

TRAFFIC JAM
(a fantasy)

Written by
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FADE IN:

EXT. DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT - DEAD OF NIGHT - 02:30

Dead silent. Till. Eight ten-wheeler trucks pull up noisily. Disgorge workers who unload concrete barriers, roll them to block the intersection. Their jackhammers shatter quiet night. Wind gust blows their gritty debris. Nearby windows light up.

FILTERED VOICE (VO)

Captain plays God.
Up there.

EXT. CITYSCAPE AND HORIZON - DEAD OF NIGHT - 03:30

Tall architectural verticals. One angular branch cuts across. It sways as emergency trucks breeze by destroying darkness.

FILTERED VOICE (VO)

I was God.
Down here. I don't deserve to be--

REPORTER (VO)

--in here? With him still up there?

EXT. TWO-LANE SUBURBAN ROAD - NIGHT - 04:07

Dead of night.
Dead black.
Dead silent.

Worn-down straightaway framed by woods.
Worn-down lane-striping hard to see.

TOMCAT in-heat howls. From somewhere.
COYOTE howl responds. From elsewhere.

FILTERED VOICE (VO)

Like God.
I give you. The Ten Commandments.

From far right. Sound of Big Car OS. Accelerating smoothly.
From far left. Sound of Old Car OS. Gunning it hoarsely.

At far right. Low fog lights from Big Car.
At far left. One high bright from Old Car, one dead light.

Both car's lights shift position. Then they align.
Both car's lights head in a straight line at each other.
Both car's lights merge in a splash of primary colors...as

REPORTER (VO)

Not God.

Moses gave us The Ten Commandments.

the two engines move close now angrily loud as high headlights from a third vehicle expose a. Hidden side road. Where a moving-van tractor-trailer spins wheels, leans on its horn, as Big Car at right swerves, a face in it screaming as

FILTERED VOICE (VO)

My Ten Commandments.

From a secular Moses.

all collide Big Car Old Car moving van flying headlight shards splinter into foreground carrying light and color and fragments of a bloody teenage face. Moving-van horn sticks, belches. As metal parts spray up. Fall. Clatter. Horn farts. Horn stops.

THE WORN-DOWN TWO-LANE ROAD PILED WITH LIFELESS VEHICLES

Dead silent. Again.
Dead black. Again.
Dark distant city asleep.
As if it never happened.

EXT./INT. METROPOLITAN COMMERCIAL AIRPORT - 04:12

Dead silent.
Broken by.
Noisy jalopy. Noisy, but

highly polished. Headlights pull jalopy around a service road to the tarmac. Lights out. Coarse engine sputters off to clean hum of sleek corporate-jet that taxis in front of

MAX BLESSING, jalopy driver, in shadow. Who opens car door and car explodes with heavy-metal rock. Max, growling words to song, exits favoring his left leg. Stiff muscles protest as he leans back in, turns the radio off, grabs a lunchbox.

FILTERED VOICE (VO)

First Commandment?

Not secular. It's biblical.

Not quite pitch black now. Max walks forward purposefully with a limp he tries to conceal behind military posture. His thumbs under his shirt collar, he fluffs it stylishly,

sips steaming coffee from his ancient Army-issue canteen. Stops at hangar side door to a tiny office lit by one lonely night lamp, steps in, grabs a clipboard and CD, shuffles out. As an airport fuel truck drives by, its brights hitting

Max's sidelit face, a seen-it-all face
which betrays more lines than Willie Nelson.

FUEL TRUCK DRIVER

You? Still up there, Max? Today?

Max blows a translucent pink bubble. It grows. Pop. On his
pursed lips. He moves near a large indistinct black object.

MAX

Today. Every. Goddamn. Day.
Idiot kids get a driver's license?
My war hero days long gone?
Still flap my wings.

On the black object, we can make out words: "LIGHTNING II."
And call letters for a television station: "WLTN 11."

Pre-flight walk-around: Max checks linkage, checks oil, fuel,
removes main rotor tether. Grunts his way up into the black

BELL HELICOPTER JET RANGER. Max drags up his sleepy left leg.

A new Max. His movements on auto-pilot shift into high gear.

Clicks on overhead light--Dons headset--Checks controls--
Checks right rudder pedal--Circuit-breakers in--Battery on--
Fuel on--Visual check of main rotor--Gauges at zero--Seat
belts on--Press main rocker switch--Laptop on, CD on top--

MAX

Name me one rotten kid does that?

Turbines spool up low hum to high, rotor turns clack-clack, as
LIGHTNING II eases off the deck, rises, tilts forward, ascends.
Gracefully. Into wind gusts. And freedom. Up and away.

Max looks up up from the cockpit to a star-stippled night sky.

Max looks down down to a light-stippled city falling farther
below, eight-hundred feet down,

revealing the horizon, whose smoldering glow foreshadows dawn,
dappled with blue and red pulsating lights from which emanate

FILTERED VOICE (VO)

Politics is war. In a starched shirt.
First Commandment is your loaded gun:
"Smite thine enemies." Saith Moses.

the faraway syncopated sirens of two medical emergency vans.

REPORTER (VO)

Smite. Smite!?

EXT. SUBURBAN BACK ROAD - 04:29

Dead of night.
Dead black.
Dead silent.

On pitted concrete road, two moving vehicles.

Front car: Open convertible doing thirty. Lush violin music.
Tailgating: A bucking pickup, brights on. Loud country music.

FILTERED VOICE (VO)

Let 'em know you smite with the wrath
of Old Testament Jehovah. You practice,
even if they're merely rude, to get
into the habit. Lie to media humiliate
enemies ruin people crush careers
before they do you. They see you the
one standing they get right in line.

TEEN BOY drives the convertible, hand lightly on TEEN GIRL's
breast. She slides over so his hand sits higher. He forces
her tense hand to his crotch, where dash lights show a wet
stain spreading on his well-ironed cotton trousers. While

PICKUP HICK tailgating flashes his brights, blasts his horn.

Convertible veers onto shoulder, waves pickup on. Pickup honks,
passes. Stops. Convertible passes. Pickup tailgates. Till,

Teen Boy convertible driver stops short. Exits. Dressed for
his big date. Buttons his jacket to hide the telltale stain.

Sidles between car and pickup, whose brights reflect on his
glasses. Which he takes off. Opens his trunk. Grabs a bat.
Strikes a he-man pose. Trying not to look so scared shit.

Teen Boy sputters curses aloud, his voice going high.

FILTERED VOICE (VO)

Don't threaten. Take action!
(devil's laugh)
Your rep is the only threat you need.

Pickup Hick, out now, slovenly, whistles lewdly at Teen Girl
in the car. Liquored up, he spits a stream of tobacco. Takes a
long beer drinker's leak... ..aims his final dribble at her,

hops back in. Convertible drives off, followed by the pickup.
Convertible swerves around a sharp curve the pickup brakes
hard for, putting distance between them. More distance. Till

convertible driver sees pickup tailgating, flashing brights.
Teen Boy speeds up. Pickup speeds up. Convertible stops hard.

Teen Boy out, shakes the bat, hustles back in, closes the cloth convertible top. Pickup hits the gas, rams the convertible across two lanes nose-first into a tree. CRUNCH.

Tree vibrates shaking leaves and branches on the convertible.

Voluptuous Teen Girl inside is jolted. Is motionless. Is she?-- Then she. Screams as a sharp branch pierces the cloth top.

Poor wreck half hangs off the road, half blocks oncoming lane.

REPORTER (VO)

Be back. Guard? Bringing him in now.

FILTERED VOICE (VO)

Before I tell you Moses's secret?

Hint: Eminent Domain -- take.

Not, take action. Just. Take.

Pickup speeds drunkenly off toward the city, horn blasting. House lights turn on. Pickup's rear red lights fade as Teen Boy's red cellphone emergency light blinks its mute S.O.S.

FROM A DISTANT BEND IN THE ROAD

Teen Boy. Alone in the distant dark. Pitiful.
Lost the battle. Lost the war. Lost his girl.

Lost in the sightless night.
Dead silent.
As if it never happened.

EXT. MANSION DRIVEWAY - 04:43

On a background of distant sirens. Loud musical doorbell rings.

Curving brickwork driveway. Xenon headlights cut the black air.

Black limousine pulls up to porte-cochère of an old-world stone mansion, dims lights. Which illustrate fine details of stonework. Inside, lights turn on. Voice is oddly familiar.

MAN OF WEALTH (OS)

Like God. Like the old days. When
I learned by looking down. Today.
I look down again from. Up there!

EXT./INT. BELOW THIN CLOUDS - LIGHTNING II - 04:54

Max in Lightning II notes graceful clouds. Copter sounds wane.
AS THE CLOUDS FLOAT cross-country,

OVER GENTLE LAKES BLUSHED BY PINK TINT OF DAWN LIGHT, THEN

UNDER SOFTER PINK-GRAY CLOUDS PASSING OVER PARKS, THEN

FILTERED VOICE (VO)

Where in God's Hell did you--? I see!

(very impressed)

Second Commandment: "Control the press to control the brand." I built bridges and parks, sewers and schools. "The People" saw me as a reformer, liberal media loved me. Media relations? A full-time job inside a full-time job.

ACROSS STATE BOUNDARIES AND OVER LOW MOUNTAIN RANGES, THEN

TO DARK DRIZZLE OVER A SMALL CITY, THEN

FILTERED VOICE (VO)

Give media brass a hot exclusive, free passes. I'm hassled by some pushy newsman? My news buddies bully him. I took a shortcut. What do I own?

TO CITY OUTSKIRTS

and clouds come to rest above a

EXT. SMALL-TOWN AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Old prop charter plane. Windows show dim lighting inside. Outside, two dozen athletic men heft baseball equipment bags carrying team name: "HAWGS." Some also juggle and sip coffee.

Sleepy, a few kiss sexy girls good-bye, mumble at each other. PUDGE tweaks tight buttocks of a tall smiling Asian teen babe who sees it's Pudge, stares him down, looks to her muscular, WIRY BOYFRIEND for help, who, grinning, shoves Pudge.

WIRY BOYFRIEND

You dick, you. I--

The ballplayers board. Old engines turn over, coughing.

INT./EXT. MANSION DRAWING ROOM - 05:11

MAN OF WEALTH dons a suit jacket. His face appears dark-olive.

A valet brushes Man's suit tailored snugly over his trim form, a spread of eggs and fruit drawing his gaze from TV news.

Black limo's headlights filter through a tall gauzy curtained window. Beyond the window, in the long, looping driveway, the limo awaits, ray of early sun glinting off its hood ornament. The reflection becomes other, larger lights...

EXT. WIDE LOCAL VENICE BOULEVARD - 05:14

Random circles of light become giant spotlights showing us street barricades surrounding two movie-equipment vans, two actor's trailers, cameras on dollies, production crew scurrying. Folded camp chairs are plopped in the street. Caterer sets up. Local residents in bathrobes trudge in, gawk. Cars stack up.

EXT./INT. ABOVE LOCAL TRAFFIC - LIGHTNING II - 05:26

Interior worklight glints off silver double-Captain's bars on Max's left and right civilian collar. He spit-shines them.

Max looks up up,

from below translucent whirling rotor blades of Lightning II.

FILTERED VOICE (VO)

I tell unions, "Dig here." Two A.M...

Max looks down down,

scans a clot of slow commuter cars raggedly illuminated by dawn light, by their own lights, by his copter's lights.

Office buildings under construction. Two highways ring the city. On the outer ring, caisson drill rigs chunk into life. Batteries of trucks, earth-moving machines, tall cranes, workers and their cars. Stop predawn traffic dead. Everywhere.

Hard-hat union crew excavates a football-field size cavity. Hard-hat union crew at water's edge, like swamp monsters with headlights and hydraulic hammers, drives more massive steel bulkheads deeply into the muck under the rocky shoreline.

MAX

Hits the fan, people wake to-- Yeah!

Now with the surprising grace of a youthful cadet, Max banks Lightning II, swoops down as CD slides off laptop distracting him as, suddenly, lost in shadow, a twenty-story construction crane tips, slides, invades two right lanes, blocks them.

Rusty creak of rotating crane. Car's brakes. A thunk. A horn.

MAX

Move that mother back!

Too close! Metal shears metal. Bottom of Lightning II glances off looming crane. Sharply noses up left down shakes rolls spirals plummets fifty feet, two hundred, four hundred. Until,

Max's skillful (manicured) hands are

acting/throttle -- Flicking/right stick -- Doing/collective --
Easing off main rotor -- Feet hitting right pedal left pedal

as Lightning II

jumps up, left. Centers with a shudder.
Levels barely inches above deadly concrete. Gently.

As if it never plummeted.

Rotors blurred from above stir loose sand and gravel below.

Max, face calm as a sleeping baby, ascends blithely, scans
the printout, stiffly picks up fallen CD, inserts it in PC.
Pulls a young woman's photo from his wallet. Talks to it.

MAX

Who stole construction off the report?
Pay 'tension Cap'n Max. Old eyes--

Crane is there again. No problem now. Slick evasive maneuver
with cyclic stick. Max glides Lightning II gracefully sideways.

EXT./INT. OVER VIETCONG GUNFIRE - DUSK - OLD FILM FLASHBACK

Inside a HUGHES HUEY COMBAT COPTER.

Interior worklight glints off silver single-First Lieutenant's
bar on Max's left and right Army collar. In right-side seat,

MAX, TWENTY-FIVE, First Lieutenant, face lined, tight-lipped,

looks through filthy wind screen with target scrawled on it.
Below, V.C. tanks lit by dawn, by copter lights, by weapon fire.

MAX AT 25

Begged ya, Wipe damn wind screen Cody.

BLAKE CODY, Second-Lieutenant, in left seat, single brass bar.
Olive Negro copilot and gunner, with Caucasian facial features.

CODY AT 22

This niggah don't clean. Sir. Four ideas?

Bass boom of M-60 door-gunners merges with engine vibration as
Max swoops down in mud-splashed copter, blasts two V.C. tanks.
Two Vietcong scramble from tank, dash desperately into trees.

MAX AT 25

Just do Field Manual page thirty-seven.

Cody sends down a rocket pod fireball.

CODY AT 22
Beat ya to it again, Cap--

MAX AT 25
Lieutenant! Dammit, Cody. First Lieu--
One for Cassius Clay. Two--

Cody sends down a second fireball. In its wake, the Huey dives headlong. Vietcong's hand-held machine gun strafes the copter bottom. No problem. Slick evasive maneuver with cyclic stick. Max glides the copter gracefully sideways.

CODY AT 22
Pretty fancy for a by-the-book guy.

MAX AT 25
(to Vietcong below)
Adios daddy-o.
(to Cody, exultant)
Saw him first, Second Lieutenant.

Max banks the Huey as ground fire pierces the aluminum skin. His left thigh explodes. Gauges spot with red. The red runs.

Max, feeling the red-hot pain, squeezes his eyes shut. Cody taps into his compulsive military self-discipline. Centers his shiny brass belt buckle, grabs First-Aid kit.

MAX AT 25
You are fast. Lieutenant...Lightning.

CODY AT 22
You will not die. Sir. That's an order.

MAX AT 25
I give the orders, Light--...

As Cody lands hard Max laughs grimaces passes out turning white.

EXT. INNER-CITY PELL STREET - PRESENT DAY - 05:33

White-clad high-school band assembles for a parade, tunes up.

EXT. VENICE BOULEVARD NEAR MOVIE CREW - MINUTES LATER

More cars stack up at green light. They inch closer.

EXT./INT. ABOVE CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC - LIGHTNING II - 05:49

Max, cozy in his own world. Piloting Lightning II. On-mic. On-air voice a rich baritone.

MAX

(Joe Friday staccato)
 - three - two - one.
 FRONT-AND-CENTER RADIO TROOPERS.
 CAP'N MAX REPORTING. OH-FIVE-FIFTY.
 Route 65 south. Cornflower at Exeter.
 Case Construction. Derricks. Cranes.
 Right lane blocked two solid miles.
 Four lanes into two. Bad arithmetic.

Flies ahead a mile, surveying. Listens to his headset. Shocked.

His off-air aging voice now agitated, talking to... To whom?

MAX

Fuck! You! Can't tell me. -- You cut
 what? -- Over my -- Can't censor an
American war hero, I was no overpaid
 mercenary. Come down there burn your
 ass kid, ever cut my traffic report--
 (waits, listens)
 Oh you heard me huh?

Face white in orange-pink dawn, red wash of anger. Or? Fear?

Shoves away mouthpiece with red "On" diode. Sees it's on.
 Angrily clicks it off. It blips out. Angrier. Grabs canteen.
 Cocks his arm to heave it. Face shows military self-control.

Slams in the cyclic. A smile? His eyes say he has. An idea!
 Copter jumps away replaced by band of orange light at horizon.
 Dawn light. Too bright. In our eyes. Copter whine segues to

INT. MASTER BEDROOM OF ESTHER AND SAUL BASKIN - 05:59

WHINY BOSE RADIO alarm that wakes thirty-something couple.
 Blinding sun pierces window, sprays far wall at a sharp angle.

NPR ON RADIO (VO)

Today Wednesday is the birthday of
 country singer Spooner Vance--

ESTHER

Hump day, Saul. Wednesday. Up up!

ESTHER BASKIN removes her satin-lined sleep cap. Sandy hair,
 tight, short, beauty-parlor-perfect. Mediterranean, Semitic,
 darkly-beautiful face with deeply-inset black Picasso-eyes.

SAUL

Hump day, Esther? Humpless. Month!

SAUL BASKIN. Doesn't really look Jewish.
 Shoulder-length red hair, fair skin, cop's black mustache.

SAUL
Shift-change today, Esther.

ESTHER
Tomorrow you're late, you're demoted?
Saul? Hon? Today we do Belt.

She jumps out perkily. He's hunched into sheets. Grunt. Up.

EXT./INT. NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC - GM ESCALADE - 06:03

FAT EXEC in his slow moving car. GAUDY BIMBO unzips his fly.

FAT EXEC
At work I'm King. Stuck here, same as
some two-hundred-thou'-a-year nobody.
I come on my silk shirt how's it look?

GAUDY BIMBO
Relax oh-"King." I'm paid to swallow.

EXT. PASTEL COLORED TREE-SHADED REAR GARDEN - 06:07

ELDERLY LADY practices Tai Chi. Exhaling softly. Bare feet.

FILTERED VOICE (VO)
Third Commandment: "Concentrate power."

She, soft as her lush garden, does Yang-style "Push-and-Brush."
Sound of a car speeding past. Another. Brakes. She glides to
harder Cheng-style, "Pound-the-mortar." Smack. Distant thunder.

INT. LARGE BASKIN BREAKFAST ROOM - 06:34

Relentless sunlight washes out details. Shadows reveal details.

Esther dressed, pressed. Short hair now long, dark, too smooth
at the temple. (A wig?) Saul, eyes sleepy, manly in sweats,
towels off, beaded jump-rope on shoulders, long red hair tied
into a dark ponytail. Intones a Hebrew prayer, a "bracha."

ESTHER
Belt? My big day. Big! Don't ruin--

SON, BELT, ELEVEN, does "Washington Post" crossword in red ink.
A red-headed Elvis. Orange sunlight intensifies his ferociously
red hair. Belt tightens his Black Belt across his flat stomach.

DAUGHTER, BABE, NINE, does gymnast stretches, showing off.

BELT
Didn't do my homework, Esther. So?

SAUL

School's skipping him again Esther. So?

Esther's eyes from across the room demand Belt answer her.

BELT

Okay okay Esther.

(sarcastic)

"More study more smarts."

SAUL

He learns faster than they teach.

Skipping some classes today, told him

okay. Told you, Belt, call her "Mom."

Don't mouth off. Say your bracha.

ESTHER

Don't argue in front of-- NOW BELT!

MULTICOLOR OUT-OF-FOCUS HURLING SQUARE FILLS THE FRAME.
THWACK! Almost explosive as it bashes a wall. Then. Thud.

BLINDFOLD

is rudely forced across Belt's young eyes, pulled harshly.

BELT

Aaaahhhhh! too tight, Es--Mom.

ESTHER'S HAND

expertly scrambles square Rubik's Cube.

Thrusts it into Belt's hands. As

BLINDFOLD

is pulled down to uncover his eyes. As

BELT'S HIGH IQ EYES

scan the Rubik's Cube he rotates. Green face up, white, front.

BLINDFOLD

is yanked up to cover his eyes. As

ESTHER'S HAND

with fastidious red fingernails precision-clicks stopwatch. As

BELT'S NEWSPRINT-STAINED HANDS

work the Rubik's Cube rapidly. All facets match but one. Then,

FILTERED VOICE (VO)

(legato)

"Concentrate power." Did. Now I had media
support. And public support. New goal:

Executive support. I began like an
immigrant? Rejected by the caviar set?

So now I network. Became King of the
Bottom-Feeders. Built my own base.

STOPWATCH
ticks seconds, phantom image behind Belt. As

ESTHER'S HAND
precision-clicks the stopwatch. Yanks off his blindfold.

BELT
Done! Forty-three quintillion--how--?

ESTHER
Twenty-six-seconds point six-two.

BELT
Shit.

SAUL
Told you. Watch your mouth young man.

BABE
Wash your mouth with soap pimple puss.

ESTHER
Dishwasher soap. Don't forget to buy
some, Saul. Saul? Work tonight, right?
But do not be late tomorrow, Thursday.

Belt turns his back on both parents.
Saul averts his eyes. ("She's usurped my authority again.")

SAUL
Esther, told you. Now Belt. Fibonacci
Sequence, from two-hundred thirty-five.

BELT
Two thirty-three. Three seventy-seven...

ESTHER
Your third slowest, Belt. Hon.

BELT
My eyes Es--Mom, faster when I was
eight. Six-hundred eight, no, ten...

BABE
I do gym today. My balance beam test.

BELT
No one cares, Babe. Ass puss.

BABE
Pimple puss next is nine eighty-seven.

BELT
(picks at a pimple)
Ass--uhh--uh--fifteen ninety-seven.

BABE

You gave him a Black Belt.
What will you give me?

ESTHER

Give? Girls get what they. Take.

Babe squares herself. Peers wide-eyed down into her blouse.
("Did I get boobies yet?")

ESTHER

Life happens while you fill out, Babe.

Saul scans Esther's torso. A lascivious look and gesture.

He goes into the garage off the kitchen, holds the hanging heavy-bag. Belt roundhouse-kicks it with Black Belt form. As

the outer garage door grinds scratchily open and up. As

Esther, no waste motion, grabs briefcase, BlackBerry, iPod, kisses Babe. Saul offers his cheek for a formal peck, and

is surprised. By a tongue kiss. Then mutters:

SAUL

Religious Jew's wife has duties.
Religious Jewish husband has options.
Hear me Esther? Hump day. Sure.

Babe suppresses a "knowing" giggle.

EXT. EIGHT-LANE HIGHWAY TRAFFIC - 06:59

Cars moving unevenly. Headlights form rhythmic patterns.

LARGE, LONG-HAIR, ORANGE AFGHAN DOG runs, yelping, across four lanes. Nearby M.A.P. Motorist Assistance Patrol van cuts across lanes in pursuit. Brakes screech, fenders bend, bumpers lock, metal crunches. The terrified Afghan WHIMPERS.

EXT. INNER-CITY PELL STREET - DAY - SAME

High-school paraders line up, toot and tune their horns.

INT./EXT. BASKIN GARAGE - 07:00

Family van. Kawasaki 1600 Police model. Shiny silver Lexus.

Esther briskly slides her trim haunches into Lexus leather. Inhales the aroma of newness in the soft interior light.

Backing out. Dashboard clock clicks precisely to "07:00." BEEP.
Garage door cascades down closing precisely as car clears it.

Esther motors humming top-line Lexus through a Hallmark Card suburb. Tools onto highway. Life is good. Hits radio power--blustery news reader--switch--Wagnerian music--switch--news.

MAX ON RADIO (VO)

Early heavy traffic. Tells me we're...

She mutes the radio. Dash-mounted BlackBerry shows "07:02:20."

Her finger on the BlackBerry. Click. Her tight schedule.

Esther looks out, grunts, as slowed traffic pisses her off.

Stops short. Bangs dashboard. Turns radio louder. Too angry soprano bleat from Wagner's "Valkyries." She hits one key on her cellphone. Beep tones of her speed-dialing cellphone

segue into Max's distant copter noise. She looks up up as she anxiously awaits an answer. Lowers the radio volume...

ESTHER

Harleen don't forget I want--wait!

MAX ON RADIO (VO)

(volume fades up)

...dump truck stuck on Route 465
median--

INSERT - DIVIDED HIGHWAY WITH TILTED, SPILLING DUMP TRUCK

Front wheels hang over far edge of median, rear wheels raised.

BACK TO SCENE

ESTHER

Stuck! My big day today? Why now?

King Saul has options, Harleen?

Queen Esther has not?

(checking her watch)

Queen Esther might not.

Clicks cellphone off. Clicks radio off. Esther the Executive presses G.P.S. button on Lexus dash, glances at map, zips to right-hand lane, sees exit, cuts wheel, smiles, stops short, her studied calm lost as car behind taps her bumper.

Up ahead. Eighteen-wheeler speeding in slow lane past entry-ramp, left of white line. Small car inches into truck's lane, skins side of speeding truck. Metals spark. Distant sirens.

EXT. ROADS NEAR METROPOLITAN AIRPORT - 07:13

Above, sky is filled with rapidly moving wispy clouds.
Below, row of cars slogs doggedly to nearby airport. An S.U.V...

FILTERED VOICE (VO)

Concentrate power. How, you wonder?
 Grabbed me a department no one gave
 a shit about: Parks. Five near-
 retirees around the state ran Parks.
 Dispersed the power. My secret method?
 Moses's secret? Don't ask just take.

heads for an opening, cuts across three lanes. Bang. Mangled.
 Two chain-reaction crashes follow. Three drivers exit, mad.

REPORTER (VO)

Your cynical take on Eminent Domain?
 And where in the Bible?--which Moses?

Above, sun breaks through the moving clouds. Then

three passenger jets align in the sky descending to land. The
 Hawgs' prop plane bisects their queue, carving the vapor trail.

EXT. METROPOLITAN AIRPORT - 07:28

Cars pile into airport. Mêlée vans buses jitneys photographers.
 Chaos. Cops blow whistles. Fans jump barricades to mob Hawgs'
 charter prop spitting out groggy ballplayers who elbow past
 fans who rush back to cars, players to jitneys or limos.

Players' vehicles exit airport en masse, dodge fans on foot
 running amok.

Fans on access road hunt autographs, tie up highway entrance.

FILTERED VOICE (VO)

From Parks, I controlled budgets and
 construction. Plus roads. Highways.
 Tunnels. Concentrated power. No one
 dared tell me no. I know what's gonna
 be built, and the biggie, I know where!
I award contracts? They vote for my
 bill. Acreage near a new road?--pure
 gold. Show some bureaucrat a blueprint?
I own him. He votes for it, guaranteed.

REPORTER (VO)

Traffic got worse.

Hawgs' stretch limo overlaps two lanes, scrapes Hawgs' jitney.
 In limo, Pudge. In jitney, Wiry Boyfriend. Ain't over yet!