

— WRITING SAMPLE —  
(screenplay - feature length)  
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CRITICAL MASS

Original Screenplay  
by  
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FADE IN:

TELEVISION IMAGE

People frantic at a nuclear reactor meltdown.

TELEVISION IMAGE

Sonic booms and jackhammers from a documentary on noise pollution.

TELEVISION IMAGE

Live news footage of a PROTESTER chaining himself to the door of a chemical company named "New Horizons, Ltd."

THREE MORE TELEVISION IMAGES

And during all these we've been HEARING THE CHAOS OF ALL SIX PROGRAMS playing at once.

The sequence gives us a feeling for the insidious and hazardous side effects of modern technology, a motif that will keep percolating subliminally through the background...

A SMALL ENCLOSURE

The NOISE of the television programs CONTINUES as we watch through a glass pane --

A human hand and forearm covered by a protective rubber glove uses tongs to remove a fist-sized metallic hemisphere from a small kiln.

The hemisphere is carefully carried a couple of feet over to a suitcase-sized metal shell, opened to expose mechanical innards.

The hemisphere is fitted into place at one end of the mechanism's interior, directly facing an identical hemisphere already installed a foot apart from it, waiting patiently now for apocalyptic union with its twin.

Now we see the --

FACE OF THE SCIENTIST

Peering through the glass pane as he works.

He has long greasy hair, a ragged beard, and gaunt features. He's young. There's sweat seeping profusely from his forehead.

He's shaking almost imperceptibly, from something more than just his fear.

PULL BACK to see that he's working at a small brick enclosure in the middle of a grungy, closed garage. Metal-working machines stand by, and a makeshift living area with a cot.

Beside him a television set plays. Its screen is sectioned off into six different images from six separate channels -- the ones we first saw, and have heard all along.

He pulls his arms out of the rubber appendages. Something has caught his attention on the T.V. He reaches to push a button, and if we're perceptive we'll notice the junkie's mainlining marks on his forearms.

One of the images expands to fill the television screen, a newscast--

NEWSCASTER

-- whether in fact an amount of weapons-grade plutonium is actually missing or not. Unconfirmed reports say the amount is just over the "critical mass" needed to produce a nuclear explosion --

O.S. we HEAR the sound of a police helicopter getting louder. The Scientist looks up apprehensively.

EXT. THE GARAGE - NIGHT

The garage faces a narrow industrial/commercial back-street somewhere in Los Angeles. The heavily locked door is slashed with chicano street-gang symbols.

The helicopter hovers over us a moment, sweeping the street with its search light, then lifts off and away...

THE PURPLE NIGHT SKY

... Something eerie about it. It's the middle of the night but the purple sky is lighter than the dark grey clouds in front of it -- you'd swear you were looking at a negative image...

NEW ANGLE - THE SKY

The police 'copter crosses the same surreal backdrop.

It passes behind the bright sign of a gas station, and suddenly we are looking at --

A FACE - BOYD RUSSELL

-- as the 'copter's searchlight blasts him for a moment.

BOYD is a California blonde in his late twenties. He has the kind of face you'd call All-American. Probably was voted "Most Likely to Succeed" at his highschool graduation.

But a subtle difference shows up if you don't judge him right off. It's a restrained tension. And a slight asymmetry that's out of place on a face like his.

Boyd seems almost in a trance...

REVEAL that he is kneeling beside the gas pump and wearing the uniform of a gas station attendant -- not what you'd have expected from his looks. He clenches the gas nozzle in one hand...

REVEAL FURTHER that his other hand toys with an opened matchbook, full of nice fresh matches...

In the dim b.g. a door slams and we can make out the silhouette of an older man locking up for the night. He sees Boyd and calls to him as he walks off --

OLDER MAN

Boyd! Have a good weekend!

Boyd doesn't respond. Instead, we SEE a tear slide down his cheek ... There's a WHOOSH as --

An RTD Bus pulls up and OBLITERATES THE SCREEN with its bulk.

Pause, as diesel exhaust wafts by us...

The bus starts to lumber away again.

INT. RTD BUS - NIGHT

As East Hollywood passes by outside the windows. Boyd stares out his window from the very back of the bus. He looks more tense than before.

There are a few other late-night passengers on board, lost in their own worlds or just blanked out.

Above Boyd an anti-unclear bus billboard says: "WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF NUCLEAR WAR -- KISS THE CHILDREN GOODBYE."

The bus wheezes to a stop again. Two other passengers board. The bus pulls out.

Strutting toward Boyd is a runt of a Street HOOD with a ghetto-blasters stereo of questionable portability. He takes the seat directly in front of Boyd.

Following him comes a New Waver who looks like one of THE UNDEAD.

The Undead sits across from the hood. Boyd stares openly at him. He glowers back at Boyd from sunken dark-rimmed eyes like a vampire... until Boyd outstares him.

A beat, and then --

BLAST! from the stereo, teenage electro-pop at FULL VOLUME.

The other passengers flinch. And scowl, but not in the Hood's direction.

The Undead turns to the Hood in disgust --

THE UNDEAD  
(growls)  
Shut it off, shithead!

We see the busdriver glance back. The Hood is simply sneering at The Undead.

No change of expression from Boyd. But he's boring a hole in the back of the Hood's head in front of him.

The Undead rings for his stop. The bus stops and the Undead gets off. The bus resumes.

Tableau. MUSIC still BLASTING...

THE BUSDRIVER

He's about to turn around and maybe say something finally. But just then the MUSIC STOPS and he turns back, satisfied.

The passengers look relieved.

Now there's another ring and it's Boyd's turn to get off.

CUT TO:

THE BUS DEPOT

As the bus pulls in for the night.

INT. BUS - THE BUSDRIVER

Tired. Looks back at the Hood still sitting there.

BUSDRIVER  
End of the line, buddy.

No response. Dismayed, he checks his concealed handgun.

He edges down the isle toward the Hood.

The Busdriver is relieved to see that the Hood is just sleeping.

BUSDRIVER  
Hey -- end of the line.

Then shock --

THE HOOD

His windpipe is crushed. Strangled to death.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREET - BOYD - NIGHT

Boyd is still hyped by the adrenalin rush. He is wandering aimlessly because he simply can't stand still.

His twisted exhilaration soon fades and his expression returns to what is normal for him: a fight to suppress some terrible turmoil.

He starts to claw slowly at himself on different parts of his body. He doesn't seem to notice he's doing it, as if it's a familiar habit.

If we could feel his tension we'd know what it's like to be a walking time-bomb --

BOYD'S POV

MOVING through a horribly abrasive world. Sounds and images jar us, make us jump at the slightest thing.

Buildings, traffic, pedestrians, all seem to crowd in on us claustrophobically.

People seem to look at us from cold and alien eyes.

Sounds are loud and irritating. A passing truck is like sudden thunder. Screeching wheels like fingernails on a blackboard.

BOYD

He's really inflamed by his crawling skin. It takes a lot of will to stop from clawing at it and making it get worse. Fumes from a bus make him gag.

We STOP FOLLOWING him as he passes a storefront -- a gun store with an advertisement for a Survivalist Training Course.

Boyd recedes erratically into the night...

CUT TO:

A POLICE INVESTIGATOR'S BADGE

Being displayed in bright fluorescent light.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

JOHN HILLER, police investigator, holds out his badge for the RECEPTIONIST.

RECEPTIONIST

I wondered what those looked like.

Hiller, a heavy set man in his early forties, looks haggard and sluggish. This prime specimen of a man has seen much better days, and the clinical fluorescent lighting makes him look even worse.

He is munching on a "Twinkette" cake. He shoots the wrapper at the wastebasket but misses. He looks at it but doesn't move to pick it up.

RECEPTIONIST

(Into intercom)

Inspector Hiller is here.

HILLER

(Points to his badge,  
correcting her  
wearily --)

Investigator... that means  
"detective".

RECEPTIONIST

I see.

(She doesn't)

Go right in, Inspector.

Hiller opens the large oak office door, steps in and closes it behind him.

ON THE DOOR

HILLER (VOICE OVER)

I assume you've heard of the  
Friday Strangler. Weekly victims,  
mostly in Hollywood.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S COUCH - HILLER

And we're surprised to realize that Hiller is talking to his psychiatrist. All we see is Hiller on the couch. The psychiatrist remains remote offscreen.

HILLER (CONT'D)

Two months and all I've been able  
to come up with is a report that  
the guy was scratching himself...

(Free-associating)

...I feel just like all these  
dreams where I can only run in  
slow motion... This sluggish  
fatigue, never ending... This  
fogginess in my head... Everything  
catching up to me.

(A beat, realizing)

The guys don't even tell AIDS  
jokes around me anymore...

(Pause)

How can you be so sure my problem  
is -- what'd you call it --  
"psychosomatic"? Maybe there's  
no hidden meaning to it at all.  
Maybe I'm just burnt out. I'm a  
cop. You eyeball too many horrors  
and it gets to you.

(Beat)

I mean -- I've been coming here  
for almost a year. We find clues  
about unconscious fears and  
fantasies. But nothing fits  
together. No bells ring. No  
lights blink on. We should have  
found the solution by now.

PSYCHIATRIST'S VOICE

(After a pause,  
analyzing)

You want to solve the case. You play detective even in your own psychotherapy.

HILLER

What else can I say?

PSYCHIATRIST'S VOICE

Just say what comes to mind.

Hiller sighs. He's heard that a million times.

HILLER

(Finally)

Food. I read this article about food allergies. One guy's depression went away when he stopped eating eggs. They say some people have heavy-duty allergic reactions to everyday things. But their body adapts, like a drug addict, so they end up with what they call a "chronic syndrome" and they never know what's causing it.

(Looks over for a  
reaction, gets none)

You can identify an allergy to a food by avoiding the food for three weeks. When you eat it again you get a real dramatic reaction. So all you have to do is eat something like oatmeal for three weeks, then try regular foods again one at a time, see what happens.

PSYCHIATRIST'S VOICE

It sounds like you are avoiding responsibility for your problem. You are forgetting that a psychosomatic symptom can be a defense. You focus on treating the symptom instead of on your inner life.

HILLER

(Sighs)

I guess so... I guess so... I have to constantly suspect myself. Like there's somebody else inside my head pulling the strings. But, Christ, it's like being possessed, you know? What can I do, see an exorcist? Besides, you think everything is a defense. It's like a knee-jerk reaction from you. Why should I believe you? ...Why?

PSYCHIATRIST'S VOICE

(After a pause)

I get the sense that your intellect is racing feverishly to justify avoiding what you really feel.

Hiller sits up, thinking. He rises and paces the floor for a moment, then stops --

HILLER

(Resolved)

I don't care what the precinct says, I've had enough of this.

(Picks up coat)

I'm going to try this food test, and I'm going to deal with things myself.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Hiller plods toward the exit.

RECEPTIONIST'S RADIO (V.O.)

-- unhealthful air quality. Stay inside today --

Noise and blinding light spill in as Hiller opens the door and steps outside...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE GARAGE - NIGHT

A Chevy pulls up at the curb. Two men get out. Both are middle aged and rugged looking; one is tall and robust -- MAX; the other is short and weasely -- AMBROSE.

AMBROSE

Alphabet soup? What do you mean  
alphabet soup?

MAX

Alphabet soup -- A B C. Atomic,  
Biological, and Chemical warfare.  
Man, you've been out of the real  
world too long.

AMBROSE

-- Yeah, and you been off the  
Street too long.

INT. GARAGE

The atomic bomb sits shiny and new, ready for pickup.  
The T.V. monitor shows Max and Ambrose standing outside.

EXT. GARAGE - THE GUYS - NIGHT

There's a normal-sized door inset in the garage door. A  
peep hole in the door snaps open.

AMBROSE

Que pasa, bro?

A pause, then through the peephole the muzzle of an  
automatic assault rifle protrudes to meet Ambrose's grin.

MAX

(The password)  
"Ghetto Blaster."

That lets them in.

INT. GARAGE

The Scientist puts the rifle down and watches nervously as the  
two guys look around, impressed. All incriminating  
manufacturing evidence has been removed. They see the bomb and  
check it out.

MAX

(Wolf-whistle)  
Coy little bitch isn't she? But  
hot to trot.

The Scientist lowers the bomb into a carrying case.

Then he stands waiting, eyeing Ambrose. Ambrose casually hands him a large packet of white powder. The Scientist clutches it with pathetic desperation and moves toward his cot.

SCIENTIST  
Fucking mercenaries.

AMBROSE  
Hey -- the term is "civilian  
irregular defense soldier" --

MAX  
(To Ambrose)  
-- Come on. Let's make it.  
(He picks up the  
bomb)

EXT. GARAGE - MAX AND AMBROSE - NIGHT

As they open their trunk and lift the bomb case in. The simple case is locked with a simple combination padlock.

MAX  
(Flips the lock)  
High tech.

AMBROSE  
What does such a quiet little  
country want this for anyway?

Max pauses as he notices a buick approaching slowly.

Nothing suspicious. He closes the trunk.

MAX  
(Shrugs)  
Status symbol.

Looking back at the Buick -- two men aim silencers at Max --

MAX  
(Dropping behind  
Chevy)  
Contact!

-- SHOTS ricochet off the body and windows of the Chevy as Max and Ambrose get in from the other side. The bullets don't make a scratch.

The Chevy takes off laying rubber --

-- and almost collides with another Buick barreling at them from the other direction with a machinegun BLASTING --

The blasting mixes with a new sound as we

CUT TO:

INT. NEW WAVE DISCO CLUB - NIGHT

LOUD, SLOW beat...

Dark... Foreboding... Oppressive...

Depressive-psychotic -- that's the tone of the MUSIC and of the patrons in this place. The dancers move alone to the music as though each is in a morbid trance, as though the music is a stand-in for a heroin fix...

CUT TO:

INT. UNMARKED RADIO-CAR - NIGHT

As Hiller and his rookie partner, CARSON, pull up in front of the New Wave club. Carson is driving. Hiller looks beat.

CARSON

Last stop.

Carson eyes the club entrance, the weird looking patrons. Then he picks up a sheaf of papers -- they are copies of an artist's rendering of The Undead, the guy from the bus.

CARSON

Looks like his kind of place.

(He opens his door)

I can handle it.

But Hiller forces himself out too. He notices his shoe is undone... but at the moment it's too much extra hassle to even bend down and tie it up. He lumbers along with Carson.

INT. NEW WAVE CLUB

Lots of sidelong glances as Carson takes the sketch around. Lots of heads shaking when they look at it. Carson trying to shout over the heavy music...

Carson comes back full circle to Hiller. Hiller is leaning against a pole near a group of freaky characters -- he seems to be hypnotized by the morbid, trance-inducing beat...

This group reacts to Carson's sketch with the same head-shaking. Carson shrugs to Hiller and makes to leave --

HILLER

(To the group)

... If he does come in here, I suggest you all clear out and call us right away...

(A calculated pause  
as they wonder --)

There's a slight possibility this guy may have come into contact with that plague virus at the recombinant DNA lab down the block. From the accident with anthrococcus B-1.

Nervous looks around the group as Carson and Hiller turn to go...

INT. RADIO-CAR - HILLER AND CARSON - NIGHT

Carson holds up a note pad with an address --

CARSON

(Grinning)

Bingo! That was slick, Hiller.

He checks the address on his street map. Then he starts the hesitant engine. They pull out.

CUT TO:

EXT. DINGY FLOPHOUSE - NIGHT

As the detectives' car pulls up out front.

INT. CAR - HILLER AND CARSON

Carson looks at Hiller as the aging engine diesels to a halt. Hiller is sitting up straight, sound asleep.

Carson regards Hiller a moment with an expression that hints of affection and admiration...

CARSON

(Play-acting)

... Say, Hiller, tell us about how you caught the Hollywood Slasher in seventy-two...

(A beat, then he mimics Hiller's brusque voice)

Just routine and persistence, boys. No folk heroes in this department.

Carson gets out, slams his door, and walks around to the other side and smiles as Hiller snaps awake and gets out pretending he was never asleep.

HILLER

(Disoriented)

-- Right, so -- it's possible this guy is only a witness --

(Looks at sketch again)

But if he's really anything like this sketch...

(Lets the implication hang)

... jeezus, Carson, don't look so goddamn eager.

INT. A SHABBY ARTIST'S STUDIO - NIGHT

The undead stands holding a painter's airbrushing gun and listening to walkman headphones. He is staring grimly at a painting on an easel.

He looks extremely frustrated with his work. He tries more red airbrushing. No good. Hopeless. He growls and kicks at the easel. It crashes into the wall.

INT. HALLWAY

As Hiller and Carson approach the studio door and HEAR things thump and smash and someone snarling venomous obscenities.

They exchange looks. Hiller knocks hard. They wait but the noises continues.

Hiller knocks once more --

HILLER

Police officers!

No response. Carson is getting nervous. They take out their guns.

Hiller stands back, then with his full weight BOOTS open the door and covers for Carson who jumps right in, gun aimed --

CARSON

Freeze!

-- the hysterical Undead whirls on Carson wide-eyed and pointing the air-gun dripping red --

-- and on the flash of the "gun" pointed at Carson, Hiller

FIRES on The Undead --

The Undead recoils against the wall and then just stands there stiffly, in shock, shaking.

They approach him cautiously. He's got a shoulder wound.

Hiller sizes up his mistake.

HILLER

(Into his belt radio)

72, 447, get an ambulance to six  
one two Harper.

(Hesitates)

And the Shooting Team... Over.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREET - NIGHT

MACHINEGUN FIRE in the Saturday night traffic.

Sideswiping cars and running red lights, the Chevy tries to shake the two Buicks.

Chaos -- as cars pull over or try to escape over sidewalks. Drivers abandon their cars. Others sit terrified and paralyzed in growing traffic jams.

Ambrose's heavy BURSTS of automatic fire have riddled the Buicks with holes, knocked out windshields, and probably killed one or two of them, while the custom-reinforced Chevy remains strangely intact. But the Buicks are relentless.

The Chevy gets a good lead now -- until it almost collides with a police patrol-car blockade --

But the cops can only hide from the onslaught of machinegun fire --

Traffic near the action is squeezing in on itself. Claustrophobic faces peer out of windshields.

In an AERIAL SHOT the clogged traffic pushes in on itself from all sides and tries to push out from the center, like a piston compressing till the chamber explodes.

A stray bullet shatters a cafe window and the customers freak out.

INT. CHEVY

The pursuers are closing in again --

AMBROSE

-- jeezus, who's greenbacking those slicks? --

MAX

-- this is getting messy. We gotta ditch the bomb --

AMBROSE

-- How?

Max whips the car into a residential side street.

The Buicks are blocked for the moment --

MAX

I've got an idea.

CUT TO:

INT. ARTIST'S STUDIO - NIGHT

FLASHES pop as one detective takes polaroids. A second one pokes around, and a THIRD dusts off a thumb print and compares it to a photo of another thumbprint.

Hiller and Carson stand by.

THIRD DETECTIVE

(To Hiller, holding up the photo --)

The Strangler.

(Hiller nods)

Not even close, I'm afraid...

The detective regards Hiller a little suspiciously. Hiller takes it hard.

At the doorway, tenants gawk at the scene --

OLD LADY

What channel is it on?

Hiller shuts the door in her face.

CARSON

It was an honest mistake, Hiller. Could have happened to anyone.

HILLER  
Bullshit...

CARSON  
You'll be cleared.

HILLER  
(Nods, morose...)  
I'll be cleared... And you'll  
keep carrying this case for me...  
you'll keep covering for me...

CARSON  
(Quoting)  
"Resistance causes persistence."

HILLER  
(Grimacing)  
... you'll keep feeding me more of  
your New Age doubletalk.

This looks like an ongoing friction between them -- Carson  
hesitates, as though thinking of shutting up, but can't help  
himself --

CARSON  
But -- you really can create your  
own experience. Just take a stand  
--

HILLER  
(Covers his ears)  
Alright, alright, that's enough!  
(He pulls himself up  
tall and tough --)  
I am back in the saddle, as of  
now. Okay? Because I say so.  
(Looks truly  
determined)  
Just like I used to be. You have  
my word.

Carson beams at Hiller's declaration.

HILLER CONT'D  
Now let's go talk to this guy --

They leave the room, REVEALING behind them the painting, tipped  
and broken on its easel --

## THE PAINTING

A chilling vision of apocalyptic catastrophe. Sitting like an omen in this foreboding room, overlooking the city lights...

CUT TO:

## INT. THE SPEEDING CHEVY - NIGHT

Careening down a residential street -- Ambrose stares at Max as he drives --

AMBROSE

Your sister?

MAX

It's safe. She was an actress but she withdrew from the whole scene -- now she spends all her time at home alone. It's safe --

AMBROSE

-- what if she screws with it? --

AMBROSE

-- She's afraid to operate a toaster --

AMBROSE

-- curious friends --

MAX

-- she never has visitors --

They pull up to the curb. Max looks back -- clear. He hops out of the car --

AMBROSE

There could be fallout over this...

MAX

(Opening the trunk)

-- take the wheel and play decoy -  
-

AMBROSE

(To himself)

...pardon the expression.

The Chevy pulls away and Max lugs the bomb case from the car and up to the front porch of a squat little plain spanish-style duplex.

## LOUISE'S PORCH

Max sets the bomb behind a bush. He turns his coat inside out -- it becomes a new style and color. Then he rings the bell. We HEAR it inside.

No answer. He waits.

Rings again. Still no answer.

He's getting worried now, looking around, planning his next move. He reaches for the bomb case. We HEAR a telephone RING inside the house. Max hesitates. No second ring -- someone has answered it.

Ear to the door, he can hear a faint woman's VOICE in gossipy telephone conversation. He knocks.

The voice won't falter. He knocks again but no response. Max leans down to the mail slot and opens it --

MAX

Louise! Louise it's Max!

A pause. Finally --

LOUISE

Max I've told you I don't answer my door. You have to phone me.

MAX

It's important, I have to leave something with you.

A pause. A peep slot opens and we can see Louise's nose--

LOUISE

Just a minute, I have to get decent.

## INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE

Dark gloom.

Louise is in her mid thirties -- she has a gangly body reminiscent of Popeye's girlfriend Olive Oyle. Wearing long underwear, she shuffles out of the livingroom.

We get a good SURVEY of her living space. In the shuttered dark, heaps of junk clutter the floors and sparse furniture. Piles of dusty nicknacks. Piles of old newspapers and old socks. The entire floor is strewn with coupons that she has been cutting out of papers and magazines. It looks like the home of a bag lady.

Louise returns, dressed, and opens the --

LOUISE

Why do you have to leave anything here? It will disrupt my work.

MAX

I'm sure there's a place you can put it.

LOUISE

-- it may look messy but I know exactly where everything is. If things get moved around, I don't know, I have a lot of coupons to sort through today--

MAX

(Jumping on that angle --)

-- But that's just why I thought of you, Louise. This instrument is property of, uh, Procter and Gamble, and you'd be doing them a big favor. I can get you fifty double-coupons for helping out.

LOUISE

Really?

MAX

Maybe sixty.

LOUISE

(Thinks --)

Okay --

(Ushers Max in)

Max surveys her spooky mess...

MAX

(Under his breath)

Jeezus.

CUT TO:

MAX

putting the case in a corner beside a pile of scrap leather where she has cleared a place for him.

MAX

(Confiding)

Remember, this advice is a trade secret. So if anyone found out about it, well... I would never forgive myself.

LOUISE

Ma--ax, you don't have to talk like that. You look nervous. Give us a warm-fuzzy.

She hugs him and he hugs back reluctantly.

MAX

Got to run but I'll call soon.

SOMEONE'S POV

from within the dark hallway -- as Max peeks out the front door, then boldly walks out, waving goodbye.

Louise closes the door tight and returns to her coupons on the floor. She switches the television on for company and it lends a little light to the dark room -- on the television is a man being interviewed in silhouette to hide his identity --

MAN ON TV

-- I worked for the mafia for ten years. I know them. I know they now own half of the toxic waste disposal companies in America, and I know they are not disposing it.

The television CUTS TO shots of row upon row and pile after pile of corroded metal barrels on back-lots and abandoned property --

MAN ON TV (CONT'D)

The stuff is being stockpiled...

THE POV MOVES and there's a NOISE --

LOUISE

(Looking toward us)

Did you say something?

MAN ON TV

... and this problem is going to come to a head before we know it, just like all the other [BLEEP!] our civilization is creating. All I can say is God have mercy on our children...

Louise turns down the sound -- there's a man in the shadows of the hallway.

VOICE

I can't find my towel.

And just as he speaks his face hits the light --

It's Boyd.

Boyd...

LOUISE

Oh -- it's out here.

Boyd walks over in his underwear and picks up his towel.

BOYD

Who was that?

LOUISE

Max. My brother.

LOW ANGLE on Boyd as he stares oddly into space, clawing slowly and methodically at his arm. The corner of the bomb case can be seen in the f.g.

Boyd leaves.

We are left to contemplate the bomb sitting oh so quiet in its corner...

CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR ADILMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Psychiatrist GEOFFRY ADILMAN is in session with a patient. Primordial carvings surround him on his walls and thick smog fills the picture window behind him. He has a droopy, scruffy appearance in spite of his obvious professionalism. When speaking, as we'll see, he may suddenly getting caught on a word, struggling to get it out, a kind of stutter.

Reclined on Adilman's couch is Boyd. He is as tense as a cat ready to strike, but he's doing his best to be accommodating.

ADILMAN

... Do you itch right now?

BOYD

It's minor right now.

ADILMAN

What's the difference between  
itching minor and itching maa...  
major?

BOYD

(Hesitates, thinking)

Well... it's the difference  
between feeling twenty spiders  
crawling on your body and two  
hundred spiders crawling.

ADILMAN

You actually feel spiders crawling  
on your body?

BOYD

More like little things burrowing  
in.

ADILMAN

What do you do to r-relieve this  
itching?

BOYD

Ah... get drunk.

ADILMAN

That helps?

BOYD

If I get -- really drunk.

(Beat)

And that's it.

(Laughs cheerlessly)

Medications don't work. None of  
the treatments they've given me.  
There's nothing I can do.

ADILMAN

Doesn't it help to scratch?

BOYD

No, because it just aggravates it.  
I try to just sort of rub myself  
through my clothes and it helps a  
little...

ADILMAN

(A beat)

What do you think when you start itching really bad?

BOYD

I get -- It's like I want to fight back somehow, right? But I can't. It's not -- I feel really, really frustrated. All my energy is concentrated in fighting back at whatever it is. But there's no way.

ADILMAN

How do you cope with your life when you have this feeling?

BOYD

A lot of the time I just go through the motions, pretending I'm okay, and I'm basically all tensed up. I'm very close to not being able to cope at all. But I do what I have to do.

ADILMAN

How do you feel right at the point where you don't think you can cc...can cope at all?

BOYD

I feel really, really angry, and I feel really afraid of going crazy. I'm afraid of crossing that line.

ADILMAN

What do you think you would do if you crossed that line?

BOYD

Smash things. Break things. Kill people. Kill myself. Roll around on the floor screaming. Anything.

ADILMAN

Have you ever done things like that?

Boyd would rather not face that question.

ADILMAN (CONT'D)

Do you smash things?

BOYD

I know there's no point. There's no point in doing anything like that. Except killing myself of course. It's just a feeling that I have to do something!

ADILMAN

So it helps you to release physical energy when you're feeling that fru...sstrated?

BOYD

Yes. Yes, I think so.

Boyd looks sad. For a moment Adilman's expression betrays pity. He makes a note.

BOYD (CONT'D)

... I used to have a sense of humor, you know. I did. I came to Hollywood to be a comedian...  
(Looks regretful)

He looks about as far away from his goal now as he can get.

ADILMAN

Let's get back to your father's death -- How do you feel about it now?

Boyd breathes deeply, trying hard to relax.

BOYD

Nothing, it's just -- a memory...

ADILMAN

Take your time.

BOYD

I don't feel anything. He was auto-immune.

ADILMAN

P-pardon me?

BOYD

He was allergic to himself, that's how he died.

ADILMAN

You mean to say he had multiple sclerosis?

(Boyd nods)

Is that why you tried to get into medicine?

Boyd sits up in sudden irritation, unaware that he is resuming his insidious raking of his skin --

BOYD

-- I don't see how I can be making myself itch!

ADILMAN

Of course you wouldn't. As I've explained, that's exactly how repression works. Anxiety is converted into another diii..disorder that you can deal with.

(Beat)

In your case, anxiety makes you itch, instead of fight.

BOYD

(Jumps on that --)

-- So then why do I feel like fighting?

ADILMAN

That's a secondary reaction to the itching.

(Beat)

I believe that your obsession with your body, and your hyper...ssensitivity, is a diversion. A diversion to justify, let's say, not getting into medical school --

BOYD

(Desperate)

I still think it's something else! Something -- something in the air -- I've read even microwaves can affect you, you know -- it's everywhere I go! I'm telling you, I'm at the breaking point! It's reaching -- it's reaching a critical mass...!

ADILMAN

I understand how dif-dif..fficult  
this is for you, but as we agreed  
before, we must look at your  
problem as a case of psychosomatic  
neurosis.

Boyd doesn't seem to be listening anymore.

ADILMAN

(Looks at his watch)

I think we should schedule another  
session this w-week.

BOYD

(Withdrawn)

... why me... why me ...?

CUT TO:

INT. LOUISE'S LIVINGROOM - DAY

The bomb case...

INT. BOYD'S BEDROOM - DAY

Boyd sits on his bed, in his tiny, bare room, trying to  
meditate...

BOYD

(A slow mantra)

Ahh... Ihng... Ahh... Ihng...

Abruptly he stops his chant and claws at himself fiercely.  
Stops that just as abruptly and makes himself continue his  
mantra.

He is ludicrously trying to force himself to relax, and he's  
obviously far too tense and distracted.

The SOUND of heavy, insistent BASS from a stereo invades his  
room. His eyes snap open and he stares up at the ceiling with  
hate. Then closes his eyes and continues with more fervor.

His eyelids tighten and his teeth clench as he tries harder and  
harder to force the calmness of meditation to come over him.  
His mantra sounds more and more like a howl of rage --

KNOCK at his door -- Boyd jumps --

BOYD

What!

The door opens. It's Louise, all bubbly --

LOUISE

I was just talking to my psychic,  
and I thing I can get you a big  
audition --

Boyd just glares at her hotly --

LOUISE (CONT'D)

So cross your fingers --

BOYD

-- Shove it, Louise.

LOUISE

(Surprised)

-- What?

BOYD

I've had it with your bullshit,  
that's what -- I don't buy it  
anymore --

He gets up and moves toward her, scratching --

BOYD

-- How long did you think you  
could lead me on? Huh?

He backs her out into --

INT. LIVINGROOM

BOYD (CONT'D)

You tricked me into renting a room  
in this junkyard with all your  
talk about your big time  
connections. About how you could  
help me. And it's been nothing  
but talk for four months--!

LOUISE

(Indignant)

-- Connections have to be  
cultivated! I've been out of the  
party scene --

BOYD

-- you've been out of your mind!  
Or you're lying.

(His hands flex --)

Either way, I ought to --

He holds back... There's a car HONK outside.

                  LOUISE  
                  (Urgently)  
          Look --

She opens the front door. An older man in Mercedes waves back. She grabs her floppy hat and heart-shaped sunglasses and strides out --

                  LOUISE  
                  (Haughty)  
          I expect an apology when I return.

She walks to the street while the man gets out and opens the door for her. They are all gushy with each other.

Boyd watches them, smoldering. Louise has left the television on --

                  NEWSCASTER (ON TV)  
          -- insulation containing urea  
          formaldehyde.  
          (Beat)  
          Yet another revolution in computer  
          technology is the heralded "liquid  
          crystal memory" developed by Craig  
          Foster at New Horizons --

The picture CUTS to an interview with an eager young MBA graduate type, FOSTER --

Boyd tries not to scratch -- instead he strikes out at the infuriating piles of junk strewn about the house. He knocks brickabrack off the diningroom table, clearing a spot on the table top for probably the first time in years.

                  FOSTER (ON TV)  
          -- The reason for the rush is the  
          Japanese -- whoever can get this  
          stuff on the market first will  
          virtually control the computer  
          industry -- it makes present  
          technology look like the stone  
          age.

                  REPORTER (ON TV)  
          What about the allegations that  
          your process is putting  
          questionable chemicals into the  
          air --?

Boyd punches the television OFF. He begins pacing from room to room, agitated, not knowing what he might do next.

Then he notices --

Today's L.A. Times, untouched -- on the front page is a PHOTO OF MAX, whom Boyd had observed visiting briefly the other day. The headline reads:

UNDERWORLD 'BAGMAN' WANTED  
IN HOLLYWOOD SHOOTOUT

Boyd's eyes narrow.

He turns and looks toward the mysterious case deposited by Max.

He goes over and clears the junk away from it. He looks at it thoughtfully, flips the padlock. Then he goes to his room.

He returns with another padlock and compares them -- they match.

He leaves again and returns now with long bolt cutters. In a moment the lock snaps off.

Boyd opens the case and looks in at the mysterious device. There are no labels to indicate what it is; it's clearly bomb-like, and clearly "home-made".

There is a carrying handle. There is a timer dial. There is an on-off key switch.

The key itself is in the case, too.

Boyd lifts the bomb out. It's light enough for his strong arms to carry it easily by its handle.

He looks it over. Toys with it...

Then he notices a schematic diagram at the bottom of the case, with instructions and specifications --

-- and it's all he needs to know...

Boyd sits ramrod stiff in shock --

He knows what it is.

It can't be. But he knows what it is.

Shakily, he returns the bomb to its case, locks it, and puts it back the way it was.

Boyd sits very still, staring, breathing hard.

CUT TO:

## BOYD'S ROOM

He paces back and forth erratically, deep in thought.

He stops. Something really big is turning over in his head.

CUT TO:

## INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY

A table with opened books on nuclear weapons and nuclear proliferation.

## BOYD

searching the shelves as though his life depends on it, now selecting medical textbooks.

In his rigidly focused attention he does not even see the people who have to maneuver around him to get by.

CUT TO:

## BOYD AT HOME AGAIN

Poring over his medical texts obsessively. Writing reams of scrawling notes.

CUT TO:

## BOYD PACING

around his tiny room.

CUT TO:

## THE LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Louise looks up from the television as Boyd peers in.  
Just checking --

## THE BOMB CASE

It's still there.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE HOUSE - DAWN

Boyd's bedroom light still burns as the dark smoggy sky begins to lighten on a new grey day.

We can see Boyd still hunched over his material, entrenched in his madness...

CUT TO:

INT. ADILMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Boyd is on the couch again, deep in thought this time, tense and nervous...

BOYD

... I kept thinking... why me, why me? And then -- there was a sign... I saw the light and I realized -- I've been chosen...

(A pause. Adilman waits. Finally--)

"Gaia" -- Mother Earth -- that's what scientists are calling life on earth because the whole thing is alive. And civilization is a disease, poisoning Gaia. Life has become allergic to itself. Gaia must strike back to heal itself just like an immune reaction, fighting off the disease with antibodies. And that's what I am, you see? One of the antibodies. The "Human Antibody". I'm simply an -- an intermediary for this giant auto-immune disease...

ADILMAN

(Surprised and concerned)

Well naturally you like to see things in medical terms, but, uh, we must remain clear that this is only a mm...metaphor --

BOYD

-- Why else would it be building around me? Crawling over me. Compelling me to act. I have a role, you see.. It isn't just me anymore.

(Beat)

(MORE)

BOYD (CONT'D)  
 I'm afraid, but -- I'm afraid it's  
 too late...  
 (Looks for help)  
 Is it?

Adilman gives him a long look, then starts to write out a prescription.

ADILMAN  
 I may have something that will  
 help.

BOYD  
 What --?

ADILMAN  
 (Cautiously)  
 Kind of a trrrr-anquilizer, it --

-- Boyd reads it. The color drains from his face.

BOYD  
 Thorazine. I see. You think I'm  
 crazy.

Boyd takes a deep breath and shudders.

BOYD (CONT'D)  
 (Decisive)  
 That's it then. There's nothing  
 to stop it... No more choice...

Boyd looks strangely relieved; scared, but relieved. A weight has been lifted.

BOYD  
 ... only where... and when...

Adilman watches uneasily.

CUT TO:

INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE - DAY

BOYD'S FACE

Twisted with apprehension, poised at the abyss --

THE BOMB

In his hands.

## THE TIMER DIAL

Turning it to ZERO.

## THE KEYSWITCH

Inserting the key.

All it takes now is a quick twist...

## A "BULLOCKS" SHOPPING BAG

Is pulled up over the bomb.

## THE TRUNK OF BOYD'S CAR

As he lowers in the bomb with its shopping-bag cover.

## THE BOMB CASE

A huge rock is dropped into it. The new padlock is locked on.  
It goes back where it was.

## BOYD

Gets into his car. Compelled...

He pulls out a map of Los Angeles.

He pores over it, searching...

His finger slowly traces points of interest...

He stops. He can barely contain his fearful exhilaration,  
the terrible thrill of imminent release...

In the b.g. we SEE Louise getting dropped off by the guy with  
the Mercedes. She skips over toward Boyd --

## LOUISE

(Self-satisfied)

It's all arranged!

Boyd whirls on her sharply --

LOUISE (CONT'D)  
 Your big audition! This Friday--!  
                   (Alarmed at his  
                   expression)  
 What's the matter -- ? This is  
 your big break.

Boyd looks off-balance and confused at first -- torn -- but then, a strange nodding of his head... submitting to Fate...

CUT TO:

CLOSEUP - A CORPSE

The body of the junkie Scientist, laid out in the --

AUTOPSY LAB - DAY

Hiller and the PATHOLOGIST look down at it. The Pathologist removes his gloves.

                  PATHOLOGIST  
 A hot shot of smack. Horrible way  
 to go.

                  HILLER  
                   (Jaded and morbid)  
 Lost: one junkie with a PhD in  
 engineering physics...

Hiller looks numbly at the corpse...

                  PATHOLOGIST  
 Hungry?

A beat.

INT. CAFETERIA - HILLER AND PATHOLOGIST AT TABLE

                  PATHOLOGIST  
 I wish the woman I'm dating would  
 eat like that --

Hiller is eating unenthusiastically from a tupperware bowl of homemade oatmeal. He doesn't comment.

                  PATHOLOGIST  
 What are you doing investigating  
 dead junkies -- didn't the  
 shooting board clear you guys?

HILLER

They did. We've just drawn a  
black on the Strangler for now...  
Weird case... All we know is he  
scratches himself and he looks  
"All American".

(Beat)

And every week, another Friday  
creeps up...

CUT TO:

INT. MEN'S WASHROOM

Deserted except for Hiller. He's just washed his hands. He  
stands there now staring at himself in the mirror.

He just keeps staring. We MOVE IN on his FACE in the mirror...

Slowly, he raises his hand, touches his face, and then, on  
impulse -- SLAPS his face, hard.

He keeps staring, searching for something.

CUT TO:

INT. A LARGE THEATRE - DAY

Looking from the stage, down onto a small front-row audience --  
a PRODUCER, a STAGE MANAGER, assistants, groupies.

They frown politely, clear their throats in distaste, or  
whisper disdainful asides, as we HEAR BOYD SPEAKING, doing a  
routine -- and AS THE CAMERA HAS BEEN MOVING STEADILY TOWARD  
REVEALING Boyd on stage --

BOYD (O.S.)

... So everyone is afraid of the  
Soviets and their nuclear weapons,  
right...?

...REVEAL Boyd's legs from behind, astride over the audience --  
and most significantly, on the floor beside the microphone  
stand: the bomb, in its shopping bag...

BOYD (CONT'D)

But what are we really afraid of?  
We're afraid of them having  
control over us, that's what.

FULL SHOT - BOYD ON STAGE

BOYD (CONT'D)

But what's the problem? There's a simple way to remove the threat -- bomb ourselves! Then we're in control!

(Imitating a radical fanatic)

WE MUST TURN OUR NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON OURSELVES BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

(He waits for the laughs that don't come)

I mean seriously -- can any of you give an logical reason why we should keep living? Heh, heh -- of course not.

(Points to a woman who seems to be mocking him)

Hey you -- I bet you think there is a reason, don't you? Well that just shows what an idiot you are, All the more reason to push the button don't you think? In fact -- I volunteer to do it. You think that's dumb huh? Well how do you know I don't have an atom bomb in this bag right now --!

Boyd lunges for the bag as if to turn it on -- but he stops, and turns back and chuckles slyly. All they can see is the Bullock's bag.

BOYD

(Indicating the bag)

Nuclear proliferation is all the rage these days, after all...

(A pause...)

Speaking of the Russians. I hear they have a plan to humiliate the Americans when they take over the world. They will force us to paint all of our cars red. So I figure in the future, then, when an astronaut out there in space meets friendly Aliens from another galaxy and he wants to direct them to planet Earth, he can just say -- "It's the one wearing the red car nation..."

He gets maybe one snicker on that one.

BOYD

Hey look -- you're not laughing  
'cause you don't really believe I  
have an atom bomb in this bag,  
right?

(Playfully  
reprimanding)

But I do -- so you better start  
laughing! Come on now...

A couple of derisive titters...

BOYD (CONT'D)

Anybody can be a comedian with the  
right leverage, right?

The Producer isn't even paying attention -- he's looking over  
some notes and whispering to his SECRETARY, joking between  
themselves. Boyd notices and starts to rake at his arms  
again...

BOYD

If you'll just try and appreciate  
me I won't have to BLOW YOU UP--!

The Producer finally looks at boyd --

PRODUCER

Okay that's fine thank you -- !  
(To his Secretary)  
Who's next? I'm taking a leak...  
(He gets up --)

CUT TO:

NEW ANGLE - SIDE OF THE STAGE

Now the Producer is talking with the Stage Manager. They  
both look overworked.

MANAGER

Who was that last guy? I missed  
it.

PRODUCER

(Rolls his eyes)  
A companion of the indomitable  
Louise...

MANAGER

Louise?

The back of Boyd's head ENTERS FRAME in the f.g., eavesdropping  
right behind them.

PRODUCER  
 You know, the dippy broad who  
 thinks she's --

MANAGER  
 -- oh, God, yeah...

PRODUCER  
 (Sighs)  
 Well, he's auditioned. I hope  
 that gets her off my back.

MANAGER  
 Any good?

PRODUCER  
 You think I was paying attention?  
 That was the closest I'm going to  
 get to a coffee break today.

Suddenly the Manager notices Boyd --

MANAGER  
 Oh -- can I help you?

PRODUCER  
 (Caught with his  
 pants down)  
 Oh, hi. What's, uh... in the bag?

The back of Boyd's head moves off screen again, without a  
 response... The Producer and Manager exchange looks till the  
 Secretary arrives with a GIRL --

SECRETARY  
 This is Maggie Thompson --

GIRL  
 (Nervous as hell)  
 Listen I really do have to go to  
 the bathroom again, I'm sorry, I  
 really do --

PRODUCER  
 (Paternal)  
 It'll be alright, Maggie --

He walks her downstage center and sits with her in front of the  
 curtain.

PRODUCER

Why don't you just warm up by  
telling me a little about yourself  
first. Just forget about the  
audition for the moment...

GIRL

Okay... Um...

There's a THUMP close behind them. It startles her --

PRODUCER

(Calling through the  
curtain)

No working back there, we're  
auditioning!

(To Girl)

Go on...

BOYD'S FACE

Behind the curtain, back stage. He shakes with a terrible  
anticipation.

We PULL BACK a little, and we see that he is kneeling beside  
his atomic bomb, gripping the detonator key, ready to turn  
it...

Ready to turn it...

And we just keep PULLING BACK and UP, away from the curtain and  
up into the high fly gallery, looking back down at the crouched  
figure of Boyd, a speck against the solid wall of curtain...

EXT. THE THEATRE - DAY

As the world goes about its business.

A FLASH OF MOVEMENT --

BOYD'S HAND

tearing itself away from the detonator.

BOYD

leaps up, anguished and confused, and charges out toward the  
exit, carrying the bomb. A beat and then --

CUT TO:

INT. A SMALL NAUTILUS GYM -DAY

VARIOUS ANGLES of the aggressive up-and-down, back-and-forth impulses of the Nautilus weights and levers --

BOYD'S POV --

Other people working out, seen through the heaving, slashing rhythm of his machine. The whole effect has a compressed, claustrophobic feeling.

BOYD

Exerts himself to the maximum, channeling his rage into the machine, groaning with the strain.

A GUY

Gives Boyd a sidelong glance as Boyd dismounts the biceps machine and goes to the pullover machine.

On the pullover machine -- the exertion only makes him feel worse and worse because as he heats up, his skin acts up more.

Scratching himself in frustration he happens to notice, across the way --

The Guy seems to be watching Boyd. Boyd stops scratching and goes to another machine.

The symptom is getting worse and worse and Boyd is getting steadily more stiff and expressionless as he tries to claw at himself discretely. Again he sees the Guy looking at him. Boyd moves away...

INT. A SIDE ROOM

We can see the Nautilus gym back through the doorway, next to a poster for a self-defense course. This dimly-lit side room is for the few people who like to use free-weights.

Boyd walks in, out of sight of the others, and starts to tear violently at his crotch, which he was too embarrassed to do before.

GUY'S VOICE

Medications don't work, I bet.

Boyd is startled --

BOYD'S POV - THE GUY

The Guy is setting new weights on the bench-press barbell.

He seems to be a friendly nebish. We are ON THE GUY ONLY as he talks --

GUY

I had the same thing once. Turned out it was caused by stress. A lot of things are, you know. You'd be surprised. Nothing to be ashamed of either. I discovered the main thing is just to relax. Working out is good for that.

He stretches out on the couch --

GUY (CONT'D)

You can learn a lot about yourself from the experience.

(He lowers the barbell, chuckles)

Boy was I surprised to find out--

(He presses the barbell up again --)

-- it was all in my head...

BOYD'S HANDS

Squeezing hard on a pair of "grip-extendors".

BOYD'S POV --

The Guy can't quite push it up onto the rests. It's a scary thing when that happens to you.

MAN

(Gasping)

Thanks --

Boyd's hands grab the bar and help him push the weight all the way up. Almost all the way...

... the Guy's arms start to shake -- Boyd is pushing down now.

The guy looks alarmed, then terrified as he strains with all his remaining strength to hold it up against Boyd's constant pressure -- the bar moves slowly, relentlessly --

-- down...

BOYD

Looks gratified as we HEAR O.S. a horrible drawn-out CRUNCH and GURGLING.

Silence. Boyd lifts the bar and places it neatly on the rests. Then quickly flees out the back door and into the alley...

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Through the noisy chaos of the station we get a GLIMPSE of a television set on one of the desks showing something about a two-headed calf in a small town evacuated due to insecticide poisoning; and then it cuts to a new shot of the Protester chained to the front door of the factory called New Horizons, Ltd -- On-the-Spot REPORTER: "Week after week, rain or shine, that sounds like a lonely vigil --"

-- A pair of young detectives nicknamed HECK AND JECKLE pass by --

HECK

Look at this crime report --  
criminals popping out of the  
goddamn woodwork --

JECKLE

-- must be something in the air --  
(Surprised to see  
HILLER APPROACHING  
with a spry step --)  
Hey, Hiller, you're looking good--  
(He really is)  
-- Been slacking off or something?

Hiller swings into his seat at his desk nearby --

HECK

(Ribbing him)  
-- Or maybe Reverend Carson has  
finally shown you the light, huh?

HILLER

(A beat)  
-- For your information, Carson  
and his "positive thinking" have  
put more murderers behind bars  
than both of you two alcoholics  
combined.

Hiller sifts through some papers and Heck and Jeckle pass on. He puts the papers aside as he sees Carson arrive with a lunch bag.

Hiller watches Carson with a curious respect.

CARSON

(Cheery)

Morning. Well -- will you look at you, huh? What did I tell you -- when a man really takes a positive stand on himself he can do anything --

HILLER

(Groans)

-- No sermons on an empty stomach, huh?

(Beat)

Tell it to the Strangler.

It's unstated, but they smile at each other and we sense maybe Hiller has started to take Carson seriously.

Carson opens his Big Mac and bites into it with gusto.

Hiller opens his container of porridge and makes a face.

A DESK COP appears and slaps a slip of paper onto Hiller's desk, looking grim --

DESK COP

Another strike, Hiller.

HILLER

(Frowning and getting up)

And I was worried he might be slipping...

They pass by the television again, which is just topping off the protester's live interview with a shot of the factory smoke stack spewing its fumes.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SMALL NAUTILUS GYM - DAY

People cluster around the perimeter, fenced out as Uniform Cops stretch out a thin yellow ribbon around this building and parking lot. Printing on the ribbon reads "-- scene of crime - - do not enter -- "

Beside the building several young men are being questioned by the Uniform Cops. Most of them are Californian all-American jocks, like Boyd.

INT. FREEWEIGHT ROOM

Camera lights flash at the gruesome sight of the dead Guy on the bench press. Several Uniform Cops turn toward Hiller and Carson as they enter.

Hiller looks in dismay at the body. The dumpy ranking officer, KRANTZ, turns to Hiller --

KRANTZ

Well if it aint Batman and Robin.

HILLER

Con safos, Krantz. I see you finally made lieutenant, you think it was a computer error, maybe?

KRANTZ

Careful, Hiller, you owe me one.

HILLER

Cut me some slack, shmucko.  
Run it down.

KRANTZ

(Shrugs)  
What do I know? I'm no macher like you.  
(Points--)  
There's the Manager --

During this exchange Carson appears to be engaging in a similar chafing ritual with another Uniform Cop, and it seems to lighten the tension for them all --

Hiller talks with the Manager, a well-groomed, huge Charles ATLAS --

ATLAS

(Shaking)  
No, the back door doesn't open from the outside.

Atlas can't help looking over at the body, and he looks like he's going to faint.

HILLER

And no one saw any strangers enter the front way.

ATLAS  
 (Reluctantly)  
 Only members...

Carson and another YOUNG DETECTIVE dust down the machinery for prints.

Someone appears in the b.g. behind Hiller. It almost looks like... it is -- it's Boyd.

Boyd just stands there at the doorway, watching. He has changed back to his street clothes. Lt. Krantz sees him --

KRANTZ  
 Hey! Can't you read!

BOYD  
 I need a workout. I won't get in your way.

KRANTZ  
 (To another cop)  
 Shit, some people --

INT./EXT. AT THE DOORWAY

KRANTZ  
 (To Boyd)  
 Let me see your identification,  
 and then get outside the ribbon.

Krantz looks over Boyd's ID and writes it all down.

Hiller passes with Carson and the Young Detective -- he stops shoulder-to-shoulder with Boyd --

YOUNG DETECTIVE  
 You mean to say the killer is affected by some psychological wound too great for him to overcome?

HILLER  
 I mean he doesn't have the guts to overcome it.

Hiller flashes a slight meaningful smile to Carson, who catches it and smiles back.

Boyd wants to argue when he hears this, but holds himself back.

Boyd and Hiller stare each other in the eye for a moment.

Atlas notices Boyd now, does a double take -- like didn't he already see this guy today -- then considering that Boyd is just arriving, he shines it on and walks away.

HILLER  
 (To Krantz)  
 Try sweating everyone on the sign-  
 in sheet. You'll have to do  
 without warrants, though. And  
 print everybody. We may have  
 something from the barbell.

Hiller moves away and boyd starts to hurry off --

KRANTZ  
 (To Boyd)  
 Hold it.

Boyd freezes.

KRANTZ  
 We need your fingerprints. Will  
 you come this way please?

BOYD  
 (Thinks for a beat)  
 Am I under arrest?

KRANTZ  
 (Reluctantly)  
 No.

BOYD  
 Then I'm free to go.

Krantz looks pissed. He shrugs him off as Boyd walks away...

HILLER AND CARSON

Leave the scene now... They pass one of the MEMBERS who waits nearby with a newspaper dangling in his hand.

MEMBER  
 (Indicating the  
 murder)  
 I just can't believe this. I mean  
 it's absurd...

Hiller notices the HEADLINE on the Member's newspaper:

"PLUTONIUM CONFIRMED MISSING"

HILLER  
 (To Member, pointing  
 to the headline--)  
 Just be thankful he's not the one  
 building a nuclear bomb --

CARSON  
 Jeezus, Hiller, with an  
 imagination like yours, who needs  
 nightmares?

Hiller and Carson head for their car as Boyd's car drives off  
 in the b.g.

HILLER  
 A week today is a big occasion.

CARSON  
 What?

HILLER  
 The thirteenth...

CUT TO:

INT. ADILMAN'S RECEPTION OFFICE - DAY

"FRIDAY 13" -- that's what it says in bold letters on the  
 Receptionist's calendar.

The Receptionist looks up and smiles at someone --

RECEPTIONIST  
 You can go in now.

INT. ADILMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

ADILMAN  
 Hello, Boyd.

EXT. THE OFFICE WINDOW - LOOKING IN

Looking in from outside the steel-and-plexiglass office tower,  
 we can SEE Boyd facing Adilman inside the dark office.

A bird flutters INTO VIEW, all covered with oil and unable to  
 fly properly. It tumbles downward and we --

FOLLOW THE BIRD, tracking slowly down story after story,  
 catching glimpses of people in other offices below Adilman's...

The bird plummets down ahead of us now. We KEEP DESCENDING to the sidewalk, coming to a cushioned STOP to see the bird lying on the pavement right in front of --

BOYD'S CAR

...MOVE IN to take a look at the back seat.

On the floor of the car is the bomb.

THE BOMB TIMER

The bomb is TURNED ON and the timer is going.

There is FIFTY-FIVE MINUTES LEFT until detonation...

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - HILLER'S DESK - DAY

Hiller hangs up the phone and finishes jotting down a note, his eyes gleaming with inspiration. Carson arrives with an armful of file folders and starts placing them down one at a time --

CARSON

... nothing, nothing, nothing,  
nothing...

(Then finally down to  
a handful --)

And these five refused prints, but  
two have alibis, two are women,  
and one was just arriving for a  
workout when we got there.

HILLER

Listen, I just checked something  
out. I got references to a couple  
of psychiatrists that specialize  
in psychosomatic disorders --

CARSON

-- Psycho what?

HILLER

Like they told me I had. Remember  
he was itching? He could be  
seeing a shrink just like I did.

(Rises to go)

Let's see if we can seduce a  
secretary into dropping his name.  
Pretend we know him --

CARSON

(Holds up another  
slip of paper)

Can't -- we're on call and this  
domestic shooting just came in.

HILLER

Can you handle it? I'll try  
anything to stop another Friday  
killing.

CARSON

Sure, no problem. Go grasp at a  
few straws.

Heck and Jeckle sit at adjacent desks. Heck looks half dead  
from overwork and lack of sleep, while Jeckle is out to lunch  
completely, face down on his desk. On his small television set  
we get a glimpse again of Foster, the young industrialist--

HECK

Twenty three minutes till they  
spring us, but who's counting.

Heck watches Hiller's unbounded new energy. After he passes --

HECK (CONT'D)

Hows about slipping me a little of  
whatever you're taking, huh,  
Hiller...

Hiller exits frame and we're left with Heck's TELEVISION--

FOSTER (ON TV)

(Continuing his  
interview)

... one study means nothing.  
Until the EPA has done its own  
tests, we are free to continue the  
emissions. I'm sure their tests  
will show no cause for alarm, and  
besides, no one in their right  
mind would shut down our  
operations now -- we're ushering  
in a new Age here --

CUT TO:

INT. ADILMAN'S OFFICE - FULL SHOT - ADILMAN AND BOYD

On the analyst's couch, Boyd lies in peaceful repose, not  
scratching.

BOYD  
I never thought the end would feel  
so...peaceful.

ADILMAN  
(After a long pause)  
The end of what?

BOYD  
(After a moment)  
The end of the disease. Death,  
the great cure-all.  
(He looks over at  
Adilman's perplexed  
expression)  
Those other times, when it would  
build to such a compelling need,  
it simply wasn't the right time.  
Those times I had to release  
myself on mere individuals. But  
now here we are, Doc. This time  
it's "out of my hands"--

Boyd chortles nervously at his private joke.

He looks at his watch.

INSERT - THE BOMB TIME: TWELVE MINUTES LEFT.

Now Boyd starts to sober. He breathes more heavily.  
He's not saying anything...

ADILMAN  
Boyd --

BOYD  
(Exploding)  
-- The world has made me its  
martyr, and when you crucify me  
you go to hell with me!

Boyd's mood is turning to despair now. He's getting agitated.  
Starting to scratch.

BOYD  
(Sad)  
... I never even got to see  
Richard Pryor...

A long pause in reverie...

Boyd suddenly sits up straight --

BOYD

Wait a minute. Wait a minute.  
I want to call my mother.

He moves toward Adilman's phone -- Adilman puts his hand over it --

ADILMAN

-- why don't we taa-alk about it  
first--

Boyd knocks Adilman's hand away. He nervously dials the number. It rings.

He looks at this watch --

CUT TO:

THE BOMB TIMER

Eight minutes.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - HILLER - DAY

In a telephoto shot Hiller strides towards us, checking the address. The background is brought up close behind him by this perspective and we can clearly SEE the distant New Horizons factory. There is no smoke from its chimney today.

CUT TO:

INT. ADILMAN'S OFFICE AGAIN

As Boyd waits for the phone to be answered.

BOYD

...She never understood me...

Long wait and still no answer.

Boyd reluctantly sits down again -- but springs up immediately and begins pacing -- feverish --

BOYD

It doesn't... it's not...  
It doesn't feel the same today!  
(Furious)  
Goddamnit, the timing is wrong!  
How can that be!

His muscles are knotted and he's sweating.

A change of heart. He glances at this watch again and suddenly bolts for the door -- Adilman starts to protest -- Boyd vanishes out the door -- Adilman sits back, looking impotent.

CUT TO:

THE BOMB TIMER

Two minutes...

CUT TO:

INT. AT THE ELEVATORS - BOYD

As he waits, sweating it...

You'd think the elevators were all out of order... nothing's happening...

Boyd looks over to the exit stairs. Just as he is about to go for them, an elevator opens. Boyd rushes into it.

It doesn't close. Again, all is still. Is it malfunctioning? What's happening?

It's still not closing, even as he pushes at the CLOSE DOOR button.

Finally, the elevator doors begin to ease together.

But just as they are about to shut a Businessman rushes up and forces them to open again.

The man steps in and smiles. Pushes for a floor.

Again we have to wait for the long delay before the door will do its closing act...

Finally, again, the door closes. We see another person running to catch it -- but they don't make it. Relief.

The elevator starts to move -- but it's moving up!

Boyd watches the numbers rise. The Business man is getting uncomfortable himself just looking at Boyd.

Boyd stabs a floor button. The elevator slows to a halt. The doors open.

Boyd races for the exit stairs --

EXT. THE STREET - BOYD'S CAR AND HILLER

Hiller approaches Boyd's parked car. He identifies Adilman's building just as he notices Boyd, wild-eyed, emerging from the entrance and hurrying toward the car. Hiller has seen this guy before.

HILLER'S POV

Boyd fumbles desperately with his car keys as he nears the car. In his haste he drops the keys. Having to turn back and fetch the keys pushes him over his limit and he stops, enraged, suddenly provoked into a frenzy of clawing at his body as if he were under siege by a swarm of insects.

HILLER

Realizing. Bursting into a run --

HILLER  
Police! Hold it right there!

AT THE CAR

Boyd is startled, starts to flee, suddenly reverses and lunges for the keys, scoops them up and races around the back of the car toward the street side as Hiller on the sidewalk side pulls his gun and aims with both hands over the top of the car --

HILLER  
(Aiming straight in  
Boyd's face)  
Hands on your head!

Boyd flings the back door open and lunges inside.

HILLER'S POV - THE BACK SEAT

As Boyd switches off the keyswitch. There is so little time left on the timer dial that you can't even tell how much. Boyd is shaky and nauseous.

Hiller scrambles around to the street side but Boyd has leaped out and rocketed across the street, cars screeching their brakes to avoid him.

THE STREET

Declining to shoot, Hiller sprints after Boyd.

Across the street a woman is arguing with a meter maid. She has left a baby carriage unattended at the mouth of an alleyway.

Hiller gains on Boyd. Boyd darts toward the carriage, snatches out the baby, and runs with it into the alley, putting on a new burst of speed.

Now Boyd whirls around as he runs and heaves the baby up into the air toward Hiller --

-- Hiller springs instinctively and catches the tumbling baby. Startled and dismayed he turns back, quickly deposits the baby in its carriage as the mother reacts in horror, and resumes the chase. But by now Boyd is out of sight where this alley deadends at the intersection with another alley. Arriving at the intersection, Hiller makes a choice and follows the lefthand branch...

Emerging onto the bright sidewalk -- Hiller has lost Boyd. His expression is pained. Then, remembering something, he dashes off through the pedestrians.

WHERE THE CAR WAS

Hiller rounds the corner in front of Adilman's building to find that Boyd's car is now gone.

But the resolve has not left Hiller's face. He heads with determination into the building entrance.

CUT TO:

INT. ADILMAN'S RECEPTION OFFICE

The Receptionist is startled by Hiller --

HILLER

(Leaning toward her)

Did you just have a patient in here who scratches himself all the time? Late twenties, blonde, real tense --

RECEPTIONIST

(Off guard)

-- uh, yeah --

HILLER

(Displaying badge)

-- LAPD Homicide. What is his name please?

RECEPTIONIST

Um. Um. I think you have to have  
a search warrant.

HILLER

I'm only asking his name .

Flustered, she rummages through some papers. She finds one and  
scans it hesitantly.

Sitting on the waiting-chair is a frail man who suffers from  
panic attacks. This intrusion is unnerving him.

RECEPTIONIST

The College of Physicians and  
Surgeons requires that we receive,  
uh, a "notice of motion" from the  
court in order to release  
information.

Hiller strides to Adilman's door and opens it --

RECEPTIONIST

Hey -- you gotta go through me!

The nervous patient can't take it. He flees the office.

RECEPTIONIST

(calling after him)

Mr. Camden come back!

INT. ADILMAN'S OFFICE

Hiller faces Adilman from across the room.

HILLER

If you have reason to suspect a  
patient is about to commit a  
murder, you are obliged to report  
him, isn't that correct?

ADILMAN

(Cautious)

Yes.

HILLER

Have you heard of the Friday  
Strangler?

CLOSEUP ADILMAN

Suddenly stunned. Beginning to realize. A tableau as we wait  
for his response, and then --

ADILMAN  
 Boyd. It's Boyd Rrr...Russell.

CUT TO:

INT. LOUISE'S LIVINGROOM - DAY

On Boyd, sitting and staring. He looks tortured and totally unpredictable. Louise enters, senses he needs comforting, leans over and gives him one of her warm-fuzzy hugs.

Hold for a moment, as Boyd's thumb strokes her neck...

CUT TO:

EXT. LOUISE'S HOUSE - DAY

All is still...

ALL AROUND THE HOUSE AND STREET

A squad of heavily armed policemen quietly spread out and find concealed positions.

HILLER'S CAR NEARBY

Carson sits inside listening to the police-radio and watching Hiller pace back and forth outside the car, looking more sure of himself than ever. It's such a sweltering day that neither of them wear their jackets to cover their guns.

Hiller pauses, leans against the car, tries to be patient.

He sees that Carson is listening closely to the radio, starting to smile, responding over the microphone, and finally looking up at Hiller and giving the thumbs up.

Hiller's habitually hardened look can't conceal his exhilaration. This is it -- they're going to nail the bastard.

Hiller and Carson head for the front door of the house.

Carson covers Hiller as he rings the bell and waits, hand on his gun.

No answer.

Hiller takes out his tools of the trade and quietly picks the various locks...

Then he brandishes his gun as several Uniform Cops gather behind them.

Hiller throws the door open and springs in --

INT. HOUSE

Hiller and Carson search stealthily, on guard. The Uniform Cops slip in behind them and spread out to other rooms.

Hiller arrives at Louise's open bedroom and sees her from behind, slumped awkwardly, neck lolling to the side -- he vaults a pile of junk and rushes to her in dread --

She SCREAMS and drops the phone she'd been talking on --

HILLER

(Relieved)

Police, ma'am. We have a search warrant.

(Holds out his badge)

LOUISE

These are my things! I trade them!

Hiller backs up and Louise jumps under the covers of her bed, which is strewn with five-and-dime nicknacks.

HILLER

(Scrutinizing the scenery)

Relax -- we're not from the sanitation department.

(Beat)

But in the sanity department your housemate has left a lot to be desired. Where is he?

LOUISE

I.. he said he was going to Venice beach.

HILLER

What for?

LOUISE

Something about... "isolating the lesion"? ... You see, he sees things that we don't...

COPS

Looking through all the stuff in Boyd's room meticulously.

Shining flashlights into murky corners.

Making faces at the state of the place.

Opening the bomb case and pondering over the large rock inside.

Nodding in affirmation as they make a positive fingerprint match --

HILLER

--Got it --

(To a detective)

-- Put out the APB will you. Then join us at the beach with as much backup as you can get.

EXT. HOUSE

Hiller and Carson pull out in their car and drive off.

DOWN THE STREET

They pass a Cadillac that's heading in the direction of the house rather slowly.

THE CADILLAC

It's Max and Ambrose.

They drive up in view of the house. They see the commotion around it and pull over apprehensively.

They see the patrol car. They see the ghost cars. They see two cops come out of Louise's house with the empty bomb case.

The two mercenaries are really sweating it...

Ambrose gets out of the air-conditioned car, straightens his suit, pulls out fake press ID, and heads for the cops. One of the cops gives him a few clipped words --

COP (DISTANT)

-- Strangler --

Then he can't get any more out of him. The cop waves him on.

Ambrose gets out of sight of the cop and maneuvers to where he sees Louise watching out of her bedroom window at the side of the house.

Louise gives Ambrose some tentative answers. He thanks her and makes for the Cadillac --

Ambrose gets back in. He says nothing to Max. Just sits and stares at him, all the life draining from his face...

CUT TO:

INT. CADILLAC- MOVING ON THE FREEWAY - DAY

Ambrose is stunned. Max drives.

MAX

It's a hell of a world when a  
a psychopathic killer can get  
ahold of an atom bomb...

They continue in silence.

CUT TO:

EXT. VENICE SIDE STREET

Hiller's car pulls up. The two of them get out, ready for the hunt.

In the b.g. we can see other plainclothes men arrive and disperse.

Carson looks dubious but Hiller looks quietly assured.

EXT. VENICE BOARDWALK - DAY

The sun beats down on the boardwalk crowded with virtually naked, tanned bodies. The bodies of tourists, beach bums, voyeurs from the Valley, struggling artists, army reservists, and junkies.

Flashy rollerskaters weave precariously through the crowd with their walkman headphones on.

It's a real scorcher today, even at the seaside, because of the heavy smog inversion.

We follow a couple of TOURISTS into a tavern --

INT. TAVERN

As they step into the dark and crowded recesses.

TOURIST

Thank God for air conditioning.

They move out of view and we see --

SLAP! a pretty girl slaps someone at a table and walks away furiously, mumbling "creep" as she passes by us.

Behind her at the table we see the creep is Boyd. He stares angrily after her.

CLOSEUP UNDER THE TABLE

His sinuous hand caresses the nuclear bomb...

EXT. BOARDWALK - MAX

Hunting his prey. And wishing he didn't have to wear his jacket to conceal his bulky weapons.

EXT. HOTDOG STAND - AMBROSE

Wondering where to look next, and not even close to noticing that he is pouring with sweat under his jacket.

EXT SHORELINE - A GUNMAN

Backup to max and Ambrose.

EXT. STREET. - A SECOND GUNMAN ALSO

EXT. ALLEYWAY - BOYD

Watching the people pass on the boardwalk... hating them... itching.. sweating... smoldering...

BEHIND HIM

Max spots him. He approaches Boyd nervously, carefully.

He screws on his silencer and gets up close --

Boyd sees and recognizes Max and reacts instantly -- he drops the shopping bag from the bomb and grabs the key switch, clearly ready and willing to set it off if there's any false move.

Max backs off fast. This is touchy. This is scary as hell...

Boyd flees into the crowd.

BOYD'S POV - IN THE CROWD

Enhancing the feeling of claustrophobic, scorching, noisy, jarring, jostling, helpless hell.

A few people look at him uncomfortably, at the menacing way he's clawing at himself. Some look curiously at the bomb.

A couple of kids are playing with firecrackers. Boyd jumps each time one goes off. One goes BANG right beside him and he jerks in fear and rage, hand on the switch again, looking frantically for the Gunman. But they are nowhere in sight. Maybe he has eluded them. Now he just wants to get out of here.

The boardwalk traffic is blocked by some demonstrators -- some Canadians protesting American-made acid rain falling on their country.

The crowd is pressing in now from all sides and Boyd can't make his way out.

The demonstration spills over onto the sand and disrupts a volleyball game. The jocks are pissed off.

From Boyd's DISTORTED POV we hear only a general hellish DIN. Abrasive, scary sounds. Lots of people are shouting redfaced but no words match their mouths -- until right now, for a moment, a few of the protester's words are picked out -- "... out of control! -- the point of no return!"

Boyd is explosively anxious now, looking like he wants to claw his way out of here --

Then he sees Max again. And Max is signaling to someone else --

On all sides, Boyd sees the other Gunman carefully closing in. They don't know he's seen them.

From a balcony overlooking the boardwalk, a couple of rowdy resident partiers throw beer cans down on the protesters. Things suddenly get mean. Factions square off, shouting --

-- the volleyball players try to ignore it all and stubbornly continue their game -- while a long line of frustrated restaurant patrons gets broken up by the jostling crowd and they now add to the squabble, coming to blows over who was ahead in line --

-- the crowd is a directionless mob, with Boyd at the center. The gunmen are closing in and the entire mob and space itself seems to contract --

-- Boyd stands stock still, totally freaked, can't take it -- sets the bomb down, bends to turn the switch, takes a last deep breath and --

WHACK! a volleyball hits him in the head and knocks him right over. Someone trips over him. The scuffle disorients him--

He looks for the Bomb. It's gone --!

THE GUNMAN

None of them have it either, they're searching around too --

ROLLERSKATER

A youth on rollerskates is zooming off with the nuclear device, just barely able to carry it.

Boyd sees the rollerskater.

The gunmen see the rollerskater too, and they give chase through the crowd, forgetting Boyd.

Boyd releases an unbelievable HOWL of maniacal rage ...!

A space clears around him immediately. He runs off, down a sidestreet, leaving the entire crowd almost stopped in its tracks, watching him disappear...

EXT. LARGE WAREHOUSE

The huge front loading door is pulled open a little on its tracks, but the place looks deserted.

INT. THE WAREHOUSE

Expansive and filled with a labyrinth of packing crates and shadows.

VOICE (O.S.)

Man, I am whippin, bro --!

ANGLE --

The ROLLERSKATER is meeting with his COHORT, another teenage thug.

COHORT

(Examining the bomb)

This ain't no stereo, man, where's  
the speakers? Shit, this scene  
aint nothin but apart, Jack.

ROLLERSKATER

(Studies it)

It's gotta do something...

He reaches for the detonator key -- then hesitates --

They look at each other -- should he try the switch?

Something metal clatters across the concrete at their feet,  
startling the crap out of them --

ROLLERSKATER

What the hell --

Something moves in the shadows.

Into the light, Boyd's demonic face emerges, seething, eyes  
bright with anticipation...

BOYD

-- lacerate.. -- amputate...  
-- masticate.. -- isolate...  
-- disintegrate..

WIDE SHOT

As he plays with them cat and mouse. He is swift and keeps  
blocking their frantic attempts to escape.

BOYD (CONT'D)

-- desiccate... -- desecrate...  
-- palpitate... -- coagulate...  
-- radiate... -- hate!

EXT. WAREHOUSE

A CRASH from the darkness within --

The two thugs come racing out, running for their lives.

They pass out of view and we are left with a long, still look  
at the dark gaping entrance of the warehouse.

EXT. STREET - HILLER AND CARSON

The two terrified youths race by.

Just down the lane is the warehouse. From its darkness we see Boyd emerge with the bomb.

Hiller sees him. Boyd suddenly recognizes Hiller and darts back inside.

HILLER  
(On the run)  
That's him!

Carson follows Hiller down the alley to the warehouse, alerting the others on his two way belt radio.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEYWAY

With the mercenaries and their two gunmen, regrouping in a doorway directly across from a small open side entrance of the warehouse.

GUNMAN ONE keeps a lookout down the alley to where they can see the cop cars pulling up to meet Hiller.

AMBROSE  
(Close to panic)  
They can't know about the bomb,  
they're going to try and smoke him  
out...!

GUNMAN TWO  
Let's split, let's split, come on!

MAX  
You got a jet on standby or  
something?

Gunman Two looks confused by Max's meaning --

MAX (CONT'D)  
You'd have to make it as far as  
Mexico in the next few minutes.

Gunman Two suddenly realizes the full extent of his dread.

AMBROSE  
I say we tell them.

MAX

You crazy? We'll never have a chance to score like this again -- I say we ice'em! We've got the edge --

AMBROSE

-- even if we stop them from freaking the psycho, how are we gonna handle him!

EXT. FRONT OF WAREHOUSE

Hiller dispatches the two other plainclothes men --

HILLER

Step on it! Get this place secured!

The plainclothes men race off to cover any other exits --

Carson is on the car radio --

CARSON

The SWAT Team and the K9 squad.  
(A precaution --)  
And an ambulance. Ten four.

A black-and-white radio-car pulls up, driven by a Uniformed POLICEWOMAN.

EXT. ALLEY - THE MERCENARIES

GUNMAN ONE

(Watching the cops)  
-- I think they're going in now!

Ambrose looks like he's going to break out into assholes and shit himself to death.

MAX

That's it --! Move--!

He shoves them ahead of him and they rush nervously into the warehouse side-door, automatic weapons ready.

Gunman Two lags behind. Unnoticed by the others he sneaks off down the alley -- this is just too bizarre...

## INT. WAREHOUSE

A rectangle of blinding light from outside the partially retracted warehouse door lights the place up some and silhouettes the figures of Carson, Hiller, and the Police Woman outside.

Hiller takes a testy few steps forward with a megaphone --

HILLER

Boyd Russell! We know you are in there! Come out quietly right now and you won't get hurt!

They wait. The monstrous warehouse is packed floor to ceiling with towers of crates and barrels, lots of places to hide.

In the shadows, the Mercenaries spread out, heading for the entrance to form a hasty battle front --

-- Ambrose peeks out at the cops as he weasels toward them, alternately peering back over his shoulder, wary of Boyd, caught in the middle as Irresistible Force is about to meet Immovable Object.

## EXT. WAREHOUSE

Hiller looks at his watch. He looks pretty sure of the situation --

HILLER

(To Carson)

We got him, partner, we got him...

Carson grins. He is munching on a twinkette, and he offers the rest of it to Hiller, who takes it and starts to gulp it down, noticing the Policewoman --

HILLER

(To Policewoman)

Hey, Sergeant, you got a date for this evening? I feel like treating a cop like a lady tonight.

POLICEWOMAN

(Smiles)

Give me a minute -- I have to decide if that's a compliment or an insult.

HILLER  
 (Putting the  
 twinkette wrapper in  
 his pocket)

While you're doing your mental  
 gymnastics let's see if we can't  
 get this door closed up --

The two of them move toward the massive sliding door...

HILLER

Sees movement behind one of the crates inside -- the  
 distinctive glint of sunlight off a gun barrel -- he whirls,  
 aims --

-- it's not Boyd, it's one of the Gunmen, gun aimed -- Hiller  
 hesitates --

A FLASH OF MEMORY of the innocent artist recoiling against the  
 wall --

AND IN SLOW MOTION --

Carson sees what's happening. Horrified, he sights on the  
 Gunman himself and fires just a split second before the gunman  
 does -- blowing him away as a BURST of his MACHINEGUN FIRE goes  
 wild and --

Near Hiller the Policewoman is hit --

-- they have a split second to look on in horror...

-- she is dead before she hits the pavement.

Hiller and Carson race for cover just before an EXPLOSION of  
 GUNFIRE erupts from inside as Max and Ambrose open up on  
 them --

Secured behind the cars, Hiller and Carson return fire as best  
 they can --

INT. WAREHOUSE

SERIES OF SHOTS of cops' bullets ricocheting off canisters  
 marked with skull and crossbones and warnings about dangerous  
 chemicals.

Bullets puncturing crates of God-knows-what.

AMBROSE

Watching the chaos. Watching Max reloading. Trying to deal with that kind of doomed terror that feels like an elephant sitting on your chest.

There's movement in the shadow down the aisle and he can just see -- it's Boyd --

BOYD

Crouching in the shadow, a cornered beast, fearful and furious. Hand on the bomb key. Ready for the slightest excuse to let it all go...

EXT. WAREHOUSE

A lull in the shooting...

Ambrose emerges, waving a rag --

AMBROSE  
Hold fire! Hold fire!

He heads straight for Hiller, and as he gets close --

AMBROSE  
The psycho! The psycho! He's got  
an at --

--PLAT! PLAT! and Ambrose is ripped apart by bullets through his back.

Max had to expose himself for just a split second to get the shot off, but in that split second --

-- Hiller shoots Max as dead as Ambrose.

Silence. The dust settles. Hiller looks to Carson --

Carson has been hit . He's unconscious.

Hiller rushes over to Carson. He's still breathing.

Hiller hears SIRENS coming. He looks back at the warehouse, incensed. He reloads.

Hiller flattens himself against a retainer wall and edges toward the shadows of the warehouse...

BOYD'S POV - HILLER

We are at the other side of the entrance. As Hiller moves in, into the shadow, we edge out, toward the sunlight.

HILLER'S POV

Peering into the warehouse... suddenly everything is starting to wobble and spin --

HILLER

Looks alarmed -- what's wrong with him now? Then he remembers --

-- he pulls the twinkette wrapper from his pocket, realizing --

-- he sees Boyd moving out into the light--

-- Hiller staggers toward Boyd -- he tries to aim properly --

-- Boyd freezes and goes for the detonator key --

-- Hiller shoots and misses by a mile -- Boyd flees --

Hiller struggles to stay steady, but finally drops to his knees and dizzily watches Boyd disappear around a corner. There was only the briefest glimpse of some heavy object that Boyd was carrying...

The SIRENS BLARE as half a dozen police vehicles pull up outside the warehouse. Snipers and K9 officers with attack dogs fall out while the ambulance attendants rush to Carson and the dead Policewoman.

Hiller looks in concern toward Carson -- finally relieved as he hears --

CARSON

... this is why we get lousy  
insurance rates...

-- and he sees them helping Carson walk to the ambulance.

The COMMANDER rushes up to Hiller, bewildered by all the extra corpses--

COMMANDER

What the hell is this?

Hiller looks drugged...

HILLER  
 (Finally)  
 ... A brave new world?

Hiller collapses completely.

COMMANDER  
 (To Medic)  
 Over here. I think he's in shock.

Hiller mumbles and shakes his head, holds out the twinkette wrapper to the Commander.

The Commander looks at it in puzzlement.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE SHOOTING RANGE

We look from the target end back down the narrow walls that converge at the distant firing end on the lone figure of Hiller.

CLOSEUP HILLER

Looking pissed off. He raises his service revolver, aims carefully, and FIRES aggressively right at us --

Blam. Blam. Blam. Blam. Blam. Blam. Six steady shots in unbroken succession.

Maybe he's succeeded in getting something out of his system.

THE TARGET

A row of six twinkettes. Bullet holes in five.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Hiller stands over Carson's bed. Carson is heavily bandaged but looks happy. His television plays a deodorant commercial and maybe something about depletion of the ozone layer.

CARSON  
 Twinkettes?  
 (Beat)  
 You mean -- all those months of tiredness and weird shit you had was an allergy? To twinkettes?

HILLER  
 (Embarrassed)  
 One of the ingredients anyway.  
 The doctor has narrowed it down to  
 the preservatives, he thinks.

Carson laughs but cuts it short with a grimace of pain.

CARSON  
 So you never had the cops' dreaded  
 "occupational disease" after all.

HILLER  
 No sir. Which means you are back  
 to square one with your trying to  
 con me into this positive-thinking  
 stuff. So you better perform a  
 miracle and get yourself out of  
 here pronto if you ever want me to  
 take you seriously again.

CARSON  
 Just tell the Strangler to wait  
 for me.

HILLER  
 (Suddenly serious)  
 -- too late.  
 (Beat)  
 They brought in a hooker this  
 morning, strangled the same way...

Hiller starts to pace, and as he moves away he REVEALS behind him the window, looking out on a hazy grey panorama that includes the THE NEW HORIZONS FACTORY. Today, SMOKE pours from its chimney.

CARSON  
 This morning? But it's Saturday--

HILLER  
 That's what I said. Boyd must  
 have a faulty calendar.

In the b.g. on the TELEVISION we NOTICE the protester again, chained to the New Horizons factory entrance as scowling employees pass by -- and we catch a GLIMPSE of the words "every Friday" --

Hiller almost turns to the television. Almost --

CARSON  
 Who the hell were those gunman?

HILLER  
 (The hell if he can  
 figure it.)  
 Krantz is covering it. He thinks  
 they're the ones involved in the  
 shootout in Hollywood. But as for  
 why they attached us...

Hiller shrugs in bewilderment. Again we just catch on the  
 television "every Friday" --

-- and again Hiller misses it.

CARSON  
 This is getting --

HILLER  
 -- really weird...  
 (Looks at his watch)  
 Wait -- I think the Chief is  
 supposed to make a press statement  
 about it right now --

Hiller finally goes to the television and turns up the volume,  
 but now it's a commercial.

A pause, then Hiller tries other channels. He passes one  
 channel that's playing a rerun of the protester we just saw.  
 Then he turns it back --

The protester, MR. COSTELLO, is a mousey but hyperactive  
 character --

COSTELLO (ON TV)  
 -- Because until the tests are  
 conclusive, I believe the Air  
 Quality Management District must  
 put an injunction on the  
 emissions.

REPORTER (ON TV)  
 Mr. Costello, you belong to no  
 activist group. Why do you choose  
 to do this?

COSTELLO (ON TV)  
 Somebody has to. The EPA Board  
 are all industrialists...

REPORTER (ON TV)  
 (Into camera)  
 One thing is certain -- Mister  
 Costello will be continuing his  
 Friday vigils... Live from  
 Hollywood, this is --

HILLER  
 -- God damnit, it's Saturday!

Hiller and Carson exchange suspicious looks.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE FACTORY - DAY

Hiller approaches the Factory Building of New Horizons Ltd,  
 just as two Uniformed OFFICERS are arresting Costello --

COSTELLO  
 (To Officers)  
 Thanks for waiting for the news  
 crew, fellas.

One Officer is trying to cut the chain with a bolt cutter--

OFFICER  
 No problem.  
 (It won't cut)  
 Damn --  
 (To other officer --)  
 You brought the wrong ones again.  
 (To Costello --)  
 We'll be back --

The officers leave, nodding to Hiller, who flashes his badge  
 for Costello --

HILLER  
 Detective Hiller. I'm on a  
 homicide case. You may be able to  
 help me by telling me what this is  
 all about.

COSTELLO  
 It's about Foster's magic liquid  
 crystals.

HILLER  
 Who's Foster?

COSTELLO  
 The President of New Horizons.  
 See that smoke stack? Only one  
 left in Los Angeles Proper. See  
 the smoke? They're pumping out a  
 byproduct called Beta Three that--

HILLER  
 -- Every Friday.

COSTELLO

Yeah. But it stays in the air a lot longer. And it has not been approved.

HILLER

How do you know about it?

COSTELLO

It's public knowledge.

HILLER

So why isn't anyone stopping it?

COSTELLO

The bloody Air Quality Management people are in bed with Foster, of course. They refuse to recognize the scientific test study that proved Beta Three is dangerous.

HILLER

Why are you here today instead of yesterday?

COSTELLO

Huh? 'Cause they changed the schedule. And starting on Monday they'll be emitting it every day

-- look --

(He hands Hiller a pamphlet)

Here's their schedule in black and white... Keep it...

HILLER

Thanks a lot, Mr. Costello.

Hiller heads inside...

INT. FOSTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Plush but lived in. This is the site of many a long night's work--

Hiller flashes his badge for Foster, the same young nouveau riche executive we've seen on television.

HILLER

Mister Foster, you're currently  
dumping a chemical called Beta  
Three, following this schedule --  
(Displays the  
pamphlet)  
Is that right?

FOSTER

Oh God...  
(Sighs)  
Yes, that's right. Look -- that  
guy Costello out front was a  
classmate of mine in college; he  
has some kind of grudge, or he's  
crazy -- he had that study done  
himself; why do you think the EPA  
won't touch it --

HILLER

You know of the Friday Strangler?

FOSTER

(Apprehensive)  
Of course.

HILLER

He switched from Fridays to  
Saturday today, just like you did.  
And his first murder was the day  
of your first emission of Beta  
Three. This pattern is more than  
coincidence --

(Beat)

-- I think it induces him to  
kill...

(Foster looks  
incredulous)

I want you to stop dumping the  
stuff for a while. Just until we  
catch him. To be safe.

FOSTER

That would lose crucial production  
time.

HILLER

Only for a few days.

FOSTER

Sir, the media may make me look like a fairy tale success story but I am going through hell with my investors. Some of them will pull out if I stop right now. The whole operation will be shut down indefinitely. And that won't be just my loss.

Hiller waits for a definite yes or no.

FOSTER

Besides -- if it's so bad, the whole city will be turning homicidal, not just one guy.

HILLER

No -- I think this guy has a freak allergy to it.

FOSTER

I find that awfully hard to believe.

HILLER

Believe it. I just discovered my brain was being scrambled by a chemical allergy -- it happens.

FOSTER

Look -- if the EPA tests do prove my chemical is dangerous to the population, that's one thing -- but you can hardly expect me to be responsible for somebody's allergies.

(Beat)

Sorry, but no.

HILLER

Yeah. I guess I'll just have to get you a legal injunction. Good day.

Foster looks nervous as Hiller exits.

CUT TO:

INT. BOYD'S MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Heavy curtains are drawn and the light of a silent television set flickers over Boyd, asleep under the sheets...

... but not alone. He moves -- the sheet falls aside and we SEE he has the atomic bomb in bed with him.

As the television light dims for a moment, we can see the bomb glowing, ever so slightly, greenish and eerie. Boyd cuddles the bomb. He strokes it lovingly in his sleep. His hand toys with the detonator switch...

He gets restless, tosses around a little, and awakens. He sits up a little and stares at the bomb. Still only half awake, he looks at the television --

-- and he is looking at HIS OWN FACE, filling the television screen, a photograph. Boyd is mesmerized by the image. Then the photo of his face is REPLACED by a shot of the THE NEW HORIZONS FACTORY, smoke billowing from its towering chimney. Boyd remains entranced.

Now the TV cuts to an INTERVIEW WITH HILLER AND ADILMAN. Boyd finally reaches out and turns up the volume to HEAR --

ADILMAN (ON TV)

-- Though I have not seen such a diagnosis in the psychiatric literature, Boyd Russell's combination of somatic symptom and parr...paranoid delusion is unique, and Investigator Hiller's e-evidence has convinced me that this could indeed be an ideopathic physiological reaction. An aall...aallergy.

(beat)

What is most curious is that the delusion he developed to compensate does parallel, metaphorically, his actual sit...uation --

BOYD

You told me I was wrong!

HILLER(ON TV)

(Empathetic)

-- The "Human Antibody", he calls himself.

(Holding up Boyd's dossier)

He sensed his own predicament. He did his best to come to terms with it. That's why we're making this plea --

Hiller looks into camera, CAMERA ZOOMS IN for a moment --

HILLER(ON TV)

-- to Boyd. Turn yourself in now. You can save yourself, as well as others. You can be cured. As a victim you can have your sentence reduced by up to ninety percent.

ADILMAN(ON TV)

I suspect, however, that he may have passed the point of no return.

BOYD

Judas!

(Trembling wrath)

Whyfore didst thou betray me!

REPORTER(ON TV)

In the meantime, what are you doing about the New Horizons factory?

HILLER(ON TV)

I believe the emissions must be stopped until Boyd is found. We hope to obtain a warrant before they resume emissions fulltime on Monday.

REPORTER(ON TV)

Which could lead to more deaths.

HILLER(ON TV)

Yes.

REPORTER(ON TV)

Doctor Adilman, if what you suspect is true, then the case of Boyd Russell has far-reaching consequences.

BOYD

(Possessed)

You bet it does! You bet it does!

As Adilman continues, Boyd rummages through a scattered newspaper, muttering medical terminology under his breath...

ADILMAN (ON T.V.)

Well it's premature to g...generalize at this point but it does lead one to wonder how many other disturbed people are suffering from something similar.

And on this cue the television CUTS TO A NEW SCENE -- a large, shiny Fuller dome nestled amongst trees -- a second reporter in the f.g. --

SECOND REPORTER

Here at Point Conception, under this geodesic dome, is an experimental community where up to forty patients have been living in a specially designed environment, completely free of all manmade materials or chemicals --

Boyd stops searching the paper -- next to an article on the increase in violent rapes is a picture of the Protester chained to the New Horizons factory. The caption speaks of the Friday emissions. Boyd burns holes into it with his eyes --

BOYD

(Obsessively)

Isolate the lesion...

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW HORIZONS FACTORY - MORNING

Across the street from the front entrance, a couple of plainclothes cops sit waiting and watching in an unmarked car.

AT THE BACK ENTRANCE - UNMARKED CAR

Heck and Jeckle, the two detectives from the station, lounge in their car.

JECKLE

(Yawns)

I lost another day off for this?

Heck watches Foster crossing the parking lot and heading into the building, well before his employees will arrive.

HECK

If the factory president is bait for this psycho, why didn't Hiller tell the guy?

JECKLE

Maybe he did. This is just a precaution. Besides, the sucker set himself up. Screw him.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

The factory is in the b.g. No smoke yet from the smoke-stack.

BOYD

Enters frame, fixated on the factory. He leaves...

INT. ELECTRONIC PARTS STORE

Aisles and aisles of electronic components. A big display of home security systems.

Outside the display window we see Boyd appear and look in.

Boyd enters the shop, carrying the bomb. He exchanges uneasy glances with the SHOPKEEPER, and starts to wander the aisles in search of something. There are no other customers.

THE SHOPKEEPER

Suspicious, he pulls out his newspaper. The front page has a photo of Boyd Russell, the Friday Strangler.

Boyd notices the Shopkeeper staring at him.

The Shopkeeper fetches his gun. He looks for Boyd again but he's lost sight of him. He goes to his phone and starts to dial. No dial tone. He looks along the phone cord -- cut...

Now he's sweating, looking around frantically.

He starts to head out the back way, through his repair-shop. There's a lot of shadow in here before he can make it to the safe sunlight at the back door...

The Shopkeeper is torn between caution and blind fear. The further he gets the more the trembles.

In a flash -- lunging hands jerk his ankles back and into the air -- he hits the floor like a sack of potatoes, gun flying --

Trying to scramble up -- but there's Boyd, standing over him with the gun. He freezes.

BOYD

I have a job for you.

Gun on the Storekeeper, Boyd hoists the bomb up onto the workbench.

Gun to the Storekeeper's jaw, Boyd drags him over to sit in front of the bomb. He shoves the schematic diagram into the Storekeeper's hand --

BOYD

Read.

It doesn't take long before the Storekeeper registers his horrified realization that there is a real, live, nuclear device two feet from his nose. He looks into Boyd's cold, burning eyes.

BOYD

All I want you to do is bypass the detonator keyswitch with this --

(Holds up a button switch --)

When the button is held down, it stays off. When I let it go -- boom.

(Pause)

Simple. Just don't slip.

The Storekeeper is close to fainting from fear, maybe hoping he'll wake up any second. Boyd shoves the tool box over to him. He pushes the muzzle of the gun harder under the Storekeeper's jaw --

BOYD

Or I could just kill you and do it myself --

The Storekeeper takes a screwdriver and starts to unfasten the control plate...

Plate removed, he looks at the wiring and freezes.

Then he forces himself to pick up his wire cutters.

Traces one of the wires, poises to cut it, hesitates a long moment, then cuts.

He makes a solder onto the lead from the pushbutton switch.

He is crying softly as he makes the last cut and very very gingerly makes sure the live wires don't touch...

BOYD

Careful... Careful...

He solders the last splice. The button switch is taped to the carrying handle, ready for Boyd's thumb.

Now the Storekeeper replaces the plate and finally allows his hands to shake.

He stares at Boyd, as Boyd stares at the bomb, very still, very still...

-- Boyd abruptly reaches out, grabs the handle, and with his thumb --

-- depresses the switch.

The Storekeeper gasps and flinches away. Looks back at Boyd in helpless, panting, terror.

Boyd hands him back his gun. The Storekeeper holds it limply, useless.

BOYD

Too bad I had to cut your phone  
line... you'll have to go next  
door to call the police...

(Beat)

--GO ON! We wouldn't want them  
shooting me by accident now would  
we?

Boyd smiles, indicating his thumb on the button. The Shopkeeper starts to back away. Boyd ignores him and walks for the front door.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Busy as Hiller briefs two plainclothes men. They are ready for action.

HILLER

We will shut down only the  
operations that directly cause the  
Beta Three emissions. And let's  
try to keep it low key.

A DETECTIVE approaches them --

HILLER

Okay, here comes our reservation  
ticket -- let's hit the road --

They all head toward the Detective and the front door --

HILLER

(To Detective)

We've got one hour left before  
they start it up --

But Hiller sees the Detective's despairing look and stops --

DETECTIVE  
 (Gestures in defeat)  
 I couldn't get the warrant.

Hiller is stunned.

DETECTIVE  
 Judge says it's too "alarmist".

There's a long pause as the others look at Hiller. He's starting to get that distant sort of look he used to have before.

HILLER  
 (Takes a deep breath)  
 Judge Fallwell? The bastard owes me one, let me try him...

He walks determinedly for the door.

Lt. Krantz hails Hiller --

KRANTZ  
 Hiller, I need to talk to you --  
 (As Hiller tries to  
 brush him off)  
 It's important --  
 (He follows Hiller)  
 The Feds traced the guys who ambushed you to the garage where the atom bomb was built.

HILLER  
 (Stops)  
 What atom bomb?

KRANTZ  
 (Sardonic)  
 Pardon me -- The "alleged" atom bomb. Made from the "allegedly" stolen plutonium. We couldn't find anything in the warehouse so I'm wondering...

We are TRACKING IN CLOSE ON HILLER'S FACE as he reacts --

KRANTZ (CONT'D)  
 Hiller...? I'm wondering do you think there's some connection with the Strangler...?

Hiller looks like he's seen a ghost. He looks like he's seen Armageddon.

He looks right through Krantz and starts to giggle insanely.

KRANTZ

(Taking it the wrong  
way --)

Shit, man, I'm busting my balls on  
this -- we can't all be  
supersleuths, you know -- it's not  
that dumb a question --!

He walks off, sore --

But Hiller grabs him and yanks him back and practically off his  
feet -- he stares deeply at Krantz, like a man possessed.  
Krantz is really unnerved --

HILLER

(A charged whisper)

He has it. Boyd... has... an  
atomic bomb...

KRANTZ

Don't shit me like that, man --

HILLER

Listen! They tried to warn me but  
I didn't understand. Please --  
call the Commander and Feds right  
now -- Scramble the SWAT team to  
the New Horizons factory. I'll  
see you there! -- just do it!

And he's rushing off --

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLER'S CAR - MOVING

Siren wailing, blazing a trail through the traffic.

INT. CAR - HILLER

Grim, outraged, burying his terror --

CUT TO:

INT. FACTORY

Hiller strides in, finds the security man, flashes his badge,  
gets directions --

INT. FACTORY

Hiller follows a gangway down into the open bowels of the factory, between monstrous rumbling vats and machinery, finally toward a door marked "INCINERATOR".

INT. INCINERATOR ROOM

A CONTROLLER sits at a computerized console, dwarfed by an enveloping boa-constrictor's nest of gas ducts. A clock behind him reads: 8:45.

Hiller enters and right away locks the thick door behind him, then approaches the Controller, flashing his badge --

HILLER

You will not be starting the nine o'clock emissions. They're temporarily canceled.

CONTROLLER

Oh yeah? Can I see your warrant?

In answer, Hiller grabs him, slaps handcuffs on one wrist --

CONTROLLER

Hey!

-- and cuffs him securely to this chair.

CONTROLLER

Who the hell do you think you are!

For a couple of beats Hiller looks like he might be considering the question.

Then he starts to move off -- but stops as he glances at --

THE CONTROL CONSOLE

Lights and numbers continue to change.

It's set up like a flow diagram, and you can plainly see the thing is running itself, following its precisely timed and choreographed steps.

CONTROLLER

(A smirk)

Welcome to the modern world.

Hiller takes off the cuffs, shoves the chair up to the console again, and puts his revolver to the Controller's head --

HILLER  
Turn it off, asshole!

Now the Controller is really terrified, but he plays the prisoner of war --

CONTROLLER  
(Looking straight ahead)  
My name is John Homer. Controller first class. Number two three six dash five five nine.

Hiller secures him to the chair again.

Then he thinks hard, looking over the console and a nearby shelf of operating manuals.

Hiller takes down a thick operating manual, flips through it, then starts to study it in earnest. The Controller looks at him incredulously.

EXT. FACTORY

Nothing unusual.

INT. STAKEOUT CAR

Looking straight in at Heck and Jeckle. Jeckle slouches in the passenger seat, snoozing, while Heck tries to stay alert.

Behind them we can SEE the approaching side street, and among the pedestrians -- Boyd. With his bomb.

Boyd gets closer.

Heck notices him in his rear view mirror. He studies the approaching figure...

-- Yeah, by God, it's the Strangler --

HECK  
Jeckle --

JECKLE  
(Moans)  
Alright, alright, I'll turn up the reactor...

Heck jabs him in the ribs. Jeckle snaps awake and alert.

HECK  
 (Points to rear-view)  
 Look --

JECKLE  
 (Excited)  
 Shit.

They wait, unfastening their guns, as Boyd approaches across the street.

Jeckle grabs the radio microphone --

JECKLE  
 36, 447, spotted suspect, request  
 code two backup, we're going for  
 him now, ten four.

Boyd passes across from the car, heading for the side entrance.

HECK  
 One... Two... Three...

Both cops fling open their doors and dash toward Boyd.

Boyd stiffens in surprise. Heck and Jeckle freeze in assault positions, guns aimed --

HECK  
Freeze, mother!  
 (Boyd freezes)  
 You're under arrest for suspicion  
 of murder!

Heck whips out his handcuffs and makes a grab for Boyd's loose arm --

HECK  
 (Indicating bomb)  
 Drop that!

BOYD  
 This is a bomb, you idiot!

Heck hesitates --

BOYD (CONT'D)  
 See this button I'm pushing down?  
 If I let go of it, the bomb goes,  
 and so do you!

Heck steps back. The two cops look at each other, scared, not knowing what to make of this. It is a pretty deadly looking device.

BOYD  
 (Through clenched  
 teeth)

Now get this very, very, clear...  
 This is a nuclear bomb. As in  
 Hiroshima. Anyone tries to stop  
 me, and L.A. becomes a crater!

At this, Heck relaxes perceptibly --

HECK  
 I see...  
 (Stepping closer,  
 sarcastic--)  
 And I suppose you built it  
 yourself? Out of everyday  
 materials from your local drug  
 store, perhaps?

Heck is getting close to Boyd again, taunting -- Boyd is fuming mad now.

Jeckle steps closer too, but hyped by loathing anger, pointing the barrel of his cocked gun closer and closer to Boyd's head.

HECK (CONT'D)  
 Gee, you must really be a genius.  
 I bet no one understands you, am I  
 right?

Heck dangles the handcuffs in front of Boyd, while Jeckle's approach is different -- he glares down his gun sight at Boyd--

JECKLE  
 Just give me one little reason to  
 blow your head off, scumbag!

Boyd looks down at his --

THUMB...

INT. INCINERATION ROOM

Hiller is still poring over the operation manual, but he looks stumped. He looks at the clock -- one minute left. He flips through the book, looking for something -- zeros in on a diagram --

He gets up and goes to the front of the console. There he tugs off a panel revealing the modular components inside.

He looks it over, comparing it to the diagram. Then he tries to remove one of the modules, but can't budge it. The Controller sneers.

He takes out his revolver, very simply holds it up to the module, and FIRES.

All the functions of the console shut down. The Controller stares in disbelief as Hiller hurries out.

EXT. FACTORY SIDE ENTRANCE

The two other stakeout cops have joined Heck and Jeckle to form a ring around Boyd.

JECKLE  
He's bluffing.

HECK  
He's looney tunes.

THIRD COP  
Of course, but the device might still do something. We can wait till the Chief arrives.

BOYD  
I'm not waiting --

Boyd starts to walk out of their circle. A cop tries to block his way but he pushes him aside. All guns level on Boyd, but he keeps walking --

JECKLE  
(Ready to shoot)  
Go on... go on...!

Suddenly Hiller emerges from the side door. He stops smack in their line of fire on Boyd. Jeckle swears. Boyd slows when he sees Hiller.

Hiller is shocked. He tries to quickly size up the situation.

THE GROUP

Watching, expectant.

In the b.g. the SWAT team is arriving and starting to deploy.

BOYD AND HILLER

Face to face. Boyd in a smoldering rage, and Hiller looking deeply into Boyd, trying to fathom him, glancing at the bomb and the spine-chilling, precarious push-button, aware of the acute need for diplomacy...

HILLER  
(Carefully)  
... What do you want?

BOYD  
(Thinking...)  
I want to see Doctor Adilman.  
Here. Now.

Boyd moves to go in --

Hiller steps aside and holds up his hands in warning to the other cops --

HILLER  
Hold your fire! This man has a  
live atomic bomb! This is for  
real! Do not fool with him under  
any circumstances! I repeat, this  
is for real!

The cops register their shock and horror, or their denial, each in his own manner.

The SWAT team awaits orders.

Jeckle faints. Out cold on the sidewalk.

All around, FBI cars are pulling up

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FACTORY LOBBY - FULL SHOT - DAY

FBI AGENTS line the perimeter. Boyd stands defiantly in the very center. He holds the bomb pushbutton with the bomb sitting atop a chair.

The vaulted ceiling is two stories high with corridors leading from it in several directions.

A couple of SWAT team snipers can be seen getting into position in elevated vantage points. In one of the corridors is a doorway to a makeshift briefing room, where heavies of the FBI and God knows who are coming and going very quietly.

It's very tense and very still in here...

EXT. BACK ENTRANCE

A hoard of bewildered company employees are being herded out, directed by Krantz.

WOMAN

What's it about, Officer?

KRANTZ

(Tense)

You'll see it on the news soon enough...

(To himself)

Hopefully.

(To others)

Keep it moving! Go straight to your cars and leave the vicinity!

WOMAN

(Shrugs)

As long as they're paying us.

Other cops are diverting traffic on the street.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM

Besides Hiller there are a dozen men in here trying to sort out their desperate options -- FBI men, science advisors, part of the SWAT team.

BIG FED

-- Forget the Pentagon! I don't want the goddamn army trampling through here!

BUREAUCRAT

Why don't we just evacuate the area of the blast?

SCIENTIST

That would be the entire city of Los Angeles. It would take --

(Calculates)

-- five days. And that's if no one gets excited.

SWAT CAPTAIN

What is all this bullshit? My men can put a bullet in this freak's head like cutting butter. They're in position now --

HILLER  
 (Shocked at the  
 communication gap)  
 Jesus Christ who's briefing these  
 guys!

A SMALL FED rushes to the SWAT Captain and explains carefully--

SMALL FED  
 -- If he lets go of the bomb it  
 will go off! Didn't Dugan talk to  
 you?

HILLER  
 (To Big Fed)  
 Have you confirmed that it's the  
 same bomb you were looking for?

BIG FED  
 Unfortunately, yes. We also have  
 the story on this Beta Three  
 allergy thing, but what does he  
 want Adilman for?

HILLER  
 I don't know, but I'm pretty sure  
 he will set off the bomb once he's  
 got Adilman.

(Beat)  
 I don't think he needs the factory  
 emissions to boost him over the  
 edge anymore. His delusion is  
 enough for that now, and he's  
 desperate.

(Beat)  
 Let me try and talk him down, I  
 know what he's going through --

SHRINK  
 I don't advise that --

BIG FED  
 (Introducing--)  
 -- Doctor Whitehead, forensic  
 psych --

SHRINK  
 If a paranoid schizophrenic has  
 gone this far, any attempt to talk  
 him down could push him over the  
 threshold.

A group of three SCIENTISTS have been conferring intensely in  
 the b.g.

The Bureaucrat is biting his nails off and the Small Fed is shaking his head rhythmically as if in denial.

HILLER

What if we have an agent pose as a scientist to verify the bomb's authenticity? He could try and get his hand on the button --

BIG FED

-- Too risky. I doubt Boyd would be dumb enough to let us get that close anyway --

SMALL FED

(Breaking down)

-- Jesus Christ Almighty what are we supposed to do then, what are we supposed to do --!

The Scientists have finished conferring and one of them steps forward as a spokesman. All eyes turn to him --

FIRST SCIENTIST

We have an alternative. It would involve only one sniper.

The SWAT team looks interested.

FIRST SCIENTIST (CONT'D)

Judging from the shape and weight of the bomb, the plutonium is in two halves on opposite sides, with explosives to ram the two halves together to produce the critical mass. The shell must be pretty thin.

(Beat)

One high-powered bullet could defuse the bomb by blowing it apart at the mid-point and scattering the plutonium so that it cannot explode. There are two problems with that. One, because of the plutonium particles in the air, all doors, windows, chimneys, must be sealed off. The entire factory will have to be quarantined.

FACTORY MANAGER

For how long?

FIRST SCIENTIST  
(Calculates)  
Nine hundred years.

The group reacts to that one...

HILLER  
Wait a minute -- the sniper will  
need his hands and face free to  
aim accurately. He can't wear a  
radiation suit.

FIRST SCIENTIST  
That's the second problem. We  
don't know for sure he'd get away  
without some exposure.

SECOND SCIENTIST  
But we can have men in radiation  
suits inside near the last exit to  
test him. If he is contaminated  
we can hook up an air-lock system  
to quarantine him.

FIRST SCIENTIST  
That'll keep everyone else safe...  
but it won't help him.

SWAT CAPTAIN  
What exactly will this radiation  
do to you?

FIRST SCIENTIST  
Plutonium radiates alpha, beta,  
and gamma rays. They're harmless  
-- unless you get some particles  
of the actual plutonium itself  
into your blood stream -- from  
inhaling it for example. Then  
you'll get cancer if you don't die  
rather horribly first.

THE SWAT TEAM

They no longer look trigger happy...

Detective Heck steps in and taps Hiller on the shoulder --

HECK  
Adilman's here. He knows about  
the bomb.

EXT. FACTORY ENTRANCE - HILLER AND ADILMAN

Cops have everything barricaded off and one of them is keeping Adilman back from the front steps. Adilman talks across the police officer to Hiller --

ADILMAN  
(Pleading)  
-- But I can help --

HILLER  
You can't see him. Absolutely no way.

ADILMAN  
-- but he wants me --

HILLER  
-- sure -- he wants to see your appreciative face when he gives us all his goodbye present.  
(Beat)  
And I don't know that he's even going to wait for that.

A pause between them. Hiller turns to go back in --

ADILMAN  
Hiller, I --  
(Hiller turns back)  
Can you ff-forgive me? For not knowing better?

Hiller nods, understands.

INT. LOBBY

Hiller passes on the periphery, behind the FBI agents. Boyd is seated in the chair now, bomb on the floor beside him.

HILLER'S POV - BOYD

Boyd looks insanely impatient. He locks desperate eyes with us as we PASS...

HILLER

Returns the look impassively.

But when he finds himself alone in the corridor outside the briefing room, his nerves begin to betray him. He gets it under control and presses on --

INT. BRIEFING ROOM

Hiller enters. The FBI men stand to one side. In the middle of the room the Captain faces his entire SWAT team of ten men.

The Captain looks grim. The men look nervous. The room is unexpectedly quiet.

HILLER  
(To Big Fed)  
What's the score?

BIG FED  
We're going for taking out the  
bomb.

Now Hiller notices the monstrous rifle laid out on the table up front. It is fitted with a telescopic infrared laser sight.

BIG FED  
He just asked for a volunteer.

Suddenly the Captain turns his back on his men in shame.

Everyone waits nervously.

EXT. FACTORY

Construction trucks are pulling up all around the building. Ladders and cranes are being erected to reach high windows and vents.

Most of the workmen are brick layers. They swiftly slap down brick and mortar to block in windows and doors.

Two men putting on radiation moonsuits look up at the crane positioned level with the high lobby windows.

INT. FOSTER'S OFFICE

Foster is still here, removing documents from a safe and placing them in a briefcase. Footsteps echo in the deserted corridor outside --

An FBI AGENT looks in and is alarmed to see Foster --

FBI AGENT  
What do you think you're doing --  
going down with the ship? Get the  
hell out of here!

FOSTER  
 (Still grabbing  
 stuff)  
 -- five minutes, five minutes --

FBI AGENT  
 -- listen asshole, we're sealing  
 the place up -- it's your life at  
 stake here --

FOSTER  
 (Holds up documents)  
 -- And my life is in these papers!

The FBI Agent gives him a long look, then --

FBI AGENT  
 (Deadly serious)  
 Five minutes is all you've got.  
 Exit on parking level, got it?

Foster nods and hurries out and down the hall to another office. Through its door we can see him sifting through files --

BACK TO THE BRIEFING ROOM

The same tension, waiting for a volunteer, or for someone to get singled out... Finally --

HILLER  
 Captain.  
 (The Captain turns)  
 I'll do it.  
 (Long beat)  
 ... I have no family...

There's a long moment while the Captain eyes Hiller, not at all sure about him...

CAPTAIN  
 Hiller... it's hardly a secret  
 that your, uh -- stability has  
 been in question for some time...

HILLER  
 -- I had a class double A firing  
 rating --

CAPTAIN  
 -- That was a while ago --

HILLER  
 -- Try me...

The Captain hesitates still, sweating it.

CAPTAIN  
 (Finally)  
 ... Alright...

All eyes on Hiller now.

HILLER  
 I want to try and talk him down  
 first. I know what's going on in  
 his head --

The Captain is about to object, but his authority is usurped by  
 the Big Fed --

BIG FED  
 -- Go to it -- we can't stall him  
 any longer --

HILLER  
 Thank you, Sir.

Hiller leaves. The Captain still does not like the look of  
 this...

EXT. UP AT THE LOBBY WINDOWS - THE CRANE

Atop the crane, two BRICKLAYERS wait. One of them leans his  
 head over to look into the closed window near him --

Inside, down below, we can see Hiller walking slowly toward  
 Boyd...

OTHER BRICKLAYER  
 Keep your head back, idiot, he'll  
 see you!  
 (Beat)  
 Why do you think we have to wait  
 until it's over!

INT. LOBBY - HIGH SHOT

Coming DOWN and in CLOSE on the two of them facing off.

Through the following it should be clear that Hiller in some  
 sense believes in the essence of what he says --

HILLER  
 There's another way...

BOYD

No. The disease is terminal.

HILLER

Your prognosis is wrong.

BOYD

Hah! Just watch the news some time, mister detective, you'll soon see what I feel --

HILLER

I've felt it! I was manipulated by a chemical too. I was a -- "human antibody"...

(Boyd listens)

We may be victims, but we still have a choice -- to give in to the destruction, or to take responsibility for it. No matter how you're feeling, no matter what's being done to you -- you still have that choice.

BOYD

(Faltering)

... easy to say... easy to say...

HILLER

-- we can fight the Disease --

(Gestures, meaning the outside world)

-- you and me. We can get you away from the chemical and we can prove you're the victim of a physical condition --

BOYD

-- they'll lock me up all the same --

HILLER

-- you can use the publicity to make your point. The people, the other "cells", will support you if you show the way. We can inject new blood into -- Gaia.

The more Boyd looks like he is actually losing his resolve, the more Hiller gets into it --

HILLER (CONT'D)

You can be a martyr for good  
instead of for evil. And you'll  
be alive and well again,  
goddamnit!

Boyd looks like he's buying Hiller's sermon.

But then he changes. Looks weary. Shakes his head.

BOYD

You don't understand...

(Beat)

It's not my choice...

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR

The FBI Agent rushes down the corridor making a final check in  
all the rooms --

INT. CHEMISTRY LAB

Foster removes a rack of test tubes from a freezer.

FOSTER

(Alarmed)

-- what do I keep it in --?

He looks around frantically -- then he hears the FBI Agent  
approaching -- he quickly hides behind the door --

The FBI Agent looks in, sees it empty, hurries on --

CUT TO:

BACK TO HILLER AND BOYD --

HILLER

(Trying another  
angle)

Look, you think you're fulfilling  
some divine destiny, right? But  
what good will blowing up this  
city do? It'll only make a blood  
clot... stop the circulation...

Boyd is getting nervous -- starting to claw at himself again.

BOYD

Others will follow...

HILLER  
That's a load of --

BOYD  
STOP IT! You plead for your  
rotten life very eloquently, but  
it's too late! Take your medicine  
like a man and bring me Adilman  
right now -- right now or it's all  
over!

Out of the corner of his eye Hiller sees the FBI Agent at the  
entrance to a corridor give him an "all clear" sign --

BOYD (CONT'D)  
Now! Now!

HILLER  
Alright, damn you...

Hiller turns and strides out --

It suddenly becomes clear that the whole place has been emptied  
while they were talking.

Boyd notices.

EXT. FACTORY

All openings are bricked up tight except for the upper windows  
that Boyd can see from inside, and one side door left only  
partially bricked in, where everyone congregates now in deathly  
silence, with bated breath, each watching his private life  
flash before his eyes...

The two men in radiation MOONSUITS step into this side entrance  
with geiger counters.

INT. IN THE SHADOWS OF THE CORRIDOR

Hiller and the SWAT Captain. They are down the dark hall as  
far as they can be from the lobby and still get a safe,  
accurate shot. Hiller hefts the rifle. The Captain hands him  
a gas-mask, which he puts down beside him.

BOYD

Getting worried.

BOYD

Hiller!

(It echoes)

Don't do anything stupid!

HILLER AND CAPTAIN

Hiller is steadying the rifle on the table, lining up the laser sight. The Captain looks awfully worried about trusting Hiller.

CAPTAIN

Don't hit the detonator. God be with you.

He exits toward the end of the corridor, where the two men in Moonsuits are silhouetted by the light of the only opening left.

THROUGH THE RIFLE SIGHT

An infrared filter allows us to see a small, red, infrared-laser spot where Hiller's bullet will go. It is a telephoto image of Boyd, so it wavers like binoculars do as he tries to line it up and steady the dot on the center of the bomb long enough to get a confident shot --

BACK WITH BOYD

BOYD

Fuck it then!

He hoists the bomb off the floor and begins to pace with it --

THROUGH THE RIFLE SIGHT

Boyd moves too much and Hiller can't keep the dot on the bomb. Boyd is starting to cross the lobby.

BACK WITH BOYD

BOYD

FUCK Adilman, you're all going with me anyway! Fuck it! Fuck it! Fuck it --!

THROUGH THE RIFLE SIGHT

Boyd has suddenly moved out of sight completely, around the corner. We still HEAR distantly -- "fuck it fuck it fuck it..."

HILLER

Looks up -- oh God, should he wait? Should he run out there?

WITH BOYD

MOVING with Boyd, we can see only darkness in the corridor where Hiller waits.

BOYD

Fuck it fuck it fuck it fuck it  
fuck it fuck it fuck it --!

Boyd has moved back maybe just barely in range of the corridor -- maybe not -- and he stops, as though every muscle in his body has frozen stiff from tension, tilts back his head and --

-- holds the bomb up with both hands, his thumb slowly relaxing its hold --

EXPLOSION -- !

THROUGH THE RIFLE SIGHT

Boyd falls back as the bomb casing shatters apart and debris scatters through the air.

HILLER

Drops the rifle, snatches up the gas-mask, tugs it on, and rushes toward the other end of the long dark corridor and the two Moonsuits.

One of them calls out the opening -- "He did it!"

EXT FACTORY

The relief is tangible.

INT. THE LOBBY

Boyd is sprawled on the floor amid the debris, wounded and bloody --

BOYD

Look what you did to me! Look  
what you did!

He starts to SOB... High up we can SEE the bricklayers swiftly blocking up the last windows, sealing out the sun.

AT THE EXIT WITH HILLER

Boyd is still HEARD SOBBING in the background while the two Moonsuits check Hiller over carefully with geiger counters.

MOONSUIT

You're clean, man. You're okay.

Hiller finally breathes easier.

Boyd is still sobbing in the distant lobby. They watch as Boyd picks himself up drunkenly and starts to limp around.

INT. ELEVATOR - FOSTER

Foster enters with his briefcase and a portable freezer case. As the doors close on him he pushes the first floor button by mistake --

-- he reacts as he realizes, nervously pushing parking level.

INT. CORRIDOR WITH HILLER AND MOONSUITS

All three of them see the elevator door open down the corridor -- in front of Boyd. Foster stands there helplessly. Boyd observes blankly for a moment, then lunges toward Foster, staggering into the elevator just as the doors close behind him --

Hiller impulsively moves forward -- but the Moonsuits grab him --

MOONSUIT

It's too late, man!

They pause a moment, restraining Hiller.

MOONSUIT

(Finally)

Let's move --

They start to take Hiller with them through the opening --

HILLER  
 (Looking back)  
 Wait!

They turn to look --

The elevator door is opening again...

Foster steps out shakily. Boyd lies crumpled on the elevator floor.

The Moonsuits push Hiller out the opening --

MOONSUIT  
 Get out! We'll take care of it.

EXT. FACTORY

Hiller emerges to CHEERS and blinding sunlight.

The SWAT team Captain steps forward hesitantly, then lets himself go and hugs Hiller.

Hiller looks back expectantly at the exit opening. Two bricklayers are poised to brick it up as soon as the Moonsuits emerge.

A HISS of compressed air and a transparent plastic bubble balloons out from the opening, growing to man size.

A moment, then Foster steps out of the opening, inside the bubble, clutching his baggage, bewildered. The onlookers GASP.

The bubble detaches from the opening. The Moonsuits step out now -- and the bricklayers go swiftly to work on the opening.

Foster is frantic --

FOSTER  
 No! No! This can't be!

MOONSUIT  
 (Grim)  
 He breathed a lot of it in.

There is silence. No one knows what to say, how to react.

Concerned doctors crowd around the bubble as we PULL BACK a little to REVEAL more of the sealed-up factory and the signs going up -- "DANGER: DO NOT ENTER", "WARNING: CONTAMINATED AREA"...

Foster is breaking down, punching at the walls of his bubble --

FOSTER  
 (Hysterical)  
 Look what you've done to me!

-- as we LEAVE HIM BEHIND ...

CUT TO:

INT. FACTORY LOBBY - THE ELEVATOR

Boyd's body lies twisted on the floor of the elevator, as the elevator door closes... hits his leg and opens again...

... closes...

-- hits the leg and opens again...

... closes...

-- hits the leg and opens again...

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK FROM THE FACTORY A WAYS

Adilman and Hiller stand silently together in the f.g. looking at the factory.

They overhear a Scientist and an FBI Agent talking nearby --

FBI AGENT  
 Mummified...?

SCIENTIST  
 The bacteria that cause decay will die from the plutonium too. So the body of the madman will be preserved indefinitely...

Hiller and Adilman exchange looks...

HILLER  
 A tomb... like the pyramids...

ADILMAN  
 A monument...  
 (Beat)  
 You know what it says on the gates of Dachau?

Hiller nods.

HILLER  
(Finally)  
"Never forget".

THE FACTORY

In a wide shot we are left looking at the entire factory, so solid and massive, for the credits to roll over...

FADE OUT.