CHASING THE APEX

by

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OFFSCREEN Two Engines SCREAM in syncopation, slicing through gears with UPSHIFTS and DOWNSHIFTS, all at or near redline.

FADE IN:

EXT. LAGUNA SECA RACETRACK – DAY (CONTINUOUS ACTION)

CLOSE UP on the vivid IRIS/LENS of a green eye, there is a DISTINCT REFLECTION: The back of a RACECAR with its massive spoiler and the red and white stripes of KERBING as it flashes by in the turn.

BOB (VO)
Iler is simply attacking! This is gonna come down to the last few laps in a come-from-behind season in a career where he's actually having meteoric success!

JAKE ILER, a late twenties handsome rogue of a driver, pursues a racing liveried Huracan in an AMG GT-R during a GT3 race. He is mere feet behind at harrowing speeds and the two cars exude a CACAPHONY OF NOISE as Jake stalks his prey around the track.

JEFF (VO)
As they head into the final lap it feels like fate that Iler gets past Goodwin in the #74 Lamborghini. He's come up six positions in this final push for the championship--Don't forget, Bob, that he has to get first place here to secure the title!

FROM A HIGH VANTAGE

JESS MARSTEN, a mid twenties stunner, is standing in a VIP spot where she has a premier view of the track. She is anxious for her man to pass, trying to impart the energy he needs to execute the move.

TRACK'S PRESS BOOTH

Two announcers, BOB and JEFF, call the race.

BOB
(covers mic) My money's on Iler--(uncovers) --Jake Iler is doing his darndest to frustrate and wear down Goodwin. He has a ton of experience from a diverse background; motorcycles, rally-cross, desert trophy
(MORE)
2.

ON TRACK

Jake continues to harry the Lambo.

JEFF (VO)
--You're right, we've been covering him for years at this network and it's great to see Jake doing so well in a race he shouldn't be doing this well in. Especially considering his team at Marsten Racing doesn't usually place near the top at all in the standings, and now Jake's one pass away from giving them a championship!!

PIT ROW

Team owner MIKE MARSTEN, a graying yet commanding gent in his fifties, and his CREW CHIEF watch the action from the pit wall amongst the other "Team Marsten" CREW MEMBERS.

MIKE
I don't know whether I feel like kissing him or strangling him.

CHIEF
If we'd gone with a three-stop strategy, he damn sure wouldn't be where he's at--

MIKE
--yeah, yeah. I don't pay ya to tell me what I can clearly see! Just didn't think he'd be able to get these lap times on a two-pit!

CHIEF
Been surprising me all season...

Mike grins and nods with delayed acquiescence.

ON TRACK

Jake goes for the inside line and the two cars tap, both getting squirrely. Jake makes micro-corrections with GLOVED HANDS.

In the Lambo, GOODWIN, a handsome young lad himself, taps his brakes as retribution for the contact.
In the GT-R, Jake's eyes gleam with the thrill of the chase.

IN BOOTH

BOB
Whoa--! A bit of contact and then a brake-check by Goodwin! (covers mic) --I'm tellin ya!

JEFF
(covers mic) Wouldn't catch me bettin' against him! (uncovers)
Iler should be getting slower lap times considering how long he's been on those tires--

ON TRACK

Jake slips slightly and oversteers through a turn and the Huracan surges ahead.

Jake buries the THROTTLE and tightens his grip on the steering wheel.

PIT/PADDOCK

Team Marsten watches the leaders duke it out on a MONITOR.

MIKE
Argh!! Cmoncmoncmonnnn...!

VIP

JESS
Let's go! You got this!!!!!

ON TRACK

Jake closes gap with Goodwin by braking later and trying for inside line again, nearly colliding as they flick left/right through the CORKSCREW (Turn).

GOODWIN
Freakin madman--!! That's my line!

Jake is holding tight with the side of Goodwin like a remora. Through the final esses, Jake is on the outside as they approach the final turn, a left.

JEFF (VO)
We've seen Iler do this all season; he forces others to make a mistake.
(MORE)
JEFF (VO) (CONT'D)
And that means Goodwin has to drive
defensively--

The crowd go to their feet in anticipation, eagerly watching
the last few relevant moments of the race.

BOB (VO)
--You can sense it even from up here
in the booth that Goodwin is just
barely hanging onto that lead!
Here comes Iler's virtually last
chance to pass...!

Jake inserts himself in the innermost part of the entrypoint,
intending to brake later and when the Huracan is going
to collide with him, Jake goes high around the turn, allowing
Goodwin to make a perfect race line and Jake can only
follow him lamely into the last straighway.

IN VIP
Jess crumples into a squat, defeatedly.

JESS
Ughhhh--

PIT WALL
Entire "Team Marsten" puts their hands on their heads in collective dismay, watching Jake go by they know for certain
he's going to take 2nd place instead of the coveted win.

The CREW next to them in Goodwin's TEAM COLORS jumps in elation, antithetic to Team Marsten's reaction.

Jake follows Goodwin through the CHECKERED FLAG, just a few meters behind.

BOOTH

BOB
And Brian Goodwin gets the victory!
I wasn't expecting Iler to try pass-
ing on the outside in the GT-R--
Especially this late in the race!

Rendered speechless, Jeff looks equally mystified.

OUTER PADDOCKS WALL
Several FEDERAL AGENTS in tactical gear and marked windbreak-
(MORE)
ers are hovering just out of eyeshot from Team Marsten and adjacent teams; holding PISTOLS and ASSAULT RIFLES at port. They look about each other with nervous energy.

LEAD AGENT (into RADIO)
We're all set--go ahead and take em'

Agents approach Mike Marsten and another team of them simultaneously move into another paddock as they go to their own targets.

LEAD AGENT (cont'd)
Michael Marsten! You're under arrest. You have the right to--(zip ties him)

MIKE
(starting a scuffle)--What the hell?! Is this somebody's idea of a joke?!

JESS' VANTAGE

Agents swarm into specific areas of the pit/paddocks area, anyone witnessing is visibly and audibly STUNNED.

JESS
Oh God, no...

Equally quick to react are the CAMERA OPERATORS close by, who were busy shooting the race, divert and are now capturing the arrests.

Several scuffles break out as PERPS resist or flee ineffectually. There are small pockets of pandemonium.

IN BOOTH

BOB
Jeff, what the heck is this!?!?

OVER THE PADDOCKS

Onlookers over-react and scatter hysterically as agents make arrests.

JEFF (VO)
If you're watching this at home, we are just as shocked as you are! This is beyond bizarre for a racing event to be raided...

PIT LANE ENTRANCE
Jake pulls in obliviously and sees the bruhaha of the arrests, along with the cameras competing for the best shots--

Then he sees Mike being thrown to the ground, two agents kneel over him as he continues to buck and revolt.

Jake creeps in at a snail's crawl before the LEAD AGENT points at him.

LEAD AGENT
That's him!! That's Iler!!

Several agents point AR's and yell histrionically.

AGENT 1
Don't make a move!!

AGENT 2
Get outta the car!!

AGENT 3
Don't even think about it!

ON JESS

She descends the raised viewing area then abruptly stops to watch the confrontation.

JESS (to herself)
Don't do anything stupid Jake...

IN THE GT-R

Jake's foot hovers over the throttle and his right hand jiggles involuntarily as he taunts the shifter-knob. Will he bolt?

No. He unlatches the door.

LEAD AGENT
Kill the motor!!

Jake flips a SWITCH and the car dies. He unclips his harness and gets our cautiously.

He's rushed by agents and gets pushed against the roof-bracing of the car. He notices Jess who is horrified; her hands cover her mouth in shock.

JAKE
Call a lawyer!! Don't say a \textbf{word} to these motherfuckers!!

An agent punches Jake in the kidney for the jibe (oof!) and yanks his zip- stripped wrists, telegraphing through his shoulders.

ASSORTED SHOTS OF THE ARRESTS (FOOTAGE)
VARIOUS SHOTS of the agents putting men into custody.

BOB (VO)
Again, if you're watching at home or later on YouTube, you're as shocked as we are in person. What a black-eye to the racing world.

Tactically dressed agents frisk an upstanding looking man, removing his ROLEX.

JEFF (VO)
This is wildly inappropriate—and it'll be remembered simply as an embarrassment.

INT. INTAKE / HOLDING ROOM - DAY

Jake and his LAWYER confer, with Jake handcuffed to the table.

LAWYER
They have a really solid case against you...
(flips through INDICTMENT)
"Conspiracy to distribute cocaine", "Conspiracy to commit money laundering"... each one's ten years.

Jake has a vacant stare as he processes this, the color draining from his face.

LAWYER (cont'd)
You're number one on the indictment so they think you're the ringleader. Ergo, there's twenty people under you that are gonna cooperate--We can't even dream of taking this to trial.

JAKE
There's no physical evidence!! What about 'habeus corpus' and all that...? They didn't catch me doing anything remotely illegal.

LAWYER
"Ghost Dope". They don't need physical evidence to make a case. Just a few of the people under you has to corroborate their narrative—
JAKE
--I only know four of the names even on that fuckin' list!!

LAWYER
(shakes head) Even one person who talks first and takes the best deal is gonna be all they need.

JAKE
So: No trial.

LAWYER
Absolutely no chance. You'd get thirty years if you took it to the box and lost.

JAKE
(beat/reels incredulous at that figure)
--Why did they make the arrests at the race...?!

LAWYER
My friend at the US Attorney's office said they wanted to make a statement--even affluent racing types aren't above "justice". (makes air quotes cynically) Even the DEA had you picked to win and they wanted to pluck you at your crescendo.

JAKE
Hm. Ironically, I get some small pleasure in their disappointment. (beat) Alright, what do we do?

LAWYER
We take a deal. In doing so I can probably get them to drop one of the counts.

JAKE
So a hundred grand to you gets me a plea deal...

LAWYER
(shrugs) They have all the cards. The game is rigged...

INT. JAIL VISITING ROOM - DAY
Jake's in a different outfit and Jess is sitting across from him, about a meter apart. They extend their bodies to hold hands, a stentorian voice from a PA blares, "NO CONTACT OR WE'LL TERMINATE THE VISIT". They sit ramrod straight and then after a breath, relax.

JAKE
My lawyer says ten years...
So, I'm really looking at seven
and a half with good time.

JESS
(mouth agape) Jesus...

JAKE
Look, I don't expect you to have
to do this time, too.

JESS
Oh, fuck off. Are you kidding..?

Jake only stares wide-eyed, unsure how to respond.

JESS (cont'd)
Look--I'm gonna be there for you.
(her eyes shimmer)
I love you.

JAKE
Well! (hugely relieved)
You've never said that before.

JESS
...Do you love me?

JAKE
Of course I love you. I kinda fig-
ured I was gonna spend the rest of
my life with you.

JESS
Jake, I still want to...
Whether you have to go to prison
or not. (wipes tear duct)

JAKE
(beat)
What about your Dad? How's he
holding up..?

JESS
Oh god, he's so stressed out. He's
hoping to get less than five years
for money laundering (rolls eyes)
(MORE)
JESS (CONT'D)
--That's the best his lawyers can do...

JAKE
I'm so sorry. If I'd kn--

Jess cuts him off with an abrupt HAND SIGNAL and points to the ceiling; "they're listening". Jake sighs and leans in.

JAKE (cont'd)
I really wish I could hold your hand.

JESS
Just tell me you love me again?

JAKE
Jessica, I loved you from the moment I met you.

JESS
I know.
(beat)
I just needed to hear it.

INT. FEDERAL COURTHROOM - DAY

Jake stands in front of a very serious, very imposing JUDGE.

Jess is in the BG, looking like a ray of sunshine in the gloom, the only colorful thing in the room.

JUDGE
I'm sentencing you to 120 months...

GRADUAL DISSOLVE INTO:

Jake goes through a TRANSITION where he's standing in the drab courtroom and then his face changes along with the background.

He becomes more tan and sprouts a beard, his hairline recedes and his arms are now covered in tattoos.

EXT. PARKING LOT OUTSIDE A PRISON - DAY (7 YEARS LATER)

LONG DISSOLVE ENDS and Jake steps past the prison gate into a bright, sunny parking area where Jess is waiting for him.

Her hair is longer, she's slightly older too but more attractive than ever.
They embrace for some time, slowly rocking and basking in each other's love, alone in their own world.

INT. "CUSTOM DUNES" FABRICATION WORKSHOP - DAY

Car parts, engines, and frames of high end dune buggies surround Jake, where he is busy lathing, making a din of RACKET.

His weathered looking BOSS peeks out from his side office.

BOSS
By, yo!
(no response due to NOISE)
ANDRETTI!!

Jake flips the machine off and turns to face him.

JAKE
Ha! Yeah, boss?

BOSS
I'm gonna split. You want overtime?

Jake's conscience fights between work ethic and going home to Jess.

JAKE
um...
(beat)
Yeah. Yeah, sure.

His boss senses his trepidation, then nods and departs.

Jake reactivates the machine.

TIME LAPSE of Jake's SAND RAIL he's working on coming together. He welds, connects, and fastens in a blur as the buggy becomes realized.

NORMAL TIME he's adding a special touch as the PHONE RINGS. He picks it up after some hesitation.

JAKE
Custom Dunes.

REPORTER (VO)
Hey, I'm looking for Jake Iler.

JAKE
(scowls)
.....speaking.
REPORTER (VO)
You're a tough guy to track down!

JAKE
Apparently not...

INT. JAKE & JESS' APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jess is cutting veggies while food sizzles in BG.

JAKE
I probably shouldn't have even picked up the phone...

JESS
So why did you?

JAKE
...a feeling?

JESS
Ooooo, (teasing) You make it sound ominous--!
So who was it/what was it about...?

JAKE
This reporter from ESPN. He's actually a producer on that "30 for 30" show...

(beat)
He's talking about doing a documentary about me. It'd be an hour or 90 minutes or thereabouts, depending on how much I'd be willing to commit to--

JESS
--So are you gonna do it...?

JAKE
(rubs his chin, detached)
I dunno. The media pretty much crucified me already.

JESS
But this is different!

JAKE
(jerks head skeptically)
...How?

JESS
This is a chance to tell your side of the story!
JAKE
What, how I got some of my best
friends sent to prison for
"conspiracy to sell cocaine"...?

JESS
No... you were just doing it so
you could keep the team afloat!

JAKE
Ah, yes! (faux magnanimously)
--The benevolent drug dealer!

JESS
(scoffs) I'm serious. You only
kept doing it so you could keep
my dad from going bankrupt--

JAKE
--No one's ever gonna see it that
way darlin. The truth is bad enough.
I took a huge gamble doing that for
so long and lost everything.

JESS
(beat)
You didn't lose me...

JAKE
(looks at her on a tilted head)
You're right...

JESS
(beat)
I think you should do it.

JAKE
...Yeah?

JESS
What have you got to lose...?

JAKE
Certainly not you!!

He approaches her from behind and wraps his arms around her,
kissing her neck. She responds by nestling into him.

JESS
Mmm... not even if you tried.

MONTAGE - JAKE'S "DOCUMENTARY"
Set to UPBEAT MUSIC.

EXT. LAGUNA SECA RACETRACK - DAY

Jake stands on the perimeter of the vacant track and points to where the raid happened, while a FILM CREW and a reporter/producer in his mid-forties, STEVE, capture him.

JAKE
...and they just swarmed like insects...! Like, outta nowhere.

STEVE
What was your initial reaction?

JAKE
--My stomach fell in my asshole!

INT. CUSTOM DUNES' WORKSHOP - DAY

The Cameraman and SoundGuy on the crew snake around Jake's work area walk backwards, allowing Jake and Steve to converse while they're being filmed.

JAKE
It's humbling, but th--

The SoundGuy trips and the MIC BOOM fully enters their shot. Jake and Steve halt abruptly.

STEVE
--You ok?

The SoundGuy chuckles heartily and gets himself up.

JAKE
Take two!

INT. JAKE & JESS' GARAGE - NIGHT

Jake has the hood open to a 427 Cobra. The crew, apparently off the clock, listens to Jake yarn.

JAKE
So he gives me ether--

The crew GROAN in mirthful anticipation. At that moment, Jess enters the garage carrying drinks for everyone, pleased to be hostessing.

Jake acknowledges her and she makes an expression indicating for him not to stop the story.
JAKE (Cont'd)
--And I'm like, "you sure this is safe?"
"Uh-huh" (gruff stage voice)
WOOOOOOOSH!!
Bye eyebrows!!

Everyone laughs enthusiastically.

EXT. ESPN BUILDING, LOS ANGELES - DAY

Steve holds the FRONT DOOR under the MARQUEE open for Jake to enter.

STEVE
--Between the lighting and sound capture, it's just more ideal.

Jake shrugs nonchalantly and enters.

MONTAGE and SONG ENDS

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM / ESPN BUILDING, LOS ANGELES - DAY

HANS RICHTER, an urbane German in his mid-sixties, sits at the head of a large table as the focal point of several well-suited ADVERTISING EXECUTIVES.

There is a POWER POINT PRESENTATION of ESPN and RedBull advertising figures in progress.

SUIT 1 (holding PP REMOTE)
(glively) So--these are the figures last year, and we project at least the next three quarters to go....
(clicks remote) even better.

HANS
(steeple fingers patiently)
It seems as if we have the ultimate first world problem!

He looks out the windows and then back at the execs.

HANS (cont'd)
Too much money, and we just need to find a way to spend it!

Everyone in the room chuckles nervously and looks at each other dodgingly.
HANS (cont'd)
Let's take a recess--

More awkward glances around the room because clearly Hans and his staff are underwhelmed.

MOVING. Hans and his AIDE wander into the connecting hallway.

INT. ESPN BUILDING CORRIDOR - DAY (CONTINUED ACTION)

HANS (in GERMAN)
Another disappointment!! They want to do more mermaid cartoons?! (scoffs)
All these amazing minds for advertising and you would think they could come up with something better.

As they walk discreetly down the DARKENED corridor they come upon a recessed, WELL-LIT STUDIO where Jake is being interviewed behind a GLASS PARTITION. They stop to watch and listen.

JAKE (in progress)  
...Really you're missing the mark by not effectively showing (ticks off points on fingers) acceleration, braking, and G-forces. Your audience can't understand how absurdly fast the cars are. They don't understand how talented the drivers are and they're just on the razor's edge of control.

STEVE (OS)
I remember you calling it more of an "international sport"--

JAKE  
--Right; so it's hard to identify with the drivers since none of them are American. So, that makes it hard to sell the story. More than anything, people--not just Americans, even--want to see the story unfold; characters we either love or hate, the human drama that makes it exciting. It's not just the cars going around the track--it's the people in them that we're fascinated with.

A few of the wandering execs from the meeting have heard the monologue like a siren call and also listen, rapt.
HANS  
(to his cohorts/spellbound)  
Who is that...?  
The others shrug and look dejectedly at each other.  

HANS (cont'd)  
It's too bad he's not a driver!!  

AIDE (in GERMAN)  
That's Jake Iler. He's the one who caused the big drug bust at the race-track a few years ago.  

HANS  
(beat/turns to SUIT 2)  
..Can I get a copy of that tape?  

CLOSE SHOT of Hans, mesmerized as he plots and brainstorms.  

SUIT 2 (OS)  
Uhhh... sure! I'll see what I can do!  

TIME CUT  

Jake is wrapping up his interview, removing his mic and handing it over to a producer.  

Steve shakes his hand and Jake turns to leave, and then almost collides with Hans, waiting in the hallway.  

JAKE  
Uh, excuse me.  

HANS  
Actually, pardon me. I'd like to introduce myself. (puts hand out)  
Hans Richter. (they shake)  
Couldn't help but catch some of your conversation.  

JAKE  
Oh! I, uh... didn't think anyone was really listening...  

HANS  
It would seem that many people will be listening, soon enough. (Indicates to cameras behind partition)  

JAKE  
(beat)  
...Very true.
HANS
I was wondering if I might take you to dinner, where we can discuss some ideas I have...

JAKE
Uhhhh, my *girl* is uh, waiting for me.

HANS
(chuckles) Ja, ja! She's invited, too!

INT. BUSY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The trio sit in a booth, the table is filled with almost-finished plates and they appear content and amiable.

HANS
...and so I'm at the twilight of my career, and it feels like I've put myself out to pasture-- my current assignment is taking an exorbitant budget and relating it to an over-saturated and apathetic US market.

(beat)
But there was something you said about getting Americans to *watch* Formula One--which we've already invested untold fortunes in-- it seems the best payoff would be to get the audience *emotionally* invested...

JAKE
(beat)
The best way would be to put an American in the cockpit.

HANS
(nods) We Germans went nuts over Schumacher, the Brazilians are still fanatical about Senna, but Americans have ____ (pantomimes "nothing")

JAKE
The greatest moments for the sport are when the drivers win in their native country. But that's impossible with no US driver--

HANS
--What if I brought you on as a...

(MORE)
HANS (CONT'D)
consultant to RedBull racing. You have... all this insider knowledge. We could...cultivate a search...--

JESS
--You guys are amazing! It's so obvious; the answer's right in front of you!

Jake and Hans look at each other for a moment and then back at Jess.

JESS (cont'd)
(pointing at each, respectively)
You need a driver, you are a driver.

HANS
(very skeptical)
But... Formula One? It is the pinnacle... It is--

JAKE
--I can drive anything.

JESS
(overlapping)--he can drive anything.

Hans is not convinced. He looks disappointed to kill their nascent enthusiasm.

JAKE
I've been out of the saddle for a while, but put me in something with a motor and I'll make that thing go.

JESS
It's true. Whatever he's in--

HANS
--ok, kids! You can stop hitting me over the head with your... subtle innuendo...

JAKE
Hans, I can tell you have clout at your company.
(Hans nods grudgingly)
And you're clearly a racing fan--you know the sport.
(beat)
So you know it's 90 percent mental. I might be a tad older than when I went away in my prime, but I
(MORE)
JAKE (CONT'D)

haven't lost a step--
(starts to kid)
--I might even be sharper than ever...

Hans keeps his expression equivocal.

JAKE (cont'd)

In the beginning we just do this
low-key: no publicity, no cameras.

(beat)

No face to lose.

This strikes a special chord with Hans.

JAKE (cont'd)

You put me in an RB17...
and I'll show you fast.

Hans holds Jake's assured gaze for a prolonged moment. Then he looks away and nods thoughtfully.

DISSOLVE INTO:

EXT. REDBULL RING/TEST TRACK, AUSTRIA - DAY

Sweeping views of the stunning backdrop, the picturesque and verdant Austrian hills contrast the asphalt of the track and its billiard-smooth surface.

A low cloud moves over the land as early morning becomes mid.

Jake is standing over the RB17 and admiring it for the work of art that it is. He puts a hand on it and lets the car's organic energy flow into him.

The group of accompanying ENGINEERS do not look pleased to be letting this outsider lay even a hand on their treasured creation. Folded arms and scowls convey their feelings known but Jake smiles hugely despite them.

Jess is equally happy for him, sensing his eagerness.

A tall, imposing Swede in his mid-fifties, AXEL BLAUKAMP (the TEAM PRINCIPAL), walks into the paddock/garage.

HANS

Jake, this is Axel Blaukamp.
Axel, Jake Iler.

JAKE

Really fantastic meeting you--
(extends hand) I've followed your
(MORE)
JAKE (CONT'D) 
career, especially your rally back-
ground--

Axel doesn't extend his own hand. He stands a meter away from 
Jake, looking at his physique. Then he looks Jake in the eye.

AXEL
You are far too heavy. There is no 
way I can make a ballast adjustment 
this late.

Axel shoots a pointed look at Hans who is shocked.

JAKE
Wait, this is just a test-run so 
that's kind of a non-issue, and 
at some point I can shed some KG's 
if need be. But as long as there's 
足够 legroom, I really need to 
get into that car.

Axel glances at the car and then back at Jake. His glare 
would cause anyone to relent, but Jake makes himself an 
inch taller by standing more erect.

JAKE
(Congenially) We're already here...
Let's do this.

HANS
(beat/narrows eyes slightly)
Get him suited!!

Jess stifles an applause. She, Jake and Hans share a conspir- 
atorial smile while everyone else remains cold and irritated.

MECHANICS and engineers start bustling to get the car ready.

AXEL
Herr Iler! Once you're in the car 
and it's started, it's quite tricky 
to get it moving. I assume you've 
read about it.

JAKE
I have.

AXEL
Good, it won't be an issue then. 
But if you can't do it quickly it 
becomes an issue because the engine 
and components have to stay in a very 
narrow temperature band, so everything 
(MORE)
AXEL (CONT'D)
has to be perfect, or the auxiliary fans have to come out.

JAKE
It won't be an issue.

AXEL
...We'll see.

TIME CUT:

Racing-suited Jake climbs into the car and it's visibly uncomfortable. The STEERING WHEEL gets put on and now it's doubly restrictive. Jake gulps with effort.

JAKE'S POV as the "HALO" is placed and we see through Jake's aspect of how constricted his/our world has become.

He gives a thumbs-up to an ENGINEER, who taps a keyboard and the engine ROARS to life.

The NOISE is staggering. Jess mouths "oh my god" as she dons a pair of huge EARPIECES.

REVERSE ANGLE of Jake leaving the garage, and then creeping along pit lane. He smokes the tires for a moment.

JAKE (VO)[Radio throughout]
Just putting some heat in 'em.

The crew is irritated further, exchanging grimaced glances, while Hans and Jess are an island of joviality.

ON CAR

Jake is doing hard side-to-side driving, warming everything up, intermittently hitting the BRAKES and keeping engine REVS high.

AXEL (VO)[also via radio]
That's great Iler, but also be mindful of the brakes because if they're cold they will lock up and you'll have flat spots on your tires in moments. Get the brakes hot way before you hit corners hard or this session will be a short one.

JAKE (VO)
Yeah, don't forget I've read alllll about it!
JAKE'S POV as he enters Remus (Turn 2) and rockets away. Our first taste of the incredible speed.

    JAKE (VO)
    Oh my god!!!

GARAGE

Some of the engineers can't help but grin as his excitement is contagious over their radios.

ON TRACK

AERIAL SHOT of Jake going through Turns 5/6/7, owning the race line.

PIT WALL

Jake flies by and Jess waves excitedly.

    JAKE (VO)
    Hi Jess!!

Her subsequent giggles are drowned out by the engine's ROAR.

QUICK CUTS of Jess and Hans watching him go by several more times as the sun rises imperceptibly.

ON TRACK (CONTINUOUS ACTION):

JAKE'S POV as he goes by Jess and Hans at a blurring speed. He accelerates to 190 MPH and then brakes hard into Turn 1.

GARAGE

    AXEL
    OK, you are running decently through the checkpoints for your power handicap.

    JAKE (VO)
    (stunned) --Handicap?!?!

TRACK

    AXEL (VO)
    Ja, you are running at 75 percent power...
JAKE (VO)  
(beat)  
...You mean it goes even faster?!  

GARAGE  

AXEL  
Ja---substantially:  

JAKE (VO)  
(beat)  
Well.... add some of that juice ya salty Swede!!  

Hans laughs openly and Jess turns beet red.  

AXEL  
...You have to bring her into the garage to do so, Herr Iler.  

TIME CUT:  

Jake is pushed by the crew/reversed into the bay and he pops off the Halo and gets out of the car in a flourish.  

JAKE  
WOOOOO!!! Almost better than sex!!  

Jess glares at him admonishingly.  

JAKE (cont'd)  
---almost!  

Hans is the only one to laugh.  

AXEL  
Herr Iler, may I speak with you a moment?  

Jake follows Axel to an open area in the pit lane where Axel lights up a cigarette.  

JAKE  
(breathlessly) Before you say anything, I'd like to apologize for what I said; I got caught up in the moment and was having a bit too much fun. You gotta understand this is the opportunity of a lifetime and if things go well, we could be working together. What do you say we start off on a better foot?  

Axel puffs and exhales, really contemplating the proposition.
It's a stare down with diminished hostility as Axel really studies him.

Axel flicks the cig and offers his hand to shake. Jake takes it.

**AXEL**
We can try this again.  
(louder) **Put the power to 85 percent!**

**JAKE**
75 to 85?

**AXEL**
It's a big jump, Iler--you'll see.

CUT TO:

**ON TRACK (CONTINUOUS ACTION)**

Jake approaches Turn 2/Remus again and gets after it, ANOTHER ANGLE rocketing away.

**JAKE (VO)**
Sweet Mother Mary and Jo!!  
This is only at 85?!?!?

**GARAGE**

**AXEL**
Ja Iler, we're feeding you gradually.  
That's quite the pricey machine you pilot.

**TRACK**

**JAKE (VO)**
(ECU on his EYES) I can tell.

Jake enters Turn 3 and gyrates through with the new power, almost losing it but a quick flick of his hands maintains control and he barrels toward Turn 4.

**JAKE (non-radio voice)**
Quite the machine, indeed.

**PIT WALL**

He flies past Jess and the garage again, she watches intently.

**ON TRACK**

Jake brakes absurdly late into Turn 1
AXEL (VO)
Once again, your checkpoint times aren't terrible. Come in for more... juice, if you please.

JAKE (VO)
Ooo, I love it when you talk like that.

GARAGE
The engineers snicker and are coming around to him.

TIME CUT:

Jake comes into the bay again, pops out and is awash in sweat and is now far more demure, visibly worn-out.

AXEL
Put the ECU at 95.

JAKE
(privately to Axel) Let's put it to 100 so I can really feel how it's gonna be.

AXEL
(beat)
...Negative. 95 for now.

Despite their discretion, everyone saw the interaction and the engineers input the new (95%) command into LAPTOPS.

Jake looks around and Jess saunters up to him.

JESS
How is it?

JAKE
....indescribably fast.

JESS
"Better than sex"...?

JAKE
Ummm... it's...(stifling a grin) ...different.

JESS
(scowls amused) Mm-Hmmm....

CUT TO:

ON TRACK
Jake is shooting out of the pit lane, on the charge up the hill before Turn 2.

JAKE (VO)
I'm still not at full power?!

He takes Turn 2 really fast, almost losing it like how he forced a correction on the last power increase, gyrating and having to make overt adjustments just to stay on track.

He plunges ahead into the different race lines of Turns 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, where the corresponding tire is in the very apex of each turn, riding the kerbs aggressively.

AXEL (VO)
Timing sector two is looking great.

Jake enters Turn 8/Rindt and brakes heavy, locks up for the briefest moment, throttles out and goes into a spin and ends up in the run-off area.

The car stalls and the SOUNDS OF NATURE envelope Jake as he hits the steering wheel.

JAKE
Shit!!

GARAGE
Jess sees the laptops are reading erratically and looks concerned. She glances at Hans who shares the same affect.

AXEL
Iler! You ok? ....Iler!!

JAKE (VO)
Yeah, I'm fine -- it's stalled out. You're gonna have to give me a start.

Axel looks amused as he glances towards Hans and Jess. Their disappointment is transparent and his look becomes one of empathy.

CUT TO:

TRACK

The AMG Wagon comes up to the stranded car and the crew pops out to plug in the STARTING DEVICE.

Jake looks toward the distance and sees Jess atop a building, blowing him a kiss, making him smile, his black cloud lifted.
TIME CUT:

Jake's back in the RB17, approaching the pit lane entrance.

AXEL (VO)
Come back in and we'll call it a day.

JAKE (VO)
One more lap, just to put some heat in the tires.

Axel is on the pit wall flexing his jaw angrily, watching Jake fly by at speed and shakes his head.

CUT TO:

GARAGE

Jake gets pushed back into the garage again and he jumps out of the car with child-like excitement.

JAKE
Let's put it at 100 percent!!
I'm cooking with FIRE!!

AXEL
Nej, that's it for today. You lost control and it wasn't even at the power ceiling.

JAKE
(beat)
...Hey Axel, when the horse throws you, you get back on.

Axel shakes his head "no", then heads over to the low wall to lean on. Jake follows him over.

The garage is tense and the crew busies themselves.

JAKE (cont'd)
Ax, you said yourself that I was nailing the times. Let me prove to you I'm more than 'capable'. Come on, the fuel's low-- just a few more laps and then I'll be outta your hair.

Axel stares into Jake, not giving an indication of his thoughts.

JAKE (cont'd)
...because we both know there's no more second chances. This isn't (MORE)
JAKE (CONT'D)
gonna happen tomorrow (indicating the crew) -- so there's only today. (softly) Just one more chance...

Axel looks into the distance and shakes his head almost imperceptibly. Then--

AXEL
(softly to match) Ja, OK.
(louder) Put the engine at the limit! No packing up yet!!

Axel walks away and Jake has to stifle his excitement. He acknowledges a look from Hans and Jess and then silently clutches.

CUT TO:

TRACK (CONTINUOUS ACTION)
The car leaves pit lane a hair LOUDER with fresh SLICKS.
LOWER POV shows the vehicle covering distance faster than ever.

Jake's hands deftly fiddle with the steering wheel controls as he goes along the back straight before the quick Turn 3-7 sequence.

JAKE (VO)
OK, great balance and contact coming out of Worth Kurve, virtually no understeer, which I'm loving -- this thing's on rails.

GARAGE
Axel glances at an ENGINEER, taps his watch and the engineer nods subtly with an appraising gleam.

Jess watches Jake fly by the usual finish line/timing sector and a DIGITAL DISPLAY reads "1:23.267"

The whole garage makes an impressed "Ooooh" sound, quite audibly.

JESS
Is that good...?

Several engineers glance at her and then at each other incredulously.

Axel beckons Hans over to speak privately.
AXEL (in GERMAN)
You are right. The kid is fast.
Have you spoken to him about a contract?

TIME CUT:

Jess is looking on as Jake passes again and the sun is low.
In the diminishing light her smile is dazzling, love radiating
from her. The car's ROAR crescendos and then fades.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

INT. REDBULL RACING HQ (MILTON KEYNES) - DAY

Hans stands outside a glass partition watching Jake in a
driving simulator.

Jake gives unintelligible/AD LIB feedback to the TECHNICIANS
in the room.

The session halts and Jake removes his helmet, showing sev-
eral months of BEARD GROWTH. He sees Hans and goes to him
and they embrace like old comrades.

HANS
How goes the sim life?

JAKE
Ehhh... it's not quite what I thought driving in Formula One
would entail, but it's not the worst way to make a living.

HANS
Well as that Americanism goes,
I must tell you: "be careful what you wish for"

Jake screws up his face quizzically.

HANS (cont'd)
Oh, so I'm the first to tell you?
Lucky me! Not so lucky for Martin
Allenby who broke both legs rally-
ing in Turkey.

Jake looks embarrassingly hopeful for a flash and then stifles
it.

JAKE
Sooo.. who's the vacancy going to?
HANS
It's yours, if you want it.

JAKE
(beat)
...You're serious?

HANS
Axel was actually the one who suggested I break it to you--
Sorry! Bad pun...
(beat)
What do you say?

JAKE
I think you know the answer--

HANS
Welcome to the big leagues, kiddo!!

Jake has to sit down in the darkened VR seat to absorb the news. A mix of elation and disbelief register on his mien.

His face is LIT by a Mediterranean sun as he DISSOLVES INTO:

EXT. MONACO - DAY

Jake is leaning over the balcony of his hotel. The harbor is rife with mega-yachts, and the passing cars under him are nothing less than Rolls-Royce and Bentleys, resplendent in the sunlight.

The boutique stores are Gucci, Versace, Prada, et.al.--The exteriors are marble or chrome. A luxuriant energy pervades.

Jess puts her hand on his shoulder and his arm goes around her waist. They digest and inhale the splendour and opulence.

JESS
I'm so happy for you...

Jake looks at her for a long moment and shakes his head "no" lightly, and it makes her squirm under his gaze.

JAKE
Be happy for us.

Jess loves this and squeezes Jake tighter. Jake casts his glance to a block over where he sees his swarthy, Italian team-mate NINO GRAZZANO being hounded by paprazzi and their eyes meet for a flash. Jake recedes from the balcony, pushed suggestively by Jess with a devious chuckle.
Nino narrows his eyes with enmity even after Jake's vanished.
OFFSCREEN an F1 engine SCREAMS as it UPSHIFTS.

SMASH CUT TO:

MONACO RACETRACK

Jake's RB17 is coming out of the tunnel, into the light, continually accelerating.

MARK (VO)
..the kind of shockwaves Jake Iler is causing as Allenby's replacement, looking tremendous, coming out swinging in practice and the first qualifier.

PAT (VO)
Is it a testament to Red Bull making successful mid-season changes to the car to remain competitive, or is Iler the real deal?

MARK (VO)
--or both? Here's his time--

Q2 time ends according to a DISPLAY in BG.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. MONACO COMMENTATOR'S BOOTH - DAY

MARK, an Englishman and PAT, a ruddy Scotsman, both in a state of constant excitement and journalistic wonder, react.

MARK
OHHHHHHH!!!

PAT
Woooow!!!

The visible crowd reacts likewise.

MARK
Iler finishes faster than Grazzano in Q2!!

PAT
Well, Axel Blaukamp's job just became much more interesting.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT - REDBULL'S RACING PADDOCK/GARAGE - DAY

Jake gets out of the car and is thronged by attentive media,

(MORE)
crew, engineers, and Jess off to the side.

Nino starts CLAPPPING and draws attention.

NINO
Let's hear it for the great US import!
(clapping stops)
Butttt, I think you're better suited
for stock cars, eh Iler?

JAKE
Clearly not, since I've got a faster
time than you..

A rivalry is born and everyone watches, mesmerized.

NINO
Nah.. maybe there's a dirt track
that's a better place for you...
--That seems like your kind of
environment.

JAKE
What's crazy, Nino: everyone says
you're an asshole--(glances at watch)
--but it took me record time to
find out!!

Everyone snickers and the tension ratchets. Nino becomes
apoplectic--

NINO
Hey Iler!! This is my team!!!
--After the next qualifier you'll
get used to being behind me. And
then you can take your (sputtering)
pathetic ass to some... Prison
league--

Jake bullrushes up to Nino, getting right in his face, tower-
ing over him. A MIC BOOM is hovering just over them.

JAKE
You wanna talk about prison..?
That's where I fucking prettier men
than you for running their mouths,
and since you can't seem to shut
your trap, I'm gonna take extra
special care making you my bitch--

Jess yanks Jake's arm and pulls him away. Jake is looking
maniacally sadistic and Nino is terrified. The onlookers
are now in an uproar and Jake finally notices them.
JESS
(in a yell-whisper)Jesus Christ Jake!!

JAKE
---What?!?!

JESS
So now you've got a thing for brunettes...??!

JAKE
(beat)
You heard that...!

JESS
(through clenched teeth)
..Everyone heard that!!

INT. REDBULL VIP AREA - DAY

Hans and other BIGWIGS are schmoozing in the festive atmosphere.

Hans' aide approaches him, urgently.

AIDE
Your presence is needed--

Hans' look changes to puzzled concern.

AIDE (cont'd)
--damage control.

INT. RECESSED PADDock - MOMENTS LATER

Hans with Jake as Jess looks on.

HANS
This is bigger than your ego now, we have co-sponsors and companies that are on that car. Their names and reputations that they have paid to put on there, and the way you act reflects on them!!

JAKE
Ya know, Hans--if I'da known you were gonna lecture me like this I wouldn't have said annnnything to the guy insulting me in front of... literally everyone!!!
HANS
There are better ways of handling--

JAKe
--I thought this was all about publicity! Ya know: 'No such thing as bad publicity!' (mocking)

Hans exhales theatrically, refusing to be baited.

HANS
You're not just a driver anymore. You're the face of a brand! I need you at your best--your most professional--all. ze. time.

JAKE
(grunts)

HANS
I need you to be that charismatic gentleman I met in the studio in California.... We value you for your personality as much as your driving abilities. But I need you to be humble.

JAKE
(beat)
Ok Hans.

HANS
There will be fallout from this for quite some time.

Jake looks at Jess, at last with real concern.

HANS (cont'd)
I'm not mad. I'm just disappointed.

JESS
That's way worse!!

All three fall into easy laughter as levity is restored.

INT. REDBULL GARAGE - DAY

Axel is in an out-of-the-way area and beckons Jake to him while crewmembers hustle and bustle with the car.

AXEL
For Q3 you're going to be on softs and Grazzano's on super-soft.
JAKE
(beat)
...for any particular reason..?
That's gonna make it way harder to
get a good spot on the grid.
--I was thinking I'd be running on
super or even hyper-soft.

AXEL
This isn't my first day, Iler.
I'm the one responsible for deciding
these things.

JAKE
But the tires I run in Q3 are the
same ones I start the race with!!
Do Nino and I have different pit
strategies or something...?

AXEL
You're catching on kvick...!
The situation will be very fluid
once the race begins tomorrow.
Do you have to piss?

JAKE
No.

AXEL
Then get ready. We're on deck.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT
Jake and Jess are in comfort/relax wear. Jake is making
scrambled eggs.

JAKE
Argghhhhhh!!! Of course he gets a
better time when he got better
tires!!
(beat)
--Sixth place!!

Impetuously, Jake flings the skillet/spatula/eggs at the wall.

JESS
Jeez, honey--(moves to get up)
--You're taking that whole 'break
some eggs to make an omelet' thing
to a whooole new level.
JAKE
(rubbing his face/garbled)
Fuck, I'm sorry--

JESS
--I got it, I got it.

JAKE
(beat)
Now I feel like an ass...

JESS
Well, yeah.

She smiles ironically and he can't help but do the same.

JESS (cont'd)
What's so bad about starting in sixth? Can't you make up for it throughout the race?...

JAKE
(beat)
This is just a really difficult course to pass. There's only one DRS zone and it's really short compared to other tracks--

JESS
--wait: DRS is...?

JAKE
(flatly) Drag reduction system.

JESS
Oh, like when the spoiler drops!

JAKE
(teasing) Ah, someone was paying attention!!

JESS
Duh! (playing along)
...But explain it, anyway.

JAKE
Naturally (amused)-- In the qualifiers I was using it pretty much at will, but during the race there's only one spot on the front straight where it comes on automatically.

He uses two sugar packets to make a mini-DEMONSTRATION.
JAKE (cont'd)
But you have to be less than a second away from the car in front of you for it to activate--

JESS
--Does the guy in front get it, also?

JAKE
Good question. (uses a 3rd packet) --Only if there's someone within a second ahead of him.

JESS
So it makes passing easier.

JAKE
Precisely! --But at Monaco the area is so short and the leader is allowed to block once, so it virtually renders it obsolete. Vroom! Screech! (simulates block w/sugar).. Then the rest of the course is really narrow and tight--

JESS
--Oooo, we like that.

JAKE
Ha, we do. (Grins and then gets serious) ..It's just a huge setback from where I shoulda started.

JESS
Jake, you can't think like that. You gotta think positive. Don't defeat yourself before you've even started the race. Think about how fortunate you are--we are.(smiles) Remember where you were this time last year?

JAKE
You have a wonderful way of giving me perspective, my dear.

JESS
That's not all I'm good for, I'm also a better cook than you!! Let me make it this time and we'll see how it turns out. You relax. Shoo!

He sits on the barstool opposite her and admires her.
JAKE

Love you.

She winks and cracks an egg.

JESS

See? It doesn't have to be so violent!

EXT. MONACO STARTING GRID - DAY (CONTINUOUS ACTION)

Jess is watching from Turn 1 (St. Devote) as the race begins. The engines' DOPPLER EFFECT make an impending wall of sound as the cars come towards her, condensing, as if many collisions are imminent.

JESS

Holy shit!!!

The cars in P4&P5 touch tires directly in front of Jess and careen across Jake's trajectory and go into the inside runoff-area as he narrowly misses them.

JAKE'S POV as he's now P4, the incapacitated cars blur by and he charges up Beau Rivage (Turn 2) into Massenet (Turn 3).

ANOTHER ANGLE of P1 (Nino) and P2 (SCHUSTER) are dead even and have a .75 sec lead over the rest of the pack.

WITH JAKE as he follows P3 closely into Mirabeau (Turn 5).

GRAND HOTEL HAIRPIN (Turn 6) seems to narrow before them, Jake takes the inside line and brakes later than P3, forcing P3 to the outside line.

Jake over-throttles and intentionally makes the car step-out in a brilliant overtake. Rubberized DEBRIS is shot onto P3's visor.

ON NINO and P2 as they are in Turns 7&8, P2 frustrates Nino as they go into the tunnel for the first time.

P2 rides in Nino's slipstream and advances, almost touching.

JAKE'S POV as he comes out of the tunnel to see Nino and P2 braking before weaving through Nouvelle Chicane (Turn 11).
COMMENTATOR'S BOOTH

MARK
Well, that had all the thrills that one could want from an opening lap!

PAT
What jumped off the page for me, Mark, was how RedBull-rookie Iler has gone from P6 to third!!

CUT TO:

JESS' VANTAGE

She watches Nino and P2 go around Turn 1 and Jake's just over a second behind them, cheering with the throng of fans.

AXEL/PADDOCK

Axel taps an engineer on the shoulder, cueing him to switch a MONITOR to another type of display.

AXEL
Iler, how's the car?

Jake tackles Massenet and Casino (Turns 3&4), continually losing sight of P1 and P2 who are still over a second delta out front.

AXEL/PADDOCK

AXEL
Ja, ja--great start... lots of laps to go!

A small sardonic smile plays on his lips from getting to be the antagonist for a moment.
Jake enters into the tunnel, then bursts out into the daylight in a QUICK SERIES OF SHOTS/OVERLAPS, where P1 and P2 get continually closer as he closes the delta on them.

TIME CUT:

AT TURNS 5-8

Jake is now less than .25 second behind P2 as they enter the technical section.

MARK (VO)
Iler in P3 is almost able to reach out and touch Schuster's brake light in the Mercedes!!

PAT (VO)
I love how Iler's been able to advance on the leading pair; both of them on super-softs and because of their inability to get away from each other, we've got the rookie in his maiden race come to badger them as well!

Jake brakes extremely late into Nouvelle Chicane after the tunnel, deftly sliding through the quick left/right and forces P2 Mercedes into the Kerbing, overtaking.

MARK (VO)
Iler is directly behind the veteran Grazzano--!

PAT (VO)
If this is an extension of their heated exchange in the paddock, then they are both driving with something to prove!

Jake's DRS activates for him after Turn 19 and he goes for an overtake on Nino's left, to which Nino blocks successfully as he takes a wide race line into Turn 1.

The crowd is roaring as the two RedBull cars head into the technical section and we have QUICK CUTS from a balcony at Turn 3, then:

STREET LEVEL at Turn 4.

The duo gyrates below Turn 5.

REVERSE ANGLE as the two cars plunge into Turn 6.

JAKE'S POV as he is heart-stoppingly close to Nino into Turns 7&8.
Jake gets into Nino's slipstream in the tunnel.

CLOSE UP on Nino's RIGHT MIRROR and when they blaze into the light Nino loses him for a flash as Jake's shifted to his left.

END QUICK CUTS

TRACK

It's 180 MPH chicken as they approach Nouvelle Chicane and Jake is wheel-to-wheel from Nino, just inches apart.

They have to brake to 40 MPH and Jake hangs on Nino's left rear like a tick.

They are dead even approaching Tabac (Turn 12) which is very tight but Jake has a better line and forces Nino to outside.

Jake now has a ½ car length's lead as he heads into Piscine I (Turns 13/14).

ANOTHER ANGLE on front AERO which allows Jake to complete the takeover throughout the dynamic turn at 125 MPH and climbing.

HIGHEST VANTAGE of the crowd shows the ecstatic multitude as Jake cements his pass through Piscine II (Turns 15/16).

IN THE PADDOCK Axel puts a hand on his chest and takes a deep breath, relieved there wasn't a crash.

ON TRACK

Jake passes by Jess in the front straightaway, she has both arms up in celebration and everyone in sight is equally enthralled.

Nino gets DRS and attempts to pass Jake on inside but Jake blocks as they head into Turn 1, thwarting Nino.

PAT (VO)
Iler seems to hold the lead for now!!

COMMENTATOR'S BOOTH

MARK
What an incredible feat if he came from sixth to win at Monaco in his debut race!!

PAT
Unheard of!! Unfathomable!!
MARK
Well--start 'fathoming', because this veritable newcomer's leading!!

Pat acknowledges Mark with an overt look: "touche"

TRACK
Nino follows Jake through the technical section of Turns 5-8 and the delta increases minutely with each turn.

NINO (VO)
Axel. I'm gonna box for fresh shoes.

PADDOCK
Axel makes a gesture to the team, already prepping.

AXEL
Confirm. See you in a moment.

TRACK
Jake sees Nino pull off after Turn 18 as he takes Turn 19, close up on his eyes emit relief. He's alone with the lead for a moment.

PIT LANE
Nino gets fresh tires in a blistering sub two second change.

TRACK
Jake flies past Massenet/Turn 3.

JAKE (VO)
I'm looking for some new rubber, boss.

PADDOCK
Axel makes "get ready" gesture again.

AXEL
Ja, you read my mind. Box this pass.

A MECHANIC close to Axel is rubbing his wrist tenderly and makes a pained expression, but no one notices.

TRACK
Jake rockets through Turn 17 and brakes hard through 18,
then intentionally steps out the rear as he goes into the pit lane.

His speed seems like a crawl as he has to stay under the 80 KPH LIMIT, he gets to the waiting crew and swerves to them.

They attack the car with blurring alacrity—but the ailing mechanic boggles up the front left tire and Jake's eyes panic.

After a few precious seconds the wheel goes on and Jake mashes the throttle to get back to the Pit Lane exit just in time to see Nino zoom by.

AXEL

AXEL (in SWEDISH)
GOD DAMN IT!!!

He confronts the Mechanic who erred—

AXEL (in ENGLISH)
WHAT THE FUCK WAS THAT?!?!?

The faulty Mechanic quails under his wrath. His comrades shake their heads in shame.

TRACK

Jake now has a huge four-second delta and watches Nino disappear around Massenet (Turn 3) when he's barely at the incline of Beau Rivage (Turn 2).

PAT (VO)
Oh, what a turn of events as Iler's crew surely flubbed his stop!!

MARK (VO)
Reminds me of a man saying it would be "unfathomable" to think he could pull off such a stunt.

COMMENTATOR'S BOOTH

Pat fills with mock hubris.

PAT
A very... perceptive man said that.

MARK
(rolls eyes) We've really got to get your adjectives under control!!

JESS
In her viewing area, Hans approaches her.

She glances at the STANDINGS TOWER and it reads "LAP 42/78, P1 GRAZ--, ILER +4.32"

JESS
Jake's got an uphill battle.

HANS
True enough...
He should be able to keep pace,
and second place in his first time
out is nothing to be ashamed of.

JAKE'S POV as he assaults the Technical Section, making adjustments on the steering wheel as he careens forth.

JESS (OS)
He won't be happy with second...
It's really amazing to see him racing again, it's so good for him. But he didn't make it this far just to fall short--

Jake pops out of the tunnel into the daylight, he sees Nino going through the Chicane 4 sec ahead. CLOSE UP on his eyes narrow.

JESS
--Ya know?

Hans simply nods and smiles enigmatically.

JESS
(more to herself) Definitely not over.

She glances again at the STANDINGS TOWER as it reads "LAP 42/78, P1 GRAZ--, ILER +4.11"

DISSOLVE/TIME CUT:

It now reads "LAP 70/78, P1 GRAZ--, ILER +1.02" and then "LAP 71/78..." as Nino goes through the START/FINISH LINE and Jake is a literal second behind him. Jess' hair blows from the air wash as she watches vigilantly.

TRACK
The two continue their duel around Turn 1 and up the incline.

MARK (VO)
Credit Axel Blaukamp's foresight of
(MORE)
MARK (VO) (CONT'D)
putting his P1 and 2 drivers onto an
opposed tire strategy, allowing Iler
and Grazzano to get comfortably in
front of the rest of the field as
we near the end of this race!

PAT (VO)
I hate to beat you over the head with
my own unfathomables--

COMMENTATOR'S BOOTH
Mark visibly cringes.

MARK
..I thought you'd let that die!!

PAT
Y'r not getting off that easy, old
boy--!!

TRACK
The duo head into the tunnel and Jake closes delta perceptibly in Nino's slipstream.

MARK (VO)
--And neither is Grazzano as Jake Iler
is looking to keep sparring!!

Jake brakes far later than Nino into the Nouvelle Chicane,
on Nino's left, interrupting Nino's race line or a collision
is imminent, Nino accedes him the space and Jake takes over.

PAT (VO)
It's the same move he pulled on Schuster!
Grazzano is simply being bullied by
his own team-mate!!

JESS
She sees the takeover completed on a huge MONITOR and jumps
in celebration with the rest of the crowd.

Axel looks at the same monitor impassively. He glances over
at Jess and they lock eyes. Her smile is infectious and even
Axel smiles back at her.

TRACK
The two drivers enter Piscine I (Turns 13/14) and they're
virtually occupying the same space. Jake slides ever so
slightly through Piscine II (15/16), and he has to hold
(MORE)
a perfect line to defend Nino. They go around "Anthony Noghes" (Turn 19) and into the main straightaway.

MARK (VO)
Grazzano will have DRS because he's easily within a second of Iler--

Jake holds the middle line, Nino's spoiler/DRS DROPS and he begins to surge ahead of Jake on his left.

PAT (VO)
--Iler's allowed one defensive move!!

Jake swings well into Nino's path forcing him onto his brakes and killing his velocity as Jake now holds the outer line into Turn 1 with far more momentum than Nino.

COMMENTATOR'S BOOTH

MARK
What an absolute savage--! That was beyond aggressive and teetering on the edge of legality--!

PAT
Iler has to hope he doesn't get penalized!

VIP AREA

Hans gets slapped on the back by drunk colleagues. He glances at the STANDINGS TOWER which reads:

"LAP 72/78, P1 Iler--, Graz +1.33"

HANS (in German)
That's it, boy...

DIETRICH MATESCHITZ (RedBull owner) shares a look with him and raises his eyebrows in acknowledgement.

CUT TO:

INT. FIA JUDGES' ROOM - DAY

Two gentlemen and one lady JUDGES are watching a REPLAY of Jake's questionable pass on a MONITOR.

JUDGE 1 (FRENCH ACCENT)
By the exact wording of our rules, it was not illegal.

JUDGE 2 (ITALIAN ACCENT)
He cannot-a do that! Especially to a team-mate! It's a bad--
LADY JUDGE (BRITISH ACCENT)
(raises hand imperiously, interrupting)
--There is no penalty. You're being hyperbolic and frankly rather preposterous.

Judge glares at her while an AIDE reaches for the door, opens it and announces to a TV production crew:

FIA AIDE
No penalty!!

CUT TO:

TRACK

JAKE'S POV as he glances in the mirrors as he heads into Nouvelle Chicane and Nino is barely exiting the tunnel.

JESS
She glances at the STANDINGS TOWER and it reads:
"LAP 75/78, P1 ILER--, GRAZ +2.11" and that changes to "2.36" before her eyes. She clutches a fist triumphantly.

JESS
Yes!! Let's go babe!!!

TRACK

Jake heads up Beau Rivage, CYCLING THROUGH THE GEARS (3rd through 7th) and then DOWNSHIFTING rapidly as he brakes at Massenet (Turn 3).

MARK (VO)
Iler extending his lead on super-softs, really pushing them to the limit and he keeps setting 'fastest lap' markers as the car's weight diminishes.

PIT

Axel watches Jake's car's SPECS and DATA on a MONITOR.

AXEL
Iler, no need to keep burying the throttle—you've got less than three laps to go and your lead isn't being cut into.

TRACK

Jake goes through Grand Hotel Hairpin, sliding through the turn and gyrating dramatically as his tires find purchase.
JAKE (VO)
What's my lead over Nino?

AXEL (VO)
Two point five seconds and widening.
The race is damn near over and there's
a lot of season to go. No need to
kill the motor unnecessarily--

Jake drives through the tunnel, into the daylight.

JAKE (VO)
Just a few more laps, Ax.

He brakes hard into Nouvelle Chicane, flicks left and then
right and as he does he BLOWS his LEFT REAR TIRE, spinning
the car around. It was a low speed chicane so he comes to
rest going the wrong way, and gets to watch Nino go by.

JESS
She watches on a GIANT MONITOR, utterly dismayed, clutching
her hair--

JESS
Nooo!!!

TRACK
Jake watches car after car pass as the YELLOW FLAG comes out
and everyone goes under caution.

AERIAL SHOT of Jake stranded in front of the racing world.

PIT
Axel kicks a stool over, then goes back to crossing his arms
and watching a MONITOR, his icy anger blazing. He watches the
last car close to Jake go by.

AXEL
Bring it in.

TRACK
Jake turns the car around and drives it extremely slowly
(20 MPH) as he approaches Tabac (Turn 12).

Watchers "Woooo" from the YACHTS as he passes by glacially.

CLOSE UP of Jake's EYES vacantly staring ahead where the
car and helmet DISAPPEAR /
EXT. MONACO WINNER'S CIRCLE - DAY

DISSOLVE ENDS as Jake's now flanked by Hans and Jess, and part of the audience.

Nino is shaking champagne and spraying it all over the other top two FINISHERS.

Jess takes Jake's hand and squeezes it but he doesn't respond.

Jake locks eyes with Nino. Nino meets his gaze and his smirk becomes a gloating sneer.

Hans says something INAUDIBLE to Jake but he is totally hypnotized by hatred. Jess tugs hard on his hand to break the spell and finally the trio walks away, dejectedly.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL BALCONY - NIGHT

The city pulses with festivity as Jake lounges on a deck chair, looking defeated. He smokes on a VAPOR PEN and lazily exhales into the starry sky.

Jess comes over with her drink and sits on the edge of his chair and touches his feet, rubbing his shins.

JESS
Wanna get in the hot tub?

JAKE
(beat)

Nah.

Jess takes a sip and waits for Jake to elaborate.

JAKE (cont'd)
Not right now, anyway.

JESS
Babe, you were amazing today.

JAKE
(grunts)...But I didn't win.

JESS
That doesn't matter, everyone knows you should have won.
JAKE
(very perturbed) But I didn't win.
I came in nearly last. History doesn't remember the "almost won" drivers--
(takes a big chief of vape and exhales)

JESS
Look, I was just trying to be nice--

JAKE
--Well I don't need your fuckin' pity!

Jess stands up immediately and Jake knows he overdid it.
Jess has her back to him, and then turns back to look over her shoulder--

JESS
(quietly) Do you wanna be alone or something?

Jake stands and touches her on the hip intimately.

JAKE
No--of course not. I'm genuinely sorry for saying that.

She faces him and looks beautiful in the moonlight.

JAKE (cont'd)
Especially when you're just trying to make me feel better.

JESS
I know what you're going through.
(puts hand on his face) --I know how hard you fought...
But there'll be other races.

JAKE (beat)
...Not like this.

She looks tense, as if she made a mistake forgiving him so quickly. Jake senses it too and remains contrite--

JAKE (cont'd)
--but it'll be ok... Everything'll be fine as long as I have you.

She grabs him tight and lovingly nuzzles into his neck.
JESS
(almost inaudibly)...you'll always have me, Jake.

They embrace roughly and then kiss, the VANTAGE ASCENDS to the FLAGPOLE of the Hotel.

The Flag of MONACO DISSOLVES

BEGIN MONTAGE - "JAKE'S SEASON" (MOS THROUGHOUT)

Into the CANADIAN FLAG, Volbeat's "Last Day Under the Sun" plays throughout.

-Brief TIME LAPSE of the TEAM TRUCKS filling up the paddock area of Jacques Villeneuve Circuit in MONTREAL.

-Axel is making driving gestures to Jake, while Jake's mocking/mimicking him. Jess does "The Robot" behind Axel and Hans has to cover his laughter.

-On the track, Jake gets into a jam on Lap 1/Turn 1 (Virage Senna/Island Hairpin) mid-pack.

The cluster is SUPERIMPOSED with RESULTS displayed on a DISPLAY TOWER, "ILER: 4th PLACE"

-A FRENCH FLAG on display DISSOLVES into Jake and Jess at the top of the EIFFEL TOWER, laughing together.

Jake points to the ARC DE TRIOMPHE and the LOUVRE, and they appear to be totally in love. He begins a spontaneous Tango dance and spins her in a pirouette while she laughs gaily.

-The RED and BLUE LINES of PAUL RICARD CIRCUIT are SUPERIMPOSED over a throng of fans, vying to take pictures with Jake.

He holds someone's baby, looks at Jess expectantly, to which she makes an "eek" face and he feigns surprise.

A public relations HANDLER taps his watch at Jake: "time to go"

-Jake races around the track next to the same dizzying Red and Blue lines, he locks up all four wheels when he almost collides with a Ferrari, and goes sliding into a runoff area.

-An AUSTRIAN FLAG waves and DISSOLVES as we return to the (MORE)
REDBULL RING. RedBull is everywhere here, so the fans are legion and manic, ergo Jake gets mobbed.

He is lost in a veritable sea of fans, visibly struggling to find Jess and when their eyes meet she telegraphs to do his duty with a glance. When he turns his back to her she is disappointed.

-On the track Jake makes a slippery pass by a McLaren around Turn 2 (Remus), now directly behind his rival Nino.

His eyes narrow as he's set to engage, but then he gets passed in an alarmingly rapid succession. It's clearly a power failure and Jake's anger is evident.

-DISSOLVE a UK FLAG over FISH & CHIPS, where Jess takes one and teases Jake by waving it under his nose, while he looks miserable and paradoxically amused as she takes a monster bite.

Jake shoves the food aside and pins Jess down while she continues to laugh and chew.

ANOTHER ANGLE of the bed they're on while he continues to go down on her, while she swallows her bite and looks down quite agreeably and then her breathing hitches.

-DISSOLVE the SILVERSTONE CROWD madness at a publicity shoot where Jake and Nino glare at each other.

Hans watches from a premier spot and surreptitiously glances at Axel who appears displeased.

-A GREEN FLAG is SUPERIMPOSED over the fans where Jake is on the track.

QUICK CUTS of Jake getting passed over and over and over.

Jess covers her eyes in anguish, while Jake finished 10th according to SUPERIMPOSED RESULTS on a DISPLAY.

-DISSOLVE into a GERMAN FLAG and the imposing grandstand of HOCKENHEIM, and a THREE DAY TIME LAPSE of MERCUARIAL WEATHER.

-The race is in play, Axel barks an order over the radio, and Jake drives past the pit entrance.

The rain hits the track in a torrent and causes Jake to (MORE)
spin out of the long arcing straight of Spitzkehre (Turn 5), hydroplaning into a gravel trap.

Once at a stop he flips up his visor and looks up at the rain, and at the same moment another car slides uncannily close to him, almost colliding, and his reaction is jarring.

-A German flag in eyeshot turns sideways and dissolves into a Belgian flag at Spa-Francorchamps. An aerial shot of Eau Rouge highlights a few of the cars taking the hill at full speed.

Axel barks again over the radio, to which Jake pits and puts on rain tires with CU on the grooves.

-Another angle/moving shot of Jake executing a brilliant and daring overtake at Eau Rouge while it rains lightly.

-Jake overtakes a Mercedes at Bus Stop I and a Renault in the next instant, meters away from the finish line for P3.

-Jake and Nino are both on the podium with the first place finisher, Schuster, from Team-Mercedes between them.

-Jess is blowing Jake fervent kisses from the audience as he returns them likewise.

-A stray Italian flag is being waved and it superimpose/ dissolves over a plate of colorful red and green gourmet food, where Jess digs into it and taunts Jake who's having a salad.

She animatedly enjoys the food while he pretends to ignore her. She picks up a newspaper intentionally upside down and looks over the top flirtatiously--but Jake is transfixed on the tabloid cover: "Iler v Grazzano!!", causing him to grimace.

-Aerial shot over Monza, Jake and Nino coming out of Variante Ascari (Turn 9/10) in a dead heat as they approach Curva Parabolica (Turn 11) with Jake on the outside line.

Neither will relent and Nino forces Jake off the track, going into the gravel runoff at 180 MPH, sliding all the way and bonking into the Armco wall.

-Axel throws off his headset in a rage while the sea of (More)
ITALIAN FLAGS in the RG wave in jubilation.

-One of the flags DISSOLVES into a RUSSIAN FLAG fluttering at night, where Jake and Jess are in RED SQUARE. They hold hands, playing tug-of-hands/tug-of-wills going opposite directions as they sightsee.

Jake is recognized by fans and out come the iPhones. He implores her to indulge the fans, but her arms are crossed in obvious irritation. She bides impatiently while he takes selfies with them.

-On the track at SOCHI the whole field leaps forward from the grid at the start and at Turn 2 they bottleneck.

Jake locks up by braking too late and a dozen cars collide.

The unscathed cars zip away into the arcing and picturesque 180°+ Turn 3, highlighted by flagpoles as we CLOSE UP on:

-FLAG OF SINGAPORE and DISSOLVE/SUPERIMPOSE a SUNSET of the massive grandstand and the Ferris Wheel there.

Jake is going around Turn 22, and is passed easily, and then it happens again quickly.

Axel puts his fist on his forehead, dejectedly. A STANDINGS TOWER while Jake comes into the pit reads, "ILER-DNF"

In the pit, Jake removes his RED HELMET, and he's shell-shocked at the retirement.

DISSOLVE the HELMET into the RED SUN of the JAPANESE FLAG.

END MONTAGE.

INT. NAGOYA, JAPAN. REDBULL PROMO TENT - DAY

A weary Jake is flanked by JAPANESE REDBULL PROMO GIRLS at an impromptu photo shoot. A spirited PHOTOGRAPHER spurs them along, while many fans are looking-on.

PHOTOGRAPHER
  Kiss his cheeks!!
    (beat)
  Big smile, Jake, big smile!!

Jake is noticeably making an effort to be positive.
JAKE
(strained) This is as big a smile as I can make....
It's not like I'm faking it!!

All onlookers/fans laugh, except for Jess.

The photographer checks the back of his camera, satisfied.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Wow, great shots!!

MODEL 1
Can I have your autograph?

She hands him a SHARPIE, then pops her boobs up, prompting him: 'SIGN HERE'

JAKE
Ummmmm...

MODEL 2
(grabs Jake's arm)
No--hee hee! We just playing trick!
I dared her, we just kidding!

Jake looks unsure for a breath and then impulsively signs--

JAKE
Nah, too late!!

PHOTOGRAPHER
Like, whoa--!!
(starts snapping pics)
Ha! Great shots, Jake!!

Jake glances at Jess who is now thoroughly pissed.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY, NAGOYA - NIGHT

Jake and Jess walk with their baggage through the opulent, open area, and she's following.

JAKE
Come on Jess, it was kinda funny...

JESS
I can't even believe the audacity of these... bitches!!
Are they shamelessly gonna hit on you--in front of me--for the rest of our lives...? Like, this is Japan.
What are they gonna be like in Brazil?!!
JAKE
(beat)
I think you're over-reacting...

JESS
Oh, do you? You're not helping to
defuse things by actually signing
her tits!! "I dare her, I dare her!!"
(mocking model's accent)

JAKE
--Can we just drop this?

A peppy Dutch PR GUY from RedBull runs up on them.

PR GUY
Hey--! Like, super glad you're back!
I'm having them set up in your room
now.

Jake drops his bag and Jess exhales angrily. Seeing Jess' reaction, Jake's frustration doubles.

JAKE
Yr fuckin' kidding, right?
All I wanted to do is go to my room
...and decompress.

PR GUY
(nervously) Uhhh, it's a really
important piece? The segment is all
about you, and it's like... Japanese
"60 Minutes" --but for sports.

Jake glances at a fuming Jess and then picks his bag up.

JAKE
Let's just get this over with...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Jake enters the room and sees KIKU OTANI, gorgeous sports reporter. Their look connotes instant chemistry while her CREW sets up the filming equipment.

KIKU
Jake Iler--
(small bow)
--Very pleased to meet you. Kiku Otani.

JAKE
(rushed smaller bow)
Nice meeting you. Uhh, this is Jess.
Jess doesn't bother with formalities. She sidles Jake and chucks her bag on a dresser.

KIKU
Your assistant...?

JAKE
Ha!! (doesn't bother correcting her)

Jess glowers at Jake indignantly, hand on hip.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Their interview is beginning with Jake and Kiku sitting opposed with Jess behind Jake, out of their shot. Jake has been made-up and is in better attire than moments before.

KIKU
A little over a year ago, you were getting out of prison; a sentence where you were incarcerated for a little more than seven years. What has surprised you the most in the past year?

JAKE
(struck by question/beat)
Just... the response of people, around the world... I never in a million years thought I'd get an opportunity to do this--(he snatches a PROP REDBULL CAN next to him) --but thanks to RedBull Racing, heeeere we are!! (very cheesy)

KIKU
(cute giggling) Hee hee!! (beat/puts on serious face) Tell me about your time in prison.

JAKE
Wow, that took a dark turn! (they both chuckle)
I mean... (shrugs) it's not like it is in the movies--

KIKU
--did you really sodomize other men?

JAKE
Haaaa!! (scowls) (beat)
...no, haha. I just said that to
JAKE (CONT'D)
scare Nino.
--Did it work?

KIKU
Hee-hee. I don't know... (diffident)

JAKE
When you get a chance, ask him.

KIKU
Since I have you at the moment--
(looks at her notes)
You were saying, "it's not like the movies"...
So what was it really like?

JAKE
(long beat/drawn out breath)
Depressing. Because you feel like you've wasted your life.
A good chunk of it, anyway.

KIKU
Did you think you would race again?

JAKE
(quickly) --No.

KIKU
Why not, Jake? (Jess is alert in BG)

JAKE
(beat)
I kinda thought the... collective racing community would turn their back on me.

KIKU
So, what happened?

JAKE
Someone took a chance on me.
My friend Hans took a chance on me.
(takes stoic pause/beat)
Well, everyone at RedBull did, and thankfully they still are...

KIKU
What was it like running off the track at Monza?

Jake has to fight laughing at the change of tact in questions.
JAKE
(groans) Ughh, probably the low point of the season...?

KIKU
What about when you caused the pile-up at Sochi?

JAKE
Correction: that was the low point of the season! (humorously)

KIKU
(giggles)
In all seriousness, going back to Monza when you left the track at 260 KPH--were you scared?

JAKE
That's what? 160 miles an hour...? Nah, wasn't scared. (grinning)

KIKU
Is that sarcasm...? (coy)

Jake merely raises his eyebrows flirtatiously.

KIKU (cont'd)
..What about your loved ones?

ANGLE ON JESS.

JAKE (OS)
What about them?

KIKU
You don't worry about your safety? (concerned)--Even for their sake?

JAKE
I can't "worry"--or I have no business in that car to begin with.

KIKU
Are you saying it would affect your focus...?

JAKE
(nods subtly)...most certainly.

KIKU
(intimately) What do you focus on?

CLOSE UP on the visual exchange between them.
JAKE
You... just have to be in the moment.

Jake smiles at her disarmingly and she returns it. Then she notices Jess behind him and flushes guiltily.

JAKE (cont'd)
..but, ah--it's probably not the "made for TV" answer you want--but I just concentrate on following the race line and zone out.

KIKU
In Japan, we have a word for that: Rezafokasu. It's like, 'intense focus' ...You can borrow that word, ok?
My gift to you.

JAKE
Ah, arigato--(Kiku smiles unabashedly)
--Rezafokasu. It's--(somber)
It's like I'm alone out there.
Except for my teammates! Thanks Axel!
(obnoxious wink)

KIKU
(giggles)

INT. HOTEL ROOM, POST INTERVIEW - NIGHT

Jake is sprawled on the bed reading a Clavell. Jess is squaring up the room and intentionally SLAMS a drawer.

JAKE
What are you so upset about?

JESS
(whips the shirt she's tidying)
I'm kinda..."upset" by the way you did that interview.

JAKE
(closes book) What about it?

JESS
Ohhh, I guess because I get zero acknowledgement as your girlfriend; the one who stuck it out with you while you were in prison all those years.

JAKE
Would you like me to...
(MORE)
JAKE (CONT'D)
"acknowledge" it more?

JESS
(scoffs)
--No, actions speak louder than words, Jake.

JAKE
I'm not even gonna attempt to decipher that...

JESS
It's the way you shamelessly flirt with her right in front of me!!

JAKE
Look--I'm sorry you missed out on all the attention and male companionship while I was gone--

JESS
--It's not that!! It's how you said you're "alone out there"!! How could you be alone when I've always been here for you??

JAKE
You've always been here for me..? Thank goodness I have this naggy girlfriend to have my back...!

Jess reacts like she's been struck. Incipient tears form.

JESS
That's so not fair...

JAKE
(Standing up) Don't you think I have enough to stress about...? This season's a fuckin disaster and we're probably gonna get screwed outta practice tomorrow...

JESS
Oh, I'm sorry everything in your life where you drive race cars for a living isn't perfect.

JAKE
(shakes head/beat)
I don't need this shit.
JESS
Would you rather be "alone"?

JAKE
Than have to deal with this...?
...Absolutely.

JESS
(beat/draws up dignity)
I don't have to be here.

JAKE
(reaches for door handle)
I'm gonna get some air.
If you're not here when I get back...
(beat)
..it's not the end of the world.

He opens the door, glances at her for another moment and then leaves.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY BAR - NIGHT

Jess sits at the bar lackadaisically finishing a drink.

Her empty glass is replaced by an obsequious BARTENDER, while Nino approaches her from behind.

NINO
Surely a lady as gorgeous as you wouldn't be drinking alone!!

JESS
Surely she would, especially since she'd like to be left alone right now.

NINO
Aw, come on-a! That's no way to be. If you really wanted to be by your- self, there is a mini-bar in the room.

JESS
That's a good point!

She hails the bartender who attends instantly. Nino inter- jects, and out-projects her, bodily.

NINO
We need a bottle of Dom!! On Ice!!
(snaps fingers) Pronto!!
We're celebrating, after all.

The bartender turns to do his bidding
JESS
I'm not celebrating anything--

NINO
--Bella, there does not have to be...bad-a blood between us!

JESS
No...? Despite the fact you're a total prick?

NINO
Tsk, tsk, no... I'm actually... glad I ran into you! --Because I was a-thinking: maybe you can be a... emissary between me and your husband?

JESS
(beat)
He's not my husband.

NINO
Ah yes! And now I see there is no ring on your finger. What a fool...--And yet you travel the world with him as his mistress. (pours Dom) Then a-maybe champagne is fitting, because that is quite French of you! (Titters at himself)

JESS
I'm not. His "mistress". (sharply)

NINO
Eh, titles are not important. What I'd like to propose to you is a toast: your...Jake and myself, to getting off on a better foot. Let's call it,(raises glass) "To a fresh start-a!!"

EXT. SUZUKA RACETRACK GROUNDS - NIGHT

Jake is staring at the Ferris Wheel abstractly.

His gaze follows the actions of a CUTE COUPLE on a date, laughing as they go around.

A sentimental smile plays on his lips and his eyes gleam fondly.

His phone BUZZES and he checks it. A SUPERIMPOSED text message reads,"Jake Iler?" and another following that says,"I want (MORE)
you to have my number". And then Kiku's CONTACT INFO comes through along with her PHOTO.

He replies, "Got it" and with a wistful smile, puts the phone back in his pocket and goes back to watching the Ferris Wheel.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY / OUTER BAR AREA - NIGHT

Jake strides through the busy area on the way to the elevators but stops abruptly when he spies Jess and Nino drinking together.

NINO (to Jess)
Would you like some more?

Jess nods eagerly and Nino obliges. Jake's face is latent fury.

He's moving to confront them and his phone rings and he answers it automatically.

JAKE
Hello?

KIKU (VO)
Any chance I can meet with you?

JAKE
(stops walking and glances at phone)
...Kiku?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. KIKU'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Kiku stands on her balcony in a sheer Kimono with a plunging neckline, phone in hand.

KIKU
Yes, I have some... follow-up questions. Can I see you?

LOBBY

Jake watches Jess and Nino surreptitiously.

JAKE (into phone)
Where are you?

NINO (to Jess)
To building relationships!
Jess clinks glasses, looking swept-away.

KIKU (VO)
I'm staying in your hotel. Room 1607.

JAKE
(mumbling) Perfect timing--
(clearly)--I'll be right there.

Jess takes a heady swallow, Jake turns for the elevator.

As he gets in he sees Jess laugh at a Nino witticism. At the exact moment the doors close, Jess looks in Jake's direction.

Nino sees she's distracted and goes for a kiss. Jess jerks away violently; stunned.

JESS
What are you doing?!

Nino grins wickedly and Jess SLAPS him hard enough to make everyone within earshot come to a halt.

JESS (cont'd)
Is this some kind of game to you?

Nino touches his own face lovingly and smiles despite her.

JESS (cont'd)
I wouldn't make Jake your enemy.
He won't just fuck you up, you greasy little worm--he'll kill you.
He'll actually kill you.

She stands up and snatches her purse, Nino has a flicker of fear go over him.

JESS (cont'd)
I'd hate to be in your shoes when he finds out. Feel free to pay for my drink since you ruined my evening.

She walks for the elevator, ANGLE ON a RedBull Engineer, MIKAEL, who is close enough to have heard and seen it all.

He goes back to his AD LIB conversation.

CUT TO:

INT. KIKU'S HOTEL ROOM- NIGHT

Jake pauses at the door which is latched to stay open in anticipation. He enters and Kiku turns to engage. As soon as he lays eyes upon her, his ambivalence is evident.
KIKU
I know you don't drink alcohol, but I made some green tea...

Jake stands at the threshold rather awkwardly.

KIKU (cont'd)
Close the door. Would you like some? (indicating the tea)

JAKE
If you're having some, yes.

KIKU
(softly) Of course.

She nods for him to sit and pours, serving.

She then sits very close to him. They sip and glance at each other.

JAKE
It's good. (smiles nervously) (beat)
You said you had some follow-up questions for me?

KIKU
(blushes and looks down)
Now I'm feeling shy...

JAKE
You're not shy--(scoffs playfully)
You're a reporter!

KIKU
Hee-hee. That's true.
I guess I have an... irregular question.....

Jake merely prompts her with a look. She dismisses her giddiness and steels herself, penetrating him with a new affect.

KIKU
Did you feel that connection...?
(beat)
When we met?

Jake nods slightly and puts his hand on her leg which is all gooseprickles, it reacts as if applied with an electrical charge.

He then commits to lean in, and so does she. They kiss, lightly at first and then passionately.
Then she breaks away, panting.

   KIKU
     --I have something to tell you.

   JAKE
     (amused) Uh-oh.

   KIKU
     No, (grinning) it's not bad... Well, it's not "good", either.

   JAKE
     (makes humorized croaking noise)

   KIKU
     (light chuckle) --I want to do some coke. Do you mind if I do a line?

   JAKE
     (beat/a bit surprised)
     Ummmm... no. Not at all. (then inhales deeply)

   KIKU
     --But there is a caveat.

   JAKE
     A "caveat"...?

   KIKU
     I think that is the right word.

   JAKE
     Well--I won't know unless you tell me.

   KIKU
     I want to do a line... off of... you. (looks down at his crotch)

   JAKE
     (feigns surprise) I don't know if that's a 'caveat'... but it's... definitely interesting.

Kiku giggle and pulls out a small vial. She pulls the knot on her kimono and looks at him with sultry eyes, expectantly.

   KIKU
     Do some off me, first?

Jake bites his lip with the last of his unease and then (MORE)
nods eagerly. He makes a noise of assent. Kiku puts a sprinkle on her nipple, obscured by Jake's head.

Jake sniffs and audibly Suck/Kisses it, Kiku inhales sharply and moans almost imperceptibly.

In a flourish, Jake stands up and undoes his pants. Kiku kneels in front of him.

Jake sees his Reflection in the balcony's sliding glass door, but he can't bear to look at himself.

Then Kiku Sniffs loudly and Jake's eyes glaze over in pleasure.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

INT. KIKU'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

The blinds are drawn but some light peeks through.

Rocks glasses with remnants of ice and whiskey catch the refraction.

Jake opens a bloodshot eye and glances at his watch.

    JAKE

    Ah, _F*ck_!!!

Jake scrambles into his clothes, apathetic of disturbing a still-sleeping Kiku.

He careens out the door, still dressing in flight.

INT. JAKE & JESS' HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Jess is putting the finishing touches on packing her bag.

Jake barrels in, startled to see her.

    JAKE

    --What are you doing?

    JESS

    (coldly) You went out to get some air and I was up all night waiting for you.

    (beat)

    And now I'm leaving.
JAKE
You're leaving me?

JESS
Jake... you'll be fine without me.

JAKE
Wait: so you're leaving me, for him?!

JESS
(dumbstruck)--Who?!

JAKE
Nino!!

JESS
(repulsed) Oh, god. Never!
What--
(beat)
--that pig made a move on me at the bar, but I stood up for you.

JAKE
Yeah... I saw you standing up for me.

JESS
Oh!! So you didn't see me smack him in the face?!

JAKE
(lamely)... no...

JESS
So where were you last night?

JAKE
---I-I don't have time for this--
(makes for shower)

JESS
Oh, Hell no!! Come back here!

JAKE
I gotta get ready, Jessica...

JESS
(blocking him) Let me find out you were with that little news-bitch.

JAKE
(gulps helplessly)
--You were with Nino!!
JESS
(now irate) I was having a drink
by myself, and Nino showed up!!
And then he tried to kiss me and
I slapped him in front of
everyone at the bar!!!

Jake looks away from her, catches another REFLECTION of
himself in a VANITY MIRROR and can't stand that either.

JESS (cont'd)
(calmly) Did you fuck her?

Jake looks at her but can't answer. Her eyes well with tears.

JESS (cont'd)
Did you honestly believe in your
heart that I was gonna fuck Nino?

JAKE
(beat)
I wasn't thinking about that.

She blinks the tears away and composes herself with dignity.

JESS
I'm going home.

She walks past him and then zips her bag in a fluid motion.

JESS (cont'd)
Skip a shower. You've got nothing to
hide. You're gonna be late enough as
it is.

She opens and closes the door softly.

Jake walks out on the balcony. His phone BUZZES but he si-
lences it without even a glance.

EXT. SUZUKA RACING PADDOCKS - MORNING

Jake strides into the bustle of race prep and Axel confronts
him dead on.

AXEL
Where the hell have you been?!?
We've been ready for hours and are
about to forfeit the session!!

Jake steps into his race suit and doesn't deign to reply.
Hans storms over and joins the fracus.
HANS
Jesus Christ!! Is your phone broken?! Where have you been...?

JAKE
I'm here--!! What are **you** doing here?! Don't you have someone's ass to kiss??

All action in the garage has ceased to focus on the trio. Hans grabs Jake by the arm.

HANS
We need to talk right now--

JAKE
(shakes his grip off) --Get the fuck offa me!!

AXEL
GET BACK TO WORK!!!

Everyone else resumes "looking" busy. Axel and Hans share a look over overt concern.

HANS
(privately) What's going on with you and Jess..?

JAKE
(beat/surprised) She left--it's nothing. Lets get on the track.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUZUKA RACETRACK - MIDDAY (CONTINUOUS ACTION)

POV of Jake tearing around the long loping Turn 1 at 195 MPH under ominous skies.

AXEL (VO)
How's downforce on corner entry?

JAKE (VO)
(tersely) The setup's fine.

Jake enters the slightly uphill S-curves (Turns 3-7) and absolutely nails them.

INTERCUT WITH
INT. SUZUKA ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH - MIDDAY

An ANNOUNCER and his COLLEAGUE watch the action, broadcasting in JAPANESE.

JAPANESE ANNCR
This is going to be a fast lap!!
That section was perfect!!

TRACK

Jake leaves Spoon Curve and accelerates faster, faster, faster.

REVERSE ANGLE as he blasts under the Tunnel.

POV as he waits until the last possible moment to brake at Casio Triangle (Turns 16/17).

AXEL (VO)
Il'er keep in mind this is practice.
No need to eviscerate the tires before the damn qualifier.

PADDOCK

Jake blazes by. Axel turns to an ENGINEER with a cockney accent.

AXEL
How's Il'er's times?

ENGNR
Fastest we've ever run 'ere.
Ee's a polesitter f'r cert'n, 'e keeps this paice.
(leans in / more quietly now)
Wha'eva bee ee's got in 'is bonnet--
Oy don' think Nino c'n keep up.

Axel is tight lipped with apprehension but can only nod.

TIME CUT:

Jake climbs out of the car, goes to shed his suit and he's drenched in sweat. The garage is swarming with activity.

NINO
Great times, Il'er! Those will be a-very hard to beat.
JAKE
(scoffs and looks around)
...Riiiiight.

NINO
Ey, Jake! You can not-a take a compliment?!

Jake posts up confrontationally with three meters separating them. Everyone is transfixed watching.

NINO (cont'd)
Like, I never got the chance to tell you this: (snaps finger)
--But you got a really good girl.

Jake takes three quick steps, lowers his shoulder and spears Nino right in the chest. The crew swarms immediately and its total calamity. Jake raises his fist to pummel Nino but he's pulled off with an inch to spare.

AXEL
STOP!!! STOP!!!

Jake is pulled off, wriggles out of the crew's grasp and storms out of the garage through the bay doors.

Nino remains on the ground and no one bothers to help him up.

NINO
That guy is an animal!! We were just talking and did you see what he did to me...!?!?

The crew and Axel leer at Nino disgustedly.

INT. SUZUKA CONFERENCE ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Jake, sitting with his arms crossed petulantly, is flanked by Hans and Axel.

Opposite them sits MAX BECKETT, the patrician FIA Pres. and DOLPH, his main associate. They are flanked by other FIA BIGWIGS.

JAKE
He started it.

Hans and Axel groan while Max's peers look veritably amused.

MAX
It's good you didn't hurt him--truly.
(MORE)
MAX (CONT'D)
But there will be consequences.
Immediately, there will be a two-
race suspension.

Hans and Axel interject to protest but Max forestalls them with a gesture.

MAX (cont'd)
--And there will be a further investiga-
tion, with possible further repercus-
sions. Lucky for you there were no cameras filming in the paddock at that precise moment, or it would be an abject dismissal from the sport, entirely.

Max lets the words sink in and Jake shifts uncomfortably.

MAX (cont'd)
Even luckier for you, there is a particular Italian that I positively loathe. Because if I find out that Grazzano provoked you by saying some-
thing un-gentlemanly, there may be consequences for him, also.

Hans glances at Axel whose frown deepens.

MAX (cont'd)
Either way, you are in the wrong for now and the suspension will stand.
(glares at Axel pointedly)
So you are by no means off the hook.

JAKE
Yes sir.

MAX
When I'm finished speaking with Nino, you two will shake hands--

Max pauses for Jake to acquiesce to which Jake nods dis-
passionately.

MAX (cont'd)
--At a press conference
(taps Dolph who leaves quickly) where you will elucidate the press on what a privilege it is to be part of something so majestic.
You will not discuss any details of the suspension, but you will acknowledge the sport is bigger
(MORE)
MAX (CONT'D)
than the petty differences of you
and you rival (sneers).
You may leave. Send Nino in.

INT. SUZUKA MEDIA ROOM - LATER
Jake shakes hands with Nino.

JAKE (privately/only to Nino)
This ain't over--

Nino moves his lips to reply but Jake breaks contact and
turns to a podium, standing before an assortment of reporters.

JAKE (cont'd)
Ahem (clears throat) --
I've uh... Embarassed myself, forgetting my
responsibility that I have to
everyone on my team. And, equally
as important, the fans.
(beat)
I have to remember that I can't
act on impulse.
I now realize that I can't beat my
enemies in public...
Because of laws.
(draws some light laughter)
--So instead, I'll do it on the
track.

He turns to leave and there are a hail of questions fired
at him, but he goes out a side door alone.

Max Beckett watches him leave from a side vantage, standing
with Dolph.

MAX
Something of a ratings wet dream.

Dolph raises his eyebrows appraisingly and nods.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE MEDIA ROOM - A MOMENT LATER
Kiku and her CAMERA OPERATOR in tow catch up to Jake.

KIKU
Jake! ...Jake!!
JAKE
(surprised) ...Hey.

KIKU
I'm glad I could get you alone.

Jake overtly glances at her cameraman staying barely out of earshot, seeming proactively disinterested.

KIKU (cont'd)
I was wondering if you'd give me an exclusive.

JAKE
(beat/he hesitates)
--Kiku, I can't

KIKU
(near whisper) Even after last night?

JAKE
Listen: Last night was amazing...
But it was a mistake, and I shouldn't have even come to your room--
(Kiku is mortified)
--and... look, this is off the record-- I can't talk about what happened--(lowers voice)
But if you wanna break the story that it's a two-race suspension, that's the best I can do.

KIKU
So... that's all you can tell me?

JAKE
(hesitates and then small nod)
Yeah.

KIKU
Then I didn't hear it from you.
(beat)
Thanks for everything, Iler.

She smiles sadly and walks away.

INT. REDBULL PADDOCK / GARAGE - EVENING

The area is now mostly vacant. Jake looks in the cockpit of the RB17 as if he's forgotten something.

Mikael, the mousy engineer from the bar, approaches Jake.
MIKAEL
The irony is, he was paying you a compliment.

Jake turns and furrows his brow for him to elaborate.

MIKAEL (cont'd)
When Nino said, "you got a really good girl" (mocks accent) -- it's true. I watched the whole thing and could hear them, too. He was making it seem like he'd had a change of heart ... and wanted to be your friend. Which lowered her defenses.
(beat)
And then he tried to kiss her...

JAKE
Did she really hit him?

MIKAEL
POW!!! (slaps air)
-- Right in the kisser, haha!!
She slapped the taste out of his mouth! (very Germanic enunciation)

Jake chuckles with him and exhales, relieved. At that moment, another CREWMEMBER runs into the garage, panting.

CREWMEMBER
Jake!! You need to come quick, it's Hans!!

EXT. END OF PIT LANE - EVENING

Hans is getting pushed toward the back of an ambulance. Jake intercepts him while other RB CREW hover anxiously.

HANS
Looks like I'm getting too old for all this...

JAKE
What the hell happened..?!

HANS
I think it's a heart issue--

Jake looks at the HEAD PARAMEDIC who nods gravely.

JAKE
Oh god, this is my fault--
HANS
--Nein, nein..! This is from sixty-six years of sausage and heavy bier!
I've survived three terrible marriages to three terrible women!!
--I'll survive this!!

They both laugh and bonhomie resumes for a moment.

Hans beckons Jake closer and indicates to the RB crew surrounding them.

HANS
You're a leader, Jake.
(Jake shakes head 'no' but Hans persists)
Zey need you--
Just like you need zem!!

Jake looks as if he's gonna crack so Hans brings him in for a tight bro-hug.

Jake nods for the paramedics to put Hans into the ambulance.

It drives away and Jake turns to look at the team solemnly.
He can't muster any words so he looks down and they begin to dissemble.

EXT. PALACIAL ESTATE - MIDDAY (9 YEARS AGO)

Jake walks up a gravel pathway dressed formally toward a reception hall opening.

He bounds up some steps with youthful energy.

INT. WEDDING RECEPTION - A MOMENT LATER

Jake takes in the festive wedding atmosphere of Mike Marsten's other daughter, NIKKI. Jake is one of hundreds of classy looking guests.

Mike spots Jake and strides over to greet him and show him around--

MIKE
There ya are! C'mon, I want you to meet some of my friends!

SHERRI, a horny cougar-chick in her early fifties, pulls the duo into her group, looking at Jake solicitously.

SHERRI
Who you got with you, Mike?
MIKE
He's my new driver!

SHERRI
Driver...?

MIKE
From my race team!! He's my "secret weapon" this season, haha. Jake, this is my cousin Sherri.

SHERRI
Ohhh, that kinda driver. Hi, Jake--(arches eyebrow)

JAKE
(exists hand) Um, hi cousin Sherri.

Two of Mike's PEERS amble over. One pumps his hand.

PEER 1
What a beautiful day for Nikki to get married, huh?

PEER 2
Hey Mike, congratulations! Nice ceremony!!

All in the large group seem to chatter amiably amongst themselves and Jake taps Mike on the shoulder.

JAKE
(privately) I can't thank you enough for inviting me, Mr. Marsten--

MIKE
--It's just 'Mike'!! And you're part of the family now, too!

Jake spots a glimpse of Jess across the room and she's radiant. His world just changed.

She sees his stunned look and stops the conversation she was in and they're both spellbound, enchanted.

MIKE (OS)
Jess, come meet someone!

Never breaking their gaze, Jess walks over until her little Niece, who's four years old, runs into her leg.

NIECE
Aunt Jess, Aunt Jess! Pick me up!!

Jess picks her up and sets her on her hip.
NIECE (cont'd)
Aunt Jess, when are you getting married?

A few people close by chuckle at the cuties.

JESS
Well kiddo, I gotta find an eligible bachelor first. (looks subtly at Jake)

JAKE
Do you wanna dance?

JESS
(smiles, surprised)
Ummm... Dad?

MIKE
You haven't asked permission for anything since you were her age! --What are you starting for now?

JAKE
Do you mind, Mr. Marsten?

MIKE
I told you not to call me that--! It's "Mike"!!

Jess puts her niece down and Jake takes her arm.

MIKE (cont'd)
Wait a couple weeks before you start calling me 'Dad', though! (draws laughs)

INT. WEDDING DANCE FLOOR - MIDDAY (9 YEARS AGO)

SERIES OF SHOTS:

Jake spins Jess onto the dancefloor with graceful ease. Their chemistry is immediately in sync. They waltz, utterly captivated.

They're grinding and singing together, "from the windowwww/to the wall!" and laughing at their natural candor.

They're doing the "Macarena", both really popping from the turn and laughing riotously.

END SERIES OF SHOTS.
INT. SUSHI RESTAURANT - NIGHT (9 YEARS AGO)

Jake and Jess sit at the bar, sushi is presently being served as they split chopsticks and mix wasabi, etc.

JESS
So what do you do for a living--besides drive?

Jake picks up a sushi roll, deliberately stalling.

JAKE
...Would you consider yourself fairly...socially progressive?
--Or more conservative?

JESS
Wait--are you a lawyer?!

JAKE
Ugh, yuck!! No!!

JESS
(off his reaction) Hahaha!!
--Whew! (faux wipes brow)

They appraise each other fondly.

JESS (cont'd)
Well, I've been told you shouldn't talk politics on dates.
--Especially first dates.

JAKE
Technically this is our second.
(holds up two fingers)

JESS
(amused) How's that?

JAKE
That wedding was definitely a date.
That was like four hours.
It was actually more like two dates!

JESS
Ohhhh, so this is our third date?

JAKE
(smugly) Exactly.

JESS
Look at you: Mr. Thinks-He's-Gonna (MORE)
JESS (CONT'D)
-Get-Some...

JAKE
(almost chokes on food)
--I'm just being optimistic.

JESS
(beat)
I'd say you're being realistic.

JAKE
Ok...
(beat)
You're not a square.

JESS
So: what do you do for a living?

JAKE
(raises piece to eat then halts)
...Maybe I'll tell you next time.

JESS
You assume there'll be a next time!

JAKE
(grinning devilishly)
There will be...

INT. JAKE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (9 YEARS AGO)

Jake and Jess cuddle in bed, being spoons.

JESS
You don't care if I spend the night, right?

JAKE
You always ask, and I never mind. I like having you here.

JESS
Mmmmm, good.

She rolls over to kiss him and then looks at him intently.

JAKE
Yeeeees...? (very cute)

JESS
(beat)
I just... think about you sometimes.
(MORE)
JESS (CONT'D)
Like, I wonder how you got started... selling drugs! You seem so... wholesome!

JAKE
(mock offended) I am wholesome!!

She settles deeper into the pillow and nudges her chin to prompt him into further explanation.

JAKE (cont'd)
I grew up near the beach and it was always around. Everyone I knew did it, so it just made sense to sell 'em. Then I got into racing and it paid for all my cars and whatnot--It's almost like how I paid for an education.

(beat)
It's allowed me to get this far in my driving career--my real career--and I really only have like... Three customers. So the risk is low.

JESS
Three customers..?
Is that even lucrative..?

JAKE
(neutrally) Ummm... Yeah.

EXT. JAKE'S BACKYARD - DAY (9 YEARS AGO)

Jake and Jess are eating BBQ they've prepared.

JESS
Remember I was asking you about money...?

JAKE
(not really)

JESS
Well, I was thinking...
(beat/Jake raises eyebrows)
...I heard my Dad talking on the phone. I think he needs help.
Like, financially. Maybe you... know someone?

Jake smacks his chops and leisurely drinks from a cup.
JAKE
How much does he need?

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - DAY (9 YEARS AGO)

Jake sits across from Mike with a large desk between them.

MIKE
I can't believe Jess would mention that! God, this is embarrassing...!
I feel like I've boxed myself in, and if that other contracting firm
underbids me on the next job I'm finished. (Starts muttering)
If I over-extend a line of credit, the banks'll call everything in.
I'd have to sell everything--

JAKE
--Including the race team.

Mike shrugs through a tight lipped grimace and then nods.

JAKE (cont'd)
How much do you need?

MIKE
One point five million.

Jake merely raises his eyebrows and looks concerned.

MIKE (cont'd)
I'd just need it for ninety days and then I get a check stroked when the
other deal's finalized in Omaha... (glazes over)

JAKE
--I can get it. I just need a promissory note drawn up saying you'll have it back to me within six months.
That'll give you some cushion.

MIKE
How are you gonna do that?

JAKE
I've got some family money...
Only thing is, it's in cash--
(Mike looks puzzled)
--So you can't make a huge deposit into one account or the FBI's gonna be all over it.
MIKE
I see...
(beat)
What percent interest do you want it back at?

JAKE
No interest--

MIKE
--Jake!

JAKE
Look, you've been like family to me. And I lov-- (stops abruptly)
I'm crazy about your daughter. (beat)
Plus, I'd be out of a job if I don't help you out. (both chuckle)

MIKE
(beat)
Uhhh, Jake... I don't know what to say--

JAKE
--Just "thank you" is enough. Now call your attorney and get that note drawn up. I'll be back in an hour.

INT. JAKE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY (9 YEARS AGO)
Jess is on her laptop while Jake is fiddling with a car part.

JESS
I googled you...

JAKE
(playfully)Ohhh... this can't be good.

JESS
(scoffs, ignoring him)
I found this article that said you're a quote 'great driver on a mediocre team'.

JAKE
Ha, I'd say that's a bit of an embellishment...
JESS
Is it...?

Jake pries at the part but it's not budging.

JAKE
...I wouldn't refer to myself as a "great driver"--

JESS
--You're on a run for the championship!!
(Jake just shrugs)
Is Marsten Racing really "mediocre"?

JAKE
That's a harsh word, but we're not the best. There're factory teams that are way better.

JESS
How come you don't drive for them?

JAKE
Because--(gets very close to her face)
--they don't have the "world's hottest daughter" as a perk..
(kisses her sumptuously)

JESS
Mmmm, you're sweet...
But seriously, why?

Jake fiddles with the part with more success, freeing it some.

JAKE
Because racing is full of politics, and there's a lot of people that... basically help each other.
And if you're not born into the club --or down to seriously kiss their ass--they're not trying to help you.

She can't her head and sees him in a new light.

JESS
Well, good thing you helped yourself.

JAKE
Yeah--(grunts with exertion)
--We'll see how it goes at Laguna this weekend.

The part now rolls smoothly and he looks pleased.
INT. FEDERAL PRISON PHONE BANK - EVENING (3 YEARS AGO)

Jake is trying to make a call amongst dozens of shoulder-to-shoulder inmates.

JAKE
Am I gonna see you this weekend...?
(the receiver transmits scratchiness
and then is silent)
...You there?

JESS (VO)
(scratch)--Sorry! The cat made me
drop the phone..
Of course I'm coming this weekend.

Jake looks supremely relieved and exhales his stress.

JAKE
I miss you...

EXT. FEDERAL PRISON VISITING AREA - MORNING (3 YEARS AGO)

Jake and Jess sit across from each other with other families
and inmates in close proximity. Jess looks stricken, her
eyes are puffy.

JAKE
Why didn't you tell me over the phone?
...When did you find out?

JESS
On the way here.

JAKE
Jeeeesus. (looks as stricken)
--Your sister tell you?

JESS
Yeah.

JAKE
An aneurysm... That's...

(beat)
He was 58?

JESS
59.

(beat)
The last time we talked on the phone
he was so excited to get out.
He always asked about you.
(MORE)
JESS (CONT'D)
(beat)
He was like a big kid---
(her voice chokes)

JAKE
(beat)
I'm sorry honey.

JESS
(her tears flow down)
I just wish you could hug me...
(beat/tries to smile)
When will this be over?

EXT. PRISON PARKING LOT - DAY (1.5 YEARS AGO)

ANOTHER ANGLE of Jake and Jess in their first post-release embrace. They're mid kiss and Jess breaks away--

JESS
I took the back seat out.

JAKE
Oh yeah....?

JESS
Yeah, you need to get inside me, now.

JAKE
Mmmmm, Grrrr (smacks her ass)

INT. JAKE & JESS' APARTMENT - DAY (1.5 YEARS AGO)

She leads him into the kitchen on the end of an apparent tour and he's quite pleased.

JESS
And I figured you wouldn't wanna go out....?

JAKE
(deliberates and then shakes 'no')
--Not right now, anyway.

JESS
(pleased)So! I brought all your favorites... to you!! Da da da da daaaa (singing)...!

She presents several COVERED DISHES and makes a big
(MORE)
production over them.

JESS
(unveils)--Pizza!!!
Just the way you like it!!

JAKE
Oh my god!! Pizza!!
Look at that, all charred and crispy..

JESS
(unveils) Shrimp and scallop ceviche!

JAKE
Little skrimpos!! Is that...?
(inhales sharply)
Cilantro, I see?
(sniffs) --And smell?

JESS
(chuckles) Annnnd, to finish you off--

JAKE
--You already did that!

JESS
(huskily) And I'm gonna do it again.

They kiss, delicately, never closing their eyes. She lifts the last cover.

JESS
--Chocolate...cake!!

JAKE
(Jaw ajar) Fuuuuuuuck...!

EXT. JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK - NIGHT (1.5 YEARS AGO)

Jake and Jess lay atop an RV, stargazing. The Milky Way is on vivid display for them.

JAKE
You're not cold...?

JESS
(kisses him on cheek)
I'm perfect...

OFFSCREEN their moment of serenity is interrupted by an escalating HORN which builds and mixes with CITY NOISES.
EXT. NAGOYA CENTRAIR AIRPORT – NIGHT (PRESENT)

Jake is arriving at the airport in the back of a cab, jerked out of his reverie as the cab halts and CITY NOISES persist.

CAB DRIVER
2600 Yen, Please.

Jake looks like he's astonished to be back in the real world.
He reaches for his wallet and hands the driver the fare.

INT. PLANE OVER THE PACIFIC OCEAN – DAY

Jake looks out of his window at the endless expanse of water.
A very attractive/look-alike-to-Kiku STEWARDESS interrupts his thinking.

STEWARDESS
Mr. Iler...? (he looks, eyes wide)
May I have your autograph?

He nods, takes a pad from her and signs.
She leans in to take the pad.

STEWARDESS (cont'd)
(licentiously) If you desire anything
...Please let me know.

Jake can only manage a wan smile and shakes his head 'no'.

EXT. SANTA MONICA – LATE DAY

Jake gets out of a Towncar in front of an opulent house, looking rumpled and tired. He has flowers in one hand and a travel bag in the other.

OFFSCREEN he hears FEMALE VOICES from a block away and turns to them.

Jess is walking a couple corgi dogs with her similar-looking sister Nikki and her niece from the wedding, who's now 13 years old instead of 4.

NIKKI
(from far off)...Speak of the devil.

Jess stops in her tracks and stares.
CLOSE SHOT of her mien, ambiguous and moderately suprised.

NIECE (OS)
Is that Uncle Jake...?

EXT. SANTA MONICA BEACH - TWILIGHT

Jake and Jess walk in stride, he's still holding the flowers.

JESS
So what are you doing here?

JAKE (beat)
I gotta sort things out with us, Jess.

JESS
I think you've gotta be by yourself for a while, Jake...

JAKE
Is that what you want...? You want me to just leave you alone?

JESS (beat)
I'm flattered you showed up; but I have a feeling that if we do this again you'll just resent me.

JAKE
I think if I don't at least try to get you back--right now--I'll regret any moment we'll be apart, until the next time I see you... I'm not leaving here empty-handed.

JESS (challenging) Oh yeah? (stops walking)

JAKE
Yeah. I've decided. (beat)
I'll give up racing if that makes us work--nothing is worth the price of losing you.

JESS (shakes head)
You are so stupid. (beat/Jake is perplexed)
(MORE)
JESS (CONT'D)
How could you ever think I'd want you to give up the thing you love most?

JAKE
--Second most.

JESS
Cute. (still serious)
--But I'd never ask you to make that sacrifice...
I love you too much for that.

JAKE
So you do love me. (coy/playful)

JESS
I've always loved you, dummy.
(grabs flowers and smells them)

JAKE
Jess, I could have it all and it means nothing if I can't share it with you. And....
I'll never be whole unless I have my better half with me...
(beat)
You're the best thing that ever happened to me. I wanna spend the rest of my life being as good to you as you've been to me.

JESS
You'd really give up that other life for me?

JAKE
In a second.

JESS
You mean that. (declarative)

JAKE
(beat)
There is no other life without you.

JESS
(long beat)
.....Don't ever forget it.

They get very close and look intensely at each other.
JESS (cont'd)
Let's get you a shower.
(Jake chuckles)
--And then make up officially.

JAKE
Hahaha!! I love you!!
(they kiss, sparsely)

JESS
I'm serious!! (tosses flowers)
--Let's go! (yanks his arm)

The sun sets in a TIME LAPSE, the stars arc across the sky towards the eastern horizon.

DISSOLVE INTO:

EXT. CIRCUIT OF THE AMERICA'S, AUSTIN, TX - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS:

The sun RISING with COTA's VIP Tower silhouetted.

The Racing Teams' semi-truck "Circus" enters their respective areas in the paddocks in the morning daybreak.

An RB17 is unloaded off the back of a trailer.

Tires are distributed by a giant PIRELLI bigrig.

WIDE ANGLE of a practice session in progress, with the cars zipping around.

END SERIES OF SHOTS.

INT. COTA BROADCAST BOOTH - DAY

Announcers Mark (from the Monaco Seq.) and TED, a mid-forties Oklahoman, are commentating on the Friday practice session.

MARK
With Jake Iler having finished his suspension and this being the last race of the season, these Stateside fans are showing up in huge numbers, even for a practice day that is normally nowhere near such a draw.

TED
Yeah, Mark: Iler-Mania---
or, as I like to call it --
(MORE)
TED (CONT'D)
"Iler-Rama", is in full swing!!

MULTIPLE SHOTS of the different cars and UNIQUE SIGHTS and
UNIQUE PEOPLE from around the track.

MARK (VO)
"Iler-Rama"...? Did you really make
that up?

TED (VO)
I'm more than just a pretty face,
Mark.

MARK (VO)
You are indeed--some would even go
as far as calling you a 'talking
head'.

TED (VO)
Heck, I'll take that as a compliment!

BOOTH

MARK
It wasn't--but Iler-Mania is looking
good here today, Ted!

INT. REDBULL'S GARAGE - DAY

Jake's car is pushed in by some crew and he pops out.

Axel and some engineers huddle to listen--

JAKE
We always say there's no "perfect"
setup, but damn the car feels great!
That new wing is giving huge gains
in Turn 1 and 12--

MIKAEL
--What about 19?

JAKE
Yeah, all the low speed corners--
It feels awesome...!
(pretends to sob theatrically)
--Man, I missed you guys!!

AXEL
Ja, ja--we missed you too. (rolls eyes)
Now go and relax while we run some
(MORE)
AXEL (CONT'D)
analytics... but don't get lost.

Jake goes to leave but Axel looks like he's had an afterthought.

AXEL (cont'd)
Hey Iler! Hold on-- quick chat.

They go into a smaller, private office within the garage. Axel leans against a wall and lights a cigarette.

AXEL (cont'd)
As you know, we need to do what's best for the team.
(blow smoke, Jake furrows brow)
...Nino has to get first place to lock up the championship over Schuster.
(beat)
This is probably going to be his swan song--if he wins, he's most likely going to retire...
And if he doesn't win, he's most likely going to push for another year. He's obsessed with a third title and feels like this is his last shot.

JAKE
So... (scratches eyebrow)
Where does that leave me?

AXEL
Well. You haven't won a single race.
Let alone a championship-- whereas, Nino has two.

JAKE
You still haven't answered my question.

AXEL
(taking a big drag)
I'm not the one who makes those decisions.

JAKE
So--"they" want me to help Nino win, obviously.

AXEL
(scoffs) Naturally! He's your teammate.
JAKE
I hesitate to agree with that term, when it pertains to him, but...
Ok.

AXEL
No one expects you to do more than you've already been doing.

JAKE
Which is racing my ass off.

AXEL
Your words. (inhales to cover a smile)

JAKE
Where am I with RedBull next season?

AXEL
(shrugs)
At this point they're optimistic on how you place from week to week.
(beat)
You might be too.... seasoned...
for them to make a long term commitment.

JAKE
Too old. Even though I clearly have the ability.

AXEL
(deep drag)
"Ability"... and "Potential"... those are just words--
(the smoke bellows)
What matters is results.

JAKE
So help Nino win, and fuck Jake.

AXEL
That is your interpretation...

JAKE
You want me to... best-case scenario hover upper/mid-field and block for Nino.

AXEL
Nej, I want you to do your best. As long as someone from our team places well, we win the Constructor's Title. (rare smile)
Then my season will have a cherry on it.
JAKE
(skeptically) Do my best--

AXEL
--Myself and the team believe in you, but greater minds than mine think Nino winning a third title is best for RedBull.

JAKE
(beat)
What if I won?

AXEL
(another drag/smaller smile)
I don't think that possibility was discussed. You are the number two driver and have been behind him all season.

JAKE
Well--(grimly)--I guess we're week-to-week, then.

Axel drops the butt and grounds it out with his shoe.

EXT. COTA RACETRACK - DAY

CLOSE SHOT of Jake's same grim and determined look as he drives around the track with the ENGINE SCREAMING.

He heads into the last few turns of the latter technical section (Turns 12-19)

TED (VO)
Iler made it look like it was too easy in the first and second qualifier--

MARK (VO)
--True enough, he knows where the higher stakes are, Ted--and he's looking quite solid out there. He's setting a blistering pace as Q3 is set to wrap!

Jake comes into Turn 20 on a perfect race line and bombs into the straighaway with max momentum. He tightens his grip on the steering wheel as if to squeeze more juice out of her, hitting extreme REV LIMITS on upshifts.

He crosses the finish line / timing sector and it reads: "P1 ILER - 1:36.744, P2 GRAZ - 1:37.212".

(MORE)
The crowd responds with a ROAR.

Jake keeps it floored even though he's on pole, the engine BLOWS with a FLASH and SMOKE pours from the exhaust, the elated crowd immediately responds with COLLECTIVE DISMAY.

EXT. OUTER PADDOCKS - DAY

Jake, sweaty and rung out, is sitting with Jess on a make-shift bench. The hustle-bustle of the paddocks flows around them but they are a mini-island in the stream.

JAKE
I utterly smash the pole-- and the engine blows the instant I cross the finish line.
(shakes head sullenly)
Is the universe mad at me or something...?

JESS
Have you been on your best behavior lately...? (arches eyebrow)

JAKE
Hmmm... (amused)

JESS
I know this isn't just another race to you, babe.

JAKE
Yeah. I was literally first place and now I start at the back of the grid... (grits teeth) because of a penalty.
(beat)
Because of a penalty, my racing career's pretty much over.

Jess scowls to comprehend but then decides to let him elaborate.

JAKE (cont'd)
This just felt different... There was so much momentum and I knew it was my last chance.

JESS
So go out there and give it your best. Go out and win.
No one can stop you.
JAKE
(shaking head) I wish it were that simple... it's virtually impossible to--

JESS
--Is it "Impossible"?

JAKE
Well, no...

JESS
Look, no one would ever think you'd make it this far.
--Did you?

JAKE
Well, no--

JESS
--"Well, no" (mimicking him)
(They both laugh, long beat/they grow serious)
...Only you can beat you.

Jake seems to be struck by the simplicity of it.
He pulls her head into his chest and strokes her hair, kissing it.

JAKE
...Ok.

INT. REDBULL'S GARAGE - NIGHT

The whole team/crew except Nino is gathered around a LARGE TV.

MIKAEL
I got it!! We're live streaming!!

The TV SEGMENT that Kiku put together is on, in JAPANESE.

JAKE
How on earth are we watching this?!

MIKAEL
It's streaming from my laptop!

KIKU (ON TV)
JAKE ILER: The comeback man, on the eve of the biggest race of his career--
The whole team YELLS raucously and drowns out the narration while Jake grimaces, disbelieving his image onscreen.

On TV, it's OLD FOOTAGE of Jake in his late teens getting into a rally car.

**JAKE**

Where did they get this footage?!

On TV, the rally car is now tearing around a corner at suicidal speeds, coming in far too fast, the car flips once and then when it lazily settles on its wheels, it incredibly takes off again. The watchers double their cheering at the manouvre.

**JAKE (cont'd)**

That was just luck!!
--Anyone coulda pulled that off!!

Everyone laughs at that.

TIME CUT:

The lights have DIMMED and the team is super-attuned watching the segment, now more sedate.

On TV the segment is quick cuts from the Jake/Nino rivalry--

**JAKE (ON TV)**

Definitely makes the racing more fun to watch... (grins sinfully)

**NINO (ON TV)**

He's not a threat. He's the number two driver. (shrugs) A... distant second, really--(the team teases,"Oooo")

**REPORTER (ON TV/O.S.)**

He said you're "not a threat".

**JAKE (ON TV)**

Well, I get consistently faster lap times than him, so...
Only history will decide that-- (the team goes,"OOOOOO" even louder)

Jess enters into the back entrance, unnoticed. She has a big smile on her face and then sees what they're watching--

Kiku's face flashes on TV from her interview with Jake.

**KIKU (ON TV)**

Rezafokasu--it's like 'intense focus'
JAKE (ON TV)
(edit jumps) It's... like I'm alone out there.

Jess glowers with enmity.

The video ends and the team mulls disappovingly.

The lights COME BACK UP and the team exits and shuffles past Jake disconsolately without looking at him, while Jake looks as if he's been cheated.

JAKE
(to himself) That's--
That's not how it went...

AXEL
Get some rest. Big day tomorrow.

Axel leaves last and Jake notices Jess, finally.

JAKE
Hey! (guiltily) --We were just...
Watching a program...

JESS
You know what pisses me off?

JAKE
Ummm, hopefully not anything that I did--Recently, anyway.

JESS
Hm. No--she totally took that part out of context! That's not how the interview went.

JAKE
That's what I said! (walks to her)

JESS
And now the team's pissed with you--

JAKE
--You could sense that, huh?

JESS
Obviously! They think you dissed em!

JAKE
(shrugs placatingly)
...What can I really do...?
JESS
(beat)
Let's go get some air.
--We gotta get outta that head of yours.

JAKE
Nah, I should try to go to bed soon...

JESS
Come onnnn--(tugs his hand)
--there's something you should see!

EXT. COTA TAILGATING AREA - NIGHT

Jess pulls a willing Jake through an area where F1 fans are BBQ'ing and drinking from kegs.

Immediately there's a hubbub when people recognize him and come over to seek an autograph or take a picture.

CRANE SHOT of word spreading like a ripple effect of his presence; a continual wave of fans surge toward him.

SERIES OF SHOTS

An enraptured OLDER COUPLE grabs one of Jake's hands each--

OLDER GENT
We came to see you!!

OLDER LADY
We drove from Maine to watch you win!

Star struck FRAT GUYS yelling incoherently embrace Jake.

A massive BIKER-DUDE with a raspy voice places a bear-paw on Jake's shoulder, pointing at him with his other hand--

BIKER DUDE
(insistently) Kick some ass out there!!

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. RACING PADDOCK / JAKE & JESS' ROOM - NIGHT

Jess is wearing Jake's shirt from a moment ago. He seems to be dozing, head cuddled on her lap while she rubs him adoringly.

JAKE
Thanks for taking me out there
(MORE)
JAKE (CONT'D)
tonight, Honey...
(she groans a loving assent)
..somehow I needed that.

JESS
Awww.... of course.

JAKE
Thanks for always being there for me, Jess.

JESS
(softly)...of course.

He turns over and nuzzles into her.

JAKE
I love you.

She squeezes him and exhales, at the apogee of contentment.

JESS
(whispers) I love you, too.

She smooths his hair maternally and then glances at his PHONE within easy reach.

His BREATHING becomes long and even. She puts a nail in her mouth, contemplating.

She hesitantly picks up the phone and then looks back and forth as if searching her conscience.

Relenting, she types in a PASSWORD and her face becomes alit in the gloom from the brightened screen.

She stops rubbing Jake with her "free" hand to use both of them for the phone.

OFFSCREEN there is a knocking/BOOM BOOM BOOM on the door.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. JAKE & JESS' ROOM - MORNING (TIME CUT)

Jake pops up, irritably startled--

JAKE
Who knocks like that?!?!?

HANS (OS)
IT'S THE POLICE!!! OPEN UP!!!
Jake looks at Jess who appears impossibly guilty. He dashes for the door and flings it open--

**JAKE**
Ahhhhhh--- You ain't the fuzz!!

**HANS**
Ahhhhhh---!

You ain't the fuzz!!

**HANS**
Ja, I figured I'd give you a heart attack--! ...So you could see what it's like!!

**JAKE**
(groans amused/rolls eyes)
Shouldn't you be resting...?!

**HANS**
I've been resting!! I've had it with resting; I had to come see you-- (sees Jess in BG/pauses to smile)
I wanted to wish you good luck, but I'm thinking you won't need it.

**JAKE**
You do know I'm starting from the back of the grid...?

**HANS**
(scoffs) Listen to you!!
(smacks him with scarf playfully)
--Have you learned nothing!?
(taps Jake's forehead)
The race is won up here--!!
Now get dressed! I'm certain Axel wants to see you...

**JAKE**
Yeah, Axel....

**HANS**
(quick concern) --What? What is it?

**JESS**
--Nothing!!
(wraps Jake around shoulders)
...Everything's fine.

Jake looks at her skeptically.

**INT. JAKE & JESS' ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Jake is dressed and finishes putting on his second shoe.
JAKE
Have you seen my phone?

JESS
No, but you better get to the garage. I'll look for it and be right behind you.

JAKE
(beat)
...I kinda wanna find it--

JESS
--What is so important about it?!?! I'll find it! Go!

JAKE
(beat/baffled at her)
....Ok....

He takes another look at her from the threshold and she seems all sorts of guilty. Then he leaves.

The moment he's out of eyeshot, she puts on a hat and follows him, slipping his phone in her pocket.

EXT/INT. REDBULL GARAGE - MORNING

Jake walks up and stops short at the large bay entrance.

A few crew members are working but no one notices him--

AXEL
Iler!! In here!

Jake walks into the little office towards the back. The crew look at him with perceptive hostility, staring.

Jake stands at the doorway to the office, nervous to commit.

Axel sits at a makeshift desk, beckoning Jake in. His main ASSISTANT leaves without being asked and conspicuously doesn't make eye contact with Jake.

AXEL (cont'd)
I'm fairly impressed with you, Iler.

Axel takes a long drag of a cigarette and gestures for Jake to close the door.

JAKE
Like.... in a bad way?
AXEL
Eh---(exhales/grunt)
Most drivers are egomaniacs and narcissists who don't really care what their team thinks of them.
(snuffs cig in ashtray)

JAKE
(gulps/tries to smile)
Whereas... I'm an egomaniac that does care what my team thinks.

AXEL
I'm glad you got the team back on your side. At the very least, it was the smart thing to do.

JAKE
(beat)
I'm lost---
What did I do that was smart...?

Jake spots Jess through a SMALL WINDOW in the door, and she has an impish grin, hands behind her back, rocking playfully.

AXEL
Your unedited interview--!
--I don't know if it couldn't have waited til after 4:15 in the morning, but it seems like everyone on the team has seen it, and once again you're.... Mr. Congeniality around here.

Jake keeps glancing at Jess distractedly as her smile widens.

JAKE
I.. I didn't--

AXEL
--I liked the part where you wink at me: "Thanks Axel" (winks mockingly)

JAKE
Ummm... hold that thought--

Jake exits the small office and walks over to Jess.

JESS
Found your phone--(jiggling it)

JAKE
Ya know... you amaze me.
Because I'm amazing...? (ultra coy)

That's... you, in a word.
(he takes off her hat/they get close)

You told me in Monaco, "everything'll be fine as long as I have you."
(beat)
--Baby, you'll always have me.
(they kiss lightly, smiling)
Get ready, I'll be watching...
(she winks and then turns away)

JESS

Jake shakes his head as if he's just had Deja Vu.

EXT. COTA RACETRACK - DAY (CONTINUOUS ACTION)

Nino leading the field at the GRID is established in a QUICK SUCCESSION OF SHOTS.

Jake is dead last (20th place).

REVERSE ANGLE of the field from behind Jake, the incline he has to literally climb in the front straight/before Turn 1 is reinforced by the depth of his starting position.

The STARTING LIGHTS go out (the race begins), then the tires find purchase and the whole field surges forward.

Jake immediately shoots inside and takes P19, then takes two more spots with his better takeoff as he becomes P17.

Before the end of the first straightway he bounces to outside and is virtually touching P16 (an Alfa-Romeo) as they turn sharply into Turn 1. Jake is wide and again they almost collide as they vie for the same racing line.

Jake and the Alfa are dead even and accelerating rapidly to Turn 2, but Jake has the better line now and forces the Alfa to brake earlier.

FROM THE VIP VIEWING TOWER

Jess watches, entranced. A tall, cultured TEXAN watches next to her.

Hell yes!! Go baby, gooo!!
TEXAN
You got a horse in this here race?

JESS
Yep, that's my man down there!

TEXAN
Yer kiddin...!! Which one?

JESS
Jake Iler!

The Texan gawks dumbfounded over his aviators, incredulous. Jess laughs and nods, and looks back at the progress--

JESS
---Wooooo!!

ON THE TRACK

Jake comes around Turn 20, directly behind P15.

MARK (VO)
Into our third lap and DRS is available now, so we're going to see Iler attempt a pass around Rugerio--

Jake executes pass around P15 on outside thru front straight.

TED (VO)
The field's spread out and Grazzano's got a nice lead over Martin Schuster, his only real threat for the title-- and right now he's not even close to being able to make a pass.

AERIAL SHOT of a wide (4 sec) delta between P1 and P2.

ANOTHER ANGLE of Jake beginning his chase for P14.

MARK (VO)
Weather will almost certainly be a factor later in the race, but Iler and his teammate are having great lap times respectively, while it's dry!

TED (VO)
Oh you're right---!

IN BOOTH

Ted glances at a MONITOR which displays stats.
TED
They're both getting...
"respectable" times--!

Mark glances at Ted disbelievingly. Ted smiles back blithely.
Mark exhales--

MARK
--Lots of race left.

ON TRACK
Jake outbrakes P14 into Turn 11 and overtakes, forcing P14 to outer line.
The whole back straight has traffic, so each car activates DRS.

IN VIP TOWER
Jess looks up from the race to RAINCLOUDS in the distance, moving perceptibly closer as her hair blows in the same direction they're coming from.
Jake passes under her at Turn 17, just meters behind P13.

JESS
Yes, get 'em babe!
The Texan taps her on the shoulder and points--

TEXAN
Rain's a comin--!
Jake is riding on the transom of P13 going into Turn 20, who yields to the clearly faster car and they both rocket up the straightaway wheel to wheel and both have DRS.

JESS
One thing at a time, right?
The Texan juts out his lower lip at the apt aphorism.

ON TRACK
Jake rounds Turn 1, completing takeover and becoming P13 according to the STANDINGS TOWER, also indicating "LAP 9"

DISSOLVE/TIME CUT:
The same tower readings now read "LAP 24" and Jake is P10.
PIT
Axel looks at the sky which now beyond gloomy.

      AXEL (into HEADSET)
     Box for wets.

NINO'S CAR
He goes under VIP Tower with an empty backfield behind him.

ECU as Nino hits the 'ACK' button on the steering wheel.

VIP TOWER
Jess watches several drivers enter pit lane to change tires.

PIT LANE
Nino's WETS are slapped on and he leaves in a flash.

      AXEL (into HEADSET)
     Alright Iler, box for wets.

VIP TOWER
Jake passes the pit entrance and rockets onto the straightaway.

      JESS
     --What are you doing?!?!

The sky is extremely grey and angry all around her.

      JAKE (VO)
    How long til it actually starts raining..?

IN PIT
Axel glares at a monitor displaying the race.

      AXEL
     If I knew that I'd be a damned....
           Meteorologist!!!

ON TRACK
Jake drives into Turn 1, and from his cockpit we see him
fiddling with steering wheel controls adroitly as he speaks
and engages the technical section of Turns 2-10.
JAKE (VO)
Well, it's a good thing you're not, or we never woulda met and then we wouldn't be such. good. friends!!
--So how long, Ax?

IN PIT

AXEL glances at his assistant who flashes two and then three fingers and then makes a throat chop meaning: "MAX"

AXEL
--Two minutes.

JAKE (VO)
Great! I can squeeze out a few more laps--!

AXEL
Damn it Iler!! You're cutting it too close!! You're gonna hydroplane and then you're skitprat!!

ON TRACK

Jake stomps on his brakes hard into Turn 12 from maximum velocity and is just behind P9.

JAKE (VO)
See you in two laps.

Jake closes the delta between himself and P9 through the back technical section. (Turns 12-19)

TED (VO)
Jake Iler's the only driver out there who hasn't gotten rain tires on yet!

MARK (VO)
Yes, and he's really gambling here because those slicks are absolutely useless on a wet surface--

Jake is .5 second behind P9 into Turn 20 and then his DRS activates as he goes for a pass on the front straightway.

TED (VO)
Looks like his gambling's paying off!

Jake heads into Turn 1 with P8 very far ahead.

JAKE (VO)
What's Nino running on tires?
IN PIT

AXEL

Wets--

JAKE (VO)

--OK: I need intermediates.

Axel glances at a MONITOR with a storm tracker, and the localized shot looks angry, coming right over them.

AXEL

Negative, Iler. It's going to come down hard.

ON TRACK

Jake rounds Turn 11 and gets perspective on the imminent RAINCLOUD lurking just behind the grandstand, exactly where he's heading.

JAKE (VO)

I'm gonna get in the groove the wets make and stay competing in this pack!

AXEL (VO)

You need wets. (insistent)

Jake dives into Turn 12.

AERIAL SHOT

A huge RAINCLOUD engulfs Turn 1/Grandstand/Latter half of Front Straightaway. The cars look like specks from this height.

JAKE (VO)

I'm fixing to box now but I need the intermediates or nothing at all!!!!

IN PIT

The crew look desperately at Axel for an order. Which tires?

AXEL

Come get your forsaken tires you overgrown child!!

Jake becomes visible as the first drops of rain come down.

When he goes to stop he locks up on the barely wet ground, sliding a half car length too far forward. The team adjusts quickly.
The team slaps intermediates on. Jake gets back onto the pit lane at a stately speed (80 KPH).

**AXEL (VO)**

You're four seconds over P10 and twenty-two behind P8.

**ON TRACK**

Jake gets into the RAIN GROOVES and keeps that exact line. It's as if there's a dry path blazed on the newly wet parts of the track.

**JAKE (VO)**

Just keep that glass-half-full mentality, skipper!

**IN PIT**

Axel covers his HEADSET MIC.

**AXEL (in SWEDISH)**

Take your infernal wine glass analogy and shove it!!!

**TIME CUT:**

**ON TRACK**

A McLaren and Renault (P7 and P8) fight for position far in front of Jake as the rain has diminished.

They pass the STANDINGS TOWER and it denotes it is "LAP 37"

**MARK (VO)**

Now that the weather has abated, Marco Zeiss is really making Went-forth in the Renault work for this attempt to pass--I say "attempt" because he's successfully blocked him a number of times!

**TED (VO)**

Between the battling and the rain, it's really slowed their lap times!

**MARK (VO)**

Ah yes! I wonder--who would have guessed the rain would slow them..?

The two cars COLLIDE at Turn 18, spinning and leaving DEBRIS on the track.

Jake is at Turn 13 when a YELLOW FLAG appears.
The SAFETY CAR comes out, narrowly catching Nino and forcing the front of field to slow.

Jake hits the DEBRIS at Turn 18, smashing his front/left wing.

JAKE (VO)
Box, Box!! I need a front wing!!
Rain's almost passed--let's throw on softs while I'm in.

IN PIT
Axel glances at the sky. Sunlight is trying to peek from behind the diminishing grey mass, as it's only misty now.

AXEL
Let's wait on tires. Still raining.

JAKE becomes visible at the end of pit lane.

JAKE (VO)
It's barely a fuckin' drizzle, Ax!!
I'm only coming in once, throw softs on!!

Axel makes hand instructions and the wing is ready instantly, just as Jake is pulling up.

The total pit time is 4.2 seconds including wing change.

ON TRACK
Jake pulls back into the field under safety. In BG we see other cars come in for their own changes.

TIME CUT:

AERIAL SHOT of the cloud system having moved away from the track.

FROM VIP
The sun is bright and has cooked off the track nicely.

A PANORAMA reveals the whole field is spaced somewhat evenly behind the safety car.

TED (VO)
Well that Texas sun did its job!

MARK (VO)
The sun and the debris crew who al- (MORE)
MARK (VO) (CONT'D)
lowed only two laps to pass under caution. It looks like we're ready again as the entire field has made tire changes--

IN BOOTH

MARK (cont'd)
--and the shunt between Zeiss and Wentworth couldn't have happened at a more fortuitous moment for the back of the field--

TED
--Yeah, it happened at a really good time, too!

Mark can only gawk at him, head askance.

TED (cont'd)
--Because of the weather!

Ah.

ON TRACK

The SAFETY CAR goes in at Turn 20 and GREEN FLAGS wave.

In the lead, Nino is off like a gun.

Jake is in P6 and the entire field is quite bunched as they go into Turn 1.

Into Turn 2 a Mercedes and Ferrari (P4&P5) battling touch tires which puts them into a spin and they go into the area just before the gravel run-off, getting passed.

MARK (VO)
Oh!! There's no debris, so no need for a yellow flag but that's a heart-breaker for Giles Melnic in the Ferrari!! Top three is now Grazzano, Schuster and Trais!

TED (VO)
This re-start is gonna make things real close once DRS comes back on after two laps...

The STANDINGS TOWER reads "LAP 42/56"
TIME CUT/DISSOLVE:

The same DISPLAY now reads "LAP 48/56"

P1-P4 go through the front tech section (Turns 3-9) where Nino leads, P2 is .25 sec behind, then there's a 1.5 sec delta between them and P3/P4 who are also .25 sec apart.

They go into the back straight and P2 goes for a pass with DRS but Nino is canny and defends effectively.

In the next duo behind them, Jake gets DRS and goes for a pass on the right, P3 defends but Jake swoops inside/left and overtakes.

TED (VO)
Ooooo-WEEE!! Iler smells blood!

MARK (VO)
--And now he's got clean air; he should be able to up his pace at least marginally.!!

FROM VIP

Hans comes up behind Jess and puts a hand on the small of her back.

HANS
Is this where you've been hiding?

TEXAN
--Hey buddy! She's got a boyfriend!!

Hans puts his hands up in mock surrender.

ON TRACK

Nino leads P2/Schuster and Jake around Turn 11 and they are all .4 sec apart.

On back straight Nino takes outside line and when P2 gets DRS he dives for inside.

Nino blocks, Jake is on outside and he slips by P2.

P2 continues charge, then trying to block Jake from completing overtake and in doing so locks front brakes which allows Jake to fully pass and pull away into Turn 12.

Nino and Jake (now P1 & P2) keep up the departure from P3 through back technical section (Turns 13-19)
MARK (VO)
Red Bull's now 1-2!!!!

TED (VO)
And that flat spot Schuster just got
is gonna make it dang hard to keep
in serious time with 'em!!

The leaders continue around the track, Jake close behind
Nino through Turn 20.

AXEL (VO)
Wow, that was a brilliant move,
Jake---

IN PIT

AXEL (cont'd)
--That was exactly what a number
two driver would do...

Axel views the race on a MONITOR and the crew of onlookers
study Axel for a clue what he meant, but he's impassive.

ON TRACK

Jake continues to follow behind Nino into Turn 1.

JAKE (VO)
(his uncertainty evident) Yeah,
just...uh, being a good team-mate.

IN PIT

AXEL
Remember what I said: I want what's
best for you...

IN BOOTH

MARK
(coversing mic) That was a rather
cryptic exchange between Iler and
his principal.

TED
(covers mic as he squints, perplexed)
...Cryptic?

MARK
Whatever your salary is, I am
certain it's not enough.

Ted positively glows.
MARK (cont'd)
(uncovers mic) RedBull truly put an amazing car on the track this year--

FROM VIP

The trio of Jess, Hans, and the Texan watches Nino lead around Turn 20 and Lap 51 becomes Lap 52, and Nino has just slightly over a one-second lead.

ON TRACK

Nino's eyes radiate smugness as he checks his mirrors.

NINO (VO)
Tell Jake "thanks for the great season"...

IN PIT

AXEL
I'm not conveying that message. It's bad sportsmanship coming from you.

NINO (VO)
Axel, I'm three laps away from being a three time champion— Just do what the hell I tell you!!

Others listening are shocked at Nino's audacity and direct their gaze to Axel.

AXEL
As you please—(flips dial)--Jake, your team-mate says... "Thanks for the great season"

ON TRACK

JAKE (VO)
What the hell...!? Is he being sarcastic or sincere...?

AXEL (VO)
I won't begin to speculate.

IN PIT

Axel watches a MONITOR while the whole team watches Axel.

JAKE (VO)
...Alright--We're going to plan Z.
AXEL
...Nej nej nej Iler!!! Vaat en hel-
vete is 'Plan Z'?!?!?

ON TRACK

Jake's eyes radiate predation.

JAKE (VO)
We'll both figure it out when this is over--

They go down the front straight and Jake is still trailing by over a second as they approach Turn 1.

TED (VO)
It's just a couple laps away from a Red Bull 1-2 finish and they're for sure got the constructor's title--

The STANDINGS TOWER reads "LAP 53/54, GRAZ--, ILER +1.04"

They both begin to assault the front tech section (Turns 3-10) with Jake imperceptibly closing the gap.

MARK (VO)
Whether you agree with team orders or not--and that it was just "too little, too late" from the American --it's history we're witnessing as Nino Grazzano imminently closes on his third title! What a career!

BOOTH

TED
Seems Iler should be happy with second place from dead last!

MARK
Quite so--it was a vaunted effort, indeed.(very sincere)

TRACK

Jake is on the outside of Nino into Turn 11, Nino dives to defend and locks his front brakes.

MARK (VO)
But what's this--?! Maybe Iler isn't ready to toss in the towel just yet!

Jake carries momentum and DRS comes on, he dives inside and surges ahead which Nino can't defend.
FROM VIP

Jess, Hans, and the Texan and everyone in eyeshot puts up their arms and yells victoriously.

Under them, Jake navigates Turns 12-19 with Nino less than .25 sec behind.

ON TRACK

Jake locks his own brakes briefly into Turn 20 and Nino deftly shoots around. Then he feints Jake like he's going inside, Jake moves to block and then Nino finishes pass on the outside.

The STANDINGS TOWER and the WHITE FLAG indicate it's the LAST LAP.

FROM VIP

Everyone lets out a proportionate groan of collective disappointment, particularly Jess tugging on her hair.

ON TRACK

Nino has a .25 sec lead over Jake into Turn 1.

REVERSE ANGLE as the duo assails Turns 3-6 Esses.

VIP

CLOSE ON Jess, clutching her fists to her mouth with anxiety.

IN PIT

Axel and the team watch the Duo on MONITORS, high strung as piano wire.

GRANDSTANDS AT TURNS 9 & 10

Fans watch Nino and Jake fly past with an assault of NOISE.

ON TRACK

At the approach to Turn 11, Nino has the outside race line to defend.

Jake brakes harder, later, and dives inside to pass Nino.
They are wheel-to-wheel on the back straight and Nino's DRS activates, so Jake takes the middle line.

Nino sweeps to outside and is 3/4 past Jake--

Jake holds the middle line with a slight favoritism of the right, ever so slightly keeping Nino at bay, and then he arrives at Turn 12 with the proper race line into the apex.

Jake has only a 1/2 car length lead over Nino into Turns 12-19.

FROM VIP

CLOSE UP on Jess watching Jake hold a razor thin lead under her.

ON TRACK

The race SLOWS DOWN as Jake takes Turn 19 with Nino's nose within inches of Jake's diffuser, jockeying for any advantage.

JAKE'S POV as they approach Turn 20, Nino looms large in mirrors.

SUPER SLO-MO and TRIPLE SUPERIMPOSITION/MELD of Jake's ragged front-left TIRE kissing the KERB perfectly, his EYE "seeing" the APEX/exit, and the view from behind both RB17s sliding through the turn with his infinitesimal lead over Nino.

NORMAL TIME as they both complete exit and Nino's DRS activates. Jake holds the middle line. Nino goes for outside/right pass, so Jake blocks for a 1/4 second.

Nino hesitates and dives inside and is coming around Jake on left.

They cross the finish line almost making contact but Jake beats him by a 1/2 car length and it's enough, the CHECKERED FLAG is waving excitedly.

FROM VIP

From their astounding view, the whole place erupts.

Jess and Hans embrace, yelling triumphantly, but Jess breaks off quickly--
JESS
--I gotta go!!

Hans and the Texan look at each other, stunned. Then they jump and embrace, yelling.

ON TRACK

Jake intentionally slows by the STANDINGS TOWER, taking in his NAME at the top of the leaderboard.

He closes his eyes for a moment in respite, finally sated.

IN PIT

The entire RedBull team including Axel is jumping all over each other, generally going crazy.

FROM TURNS 3-6 ESSES GRANDSTAND

Jake goes by with an index finger raised #1 as fans roar riotously.

TIME CUT:

TRACK

Jake approaches the PARC FERME area but first rips some donuts on his deteriorating tires. A cloud of smoke enshrouds the car.

He deftly guides the car into the 1st palce spot. He quickly takes off the Halo, the HANS, gets out, takes off his helmet and puts both arms up, reveling in celebration atop the car.

Schuster is already out of his Merc and celebrating his world championship, while Nino is in BG gesturing petulantly to a Camera Man.

Amongst the crowd Jake spots Jess and goes to her, embracing her over the wall. They have to scream to hear each other.

JESS
I knew it! Baby, I knew you could do it!!

JAKE
I did too! Ever since you told me--

JESS
--so what took you so long?!?!?
Jake cocks his head back, incredulous, and then realizes he's being teased. He smiles and plays along--

JAKE
Ah, ya know... these other cars kept getting in the way...!

JESS
Well, you kept everyone in suspense!

JAKE
Even you...!? 

JESS
Nah, I told ya--I knew all along! (smug/cute)

JAKE
Yeah? You know that I love you?

JESS
Yeah, I knew that, too--(laughs)

They kiss and the cheering CROWD NOISE somehow doubles.

Jake is yanked away from her embrace by his team as they hoist him up and toss him around in celebration.

Jess watches it all sentimentally and then closes her eyes and takes a long deep breath, sharing in his exultation--

She opens her eyes and is totally at peace, smiling. 

Dissolve Into

EXT. ROUTE 33, OJAI, CA - LATE AFTERNOON

Jake's Shelby Cobra ascends up a long series of switchbacks and tight turns, the RUMBLING MOTOR growing clearer.

They come into a panoramic viewing area/turnout. The car SNAPS and SNARLS as he downshifts into the gravel and dust.

Jake cuts off the engine and Jess takes down her ponytail, ruffles her hair and looks at Jake lovingly. A DIAMOND RING on her finger catches a glint of light.

JAKE
So did I tell you that Steve from ESPN called, wants to do a follow-up?
JESS
(beat)
Sounds a bit like Deja Vu...
What are you gonna tell him?

JAKE
Ah, I think I'd be messing with fate if I didn't do it.

Jess cues him to elaborate.

JAKE (cont'd)
I feel like this whole thing kinda started when he called...
and then you convinced me to go for it--

JESS
--This all started way before that.

Jake arches an eyebrow inquiringly.

JESS (cont'd)
This was all supposed to happen.
(beat)
You were meant to be in that car last Sunday.

JAKE
(beat)
...I could... see where you're coming from. (mulling)

JESS
So, you wouldn't be "messing" with fate. It was your fate.
--Just like we're supposed to be here... now...--Together.

He takes her hand and they look at each other, both supremely content.

JESS (cont'd)
Has Hans said anything about a new contract?

JAKE
Yeah... (pauses dramatically)
--They wanna do a three-year extension.

Jess inhales sharply and lights up.
JAKE (cont'd)
--And make me number one driver, because Nino's signing with Ferrari.
(beat)
I knew he wasn't gonna retire...
--Especially like that.

JESS
Oh my gosh! That's amazing!!
--You're gonna stay with them, then?

JAKE
Yeah, they've been good to me and
I wanna be loyal to them...
(Jess beams at this)
...And it's not even about money,
I think I'm just the perfect fit there.

JESS
Ahhh! I'm so happy for you--

JAKE
--For us! (they chatter)

JESS
I'm so happy for us--!
(more laughs and her eyes gleam with happy tears)
...Who's the other driver gonna be?

JAKE
The #2?

JESS
Yeah--

JAKE
Some kid that's been in development;
F3000... his name's Mattias Verboten.

JESS
Is that... his legal name?

JAKE
I dunno--(scoffs)--why?

JESS
I think it's German for something--

JAKE
--Yeah, seems like a good enough kid,
though, Good pedigree and all.

Jake looks at the sky and the sun is sinking quickly.
JAKE (cont'd)
You wanna go back to the hotel?
Gonna be dark soon.

Jess glances in the direction they came from and thinks.

JESS
Nah. Let's keep going...
Find someplace private to pull off... (very coy)

JAKE
Yeah? (equally flirty)

JESS
Yeah, I packed a blanket.
--Go stargazing?
(raises eyebrows suggestively)

JAKE
(play-skeptically) Stargazing, huh?

JESS
Stargazing... et cetera--

JAKE
--Et cetera... Ok, I like that.
Find a pullout and we'll go star-
gazing, et cetera--

JESS
--I said "pull off", not "pull-out"

JAKE
Hahaha!! Aye-aye, cap...!

He starts the car which rumbles loudly.

JESS
Hey--

She leans forward and they kiss.

Jake REVS the Cobra, she giggles and they get settled in.

She's re-doing her ponytail as he takes off fishtailing,
and they disappear around a corner but the sound pervades
and then diminishes....

FADE OUT

THE END