

NIGHTCRAWLER

by

Dan Gilroy

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INFINITY OF STARS

over barren ground ... if not for a BILLBOARD reading

Lose Weight With The Lapband ***1-800-GET-THIN***

it could be the moon ... CAMERA pushing over a rim to show

LOS ANGELES

shimmering in night heat ... *THRUM* of civilization ... a
FREEWAY feeds into the city as a SEMI blasts by and CUT TO

A COYOTE

loping across a RESIDENTIAL STREET in the hills ... it stops
under a street lamp ... darting away and CUT TO

THE L.A. RIVER

flows darkly before us ... CAMERA rising above a FLOOD
CHANNEL to a fenced industrial area where

LOUIS "LOU" BLOOM

is a silhouette against the city glow ... using bolt cutters
to rip down a square of chain-link fence ... muscling it into
the back of a beat-up CAR as he hears something, turns to SEE

HEADLIGHTS

approaching in the distance ... LOU slamming the trunk as the
lights

SWEEP

and we see him ... LOU'S mid-20s ... pure primal id ... if
there's music it's in his head ... disconnected ... feral ...
driven by dollar signs and a dream of some imagined Eden as

A PICK-UP TRUCK

stops and a MAN gets out ... framed in headlights ... wearing
a utility belt with mace and handcuffs ...

MAN'S VOICE

What are you doing out here?

LOU

I'm lost.

MAN'S VOICE

This is a restricted area.

LOU

I didn't know that. There's no signs.

MAN

They're everywhere. Let's see some I.D.

LOU

Why?

MAN

Because there's a broken gate back there and you're trespassing.

LOU

Excuse me, but that gate was open, sir. I was under the opinion that it was a detour. What kind of uniform is that?

MAN

I'll ask the fucking questions.

LOU seeing a SECURITY EMBLEM on the man's sleeve ...

LOU

Private outfit, huh? I tried to get one of those jobs. I like guarding things.
(pulling a license)
Here you go, sir. I think what happened is I just must've gotten turned around.

The MAN reaches for LOU'S license and CLOSE ON

A CHUNKY WATCH

on the MAN'S wrist ... minute hand ticking 1:19 AM as

LOU

attacks ... fight going to ground ... dust rising into the headlights and CUT TO

LOU'S CAR

gliding along an endless VALLEY BOULEVARD ... shut stores and deserted parking lots ... street lights on every empty corner ... like a movie set waiting for the next day's shooting ... LOU'S hand shifts on the steering wheel as he admires

THE GUARD'S WATCH

on his wrist ... industrial ROAR bleeding in and CUT TO

A GIANT MACHINE

eating CARS at the edge of the valley ... night CREW craning junkers into grinding blades as

INSIDE THE OFFICE

LOU speaks to the SCRAPYARD OWNER over the noise ...

LOU

I guesstimate I have 50 pounds of copper wire, a hundred pounds of chain-link and two manhole covers, the nice thick ones.

SCRAPYARD OWNER

I'll give 50-cents-a-pound for the wire, 15 for the fence and 10 for the covers.

LOU

That's below market value.

SCRAPYARD OWNER

Market value? You know the cops came by asking about manhole covers.

LOU

I'd like to counter at a dollar-a-pound for the copper, 30-cents-a-pound for the fence and 20-cents-per for the covers.

SCRAPYARD OWNER

Sell 'em somewhere else.

LOU

I'd feel good at 75, 25 and 15.

SCRAPYARD

I'm not negotiating with you.

LOU

I think we're close.

SCRAPYARD OWNER

We're done. Take it or leave it.

LOU

I'm willing to take less to establish a business relationship. If that's your last best offer then I guess I accept.

SCRAPYARD OWNER

Drive around back and unload 'em.

LOU

Sir, excuse me, I'm looking for a job. In fact, I've made up mind to find a career I can learn and grow into. Who am I? I'm a hard-worker, I set high goals and I've been told I'm persistent. Now I'm not fooling myself, sir. Having been raised with the self-esteem movement so popular in schools, I used to expect my needs to be considered. But I know that today's work culture no longer caters to the job loyalty that could be promised to earlier generations. What I believe, sir, is that good things come to those who work their asses off, and that people such as yourself who reach the top of the mountain didn't just fall there. My motto is if you want to win the lottery you have to make the money to buy a ticket. Did I say I worked in a garage? Sir, I think you and I could work well together. So how about it? I can start tomorrow or even why not tonight?

SCRAPYARD OWNER filling out a form ... muttering 'no' ...

LOU

How about an internship then? A lot of young people are taking unpaid positions to get a foot in the door. That's something I'd be willing to do.

SCRAPYARD OWNER

I'm not hiring a fucking thief.

DEAD OF NIGHT

as LOU drives an empty valley boulevard ... holding his

CELL PHONE

on the steering wheel ... surfing a SEX HOOK-UP WEBSITE as

PHOTOS OF NEAR NAKED WOMEN

with their locations are shown ... LOU stops scrolling on

A WOMAN

in her 40s, semi-clothed and

LOU

turns the phone ... snaps a smiling self-portrait and CUT TO

A DINER

wall clock clicking 2:42 AM ... LOU arranging silverware ...
checking his reflection in a spoon ... watching the door as

THE WOMAN

whose photo we saw enters ... coat over a nurse's uniform ...
older than her photo ... LOU stands, smiling, as she sits ...

LOU

Hi. I'm Lou.

WOMAN

No names.

LOU

That's not my real name anyway.

WOMAN

Jesus you're young.

LOU

You're in health care.

WOMAN

I just got off.

LOU

Can I take your coat?

WOMAN

No.

LOU

I got us some menus. The soup today is
potato. There's a special for 3.75 that
comes with half a sandwich.

WOMAN

I'm not eating.

LOU

So. What do you have to do to become a
nurse?

WOMAN

Get a degree.

LOU

What kind?

WOMAN

LVN's vocational. Registered's an ADN.

LOU
I'll bet those cost money.

WOMAN
Well yeah.

LOU
What about automation?

WOMAN
What?

LOU
I recently read an article explaining that machines aren't just assisting workers anymore but actually kicking them out of their jobs. I'm wondering if you're seeing any of that in your work?

WOMAN
Look, I got 30 minutes to get home. My husband caught me doing this before.

LOU
My wife gave me this watch.

WOMAN
Did you read my ad?

LOU
I don't think so. I was driving.

WOMAN
I'm not into guys who are nice. I mean I like it rough.

LOU
Okay. I'm sure I can do that.

WOMAN
We'll use my car.

LOU stands, leaves with her and CUT TO

LOU

alone in his car, driving an L.A. FREEWAY ... windows down ... clock blinking 3:44 AM ... ad on the radio ... LOU likes pulling alongside cars and looking in but

OTHER DRIVERS

are unnerved by his stare and speed away as ... LOU sees an accident up ahead ... passes

TWO HIGHWAY PATROLMEN

trying to pull an unconscious **WOMAN** from a **BLAZING CAR** and

LOU

angles to the shoulder ... getting out to look as a **POLICE HELICOPTER SEARCHLIGHT** stabs the dark ... **LOU** drawn to the scene as a big panel **VAN** stops on the shoulder and

TWO MEN

jump out ... one in charge, tough and indifferent ... the other an employee ... both wear shirts with a logo that reads

MAYHEM VIDEO

The man in charge (**JOE LODER**) carrying a professional camcorder and filming as the employee yells

EMPLOYEE

We're first!

JOE LODER

Got a view in the car!

The **MEN** film the **COPS** trying to free

THE WOMAN

in the burning car as **LOU** looks inside their van and **SEES**

A DOZEN SCANNERS

blinking and blaring **EMERGENCY COM-CHATTER** ... two laptops set to **GPS** ... Los Angeles crime and tragedy tracked on high-def screens and surround sound and for

LOU

the effect is electrifying as

THE POLICE CHOPPER

banks low and

THE COPS

smash glass and

THE CAMERA GUYS

film as an

S.U.V.

skids to a stop and a MAN and WOMAN jump out and film and

LOU

looks inside the S.U.V. and regards an array of EMERGENCY SCANNERS and laptops and CUT TO

10 MINUTES LATER

and the two CAMERA CREWS have been shunted from the wreck ... filming the departure of a wailing ambulance ... action over, they head to their vehicles ... LOU following JOE LODER ...

LOU

Excuse me. This'll be on tv?

JOE

Morning news.

LOU

What channel?

JOE

Whoever pays the most.

LOU

What do you get for something like this?

JOE

Not much.

LOU

Enough to buy all that gear.

JOE

It's a flaming asshole of a job.

LOU

How do you sell what you shoot?

JOE ignoring him, loading equipment in the van ...

LOU

Can I ask you, are you currently hiring?

JOE

No.

LOU

Well thank you for taking the time to discuss what you do. You've been very helpful.

JOE
 (hears a call on the scanners)
 10-17 in Reseda! In progress!

They jump in the van and leave ... S.U.V. following as ...

LOU

stands by the smoking car ... traffic passing ... POLICE
 stringing yellow tape around the crash site and CUT TO

ORANGE GLOW

against an anthracite SKY ... night-black tinting day-blue as

THE RIM OF THE SUN

crests the mountains ringing LOS ANGELES ... light strikes
 patch fog carpeting the basin ... angles to a black ocean ...
 we're looking at the west of a million years ago and CUT TO

A FOREST OF HIGH-GAIN ANTENNAS

rising hundreds of feet above the peak of MOUNT WILSON ...
 every tv and radio station broadcasting from up here and

THE SOUND

of competing, manic MORNING TV NEWS THEMES filters in ... a
 symphonic jumble of bass-heavy opuses as we CUT TO

A SATELLITE DISH

on the roof of a crappy lego block L.A. APARTMENT COMPLEX set
 amid L.A. poverty sprawl ... a cable is spliced into the TV
 BOX with duct tape as we follow

THE PIRATED CABLE

down the wall ... past a long, busy line of ants ... medley
 of MORNING TV NEWS THEMES reduced to a single, soaring score
 as we follow the cable into

LOU'S APARTMENT

One shitty room ... near empty and neat ... perfectly made
 bed ... a few pressed shirts hanging on a pipe ... an old
 COMPUTER ... LOU watering a weedy plant on the windowsill,
 watching a

TV

set on a milk crate as an L.A. MORNING NEWS SHOW begins ...

TV ANNOUNCER

In high-definition, this is the K.L.A.X Two News at six a.m. The Number One morning news in all of Southern California. Others may claim to be your local choice, but more Southlanders get their news here on K.L.A.X. Two. Your home for exclusive stories. Live and local. With Traffic, Weather and Sports. L.A.'s real, local, HD news choice.

TWO plastic PEOPLE appear ... heavy make-up ... mock cheer...

ANCHORWOMAN

Good morning, I'm Lauren Delgado.

ANCHORMAN

And I'm Brendan Clark. An unclaimed mega-millions ticket sold at a 7-11 in San Diego is worth a whopping 266 million dollars. Is it yours?

ANCHORWOMAN

We'll have the numbers coming up, but first, a suspicious bag delayed flights at L.A.X. for more than three hours last night.

LOU changing to another A.M. NEWS SHOW with older ANCHORS ...

ANCHORMAN

It's been one week since officer Michael Hailey was gunned down, and new evidence has police hunting for one of their own.

ANCHORWOMAN

A fast moving bank robber in Sylmar didn't move fast enough and we'll explain how the F.B.I. caught up with him.

LOU changing channels to two, caffeinated NEWS ANCHORS ...

ANCHORWOMAN

A landmark court decision, Carl, has cyber-music fans singing the blues.

ANCHORMAN

Ouch. I might have to budget more for my music. And we'll also be looking into a plan that was meant to bail us out of the debt crisis and may now leave us singing the blues.

LOU changing channels to another L.A. MORNING NEWS SHOW ...

ASIAN ANCHORWOMAN

A labor walkout creates huge health-care problems in Los Angeles.

LATIN ANCHORMAN

And it was a little too close for comfort when several bears paid a visit to a Tustin homeowner, all caught on tape.

LOU

clicking between MORNING NEWS BROADCASTS, watching

HAIR-SPRAYED ANCHORS

reading news against glossy graphics until something catches LOU'S attention and he stops at

THE K.S.M.L. MORNING NEWS

Lower rent than its competitors ... Ken doll ANCHORMAN and pin-up ANCHORWOMAN peddling unvarnished fear and mayhem ...

ANCHORWOMAN

With the build-up of gas the threat of a catastrophic explosion in the Fairfax District grows more likely by the hour.

ANCHORMAN

Twisted metal, a shattered life, all caught on tape last night at the scene of a fiery one-car collision on the 605.

FOOTAGE

of the crash LOU saw fills screen ... the fiery car ... COPS pulling the WOMAN from the wreckage ... a red banner reads

K.S.M.L. EXCLUSIVE

ANCHORMAN

Melinda Flores of Yorba Linda was severely burned but escaped with her life thanks to the incredible bravery of two C.H.P. officers. The crash started a fire that quickly consumed the vehicle.

ANCHORWOMAN

As we see in an exclusive K.S.M.L. video, C.H.P. officers Mike Tully and Ken Wu risked their lives saving the single mom.

ANCHORWOMAN

Flores was transferred to Saint Joseph's hospital in extremely critical condition with severe burns over nearly 80 percent of her body.

CRASH VIDEO is replaced by a mug shot of a crazed **WOMAN** ...

ANCHORWOMAN

In just a few hours we'll be at the Long Beach court house for the first appearance of the housewife accused of cutting off her husband's genitals.

ANCHORMAN

Lisa Batril faces a judge today. She's the Merced soccer mom accused of drugging and binding her estranged husband and cutting off his genitals in a merciless attack.

IMAGES of the crime scene fill **FRAME** ...

ANCHORWOMAN

And a common household product could shorten your baby's life by years. We have the chilling details coming up.

A COMMERCIAL

plays and **CUT TO**

BRIGHT SUN

on white-glare sand ... heat waves distort

PEOPLE

riding bikes and jogging and roller-blading in Venice where we find

LOU

sitting on wall ... watching

A MAN

in a spandex bicycle outfit as he locks his racing bike, enters a juice store and

LOU

crosses ... picks the bike lock and **CUT TO**

A PAWN SHOP

LOU showing the bike to a WOMAN OWNER ...

OWNER

I dunno. I'll give you 500.

LOU

This is a custom racing bicycle, ma'am, designed for competitive road cycling. This bike has a lightweight, space-age carbon frame and handlebars positioned to put the rider in a more aerodynamic posture. It also has micro-shifters and 37 gears and weighs under six pounds. I won the Tour de Mexico on this bike.

OWNER

700. High as I'll go.

LOU

It cost me over 8000 new.

OWNER

700.

LOU

2500, that's giving it away.

OWNER

No bike's got 37 gears.

LOU

2000.

OWNER

Nope.

LOU

Could I please speak with your boss, please?

OWNER

I'm the owner.

LOU

How about 800 in store credit?

OWNER

What are you looking for?

LOU

A camcorder and a police scanner.

MOONRISE

over L.A. ... EMERGENCY RADIO CHATTER drums over the city ...

POLICE RADIO

-- 5-17, code one.
 -- 6-12, 10-4.
 -- 1-3-9-3-2 South Hoover. 10-16.
 -- 5-17 copy.
 -- 5-9-7 with the 11-26 westbound.
 -- Code one.
 -- 5-9-7. 1-9-8-0-4 X-ray David.
 -- 1-0-9, 88 to 0-3.
 -- 5-9-7 copy.
 -- 1-0-9 go.
 -- 2-7-8 in two minutes.
 -- 88 a go, copy.
 -- 2-7-8 roger.
 -- Tac-17, code one back.
 -- 17-copy.
 -- 2-7-8, code two.
 -- 5-9-7 clear.
 -- 88, 2-11, code two.
 -- ETC, ETC, ETC.

Nonstop POLICE BAND as the MOON inches over L.A. and CUT TO

LOU

sitting in his beat-up car ... listening to the jumble of police code and call signs on a second-hand scanner ... LOU has a cheap camcorder and a map of L.A. and no idea what or where anything is happening until ...

POLICE RADIO

-- 2-2-9, code four.
 -- 2-2-9, 10-23.
 -- 2-2-9, 2-40. Black male adult and
 black juvenile fighting at 1-3-9-3-2
 Tularosa Drive. North of location.
 -- 2-2-9 copy.

LOU checking the map ... pulling into traffic and CUT TO

TULAROSA DRIVE

is framed by squat apartment buildings and palms swaying against the night as

LOU

drives by ... sees a stopped POLICE CRUISER with its bubble lights blinking and CUT TO

A BLOODIED BLACK MAN

sitting on the sidewalk ... no shirt ... hands flex-cuffed behind him ... two COPS talking with a crying and bloodied TEENAGE BOY as

LOU

double-parks ... jumps out and comes up filming ... circling close ...

COP #1

Who are you?

LOU

Freelance.

COP #2

What are you doing?

LOU

Filming. For TV.

COP #1

Back away.

LOU

What's happening?

LOU'S CAMERA POV

as he PANS from the CRYING TEENAGER ... to the bloodied GUY in flexcuffs ... to the COPS, looking increasingly confused and irritated ...

COP #1

I said turn around and leave.

LOU

I'm fairly sure that I'm allowed to film this.

COP #1

Film *what*?

LOU

I don't know. What's going on?

COP #2

Walk away or get arrested for obstruction!

LOU backing up as he keep filming and CUT TO

LATER

LOU drives as the SCANNER spits out codes and calls, trouble touching down like a tornado stalled over L.A. and CUT TO

LATER

LOU at a FENDER BENDER ... COPS not into his filming ...

LOU

Excuse me, what's a 10-17? What's a 10-12?

COP

Leave! I'm not telling you again!

LATER

LOU at a GAS STATION ... hose to his overheating radiator ... car door open ... police radio cranked loud ... cacophony of police calls until ...

POLICE RADIO

-- 3-8-9, code two. Shots at Motor and Washington near the Walgreens. Two male suspects, no description. One injury.
-- 3-8-9, code two.

LOU yanking the hose, slamming the hood and CUT TO

MOTOR AND WASHINGTON

is blocked by SQUAD CARS and AMBULANCES ... major crime scene developing as

LOU'S CAR

stops on the fringe ... he gets out filming and

LOU'S CAMERA POV

COPS chalk-circle bullet shells on pavement ... other COPS direct traffic as LOU hurries toward

PARAMEDICS

doing chest compressions on a MAN in the street and

LOU

hurries around a CAMERAMAN filming from a respectful distance ... closer and closer until he's directly over the PARAMEDICS ... filming something we don't see ... agonizing moans ...

COP

(sees LOU)

Get back! A hundred feet back! Back!

LOU'S shoved away ... COPS pushing the other CAMERAMAN from the scene ... unrolling yellow police tape ...

CAMERAMAN

Fucking asshole. You shut it down.

The CAMERAMAN kills the light on his high-end CAMERA ...

CAMERAMAN

Had a great fucking angle till you crowded in. Take your dumb-ass and get the fuck home. There's people fucking working out here. Fucking asshole.

The MAN crosses to a panel van, opens a door and LOU SEES

THE SCANNERS AND COMPUTER SCREENS

of the trade ... the MAN hands the CAMERA to his PARTNER who downloads footage onto a computer ... one MAN editing as the other MAN speed-dials his cell ...

MAN/ON CELL

Yeah, it's Ace Video. You want to start rolling to Culver City. Your lead's gonna be at Motor and Washington. Shooting. I got some good shots of a victim being treated. L.A.P.D. hasn't released it but a manager at a Walgreens says it's a carjacking and the victim's the owner. He's white and critical. I got 60 seconds cut with a quote from the manager and a neighbor, exclusive for 2000... so make a counter ... 1250 ... 1000 ... done ...

The MAN sees LOU listening, slams the door shut and CUT TO

A LOS ANGELES TV STATION

in the high numbers on Sunset ... neon sign flickering against the night ...

KSML-TV
Television Center

INSIDE THE STATION

LOU enters the NEWSROOM where a night shift skeleton CREW is cobbling together the morning broadcast ...

LOU moving unnoticed through the open room ... eyes taking in everything ...

HALF-DOZEN WRITERS typing copy in cubicles ...

ASSIGNMENT EDITOR conferencing with REPORTERS (two hair-straightened WOMEN and a teeth-bleached MAN) ...

OVERHEARING bits of conversation (*"We're leading with the fire in Downey ... She wants a stand-up in every story ..."*)

LOU drawn to a glass wall ... peering at the

K.S.M.L. NEWS SET

with its sleek news desks and sweeping L.A. backdrops and studio-grade CAMERAS and teleprompters and green screens ... a bright, small, faux island in a cavernous black-shadowed sound stage and

LOU

is drawn to voices from a room down a hall and CUT TO

K.S.M.L. EDITING BAY

Dark ... dingy ... an EDITOR works a console with two screens ... a WOMAN stands over him and

NINA ROMINA

is a veteran of three decades in the blood-sport that is local TV news ... she's a 50-ish, over-made, hard-bitten beauty who began in front of the camera and has now, through sheer survival, become the madam of the whore house ...

NINA

(to the editor)

Put the neighbor here ... the kids with their mother ... by the door ... get it from back at 2:16 ...

EDITOR scrolling footage to stop at

TWO SAUCER-EYED GIRLS

huddled by a WOMAN talking through a barred door ...

WOMAN/ON SCREEN

It was probably like 10:30 or 11 an' she told me she heard a girl yelling so like she knew something was wrong an' then a bang so now she's like wow maybe that got something to do with what happened ... I mean he was nice, I used to see him all the time...

NINA

Cut from 'she heard yelling' to 'and then a bang' and then I want to lay over some nat sound. Let's loop the neighbor's dog barking and then try taking the crying kid from b roll and dropping that in the background.

NINA sees LOU at the door ...

NINA

You my fill-in operator?

LOU

I don't think so. I shot some footage. For sale.

NINA

A stringer?

LOU

What?

NINA

Who do you work for?

LOU

At the moment I work for myself.

NINA

See Frank, out there, the way you came.
(to the EDITOR)
What's it time to?

EDITOR

1:06.

NINA

The slot's 56. Trim the header four.

NINA sips coffee as the EDITOR trims a shot of police tape around a smashed apartment door ... glancing back as LOU leaves ...

NINA

What do you have?

LOU

Something I'm fairly certain you'll be excited about.

NINA

What is it?

LOU

It's a shooting. A man is shot, several times in fact, and he's lying on the ground. He's bleeding on the ground. I would be surprised if he survived, honestly. He was shot during a car-jacking.

NINA

From Motor and Washington?

LOU

Yes, that's right.

NINA

I heard Seven had the exclusive.

LOU

No. I was there and I was much closer to what was happening.

NINA

Well let's see it.

LOU

(hands her his camcorder)
You can watch it on the little screen.

NINA

You've never done this before.

LOU

Yes. I mean no. I'm just starting.

The editor connects LOU'S camera to the editing console and

LOU'S CAMCORDER

plays ... image of LOU outside the pawn shop ... aiming the camcorder at himself ... just peering into the camera ...

LOU

You can fast-forward through this.

EDITOR fast-forwarding LOU'S video log ... past the flex-tied black guy ... past the COP yelling at him to leave and

LOU'S arrival at Motor and Washington comes up .. EDITOR slowing to real time and we see

LOU'S CAMERA POV

of the crime scene ... COPS chalk-circling bullets ... LOU elbowing past the other CAMERAMAN filming from a respectful distance ... moans of the as yet unseen victim as LOU comes in right over the PARAMEDICS' shoulders and CLOSE ON

THE SHOT MAN

with a gaping head wound ... blood everywhere .. footage so violent and immediate the

EDITOR

(recoils)
Oh fuck.

NINA

glances from the screen to LOU ... unblinking gaze ... impassive ... watching his work ...

NINA

(dials a phone)
I need you to see something.

NINA hangs up ... watches the screen as LOU'S shoved back by the police and ... FRANK KRUSE (brisk, capable) enters the editing bay ...

NINA

Lou Bloom, Frank Kruse, our assignment editor.
(to the EDITOR)
Play it back.

FRANK

watches LOU'S footage ... winces at the gore ...

NINA

That's the lead. I want to break it up and do a wrap-around from the scene. Let's get Joel rolling. I want a walking stand-up. Teaser at five and repeat on the half. I want the copy to start with a warning.

FRANK

You're going to show this?

NINA

With a warning.

FRANK

It's excessive.

NINA

We should have packages like this every day.

FRANK

People are eating breakfast.

NINA

And they'll talk about it at work. Tie it in with the carjacking last month in Glendale and the other one, the van in Palms, when was that? March. It's a carjacking crime wave. That's the banner. Call the victim's family. Get a quote. Mike it. You know what to do.

(to LOU)

How much?

LOU

Well, I'm selling this particular piece for ten thousand. I think at that price there's a lot of value in it for you.

NINA

Not even close. This late you have no where else to go. And the quality's for shit. I'll give you a 1000, that's the most I'll do. Now let's get you paid.

NINA'S OFFICE

Work clutter ... impersonal ... impermanent ... LOU alone ... looking around as ... NINA comes in, hands him a check ...

NINA

Buy some better equipment. A directional mike. Get interviews when you can. You have a good eye.

LOU

Thank you. I'm just beginning so praise from someone such as yourself, well you can imagine it means quite a lot.

NINA

I'll help anyway I can. And of course, you can help me by calling us first. I want you to contact me when you have something.

LOU

Something like this?

NINA

That's right.

LOU

Bloody.

NINA

That's only part of it. We like crime. Not all crime. A carjacking in Compton, for example, that isn't news, now is it? We find our viewers are more interested in urban crime creeping into the suburbs. What that means is a victim or victims, preferably well-off and/or white, injured at the hands of the poor, or a minority.

LOU

Just crime?

NINA

No. Accidents play. Cars, buses, trains, planes. Fires. Suicides.

LOU

But bloody.

NINA

Graphic. The best and clearest way that I can phrase it to you, Lou, to capture the spirit of what we air, is think of our newscast as a screaming woman running down the street with her throat cut.

LOU

I understand. I've always been a very fast learner. You'll be seeing me again.

NINA

I believe you.

A TV COMMERCIAL

begins ... ends ... the K.S.M.L. THEME SONG crashes in and CUT TO

LOU'S APARTMENT

A DVD recorder is patched to the TV as

THE K.S.M.L. MORNING BROADCAST

erupts ... full frame banner reading

BREAKING NEWS CARJACKING CRIME WAVE

The ANCHORS appear, suitably breathless ...

ANCHORWOMAN

A tragic drug store visit to help his ailing wife claimed the life of a loving husband last night in Culver City. Reporting from the scene is Joel Beatty.

The REPORTER begins a walking stand-up toward the police-taped crime scene ...

REPORTER

An act of kindness turned into a savage, deadly attack outside this Walgreen's on Washington Boulevard at 2 am when 68-year-old David Keller of Mar Vista was walking toward his car with a prescription for his sick wife and was confronted right here by a black male with a 9mm handgun who police believe tried to take his vehicle. The vicious tragedy and senselessness of the brutal shooting as well as the victim's last moments were captured in graphic footage we are about to air. Viewer discretion is advised.

LOU'S footage comes on ... full screen ... sound sweetened ... filling a full 30 seconds of the broadcast ... ending with the bloody images of the mortally wounded MAN and

PULL BACK TO SHOW

LOU inches from the tv screen ... watching his work ... news broadcast moving on to another tragedy as we CUT TO

LATER

LOU downloading the segment onto his laptop ... labelling the file *CARJACKING CRIME WAVE* and CUT TO

LATER

as the police scanner plays in LOU'S apartment ... LOU
looking up police code definitions on-line and CUT TO

DENNYS

LOU wears a tie ... drinking ice water ... crunching cubes as

A YOUNG ASIAN MAN

enters ... ragged and rangy ... LOU waving him over ...

LOU
Are you Richard?

RICK
Rick.

LOU
I'm Louis Bloom.

RICK
Hi, Lou.

LOU
Louis. Sit down.

RICK sits ... a broke hustler ... loser's self-disgust ...

LOU
I need someone who doesn't drink or do
drugs.

RICK
Okay.

LOU
The situation is that I lost an employee
and I'm interviewing for a replacement.

RICK
Your ad didn't list what the job was.

LOU
It's a fine opportunity for some lucky
someone.
(pulling a notepad)
I'd like to know about your prior
employment and hear in your own words
what you learned from each position.

RICK
My old jobs? I did landscaping for a
couple months. Mow, blow and go.

LOU writing his answer in the pad ...

RICK
I learned I had hay-fever so I quit.

LOU
Other jobs?

RICK
I don't know, week here, week there.

LOU
Why hire you? Sell yourself. Go.

RICK
Okay. Well, I'm Rick, of course. I took
three buses to get here. I finished high
school. I need a job. I'll do just
about anything. That's me. Hire Rick.

LOU
What's your address?

RICK
I don't have one. Not permanent I mean.

LOU
You're homeless.

RICK
I was for awhile.

LOU
You trick.

RICK
Work the street? No.

LOU
It wasn't a question.

RICK
I'm straight.

LOU
A lot of straight guys trick. Do you
have a driver's license?

RICK
Yeah.

LOU

Do you know L.A.?

RICK

I grew up all around here.

LOU

Can you start tonight?

RICK

Doing what?

LOU

I run a successful tv news business. I film breaking stories. Maybe you saw my item this morning of a fatal carjacking.

RICK

I don't have a tv.

LOU

Do you have a cell phone?

RICK

Yeah.

LOU

Does it have GPS?

RICK

Yeah.

LOU

Congratulations. You're hired. Your job will be to listen to the emergency radio, learn the police codes, help navigate and watch the car.

RICK

What's it pay?

LOU

It's an internship.

RICK

I can't do that. I need money.

LOU

I'm giving you the chance to explore career options and gain insight into my organization. It's not at all unusual for me to make full-time job offers to my interns.

RICK

I gotta get paid. At least something.

LOU

I'll give you 30 dollars cash per night.

RICK

Okay. I guess.

THE SUN

sinks into the sea as police radio chatter plays over ...
isolating on ...

POLICE RADIO

-- 7-92, 10-38.
-- 7-92, 10-6.
-- 7-92, copy.

LOU V.O.

7-92's the responding unit. 10-38's a
traffic stop, suspicious vehicle. 7-92
answered 10-6, which means they're busy.
The dispatch copied, meaning understood.

POLICE RADIO CHATTER continues as

A CELL PHONE SCREEN FILLS FRAME

GPS map of Los Angeles ... user location pinging on a street
in West Hollywood ...

POLICE RADIO

-- 18, code six.
-- 7, 10-14.
-- 7, code six, copy.
-- 7, 248, 10-14, 1-8-9-2-7 Vermont.

LOU'S CAR

parked in Hollywood ... LOU at the wheel ... RICK shotgun ...

LOU

Unit 18's on a stopped car. Unit 7 and
unit 248 got a 10-14, that's a prowler,
they're both responding.

RICK

Should we go?

LOU

No. We want victims, and not the kind
that live on Vermont.

TIME LAPSE

An hour passes in seconds ... LOU and RICK nearly motionless in the front seat ... listen to POLICE RADIO CHATTER and ... sudden activity ... view through

THE WINDSHIELD

of LOU driving hyper-speed through L.A. ... resume to

REAL TIME

and LOU driving 90 mph on a freeway ... POLICE RADIO blaring ... RICK reading his GPS ... calling directions ... freaked by the speed ...

RICK

-- you're getting off at the next exit,
coming up, slow down, man --

RICK braces and grabs the dash as LOU takes the exit ... sparks flying as he brushes the guardrail ...

RICK

-- too fast dude! --

LOU

Where are we going?

RICK

-- left at the light! --

LOU

I'd like more warning next time.

LOU skidding into a hard left turn ...

LOU

Talk to me, Richard. What next?

RICK

-- keeping on this -- five, no six blocks
then a right --

LOU

On what?

RICK

I made a mistake! Shit! It was the next
exit!

LOU looking at him ... dead stare ... pulling a screeching u-turn and CUT TO

FIRE TRUCKS

block a street ... COPS string yellow tape and

LOU

hustles up to the action as he's filming ... arriving late ... seeing several freelance CREWS packing gear to go ...

LOU

Did they bring them out?

FREELANCE MAN #1

Ambulance left five minutes ago.

LOU filming a smoke-sooted doorway ... gawking NEIGHBORS ... FIREMEN rolling hoses ... nothing else to shoot and CUT TO

LOU'S MOVING CAR

LOU driving ... RICK beside him ... POLICE RADIO playing ...

LOU

I'd bet I wasted five dollars of gas just getting here, or don't you think that's a lot of money?

RICK

I'm sorry.

LOU pounds the car horn ...

RICK

You were going too fast. I couldn't see the screen.

LOU

Okay. First off, Richard, don't answer by telling me a problem. I have enough of those already. Bring me a solution. Then we'll make a decision together.

RICK

Maybe if you didn't rush me.

LOU

Don't rush you. Okay. Good, I can use that ... You see, Rick, they've done studies, and they found that in any system that relies on cooperation, from a school of fish or say even a professional hockey team for example, these experts have identified communication as the number one single key to success.

LATER THAT NIGHT

A motorcycle has wiped out on a FREEWAY and been crushed by a truck ... in the next lane

THE DEAD RIDER'S

bent legs stick from under a sideways CAR ... road flares funnel traffic to adjacent lanes as

LOU

films with several other FREELANCERS and CUT TO

LATER THAT NIGHT

LOU and RICK in a DINER ... looking at menus ...

RICK

I don't have any money.

LOU signalling the WAITRESS ...

RICK

Can you front me from what I make tonight?

LOU

You haven't made it yet.

The WAITRESS comes over ... name tag ...

LOU

Hello, Donna. I'd like to have a hamburger, please. I'd like it rare.

WAITRESS

Anything with that?

LOU

Is the cheese extra?

WAITRESS

85 cents.

LOU

Just the burger. And a water, please

RICK

Nothing for me.

LOU

I thought you were hungry.

RICK

You said I didn't make the money yet.

LOU

I didn't say you couldn't borrow it.

RICK

I'll have what he's having.

She leaves ...

LOU

From now on I want you to listen to what I say, Rick. That means more than just hearing it and remembering what was said. I also want you to buy some new clothes. There's a lot of things we can't control, like where we were born, but how we present ourselves to strangers and new acquaintances isn't one of them.

LATER THAT NIGHT

LOU doing 100 MPH on a freeway ... engine red-lined ...
POLICE RADIO blasting ... RICK on the verge of panic ...

LOU

Do you know what fear stands for?

RICK

What?

LOU

False Evidence Appearing Real.

RICK

You're going really fucking fast.

LOU

Get out of your head, Rick. It's a bad neighborhood. Now when you have a chance I need to know when I'm exiting.

RICK

Florence. 2.2 miles.

CRIME SCENE

Mixed neighborhood ... POLICE CARS painting the night red ...
LOU films as he comes through a line of gawking NEIGHBORS ...

LOU

What happened?

NEIGHBOR

Fuck you vulture motherfucker.

LOU keeps filming ... approaching an OLD NEIGHBOR ...

LOU

TV news. What's going on?

OLD NEIGHBOR

There was a shooting. I counted 20, I dunno, 30 shots. Place is supposed to be boarded up. They don't fucking care.

LOU

(still filming)

Let's try it again without cursing.
Thank you. So what's going on?

OLD NEIGHBOR

Not doing it again.

LOU

For tv. This time really sell it.

OLD NEIGHBOR

I don't have a tv.

The OLD NEIGHBOR walks away .. LOU goes to the police tape ... films COPS outside an abandoned HOUSE ... a FREELANCER passes, heading to his van ...

FREELANCER

S'nothing. Two dead crackheads.

LOU stops filming ... walking back to the car when he has a view into the yellow-taped backyard where he SEES

A WHITE COUPLE

outside a HOME adjacent to the shooting ... crying MOM with BABY ... COPS examining bullet holes in the house exterior as

LOU

opens the gate of the WHITE COUPLE'S row home ... going to the front door ... knocking ... but the OWNERS are in the backyard with the COPS and LOU knows it as he lets himself in and CUT TO

INSIDE ROW HOME

LOU filming ... moving through the couple's house ... zooming in on a stroller ... reaching the kitchen where he sees

A REFRIGERATOR PHOTO

of the COUPLE with their BABY ... LOU pauses ... moves the photo close to a nearby bullet hole ... resumes shooting and LOU sees mail on a table ... grabbing a letter and CUT TO

K.S.M.L. NEWSROOM

LOU, NINA and FRANK KRUSE packed in a cubicle watching

LOU'S FOOTAGE

inside the house ... family photo beside the bullet hole ...

NINA

Great shot. Oh that's fantastic. That's a great piece of tape.

FRANK

You didn't get an interview with the couple?

LOU

I have footage of them.

A clip appears ... far-away view of the young COUPLE talking to the police in their backyard ...

LOU

I also have an interview with a neighbor. He curses but you can cut that out.

FRANK

How'd you get inside the house?

LOU

The door was open.

FRANK

They allowed you?

LOU

I heard someone yell to come in, but when I didn't find them inside I left.

FRANK

The only shot of the owners is over a fence?

LOU

The police were shutting it down.

FRANK

I don't like it.

NINA

Like what?

FRANK

The footage looks like he broke in. He has no close-ups of the homeowners --
 (holding the letter LOU took)
 -- and he's giving us their names off a piece of private correspondence.

LOU

Excuse me, that's junk mail.

FRANK

Well I have a problem with that.

NINA

We'll knock out a killer package.

FRANK

This is *my* job.

NINA

Your job's writing the tweet of the day and getting Deb to turn sideways during the weather forecast. We're running it.

NEWS SET

NINA walks LOU onto the news set ... TECHS prepping ...

LOU

I liked how you handled Frank. You didn't soften the truth or dilute it. I think being clear with your objectives is more important than trying to present ideas in a non-confrontational manner.

NINA

You have experience in an office?

LOU

Myself? Not presently, no.

NINA

So where'd you get all that?

LOU

I study a lot on-line.

NINA

Yeah. What?

LOU circling the news set ... taking it in as he talks ...

LOU

Well, all sorts of things, actually. I'm on my computer all day. I haven't had what you'd call much formal education but you can find most anything if you look hard enough. Last year I took an on-line business course, for example. I learned you have to have a business plan before starting a business, and that why you pursue something is as important as what you pursue. The site advised you to answer the following question before deciding where to focus your abilities. The question was 'What do I love to do?' The site suggested making a list of my strengths and weaknesses. What are you good at? And what are you not that good at? Maybe you want to strengthen and develop knowledge about the things you're already good at. Or maybe you might want to strengthen your weaknesses. I recently remade my list and I'm thinking now that television news might just be something that I love as well as something that I happen to be good at.

LOU stops at the large, high-def L.A. backdrop ...

LOU

On tv it looks real.

NINA

Yes it does. Well, I have a show to do. Your check's at the desk. Outstanding work, Lou. Really.

LOU

Thanks, Nina. That means an awful lot.

NINA leaves ... LOU alone sitting in the anchor chair ... staring into the black eyes of the cameras and CUT TO

MOUNT WILSON

Tallest antenna ... vertigo view ... churning K.S.M.L. theme song and CUT TO

LOU'S APARTMENT

LOU close to the TV ... K.S.M.L. INTRO playing ... montage of police chases, banking helicopters, wailing ambulances ...

NEWS INTRO

From the mountains to the valleys to the desert this is K.S.M.L. First News in HD. First, best, live. From the leader of morning news. The news you need to know. With Lisa Mays, Scott Kim, meteorologist Debbie Chu and Gill Bonner with sports.

ANCHORWOMAN

Is stealing a child as hard as it seems? You'll hear a Torrance mother's frantic 9-1-1 call that triggered a desperate amber alert last night after her fourth grader failed to arrive home for dinner.

ANCHORMAN

And tragedy as a grandmother is mowed down crossing a busy Southland street. We have details and an in-depth K.S.M.L. exclusive on the deadliest crosswalks in the city. Is one in your neighborhood?

ANCHORWOMAN

But first, a Westchester couple and their newborn daughter narrowly escaped death overnight after being caught in a raging crossfire between suspected drug dealers that left two dead. Only K.S.M.L. has the terrifying, exclusive footage.

WOMAN REPORTER outside the yellow-taped crack house ...

REPORTER

It's every parent's nightmare. Imagine singing a lullaby to your infant, tucking them in for sleep and then shielding them as a barrage of high-powered bullets literally blast through your home. Well for the Cahills of Westchester that fear became a terrifying reality when an adjacent drug house was the setting for a scene right out of the Wild West.

LOU'S footage of the crime scene neighborhood appears ... soundtrack sweetened by sirens and barking dogs ... banner across the bottom of the screen ...

K.S.M.L. EXCLUSIVE Horror In Westchester

REPORTER/OVER

This sleepy Westchester lane erupted in gunfire at approximately 1:20 last night, with sheriff's deputies telling K.S.M.L. that over 30 shots were exchanged in a shootout that left two unidentified but alleged drug users dead in the foreclosed home behind me. But the horror was only beginning inside the neighboring house where Robert and Cathy Cahill were left frantically checking their baby daughter for injuries after the barrage shattered the safety, as well as their windows and rooms, with high-caliber bullets.

The inside of the couple's house is seen ... money shot of the family photo on the bullet-pierced fridge ...

REPORTER/OVER

Police investigators are now mounting a massive search for the gunmen, with one senior official telling K.S.M.L. that it was a miracle innocent victims weren't injured or killed in the shootout. That official also conveyed concern for the very real possibility of more gunplay in other L.A. neighborhoods, urging all Southland residents to exercise caution by locking their doors and windows.

ANCHORMAN appearing ...

ANCHORMAN

Deena Rain, live for us in Westchester. Thank you. More after this.

LATER

LOU downloading the recorded news broadcast onto his computer ... labelling the file *HORROR IN WESTCHESTER* and ...

TIME LAPSE

LOU'S computer screen fills with files ...

CARJACKING CRIME WAVE ...

HORROR IN WESTCHESTER ...

NURSING HOME NIGHTMARE ...

TODDLER STABBED ...

D.W.I. CRASH CLAIMS FOUR ...

CARJACKING/WOMAN DRAGGED ...

MURDER/SUICIDE IN DUARTE ...

BOTCHED SWAT RAID ...

RAMPAGE IN RESEDA ...

FIERY DEATH ...
 HEADLESS BODY IN CARSON ...
 SAVAGE DOG ATTACK ...
 BUSINESSMAN SHOT IN GARAGE ...
 HAMMER SLAYINGS ...
 POWERLINE ELECTROCUTION ...
 TRACTOR TRAILER CRUSHES CAR ...
 GAS EXPLOSION IN INDUSTRY ...
 RESTRAINING ORDER MURDER ...
 SON STABS FATHER ...
 GANG SHOOTING HIGH SCHOOLER ...
 ROAD RAGE DEATH ON 110 ...
 A.T.M. KILLING ...
 KIDNAPPER KILLS VICTIM ...
 HATE CRIME MURDER ...
 MISSING MOM ...
 DRIVE-BY IN VENICE ...
 PARKING LOT RAPE ...
 SUICIDE BY COP ...
 AIRPORT BODY ...
 CO-WORKER CRUSHED ...
 TOT TAKEN ...

CAMERA closing on words in the continuing list ...

KILLING ...

VICTIM ...

SHATTERED ...

BLOODY ...

BOTCHED ...

SCREAMS ...

KNIFE ...

BRAINS ...

OFF-DUTY ...

CRAZED ...

GAS STATION

Gaudy sunset ... LOU wiping the windshield of his brand new, red CHALLENGER ... RICK filling the tank ... pulling the pump as LOU runs over ... furiously wipes some spilled gas ...

LOU

Rick, I'm really pleased with how you've progressed and you're doing a great job. However you just spilled gasoline on my car, which will eat the paint. I'd like you to tighten up a bit on this, because if you fill it like that again I'm gonna terminate you immediately, I promise you.

NIGHT

LOU driving ... dozen new EMERGENCY RADIOS crammed on the dash ... overlapping chatter ... RICK glued to two computer screens ... checking emergency band texts and locations as

LOU stops at a red light ... eyeing the road ... listening to the scanners ... fingers drumming on the wheel ... waiting for the right call ...

RICK

(glancing across the street)
Crate and Barrel. That's a good store.

LOU not answering ... constant emergency chatter ...

RICK

Making peace with what you don't have. That's what it's all about. Living with what you ain't got. Right? Don't you think?

LOU

I think hellos are really just a way of saying don't hurt me. It's a signal. If you don't return it, it's an aggressive response. You're saying, 'you're not safe with me.'

EMERGENCY SCANNER

-- 6-1-9, code two T-C. 9-0-2. 1-1-6-0
Benedict Canyon.
-- 6-1-9, copy. Code one-Mary.

LOU

Crash with injuries. Good neighborhood.

LOU running the light ... bombing into the hills and CUT TO

BENEDICT CANYON

A half-dozen cars stopped on a sharply curved uphill road ... panicked MOTORISTS mill by their cars, talk on cell phones as

THE RED CHALLENGER

appears ... driving the shoulder to the front of the line of stopped cars ... LOU jumping out ... already filming ...

LOU

(to a freaked MOTORIST)
TV news. What happened?

MOTORIST

Head-on! They're dead!

LOU

Did you see it happen?

MOTORIST

No, after.

LOU

What exactly did you see?

MOTORIST

Bodies. Blood. Get that camera out of my face.

LOU jogging up the road ... coming upon the crash and

LOU SEES

one FATALITY in a crushed car ... spies another FATALITY ejected from a smashed truck ... body half-hidden in the brush beside the road ... distant sirens and

LOU

goes to the body in the car ... props it into view ... drapes it over the steering wheel ... runs to the brush ... drags a second body by the leg onto the road ... positions a lifeless arm ... stepping back and

LOU'S POV THROUGH CAMCORDER

as he focuses on a shot of both bodies in the foreground ... red RECORD light on ... fire starting ... entangled cars becoming a bonfire as

FIRETRUCKS and POLICE

start arriving and

LOU

goes up an embankment ... shooting through the flames as

A FAMILIAR VAN

pulls up and the two STRINGERS seen at the first car crash jump out ... blocked by COPS from coming close ... JOE LODER in a MAYHEM VIDEO shirt spotting LOU filming and CUT TO

K.S.M.L. NEWS SET

as the wall clock ticks 5:54 AM ... ANCHORS taking seats at the news desk ... MAKE-UP ARTIST applying touch-ups ... cameras dolly in ... WEATHER GIRL practicing in front of a green screen ... stage lights flooding on as

LOU

watches from the shadows ... stepping out of the way as a GRIP unspools electrical cable ... seeing NINA approach ...

NINA

(handing him a check)
1500.

LOU

(re: the anchors)
Scott Kim wears the same blue tie on Fridays.

NINA

We're leading with it. That's your third start this week.

LOU

I'm focusing on framing. A proper frame not only draws the eye into a picture but keeps it there longer, dissolving the barrier between the subject and the outside of the shot.

NINA

Is that blood on your pants?

LOU

I don't think so. You know I recently heard about a Mexican restaurant called Cabanita. Have you heard of it?

NINA

It's also on your sleeve.

LOU

I didn't see that.

NINA hands him a make-up towel ... LOU wiping his sleeve ...

LOU

What I was asking is do you like Mexican food, Nina?

NINA

Yeah.

LOU

Cabanita has been called an authentic taste of Mexico City. Most evenings there's live music, but on Saturdays classic Mexican films are shown. Do you want to go with me? I think it would be fun if we went together.

NINA

Thanks, but I'm busy.

LOU

Saturday's your night off, isn't it?

NINA

I have a rule, Lou. I don't date people I work with. And I'm twice your age.

LOU

I like older women. Besides, I don't work with you, you're somebody I sell to.

NINA

And I don't want to fuck that up.

LOU

What if by saying no you fuck it up?

NINA

Is that what you saying?

LOU

I didn't say that.

NINA

I don't know what to say.

DAWN

Sun ascending a sheet-white sky ... LOU leaving K.S.M.L. ... walking to the Challenger as

THE MAYHEM VIDEO VAN

pulls to the curb ... JOE emerging ...

JOE

Lou, hey Lou. Joe Loder. Mayhem.

LOU keeps walking ... JOE catching up ...

JOE

Great get tonight. They were closing it down by the time we showed up.

LOU

Were you waiting for me out here?

JOE

I was driving by and saw your car. You need an air-card if you really wanna be a mobile station. Import the video to the laptop, cut the video, upload to your FTP site and notify the stations you got something for sale. Boom boom boom.

LOU listens ... acting less interested than he really is ...

JOE

Otherwise it's a nice ride. I had a '97 Challenger but lost it in a divorce. The laws of California aren't friendly to alimony payments. You got a good run going but there's valleys out there. Believe me, I've been nightcrawling eight years. You hear I'm adding a second van?

LOU

I didn't hear that.

JOE

Gonna be a game changer. Cut our on-scene time in half. And I'm setting up a dedicated dispatch. No more listening and driving. You like the Canon 300s?

LOU

I never used one.

JOE

Six thou a piece. 2.4 megapixels, night vision, 18-to-1 zoom, image stabilizing. I got one with your name on it.

LOU

I have a camera.

JOE

I want you running my second van. Two crews. Half the territory to cover. Now I know what you're thinking, half the money. But it also means twice the sales 'cause we're gonna be first at the scene. Why compete when we can work together? You can use my press cards. Puppydog off my police connections. This is the big move. The next level. We can corner this whole thing. I'm talking about putting some heavy digits in our pockets.

LOU

Thanks for offering me the position but working for myself is more in line with my skills and career goals.

JOE

Take a few days to think about it.

LOU

No. You'll need to hire someone else and I don't want to hold up the process.

JOE

You want to be on the inside of this. I'm gonna be tag-teaming every call.

LOU

You keep talking like it's something I might be interested in but I'm not.

JOE

You don't even understand the offer. If you did you'd be asking questions. What does this mean? What does that mean?

LOU

I feel like grabbing you by your ears and screaming in your face I'm not fucking interested. Instead I'm going to drive home and do some accounting.

LOU gets in his car, pulls away and CUT TO

MEXICAN RESTAURANT

Crowded and loud ... Mexican movies projected on walls ...
LOU and NINA eating at a table ...

NINA

I didn't wake up till five. My body's so off I feel like it's time for breakfast.

LOU

I'm sure you're beautiful anytime of day. In fact I'd say you're much prettier than Lisa Mays. I like the dark make-up on your eyes. I also like how you smell.

NINA

Where are you from, Lou?

LOU

The north end of the valley. Some of the calls sometimes take me over that way but nobody I know is still out there. You're from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

NINA

How did you know that?

LOU

It's online. Everything about you's online. Well not everything, but definitely a lot. I've watched all the videos from when you were a reporter. I'm sure you look at them of course.

NINA

God no, not without a drink in my hand.

LOU

I watch my work all the time.

NINA

Do you want to become a reporter?

LOU

No.

NINA

Most of you guys want air-time.

LOU

Not me. I want to be the guy who owns the station that owns the camera. The business is doing well but I'm ready to grow to the next level. To do that I need to stay one step ahead of my competition and take risks. I also need financial support to implement expansion. Would you like another margarita?

NINA

One's enough.

LOU

Thanks for coming out to talk. The place I'm in now is that I want a relationship with somebody I can team up with and share, like we share the same hours, the same job and whatnot. I could go down a laundry list but you get the idea.

NINA

I hope you find someone.

LOU

Here's the thing about that, Nina, I'm quite certain that I already have.

NINA

Okay, let me put this politely. I only came out to dinner with you, Lou, purely as a professional courtesy.

LOU

Thank you, because I don't think it's a secret that I've single-handedly raised the unit price on your ratings book.

NINA

Our ratings book price?

LOU

I'm a very fast learner, Nina. We had a conversation and I specifically mentioned that. Do you remember? Well do you?

NINA

Yes.

LOU

I recently learned, for instance, that most Americans watch local news to stay informed. I also learned that an average half-hour of Los Angeles television news packs all its local government coverage -- including budget, law enforcement, education, transportation and immigration -- into 22 seconds. Local crime stories, however, not only usually led the news but filled 14 times the broadcast, averaging 5 minutes 7 seconds. And K.S.M.L. relies heavily on such stories. With Los Angeles crime rates going down I think that makes items like mine particularly valuable, like rare animals. I imagine your needs will only increase during next week's rating sweeps period.

NINA

We certainly appreciate what you do.

LOU

There's certain good things in being alone. You have time to do the things you want to do, like study and plan. But you can't have dinners like this. Or be physical with a person, I mean beyond a flirtationship.

NINA

Where are you going with this?

LOU

I want that. With you. Like you want to keep your job and your health insurance.

NINA

Look, just for starters I don't need you to keep my fucking job.

LOU

You're the news director on the vampire shift at the lowest rated station in L.A. I have to think you're invested in this transaction.

NINA

Where did you get the balls to even suggest something like this?

LOU

We're still talking.

NINA

There's nothing more to say.

LOU

You can leave.

NINA

You've done well. Okay? We pay you well. Very well. We always have. If you like, I can get you an exclusive retainer, that would be on top of your segment fees. I could maybe even get you a job at the station, starting as a production assistant, so you can learn the business from the inside, that's where you said your interests lie, see where it goes.

LOU

You're not listening, Nina. I happen to know you haven't stayed at one station for more than two years at a time, and you're coming up on two years soon. So I can imagine you have a contract for that length of time and that ratings during the next week will directly affect that.

NINA

You're threatening if I don't ...

LOU

I'm negotiating.

NINA

You're threatening to stop selling to me.

LOU

That's your choice. The true price of any item is what someone's willing to pay. You want something and I want you.

NINA

To fuck you.

LOU

And as a friend.

NINA

Jesus Christ. Friends don't pressure friends to fucking sleep with them.

LOU

Actually that's wrong, Nina. Because as I'm sure you know ... a friend is a gift you give yourself.

TIME LAPSE

Earth turns and

STARS

slowly revolve as

DAY

breaks on a mountain road ...

ROCK SHADOWS AND HEAT WAVES

the only things moving as the sun time-lapses to a stop and in real time we SEE

A PACK OF COYOTES

feeding on an indistinct downed animal ...

CAMERA

pushing through brush to reveal

LOS ANGELES

smudged in morning haze... city sounds creeping in and CUT TO

A BATTERY OF SPRINKLERS

ker-chunk, ker-chunk, ker-chunk over a manicured golf course
and CUT TO

A WOMAN IN CURLERS

chases a naked CHILD down a tree-lined street and CUT TO

A 20-FOOT TALL, NEON COLORED, INFLATABLE DANCING FIGURE

writhing outside a gas station ... sound of an over-revved
engine bleeding in and TIME LAPSE AS

NIGHT

crashes down ... inflatable figure still writhing and

BLAST OF WIND AND NOISE

as the challenger roars through NIGHTTIME L.A. and CUT TO

INSIDE THE MOVING CAR

LOU slamming through corners ... RICK glued to the GPS ...
calling directions ... babel of emergency COM-CHATTER
blasting in surround sound and

PAN

the dozen SCANNERS crammed on the dash ... blinking and
burping codes ... each marked with its own label ...

LAPD - CITY WIDE TAC1 / LAPD - CITY WIDE TAC2
LAPD - CITY WIDE TAC3-5 / LASD - DISPATCH1
LASD - L-TAC1-3 / LAFD - DIV / LAFD - DIV2
SAN FERNANDO - TAC1 / SAN FERNANDO - TAC2
SAN FERNANDO FIRE / CHP COMMAND
LAPD AIR-TO-AIR

RICK

Left on Roth then six blocks to the ramp.

LOU

You're putting me on the 5?

RICK

The 2 to the 5 to the 110 to the 10.

LOU

Did you read my traffic memo yesterday?

RICK

Did I read it? Yeah. I read it.

LOU

What did it say? About the 5?

RICK

I looked at it. Okay, what?

LOU

Well for one thing it included the 5 has floating construction in the fast lane for the next three weeks. So knowing that, I'd expect you to put me on the 2 to the 101 to the 110 to the 10.

RICK

Half of one, six of the other.

LOU

It's half-dozen of one, six of the other. What I'd like is for you to admit that you didn't read what you said you did. I think you know that I'm a reasonable person, but no one likes to be lied to.

RICK

Yeah, well when am I gonna get my raise? I mean that's reasonable, right? Like you keep talking about this performance review but when's that gonna happen? Two months and every night I'm here working my ass off. I'm tired of your promises for more pay, man. I'm sleeping in a fucking garage ...

RICK launching into a monologue for more money ... his voice joining the overlapping emergency chatter and

LOU

glances at the SPEEDOMETER NEEDLE fluttering at 90 as

THE JUMBLE OF EMERGENCY SCANNER

reports build ... machine-gun stacatto tragedy blending with
RICK'S appeal for a raise until

LOU

Rick. Trying to leverage your salary in
this economic environment is near
impossible. Most firms have set starting
wages. Ideally, you could leverage with
other offers but that is just not the
case in your situation right now.

LOU knows the music of the emergency bands as his

HAND

darts and cranks the volume on *SAN FERNANDO - POLICE TAC2* ...

SCANNER

-- *Code 99, E.M.S. 14, E.M.S. Encino,
require immediate R.A., R.T. and H.A.
Light plane crash en route to
Whiteman Field. South of Foothill.*

LOU

Re-route us to that.

RICK

(regarding the GPS screen)
We're 22 minutes from Foothill and only
five from a suicide.

LOU

They're rolling heavy rescue and an air
ambulance. Get me there, please.

THE REMAINS OF A PLANE

burn in the weedy barrens beside a foothill freeway ... full
emergency response as

THE CHALLENGER

stops at a police perimeter set far from the scene and

LOU

gets out with the camera ... blocked by police tape ... tries
zooming to the wreckage ... too distant to register as

SEVERAL OTHER STRINGERS

arrive ... also shut out of shooting anything saleable as

A FIGURE

emerges from inside the accident scene ... carrying a camera
... it's JOE LODER ...

JOE

(seeing LOU, smiles)

Five fatals. Come screaming outta the
fucking sky. All lit up with the brush
on fire. Mine. Exclusive. I'm banging.

JOE ducks under the police tape ... pausing before LOU ...

JOE

Oh, and my other van's in Carson getting
the jumper. I was trying to hook you up.
I was trying to learn you. Welcome to
the future, bra.

THE K.S.M.L. NEWSROOM

is busier than usual ... sweeps week creating added energy
... clock reading 4:35 AM and CUT TO

THE CONTROL ROOM

where the walls of screens are set to competing channels ...
LOU showing NINA the night's haul ... car accident on one
monitor ...

NINA

None of this is going to knock anybody
out. I can't use any of this in my
lineup. Is this it?

LOU

No, I have the stabbing in Corona.

NINA

Where's the plane crash at Foothill?

LOU

I don't mind saying that I'm trying to
bring you stories that happen here, on
the ground.

NINA

Four has it. It'll be their lead.

LOU

And I hope they do well with that, but
you should look at the Corona stabbing.

NINA

I don't give a goddamn about fucking Corona. You know how important this week is. This shit's fucking death to me.

LOU

I understand your frustration. I guess I'm trying not to be too hard on myself.

NINA

I sold you upstairs as some kind of fucking sweeps savior and I'm leading with a goddamn stabbing in Corona.

LOU

So you want that then?

NINA

I want you to get in the goddamn game. I want something that people can't turn away from. I want what you fucking promised me.

LOU

We want the same thing. I'll just have to find two sticks and rub them together. This is my work, Nina, and I don't take anything more seriously than that. Every night's a new beginning. Now let me show you that stabbing.

LOU reaches over her, presses play as

A BLOOD-SPLATTERED APARTMENT

fills FRAME and CUT TO

SUNNY BOUGAINVILLEA BLOSSOMS

swarming with bees ... bright, blinding flowers clinging to

A TELEPHONE POLE

as we go wider TO SHOW

A BACK ALLEY

between apartment buildings ... garages and garbage cans ... sunlight angling to shadow ... the workday's ending as a

CAR

pulls into a car port ... MAN getting out with a briefcase ... entering a back door and

LOU'S CHALLENGER

drives past ... parks behind a dumpster and

LOU

steps out ... scanning the empty alley before taking a

WRENCH

from his car and moving to a line of open garages where the

MAYHEM VIDEO VAN

is parked ... beat before

LOU

slides under the van ... squeak of bolts turning and CUT TO

A MOONLIT CANYON

and the rustles and whispers of the night ... wind through dry scrub ... waves of car and plane and ocean sounds pulsing over the earth ... the electricity of existence drowned by

THE CHALLENGER

thundering down the canyon road ... power-sliding through turns ... descending into the glow of the valley ... coming upon a much slower car and CUT TO

LOU

drives ... calmly berating RICK over the emergency radios ...

LOU

Since when did Laurel become faster than Coldwater? What was the thinking there? I didn't ask that to hear myself speak.

RICK

Because Laurel only has six lights.

LOU

Coldwater has places to pass. I can't get around this person in front of us until Ventura.

RICK

It's the same argument. I said this route and you should have said something if you wanted to take Coldwater.

LOU

I thought you'd worked in other factors. If I didn't think you could do better I wouldn't ride you about routes. You have to know that, Rick. I think it's just possible that I have a higher opinion of you than you have of yourself.

LOU flooring it and passing

THE SLOWER CAR

on a blind turn ... pure chance the lane's clear ...

RICK

What the fuck?! Goddamnit! Seriously?! To get to a van crash on Moorpark? Who cares? What's the rush? Why aren't we heading for the rape in Griffith Park like everyone else?

LOU accelerating into a sharp turn and CUT TO

VENTURA BOULEVARD

THE MAYHEM VIDEO VAN is wrapped around a telephone pole ...
LOU filming the wreckage ... POLICE waving traffic around ...
PARAMEDICS pulling two broken bodies from the crash ...

RICK

(running up to LOU)

Oh fuck. Fuck me. Oh God. That's the Mayhem van. It's Joe and the other dude, what's his name, fucking Marcus. What the hell happened?

LOU

According to witnesses they were driving at a high rate of speed, probably heading for Griffith Park, when they apparently ran head-on into this light pole. No other cars. Single-vehicle.

RICK

How do they just hit a pole? Jesus.

LOU filming JOE being carried by ... a god-awful mess ...

RICK

Don't film that, he's one of us.

LOU

Not any more. We're professionals, Rick. He's a sale.

CAMCORDER POV

LOU filming JOE ... time display blinking 12:29 PM and CUT TO

CAMCORDER POV

of a LIQUOR STORE ... a half-dozen COPS stand around a body on the sidewalk ... time display blinking 3:12 AM and CUT TO

A G.P.S. DISPLAY

shows the Challenger moving deep into the valley as

LOU

drives fast on an empty freeway ... emergency com-chatter always ... dash clock reading 4:27 AM ...

RICK

Man, we are way the hell out here.

LOU taking an exit for

GRANADA HILLS

and RICK braces as they blow through a stop sign and ascend into an upscale neighborhood ...

LOU

Good brush fires are money. Code eight in a neighborhood like this, one big house on fire, that could make the lead.

RICK

(looking at the estates)
I hope they all burn, rich motherfuckers.

LOU

You're living in backwardia, Rick. Most of the government's revenue comes from the wealthy. I hear people all around me talking how the rich only got that way by screwing other people over. People say, oh, they've got it all and I don't, so they're evil. But that's just jealousy. You can't hate what you want to become.

RICK

I don't want to become them. They're zombies. They want to eat our brains.
(re: the G.P.S.)
Take the left, then hang the next right.

LOU racing higher into the hills as WE SEE

FIRETRUCKS

ahead ... crowding a narrow street and CUT TO

AN L.A.F.D. HELICOPTER

waterdrops a smoldering hillside ... smoke but no flames as

WHITE HOMEOWNERS

watch in bathrobes on perfect lawns and

LOU

and RICK get out, stand beside the parked Challenger and ...
LOU starts getting back in the car ...

RICK

What are you doing?

LOU

It's over.

RICK

Aren't you going to film?

LOU

Not unless they start dropping gasoline.

RICK stares at a COUPLE in matching robes ... heads turned to
the chopper circling the night sky and CUT TO

LOU

driving down the hill ... RICK cherry-picking com-chatter ...

RICK

Double shooting in Puente.

LOU

Not worth the gas.

RICK

Fatal on the 110.

LOU

No.

RICK

Assault in Sylmar.

LOU

Wrong direction. I want to get back to
town.

LOU

passing the monied mini-malls of Grenada Hills as

THE DASH CLOCK

clicks 4:47 AM and

THE SPEEDOMETER

rises to 80 miles per hour and

LOU

accelerates for a freeway on-ramp back to L.A. and CLOSE ON

SAN FERNANDO TAC 2

stops on an emergency frequency ... DISPATCH heard ...

DISPATCHER

-- Code 30 Victor ... all units ... 3-7
 Bonhill, Grenada Estates ... 4-5-9 ...
 -- 5-1.
 -- 5-1, 10-23, Code 30.
 -- 6-12.
 -- 7-1, Code 30 Victor, copy.
 -- 5-1, 6-12, 7-1, Code Six George.
 -- 5-1, 4-5-9 Bonhill, 8 minutes.
 -- 6-12, Code Six, 7 minutes.
 -- 7-1, Code Six, 3-7, Bonhill, 11-17.

LOU

Armed response on a home invasion.

RICK

-- we're five blocks away --
 (off the G.P.S.)
 Pull a u-turn, left at the next street!

LOU muscling a high-speed u-turn ... flooring it and CUT TO

A CUL-DE-SAC

at the end of a tree-lined street ... big estates behind high
 walls and greenery as an over-revved engine is heard and

THE CHALLENGER

blasts by a PRIVATE STREET SIGN and CUT TO

RICK

watching the G.P.S. ping approach the destination ...

RICK

-- number 34 -- end of the street --
coming up --

LOU

We beat the police.

LOU power-sliding to a stop at an ivied-wall ... jumping out
with the camera ... filming as he sprints to an open gate and

LOU

enters the grounds, alarm heard and

THE HOUSE

is big and the lights are blazing and there's

A DARK CAR

angled by the open front door and

TWO GUNSHOTS

explode from inside as

LOU

veers from entering the home and

A BIG MAN

in a ski mask plows out ... squeezes himself into the

DARK CAR

and pounds the horn and

LOU'S CAMERA POV

filming from the darkness as

A SECOND MAN

runs out... face mask shredded ... blood streaking a cheek
... jumping in the car ... spray of gravel ... tail-lights
disappearing down the drive and

LOU

emerges ... alone on the lawn ... house door open ... alarm
wailing ... LOU filming as he approaches and enters the home
and CUT TO

INSIDE THE HOUSE

there's a teddy bear on the marble foyer floor and a sweeping staircase and a broad streak of red where

A BODY

was dragged and the alarm's wailing and LOU'S filming as he follows the blood trail into

A LIVING ROOM

with a soaring ceiling and antiques and

A DEAD ELDERLY LATIN WOMAN

shot in the chest tied to a club chair and

LOU

films as he moves deeper into the house and enters

A HUGE, CUSTOM KITCHEN

with bullet-pocked appliances and wood panelling and

A MIDDLE-AGED WHITE MAN

lying dead in his underwear in a pool of spilled soda and blood and a spent pistol in an outstretched hand and

LOU

shoots the scene, utterly unaffected as he circles back and

A HAND

grabs his ankle and

LOU

aims down and films as the man tries to mouth words ...

LOU

What happened?

MAN dying, barely whispering ...

LOU

TV news, sir. What happened?

MAN

Costilla.

LOU

What?

MAN staring ...

LOU

Tell me what happened, sir.

MAN'S mouth opening ... nothing coming out ...

LOU

(zooming in)

Describe to me what happened.

MAN motionless .. he's dead ...

LOU

leaving the kitchen ... back in the foyer ... taking

THE SWEEPING STAIRCASE

and moving quickly up the curved, carpeted steps to

THE SECOND FLOOR

where he films a dropped shotgun with a pistol stock and follows a new blood trail down a broad hall and enters

A BEDROOM

decorated to a high degree where

A WHITE WOMAN

dead from multiple gunshots is sprawled on a sleigh bed with designer sheets and

LOU

films from several angles before backing out and crossing

THE HALL

and walking into

A NURSERY

fit for a prince and it's dim and a night light projects

A ROTATING STAR PATTERN

on the ceiling as LOU films

A SHOTGUN SHREDED CRIB

and story-book wallpaper and there's no sign of a baby amid the spent rage and the alarm doesn't stop and

LOU

works fast and efficiently and he's shooting every detail before leaving the nursery and striding back down

THE HALL

and he rapidly descends the stairwell to FIND

RICK

standing scared in the foyer near the open front door ...

RICK

What's going on?!

LOU

We're leaving.

LOU exits and RICK follows and CUT TO

LOU

jogging across the lawn toward the front gate as approaching SIRENS are heard in the distance ...

RICK

What's in there?! What's going on?!

LOU jumping in the car as RICK follows and

THE CHALLENGER

doughnuts the cul-de-sac ... speeds down the private street ... disappears into the night as

FLASHING POLICE LIGHTS

appear from the other direction and three POLICE CARS cut down the cul-de-sac with sirens screaming and CUT TO

LOU

driving 110 mph on a freeway ... dash clock ticking 5:22 AM ... RICK yelling above the com-chatter ...

RICK

What happened in there?!

LOU

You should have walked in and looked, Rick. If you were half-curious. That's what I'm paying you to do. You need to show initiative. There's no better way to achieve job security than by making yourself an indispensable employee.

RICK

I heard gunshots. There was fucking blood on the floor.

LOU

All the more reason. You might have helped me. You might have learned a new skill that made you more useful and put us on a track toward growth.

LOU turning the wheel and CUT TO

THE CHALLENGER

motoring across four lanes to catch an exit and CUT TO

THE K.S.M.L.

studio sign blazing against the night as frenzied

MOTHS

swarm in the glare and CUT TO

LOU

pulling up outside the station ... turning to RICK ...

LOU

Step outside for a minute.

RICK

Why?

LOU

Because I asked you to.

RICK gets out and LOU downloads the camcorder to his laptop ... fingers flying and CLOSE ON

COMPUTER SCREEN

as LOU edits out the two fleeing ASSAILANTS ... fast-forwards to the wounded MAN in the kitchen ... editing out the moment when he spoke and CUT TO

NINA

in the glassed-in conference room ... leading a pre-broadcast meeting with her STAFF as

LOU

enters the newsroom ... eye-contact ... NINA stepping out ... draining a cup of coffee ...

NINA

I've been trying to reach you for the last hour. In the future, when you don't have anything, man-up and don't dodge my fucking calls. It's a waste of my time.

LOU

I do have something.

NINA

What?

LOU

I have a home invasion triple murder in Grenada Hills.

NINA

That's just breaking now.

LOU

We got there before the police.

NINA

You have it?

LOU

I'm not going to list the many benefits of this piece. I think it's best that you probably just watch it for yourself.

NINA

I could have had someone out there by now, why didn't you call it in?

LOU

To increase your need and improve my bargaining position.

NINA

(into the conference room)
Frank, Jenny -- bay two, now.

LOU following NINA down the hall and CUT TO

THE HOME INVASION FOOTAGE

starts on the main screen of an editing bay ... beginning with LOU already inside the house and CLOSE ON

THE FACES

of NINA, FRANK KRUSE and a young producer named JENNY ... viewing his work ... curiosity ... horror ... gasps as

LOU

watches behind them ... proud to the point of serene as

NINA

picks up a phone ...

NINA

Get Linda in here.

Carnage on the screen is reflected in their expressions as

LINDA

enters (middle-aged, managerial) ... crammed close ... unblinking gaze ... hard eye ...

NINA

Home invasion in Grenada. He got there before the cops. It's 10 minutes to air time, how much of this can we show?

LINDA

You mean legally?

NINA

No, morally. Of course legally.

LINDA

Have they been identified?

FRANK

It just happened, so you have to assume no. And that's just one of the issues.

LINDA

Well you can't broadcast their identities without notifying next of kin.

NINA

We're not identifying them.

LINDA

You are by proxy by showing their faces.

NINA

We pixilate the faces.

LINDA

Where did you get this?

NINA

Stringer.

LOU

(extending a hand)

Hello, Linda, I'm Lou.

JENNY

(re: the screen)

Oh Jesus, is there a dead baby inside there?

LOU

No, the crib was empty.

NINA

For Christ's sake, are we breaking the law by showing this?

LINDA

Block the faces, don't give the exact home address, do that, I guess, I mean, I don't, I wouldn't think so, no.

FRANK

Journalistically and ethically --

NINA

This isn't Hartford.

LOU

(re: the monitor)

Well, that's mostly it right there. From this point on I just went downstairs and then I left.

FRANK

(to NINA)

What did you pay for this?

LOU

The price hasn't been negotiated.

NINA stabs the freeze frame button ...

NINA
 (to the room)
 Give us a minute, please, thank you.

The OTHERS leave ... closing the door ...

NINA
 How much?

LOU
 A million.

NINA
 How much?

LOU
 A half-million.

NINA
 I air in nine minutes. I need a number.

LOU
 I've given you two.

NINA
 5,000.

LOU
 I got five for the food truck stabbings.

NINA
 There were more dead.

LOU
 Those were poor Mexican people in a roach
 coach. Two of them were illegals. These
 are three wealthy white people shot and
 killed inside their mansion, including a
 suburban wife shotgunned in her bed. I
 know you, Nina. I know your interest and
 excitement in this product is greater
 than the amount you're offering.

NINA
 7,500.

LOU
 100,000.

NINA
 8,000.

LOU
 75,000.

10,000. NINA

75,000. LOU

12,500. NINA

50,000. LOU

15,000. NINA

50,000. LOU

NINA
Give me a serious number.

LOU
25,000. And that's the absolute lowest
that I'll go.

NINA
Can't do it. Never happen. There's the
matter of precedent. 15's my last, best
offer.

LOU stands to leave ...

LOU
Okay.

NINA
Stop. What? Where are you going?

LOU
Seven's approached me at least several
times. The ND there gave me his card. I
think Seven will offer more. It's a five
minute drive.

NINA
Hold on. Goddamn it. 20.

LOU
25.

NINA
I can't spend a month's budget on a
single story.

LOU

What if the story's not over? The people who did this escaped. They're still out there, walking around with the rest of us. If I had a family and I lived in a home that might make me nervous. I would want updates on what was going on. With this footage people will turn to your channel for the story. Now I like you, Nina, I look forward to our time together, but you have to understand that 25,000 isn't all that I want. From here on, starting now, I want my work to be credited by the anchors and on a burn. The name of my company is Video News Productions, a professional news gathering service. That's how it should read and that's how it should be said. I also want to go to the next rung and meet your team and the anchors and the director and the station manager, to begin developing my own personal relationships. I'd like to start meeting them this morning. You'll take me around and you'll introduce me as the owner and president of Video News and remind them of some of my many other stories. I'm not done. I also want to stop our discussions over prices. This will save time. So when I say a particular number is my lowest price, that is my lowest price and you can be sure I've arrived at whatever that number is very carefully. Now when I say I want these things I mean that I want them and I don't want to have to ask again. And the last thing that I want, Nina, is for you to do the things I ask you to do when we're alone together at your apartment, not like the last time.

NINA staring ...

LOU

Now. Tell you what. I have the van crash on Moorpark tonight. It was a couple of stringers, actually. That could lead by itself on an average night. I'd be willing to throw that in for free. So. What do you say? Do we have a deal?

NINA

... I have to call corporate.

LOU

I'm going to hang around while you put
this together. I'm really looking
forward to seeing how the news get made.

NINA leaves ... LOU spins in a swivel chair and CUT TO

NEWS SET

NINA introducing LOU to KEN and LISA ... sitting at the news
desk, minutes from air-time and CUT TO

A WALL OF MONITORS

show a dozen local tv broadcasts ... a clock clicks 6:00 AM
as SEVEN CHANNELS switch to local news and CLOSE ON

THE K.S.M.L.

main monitor as the usual intro is replaced by pulse-pounding
music and a red banner warning ...

BREAKING NEWS

WIDER TO SHOW THE CONTROL ROOM

where NINA oversees a DIRECTOR, PRODUCTION ASSISTANT and
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR operating the control board ...

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

10 to open.

DIRECTOR

Standby 12.

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Track red.

NINA

Where's the title?

DIRECTOR

I didn't think we decided on one.

NINA

Horror house. What did we talk about?
Slug it on the break.

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

And 5 - 4 - 3 - roll C - 2 - 1 --

DIRECTOR

Fade lower frame.

TECH DIRECTOR fading the graphic to the bottom of the screen
... ANCHORS appearing and

ANCHORMAN

This is K.S.M.L. breaking news. In the last half-hour we have received word of an apparent home invasion triple homicide in the Grenada Hills area of the San Fernando Valley. At present that number, that is the number of those dead, has not been confirmed by police, but K.S.M.L. has obtained exclusive footage from inside the crime scene in which at least three bodies can be observed. We are going to show segments of that footage throughout the broadcast and throughout the day as we break for police updates and information. Again, we're about to show exclusive K.S.M.L. video from inside the crime scene.

NINA keying the ANCHORWOMAN'S ear-piece ...

NINA

It's graphic. Repeat it.

ANCHORWOMAN

Before broadcasting this video we want to warn viewers that these are extremely graphic images. We have obscured the address and the faces as well as any identifying details and apart from that, this is mostly raw and unedited actual footage again of a triple homicide home invasion that has just occurred in the upscale San Fernando neighborhood of Grenada Hills.

NINA/OVER EAR-PIECE

Hit it again. Harder. Then roll.

ANCHORWOMAN

We have a team of K.S.M.L. reporters setting up at the scene that we will be speaking with shortly after we show what I must repeat is extremely graphic footage and I'm hearing from the control room that we have that and we're going to cue up that footage now.

LOU'S footage fills FRAME ... superimposed credit reading

VIDEO NEWS PRODUCTIONS

A PROFESSIONAL NEWS GATHERING SERVICE

LOU

watching from the shadows ... dreams blossoming and ...

ANCHORMAN

This footage was obtained exclusively by K.S.M.L. from Video News Productions, a professional news gathering service. It begins on the premises, inside the house, and that is what appears to be blood on the floor of the residence, leading into what apparently is the living area, or a living area, and there is the first body, restrained it seems to a chair, again the faces, all the faces, will be blurred.

NINA/OVER EAR-PIECE

They escaped. They're on the loose.

ANCHORWOMAN

And that is the first of what we understand are three bodies in the home in Grenada Hills, the result of what early reports suggest was a home invasion or robbery committed by a suspect or suspects who at this time are believed to have escaped. Who are still out there. And that's a very frightening thought.

INTERCUT: NINA keying the anchorman's ear-piece ...

NINA

Repeat that.

ANCHORMAN

It's very concerning, particularly given the savagery of what we're seeing and that looks to be the kitchen where you can see another body on the floor, and again I want to repeat, because it bears repeating, that the person or people who committed this brutal home invasion robbery are presently unidentified and at large, and that has to be a great worry not only to residents in the Grenada Hills area but--

ANCHORWOMAN

All of greater Los Angeles--

ANCHORMAN

The entire Southland, absolutely.

LOU watching from the dark ... footage on display and ...

ANCHORMAN

... that's the third body there in the bed of the home in Grenada Hills --

NINA/OVER EAR-PIECE

Vicious attack.

ANCHORWOMAN

-- and the only thought I have, the feeling I have is the viciousness --

ANCHORWOMAN

The severity of the violence --

ANCHORMAN

An apparent family attacked and savagely killed in their own home in what is one of the quieter and safer and frankly most expensive neighborhoods in the valley --

ANCHORWOMAN

In Los Angeles --

ANCHORMAN

By unknown assailants who have committed a vicious attack in this upscale enclave. That's a nursery there, and a crib --

NINA/OVER EAR-PIECE

Build it.

ANCHORWOMAN

And that is a child's room, and you just pray that there's nothing in that crib --

Tension builds until LOU'S tape shows the crib is empty ...

ANCHORMAN

Thank goodness. My understanding is there was no baby found in the house or any baby that was seen by the people who filmed this--

ANCHORMAN

Video News, a professional news gathering service, that apparently arrived before the police and entered the home to help or offer assistance and came upon the crime scene that we're watching now.

NINA/OVER EAR-PIECE

We're cutting to commercial then going to Joel and a police statement.

ANCHORWOMAN

And I'm getting word the police are getting ready to make a statement from the scene and Joel Beatty is there for that and I think we're going to now take a break from this graphic footage, with much more to come on the vicious home invasion triple murder in Grenada Hills.

ANCHORMAN

And we'll be back after this ...

The monitor cuts to a commercial as a make-up person darts out to touch-up the anchors and CUT TO

CONTROL ROOM

DIRECTOR sitting back as an upbeat ad plays ...

DIRECTOR

That's a 30 share.

NINA

I want theme music on the return. The score we used for the Simi rail crash.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT scrambling ... scrolling a computer as the control room phone rings ... NINA answering ...

NINA

Hello.

(beat)

Thank you.

(beat)

Well actually he asked to meet you.

NINA glancing at LOU ... LOU watching the anchors get touched up on one of the monitors and CLOSE ON

ANOTHER MONITOR

as a live feed cues from outside the crime scene ... JOEL BEATTY preparing for a report ...

UNSEEN CAMERAMAN/VO

Picture.

JOEL BEATTY/OVER MONITOR

The police spokesman's making an announcement in 60 seconds.

DIRECTOR

We'll break it.

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR/OVER EAR-PIECE

Breaking in 30.

DIRECTOR

Two-shot number one.

NINA/ON PHONE

We're going back. I gotta go.

JOEL BEATTY/ON MONITOR

Nina, we're getting a ton of heat from the police out here on the video. Nina, are you there? Nina.

NINA hangs up ... keying communication with the live feed ...

NINA

They can call the station.

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Fifteen seconds.

JOEL BEATTY/ON MONITOR

They want to talk to who shot it.

LOU going close, speaking directly to JOEL on the monitor ...

LOU

I shot it. It's Video News Productions. You can give them my number.

NINA

Lou, he can't hear, it's not directional.

DIRECTOR

Back in five, four, three, two, one --

THE COMMERCIAL FADES

and the ANCHORS return ... banner on the screen reading ...

K.S.M.L. EXCLUSIVE

HORROR HOUSE

Theme music ... score suitable for slaying dragons and CUT TO

MOUNT WILSON

at dawn and CUT TO

LOS ANGELES

brightening and CUT TO

A FIRETRAIL

scraped into an overgrown hillside and CUT TO

SEAGULLS

circling the sea and CUT TO

LOU

in his apartment ... sitting on the side of his tightly made bed ... watching tv news and the continuing, building story of a triple homicide home invasion when there's

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR

and LOU stands ... unlocking and opening it to reveal

A WOMAN

wearing a jacket and pants ... gold shield on her belt ...

WOMAN

I'm Detective Fronteiri.

LOU

Hello. I'm Lou.

DETECTIVE

You live here?

LOU

Yes. That's right.

DETECTIVE

May I come inside?

LOU

Why?

DETECTIVE

Why not?

LOU

You want to?

DETECTIVE

Yes.

LOU

I don't care.

DETECTIVE

Wonderful.

THE DETECTIVE

entering LOU'S apartment ... looking around ...

DETECTIVE

You were in Grenada Hills last night.
You shot the video in the house.

LOU

Yes, ma'am. I did. That's right.

DETECTIVE

You went inside the house and you filmed
all through the house and you even filmed
the bodies. All before the police came.

LOU

That door was open, ma'am --

DETECTIVE

Detective.

LOU

It was open and what I did was I went in
to see if I could help because the alarm
was ringing.

DETECTIVE

An active crime scene.

LOU

I didn't know it was a crime scene.

DETECTIVE

You knew what it was.

LOU

I know alarms mean someone's in trouble.

DETECTIVE

And you sold it to be shown on tv.

LOU

We're a professional news gathering
service.

DETECTIVE

What did you see when you arrived?

LOU

Two men leaving in a car.

DETECTIVE

What kind of car?

LOU

It was dark. I couldn't see what kind.

DETECTIVE

Describe the men.

LOU

Well they were just shapes, really. I was afraid so I hid and then I saw the shapes of two men. I remember the men were running, if that helps.

DETECTIVE

Do you have film of the men or the car?

LOU

No, I don't. I didn't start filming until I was inside.

DETECTIVE

You're a piece of work.

LOU

Thank you.

DETECTIVE

I'd like a copy of that footage.

LOU

Do I have to give it to you?

DETECTIVE

Is there a reason you wouldn't?

LOU

No. I made you a copy. I expected someone to come.

LOU takes a zip-drive from a drawer, hands it to her ...

DETECTIVE

We'll be in touch.

The DETECTIVE leaves ... LOU filling a glass and watering the weedy plant on the windowsill as he watches

THE DETECTIVE

drive off with her PARTNER and

LOU

pulls his computer from under his bed and turns it on and

THE UNEDITED CRIME SCENE VIDEO

begins from when he arrived at the house and

THE TWO MASKED MEN

seen fleeing ... one big ... the other's mask ripped, face
bleeding and

FREEZE-FRAME

of the man ... features visible ... LOU downloads it and

FREEZE FRAME

of the dark car ... LOU zooming ... heightening contrast and

A LICENSE PLATE

is seen ... LOU jotting the number and

FAST-FORWARDING

to the dying MAN in the kitchen as he whispers

DYING MAN/ON MONITOR

Costilla.

LOU turns to his computer and types

license plate search

WEB SERVICES

scroll ... dozens of internet ads offering to identify car
owners from government records ... LOU typing and ANGLE ON

THE TV

news broadcast transmitting dread and danger and CUT TO

LOS ANGELES

in bright sun ... sound of overlapping TV NEWS BROADCASTS
building a frenzy of home invasion fear ... day passing as

FOG

rolls in ... closes over the city like a sideways curtain ...
darkness descends and CUT TO

A BUSY LOS ANGELES BOULEVARD

as emergency com-chatter rises ... louder and louder until

THE CHALLENGER

passes fast ... weaving around slower cars and CUT TO

LOU

driving ... RICK shotgun ... dash clock clicking 8:24 PM and

RICK

I'm tired. Why're we starting so early?

LOU

One of the people in the house last night
was alive. I cut that part out. I also
cut out the men leaving in their car. I
have a name and an address. We're going
to drive there and find the person who
drove that car.

RICK

You know who killed those people?

LOU

One of them, quite possibly, yes.

RICK

You gotta call the cops.

LOU

And we will. At the right time. I'm
offering you a real opportunity, Rick.

RICK

To do what?

LOU

I don't usually share my business plan
with you, but a moment has arrived that
could allow the company to make enough
money to expand to the next level. We
could call this the critical moment. I'm
inviting you, Rick, to be part of the
team that pounces on this opportunity.

LOU stopping at a light ... looking at RICK ...

LOU

You've been asking a lot about your performance review. Well, for starters I'm seeing a great improvement with regards to your overall focus and order following. Given complex problems you're developing a real ability to find clear, simple solutions. I'm also aware of your increased enthusiasm. It's great to see how your eyes light up when you're working on new ideas. I hope you'll be inspiring us with your innovative thinking for years to come.

RICK

Thanks, man. I'm trying.

LOU

Which is why I'm promoting you to executive vice president of Video News.

RICK

What am I now?

LOU

You're an assistant.

RICK

Does it come with a raise?

LOU

Absolutely.

RICK

How much?

LOU

Pick a number.

RICK

75 a night.

LOU

Agreed.

RICK

What about more?

LOU

Well not now. We closed the deal.

RICK

I could've gotten more couldn't I?

NEIGHBORHOOD

in East Los Angeles ... foggy and forlorn as

THE CHALLENGER

passes ... drives down a street of box homes with fences and gated windows and CUT TO

INSIDE THE CHALLENGER

the scanners are turned low ...RICK watching the GPS ...

RICK

It's half way down the block, coming up on the right. Here, 36-57 North Burns.

LOU pulling up ... parking behind a dumpster and ANGLE ON

THE DARK CAR

from the home invasion tucked beside a bleak row home as LOU

LOOKS THROUGH THE CAMCORDER

Night vision view ... zooming tight on the license plate ...

RICK

That's the car?

LOU

That's the car.

RICK

No shit? You think there's a reward?

LOU

There is a reward.

RICK

How much?

LOU

50,000.

RICK

Do I get any of it?

LOU

I just gave you a raise.

RICK

That's salary, I'm talking about a bonus.

LOU

Bonuses come at the end of the year.

LOU staring across the street ... clock clicking 8:48 PM and

RICK

So we gonna call it in?

LOU

We're going to wait.

RICK

For what?

LOU

First we want to make sure he's actually inside. Then we want to find a more interesting place to film the arrest.

RICK

Where?

LOU

Anywhere we want. What we're going to do is we're going to wait for him to leave and then we're going to follow him. When he reaches what would be considered a better or more populated neighborhood we'll report his location to the police. He's a violent, wanted criminal. I have to believe that he's not going to just peacefully surrender.

RICK

Okay, I want more money. A lot more.

LOU

What makes a job desirable isn't just the dollar amount attached to it, Rick. You're on the ground floor of a growing business. Your reward is a career.

RICK

Fuck that. You're talking about some fucked up shit and you're asking me, you just expect me to be part of it.

LOU

I can't make people do things, Rick. You have a choice to do this and I have a choice if you don't.

RICK

You threatening to fire me? Hey, I got something too. Not calling criminals in, waiting for 'em to start shit so you can film it, that's against the fucking law. The cops would be majorly interested no fucking doubt. I want more money.

LOU

We can reopen negotiations, Rick, but remember that when it comes to your work reputation you can't un-ring the bell.

RICK

I want half of whatever we make tonight.

LOU

How did you arrive at that number?

RICK

There's two of us sitting here. 50-50.

LOU

I'll counter at 10,000.

RICK

You don't set the numbers on this. I want half.

LOU

If you're saying I can't negotiate then I guess I have to give it to you.

RICK

Alright then. Now I feel good about it. Now I'll go the extra mile. You never understood that, that's been the problem. You gotta bring people in, man. I'm serious. You gotta talk to 'em like they're human beings. I'm saying this to help you, dude, for the future. 'Cause you got a seriously weird ass way of looking at shit. You know you do. I mean you know what your trouble is? You don't fucking understand people.

LOU staring at him ... listening ... com-chatter beat ...

RICK

Now I'm gonna take a nap now. We can do shifts. See, now we're working together.

RICK reclining his seat ... shutting his eyes and

BLACK OUT

Murmur of emergency chatter ... doppler of distant sirens and

LOU V.O.

Wake up.

RICK OPENS HIS EYES

to the same scene ... dash clock blinking 12:24 AM ... LOU as we left him, staring across the street, still as a statue ...

LOU

He's leaving.

ACROSS THE STREET

the man from the home invasion comes out ... face scratched ... climbing into the car ... driving off ...

RICK

Is that him?

LOU

That's one of them.

LOU

starts the Challenger and CUT TO

A BROAD BOULEVARD

of forever-stretching traffic lights flashing in fog as

THE CAR

pulls down a street ... stops at an apartment building and

LOU

kills the headlights and parks to observe ...

RICK

You're too fucking close, man. Shit, this guy might've seen us and brought us here as a trap. You ever think of that?

LOU watching as

THE LARGE MAN

from the home invasion exits the apartment building ... backing into the car he's so big ... car pulling out ... LOU following and CUT TO

INSIDE THE CHALLENGER

the scanners are burbling ... GPS blinking ... LOU following ... unblinking gaze and CUT TO

THE CAR

driving into a gas station and CUT TO

THE CAR

stopped at a traffic light and CUT TO

THE CAR

pulling into a bright, busy fast food restaurant ... the two MEN going in and CUT TO

INSIDE THE CHALLENGER

as LOU parks outside ... opens his phone ... dials 9-1-1 and

911 DISPATCH/OVER

9-1-1, what is your emergency?

LOU/INTO PHONE

Yes, good evening, hello. I'd like to report the location of the two men responsible for the home invasion-murder in Grenada Hills last night.

9-1-1/OVER

What's your address?

LOU/INTO PHONE

I followed them and they've just pulled into a Wendy's at West Adams and Vernon. I can see them inside.

911/OVER

Okay, this is the Wendy's at West Adams and Vernon.

LOU/INTO PHONE

That's right. I can see them at the counter and they're ordering. These are the men wanted for the triple murder in Grenada Hills last night.

911/OVER

What's your name, sir?

LOU/INTO PHONE

Louis Bloom.

911/OVER

Do you have a description of the men?

LOU/INTO PHONE

Yes I do. They're both Latin American men. What you'd probably call Hispanic. One's big, very much on the heavy side, and the other's face is scratched. He has red scratches across his face.

911/OVER

How old are the men?

LOU/INTO PHONE

I'd say they're 30. Maybe perhaps 35.

911/OVER

What are they wearing?

LOU/INTO PHONE

The big man's wearing sweat pants with a camouflage pattern and a white t-shirt, and the man with the scratches is wearing black pants and a white-t. He looks like he has a gun.

911/INTO PHONE

The suspect is armed?

LOU/INTO PHONE

I believe so, yes. I'm sorry, I have to hang up otherwise they might see me.

LOU hangs up ... com-chatter beat before LOU turns up LAPD DIV-1 and

SCANNER

-- 4-17, code 19, West Adams and Vernon.
 -- 2-11, 4-17.
 -- 24, 4-17.
 -- 2-11, 24, two males inside the Wendys, Hispanic, one large, camouflage pants, white t, second suspect has scratches across his face, black pants, white t, code 2, possibly armed.
 -- 24, West Adams code 2.
 -- 2-11, 4-17, code two high.

LOU reaching in the backseat, pulling the camera as

RICK

looks from the scanner to the busy Wendy's ... the two MEN waiting on line to order ...

RICK
There's fucking people in there.

LOU
I count 16.

RICK
Oh shit, man. They could start shooting.

LOU
They could.

RICK
You said we were waiting for a better neighborhood with more people, not a fucking crowded restaurant.

LOU
We work with what we're given.

LOU hands RICK a small camcorder ...

LOU
You're going to go around and get an angle inside from those dumpsters over there. Steady hands, use the zoom, and no fast pans. I'll be filming from here.

RICK
Fuck that. I'm not leaving the car.

LOU
I want a second angle from behind the dumpsters. We can cut them together. Two angles. Believe me, it's more dangerous here in the car.

RICK
I don't believe anything you say. This is fucked.

LOU
Do you know I've never once cursed in front of an employer.

RICK
I'm not going out there. I'm not doing it.

LOU
You're making a mistake.

RICK
I don't care about my fucking title.

LOU

What if my problem wasn't that I don't understand people but that I don't like them? What if I was the kind of person who was obliged to hurt you for this? I mean physically. I think you'd have to believe afterward, if you could, that agreeing to participate and then backing out at the critical moment was a mistake. Because that's what I'm telling you, as clearly as I can.

RICK takes the camcorder ... gets out of the car and CLOSE ON

LOU

powers the camera ... wipes the lens ... looking through and

CAMERA POV

inside the Wendy's ... perfect view through plate glass ... the two MEN at a table ... waiting for their order and

PAN TO

RICK in shadow behind the dumpster ... looking inside as

LOU

glances in the rear-view, SEES

A POLICE CAR

silently slide into the parking lot and

LOU

presses RECORD and

CAMERA POV

of two POLICEMAN exiting the squad car as a second SQUAD CAR arrives ... no lights or siren ... two more COPS emerging and

ZOOM IN

as the COPS confer ... one going around back ... one going to a side entrance ... two going for the front door ... speaking into shoulder mikes as LOU hears their transmission on the

SCANNER

POLICEMAN/OVER

West Adams right now 17.

DISPATCH/OVER

West Adams.

POLICEMAN/OVER

Both SPs are in the Wendys. Hispanic males, matching. 10-17.

SECOND POLICEMAN/OVER

52, over.

POLICEMAN/OVER

Answering 52.

SECOND POLICEMAN

I'm going in.

LOU zooming tight on the two POLICEMEN as they enter the front ... lone POLICEMAN entering the side entrance and

THE TWO MEN

at the table have gotten their food ... eating ... the MAN with the scratched face looking up ... seeing

THE TWO COPS

coming and the third POLICEMAN approaching opposite ... COPS commanding them to remain seated ... hands on holsters as an unheard conversation begins and

HEAVY

SHOOTS a concealed PISTOL from under the table as

ONE COP

goes down and the other

TWO POLICEMEN

pull guns and

SCRATCHED FACE

dives and SHOOTS as

HEAVY

blasts away and

PATRONS

are hit in the crossfire ... pink bursts as they go down as

THE COPS

unload ... ferocious volley as

HEAVY

is hit in the head and neck ... FIRING as he falls and shooting

A POLICEMAN

in the leg and

SCRATCHED FACE

bolts ... gun BLAZING as he blitzes

OUTSIDE

and sprints to his car and speeds away and

LOU

starts the engine ... floors it ... skids to a stop by the dumpsters and

RICK

jumps in ... clawing to close the door as

LOU

fishtails onto the street in pursuit of the escaping CAR and

RICK

Oh fuck fuck fuck! Oh my God!

LOU

Did you get it?

RICK

There's people dead in there!

SCANNERS

blaring com-chatter of the shooting and locations as

LOU

floors it ... eyeing the escaping car's taillights ...

LOU

Roll your window down. Aim the camera at the car and start filming.

RICK

This is fucking fucked!

LOU

Film the car. I'm relying on you to deliver a winning performance, Rick.

Speed climbing as

RICK

leans out the window with the camcorder and starts filming ... siren from behind as

A POLICE CAR

flashes past ... pursuing the CHASE CAR ...

LOU

Wide angle. Get it all. Nice and centered.

SPEEDOMETER

sweeping through 80 ... 90 ... 100 as

LOU

stays within visual of the chase and

TWO MORE POLICE CARS

muscle past ... bubble lights and sirens blaring and

SCANNERS

-- 276, 417.
 -- 10-99.
 -- 51, 746 back, code three.
 -- Four units.
 -- 4-4-6 to 48.
 -- That's the information.
 -- Passing Deloatch. East.
 -- All units, code three.
 -- 9-3-7.
 -- 450.
 -- 4-8.
 -- Hispanic male.
 -- Onto Rosecrans! West on Rosecrans!
 -- 34, 64.
 -- Division one.
 -- Code 100.
 -- Straight on Rosecrans. Running 90.
 -- Code four, notify sheriff's!

LOU cranking the volume ... filling the car with overlapping
scanners and CUT TO

AN INTERSECTION

of two major avenues ... fast TRAFFIC taking the light as

THE CHASE CAR

skids through ... near collision causing

A PICK-UP

to veer and

CRASH

head-on into a telephone pole as

FOUR SQUAD CARS

scream through gaps in passing cars ... Challenger closely
tailing and CUT TO

LOU

barreling by the crashed PICK-UP and the

SCANNERS

are blaring and

RICK'S

filming through the passenger window and CLOSE ON

LOU IS THE CHARIOTEER

of a hyper-speed weaving train of madness ... destruction in
the rear-view ... dollars ahead and

RICK'S VIEW-FINDER

as the lead SQUAD CAR swerves to avoid a PEDESTRIAN ...
slamming a curb and

CART-WHEELING

into the night and CLOSE ON

THE CHALLENGER SPEEDOMETER

creeping to 100 and CLOSE ON

THE SCANNER LIGHTS

blinking furiously through emergency frequencies and

LOU'S POV

as a TRACTOR TRAILER suddenly appears ahead ... crossing the
avenue as the

CHASE CAR

veers ... death spin ... split-second view of

AN EXPLOSION OF GLASS AND STEEL

as the CHASE CAR submarines under the trailer and the

SQUAD CARS

skid and collide and

LOU

brakes hard and he's heading straight for the truck at

90 MPH

and

LOU

cuts the wheel at the last second and

THE CHALLENGER

threads the wreckage to come to

A STOP

some 100 feet away as

LOU

jumps out with his camera and calls to RICK ...

LOU

Let's go. Get up there and film it.

LOU jogging toward the mangled CHASE CAR as

RICK

follows ... frightened but filming with the camcorder ...
running close behind LOU and

LOU'S CAMERA POV

zooming on the crashed CHASE CAR crushed beneath the TRACTOR TRAILER and

THE SCRATCHED FACE DRIVER

is glimpsed crawling from the wreckage ... crazed and bloody ... gun in hand and

LOU

doesn't turn or veer away ... running closer and closer and blocking

RICK'S VIEW

of what awaits as

SCRATCHED FACE

sees LOU ... raising the gun and aiming as

LOU

dives away at the last second and

BAM!

BAM!

BAM!

BAM!

as

RICK

takes three SHOTS point-blank to the chest and

THE COPS

open up from the opposite direction ... firing dozens of shots and CUT TO

LOU

filming as

SCRATCHED FACE

is shredded ... frantic law enforcement overkill ... collapsing back into the wreckage and the

COPS

swarm as

LOU

backs away and approaches

RICK

flat-backed on pavement ... bloody ... breathing his last and

LOU

zooms close as

RICK

speaks ...

RICK

-- you saw him --

LOU

stops shooting ... crouching down ...

LOU

I can't jeopardize the company's success
to retain an untrustworthy employee.

RICK

-- you're crazy --

LOU

You took my bargaining power, Rick. You
used it against me. You'd have done it
again. Just admit it.

RICK

I don't know ... I don't know ...

LOU

I know ... I know ...

RICK dies as

LOU

looks up and sees

EMERGENCY VEHICLES

coming from all directions and

LOU

taking RICK'S camcorder and walking through a swarm of

FIRST-RESPONDERS

and speed-dialing his cell and climbing into

THE CHALLENGER

and pulling away and CUT TO

THE K.S.M.L. SIGN

blazing through fog ... neon letters humming with current as

THE CHALLENGER

speeds into the parking lot ... LOU exiting with the two cameras and CUT TO

INSIDE THE STATION

as LOU strides through the newsroom ... straight and tall ... saying hello to people he walks by ...

LOU

Hello Dean ... Hello Meredith ... Hi
Jenny ... Good evening, Charles ...

PEOPLE nod as LOU passes the ANCHORS coming from make-up ...

LOU

Hello Lisa. Hello Ken.

LISA

Hi.

KEN

Hey. Lou, right? Video News.

LOU

Yes. Hello. Nice to see you.

KEN

Got anything good for us tonight?

LOU

I think so. I'm actually on my way to
show it to Nina right now.

(calling back)

I can tell by your tie it's Friday.

KEN laughs as he and LISA continue down the hall and CUT TO

EDITING BAY

as NINA and the EDITOR sit in darkness ... watch LOU'S
footage ... stunned silence ... sirens and crash sounds and
brakes and gunshots coming from the screen and CLOSE ON

THE MONITOR

as the footage ends with RICK dying on the pavement ...

NINA
(to the EDITOR)
You can go.

The EDITOR leaves ... NINA turns to

LOU

in the shadows ...

NINA
Wasn't that your partner?

LOU
As a matter of fact that's him.

NINA
Well. I'm floored. I mean it's amazing.

LOU
Thank you.

NINA
I mean ... just amazing.

LOU
Thank you.

NINA
Thank you. Thank you for bringing it to
me.

LOU
You're welcome.

NINA
I want it. Obviously.

LOU
How much do you want it?

NINA
You tell me.

BLINDING BRIGHTNESS

as the news set lights flood on and CUT TO

THE CONTROL ROOM

is busy ... LOU'S footage on several screens ... NINA riding herd as TECHS slug segments ... set music ... copy typed as

THE WALL CLOCK

clicks 5:56 AM and

DETECTIVE FRONTIERI AND HER PARTNER

come through the door ... looking around ... seeing the footage on the screens ...

DETECTIVE FRONTIERI

(to an ASSISTANT)

Who's in charge here?

The ASSISTANT points to the DIRECTOR ...

DETECTIVE FRONTIERI

(approaching the DIRECTOR)

Who are you?

DIRECTOR

Who are you?

DETECTIVE FRONTIERI

(showing her badge)

LAPD. Major case. Pull the footage on these screens. Round it up. Let's go. All copies.

NINA

Can I help you?

DETECTIVE FRONTIERI

You can help yourself by collecting up every copy you have of the shoot-out, the chase, the crash -- all of it. Now.

NINA

It's K.S.M.L. property.

DETECTIVE FRONTIERI

It's evidence.

NINA

Of what?

DETECTIVE FRONTIERI

I got a cop near death in the hospital,
two dead and four wounded in a Wendys and
a dozen major crimes stretching five
miles of Pico. That tape is evidence.

NINA

It's news footage bought and paid for
from an independent contractor.

DETECTIVE FRONTIERI

How do you think he got it?

NINA

If there's an issue speak to him.

DETECTIVE FRONTIERI

Don't get in the way of this.

NINA

Unless you have a judge's order we're
going with it in four minutes.

Charged beat as the SECOND DETECTIVE looks at the wall of
monitors and SEES

LOU

on one of the screens ... standing in the sound stage ...
staring at a live shot projection on the weather board of
sunrise over MOUNT WILSON and --

SECOND DETECTIVE

Hey, isn't that him?

DETECTIVE FRONTEIRI

(seeing LOU, to NINA)

I'll make a note of your refusal to
cooperate.

The DETECTIVES leave and CLOSE ON

CONTROL ROOM MONITORS

as the DETECTIVES are seen entering the sound stage and

NINA

watches them roughly arrest LOU ... handcuffing him and
escorting him out a side entrance as

FRANK

enters the control room and approaches her ...

FRANK

Joel's got a source in the sheriff's department who says they've found drugs at the Grenada Hills house. Cocaine in wrapped packages hidden in a crawlspace. Over 50 pounds. He's confirmed it with an investigator at the scene. It wasn't a home invasion, it was a drug robbery.

NINA

Give it to the noon crew.

FRANK

This is news.

NINA

It detracts from the story.

FRANK

It is the story.

NINA

The story is urban crime creeping into the suburbs. Innocent victims. That's the story.

FRANK

Jesus, you sound like Lou.

NINA

I think Lou is inspiring all of us to reach a little higher.

DIRECTOR

60 seconds.

NINA

(donning a headset)

I want a banner on the wrap-around and music through the dissolve ... Okay Bill if you'd like to put Joel up on three before you forget ...

DIRECTOR

45 seconds ... 45 seconds to the show ...

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

It'll probably be coming out of edit four. 20 to the roll, 30 to the show.

NINA

Standby 12. After the break ready to roll 33.

DIRECTOR

15 to the roll.

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

We'll be coming to you with a box.

DIRECTOR

And 10 - 9 - 8 - 7 - 5 seconds - 4 - 3 -
2 - 1 -

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Roll 24 and put it up with track.

NINA

Big energy.

MAIN MONITOR

as a commercial ends and a banner graphic appears

K.S.M.L. BREAKING NEWS

Driving, end of humanity score and CUT TO

VIDEO VIEW OF AN INTERROGATION ROOM

LOU alone ... calm and seated as

DETECTIVE FRONTIERI

enters ... sits across and CUT TO

INSIDE THE ROOM

LOU and DETECTIVE FRONTEIRI regarding each other ...

DETECTIVE FRONTEIRI

You understand you've been read your
rights and you're here voluntarily?

LOU

That's right, yes.

DETECTIVE FRONTEIRI

That this is being recorded and filmed?

LOU

From the camera up there, yes. Wide
angle.

DETECTIVE FRONTEIRI

Would you tell me how it is you were at the Wendys tonight and called in the 911?

LOU

Of course. I'm happy to. It began earlier in the day. I was watering my plant and I looked out my window at my apartment, the one you visited, and I saw a dark colored car with two men parked across the street. I didn't think much about it, otherwise I would have reported it then. We began our night, my employee and myself, and around approximately 12:38 I looked in the rear view mirror and saw that we were being followed by what looked to be the same men in the same car. I made an evasive maneuver, circled back and tailed them to the Wendy's, at which time I witnessed them go inside and I recognized them as the men from the home invasion.

DETECTIVE FRONTEIRI

You told me you didn't see the men, that you didn't get a good look at them.

LOU

Well it came back to me when I saw them going in. Their shapes and their movements. Then I saw that one of them had a gun under his shirt and so of course I immediately got my phone and I called 911.

DETECTIVE FRONTEIRI

And started filming.

LOU

Exactly. That's what I do.

DETECTIVE FRONTEIRI

That's your story?

LOU

That's what happened. That's why I'm here talking to you. I think they tracked me down after seeing my footage.

DETECTIVE FRONTEIRI

Would you like to know what I think?

LOU

Yes, please.

DETECTIVE FRONTEIRI

I think you withheld information. I think you saw the two men at the murder house in Grenada Hills and you saw the car and you sat on it to start something you could film. What do you think about that?

LOU

I think it would be very unprofessional for someone to do that in my business.

DETECTIVE FRONTEIRI

It would be murder.

LOU

I can understand why you're looking into it but I didn't do anything like that, nothing that could be considered wrong.

DETECTIVE FRONTEIRI

You left the scene of an accident.

LOU

I wasn't involved in the accident. I avoided it and stopped.

DETECTIVE FRONTEIRI

You don't fool me for a minute.

LOU

I'm glad.

DETECTIVE FRONTEIRI

I think everything you've said is a lie.

LOU

I wish my partner was here to support what happened.

DETECTIVE FRONTEIRI

Your dead partner.

LOU

That's right.

DETECTIVE FRONTEIRI

You left your dead partner.

LOU

The ambulances had arrived. They're trained professionals.

DETECTIVE FRONTEIRI
You seem real broken up about it.

LOU
He died doing what he loved.

DETECTIVE FRONTEIRI
You filmed him dying.

LOU
That's my job, that's what I do. I like
to say if you're seeing me you're having
the worst day of your life.

VIDEO CLOSE-UP

of LOU'S face ... waiting for the next question and CUT TO

SUNRISE

over Los Angeles as

LOU

leaves the POLICE STATION ... squints at the sky ... stops on
the sidewalk to listen to the music of 9-1-1 coming from

A PARKED POLICE CAR

with its windows down as the COPS inside give him a look and

LOU

smiles ... starts down the street ... blending with other
PASSERSBY and DISSOLVE TO

AN ISLAND OF FLUORESCENT LIGHT

in a gas station parking lot where

TWO NEW VANS

stand side-by-side ... both bearing the logo

VIDEO NEWS PRODUCTIONS

A Professional News Gathering Service.

Two young MEN and a young WOMAN stand outside the vans ...
each wearing matching shirts with the Video News logo as

LOU

steps into the light ... looks them over ...

LOU

Tuck your shirt in, Bob, please. Thank
you.

One of the employees tucks in his shirt ...

LOU

(addressing them)

Congratulations. Your selection by Video
News Productions is evidence of the
hiring committee's recognition of your
employment history and unique personal
qualities. It is my hope that through
hard work and commitment you will move
through the intern program and continue
to pursue your career goals as full-time
employees of Video News. I can tell you
from experience that the surest way up
the ladder is to listen carefully and
follow my orders. You may be confused at
times and other times unsure but remember
that I will never ask you to do anything
that I wouldn't do myself.

The three EMPLOYEES staring at him ...

LOU

That's it.

LOU climbs in one van, followed by one of the EMPLOYEES ...
the other two EMPLOYEES get into the second van ... engines
start and

THE TWO VANS

head into the Los Angeles night in opposite directions ...
sound of emergency com-chatter filtering in and HOLD SHOT AS

THE MOON

breaks the rim of the mountains ... credits roll as it climbs
into the night and

THE END