

THE MATCHMAKER

Pilot by

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TEASER

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE ENTRANCE -- DAY

LYLE THATCHER - late 30s, drool-worthy but so not interested, which of course is part of the appeal - enters and removes his sunglasses. Then stares around him in disgust.

It's Valentine's Day.

All pink and red decor, giant heart-shaped candy boxes, cheesy cards, and "I love you" bears.

LYLE

Ugh.

Lyle grabs a basket and stalks down an aisle.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE AISLE -- MOMENTS LATER

Lyle reaches for a bottle of whiskey.

ROBBER (O.S.)

Hurry up! Put it in the bag!

Lyle edges to the nearest corner and peers around it.

AT THE FRONT OF THE STORE:

An ARMED ROBBER (20s) holds up the terrified CASHIER (30s).

Lyle reaches for his weapon... but finds only EMPTY SPACE at his hip.

LYLE

Crap.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE ENTRANCE -- CONTINUOUS

Bag of cash in hand, the Robber stops midway to the door.

ROBBER

And the bear!

A giant POLAR BEAR sits on the shelf behind the Cashier.

CASHIER

You... you want the bear?

ROBBER

Hey, it's for my girlfriend! You wanna make something of it?

The Robber lifts his weapon, and -

SMASH!!

A CHERUB STATUE connects with his head.

Lyle looms over the Robber's prone body.

LYLE

Schmuck.

TWO UNIFORMED COPS burst in and aim their guns at Lyle.

TALL COP

Put the cherub down!

LYLE

Hey, I just -

TALL COP

Put it down!

SHORT COP

Put your hands up!

Lyle drops the cherub, SIGHS, and raises his hands.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE -- DAY

Lyle looks out from the back seat of a SQUAD CAR as the Cashier talks and gestures eagerly to the Tall Cop.

IN A NEARBY CROWD OF SPECTATORS:

A WOMAN IN RED (50s) - super classy - seems out of place in a bold red suit, eyes fixed on Lyle as she writes on a notepad.

The Tall Cop comes over and lets Lyle out.

TALL COP

Okay Mr. Thatcher, you check out.
My sarge said you were on the job?

LYLE

Yeah, well, that was a while ago now.

CASHIER (O.S.)

You saved my life!

The beaming Cashier runs up and tries to press a HUGE RED HEART-SHAPED CANDY BOX into Lyle's hands.

LYLE

No thanks.

CASHIER (CONT'D)

Please! Give them to your wife!

LYLE
I'm not married.

CASHIER
Girlfriend, then!

LYLE
Really, I don't -

TALL COP
Hey, I'll take them.
(proudly)
I'm gonna propose tonight.

He reaches for the chocolates... but Lyle grabs them instead.

LYLE
Get your own.
(under his breath)
Idiot.

Ignoring the Cop's dirty look, Lyle stomps toward his car... making eye contact with Woman in Red as he passes her by.

She smirks at him.

He frowns back, wondering what's so funny.

AT LYLE'S CAR:

Lyle tosses in the chocolates then looks back at the CROWD. The Woman in Red has vanished.

Lyle shrugs and climbs inside.

INT. LYLE'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Lyle turns on the engine. The RADIO comes on, playing some schmaltzy number. Maybe "Love is All Around Us."

Yuck.

He flips the RADIO off, then reaches over and opens the chocolate box. Rows of CHOCOLATE HEARTS stare back at him.

LYLE
Happy Fool's Holiday, Lyle.

He stuffs a chocolate in his mouth as he pulls away.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. LYLE THATCHER INVESTIGATIONS -- DAY

A dingy building in a run-down part of Hollywood.

One door reads "AARDVARK BAIL BONDS" in six inch gold letters.

Lyle sticks his key in the *neighboring* door, where a peeling plasticky nameplate reads "LYLE THATCHER INVESTIGATIONS."

INT. LYLE THATCHER INVESTIGATIONS -- CONTINUOUS

The lone desk is cluttered with junk, a stained LAPD coffee mug, and an out-of-date computer.

Lyle enters and tosses the candy box on a chair.

A moment later, JIMMY MORRISON (40s) waddles in behind him. A New Jersey native, Jimmy might look a donut shy of a heart attack but he has an eye for the ladies and a nose for gossip.

LYLE

Jimmy, can you give me a sec?

JIMMY

But Lyle, I got a job for you.

LYLE

Okay, just... wait right there.

Lyle heads into the BATHROOM, leaving Jimmy to poke his nose into everything in the office.

JIMMY

It's a bail jumper. Leroy Baldwin, missed his sentencing hearing. Got the judge to give him two more days...

INT. LYLE THATCHER INVESTIGATIONS, BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Lyle stares at his stubble and baggy eyes in the mirror.

JIMMY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And I bet the dumb kid's hiding out at his girlfriend's place. The banger and the librarian. Heh.

SIGHING, Lyle splashes cold water on his face.

INT. LYLE THATCHER INVESTIGATIONS -- CONTINUOUS

Lyle returns to find Jimmy staring intently at his WALL CALENDAR. Jimmy swivels around when he hears Lyle.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

I just need you to go bring him in.

LYLE

If it's so easy, why aren't your guys handling it?

JIMMY

They would be if they weren't out of town on another skip.

(beat)

Vegas, on *my* dime. They better be out lookin' for the guy, not seeing Celine again.

Lyle hesitates, undecided.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

You got some other way to make rent?

LYLE

Okay, *fine*. What's the address?

Jimmy hands over a piece of paper. Then gives a broad smirk.

JIMMY

So... you got a big date?

LYLE

You're kidding, right?

JIMMY

What? It's Valentine's Day.

LYLE

That's my point. New girlfriend expects romance up the wazoo, old girlfriend thinks you're gonna propose. Either way, you're screwed.

JIMMY

How about if it's a third date?

Lyle scowls at him.

Jimmy slyly taps his finger on the wall calendar. In big red letters, the February 14th entry reads:

7PM - DON'T BE LATE!!

JIMMY

So what's this then?

Lyle's eyes go wide.

LYLE
Crap, that's *tonight*?

JIMMY
Ah, so you *do* got a date!

LYLE
Jimmy, look... about the skip -

JIMMY
I'll up your fee by twenty percent.
(as Lyle goes to talk)
Twenty five.

Lyle hesitates, then shakes his head.

LYLE
I can't. I'll never be done in time.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Hey, all you gotta do is I.D. the kid
and grab him. How long could it take?

EXT. EAST LOS ANGELES NEIGHBORHOOD -- LATE AFTERNOON

Lyle's BEAT-UP CAR sits down the street from a large house.

INT. LYLE'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Lyle frowns out the windshield then checks the time. 5:33pm.

LYLE
Come on, Leroy, show your damn face...

He sees a car pulling up and raises the binoculars.

THROUGH THE BINOCULARS:

A well-dressed MAN and WOMAN head for the front of the house.

LYLE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You having a party, Leroy?

ED WHITE (60s) - beaming and tuxedoed - opens the front door
and lets his guests inside.

THE MAGNIFIED VIEW TRAVELS UP TO A HIGHER WINDOW:

Then halts abruptly... on a FIGURE in a white wedding dress.

LYLE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Well how about that.

EXT. EAST LOS ANGELES NEIGHBORHOOD -- DAY

An "Epic Events" CATERING TRUCK pulls up outside the house.

EXT. BACK GARDEN -- CONTINUOUS

Well-dressed MEN and WOMEN chat in small groups.

BY A ROSE-BEDECKED ARCH:

LEROY BALDWIN (late 20s), the tuxedoed groom, stands patiently as his mother, GLORIA BALDWIN (50s), adjusts his tie.

LEROY
Momma, it's fine -

GLORIA
Stand still while I fix it, Leroy!

BY A FOOD TABLE:

The Woman in Red samples hors d'oeuvres, grabbing a glass of champagne from a passing WAITER's tray.

BY THE ROSE-BEDECKED ARCH:

GLORIA (CONT'D)
There! That's better.

Leroy fiddles with the tie, uncomfortable.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
You're not getting cold feet, are you?

Leroy's frown disappears as he beams with joy.

LEROY
No way. I'm the luckiest man alive.

Ed approaches them.

ED
Son, there's a man at the front door.
Someone's sent you and Tania a cake!

GLORIA
Must be my cousins. I *told* you that
waffle-maker wasn't all they'd send.

ED
He says you need to sign for it.

GLORIA
Well go on! You got time.

EXT. EAST LOS ANGELES NEIGHBORHOOD -- MOMENTS LATER

Leroy and Ed emerge through the front door.

A DELIVERY GUY has a huge, three-tiered wedding cake half out of the "Epic Events" truck... *but looks about to drop it.*

DELIVERY GUY
A little help here!

Leroy and Ed hurry to help, Leroy getting there first.

DELIVERY GUY (CONT'D)
Yeah, I just need you to...

The Delivery Guy staggers under the weight of the cake. Hair slicked over to one side, in thick-rimmed glasses -

- HE'S JUST BARELY RECOGNIZABLE AS **LYLE**.

LYLE
...take the other end!
(to Leroy)
Quick, before it falls!

Leroy climbs in the truck's rear, taking the cake's other end.

LYLE (CONT'D)
Okay... now, just... let's push it
back in and try again.

ED
But it's almost out.

Not hearing, Leroy dutifully backs up one step, then two...

A large piece of cake falls off one side, revealing a HOLLOW INTERIOR. *It's a window display piece.* Ed notices.

ED
What the...?

Shoving the cake inside, **Lyle SLAMS the door in Leroy's face.**

LEROY (O.S.)
Hey!

ED
What are you *doing*?

Lyle runs around the side of the truck to the driver's door -
And almost makes it inside before Ed grabs his arm.

ED (CONT'D)
 What's going on here?!

TANIA (O.S.)
 Daddy! What's wrong?

The bride TANIA WHITE (mid 30s) runs up in a puffy wedding dress, veil back to reveal a plain face and thick glasses.

BANGING comes from inside the truck.

LEROY (O.S.)
 Tania! Baby, get me out!

Tania pulls at the truck's rear door.

TANIA
 Leroy?! I can't get it open! Daddy,
 it's locked!!

AT THE FRONT OF THE TRUCK:

Ed still hangs onto Lyle.

ED
 Let him out!

LYLE
 Sir, you may not be aware of it, but
 your future son-in-law skipped bail.

ED
What?

TANIA (O.S.)
 Daddy! Do something!!

LYLE
 I have a warrant...

ED
 (coming to a decision)
 And I've waited thirty-five years for
 my baby to get hitched!

Ed sucker punches Lyle, who drops the truck keys on the ground. They both dive for them, grappling... but Lyle gets there first and manages to jump up into the -

INT. CATERING TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Locking the door, Lyle hurries to start the truck... forced to listen in on the impassioned declarations of Tania and Leroy.

LEROY (O.S.)
Tania, I'm sorry! It's all my fault!

TANIA (O.S.)
No, I shouldn't have insisted on
Valentine's Day when you're all I
want! Ever since I first saw you,
checking out the third Harry Potter.

LEROY (O.S.)
The Prisoner of Azkaban.

TANIA (O.S.)
A prisoner... just like youuuuuuu...!

Lyle finally gets the keys in the ignition... but hesitates at
hearing Tania's HEARTRENDING SOBS.

LEROY (O.S.)
No, baby, don't cry! I ain't worth
your tears. I ain't worth you!

TANIA (O.S.)
No! No, Leroy, I LOVE you!!

LEROY (O.S.)
Baby, I love you too!!!

OUTSIDE THE TRUCK:

As MORE WEDDING GUESTS start to emerge, the Woman in Red
studies Lyle curiously through the truck window.

INSIDE THE TRUCK:

Lyle's phone BUZZES. He looks down to see a TEXT MESSAGE:

About 2 start Where R U???

Lyle comes out of his reverie and STARTS THE ENGINE... just as
a LOUD CLANG comes from the rear of the truck.

IN THE SIDEVIEW MIRROR:

Lyle sees Ed, Tania **and Leroy** running away.

LYLE
Dammit!

His phone BUZZES again. He takes a last look at the GROWING
NUMBER OF GUESTS and stomps on the gas.

EXT. EAST LOS ANGELES NEIGHBORHOOD -- CONTINUOUS

The Truck ROARS away pursued by SEVERAL ANGRY GUESTS, its damaged rear door BANGING open and shut.

EXT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM PARKING LOT -- EVENING

FAINT SOUNDS of MUSIC come from the AUDITORIUM as:

The Truck sweeps around the packed lot.

Not a space in sight.

INT. CATERING TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Lyle GROWLS in frustration, then makes a sharp left turn.

LYLE

Screw it.

EXT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM PARKING LOT -- CONTINUOUS

The Truck drives up over the curb and onto the grass, flattening two rose bushes before coming to a halt.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM -- MOMENTS LATER

Lyle hurries down the AISLE between a PACKED AUDIENCE glued to a big song and dance number from "Hello, Dolly."

UP ON STAGE:

KAYLEE THATCHER (15) - wearing the height of 1900s fashion - is raised high in the air by SIX TEENAGERS dressed as waiters.

KAYLEE

Dolly'll never go away!

IN THE AISLE:

Lyle's eyes are fixed on his teenage niece in a mixture of abject fear and devoted awe as he reaches his seat.

UP ON STAGE:

KAYLEE (CONT'D)

Dolly'll never go away... a-gain!!!

The actors hold position, beaming, as the AUDIENCE APPLAUDS. *And Kaylee shoots Lyle a quick wink.*

IN THE AUDIENCE:

Lyle grins back at Kaylee and takes his seat next to:

LEN THATCHER (60s) - Lyle's father, a real ball-breaker of a retired cop. And right now, he's royally pissed at Lyle.

LEN
It's already the second act!

LYLE
I know.

LEN
You're a terrible uncle.

LYLE
And you were a sucky Dad. Guess it runs in the family.

Len glowers. As the APPLAUSE dies down, Lyle stifles a YAWN.

LEN
You'd better not doze off.

LYLE
I've run murder rooms on less sleep.
I think I'll be fine.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM -- LATER

Eyes shut, Lyle gives a TINY SNORE and wakes himself up.

Len glares at him but subsides.

UP ON STAGE:

Kaylee sits at an elegant table in a restaurant scene.

KAYLEE
If you're thinking of marriage, you might as well learn that you have to let women be women. Now, tell me, did you like her? Did she like you?

IN HIS SEAT:

Lyle's eyelids flutter closed again.

WOMAN IN RED (O.S.)
Mr. Thatcher?

Lyle's eyes jerk open...

INT. MATCHMAKERS OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

And Lyle finds himself in a red armchair in a DAZZLINGLY WHITE ROOM, facing the Woman in Red across a large white desk.

LYLE

What the hell?

Lyle tries to stand... but his wrists and ankles are tied to the chair with red satin bows.

WOMAN IN RED

Forgive my rudeness, but I do have several appointments before midnight.

LYLE

Where am I? What am I doing here?!

WOMAN IN RED

You're here because you need my help. And I yours.

LYLE

Lady, you've got me tied to a *chair*. Yeah, I'd say you need help!

WOMAN IN RED

Logical, as always. That's part of the problem, of course.

LYLE

Who the hell are you?

WOMAN IN RED

This isn't about me, Mr. Thatcher. It's all about you...

She waves a hand and a MOVIE appears on the large white wall.

A YOUNGER LYLE (19) walks along a suburban street in LAPD patrol uniform, hand clenched around something in his pocket.

In the armchair, Lyle turns pale.

LYLE

What is this?

WOMAN IN RED

I think you know.

Lyle knocks on the front door of a nice-looking house. No answer. He peers through the windows; goes around the side.

WOMAN IN RED

I call it the "Christmas Carol" approach. Of course, Dickens stole that from us, so...

Lyle enters the back garden... and stops dead in shock.

A young woman - *KATHERINE (18)* - and a man with coloring similar to Lyle - *DANNY (mid 20s)* - *MAKE OUT* on the grass.

Katherine notices Lyle and gasps. Danny scrambles to get up.

LYLE
(through gritted teeth)
Turn it off.

Danny catches up with Lyle as he reaches the street. An argument, and Lyle shoves Danny backwards furiously.

WOMAN IN RED
It won't change the past.

Lyle storms away, tears streaming down his face. He reaches a freeway overpass and stares down at the cars... then in a fury launches a SPARKLING ENGAGEMENT RING over the fence.

LYLE
I don't care, just make it stop.

The Woman in Red waves a hand and the movie disappears.

WOMAN IN RED
Your lover and your brother. A double whammy betrayal.

Lyle shrugs.

LYLE
She'd only have cheated on me later.
At least I found out before it was too late.

WOMAN IN RED
Did you? Anyway... moving on.

The Woman in Red waves a hand and ANOTHER MOVIE plays.

It shows a GRAY-HAIRED OLD MAN (about 70), hunched over an unappealing meal in a dismal NURSING HOME room.

LYLE
That supposed to be my father?

WOMAN IN RED
Close.

*The old man looks up, revealing him as an OLD VERSION OF **LYLE**.*

LYLE
That's... me.

Old Lyle reaches for a photo of a 40-YEAR-OLD KAYLEE. He touches the screen, and her image comes to life.

40-YEAR-OLD KAYLEE

Hi, Uncle Lyle. I know you said you couldn't make it this year, but I'm still hoping you'll change your mind... Well, let me know!

WOMAN IN RED

That was ten years ago. You never once took her up on her invitation. Now Kaylee doesn't even call.

Old Lyle regards the photo sadly and takes another bite of food... then CHOKES as it gets stuck. As he starts to panic -

The Woman in Red waves her hand and the image FREEZES.

LYLE

Is he...? Do I *die*?!

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM -- CONTINUOUS

UP ON STAGE: the big finale.

ENTIRE CAST

We can tell... Dolly!

IN HIS SEAT: Lyle's face twitches in agitation.

INT. OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

The Woman in Red looks puzzled.

WOMAN IN RED

Die? Of course. Well you're not immortal, are you?

Fuming, Lyle points to the image on the wall.

LYLE

Is or isn't that how I die?!

WOMAN IN RED (CONT'D)

It could be. But that's really up to you. The question is, do you want it to end like that? Unloved and alone?

LYLE

Gee, let me think for a minute... Of course I don't!!

FAINT SOUNDS FROM THE MUSICAL drift in.

KAYLEE (O.S.)
Wow, wow, wow, fellas...

Lyle looks around, distracted.

WOMAN IN RED
Good! Then we're agreed.

She checks her watch and TSKS impatiently.

LYLE
Agreed? What - ?

WOMAN IN RED
I'm afraid this'll have to be quick.

LYLE
Wait! I didn't agree to anything!

ENTIRE CAST (O.S.)
Dolly you'll never go away!

WOMAN IN RED
Well there's no going back now.

She comes around her desk and places her hand on Lyle's chest.

WOMAN IN RED (CONT'D)
You may feel a tad woozy for a bit.

LYLE
What are you gonna - ?

Pain suddenly shoots through Lyle, his eyes going wide.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM -- CONTINUOUS

Lyle's eyes fly open as the finale reaches its climax.

ENTIRE CAST
Dolly you'll never go away... a-gain!!

Lyle falls out of his seat, clutching his chest in agony.

LYLE
YEAARRGGHHHHHHHHH!!!!

STUNNED SILENCE reigns throughout the auditorium... until a worried face appears over the edge of the stage.

KAYLEE
Uncle Lyle?

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. THATCHER HOME, SILVERLAKE -- DAY

A two-story charmer tucked between neighbors against a hill. Lyle's beat-up car sits parked on the tiny drive.

INT. LYLE'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

It's gloomy, the curtains drawn, as Lyle lies asleep in bed still wearing his socks and shirt.

KAYLEE (O.S.)

Uncle Lyle!

Kaylee yanks open the curtains, letting bright sunlight flood the room. Lyle winces and burrows under the covers.

LYLE

Argh! Kaylee, what are you doing?

Kaylee plops herself down on the foot of his bed. Though outwardly confident, she clearly uses wit and sarcasm as defensive shields.

KAYLEE

So, *that* was a fun night.

Lyle re-surfaces, looking disoriented.

LYLE

I don't remember getting home.

KAYLEE

So you don't remember arriving late to my musical? Or falling asleep?

LYLE

I fell asleep? Oh Kaylee, I'm sorry.

KAYLEE

Well, you woke up at the end. Just in time to scream your head off.

LYLE

What?

KAYLEE

Yeah, most people just applaud. Oh, and then you tried to punch out the school security guard for towing your truck. Don't worry, he's fine.

Lyle sits up, looking disturbed.

LYLE

I don't remember. I mean, I remember being *tired*...

KAYLEE

Grandpa said you snored.

LYLE

Okay, I *do* remember having this weird dream. And then I woke up, and...

(abruptly)

Oh crap. I really did -

KAYLEE

Go nuts in front of my *entire* school? Yep. Pretty much.

LYLE

I don't know what to say.

KAYLEE

It's okay.

LYLE

No! I'll speak to your teachers, explain I was, uh, sleep-deprived?

Kaylee shrugs as she stands up.

KAYLEE

Don't sweat it. People already talk about my parents all the time. A crazy uncle's kind of an improvement.

LYLE

(not liking this)

Who talks about your -

KAYLEE

(cutting him off)

Grandpa said to let you sleep in, but I knew you had that big meeting, so -

LYLE

Crap! What time is it?

KAYLEE

About nine thirty.

Lyle jumps out of bed. Kaylee pretends to shield her eyes.

KAYLEE (CONT'D)

Whoa. Nice underpants.

LYLE

Thanks for waking me up. You're the best, kid.

Lyle kisses the top of her head as he runs for the bathroom.

KAYLEE

I know.

INT. LYLE'S KITCHEN -- MOMENTS LATER

Lyle runs in - still basically wearing the same clothes as yesterday - to find Len drinking coffee in his dressing gown.

LYLE

Where're my keys?

LEN

Kaylee forgive you? Dumb question. Of course she did.

LYLE

And I get that you don't. Now where'd you put my stuff?

LEN

So, was it booze or drugs? Because Kaylee doesn't need you getting mixed up in that stuff too.

LYLE

You think I don't know that? Look, I fell asleep and had an *epically* bad nightmare. That's it.

LEN

Seemed like more than that to me.

LYLE

Well it wasn't, alright?

The two men have a staring contest.

After a few seconds, Len reluctantly reaches into his dressing gown pocket and hands over Lyle's car keys.

Len also pulls a BUZZING PHONE out of his other pocket.

LEN

You better have this too. Your new *employer's* been calling all morning.

Lyle sees Jimmy is calling. He winces but ignores the call.

LYLE
 I don't work for him.
 (at Len's look)
Much. Hey, I can't pick and choose.

LEN
 Could if you re-joined the force!
 Dumbest thing you ever did was quit.

LYLE
 Kaylee needed me at home.

LEN
Right. Because being a P.I.'s *such* a
 nine to five job.

Lyle opens the back door.

LYLE
 Look, I gotta go or I'm gonna be late.

LEN
 For Jimmy Morrison? Or some other
 sleaze you'd have arrested a year ago?

LYLE
 Not even close.

EXT. GERRY WARNOCK'S ESTATE -- DAY

Lyle drives his car through imposing security gates flanked by
 TWO SECURITY GUARDS, and heads up a long driveway toward a
 huge, stunning Spanish style mega-mansion on a hill.

EXT. GERRY WARNOCK'S HOME -- MOMENTS LATER

As Lyle approaches the front door opens. From inside:

BETHANY (O.S.)
 ...bring milk into this house when she
knows I take it black!!

A MAID stumbles out of the house and runs for the driveway.

BETHANY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 And now she's letting all the cold air
 out!!

BETHANY WARNOCK (19) - spoilt little rich girl - appears in
 the doorway poised to slam the door. She pauses, scowling.

BETHANY (CONT'D)
 Who are you?

LYLE

Lyle Thatcher. I'm here regarding
divorce papers?

Tears fill Bethany's eyes. Turning, she runs up the stairs.

BETHANY

Daddddyyyyyy!!!!

INT. GERRY WARNOCK'S HOME -- CONTINUOUS

Lyle enters, removing his sunglasses. Then WHISTLES in awe at the opulence of the décor.

LYLE

Hope someone had a good pre-nup.

GERRY WARNOCK (50s) strides in. Or maybe 60s... up close, it's clear his hair's dyed and his smooth face had some help.

GERRY

You the guy Bruce recommended?

LYLE

Yes, sir. One of his cast had a
stalker, so I -

Ignoring Lyle, Gerry walks over to a table to grab something.

GERRY

They met at a music festival, can you
believe it? Longhaired hippies
pissing in mud. I mean, what was I
thinking, letting my Bethany go there?

LYLE

I, uh...

Lyle has no idea what he's talking about. Fortunately, Gerry doesn't actually expect an answer as he comes back to Lyle.

GERRY

Bum's in a "rock band," which means we
don't have an address. But that's
what I'm paying you for, I guess.

He thrusts an ENVELOPE at Lyle.

GERRY (CONT'D)

You get him to sign the divorce
papers. And make sure he knows to
leave Bethany alone.

(low and menacing)

And I mean *really* make sure.

LYLE
Look, Mr. Warnock -

LOUD ROCK MUSIC comes from outside.

GERRY
What the hell?

EXT. GERRY WARNOCK'S REAR PATIO -- CONTINUOUS

The large patio contains a SWIMMING POOL and POOLHOUSE.

JOSEPH 'JOEY' LEECH (22) - a punk goth rocker, skinny arms covered in tattoos - stands disheveled and bloody, holding up a LARGE, LOUD BOOMBOX on the far side of the pool.

JOEY
Bethany! Bethany, it's our
song!! The one we wrote together!!

Gerry emerges, Lyle and a HUGE BODYGUARD at his heels.

GERRY
That prick! Get him off my property!

The Bodyguard heads for Joey... who jumps over pool furniture and drops the boombox as he climbs up onto the POOLHOUSE ROOF.

JOEY
Bethany! I just wanna talk!

GERRY
Get up there! Rip him apart!!

BETHANY (O.S.)
Daddy, no!!

Everyone looks up to see Bethany out on her bedroom balcony.

BETHANY (CONT'D)
Don't hurt him, please!

JOEY
Bethany!

But as Bethany and Joey stare at each other:

GLOWING WHITE BALLS OF LIGHT RISE OUT OF BETHANY... THEN OUT OF JOEY TOO... AND SLOWLY MOVE TOWARD EACH OTHER.

Lyle stares up at them, his jaw dropping in shock.

LYLE
Holy crap!

He looks around... but *no one else is reacting.*

LYLE (CONT'D)
D-do you see that?

Ignoring Lyle, Gerry urges his Bodyguard onto the Poolhouse.

GERRY
Go on, get him! Get up there!!

Lyle shakes his head and shuts his eyes tight... but when he looks again, **THE WHITE LIGHTS ARE STILL THERE.**

Even worse: **NOW THEY'RE SLOWLY HEADING FOR LYLE.**

Lyle dodges sideways toward the Poolhouse, **BUT THE LIGHTS CHANGE DIRECTION TOO.**

LYLE
Seriously, can't anyone else see that?

GERRY
See *what*? Have you lost your mind?

Climbing onto the Poolhouse roof after Joey, the distracted Bodyguard looks down at Lyle.

Gerry SHOUTS up at him.

GERRY (CONT'D)
What are you waiting for? Grab him!

THE LIGHTS PICK UP SPEED. Lyle runs sideways to avoid them... **BUT THEY SWERVE AGAIN AND SLAM INTO HIS CHEST.**

LYLE
Yeargh!

Lyle CRIES OUT with shock and steps back... straight into the path of a SECOND HUGE BODYGUARD...

Carrying both of them into the SWIMMING POOL.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. GERRY WARNOCK'S REAR PATIO -- MOMENTS LATER

Lyle GASPS as Bodyguard #2 drags him out of the pool.

Bodyguard #1 holds Joey in a death grip next to Gerry, who shoves the divorce papers and a pen in Joey's face.

GERRY

You're gonna sign these. Now!

Joey stares up at Bethany on her balcony.

JOEY

Bethany? Is that what you want?

BETHANY

Yes!

Bethany tearfully flees back inside her room.

Utterly despondent, Joey takes the pen and signs.

EXT. GERRY WARNOCK'S ESTATE -- DAY

The Security Gates CLANG SHUT behind Lyle's departing car.

INT. LYLE'S CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

Joey stares vacantly out of the passenger window.

Lyle looks similarly stunned. Clothes waterlogged, he sticks a finger in his ear and shakes his wet head.

Drops of water hit Joey, bringing him out of his reverie.

JOEY

Thanks for trying to help back there.

LYLE

Help?

JOEY

Taking out the second guy like that?
Bold move, man.

LYLE

No... no, I was just trying to... You saw those things, right?

JOEY

Things?

LYLE

Yeah! Those things... those little...
glowing balls of light?

JOEY

No.

LYLE

But you *must* have! They came out of
you and your girlfriend!

JOEY

(nervously)

Did you, like, hit your head on the
side of the pool or something?

LYLE

But...

Seeing Joey stare at him worriedly, Lyle gives up.

LYLE (CONT'D)

Maybe I'm just going nuts.

JOEY

I know *I* am. I mean, I love Bethany
and I *know* she loves me!

Joey cradles his phone.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Any minute, she'll call.

LYLE

I wouldn't hold my breath.

INT. BETHANY'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

But sure enough, Bethany stands by her window CRYING, cradling
her own phone as she watches them drive away far below.

EXT. SUNSET PLAZA HOTEL -- DAY

Lyle pulls his car up outside the fancy hotel, to the obvious
distaste of a waiting VALET (20s).

INT. LYLE'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Joey still looks miserable.

JOEY

Thanks, man. I owe you one.

LYLE

You want my advice? Find someone else. You think this girl's special, but trust me: she's not.

JOEY

Nah. Nah, Bethany's my soulmate, yeah? Two halves of the same whole. It's like we're *pulled* to be together.

LYLE

So maybe let her be pulled to *you* next time. It's kind of her turn to put herself out there, right?

JOEY

Yeah? Yeah... I guess so.

Joey gets out of the car and trudges away. He turns and waves from the hotel entrance. Lyle waves back, faking a smile.

LYLE

Soulmates? *Riiight*.

INT. LYLE THATCHER INVESTIGATIONS -- DAY

Lyle enters in his still-wet clothes, SQUELCHING in his sopping wet shoes. He CLOMPS over to his desk and pulls a change of clothes from the bottom drawer.

JIMMY (O.S.)

So you finally decided to show your face, huh?

LYLE

Jimmy, not now.

An angry Jimmy appears in the open doorway... then takes a startled look at Lyle and peers back outside.

JIMMY

It raining somewhere?

LYLE

Sprinklers.

JIMMY

Jeesh. How long'd you stand in them?

Lyle SNEEZES VIOLENTLY.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Too long, I guess.

LYLE

Jimmy, you ever hear of, uh, balls of light floating in mid-air?

JIMMY

You mean like them UFOs?

LYLE

No. More like... around people?

JIMMY

Yeah, sure, I seen that...

(grinning)

When I was on LSD this one time...

Jimmy's mood turns angry again.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

So *that's* why you messed up the job yesterday? You was high?

LYLE

I wasn't high! I was... sleep-deprived. Just give me the rest of the day. I'll find Leroy.

JIMMY

Yeah, you don't look so good, Lyle. My boys got their guy in Vegas. They're leaving any time now.

LYLE

Then just give me twelve hours.

JIMMY

(after a long pause)

Okay, but only 'cos it's neighborly...

LYLE

Thanks, Jimmy.

JIMMY

...I'll give you five.

EXT. SUNSET PLAZA HOTEL -- DAY

Lyle's car pulls up outside and stops. The same Valet as before waits a long moment, then reluctantly steps forward.

VALET

Can I have your keys, sir?

Lyle gets out of the car and offers his keys...

But instead hangs onto his LAPD key chain as the confused Valet tries to take it, like a weird tug-of-war.

VALET
Sir, it's valet parking only!

LYLE
I know!

With an effort, Lyle wrenches back his keys.

LYLE
I changed my mind, okay?

INT. LYLE'S CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

A confused Lyle stares out at the hotel and the annoyed Valet.

LYLE
What the hell am I doing back here?

Shaking his head to clear it, Lyle starts the car again.

EXT. ED WHITE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Lyle KNOCKS LOUDLY on the front door. Finally a FEMALE NEIGHBOR (40s) appears on the other side of a fence.

NEIGHBOR
Can I help you?

LYLE
I hope so. I have a late gift for the bride and groom.

Lyle holds up the HEART-SHAPED CANDY BOX with a big smile.

LYLE (CONT'D)
You wouldn't happen to know where they went on their, uh, honeymoon?

The Neighbor glances around, then says confidentially:

NEIGHBOR
Far as I know, they're not even married yet.

LYLE
No?

NEIGHBOR
No. I heard the reverend refused...

The Neighbor's eyes shift guiltily to something behind Lyle.

NEIGHBOR (CONT'D)

Oh, hi Ed...!

Lyle turns...

But not in time to avoid a *second* sucker punch from Ed. Lyle doubles up GROANING as the bewildered Neighbor retreats.

LYLE

Again?

ED

You had that coming!

LYLE

Won't argue with you there.

Lyle pulls himself back upright with difficulty.

LYLE (CONT'D)

Mr. White, it'll get real bad unless Leroy turns himself in right away.

ED

It's *already* too late!

LYLE

No, the judge gave him an extension. He's got the rest of today.

ED

And I'm supposed to believe you're telling the truth? Mr. *Wedding Cake*?

LYLE

Call the Courthouse and check.

Lyle hands Ed his card.

LYLE (CONT'D)

And then call me, okay? I'll bring him in myself.

ED

You?

LYLE

You ever seen Dog the Bounty Hunter? Well it's me or those guys.

Ed blanches. He tucks Lyle's card into his pocket.

ED

I'll, uh, make sure they call you.

INT. LYLE'S CAR -- DAY

Lyle talks on his headset.

LYLE
Yeah, Jimmy, by this evening, I swear
to you. Look, I'm driving back to the
office right now...

EXT. GERRY WARNOCK'S ESTATE -- CONTINUOUS

The Security Guards glare through the car windshield...

As Lyle slowly brings his car to a halt.

INT. LYLE'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Lyle stares out at the Guards. Stupefied.

LYLE
Jimmy, I gotta go.

Lyle yanks off his headset and numbly feels his brow.

LYLE (CONT'D)
No fever. That's good. Right?

BANG!! A GUARD glares in the window at Lyle.

GUARD
What're you doing back here?

LYLE
Wish I knew.

INT. HOSPITAL TREATMENT ROOM -- DAY

Lyle sits on a bed as a FEMALE DOCTOR (30s) makes notes.

DOCTOR
Intense dreams and hallucinations...

LYLE
And problems driving.

DOCTOR
Blurred vision?

LYLE
Mm... it's more about *where* I drive.

DOCTOR
You find yourself getting lost?

LYLE

No, just... going to the wrong place.

DOCTOR

So some confusion, too.

LYLE

And when it all started, I had this huge pain in my chest. Do you... do you think I had a heart attack, doc?

DOCTOR

It's unlikely but we'll check. Okay, now lie back and unbutton your shirt.

Lyle complies... and the Doctor's eyes go wide.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

My goodness. That's very impressive.

She runs her fingers over Lyle's chest.

LYLE

(disconcerted)

Uh... thanks? I work out...

DOCTOR

And it doesn't look infected, so I think we can rule it out as a cause.

LYLE

Rule what out?

Frowning, Lyle peers down at his chest -

- And sees a **HUGE TATTOO centered over his heart: dozens of small, intersecting circles in every color of the rainbow.**

LYLE (CONT'D)

What the *hell*?!

Lyle sits bolt upright and rubs at his chest... even licks his fingers and tries again... but the tattoo stays put.

LYLE (CONT'D)

It's not coming off!

Agitated, Lyle jumps off the treatment bed.

DOCTOR

Mr. Thatcher, please calm down.

LYLE

You don't get it! The woman in my dream, she did something to me! She put her hand on me...

(he thumps his chest)

Right here! Right where it is!

The Doctor SHOUTS into the corridor.

DOCTOR

I need a sedative in room four!

Lyle's eyes go wide.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT -- MOMENTS LATER

Lyle runs from the hospital, shirt still flapping open, pursued by TWO BIG MALE NURSES and a SECURITY GUARD.

EXT. LYLE THATCHER INVESTIGATIONS -- DAY

Exhausted, Lyle trudges to the office from his parking spot... and spots a tear-stained Bethany waiting by the door.

LYLE

Ms. Warnock?

BETHANY

You're Lyle Thatcher, right? The P.I. who came to my house?

LYLE

(cautiously)

Yes.

BETHANY

Then you have to help me find Joey!

LYLE

You mean the guy you just divorced?

BETHANY

Please? I know you left with him, you must know where he went.

LYLE

Oh, so now you want him back? Lady, from what I saw he's better off alone.

Lyle turns away from her toward the office door... **and WINCES as PAIN shoots through his head.**

LYLE (CONT'D)

Yeaowch!! What the hell...?

BETHANY

I'll give you... a hundred bucks!

Lyle shoves his key into the lock and steps inside...

INT. LYLE THATCHER INVESTIGATIONS -- CONTINUOUS

Then GASPS as the PAIN hits him again.

BETHANY

Okay, two hundred!

Clutching his head, Lyle hurries toward the bathroom.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

Three hundred, then!

INT. BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Closing the door on her, Lyle fumbles in a medicine cabinet.

BETHANY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(through the door)

Look, I'm sorry you're sick, but I'm *begging* you. I need your help!

LYLE

Okay I'll help you, just *shut up*!!

Lyle GASPS in relief as the PAIN instantly evaporates.

INT. LYLE THATCHER INVESTIGATIONS -- MOMENTS LATER

Lyle opens the bathroom door slowly, as if afraid any sudden move might make the pain come back.

BETHANY

Are you alright?

LYLE

Yeah, I feel... better now.

BETHANY

So you'll take me to Joey?

LYLE

The idiot still loves you. Why don't you just call the guy?

BETHANY

No! No, I-I have to see his reaction when I tell him how sorry I am.

LYLE

Fine. He's at the Sunset Plaza hotel.
But I don't know what room he's in.

BETHANY

Then you'll have to come with me. You
could call up from the lobby, say you
want to help him get drunk!

(beat)

Five hundred dollars.

Lyle's gaze falls on a pile of OVERDUE BILLS on his desk.

EXT. SUNSET PLAZA HOTEL -- DAY

Lyle hands the keys to his car to the long-suffering Valet.

VALET

You sure this time?

LYLE

Bite me.

Lyle smiles and jogs up the steps to the entrance, WHISTLING.

INT. SUNSET PLAZA HOTEL CORRIDOR -- MOMENTS LATER

Lyle strides along in good humor, Bethany lagging behind.

Reaching a door, Lyle briskly KNOCKS TWICE.

LYLE

Joey? It's Lyle.

JOEY (O.S.)

(sounding drunk)

Ah, my good friend...!

After much FUMBLING WITH CHAINS, the door opens to reveal
Joey. He staggers back, bloodshot eyes widening on Bethany.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Bethany! Oh my God!

INT. SUNSET PLAZA HOTEL SUITE -- CONTINUOUS

Bethany walks in past Joey, noting the clothes on the floor,
dirty room service plates, and lots of empty bottles of booze.

JOEY

I can't believe you're here, baby! I
though we were through!

Lyle notices WHITE SPHERES FLOATING OUT OF HIS OWN CHEST.

LYLE
Guys... hey, guys!

THE GLOWING SPHERES MOVE SLOWLY AWAY FROM LYLE, SPLITTING INTO TWO STREAMS AS HALF HEAD TOWARD BETHANY, HALF TOWARD JOEY.

LYLE (CONT'D)
Seriously, one of you look at this!!

Joey hugs Bethany, leaning in for a kiss.

JOEY
Don't ever leave me again!

But instead of kissing him back, *Bethany pushes Joey away.*

BETHANY
You think I've come *back*? Just how *dumb* do you think I am?

THE SPHERES HOVER MIDWAY ACROSS THE ROOM. Freaked out, Lyle watches them warily, while:

Bethany swivels away from Joey and charges into one room after another, filled with rage as she searches the suite.

BETHANY (CONT'D)
Where is she? You can come out now!!

JOEY
Bethany, baby, what's this about?

BETHANY
Don't 'baby' me! I know, alright?

Lyle keeps an eye on the **SPHERES** as he backs toward the door.

LYLE
(to himself)
I'm just overtired. That's all.

BETHANY
Daddy told me about all the dancers you've been sleeping with! I know you only married me to get in with him!

JOEY
What? That's not true!

BETHANY
Then explain *these*!

Bethany tosses a set of X-RATED PHOTOS to the carpet. Joey bends clumsily to examine them. His eyes go wide.

JOEY
These can't be me! I barely know her-

BETHANY
Stop denying it. I spoke to your
girlfriend *Sophia* myself!

JOEY
Bethany, please - !

BETHANY
I'm going to Europe tomorrow and I
hope I never see you again!!

Bethany flees the room.

At the door by now too, Lyle lurches around it after her...

LYLE
Hey! What about my five hundred -

INT. SUNSET PLAZA HOTEL CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

...But finds himself face to face with BODYGUARD #1 instead.

LYLE (CONT'D)
- Bucks?

POW! The huge bodyguard punches Lyle in the face.

Joey emerges from the room as Lyle slides down to the floor.

JOEY
But I never slept with Sophia! You
believe me, don't you, Lyle? *Lyle?*

LYLE
I don't give a... *YEARGH!*

Lyle recoils back against the wall as **THE GLOWING WHITE SPHERES FLOOD OUT OF THE ROOM AND BACK INTO HIS CHEST.**

Then he passes out...

INT. MATCHMAKERS OFFICE

...and find himself back in the red armchair. Behind her desk, the Woman in Red looks up from a RED FOLDER.

WOMAN IN RED
You're going to be trouble, aren't you
Mr. Thatcher?

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. MATCHMAKERS OFFICE

Lyle glares at the Woman in Red.

LYLE

What are you talking about? And what the hell's *happening* to me?!

He tugs his shirt open, pointing at the tattoo.

LYLE (CONT'D)

What did you do to my chest?

WOMAN IN RED

Surely you've worked it out by *now*? I thought you were a Detective.

She looks down at the red folder on her desk.

WOMAN IN RED (CONT'D)

Bethany Warnock and Joseph Leech. Soulmates. Destined to meet. But sometimes even soulmates need help. That's where **Matchmakers** come in.

LYLE

Maybe this isn't happening. Maybe it's all a dream -

WOMAN IN RED

So you haven't been drawn to your assigned couple? Found yourself compelled to help their cause?

LYLE

You mean zoning out in my car? And that pain in my head? That was *you*?

WOMAN IN RED

Not me... their *energies*.

LYLE

You mean those... glowy things?

WOMAN IN RED

(dryly)

Those 'glowy things,' yes. Energies exchange between soulmates to seal their bond. But if the bond is unstable, a Matchmaker is assigned, and both sets pass into them instead.

Lyle peers down at his chest, rubbing it anxiously.

LYLE

Why? What are they *doing* in there?

WOMAN IN RED

Acting as guides, and... should you require it... ah... *motivating* you.

LYLE

(growling)

You mean zapping me like a shock collar until I hook up those two?

WOMAN IN RED

How eloquent. Let me write that down.

She reaches for her notebook.

JOEY (O.S.)

Lyle? Hey, Lyle?

WOMAN IN RED

I think you're needed.

LYLE

No, wait, I don't know what to do...!

INT. SUNSET PLAZA HOTEL CORRIDOR -- DAY

Lyle regains consciousness... just as the contents of an ICE BUCKET empty over his head.

LYLE

ARGH!

JOEY

Sorry! Didn't know what else to do!

Lyle scrambles to his feet SPLUTTERING.

JOEY (CONT'D)

You gotta help me. Bethany left!

LYLE

I don't care. I'm out.

But as Lyle turns to leave, a **HEADACHE** clamps onto his brow. He puts up his hand to it, face screwing up in PAIN.

JOEY

Please, man! You gotta help!

Lyle turns back to face Joey...

And GASPS as the PAIN disappears.

LYLE
 (re the pain vanishing)
 No freakin' way...

JOEY
 You won't help me?

LYLE
 No... I mean... *Fine.* I'll help.

JOEY
 You won't regret it!

LYLE
 Already do.

INT. LYLE'S CAR -- DAY

Joey sleeps off the booze in the passenger seat, the x-rated photos clutched against his chest.

Lyle talks on his cell as he drives through SOUTH LA SUBURBIA.

LYLE
 Yeah, Jimmy, everything you can on a
 dancer called Sophia Wilde.
 (beat)
 Of course it's a lead on the case...
 she's, uh, she's Leroy's old flame.

Joey wakes, looking puzzled, as Lyle quickly ends the call.

JOEY
 Who's Leroy?

LYLE
 Convenient. And what Jimmy doesn't
 know won't hurt me.

Joey frowns, trying to figure that one out.

Lyle pulls onto the drive of a small SINGLE FAMILY HOME in a packed neighborhood. A nearby radio pumps out MEXICAN POP.

JOEY
 This is it? I thought we were going
 to see some forensics dude about the
 fake photos?

LYLE
 Trust me, my dude's the best.

EXT. SINGLE FAMILY HOME -- MOMENTS LATER

CARLOS (13) opens the front door.

CARLOS
Hey, Lyle.

LYLE
Carlos. So, how goes the crime wave?

CARLOS
Pretty good. We're poised to take
over the whole city.

Joey, a bit freaked, notices a GAME CONSOLE in Carlos's hand.

JOEY
Oh, you mean in a *game*.

Carlos raises his eyebrows at Lyle and leads them inside.

INT. SINGLE FAMILY HOME -- CONTINUOUS

A VIDEO GAME is paused on the large TV.

Joey nudges Lyle and nods toward the sheaf of photos.

JOEY
Isn't he a little young to see these?

Lyle ignores Joey as Carlos leads them DOWN STAIRS, into -

INT. REESA'S BASEMENT WORKROOM -- CONTINUOUS

High tech, state of the art equipment sits all around. Joey looks stunned as he and Lyle enter, Carlos following behind.

JOEY
Whoa. It's like the bat cave.

CARLOS
Aunt Reesa, it's Lyle.

REESA MEDALLA (mid 30s) - smart and sexy in a hot CSI lab tech way - looks up from the equipment that hid her until now.

She glances at Lyle, but comes over to shake hands with Joey.

REESA
You must be Joey. I'm Reesa.

JOEY
(awe-struck)
H-hi.

Carlos rolls his eyes. He's seen this reaction before.

CARLOS

Can I go over to Chris's?

REESA

Did you finish your homework yet?

CARLOS

No.

REESA

Then ask again when it's done. Or you want I should call your mom?

Carlos HUFFS but marches back up the stairs anyway.

REESA (CONT'D)

So. What do you have for me?

Joey reluctantly hands over the photos. Reesa grins and lets out a WHISTLE at all the naked flesh on display.

REESA (CONT'D)

Wow. Hot stuff.

JOEY

Th-that isn't me, by the way. I mean... it *could* be, but it isn't.

Amused, Reesa carries the photos over to a high-tech SCANNER.

Lyle moves closer to her, seeming awkward.

LYLE

So, how's the movie stuff going?

JOEY

You're an actress?

REESA

I work on digital effects for movies... couple of TV shows, too.

LYLE

Since when?

REESA

About six months now. Been a while since I heard from you.

The machine WHIRRS SOFTLY as an image appears on a screen.

REESA (CONT'D)

Hey Joey, could you do me a favor? Go upstairs and remind Carlos I said homework *then* games?

JOEY

Sure, okay.

Joey heads back up the stairs. Reesa pauses, then:

REESA

You know I had to find out from O'Riley that you became a P.I.?

LYLE

It was kind of... spur of the moment.

REESA

Right. Just like when you resigned.

LYLE

I had to, Reesa. Kaylee lost both her parents at once. She was having a really hard time -

REESA

Spare me the bullshit, Lyle. I may have left before you did, but I still have a friend in I.A.

Lyle visibly tenses.

REESA (CONT'D)

Yeah. I know you refused to take a polygraph. Now, I *know* you weren't on the take like your brother Danny...

Lyle looks relieved but even more guarded.

REESA (CONT'D)

So only thing would've made you quit was if you were protecting someone. If you knew something you shouldn't.

LYLE

Reesa...

REESA

And big bro's already in jail, so I'm guessing it's about that wife of his. She still on the run in Mexico? Or is it Canada? Not that *you'd* know where the bitch is, of course.

LYLE
 (tightly)
 That 'bitch' is Kaylee's *mother* -

REESA
 Cut the crap, partner. I know she's
 more to you than just a *sister-in-law*.

They glare at each other... until the scanner BEEPS.

REESA (CONT'D)
 I gotta concentrate. Why don't you
 join your friend upstairs?

INT. SINGLE FAMILY HOME -- LATER

Lyle watches moodily from an armchair as Joey and Carlos play
 video games, lying on the floor in front of the TV.

REESA (O.S.)
 They're fakes.

Joey jumps up quickly, Lyle more slowly, as Reesa appears.

REESA (CONT'D)
 For starters, the specular highlights
 are *all* wrong...

Joey frowns. Reesa smirks and hands him an envelope.

REESA (CONT'D)
 Don't worry, it's all explained in my
 report.

LYLE
 Thanks, Reesa. I owe you one.

REESA
 Forget it.

Reesa pointedly turns her back on Lyle.

REESA (CONT'D)
 You know the way out.

EXT. EAST LOS ANGELES STREET -- MOMENTS LATER

Lyle and a curious Joey walk back to the car.

JOEY
 So, are you two, like...?

LYLE
 Nothing going on.

JOEY
'cos of your sister-in-law?

Lyle stops walking to glare at him.

JOEY (CONT'D)
Shutting up now.

Lyle's phone BUZZES. He looks down at a TEXT.

LYLE
Jimmy found your fake girlfriend.

JOEY
She'll never talk to us. Gerry's too powerful.

LYLE
Everyone talks. You just gotta find the right approach.

EXT. GRIFFITH PARK -- DAY

IN THE BACKGROUND:

CREW MEMBERS bustle around moviestar trailers and filming vehicles, prepping a location shoot.

IN THE FOREGROUND:

SOPHIA WILDE (20s) - attractive in a figure-hugging outfit - watches the distant activity with keen interest.

Next to her is MIKE (50s) - a bored, uniformed security guard.

LYLE (O.S.)
No... no, that's okay...

Lyle appears around a corner in a pricey suit, phone held to his ear. Mr. Super Smooth Producer guy.

LYLE (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
Cut him in on the back end, but tell him we won't go over two mill. And if he pulls that crap one more time, he'll never work for me again!

Sophia looks intimidated as Lyle ends his call.

LYLE (CONT'D)
I got it from here, thanks Mike.

Mike moves away, and Lyle turns a gleaming smile on Sophia.

LYLE (CONT'D)

Stuart Turner. Thanks for meeting me all the way up here, Ms. Wilde.

SOPHIA

It did seem a little... well, weird...

Sophia hastily gestures to the filming behind them.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Until I got here, I mean!

LYLE

Worried I might be a serial killer? Don't worry, I won't bury you alive... not until we're shooting, at least.

Sophia smiles uncertainly at the joke.

LYLE (CONT'D)

Okay, we got five minutes here, so... why should I cast you in my show?

SOPHIA

Uh... which show is it, exactly?

LYLE

We're calling it "Untitled Kiefer Project" for now.

SOPHIA

Oh! Uh... wow!

LYLE

Gerry Warnock's one of our producers, and he said you'd be perfect for the role. He said a recent performance you turned in for him was "Emmy-worthy" - and that's a direct quote.

Sophia looks horror-stricken.

SOPHIA

Uh... I...

LYLE

You are *that* Sophia Wilde, right?

As Sophia remains speechless, Lyle looks annoyed.

LYLE

Great... you're the wrong girl. Look, I'm sorry to have dragged you up here for nothing.

Lyle turns away, putting his phone back to his ear. Sophia lunges desperately in front of him, blocking his path.

SOPHIA

No, no, I'm the right girl!

LYLE

You're the Sophia Wilde Gerry hired to con his daughter into a divorce?

SOPHIA

Yes!

(horrified)

I mean... um... no?

LYLE

You can come out now, Joey!

As Joey appears from around a corner holding a VIDEO CAMERA, Lyle holds up his phone showing it's RECORDED EVERYTHING too.

JOEY

How could you lie to Bethany, Sophia?
I thought you were cool!

SOPHIA

I-it wasn't my fault! He said he'd
kill my career if I didn't help!

LYLE

Oh, so you did it for free, then?

Sophia hesitates... then takes off down the hill.

LYLE (CONT'D)

(calling after her)

Nope, didn't think so!

JOEY

Sophia!

LYLE

Let her go. We got what we needed.

They head down the hill too, passing an amused Mike en route.

MIKE

You sure liven up my retirement job.

LYLE

Thanks for the assist, Sarge.

MIKE

Any time, Lyle.

Lyle checks his phone, stopping the recording... and lets out a relieved breath when he sees something else.

LYLE
About time, Leroy.

JOEY
Now we go and see Bethany, right?

Lyle puts his phone to his ear. After a pause:

LYLE
(into the phone)
Hey Jimmy? Told you I'd find him.
Get to the courthouse, right now.

Joey looks agitated as Lyle ends the call.

JOEY
You heard Bethany! She's going to Europe tomorrow... I'll never see her again!

LYLE
It's Europe, Joey, not the moon.

JOEY
But -

LYLE
We'll go later, I promise. There's just something else I gotta do now...

Lyle staggers as SUDDEN PAIN hits.

LYLE (CONT'D)
...ARGH... *alright!* We'll find Bethany later, I swear!!

JOEY
Okay, okay, I believe you!
(a little freaked)
Dude, you're seriously tightly wound.

INT. COURTHOUSE LOBBY -- AFTERNOON

Lyle's clearly in PAIN as he and Joey approach the nervous Leroy, Gloria, Ed, and Tania, who stand waiting for them.

As Tania sees Lyle, she steps in front of Leroy protectively.

TANIA
If you lied to us...

Jimmy appears, flanked by TWO of his 'BOYS': both huge, mean, muscle machines. Tania and Leroy flinch away from them.

LYLE

That deal with the judge still good?

JIMMY

Of course!

(to Leroy)

Okay, kid. Let's get you in there.

Tania SOBS and clings to Leroy.

LEROY

I'm sorry, baby. I swear, we'll get married as soon as I get out.

JOEY

(to Lyle)

Look, I feel for them, I do... but can we go now?

LYLE

Yeah, in a sec.

JIMMY

You can always get married in jail.

ED

In *prison*? Not *my* little girl!

LYLE

Okay, wait... Who's the judge?

JIMMY

Judge Irwin. Why?

INT. COURTROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Leroy stands nervously in front of the bench, behind which sits a serious looking, black-robed JUDGE IRWIN (50s).

JUDGE IRWIN

(somberly)

Leroy Willis Baldwin...

Clearing his throat, Judge Irwin forces a smile.

JUDGE IRWIN (CONT'D)

Sorry. It's been a while...

PULLING BACK we see Tania stands next to Leroy. Behind them, Ed watches stoically, while Gloria wipes tears from her eyes.

JUDGE IRWIN (CONT'D)

Leroy Willis Baldwin, do you take this woman, Tania Patricia White, to be your lawfully wedded wife?

EXT. POOL PARTY -- EVENING

A HUGE GARDEN is lit up behind a Beverly Hills faux chateau.

DOZENS of BARELY-CLAD YOUNG MEN and WOMEN occupy a HOT TUB, gyrate to LOUD POP and HIP HOP MUSIC and swim in a HUGE POOL.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS HOME -- CONTINUOUS

MUSIC drifts up and over the house as CARS pull up out front.

INT. LYLE'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Lyle watches the action through BINOCULARS, Joey restlessly monitoring a SMARTPHONE in the passenger seat.

LYLE

Pretty big party for an unknown group.

JOEY

It's all about marketing, not talent. Celebrity feuds and getting on TMZ.

(scoffing)

The Birdies. What a dumb name. Probably Gerry's idea.

LYLE

And you're sure he and Bethany will be here tonight?

JOEY

He just tweeted they're en route.

LYLE

Ah, social media: a stalker's best friend.

As they fall silent, Joey stares intently at Lyle. Finally:

LYLE (CONT'D)

Joey, I can feel you boring holes in my skull.

JOEY

It's just... well, uh... do you have a brain tumor or something?

THROUGH THE BINOCULARS:

Gerry and Bethany climb out of a massive gold Mercedes.

LYLE
Okay, they're here.

Joey reaches for his door, but Lyle grabs him back in time.

JOEY
She's getting on a plane tonight!

LYLE
We have a plan, remember?

JOEY
Yeah. If it ever gets here - !

RAPPING on his window makes Joey jump.

Len stands outside the car, dangling a set of KEYS.

LEN
I'm missing range practice for this.

LYLE
Appreciate the sacrifice, Len.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS HOME -- MOMENTS LATER

The "Epic Events" catering truck pulls onto the mansion driveway, stopping level with TWO MASSIVE BOUNCERS (30s).

Lyle - BACK IN HIS CATERER DISGUISE - leans out the window.

LYLE
Hey. Beverly Hills Events.

One Bouncer frowns at the Truck's "Epic Events" signage.

LYLE (CONT'D)
We're expanding. Just took over these guys, haven't repainted yet.

But the guy isn't buying it. He lifts a RADIO to his lips.

BOUNCER
Sorry. I gotta call up to the house.

Lyle maintains his smile, but under his breath:

LYLE
Dammit.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS HOME -- CONTINUOUS

UNSEEN BY THE BOUNCER:

Lyle RAPS HIS KNUCKLES against the wall behind his seat.

A moment later a LOUD CRACK comes from the back of the truck.

BOUNCER (CONT'D)

What was that?

JOEY (O.S.)

Billy! It's coming apart!

LYLE

Holy crap!

Lyle jumps down, running to the -

REAR OF THE TRUCK.

Lyle yanks the rear doors open as the Bouncer re-appears...

Revealing a white-uniformed Joey clinging onto - *hugging, really* - a HUGE ICE SCULPTURE that seems to be breaking apart.

The Bouncer stares in horror at the ice sculpture.

BOUNCER

What *is* that?

LYLE

The Birdies... at least it was.

(to Joey)

Just hang on the best you can, Kyle!

(to the bouncer)

Look, I don't care what you do. Call the house, call the cops...

Lyle points up the driveway toward the house.

LYLE (CONT'D)

But you *gotta* get this sculpture to the cold room waiting up there!

JOEY

I can't hold it much longer!!

The Bouncer's eyes go from Joey's face to the dripping ice.

BOUNCER

Okay... okay! You go on up, and I'll make sure it's alright.

Lyle SLAMS the doors shut, then runs back to the -
FRONT OF THE TRUCK.

LYLE

You've just saved a true work of art!

Climbing in, Lyle accelerates the catering truck up the driveway, leaving a trail of water droplets behind.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS HOME, SIDE ENTRANCE -- MOMENTS LATER

Lyle and Joey - now in WAITERS' UNIFORMS - shove the rapidly melting 'ice sculpture' out onto the grass.

JOEY

How'd you get it made so fast?

LYLE

Display piece at the fish counter.
You couldn't smell that?

A LARGE WHITE CAT trots up and starts licking at the ice.

LYLE (CONT'D)

Okay, now we don't have long before those bouncers figure it out. So wait here... and stay out of sight!

EXT. POOL PARTY -- MOMENTS LATER

Lyle circulates, using a TRAY OF FOOD to hide his face from other WAITERS. He spots Gerry in the distance, but then -

NICK BIRDIE (O.S.)

Hey! Hey you! Waiter! Over here!!

NICK BIRDIE (21) - arrogant, entitled lead singer - yells at Lyle from a lounge surrounded by a DOZEN HANGERS-ON (20s).

Reluctantly, Lyle makes his way over.

NICK BIRDIE (CONT'D)

You leave your hearing aid at home?

LYLE

Can I help you, sir?

NICK BIRDIE

D'uh! The food?!

Lyle lowers his tray, which is attacked by the group, as -
 A VOLUPTUOUS GIRL pulls herself, Venus-like, from the pool.
 Nick's eyes rove over her sexy wet body.

VOLUPTUOUS GIRL
 Great party, Mr. Birdie.

NICK BIRDIE
 Glad you're enjoying it, sweets.

Lyle can't resist.

LYLE
 Excuse me... is this *your* party, sir?

Nick gestures to his own face.

NICK BIRDIE
 You don't recognize this? Guess they
 don't get many of the 'new tunes' in
 the old folks home!

His Hangers-On LAUGH sycophantically.

LYLE
 I thought you'd like to know your ice
 sculpture's waiting next to the house.

NICK BIRDIE
 Ice sculpture?

LYLE
 A gift from a... Miley Cyrus?

Nick jumps to his feet and heads for the house.

LYLE (CONT'D)
 You might want to hurry, sir. Before
 it melts!

INT. BEVERLY HILLS HOME -- CONTINUOUS

Joey hears someone coming. He scurries upstairs, reaching -

THE LANDING

Where he peers down at the TWO WAITERS passing below.
 Crouched down, Joey blindly opens a door and backs into -

A BEDROOM

Then turns around to find *Bethany* glaring at him.

EXT. LAWN -- CONTINUOUS

Lyle closes in on Gerry, who's supervising a NOISY WORK CREW constructing a MUSIC STAGE. His TWO BODYGUARDS hover nearby.

GERRY

No, you morons! Fix it!

Gerry's PHONE RINGS. He steps away from the noise.

GERRY (CONT'D)

Warnock... Then try another airline!
My Bethany travels first class!

Gerry comes face to face with Lyle. Realization slowly dawns.

GERRY (CONT'D)

You're helping that *Leech*...
(to his bodyguards)
Throw him out!

Lyle holds up his PHONE and hits 'PLAY' as the men approach.

LYLE (O.S.)

*You're the Sophia Wilde Gerry hired to
con his daughter into a divorce?*

SOPHIA (O.S.)

Yes!

Lyle hits 'STOP' on the phone as Gerry waves the men to stop.

LYLE

We have it on video too. *And proof
that those photos were faked.*

GERRY

What do you want. Money, I suppose?

LYLE

Nah. Wouldn't be good for my health.

GERRY

Huh? Well you must want something.
Everyone does.

LYLE

I want you to give the kid a chance.

GERRY

*Kid? He's a pierced tattooed freak
who only married Bethany to get to me!*

The distant sound of SHATTERING GLASS turns both their heads.

GERRY (CONT'D)

What the hell....?

In the distance, a CHAIR sails out one of the mansion windows. WAITERS run for cover as it CRASHES to the PATIO below.

LYLE

Dammit Joey, I said stay out of sight!

INT. BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Joey ducks another chair, which CRASHES into the back wall.

JOEY

Bethany, baby... you'll hurt yourself!

Bethany picks up a small side table.

BETHANY

Oh, I've been working out! I hit the punching bag all day...

Joey somehow gets out the way as the table SMASHES to bits.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

I pretended it was you!!

JOEY

Baby, please, I never cheated on you!

A large perfume bottle SHATTERS against the wall behind him.

JOEY (CONT'D)

I can prove it!

Bethany HURLS a truly massive perfume bottle at Joey. It THWACKS him on the head... and he goes down with a CRY.

BETHANY

Joey? Joey?!

Lyle bursts into the room, followed by a PANTING Gerry, as Bethany rushes to kneel at Joey's side.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

Joey! Joey, wake up!

Joey opens one eye as Bethany's tears drip onto his cheek.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

Maybe... maybe we can get past this...
make a fresh start...

Lyle looks meaningfully at Gerry and takes out his phone.

LYLE

You tell her, or I show her the proof.

GERRY

(reluctantly)

Uh... well, the fact is, Bethany... he didn't *exactly* do what you thought.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS HOME, REAR PATIO -- LATER

Lyle stands half-listening to a BLAZING ROW going on inside.

BETHANY (O.S.)

...interfere ...set him up!!

GERRY (O.S.)

But *Bethany*...!

BETHANY (O.S.)

...see you again ...serve you right!!

Then Lyle notices a FIGURE standing at the side of the house.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS HOME, SIDE ENTRANCE -- CONTINUOUS

Nick Birdie stares despondently at the MELTING PILE OF ICE.

NICK BIRDIE

You can't even see my face any more.

(turning to Lyle)

Was it realistic?

LYLE

(gravely)

Oh, yes sir. They really captured your nose.

Lyle picks up a piece of ice shaped into a definite HOOK. Freaked, Nick clutches his nose and charges into the house.

NICK BIRDIE

A mirror... I need a mirror!

He passes Bethany and Joey, who emerge wreathed in smiles.

JOEY

Thanks again for helping us, Lyle.

BETHANY

I just can't believe I fell for my Dad's stupid lies.

Bethany turns to Joey, taking his hands in hers.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

I promise, I'll never doubt you again.

And as Bethany and Joey stare deep into each other's eyes, Lyle sees the **BRIGHT WHITE SPHERES DRIFT OUT OF HIS CHEST.**

JOEY

I love you, Bethany!

BETHANY

I love you too, Joey!

As they finally kiss, the **STREAM OF SPHERES SPLITS UP AND SHOOTS INTO THEIR BODIES:**

HALF THE SPHERES GO INTO BETHANY, THE OTHER HALF INTO JOEY.

Dizzy with relief, Lyle takes a step back -

And tumbles into the STEAMING HOT TUB, scattering GUESTS.

INT. THATCHER HOME, KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Lyle sits at the table in jogging pants and sweatshirt, a blanket around his shoulders. He NOISILY BLOWS his nose.

LYLE

I am never going near water again.

KAYLEE

You should eat this while it's hot.

Kaylee puts a steaming bowl of soup in front of him. Lyle SNIFFS it cautiously, then takes a sip. He looks surprised.

LYLE

Your mom used to make this for us when we were teenagers.

Kaylee looks like that isn't a good thing.

KAYLEE

I didn't know. I found it written in some book.

LYLE

She never made it for you?

KAYLEE

Katherine didn't really cook.

Lyle looks troubled by Kaylee calling her mother by her first name, but before he can speak Len appears in the doorway.

LEN
You got a visitor.

Lyle glances at Kaylee.

LYLE
It's kind of late -

LEN
Not her. *You.*

INT. THATCHER HOME, LIVING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Reesa stands examining the PHOTOS on the mantelpiece.

LYLE
Reesa?

Reesa lets out a GASP when she sees how Lyle looks.

REESA
What the hell happened to you?

LYLE
It's a long story.

An awkward silence, then:

REESA
I came to apologize. I know I came on
too strong, it's just...
(beat)
You were a pretty great detective,
Thatcher. Just seems a shame all that
talent not being used.

LYLE
I'm still a detective, Reesa.
(wryly)
Kind of, anyhow.

Reesa turns back to one of the PHOTOS, showing Katherine and
Danny - Kaylee's parents - with a YOUNG KAYLEE.

REESA
Katherine looks... almost angelic. I
guess I can see why you -

Lyle steps forward cutting her off, his voice low and angry.

LYLE
Look, whatever you're thinking, you're
wrong. After what those two did, no
way I'd help either of them run!

Reesa studies him a long time, then:

REESA
Okay then. Guess I was mistaken.

INT. THATCHER HOME, FRONT HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Lyle opens the front door for Reesa.

LYLE
Thanks for helping. With my case.

REESA
Maybe I can help again some time.

Another awkward moment.

But finally Reesa turns away.

REESA (CONT'D)
Stay in touch, okay?

And then she's gone.

KAYLEE (O.S.)
You're an idiot, Uncle Lyle.

Lyle swivels to see Kaylee sitting on the stairs, half hidden in the shadows.

KAYLEE (CONT'D)
Why didn't you ask her out?

LYLE
(after a moment)
Why ruin a great friendship?

Kaylee makes a noise of DISGUST, then gets to her feet and pads away up the stairs.

Len appears from the kitchen.

LEN
You gonna close that door?

Lyle pauses, then grabs a jacket from a nearby hook.

LYLE
I think I'll take a walk.

Len looks incredulous, but throws his hands up as he stomps back into the kitchen.

LEN

Fine. Catch pneumonia for all I care.

EXT. SILVERLAKE STREET -- NIGHT

Lyle SNIFFLES then shivers and does up his jacket tighter as he walks along the almost-empty street.

Then he stops, reaches into his jacket pocket, and pulls out a SMALL, DISPOSABLE PHONE.

ON ITS SCREEN are several TEXT MESSAGES with different dates:

Am safe for now.

How is K?

Is K alright?

Lyle tilts back his head, staring up at the stars.

Then he looks back at the phone and quickly types:

K is fine.

Lyle sends the text... just as a CLATTERING SOUND over to his right makes him jump.

But it's only a HOMELESS MAN shifting next to his CART.

As Lyle puts the phone away and walks on, a CAR pulls up.

A WOMAN (40s) - smartly dressed but low-key makeup, a lawyer or businesswoman type - climbs out of it carrying groceries.

She and Lyle exchange brief nods as she walks toward her home.

More CLATTERING SOUNDS.

Lyle glances around, wanting to make sure the Woman's alright, given the Homeless Guy sleeping right there...

Then blinks in horror as **BRIGHT WHITE SPHERES RISE FROM THE WOMAN AND THE HOMELESS GUY'S VAGUE OUTLINE.**

LYLE

No... No...!

As the **SPHERES FLOOD TOWARD HIM...**

Lyle turns around and starts to run.

END OF SHOW