

SCORPIO CRUISE

by  
Michael Scherer

FADE IN:

EXT. DOWNTOWN - DESERTED STREET - NIGHT

Eerie. Quiet. TRAFFIC LIGHTS blink: green; red.

Tires SCREECH -- blue tire smoke rises from the pavement as:

BLACK HUMVEE chases WHITE ESCALADE around the corner.  
Accelerates along Central Avenue.  
Passes White Escalade--  
--cuts White Escalade off at an intersection.  
Stops.

For a BEAT quiet returns to the neighborhood.

AT THE CORNER

A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN exits a convenience store -- a brown bag filled with groceries tucked against her body.

AT THE INTERSECTION

Doors on the Humvee swing open.

AT THE CORNER

Middle-aged Woman watches: curious.

AT THE INTERSECTION

TWO MASKED MEN exit: MAC-10s in hand.

Tinted Escalade windows go down: BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

Masked Men return fire: ZIIIIIIIIIIIIIP -- ZIIIIIIIIIIIIIP!

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

AT THE CORNER

Middle-aged Woman's grocery bag jerks. She looks down:  
white milk gushes from the bag -- turns pink -- blood red.

She crumples to the ground.

AT THE INTERSECTION

Masked Men blast the Escalade: ZIIIIIIIIIIIP -- ZIIIIIIIIIIIP!

No more return fire. Quiet.

Masked Men steal closer to the bullet ridden SUV. Open the passenger door -- BLOODY BODY tumbles to the street.

Larger masked man -- a tight end on steroids -- rips off his ski-mask. Little-G, 20s, peers into the Escalade:

LITTLE-G  
Shit. Ain't them.

Second shooter steps into the headlights of the Escalade. He wears an Armani suit; Italian loafers.

DEEK WASHINGTON 20s, removes his mask. His face exudes charm. His stance, power. Eyes, ruthlessness. A pit bull in designer duds. He gives the corpses a curious glance -- turns into a hard stare.

Little-G stares

AT THE CORNER

Middle-aged Woman lies in a sea of pink.

LITTLE-G (O.S.)  
We got more problems.

SIRENS WAIL -- grow LOUDER.

DEEK (O.S.)  
Dumb bitch!

INT. CRUISE HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

CHARLIE CRUISE 30s, fit, lean, average good looks tempered by a sadness -- sleeps curled up against his wife: Melanie, 30s, his Sleeping Beauty.

Charlie CRIES out:

CHARLIE  
No. Please. No!

Tosses side to side -- almost tumbles out of bed.

CHARLIE  
NooooOOOOOOOO!

Launches himself upright -- bedclothes drenched in sweat.  
Melanie turns on a table lamp:

MELANIE  
You okay?

Charlie swings his legs to the floor:

CHARLIE  
Always ends the same.

Pads to the

BATHROOM

splashes water on his face -- towels off. He stares into the mirror -- touches his reflection. Re-enters the

BEDROOM

Melanie sits on the bed. Seductive -- beautiful. Sadness fills her eyes.

CHARLIE  
I'm okay. Really.

He gets out of his pajamas: three round scars pepper his muscular upper back. He pulls on a pair of JEANS -- slips into Cleveland Browns sweatshirt.

MELANIE  
It's four in the morning. Where you going?

Charlie sits next to Melanie -- slips on his sneakers:

CHARLIE  
Thought I'd go to the store. Pick up some French bread, get some eggs.

MELANIE  
Mmmmm. Charlie Cruise French Toast.

INT. DEEK WASHINGTON'S HUMVEE

Black Alcantara suede interior. Black tinted windows. Loud  
MUSIC: Gangst'a rap.

Little-G drives -- Deek shuffles through several pictures.  
Candids of:

INSERT PHOTOS

JOHNNIE ESPENOZA, 30s, a Scar Face wannabe, going about his  
business. And--

RAOUL MARTINEZ, 20s. Johnnie E's bodyguard.

BACK TO SCENE

Deek shoves the photos into an envelope -- tosses them aside.

DEEK

We're hosed, man. So hosed.

LITTLE-G

Don't see it, man.

DEEK

After tonight, if I take this guy  
out the cops be all over my ass--

Little-G swerves -- crosses the center line -- back. Pitches  
Deek against the passenger door:

DEEK

--shit, man. Take it easy.

LITTLE-G

Not used to these damn tinted  
windows. Hard to see.

Swerves again -- Deek braces.

LITTLE-G

You should'a stayed home tonight,  
let me and Willie handle this.

DEEK

I'm a hands-on kind'a boss.  
Besides, keeps me from getting  
rusty.

LITTLE-G  
Maybe, but if things had gone bad--

DEEK  
You vultures would be fighting over  
my turf. I know what I'm doing. I  
don't take this bastard out people  
gonna think I'm weak. Powerless.  
Can't have that.

LITTLE-G  
Know a guy in Dee-troit.

Deek cuts Little-G off with a look:

DEEK  
Fuck no! The last out-of-towner I  
hired took my money and split.

Stares out the window:

DEEK  
We're so hosed.

INT. CHARLIE'S CAR

A '98 FORD ESCORT. Clean. Spotless as the day he bought it.

Charlie accelerates out of a supermarket parking lot onto  
Central Avenue -- HUMS along to Mozart's Eine Kleine  
Nachtmusik -- DRUMS his fingers on the steering wheel.

Headlights swerve in his rear-view mirror: Black Humvee.

CHARLIE  
Damn drunks.

Charlie hits the right turn signal -- changes lanes.

SSSSSSSSSCRAPE! CURRRUNCH!

Charlie SCREEECHES to a halt -- puts the car in park -- gazes  
into his right side mirror: Black Humvee in his rear quarter  
panel.

He rolls his eyes -- puts the Escort in gear -- limps into a

DESERTED PARKING LOT

Escort comes to a full stop -- Hummer follows.

Charlie gets out -- moves to the front of his car -- inspects the passenger side. Glances at the Hummer.

Humvee driver-side door opens -- Little-G exits.

CHARLIE  
Everyone alright?

Little-G towers over Charlie:

LITTLE-G  
What the fuck wrong with you?

Charlie takes a step back:

CHARLIE  
What?

Little-G pushes Charlie:

LITTLE-G  
Look what you did to my ride, you little shit.

Charlie's breathing becomes labored.

LITTLE-G  
Damn right you goin'ta pay. Every last cent.

Charlie pulls out his cell -- dials.

LITTLE-G  
Who you callin'?

CHARLIE  
The police.

Little-G snatches the phone -- draws his arm back. Deek grabs his wrist -- twists the phone from Little-G's hand.

LITTLE-G  
What the--

Deek hands Charlie his phone:

DEEK  
No need for cops, little man.

Gives Little-G a wink -- puts an arm around Charlie:

DEEK  
Got insurance?

Charlie retrieves his wallet -- hands Deek a card:

CHARLIE  
You?

DEEK  
Self insured.

He slides the insurance card into his pocket -- gives the Humvee a once-over:

DEEK  
Lot'a damage.

CHARLIE  
Don't make them like they used to.

DEEK  
Figure you owe me 'bout eight, nine thousand.

CHARLIE  
Dollars?

Deek stares deep into Charlie's eyes -- sees, something:

DEEK  
Maybe we can work something out.  
Won't cost you a cent. We don't  
want insurance people involved.  
They be rippin' people off enough.

Charlie looks skeptical:

CHARLIE  
I'm listening.

DEEK  
How do I get in touch with you?

Charlie pulls his business card from his wallet -- hands it over. Deek examines it -- smirks:

DEEK  
Accountant? How exciting.

Charlie extends his hand:

CHARLIE  
Your card?

Deek looks at Little-G -- LAUGHS.

DEEK  
Fresh out.

Turns to Little-G:

DEEK  
Get the envelopes.

Little-G ducks inside the Humvee -- returns with the envelopes -- hands them to Deek.

Deek passes the smaller one to Charlie.

DEEK  
Go ahead. Open it.

Charlie removes candid photos of Johnnie E.

CHARLIE  
Who's this?

Deek spreads his arms wide as if to hug the world.

DEEK  
The answer to your problems.

Charlie flips through the photos:

CHARLIE  
Your mechanic?

Little-G lets out a SQUEAL: a girlie kind'a LAUGH.

DEEK  
Do me a little favor--

Hands Charlie a second envelope: thicker; heavier.

DEEK  
--I forget the accident. Forget we ever met.

Charlie looks inside -- removes a 9mm Glock -- stares:

CHARLIE  
You're kidding? Right?

DEEK  
Serious as a heart attack.

Points a finger at Charlie -- makes a shooting motion.  
Mouths: POW.

Charlie jams the gun into the envelope.

CHARLIE  
You're crazy--

Tries to return it.

CHARLIE  
--I'll pay the money.

DEEK  
You can do this for me, Cruiser.

CHARLIE  
It's Cruise.

DEEK  
Charlie Cruiser. I like it. Sounds  
gangst'a. Great name for a shooter,  
don't you think?

Deek -- Little-G LAUGH.

DEEK  
Listen to me, Mister Charlie  
Cruiser of--

Pulls Charlie's insurance card from his pocket:

DEEK  
--504 Maple Avenue.

Gives Charlie a 'I'm-gonna-kill-you-sucker' kind'a look:

DEEK  
You will do it.

CHARLIE  
Here's what I will do. Call the  
cops.

Little-G reaches under his jacket -- Deek holds him back.

DEEK  
Ahh, Cruiser. I'm sure you love  
your family, don't you?

Deek gets nose-to-nose with Charlie:

DEEK  
Don't do this-- I'll find them.  
I'll find you. Am I clear?

Charlie trembles with anger -- Deek takes it for fear.

DEEK  
Don't be scared, Charlie Cruiser.  
It's easier than you think.

Little-G gets into the Humvee -- slides behind the wheel.  
Deek climbs in -- yells out the window:

DEEK  
Forty-eight hours!

Points a finger at Charlie: POW!

INT. HUMVEE

Deek grins -- proud as a peacock. Little-G -- not so much.

LITTLE-G  
Ain't goin' to do it.

DEEK  
Did you see his eyes? He tried to  
hide it, but it was there. He had a  
killer's eyes.

LITTLE-G  
What if this killer gets caught? Or  
worse, goes to the police?

DEEK  
So what? He don't know me. Got  
nothin' on me. Nothin' at all.

Little-G GUNS the engine -- ROARS out of the parking lot.

INT. CHARLIE'S CAR

Charlie points his cell phone out his windshield -- snaps a  
picture of the Deek's license plate. Dials his phone:

CHARLIE  
Police?

DEEK (V.O.)  
Don't do this... I'll find them.  
I'll find you. Am I clear?

CHARLIE  
Never mind. Sorry.

Charlie hangs up. Puts his Escort in gear -- pulls out.  
Drives with one eye on the rear-view mirror.

He turns left on a residential street -- his gaze flicks from  
envelopes to street ahead and back.

He turns on Maple -- pulls to a stop. Gets out on

MAPLE AVENUE

scoots around to the passenger side.

He checks the block up and down. Opens the door -- removes  
the envelopes -- steps to the curb -- drops them down a storm  
drain.

CUT TO:

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - EVENING

SUPER: TWO DAYS LATER

Charlie enters -- inspects an empty living room -- closes the  
door -- steps deeper into the room.

CHARLIE

Mel?

Ducks into the

HALLWAY

passes a large framed collage: Picture of a younger Charlie  
wearing a Special Forces uniform; sergeant stripes; Fifth  
Special Forces Insignia.

CHARLIE

Mel? Shit!

Charlie stops at a closed door -- KNOCKS!

VOICE (O.C.)

Yeah?

Charlie opens the door -- enters

## BRETT'S BEDROOM

Tidy and neat for a teen. Posters of sports heroes -- rows of books line the walls. BRETT CRUISE 13, average build, above average good looks -- finishes his homework -- looks up:

BRETT  
Hey, Dad.

CHARLIE  
Where's Mom?

Brett shrugs:

BRETT  
Dunno.

Closes his book -- stuffs his homework into a backpack:

BRETT  
How 'bout a game of Soldier's  
Honor?

Charlie looks worried -- uncomfortable.

CHARLIE  
Sure. Why not. At least till Mom  
gets home.

LATER

Charlie and Brett play an exciting round of Soldier's Honor. Brett leaps off his bed:

BRETT  
Almost got you, Dad, errr...  
Scorpio.

Bret twists -- turns -- manipulates his controller with exaggerated body-English. Charlie counters every move.

CHARLIE  
Not so fast, Bulldog...

Bret breaks into a huge, toothy grin:

BRETT  
I-- gottch'ya, Scorpio!

Charlie twists his controller -- sharp left -- right -- back.

The game console spits out TWANGS; ZAPS; PINGS.  
TWO GUNSHOTS in rapid succession: BAM! BAM!

CHARLIE  
Watch your back, Bulldog.

Brett hesitates -- too late.  
Console BLEATS game over: WAAAAAAA, WAAAaaa, waaa.

CHARLIE  
You're getting better.

Brett collapses on his bed -- dejected.

BRETT  
Yeah, right. You're just too good.

CHARLIE  
Just more experience. You gotta understand Scorpio is a trained killer. But, he predicts in two weeks you'll be able to beat him.

Melanie enters -- looks terrific -- watches from the doorway.

Charlie looks relieved -- stands.

MELANIE  
What you hot shots want for dinner?

Charlie strolls up to Melanie -- gives her a kiss and hug.

CHARLIE  
Thought we'd go out.

Glances at Brett: LAUGHS.

CHARLIE  
Brett almost beat me, Mel. He's getting better. A lot better.

BRETT  
Yeah, Ma.

MELANIE  
Great. Go wash up. We'll go out and celebrate.

Brett's spirits perk up:

BRETT  
Celebrate? Celebrate what?

MELANIE  
Bulldog almost beating Scorpio.

BRETT  
Cool.

Brett darts out of his room -- Melanie picks up Brett's controller lost in thought.

A BEAT.

CHARLIE  
What's wrong?

Melanie comes round -- gives Charlie a half-hearted smile:

MELANIE  
Wouldn't it be nice if you could push one of these buttons and change yourself into any character you wanted.

CHARLIE  
What's wrong with who you are?

MELANIE  
I dunno. Thinking--

Drops the controller on the bed:

MELANIE  
--how exciting our lives used to be. Always something going on. Travel. Rock climbing. Motor cross.

She looks up at Charlie -- light dances in her eyes:

MELANIE  
And you. You used to be such a daredevil.

CHARLIE  
Long time ago. Another life. Besides, I find that kind of excitement overrated.

MELANIE  
I suppose.

CHARLIE  
 You sorry you married me? Had  
 Brett?

MELANIE  
 God! No!

She takes Charlie's hand:

MELANIE  
 It's just sometimes I miss those  
 times. Miss that man.

CHARLIE  
 That guy almost got me killed.  
 Don't like him much.

Charlie brushes past her -- exits the room.

CHARLIE (O.S.)  
 Let's go sport. I'm hungry.

MELANIE  
 Not me. I'm still in love with him.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - DAY

A group of BOYS play a vicious game of dodge ball with their  
 favorite target: Brett Cruise.

A rapid series of wicked throws target Brett's head. He  
 dodges -- ducks every throw -- LAUGHS at their feeble  
 attempts. Pisses Boys off.

KENNY BURNS 13, school bully, takes a different tact. He  
 fakes toward Brett's head -- changes up mid-throw -- chucks  
 the ball at Brett's feet.

Brett leaps: LAUGHS.

BRETT  
 Missed me, missed me, now you gotta  
 kiss me.

Kenny flips him off.

BRETT  
 What's that? Your I.Q.?

Boys LAUGH.

Kenny charges Brett.  
Bulldogs him to the ground.

Brett rolls.  
Shoves his attacker aside.  
Stands.

Kenny comes up swinging -- misses.

KENNY  
Come on you pussy! Fight!

Brett holds his hands up in mock surrender:

BRETT  
Nope.

KENNY  
Chicken shit.

BRETT  
Nope. Taught never to hit a girl.

Kenny charges -- a ragging bull.  
Brett steps aside -- a suave matador.  
Kenny misses -- recovers.

KENNY  
You're a wimp like your old man.

Brett balls his fists -- takes a deep breath:

KENNY  
My dad says your dad is the biggest  
wuss in the world. Even at work.

BRETT  
Is not!

Kenny inches forward -- Brett holds his ground. Nose-to-nose.  
Neither flinches -- neither blinks.

School bell RINGS.

Kenny shoves Brett to the ground:

KENNY  
I'll be waiting for you after  
school, wuss.

Brett stands -- brushes himself off.

Feisty redhead, NANCY CLARK 12, steps forward. Brushes the back of Brett's shirt:

NANCY  
Be careful, Brett.

BRETT  
I'm not worried.

They stroll hand-in-hand toward school.

NANCY  
He'll bring help.

BRETT  
Let'em.

NANCY  
Brett Cruise! You got something in mind?

BRETT  
Yeah. Ain't going home.

She pouts -- releases his hand:

NANCY  
You are afraid.

BRETT  
Nah.

His face grows crimson.

BRETT  
I-- I'm staying overnight at my Grandma's.

NANCY  
Isn't that a little first grade?

BRETT  
Dad's idea. He's taking my Mom out to dinner or something.

She takes his arm.

NANCY  
How romantic!

## INT. CORPORATE OFFICE

Gray cubicles mushroom out of a vast plain of gray indoor-outdoor carpeting. A sky of off-white ceiling tiles frames HUMMING fluorescent lights.

The occasional OFFICE-PRAIRIE-DOG pops his head over a partition -- looks -- returns to ground.

A phone RINGS.

## CUBICLE

GISELE 20s, perky, wears a too-short skirt and a too-tight blouse, picks up:

GISELE  
Gisele-- Hold on, sweetie.

Sets phone down -- peers over cubicle wall:

## GISELE'S POV

Charlie concentrates on his laptop -- works on a spread sheet. His desk piled high with a mountain of paperwork.

## BACK TO SCENE

Gisele sits -- crosses her long legs -- picks up her phone:

GISELE  
Yeah, Charlie's in.

She twirls her hair around a well manicured finger:

GISELE  
Nah. He don't look too busy.

Hangs up. Pulls open a drawer -- digs for a mirror -- checks her make-up.

## CHARLIE'S CUBICLE

Charlie's fingers fly over his keyboard. Quick -- efficient. Flips through reams of printouts -- rips out a page -- files it away in a folder in his desk drawer.

TOM BROWN 20s, slick-salesman type, steps into Charlie's cube with a stack of overstuffed folders.

TOM  
Chuck, my man. How you doin'?

Charlie never looks up -- continues to type:

CHARLIE  
Charlie! Not Chuck!

TOM  
Need a favor, Chuck. Report's due tomorrow. Eight A.M. I was wondering--

Charlie points to a clear speck of real estate on his desk.

Gisele glides around the partition -- locks arms with Tom:

GISELE  
Better hurry. We have reservation at O'Brien's in an hour.

Tom focuses on a gap in Gisele's blouse -- takes a step back for a better view of her soft mounds of flesh.

GISELE  
Ready, sweetie?

TOM  
Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.

GISELE  
See you tomorrow, Charlie.

Charlie waves goodbye -- flips open a folder. Phone RINGS:

CHARLIE  
Charlie here.

DEEK  
(filter)  
Charlie Cruiser?

CHARLIE  
Who?

DEEK  
I'm still waiting for that favor.

Charlie leaps up -- scans office: all quiet.

CHARLIE  
 Been more than forty-eight hours.  
 You can no longer report the  
 accident. I owe you nothing.

SLAMS his phone down -- tugs on his shirt -- rolls his neck.  
 Vertebrae CRACK.

RING! RING! RING! RING!

He ignores the phone -- goes through the motions of working.

RING!

Types.

RING!

Answers:

CHARLIE  
 Yeah.

DEEK  
 (filter)  
 You really pissed me off, little  
 man. But, I like you, Cruiser. So  
 here's the deal. Final offer. You  
 there?

CHARLIE  
 Yeah.

DEEK  
 Good. How long for you to get home?

CHARLIE  
 Home? Twenty minutes. Why?

DEEK  
 In fifteen minutes I be at your  
 house. I'm goin' to knock on your  
 door. You with me?

Charlie shoves everything off of his desk into an open desk  
 drawer--

CHARLIE  
 Yes.

--shuts down his computer.

DEEK

Good. Where was I? Do you remember?

CHARLIE

You were knocking on my door.

DEEK

Right. When your wife answers I'm takin' the bitch. Keepin' her for collateral.

CHARLIE

The police will be there in five minutes.

DEEK

That's too bad, Cruiser. 'Cause if you do call the cops... she's dead.

Charlie's phone lies on an empty desk in an empty cubical.

DEEK

Cruiser? You hear me?

EXT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE

Middle class neighborhood -- middle class tidy -- middle class quiet.

INTERIOR DEEK'S HUMVEE

SUV rolls to a stop -- Little-G peers out:

LITTLE-G

504 Maple, my man.

Deek pockets his phone -- retrieves a 9mm BERETTA from his glove box.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Melanie prepares dinner -- looks put together: sundress; make-up; hair.

KNOCK. KNOCK.

She wipes here hands on her apron -- strides into the

LIVING ROOM

Another KNOCK! Louder: WHAM!

MELANIE  
Hold your horses!

She answers. Her eyes lock on Deek: Beretta in his right hand; hypodermic needle in his left.

EXT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE

Ancient Escort SCREEEECHES to a halt.

Charlie exits.  
Races across his lawn -- stops.  
Checks for Deek's Humvee: nothing.  
Climbs the front stairs -- tiptoes across the

PORCH

Screen door swings in an afternoon breeze.

Charlie opens the inner door -- sticks his head inside:

CHARLIE  
Melanie?

Enters the

HOUSE

Everything in place -- no sign of a struggle.

CHARLIE  
Hello?

Creeps deeper into the living room.

Smoke drifts from the kitchen -- hugs the ceiling like a low flying cloud.

CHARLIE  
Oh, God!

Charlie ducks into the

KITCHEN

removes a smoking fry pan from the stove -- switches off the burner -- barrels back into the living room.

CHARLIE (O.S.)  
Mel? Honey?