

STITCH IN TIME

written by
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Story by
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FADE IN:

THE WARNER BROTHERS LOGO

...but not the full color, computer-enhanced logo we see at the beginning of every Warner Brothers movie. No, this one's much cooler, circa 1959, glowing in silvery black and white tones, an icon of an age when Sinatra was rapidly becoming the defining quintessence of cool.

OPENING CREDITS are presented Saul Bass-style, in black and white on a stylized background. TITLE MUSIC is pure late 50's potboiler -- ominous, overheated, jazzy. It's Bernard Herrman meets Mickey Spillane; heavy on strings, horns and bongos...

EXT - LOS ANGELES, 1959 - NIGHT

...which brings us to a landscape of city lights aglow in black and white. SUPER TITLE:

Once upon a time in the City of Angels...

COLOR BLEEDS INTO THE IMAGE as we BOOM DOWN to --

AN ALLEY

-- where we meet LENNY "THE DWARF" DWORKIN, a crazed little man (not actually a dwarf) lugging two enormous suitcases. His eyes are huge behind thick glasses. He sets his luggage down at the mouth of the alley to catch his breath, eyeing a jazz club across the street with "LOU'S THE BLUES" written in neon. Hot, smoky JAZZ MUSIC drifts seductively into the night.

Lenny is about to press on when suddenly:

OFFICER NED CHRISTY walks into view, a young black rookie in a blue uniform, swinging his baton and peering into darkened storefronts as he walks his beat.

LENNY draws back into the shadows of the alley, becoming one with the trash cans. He glances over in alarm at his suitcases sitting in plain view at the mouth of the alley. The cop is bound to see them. Lenny pulls a small cheap automatic.

CHRISTY keeps coming closer, oblivious to the danger.

LENNY'S holding his breath. Waiting. Will the cop go by, or will he have to kill him? Suddenly, headlights sweep the mouth of the alley as a CAR turns a corner and pulls up in front of Lou's. TWO MEN in hats get out. Christy doubles back across the street toward them.

CHRISTY

Excuse me. That's a red zone.

(CONTINUED)

STITCH

Write me a ticket. I'll wallpaper
my bathroom.

Christy steps closer and recognizes NICK STITCHLER, aka "Stitch." Stitch has that Sinatra thing, that defining quintessence of cool. He's 40's, a bachelor, no-nonsense and resolute, a man's man with a streak of wiseass in him. His partner is DANNY PEARL, equally resolute, a soft-spoken family man. They're plainclothes cops. Danny has a newspaper under his arm with the headline: "ARSON EPIDEMIC."

CHRISTY

Sorry, sir. Didn't recognize you.
(indicates Lou's)
Your fourth night in a row. You
must love the jazz here.

DANNY

Owner's been nervous lately, what
with all the fires we've been
having. We get the chance, we pop
in and show our faces around.

STITCH

And, yes, we love the jazz. Join
us? Cops drink free.

CHRISTY

Thanks. I don't drink.

DANNY

Doesn't drink on duty. Very
commendable.

CHRISTY

No sir. I don't drink, period.
Gotta stay sharp. Set an example.

He tips his hat and smiles. Off he goes, walking his beat.

STITCH

Kid's a deviate.

INT - LOU'S THE BLUES - NIGHT

As hot and smoky as the music being played. Stitch and Danny
enter. LOU, the middle-aged black proprietor, tends bar.

LOU

Singles?

STITCH

Doubles, Lou. Gotta stay sharp. Set
an example.

(CONTINUED)

Lou shoots him a look, starts making the drinks. Stitch leans heavily on the bar, grumbling to Danny:

STITCH

Another red zone.

DANNY

Don't start. For my sake.

STITCH

Wasn't there yesterday. This city grows red zones overnight. Like mushrooms.

DANNY

Stitch, I'm begging. You hear me begging?

Lou slides them their drinks. Both cops turn their attention to the BLACK JAZZ COMBO on the tiny stage. Lou leans on the counter, picks up Danny's newspaper, starts reading.

PUSH IN on the headline: "ARSON EPIDEMIC." CAMERA TILTS UP off the words and DISSOLVES THROUGH THE CEILING to:

THE FLOOR ABOVE

Empty offices. Deserted at this time of night. MUFFLED MUSIC comes from the club below. Lenny the Dwarf, wearing oversized rubber galoshes, splashes around in an inch-deep pool of gasoline as he douses the walls and floor with a jerry can.

Lenny hurls the empty can away -- it clatters and bounces onto a pile of empties in the corner.

He pulls another jerry can from a suitcase. Uncaps it. Flings gasoline as he spins around, dancing to the jazz. An artist at work. The Picasso of firebugs. One happy man.

INT - LOU'S THE BLUES - NIGHT

Stitch glides to a table occupied by a lovely BLONDE and sits. She throws him a challenging look.

BLONDE

What's on your mind?

STITCH

You. Me. A nice chianti. Linguini and clams. Soft lights. The samba. Did I mention I'm a great dancer?

BLONDE

You really expect to get anywhere with that line?

(CONTINUED)

STITCH

If you're quick on the uptake.
You're starting out slow. Better
pick it up or you'll lose me.

The blonde loves this. She raises her martini to her lips and gives him a coy smile -- but a drop of gasoline lands in her drink. Stitch frowns and takes the glass from her. Did something really fall in it, or is it his imagination?

Another drop lands unexpectedly on his cheek. He looks up.

The ceiling is soaking through from above. Drops falling.

He wipes the drop off his cheek and sniffs his fingertips. His eyes go wide, he lunges from his chair --

STITCH

EVERYBODY OUT!

-- and the place EXPLODES, blowing him right off his feet and disintegrating the bottles behind the bar. People are knocked out of their chairs by an immense, concussive fireball that races across the ceiling --

EXT - LOU'S - NIGHT

-- and blows all the windows out into the street on tongues of flame. Stitch's car instantly ignites.

INT - LOU'S - NIGHT

Fire. Chaos. Panic. Stitch and Danny struggle through the flames, herding people out the exits. Behind them, the ceiling collapses in a storm of flaming debris as we

CUT TO:

EXT - LOU'S - NIGHT

FIREMEN fight a losing battle with the blaze, with more trucks arriving. A CROWD has gathered. Stitch, Danny, and Christy are helping move the spectators back across the street.

Stitch finds Lou gazing at the fire with tears in his eyes, watching his life burn to the ground. Stitch wishes there were some comfort to offer. There isn't. Gently:

STITCH

C'mon Lou. We gotta move you back
across the street.

LOU

(softly)

Fuck it.

(CONTINUED)

Lou turns and walks away, never looking back. Stitch keeps moving the spectators back, suddenly seeing:

Lenny the Dwarf stands in the crowd, staring at the fire with a crazed sort of glee. Spittle stains his chin. The round lenses of his glasses reflect the fire -- the man looks like he has two holes of flame instead of eyes.

Stitch sidles over to Danny.

STITCH

Pinch me if I'm dreaming, but ain't that Lenny Dworkin over there?

DANNY

Lenny the Dwarf? The torch artist?
(subtle glance)
I'll be damned. Last I heard he was polishing rocks at Sing-Sing.

STITCH

Must'a got out. Funny thing, him being here. With a fire and all.

Danny motions Christy over, mutters:

DANNY

There's a guy in the crowd...

CHRISTY

(scanning broadly)
Where?

STITCH

Ixnay, kid, low profile. White guy. Rumpled raincoat. Grinning and drooling like he just laid Marilyn Monroe. Figure he's the one who torched Lou's.

CHRISTY

He is?

STITCH

We're laying odds. So here's how we play it --

Christy's no longer listening. He charges into the crowd.

CHRISTY

You there! Step forward!

Lenny realizes he's been spotted. He bolts, knocking people down. Stitch and Danny exchange an exasperated glance.

(CONTINUED)

STITCH

Don't you love rookies?

DANNY

Ever so much.

They wade into the crowd, joining the chase.

Up ahead, Christy catches Lenny with a flying tackle that takes them to the pavement. Lenny rams an elbow into Christy's throat, drags the choking cop upright, jams a gun in his ear.

Stitch and Danny draw their weapons and drop into a crouch. Bystanders scatter or flatten to the ground. Lenny backs into the street, using Christy as a shield.

LENNY

(shrill, spittle flying)

Back off or I ventilate his head!

STITCH

Don't do it, Lenny! We'd have to kill you! Think of the paperwork!

Lenny spots a red FIRE DEPARTMENT SEDAN. Engine's running. He drags the terrified rookie toward the car -- but Christy rams his elbow into Lenny's gut, slams him back against the car. Lenny lashes out, pistol-whipping Christy. Christy falls, leaving Lenny exposed.

STITCH

Drop it!

Lenny OPENS FIRE instead. Stitch and Danny flatten. Lenny jumps in the car and floors it, SCREECHING away.

Stitch and Danny race into the street and send a VOLLEY OF GUNFIRE after him. The rear window is blown to fragments, but the car peels out of sight.

STITCH

Quick! Get the car!

But Danny just gives him a long, dour look. Stitch turns. Their car is a ball of flame parked in the red zone in front of Lou's. The building collapses, flattening it as we

CUT TO:

INT - PRECINCT - CAPTAIN THORSEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Stitch and Danny sit before CAPTAIN THORSEN.

STITCH

Sir, it's not really our fault.

(CONTINUED)

THORSEN

Oh? Seems to me you let the suspect escape, but maybe I'm wrong! Feel free to contradict me. Am I wrong? Is that what you're saying?

OUTSIDE THORSEN'S OFFICE

Christy is within earshot as he hunt-and-pecks his report on a manual typewriter. A long MUFFLED TIRADE OF SHOUTING is heard, then silence. Stitch and Danny exit the office. Christy rises to speak, but Stitch freezes him with a look and walks on.

CHRISTY

It was my fault. Why didn't he tell the captain?

Danny just shrugs and smiles. He yanks Christy's report from the typewriter, crumples it up, and trails after Stitch.

EXT - PRECINCT - NIGHT

Danny catches up with Stitch outside:

STITCH

That's it! I've had it with this job -- with this city! Look!

He jabs a finger through a bullet hole in his charred sleeve, wags the finger under Danny's nose.

STITCH

We get blown up and shot at, for what? To get our asses chewed?

DANNY

You feel unloved? You're in the wrong line of work. All they promised was a gun and a badge.

STITCH

I've had it, Danny. I'm cashing in. I'm gonna go be a cop in some godforsaken little town way out in the country somewhere. Like Encino.

DANNY

There's nothing in Encino but cows.

STITCH

Exactly. When was the last time a cow took a shot at you? If you're smart, you'll come along. L.A. doesn't need us. Maybe it did once, but not anymore.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

So you're gonna turn in your notice. Just like that.

STITCH

No, I'm gonna pound my notice down the captain's throat. Just as soon as we clean up this mess.

(beat)

Think about it. Be a shame to split up a good partnership.

He turns and walks into the night.

EXT - CHINATOWN - NIGHT

SIMULATED FLAMES billow across the screen -- it's glittering silk spewing from the mouth of a Chinese dragon weaving up the street. FIREWORKS sizzle and flash, lighting up the night.

Stitch hops off a Red Car trolley and makes his way through the celebrating crowd.

EXT - RESIDENTIAL STREET (DOWNTOWN HILLS) - NIGHT

In the city below, eerie in moonlight, lies the massive concrete and steel skeleton of a freeway being built.

ANGLE WIDENS on a lovely Mexican statue of Christ standing guard over a concrete foot bridge. Stitch appears, crosses the bridge past the statue. His BUNGALOW APARTMENT is revealed on a gentle hillside as he turns the corner and heads up the path. He plucks an orange from a tree as we

FADE TO:

EXT - MACARTHUR PARK - DAY

A beautiful Saturday afternoon. Stitch is on the lake in a rented pedal-boat with "MINNIE," his gorgeous 4 year-old goddaughter. She holds a crust of bread out to a passing duck, shrieking in delight as it snatches it from her.

Danny Pearl and his wife IRIS, Minnie's parents, drift by in another boat. Danny snaps a photo of Stitch and Minnie with a Brownie camera. FADE UP MARIACHI MUSIC --

EXT - OLVERA STREET - DAY

-- coming from a spirited MARIACHI BAND. The plaza is crowded with SIGHTSEERS. VENDORS hawk their wares. Stitch bops to the Mariachi beat as he winds through the crowd with Minnie on his shoulders. Danny and Iris trail behind, browsing.

(CONTINUED)

RAMON is doing business out of a rickety souvenir stand laden with dangling toys, cheap mementos, stuffed animals. He sees Stitch, pulls out a tiny sombrero.

RAMON

Buenos dias, Detective. A sombrero for the little senorita?

Minnie gazes longingly at a small purple giraffe rag doll. She whispers in Stitch's ear.

STITCH

Ramon, my advisor tells me to go for the purple giraffe. How much?

RAMON

Fifty centavos. For you, two bits.

Stitch pays for the doll, stuffs it in his coat pocket with a glance to make sure Danny and Iris haven't noticed. He pulls a small photo and shows Ramon. Lenny Dworkin's mug shot.

STITCH

Ring any bells?

Ramon shakes his head. Suddenly, an EXPLOSION OF FIRE leaps up into frame. Stitch turns. A MEXICAN CLOWN is doing a fire-eating act for the crowd. The flames go billowing skyward.

CUT TO:

EXT - STREET - DUSK

Officer Christy walks his beat. He stops to chat with a group of ELDERLY FOLKS in the shade of a Mom n' Pop grocery, showing Lenny's mug shot around. Everybody shakes their heads...except one OLD LADY, who peers closer...

CUT TO:

INT - DANNY'S HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

Stitch is on the couch, having a beer with Danny and Iris. Minnie is dozing on Stitch's lap in her pajamas. Stitch smiles down at her. He adores this kid.

STITCH

C'mon, honey. Time to tuck you in.

MINNIE

(half awake)
I'm not sleepy.

STITCH

You're not? Well, I sure am.

(CONTINUED)

He gives her a huge false yawn. It triggers a real yawn in the little girl. Stitch picks her up.

STITCH
C'mon, kiss Mommy and Daddy good
night.

Dangling in his arms, Minnie kisses her parents.

INT - MINNIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Stitch tucks Minnie in. She gives him a big hug and kiss.

STITCH
I could tell you were saving the
best kiss for me. We had a big day,
didn't we?

MINNIE
Can I marry you?

STITCH
Gee, I dunno. There's an outside
chance I may be too old for you.
When you start kindergarten next
year, your friends might talk.

MINNIE
You have to wait for me to grow up.

STITCH
I'll try.

MINNIE
Promise?

STITCH
Sure, Minnie Mouse. Now go to sleep,
and before you know it you'll be in
the land of purple giraffes.

MINNIE
Really?

STITCH
Only if you close your eyes.

She does. He pulls the purple giraffe from his pocket and tucks it into her arms. He kisses her forehead, switches off the bedside lamp, and steals out of the room --

THE HALLWAY

-- to find Iris staring at him. She stalks him accusingly into the living room.

(CONTINUED)

STITCH

So I got the kid a purple giraffe.
So shoot me.

IRIS

When are you going to settle down
with some nice girl and have a kid
of your own to spoil rotten?

STITCH

I don't breed in captivity. Besides,
why do I need a kid of my own? I
got yours.

She can't help smiling. The phone RINGS. Danny grabs it. (It's
Christy calling from a pay phone. INTERCUT as needed:)

DANNY

Danny Pearl speaking.

CHRISTY (filtered)

Sir? Patrolman Christy here. I
think I found Lenny Dworkin.

DANNY

Don't keep me in suspense.

CHRISTY (filtered)

You know the Charter Hotel on 18th?

DANNY

Yeah, it's a fleabag. Sit tight,
we'll be right there. And
Christy...keep a low profile.

CUT TO:

INT - CHARTER HOTEL - NIGHT

The lobby is swarming with neighborhood LOCALS, most of them
black. Stitch and Danny push their way inside. Christy's at
the front desk, trying to calm the crowd.

ANGRY MAN

I say we drag the sucker outside
and string him up!

CHRISTY

Now, you don't mean that...

ANGRY WOMAN

By his nuts!

Stitch whistles through his fingers. The crowd goes silent.

(CONTINUED)

STITCH

He's not guilty until I say he is.
Now drift.

This is obviously an edict not to be questioned. The crowd disperses, grumbling. Stitch shoots Christy a nasty look.

STITCH

Good work. Glad you didn't attract
any attention to yourself.

Christy is crestfallen -- he just can't win. Stitch shows the mug shot to the DESK MANAGER, an elderly black man.

STITCH

This who we're talking about?

MANAGER

(nods)

Comes in smellin' of gasoline most
nights. Figured he worked in a
fillin' station. Room 306.

INT - HOTEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Room 306. Stitch steps to the door, trailed by Christy. Stitch tilts his hat into his hand, roots around under the sweatband, pulls out a set of lock-picks. He eases them into the lock.

INT - HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Cheap and dingy. Lenny the Dwarf lies on a sweat-stained mattress in boxer shorts and socks, snoring softly. Stitch suddenly enters with Christy at his heels.

STITCH

If it isn't Lenny Dworkin. The
rodent that walks like a man.

Lenny sputters awake, bolts for the fire escape -- but Danny comes in through the window and drives him back into Stitch's grasp with a punch in the mouth. Stitch bounces Lenny off the floor a few times, then drags him upright and slams him into the corner hard enough to rattle his fillings.

STITCH

Hiya, Lenny. Love your cologne.
High test?

Danny notices a map of Los Angeles taped to the wall. The map is stuck with dozens of push pins.

DANNY

Funny how all the pins are stuck in
places we've had fires lately.

(CONTINUED)

STITCH

Hilarious. I might bust a gut laughing.

DANNY

Lenny, Lenny, Lenny. You've been a busy boy.

LENNY

That don't prove nothing! It'll never stand up in court!

STITCH

Oh, it'll stand up all right. It might even sing and dance. Like Cyd Charisse.

DANNY

Ruby Keeler.

STITCH

Jimmy Cagney.

DANNY

Fred Astaire.

STITCH

Lenny, we got a whole musical on our hands...

He peels Lenny off the wall and shoves him on the bed.

STITCH

...so why don't you tell us who you're working for?

LENNY

Who says I'm working for anybody?

DANNY

(studying map)
You're a torch for hire, Lenny, everybody knows that. So spill.

LENNY

Up yours, flatfoot.

ANGRY VOICES filter up from the street below. Danny drifts to the window, glances out, calls to Stitch:

DANNY

You order a lynch mob?

Lenny scurries to the window. He's greeted by SHOUTS AND JEERS. A bottle shatters against the window frame. Lenny

(CONTINUED)

recoils in terror, flattening against the wall.

LENNY
Holyfuckingshit.

ANGRY MAN
Well? Is the little peckerwood
guilty or not?

DANNY
(leans out)
Yeah, but according to him we
haven't got enough evidence to
arrest him.

ANGRY MAN
Fine by us!

STITCH
Fine by me too. C'mon, partner.
(heads for the door)
So long, Lenny. It's been a slice.

LENNY
Where are you going?

DANNY
Home. It's getting late.

LENNY
I can see what's going on here!
You're trying to bluff me out!

STITCH
No bluff, Lenny. You win. You're
free to go.

DANNY
G'night. God bless.

LENNY
Wait a minute! You gotta arrest me!
What about all this proof? What
about the map on the wall?

Stitch and Danny glance at each other and start laughing.

STITCH
He calls that proof.

DANNY
What a crazy guy. Life of the party.

STITCH
Gotta love him.

(CONTINUED)

LENNY

Fellas, please! I'm your man, I
swear!

DANNY

We need more to go on, Lenny.

Stitch lashes out and drags the firebug close, eyeball-to-eyeball. Close enough to bite.

STITCH

Like the name of the guy paying you
to torch my city, you little rat
bastard.

CUT TO:

EXT - STREET - NIGHT

Dark clouds gathering. Distant flashes within the clouds. A storm coming in. TILT DOWN to:

A business district of office buildings. A Chinese laundry. An all-night diner straight out of Edward Hopper. Not many people out. A couple scurry by, eager to beat the storm.

A car pulls up. Stitch, Danny, Christy, and Lenny get out. They cross the street toward a five-story pre-war OFFICE BUILDING with an elaborate iron fire escape.

INT - BUILDING LOBBY - NIGHT

The group enters, greeted by a few potted plants, some leather club chairs, a long counter with message slots.

LENNY

Never seen nobody else up there.
Just him.

A look passes between Stitch and Danny. Stitch pulls a quarter from his pocket, prepares to toss.

STITCH

I call heads.

He flips the coin, slaps it to the counter. It's heads. Danny sighs. (This has all the earmarks of long-standing ritual.)

STITCH

You babysit the rookie.

Christy is stung by this. Stitch doesn't care -- he pockets the coin, drags Lenny into the elevator, shuts the folding iron gate. The elevator rises from view, arrow creeping around.

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTY

What's with the coin toss?

DANNY

We always flip to see who stakes
the lobby. I always lose. I
wouldn't mind, but nobody ever gets
past the son of a bitch.

INT - FIFTH FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Stitch dogs Lenny from the elevator to a door. The words on the pebbled glass read: "PHILLIP RANDOM -- Attorney." Stitch flattens against the wall, draws his .45, knocks gently.

INT - RANDOM'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Shadowy, lit by a desk lamp. PHILLIP RANDOM, an oily young man with a pencil-thin mustache, whispers into the phone:

RANDOM

Hold on. Somebody's at the door.

He puts the receiver down, slinks across the room.

LENNY (O.S.)

Mr. Random? It's me, Lenny Dworkin.

THE DOOR

opens a crack and Random peers out.

RANDOM

Dworkin? Are you crazy coming here?
Every cop in town's looking for you!

Stitch's hand enters frame, grabs Random's necktie, and pulls his face into the crack of the door. Random's features are squeezed, his eyes bugging out as Stitch leans close.

STITCH

Yeah. He knows.

Stitch kicks the door open and propels Random back across the room against his desk. He jams his .45 to Random's nose.

STITCH

We're gonna play 20 questions. If I
think you're holding back, I pull
the trigger and you spend the rest
of your life breathing through your
armpits. Are we clear on the rules?

CAMERA PANS OVER THE DESK to the phone -- whoever's on the line can hear what's going on.

(CONTINUED)

IN ANOTHER OFFICE

FRANKY DOYLE has the phone to his ear, listening. He's a small-time gangster in his early 20's -- young, but with eyes like flint. With him is JIMMY THE SKINK, a skinny 18 year-old sociopath with a rabid grin and acne scars. BULL BEIFUS is built like a beer truck. Other THUGS hover close by.

STITCH'S VOICE (filtered)

First question. How does a low rent shyster like you foot the bill for a citywide barbecue?

RANDOM'S VOICE (filtered)

I'm just a go-between. I deliver instructions and keep the books, that's all I do.

Doyle looks up toward the ceiling as LIGHTNING tears the sky.

DOYLE

Random's got company.

OUTSIDE THE BUILDING

Through a fourth-floor window, we see Franky Doyle looking up at the ceiling. Through a fifth floor window (the office just above his) we see Stitch grilling Random.

IN THE LOBBY

Christy peers out the window at the approaching storm. Danny, sunk in a club chair, stifles a yawn.

DANNY

Wanna make yourself useful, grab us some coffee across the street.

IN RANDOM'S OFFICE

Lenny is crouched in front of the safe, turning the dial.

RANDOM

...left 49, right 16, left 5.

Lenny opens the safe and pulls out a sheaf of documents in a cloth binder. He sorts through it.

LENNY

This is it. Places that got torched, payment dates, canceled checks...

STITCH

Signed by who?

(CONTINUED)

LENNY

Some guy named Francis P. Doyle.

STITCH

(to Random)

Franky Doyle? That two-bit
douchebag? He's behind all this?

A FLASH OF LIGHTNING reveals Doyle and his thugs looming in the doorway, guns drawn. Lenny gasps.

DOYLE

That would be a yes.

Stitch pivots and hurls Random into Doyle, knocking the whole group into the hallway in a tangled heap. He slams the door and locks it, diving away as BULLETS tear through the wood.

IN THE LOBBY

The SOUND OF THUNDER masks the sound of gunshots. Danny's in the club chair, bored, drumming his fingers.

ON THE FIRE ESCAPE

Stitch throws the window open and looks out. One of Doyle's goons is coming up the fire escape, cutting them off.

STITCH

(mutters)

Should'a read my horoscope today.

Stitch drags Lenny up the fire escape. Behind them, the door bursts in, splintered off its hinges by Bull.

LOW ANGLE OF BUILDING

Stitch and Lenny scramble up the fire escape with Doyle and his boys in hot pursuit. ANGLE PULLS BACK to reveal Christy at the diner's counter across the street, oblivious.

CHRISTY

Better make that four coffees...

ON THE ROOF

Stitch and Lenny run through a jumble of air ducts, becoming separated in the twists and turns. Stitch rolls up the dossier of evidence and slam-dunks it down an air vent.

INSIDE THE VENT

The evidence clatters into the vent, bounces off a spinning fan blade, and scatters into a narrow space in the roof.

(CONTINUED)

STITCH

skids to a stop and flattens into the shadows. He pulls his gun and looks around in desperation. He can hear Doyle's men SHOUTING to each other as they comb the roof.

Lenny suddenly steps into view, a dark silhouette. He seems bewildered, lost. Stitch reaches out and grabs him, pulling him into the shadows. Lenny is weeping.

LENNY

I never should'a listened. It's all your fault.

STITCH

Take it easy, Lenny. I'll get you out of this.

A sudden FLASH OF LIGHTNING reveals the handle of a butterfly knife sticking out of Lenny's stomach. Lenny is staring down at the knife, weeping at the sight of so much of his own blood. He sinks to his knees as Stitch gapes in horror.

Bull looms from the darkness. Stitch spins to shoot, but Bull grabs his hand and squeezes until we hear bone cracking. Stitch screams as the gun discharges harmlessly into the air. Bull plucks it from Stitch's hand and hurls it away.

Stitch gazes up in awe at the big man. We're talking trouble. Bull proceeds to bounce Stitch off the wall again and again, methodically and brutally. Playing handball with him.

DOYLE (O.S.)

Give it a rest.

ANGLE SHIFTS to reveal Doyle and Jimmy the Skink drifting from the shadows. Jimmy's CLICK-CLACKING a large butterfly knife open and shut, open and shut. He stoops to pull its twin viciously out of Lenny's stomach. Lenny gasps. Jimmy starts CLICK-CLACKING both knives in perfect unison. Doyle's thugs yank Lenny to his feet and search him. They come up empty.

THUG #1

Ain't here, Boss.

Doyle cocks his head. They drag Lenny to the edge of a sloping skylight. The elevator pulley is just below the dingy glass, and below that is empty space -- the elevator shaft.

STITCH

Jesus. Don't do it.

Lenny teeters at the edge of his balance, weeping as he gazes down into the void. Jimmy leans in close.

(CONTINUED)

LENNY

Please...it ain't my fault...

JIMMY

How high do you bounce?

Jimmy shoves him. Lenny lets out a wail as he plunges through the glass. He SCREAMS all the way down the shaft and vanishes into darkness. A final DISTANT THUD. Jimmy peers after him.

JIMMY

Not very high.

Stitch gets searched. Doyle takes his wallet, flips it open to find a gold detective's badge. He flings the wallet away.

DOYLE

A solid gold dick. L.A.'s finest.
You have something of mine.

Stitch says nothing. Doyle glances at Jimmy and Bull. They work Stitch over until he goes to his knees.

DOYLE

I'll ask again.

STITCH

Ask all you want.

Jimmy and Bull yank Stitch to his feet and slam him back against the base of a radio relay tower, where they secure him with his own handcuffs. Jimmy pulls a knife, whirling it open in front of Stitch's eyes.

STITCH

I'm impressed. You ever get tired
of working for him, you can get a
good job in a Chinese restaurant.

Jimmy leans in nose to nose. LIGHTNING tears the sky.

JIMMY

You gonna sing?

STITCH

I look like a fat lady to you?

Jimmy backs up, throws the knife. It THUNKS solidly in the wooden backboard of the relay tower, a scant hairbreadth to the right of Stitch's neck. LIGHTNING FLASHES.

Jimmy pulls out the second knife and CLICK-CLACKS it open. He glances at Doyle. Doyle nods. Jimmy throws. It slams into place just to the left of Stitch's neck. MORE LIGHTNING.

(CONTINUED)

Jimmy pulls out yet a third knife.

DOYLE

Jimmy, put this one dead center of
the other two.

Stitch gulps. Dead center means right into his throat.

DOYLE

Last chance, Detective.

STITCH

Go piss in your hat.

Doyle nods to Jimmy. Jimmy twirls the blade open with a flourish, then draws his arm back for the final throw --

-- and a MASSIVE BOLT OF LIGHTNING strikes the relay tower, engulfing Stitch in a HUGE FLASH of inconceivably high voltage. We hear his drawn-out SCREAM as the world goes nuclear white.

Doyle and his men are knocked right on their asses.

The lightning dies. The gangsters rise, gaping in shock. Aftershocks of electricity skitter up and down the tower in vaporous strands, then dissipate entirely.

Stitch is gone. In his place hangs something resembling a charred, tattered scarecrow swaying in the wind.

BULL

Oh, yuck.

DOYLE

Fried him. Just like that.

They tear their eyes off the grisly sight and hurry away. PUSH IN on the smoking corpse. A charred watch slithers off the wrist and drops near Stitch's discarded badge and gun.

FIFTH FLOOR HALLWAY

Doyle and his men rush down the stairs from the roof and hustle onto the elevator. Bull starts to close the folding iron door, but a MATRONLY LADY with a feathered hat appears.

LADY

Hold the lift, please.

Bull holds the door. Doyle glares at him as she gets on.

IN THE LOBBY

Danny paces the floor. He glances up, sees the elevator finally start to descend.

(CONTINUED)

IN THE STREET

Christy is walking back from the diner with coffee and doughnuts, collar turned up against the drizzle.

IN THE ELEVATOR

The matronly lady is surrounded by stone-faced gangsters all trying to look innocent as newborn babies. Everybody's staring straight ahead, nobody saying a word.

A small drop of blood lands on the lady's hat. Bull glances up. He nudges the others. TILT UP to reveal Lenny the Dwarf's mangled face protruding through the smashed ceiling of the elevator just above the lady's head, his eyes wide and staring, his tongue distended and blue. He seems to be looking directly down at her, making an awful face. The thugs have to bite their lips to keep from laughing.

IN THE LOBBY

Danny watches the arrow approach the ground floor. Christy enters, grinning as he shakes water off his uniform.

CHRISTY

You like sweetrolls, sir?

Danny looks at him, distracted as the elevator stops. He turns back as the gate opens, expecting to see Stitch. Instead:

Doyle and his men are exiting the elevator. Realizing there are cops in the lobby.

An eternity passes in the space of a mere heartbeat. Then things explode, fraction-of-a-second events ticking out in agonizing SLOW MOTION as if molasses had been poured into the very gears and cogs of time itself:

THE GANGSTERS go for their guns, coats snapping back as weapons fly free --

DANNY goes for his gun, fully aware that he's a dead man but drawing anyway, face contorting as he screams a pointless warning to Christy --

CHRISTY frozen in the entrance, eyes going wide with incomprehension and fear --

JIMMY pumping a sawed-off shotgun as he kicks the lady in the back to propel her into the line of fire --

THE GANGSTERS unleashing an incredible barrage of GUNFIRE --

THE LADY is blown off her feet --

(CONTINUED)

DANNY is lifted into the air by the gunfire, body shredding, the counter behind him getting chewed to pieces --

CHRISTY has coffee and doughnuts EXPLODE out of his hands as the bullets tear into him, the glass doors shattering all around him --

WIDE ANGLE OF LOBBY

Abrupt, stunning silence. A haze of cordite smoke hangs in the air, along with the thick coppery smell of blood.

A slaughterhouse.

JIMMY
(softly)

Fuck.

Doyle and his men race into the night as we

FADE TO BLACK

EXT - LOS ANGELES, 1999 - NIGHT

A storm is brewing. Lightning dances in the clouds.

EXT - HYPERDYNE RESEARCH LABORATORIES - NIGHT

A sprawling complex surrounded by an electric fence. A GUARD occupies the gate booth, watching a bank of surveillance screens. A local newscast plays on a small color TV:

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
...blaze spread to the adjoining
warehouse. Authorities confirm
this was another in a recent rash
of arson fires plaguing this city...

Suddenly, a BOLT OF LIGHTNING strikes the immense turbine generators on the roof of the lab. Another follows directly on its heels. The guard jumps to his feet.

LIGHTNING dances and writhes, bolt after bolt striking the building -- as if the generators had suddenly completed a circuit with the sky. The guard spins, slaps the intercom.

GUARD
This is the gate! There's something
really weird going on out here!

INT - HYPERDYNE LAB - NIGHT

A COLD-FUSION NUCLEAR ACCELERATOR HUMS in high gear, looking like a tunnel of giant glowing sparkplugs, creating a swirling field of electromagnetic energy.

(CONTINUED)

Behind thick viewing windows is the control room, filled with computer terminals and high-tech gear. TECHNICIANS in lab coats scurry about as an ALARM BLARES. DOCTOR LEFKO, the senior scientist, shouts over the noise to SUTTON:

LEFKO

Where's that surge coming from?

SUTTON

I don't know, but it's blazing through our circuits like crazy! Should I shut it down?

LEFKO

Not unless we reach critical mass!

GUARD (filtered)

Hey! Anybody listening in there?

LEFKO

(hits the intercom)

We're a little busy! Can't this wait?

GUARD (filtered)

I don't think so! Check your screen, I'm putting something through!

A VIDEO MONITOR winks to life, showing an exterior view of the Hyperdyne complex. LIGHTNING blazes from the sky in overlapping bolts into the roof turbines -- or is it the other way around? Is the machinery actually spewing lightning skyward?

Lefko and the others crowd around the monitor, stunned:

SUTTON

That's our surge?

LEFKO

A surge from God. We're drawing power right out of the sky...

Sutton peers at a computer screen, more amazed by the moment.

SUTTON

...or it's drawing power from us.

TECH #1

We're approaching critical!

LEFKO

Trip the breakers! Shut it down!

A flurry of activity. All eyes go to the machine -- instead of shutting down, it's increasing its output. The HUMMING builds

(CONTINUED)

to a LOUD HYSTERICAL WHINE. The electromagnetic field becomes a swirling vortex/tunnel of power and dancing light.

SUTTON

What the hell's happening? We're not feeding her anymore!

LEFKO

She's feeding herself.

He points to the video screen. The roof turbines are trading a continuous, unabated surge of LIGHTNING with the sky --

EXT - HYPERDYNE - NIGHT

-- which results in a final incredible BLAST OF VOLTAGE that blazes through any and every electrical system available to it. Sheer power shoots along the electric fence. The guard dives from his booth as his video screens EXPLODE!

INT - HYPERDYNE - NIGHT

The surge blows through the building, detonating every light, every computer, every phone. The scientists hit the deck as the thick viewing windows shatter into fragments.

The nuclear accelerator spews an incredible blast of sheer white energy and Stitch is hurled screaming from the tunnel as if shot from a cannon.

His landing is rough -- he skids across the floor and slams head-first into the wall. He gets up, dazed and cradling his head, trying not to pass out as flames leap up around him.

STITCH

Oh great. I'm in Hell.

Lefko, in his white lab coat, staggers from the control room.

STITCH

And the Devil's a dentist. Perfect.

Overhead sprinklers kick on. GUARDS with extinguishers arrive to evacuate the scientists. One of them sees Stitch.

SECURITY #1

Who the hell is that?

SECURITY #2

(drawing his weapon)

Hey! Freeze it right there!

The guard fires a warning shot. Stitch runs for it, careening through the smoky maze of the building, bumping into evacuees, the two guards hot on his heels.

(CONTINUED)

EXT - HYPERDYNE - NIGHT

An orange glow fills the sky as the building burns. Stitch bursts from a side exit, plowing through the people already in the parking lot. He vaults the shorted-out fence and keeps going, running full-tilt from a nightmare as we

CUT TO:

EXT - ALLEY - NIGHT

We find DETECTIVE NED CHRISTY napping in an unmarked Taurus, snoring softly. Now late 50's, Christy is a far cry from his rookie days. The idealism of youth has given way to a big belly and the weary cynicism that only a lifetime of cop work can provide. He's a tired old man with too many miles on him, a walking set of fallen arches waiting for retirement.

POLICE RADIO (filtered)

All units, we have a possible arson in progress at Hyperdyne Research Lab, 1102 Ordway Street. Suspect is fleeing scene, male Caucasian...

The radio DRONES on, but Christy seems in no danger of waking up. He shifts in his seat, sputtering.

Suddenly, fire trucks rage past the mouth of the alley. SIRENS WAILING. Christy sits up, startled and disoriented.

CHRISTY

What? Huh? Shit.

He starts his engine, drains the last swallow from a pint of whiskey, and tosses the empty bottle out the window. He sprays his breath with Binaca, breathes into his palm to test his breath, then slowly pulls out. No big hurry.

Christy's car disappears around the corner. SWISH PAN to Stitch as he staggers into the alley near the point of mental and physical collapse. He pauses to catch his breath.

Suddenly, a police helicopter ROARS into view at the end of the alley, hovering near street level, searchlight catching Stitch in a halo of blinding light.

He turns and runs for his life, face contorted with terror as shafts of light dance around him. He ducks down an intersecting alley. The copter spirals up into the sky.

Stitch flees through the back alleys like a rat in a maze, twisting, turning, barely keeping one step ahead of the searching helicopter. He runs out into the street --

-- and a DOZEN POLICE CARS converge. The copter pins him with

(CONTINUED)

light. Stitch gets hemmed in, blinded on all sides by revolving lights. COPS pour from their cars, led by DETECTIVES SCORBY AND WELLES. Stitch is stunned to see Welles -- a woman -- pump a shotgun and holler:

WELLES
FREEZE, ASSHOLE!

Out pops UNIFORMED COP #1 with a stun gun, FIRING BOTH DARTS. They hit Stitch in the chest, trailing tiny wires. Stitch has half a second to look down with a "what the fuck" expression on his face, then the CHARGE ZAPS HIM off his feet --

-- and then something weird happens: the current flowing through the wires doesn't stop. In fact, it's increasing. COP #1 stares at the gun in his hands, stunned as the wires start to smoke. Electricity surges down the wires into Stitch, as if power were being sucked out of the gun. The cop is desperately slapping at the controls, trying to stop it.

COP #2
Shut the damn thing off!

COP #1
I'm trying!

It finally ends. Officers rush to check on Stitch. Cop #1 does a "hot potato" with the overcooked stun gun, staring at it with deep confusion. He looks up. Everybody's staring at him.

SCORBY
How'd you stop it?

COP #1
I didn't. The battery drained.

CUT TO:

INT - HYPERDYNE - NIGHT

A scorched, waterlogged mess. FIREMEN are mopping up. Lefko and Sutton are poking through the rubble to see what they can salvage as Christy takes their statements:

CHRISTY
Exactly what kinda research you people do here?

LEFKO
Particle physics, that sort of thing. We were trying to isolate a tachyon.

CHRISTY
A tacky what?

(CONTINUED)

LEFKO

Tachyon. That's a sub-atomic particle. Smaller than an atom.

CHRISTY

What are these tacky particles for?

SUTTON

It's a little complicated, but we believe they move faster than the speed of light. Theoretically, at that speed, they zip back and forth through time itself.

CHRISTY

(stifles a yawn)

Pretty damn fast, I'm guessing. So what went down here?

LEFKO

An accident, Detective. A one-in-a-million freak accident.

CUT TO:

INT - HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Stitch sits alone on a bare metal bench, cradling his aching head in his hands. He's still woozy, much the worse for wear. The luxuries are few: a few folding metal chairs, some tattered magazines, a pawed-through newspaper...

INT - PRECINCT - NIGHT

...all of which we see on a VIDEO SCREEN. We're watching a live feed of Stitch in his holding cell. ANGLE SHIFTS to CAPTAIN JONAS, young and college-educated, with Scorby and Welles. Other COPS are gathered.

WELLES

Couldn't get much out of him. He's pretty zoned out. Says his name's Nick Stitchler. Computer never heard of him.

JONAS

You think he's our boy?

SCORBY

Setting all these fires?
(shrugs)

Captain, you ask me, the guy's brains are scrambled. Claims to be a cop. LAPD at that.

(CONTINUED)

JONAS

Keep running his prints, and check with mental health. Let's get a make on him, people.

Christy enters in the background, weaving his way through the jumble of desks. Welles smirks, nudging Scorby.

WELLES

Look who dragged his ass in.

SCORBY

Hope we didn't wake him.

The cops chuckle and disperse. Christy is obviously the joke of the precinct. Jonas swoops down on Christy like a hawk.

CHRISTY

Captain, I hear we got the guy.

JONAS

"We?" Detectives Scorby and Welles made the collar. And just where were you during this manhunt?

CHRISTY

At Hyperdyne, sir. Taking statements.

JONAS

Statements.

CHRISTY

Yes sir.

JONAS

(icy beat)

Whenever something's going down, you're always someplace else. Taking statements.

Christy says nothing. Swallowing his pride is nothing new, he's had years of practice. Jonas moves on. Christy glances at the video feed, sees at Stitch in his cell.

Christy proceeds to his desk, sits, starts typing his report on an old computer, hunting and pecking with two fingers. The technology may have improved, but his typing skills haven't.

PUSH IN ON CHRISTY. The gears are turning in his head. He leans back to peer at the video feed again. Something about the suspect bothers him, but he can't put his finger on it. He gets up, scans the arrest report on Scorby's desk.

CHRISTY

Nick Stitchler?

(CONTINUED)

Is that name familiar? He peers at the video feed again, long and hard. He exits into --

A DESERTED CORRIDOR

-- which is lined on both sides with countless framed 8x10s of every officer killed in the line of duty going back to the early days of the department. Christy goes down the line of proud, smiling faces -- and stops.

It's a photo of Stitch in his dress blues. Caption: "Detective Nick Stitchler. Killed in the line of duty. September 24, 1959."

Christy stares at the photo, mind blown. He digs a pint of whiskey from his inner coat pocket and takes a swallow.

CUT TO:

INT - HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Stitch is alone. Christy enters and stares at him.

CHRISTY

Who are you?

STITCH

How many times you people wanna hear this?

CHRISTY

Answer the question.

STITCH

Let's parlay. I'll flap my gums some more if you knock me a fag.

CHRISTY

Huh?

STITCH

A fag. A smoke. A cigarette.

Christy pulls out a pack. Stitch takes one. Christy raises a lighter and flicks it -- a tiny spark leaps from the lighter and strikes Stitch painfully.

STITCH

Ow! Damn! What the hell kind of lighter is that?

CHRISTY

Electronic. Never done that before.

Stitch puffs the cigarette to life. He leans back, blows smoke at the ceiling.

(CONTINUED)

STITCH
The name's Stitchler. Nick.
Detective Sergeant, LAPD.

CHRISTY
Bullshit. Nick Stitchler died
almost forty ago. Fried by
lightning on a rooftop.

That's literally the last thing Stitch expected to hear. He
cocks his head with a "say that again?" expression.

STITCH
Excuse me?

CHRISTY
I was there.

STITCH
And who might you be?

CHRISTY
Ned Christy.

STITCH
(pause)
Look pal, I know Ned Christy and
you ain't him. He's a rookie with
two left feet and a heart bigger
than his belly. Next you'll tell me
my partner's in some old folks home
gumming down a bowl of Farina.

CHRISTY
Danny Pearl died the same night
Nick Stitchler did!

STITCH
Try again. Start with "once upon a
time."

CHRISTY
I got the scars to prove it! We got
splattered all over the lobby of
that goddamn building!

Furious, Christy opens his shirt, revealing old bullet scars.

STITCH
What about Franky Doyle and his
boys? They go join a convent? Learn
a few hymns?

CHRISTY
Franky Doyle?

(CONTINUED)

STITCH

The guy you're saying iced my partner and shot you full of holes.

CHRISTY

Whoever took us out in that lobby vanished into thin air!

STITCH

You're nuts, old man. Like roca.

Christy snaps, drags Stitch to his feet.

CHRISTY

I don't know who you are or what your game is, but you're through fucking with me, understand? Come clean, or I'll tear off your head and shit down your neck!

Stitch pivots out of Christy's grasp, sends him crashing into the wall. Chairs scatter. Christy slides heavily to the floor.

STITCH

Frankly, grampa, I don't think you're up to it. Even sober.

Christy gets to his feet. Scorby suddenly bursts in, furious, and wrestles him out the door.

SCORBY

Christy, goddamn it! You trying to blow my case?

The door slams. Stitch is alone. His eyes go to the newspaper and magazines, which now lie scattered on the floor. He picks the paper up, his breath catching in his throat as he sees:

TWO COLOR PHOTOS side by side. The first is Buzz Aldrin saluting our flag on the moon. The second is President Clinton honoring the crew's achievement at a White House ceremony. The headline reads: "30TH ANNIVERSARY OF MOON LANDING."

Stitch checks the paper's masthead date: July 20, 1999. At first he's too stunned to react.

He looks at the magazines at his feet. The cover of TIME has a dozen identical babies climbing out of test tubes under the headline: "CLONING HUMANS -- THE NEXT STEP?" NEWSWEEK's cover has a photo of a NASA probe on the surface of Mars, with the headline: "COLONIZING MARS IN THE NEXT CENTURY."

It's definitely sinking in. He steps up on the metal bench, craning to peer through the small wire-mesh window set high on the wall. The first thing he sees out there is a live picture

(CONTINUED)

of himself on the video feed. He's watching himself standing on the bench, staring out the tiny window.

He turns, sees the surveillance camera on the wall, tentatively waves his hand. His image on the video screen does exactly the same thing. He finds it disorienting.

Stitch peers this way and that. He sees digital clocks. A tiny color TV showing the Hyperdyne fire. Glowing computer screens (one of which is running the "Flying Toasters" screen saver, which strikes him as particularly odd). In short, a lot of things that didn't exist in 1959.

He sits, trying to get past the "holy shit" factor. He studies the newspaper in amazement, turns it over and sees:

A familiar face. Now in his 60's, Phillip Random still sports a pencil-thin mustache. Stitch scans the accompanying story:

STITCH

"Phillip Random to appear at hearing...law firm implicated in bribery scheme..."

Stitch tears the story out as we

CUT TO:

EXT - DOWNTOWN - ESTABLISHING - MORNING

Another day in the City of Angels. Traffic chokes the streets around Parker Center.

INT - PRECINCT/P.D.'s BULLPEN - DAY

Scorby is hustling Stitch, in handcuffs, through chaotic precinct activity. They're heading for the P.D.'s bullpen, where the PUBLIC DEFENDERS stand at counters preparing their cases. (The layout's like a DMV.) Stitch immediately notices MARY SULLIVAN across the room, her back to us, legs stunning under a dark skirt suit. She's early 40's, a devastating combination of maturity, brains, and sex.

MYRON KATZ glances up from his paperwork as they approach.

KATZ

No way, don't even ask, I'm swamped enough for three people.

SCORBY

Who's up for grabs?

KATZ

(cocks his thumbs)
Try Weingard.

(CONTINUED)

STITCH
What, the bald guy?

KATZ
What's wrong with the bald guy?

STITCH
What's wrong with her? That's the best set of gams I've seen since Castro took Cuba.

Scorby and Katz trade a look. He's got a point.

CUT TO:

INT - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Mary Sullivan sits across the table from D.A. JOHN HELLER. Stitch is between them like a guy at a tennis match, head swiveling from side to side as they fire verbal salvos at each other. Scorby, Welles, and Captain Jonas are present.

HELLER
Your client has no explanation for being at the scene?

MARY
My client doesn't need one. A crime was not committed.

HELLER
Come on, he was seen running out of a burning building.

MARY
Wouldn't you?

STITCH
Good one. She's got you there.

MARY
I'll handle this.
(to Heller)
As I understand it, the Hyperdyne fire was not arson related.

HELLER
That hasn't been confirmed.

MARY
Until it is, stop wasting our time.
The most you've got is trespass.

A COP enters, whispers to Welles. Welles relays the message to Jonas and Scorby. None of them look happy.

(CONTINUED)

HELLER

Can he account for his whereabouts
where the other fires are concerned?

MARY

If you have evidence linking him to
those fires, trot it out. But do it
quick, or I might advise my client
to file suit against the city.

JONAS

(taps Heller)

Excuse me. Could we see you outside
for a moment?

Heller and the cops exit the room. Stitch smiles at Mary.

STITCH

Counselor, you are some skirt.

MARY

(shoots him a look)

Watch your mouth, asshole, or I'll
plead you guilty.

This takes him aback -- he meant it as a compliment.

OUTSIDE INTERROGATION

HELLER

Talk to me, I'm a busy man.

JONAS

We just got the verdict from the
arson team. They say those eggheads
at Hyperdyne accidentally blew up
some of their own equipment.

HELLER

Then I don't care who he is. Cut
him loose.

INT - PRECINCT - DAY

Stitch is dogging Mary's steps as she heads for the exit.

MARY

What's on your mind?

STITCH

You. Me. A nice chianti. Linguini
and clams. Soft lights. The samba.
Did I mention I'm a great dancer?

She looks at him blankly. Heller hurries past on his way out.

(CONTINUED)

HELLER

We still on for the charity auction?

MARY

Wouldn't miss it.

HELLER

Great, pick you up at six. Gotta run. Big hearing today.

Off he goes. Stitch leans in to Mary.

STITCH

What's with Mr. Wonderful? You two an item?

MARY

Look, Mr. Stitchler --

STITCH

Call me Stitch. All the best people do. Even the worst people. So how about it? Wanna paint the town? I got a ten dollar bill burning a hole in my shoe.

MARY

Are you for real?

STITCH

Maybe I'm just trying to make up for before. Whatever it was I said.

MARY

I'm sure you mean well, but I never see clients socially. Especially jerks like you.

She walks away. Stitch watches her go.

STITCH

From asshole to well-meaning jerk. I'm sensing progress.

CUT TO:

EXT - PRECINCT - DAY

Stitch exits and gazes up, stunned at the impossibly high buildings, seeing this brave new world in the harsh glare of daylight. It's another planet, far removed from Stitch's L.A.

He encounters one oddity after another. KIDS zoom by on skateboards. BANKERS jog with CELL PHONES. LOW-RIDERS bounce up the street on their suspensions, horns blaring.

(CONTINUED)

Stitch comes to a HOTDOG VENDOR doing business from a cart. It occurs to him how hungry he is.

STITCH

I haven't had a bite in years. How about one with mustard and kraut?

The vendor slaps a hotdog together and hands it to Stitch.

VENDOR

Two bucks.

Stitch is floored by the price. He tilts one end of the hotdog up with his finger, peering under it.

STITCH

You slip a steak dinner in here behind my back?

VENDOR

You want it or not?

Stitch digs the ten dollar bill from his shoe and hands it over. The vendor gives him his change.

Stitch walks with his hotdog, passing a huge display window crowded with TV sets tuned to different channels. Richard Simmons. Oprah. Bosnia. Iraq. The space shuttle. A dizzy sampling of the modern age. Stitch pauses at --

"ELECTRONICS EMPORIUM" ENTRANCE

-- where he finds his image staring back at him from a dozen screens, including a 65-inch. He looks around, finds the camera -- it's a tripod-mounted camcorder aimed out the door for the amusement of customers as they come and go.

STITCH

They got these everywhere now.

He watches himself chew his hotdog on the widescreen, tilting his head this way and that like a kid with a funhouse mirror.

A nearby TV draws his attention: it's the famous news footage of Hollywood Boulevard collapsed into the Metro Rail tunnel. Emergency crews are picking through the rubble around the giant hole. The image cuts back to TWO MEN in-studio as:

GUEST

...rail system as a dangerous boondoggle. We've got Hollywood Boulevard collapsing into the tunnels! Clearly, there are issues the city's hiding from us...

(CONTINUED)

Stitch turns back to his own image on the 65-inch, suddenly seeing something. ANGLE TIGHTENS IN until we see it too: Christy is poised near the hot dog stand half a block behind, tailing him. Stitch smiles.

STITCH

That's the spirit, Ned. Stick to me like Elmer's.

(glances at camcorder)

I could get used to these.

He exits frame. On the video feed, we see Christy break cover and follow Stitch up the crowded street.

CUT TO:

INT - BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

Stitch enters the same lobby where Danny Pearl, Ned Christy, and a matronly lady were gunned down so long ago. The place is rundown, bleak. Paper peeling from the walls. The elevator is out of order. Stitch sighs and takes the stairs.

FIFTH FLOOR HALLWAY

Stitch exits the stairwell, hearing the THROBBING SOUND OF THRASH. He has no idea what it is, or that some might consider it music. He proceeds cautiously up the last set of stairs to:

THE ROOF LEVEL

Instead of a roof, Stitch finds a fire door on which is spray-painted the following charmless warning:

"No Niggers! No Kikes!"

He hesitates, not knowing what to expect. He opens the door to find that the roof has been enclosed to create a new top floor. CAMERA PUSHES THROUGH into an insane asylum of WHITE SUPREMACIST SKINHEADS gyrating and slamming violently to the NERVE-DAMAGING NOISE issuing from a LIVE BAND on stage. The music, if you can call it that, is FASCIST SPEED THRASH. The lyrics, those that we can make out, are hateful and vile in the extreme. The chorus consists of chanted "sieg-heils."
(Yes, this kind of music actually exists.)

Even worse? On the far wall, lit by neon and strobe lights, is a banner-sized portrait of Adolf Hitler.

Welcome to Hell.

Stitch enters, mouth hanging open. He moves through the crowd, jostled by neo-Nazi moshers, looking stunningly out of place in his Sinatra hat and Dean Martin shoes.

(CONTINUED)

He stops and stares down. TILT DOWN as he taps the floor with his foot. There's a roof under there somewhere.

The crowd parts as BOBBY SCUD approaches. Scud is a muscled skinhead sporting a myriad of swastika tattoos, piercings, and a Walkman on his shaved skull. Not a guy you'd want dating your sister. He's trailed by SLICK, HOMER, and others.

SCUD

The Bobby Darin concert's been canceled.

This brings HOOTS AND JEERS from the crowd.

STITCH

I'm on police business.

This is greeted with "oooooooohs" and a chorus of pig noises.

SKINHEADS

Piggy piggy piggy! Soooooeee!

SCUD

You got a search warrant, pig?

STITCH

I beg your pardon?

SCUD

If there's anything worse than a pig, it's a pig without papers.

STITCH

(looks around)

Anyone here speak English?

Scud grabs Stitch by the front of the shirt and pulls him close, glaring into his eyes.

SCUD

If you don't set your cruise control and hyperdrive out of here, I'm gonna do a Rambo on your head.

Stitch hasn't a clue what Scud is talking about. He glances up uneasily, imagining something messy being placed on his head. His eyes shift back to Scud, noticing the Walkman.

STITCH

You mean that?

SCUD

What?

STITCH
 (indicates Walkman)
 That's a Rambo on your head, right?

Scud goes purple with rage. He cocks his arm back.

SCUD
 Wrong.

SCUD'S FIST

slams enormously into camera --

EXT - BUILDING/ALLEY - DAY

-- and Stitch is tossed out the alley doors headlong into some trash cans. The doors slam. He lays in a sprawled heap, beaten and bloody, trying to catch his wind.

CHRISTY (O.S.)
 I should haul you in for disturbing
 the peace.

ANGLE SHIFTS to reveal Christy sitting on an upturned crate.

CHRISTY
 Why'd you come here?

STITCH
 To get the crap kicked out of me by
 a bunch of Nazis.
 (sits up painfully)
 I didn't know we still had any. I
 seem to recall fighting a war to
 get rid of them, but I guess
 they're like weeds. I don't suppose
 you'd care to arrest them?

CHRISTY
 Seems to me they did a public
 service.

Stitch staggers to his feet, wiping blood from his nose.

STITCH
 Look, before we go blind from the
 brilliance of this snappy patter,
 let's get something straight. You
 don't believe for a moment I'm who
 I say I am. You think I'm some kind
 of happy fruitcake with a sick
 sense of humor. You'd like nothing
 better than to find out I'm up to
 no good and nail me for it.

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTY

Right on all counts.

STITCH

I'm nothing if not perceptive.

CHRISTY

I'm not letting you out of my sight
till I get some answers.

STITCH

Glad to hear it.

CHRISTY

(dubious)

Why's that?

STITCH

I'm gonna need someone to show me
the ropes. This ain't L.A. It's
another planet.

Stitch heads for the street. Christy trails him suspiciously.

STITCH

Listen, in case somebody asks,
what's a Rambo?

CUT TO:

EXT - CRIMINAL COURT BUILDING - DAY

A FRANTIC CROWD bursts from the courthouse and swarms down the steps -- reporters, minicam crews, the works. In the storm's eye is PHILLIP RANDOM, a small man in a bad toupe tossing out "no comments" on his way to his limo. He dives into the car. The reporters now swarm to D.A. John Heller.

HELLER

Mr. Random refused to answer any
pertinent questions concerning the
alleged bribery attempt. He leaves
us no choice but to pursue the
matter by other means.

REPORTER

Does that mean Phillip Random will
be subpoenaed?

HELLER

That's exactly what it means.

CAMERA PANS with Random's limo as it breaks free and speeds away. ENDFRAME on Stitch and Christy on the sidewalk, watching it go. Stitch has the article he took from the newspaper.

(CONTINUED)

STITCH

You want answers? Five minutes with that shyster, I'll shake loose more answers than you got questions. But I need you there.

CHRISTY

Why?

STITCH

My badge expired. Yours didn't.

CHRISTY

This is bullshit.

STITCH

If it is, drag me back to the precinct. I'll confess to every fire ever set, starting with Rome.

CUT TO:

EXT - PRECINCT PARKING LOT - DAY

Christy leads Stitch to his unmarked police Taurus, meticulously waxed and cared for. Stitch is fascinated.

STITCH

Mind if I drive?

CHRISTY

Are you high? You're looking at the only police car in the County of Los Angeles that isn't a piece of shit. This baby's had only one driver since it rolled off the assembly line -- me.

STITCH

I'll be careful. I swear.

Christy isn't convinced. Stitch pulls a quarter.

STITCH

Let's flip on it. I call heads.

Stitch performs the coin toss. It's heads. Christy experiences a weird sense of deja-vu. This ritual seems oddly familiar. He hands over the keys.

CHRISTY

I'm buying this car when I retire. You scratch it, I chew the skin right off your butt.

(CONTINUED)

Stitch gets behind the wheel. Christy settles into the passenger seat. Stitch finds the ignition and puts the key in.

As he turns it, a blue/white spark of electricity surges from the ignition into his hand. He jerks back, hissing in pain.

Christy shoots him a look, reaches over and turns the key. The engine kicks over smoothly -- no spark this time.

CUT TO:

EXT - HIGH RISE OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Random's limo pulls up to a 30 story office building. Random gets out and hurries toward the building.

INT - 30TH FLOOR/RANDOM'S OFFICE - DAY

Random bolts out of the elevator past reception. His SECRETARY tries to flag him down, but he waves her off.

RANDOM

I'm not to be disturbed, Joyce.

He dashes into his office, which is actually several suites comprising a luxurious penthouse area. Four JANITORS in white jumpsuits are cleaning the hallway floor.

Random hurries past them to his inner suite, goes straight to his desk and pulls out a bundle of documents: passport, traveler's checks, etc. He grabs the phone, dials a call.

RANDOM

I'd like to book a seat your next international flight.

A GLOVED HAND enters frame, disconnects the call. ANGLE SHIFTS to reveal a small, wiry "janitor." Although now 58, there's no mistaking that rabid grin and acne-scarred face. JIMMY THE SKINK has gotten older, but he hasn't mellowed. If anything, he's even meaner and crazier than he was at 18.

JIMMY

Cabo's nice this time of year.

RANDOM

Jimmy! What are you doing here?

Random tries to hide his terror as he backs away. The three other "janitors" loom up -- RAY, BILLY BONES, and CHIN. One white, one black, one Vietnamese. All with faces of stone and nerves to match. These three go back a long way -- Special Forces lurps who fought in Vietnam together, killing people and blowing things up. Professionals.

(CONTINUED)

JIMMY

I'm here because there's something
about you I've always wondered.

Jimmy crowds Random back against the floor-to-ceiling plate glass window. Random glances out, looking thirty stories down. A dizzying drop. Traffic crawling like ants. He locks eyes with Jimmy, who grins.

JIMMY

How high do you bounce?

EXT - RANDOM'S BUILDING - DAY

The unmarked Taurus eases carefully into the red zone in front. Stitch and Christy get out.

STITCH

You sure you want me to park in the
red zone?

CHRISTY

Parking in the red is a perk that
comes with the badge. This way,
nobody fucks with my car. It stays
pristine. Undented. Beautiful.

Christy flicks an imaginary spot of dust off the hood. Stitch shrugs. They proceed toward the building.

FADE UP THE SOUND OF A LONG, DRAWN-OUT SCREAM from above.

Behind them, Random's body impacts on the Taurus and tears right through the roof -- the windows and tires explode as the impact rocks the car to its axles.

INT - RANDOM'S OFFICE - DAY

Jimmy leans out the gaping hole that a moment before was a plate glass window, peering thirty stories down. Breeze whistles in, scattering the papers from Random's desk.

JIMMY

Not very high.

EXT - BUILDING - DAY

Christy and Stitch turn to look at the car. It's totaled beyond repair, blowing steam from the ruptured radiator.

STITCH

I never had much luck parking in
the red.

(CONTINUED)

Christy does a slow burn, really pissed. Random's toupe drifts from the sky like a furry parachute and lands before them. They proceed toward the building, passing people rushing out to see the accident.

INT - LOBBY - DAY

Stitch and Christy find the elevators. Christy jabs the button, fuming. Stitch glances over and sees:

Jimmy the Skink is getting off the service elevator with his "maintenance crew" and hurrying through a side exit.

Stitch is rocked with recognition. He'd know that psychotic acne-scarred face anywhere. He grabs Christy, pulls him along.

EXT - BUILDING - DAY

Stitch and Christy rush out. Stitch scans above the crowd, sees Jimmy and his crew loading into a white utility van.

CHRISTY

You wanna tell me what's going on?

Stitch fights his way through the crowd with Christy at his heels. Jimmy's van is pulling out, leaving.

An AMBULANCE screeches to the curb. Two PARAMEDICS leap out and hurry toward the mangled Taurus.

Stitch sees the opportunity and grabs it -- he leaps behind the wheel of the ambulance and cranks the key. Again, a spark of electricity zaps him -- he cries out in pain, but turns the key all the way over. The engine starts.

PARAMEDIC

HEY! STOP!

STITCH

Police emergency!

He jams it in gear and hits the gas -- the ambulance shoots forward and jumps the curb. The crowd scatters. Christy rips open the passenger door, running alongside.

CHRISTY

ARE YOU CRAZY?

STITCH

Get in or get left behind!

Christy has no choice -- he heaves himself into the passenger seat. Stitch swerves back into the street.

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTY

Pull this goddamn thing over right now! I'm gonna slap you nine different shades of purple!

STITCH

See that white van up ahead? They're the ones who just hammered your car into the pavement.

CHRISTY

(quick attitude change)
Don't lose the motherfuckers.

EXT - STREETS - VARIOUS ANGLES - DUSK/EVENING

The white van cruises through traffic. The ambulance is some distance behind, tailing it.

IN THE VAN

Jimmy strips off his white janitor's jumpsuit, revealing a classic black tux with tails underneath.

EXT - HANCOCK PARK ESTATE - DUSK

A sprawling, multi-million dollar estate. Some big event is getting under way. GUESTS in formal dress are arriving. An army of VALET ATTENDANTS park expensive cars, while USHERS direct the guests to the grounds behind the house.

Jimmy's van goes past the main driveway and up a smaller service driveway, disappearing through an electric gate.

ANGLE SHIFTS to a COUPLE in immaculate evening wear handing their Jaguar keys to a VALET. Suddenly, an ambulance swerves up the driveway, tears through a hedgerow, and lurches to a stop on the rosebushes. Stitch gets out.

STITCH

Don't park it under a tree, pal.
The sap ruins the finish.

CHRISTY

(trailing nervously)
Look, let's just forget this...

Stitch ignores him, heading for the backyard. An USHER tries to stop them:

USHER

Your invitation?

STITCH

Lost in the mail. Piss off.

(CONTINUED)

Stitch leads Christy into the backyard -- which is more like the tiered grounds of a palace. Our two heroes find themselves overlooking an area big enough for a royal wedding. An amazing buffet is being served. A LIVE ORCHESTRA is playing.

Stitch studies the crowd below, his gaze coming to rest on:

JIMMY THE SKINK exits the main house in his tux and tails to join the party. Somehow, the clothes make him look even more sinister -- like grinning death in a tuxedo. He comes to a small knot of people chatting and laughing.

The host is FRANCIS DOYLE -- he's got distinguished silver hair, a nice tan, and the world by the balls. He's the very picture of wealth and success. Among the people chatting with him are MAYOR HART, D.A. Heller, and Mary Sullivan.

Stitch has his attention riveted to Doyle as a SOCIETY LADY ushers him to the microphone to speak:

DOYLE

Thank you all for attending our little charity event this evening. The auction will get underway at eight o'clock as scheduled. Until then, yes, the food is free.

The crowd laughs. An EFFEMINATE MAN leans over to Stitch.

MAN

I'm bidding on Judy Garland's ruby slippers.

Stitch shoots him a humorless look. The man shrinks away.

DOYLE

I know you'll all join me in thanking Mayor Hart for his presence tonight.

The guests applaud. Hart waves, flashes a winning grin. Stitch keeps his eyes on Doyle, taking his measure as:

DOYLE

I'd also like to thank the Society for allowing me to host tonight's fundraiser. Education is a vital concern to all of us. The money you spend here will help put computers in classrooms and allow inner city youth vital access to the information superhighway -- their doorway to the future. Needless to say, we should all dig deep. No cheapskates allowed.

(CONTINUED)

Laughter and applause. Doyle holds up his hands, modestly accepts their kindness.

STITCH

Look at him. He looks like a rat turd floating in a champagne cocktail.

CHRISTY

Francis P. Doyle? The Francis P. Doyle?

STITCH

He's nothin' but Franky Doyle to me. A two-bit slug who'd sell his own mother for spare parts.

Stitch starts down toward the party. Christy grabs him.

CHRISTY

No way you're going down there.

STITCH

Just wanna say hi. Mingle a little.

CHRISTY

Read my lips -- no fucking way.

STITCH

What's the matter, Ned? Worried about your pension?

CHRISTY

As a matter of fact, yes.

STITCH

Well, I'd hate to get you in dutch with your boss.

CHRISTY

That's very considerate of --

In one swift fluid motion, Stitch swipes Christy's handcuffs from his belt and cuffs Christy's wrist to the iron railing. Christy is flabbergasted, then furious. He reaches into his pocket for his keys, but they aren't there. Stitch holds up them up, jingling them out of reach.

STITCH

Abracadabra.

CHRISTY

You pick-pocket son of a bitch.

(CONTINUED)

STITCH

I learned that little trick from a second-story man called Ike. Had an eye that twitched. He cuffed me to the rear bumper of a Greyhound bus. I wound up in Barstow.

Stitch pockets the keys, heads down the steps toward the party. Christy glances around self-consciously. He grabs a drink from a passing tray, takes a cursory sip, sets it down. It's not the booze he's after, it's the swizzle stick -- he plucks it from the glass, starts picking his handcuff lock.

DOYLE'S GROUP

A loose knot of mingling people, chatting and laughing. Mary looks pleasantly bored. Mayor Hart leans over to her.

HART

Ms. Sullivan, do you intend to bid this evening?

MARY

Well, Mr. Mayor, I did have my eye on the hat that Humphrey Bogart wore in the "Maltese Falcon."

Mary freezes, seeing Stitch coming down the stairs. Stitch snaps a jaunty wave, keeps coming down toward her.

MARY

Oh my God.

HELLER

(follows her gaze)
What's he doing here?

DOYLE

Is there some problem?

MARY

That man. I think he's following me.

Doyle gives Jimmy a look: "take care of it." Jimmy detaches from the group, moving out to block Stitch's path.

JIMMY

Private party. Friends of Mr. Doyle only.

STITCH

Franky and I go back a long way. I remember when he was running whores in Chinatown.

(CONTINUED)

People are starting to glance over. Jimmy presses closer, showing a bulge under his jacket -- a holstered gun.

JIMMY

You know what this is?

STITCH

You're showing me your bulge. Does that mean you like me?

JIMMY

It means you don't belong here. Allow me to show you out.

Stitch backs down, motions "lead the way." Jimmy does -- but instead of following, Stitch peels Jimmy's tux jacket from behind and yanks the coat down around his arms, binding them. In the same fluid motion, he yanks Jimmy's revolver from his holster and kicks him in the butt. Jimmy goes sprawling. The guests fall silent, all eyes on Stitch. He holds Jimmy's gun up, admiring it.

STITCH

Ooooh, it's a big one. You must be popular.

CHRISTY

is picking the handcuffs with the swizzle stick. He is suffering as he watches Stitch, wishing he were anywhere but here.

JIMMY

looks demonic as he gets to his feet, ready to hurl himself at Stitch -- but a gesture from Doyle stops him.

Jimmy holds out his hand, demanding his gun back. Stitch shakes out the bullets, reaches across the buffet table, and drops the revolver into a pot of bubbling hot fondue.

STITCH

Pick it up from the cook.

He grabs a glass of champagne from a waiter's tray as he crosses toward Mary and Doyle.

STITCH

Hiya, doll. Miss me?

DOYLE

I don't believe I've had the pleasure.

(CONTINUED)

STITCH
 I don't believe you will.
 (looks around)
 C'mon, folks. Don't look dazed.
 It's a party.

The guests go back to their mingling. Stitch turns to Heller.

STITCH
 Say, John, ain't that the damndest
 thing about Phillip Random?

HELLER
 I beg your pardon?

STITCH
 Oh, didn't you hear? Seems he tried
 to skip out on your subpoena.
 Didn't get very far, though. Only
 about thirty stories.

Doyle and Jimmy exchange a look.

HELLER
 What are you saying?

STITCH
 I'm saying he took a dive out his
 office window. Habeus corpus'd
 himself all over a car.

HELLER
 (stunned)
 Oh my God. Random's dead?

STITCH
 If getting scraped up with a
 spatula is any indication.

Heller looks devastated. Mary puts a comforting hand on his
 arm. Doyle moves closer to Stitch, facing him.

DOYLE
 This is terribly sad news.

STITCH
 (shrugs)
 Back in school he was voted most
 likely to be identified by his
 dental records. He was your lawyer,
 wasn't he?

Doyle regards Stitch with reptilian eyes, sizing him up.
 Stitch returns his gaze with cold amusement.

(CONTINUED)

DOYLE

Call the security patrol and have this gentleman escorted from the neighborhood.

HEAD USHER

I just did sir. They'll be here in a minute.

STITCH

That should be enough time for a quick spin on the dance floor.

He takes Mary by the hand, pulling her along.

HELLER

Hey!

STITCH

Don't split a seam, pal. Soon as I get "escorted," you'll have her all to yourself.

(hails the BANDLEADER)

Maestro! Parlez vousz Duke Ellington?

BANDLEADER

Tres bien.

The music starts. Stitch and Mary begin. He wasn't lying, by the way -- he's a hell of a dancer. So is she.

STITCH

The looks I'm getting, you'd think I wasn't housebroken.

MARY

It's your primitive charm. You always this colorful?

STITCH

Baby, I'm a veritable rainbow.

MARY

The name's Mary Sullivan. Not baby. Not doll. Not sweetheart.

STITCH

I suppose "boo-boo cakes" is out.

MARY

Those terms are demeaning.

STITCH

No kidding. I thought they were affectionate.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

That's because you're an overbearing sexist with testosterone for brains.

STITCH

I'd resent that if I knew what it meant.

MARY

Who are you?

STITCH

If I said "the guy you've been waiting for all your life," would you think me forward?

MARY

I'd think you a lunatic.

STITCH

Yeah, but a swell dancer, right?

MARY

You are light on your feet. For a lunatic.

STITCH

My mother's doing. She was a dance instructor. Always said a young man should know how to fling a gorgeous babe across the floor.

Suddenly, WESTEC GUARDS appear, coming through the crowd.

HEAD USHER

That's him!

STITCH

Gotta go. My ride's here.

He tilts her chin up and gazes into her eyes.

STITCH

This has been the most meaningful forty five seconds of my life.

Mary almost smiles -- there's something about him. The Westec guards grab him and drag him away. We ENDFRAME on Doyle as he pulls Jimmy aside and mutters in his ear:

DOYLE

Find out who he is.

CUT TO:

INT - PRECINCT - CAPTAIN JONAS' OFFICE - NIGHT

JONAS

You're dead weight, Christy. If I had my way, I would've dropped you when I took charge of this precinct, but the city says I can't. They say I have to put up with you. What I don't have to put up with is officers in my command taking joyrides in ambulances.

CHRISTY

Sir, my unit was disabled. I had reason to believe suspects were fleeing the scene.

JONAS

Suspects! Phillip Random was facing a subpoena! He committed suicide!

OUTSIDE JONAS' OFFICE

Stitch is listening at the door. A LONG MUFFLED TIRADE OF SHOUTING is heard. Abrupt silence. Christy exits the office and shoots Stitch a nasty look. CAMERA DOLLIES with them:

STITCH

I see some things don't change. Asses still get chewed the old-fashioned way.

CHRISTY

I can't believe I actually sat there and took the rap.

STITCH

Oh? I suppose nobody ever did the same favor for you?

CHRISTY

Never.

They come to the elevator. Christy presses the button.

STITCH

That's funny, I recall as if it were only yesterday -- in fact it was the day before yesterday -- me sitting in Captain Thorsen's office taking the heat for a certain young rookie who fucked up, said fuck up resulting in the escape of an arson suspect, one Lenny Dworkin, aka Lenny the Dwarf.

(CONTINUED)

Christy gazes numbly at Stitch, mind blown.

CHRISTY

Oh. Oh, Jesus.

STITCH

There's only three people who'd know about that. You, me, and Danny Pearl. Danny's dead. That leaves you and me.

Christy peers at Stitch. A whisper:

CHRISTY

Stitchler? It's really you?

Stitch just nods. Christy doesn't know what to say. He digs a tin of Anacin from his pocket, fumbling as he tries to open it with shaking fingers.

STITCH

(gently)

You all right?

CHRISTY

Yeah, sure, for a man staring at a ghost. I think my head's gonna explode.

Stitch takes the tin of Anacin, opens it for him. Christy pops a few in his mouth, dry swallowing with a grimace.

CHRISTY

How?

STITCH

Look, all I know is I'm on that roof in 1959 doing the electric Carioca, and suddenly I'm not there anymore. I'm somewhere else.

CHRISTY

The Hyperdyne Research Lab?

STITCH

Was it on fire? Bunch of dentists running around?

(Christy nods)

That's the place.

CHRISTY

(dazed)

Tacky particles. Jesus.

The elevator arrives and they get on. Stitch presses the down button -- a crackling flow of electricity shoots up his arm. He arches in pain, his image wavering and overlapping -- for a brief moment, there seem to be several Stitches occupying the same space -- then it passes, everything going back to normal.

CHRISTY

Goddamn. Whatever that is, it's getting worse.

STITCH

I know. For a moment it felt like...

CHRISTY

Like what?

STITCH

Like when I got yanked out of 1959.

CUT TO:

EXT - STREET (DOWNTOWN HILLS) - NIGHT

Stitch's old neighborhood. We've seen this view before, but there's a key difference: what used to be a half-completed freeway under construction is now a freeway that was built a long time ago. It's choked with traffic, just another part of the L.A. landscape.

ANGLE WIDENS on the same lovely Mexican statue of Christ standing guard over the same concrete foot bridge. Stitch and Christy come across the bridge, turn the corner...

...and find a sprawling mall ala Citywalk. The hillside bungalows and orange trees are long gone, replaced by trendy shopping, a Lazertag parlor, a California Pizza Kitchen, a movie six-plex -- basically, a glitzy/ghastly neon monument to consumerism and bad taste.

STITCH

If I had to guess, I'd say the lease on my apartment expired.

CUT TO:

INT - CHRISTY'S PERSONAL CAR - NIGHT

This one is a piece of shit. Stitch is driving. He sees a van in the next lane, nudges Christy.

STITCH

What make is that?

CHRISTY

Toyota. It's Japanese.

(CONTINUED)

STITCH
Japanese? As in "Pearl Harbor?"

CHRISTY
Now they build cars, plus other
knick-knacks. Germans, too.

STITCH
You think if we'd lost the war,
Hirohito would'a bought a Packard?
Hitler'd be tooling around in a
goddamn Ford? What the hell kind of
world is this?

CHRISTY
Different. You given any thought to
what you're gonna do?

STITCH
There's only one thing I know.
Being a cop. But I guess that's
in the past.

Stitch gazes around as he drives, seeing no future in this
future. A melancholy beat.

STITCH
You suppose the Academy would take
me? I'm pretty spry for a guy in
his eighties.

CHRISTY
(smiles)
You up for a drink? I'm buying.

STITCH
Why not? Lou's the Blues used to be
right around here. They ever
rebuild it after the fire?

CHRISTY
Lou's the Blues?

STITCH
Yeah, you remember Lou's. Best jazz
this side of Kansas City, until it
got torched. Speaking of which,
what's with all these fires you've
been having?

CHRISTY
We got some goddamn high-tech torch
artist at work. Malglinite charges,
mercury detonators, shit they never
even dreamed about back in our day.

(CONTINUED)

Stitch is getting his bearings. He turns the wheel sharply.

STITCH

I know where we are. Lou's the Blues is just up there.

CHRISTY

(looking around)

Wait a minute. We're on an offramp.

STITCH

What's an offramp?

THE CAR

hurtles onto a freeway going in the wrong direction. Oncoming cars slam on their brakes, careening wildly. A big-rig truck swerves across three lanes, AIR HORN BLOWING.

Stitch avoids a hair-raising series of head-on collisions by mere inches. They swerve to a stop on the center divider and jump out. Stitch gawks at the traffic raging by in both directions.

CHRISTY

That's it! That's the last time I let you drive! From now on you don't even parallel park!

STITCH

What the hell is this?

CHRISTY

It's a freeway! Like the Arroyo Seco, only bigger! We got 'em all over the city now!

Stitch looks around. He points directly down at his feet.

STITCH

This is where Lou's the Blues used to be. Right here.

A flicker crosses Stitch's face -- some vague suspicion.

CUT TO:

EXT - HOUSE IN THE SAN FERNANDO HILLS - NIGHT

Mary's carrying a hatbox as Heller walks her to her door.

MARY

It's not your fault. You're the district attorney, you were doing your job.

(CONTINUED)

HELLER

If doing my job means hounding Phillip Random to the point of suicide, then I guess I did my job brilliantly. Hell, I deserve a bonus.

They come to her door. She unlocks it and steps inside. He tries to follow, but she blocks his way.

MARY

My place is kind of a mess.

HELLER

So come to mine. I'll pour a nice Beaujolais. We could sit in the hot tub and watch Nightline.

MARY

Thanks for the offer.

She gives him a chaste goodnight kiss. There's affection here, but not the kind he's hoping for. The door closes in his face. He turns away, sighs.

HELLER

Not my night.

INT - MARY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The place is anything but a mess, and displays a penchant for things hard-boiled. Rare framed posters of noir films adorn the walls. First editions line the shelves. A Maltese Falcon perches balefully on the mantle. A bronze bust of Bogart occupies the coffee table. Mary enters, hurries into --

THE BATHROOM

-- where she opens the hatbox and reverently removes a gray fedora. Bogart's hat from "The Maltese Falcon." She puts it on, glowing like a kid. It's a few sizes big, but she loves it. She squints her eyes and twitches her upper lip, ala Bogie. A cat leaps up on the sink to investigate, MEOWS.

MARY

I don't care what it cost. This hat actually sat on Bogart's head. He wore it when he sent Mary Astor up the river.

(checks inner band)

See that? That's Bogart's sweat.

CUT TO:

INT - MARY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mary's curled on the couch, eating microwave popcorn and watching "The Maltese Falcon" on a huge projection TV. Bogie peels off Elisha Cook's coat from behind, binding his arms and taking his guns -- the same trick that Stitch played on Jimmy.

BOGART

This oughtta put you in sound with your boss.

Mary smiles. She knew she'd seen that move somewhere.

CUT TO:

EXT - STREET - NIGHT

Stitch and Christy are parked across from the building where the long-ago shooting occurred. SKINHEAD MUSIC throbs on the roof. Christy is slumped at the wheel, peering across the street and wrestling with old memories. Softly:

CHRISTY

I never even knew what hit me. All I remember is lying there in that doorway, thinking I got hit by a train. And wondering where the goddamn train came from.

STITCH

On that roof is the evidence that'll put Franky Doyle away for keeps.

CHRISTY

(glances up)

Too bad they built a club for racist shitheads on top of it.

STITCH

No sweat. We tear up the floor.

CHRISTY

Not without a court order. And we need a goddamn good reason for that.

STITCH

We got a good reason.

CHRISTY

According to you. But you don't exist. So forget it.

Christy starts the engine and pulls away.

CUT TO:

EXT - CHRISTY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Christy's car pulls up. They get out, arguing all the way:

CHRISTY

You don't know shit from bacon grease! Doyle swings a lot of weight in this town! What are you gonna do, beat a confession out of him?

STITCH

If that's what it takes.

CHRISTY

Look, things aren't like they used to be. You can't strong-arm people anymore. They've got civil rights now! The Miranda Decision for instance! Remember what they told you when you got arrested?

STITCH

You mean that jumpin' jive about my right to remain silent?

CHRISTY

Those are your constitutional rights. No suspect is ever arrested without being apprised of those. That's the law.

STITCH

(comes to a dead stop)

Bullshit.

CHRISTY

No, that's straight shit.

Stitch considers this for a long beat.

STITCH

How do you ever get anything done?

Christy shakes his head, continues up the walk --

INT - CHRISTY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

-- and enters with Stitch dogging his steps:

CHRISTY

Just drop it, okay?

STITCH

That slime killed my partner. Where I come from that means something.

(CONTINUED)

Christy shrugs off his coat and heads for the closet.

CHRISTY

Get over it. Cops die all the time.
It's a dangerous job.

STITCH

This is not Ned Christy talking.
The Ned Christy I know would've
waltzed barefoot through hell to
nail a jaywalker. He was ready to
take on the world!

CHRISTY

The Ned Christy I know has fallen
arches and can no longer waltz!
He's the only cop I know who'd
rather do paperwork than be out on
the street!

STITCH

Why?

CHRISTY

Because out on the street people
shoot holes in you! They gun you
down in lobby doorways and leave
you to die like some kind of animal
by the side of the road!

Pause. Christy realizes he's trembling. He runs a shaky hand
down his face as if to wipe the shame away. Softly:

CHRISTY

Jesus, Mary, Joseph. I flinch every
time I hear a car backfire.

STITCH

I'm sorry.

CHRISTY

You should be. You're the one who
walked me into a wall of bullets my
first month on the job.

Christy heads into the bathroom, leaving Stitch to wrestle
with his guilt.

THE BATHROOM

Christy runs water in the sink and splashes his face, trying
calm down. Stitch appears in the doorway. Softly:

(CONTINUED)

STITCH

Danny and I grew up together. We went ashore at Normandy and fought through France together. The day his little girl was born we got drunk, and we laughed and wept together. The only thing we didn't do is die together. And that's the single worst stroke of luck Frank Doyle ever had -- 'cause I'll see him on a slab before I see him get away with it.

Stitch turns and disappears into the living room. Christy stares up into the mirror, not liking what he sees.

CHRISTY

Shit.

(beat)

Stitch? Look, man...

He follows Stitch into --

THE LIVING ROOM

-- but Stitch isn't there. The door's open. He's gone.

CUT TO:

INT - ARMAGEDDON CLUB - NIGHT

Stitch enters toting a golf bag with a single nine-iron poking out of it. He weaves through the skinheads on the dance floor and peers out the window at the fire escape. He turns back, trying to get his bearings.

He works his way back through the club, trying to retrace the path he took almost 40 years ago. He winds and weaves, ducking and dodging around imaginary air ducts and fan housings.

Bobby Scud is watching this strange behavior from the bar, working himself into a fine rage. Slick does Iago in his ear:

SLICK

Some pigs deserve what they get.
Some even beg for it.

Scud snorts a vial of amyl nitrate. A flush creeps into his face, his pupils dilate. He detaches from the bar.

Stitch is staring at the floor, having found his spot. He shrugs the golf bag off his shoulder, frowning in concentration as if studying a difficult tee. Scud and the others surround him. They are blithely ignored.

(CONTINUED)

SCUD

Piggy has returned!

SHOUTS AND JEERS from the crowd. A wave of hostility. Stitch just keeps studying his spot, unperturbed.

HOMER

Asshole don't hear so good.
Hey pig! You deaf or what?

Still no response. Stitch pulls a pair of gardening gloves and plastic goggles from the golf bag and puts them on. He then chooses the nine-iron, assumes a stance, and draws aim on an imaginary ball. This unflappable behavior sends Scud deeper and deeper into a hysterical rage. He wraps a heavy chain around his fist, preparing to split some skull.

SCUD

HEAR ME PIG? I'M TALKING TO YOU!

STITCH

Shhh. Observe this shot carefully.
It's called a "Rambo birdie."

He swings and follows through, driving the club up into Scud's crotch with incredible force -- THWACK!

STITCH

My Rambo, your birdie.

Talk about bringing things to a standstill. Everyone gapes in astonishment, with Scud the most astonished of all. He just stands there, experiencing a whole new definition of pain -- a whole new universe of it.

SCUD

(faint whisper)

My...balls.

He collapses in a heap. The others rush in to attack. Stitch proceeds to kick some serious ass with his nine-iron. He wades through them like Moses wading through the pagans, smiting them with his almighty staff.

STITCH

Sieg heil this!

Stitch breaks the nine-iron off over somebody's skull -- it spins through the air, leaving him with just the handle. The skinheads regroup with switchblades and chains. Homer leads the way, face bloodied and murderous.

STITCH

Before we go any further, let me
show you my search warrant.

(CONTINUED)

HOMER

What fucking search warrant?

Stitch reaches into the golf bag and pulls out a chainsaw.

STITCH

This one right here.

He pulls the cord -- BRRRAAAAAPPP! The skinheads scatter like rats. Only Scud is left, curled on the floor and clutching his nuts, gaze blanker than Little Orphan Annie's.

Stitch plunges the chainsaw into the floor, tearing through the wood in an eruption of splinters as we

CUT TO:

INT - CHRISTY'S CAR - NIGHT

Christy is cruising the streets in search of Stitch. A call comes over his police scanner:

VOICE (filtered)

All units, we have a report of a man with a chainsaw at the Armageddon Club on Hope Street...

Christy chokes. He hits the gas, running a red light.

EXT - ARMAGEDDON CLUB - NIGHT

POLICE CARS are screeching up. Christy pulls to the curb and jumps out, leading the way.

INT - ARMAGEDDON CLUB - NIGHT

The police storm in. Stitch is waist-deep in the floor, chainsaw spewing debris. Christy motions "hold your fire" as he proceeds to the pit. Stitch kills the saw, pulling out the evidence and laying it at Christy's feet.

STITCH

Put it someplace safe.

Christy sighs, nods at Scud.

CHRISTY

What happened to him?

STITCH

I violated his constitutional rights by driving his nuts into his throat with a nine-iron. Speaking of rights, do I get to hear mine?

(CONTINUED)

Christy nods to the blueshirts. They help Stitch out of the pit and start cuffing him.

COP

You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say may be used against you in court...

Stitch grins at Christy. This shit cracks him up.

CUT TO:

INT - PRECINCT - DAY

Mary sits on a desk, jotting in a notepad. Stitch has his feet up, admiring her legs. Christy paces the floor, chewing Tums.

MARY

I want to make sure I understand this. You say you loaned him a golf bag, a nine-iron, and a chainsaw--

CHRISTY

I didn't say that. I said he borrowed those things from my garage. Borrowed.

STITCH

For lack of a better word.

MARY

He then proceeded to run amok with said items...

STITCH

I didn't actually run. It was more like walking amok.

MARY

...thus causing grievous bodily injury as well as substantial property damage. Is that it?

CHRISTY

Pretty much.

MARY

How ambitious. You ruined Francis Doyle's party and went berserk with a chainsaw all in the same night.

STITCH

I believe in living life to the fullest.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

Look, can the wisecracks. You'll be in front of a judge next week, and I need some answers. What is it with you? Are you mentally unbalanced? Some kind of fun-loving sociopath?

She plants herself right in front of him, waiting for an answer. But he's no longer listening -- he tilts to the side and stares past her at a map of Los Angeles on the wall. He rises, fascinated, pointing at the freeways.

STITCH

What the hell are those?

CHRISTY

Freeways. Like the one we saw last night, remember?

Stitch runs his finger along the freeway pattern: Harbor, the Golden State, Santa Monica...

STITCH

I've seen this pattern before.

MARY

Everybody has. It's the downtown interchange.

CHRISTY

(pulls him aside)

It's impossible. Those freeways weren't there back in '59.

STITCH

Hand me those push pins. Let's see...Lou's the Blues used to be right there...

He presses a pin into the map -- right on the freeway. He picks up another pin as we

TIME DISSOLVE:

STITCH

You see a pattern, or is it me?

CAMERA DOLLIES AROUND THEM to reveal the map -- the freeways are stuck with dozens of push pins, duplicating the pattern on Lenny the Dwarf's map from almost forty years ago.

CHRISTY

Those are all the places Lenny the Dwarf torched?

STITCH
All the ones I know of.

MARY
Somebody want to tell me what's
going on here?

Stitch pulls out the article he tore from the newspaper.

STITCH
According to this, Phillip Random
tried to lay some bribes on City
Hall to influence the route of the
"Metro Rail." What's a metro rail?

MARY
You haven't heard of Metro Rail?

Stitch hasn't. He looks to Christy for help.

CHRISTY
It's L.A.'s mass transit project.
They're putting in a rail system,
some underground, some above. It's
a huge job, the biggest this city's
seen since...

Realization slowly dawns. He stares at the map.

CHRISTY
...since they built the freeway
system. Holy shit.

MARY
C'mon, guys. Let me in on it.

STITCH
Sure thing, doll. Just as soon as
you arrange a meeting with your
buddy the D.A.

She looks at Christy. Reluctantly, he nods.

CUT TO:

INT - PRECINCT - BAIL WINDOW - DAY

Christy scribbles out a check. The CLERK hands him a bail receipt. Christy turns and finds Stitch paging through a PLAYBOY magazine in the lounge.

STITCH
These dames aren't wearing anything.

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTY

Five thousand bucks. I oughtta have my head examined.

STITCH

Zero. Zilch. Zippidy-doo-dah.

Christy yanks the Playboy away and slaps a pair of Playtex gloves into Stitch's hands.

CHRISTY

Next time you get near anything electrical, wear these. I'm tired of watching you light up like some cheap special effect.

CUT TO:

EXT - DOROTHY CHANDLER PAVILION - EARLY EVENING

The fountains are doing their synchronized dance. CROWDS OF PEOPLE in evening wear are arriving for the opera. A HOMELESS GUY with a saxophone is playing a sexy jazz solo for tips.

We find Stitch, Christy, and Mary waiting in the midst of it all. D.A. Heller approaches through the crowd.

HELLER

So? What's this about? Had a change of heart? Come to confess?

STITCH

Not me. Try Franky Doyle. Oh, sorry, "Francis P."

(off his look)

Some 40 years ago, our pal Francis arranged dozens of arson fires that I know of. Probably a lot more.

Mary instantly regrets going along with this:

MARY

I'm sorry, if I'd known he was this crazy...

CHRISTY

Hear him out.

HELLER

Okay. I'll bite. Why would one of the most respected citizens of Los Angeles burn it down?

(CONTINUED)

STITCH

The oldest motive in the world.
Simple greed.

(to Mary)

You get burned out. Insurance
doesn't pay you a dime because it
was arson. You've lost everything.
Along comes Doyle, offers to buy
your land. What do you do?

MARY

I sell.

STITCH

Sure you sell, and sell cheap. You
have no choice. So here's Doyle
with all this land, right? Funny
thing, the city comes along and
wants to buy his land to build
freeways on. What does Doyle do?

MARY

He sells.

STITCH

Give the lady a cigar. Doyle sells,
at a staggering profit. Buy cheap,
sell dear. It's the American way.

HELLER

Okay, but how did Doyle guess where
the freeways were going to be?

STITCH

He didn't have to guess. He had
Phillip Random greasing the palms
of certain city officials. Buy a
vote here, a vote there, and before
you know it, Doyle's selling real
estate. Instant freeway.

Heller glances to Mary, who's still wondering how she got
talked into this.

HELLER

You gotta hand it to him. That's
quite a story.

STITCH

It gets better. You know all these
fires you've been having lately?

HELLER

You're not implying...

(CONTINUED)

STITCH

I'm not implying anything, I'm saying it loud and clear. Doyle's pulling the same hat trick he pulled 40 years ago. Only now it's this Metro Rail.

MARY

(deadpan)

So...basically, what you're saying is, Doyle's guilty of the biggest land swindle in the history of mankind.

STITCH

That, plus murder. Phillip Random, for starters. Doyle figured he'd blab under subpoena, so he gave him a skydiving lesson.

CHRISTY

No chute. Oops.

Heller thinks it over, can't help chuckling.

HELLER

This delusional conspiracy theory of yours is very entertaining, I'm the first to admit...

STITCH

But?

HELLER

Metro Rail isn't like the freeways. Back then they bought up thousands of acres, entire neighborhoods disappeared. Today, most of the land already belongs to the city. Hell, most of it's underground.

MARY

(looks to Stitch)

Good point.

But it's Christy who drives the final nail into the argument:

CHRISTY

You telling me fortunes won't be made or lost depending on where the trains do or do not go? You saying whoever owns the land where the next Century City springs up isn't gonna be a billionaire overnight?

Mary is subdued by this, turns back to Heller.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

Even better point.

Heller's wrestling with it in spite of himself. Finally:

HELLER

This is all bullshit unless you have evidence to back it up.

STITCH

Christy's got the goods tucked away nice and safe. Right, Ned?

CHRISTY

Nice and safe.

STITCH

There's one condition. When the time comes, Christy gets the collar. It'll be a nice way to ring down the curtain on a long and distinguished career.

CHRISTY

(touched)

Stitch. Thanks, man.

STITCH

De nada. We have a deal?

HELLER

If that evidence of yours isn't a pipedream, I'd say we do. But how did you come by all this? Who the hell are you?

STITCH

Does it matter as long as Doyle sticks to the wall when thrown?

Heller smiles...no, it doesn't. He walks away, leaving our trio by the fountain.

MARY

I think you actually convinced him.

STITCH

Yeah? What about you?

She just smiles, says nothing.

CHRISTY

I gotta go clock out. You need a couch, mine's still vacant. You know where to find me.

(CONTINUED)

STITCH

Thanks, pal.

CHRISTY

See you around, wiseguy.

Christy walks away. Stitch turns to Mary.

STITCH

So this is goodbye?

MARY

(thinks a beat)

You. Me. A nice chianti. Linguini
and clams. Soft lights. The samba.
Did I mention I'm a great dancer?

Stitch is obviously not used to being on the receiving end of
a come-on. She reads the confusion on his face.

MARY

What?

STITCH

I've been out of circulation for a
while. I see things have changed.

MARY

For the better?

STITCH

That would be my guess.

CUT TO:

INT - MARY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Stitch and Mary enter.

MARY

If you don't mind, I need to get
out of my work clothes. If you get
bored, there's a VCR, laserdisc,
DVD, CD player. Just press a button.

She goes into the bedroom. Stitch wanders over to examine the
gear, clueless as to their purpose. He puts on his rubber
glove and tries pressing a few buttons.

Suddenly, a life-size Jimmy Cagney appears in black & white on
the projection TV behind him, cradling a Tommy gun.

CAGNEY

Get those mitts in the air, bub.

(CONTINUED)

Stitch freezes and raises his hands. He starts to turn around.

CAGNEY

Don't turn around. Just listen good.

Stitch doesn't turn around. He listens good.

CAGNEY

You shouldn't have done it. How a mug like you ever lived so long is a wonder. Say goodbye.

Cagney opens fire. Stitch dives over the couch.

CUT TO:

EXT - SAN FERNANDO VALLEY/MARY'S BALCONY - NIGHT

The city spread out in a sea of lights. SMOKY JAZZ plays softly. PAN OFF to Stitch and Mary in the foreground, slow dancing on the balcony of her apartment.

STITCH

We just set a new record. We've been dancing a whole three minutes now without me getting thrown out.

MARY

Let's go for four.

ANGLE SLOWLY TIGHTENS as they keep dancing against the backdrop of city lights. They're drawing closer, tighter, gazing into each other's eyes.

MARY

Stitch? Tell me who you are.

STITCH

The name on the birth certificate said Nick Stitchler. Not Nicholas, just Nick. My father was an uncomplicated guy.

MARY

You remind me of a cop.

STITCH

Any cop in particular?

MARY

Every cop I ever saw on the Late Show. Only you're not in black and white.

(CONTINUED)

STITCH

I had a badge. Long time ago. Your turn. Ever been married?

MARY

Once. Lawyers shouldn't marry lawyers. It only complicates the divorce.

STITCH

What kind of guy was he?

MARY

He ordered wine well.

STITCH

Do I remind you of him at all?

MARY

Not even remotely.

By now we're TIGHT on their faces. Their lips melt together in a passionate kiss. They come up for air.

STITCH

Careful, doll. You're gonna rip my lips off.

INT - MARY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

MUSIC CONTINUES AS WE PAN THE ROOM, past the bust of Bogart wearing the hat Mary bought at auction...

...and we find Mary and Stitch necking on the overstuffed couch in front of the fireplace, their kisses steamy. These people are hot for each other. They sink further and further into the couch, Mary pressing him back into the assorted pillows and stuffed animals...

...and Stitch glances at an old, threadbare purple giraffe rag doll about six inches from his face. It stops him cold. He sits up.

MARY

What is it?

STITCH

So...tell me about your family.

MARY

I beg your pardon?

STITCH

Your family. Start with your dad.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

I never knew him. He died when I was four.

Stitch rises and goes to the mantle, where old framed photos are arrayed. The look on his face says it all.

PAN TO the photos, many of which feature Danny and Iris, or Mary as a child. In fact, there's one we remember being taken: Stitch and his goddaughter are out on the lake in the pedal boat. The little girl is laughing because the duck just snatched the bread from her hand. Stitch's face is blurred, just a grainy black and white smudge from the distant past.

MARY

Stitch? What's wrong?

STITCH

Nothing. I just hate it when good cops die.

MARY

How did you know he was a cop?

For a moment we think he's caught -- but he points at a photo. It's an old sepia shot of Danny wearing his dress blues.

STITCH

Looks like a fine man.

He has to turn away to hide his emotions, gazing out the window at the city lights. Softly:

STITCH

You know, that all used to be orange groves as far as you could see. If the breeze was right, you could smell the honeysuckle all the way downtown.

(beat)

This isn't a city anymore. It's a traffic jam with buildings.

JIMMY (O.S.)

Time marches on.

REVERSE ANGLE

reveals Jimmy the Skink with his hand over Mary's mouth and a knife to her throat. Her eyes are wide with fear. Ray, Billy Bones, and Chin emerge from the shadows and proceed to beat the living hell out of Stitch as we

FADE TO:

EXT - CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT

The steel skeleton of a high-rise office building under construction looms in the night sky. A sign reads: "Future World Headquarters of Doyle Enterprises, Inc."

Stitch is dragged before Doyle, who's sitting against the hood of a large black Mercedes, fiddling with his watch. He presses a button and the watch BEEPS the first few bars of Beethoven's Fifth. Doyle smiles.

DOYLE

Duh-duh-duh-dummmm. I love that.
Moment of truth. You know, there's
something I keep asking myself.

STITCH

And that is?

DOYLE

Who are you, and why do you persist
in bothering me?

STITCH

When you ask yourself, do you get
any answers?

DOYLE

So far, no. You have no credit
history. No tax history. In fact,
no history period. You've proven to
be something of an enigma. A
living, breathing conundrum.

STITCH

I love the twenty dollar words you
use nowadays. What'd you do, go to
night school?

Doyle's men kidney-punch Stitch from behind, driving him to his knees. Doyle detaches from the car, hikes up the knees of his trousers to preserve the crease, squats down.

DOYLE

Have we met somewhere before? Do we
know each other?

STITCH

I'm the ghost of Christmas past. I
haunted you once, remember?

Doyle looks up at his men. They hurl Stitch face-first into the grill of the car, bounce him off the bumper a few times. They kick him, stomp him. Stitch curls up on the ground. Doyle grabs his lapels and hauls him up, face to face.

(CONTINUED)

DOYLE

I'll say it in plain English so you understand. See this watch? It cost more than most people earn in a year. See that building? It's my building. And, yes, the land it's on, which I also own, will be the next Century City. Along with several others. The point I'm making is, I'm far too important to be fucking around with a cheapjack little shit-for-brains like you.

Stitch is shocked to hear Christy's Century City analogy come out of Doyle's mouth, but hides it. He looks at the building.

STITCH

I'm impressed. You and your watch can sit on top of the world and sing songs to each other. If you press the right button, maybe it'll remind you how important you are.

Doyle lets go of him. He rises with a sigh.

DOYLE

Tough guy.

CUT TO:

INT - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

DOLLYING AT GROUND LEVEL under a row of parked cars -- each gas tank has a malglinite charge the size of a pack of chewing gum attached. Each charge of malglinite, the most powerful plastic explosive known to man, has a small LED readout on its face. These explosives are the handiwork of experts.

ENDFRAME on Billy Bones and Chin dressed as janitors. They're working under the cars, attaching the final charges. Billy Bones speaks into a headset:

BILLY BONES

Ray, we're done here.

RAY (filtered)

Good. Come on up.

TOP FLOOR OF GARAGE

Ray crouches next to the open door of a parked car. Stitch is behind the wheel -- in fact, his hands are chained to the wheel.

Ray presses a button on a stopwatch/transmitter and the LED lights up, counting down from 3 minutes by tenths of a second.

(CONTINUED)

UNDER A ROW OF CARS

All the LED readouts on the malglinite charges are counting down in synchronization.

RAY

hangs the stopwatch from Stitch's rearview mirror.

RAY

Here, keep this. When it zeros out, so do you.

STITCH

Hell of a setup. I'd tip my hat if I could.

RAY

Too bad you won't be around to see the job we're doing tomorrow. Make this look like a weenie roast.

The white van pulls up. Ray closes Stitch's door, walks to the van, gets in. The van pulls away.

Stitch is left with the stopwatch. 2 minutes 29 seconds and counting. He tries to reach under the dashboard, but can't.

STITCH

Well, hotwiring's out.

He looks around, mind racing desperately. 2 minutes, 2 seconds left. He thrashes around, trying to break the steering wheel. No way. Modern unitized construction.

It suddenly occurs to him -- he bows his head forward and tips his hat into his hands. He roots around under the sweatband and pulls out his trusty set of lock-picks.

He twists around, gets his Playtex gloves from his pocket, puts them on. No sense getting zapped. 1 minute 12 seconds. He eases the picks into the ignition, feeling his way, trying to find the right combination of positions that will turn it.

The ignition turns, but only halfway. A WOMAN'S VOICE suddenly comes out nowhere, intoning softly:

WOMAN'S VOICE

Your door...is ajar. Your door...is ajar.

Stitch twists around, looking in the back seat.

STITCH

Hello?

WOMAN'S VOICE

Your door...is ajar. Your door...is ajar.

Stitch sighs and continues working at the ignition.

STITCH

Great. We needed cars that talk.

He works. He sweats. The seconds tick by. 24 seconds left.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Your door...is ajar...

STITCH

Baby, we got bigger problems than the goddamn door.

(to the ignition)

C'mon, c'mon. The suspense is killing me.

With a click, the ignition turns and the engine SCREAMS to life. Stitch jams it in reverse with the pedal floored.

The car BURNS RUBBER backing out of the spot and SMASHES into the cars opposite. Stitch throws it in drive, not even bothering to take his foot off the accelerator. The car burns rubber again, skittering sideways before the tires get their traction -- the car blasts forward, scraping along an entire row of parked cars.

VARIOUS ANGLES

Stitch keeps turning the wheel like a maniac, racing down the levels of the garage. 4 seconds. 3 seconds. 2 seconds.

THE MALGLINITE CHARGES

The LED readouts hit zero.

STITCH'S CAR

is chased through the parking lot by an incredible chain reaction of DETONATING CARS.

EXT - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

MASSIVE FIREBALLS EXPLODE from all the levels as Stitch's car (now wrapped in flames) rams the automatic gate --

-- and the parking garage collapses massively behind him, tons of concrete pancaking down and missing him by inches.

(CONTINUED)

The burning car careens wildly across the street, scattering traffic in all directions. It jumps a curb, flies through the air, and lands smack in the middle of a large fountain. The flames are extinguished. Unfortunately, the car sinks.

IN THE CAR

Water pours in, flooding the car. Stitch, still chained, looks up through the moon-roof and sees water close over it.

STITCH

First I'm gonna burn, now I'm gonna drown. C'mon God, make up your mind.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Your door...is ajar...

STITCH

I KNOW THE FUCKING DOOR IS A--

The water closes over his head. Glub! Completely submerged. He contorts his body around, getting his legs up. He starts kicking the moon-roof with both feet.

ANGLE ON FOUNTAIN

as a curious crowd gathers. Stitch's head suddenly pops up through the moon-roof, gasping for air and looking around.

STITCH

Anybody got a hacksaw?

CUT TO:

INT - PRECINCT - NIGHT

Christy's doing paperwork as the PHONE RINGS. (A UNIFORMED COP is calling from a payphone near the fountain. Stitch is behind him, shivering in a blanket. Across the street, FIRE TRUCKS are battling the blaze. INTERCUT locations as needed:)

CHRISTY

Detective Christy speaking.

COP (filtered)

This is Patrolman Diedrickson.

CHRISTY

What the hell's going on there?

COP (filtered)

Another building got torched. Listen, there's a guy here, drove a burning car into a fountain. Says he's a friend of yours.

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTY
Caucasian? About six feet tall?
Dresses kinda retro?

COP (filtered)
Yeah.

CHRISTY
Never heard of him.

CUT TO:

INT - CHRISTY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The PHONE IS RINGING as Stitch and Christy enter.

CHRISTY
What do you expect me to do? Knock
on his door and say, "excuse me,
Mr. Doyle, I understand you've
kidnapped Mary Sullivan? We'd like
her back?"
(grabs the phone)
Yeah, Christy here.

MARY (filtered)
Christy? They killed Stitch. I--

Sudden silence -- someone snatched the phone away. Christy
hears breathing. Stitch leans close, also listening.

INT - DARKENED ROOM - NIGHT

Jimmy has the phone to his ear. He's running a knife point
slowly along Mary's neck. Softly:

JIMMY
She's a pretty lady. Want to hear
me cut her throat?

INT - CHRISTY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

CHRISTY
No. I don't.

JIMMY (filtered)
Then listen closely. You have the
late Mr. Stitchler's evidence. I
have the pretty lady. What say we
trade?

Stitch taps his watch, telling Christy to stall for time.

CHRISTY
I can't get to it till tomorrow.

(CONTINUED)

JIMMY (filtered)
I'm a patient man. But don't try
any shit, or I'll mail this bitch
to you in pieces. Clear?

CHRISTY
As a bell.

JIMMY (filtered)
I'll call back tomorrow.

Dial tone. Christy hangs up, hands trembling.

CHRISTY
I'm guessing if I show up to swap
the evidence for Ms. Sullivan,
they'll kill us both. Am I right?

STITCH
(nods)
You know too much.

CHRISTY
What a lovely thought. I should
write greeting cards for Hallmark.

Christy grabs a bottle of J&B off the shelf and sits at the
kitchen table. He unscrews the cap, pondering the booze.

CHRISTY
What do I do?

STITCH
Crawl into that bottle and hide.
It's safe in there. Helps you
forget why you ever became a cop.

CHRISTY
I'm past it. Have been for years.

STITCH
Says you. I say different.

Christy shakes his head, trying to swallow the bitter taste of
his own shame. Stitch digs a quarter out of his pocket.

STITCH
We'll flip on it. Heads, you're a
wild man, superhuman, the stuff of
legends. A cop to make the gods
tremble. Tails, you're a worthless
burned-out old alky.

Stitch flips the coin, slaps it to the table. Christy leans
forward, the suspense killing him. Stitch lifts his fingers to

(CONTINUED)

reveal...heads.

Christy looks up slowly, arriving at a quiet but monumental decision. He puts the bottle aside and rises, heading into --

THE BEDROOM

-- where he pulls a shoe box from the closet and hands it to Stitch. Inside lies a gun, a modest .38 revolver.

CHRISTY

That's my spare. Do me a favor. Try not to shoot anyone.

(looks to God)

What am I saying? Look who I'm talking to.

(rooting around)

I've got some extra ammo here somewhere. Turn that light on, would you?

Without thinking, Stitch clicks on a bedside lamp -- a massive electrical charge blasts up his arm and envelopes him with sputtering energy. He screams, writhing as his image overlaps, several Stitches occupying the same space.

The lamp EXPLODES. Stitch reels across the room -- actually many Stitches reel across the room, all of them a fraction-of-a-second out of sync with the other, like a deck of cards getting shuffled by a magician.

STITCH

(screaming, distorted)

CCCCCHHHHRRRRRIIIIISSSSTTTTTTYYYYY!

Purely on instinct, Christy grabs him -- suddenly, Christy is out of sync in time as well. The two of them dissolve like jittering ghosts right through the wall into --

THE LIVING ROOM

-- where they come through the wall, the couch, the TV. Stitch finally stabilizes, their duplicate images accordioneing back into place with a SNAP! The impact slams them both to the floor, where they lay gasping and trying to catch their breath. As their eyes meet:

CHRISTY

Look...I didn't want to say anything...but it seems to me the more juice you keep sucking up, the more unstable you're getting. I got a bad feeling you're gonna go time tripping again.

(CONTINUED)

STITCH

(nods painfully)

Yeah. If you hadn't grabbed me...for a second I thought I was out of here.

CHRISTY

Damn, man, for a second I thought I was going with you.

STITCH

I wonder where I'll go next?

CHRISTY

(realization dawning)

Oh. Oh God.

STITCH

What?

CHRISTY

I didn't think it was important. I mean, it didn't make any sense, but I didn't think...

STITCH

What do you know that I don't?

CHRISTY

(hesitates)

You didn't just vanish back in '59. They found a body on that radio tower. Fried by the lightning.

Stitch is stunned. He rises, exits the house.

EXT - FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Stitch gazes off at the city. Christy joins him.

STITCH

So that's how it is. I'm going right back where I came from. Back to that moment that lightning hit me, so it can finish the job.

CHRISTY

Stitch. I'm sorry, man. Sincerely.

STITCH

Don't be. I've realized something in the last few days. Nothing ever just happens. Everything has a purpose, a reason.

(CONTINUED)

He gazes up, losing himself in the stars.

STITCH

I don't know why the man upstairs is pulling these strings, exactly, but I do know this...there are no such things as accidents. I was brought here to finish something I started. For that I'm grateful. After that it doesn't matter.

(beat)

Besides, I'd rather die in my city...than in this strange and lonely place.

FADE TO BLACK

INT - UNMARKED CAR - MORNING

A gray, overcast day. Stitch and Christy are sipping coffee and listening to a weather report on the radio:

DISC JOCKEY (V.O.)

That hurricane off Mexico means we Angelenos are in for one whopper of a storm today...

STITCH

That storm's got my name on it. The way I draw electricity, the lightning's gonna track me down and zap me right back to 1959.

(sardonic)

I rode into town on a lightning bolt, and I'm riding out the same way. Poetic, huh? In a cheap dimestore kind of way.

Christy nods sadly. Stitch sees someone, suddenly all business:

STITCH

That's him. Let's go.

Stitch gets out. Christy starts the engine.

EXT - STREET - DAY

Heller is walking to work with a briefcase, the collar of his expensive raincoat turned up against the cold. Christy drives by, splashing him with muddy water.

HELLER

Asshole!

(CONTINUED)

The car stops. Heller looks nervous -- the last thing he wants is some irate driver picking a fight. The driver gets out and faces him -- it's Christy. Now Heller really looks nervous. He turns back in the other direction --

-- and bumps right into Stitch. Heller tries to run, but Stitch grabs him by the belt of his coat and swings him around, hurling him through a plate glass window into --

A LAUNDROMAT

-- where Heller hits the floor in a storm of broken glass. Stitch leaps in after him and starts yanking Heller's clothes off. Christy enters, trying to look nonchalant as panicked CUSTOMERS scurry out past him.

STITCH

Golly, John, we got you wet. How thoughtless. Here, allow us to dry you off.

Stitch tosses the clothing aside, grabs Heller, and hurls him headfirst and naked into one of the huge dryers. He slams the door and glances at the sign.

STITCH

Fifty cents for the dryer? That's outrageous!

Christy digs change from his pocket, checking for quarters. Heller is pounding on the glass, shouting his lungs out.

CHRISTY

You know, we are violating his rights somewhat.

STITCH

Don't start with me.

He takes the quarters from Christy, feeds them into the dryer, hits the start button. The dryer kicks in, bouncing Heller around -- THUMP, THUMP, THUMP! Stitch and Christy lean on the counter and wait a while.

CHRISTY

You think he's done?

STITCH

I dunno. Let's check.

Stitch opens the dryer. It churns to a stop. Heller's head and shoulders flop out. He's gasping, battered:

HELLER

Please...please...

(CONTINUED)

STITCH

Where is she?

HELLER

...I don't know what you're talking about...I swear...

STITCH

Doyle found out about the evidence. I can name three people who didn't tell him. You're number four.

(grabs Heller's face)

Doyle's got you in his hip pocket. You oughtta be ashamed. A public servant like you.

He shoves him back in the dryer, slams the door. The dryer kicks in again. THUMP, THUMP, THUMP! Stitch and Christy wait a while longer. Stitch opens the dryer. Heller's half-senseless.

STITCH

I'll ask again. Where is she?

HELLER

...dunno....please...I swear...

STITCH

How about the location of the place they're torching today?

(off Heller's look)

We can keep this up all day. You'll shrink to the size of an avocado before I get bored.

HELLER

...supermarket...Wilshire and Primera...

A POLICE CAR screeches up outside. TWO UNIFORMED COPS rush in. Christy flashes his badge, cocks his head at the dryer.

CHRISTY

Book him for indecent exposure.

The cops bend down, peering into the dryer as we

CUT TO:

INT - SUPERMARKET - LOADING DOCK - DAY

The STORE MANAGER is checking stock as the white van pulls up outside, now bearing a phone company logo. Ray gets out and enters, followed by Billy Bones and Chin. They're wearing phone company hardhats and carrying toolboxes.

(CONTINUED)

RAY

There's a problem in one of our underground lines. We need to get under your store.

MANAGER

Go ahead.

Billy Bones refers to a Department of Sewers blueprint. He leads the others across the loading dock into --

THE SUMP PUMP ROOM

-- where they find a grimy tangle of water/sewer/refrigeration pipes. Billy Bones sweeps a flashlight across the floor, finds a manhole cover. Chin pulls a pry bar from his toolbelt.

INT - UNMARKED CAR - DAY

We go by a construction zone familiar to all Angelenos: a subway tunnel being dug. ANGLE SHIFTS to Christy at the wheel.

Stitch rubbernecks the subway work as they turn the corner into the supermarket parking lot. He spots the white van:

STITCH

That's the van we followed to Doyle's estate. Same plates.

CHRISTY

(grabs radio mike)

Dispatch, this is thirteen forty delta, requesting backup. Arson in progress at the market, 5135 Primera, corner of Primera and Wilshire. Over.

They get out of the car, splitting up as they proceed cautiously toward the store:

STITCH

I'll take the front.

INT - SEWER TUNNEL - VARIOUS ANGLES

ANGLES ARE DARK AND TIGHT, not giving too much away: Ray, Billy Bones, and Chin are in various locations, attaching malglinite charges with putty. Ray places his last charge, speaks softly into a headset:

RAY

Billy Bones? Chin?

BILLY BONES (filtered)

We're clean.

RAY

I'm arming them...now.

He presses the button of a stopwatch/transmitter hanging from his neck -- with a BEEP, the LED winks to life, counting down from 6 minutes. Ray hurries to leave the sewer.

INT - SUPERMARKET - DAY

Stitch enters, fascinated by the automatic doors. He looks around. About thirty people at the checkout stands. Nothing unusual. He moves further into the store.

THE LOADING DOCK

Christy enters, gun drawn, jumpy as hell. He almost shoots the STORE MANAGER coming around the corner.

MANAGER

Holy shit! Don't shoot!

ANOTHER ANGLE

Ray and his men freeze -- they were just about to enter the aisle into Christy's view. They pull compact Ingram Mac-10 machine guns from pouches on their toolbelts as:

CHRISTY

Police officer! Where are the guys from the phone company?

MANAGER

(gestures, confused)
In back...they had to get down in the sewer.

Christy turns in that direction -- just as Ray, Billy Bones, and Chin pivot into view, MACHINE GUNS BLAZING.

The manager is chewed to pieces by gunfire before he knows what hit him. Christy hurls himself behind a mountain of Purina Dog Chow as the bags EXPLODE, ripped asunder by a storm of 9-mm bullets. Dry dog food showers down like hail.

IN THE MARKET

Stitch races down the aisle, revolver drawn, scattering shoppers left and right. He spins around, trying to determine the location of the gunfire. There is now only silence.

THE LOADING DOCK

Christy mutters a quick prayer, then pivots from behind the Dog Chow, gun leveled -- the aisle is empty.

(CONTINUED)

Chin pops out of nowhere, nails Christy with a spinning kick. Christy hits the floor and loses his gun. Ray and Billy Bones step before Christy, leveling their Macs to kill him...but pause, hearing SIRENS.

POLICE CARS screech up outside the loading dock doors. COPS pour out. Ray and Billy Bones swing their Macs at them, FIRING LONG BURSTS. Cops dive for cover as WINDSHIELDS ARE BLOWN OUT and LIGHTBARS GET BLASTED TO FRAGMENTS.

IN THE MARKET

Stitch grabs a STOCKBOY racing toward the front of the store.

STITCH
Where's it coming from?

STOCKBOY
The loading dock!

He points just as Ray and his men burst in from the loading dock with Christy. They're amazed to see Stitch alive:

RAY
Son of a bitch!

They OPEN FIRE. Stitch hurls himself and the stockboy behind the produce bins as fruits and vegetables geyser into the air.

Stitch rolls and comes up, RETURNING FIRE.

Shoppers all over the store are panicking, taking cover, flattening to the ground.

Ray and his men keep going, dragging Christy up the aisle to the front of the store. A DOZEN MORE POLICE CARS converge in the parking lot outside the plate glass windows. Cops pour out, assuming positions behind their vehicles.

STITCH

crouches low as he races up the produce aisle, feeding fresh bullets into his revolver. He comes to a terrified WOMAN covering her two crying CHILDREN. He pauses to make a funny face at the kids and toss them an apple -- they quiet down, reassured -- then he bursts from cover...

ANOTHER ANGLE

...to find Ray down at the far end of the checkstands with his Mac-10 pressed under Christy's jaw. A standoff.

RAY
I'll blow his head off.

Stitch and Christy lock eyes. Christy's expression is heavy with accusation -- if he dies, it'll be Stitch's fault. Stitch lowers his gun, tosses it away.

JONAS
(through bullhorn)
IN THE STORE! YOU'RE SURROUNDED!

Billy Bones presses close to Ray, sweating as he checks the stopwatch. 4 minutes 49 seconds and counting.

BILLY BONES
We gotta get long gone, man. This place is gonna go bye bye.

RAY
Get everybody up front.

Billy Bones and Chin carry out the order, herding all the customers to the front of the store.

BILLY BONES
Up against the windows! Move!

EXT - MARKET - DAY

Jonas and the other cops watch as the terrified faces of the hostages press up against the windows. The automatic doors open. Ray appears, using Christy as a shield.

RAY
Give us a car and back off, or we start tossing a body out the door every twenty seconds...
(puts the Mac to Christy's head)
...starting with him.

JONAS
I don't have that authority!

RAY
(reading the stopwatch)
Fifteen seconds...ten seconds...
five seconds...

JONAS
All right! We'll give you a car!
Garza! Bring that unmarked unit!

RAY
Not him! I'm sending somebody out!

INT - MARKET - DAY

Ray pulls back inside, glances at the stopwatch. 4 minutes 10 seconds left. He turns to Stitch.

RAY

You. Houdini. You're gonna drive us out of here.

STITCH

I think it's only fair to warn you. My license expired.

RAY

You wanna expire along with it?

EXT - MARKET - DAY

Stitch exits the store, crosses the parking lot. Jonas blinks at the sight of him.

JONAS

What the hell are you doing here?

STITCH

Giving them their car.

He holds out his hand. Jonas tosses him the keys.

INT - UNMARKED CAR - DAY

Stitch gets in. Sees the Ithaca shotgun in its floor rack. Puts on his rubber gloves. Starts the engine.

INT - SUPERMARKET - DAY

Ray and his men are staring out the window, surrounded by hostages. Waiting.

The car just sits, engine idling -- then it shoots forward in a cloud of blue smoke directly at the store.

Everybody dives out of the way as Ray FIRES A BURST right through the plate glass window at the oncoming car. Stitch ducks as his windshield disintegrates.

The car plows into the supermarket in a storm of EXPLODING GLASS AND TWISTING METAL. Chin is thrown onto the hood as the car demolishes a checkstand and lurches to a stop.

Chin raises his Mac, but Stitch pokes the shotgun through the shattered windshield one-handed and pulls the trigger. **BLAM!** Chin gets it point-blank in the chest, blown back off the hood to land in a pyramid display of Ragu spaghetti sauce. A gooey explosion of homestyle goodness geysers into the air.

Stitch hurls the shotgun to Christy and hits the gas, plowing on through the checkstands. Ray and Billy Bones unleash BURSTS OF MACHINE GUN FIRE as the car careens after them.

Christy starts herding hostages out the demolished storefront. Cops are rushing up, helping people to safety.

ANGLE ON AISLE

Ray and Billy Bones run like hell with the car right behind them. The vehicle's wide -- its sides are plowing the shelves, churning cans and boxes into the air like a snow plow.

The men split in two directions as the car hurtles out of the aisle in a tight turn -- the rear end smashes into the dairy case, EXPLODING glass and milk in all directions.

EXT - MARKET - DAY

CHRISTY

Everybody back! This place is gonna blow up!

Everybody runs...but Christy pauses, looking back at the market. Hearing the battle rage within. Torn between running for his life and going back to help.

INT - MARKET - DAY

Stitch chases Ray and Billy Bones through the supermarket, his car destroying everything in its path. Twisting. Turning. Careening. Smashing. Unstoppable.

Billy Bones emerges from an aisle near the front of the store. The car bursts into view in a cloud of smoking exhaust and Rice-a-Roni, battered beyond recognition, tailpipe and muffler dragging. Billy raises his Mac to strafe the car...

...but Christy pops up behind a checkstand, shotgun leveled.

CHRISTY

Drop it!

Billy whirls to shoot. Christy pumps him full of shotgun rounds. Billy is blown off his feet, Mac BLAZING into the air.

No sooner does Billy go down than Ray suddenly appears at the far end of the checkstands, FIRING A LONG BURST at Christy. Christy dives as bullets chew the register to pieces.

ANGLE ON AISLE

Ray cuts down the aisle. The car comes after him, churning through a tight turn -- and the vehicle gets jammed, wedged between the shelves, wheels spinning in salad dressing.

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTY

breaks from cover, running toward the back of the store.

RESUME STITCH

Flooring the pedal. The car spinning its wheels. No traction. Ray turns back and grins, raises his Mac.

Stitch struggles to get out of the car. The doors are wedged solid by the shelves. He ducks as BULLETS STRAFE the car.

Ray empties the clip. He then pulls a satchel charge from his toolbelt, yanks the ripcord, and slides the explosive down the aisle under the car. Right under the gas tank.

Ray turns and runs. Stitch takes that as a sign something's about to go boom. With seconds left and no choice, he rips the rubber glove from his hand and cranks the ignition. Streams of electricity race up his arm and envelope him. He arches back, screaming as he drains the battery -- and his image begins to overlap as his toehold in time goes unstable.

THE CAR EXPLODES straight up out of the aisle on a rocket booster of gasoline. It flips through the air and lands upside down, completely engulfed in flame. Sprinklers kick on.

Stitch walks from the flames -- or rather, countless Stitches do, all of them out of sync like a deck of cards being shuffled. Stitch stabilizes, his duplicate images accordioning back into place with a SNAP! The impact knocks him flat.

LOADING DOCK/SUMP PUMP ROOM

Ray runs in. He's got only one escape route left. He climbs down the manhole --

INT - SEWER - DAY

-- and slides down the steel ladder. He gets to the bottom and turns -- CLACK-CLACK! There's a shotgun aimed at his face.

CHRISTY

What was that you said about blowing my head off? Could you repeat that?

RAY

We have to leave. I mean it.

CHRISTY

Yeah? Why? What's so interesting about this sewer anyway?

STITCH (O.S., from manhole)
Look above you, Ned.

Ray glances up, astonished to see Stitch alive. Again.

Christy also looks up, slowly realizing where he is: right under a malglinite charge. The red LED is clicking away.

Think that's bad? Wait. ANGLE WIDENS OUT as Christy peers around, revealing a HUGE GAS MAIN that seems to run for miles. The pipe is inches above his head -- and it's lined with countless malglinite charges stretching in both directions.

CHRISTY
Oh, fuck me.

Stitch comes down the ladder. Ray is staring at him with slack-jawed amazement:

RAY
How do you keep doing that?

CHRISTY
(grabs Ray, furious)
Are you kidding me? All this just to take out a supermarket?

STITCH
I don't think so. You know that construction zone we drove by?

CHRISTY
Out on Wilshire? They're digging another subway tunnel! What's that got to do with...

He looks up at the gas main, realization dawning.

STITCH
...the price of beans in Brazil?

Stitch moves down the tunnel, following the pipe. Christy brings up the rear, prodding Ray ahead with the shotgun.

We hear HEAVY MACHINERY ahead. Lights appear as the SOUNDS GROW LOUDER. Stitch leads the way through the maze-like understructure of Wilshire Boulevard, edging past a series of massive concrete underpinnings --

THE SUBWAY TUNNEL

-- and emerging into the underground construction zone. MEN AND MACHINES everywhere. It's deafening. Christy looks back the way they came. Sure enough, the gas main runs parallel to the subway tunnel. Everybody shouts to be heard:

CHRISTY

You're blowing up the goddamn tunnel? Why?

STITCH

This isn't where Doyle wanted it! You said it yourself, it's all about property values! You can't make a killing unless the trains go where they're supposed to!

CHRISTY

So if you can't bribe 'em, blow 'em up? Jesus!

STITCH

I bet they punched that big hole in Hollywood Boulevard too!

RAY

Sherlock fucking Holmes! Can we go?

Christy yanks the stopwatch from Ray's neck.

CHRISTY

Just turn the goddamn thing off!

RAY

I can't! It's not designed that way!

CHRISTY

What? What kind of idiot makes a bomb he can't turn off?

They've been spotted. A CONSTRUCTION TEAM approaches:

FOREMAN

Hey! What do you think you're doing? This area's off limits!

CHRISTY

Get your people out of here! You're sitting on a bomb!

FOREMAN

That's not funny, asshole! Who the hell are you?

Christy goes totally berserk, waving his shotgun:

CHRISTY

I'M CHICKEN LITTLE, MOTHERFUCKER,
AND THE SKY'S ABOUT TO FALL! NOW
GET THE FUCK OUT!

(CONTINUED)

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! HE PUMPS SHOTGUN ROUNDS over their heads to get them moving. Instant pandemonium. WORKERS flee for the surface, emptying the construction zone.

Ray tries to join them, but Stitch grabs his collar and yanks him back.

STITCH

Not so fast. I haven't read you your rights.

RAY

My what?

CHRISTY

Screw that! This is no time to get politically correct!

He shows him the stopwatch. 59 seconds. 58 seconds.

STITCH

Ned. We're talking about a man's constitutional rights. It's the law.

Before anyone can react, Stitch peels the handcuffs from Christy's belt and cuffs Ray's wrist to a steel support. Ray is stunned to find himself trapped. Stitch dangles the key.

STITCH

You have the right to remain silent. If you give up that right, I'll give you this key before the tunnel goes boom.

RAY

You're kidding.

STITCH

Am I laughing? You see any teeth?

47 seconds. 46 seconds.

RAY

It's a bluff!

STITCH

How convinced are you?

43 seconds. 42. 41. 40.

RAY

What do you wanna know?

STITCH

Where is she?

(CONTINUED)

Stitch waits for answer. 35 seconds. 34 seconds. 33 seconds.

RAY

You're crazy!

STITCH

(big smile)

That's right.

30 seconds. 29. 28. Christy gives Ray a queasy look.

CHRISTY

I hope you say something soon.

RAY

They've got her at Doyle's building!
The one under construction! Can we
leave now? Please?

Stitch and Christy trade a glance.

CHRISTY

Run like hell?

STITCH

That's the plan.

They turn and haul ass out of there. Stitch tosses the key.
Ray catches it, frantically trying to unlock the cuffs.

EXT - WILSHIRE BOULEVARD - MOMENTS LATER

Stitch and Christy emerge from below and make a mad dash
across the street, covering precious yards. Ray is not far
behind. Construction workers are scattering, running in all
directions, waving off traffic.

CHRISTY

GET OUT OF THE STREET!

INSERT - THE GAS MAIN

All the LEDs hit zero. The screen FLASHES WHITE as:

EXT - WILSHIRE BOULEVARD - DAY

THE CONSTRUCTION ZONE EXPLODES SKYWARD ON A MASSIVE ERUPTION
OF SEARING FLAME. Stitch, Christy, and Ray are hurled forward
on an awesome shockwave. But it doesn't end there --

VARIOUS ANGLES

-- because this is the mother of all movie explosions. We're
talking six blocks of the Wilshire Corridor blowing up right
in front of our eyes! Ever wonder what Hell would look like if

(CONTINUED)

it erupted through the street? Like this:

GEYSERS OF FLAME punch up through the pavement and soar hundreds of feet into the air, chewing the street in both directions from epicenter...

TONS OF PAVEMENT go flipping skyward like God's tiddlywinks...

THOUSANDS OF WINDOWS SHATTER up and down Wilshire, raining like snow from all the high-rise office buildings...

CARS veer wildly and go spinning out, slamming into each other in an impromptu demolition derby...

A BUS flips onto its side, skidding in a long stream of sparks and taking out a bus shelter...

STITCH AND CHRISTY

scramble to their feet against a solid backdrop of fire and keep running, dragging Ray along. BURNING BULLDOZERS AND FORKLIFTS come raining out of the sky, crashing massively into the street all around them as we

CUT TO:

EXT - SUPERMARKET - DAY

Chaos and confusion. Wilshire Boulevard is a giant smoking trench. Fire companies are responding from all over the city, with more trucks arriving by the moment.

Stitch and Christy limp toward their car. They're battered, bleeding, and dark with soot. Christy cradles the shotgun.

Captain Jonas weaves through the confusion toward them, shouting hysterically:

JONAS

Christy! I want some goddamn answers! You wanna tell me what just happened here?

CHRISTY

Wilshire Boulevard blew up?

STITCH

Trick question, right?

JONAS

Don't fuck with me! I got a very pissed off D.A. in custody who claims the two of you assaulted him and ran him through a washing machine! Is that true?

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTY

No sir. It was a dryer.

JONAS

Christy, turn in your badge. You and your friend here, whoever he is, are both under arrest.

STITCH

(to Christy)

How does this work? We read each other our rights?

CHRISTY

Begging your pardon, Captain, but I'm afraid we can't right now. There's something we have to do.

JONAS

What? What did you say?

Christy cocks the shotgun and presses it into Jonas' belly.

CHRISTY

I said nobody's taking my badge, you dick-face peckerwood. Get in the car.

Jonas is flabbergasted. Stitch takes his gun and shoves him in the back of the car, cuffing him to the door. Christy glances around -- nobody saw it. Too much smoke and confusion.

CHRISTY

So much for the pension thing.

CUT TO:

INT - CAR - DAY

Christy is driving. Stitch is beside him, feeding shells into a shotgun. Captain Jonas is in back, ranting at Christy:

JONAS

Uncuff me, you crazy son of a bitch! You have any idea how much trouble you're in? Do you?

CHRISTY

(ignoring him)

Jeez, look at those storm clouds. Looks like the weatherman was right for a change.

Stitch racks the pump, starts loading the other shotgun.

(CONTINUED)

STITCH

You know, for an old fart with his nerves shot, you really kicked some ass back there.

CHRISTY

I did, didn't I?

JONAS

Christy? Are you listening to me?

CUT TO:

EXT - DOYLE'S BUILDING - DAY

A vast steel skeleton topped by naked girders straining for the sky. Storm clouds are pouring in fast off the Pacific. Distant FLASHES OF LIGHTNING dance across the ocean. ZOOM SLOWLY IN to reveal THREE FIGURES on one of the middle floors.

ON THE BUILDING

Doyle paces. Jimmy leans against a girder, CLICK-CLACKING a butterfly knife open and shut, open and shut. Mary has her mouth taped and her hands bound. Her eyes are terrified. Freezing wind whistles through the structure.

DOYLE

Where the hell are they? They should have been back by now.

JIMMY

They probably had to pull over for a lot of fire trucks.

They gaze off. A column of black smoke rises from the city: Wilshire Boulevard. Doyle smiles, calming down, checks his watch. Impulsively, he presses a button -- the watch plays him an electronic version of "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head."

JIMMY

Boss. Look.

Doyle turns to look. Ten stories below, Christy's car rams the gate into the construction area, churning up dust.

ON THE GROUND

The car lurches to a stop. Stitch and Christy get out, gazing up at the building. Jonas is trapped in the car, still cuffed.

STITCH

This is gonna get dicey. I'll go it alone from here.

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTY

The hell you will.

STITCH

You've done your part. You're staying here.

CHRISTY

Let's flip for it.

Stitch considers it. He digs a quarter from his pocket and flips it into the air -- but before he can call it, Christy's hand shoots out and snatches the quarter. He holds it tight in his fist, locks eyes with Stitch.

CHRISTY

I call heads.

Christy turns the coin in his fingers -- both sides are heads. A con man's coin. He hands it back. Stitch shrugs.

STITCH

What are we waiting for?

THUNDER BOOMS. Stitch and Christy, both cradling shotguns, march solemnly up the gravel road toward the building.

CHRISTY

(without looking back)

Captain? You might want to call for backup.

Jonas lunges over the seat, grabs the handmike.

STITCH AND CHRISTY

walk side by side, gazing up as they approach the building. MORE THUNDER. Jimmy appears ten stories above them, unleashing a LONG BURST from a high-tech Heckler & Koch assault rifle.

Stitch and Christy dive to either side, taking shelter behind construction equipment. Bullets chew the ground and SPARK the machinery. Abrupt silence. They glance across at each other.

CHRISTY

You're a shit magnet. Wherever you go, shit flies in your direction. All I can do is duck.

STITCH

Bitch, bitch, bitch.

They burst from cover and run across open ground, sending a fusillade of SHOTGUN FIRE up at the building. Bullets chew the ground around their feet.

(CONTINUED)

They reach the ground floor level, out of the line of fire. The RUMBLE OF A WINCH draws their attention -- the cables of a construction elevator are being turned by the motor.

CHRISTY

They're going up.

ON THE ELEVATOR

Doyle and Mary are riding up in the open cage of a large platform-style construction elevator, passing beams and girders. He has a large .45 automatic pressed to her side. A vicious wind whips their clothing into a frenzy.

STITCH AND CHRISTY

jump on the other elevator. Christy hits the lever. They rise.

JIMMY

is on a floor somewhere in the middle. He looks up at Doyle's elevator rising out of sight, then glances down at Stitch's elevator approaching. He takes a step back and fires a burst into the electrical panel.

STITCH AND CHRISTY

stumble as their elevator grinds to a shuddering halt. Christy almost loses his balance and goes over the side, but Stitch grabs his tie and yanks him back.

CHRISTY

Thanks.

STITCH

Don't mention it.

BULLETS STRAFE the elevator cable above their heads, ripping it to shreds. SNAP! Stitch and Christy hurl themselves clear as the elevator drops out from under their feet and hurtles toward the ground below. They land on the building, skidding on their bellies across the floor...

SEVERAL STORIES HIGHER

...while Jimmy peers down, watching the elevator CRASH far below. He slaps a fresh clip into his HK, craning further out to see where the cops went.

STITCH AND CHRISTY

rise slowly, looking up. Tense and alert, expecting anything.

CHRISTY

Looks like we climb from here.

(CONTINUED)

STITCH

Let's split up. Draw his attention
in two different directions.

Christy nods.

VARIOUS ANGLES - STITCH/CHRISTY

They work their separate ways up floor by floor, a tense game of cat-and-mouse among the high girders. Climbing ladders. Scaling catwalks. Expecting Jimmy to pop up anywhere.

CHRISTY

moves cautiously, shotgun at the ready.

Jimmy suddenly pops into view and FIRES A BURST from his HK. Christy is hit in the arm and spins to the ground. Jimmy approaches in no big hurry.

JIMMY

Toss it over the side.

Christy has no choice. He hurls the shotgun over the edge.

Stitch suddenly appears above Jimmy, aiming his shotgun from a catwalk on the floor above.

STITCH

Drop it!

JIMMY

(glances up)

Wrong, pal. You drop it, or I
splatter your partner to the wind.
Toss it nice and far.

Stitch has no choice -- he tosses the shotgun. Jimmy grins, turns back to Christy.

JIMMY

Now...let's see how high this cop
can bounce.

Stitch sees a large open drum of industrial solvent nearby. Quick as a flash, he kicks it over -- 50 gallons of highly flammable solvent cascade down, drenching Jimmy. He howls in pain, blinking solvent from his eyes. Stitch drops down from the catwalk. Jimmy spins to shoot.

STITCH

Go ahead, pull the trigger! Let's
see what happens when those fumes
ignite! I've never seen an asshole
explode before!

(CONTINUED)

Jimmy hurls the HK over the side. Lightning fast, he pulls out his twin butterfly knives, CLICK-CLACKS them open, and launches himself at Stitch with a scream of pure animal rage.

The fight is brutal, vicious. Jimmy's knives slash the air in a martial-arts blur. It's all Stitch can do to keep from being gutted like a fish.

Jimmy gets him on the ground, straddling him with both razor-sharp knives poised to plunge into his throat. Stitch has Jimmy by the wrists, straining to keep the knives away.

CHRISTY (O.S.)

Excuse me.

Jimmy glances over, his eyes widening in horror. Christy is holding his cigarette lighter near the trail of solvent.

The lighter flicks. The solvent ignites.

Jimmy leaps up and runs screaming in various directions...but try as he might to outrun it, the flaming trail of solvent follows him wherever he goes. He zigs, he zags, he goes this way and that, but the fire pursues him, closing in.

With no place left to go, he finally hurls himself off the building and vanishes.

Stitch helps Christy up. They hobble to the edge...

...and find Jimmy hanging by his fingertips from the end of a dangling girder suspended from a cable. The girder see-saws slowly up and down over fifteen stories of empty air.

JIMMY

Help me. Please.

STITCH

What's the matter, Jimmy? Losing your grip?

In fact, he is. His fingertips slip a fraction of an inch.

JIMMY

C'mon, pal! Get me out of this!
I'll tell you anything! I swear!

STITCH

There is one thing I'd like to know.

JIMMY

Anything! Just ask!

STITCH

How high do you bounce?

(CONTINUED)

Jimmy HOWLS in outrage as he loses his grip. In a final act of defiance, he pulls his revolver and FIRES A SHOT -- the muzzle flash ignites the solvent and he bursts into flame. He falls fifteen stories, a human meteor.

STITCH

Not very high.

Doyle suddenly pivots into view several stories above them, leaning out to the edge of his balance. He fires. The massive .45 slug blows a hole right through Christy in a spray of blood.

Stitch grabs Christy and they hit the floor. Stitch drags him to safety, cradles him in his arms. Christy blinks up at him, stupefied by the pain and shock. THUNDER BOOMS.

STITCH

Hey partner, talk to me.

Christy tries to speak. Stitch loosens his tie.

CHRISTY

It...hurts.

STITCH

I'm gonna get you some help. You just hang on.

CHRISTY

No time...

Christy draws a final shallow breath, eyes dancing in pain.

CHRISTY

(faint whisper)

The storm. The storm.

His pupils glaze. Dead. Stitch throws his head back and SCREAMS IN RAGE as the heavens illuminate with a FLASH. The rain hits, lashing through the structure on gale-force winds.

ON THE GROUND

Police cars are streaming into the construction area.

ON THE BUILDING

Doyle has his arm around Mary, the .45 pressed to her neck. They're as high as they can go, perched on beams and girders that sway in the wind. Wind and rain lashes them violently, threatening to sweep them right off the building.

Doyle spins this way and that, watching the police cars converge on the ground far below, his world crumbling around him. He's as dangerous as a cornered rat.

Stitch appears. Doyle whirls and FIRES. Stitch ducks behind a beam as the bullet SPANGS off the metal. Doyle almost loses his balance, taking Mary with him -- she screams under the tape covering her mouth -- but he manages to steady himself.

STITCH

Doyle? How's it feel to be on top of the world? Have your watch sing us a song!

DOYLE

You son of a bitch! You've ruined me!

STITCH

Don't think it hasn't been fun. But it's over now. End of story.

Stitch steps into view, the dossier of evidence in his hands.

STITCH

I think this belongs to you.

He tosses it. Doyle tries to catch it, but the wind snatches it from his hands -- the papers fly away, scattering all over the city. Pointless now. Doyle jabs his .45 into Mary's ribs.

DOYLE

I'll kill her!

STITCH

No you won't. It's me you want.

Doyle's gun swivels slowly from Mary to Stitch.

DOYLE

Yes. You.

STITCH

A deal. Me for her.

DOYLE

A worthy bargain.

STITCH

I thought you'd like it. You can press that gat in my belly and look in my eyes when you pull the trigger.

Mary shakes her head wildly. Stitch smiles grimly and just keeps coming. He reaches out for Mary and pulls her away. He unties her hands and removes the tape from her mouth.

MARY

Stitch--!

(CONTINUED)

He puts a finger to her lips.

STITCH

Shhh. Not a word...Minnie Mouse.

He kisses her. We read confusion in her eyes, and a glimmer of memory -- what did he call me? The storm is right on top of them, charging the air with electrons. A rush of static electricity rushes from his lips to hers. A hell of a kiss. He pushes her gently, sending her on her way.

Stitch turns to Doyle. Face to face. On top of the world.

LIGHTNING BOLTS move closer and closer. Stitch looks up, blinking into the rain -- furious charges of of electricity are building directly overhead. A few seconds left. Doyle presses the .45 into Stitch's gut, seething with malice.

DOYLE

Who are you?

Stitch just smiles. He begins to glow, static charges racing up and down his body, the very air becoming supercharged with electrical particles. Doyle gasps.

STITCH

A solid gold dick. L.A.'s finest.

(grim smile)

Remember back in '59? The night you tossed Lenny the Dwarf down the elevator shaft? I have to go back there now. I have to die...

Stitch reaches out and grabs Doyle, pulling him close. Doyle cries out in pain as he is grounded to Stitch, the electricity sparking between them, bonding them.

STITCH

...but I'm not going alone.

Stitch thrusts an arm toward the sky -- and grabs a vertical steel rebar. An impromptu lightning rod. Doyle gazes into his eyes, overwhelmed by horror as he finally recognizes him.

DOYLE

YOU!

A BOLT OF LIGHTNING strikes the rebar -- MASSIVE VOLTAGE surges down the steel conduit, flows through Stitch, and into Doyle. Doyle disappears in a huge WHITE FLASH --

EXT - ROOFTOP - NIGHT - 1959

-- and Doyle's screaming face appears as he gets yanked into the past, replacing Stitch on the radio relay tower. In the

(CONTINUED)

heartbeat of time it takes for the lightning to fry him, the last thing Francis Doyle ever sees is a glimpse of himself and Jimmy as young men.

The lightning dies. Abrupt, shocking silence.

The young gangsters rise, gaping in astonishment. Aftershocks of electricity skitter up and down the tower in vaporous strands, then dissipate entirely.

The charred, tattered corpse hangs from the radio tower, swaying in the wind. Franky Doyle stares at the body, not imagining for a moment that he just witnessed his own death.

BULL

Oh, yuck.

DOYLE

Fried him. Just like that.

They hurry off. CAMERA DOLLIES IN on the corpse. Once again, we see a charred watch slither off the wrist and drop to the ground -- it's Doyle's, the one that played electronic tunes.

EXT - LOS ANGELES - DAY - 1999

The storm rages. Doyle's building is a lightning rod in the landscape, drawing overlapping BOLTS from the sky.

ON THE BUILDING

Stitch has gone totally unstable from the voltage that has flowed through him. Writhing coils of electricity lift him into the air. Current leaps to the surrounding girders and back, a dancing spiderweb of light. Countless images of him appear, each out of sync with the other.

Mary is struggling to reach Stitch, but the distorted time-field he's generating is slowing her down -- it's like trying to run in a dream, everything getting slow and weird.

MARY

Stitch! Don't go! Stay with me!

STITCH

(screaming, distorted)

MMMMMAAAAARRRRYYYYY! TTTTAAAKKKEEE
MMMMMYYYYYYYY HHHHAAAAAANNNNNDDDD!

Now the time-field is starting to affect her as well. Multiple images of Mary jitter briefly like ghosts, the effect growing stronger as she nears the vortex...

...their fingertips straining toward each other...

(CONTINUED)

...desperate for that touch...

...because it might keep him here...

...or take her with him...

Stitch vanishes before they make contact, sucked away in a cosmic vacuum. Mary is left alone in the storm, lashed by wind and rain, everything back to normal.

EXT - ROOFTOP - NIGHT - 1959

Sparks of voltage appear, leaping from metal to metal, building in intensity like a Jacob's ladder run amok, creating a whirlwind vortex.

The vortex vanishes. Stitch drops from mid-air, slamming flat on his back on the tarpaper. He's back. He's alive.

He rolls painfully over, sees the smoking corpse on the relay tower. Scattered on the ground at its feet are Stitch's discarded badge and gun, plus Doyle's fried watch.

Stitch walks over, picks up the watch by its charred strap. With its last bit of electronic breath, it BEEPS a pathetic few bars of Beethoven's Fifth -- duh-duh-duh-dummmmm -- and then fizzles out in a puff of smoke.

The moment of truth? Realization dawns. Maybe there's still time. Stitch grabs his gun and runs for the stairwell.

IN THE STREET

Christy is walking back from the diner with coffee and doughnuts, collar turned up against the drizzle.

IN THE ELEVATOR

The gangsters ride the elevator down with the matronly lady. Lenny's mangled face protrudes from the ceiling.

IN THE STAIRWELL

Stitch careens full-tilt down the stairs in near darkness, crashing into the walls as he takes the landings, his descent dizzy and terrifying.

IN THE LOBBY

Danny watches the arrow approach the ground floor. Christy appears at the lobby entrance, grinning as he shakes water off his uniform.

CHRISTY

You like sweetrolls, sir?

(CONTINUED)

Danny looks at him, distracted as the elevator stops. He turns back as the gate opens, expecting to see Stitch. Instead:

Doyle and his men are exiting the elevator. Realizing there are cops in the lobby.

An eternity passes in the space of a mere heartbeat. Then things explode. Fraction-of-a-second events tick out in agonizing SLOW MOTION as if molasses had been poured into the very gears and cogs of time itself:

THE GANGSTERS go for their guns, coats snapping back as weapons fly free --

DANNY goes for his gun, fully aware that he's a dead man but drawing anyway, face contorting as he screams a pointless warning to Christy --

CHRISTY frozen in the doorway, eyes going wide with incomprehension and fear --

JIMMY pumping a sawed-off shotgun as he kicks the lady in the back to propel her into the line of fire --

STITCH bursting into the lobby gun-first, smashing the stairwell door right off its hinges --

DOYLE AND HIS MEN spinning toward Stitch, faces going slack with amazement --

CHRISTY flinging the coffee and doughnuts aside, drawing his sidearm --

STITCH opening fire --

DANNY opening fire --

CHRISTY opening fire --

DOYLE AND HIS MEN are blown back off their feet, bullets chewing through them in clouds of smoke and blood, the entire group sprawling backward into the elevator in a tangle of bodies. Jimmy's sawed-off goes BOOM at the ceiling, bringing down a chandelier.

ON THE ROOFTOP

Doyle's charred body begins to shimmer...and simply winks out of existence. The future in which Doyle becomes a rich and powerful man who dies in 1999 has been erased.

IN THE LOBBY

Silence. A haze of cordite smoke hangs in the air, along with the thick coppery smell of blood.

(CONTINUED)

The dead gangsters lie heaped in the elevator. Lenny the Dwarf's mangled face peers down at them, making an awful face. The matronly lady sits on the floor, crying but unharmed.

Danny regards Stitch dourly.

DANNY

What the hell took you so long?

Stitch is overwhelmed to see his friend alive again. He grabs him in a warm embrace. Danny is flustered and surprised.

STITCH

Danny. You look great.

DANNY

Thanks, partner. You look like shit.

Stitch sees Christy having a bad reaction -- the young rookie's never seen men die before. Stitch hurries over.

Christy looks at him, expecting some nasty comment. Instead, Stitch throws a comforting, steadying arm around him.

STITCH

Take it easy. You'll be all right.

Christy is flabbergasted at the affection Stitch suddenly seems to have for him. Stitch smiles.

STITCH

You know, you're gonna make a hell of a cop some day.

CUT TO:

EXT - BUILDING - NIGHT

Stitch and Danny are sipping coffee as the covered bodies of the gangsters are brought out and loaded into coroner's vans. Christy sits on the curb nearby, a blanket over his shoulders.

A car pulls up. Captain Thorsen gets out.

DANNY

(nudges Stitch)

The Good Humor man.

Thorsen approaches, looking mean as ever. They take a deep breath, ready for anything. Thorsen regards them both.

THORSEN

Talk about results. Damn fine work, both of you. There's gonna be a commendation from the city in this.

(CONTINUED)

Stitch faces Thorsen with a steely gaze.

STITCH

You know what you can do with that commendation?

Danny groans inwardly and prepares himself -- this is bound to be ugly.

STITCH

You can include Patrolman Christy. He's the one who broke this case.

Danny and Christy are quietly flabbergasted. Thorsen nods.

THORSEN

I'll see to it.

Thorsen moves on. Danny gives Stitch a look.

DANNY

I thought you said you were gonna pound your notice down his throat.

STITCH

What, and leave L.A.?

Danny just smiles -- after all these years, he should know better than to take Stitch seriously.

STITCH

Face it, Danny. This city needs us. Always has...always will.

(returns the smile)

See you in the morning, partner.

He walks away. Danny calls after him:

DANNY

Need a ride?

STITCH

I'll walk. It's a beautiful night. You can smell the honeysuckle all the way from the Valley.

(inhales deeply)

I love this town. Smells like a cheap hooker.

Stitch strolls on into the night as we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - BEACH - DAY

Pacific Ocean Park stands against a beautiful blue sky, ferris wheel turning. TILT DOWN to Stitch and his 4 year-old goddaughter playing at the edge of the surf, having a grand time tossing a beachball back and forth. Danny and Iris are spreading out a picnic nearby.

IRIS

Come on, you two!

STITCH

On our way! C'mon, Minnie Mouse.

He scoops her up. She locks her arms around his neck and gives him a fierce hug.

MINNIE

Can I marry you?

STITCH

Like I said, I'm too old.

MINNIE

Wait for me to grow up. Promise.

Stitch tries to speak but can't. He puts her down, and they walk up the beach hand in hand.

MINNIE

Will you promise?

Stitch is choked with emotion, knowing that he did fall in love with her forty years from now...in a future that will never be. He shakes his head sadly.

STITCH

Maybe some other time.

FADE OUT

THE END