

DOWN SOUTH BLUES

By

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FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING

RUSSELL BLUES, (30, African-American, cool, full of wit), sluggishly climbs up the stairs. He pulls out a bail bonds slip with two pictures attached from his pocket.

Next to the slip, the first picture: a HISPANIC MAN, huge -- 300 pounds huge. He is BIG DANNY. Russell flips to the next picture: Big Danny's current picture, now 150 pounds smaller. He approaches the apartment and knocks on the door.

BIG DANNY (O.S.)
Who the hell is it?

RUSSELL
(nasally voice)
Good morning, Mr. Nunez, I'm Clarence Hightower from Publisher's Clearinghouse, and I'm proud to announce that you're our \$10,000,000 winner!

BIG DANNY (O.S.)
Yes! I'm rich, biatch!
(singing)
'All I do is win! No matter what!'

BIG DANNY gleefully opens the door. He is stunned to see Russell standing at the door.

RUSSELL
Whassup, Big Danny! Long time, no see! You've lost some weight! Jenny Craig's been real good to you, so good that the court hasn't seen you in the last three months.

BIG DANNY
Russell, I was gonna go to the courthouse but my asshole cousin--

Russell flashes his handcuffs.

RUSSELL
Save that bullshit for Strode.

BIG DANNY
I ain't goin' back!

Big Danny tries to slam the door, Russell blocks it with his left foot.

INT. BIG DANNY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Russell BURSTS through the door. Big Danny throws a wine bottle at him. As Russell dodges the bottle, Big Danny climbs down his fire escape. Russell climbs down the fire escape and gives chase.

EXT. CHINATOWN BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

The chase is on! Russell chases him through the Chinatown streets. Big Danny knocks down a few pedestrians. Russell bobs and weaves past them. Two preteen BOYS park their motorized scooters in front of a barbershop and go inside.

Big Danny spots the scooter. He hops on and BURNS RUBBER on him. Russell spots the other, he jumps on and races after him. The boys see the two riding their scooters. They storm out of the barbershop. Furious.

BOY #1

Hey, give us back our scooters,
assholes!

BOY #2

Yeah, you crackhead sons of
bitches!

They speed onto the streets. The two dodge in and out of oncoming traffic. A game of cat and mouse. Cars swerve out of their way.

RUSSELL

I'mma git yo' ass!

BIG DANNY

You ain't catchin' shit, puta!

Big Danny takes a detour through an alley. The scooter starts running low on gas. He hops off and hauls ass. Russell turns into the alley, jumps off the scooter and continues chasing him.

Big Danny jumps over the fence, Russell jumps over behind him. Nailed to that fence, a tattered sign: **NEVER MIND THE DOG, BEWARE OF THE OWNER.** We hear a man HOLLERING, CURSING and SHOOTING his gun.

BIG DANNY/RUSSELL (O.S.)

Oh shit!

They jump back over the fence. Big Danny sticks his hands out. Our boy slaps the cuffs on him and escorts him away.

INT. 1987 CHEVY EL CAMINO - MOVING - MOMENTS LATER

Russell cruises through the Chinatown streets with Big Danny on the passenger side. He sees a FINE WOMAN walking down the street. Russell blows his horn at her.

RUSSELL
How you doing, sexy?

The woman flirtatiously smiles at him. Russell smiles back. He sees the car in front of him, close to crashing into it.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
Oh shit!

Russell SWERVES out of harm's way.

BIG DANNY
You don't have no game.

Big Danny cracks up, Russell HITS the brake. They JOLT FORWARD as their seat belts stretch. Big Danny BUMPS his forehead on the dashboard. Big Danny grimaces in pain as he holds his forehead.

An unsealed envelope falls from the visor and lands on the floor. Russell's cell phone RINGS. He answers it.

RUSSELL
Hello.

INT. HOUSE IN ATLANTA - DAY

BETTY BLUES, (57, stout, doting, traditional Southern Belle), stands over a hot stove cooking dinner in the kitchen. She grabs two pot holders and removes a pan from the oven.

BETTY
Well, I think my youngest son forgets that he has a loving mother.

INTERCUT

RUSSELL
Hey, Mom. How you doing?

BETTY
I'm doing good, Russy Dusty. What about you?

RUSSELL
I'm good. How's Pop?

Betty tastes a sample of her roast. She savors the taste and flavor. JOHNNIE BLUES, (58, opinionated but lovable), walks into the house with his fishing equipment.

BETTY

He's doing good, he just came back from fishing with Mr. Bond. You wanna speak to him?

RUSSELL

Naw.

BETTY

(mouths)

You wanna talk to Russell?

JOHNNIE

(mouths)

No.

Johnnie puts down his fishing equipment.

BETTY

Every time you call me, you don't wanna talk to your father, or he doesn't want to talk to you.

RUSSELL

Mom, you know how he is.

BETTY

It doesn't make sense, Russell. Y'all need to bury the hatchet. In his own funny way, he misses you.

Betty puts a sweet potato pie in the oven and shuts the door. She turns off a pot on the stove.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Are you coming down here for the family reunion for the Fourth?

RUSSELL

I can't. I'll be working.

BETTY

You've been "working" for the last seven years. Your brothers wanna see you, your niece and nephew are growing like weeds. Charity's birthday is coming up. Jodie's gonna be shooting fireworks.

Betty pours herself a glass of lemonade. She gulps it down.

BETTY (CONT'D)
Too bad. I had a surprise for you.

RUSSELL
What?

BETTY
It's not "What?", it's "Who?"
What difference does it make?
You're not coming to the reunion.

RUSSELL
I gotta go, Mom. I'll talk to you
later. I love you.

He hangs up.

BIG DANNY
You should go to your family
reunion, Russell.
(tears up)
I wish I could see my parents.

RUSSELL
Where's your parents?

BIG DANNY
(crying)
In jail!

RUSSELL
One big happy family.

INT. COOK COUNTY JAIL - DAY

Russell escorts Big Danny in the jail. A guard uncuffs him
and pats him down.

GUARD
Big Danny, you're back from your
vacation.

BIG DANNY
Yeah, I came in on your wife's
back. Damn, that shit is strong!

GUARD
Well, I came to work on your mom's
back, and that's even stronger.

Big Danny attempts to swing at the guard. Two guards rush in,
restrains Big Danny and cuffs him.

EXT. CHICAGO - DAY

The Windy City is alive! A bright humid day, no clouds in the sky. As the city kicks in high gear; we see a MONTAGE of the people who make up Chicago. Everybody hustles and bustles to the same beat.

INT. STRODE BAIL BONDS - DAY

A West Side storefront. All bail bonds offices are junky. This one is no exception. JENNY, the fine secretary, sits at her desk surfing the Internet. She stops Russell in his tracks.

JENNY

Hey, Russell, I had a message for you, but I forgot what it was. Are you going to your family reunion in ATL this weekend?

RUSSELL

No, no and hell no! I am not spending my Fourth of July weekend with my fam. Especially me father, who thinks you're nothing if you're not made in his image. Besides, I don't need family.

JENNY

Yes, you do. We all need family. Whatever problems you have your dad, you need to resolve them before it's too late. You need to go.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Russell!

JENNY

That's the message I forgot to tell you.

He turns around and sees MIA STRODE, (55, the money grubbing bondsman), standing behind him. Russell hands her the booking slip. She hands Russell his money.

MIA

Chicago P.D. called me this morning claiming you and Big Danny stole two 12-year-old kids' motorized scooters and raced all over Chinatown yesterday.

(beat)

(MORE)

MIA (CONT'D)

Your mistakes cost me money. If you don't shape up on your wild-ass antics; I'm gonna ship you out. Step into my office.

They walk over to her desk and sit down.

MIA (CONT'D)

Here's your next assignment. The Ghost of Criminals Past has come back to haunt us.

Mia hands Russell a file. He opens it and sees a mugshot: EL BANKSTON, a classic loser. He studies El's file.

RUSSELL

El Bankston.

INT. SOLDIER FIELD - VENT - DAY

A silent drill unscrews the door off. EL BANKSTON, (29, clever, very different from his mugshot), crawls into the vent with a flashlight, and a teddy bear with the initials "E.B." on the left claw. He is dressed as a maintenance man.

RUSSELL (V.O.)

Got his B.A. in petty theft, and tried to go for his Masters in jewelry heisting. He popped two members of his crew and ripped off his ex-partner.

He shines his flashlight on a black jewelry box with a duct-taped "X" across it. El beams from ear to ear. He rips the "X" off, the box falls into his hands.

MIA (V.O.)

Yeah, but that ex-partner was Demarco Reno.

INT. STRODE BAIL BONDS - DAY

RUSSELL

I know. He's doing twenty-five to life.

MIA

Not anymore. He decided to give himself an early release two days ago.

INT. SOLIDER FIELD - VENT - DAY

El opens the box, removes a shiny, rare diamond. El kisses the diamond. He unzips the back of the teddy bear, and pulls out a MAGAZINE CLIP of a plush Key West home.

MIA (V.O.)
He killed the prison's doctor and
took off in his Chrysler 300.

His face lights up.

EL
One step away from Paradise,
beautiful.

He puts the diamond back in the box, stashes it in the teddy bear and zips it up.

INT. STRODE BAIL BONDS - DAY

RUSSELL
So, what's the deal?

MIA
Russell, Bankston was your rabbit
once. Now, I need you to get him
again.

RUSSELL
Are you serious?

MIA
Yeah, it's just a matter of time
before Reno offs him.

RUSSELL
You gonna have to get somebody
else, Mia. This shit's too risky.
I'm going to lunch.

Russell heads out the door. A bounty hunter walks through the door. Mia approaches her.

MIA
Vanetta, I need you to track down
El Bankston.

BOUNTY HUNTER #1
No.

She walks away.

MIA
Junior! Junior!

Mia stops another bounty hunter as he heads out the door.

BOUNTY HUNTER #2
Yeah, Mia.

MIA
I need you to do a special job for me. I need you to catch El Bankston.

BOUNTY HUNTER #2
Hell no. That's a suicide mission.

He is out the door. She approaches another bounty hunter.

MIA
Andy, I got a special job for you.

BOUNTY HUNTER #3
What's that, Mia?

MIA
I need you to catch El Bankston.

BOUNTY HUNTER #3
Nah, I'm good.

MIA
I'll make it worth your while. I'll pay you double.

He walks away.

MIA (CONT'D)
Shit!

JENNY
Auntie, you're gonna have a tough time finding somebody who wants to do that job.

MIA
Jenny, you're my niece and I love you. But, when I want your opinion, I'll ask for it.

Jenny goes back to work.

INT. GIORDANO'S PIZZA - DAY

Russell waits in the long lunch line. The customer in front of him finishes ordering. Russell steps up to the counter.

CASHIER

What would you like to order today, sir?

RUSSELL

I'd like to order the Southside Italian Beef, a slice of pepperoni deep dish and a large Pepsi.

The cashier rings it up, gives him the total. Russell pays the money. He steps aside for the next customer.

CUSTOMER

I can't wait for the Fourth of July. I'm going to a cookout at my mother's house. Some of my family from Cleveland is coming.

CUSTOMER'S GIRLFRIEND

It's gonna be fun. I can't wait to meet your relatives from out-of-town.

Russell digs into his pocket and pulls out something it's an invitation.

INVITATION

"THE 20th ANNUAL BLUES-PAMPLIN FAMILY. 4TH OF JULY. ATLANTA, GEORGIA. 3:00 PM 'TIL DUSK."

RUSSELL

Whatever.

Russell rips up his invitation and throws it in the trash. The assistant manager walks up with a bag.

ASSISTANT MANAGER

Southside Italian Beef, a slice of pepperoni deep dish and a large Pepsi.

RUSSELL

Right here. Thank you.

She gives Russell his order. He checks to see if everything's there. It is A middle-aged man recognizes Russell. This is PETE.

PETE

Mr. Blues. How are you?

He steps out of line and walks over to Russell.

RUSSELL

I'm good, Pete. You?

PETE

Good. Did you get the letter the bank sent you?

RUSSELL

What letter? I ain't received a letter.

PETE

You should have. We mailed it to you a week ago.

A beat.

RUSSELL

I'll have to find it.

INT. 1987 CHEVY EL CAMINO - MOMENTS LATER

Russell slips in the car with his lunch. He picks up the unsealed envelope off the floor. He frowns -- What the hell is this?

INT. RUSSELL'S HOUSE - DAY

Russell walks through the door. A nicely-kept bachelor pad decorated with nice furniture. Little pictures, no plants. He sits at the dining table and eats his lunch. Russell opens the letter and reads it.

CERTIFIED LETTER

"FORECLOSURE NOTICE. Dear Mr. Blues, we are writing you in regard to the \$50,000 in back taxes you owe on your property. If the full amount is not paid in full by July 31, your house will go into foreclosure."

RUSSELL

Son of a bitch!

He angrily balls it up and throws it on the floor.

INT. STRODE BAIL BONDS - DAY

Russell walks through the door, and strolls up to Mia at her desk.

RUSSELL

You still need somebody for the Bankston job, Mia?

MIA

Yeah, because everyone I asked said, "No." Here's the rundown, I only got five days to get Bankston back to Chicago before I default and I'm out of \$750,000. I can pay you \$10,000.

Russell isn't convinced.

MIA (CONT'D)

Alright. \$20,000.

He still isn't convinced.

RUSSELL

Twenty-thousand? This is a big rabbit I'm catchin' here.

MIA

How much do you want, Russell?

RUSSELL

Mia, I'll do it seventy-thousand.

MIA

As in \$70,000?

RUSSELL

You heard what I said. Seventy G's.

(beat)

Prime time job, I wanna be paid prime time money.

MIA

OK. Done. You have to get him back here by midnight Tuesday or the deal's off. Not a minute later.

RUSSELL

I'm on it, Mia.

INT. LI'S CHINESE RESTAURANT - EVENING

A greasy spoon restaurant. Decorated wall-to-wall with Chinese artifacts and posters. MINKA, the cashier, is serving the dinner crowd as Russell walks in.

RUSSELL

Hey, Minka. Can you get Li for me?

MINKA

Sure. I'll buzz him, Russell.

Minka presses the buzzer. LI, ex-hustler turned owner, walks out of the kitchen.

LI

Russell! Whassup, man!

RUSSELL

I'm here for some info on your boy
El Bankston.

LI

I haven't seen him.

Russell shoots Li a stare -- Don't BS me.

LI (CONT'D)

Alright, he came by the other day.
We had a couple of beers. He said
he was heading back home to Atlanta
to be with his girl. She's
pregnant. He gave me his address,
I'm suppose to go visit him next
month. You want me to go get it?

RUSSELL

Yeah, go get it, Li.

Li goes to the kitchen. He comes back and gives him the address. Russell glimpses at it. A beat.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Four-oh-four. ATL, I'm comin' home.

EXT. O'HARE INTL. AIRPORT - MORNING

The plane SOARS off the runway and FLIES into the sky.

EXT. ATLANTA - MORNING

Welcome to Atlanta, The ATL.

EXT. HARTSFIELD-JACKSON ATLANTA AIRPORT - DAY

The 747 touches down on the runway.

INT. HARTSFIELD-JACKSON ATLANTA AIRPORT TERMINAL - CONTINUOUS

Lots of hustle and bustle, three times busier than usual. Jet-lagged passengers stagger off the plane. Russell looks at his letter as he moves through the crowd. A man on a mission.

INT. LI'S CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY

The restaurant is closed. Only soul in the place is Li mopping the floor. DEMARCO RENO, (30s, ruthless to the core), walks through the door. He creeps up on Li.

LI

We're closed. We don't open for another thirty minutes, I should've locked the door.

Li looks up and sees Reno in his face. He is terrified.

RENO

What's up, Li.

LI

Demarco, whassup! When did you get out?

RENO

Spare me the bullshit. You think I forgot that you sold me out to the cops? But, that's neither here or there. Do you know where El is?

LI

No, I haven't seen him.

At LIGHTING SPEED, Reno STRIKES Li across his face with the butt of his 9mm Beretta. Reno searches the counter and finds El's address.

RENO

I hate liars, and here's what I do to liars.

He SHOOTS Li in the chest. Dead on impact. Reno digs into Li's sock, and finds a neat wad of 50 dollar bills. Reno pulls out two pictures from his pocket: the first El's mugshot, the other an old picture of his ex-girlfriend, CHARMAINE JONES. He is out the door.

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - FBI BULLPEN - DAY

Special Agent MYRON SCRUGGS, (50), step off the elevator, talks on his cell as strolls through the bullpen.

SCRUGGS

No, he is not moving in with us.
You know your dad hates me.

(pause, listening)

The man threw hot rice at me at our wedding, and ended up hitting your cousin in the face. Now, he looks like Two-Face.

His partner, Special Agent RICHIE DAMERON, (Scruggs' age), is sitting at his desk doing a crossword puzzle as he eats his donut.

SCRUGGS (CONT'D)

Nina, we'll talk about it when we get home. Love you.

Scruggs hangs up. Dameron hangs up.

DAMERON

Still trouble in paradise?

Scruggs pours himself a cup of coffee and overloads it with sugar and creme. Stirs it up and drinks it.

SCRUGGS

Yes. She keeps on stressing me about my father-in-law.

DAMERON

Well, I have something that'll lift your spirits. An anonymous tipster just called me with info about El Bankston.

SCRUGGS

That case you were working on back in Chicago four years ago?

DAMERON

Yeah. Guess what? He's right in Atlanta.

SCRUGGS

Cool. Anything else?

DAMERON

Reno was staying with a girlfriend in New York, Charmaine Jones, but her current status is unknown.

(hands him the address)

Anyway, here's Bankston's address.

SCRUGGS

Let's roll.

EXT. EL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

El's very pregnant girlfriend, TANYA, (28), waddles out the door. El follows behind her carrying her two heavy suitcases.

EL

Damn, Tanya. Are you visiting Vegas or moving there?

TANYA

I just wanna be comfortable, El.

EL

This is too heavy for comfort. You got the \$40 I asked you to play for me?

TANYA

For the umpteenth time, I got it!

ACROSS THE STREET

An '08 GMC Yukon is parked on the curb. Scruggs and Dameron sit in the SUV as Scruggs records El's every move on his DV camcorder.

DAMERON

Myron, we are so close to the grand prize, I can taste it. And, El's gonna lead us right to it.

SCRUGGS

Yep. First, the Sancy Diamond and then grand prize: Demarco Reno.

BACK AT THE APARTMENT BUILDING

El stands at the passenger side with Tanya.

EL

How you doing, Mrs. Stone?

Tanya's Mom flips El the bird. The agents laugh at him.

SCRUGGS

Shit, I thought I had problems with
my father-in-law.

Tanya gives him a good-bye kiss. She gets in and they pull off. El darts back in the building. A cab pulls up on the curb. Russell jumps out the cab. He sees a pizza delivery man and gives him \$20.

Russell takes the pizza and walks into the building. Another cab pulls up on the curb. Reno jumps out the cab and darts inside.

DAMERON

It's beginning to look a lot like
Christmas.

SCRUGGS

Catch two for the price of one.

Scruggs and Dameron jump out the car and run across the street.

INT. EL'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

The apartment is decorated with art deco and old furniture. El sits on the couch laughing at an OLD MOVIE on TV. There's a knock at the door.

EL

Who is it?

RUSSELL (O.S.)

Mario's Pizza. I got a delivery for
El Bankston.

EL

Lunch!

El races to the door and opens it. It's Russell standing at the door with his pizza and his 9mm Beretta pointed at him. El is shocked. Russell enters the apartment.

EL (CONT'D)

Russell! If I knew you were coming,
I would've cleaned up.

RUSSELL

Save that bullshit for Strode when
we get back to Chicago, El. Put
your hands up against the wall.

He does. Russell pats him down.

EL
C'mon, Russell, we can split the
diamond fifty-fifty.

RUSSELL
Nope. You ran from me once, you're
not running from me again.

EL
All right, a third.

RUSSELL
Hell no. I ain't Boo-Boo the Fool.

EL
A quarter.

Russell don't wanna hear it. He pulls out his handcuffs. Just as he's about to slap the cuffs on El, Reno enters the apartment.

RENO
What's up, El. I know you and your
friend wasn't about to leave
without us gettin' reacquainted.

Reno pulls out his .40 Caliber Semi-Automatic. Russell pushes El out of harm's way as he reaches for his gun. The two EXCHANGE FIRE, round for round. A Wild West gun battle.

EL
I wish I would've gone to Vegas
instead of being in the middle of
this shit!

The gun clicks. Reno is out of ammo. El grabs his teddy bear. Our duo jumps out of El's third-story window and lands in a dumpster. Reno reloads and runs to the window. Russell climbs out the dumpster. El climbs up and Russell pulls him out.

RENO
You can run but you can't hide!

Reno shoots at them as they're running. Scruggs and Dameron rush in with their guns drawn.

SCRUGGS
Freeze, Reno!

Reno turns around and FIRES at the agents. They duck behind the couch and RETURN FIRE. He SHOTS his way out of the apartment.

INT. HARTSFIELD-JACKSON ATLANTA AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

A long line. Russell and El approach the CUSTOMER SERVICE REP at the ticket counter. He smells them and sprays air freshener.

CUSTOMER SERVICE REP
Hello. How may I help you?

RUSSELL
Can I get two tickets for the next flight to Chicago?

CUSTOMER SERVICE REP
Let me see your driver's license or state I.D., sir.

Russell hands the rep his license. She looks up flight information on her computer.

CUSTOMER SERVICE REP (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, but all of our flights are booked for 4th of July weekend. There won't be any flights leaving from Atlanta until Monday.

RUSSELL
You're bullshittin' me?

CUSTOMER SERVICE REP
No, I'm not bullshittin' you. I suggest you try Amtrak, Greyhound or Megabus.

RUSSELL
Am I being Punk'd? Ashton Kutcher better come out now. Can you get me anything that can get me the hell back to Chicago tonight?! I could be at my family reunion instead of dealing with this shit!

A husky airport security guard approaches them. They're scared as hell.

SECURITY GUARD
Is there a problem, gentlemen?

RUSSELL
No, not at all.

The duo walks away.

INT. AMTRAK - PEACHTREE STATION - DAY

The station is packed. Russell and El stand in a long line, waiting.

EL

I love trains. You get to sleep,
eat, talk and get it in.

RUSSELL

Well, I hate trains. People sit
next to you talking to you like
y'all been friends for years,
snoring and drooling on you.

They approach a CLERK at the ticket office.

CLERK

Good afternoon, sir. How may I help
you?

RUSSELL

Yes, I would like two one-way
tickets to Chicago.

CLERK

I'm sorry, sir, but all trains to
Chicago are booked for Fourth of
July weekend. I'm sorry. We won't
have any trains leaving from
Atlanta until Monday.

Russell and the patrons are pissed. Russell and El step out
the line. They see Scruggs and Dameron enter the station.

RUSSELL

Shit! The Feds!

They sit down in chairs and hide.

EL

How can you tell?

RUSSELL

I come from a family of cops. I can
spot 'em a mile away. I think
they've been following us. We gotta
get to the Greyhound station. But
how?

Russell sees a sprinkler by the vending machines. A custodian
is fixing the sprinkler. He walks over to a vending machine
and buys a pack of Twinkies. The custodian steps off the
ladder, and heads to the bathroom.

He looks around to see if anyone is looking. No one is looking. Russell climbs up on a ladder. Russell pulls out a lighter, lights it up and points it to the sprinkler.

The sprinkler system is turned on. Water splashes everywhere. Everyone scatters out the door. Russell grabs El and they disappear into the crowd.

EXT. GREYHOUND STATION - DAY

Russell storms out the station with El. Russell is pissed.

RUSSELL

Damn! Greyhound and the Megabus are booked for the holiday, too.

EL

Told you we should've went to the Marriott.

Russell punches in a number on his cell phone.

RUSSELL

No, I'm gonna get a rental car.

EXT. RENTAL CAR COMPANY - DAY

Russell, El and Russell's cousin PERCY, (30s), move through the lot as Russell searches for a car. Most of the cars on the lot are gone.

PERCY

Cuzzo, most of my cars gone or reserved. You gotta book those three weeks in advance around the holidays.

They stop at a parking space with a 2004 Ford Excursion.

RUSSELL

What about this Excursion here?

PERCY

Somebody reserved it.

They move over to a parking space with a 2007 Chevy Suburban.

RUSSELL

This Suburban is slick, real slick.

PERCY

Somebody got that on hold already,
too. I only got one more car left.
It's a classic.

Percy leads them to a parking space at the end with a 1970 Cadillac Eldorado. Russell can't believe it.

RUSSELL

What the hell is this? Does it have
a diamond in the back and a sunroof
top.

Percy flashes the keys.

PERCY

Take it or leave it.

Russell grabs the keys.

INT. '70 CADILLAC ELDORADO - MOVING - DAY

Riding on a busy I-75 North. Russell is in the driver's seat, El rides shotgun. The latest DIRTY SOUTH RAP HIT PLAYS on the radio.

EL

How come you won't go to your
family reunion? I heard you mention
it at the airport.

Russell ignores him.

EL (CONT'D)

We got a long way to go, I wanna
talk to one more sane person before

RUSSELL

Me and my dad aren't exactly Cliff
and Theo Huxtable. Let's just leave
it at that.

EL

I've never been to a family
reunion.

RUSSELL

Listen, El, all I gotta do is get
you back to Chicago and collect my
money. Let's keep the talking to a
minimum.

EL
Okay. I'm hungry.

RUSSELL
Yeah, me too. I could go for some
Mickey D's right now myself.

He turns at the next exit.

EL
Are family reunions fun?

RUSSELL
No.

EXT. PARK - DAY - FLASHBACK

DJ, 12 going on 32, twice Russell's size -- or any boy's size, struts towards Russell. Russell holds a can of soda in his hand.

DJ
Russell, I got a joke for you. Do
you know what the fist said to the
face?

Russell nods no. DJ punches him in his face. Russell BAWLS on the ground as a young Jodie laughs at him.

INT. '70 CADILLAC ELDORADO - MOVING - PRESENT DAY

Russell snaps out of his flashback. El is SNORING. He peaks at an OLD COUPLE in the next car staring at them. He BLOWS the horn and signals at them.

RUSSELL
Go around!

The wife continues staring at them. Russell signals again.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
Go around! There should be a law
where people shouldn't drive after
50.

INT. OLD COUPLE'S CAR

The wife peaks at El's mugshot from an App on her cell. He looks over the car again and recognizes El.

INT. '70 CADILLAC ELDORADO

Russell looks over at the wife again. He sees the wife on her cell.

RUSSELL

Aw shit!

Russell SWERVES around and drives on the opposite road. El is JOLTED from his sleep.

EL

Russell, you crazy-ass son of a bitch! Stop this got damn car!

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Russell parks the car on the side of the road. Russell steps out, he pulls El out.

EL

What hell is wrong with you?!

RUSSELL

A old woman just recognized you. She saw you, she saw me, this car and the plates. Now, we have to ditch this car and lay low.

EL

Where, Russell?

Russell ponders. Wheels turning in his head.

RUSSELL

We can stay at my parents' house.

EL

Your parents' house? Hell no! Let's just go find another hotel.

RUSSELL

Those FBI agents is searching every square foot inch of this damn state, people recognize you and Reno's after us, too. My parents' house is the safest bet we have.

Another car passes by. They duck behind the Eldorado and hide. A beat.

EL

I'll take your parents house for 400, Alex. But, how are we gonna ditch this car?

RUSSELL

Leave it to me.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Russell rolls the car onto the middle of the road. He jumps out the car. Our boys stand on the side of the road.

An 18-Wheeler roars through the road, horn BLOWING. The truck bulldozes through the street, and CRUSHES the car into little pieces like a Monster Truck smashing a Hot Wheels car.

RUSSELL

Thank God for Renter's Insurance.

(a beat)

Now, I can call my cousin.

EXT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - DAY

A nice two-tract house. Percy pulls up in front of the house. El is sleeping, clutching the teddy bear like a little kid. Russell throws a cup of water on him. El JOLTS in his seat.

EL

What the hell?!

RUSSELL

Wake up, Sleeping Beauty. We're here. Can you hook me up with another car?

PERCY

All my cars are gone, cuzzo. As matter of fact, every rental car place in Georgia is out. Sorry, Russell.

RUSSELL

El, listen up. This weekend is my family reunion. My parents think I'm a bouncer at a strip club. You pretend to be my best friend, and you work as a bartender at the club with me.

EL

I'm a natural. I can pull off an Oscar-winning performance for your family.

PERCY

What do you really do, Russell?

Percy takes a sip of his soda.

RUSSELL

I'm a bounty hunter, and he's my bail jumper.

PERCY

That explains the cuffs.

RUSSELL

Alright, I'll see you later, P.

They step out the car. Percy waves and pulls off.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Now, El, my dad's an ex-cop and he hates bounty hunters. 'Til I can get you back to Chicago, keep this front up.

EL

Okay. You're still gonna keep these cuffs on me?

RUSSELL

Yep. Whenever my family ask you about the cuffs; you're girl cuffed you and you lost the key.

El and Russell walk up the steps. The front door swings open. It's Betty. She is ecstatic.

BETTY

Oh my Lord, my baby's home!
Johnnie, come out here!

RUSSELL

Hey, Mom.

Russell runs up to his mother and hugs her tightly.

BETTY

I thought you wasn't coming? You lied to me!

RUSSELL

I wanted to surprise you. I caught a flight and Percy brought us.

BETTY

Well, this is the best surprise any mother could ask for.

(re: El)

Who is this handsome man?

EL

(extends his hand)

Hi, I'm El. Nice to meet you, Mrs. Blues.

BETTY

Don't call me Mrs. Blues, call me Mama Betty and don't shake my hand. Come over here and give me a hug.

El hugs her.

BETTY (CONT'D)

What's with the handcuffs?

EL

I was testing these out on my girl, woke me up and the key was missing.

Johnnie steps out on the porch.

RUSSELL

Hey, Daddy.

The father and son awkwardly hug.

JOHNNIE

Hey, Russell. How you doing? So, you decided to take a break from the shake-shake dancers?

BETTY

Johnnie, don't start.

RUSSELL

Daddy, this is my friend El. El, this my father Johnnie.

Johnnie shakes El's hand.

JOHNNIE

Nice to meet you. Why are you in handcuffs?

EL
 (embarrassed)
 I was testing them out on my girl
 woke up and the key was gone.

JOHNNIE
 That's all right. I got the key in
 the house.

BETTY
 Where's y'all luggage?

RUSSELL/EL
 Got lost at the airport!

BETTY
 You two are gonna have to sleep in
 the attic. Your grandparents are
 sleepin' in your old room, Russy
 Dusty. You have to keep the window
 open because the air conditioner's
 broke.

RUSSELL
 Aw, Mom, it's gonna be so hot up
 there; The Devil's gonna be in the
 attic sippin' a piña colada.

BETTY
 Now, y'all get in the house, Russy
 Dusty. Charity's party starts in an
 hour.

Johnnie and Betty walk into the house.

EL
 (chuckles)
 Russy Dusty.

El looks over at Russell. He isn't smiling. The smile erases
 from El's face. They go in the house.

INT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The house is clean and well-kept. Old but nice furniture,
 nice plants, lots of pictures. El looks around.

EL
 This is a nice house.

RUSSELL
 Thanks. Lot of memories here.

EL

I just have one question.

El picks up an old picture of Russell: a skinny kid with Coke bottle glasses and mouthful of braces.

EL (CONT'D)

How can two beautiful parents
produce one ugly-ass kid?

Russell hangs the picture back on the wall.

RUSSELL

Don't let that picture fool you. I
got mad girls in high school.

EL

Were they blind, near-sighted, far-
sighted?

MALE VOICE #1 (O.S.)

No, they had magnets on their
shoes.

MALE VOICE #2 (O.S.)

Or, they had glasses so thick that
they could see him from the
hallway.

Russell recognizes the voices anywhere. He turns around, and sees JUNE, (39), and JODIE, (33), his older brothers, standing in the door way.

RUSSELL

Whassup, Pastor! Whassup,
Detective! How y'all doing?

The brothers hug.

JUNE

I'm good. How are you?

RUSSELL

Good. How's the church?

JUNE

Good. We having our revival this
weekend. Y'all need to come. Boy, I
thought I was gonna have to put an
A.P.B. out on you just to see you
again.

RUSSELL

Jodie, how is it fighting crime for Atlanta P.D.?

JODIE

Takin' it one bad guy at a time.

RUSSELL

June, Jodie, this is my friend El.
El, this is Johnnie Jr. but we call
him June and this Jodie.

They bump fists with El. Jodie stares at El as if he looks familiar to him.

JUNE/JODIE

Whassup, El. Nice to meet you.

JUNE

What's up with the handcuffs?

EL

I usually don't tell this to everybody, but I know I'm alright since I'm confessing to you.

JUNE

(beat)

Dude, I'm a pastor, not a priest.

EL

You both still work for God.
Anyway, I was drunk at a bachelor party last night. The last thing I could remember was Sparkle's tits in my face.

June walks out the living room.

RUSSELL

Where's Janet?

JODIE

She couldn't make it. She went to on business at the Essence Music Festival. But, you gotta see Charity and Mike, they are getting big, little bruh.

Johnnie comes down stairs with the key.

JOHNNIE

I found the key. It took a minute but I found it.

He hands the key to Russell. He sticks it in and tries turning it. The key bends.

RUSSELL
Damn. The key bent up.

JOHNNIE
And, I lost the extra key. I would try one your mom's hair pins, but she ran out of them. Don't be embarrassed, son. The same thing happened to me, too. Mrs. Blues and I were playing Cops and Robbers--

RUSSELL
Daddy, please!

Johnnie walks upstairs. A '50s LOVE SONG BLARES from Russell's old bedroom.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
Uh-oh, that's my grandparents. I know what they doing when that song plays.

EL
Are they having sex?

Russell nods yes. They cringe.

INT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Russell and El walk up the stairs. The attic has been refurbished. Little furniture, broke air conditioner. Russell cracks the window open. El hides his teddy bear under the bed.

EL
Your mom was right. It's a freakin' sauna in here.

RUSSELL
Yeah, it is. But, look at it this way; right now this is the Ritz-Carlton to you. I got some old clothes.

Russell punches a number on his cell phone.

INT. STRODE BAIL BONDS - AFTERNOON

The phone RINGS twice. Mia rushes over to the phone.

MIA
Good afternoon, Strode Bail Bonds.
Mia speaking.

INTERCUT

RUSSELL
Hey, Mia, it's Russell. I got good news and bad news. The good is I got Bankston. El, say "Hello" to Mia Strode, your bail bondsman.

He puts the phone to El's ear.

EL
Hello.

MIA
Yes! You are the man, Russell!
What's the bad news?

RUSSELL
We can't get back to Chicago because all travel is booked for the weekend. Planes, trains, buses, even rental cars. And, the rental car I had got totaled by an 18-wheeler.

MIA
That's okay. Where are you now?

RUSSELL
At my parents' house. These two FBI agents came into the Amtrak Station looking for us while I was trying to book a train. They're looking for us now. So, this is the only option I had.

MIA
Alright, I have a friend who's a travel agent. He can give you a flight anywhere, anytime. I'll get you two tickets for tomorrow. Just keep him on lockdown 'til then.

RUSSELL
OK. Thanks, Mia.

He hangs up.

EXT. BLUES FAMILY'S BACKYARD - DAY

A birthday party is in full swing. The latest POP HIT BLARES in the B.G. Family and friends have fun in the sun. Eating, dancing, playing loud, friendly games of Chess, Dominoes, Spades, Kickball.

A big hand-made banner hangs above with balloons that says, "HAPPY BIRTHDAY CHARITY." Our boys mingle with relatives and friends. Their clothes are two sizes too small. They make their way over to Russell's grandparents CECIL BLUES, and his wife MARLA, (both 70), sitting in their lawn chairs in the shade.

RUSSELL
Hey Grandma. Hey Granddad.

MARLA
There's my grand baby!

They hug Russell.

RUSSELL
How you doing?

MARLA
Good. How you doing with all that craziness in Chicago?

RUSSELL
I just roll with it, Grandma.
Granddad, I know you still run numbers down here.

CECIL
Who's keeping my money?

They laugh.

RUSSELL
This my friend El. El, these are my grandparents.

CECIL/MARLA
Hello.

El shakes their hands.

EL
Nice to meet you. I've heard a lot from you--I mean, about you.

The grandparents shoot a crazy look at him -- What the hell is he talking about? El walks away.

KIDS (O.S.)
Hey, Uncle Russell!

Russell turns around, sees two adorable KIDS (one girl, one boy) run up to him and hug him. The girl is no more than nine, the boy is no more than five. The birthday girl is CHARITY and the boy is MIKE.

RUSSELL
Oh my God! Charity, happy birthday!
Mike, what's up, nephew! You two
have gotten big. Y'all been good?

KIDS
Yes.

He gives Charity \$5.

RUSSELL
Here you go, Charity.

CHARITY
Thank you, Uncle Russell.

She beams from ear to ear with joy. El walks back with a piece of birthday cake.

EL
Well, this pretty girl must be the
birthday girl. What's your name?

CHARITY
Charity.

EL
Hi, I'm El. Charity, that's a
pretty name.

CHARITY
Thank you.

EL
And, I always have something
special for pretty little girls.

El gives her \$15. Her face beams more.

CHARITY
Thank you, Mr. El.

The kids run off.

RUSSELL
What the hell was that?

EL
It's her birthday.

El walks away. NIKKI RHODES, formerly CHARMAINE JONES, (Russell's age, down-to-earth and drop dead gorgeous), shushes everybody as she creeps behind Russell and covers his eyes.

NIKKI
Guess who?

RUSSELL
Beyonce? Janet? Alicia?

She uncovers Russell's eyes. Russell turns around. He is surprised.

NIKKI
Surprise!

RUSSELL
Charmaine?!

They hug.

NIKKI
I go by Nikki now.

RUSSELL
You look good!

NIKKI
Thanks.

RUSSELL
Last thing I heard that you were in New York dating Mr. Wonderful. What happened?

NIKKI
That's a whole other discussion. I moved back here a few years ago, and I'm the Director of Nursing over at Piedmont.

RUSSELL
That's what's up.

NIKKI
Jodie, I just wanted to drop off Charity's birthday present.

Nikki gives Jodie the gift.

JODIE

Thank you, Nikki.

NIKKI

I'm about to head to work. But, I'm off this weekend, so we'll have plenty of time to catch up. As a matter of fact, meet me at Orchard Park at 1:30. I go for my daily jog there.

RUSSELL

Okay, I'll see you tomorrow.

She leaves the backyard. Russell admires the swagger in her walk and the switch in her hips.

EXT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - MAGIC HOUR

As the sun starts to go down, Johnnie is fixing a 1984 Cutlass Supreme in the driveway. He starts the car, the engine is GRUMBLING. Johnnie turns the car off.

RUSSELL (O.S.)

I thought this would've been at the junk yard by now.

He looks up and sees El and Russell.

JOHNNIE

That's the same thing your mama and your brothers keep saying. But, you know how I get attach to things. You wanna help me?

RUSSELL

Naw, I gotta--

JOHNNIE

You've been away from us for seven years. C'mon, spend some time with your old man.

RUSSELL

All right.

Russell grabs some extra tools and helps his father. El sits down in a lawn chair.

JOHNNIE

I remember we used to work on cars together all the time. I'm glad you're back home, son.

(MORE)

JOHNNIE (CONT'D)

It's been a long time since we talked. It seems we keep missing each other every time you call.

RUSSELL

What do you want to talk about, Daddy?

JOHNNIE

Life. You like working at the strip club?

RUSSELL

Yeah. It's a cool gig. I make good money.

El taps the cuffs on a card table. Russell looks over at him. He whistles.

JOHNNIE

You could do better. If you'd join the police force. It can be here or even Chicago P.D., too. You're breaking something special here.

He taps the cuffs on the table again. Russell looks over at him. He pretends he is relaxing in the chair.

EL

What's that, Mr. Blues?

JOHNNIE

A family tradition. Four generations of cops in the Blues family. Russell's grandfather was a cop, I was a cop, his mom worked as a administrative assistant for the department, Jodie is a detective. Even June was a cop before he became a pastor. It instills discipline in you, gives you, as you young folks say, swag about protecting and serving your community, and it teaches you sacrifice.

RUSSELL

Daddy, can we please get off the subject? That's y'all thing, not mine.

JOHNNIE

OK, I guess it could be worse. You could've been a bounty hunter.

EL

What's wrong with bounty hunters?

JOHNNIE

I can't stand them. They ain't nothing but the poachers in law enforcement. I was up for a Lieutenant promotion 15 years ago, and catching this bank robber was gonna punch my ticket. But, a bounty hunter beat me to it because he didn't show up to court on a DUI charge. No robber, no promotion.

INT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - ATTIC - NIGHT

Russell lays in the bed, SNORING. El is still awake. He kicks off the cover. He is still wearing his clothes from the birthday party. He spits a spare car key out of his mouth.

EL

I got my one-way ticket to freedom bitch.

El gets out of the bed and tiptoes out the attic.

INT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The kitchen is dark. El tiptoes through the kitchen. He grabs a hair pin off the counter.

EL

Russell's dad overlooked this one.

He picks the lock and uncuffs himself. El opens the door and makes a break for it. Free at last! Wrong! El feels something pressed to the back of his head. The light is turned on. It's Russell with his gun pointed at him.

RUSSELL

Where are you going, Mr. Bankston?

El pretends like he's sleepwalking.

EL

I'm sleepwalking, Russell.

Russell sees the spare car key in his hand. He takes it.

RUSSELL

So, you always sleepwalk with my parents' spare key?

EL

Yeah. I got it from their room
while I was sleepwalking.

Russell isn't buying it. He pulls out a chair for El. They
sit down at the table.

RUSSELL

El, I was born at night, not last
night. You stole this. You're a
liar, a thief, and a murderer.

EL

I ain't a murderer, asshole! I was
set up!

RUSSELL

How? You're wanted by the FBI.

EL

I was working at Solider Field; a
friend presented me with an
opportunity. At first I didn't want
to do it. But, I've always been
guilty of giving into peer pressure
to gain friendships. It was The
Sancy Diamond at the Diamond
Exchange. He introduced me to his
friend: Demarco Reno.

INT. DIAMOND EXCHANGE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

SNICKERS cuts a whole in the display case with a glass
cutter. El takes the diamond and puts in the black jewelry
box.

EL (V.O.)

The plans were set and we executed
them to perfection.

INT. '95 CHEVY VAN - MOVING - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

PRETTY BOY ED is behind the wheel, Snickers rides shotgun
eating his Snickers bar. Reno and El sit in the back.

EL (V.O.)

We were about enjoy the fruits of
our labor...or so we thought.

El pulls out the jewelry box and flashes the diamond.

SNICKERS

Damn, that's nice. That ice is cold.

El puts the diamond back in the jewelry box. Reno pops the cork on a champagne bottle. He pours glasses for everybody.

RENO

Snickers, El, Pretty Boy Ed, I'd like to make a toast to our hard work.

(Jamaican accent)

And, to the beautiful women we're about to see in Jamaica, mon!

They toast and drink up. A Cadillac Escalade SWERVES around them, almost knocking them off the road.

PRETTY BOY ED

Son of a bitch!

SNICKERS

It seems like everybody can get a license these days.

The Escalade barricades their path at the light. Pretty Boy Ed SCREECHES the van to a halt. Two beefy HENCHMEN step out the SUV. They rush up to van with their guns drawn. Reno pulls out a .357 Magnum on his crew.

EL

Demarco, what the hell are you doing?!

RENO

Fellas, today I realized that I'm too greedy to split 60 million four ways.

He SHOOTS Pretty Boy Ed twice in the back, Snickers in his chest, killing them instantly. He aims his gun at El. Ready to kill.

RENO (CONT'D)

El, give me the diamond.

El knocks the gun out of Reno's hand. They struggle for the gun, but Reno beats down El. El goes for the gun, Reno KNOCKS HIM OUT COLD with the champagne bottle. He puts the gun in El's hand and jumps out the van.

INT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - PRESENT DAY

EL

They charged me right away. And, I wasn't about to face a murder rap that I didn't do. So, I skipped the week of my hearing. Reno was living with some chick in New York. She snitched on him and vanished. Reno knew he was hot, so he went back to Chicago and got arrested.

RUSSELL

I got friends in the DA--

EL

Nope. Why don't you just gimme the keys and let me go?

Russell hands El the key. El reaches out for it.

EL (CONT'D)

For real?

Russell puts the key in his pocket.

RUSSELL

Hell no.

EL

Well, what about you parents' car? We could use it to get back to Chicago.

RUSSELL

After I almost wrecked their car when I was 15; they told me, "It'll be a cold day in Hell before I drive a car of theirs again." I feel the repercussions of my dad's belt across my ass just thinking about it.

INT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

The family sits at the table having breakfast. Some people are full, others grab seconds. Johnnie finishes his breakfast and gets up from the table.

JOHNNIE

Baby, this breakfast was good.

Johnnie and Betty kiss on the lips.

JODIE

Get a room.

JOHNNIE

You forgettin', son. This is our room.

RUSSELL

This is good, Mom. I sure miss your cooking.

EL

This is good, Mama Betty.

BETTY

Thank you. I appreciate it. Can your mom cook, El?

EL

My mom left when I was one, I never met my father. I've been in and out of foster homes all my life. I have a younger brother in Philly, but we don't talk much.

JOHNNIE

What do you do, El?

EL

I work with Russell at the club as a bartender.

JODIE

So, how did you and Russell meet?

EL

Well, I just started working as the bartender at Scores with Russell. Some drunk jerk started harassing me about one of the girls at the club. It turns out that it was her ex-boyfriend. He punched me in the back of the head. Russell came in and helped me. We've been friends ever since. You're son is also a player in Chicago. He pulls all kinds of women. I don't know how he does it. It must be in the genes, Mr. Blues.

Russell forcibly laughs as he contains his embarrassment.

BETTY

I need somebody to run to the grocery store for me.

EL

Me and Russell can go.

He kicks El in the leg. Betty gives Russell the money and a grocery list.

BETTY

Everything's on the list. Don't forget to play your father's numbers.

June hands Russell his car keys.

JUNE

Here, take my car and bring it back.

INT. DINER - DAY

Reno, in a disguise, is sitting at his table glancing at the menu. He drinks a glass of orange juice. The waitress walks over to his table.

WAITRESS

Good morning. Can I help you, sir?

RENO

Yes, I would like eggs, bacon--

She writes down his order on her pad. Reno sees Russell and El riding down the street in a SUV.

WAITRESS

Anything else, sir?

RENO

You know what, that's alright.

Reno jumps out of his seat and runs out the diner.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

The store is packed in droves. Our boys stroll through the aisles as Russell pushes the shopping cart. El packs items into the cart. A customer and her son notices the cuffs on El.

EL
We're into S&M.

The customer is angry.

CUSTOMER'S SON
Mom, what's S&M?

CUSTOMER
They're nasty, generic M&Ms. C'mon!

They continue shopping. El sees a father bonding with his son. He can't help but smile. They move on to the card section. Russell grabs a "Thinking of You" card.

EL
Oh, how romantic.

Our boys move over to the candy section. Russell grabs two Sour Apple Laffy Taffys.

EL (CONT'D)
It just looks like somebody's crazy
in love. (singsong) Russell and
Nikki sittin' in a tree --

RUSSELL
Shut the hell up.

EL
Russell, I need your opinion on
something. Do you think my girl and
I should bottle feed or breast
feed?

RUSSELL
That's between you and her.

EL
Well, I'm gonna be going away soon,
so I want to get this together now.
I just need a little input. Did
your mom breast feed you and your
brothers?

RUSSELL
Whoa! Get my mom's titties out of
your head.

EL
But, you're my only friend--

RUSSELL

Let's get this straight, Bankston.
We ain't friends, buddies, homies,
or even associates. I'm hiding you
out here 'til I get you back to
Chicago today, collect my money and
pay off my house.

Reno walks into the store and approaches the manager.

RENO

Excuse me, can you please tell me
where I can find the barbecue
sauce?

MANAGER

Aisle six.

El and Russell stroll through the barbecue sauce aisle.
Russell puts a few bottles in the cart. A thought comes
across Russell's mind.

RUSSELL

Damn! I'm about to forget about the
eggs arguing with you, El. Stay
here.

Russell walks away. El cell phone RINGS, he answers it.

EL

Hello.

EXT. VEGAS STRIP - CONTINUOUS

Tanya walks along the strip with her mom. Tanya's Mom has an
ice pack on her head. She is hung over as hell.

TANYA

Hey, baby.

INTERCUT

EL

Hey, Honey Bun. How you doing?
How's Vegas? How's our baby?

TANYA

Everything's good. Despite the
fact, Mom got drunk last night at
the Bellagio. She got pissed that
she lost, and started acting a
fool.

(MORE)

TANYA (CONT'D)

The only thing that saved us from getting kicked out was that I told them she was bipolar and off her meds.

EL

Tanya, that ain't an act.

El looks up. He's spooked as if he saw a ghost. He did. It's Reno.

TANYA

El? El, baby, what's wrong?

The phone drops out of El's hand.

RENO

Whassup, El. I wanna pick up where we left off since our reunion ended so abruptly.

Reno pulls out a SNUB-NOSE .38 from his holster. Russell tackles El out of harm's way as he FIRES at them. Everyone hauls ass out of the store. Our boys duck for cover in the cereal aisle. Russell uncuffs El.

RUSSELL

El, I never thought I'd say this to any jumper, but you gotta bounce. Go out through the back.

EL

Fuck it! You don't have to tell me twice!

El hauls ass. Russell grabs two cereal boxes, opens them and removes the bags. He throws them at Reno. Reno SHOTS them, cereal EXPLODES everywhere. Russell FIRES BACK at him, and they EXCHANGE SHOTS at each other.

The security guard jumps on his radio. Reno shoots the guard in the arm. Russell is out of ammo. He quickly reloads, and sneaks behind the cereal aisle. Reno creeps around the cereal aisle and sees Russell.

Reno aims his gun at his head, locked and loaded. In SLO-MO, El FLIES in front of Russell, and a bullet hits him in the arm. The sounds of POLICE SIRENS draw closer and closer.

RENO

We'll have our reunion! You'll see!

Reno runs out the door.

RUSSELL

El!

Russell rushes over to El.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Are you alright?

EL

Yeah.

RUSSELL

You gotta get out of here.

El runs out the back. Russell tends to the security guard.

INT. GROCERY STORE - LATER

The store is now a crime scene. Detectives gather evidence, CSI search for forensics as officers secure and guard the perimeter. EMS tend to the security guard. Scruggs and Dameron walk over to Russell.

DAMERON

Hello, Mr. Blues.

The agents flash their badges.

DAMERON (CONT'D)

I'm Special Agent Richard Dameron and this is my partner Myron Scruggs. We want to ask you a few questions about El Bankston.

RUSSELL

OK, what do you wanna know?

SCRUGGS

Give us what you know about El Bankston.

RUSSELL

OK, my boss hired me to bring him back to Chicago on an old warrant. I tracked him down here in Atlanta a couple days ago. I tried to catch him but he got away.

DAMERON

How did the shoot out between you and Reno occur?

RUSSELL

Reno came into the store and
confronted me about Bankston.

SCRUGGS

What did he ask?

RUSSELL

He asked me if I had seen him.
I told him no. He thought I was
lying then accused me of having his
diamond. Reno shot at me, I fired
back at him and he ran out the
store.

Scruggs hands him his business card.

SCRUGGS

Here's my card. Now, if you see
Bankston, have any questions or any
further information to give us;
give me a call.

RUSSELL

I will. Thank you.

Russell walks away.

DAMERON

Myron, is it just me, or is Blues
full of shit?

INT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - ATTIC - DAY

Jodie starts searching for clues about El. Jodie sees his
wallet on the dresser. He takes El's drivers license from his
wallet. Jodie pulls out his cell phone and dials a number.
The line RINGS and picks up.

DETECTIVE (O.S.)

Hello, Atlanta Police Department,
Zone 4, Detective Mac Barkley
speaking.

JODIE

Barkley, this is Blues. I need you
to do me a favor. I need you to run
a name for me on the computer.

DETECTIVE (O.S.)

You know, Jodie, you don't grasp
the concept of vacation.

(MORE)

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

The key word is to vacate, leave,
not work. What's the name?

JODIE

El Bankston.

DETECTIVE (O.S.)

The computers are down. They'll be
back up in a day or two. I'll e-
mail the info to once they fix
them. I've been up to my ass in
these liquor store robberies.

JODIE

Cool. Thanks.

He hangs up.

INT. JODIE'S OLD BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mike runs around with Charity's new doll, taunting her.
Charity is chasing after him like he's kidnapped her own
child.

CHARITY

Gimme back my doll, Mike!

MIKE

No. You can't catch me! You can't
catch me!

Mike grabs a pair of scissors. He starts cutting the hair off
the doll's head.

CHARITY

Stop, Mike! Put the scissors down!

He keeps sniping off the doll's hair. Charity has had enough.
She punches Mike in the groin. Mike falls to the floor. He
holds his crouch, wailing. Jodie runs into the room.

JODIE

What y'all doing up here? Mike,
what you doing with those scissors?
You know better than to be playing
with scissors.

Jodie takes the scissors from him.

MIKE

Daddy, Charity hit me in my ding-
ding.

CHARITY

I told him to give me my doll back,
and he started cutting her hair
off.

JODIE

Alright, I'll get you something
from the attic, Charity.

INT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Jodie runs up the stairs and opens an old toy chest. He
searches through the chest.

JODIE

Damn, I ain't know Charity could
throw a punch like that. She got it
from her mama.

Jodie blows dust off the chest. He continues digging for a
doll. Nothing. He notices something under the bed. It's El's
teddy bear.

JODIE (CONT'D)

What is this?

He grabs the bear from under the bed.

JODIE (CONT'D)

This looks like the bear that
Russell used to sleep with when he
was little.

(a beat)

It didn't help much 'cause he still
wound up peeing the bed. Charity,
can you come here please?!

Charity runs up the stairs.

CHARITY

Yes, Daddy.

JODIE

I found this teddy bear that was
your Uncle Russell's. You can play
with this 'til we get back home,
and I'll buy you a new doll.

She takes the bear and tightly hugs him.

INT. JUNE'S SUV - MOVING - DAY

Russell and El ride in silence. The latest R&B HIT BUMPS on the radio.

EL
Did you and Nikki ever date?

RUSSELL
Naw, we're just friends.

EL
You ever thought about taking it to the next level?

RUSSELL
Classified information.

EL
You have. I mean, you gave her a card and candy. If that's not you trying to be her man, I don't know what is.

El feels his arm. It's wet and squishy.

EL (CONT'D)
Why does my arm feel wet and squishy?

He looks at his arm. It's a bullet wound. El is shocked.

EL (CONT'D)
Oh shit! I've been shot! Russell, I've been shot!

Russell looks at his arm and laughs.

EL (CONT'D)
I'm sittin' up here shot, and you're laughing at me?! I might get gangrene and my arm will have to be amputated.

RUSSELL
El, calm down. It's just a flesh wound. You had so much adrenaline in you, you didn't feel it.

Stopping at a RED LIGHT, Russell pulls off his shirt and gives it to El. El wraps it around his wound. Russell's cell RINGS. He looks at his screen: MIA. He answers it.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Hello.

MIA (V.O.)

Hey, Russell.

RUSSELL

Hey, Mia! You got the tickets?

MIA (V.O.)

I got bad news, Russell.

(beat)

They broke into my friend's office last night, and stole all of his computers. I'm gonna hit the Web to find a flight for Monday or Tuesday. I'll call you or text you when I get something.

RUSSELL

(dejected)

Okay, Mia.

He hangs up. The light turns GREEN. Russell drives off.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Well, we're gonna be here in ATL for a couple more days. My bondsman can't get us on a flight back to Chi-Town.

El sticks his hands out. Russell pulls out his handcuffs. He has a change of heart, and puts the handcuffs back in his pocket. El is surprised.

EL

Russell, what are you doing?

RUSSELL

I don't feel right puttin' these cuffs back on you. You saved my life. I'm very grateful. Thank you.

EL

(chokes up)

That's so touching. Are you gonna let me go?

RUSSELL

(beat)

I said I'm grateful, not crazy.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Russell and Nikki jog along a trail. El walks behind them. She is in her workout gear and jogging as if she's in the Olympics. Russell jogs behind her, breathing heavy. She slows down.

RUSSELL
(out of breath)
Can we take breather?

Nikki continues jogging. She turns back and sees our Russell still struggling.

NIKKI
Yeah.

They sit down on a bench. El passes out on the lawn. Russell catches his breath.

NIKKI (CONT'D)
That was good.

Nikki takes a swig from her water bottle. She hands it to Russell. Russell grabs the water bottle and takes a gulp. Nikki cracks up. He hands it back to her.

NIKKI (CONT'D)
What do you do back in Chicago?

RUSSELL
I am a bartender at a strip club.
So, what happened to Mr. Wonderful?

NIKKI
Let's just say I found out some
things about him that wasn't too
kosher, so I left.

RUSSELL
That's his loss.

NIKKI
Thank you. Are you seeing anybody
in Chicago?

RUSSELL
I am so busy working that I don't
date that much.

NIKKI
You got plenty of options.

RUSSELL
You got jokes.

NIKKI
Yes, I do.

They get up and continue jogging. El sits down on the ground.

EL
You two go ahead. I'm gonna lay
here and get some oxygen.

RUSSELL
Oh, before I forget, I wanna give
you something.

Russell pulls out the card and gives it to Nikki. She opens
the card, and sees the two Laffy Taffy taped inside.

NIKKI
Oh my God, Sour Apple Laffy Taffys!
I haven't had these in a long time!
Thank you, Russell!

Nikki hugs Russell.

RUSSELL
I remembered them being your
favorite. I wanted to give you
something since I was back home.

NIKKI
I appreciate it.

RUSSELL
No problem.

NIKKI
Why don't you have a girlfriend,
Russell?

RUSSELL
We were too different. She wanted
to be a career girl, and wanted him
to quit his job but he didn't want
to. So, he came home from work one
night, she was gone.

NIKKI
She missed out on a great thing.

RUSSELL
Thank you.

INT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - ATTIC - DAY

El walks up the stairs. He looks under the bed. The teddy bear is gone. He is pissed.

EL
Oh shit!

Russell runs up the stairs.

RUSSELL
What's up?

EL
My bear's gone.

RUSSELL
You bullshittin'?

EL
I bullshit you not.

Russell looks under the bed, and sees the bear is missing.

RUSSELL
Where can it be?

EL
I don't know, but we gotta find it.

RUSSELL
Why is it so important?

EL
That's where I hid the diamond.
It's worth \$60 million.

RUSSELL
60 MILLION?! We better find it
before my family does, or we'll be
going back to Chicago in body bags
or handcuffs. How the hell are we
gonna find the bear?

An idea pops up into El's mind.

EL
Russell, my friend, tonight you're
gonna be a thief.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Our duo, in all black and ski masks, tiptoe up the steps with flashlights. They stop at Johnnie and Betty's bedroom door.

RUSSELL

Boy, are you crazy? This is my parents' room.

EL

OK, one thing about being a thief is you have to be mysterious. That's why we are wearing these socks and all black.

RUSSELL

They smell like sweaty feet.

EL

I got them from your grandfather's drawer, it's the best I can do on short notice. Now, you can't underestimate where a mark might hide their stuff. Rumor has it that The Sancy Diamond was cut out of a messenger's stomach after he was disinterred.

Russell is disgusted by the remark.

EL (CONT'D)

Don't think of them as your parents right now. Think of them as marks. You also have to be precise. We have to be in covert and in and out.

INT. PARENTS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door slowly creaks open. Russell and El creep into the room. Johnnie and Betty are in bed, sleeping. Betty is SNORING.

EL

(whispers)

Damn, your mom can snore.

RUSSELL

Shut the hell up, and let's look for this damn teddy bear.

Russell searches through the dresser. El searches through the chest. They come up empty.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
The bear's not in the dresser.

EL
It's not in the chest either.

Betty tosses and turns.

RUSSELL
Oh shit. My mom's about to wake up.

Betty wakes up. Our duo hides behind the curtains. She thinks he hears burglars in the house. Betty doesn't hear a sound -- It must be my imagination. She goes back to sleep.

EL
Let's check the closet.

They slip out from behind the curtains, and El opens the closet door. They ravage through the closet. She wakes up again, and sees El and Russell going through the closet.

Betty rises from the bed, and grabs her pepper spray from the night stand. She sprays their faces orange. Russell and El stopped in their tracks. They scream like little girls.

BETTY
You damn burglars get the hell out
of my house!

They jump out the window. Johnnie jumps out the bed. June and Jodie rush into the room.

JOHNNIE
You okay, baby?

EXT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - LATER

Betty, Johnnie and the family stand on the front porch. Betty and Johnnie recount the events to a police officer as jots down the information.

BETTY
I pepper sprayed them, and they
jumped out of my window.

The officer jots down her statement. El and Russell run out on the front porch, now in their pajamas.

RUSSELL
What's going on?

JOHNNIE
Somebody tried to break in the
house. Your mama scared them off.

Russell hugs his Betty.

OFFICER
Where were you two while the
burglars were in the house?

RUSSELL
We were sleeping.

Jodie isn't buying it. He creeps around the backyard.

INT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - MORNING

Russell searches through the china cabinet in the dining room
for the teddy bear. Nothing.

RUSSELL
Damn! I was trying to tell you last
night that we shouldn't have went
in my parents room.

EL
It was the right set up, right
time. Who knew your mom could sense
things like a bloodhound.

El searches through the living room. He looks under the
couches and recliner. Nothing.

RUSSELL
Yeah, we're just lucky that my pops
slept on the couch, or he might
have killed both of us.

Russell hears FOOTSTEPS coming downstairs.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
El, here comes my people. Pretend
like you're looking at my mom's
China.

He does. Betty, Johnnie, June, Jodie and the kids walk down
the stairs.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
Good morning, family.

Everyone says "Good morning" to each other.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
How y'all doing?

BETTY
Shaken up but we're all okay. What are y'all doing?

EL
I was looking at your China. It's nice, Mama Betty.

BETTY
Thank you. I was about to make breakfast.

RUSSELL
No! Why don't y'all go out for breakfast? My treat. Me and El will catch up.

He gives Betty the money.

BETTY
C'mon, everybody, let's get dressed.

INT. RUSSELL'S OLD ROOM - LATER

Our duo enters the bedroom. It's the same way Russell left it. Posters of rap stars, basketball players, car magazine clips and beautiful women.

BETTY (O.S.)
We'll see y'all at the restaurant!

RUSSELL
OK, Mom.

Russell and El dig through the closet for the bear. Nothing. They search the dresser and chest drawers. Nothing.

CECIL (O.S.)
I'll be right back. I misplaced my reading glasses.

MARLA (O.S.)
I'll help you look for them 'cause you have a hard time finding stuff.

They hide under Russell's bed. Cecil and Marla enter the bedroom, kissing.

MARLA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 They fall for the "Misplaced
 Reading Glasses" trick every time.
 Now, my Negro League Player, are
 you ready hit one out of the park?

The couple take their clothes off. El and Russell are
 disgusted. They gag as if they're ready to vomit.

CECIL (O.S.)
 Yes I am.

Cecil throws his boxers in their faces. More disgusted.
 Scarred for life. Cecil and Marla fall back on the bed.

EL
 If I were you, I'd burn the
 comforter and those damn sheets.

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - FBI BULLPEN - DAY

Scruggs reviews the surveillance tapes from the grocery
 store. He pauses the tape. Dameron walks over to him with two
 sodas and two cheeseburgers.

DAMERON
 What's up, partner. I brought some
 late breakfast.

He sits them on his desk. Dameron sits next to him.

SCRUGGS
 Thank you. My two favorites from
 the four basic food groups:
 cheeseburgers and sodas.

Scruggs grabs his cheeseburger and soda. He takes a big-ass
 hungry bite.

DAMERON
 What are you watching?

Dameron takes a big-ass bite.

SCRUGGS
 I'm watching the surveillance tapes
 from the grocery store shooting. I
 couldn't get anything from
 Bankston's building. The manager
 reported the cameras being damaged
 the night before.

DAMERON

Right.

SCRUGGS

So, I had Byrne blow it up for me.
Guess who was running with El?

Dameron takes a sip of his soda.

DAMERON

Who?

Scruggs plays the tape. They see Russell and El ducking in the cereal aisle and Reno shooting at them.

DAMERON (CONT'D)

I told you Blues was full of shit.
He's been working with Bankston the whole time, and Bankston probably double-crossed Reno. I hate to say I told you so, Myron.

SCRUGGS

No, Richie, when you're right, you're right. Did you get any info on the Jones girl?

DAMERON

No, the last known address she had was in New York.

INT. RENO'S MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Reno sits in the bed watching an OLD MOVIE on TV. He is eating a bag of potato chips. His cell phone RINGS. Reno gets up to answer it.

RENO

Hello.

(pause, listening)

You want me to meet you at The Busy Bee Cafe?

Reno rips off a piece of newspaper and grabs an ink pen.

RENO (CONT'D)

You're talking to fast. What's the address?

He drinks his glass of gin and scribbles down the address.

RENO (CONT'D)
810 Martin Luther King Drive,
Southwest? Alright, I'll be there
in 15 minutes.

INT. THE BUSY BEE CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Reno sits in a booth, drinking a glass of ice tea. Dameron enters the restaurant and spots Reno. He joins him in the booth.

RENO
If it isn't the man who waits two
days to return my calls.

DAMERON
Sorry, I've been busy.

RENO
Does your partner suspect anything?

DAMERON
No. He's busy with his father-in-
law issue. Did you find a fencer
yet?

RENO
No, but I've talked to a few
fencers here in Atlanta and two out
in San Fran.

DAMERON
All right. Keep checking.

A waitress approaches the booth.

WAITRESS
Would you like anything to drink,
sir?

DAMERON
Water.

WAITRESS
OK. Are you ready to order?

RENO
No, not yet.

WAITRESS
Just let me know when y'all ready
to order.

RENO

All right.

She walks away.

DAMERON

You know, my grandfather used to say, "Always stay clean because your sloppiness will tell on you."

RENO

What the hell are you talkin' about, Dameron?

DAMERON

You know what the hell I'm talkin' about, Demarco. That bullshit you pulled yesterday. Why the hell did you go into a crowded grocery store shooting?!

RENO

I'm trying to get what's owed to me.

DAMERON

I understand that. You've always been savvy, but lately you've been reckless with this Rambo bullshit. First, the prison doctor, now this. There's cameras all over that store, they got you on tape.

(beat)

If you don't be covert, all of this is goes from sugar to shit. And, if I go down, you go down.

RENO

You're right, Richie. Who was the dude that was with El at his place?

DAMERON

His name is Russell Blues. He's a bounty hunter from Chicago. That's another problem we gotta deal with. I know they're still in Atlanta. But, where are they hiding?

RENO

They might have left.

DAMERON

No, all travel is booked for the Fourth. They're still here and I'll find them.

RENO

OK. Did you find Charmaine?

DAMERON

Nada. She's ghost. Anyway, as soon as I find them, you take care of them and get the diamond.

EXT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Russell sits on the porch. He takes out his cell and texts: **MIA, DID GET THE TICKETS?** and sends it. Russell's cell BEEPS. He receives a text, it's from Mia. It reads: **NOT YET RUSSELL, FLIGHTS ARE STILL BOOKED.**

RUSSELL

Shit.

He goes back in the house.

INT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Russell, El, Nikki and the family are sitting in the living room, laughing and talking. Betty shows old family pictures from the family photo album.

Betty flips to the next page. It's a picture of a three-year-old butt-naked Russell running through the living room with Johnnie running behind him.

BETTY

This is Russell when he was three. We were tryin' to give him a bath. He wouldn't let us, and ran out the bathroom like Carl Lewis.

Everyone cracks up except Russell. He's embarrassed. A front page headline in the newspaper grabs Nikki's attention. Nikki picks up the paper from the table and glances at it.

NEWSPAPER

The headline reads: "POLICE LOOKING FOR MAN IN GROCERY STORE SHOOTING." Under the headline, an old mugshot of Reno.

MARLA

You reading about that shooting at the grocery store. It's a shame people can't even go grocery shopping anymore.

NIKKI

Yeah, it is.

Nikki sits the paper back on the table. Betty points out another picture on the next page. It is a picture of Jodie and June posing as superheroes in their underwear.

BETTY

Here's June and Jodie, they used to run around the house thinking they was superheroes. Cap'n Drawers and Under-Roo.

Everyone cracks up even more.

CHARITY/MIKE

(singsong)

You wear tighty whiteys! You wear tighty whiteys!

Cecil sees an old picture of himself in his Negro League uniform.

CECIL

El, that's me right there in my playing days. I was one of the best players in the league.

EL

Which team you played for? What was your position?

CECIL

Shortstop. I played for the Chicago American Giants, two-time Negro World Series Champions. I got an opportunity to play for the Pirates.

(beat)

Then something important came up.

Russell walks back into the living room.

CECIL (CONT'D)

I found out Marla was pregnant with Johnnie, so I had to turn 'em down. Worked odd jobs before I got on the force.

(MORE)

CECIL (CONT'D)

Sometimes I still think about what it would've been like playing in the Majors. Maybe I'd be a Hall of Famer by now. I would do it all over again. Do you have any goals, El?

EL

I wanna go into the jewelry business.

MARLA

Sells? Appraisals?

EL

Heisting.

They all laugh.

EL (CONT'D)

No, seriously, I wanna open my own jewelry store.

BETTY

Do you have any kids?

EL

No, but my girlfriend and I have one on the way. She's six months.

Everyone gives El their congratulations.

JUNE

Boy or girl?

EL

As long as my kid's healthy, it doesn't matter.

JOHNNIE

I'm glad you got your head on straight, El. Now, if we can only get a certain son of mine in the right direction.

Johnnie walks over to Russell with an Atlanta P.D. job application. Russell takes the application and tears it up.

JOHNNIE (CONT'D)

Get him a real job instead of bartending in watering holes for the rest of his life.

RUSSELL

I'll show which direction this is going.

He rips up the application and storms out.

JUNE

Daddy, that was uncalled for.

JODIE

Yeah, Pop, that was wrong.

CECIL

Son, I would call you an 'asshole', but that would be complimenting them. You just a whole ass.

BETTY

Jonathan Satchel Paige Blues, why the hell did you mess up a good time with that B.S.? Puttin' him down like that in front of our family and our guests.

JOHNNIE

Jewel, all I'm suggesting is that the boy make an occupation change. He needs a career, not a job.

BETTY

Bring that up to him later! I don't approve of it, either, but he has to live his own life. You know what? This conversation is over. Good night.

She storms out. Johnnie knows what time it is.

JOHNNIE

(humbly)

Can I get a pillow, baby?

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - FBI BULLPEN - MORNING

Scruggs strolls through the office, groggy. Dameron is talking on his cell phone. He sees Scruggs and hangs up.

DAMERON

Mornin', partner. You look beat down.

SCRUGGS

I am. Nina kept me up all night about my father-in-law. She talked my ear off for three hours. I couldn't sleep for shit.

Scruggs pours himself a cup of coffee. He takes a big gulp.

DAMERON

Glad I don't have that problem anymore.

SCRUGGS

But you still pay alimony.

Dameron bites into his donut. Scruggs takes another big gulp.

SCRUGGS (CONT'D)

Last night, before I left. I started digging into Blues, Bankston and Reno's cell phone records. I wanted to show 'em to you.

Scruggs goes to his desk for the phone records. They're gone. He is pissed.

SCRUGGS (CONT'D)

Shit! What the hell happened to the phone records? Have you seen them, Richie?

DAMERON

No. Maybe the janitors threw them away accidentally.

SCRUGGS

Well, I'm gonna let Maintenance know. I'll have the cell phone company e-mail me the records again, but we can't print them 'til the day after tomorrow because the printers are broke.

DAMERON

I'm gonna go to the bathroom.

Dameron walks out the door.

EXT. FEDERAL BUILDING ROOFTOP - MOMENTS LATER

Dameron paces back and forth on the roof. He punches a number on his cell phone. The line RINGS twice and picks up.

RENO (O.S.)

Hello.

DAMERON

Demarco, this is Dameron.

INT. RENO'S MOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Reno walks out the bathroom wrapped in a towel.

RENO

What's up?

INTERCUT

DAMERON

Listen, don't call me on this phone. I'll text you my new phone number.

RENO

Cool. You got any whereabouts on El and this Blues character?

DAMERON

Not yet. I should be getting more info on their whereabouts soon.

RENO

What about Charmaine? Did you find her yet?

DAMERON

I told you already, Demarco.

RENO

No, she's out there somewhere. I know it.

DAMERON

Alright. I'll call you soon as I get something.

RENO

Okay.

They hang up. Dameron throws his cell phone off the roof. The phone shatters into small pieces.

EXT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - DAY

Russell is fixing the Cutlass Supreme in the driveway. El sits in the lawn chair drinking a glass of ice water. Johnnie steps out the house and walks into the driveway.

JOHNNIE

Son, I wanna say I'm sorry--

Russell stops working.

RUSSELL

Come on, El. Let's go. We gotta go and do...you know.

EL

Yeah. Right.

El gets up. They walk into the house. Betty, Marla and Cecil step out the house with lawn chairs and join Johnnie in the driveway. They unfold their chairs and sit down.

JOHNNIE

I don't know what's wrong with Russell.

CECIL

Don't play like you don't know what it's about, boy.

BETTY

He's still hurt about last night. You were pretty harsh on him. I know you don't approve of what he does, I don't either. But, I can't stop being his mother just like you can't stop being his father.

MARLA

She's right. Our kids come from us, look like us and act like us, but they ain't us.

CECIL

You and Russell need to work it out. If he was gone for eight years, he'll be gone forever.

INT. JUNE'S OLD ROOM - DAY

Russell and El search through his dresser drawers for the teddy bear. Nothing. El opens his old chest and searches. El runs across June's old issues of *Playboy*.

EL
Pastor was a freak.

RUSSELL
Yeah, he was. But, the one with
Pamela Anderson on the cover was my
favorite.

El tries to open the magazine. The pages are sticky.

EL
It looks like that it wasn't just
your favorite, Russell.

He puts the magazine back in the chest and continues
searching.

EL (CONT'D)
Why did you leave when you're
father came out?

RUSSELL
I ain't trying to hear what he has
to say. Drop it.

EL
No, I'm not gonna drop it. All this
time you've been actin' like it's
all your dad. Some of it is him,
but you don't see your part in
this.

RUSSELL
My part?!

EL
Yeah, you've been so angry--

RUSSELL
You're a guest in this house. You
don't know shit about me or my fam.
Besides, how the hell I'm gonna
take family advice from a jumper?

EL
"Jumper?" Well, this "jumper" was
made a part of the subject when a
certain bounty hunter asked me to
pretend to front as his best friend
for his family.

They hear a door open.

RUSSELL
Somebody's coming, c'mon.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Our boys walk out the bedroom. June steps out the bathroom.
Jodie steps out his bedroom.

JUNE
Whassup, fellas. What you doing in
my room?

RUSSELL
Just giving El a tour of the house.
Where you going?

JUNE
Me and Jodie are about to go to the
park and play some ball.

RUSSELL
Oh snap! I wanna come.

JODIE
Russell, we love you, little bruh,
but you suck.

JUNE
El, how good are you?

EL
I ain't LeBron but I'm pretty
decent.

JUNE
That's cool. You can come with us.

INT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Russell cracks open the phone book looking for travel agents.
He runs across one with discounts. Russell takes out his cell
phone and dials.

TRAVEL AGENT (O.S.)
Afternoon, Sunshine Travel Agency.

RUSSELL
Yes, I am calling to see if I can
book two one-way tickets to
Chicago?

TRAVEL AGENT (O.S.)
For which date, sir?

RUSSELL
I need it either today or tonight.

TRAVEL AGENT (O.S.)
I'm sorry, sir. I don't have any flights available right now. The best I can get you in for is Tuesday.

RUSSELL
No, that's okay. Thank you.

Russell hangs up. He flips through the pages and finds another travel agency. He dials the number.

TRAVEL AGENT #2 (O.S.)
Good afternoon, McMillan Travel Agency.

RUSSELL
Yes, I'm calling to see if you have two one-way tickets to Chicago for today or tomorrow?

TRAVEL AGENT #2 (O.S.)
I'm sorry, sir. All flights are booked due to the holiday. The earliest we can get you a flight to Chicago is Wednesday.

RUSSELL
No, I'm good. Thank you.

Russell hangs up. He texts: **MIA HAVE YOU FOUND ANY FLIGHTS ONLINE YET?** and sends it. Russell's cell BEEPS. He got a text, it's from Mia. It reads: **I'M STILL WORKING ON IT.**

He peaks out the window, and sees Nikki stepping out of her car. Russell nervously pops a half stick of gum in his mouth.

INT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Betty and Nikki stand over the stove, cooking. Betty removes a pan of butter rolls from the oven. She sits it on the table. Nikki stirs a pot of macaroni.

BETTY
I appreciate you coming on your day off to help me out, Nikki.

NIKKI

It's not a problem at all, Mama Betty.

BETTY

Let me get you the eggs for the macaroni and cheese.

She opens the refrigerator. No eggs.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Dammit! No more eggs. Johnnie and his damn egg sandwiches. I'm gonna run next door and borrow some eggs, I'll be back. Don't let Russell get no butter rolls.

NIKKI

OK.

Betty is out the door. Russell enters the kitchen. He cuts a butter roll from the pan. He bites into it, savoring the taste and flavor.

RUSSELL

Hey, Nikki.

NIKKI

Hey, Russell. You know your mom don't want you touchin' her butter rolls.

RUSSELL

I'm just doing a taste test. And, they are still good.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

She's gonna knock the taste out of your mouth if she catches you with that butter roll.

NIKKI

What you doing here?

NIKKI (CONT'D)

I decided to come and help your mom finish the food ready for the family reunion.

RUSSELL

OK.

NIKKI

Since you're doing taste testing.

She cuts a sample of macaroni and cheese with a spoon.

NIKKI (CONT'D)

Taste this.

He does. Russell enjoys it.

RUSSELL

That is good. It's very close to my mom's.

NIKKI

Thank you.

Russell gains his composure to spit out his next question.

RUSSELL

Nikki, I was wondering if you wasn't doing anything tomorrow, maybe we can go out to dinner--

NIKKI

Are you asking me out on a date, Russell Blues?

RUSSELL

Yes.

NIKKI

I'd love to.

RUSSELL

Yes! I'll pick you at 8, and we'll go to Olive Garden.

NIKKI

All right.

Johnnie and El enter the kitchen.

JOHNNIE

Hey, Nikki.

NIKKI

Hi, Mr. Blues. Hey, El.

El waves at her.

JOHNNIE

Russell, me and you need to talk.

Russell ignores him and walks out the kitchen.

INT. BLUES FAMILY'S BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Our boys search and rummage through old boxes for El's bear. Russell searches on the left, El on the right.

EL

This bear has to be somewhere in this house. It didn't just pull a Ted, come to life and walked out of the attic.

Russell rummages through another box.

RUSSELL

We'll find it.

EL

You still not talking to you pops?

RUSSELL

I don't have nothin' to say to him.

El searches another box.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

All my life, he always tried to mold me in his own image. If you don't fit that image, you're not worthy of his approval.

EL

Maybe he's working on it, Russell. But, how would you know? You're pushin' him away that's why you haven't been home in seven years, and why you ain't got no friends.

RUSSELL

Since when did you become Dr. Phil? You can't analyze my situation. You don't even know my situation.

EL

I'm not Dr. Phil, but I do know if you keep pushin' your family away; they're gonna push away from you.

RUSSELL

Whatever.

EL

What happened with you and Nikki?

RUSSELL

I asked her out. We're going out tomorrow. But, I ain't gon' lie, I'm nervous as hell, El. I haven't been on a date in two years.

Russell searches another box. El moves on to the next box. El stops.

EL

No dates in two years? Shit, I would've became a monk or a priest. Let's stop the search for now.

A beat.

EL (CONT'D)

Russell, I'm gonna help you. I'm going to be your eyes and ears.

EXT. NIKKI'S CONDO - NIGHT

Russell rolls into the parking lot. He steps out the SUV with a rose. Cool on the outside, nervous as a hell on the inside. He pops a handful of Tic Tacs in his mouth.

EL (O.S.)

May the force be with you.

He strolls to the front door and rings the doorbell. A female COLLIE jumps on Russell's leg and starts humping it. Russell fights the dog off.

RUSSELL

Come on! Down, girl! Down! Down!
Heel!

Tic Tacs fall out of Russell's mouth. El peaks out the back and cracks up. Nikki opens the door. She is incredibly stunning. He looks up at her.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Bitch, get off of me!

Nikki can't help but laugh.

NIKKI

Baby, down! Get in the house!

The dog hops off Russell's leg and runs in the house.

NIKKI (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Russell. She's in heat.

RUSSELL

No, she was good. That's the best I ever had. I need a cigarette.

Nikki laughs. Russell basks in her beauty.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

You look beautiful.

NIKKI

Thank you.

He gives Nikki the rose.

RUSSELL

This is for you.

NIKKI

Awe, thank you.

RUSSELL

Let's hit the town.

INT. JUNE'S SUV - MOVING - MOMENTS LATER

Russell and Nikki ride through East Atlanta. Dead silence. El is covered in a blanket in the back. He peaks up at them.

EL (V.O.)

(thinking)

Now, I see why Russell hasn't had a date in two years. He's too damn stiff, just killing the mood. It's a date, not a funeral.

El pulls out his cell. He clicks on his "Music" menu, and selects a song. A '90s SLOW JAM plays in the B.G.

NIKKI

Is that your cell phone?

RUSSELL

Yeah.

NIKKI

I haven't heard this song in a long time. I remember hearing this song at--

NIKKI/RUSSELL

The Mechanicsville Festival.

NIKKI

Yeah. You know you danced pretty good for a dude with two left feet.

RUSSELL

You wasn't a bad dance partner yourself.

Russell makes a right at a GREEN light.

NIKKI

I thought you were taking me to Olive Garden.

RUSSELL

I got something much better.

NIKKI

What is it?

RUSSELL

You'll see.

INT. SKATING RINK - NIGHT

The skating rink is packed. It's wall-to-wall skaters on the floor skating to the latest SOUTHERN RAP HIT. The two tiptoe near the rink. El sneaks in and observes from a distance.

NIKKI

Russell, what are we doing here?

RUSSELL

Since I'm back at home, I wanted to take you somewhere special.

NIKKI

So you made up with Olive Garden?

RUSSELL

Yep.

Pause. Russell's cell BEEPS. He receives a text. It's from El. It reads: **RUSSELL ASK HER TO SKATE. MAKE SMALL TALK.**

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

You wanna skate now?

NIKKI

Yeah!

Nikki and Russell step onto the rink and skate. They are a little rusty but coordinated.

RUSSELL

This bring back lots of memories.
All of those skating parties in
junior high. I had girls flockin'
to me.

NIKKI

No, Mr. Blues, if I remembered
correctly; the girls fleeced
themselves away from you.

She cracks up.

EL

You doing good, Russell.

RUSSELL

OK, you got jokes.

The DJ switches to an OLD SCHOOL SLOW JAM.

SKATING RINK DJ (O.S.)

This is a "Couples Skate". All
couples on the floor.

Single skaters step off the rink, some stay on the rink as
other couples come onto to skate.

RUSSELL

There's something I've been wanting
to tell you.

NIKKI

What is it?

RUSSELL

Ever since we was kids, I always
had a crush on you. But, you always
had the fellas on you.

NIKKI

Not all the fellas. There is one in
particular that I wished who
would've been on me.

RUSSELL

Who?

NIKKI

I'm looking at him.

Nikki slips and falls on her ass. Russell helps her up.

RUSSELL
Nikki, I'm sorry. Are you all
right?

NIKKI
Yeah.

They gaze into each other's eyes. They kiss.

EXT. SKATING RINK - CONTINUOUS

Russell and Nikki walk out the rink, holding hands.

DAMERON

He steps out of a restaurant across the street with his food. Dameron spots Nikki and Russell. Nikki looks very familiar to him. Dameron whips out his cell phone and snaps a picture of her.

INT. JUNE'S SUV - CONTINUOUS

El looks under the seats for the teddy bear. Nothing. He peaks at them and smiles -- He's in there. He covers himself back in the blanket as they approach the car.

INT. JODIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jodie sits on the bed talking on his cell phone.

JODIE
So, how's New Orleans, baby?
(pause, listening)
Good. Good. The kids are knocked
out. They had some much fun at the
park today.
(pause, listening)
No, Mike hasn't cut up anymore of
her toys, and she hasn't punched
him in his wee-wee again either.
They've been getting along pretty
good.

Jodie's cell phone buzzes. He looks at the screen.

JODIE (CONT'D)
Baby, I'm gonna have to call you
back. Love you.
(clicks on the other line)
Hello.

DETECTIVE (O.S.)

Jodie, I'm calling to tell you that the computers at the station are fixed. I gotta drive to Athens, and pick up the perps in the liquor store robberies. I'll send that Bankston file tomorrow.

JODIE

Thanks, Barkley.

He hangs up.

INT. MIA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Mia sits at her computer, sorting out the budget. She drinks her coffee.

MIA

I need a break from this shit. Let me look at my e-mail.

She clicks on the Internet, and logs into her e-mail. The first message in her "Inbox" catches her eye. It reads: **EL BANKSTON**. She moves her mouse and clicks on it.

E-MAIL: FBI FLYER

At the top, a red banner with white letters: FBI'S MOST WANTED. Under the banner, \$100,000 REWARD, El's mug shot, his crime information and physical description.

MIA (CONT'D)

\$100,000? I can get the reward money, and get my money back from the court. The best of both worlds.

Mia dials a number on her cell phone.

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - FBI BULLPEN - DAY

Scruggs sits at his desk writing a report on the computer. Dameron strolls through the office with a pep in his step.

DAMERON

Hey, Myron.

SCRUGGS

Hey, Rich.

DAMERON

Did you get the new e-mail about Reno's phone records?

SCRUGGS

Yeah, he made two local calls and one to San Francisco. But, there was this other number that kept showing up "Private." I'm working on obtaining more of his phone records. I see you got a little pep in your step. It must be somethin' good.

DAMERON

I just got some news on Blues, Bankston and Jones.

SCRUGGS

Lay it on me.

Dameron hands him a print out.

DAMERON

Last night, I was getting my dinner from China Dragon, and I spot Blues with a girl across the street, who bared a striking resemblance to Jones. So, I took her picture.

(beat)

This morning, I scanned it to my e-mail, printed the picture and faxed it over to the DMV in New York. It matched Charmaine Jones' description, but there's no current address.

He sips his soda.

DAMERON (CONT'D)

Then I faxed the picture to my friends at the Atlanta DMV. They faxed me a license with the name Nikki Rhodes with a similar picture only her hair was cut.

(shows him both pictures)

So, what do these pictures tell you, Myron?

SCRUGGS

Nikki Rhodes is Charmaine Jones.

DAMERON

Very good, Watson.

Dameron hands Scruggs another print out.

DAMERON (CONT'D)
Blues' bounty hunter in Chicago
knows gave us great info on Blues
and Bankston's whereabouts.

SCRUGGS
Where?

DAMERON
She said they're at Blues' parents
house here in Atlanta. Those are
his parents, Jonathan and Betty
Blues. Dad's was a detective for
the ATL P.D. for 30 years. Mom was
an Administrative Assistant for the
department for 20. That's their
address.

SCRUGGS
I see you got your new cell phone.

He gives it to Scruggs. Scruggs checks it out.

SCRUGGS (CONT'D)
It's real nice.

DAMERON
Yeah, I got more gigs, and I can
download more apps.

SCRUGGS
In the meantime, I'll tell Hornsby,
so we secure a warrant.

DAMERON
No, we'll do surveillance for now.
So, we can gather more evidence.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Reno steps out of a restaurant, in his disguise. He walks
down the street. His cell phone RINGS and he peaks at the
screen.

RENO'S CELL PHONE

DAMERON. 404-798-GLAV.

He tries to answer it. Low battery.

RENO

Shit.

Reno stops a PEDESTRIAN, who's walking and talking on his cell phone.

RENO (CONT'D)

Excuse me, sir. Can I borrow your cell phone for a second?

PEDESTRIAN

I'm not done--

BOOM! Reno CLOCKS him in the face and takes his cell phone. He dials the number on the cell phone. The line RINGS twice.

DAMERON (O.S.)

Hello.

RENO

Dameron, it's me. I tried to answer your call but my battery died. What's up?

EXT. FEDERAL BUILDING ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

Dameron stands on the rooftop on his new cell phone.

DAMERON

I found out where Blues and Bankston are staying. They're at Blues' parents house, the address is 678 Maple Street. My partner and I are doing surveillance there. Be there at midnight, tonight.

INTERCUT

RENO

Oh, I'll be there. But, I got good news.

DAMERON

What is it?

RENO

I got the fencer from Frisco. I told him we're meeting with him Tuesday.

DAMERON

That's real good news.

(a beat)

(MORE)

DAMERON (CONT'D)

Oh yeah, you were right about Charmaine. I also found her. She's right here in Atlanta, goes by Nikki Rhodes now. I'll text you her address.

RENO

Thanks, Dameron.

DAMERON

Tonight, we're gonna get our diamond.

RENO

Yes we will.

INT. PARENTS' BEDROOM - DAY

El sneaks into the bedroom. He searches each dresser drawer for the teddy bear. Nothing. El looks under the bed. Nothing. He rises up, and spots something on the night stand.

A family portrait: an old Sears photo of Johnnie, Betty, June, Russell and Jodie.

El can't help but smile. He picks up the picture and stares at it.

VOICE (O.S.)

El.

He jumps up, scared shitless. El turns around, and sees Johnnie standing in the doorway.

JOHNNIE

I've been looking all over for you.
We're about to go the reunion.

EL

Oh, I was just about to go downstairs.

JOHNNIE

What are you doing?

EL

I was just walking by, and I saw this picture on the night stand. It's a nice picture, sir.

JOHNNIE

Thank you. That's last picture we took together Russell's senior year in high school. It's time for a new picture.

EL

I hope I can be as good of a family man as you. It's just gonna be harder because I'm gonna miss my family while I'm away.

JOHNNIE

Just keep them close to you. Well, be the best parent that you can be. Listen and be supportive.

Johnnie walks away.

EXT. PARK - DAY

The family reunion, in full swing, has taken over the park. A large banner hangs above the park. It reads: **THE 20th ANNUAL BLUES/PAMPLIN FAMILY REUNION**. An R&B CLASSIC BUMPS in the B.G.

A close-knit THRONG of family and friends eat, congregate, mill, play, dance and mingle at picnic tables and throughout the park. El and Russell step onto the park. Russell greets and hug his relatives and introduces them to El. Nikki runs up to Russell and hugs him.

NIKKI

Hi, baby. Hey, El.

El waves at her as Nikki kisses Russell on the cheek.

RUSSELL

Hey, you.

Russell's cell BEEPS. He got a text. He clicks on it, it's from Mia. It reads: **RUSSELL, I SPOKE WITH MY FRIEND. HE BOUGHT A NEW COMPUTER, YOU AND BANKSTON ARE ON THE 6:00 FLIGHT BACK TO CHICAGO MONDAY NIGHT. I'LL E-MAIL YOU THE FLIGHT INFO.**

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Baby, me and El have to--

NIKKI

It's all right, go ahead. I'll be over here with your mom.

She walks away. Our boys stop at a cooler and grab beers. They sit down at a table, crack them open and drink them.

RUSSELL

El, my bail bondsman got the tickets for me to bring you back to Chicago Monday night.

EL

Well, it's been a helluva run.

RUSSELL

Yeah, I have to admit. I'm kinda gonna miss you, El.

They toast.

EL

I'm about to go get me something to eat.

El gets up and walks away. Russell continues sipping his beer.

VOICE (O.S.)

Whassup, Russell!

Russell can't believe his ears. He turns around, and sees DJ behind him. Now a beast of a man, bulged with muscles.

DJ

It's been a long time, cuz. You got taller. Come over here and show me some love.

The flashback replays in Russell's mind. Fire burns in his eyes. He jumps out of his seat, and TACKLES DJ to the ground like Ray Lewis. Russell beats the shit out of him. The family looks on, shocked and embarrassed.

EXT. PARK - LATER

A BLUES SONG BUMPS in the B.G. El, Russell and Nikki sit next to Jodie, June and DJ at the picnic table. DJ has a black eye.

Betty, Johnnie, Marla and Cecil sit at another table. They are grubbing. Dead silence.

EL

Russell, you should hear what your pop has to say.

RUSSELL

Told you I ain't got nothin' to say to him.

EL

The last time I checked this was a family reunion.

RUSSELL

Yeah, it is. But, you can't just say family, you have to act like family.

BETTY

Johnnie, I think you should talk to Russell.

JOHNNIE

Baby I tried, but he made it clear to me that he don't have nothing to say to me.

BETTY

Try harder. You two haven't worked on the Cutlass since the fight. You know you miss it. If you try--

Betty whispers something in his ear. Something freaky.

JOHNNIE

I'll do it!

Johnnie walks towards Russell.

JODIE (O.S.)

Soul Train Line!

The DJ plays an R&B CLASSIC. Russell rushes to join in. Two lines form the Soul Train Line. Men on one side, women on the other. Everyone takes their turn movin' and groovin' down the line.

JODIE

He sits at a picnic table watching Mike and Charity sliding down the slide. Jodie pulls out his tablet, logs onto his e-mail. He taps on the first message in his "INBOX."

TABLET

The same FBI flyer that was e-mailed to Mia.

JODIE (CONT'D)
 Son of a bitch.

EXT. PARK - CONTINUOUS

A friendly baseball game. Russell and El sit in the bleachers. DJ is on the mound pitching. Jodie is batting at the plate.

DJ throws a pitch to him. Jodie hits the ball opposite field and runs to first base. Nikki steps up to the plate. El sees Charity walking with the teddy bear towards Jodie's car. She puts the bear in the backseat.

EL
 Russell, I just saw your niece put my teddy bear in your brother's car. Let's go get it.

RUSSELL
 But, I'm next at the plate.

EL
 This might be our only chance to get it. Let's go.

RUSSELL
 OK.

INT. JODIE'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

El opens the passenger side door. Our boys climb in and El grabs the bear from the backseat. El unzips the back, opens the jewelry box. The diamond is still inside.

EL
 Thank you, Lord.

EXT. PARK

They run over to June's SUV. El throws the bear in the back seat. El's cell BEEPS. He got a text, it's from Tanya. It reads: **HEY BABY, MOM AND I ARE LEAVING A DAY EARLY. WE'LL BE BACK TOMORROW. LOVE YOU. <3.**

EXT. ATLANTA - NIGHT

A spectacular 4th of July fireworks display EXPLODES into the ATL skyline.

EXT./INT. '08 GMC YUKON - NIGHT

Dameron and Scruggs are parked across the street from Russell's house on stakeout. Scruggs is groggy. Dameron watches the action with binoculars as he eats his hot dog.

DAMERON

Did y'all finally settle the father-in-law issue?

SCRUGGS

Yep, Nina and I made a compromise.

DAMERON

What was the compromise?

SCRUGGS

He stays in his little apartment in the attic, and we won't try to wring each other's necks. I have to go pay the water bill, be right back.

RENO

He parks across the street in a stolen car.

Scruggs get out of the car. Dameron puts two sleeping pills in Scruggs' coffee. Scruggs gets back in the car and drinks his coffee.

DAMERON

That's a great compromise. She gets what she wants, you get what you want.

Scruggs starts getting tired. He yawns.

SCRUGGS

(beat; yawning)

Happy wife, happy life Partner.

He is out like a light. Dameron texts Reno on his cell. It reads: **DEMARCO, GO GET THE DIAMOND NOW.**

INT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Our duo is sound asleep. Reno climbs up the window on a ladder. He sneaks into the attic with a flashlight. He rummages through the old chest for the diamond. Nothing.

Reno rummages through every dresser drawer. Nothing. He shines his flashlight on something under the bed. Reno opens the closet, rummaging through old boxes. El is awakened by the rummaging.

He sees Reno rummaging through the boxes. El hides under the bed, and spots a golf club next to him. He grabs it, and tiptoes from under the bed.

RENO

Shit. Where the hell are you,
diamond?

EL (O.S.)

Right here.

El WHACKS him across the face with the golf club. It's on. Reno pulls out his gun, El kicks it out of his hand. Reno delivers a hard right to his face. El hits him with a two-piece to his face and jaw.

EL (CONT'D)

Russell, help me!

Russell JOLTS up and sees the two fighting. He jumps in, TACKLES Reno. Russell delivers a left hook to his face, knocking Reno to the floor. Reno leaps up, HITS him with a combo to his face.

JOHNNIE (O.S.)

Is everything all right?!

Reno jumps out the window.

EXT./INT. '08 GMC YUKON - MOMENTS LATER

Dameron sits in the car, waiting. His cell phone RINGS. He answers it.

DAMERON

Hello, Special Agent Dameron
speaking.

INT. STOLEN CAR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Reno is speeding through the streets.

RENO

I didn't get the diamond. I
couldn't even find the diamond.
Blues and Bankston woke up and we
got into a fight.

INTERCUT

DAMERON

Did you get the text with Nikki's address?

RENO

Yeah.

DAMERON

OK. Tomorrow you go see her, and see what she knows about the diamond. Also, El's girlfriend Tanya is coming in on a 2 o'clock flight from Vegas. You go see her, too, and see what she knows.

RENO

I most certainly will.

They hang up.

INT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Russell and El walk down the steps. El carries his teddy bear in his hand.

EL

I can't wait 'til Sunday dinner.

RUSSELL

Me and you both. You loved my mom's cooking, you're gonna love Nikki's, too. She can throw down. Have you heard from your girl?

EL

No. I've been trying to call her, but she ain't answering. Maybe her flight was delayed. I'm gonna try again in a few minutes.

El peaks out the window and sees Dameron and Scruggs parked across the street.

EL (CONT'D)

Russell, we got company.

Russell looks out the window and spots the FBI agents.

RUSSELL

Aw shit. How the hell did Reno get my parents' address?

EL

He probably looked it up on the Internet.

RUSSELL

It don't matter, we gotta get the hell out of here ASAP. I'm gonna see if my bondsman can get those tickets bumped up to tonight.

They head towards the door. Nikki walks into the living room.

NIKKI

Russell, El, where y'all going? Dinner is about to be served.

EL

I almost forgot that I was suppose to help my friend rearrange his bedroom set today. And, I need Russell's help, we won't be long.

Betty, Johnnie and the kids enter.

CHARITY

My bear!

Charity rushes to the bear. El holds it up over his head.

EL

No, this is my bear. My initials are on it. I had it done at Build-A-Bear last year.

Betty sees his initials on the left claw.

BETTY

Charity, it is his. You have to give it back, baby.

Charity hands the bear over to El.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Where are y'all going? We about to have Sunday dinner.

RUSSELL

We're just going to help El's friend rearrange his bedroom set. It won't be long, we'll be right back.

Betty isn't buying it.

BETTY

I was born at night, not last night. Y'all have to come up with something more better.

Jodie walks in.

JODIE

Way better. Or, do you want me to tell them the truth?

JOHNNIE

Whatcha talkin' about, Jodie?

JODIE

El is not who he say he is, Dad. He's a criminal. He knocked off a jewelry store in Chicago four years ago. He's wanted for murder, too.

Jodie hands Johnnie and Betty El's FBI profile. They are shocked.

JOHNNIE

El, Russell, is this true?

EL

Yeah. I don't work at the club with Russell, and I'm not going into business. I'm a jewel thief, and I hid the stone in the bear. But, I didn't commit murder...my ex-partner, Demarco Reno, set me up.

NIKKI

Oh my God. Demarco.

RUSSELL

You know him, Nikki? How do you know him?

NIKKI

He's my ex-boyfriend.

Everyone is stunned.

EL

You're the woman he was living with in New York?

RUSSELL

That was Mr. Wonderful?

NIKKI

Yeah. I thought he was. But, I found out he was violent, controlling and a criminal, so I told the police. I knew he'd kill me for leaving him and snitching on him. So, I changed my name, left New York and moved back here.

Tears well up in her eyes.

NIKKI (CONT'D)

I wanted to tell you, Russell. I just didn't know how. I'm sorry, I gotta go.

RUSSELL

Nikki, don't leave. Let's talk about this.

Nikki heads for the door. Russell goes after her. She is out the door.

JODIE

And, that's not all. They were the ones who broke into your bedroom the other night.

EXT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Jodie creeps around the backyard.

JODIE (V.O.)

I knew something wasn't right. So, I searched the trash.

He lifts the lid from the trash can. Jodie sees the two ski masks and clothes in the trash. He removes them.

JODIE (V.O.)

And, I found two ski masks and jogging pants. I know no burglar ditches their clothes that fast.

INT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - PRESENT DAY

JODIE

So, I took them to the crime lab, and had a friend there run them for tests. The results linked y'all DNA to those ski masks and clothes.

Now, they are pissed. Betty slaps both of them in the face.

JOHNNIE

Russell, why the hell did you bring a wanted criminal into our house?

RUSSELL

I'm not a bartender, Pop, I'm a bounty hunter. I was hired by my bail bondsman to take El back to Chicago. That's why he was in those handcuffs.

BETTY

So, y'all were using our house as a hideout?!

RUSSELL

Yes.

JOHNNIE

We're disappointed in you, Russell. This is the worst thing you've ever done. Not only you lied to us, but you became one of the poachers of law enforcement. You two need to find somewhere else to stay.

Our boys are dejected and disappointed.

RUSSELL

I'm sorry.

JODIE

Give me the diamond, too. I'm turning that over to the FBI.

El unzips the bear's back. Takes out the jewelry box and gives it to Jodie.

JODIE (CONT'D)

You two are lucky. The only reason why I'm not turning y'all in 'cause it ain't an Atlanta P.D. case, and it would be a conflict of interest.

He gives the bear to Charity. Our boys head towards the door.

RUSSELL

It's funny. I stayed away for seven years. Now, I come back home and I'm being pushed out.

They are out the door. Johnny is salty.

INT. CAB - MOVING - DAY

El and Russell ride in the cab looking out their windows.
Dejected. Absolute silence.

EXT. NIKKI'S CONDO - DAY

Nikki rolls into the parking lot. She steps out of her car.

RENO

He is parked on the curb across the street in the stolen car.
He has been parked in the same spot all night. Reno jumps out
the car.

EXT. NIKKI'S CONDO - CONTINUOUS

Nikki walks up to the door and pulls out her keys. They fall
to the ground. She reaches down to pick them up. A HAND
enters the FRAME and picks up the keys.

RENO (O.S.)
Hello, Charmaine.

Nikki looks up. Reno is standing over her. She is startled.

RENO (CONT'D)
Or should I say Nikki. Long time,
no see.

NIKKI
How the hell did you find me,
Demarco?

RENO
Let's just say I have a friend in a
high place. You still look
beautiful as ever.

NIKKI
Get the hell away me from before I
call the police.

Reno grabs her arm.

RENO
No matter how far you run, Nikki.
You'll never get away from me.

She reaches for her mase. Reno flashes his SNUB-NOSE .38
tucked in his pants.

RENO (CONT'D)

I wouldn't do that if I were you.

Nikki knows what time it is. She walks with Reno.

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - FBI BULLPEN - DAY

Scruggs sits at his computer. He logs into his e-mail and clicks on his "Inbox". The first message reads: **RENO'S PHONE RECORDS II**. He clicks on the message, downloads and prints the files.

He runs to the printer and retrieves them. Scruggs sits back down at his desk. He looks over the phone records.

SCRUGGS

No calls between Blues and Bankston.

Scruggs flips to through the phone records.

PHONE RECORDS

The records read, "RICHARD DAMERON" down the list. Along with his new number next to his name.

SCRUGGS (CONT'D)

Son of a bitch.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

A small double-bed room. Not seedy but not very classy. Russell sits on the edge of his bed. El sits in his bed watching a MOVIE.

RUSSELL

My parents put me out. Forget 'em. I don't need 'em. I don't need no family.

EL

Yes, you do, Russell.

RUSSELL

No, I don't, El. I was gone for seven years, so I'm stickin' to what I know--staying gone.

EL

Hey, our lie was going to catch up with us sooner or later.

(MORE)

EL (CONT'D)

It was fun while it lasted. Now,
I'm about to go get some ice from
the ice machine my soda. Just let
me know when the pizza comes.

RUSSELL

Okay.

El grabs the bucket and walks out the door.

EXT. MOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

El presses down on the lever. The machine sputters. It's
broke. El is pissed.

INT. MOTEL - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

El knocks on the door. He enters the office. The office is
empty.

EL

Hello.

(pause)

Hello. Anybody home? I just wanted
to tell you that your ice machine
is broke.

He walks up to the desk. El steps in a liquid trail. He looks
down on the floor. It's blood. El looks over the desk. The
manager is laid out on the floor with a bullet hole in his
chest. Dead.

EL (CONT'D)

Oh shit.

Without warning, two guns are pointed at the back of El's
head. It's Reno and another goon.

RENO

I told you that we're gonna have
our reunion.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Russell is still sitting on the edge of his bed. There's a
knock at the door.

RUSSELL

Damn, that pizza was fast.

He gets up and opens it. WHAM! A GOON clocks Russell in his face with the butt of a 9mm Beretta. He is out cold.

AN HOUR LATER

Russell is in the bed, still knocked out. He wakes up and notices something next to him. A Post-It message is attached to his cell. It simply reads: **PLAY ME.**

He removes the Post-It and clicks on his cell. It's a video. Russell presses "PLAY."

CAMERA PHONE VIDEO

El, Nikki and Tanya sit in the back of a SUV. Tied up and gagged. Reno comes into the FRAME. He looks AT the CAMERA.

RENO

Since I have little time, let's get straight to business. I got something that you want, you something that I want. Meet me at the Georgia Dome at 3:00, on the fifty-yard line, we'll make the exchange. You better be alone.

(beat)

If I sense that there's a cop in that stadium; I won't only kill them and you, but I won't stop 'til your whole family is wiped off the damn map.

Reno slams the door. The video stops. Russell is pissed.

RUSSELL

I'm gonna need my family.

Russell punches a number on his cell.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Jodie, I need the diamond back. Reno kidnapped Nikki, El and his girlfriend. If we don't get it to him, he's not only gonna kill them but us. Meet me at the Georgia Dome at 3 o'clock. Thanks, bruh.

He hangs up and punches in another number.

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - FBI BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

Dameron sits at his desk filing paperwork on his computer. His phone RINGS twice. He picks it up.

DAMERON
FBI, Robbery Division. Agent
Dameron speaking.

INTERCUT

RUSSELL
Agent Dameron, this is Russell
Blues. I got a tip for you.

DAMERON
Now, you want cooperate with us?

RUSSELL
Here me out. Reno has El and our
girlfriends. I set up an exchange
with him to get them back. It's
goin' down at the Georgia Dome in
two hours, fifty-yard line. All I
want is to take El back to Chicago,
and all charges against me and El
dropped.

DAMERON
We'll talk about it. We're on our
way now.

Dameron hangs up.

DAMERON (CONT'D)
Look, if Myron comes looking for
me, tell him I'm going to the
Georgia Dome.

He is out the door. A few seconds later, Scruggs enters the office.

SCRUGGS
Anybody seen Dameron?

AGENT
He said he was headed to the
Georgia Dome.

Scruggs runs out the door.

EXT. GEORGIA DOME - DAY

Russell and Jodie roll into the parking lot. They jump out the car and head towards the entrance.

INT. GEORGIA DOME - DAY

Reno stands on the fifty-yard line with the two goons. Jodie poses as a custodian in the first row pushing a cleaning cart. Russell enters the stadium.

RENO

Mr. Blues, you're on time. I like that.

Goon #1 approaches our hero and pats him down. He takes Russell's gun from the back of his pants.

RUSSELL

I got your diamond. Now, where's El and the ladies?

RENO

Don't worry. They're safe and sound.

RUSSELL

Bring 'em out, so we can do this exchange.

RENO

Before we can conduct business, we have to wait for my partner.

RUSSELL

Partner?

RENO

Yes, partner. And, here he is now.

Dameron enters the stadium, and walks up to the line. Russell is stunned.

RUSSELL

Agent Dameron? You're partners with Reno?

DAMERON

Yes. I've been working with Demarco for the last two years. He made me an offer I couldn't refuse.

(MORE)

DAMERON (CONT'D)

I gotta give you two credit, you two were slick until your bail bondsman called us, and it lead us to your parents' house, Russell. So, let's see the diamond.

Russell gives them the jewelry box.

RENO

Bring them in.

Goon #2 brings in Nikki, Tanya and El. Still tied up and gagged.

RUSSELL

Are y'all all right?

They nod, yes.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Let 'em go, you rat son of a bitch!

RENO

Take El back to the Control Room, and take the girls back to the Super Suite. Put them out of my misery.

Goon #2 escorts them out. They fight and struggle. Reno opens the box and they admire the diamond.

SCRUGGS (O.S.)

Freeze! FBI!

Scruggs strolls up to the fifty-yard line with his gun pointed at them.

SCRUGGS (CONT'D)

You know, Richie, I didn't wanna believe that you made a pact with Satan. But, I got the other copy of Reno's phone records. Your new number shows up all through them. I put two and two together. Not only your new number's on there, but the "Private" number was your old number too. You damaged the cameras at Bankston's apartment building, broke the printers, and drugged me during the stakeout. You also shredded the original phone records. And, you were gonna make Blues and Bankston the fall guys. I just got one question, Richie. Why?

DAMERON

Myron, I had to. You were getting close. I got a mortgage, a son in college and alimony's kickin' my ass.

(beat)

I'm sorry, partner, a third of \$60 million was too sweet of an offer to refuse.

RENO

I been meaning to talk to you about that, Agent Dameron. I decided to downsize your third to zero.

Reno pulls out a 9mm Beretta. Dameron reaches for his service gun. Too late. Reno SHOOTs him twice in his chest, killing him instantly. Now it's really on! An old school gunfight.

Russell RETURNS FIRE with his Mini-Desert Eagle, hitting Reno in the arm. Another goon creeps behind Russell with a Glock locked and aimed at his head. Suddenly, two bullets penetrate his back and stomach, crumpling to the ground. It's Jodie in the stands holding his .357 Magnum.

Scruggs FIRES at Reno with his service gun, hits him in his arm. Reno SHOOTs him in his leg as he runs out the stadium. Russell and Jodie rush over to his aid.

RUSSELL

Scruggs, are you all right?

Russell takes off his shirt and wraps it around his wound.

SCRUGGS

Yeah. I'll talk to the Federal Prosecutor to make sure you two don't face any charges. Just get that son of a bitch.

JODIE

I'll stay with him.

Russell is gone.

INT. GEORGIA DOME - CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

El sits in a chair, tied up. Goon #1 pulls out a syringe filled with heroin and cocaine (hotshot).

GOON #1

I could put a bullet in your head, and call it a day.

(MORE)

GOON #1 (CONT'D)

But, that would be too nice for you. It's better for you to have a more of a cruel death.

A finger nail filer slips out of El's shirt sleeve and into his hand. El starts cutting the ropes.

EL

I'd rather take the bullet to the head. It's faster.

GOON #1

Shut up!

Goon #1 walks up to El with the syringe. The ropes break off.

GOON #1 (CONT'D)

Time to say good night.

El kicks the syringe out of his hand and gets up. He punches Goon #1 in the face. Goon #1 grabs the syringe, he and El wrestle each other. The syringe is inches away from El's shoulder. El KNEES him in his balls, and snatches the syringe from his hand.

EL

Time to say good night.

He shoots the hotshot in his arm, killing him instantly. El is out the door.

INT. GEORGIA DOME - SUPER SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Tanya and Nikki are tied up, back-to-back, in their chairs.

TANYA

Hey, what's your name?

NIKKI

Nikki. I'm Russell's girlfriend.

TANYA

I'm Tanya, El's girlfriend. I know we don't know each other well, but I got a plan to get us out of here.

NIKKI

What?

TANYA

I'm about to go into labor.

A beat. Nikki grins -- I got you.

OUTSIDE THE SUPER SUITE

Goon #2 guards the door like a hawk. He hears water SPLASHING and Tanya SCREAMING.

BACK IN THE SUPER SUITE

Goon #2 rushes into the suite. Tanya laying on the couch, BREATHING, PANTING and SCREAMING.

NIKKI

Tanya, I need you to calm down and breathe.

She does.

GOON #2

What the hell's going on?

TANYA

I'M IN LABOR, ASSHOLE!

GOON #2

Are you serious?!

TANYA/NIKKI

Yes!

NIKKI

Her water broke, she's gonna have this baby any minute. I'm a nurse. You have to unite us so I can help her deliver this baby.

GOON #2

I didn't think I'd have to go through this again so soon. I just went through this with my wife.

Goon #2 cuts them loose with his knife. Tanya lays down on the couch. The ladies pant and breathe in rhythm together. Nikki grabs her stun gun from her purse as Goon #2 gets on his cell phone.

Nikki creeps up behind him, and sticks it to the goon's nuts. BAR-BE-CUE! He falls to the ground, holding his sack. Tanya KNOCKS HIM OUT with a beer bottle, Nikki takes his guns. She helps Tanya up and they're out the door.

INT. GEORGIA DOME - CONCESSION STAND - CONTINUOUS

El strolls through the concession stand looking for the women. BOOM! A hard clothesline by Reno levels El to the floor. El stares at the barrel of a Reno's 9mm Beretta.

RENO

The party's over, El.

Out of nowhere, Russell kicks the gun out of his hand. He delivers a HARD RIGHT to Reno's jaw.

RUSSELL

Not yet.

A white-knuckle brawl for it all. Russell vs. Reno. Good guy vs. Bad guy. You know the deal. Russell is winning, but Reno comes back with a few hard jabs to his face. He picks up Russell and BODY SLAMS him to the floor.

EL

Oh shit, Reno's on the juice.

Russell sluggishly gets on his feet. Reno gives him a beatdown. He goes in to kick Russell. Russell blocks his foot and pushes him to the floor.

RUSSELL

Get up, bitch!

Reno gets on his feet. He pulls his shank from his pocket. He lunges at Russell, Russell grabs his arm and knocks the shank from his hand. He comes back to deliver Reno the ass kicking he deserves.

He delivers a HARD RIGHT to Reno's face, knocking him out cold. Russell drags him to a chair and cuffs his right hand to the leg.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Demarco Reno, you are under arrest.

El walks over to him. He removes the diamond from his pocket.

EL

I believe this belongs to me.

He kisses the diamond as he puts it back in the jewelry box.

EL (CONT'D)

Thanks, Russell. I was gonna cut you in, although you're about to take me jail.

Reno awakens and pulls out a .38. Locked, loaded and aimed at them. In SLO-MO, Russell jumps in front of El and takes a bullet to the leg. He pulls out a .22 from a holster in his sock and FIRES three shots into Reno's chest, dead instantly. El rushes over to him.

EL (CONT'D)
You okay, Russell?

RUSSELL
I'll live. Let's go find the ladies.

INT. GEORGIA DOME - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - DAY

Nikki and Tanya sit on the couch.

NIKKI
This is Fourth of July weekend has had a lot of fireworks.

TANYA
Yes, it has. You know what sounds good right now, Nikki? Nachos and ice cream with Snickers.

NIKKI
I never thought I'd say this, but that does sound good.

El busts the door open with a fire extinguisher. Nikki FIRES at them. Russell waves a white towel as they enter. The ladies run up to their men and kiss them.

EXT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - DAY

Jodie rolls into the driveway. Jodie, Russell and El all step out the car. Russell is limping. Betty and Johnnie step out the house. Betty runs to them and hugs them. Jodie goes in the house.

BETTY
Oh my God. Are you babies all right?

RUSSELL
Yes, Mom, we're fine.

JOHNNIE
What about the girls?

RUSSELL

They're okay. Mom, Dad, we have something to say to you. Y'all have every right to be mad at me. I know lied, and I didn't mean to hurt either of you.

(a beat)

I did it because I enjoyed being around my family again, and I didn't want to ruin it. I am so sorry.

EL

We broke your trust, and that's the last thing we wanted to do. I hope you can forgive us.

RUSSELL

I don't wanna be distant for another seven years.

JOHNNIE

Russell, you became distant because I pushed you away. I didn't support you enough. I've been bitter and blaming people for a missed opportunity in my career. But, I didn't realize I missed an opportunity with my son. I don't care what job your is. Strip club bouncer, cop, bounty hunter, whatever it is as long as you're happy.

RUSSELL

I chose to stay away. I should've found a way to talk to you but I didn't. As a good friend told me, "If you keep pushin' your family away; they're gonna push away from you."

JOHNNIE

Can you forgive your old man for being an unsupportive idiot?

RUSSELL

Yeah. I forgive you, Daddy.

They hug. Father and son again.

JOHNNIE

I love you, Russell.

RUSSELL

I love you, too. Let's finish working on that Cutlass.

EXT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - EVENING

The car is fixed. The Cutlass is running smoother than before. The engine purrs like a kitten. Johnnie and Russell stand in the driveway, admiring their handiwork.

JOHNNIE

I like hearing that sound.

RUSSELL

Me too, Daddy. We did a helluva job.

JOHNNIE

Let's give it for a spin. You drive.

He tosses Russell the keys. They hop in the car, back out and drives off.

EXT. BLUES FAMILY'S HOUSE - DAY

A bittersweet moment. Russell and El stand in the front yard hugging the family as they say their good-byes. Johnnie and Russell hug.

BETTY

I love you, baby.

RUSSELL

I love you, too, Mom.

Betty gets emotional as she tightly hugs them.

BETTY

I hate to see y'all go. I've gotten used to having y'all around.

RUSSELL

Mom, it's alright. I'll be back next year. I'll call you as soon as we land.

BETTY

OK. El, you're welcome to visit anytime. Next time, you bring your girlfriend and that cute baby. Y'all have a safe flight.

EL

I will.

(remembering)

Wait. I wanted to do something for you before I go. Russell, let me see you phone.

RUSSELL

What for, El?

EL

Your dad said he wanted a new family picture. Right?

JOHNNIE

Right. Everybody, family picture in the front yard!

The family gathers in the front yard, and poses for the picture. El snaps it. Perfect. El starts crying.

RUSSELL

El, are you crying?

EL

No, it's my allergies.

They're not buying it. Our boys and Johnnie hop in the Cutlass. Everybody waves at them as they back out and pull off.

INT. HARTSFIELD-JACKSON ATLANTA AIRPORT - DAY

Another bittersweet moment. Nikki and Tanya stand with our duo at the gate. The ladies passionately kiss their men on the lips.

RUSSELL

I'll call you when I get home, baby.

NIKKI

OK, and I'll see you in Chicago in a few weeks. Love you.

RUSSELL

I love you, too.

El hands Tanya the jewelry box and rubs her stomach.

EL

Take care of our babies.

TANYA

You know I will, El. I love you.

EL

I love you, too, Honey Bun.

Nikki hugs El, Russell hugs Tanya.

NIKKI

Nice meeting you, El. I'll make sure Tanya and the baby are taken care of before I leave.

EL

I appreciate it, Nikki. Thanks.

Our boys wave good-bye to their ladies as they head towards the gate. El laughs.

EL (CONT'D)

Awe.

(mocks Russell)

"I love you, too."

Russell slaps the cuffs on him and cracks up. El is salty.

EXT. HARTSFIELD-JACKSON ATLANTA AIRPORT - MOMENTS LATER

The plane SOARS off the runway and FLIES into the sky.

EXT. O'HARE INTL. AIRPORT - NIGHT

Back to where the journey started. The plane touches down on the runway.

INT. O'HARE INTL. AIRPORT - NIGHT

Russell and El ride down the escalator. They stop at the door. It's the end of the road.

EL

Well, this is the end of the road.

Russell dials a number on his cell and puts it on speakerphone. The line RINGS twice, picks up.

MIA (O.S.)

Hello.

RUSSELL

Mia, I got El Bankston with me.

EL

Hello.

MIA (O.S.)

Yes! Russell, you are the man!

RUSSELL

Now, you can say "Goodbye" to him. I know you tried to sell us out to that rogue FBI agent, so kiss my ass. I quit!

MIA (O.S.)

Russell--

Russell hangs up. He uncuffs El.

RUSSELL

No, this is the beginning of the road, homey. El, you made me remember something that I forgotten. You made me remember the importance of family. I wouldn't have known that if it wasn't for you. Thank you.

El smiles. This means the world to him.

EL

That's the nicest shit anyone's ever said to me, Russell. You've been more of a true friend to me this past weekend than they were in my whole lifetime. I would be honored if you'd be the godfather of my child.

RUSSELL

I'll definitely be the godfather of your child.

Russell gives him the handcuffs.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

To remember our journey together.

EL

This might give the little man a little brother or sister sooner rather than later.

They hug. El pick pockets Russell's letter from his pocket. Friends forever.

RUSSELL
Catch you later, El.

El steps on the walking escalator, waves good-bye to Russell, steps off and walks away. Russell looks at the clock on his cell phone. It's 11:15.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
A quarter after eleven. Damn, I would've made it.

He is out the door.

EXT. RUSSELL'S HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: THREE WEEKS LATER

Russell and Nikki pulls up in front of the house on the curb. The two step out the car. Russell retrieves Nikki's duffle bag from the trunk.

RUSSELL
Welcome to our humble abode.
(under his breath)
I don't know how much longer it'll be ours.

She checks out the house.

NIKKI
It's a nice house, I like it. What are you gonna do now that you quit your job?

RUSSELL
Open my own bail bonds business.

They walk up the stairs. An envelope is wedged in the door. Russell takes the envelope and opens it.

CERTIFIED LETTER

The certified letter from earlier has a red "PAID" stamp across the middle.

Russell is baffled -- How the hell did this happen? They spot something. A package sits by the door. Russell picks it up and cuts it open with his key.

It's a "Variety Pack" of Hershey candies with a card attached. He opens up the card and reads it.

EL (V.O.)

(reading)

"Russell, as a token of your friendship, I pick pocketed your letter, and paid off the back taxes on your house. We got a house in Key West; I hope you come visit us soon -- El. P.S. -- There's some goodies inside the box."

Russell opens the box, and looks under the candies. Seven large stacks of fresh ONE HUNDRED DOLLAR BILLS in each row! Russell drops her duffle bag. He is ecstatic.

NIKKI

What are you so happy about, Russell?

Russell shows Nikki the money. She is ecstatic too.

RUSSELL

A tax lien payment, a new business and a cruise for two in Turks & Caicos, baby! Thank you, El!

Russell puts the duffle bag around his shoulder. He kisses Nikki on the lips. Russell picks up Nikki, and carries her into the house. Russell slams the door.

THE END