PRESENCE (unlic)

written

by

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PRODUCTION PENDING DRAFT
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PRESENCE PILOT

OVER BLACK WE HEAR THE SOUND OF DEEP, RAPID BREATHING. It should be indicative of hard, physical exertion.

OVER THIS IS A SLUG THAT READS:

Afghanistan / Then

FADE IN:

1 EXT. AFGHANISTAN/ROAD - DAY (D1)

We open TIGHT on LT. COL. PRESENCE FOSTER. We are on her eyes, and can read the intensity in her nature. Presence is RUNNING, and RUNNING HARD. As she continues to run, THE CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal that Presence is in COMBAT GEAR. She’s running down a back road in Afghanistan, WEAPON IN HAND. As she runs, as THE CAMERA CONTINUES TO WIDEN, we see more and more of the “story” and the reason for her intensity. Along the road are WRECKED and SMOLDERING Humvees, DOWNED SOLDIERS. Other soldiers returning fire on TALIBAN FIGHTERS who pop up from cover... Through all this - fire fights, RPGs - Presence NEVER STOPS MOVING forward - BALLS OUT - and we DO NOT CUT AWAY from her moving forward.

Presence finally arrives to a small group of Soldiers who are using a Humvee for cover. At this point the ENEMY FIRE is intense. Delivering orders:

PRESENCE
Check right. I need suppression fire on three. All you got.

SOLDIER
Yes, ma’am.

PRESENCE
One, two...

On a silent three count, the soldiers swing from cover and cut loose with a vicious fusillade of fire. Presence darts from cover, runs about fifteen yards to an ugly scene: A wounded comrade - EDGAR - his burned out Humvee obviously hit by an IED. DEAD SOLDIERS scattered around him. Grabbing Edgar by his vest - BLOOD PUMPING FROM OPEN WOUNDS - Presence pulls Edgar to the safety of the cadre of men who are giving her covering fire, BULLETS STRIKING ALL AROUND HER. Once there, Presence frantically tries to tend his wounds, but moment by moment it becomes painfully clear to Presence there’s JUST TOO MUCH DAMAGE. There’s not much she can do. Blood CONTINUES to flow, as the LIFE SLIPS from Edgar. It is

(CONTINUED)
harsh, graphic and sad... A soldier dying on the field in a buddy’s arms.

PRESENCE (CONT’D)
Edgar, you hear me? Edgar!
(calling off)
Medic!

Reaching a BLOODIED HAND up to Presence:

EDGAR
Presence... You gotta promise...gotta promise me...

PRESENCE
No promises, except you’re getting home.
(calling off)
I need a medic, now!

As he begins to fade:

PRESENCE (CONT’D)
Edgar... Edgar!

On that sharp line, we make a HARD CUT TO:

BLACK

OVER THIS IS A SLUG THAT READS:

Los Angeles / Now

Then the darkness stirs, revealing that we are actually VERY TIGHT ON THE TINTED DRIVER’S WINDOW OF A CAR. It’s not much of a car, just a hoopty.

EXT. STREET/FAIRFAX DISTRICT – DAY (D2)

The Driver’s window drops revealing Presence behind the wheel. It’s a few years on since the opening scene. Presence is dressed in civvies; a look that is stylish and accentuates her physique, but at the same time doesn’t restrict her movements. Our locale has shifted to Los Angeles. The Fairfax District.

Just beyond the car passes a WHIRLWIND OF VIBRANT COLORS. As we gain perspective on the scene, we see Presence is on the fringe of a PURIM CARNIVAL. The street is filled with CELEBRANTS dressed in BRIGHTLY COLORED COSTUMES, adorned with MASK, and who SING and DANCE. New Year’s Eve, nor the 4th of July have anything on what’s transpiring here. It is a spectacle in the absolute best sense

(CONTINUED)
Presence exits her vehicle, and makes her way through the JOYFUL MASS toward SAUL’S DELI. Just as she’s about to enter, HER PHONE BUZZES. She takes her phone from her pocket,... The CALLER ID on the screen reads: DUCHESS AVEDON. Presence swears slightly under her breath, hits IGNORE, and then proceeds to enter the deli.

INT. SAUL’S - CONTINUOUS (D2)

Not a corner shop by any means, Saul’s is a SIZABLE CONCERN and a FINE ESTABLISHMENT. As with the exterior, the interior is filled with PATRONS who celebrate the holiday.

Presence makes her way through the crowd to a PRIVATE DINNING ROOM.

INT. SAUL’S/PRIVATE ROOM - CONTINUOUS (D2)

Wood and leather dominate. It’s got an “old boy’s” feel to the joint. The room is populated by several HASIDIC MEN. A few of them have some real size to them. If they weren’t believers, YOU MIGHT THINK THEY WERE WORKING FOR THE MOB. At first blush, it would seem Presence is out-numbered and out-muscled. If that should matter to her, she displays no anxiety. She closes the door to the room as she enters – which both serves to afford her some privacy, but also gets everyone’s attention. As she settles Presence casually rests a foot on a chair.

PRESENCE
Hey, I’m looking for Saul.

The men don’t necessarily respond directly, but it’s clear Presence isn’t going to give up much info other than to Saul himself.

SAUL
Help you?

PRESENCE
Saul? So, look, thing is, sometimes life; it doesn’t go how you planned. It happens. Things change. People change. They’re in love. They’re out. They get divorced... They move on. You moved on. But your ex-wife--

SAUL
Hester sent you?

One of the Hasidic men stiffens, starts to move toward Presence. Before he can close the gap, Presence straightens
a leg, sending the chair shooting across the space and directly into the guy tripping him up, and dropping him down to the floor. She was ready for him the minute she arrived.

Returning her attention to Saul:

PRESENCE
By religious law, Hester can’t move on until you give her a, a...

SAUL
A “get.”

PRESENCE
A “get.” Yeah.

As Presence pulls a DOCUMENT from her back pocket:

PRESENCE (CONT’D)
And until you sign this for Hester, even though you’re divorced, she’s got no legal rights in marriage. If she’s with another guy, it’s adultery...

SAUL
Hester shouldn’t be with another man.

PRESENCE
If you’re having regrets over the divorce, work it out. Don’t punish her.

SAUL
Why do you care?

PRESENCE
She wants to live her life. So, do right; let her live.

Saul exchanges some stink-eye with Presence, but it’s very clear he’s a wounded man. He takes the document from Presence, signs it.

As she takes the document back, pockets it and starts to head from the joint:

PRESENCE (CONT’D)
You’re a good man, Saul. I know ‘em when I see ‘em.
INT. TEMPLE - LATER (D2)

As we come into the scene, Presence is in the Temple with a RABBI. The Rabbi is literally getting down to business counting out CASH MONEY:

RABBI
Twenty, forty, sixty, eighty, one-hundred... Ten..that’s twenty...

PRESENCE
Whoa. Wait.

RABBI
Two-twenty-five.

PRESENCE
Deal was I’d get the “get,” I get two-fifty.

RABBI
Something for the Lord.

Presence gives a “really?” stare.

RABBI (CONT’D)
Something for the Lord.

Clearly the deal isn’t going to be modified. Presence mutters with a touch of melancholy:

PRESENCE
Sure. Something for the Lord.

She collects the money and exits under the Rabbi’s smile.

EXT. MUSCLE CAR LOT - DAY (D2)

We are on a street in Van Nuys that is LINED with AUTO SHOPS - sales, service, consignment. The block is like a Mecca for the worship of vehicles.

Presence talks with MANNY ACEVEDO - Edgar - the guy who died in Presence’s arms; his brother. Manny’s kind of a thin dude. Has a sorta “Jesus” look to him, if Jesus was sporting tats all over his body. One can tell Manny used to be a troubled kid - likely RAN WITH GANGS - but for the minute he’s putting all his energy into being a better person.

Manny and Presence have an easy manner as well as a familiarity.

(CONTINUED)
MANNY
Two-hundred-fifty bucks just to get some woman a divorce?

PRESENCE
I didn’t get her a divorce. I got her her freedom. Big difference.

MANNY
Is that legal?

PRESENCE
Legal-ish.

MANNY
C’mon, girl. You getting out of the Army just so you can get back to thuggin’ and thievin’?

PRESENCE
Manny, I’m not going back to that. I owe Edgar better. I’m not just living for me anymore.

That’s a sharp statement. Before Manny can give a response, a car is pulled around the lot. It’s a classic MERCURY MARAUDER. The whip is black on black (on black). RIGO - lot’s owner, and a rather heavy set guy - heaves himself from the car. He’s got PAPERWORK ready for Presence.

Just looking at the car, Presence lights up like a kid on the first day of Kwanza.

PRESENCE (CONT’D)
That’s what I’m talking about. That is a whip.

RIGO
Four-point-six litre V8... Three-hundred-two-ponies...

MANNY
Those trims don’t look like they’re within DOT standards.

RIGO
Don’t talk a customer out of a deal, bro.

PRESENCE (CONT’D)
They’re fine.

PRESENCE
Black-on-black-on. They can’t even see you coming.
MANNY
See? That’s a “thuggin’ and thievin’” mentality. You need to be more practical with your purchases.

PRESENCE
Can you just stop making sense?

RIGO
Bro, I’m trying to make a sale.

Presence grabs a pen, signs the paperwork. Does a little “ta-da” with her hands. As she starts to get in the car:

PRESENCE
Seriously, you’re like an Amish Librarian.

MANNY
An admirable lifestyle, and an honorable profession, so if that’s meant to be a slam...

PRESENCE
With, or without you, starting now, I’m living life.

Presence fires up the car and starts to drive off the lot. The moment she rolls out into the street, ANOTHER CAR traveling perpendicular to the drive HITS THE FRONT END of the Marauder, then drives off without even stopping to check on anyone’s well being.

Manny runs to the car to check on Presence, he yells at Rigo:

MANNY
Rigo, go get him!

Rigo goes huffing up the street after the hit-and-run driver. As Manny pulls Presence from the car:

PRESENCE
What the hell... He couldn’t see me?

INT. W HOTEL/DRAIS NIGHTCLUB – EVENING (D2)

A nice, higher end club/lounge in Hollywood with a view of the city. At the moment the STAFF is in the middle of setting up for an event. Servers are prepping food, drinks... People are dressing the space...

Overseeing it all is TRE DAVIS, Presence’s half-brother. Tre is the kind of modern gay-guy who is tight, right and always (CONTINUED)
good for a fight. Dresses well, has a head for business, and would have no problem KNOCKING SOMEONE THE FUCK OUT if the person got a little too lippy. A guy like Tre, a guy who’s got his shit together, isn’t real forgiving of mistakes. Particularly when it comes to Presence.

PRESENCE
Tre, hey.

Presence’s greeting is met by Tre with a negative shake of his head.

PRESENCE (CONT’D)
C’mon, don’t be like that.

TRE
What do you need this time, Presence?

PRESENCE
I had a little car trouble...

TRE
When did you get a car? PRESENCE (CONT’D)
I’m kinda tight on money for repairs.

PRESENCE (CONT’D)
I really could use a gig.

TRE
Every time you come around to see me--

PRESENCE
“Every time?”

TRE
You show up asking me for a solid, or a hook up...

PRESENCE
I come around looking for some helping out from my brother.

TRE
You’re not my sister. You’re my half sister. And six months ago I didn’t know about you. I could show up to work without you coming around acting like I owe you something.

(CONTINUED)
PRESENCE
You don’t need a bouncer? Some security for a couple of nights?

TRE
I don’t run these clubs, sister. I just book the events. You want to work security, then you need to get licensed.

PRESENCE
It’s hard for me to get a license. I’m an ex-con. Got a rap sheet.

TRE
Should have thought about your future back when you were screwing up your past. But your side of the family--

PRESENCE
You know we had the same dad, right?

TRE
Look, you been out of the army for four months. You’ve been broke for three and a half ‘em. Hell, you’d be homeless right now except you’re baby sitting some abandoned house.

PRESENCE
“Distressed property.”

TRE
You need to get real about your situation.

PRESENCE
I’m getting tired of people telling me that.

TRE
If enough people are telling you to get real, maybe you need to listen.

That piece of science lands a bit with Presence.

EXT. PRESENCE’S JOINT – NIGHT (N1)

We see Presence’s wounded Marauder arrive to her home. The joint is at the tail end of Malibu looking out over the beach. The joint would be a really nice piece of
property...except that it is clearly UNFINISHED. Like a spec house where the financiers had run short of funds. The structure is livable, but not something that’s ready for sale. Beyond that, being able to see the raw infrastructure of the place in some ways enhances the overall design language making the joint feel as much like a HIP, ARCHITECTURALLY-DRIVEN space as a distressed property. Somebody with wits could do a lot of the joint. Presence, in fact, has.

INT. PRESENCE’S JOINT - LATER (N1)

The interior of the space, much like the exterior, is unfinished, but Presence has done all she can to make it both livable and her own. ORANGE EXTENSION CORDS, run through and among the space along with WORK LIGHTS...

Presence arrives to a BEDROOM. On a sound system she plays Nina Simone’s version of “Here Comes the Sun” as she changes and gets relaxed.

She cracks open a bottle of El Mayor Reserva Añejo Tequila. She uses a glass, but at the rate she drinks, she might as well take it straight from the bottle.

INT. PRESENCE’S JOINT/LIVING AREA - MORNING (D3)

Presence is eating some version of something out of a microwave. There’s a knock on the door. Presence opens it revealing JAS, a near-Eastern woman in her late-twenties. Jas is quite beautiful, and all business. And clearly formidable. She’s got a certain ease with Presence that plainly says that she’s got no issues getting into things with Presence should it come to it. Jas and Presence seem to have history, and perhaps not real good history.

Getting a whiff of Presence’s breath:

    JAS
    God, Presence. You smell like a dog that ate its own vomit.

    PRESENCE
    Wrong party, Jas. Keep moving.

    JAS
    We need to talk.

    PRESENCE
    If you’re still working for the Duchess, tell her whatever it is, I said “no.”

(CONTINUED)
It’s Chad. He’s missing.

That kinda lands with Presence. She steps away from the door. Jas floats inside the space.

JAS (CONT’D)
Three weeks since we’ve heard from him.

PRESENCE
Not my problem.

JAS
(pointed)
But he used to be. He used to be your fiancé.

PRESENCE
Never got over finishing second.

JAS
Never got over watching you break his heart. If the Duchess is asking for your help, she’s desperate. And from what I saw of your wrecked car outside, and all this...nothing you got going on in here, you could use a paycheck. Do everybody a favor. You’re not doing this for the Duchess. You’re doing this for Chad.

Presence considers her decision. The hardness she displayed when Jas arrived fades just a bit. She swears a bit under her breath. Then, relenting:

PRESENCE
Let’s go see the Duchess.

END OF ACT
We’ve got an amazing view of the Blair Hills section of Culver City; sizable homes that look over the 60 acres that has become a beautiful state park. It’s like a nature reserve in the middle of a city.

Presence is escorted by Jas out to The DUCHESS. The Duchess is an older woman – mid-fifties – who carries her physical stature very well. She’s accumulated a great deal of wealth and power. She has no problem reminding people of that.

Jas floats nearby. If there’s a chance that Presence might want to start trouble, Jas remains close enough to end it.

DUCHESS
I wasn’t sure you’d come.

PRESENCE
Jas says you’re desperate, and I was curious what desperation looks like on you.

DUCHESS
Chad’s missing.

PRESENCE
Guys with trust funds and cold mothers tend to do that.

DUCHESS
Generally he’d run off with you. And generally I could count on him to come to his senses, and return home. He hasn’t this time.

PRESENCE
Check the strip clubs, the ultra lounges...the hotel suites of any supermodel in town...

DUCHESS
We’ve tried that.

PRESENCE
Then call the police.

DUCHESS
Chad’s an adult. If he wants to run off there’s not much they can do.
PRESENCE
We both know your son. He loves fun, hates maturity, and can’t stand being sober. Whatever the problem is, me bringing him home’s not going to solve it.

DUCHESS
I’m asking for your help. That doesn’t mean anything to you?

PRESENCE
It meant something; you always treating me like I was a thug just trying to steal her son.

DUCHESS
You are a thug. You can pretend you’re a war hero, but the only reason you were in the army is because it was that, or jail.

Starting to head off:

PRESENCE
You’re on you’re own.

DUCHESS
Back when I wanted you to stay away from Chad you wouldn’t. Now that I need you to find him, you won’t?

PRESENCE
I learned my lesson. There are people you can hire to find him.

DUCHESS
He’ll run from other people. You know Chad better than I know him myself. You’ll be discreet, and you won’t give up. That makes you the right man for the job.

The Duchess opens a ledger, and writes a check.

DUCHESS (CONT’D)
I’ll pay you a flat rate, and cover your expenses if you bring him back.

PRESENCE
I never wanted your money, Duchess.
And I never wanted you as a daughter-in-law. And yet here I am sending you after my son...

Stepping to Presence, getting right in her grill and making a challenge of the next moment:

DUCHESS (CONT'D)
And here you are taking my check.

The Duchess holds out the check to Presence. She hesitates a moment, then takes the check and starts to head out.

INT. DUCHESS’S MANSION/FOYER - LATER (D3)

Presence is met on her way out by Jas. Jas has got a little shit eatin’ smile.

JAS
You’re taking the job?

PRESENCE
Chad’s usual suspects; rich friends, beautiful women...?

JAS
I’ve shaken those trees. Nothing.

PRESENCE
What’s his new addiction?

JAS
He’s been clean lately.

PRESENCE
Chad always had an addiction. If it wasn’t liquor, it was gambling. If it wasn’t drugs, it was women. There’s something new in his life. Something he’s obsessed with. That’s where we’ve gotta start.

Jas thinks for a minute. Something comes to her.

INT. DUCHESS’S MANSION/GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER (D3)

Jas opens the garage revealing a collection of CARS. Some vintage, some new and high end... Among them is a very hot CUSTOM MOTORCYCLE.
Presence starts TAKING PICTURES of the cycle with her PHONE.

PRESENCE
Who did the work?

JAS
Don’t know his name. Some roughneck. He hasn’t come around in awhile.

PRESENCE
Why would he if he already knew Chad was gone?

Presence heads from the space with the urgency of a woman on a mission.

INT. THE CANDY STORE - DAY (D3)

We’re in Manny’s business: The Candy Store. A VERY FUNKY consignment space, lounge, emporium... It’s the crossroads of commerce. The YOUNG and HIP looking to mingle with the MONIED UP. Rick’s Place if Rick’s had been in downtown LA rather than Casablanca.

Manny is looking through photos Presence took of the bike.

MANNY
You almost married a Duchess’s kid?

PRESENCE
Duchess. Tech millionairess, has a huge international shipping business...

MANNY
You walked away from all that? This dude Chad must’ve been a real ass-hat.

PRESENCE
(hedging)
He...sometimes had his good points.

Looking through the cellphone photos:
PRESENCE (CONT’D)
Custom ride; that’s like a fingerprint. I know some Gs who could ID a ride like this.

As she collects her belongings to start heading out:

MANNY
I’m coming with.

PRESENCE
You’re not coming with.

MANNY
You’re gonna run around doing some “legal-ish” nonsense, I’m keeping an eye on you.

PRESENCE
God. Like an OCD Amish Librarian.

MANNY
I don’t know what you’ve got against reading.

Manny and Presence are up and out.

EXT. “THE STRIP” - DAY (D3)

A section of South Central LA where Biker Boyz - Urban Youth who are into trick motorcycle riding - practice their skills. They ride up and down the block doing tricks, showing off their rides for the SIZABLE CROWD OF MOSTLY ROUGHNECKS that has shown up to take in the display of skill and bravado. As one would imagine, these are a rough bunch. Young people who might otherwise POTENTIALLY BE IN GANGS, but who now put all their energy into riding.

Presence and Manny arrive in her wounded Marauder. Both exit the car. Getting the lay of the land, Presence rolls up on BRICE, a guy whose muscle and potential for bad-assness are big and obvious. Presence and Brice greet like two people who have good history.

PRESENCE
Brice...

BRICE
Presence, what up, Yo? Heard you was back on the streets.

PRESENCE
You remember Manny.

(CONTINUED)
Eyeing Manny, speaking with a chill:

BRICE
Yeah.
    (to back Presence)
So, what’s good?

PRESENCE
I got a friend I’m looking for.
He’s gone underground, and the only
thing new to the scene is this
ride.

Showing the images on her phone:

PRESENCE (CONT’D)
Do anything for you?

BRICE
Sorry. I ain’t a snitch.

PRESENCE
Doesn’t go past me, you know that.

BRICE
Not talking about you. Talking
about Manny. Flipped on you,
flipped on his own brother. He’s
the reason Edgar got killed.

MANNY
Forget this fool.

Manny starts to head off. Presence pulls him back.

PRESENCE
Hey...
    (to Brice)
If Manny’s here with me, he’s cool.

Brice takes a moment to consider Presence’s veracity.

BRICE
Lemme see the bike.

Presence holds the phone up again.

BRICE (CONT’D)
Garret Huff. He thinks he’s a
playa, but he’s harmless. Drops on
and off the map all the time.
PRESENCE
He on the map now?

Taking out his phone, Brice shows a photo of Huff posing with some BIKER GIRLS.

BRICE
Around here somewhere probably trying to score some tail. Follow the honey.

PRESENCE
Very classy. I owe you.
(to Manny)
Head back to the car.

MANNY
I’m not letting you roll alone.

PRESENCE
Keep the motor running. I come back, I might be coming back hot.

As Manny heads off, Presence starts to work her way through the crowd, head on swivel, looking for Huff. As Brice instructed, she “follows the honey:” a flow of attractive ladies the guys all work to impress. At the center of it all, among a gaggle of dudes showing off their wares, is Huff with a bike very similar to Chad’s.

PRESENCE (CONT’D)
Slick. That is seriously slick. I got a friend with a ride just like it.

GARRET
If he’s got it, I made it. What’s your friend’s name?

PRESENCE
Chad. Know him?

GARRET
Chad? Lemme tell you something about Chad...

With suddenness, Chad SWINGS HIS HELMET at Presence. Presence is ready and blocks the swing. Garret, however, has got some quick to him and THROWS A KICK that catches her hard in the midsection. Garret jumps on his bike fires it up, and tries to fight through the mass which isn’t easy.

(CONTINUED)
Presence is up on her feet and comes running back to her Marauder and jumps behind the wheel.

PRESENCE
That’s him. Buckle up.

Presence jams the car into gear, hits the gas, tears after Garret... Just as she crosses an intersection, the Marauder is yet again FRONT-ENDED. This time, by a POLICE CRUISER which obviously didn’t see her coming. From the car steps officer MIKE MCKAY who orders Presence:

MCKAY
Out of the car!

PRESENCE
What the hell? You couldn’t see me?

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

INT. POLICE STATION/HOLDING - AFTERNOON (D3)

Presence is alone, chilling in a holding cell. Deep in thought, she seems kinda like a version of Steve McQueen in The Great Escape.

A HOLDING OFFICER comes around and opens the door.

HOLDING OFFICER
You got bail. Let’s go.

INT. POLICE STATION/PRE-RELEASE - MOMENTS LATER (D3)

Presence is walked to pre-release. Manny is already there signing for his belongings. He is visibly pissed, and starts in on Presence as she signs for her stuff.

MANNY
Told you.

PRESENCE
Quiet.

MANNY
Four months out of the army, and you’re right back in prison.

PRESENCE
It’s a holding cell, not prison.

MANNY
It’s got bars, and you couldn’t get out.

PRESENCE
For a guy who grew up around the life, sometimes you can come off a little precious.

MANNY
I wouldn’t be coming off any way at all if you were living straight.

PRESENCE
What is your problem?

Manny doesn’t respond, which begs more inquisition from Presence.

PRESENCE (CONT’D)
Hey, what’s your problem?

(CONTINUED)
MANNY
You heard what he said: I’m a snitch who got his own brother killed.

PRESENCE
Well...you are a snitch.
(beat)
But you’re the reason I got out of gangs, and I’m still alive.

Presence collects her belongings and the two head off.

INT. POLICE STATION/LOBBY - CONTINUOUS (D3)

Presence and Manny make their way out of the joint. As they travel, Presence spots officer McKay. It’s the first time we really get a good look at the guy. Late-twenties. He’s got the body of a guy who knows where the gym is located. Nice eyes, but with tough scars here and there to let you know he’s not afraid to get hectic if he’s required.

PRESENCE
Oh, man...

MANNY
Presence, leave it. We just got sprung.

Presence isn’t leaving anything. She makes her way directly to McKay, gets right up in his grill.

PRESENCE
Hey, jackass... You hit my ride.

MCKAY
Excuse me?

PRESENCE
You hit my ride, then you arrest me?

MCKAY
You blew through a stop sign.

PRESENCE
I had right of way.

MCKAY
Your car’s a rolling violation.

PRESENCE
My ride is tight.

(CONTINUED)
MCKAY
So maybe the problem’s not the ride, it’s the woman behind the wheel. Where’d you learn to drive?

PRESENCE
Afghanistan. But I was only dodging Taliban and IEDs, not hardasses in squad cars.

That Presence used to be in uniform kinda lands for McKay. Presence can read the look on McKay’s face and anticipates what’s coming.

PRESENCE (CONT’D)
What, now you feel bad ‘cause you should’ve been nicer to a vet?

MCKAY
You know, you’re not the only one who learned to drive in Afghanistan. Just drive careful, okay?

Presence, not expecting to have anything in common with McKay, gives a bit of a lingering look, then an appreciative nod before heading on.

INT. POLICE STATION/LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER (D3)

Waiting for Presence and Manny is Tre, who is none too happy about having to bail the two out.

TRE
I seriously have to jump from work just to bail you out of jail?

MANNY
Don’t start with her. She’s already pissed.

TRE
Then she shouldn’t be tussling with the cops.

PRESENCE
Wasn’t my fault.

TRE
I just paid your bail, paid to get your car out of impound...

(CONTINUED)
PRESENCE
I don’t need your help. I got a job.

MANNY
She’s doing a rundown on her ex-fiancé.

Tre gives a “WTF” look. Presence now gives a similar “WTF” look to Manny.

TRE
You got some stuff you want to talk about?

PRESENCE
I’m cool.

TRE
Four months, and I’m just now hearing about some dude you almost married? Why didn’t you tell me about him?

PRESENCE
How am I going to talk to you? Every time I come around, you act like I’m trying to climb in your pocket.

Getting fairly genuine about their circumstance:

PRESENCE (CONT’D)
Being a sister; this is new to me, and so far I liked it better when I was an only child.

That kinda lands with Tre.

PRESENCE (CONT’D)
I’m cool. Lemme have my car keys.

Tre looks to Manny for confirmation. We get the sense Manny doesn’t buy that. Presence says again:

PRESENCE (CONT’D)
I’m cool. My keys, please

TRE
Whatever you’re into, you need to be done with it. Promise.
Presence looks from Tre to Manny. Both wait for her to promise.

PRESENCE
Promise.

INT. GARRET’S JOINT/STAIRWELL – DAY (D4)

Garret’s making his way up the stairs. He finds waiting for him at the top a clearly annoyed Presence. Garret spots her, and immediately bolts back the way he came. Presence jumps the rail, and beats Garret to the next landing. Garret turns, and now tries to make his way BACK UP the stairs. Presence grabs him by the leg, yanks him back slamming into the stairs. That pretty much takes the spring out of Garret’s step. As he clutches his head, he whines to Presence:

GARRET
Damn! Why you keep chasing me?

PRESENCE
‘Cause you keep running. I know your name, I know who you hang with... I found your ex-girlfriend - who is better than you deserve - and she was real happy to flip on you... Where’s Chad?

Garret doesn’t say anything. Presence starts to make a threatening move toward Garret.

GARRET
Whoa, whoa, whoa...

PRESENCE
Look, you can either help me, or you can get your ass kicked some more. Those are the only options you get.

GARRET
What is the matter with you? It’s no big thing with Chad. He just wanted to disappear some. Get his head right. He knows I been on the DL before, and wanted me to do the same for him.

PRESENCE
So you set him up where?
GARRET
Got him some fake IDs, got him to Catalina. I don’t know what name he’s using, I don’t know where he’s staying.

Easing up on Garret:

PRESENCE
I do.

(beat)
You’re a good man, Garret. I know ‘em when I see ‘em.

Presence is out.

EXT. CATALINA ISLAND - DAY (D5)

Catalina is just off the coast of California and a world away. It is a sun soaked, chill playground full of the RICH and the PRETTY. There’s a lot of flesh showing, and the majority of it is tight and tanned.

EXT. PLAYA MAR HOTEL/POOL - DAY (D5)

It’s the VERY BEST hotel the island has to offer. The theme of sun and skin continues.

Presence enters the pool area, looking appropriate for the venue. She lands at a pool-side bar where she’s approached by a bartender, WINN.

WINN
What can I get you?

PRESENCE
Do you know Ralph Ellison?

WINN
Mr. Ellison? He’s got a cabana. He’s around here somewhere.

Presence waits a bit, does some people watching... For a moment she kinda drifts mentally, digs on the environment... Then, through the crowd, Presence sees CHAD. Even at a distance, Chad is charming, charismatic...but there is something about him as well that’s just a bit busted. For what good qualities he has, there something about him that would make one think he can’t help but end up on the wrong side of trouble.

A whole lot of emotion starts to well up in Presence. Her gaze lingers on him for a long moment. At first there’s some (CONTINUED)
nostalgia to her thoughts...but thinking back on the past only brings up bad memories. She gets up off the bar stool, starts for Chad like a woman on a mission. Then, she stops... With equal determination she heads back to the bar and says:

PRESENCE
Lemme get a shot of El Mayor Reserva Añejo.

Winn pours. Presence downs the shot. Braced, she now turns back for Chad and starts making the cross.

PRESENCE (CONT’D)
Chad!

Chad turns, sees Presence moving for him. He shows no surprise. Rather, it’s as though he figured sooner, or later she was going to catch up to him. Easy in manner:

CHAD
I know that look. I know what’s coming. I’m not gonna fight you.

Presence lands with Chad, grabs him by the shirt and cocks an arm like she’s about to beat him senseless.

CHAD (CONT’D)
Just do your thing, and dump me somewhere comfortable when you’re done.

Chad’s passiveness kinda shakes Presence. She eases up on him. Rather than throw a punch, Presence delivers a deep, deep kiss. We she eventually breaks off:

CHAD (CONT’D)
It’s good to see you, Presence.

INT. PLAYA MAR HOTEL/SUITE - AFTERNOON (D5)

We are interior of what must be one of the more luxurious suites in the joint. In the bedroom is a sizable bed. In the bed are Presence and Chad who are finishing some monumental “reacquaintment” sex.

As Chad huffs a few deep breaths:

CHAD
Jesus, Presence, you been working out?

(CONTINUED)
PRESENCE
It’s called upper body strength. You’d know about it if you dated girls who weighed more than 82 pounds.

CHAD
How’d you find me?

PRESENCE
You don’t slum. I knew you’d be at the best hotel on the island. You always used one of your favorite authors as an alias, and since there wasn’t a Chester Himes registered...

CHAD
I didn’t think I’d ever see you again.

PRESENCE
That was sorta the plan.

Presence gives a bit of a smile with that.

CHAD
You got a great smile.

PRESENCE
Same as it ever was.

CHAD
You forget after three years.

PRESENCE
Learn to appreciate when you have the chance.
(beat)
God, Chad. There were 10,000 miles of good times waiting for us.

INT. ULTRA-LOUNGE - NIGHT (N0)

Real quick pop of Presence and Chad in and among beautiful people. The attraction and passion between the two fairly radiates in the near dark.

PRESENCE (V.O.)
You and me...you know we could’ve had so much fun.
Presence and Chad continue.

CHAD
We did have fun.

PRESENCE
We could’ve had the kind of fun
that didn’t include me waking up to
an empty bed, going days without
hearing from you... Settling your
gambling debts... And the mystery
phone calls from women you swear
you didn’t know.

CHAD
I didn’t know them. Not really.

Another real quick pop. We see Presence and Chad in the
middle of a fierce argument.

PRESENCE (V.O.)
I could put up with a lot, but I
wasn’t going to put up with
somebody who couldn’t commit.

Completing her thought:

PRESENCE
I grew up in a broken home. I
wasn’t going to marry into one.

Presence gets up and moves over to a DINING TABLE littered
with ROOM SERVICE TRAYS. Clearly they’ve been at this for
awhile.

Chad weakly drags himself from the bed and joins Presence in
a cup of TEA.

CHAD
How long you been out of the army?

PRESENCE
I just got discharged four months
ago. I needed a change. ...My
father died.
CHAD
(genuine)
I’m sorry.

PRESENCE
Lost a buddy, too. Edgar

CHAD
He was the one...

PRESENCE
We enlisted together. His brother’s worried now that I’m out of uniform, I’m going to get back into the life.

CHAD
Are you?

PRESENCE
Me and Edgar; we were a couple of young thugs acting stupid...

CHAD
Pulling a “smash and grab” at a jewelry store.

PRESENCE
Yeah, that was genius. After Manny turned us in to the police, it was jail, or the military. Picking green over orange...? Best thing that ever happened to me. I’m not trying to backslide. I’m trying to make things right with Manny, trying to connect with my brother...

CHAD
Wait. I didn’t know you had a brother.

PRESENCE
I didn’t know I had a brother. But...broken homes. Dad drops dead, we show up to mourn, and there’s brood #2 weeping over his casket.

CHAD
Good times.
PRESENCE
Tre’s a hood rat, too, but he made it out on his own, so he treats me like an 8-ball chick that’s always looking for a handout.

CHAD
I thought me and the Duchess were messed up.

PRESENCE
You got nothing on my family.
(beat)
So, look, I gotta get you home.

CHAD
I’m not going.

PRESENCE
Don’t make me haul your ass--

CHAD
You sit there talking about how you’re trying to figure yourself out, but you’re going to haul me home for doing the same? The Duchess paying you?

Pulling a check book from a nearby end table:

CHAD (CONT’D)
I’ll double it.

PRESENCE
I got a job, I’m doing my job.

CHAD
I’m offering you a new job, which is to quit your old job. And your old job is basically over ‘cause you found me.
(getting real)
Presence...I can’t go back. I got stuff I’m trying to deal with.

PRESENCE
Stuff like what?

CHAD
I’m off liquor, I’m trying to dry out--
PRESENCE
Stuff like what? I can help.

CHAD
I’m asking you, just for awhile, let me be. Go back to the Duchess. Tell her...tell her whatever. Just forget about me. Then one day, when I get myself together, I’m gonna be the one who comes looking for you.

For a moment it seems Presence might actually be enthralled by the vision. If so, she quickly gets over it.

PRESENCE
I don’t believe you. And I don’t like getting lied to. And know what else...? I don’t care anymore.

CHAD
Presence, I’m always gonna--

Presence ain’t trying to hear all that.

PRESENCE
Make the check out to cash. You’re just business now. That’s it.

Chad writes the check. Presence takes it, then heads back to the bedroom to get dressed.

EXT. DUCHESS’S MANSION/BLAIR HILLS – DAY (D6)

Presence has returned to the Duchess. Jas stands over her shoulder giving Presence much stink eye. Holding up her end of the agreement with Chad:

PRESENCE
I couldn’t find him.

The Duchess steps close to Presence as if using her eyes as lie detectors. Presence says again as she takes out the Duchess’s check:

PRESENCE (CONT’D)
I couldn’t find him, so...you can have this back.

(CONTINUED)
Duchess

I’m surprised. I always thought you to be the kind who would do anything for money.

Presence rips up the check, heads back the way she came. We read in her a lot of hurt and emotion.

INT. PRESENCE’S JOINT – DAY (D6)

We see Presence using a phone app to deposit the check from Chad. She’s kinda melancholy about it.

INT. GYM – DAY (D7)

Presence is in the gym working out her frustrations in the ring against another fighter. The pair are just sparring, but Presence lays in just a bit to the other fighter. We can see the speed and accuracy with which she can place her shots. No two ways; Presence is fierce.

As Presence engages, a couple of LAPD detectives approach. LUDLOW, male and STONE, female. Both formidable. Both hardasses. They are backed by a couple of uniformed officers. One of whom is McKay.

Ludlow

Presence Foster?

Presence

Yeah.

Ludlow

You know Chad Avedon?

Presence

What’d he do?

Ludlow

He got himself killed. We need to go talk about that.

For Presence, that’s the sock that shocks.

END OF ACT THREE
Cleaned up some, Presence is sitting at a table as she’s grilled by Ludlow and Stone. BARELY ABLE TO PROCESS CHAD’S LOSS, Presence is in no mood to deal with Ludlow’s “hard guy” routine as he displays PICTURES of Chad’s body.

LUDLOW
Dead. Fished out of Catalina Bay. Two days after you told the Duchess you couldn’t find him.

PRESENCE
How long was he in the water?

STONE
You tell us.

PRESENCE
Do you have his cell phone? You do a trace on any calls? I hope to God you’re looking at surveillance footage.

LUDLOW
You start owning up to things now, it’s gonna make it easier later. We pulled your jacket. Armed robbery. Assault...

STONE
You’re out of the army, back in the hood, hard up for money... You go see your ex... Only, prick that he is, he doesn’t want to pay your way anymore. You beat his ass? I’d beat his ass.

PRESENCE
You two are stupid. We’re done.

STONE
You don’t set the rules.

PRESENCE
But I pay my taxes, so you work for me. And, by the way, you shouldn’t be wearing a gun to an interrogation.

(CONTINUED)
Ludlow gives a nod to Stone. Stone throws an elbow to Presence that hits her square in the head.

PRESENCE (CONT’D)
God...damn... You think that’s cool just ‘cause she’s a girl?

STONE
A “girl?”

Stone doesn’t like that qualification. She starts to take another swing at Presence. Presence intercepts, twists Stone, slams her hard onto the table... Ludlow starts to go for his weapon. At the same time, Presence goes for Stone’s gun. She DOES NOT PULL IT, but she clearly beats Ludlow to the punch.

Before Ludlow can respond. McKay opens the door and steps in. Ludlow, pissed:

LUDLOW
Knock, ass-cap!

In a very dry fashion, McKay knocks twice on the door. Nearly enraged:

LUDLOW (CONT’D)
What!

MCKAY
Medical Examiners report came back. The vic’s blood alcohol level was three times the limit. Was drunk when he hit the water. Accidental drowning.

PRESENCE
So, I guess we are done.

Presence moves for the door. McKay escorts her out.

INT. POLICE STATION/CORRIDOR – CONTINUOUS (D7)

Presence converses with McKay as he walks her from the joint.

PRESENCE
Your boss has got a real attitude problem.

MCKAY
He’s not my boss. And, you could try “thank you.”

(CONTINUED)
And this accidental drowning...?
When I saw Chad he wasn’t touching liquor.

The ME’s report said it was likely, but questionable. I wasn’t going to say anything in front of Ludlow.

As long as you’re in the mood for doing favors Officer...McKay; they have Chad’s cell phone? They trace any calls?

Remember when I told you to stay out of trouble?


I saw your “other” jacket. The one from the DOD. Bronze Star...?

When I’m bad, I’m bad. When I’m good, I’m sugar wrapped in peppermint honey.

What the hell is “peppermint honey?”

Can I go?

You can go.

Presence starts to head off. Presence, she takes a beat, then turns back:

McKay... Thank you.
The space is mostly empty. A BAND is rehearsing. The LEAD SINGER working her way through a version of India.Arie’s Ready for Love. Presence and Tre hang near the back having a couple of drinks, Presence downing her El Mayor Reserva Añejo. They interact, perhaps for the first time like a sister and a brother.

PRESENCE
This is exactly why I got out of uniform. I hated being in a job, if you’re a day late, or a dollar short, you end up standing over somebody else’s grave. Losing Chad...hurts. But losing him knowing I could have done something for him...

TRE
You tried.

PRESENCE
Clearly I messed it up.

TRE
You can’t save people who don’t want to be saved.
(beat)
Did you love him?

PRESENCE
I don’t know.

TRE
That’s bull. You know if you love somebody.

PRESENCE
Sometimes you think you know what love is. You think you know what commitment is, then you find out dad’s not hanging with his boys, he’s just out running around with some whore.

TRE
My mom’s not a whore.

PRESENCE
Wasn’t talking about your mother in particular. Whatever whores in general our dad was banging.
That is a whole lot of bitterness, and blame in service of dodging one question. Did you love Chad?

I’m not as sentimental as you think.

And you’re not as hard as you think. The only thing that’s tough are the choices you need to start making.

You ever think the standards you set for other people are unrealistic?

Or, maybe I just think there’s nothing you can’t do.

Presence gives an appreciative smile.

See. Not so bad having a brother.

Your mom’s still a whore.

Presence lays in bed, exhausted more than just resting. Her phone RINGS, and she languidly fumbles it on. On the other end of the line is a BRANCH MANAGER

...Hello...

Presence Foster? I’m calling from Prime National Bank. I’m sorry to inform you that the check you recently deposited can’t clear.

It can’t...?

The account it’s written from has been placed in probate. The assets
are frozen. We’re going to have to charge a thirty-five dollar fee for the returned check.

Of course you are. You couldn’t have just sent me an email?

I wanted to let you know about the letter.

What letter?

We see Presence arrive to the bank. She’s greeted by the BRANCH MANAGER who hands her an envelope. As she does, WE CONTINUE TO HEAR THE TAIL END OF THE PHONE CONVERSATION.

There was a letter addressed to the individual who cashed the check. We’re holding it here for you. We’ll give it to you directly any time you want to pick it up.

Presence opens the envelope. Inside the envelope is a single BUSINESS CARD. The card reads: CHUCK PANAMA - BROKER. The address is in Inglewood.

Inglewood, CA. You can tell by the low-flying planes that make their approach to LAX. We see Presence’s Marauder arrive to what looks like a low-end insurance brokerage.

Presence checks the address against the card, then heads for the door. She rings a BUZZER, and after a moment is BUZZED IN.

Presence enters to find a place that’s right out of 1979. Shag rug, mimeo machines, filing cabinets...

There’s a MAN sitting behind a desk, and OLDER BLACK MAN who looks like he’s been working the joint for 60 plus years. CHUCK PANAMA. The man has a certain ease about him. But it’s the kind of ease that could lead one to a false sense of security right before Chuck slipped out a gun and handed you a bullet. Though Charles comes across as pleasant enough,
the PITBULL that sits across the room from him doesn’t look to be. Presence, however, is nonplussed.

PANAMA
May I help you?

PRESENCE
I’m looking for Chuck Panama.

PANAMA
Who’s asking?

PRESENCE
Presence.

PANAMA
That doesn’t tell me anything.

Presence takes out Panama’s business card, hands it to Panama.

PRESENCE
What’s this tell you? I got it from a dead man. Chad Avedon.

PANAMA
Have a seat, Presence.

As she does:

PRESENCE
So...what kind of a broker are you?

Panama doesn’t answer.

PRESENCE (CONT’D)
I’m not a cop.

PANAMA
You’re not a client, either.

PRESENCE
I’m just looking for a few answers. Chad was...we were close.

PANAMA
I feel your pain, but that’s not my problem.

PRESENCE
Well...there’s an issue of an outstanding check. Can you relate (MORE)
to that? So, we can chat, or I can get to collecting.

Panama takes measure of Presence.

PANAMA
I believe you will.
(beat)
I broker services. There are people who need services, and there are people who can supply them.

PRESENCE
What kind of services?

PANAMA
Generally speaking; the kind of things you can’t even find people on the internet to handle.

PRESENCE
Illegal stuff.

PANAMA
There is a whole level of commerce that exists below the visible. I don’t ask. I don’t judge. I just facilitate.

PRESENCE
Did Chad need services?

PANAMA
He was offering. Interesting thing: people who come from money are generally very lousy about money. Chad owed heavily.

PRESENCE
Owed who?

PANAMA
I don’t know who, and “who” was not my concern. He needed to make money, and I put him together with someone who needed some helping out.

PRESENCE
What kind of “help” did Chad give?

(CONTINUED)
PANAMA
I’m a businessman. I’ll tell you about your friend, but there’s no business in me offering up more than that.

PRESENCE
You brokered a deal. Chad ended up dead, so I’m guessing whatever the deal was, it didn’t go down and you’re missing your vig. Somebody owes me, somebody owes you. I’m in the mood to make that somebody pay.

PANAMA
This is a tough business, Presence.

PRESENCE
I’m a tough customer.

Panama considers things. He crosses to an OLD-SCHOOL FILING CABINET, pulls a file and hands it to Presence.

PRESENCE (CONT’D)
Any chance you got this on a thumb drive?

Panama gives a rather dry look. Presence takes the file and exits, taking just enough time to pet the dog on her way.
PRESENCE
Lemme speak to Nick, please. I’m calling about Chad Avedon.

RECEPTIONIST (O.C.)
Mr. Tashjian’s not available. I can take a message.

PRESENCE
It’s not a message. Tell him I’m calling about Chad Avedon.

RECEPTIONIST (O.C.)
(beat)
Hold please.

There’s a long beat as WE HEAR HOLD MUSIC OVER THE LINE - PLAYER’S “BABY, COME BACK.” After a moment someone comes back on the line. As the two speak, their meaning is thinly veiled. They both know the game they’re playing.

TASHJIAN (O.C.)
This is Nick Tashjian.

PRESENCE
Nick? Hey. I’m calling about Chad Avedon.

TASHJIAN (O.C.)
I don’t think I can help you.

PRESENCE
No?

TASHJIAN
What was the name again?

PRESENCE
Chad Avedon.

TASHJIAN (O.C.)
Your name.

PRESENCE
Presence.

TASHJIAN (O.C.)
Well, I can see if this gentleman is in my employ, if that’s what you’re asking. Do you have a number where I can get back to you.

(CONTINUED)
PRESENCE
Three-one-oh, three-eight-five, six-seven-two-eight.

TASHJIAN (O.C.)
I’ll be in touch, Presence.

PRESENCE
Appreciate it, Nick.

Presence hangs up the phone. She fires up the Marauder and drives.

INT. PRESENCE’S JOINT – NIGHT (N2)

THE FOLLOWING PLAYS OUT IN A SINGLE PIECE. Presence arrives home. She heads upstairs. She turns on her sound system. “When am I Going to Make a Living” from Sade plays. Presence goes to a closet, pulls out some clothes, lays them out on the floor leaving a trail toward the bedroom.

She goes to a LOCK BOX she has hidden away, opens it. Inside are GUNS, and some ORDNANCE. She takes out a FLASH BANG. She heads into the closet just outside of the bedroom and CLOSES THE DOOR.

THE CAMERA PANS OVER to a WINDOW which looks outside the property. After a long moment WE SEE A CAR PULL UP to the house. It sits for a moment, then the lights dim. We see FOUR MEN get out of the car and head for the house. THE CAMERA AGAIN ORIENTS FOR THE INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE, and toward the stairs. We see the four men, WEARING SKI MASKS AND TOTING GUNS moving up the stairs and for the bedroom HEADING PAST THE CLOSET AS THEY GO. WE HOLD ON THE CLOSET. We see Presence then open the closet door, ease from the space and roll the grenade into the bedroom, then turn her back to the space. The flash bang DETONATES. We see Presence move into the bedroom, the men now STUNNED. She kicks ass in counterpoint to the easy sounds of SADE, one dude in particular she pounds rather BADLY IN THE HEAD. The men, barely able to keep their bearings, struggle from the space.

Presence moves to the WINDOW, and watches as they fall into their car and then speed away. She heads back into the bedroom, lays on the bed as Sade continues to ask “when am I gonna make a living?”

END OF ACT FOUR
ACT FIVE

INT. LOUNGE - DAY (D9)

The space is largely empty, some crew cleans as Presence sits with Tre. He's reading through the file she got from Panama. Tre says to his sister, rather incredulously:

TRE
Nick Tashjian's trying to kill you?

PRESENCE
I don't think he was trying to kill me. I think he was trying to keep me from asking questions about a guy he did kill.

TRE
That's...that's nuts.

PRESENCE
Chad writes me a check that he knows, if he's not alive, the bank won't cash. And when they don't, the check comes back to me with an envelope and a card. That takes me to Chuck Panama, who hooked Chad up with Tashjian. I call Tashjian to see if he's cool, or he's rattled. Next thing, I got some thugs come around to see me.

TRE
Why? This Panama guy trades services. No disrespect to your ex, but it's not like he had a lot going on.

PRESENCE
The Duchess does. She's got a whole shipping company. Tashjian; he's been broke as much as he's had dough. You know how the club scene works. People build empires moving weight, and being dirty. Chad's desperate, agrees to do some smuggling...

TRE
But...?
PRESENCE
But Chad’s not a complete jerk, and 
decides to kill the deal.

TRE
Only, Chad’s the one who ends up 
getting killed.

PRESENCE
That’s what I’m going to ask Nick.

TRE
You read this, right? It’s like 
the history of how he built 
himself. Major playa, big trouble, 
but with enough friends nothing 
ever sticks.

Pointing a photo of Tashjian’s Luna Vice Club:

PRESENCE
Can you get me in?

TRE
I’m not putting my sister in the 
middle of all that. If this dude’s 
trouble...

PRESENCE
Then I’m in the right place. Can 
you get me in?

TRE
Presence, one time; let go.

PRESENCE
You told me there’s nothing I can’t 
do.

TRE
I meant, like, start a bakery. 
Open a Pizza Hut franchise...

Tre very much gets that she doesn’t let go. Relenting:

TRE (CONT’D)
...Yeah, I know a guy.

EXT. LUNA VICE - NIGHT (N3)
It’s a hot spot with the associated types: YOUNG and GOOD 
LOOKING, OLDER and MONIED UP. There’s a string of HIGH END 
CARS placed out front. Presence pulls up in the Marauder.
She spots a sizable dude, DANNY, who’s working security outside the place.

PRESENCE
Danny?

DANNY
What’s up? You Tre’s little sister? Must be from the good-looking side of the family. Whatcha need?

PRESENCE
I need to get in, and I need to keep my ride close. And pointed toward the drive.

Calling to another BOUNCER.

DANNY
Leon, back her in. (to Presence:) Let’s go.

Danny walks Presence INTO THE CLUB. As they travel:

DANNY (CONT’D)
You sure you want to do this? Once you’re in there, I can’t help you.

PRESENCE
What am I looking at?

DANNY
Tashjian always hangs at the back of the house. He’s got five thugs watching him. Strapped, but they don’t usually pull out. Not in his joint. Bad for business. Tashjian’s ride’s out front. The Vanquish.

The pair arrive to the MAIN SPACE of the club. The joint is jumping. The club is jamming. A DJ’s spinning. Danny, looking out over the space toward a VIP area:

DANNY (CONT’D)
That’s him. I don’t know how you’re gonna get through his guys.

PRESENCE
I’m not. Thanks.

(CONTINUED)
Presence works her way across the space to the VIP area. She makes her way directly to a bouncer, WELLS. Presence moves to him, whispers something in his ear. Wells gives a curious look, Presence remains constant.

Wells crosses into the VIP area and over to TASHJIAN. This is the first time we get a real, good physical look at the man. Well manicured, handsome, but it some ways it’s like putting lipstick on a rock. The dude is hard. His nature is to be hard. One can only hope he doesn’t turn his nature against you.

At a distance, over the noise, we can’t hear what Wells says to Tashjian. We can, however, see Tashjian sit up and look across the club to Presence. Off his look, WE MAKE A HARD CUT TO:

INT. LUNA VICE/KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER (N3)

Presence is marched into the kitchen by Tashjian and FOUR THUGS. The kitchen’s “closed.” Music piped in from the club plays in the space. Tashjian reaches to a control and turns the music down. Arriving to the space, Presence sees another guy - a real badass looking dude - CARTER, whose face is BADLY BRUISED. Likely the guy Presence put the beatdown on back at her place. Easy as Sunday morning:

PRESENCE
Have we met?

That gets a sneer from Carter. Tashjian wastes no time getting right into things.

TASHJIAN
You are a stupid little girl, you know that? Stupid. You really don’t get it.

PRESENCE
That’s why you sent guys to kill me.

TASHJIAN
Sent people to explain things to you.

PRESENCE
I’m listening.

TASHJIAN
Smart people mind their own. When they don’t, bad things happen.

(CONTINUED)
PRESENCE  
Bad things like they end up in Catalina Bay?

TASHJIAN  
The Duchess has ten cargo ships making port every day. Me and Chad could’ve had a real good thing. Me and “drunk, desperate Chad” could’ve. But then he starts to sober up. Has second thoughts about the deal. Wanted to run off and figure things out. Nothing worse than a drunk who starts to think straight.

PRESENCE  
So you put him in the bay.

TASHJIAN  
Actually, I just tried to get him to start drinking again. He went in the bay himself. Some people, they really want to make things more difficult than they need to be.

PRESENCE  
Yeah. You going to start me “drinking,” too?

TASHJIAN  
Doesn’t have to be like that. You've clearly got capacities. We’ve got a set up between here and Vietnam. We’re starting to move over a hundred kilos of--

PRESENCE  
Nick, just so we're clear; I don't give a shit.

Just as Presence has had enough of Tashjian, Tashjian’s had enough of her. To Carter:

TASHJIAN  
Mess this bitch up.

Tashjian leaves, TURNING UP THE MUSIC ON A SPEAKER as he does as if wanting to cover the sound of bloody murder that’s about to come.

(CONTINUED)
The men close in on Presence. FIVE on one. Unfortunately, for the men, they are vastly outnumbered. Presence excels at close/quarter fighting. She uses all of the environment around her to her advantage: From SUPPORT BEAMS, to APPLIANCES, to the UTENSILS that are located in various spots. Anything near her is at the very least usable for defensive means, and anything not fixed is eligible to be used offensively. THE SHOT IS STITCHED so that is seems as though Presence fairly “dances” through the space to the music taking out the thugs in a single, fluid take. In short order, Presence has torn her way through four of the men. Carter, seeing which way things are going, busts from the kitchen.

INT. LUNA VICE - MOMENTS LATER (N3)

We see Carter fighting his way through the club crowd... We see Presence closing in behind him.

EXT. LUNA VICE - MOMENTS LATER (N3)

Carter comes running out of the joint. Tashjian is near his Vanquish.

CARTER
She’s coming!

Tashjian doesn’t need to be told twice. He jumps in his car, peels off leaving Carter behind.

Presence comes out of the joint. Carter tries to cut her off, but she clocks him.

Presence jumps in her waiting car and is quickly hauling ass after Tashjian.

And then it’s on: the BIG ASS CAR CHASE we’ve been building toward all episode. Presence is not cut off this time, but rather puts on display a master class in precision driving.

The Vanquish has off-the-line speed, but Tashjian isn’t the driver that Presence is. She slaloms effortlessly through the traffic which separates herself from Tashjian.

Closing on him, Presence starts to get aggressive, using the Marauder to tear at the Vanquish. Tashjian knows he’s not going to win that fight. Jamming his brake, he turns sharply orienting the Vanquish the WRONG WAY up onto a freeway off ramp.

Presence overshots, has to brake hard and bring her car to a stop. Swinging the front end around, Presence jams the accelerator sending the Marauder surging forward like a

(CONTINUED)
bullet from a gun. She races up the ramp after Tashjian. What she sees before her forces her to utter:

PRESENCE
...Shit...

The road ahead is littered with SPUN OUT VEHICLES, the drivers clearly having lost control. Presence has got to navigate an automotive minefield just to close the gap.

Up ahead, Tashjian looks in his REARVIEW MIRROR. He can see Presence gaining. He jerks his wheel, heads down an off-ramp, races for some city streets... Looking behind him, he sees... Nothing. Nothing at all. No sign of Presence. Despite the fact he was trying to lose her, now that she is suddenly gone fills Tashjian with dread. Slowing for a bit, muttering to himself:

TASHJIAN
...Where the hell is she...?

Then, out of the darkness, the Marauder comes roaring "unseen" directly for Tashjian. Presence T-bones it into the PASSENGER SIDE of the Vanquish. Once both cars slide to a halt, Presence steps from her car, comes around to the driver side of Tashjian’s car, hauls him out and dumps him on the pavement. Presence stands over Tashjian, triumphant, AS WE HEAR THE SOUND OF SIRENS APPROACHING.

We hold on Presence for a long moment, then CUT TO:

I/E. POLICE CAR - NIGHT (N3)

We come in tight on Presence who’s riding in the back of the car. She looks worn, she looks tired... She’s a woman who is spent. The car comes to a halt. We “feel” an officer exit the car and come around to the back. Presence, emotionally empty asks:

PRESENCE
Am I in trouble?

The back door of the car opens revealing that it’s McKay who’s driving. Rather than arriving to a police station, McKay is delivering Presence home.

MCKAY
I don’t know if you’re going to get off Scott free, but... I know the shields are pouring through Tashjian’s phone records, texts... The stuff he’s saying about Chad makes him look real guilty. Worry

(CONTINUED)
Presence gives a nod. She starts for her place. Exhausted, she’s a little woozy. As she tips a bit, MCKAY IS THERE TO CATCH HER. If electricity could be transmitted by image, the viewer would feel the SPARK that travels between Presence and McKay as they touch. Presence looks to McKay, and with a bit of a tired, but intoxicating smile:

PRESENCE
You’re one of the good ones. I know ‘em, when I see ‘em.

The two linger for a moment, then Presence heads on inside her joint.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY (D10)

We’re just beyond a rather handsome HEADSTONE set for Chad Avedon.

Presence, Manny and Tre are present, all dressed in various black-centric looks. Presence has with her a very expensive looking JAPANESE TEA SET which she places at the headstone.

MANNY
Isn’t it supposed to be “one for the brothers...”

PRESENCE
He was cleaning up. Figure I’ll help him on his way.

Presence gets quiet for a moment. Tre, getting a little uncomfortable:

TRE
Do you want to be alone?

PRESENCE
Kind of like being with family.

MANNY
You gonna be good?

PRESENCE
I just need to get my head correct. Figure out what I’m doing with myself.
The group starts heading toward the Marauder, damaged, but like a warhorse, it’s still running. As they arrive to the car:

TRE
You know, I got people, time to time, could use some helping out on the DL from somebody who’s actually good to their word.

MANNY
Why you encouraging her?

TRE
I am encouraging her. Looking out for people; girl’s got a way.

PRESENCE
Manny, don’t even sweat it. I’m not getting up to anything illegal.

As the group gets into the car, thoughts take hold with Presence... She asks, clear with her intent:

PRESENCE (CONT’D)
But, if it’s legal-ish; who are your friends and what are they paying?

As we hang on Presence, we FADE TO:

BLACK

END OF SHOW