

BLOODS

Written by

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"Blood" *n.*, *proper*

A term of loyalty and respect
used between African American soldiers
during the American War in Vietnam

PRE-LAP: A ticking clock.

INT. CLAY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Small studio apartment. Mold-streaked walls. Morning light through two grimy windows.

A man sits stiffly upright on a crisply made bed. This is CLAY (30), a serious man, surface calm but hyper-focused.

He wears a navy janitor's uniform. A meticulous Afro.

A cat purrs against his thigh.

The alarm clock ticks -- 5:59 AM.

The second hand passes 10 -- *ticks louder.*

Passes 11 -- *louder still.*

Passes 12 -- *a SCREECHING ALARM BELL! --*

Clay *claps* a hand on the clock, muting the bell...

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

Clay descends the stairwell of a poor tenement building.

EXT. WATTS, CALIFORNIA - DAY

Clay walks through Watts. Just before sunrise. Only a few people, all black, are out at this hour.

Cars and business signs indicate it's the early 1970s.

Clay constantly scans his surroundings as he walks.

EXT. WATTS BUS STOP - DAY

A city bus stops. Doors screech open.

Clay approaches the bus, pauses, lets an OLD MAN board first. The old man nods thanks.

Glued to the bus stop nearby is a colorful concert poster for "WATTSTAX 72: August 20, 1972".

I/E. BUS/L.A. STREETS - DAY

Clay rides the nearly empty bus. The bus passes the LA viaducts, bone dry.

It passes Chinatown, bustling with morning activity.

A MAN boards the bus, passes Clay, sits three rows behind.

Clay turns, looks suspiciously at the man.

The bus passes a freeway sign that reads: ENTERING VERNON.

EXT. VERNON - DAY

Clay steps off the bus. Vernon is all factories, endless metal fortresses.

Hundreds of blue-collar workers, all white, walk to work. Only a few black men, all wearing janitor's uniforms.

As Clay walks we begin to hear men yelling and chanting...

And Clay comes across a LABOR PROTEST IN PROGRESS:

- Angry white picketers in front of a factory
- As a group of Latino workers break the strike
- The picketers scream crazily
- Rotten fruit and eggs hurled at the Latinos
- White cops observe with shotguns propped on shoulders
- Picket signs read: "NIXON WAKE UP, WE ARE AWAKE"

"ON STRIKE FOR JUSTICE"

"OUR FUTURE IS AT STAKE!"

Clay ignores it all, keeps walking, as a white picketer screams:

WHITE PICKETER
Goddamn wetbacks! Fuck you!--

INT. PARKING DECK - DAY

SUDDEN SILENCE. Clay now walks through a quiet parking deck.

He examines each car as he moves.

A car drives up, parks nearby. Two white guys get out.

Clay watches them. In a moment they've walked away.

Clay resumes his search. Takes a few steps. Stops, considers one car closely.

He looks around: Nobody in sight.

He approaches the car: a mid-60s, worse-for-wear Ford Galaxie.

Clay reveals a slim jim from under his shirt, slips it in the driver side window, yanks up, *CLICK--*

I/E. GALAXIE/VERNON - DAY

Clay steers the Galaxie out of the parking deck. Street is packed with white workers.

EXT. GARAGE - DAY

The Galaxie eases down a narrow industrial back street.

It approaches an open garage door, where a MAN stands waiting. This is BRADLEY (35), thin, unshaven, nappy Afro.

The Galaxie pulls into the garage. Bradley lowers the gate...

INT. GARAGE - DAY

In the garage, Bradley...

- unscrews the Galaxie's CALIFORNIA plates--
- replaces them with GEORGIA plates--
- unscrews the VIN tag--
- turns the throttle body screw, engine REVS HIGHER--
- bolts a new tire with rusty rims into place--

INT. GARAGE OFFICE - DAY

Clay hands a stack of cash to Bradley.

Bradley sets the cash onto a desk, sits down.

He opens a desk drawer.

Sets an M1911 PISTOL (with silencer) onto the desk.
Clay takes the gun, removes the clip, checks the action, etc.
As Bradley reveals a fifth of Rémy Martin, pours two glasses.
Clay sets down the pistol.
He and Bradley raise glasses, look eye-to-eye.

BRADLEY
To Horngren.

CLAY
Horngren.

BRADLEY
That mother fucker.

They drink. Long moment of eye contact. Men with history.
Clay stands, takes the pistol...

EXT. L.A. BACK STREET - DAY

The Galaxie pulls out of the garage. Bradley steps outside.

BRADLEY
Be good, Blood!

Clay raises a fist out the open window as he drives off.

EXT. L.A. STREET - DAY

Clay drives through a poor LA neighborhood. Black children play in the steaming heat... young men sit on front stoops...

Clay listens to the Bar-Kays. Head bobbing slightly.

The Galaxie passes a large white apartment building. Clay turns, enters its parking deck.

INT. JILLIAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

JILLIAN (35) walks down a hallway lined with Golden Age movie posters. She carries a man's maroon suit on a hanger.

She's white. Pretty. But life has been hard on her.

She enters a small kitchen. Clay sits shirtless at the kitchen table, smoking a cigarette, drinking milk.

She brushes a familiar palm across his back. He stands, takes the suit from her. She walks to the stove where food simmers.

Clay begins ironing the suit in the adjoining living room.

CLAY

I was here till midnight tonight.
Okay?

JILLIAN

What?

CLAY

Midnight. Tonight.

JILLIAN

I don't [understand] --

CLAY

It's just in case.

JILLIAN

Your food is ready.

CLAY

Jill.

JILLIAN

Your food.

Clay stops ironing, walks into the kitchen, where a plate of food waits. He sits, begins eating. Jillian sits, not eating.

CLAY

Midnight. I left at midnight.

JILLIAN

I've got someone coming over.

CLAY

When?

JILLIAN

Eleven.

CLAY

That's fine. I was here until 10:45.

Jillian nods.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Please say it Jill?

JILLIAN
You were here until 10:45.

CLAY
Thank you.
(beat, takes another bite)
This is good. Thank you.

She stands, rounds the table, hugs him from behind.

They kiss. A genuine moment of affection.

I/E. GALAXIE/L.A. NIGHTCLUB STRIP - NIGHT

Just after sunset. Clay drives the Galaxy, now wearing the suit: maroon jacket, flowery shirt with wide-open collar.

On the street around him, black clubs are bumpin' with beautiful brothers and sisters in wild 70s garb.

A different funk/soul song issues from each club.

Gorgeous women sway by in SLO-MO.

Players in colorful hats and glittering jewelry.

Clay focuses on the road. Music suddenly drops as...

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - NIGHT

A quiet street. Hollywood Hills. Reflections of trees and glittering mansions slide over the Galaxy's windshield.

Clay turns a corner, sees a long line of parked cars.

He approaches a driveway where THREE LARGE MEN stand guard.

These guys are armed. Clearly muscle. They watch as Clay drives past, but Clay angles his face away...

A BIT LATER

Clay parks on a dark street, the Galaxy pointing downhill. Just release the parking break and he's gone.

Clay climbs out, walks down a dark sidewalk.

The HOLLYWOOD SIGN glows in the heavens above.

He approaches a brick wall. Beyond: SOUNDS OF A HOUSE PARTY.

Clay looks around. Alone on the street.

He takes a quick step, foots off the wall, grabs a tree limb.
Quickly he's atop the wall, then drops to the other side.
He walks toward a huge mansion now visible ahead.

EXT. MANSION BACK GATE - NIGHT

An iron fence and gate. Clay removes a key ring with two keys. He inserts a key into the gate, turns, *CLICK*.

He passes through the gate. Reinserts the keys into his coat.
His gun glints briefly in a shoulder holster...

INT. MANSION, MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

A party. And it's hoppin'. 100+ people: 90% black, 10% white.
And those 10% are fly young ladies.

Upbeat funk music plays: 'Castle of Joy' by Fat Larry's Band.

Clay walks coolly through the party.

Liquor, blunts, Afros all around.

The decor is early-70s rich: 2001 bubble furniture, black lights, lava lamps, paintings of gorgeous black goddesses.

Framed gold/platinum records on the walls.

Scantily clad women drink champagne by a pool.

And holy shit -- *Is that Black Moses himself at the piano!?*

Clay approaches a bar, orders a drink (MOS, voice drowned out) from a WHITE MALE BARTENDER wearing a cherry red suit.

Clay sips his drink, looks over the party, scans faces. The majestic women. The players. The toughs in the corner.

But his concentration breaks when...

A DRUNK MAN AND WOMAN (25) bump into him. Clay barely saves his drink from spilling. The Drunk Man and Woman laugh.

DRUNK MAN
My bad, brother! My bad!

DRUNK WOMAN
We spill your drink sweetie?

CLAY

No.

DRUNK WOMAN

Don't be mad, baby. He didn't mean nothing.

DRUNK MAN

I said my bad, brother! Damn, you all tense and shit.

Clay isn't laughing it off. The Bartender approaches.

DRUNK MAN (CONT'D)

Three of whatever my brother is having.

Clay sees the three of them -- MAN, WOMAN, and BARTENDER -- all looking at him. He shakes his head briefly, walks away.

DRUNK MAN (CONT'D)

I said my bad, brother! Shit!

ACROSS THE ROOM

Clay finds a corner, posts up. Again he scans faces.

Gorgeous models. Stoners. Brothers with huge mustaches. Musicians. Dealers. Ten bouncers in black suits.

None are who Clay is looking for.

Then he sees...

A LATINA WOMAN steps to a microphone by Isaac Hayes' piano.

The music goes silent. The party quiets.

This woman, we will learn, is CAROLINA (30): intelligent, strong, wounded.

She begins singing "*Cucucurucucu, Paloma*." Isaac Hayes accompanies. A strange juxtaposition: Mexican folk + soul...

But the crowd is transfixed. She's an amazing singer, but more so her voice is brutally raw.

Clay is dumbstruck. His mouth slightly ajar.

It's clear now how tense he's been all along. Somehow this woman's voice has cracked through.

And then...

She makes eye contact with him.

Just for a moment.

Like she's singing directly to him.

And Clay sees: a Fleur-de-lys tattoo on her arm.

Then he sees... standing beyond her...

A MAN IN A BLACK SUIT (50).

Clay's expression goes ice ---- fucking ---- cold.

Black Suit stands in the audience. Smokes a cigar. He's haughty. Possessive. Hard.

He turns, walks away through the crowd.

Clay begins to follow, moving parallel through the crowd.

Black Suit disappears down a hallway.

Clay glances at the stage. Carolina's song nears a heartrending climax, which is CUT SHORT as we...

CUT TO:

INT. BACK OFFICE - NIGHT

Black Suit enters a small office. Locks the door behind him.

Sits at his desk. Pours a drink, takes a sip, when...

The office door knob rattles.

Black Suit sets down his drink.

The door knob rattles again.

Black Suit opens a drawer where a chrome-plated .45 glitters.

Carolina's song murmurs through the door.

BLACK SUIT
Who's that!

Rattling stops. A long moment.

In the distance, Carolina's song ends. The crowd applauds, and an incongruously peppy FUNK SONG begins on the stereo.

Black suit leans back. Relaxes.

-- And that's when --

The door lock CLICKS OVER and the door slowly swings open.

Black Suit freezes. Then he comes to, lunges for his .45...

As Clay enters, crouched low, gun raised, fires once.

Black Suit drops his gun. Clutches his chest.

BLACK SUIT (CONT'D)
What you want, man? What you--

CLAY
Doesn't matter.

BLACK SUIT
Who are you?

Clay fires again. The bullet slams Black Suit's forehead. He pitches back, then forward, head slams the desk: *thump-thump*.

Clay lowers his gun. Face like stone.

Bloody mist in the air.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Clay exits the office, leaves the door slightly ajar. Moves down a dark hallway, suddenly comes face-to-face with...

Carolina. The singer.

They both stop. Eye contact.

Clay's gaze softens. But just a bit.

Then he snaps out of it. Walks past her.

She watches him go without a word.

INT. MANSION, MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Clay crosses the raucous party. Head low. But he sees...

-- The Bartender is looking directly at him and --

-- One of the BOUNCERS (30) looks at him, too, and then --

DRUNK WOMAN (O.S.)
I'm sorry about earlier, baby!

Drunk Woman staggers up to Clay--

DRUNK WOMAN (CONT'D)
You want some blow, baby - we'll
make it up to you - he didn't mean
nothing!

Clay tries to flee but is bumped by twenty partygoers. They all seem to close in on him.

Finally he elbows through, leaves the Drunk Woman pouting. All the partygoers frown at his rough urgency...

INT. BACK STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Clay bounds down a staircase. Moving fast now.

INT. BACK OFFICE - NIGHT

Carolina stands looking at Black Suit's corpse. Her gaze both focused and distant. Somehow this doesn't surprise her.

EXT. MANSION BACK GATE - NIGHT

Clay steps through the still-open gate, closes it behind him, it CLICKS shut, locked. Then he's off into the darkness.

MOMENTS LATER

He climbs atop the brick wall. Drops to the sidewalk.

THEN

He clambers into the Galaxie. Releases parking brake. Turns ignition. Engine fires.

THEN

He drives down through Hollywood Hills *below the speed limit.*
Hollywood sign above.

Two police cruisers appear ahead, sirens blaring/blue lights flashing. They speed past Clay.

Clay glances in his rearview, keeps driving.

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT

Two Bouncers run to meet the police cruisers as...

People flee the party. It's chaos: cars honking, wheels screeching.

A COP (white) forcefully grabs a WOMAN (black) by the arm.

She SCREAMS.

ANOTHER COP raises his revolver, FIRES ONCE into the air.

PANDEMONIUM follows: *yelling, cursing, running.*

As more cop cars arrive, sirens blaring.

I/E. GALAXIE/APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Clay parks in front of Jillian's apartment building.

He looks at his wristwatch: 10:56 PM. Jumps out of the car.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

Clay enters the lobby, presses the UP button on the elevator. The elevator DINGS, doors open.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE JILLIAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Clay approaches a door (obviously Jillian's). He checks his watch: 11:02 PM.

He presses his ear to the door. Hears nothing.

At the end of the hall, around a corner, the elevator DINGS.

A WHITE GUY exits the elevator: mid-40s, boring grey suit.

White Guy nears the corner -- and Clay steps forward, bumping shoulders with him.

They both step back. White Guy is startled. Clay stands there, letting himself be seen.

CLAY
My bad, brother.

White Guy is speechless. Frightened.

Clay grins.

Then Clay pats White Guy on the arm, quite hard, startling him even more.

And Clay walks away.

The elevator doors open. Clay grins back at White Guy again, then steps into the elevator.

White Guy knocks on Jillian's door. Door opens. It's her...

JILLIAN
Hey, baby. I was wondering when--

JONATHAN
Was someone just here?

JILLIAN
What?

JONATHAN
There was a man out here.

JILLIAN
What man, baby?...

As she ushers him into her apartment.

EXT. POINT FERMIN PARK (LOS ANGELES) - NIGHT

Dark ocean crashes. A warm breeze. Jagged cliffs.

HEADLIGHTS sweep over the cliffs, come to a stop.

Sound (O.S.): A car door OPENS AND CLOSES.

Clay steps into the headlights, toward the cliff's edge. Far behind him looms L.A. PORT: hulking ships/factories/etc.

Clay approaches the cliff's edge. Removes his gun, disassembles it, hurls the pieces into the dark void, down to the ocean.

Then he removes the TWO KEYS. Throws them in as well.

SOUND (O.S.): Music, in the distance - "I'll Take You There" by The Staples Singers.

Clay looks up, sees a huge CRUISE SHIP easing out of port. There's a PARTY on deck: 50 white people laughing/dancing.

Clay watches for a long moment as the ship slides by.

EXT. ABANDONED FACTORY - NIGHT

LIQUID splashes on the GALAXIE'S HOOD.

Clay is dousing the car with gasoline from a red jug.

He's in an abandoned factory. Other burned/charred vehicles surround the Galaxie. *Clay's past hits?*

Clay unbuttons his suit coat, pants, quickly disrobes. He tosses the suit into the Galaxie's window.

Now in underwear/undershirt, Clay lights a match, tosses it.

The car *WHOOMPS* into flames.

Clay removes another suit from his duffel bag...

I/E. - BUS/L.A. STREETS - NIGHT

Clay rides a bus, now wearing a slightly rumpled grey suit...

INT. MANSION, MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

MATCHING SHOT of DETECTIVE REGAN (30, white). His suit is brown, pressed, slick; Steve-McQueen-in-Bullitt look.

He enters the mansion, where the party, as they say, is over.

The gaudy main room is filled with white cops, while black partygoers sit on floors/sofas, "held for questioning."

Regan walks through the room, nodding at cops, scanning detainees. He's sharp, controlled, a battle-tested rooster.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE OFFICE - NIGHT

Regan walks down the dark hallway, then steps into...

INT. BACK OFFICE - NIGHT

... the office, where Black Suit's corpse slumps on the desk.

FIVE WHITE COPS are there. One of them flashes photos.

Carolina sits nearby on a small sofa. Her eyes downcast.

REGAN

Jesus. What's she doing in here?

A uniformed OFFICER looks up.

OFFICER

She found the body, sir.

REGAN
But why's she in here now?

OFFICER
Wanted to keep her separated from
the others.

Regan grimaces at him. He approaches Carolina. He speaks in bad Spanish (NO SUBTITLES):

REGAN
*Lo siento, señora. Yo soy el
Detective Regan. Comprende Ingles?*

That's about the extent of Regan's Spanish. Carolina looks at him, shakes her head, No.

REGAN (CONT'D)
Lo siento...

He holds out a hand. She takes it, stands. They exit.

INT. VAQUITO'S OFFICE/HOUSE - NIGHT

A PHONE RINGS in another office, this one very clean/ritzy.

The phone is picked up by Alejandro (35), a formidable man, South American, tall, dark beard, piercing eyes.

He says nothing, just listens. He hands the phone to--

VAQUITO (40). Vaquito is also South American, shorter, softer, well-dressed, calculating, calm. Clearly the boss.

INTERCUT WITH

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

A CHUBBY WHITE COP talks furtively into a phone. The police station bustles loudly behind him.

CHUBBY WHITE COP
It's confirmed -- Yeah -- There's a
description on the shooter. At least
three witnesses, maybe more.

VAQUITO
The description of the shooter?

CHUBBY WHITE COP
 30. Negro. Short-to-medium Afro.
 Average height. -- Yeah, that's all
 for now.

TIME CUT: Vaquito hangs up the phone. He looks at Alejandro.
 A silent communication passes between them. Then--

Vaquito looks across the desk at (revealing to us) a third
 man: MATEO (40), nervous, sweating, forced smile, mustache.

This dialogue is IN SPANISH (SUBTITLED):

VAQUITO
 30 years old. Black. Afro. Does that
 sound like your man?

MATEO
 Sounds like half the negroes in LA.

VAQUITO
 They have witnesses.

MATEO
 You wanted it done at the party, and
 you wanted a negro.

VAQUITO
 Please don't tell me what I wanted.

Vaquito has spoken calmly, but the threat is real; Mateo
 gulps.

VAQUITO (CONT'D)
 Does he know your name?

Mateo shakes his head, No.

VAQUITO (CONT'D)
 You know what we are trying to build
 here, cousin. A foundation. A *strong*
 foundation...

The scene continues as the CAMERA MOVES OUT, revealing an
 opulent mansion...

Chandeliers. Swimming pool. Fake waterfall. A fucking 20-foot
 reproduction of the Statue of David, but also...

Scaffolding, wet paint, tools lying everywhere. Signs of
 ongoing construction... as Vaquito speaks...

VAQUITO (CONT'D)
 ...a foundation for a home, for all
 of us, for our people. A family is
 nothing without a home. In Colombia,
 there has always been war. There
 will always be war. To survive we
 must build. If we do not build, we
 are our own victims. Do you
 understand, cousin?

Mateo: *Not really.*

Vaquito's gaze is calm, focused, intense.

VAQUITO (CONT'D)
 I can trust you, Mateo.

MATEO
 Yes.

VAQUITO
 I do not need to worry.

MATEO
 No.

VAQUITO
 We do not have a problem.

MATEO
 No, Vaquito. We do not have a
 problem.

EXT. WATTS BUS STOP - NIGHT

Clay steps off a bus, back in Watts. He walks down a...

WATTS BACK STREET

... where a DOORMAN (25, black) leans against a nondescript
 metal door. Clay and the Doorman dap, hug, etc.

Then Clay raises both arms. The Doorman frisks him.

INT. UNDERGROUND CASINO - NIGHT

Clay walks through a busy casino filled with GAMBLERS/
 DRINKERS. He nods at a few folks as he moves toward...

INT. CASINO BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Clay hands \$200 cash to a CROUPIER (40) in a low-cut red jumpsuit. She hands him a tray of chips.

Clay sits at a poker table, where FIVE OTHER MEN (two black, three white) are already playing.

They all nod at Clay familiarly if not outwardly friendly. Clay tosses in a chip for the blind. The Croupier deals.

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT

Black partygoers shoved by white cops into a paddy wagon as--

Regan stands by a cop car talking into its CB, mid-convo:

REGAN

Operating without a license. And more coke in one pile than I've ever seen. Vic was music producer, sure, but Narco says he was into something heavy. That's all we've got.

SUPERIOR (OVER CB)

And the shooter?

REGAN

General description that fits about every third colored guy in L.A. County.

SUPERIOR (OVER CB)

Hmm. Well, I guess we shake the trees, see what falls out.

REGAN

Copy.

SUPERIOR (OVER CB)

This is the Hills, Lieutenant. Not some pimp under the bridge.

REGAN

Copy.

Regan sets down the mic. Sighs.

He walks toward a nearby gaggle of FIVE WHITE COPS. They read his expression and are instantly annoyed (AD-LIB) --

REGAN (CONT'D)
 Shut the fuck up! You'll get your
 quotas for the month. Move! Now!

They disperse begrudgingly...

BEGIN ARREST SEQUENCE

L.A. NIGHTCLUB STRIP - NIGHT

An LAPD paddy wagon SCREECHES stop at one of the clubs Clay drove by earlier. FOUR ARMED WHITE COPS jump out...

INSIDE THE CLUB

Cops barrel through, shining flashlights on the faces of every black man there.

They take a number of men into custody, all around 30 y.o., short Afros, etc...

IN ANOTHER CLUB

Same scene. COPS strong-arm a BLACK MAN out of the club, while a BLACK WOMAN yells *"He ain't done nothing!"* (AD-LIB)

...a WHITE COP pushes the woman forcefully, and she falls. A tussle breaks out between WHITE COPS AND BLACK PATRONS...

ON A SIDEWALK

A row of dispirited black men ushered militaristically into another paddy wagon. WHITE COPS, shotguns on their shoulders.

END ARREST SEQUENCE INTO...

EXT. WATTS BACK STREET - NIGHT

Same casino where Clay plays poker, same BLACK DOORMAN out front. FIVE COPS (all white, all angry, shotguns) approach.

WHITE COP #1
 Hey boy. Let's skip the part where
 you tell me this is private
 property.

WHITE COP #2
 Sarge, don't this pube-head meet our
 description?

WHITE COP #1
 Certainly fucking does.

The Doorman rolls his eyes, opens the casino door, yells something indistinct (AD-LIB) inside.

People inside instantly scatter, making escape.

WHITE COP #1, enraged, strikes the Doorman in the stomach with the butt of his shotgun. The Doorman crumples...

INT. CASINO BACK ROOM - NIGHT

The card players look concerned, can hear the commotion in the next room.

Clay looks steadily down at his cards.

The door BURSTS open, THREE WHITE COPS spill in, guns raised.

They roughly grab the three black men (including Clay) at the table. Slam them against a wall.

WHITE COP #1
How long these boys been playing
tonight?

WHITE CARD PLAYER #1
All night! All night!

WHITE COP #1
Bull fucking shit.

White Cop #1 breathes grossly in Clay's ear:

WHITE COP #1 (CONT'D)
What about you, boy? You been here
all night?

WHITE CARD PLAYER #1
He's been here all night!

WHITE COP #1
That right, nigger? You been here
all night?

CLAY
(sighs)
I got here at 1:30.

WHITE COP #1
That's what I fucking thought!

White Cop #1 roughly handcuffs Clay...

I/E. PADDY WAGON/L.A. STREETS - NIGHT

Clay sits jostling in a paddy wagon with 20 other scared-but-not-surprised black men (who only look vaguely like him).

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

A number of paddy wagons pull up to a POLICE STATION.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

A line of 50+ black men stand being processed. A white cop at a table takes names, IDs, etc. Everyone smokes cigarettes. Clay is near the front of the line.

INT. DARK HALLWAY (POLICE STATION) - NIGHT

A YOUNG WHITE COP leads Clay and five other suspects down a *very dark hallway* toward a door (under which light glows).

MURMURS in the next room.

Clay's jaw is clenched, but otherwise he's calm.

A KNOCK. Young White Cop opens the door -- *blinding white light* -- Clay is pulled inside and --

CUT TO:

INT. LARGE LINE-UP ROOM - NIGHT

Clay steps forward on a stage under flaming white lights...

Five brothers stand behind him...

Clay's eyes adjust, and he sees seated below:

- (1) Regan, the detective;
- (2) Carolina, the singer;
- (3) the Bartender (white);
- (4) a Bouncer (black); and
- (5) the Drunk Man and Woman (both black).

REGAN
Emmanuel Clay, 32. That right?

Clay nods.

REGAN (CONT'D)
Use your words, please.

CLAY
Yeah.

REGAN
Says here you're military.

CLAY
Discharged.

REGAN
Nam?

CLAY
Yeah.

REGAN
Same here. How long? What division?

CLAY
Three tours.

REGAN
I asked what division, sir. It
doesn't say here.

CLAY
Won't a division.
(beat)
Phoenix.

Regan's gaze goes dark, very concerned.

A long silence.

REGAN
You with the Panthers now?

CLAY
No.

REGAN
Sure about that? Tough brother like
you. Military. Afro. Don't like
cops.

CLAY
Your words.

Regan nods coolly. He's not one to back down.

REGAN
You were playing poker. Money game.
That's enough for six months.

CLAY
Okay.

REGAN
You arrived at the game at 1:30 a.m.
That right?

CLAY
Yeah.

REGAN
What were you doing before that?

CLAY
Walking.

REGAN
Walking? You drive a '65 Galaxie,
right?

CLAY
No.

REGAN
No?

CLAY
I don't own a car.

REGAN
You don't own a car? In Los Angeles?
And you say you were just walking
around Watts, in a suit, before you
arrived at an illegal poker game at
1:30 a.m.?

Clay says nothing. Regan turns to the Bouncer.

REGAN (CONT'D)
Is this the man?

BOUNCER
(hesitant)
I don't know. Guy was taller I
think.

Regan looks at the Bartender, who also isn't sure.

BARTENDER

Maybe he was taller? I don't know.

Regan turns to the Drunk Man and Woman. Drunk Man speaks loudly, with proud certainty:

DRUNK MAN

That's him! He's wearing a different suit, but he did that shit.

DRUNK WOMAN

No baby, that ain't him!

DRUNK MAN

What!? You know what he did!

REGAN

All right, Mr. Fields, calm down.
Are you sure?

DRUNK MAN

One hundred goddamn percent.

CLAY

(breaks his calm)
Fuck you, nigger.

DRUNK MAN

Fuck you, nigger!!!

Some chaos ensues... Drunk Man jumps up, acting tough... Clay curses at him (AD-LIB) but doesn't move, still controlled...

Some white cops step in to restrain Drunk Man as...

Regan speaks softly to Carolina in Spanish (NO SUBTITLES).

REGAN

Es el hombre?

Carolina looks up at Clay. They share a long moment of eye contact.

REGAN (CONT'D)

Señora?

Carolina breathes deeply. Clay looks down at the floor.

REGAN (CONT'D)

Señora Sanchez? Por favor.

CAROLINA
(beat)
No es él.

Clay looks at her now, just barely betraying surprise.

REGAN
You sure that's not him? *Segura?*

CAROLINA
No es él.

Now Carolina looks Regan dead in the eye. Regan doesn't break her gaze, deciding if he believes her.

Then, out of nowhere...

CLAY
I was with someone.

REGAN
(looks up at Clay)
What?

CLAY
Jillian Kowalski. 1433 Miranda,
apartment 412.

REGAN
Why didn't you say so before, Mr.
Clay?

CLAY
She got a man.

Regan leans back in his chair. Sighs.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

A SHORT COP leads JILLIAN and JONATHAN through a precinct hallway (still filled with black detainees).

Detective Regan approaches Jillian/Jonathan.

REGAN
Ms. Kowalski?

JONATHAN
What the hell is this about.

REGAN

I apologize, folks. I know it's late, and this is very irregular, but I need to speak with Ms. Kowalski about a delicate matter. Alone.

JONATHAN

Alone? What the hell are you talking about?

REGAN

Ms. Kowalski, please come this way.
(to SHORT COP)
Show this gentleman to Room 5.

JONATHAN

I'm calling my lawyer! This is absurd!

Behind them, the black detainees all chuckle, eyes rolling.

INT. LARGE LINE-UP ROOM - NIGHT

Clay sits on a chair in a corner of the room.

He watches Carolina, *who glances at him briefly, then away.*

Then Clay sees: Detective Regan leads Jillian through the Line-Up Room toward a small glassed-in office...

INT. GLASSED-IN OFFICE - NIGHT

Regan sits across a desk from Jillian (Line-Up Room can be seen through the glass). Pick up mid-convo:

JILLIAN

Yes, that's Emmanuel Clay.

REGAN

You're sure?

JILLIAN

Of course I'm sure.

REGAN

How long have you [known him]--

JILLIAN

Why is he here? He was with me tonight, you know.

REGAN
Looks like you were with--

JILLIAN
That's none of your damn business.

Regan smirks, stands, walks around the desk, sits on the desk inches from Jillian.

REGAN
This is a murder investigation, Ms. Kowalski. Everything is my business.
(off her rolling eyes)
How late was Mr. Clay with you tonight?

JILLIAN
10:45 I believe. Jonathan came around 11:00.

REGAN
10:45?

JILLIAN
(beat, now worried)
Oh... please don't say anything to Jonathan. He doesn't know about...

Regan laughs at this, at her. He exits the room.

INT. LARGE LINE-UP ROOM - NIGHT

Regan walks through the room and out another door. In the glassed-in office, Jillian stands.

Clay sees her. She nods at him. He nods back.

INT. SECOND POLICE OFFICE (ROOM 5) - NIGHT

Jonathan -- Jillian's other man -- sits in a small windowless office, tapping his toe in annoyance. Regan enters.

JONATHAN
What the hell is [going on?]

REGAN
Sit down and be quiet, Mr. Trainor.

Jonathan obeys. Regan remains standing.

REGAN (CONT'D)
When did you arrive at Ms.
Kowalski's home tonight?

JONATHAN
Tonight? Just after eleven I think.

REGAN
And you were the only two people
there?

JONATHAN
Of course we were the only two
people there.

Regan can't suppress grin. He turns, moves to exit.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
There was this colored guy.

Regan stops. Looks back.

REGAN
What colored guy?

INT. LARGE LINE-UP ROOM - NIGHT

Regan and Jonathan enter. Clay watches as...

Regan points in Clay's direction. Jonathan steps forward,
looks at Clay, then turns back, says something to Regan.

Clay looks to the glassed-in office, sees Jillian sink into
her chair (as she witnesses the identification).

Then Clay looks at Carolina, who gazes down at her shoes.

Regan gives Clay a long stare: suspicious, unsatisfied.

INT. POLICE STATION - A BIT LATER

A NIGHT COP hands Clay his personal effects.

Far down the hallway, Regan speaks to TWO PLAINCLOTHES COPS
(one black, one white), as all three look at Clay.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Early morning. Clay steps on the street, checks his watch
as...

JILLIAN (O.S.)

Clay!

Jillian runs up to him, hugs him.

CLAY

I can't be here now, baby. I gotta go.

JILLIAN

Just come home with me. I did good, didn't I?

CLAY

Yes. Yes. I'm sorry about this. About Jonathan.

JILLIAN

He doesn't matter, baby.

And she kisses him. A slow moment.

Then Clay looks over her shoulder, sees the TWO PLAINCLOTHES COPS standing by the POLICE STATION ENTRANCE, watching them.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)

Just come home with me.

CLAY

I can't. I need your car, Jill. I gotta have it.

JILLIAN

But--

CLAY

I gotta meet the man. You dig? I know I'm putting you in a bad [position]--

JILLIAN

Shut up.

She takes out her car keys, hands them over.

JILLIAN (CONT'D)

After what... anything you ever need. You know that.

She kisses him again.

He looks emotionally impacted for the first time. He's taking advantage of her, and a part of him hates himself for it.

But a beat later, he takes her keys, turns away.

She gasps as...

...he abruptly walks off.

The Plainclothes Cops immediately walk after him.

Clay quickly reaches Jillian's car: RUSTY YELLOW VW BUG.

He jumps in, guns the chirpy engine.

Seeing this, the Plainclothes Cops stop, turn, run back the other direction as...

Jillian watches her own car speed away.

BEGIN CAR CHASE SEQUENCE

The VW Bug weaves through busy morning traffic.

Clay glances in the rearview, sees nothing.

He accelerates, glances at his watch.

He looks again in the rearview and sees...

An *UNMARKED CROWN VIC* skid into view in hot pursuit.

The Crown Vic is so much more car than the Bug it's comical.

Then strangely...

Clay pulls to a stop at a street corner.

The Crown Vic stops directly behind him.

But the Plainclothes Cops don't get out. They just sit there watching him.

Clay sees one of them speak into a CB.

Clay looks again at his watch. 10:15 AM. He grimaces.

He pulls slowly into traffic. The Crown Vic follows.

Clay rounds a corner, sees a SHIPPING FACILITY where a bunch of big rigs pull in and out.

A sign reads "TRUCKS ONLY" on a rusty fence.

Clay approaches slowly, but then he--