes as called.

LEO  
I been looking for you Rex.

REX  
Your girlfriend read my fortune.

LEO  
Where is she?

REX  
Hopefully she wised up and left town.

LEO  
You didn't pick her up?

Rex grabs Leo by surprise.

REX  
If you find her, bring her to me, immediately, you hear?

BUZZ  
This is a make or break move for you, short pants.

Leo and Buzz do the stare down. Rex laughs. Rollie laughs.

DION  
You guys got something to say to each other?

LEO  
It's just between them and me.

INT. BAKERY BACKROOM, PANTRY

Wanda writhes on the cot disheveled, naked except for underwear and sock.

A white enamel bucket with a red rim stands beside her bed holding vile-colored spendings. She bends over and gags into it, with heartrending sobs.

It is uncomfortable to watch, so the camera cuts to the calendar. Only a day into it; the water, only a gallon consumed. Her clothes and belongings strewn about. She's shouting and struggling in pain.

WANDA

Help, help...

INT. REX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Champagne pops. There's an ice bucket full of bottles at a wet bar. An ethnic sampler of women clad in Victoria's Secret stand huddle together on a king size bed. Rex, in slinky red, pro-boxing shorts, and a fine cut upper torso, sports a bull whip and stands beside the bed cracking it in mid-air.

Rex gets bored and puts a lick on one of his cuties.

CUTIE

Help.

She yelps and jumps off the bed. Rex gives chase, cracking his whip behind him, eventually pinning her down for a fondle and kiss which she plays expertly into. It's a game. Other girls come over brandishing pillows and feather boas.

Just at the moment, Dion walks in, drops whatever she's carrying. With a look, Dion expels Rex's playmates. His bedroom empties out. Rex is mad. Bubbles rise in abandoned champagne flutes.

REX

Baby maybe you're just too square  
for me.

DION

The deal was, as long as I am in  
house, this wouldn't happen.

REX

Maybe it's time for you to move out  
again.

DION

Do I have anything to say in it?

REX

Throw your lazy brother out. Tell  
him sink or swim.

DION

Leo's done more for you than any of  
the others.

REX

What's he done for me lately? Talk  
to cops? Become Mr. Back talk?  
Thinks he can outfox me now?

DION  
He doesn't want to cross you Rex,  
it's the girl.

REX  
He fell in love with the wrong gal.

DION  
But the point is, it is love, which  
doesn't happen to everyone.

INT. BAKERY BACK ROOM, PANTRY - NIGHT

Wanda sits up on the bed, eyes closed, facial expression, tranquil. She has the white sheet wound around her naked form like a monk's toga.

The barf bucket has been taken away, the room tidied.

She has a candle stick burning on a small table beside her. The table is set with several items. An apple, beside that, a conch shell, a small, green, glass vial in the flickering candle light.

Wanda is humming a sacred melody.

EXT. MEAN STREETS - DAY

Back to his pushers position on the street corner, Leo is looking down the end of a cigarette, blowing smoke rings and watching the world go by. His POV has a fuzzy, druglike quality to it.

Old Mex comes in to view busily giving away, this day, his daily bread. Leo perks up, starts making his way to the old man.

When he reaches him, Old Mex offers him bread. Leo refuses it.

LEO  
Tell her I would come see her,

Old Mex nods.

LEO (CONT'D)  
but Rex is watching me. He'd  
pounce on her like a spider.

Old Mex nods again, walks on.

Old Mex carries on, handing out loaves to the homeless. He stops at the end of the block, waits for the light to change.

Leo slips his hand inside his waste band, where he keeps his back up inventory, looks around, unwraps a dime, quickly snorts.

A motorcycle engine can be heard, and then, just caught sight of, then, finally, some killer on a Triumph bears down through the intersection. People scatter, someone screams, rears his mount and looms above the unsuspecting shoulders of Old Mex.

Beautifully crafted, woven rings of bread are scattered all across the intersection. Bystanders look on in shock.

The bike jets away from the scene supporting a figure hidden beneath protective headgear. The killer has a custom, chrome ramrod jutting out off his handle bars, which he just used to button Old Mex's face to the blacktop.

The holy man is barely alive when he turns over. A crowd has gathered in the street, chief among them Leo. He arrives at Old Mex's side just in time to flip the bird to the mystery son-of-a-bitch. And we see it strike its target, from the masked assassin's POV, IN HIS REAR VIEW MIRROR.

Leo looks down on Old Mex. He's done for. We can't even hear or understand what Old Mex is saying. We go down close with Leo.

OLD MEX

Rex can be saved. You can save  
him.

Old Mex puts a piece of bread in Leo's hand and dies.

Leo grips his wrists to try and somehow catch him, but Old Mex fades to black. Leo hears sirens and scrams.

INT. OLD MEX'S BAKERY - DAY

Buzz and Rollie are splashing gasoline around. Buzz puts down his can, lights a match.

BUZZ

That'll do.

Buzz flips the match into a puddle of gas. He and Rollie exit the back door.

The kitchen is on fire. The pantry door is still closed.



INT. BAKERY PANTRY - DAY

Wanda is on her feet, listening at the walls. The candle flame is literally being pulled sideways by the draft sucking underneath the door.

Leo bursts in through the back door. Wanda starts pounding and shouting.

WANDA

Help.

Leo tries the door, burns his hand on the knob, kicks it twice before he breaks it open, rescuing Wanda. SIRENS are heard outside.

EXT. MEAN STREETS - DAY

Firemen arrive on the scene and begin extinguishing the blaze at the bakery.

Just up the street, an ambulance crew loads the body of Old Mex and drives off. Wanda looks on, can't see whose been killed.

Leo leads Wanda to where Old Mex was mowed down. There's bread on the street, all around, splashed with Old Mex's blood. It's enough to tell the story. Wanda is still weak from detox. She collapses on the sidewalk, choking on this new piece of bad news. Leo teeters, numb and vague, straining to see clearly through the screens of drugs and guilt.

Hardshell drives up, gets out of his car. Wanda sits, catatonic on the ground, not acknowledging. Leo, too, is speechless. His complexion is suddenly very pale.

HARDSHELL

Come on, let's get out of here  
before somebody shoots you both  
down.

Hardshell helps Wanda up. Her expression has changed to acceptance. Leo's has turned quite the opposite. He has a demon possessed look. Hardshell is quite aware of the transformation.

He bundles them both into the back seat, then hops in front and drives, looking in his side view mirror for hatchet men and their honchos. With the coast clear, he looks in his mirror at our two in the back seat.

Wanda is going through something big herself, but it's the opposite of Leo. Her eyes behold vistas. She's transcending. There's an aura of bittersweet relief.

Leo's going down. He sees blood. His pulse pounds. Brow bent, and smitten, something dark and predatory washes over Leo.

HARDSHELL (CONT'D)

Are you ready to talk?

Leo stomps his foot down hard to get attention.

LEO

Stop the car.

The two men lock horns in the mirror.

LEO (CONT'D)

I can't snitch.

WANDA

Let him out.

Wanda sees the transformation that has overcome Leo and looks at him with compassion.

WANDA (CONT'D)

I've been wrong, Old Mex was right.

They look at each other, Wanda, letting go, Leo, contracting. Hardshell cruises to a stop. Leo gets out.

EXT. MEAN STREETS - DAY

Hardshell and Wanda drive off in Hardshell's car. Wanda looks out the back window. Leo looks up and down the street, hesitates, then sets off on foot.

INT. DION'S LABORATORY - DAY

Rex and Dion argue under the red light of a chronometer. Dion tends to some chemical process. Rex is not a scientist. Dion plucks a pair stainless steel ball-bearings from the sieve, rolls them in his hand deftly.

REX

Pretty soon I'm going to be just another joke around here.

DION

You're over reacting.

Rex presses a tiny blue packet on Dion.

REX

Go find your brother and talk sense  
fast. Either he comes in at once,  
or you slip him this.

Dion takes it.

DION

You'll see.

REX

I'll see? I better see. Hurry up.

INT. BAKERY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Leo and Wanda are cleaning up the damaged bakery. Wanda scrubs off sooty work surfaces. Leo has his head in the oven along with a giant wrench. There's music on the radio.

Wanda puts down her sponge wipes her forehead takes a long drink of water.

LEO

What was it like?

WANDA

Like a million bee stings.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAYOU JUNGLE - NIGHT

Wanda's snake is winding its way through a bayou landscape, finally it arrives at a person sleeping on the jungle floor. It is Leo. The snake glides up onto Leo's body, flicking it's tongue over Leo's closed eyelids.

CUT TO:

INT. BAKERY KITCHEN PANTRY - NIGHT.

Leo eyes open with a start. He is lying on the same cot in which Wanda was seen when she was undergoing cold turkey. There is sweat and confusion on Leo's face.

Wanda comes through the door with a damp cloth. She swabs Leo's forehead and cheeks while his teeth chatter. He shivers in the depths of withdrawal.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAYOU JUNGLE - NIGHT

Still lying on the jungle floor, Leo opens his mouth and Wanda's snake slowly creeps down his throat.

CUT TO:

INT. BAKERY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Wanda is looking refreshed and renewed, kneading and fashioning dough into Old Mex's signature, woven rings. Through the pantry door to we can see Leo sitting up now in his cot.

INT. BAKERY KITCHEN PANTRY - NIGHT

Leo holds a hand mirror and shaves himself with an electric razor. He breathes deep and looks like he's been through the worst, but there is still a demented look in his eye.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAYOU JUNGLE - NIGHT

On the jungle floor, Wanda's snake's tail trails down Leo's throat and he closes his eyes and mouth looking nauseous and bloated.

CUT TO:

INT. BAKERY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Wanda turns her back to put trays of loaves in the oven, Leo walks out in a trance carrying Wanda's snake on his arm. Wanda turns around and he's gone. It only takes her a minute to realize. She crosses to the pantry then goes running out the back door.

EXT. MEAN STREETS - DAY

Hardshell cruises by the bakery, sees Leo walking down the street carrying the snake. Next he sees Wanda in pursuit. He double parks and meets her on the sidewalk. They follow Leo at a distance.

HARDSHELL

Whatever you're up to, it's working.

WANDA

I forgot to reverse it.

HARDSHELL

You sure you want to? It may be your only shot at justice.

WANDA

Old Mex warned me, but I was too mad.

HARDSHELL

He's liable to be gunned down right here in the open.

Wanda speeds up her pace, for emphasis.

WANDA

If I don't reverse it, I'll loose him.

Wanda races ahead, Hardshell keeps up, but Leo has vanished. They stop, look frantic inside buildings and passing cars.

INT. DION'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leo puts the snake inside a cookie jar and rummages through Dion's stuff, finds a handgun, checks the chamber, tucks it in the back of his pants. Dion's nowhere to be seen.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAYOU JUNGLE - DAY

Naked and barefoot, Leo stalks through the jungle, in a twilight mist.

CUT TO:

INT. DION'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dion arrives and finds Leo there.

DION

Where you been? I was worried about you.

Leo is sitting on a designer chair in he living room. Dion crosses over to him to try and figure out what's different. He's deep in thought.

LEO

Do you love Rex?

She takes off her full-length coat, reaches in the nearby closet, pulls out a heavy wooden hanger and, instead of hanging her coat on it, starts beating on Leo as hard as she can. Leo does his best to fend her off. It's a thing they've done before. Neither of them is out for blood. Her coat falls on the floor and gets trampled. She doesn't care. Finally, she stops to catch her breath.

DION  
You little punk.

LEO  
I'm not, I'll prove it.

He pulls out her gun. Both of them are still breathing heavy.

DION  
You think that has anything to do with whether you're a punk or not?

LEO  
You don't love Rex, do you?

DION  
What business is it of yours?

LEO  
He always was jealous of us.

DION  
Jealousy isn't the right word, Leo.

LEO  
I got one last thing to do before I leave town?

DION  
I won't stop you. We'll probably never see each other again. What do you say we have one last toot for the good times.

She takes out the nova. He shakes his head.

LEO  
I cleaned up, Dion.

DION  
Well, uh, wow, I suddenly feel very lonesome.

LEO  
 Thanks for bringing me up and all  
 sis, but if I'm a punk its your  
 doing. I'll always be that to you.

DION  
 Wrong.

Suddenly Rex clutches his belly with his arms. She rushes to  
 him. When he looks up at her, he's got snake eyes.

LEO  
 I'm using you now Dion.

Dion instantly accepts the suggestion.

DION  
 I know.

LEO  
 He's not using you any more, I am.

Dion nods, blankly.

CUT TO

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Dion is standing in front of Leo. They never touch. Leo  
 regurgitates and Wanda's snake slides from his throat into  
 Dion's. Dion turns around and walks away in the trance. Leo  
 looks ghostly.

CUT TO:

INT. DION'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dion is now clutching her belly and looking nauseous.

DION  
 Little brother?

LEO  
 Yeah?

DION  
 Better get out of here before  
 someone catches us.

Dion's got the snake around her neck now. Leo takes a last  
 look at Dion and walks out.

EXT- MEAN STREETS - DAY

Rex charges toward a showdown on his motorcycle, through urban streets, with Buzz and Rollie in formation behind.

EXT. MEAN STREETS - DAY

Wanda and Leo run into each other.

LEO

Um, I'm dying here Wanda. You wouldn't know what of? Would you?

WANDA

You got something to confess?

LEO

The look on Gritty's face when he died was really quite beautiful. I've been jealous of him ever since.

WANDA

You never told me you saw Gritty die.

LEO

I figured you knew by now.

WANDA

No, I always held out that you were true. So, where's Ma Shiny now?

LEO

I just threw her up.

WANDA

Well you've got to eat her again. Let's go. Take me to her.

LEO

Gritty had the right idea.

WANDA

Ma Shiny left that death wish in you. It's my fault. Come on.

Leo obeys as though under some kind of spell. No sooner are they safely away then Rex cruises past.



INT. DION'S APARTMENT - DAY

Leo re-enters the apartment, with Wanda in tow. They find Dion down, post-nova. Ma shiny still collared about her neck. Wanda untangles the snake.

INT. DION'S KITCHEN - DAY

Wanda opens a drawer full of kitchen knives, takes out the biggest one, lays her snake on the chopping block. Her movements are swift and sure. A frying pan, fire.

INT. DION'S BEDROOM = DAY

Leo sits with his sister's body, crumpled before her mirror.

LEO

You used me, your whole life. I'm used to being used, now thanks to you. That's why I'm a punk.

Wanda rushes in with a sizzling skillet and a knife.

WANDA

Eat this.

LEO

What is it.

He eats it off the knife. It's hot, doesn't look too tasty, and, besides, he knows what he's eating, Ma Shiny. He struggles to swallow it. Stops to cough violently. At Wanda's urging he swallows more.

WANDA

It can't come back up, you've got to digest it or its chaos from here on.

Still taking orders from Wanda, Leo eats the chunks of snake out of the pan until it is all gone. Meanwhile Wanda lays Dion's corps flat and arranges her in a dignified pose, then takes out her oils to anoint the corps.

WANDA (CONT'D)

I should have reversed the curse sooner. I'm sorry we were too late for her.

LEO

Take out your cards, Wanda. Throw me one for Rex.

Wanda hesitates. She can see what Leo's capable of.

WANDA

If we forgive, we put it behind us,  
otherwise it just perpetuates  
itself

LEO

Choose a card, Wanda, or I will.

WANDA

It doesn't matter any more.

LEO

What? You don't trust the cards  
anymore? Why won't you let them  
speak?

She flips over THE DEVIL card. Leo checks the gun in his  
belt.

WANDA

Don't or else you're just like him.

LEO

What am I? I won't know if I don't  
confront him.

WANDA

How will I know who you are?

LEO

He's offended everyone.

WANDA

You offended me. I'm letting that  
slide.

LEO

It wasn't my fault.

WANDA

I let it slide.

LEO

You want practice forgiving?  
Practice on me.

Leo carries his hand-gun in full view. Wanda tries to impede  
him. He sidesteps her.

LEO (CONT'D)

Call the cops, make Hardshell take  
you with him, it's your safest bet.

WANDA

We could go stay with my friend in  
Miami, if we just walked away, now.

He plucks the chopsticks from her hair, puts them in his back pocket.

LEO

To remember you by.

WANDA

Leo.

Leo charges out the door, single-minded.

EXT. BAYOU JUNGLE - DAY

Sunlight filters down through the canopy. With Dion laid on a platform in the background and eight swords sticking out of her body. Leo bends down, comes up with Wanda's snake looking good as new. In a ceremonial manner, Leo approaches Rex, wraps Wanda's snake around Rex's neck. Rex goes under the same trance that Leo and Dion did when the snake first came to them. He opens his mouth and the snake creeps down his throat.

EXT. MEAN STREETS - NIGHT

Leo recklessly cuts down an alley, to intentionally draw danger. He doesn't know that Wanda is trailing him. A MOTORCYCLE ENGINE REVS. The masked rider that killed Old Mex comes barreling down the alley behind Wanda on his bike.

Leo reacts quickly and he and Wanda dive out of harm's way just in time, but Leo loses his gun. The bike circles around and makes another pass.

This time Leo steps out of hiding and pulls the masked rider off the bike, as it passes. The bike takes a spectacular tumble.

Leo is on the balls of his feet now in front of the helmeted black rider. He can't reach his gun. They clash like infantry, Leo the underdog, no helmet, struggles to a slow defeat, unable to strike the fatal blow.

The masked assassin, simply wears him out and then drags Leo to Leo's own gun and holds it up to his head. Rex lifts his mask so a face can be the last thing Leo sees, but before Rex can pull the trigger, Leo finally locates the chopsticks he got from Wanda and plunges them into Rex's eyes.

Rex goes down, Leo gets the gun away from him, opens rounds in the air until it clicks, tosses the gun.

Scatterbrain comes gliding past on his skateboard and rings Rex around the neck with a large, woven ring of bread. This is the largest bread loaf we've seen. It falls around Rex's shoulders, pinning his arms to his sides. Wanda has many of them stacked in Old Mex's basket. HOmeless people, prostitutes, and users, from all around, take the loaves and ring Rex with them, including Jingles and Frick. Rex becomes immobilized by the rings of bread.