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**MOBIUS STRIP**

An Original Screenplay

by

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**MOBIUS STRIP**

FADE IN:

**INT. MOVING CAR/DOWNTOWN L.A. - NIGHT**

DRIVER'S POV:

ON SCREEN: A FEW HOURS FROM NOW...

The car is approaching an intersection. The traffic lights are GREEN. The driver has priority. The car crosses the intersection. Even though the car is being driven normally, observing the speed limit etc., this is a moment of high significance for everyone involved.

At the very last second, the driver looks LEFT out through the side window to see --

-- Another car, which rips through its red light, flashes across the intersection and BAM!

-- A THUNDEROUS IMPACT. SCREAMS --

Everything turns through 180° as the car, and the world, flips.

CUT TO BLACK:

SOUND UPCUT: THE RHYTHMIC BEEP-BEEP, BEEP-BEEP SOUND OF AN I.C.U. HEART MONITOR AS IT FLATLINES...

FADE IN:

**EXT. L.A./SIDEWALK OPPOSITE THE WDCH - DAY**

ON SCREEN: TEN YEARS AGO...

The sound of the flatlining heart monitor FADES away completely.

A YOUNG ADULT (17ish) is sitting on a folding chair pencil-sketching the Walt Disney Concert Hall on an artist's pad. He is KYLE IRVINE -- an artist gifted with more talent than any human being has a right to have. The way the light and shade sweeps the iconic building is nothing short of awe-inspiring.

An elderly, white-haired and bearded homeless VAGRANT wearing tennis shoes which don't match and pushing a shopping cart, stops as he walks past him. This guy is memorable because in the lapel buttonhole of his ripped and filthy suit jacket, he wears a vibrant, pristine RED ROSE. A touch of incongruous elegance in a harsh world.

The Vagrant stares at Kyle's artwork before continuing on his way without speaking.

**EXT. L.A./SIDEWALK OPPOSITE CITY HALL - DAY**

It's a different day. Kyle, wearing different clothes, is again seated sketching the architecture of this fine building.

The same Vagrant passes and pauses in his journey to admire Kyle's work. Again, in his lapel is a red rose. This time, the two make eye contact though no words are spoken.

**EXT. L.A./SIDEWALK OPPOSITE THE BRADBURY BUILDING - DAY**

It's a third different day. Kyle, wearing different clothes once more, is sketching the building. For the third time, the same red rose-wearing Vagrant pauses to admire his work.

VAGRANT

You know that's where they shot some of that movie... Damn! What was it called? It had that Indiana Jones guy in it.

YOUNG KYLE

Blade Runner.

VAGRANT

That's it! Blade Runner. You got real talent, kid. I mean, real talent.

YOUNG KYLE

Thanks.

VAGRANT

You gonna do that for a job?

YOUNG KYLE

Yup. I'm gonna do storyboards in the movies.

VAGRANT

Ambition's good, but don't be too rigid about it.

(off Kyle's look)

When life hands you a lemon -- just make sure you getta holda the salt and tequila too!

YOUNG KYLE

How d'you mean?

VAGRANT

D'you think I was born a bum? I mean: John Lennon wrote in a song, "Life is what happens to you, while you're busy making other plans."

YOUNG KYLE

(beat/thinks)

Oh, okay. I gettit! You mean, things don't always turn out the way you think they will?

VAGRANT

S'right.

Kyle nods.

YOUNG KYLE

Cool!

(beat/thinks)

Who's John Lennon?

The Vagrant shakes his head and shoots Kyle a look that says, 'You've got a lot to learn.' He continues pushing his shopping cart over the busy intersection.

Once there, he sits, waits and watches Kyle who continues to sketch.

**EXT. L.A./SIDEWALK OPPOSITE THE BRADBURY BUILDING - LATER**

Kyle finishes sketching and packs-up his gear. On the --

**OPPOSITE SIDEWALK:**

The Vagrant continues to watch as Kyle stows his gear in a backpack.

**BACK WITH KYLE:**

Who by now is walking away. As he does so --

Kyle DIVIDES INTO THREE PEOPLE; three identical replicas marching in step, side-by-side...

One turns left; One turns right. The third crosses the intersection and goes straight ahead.

WE FOLLOW THE KYLE WHO'S LIFE TURNED LEFT AS WE FLY AROUND THE CORNER TO CATCH HIM UP --

**EXT. LOS ANGELES SKYLINE - DAY/NIGHT**

Day becomes night. And night becomes day. The traffic blurs. It repeats faster and faster: day/night, day/night, daynight/daynight, daynightdaynight, etc. as time flashes by.

**INT. ONE-ROOM APARTMENT - DAY**

ON SCREEN: LATER TODAY

A MAN'S eyes... distant like he's day-dreaming...

Though his hair is long and greasy and his beard unkempt, he is Kyle Irvine, just ten years older.

NAKED, he is working on a dark, surreal, Daliesque canvas. The image is enchantingly-disturbing: seductive in a melancholic sort of way.

As he applies the daubs of paint, we see his wrists are SCARRED from failed, pervious suicide attempts.

The apartment is a mess, the bed is unmade. If Katrina were to blow through here, it would make the place tidier.

Unwashed clothes litter the floor, heaps of dirty dishes, cutlery and left-over food perch on every available surface.

A CAT is eating pizza from one of the takeaway boxes.

As he paints, his PHONE RINGS.

He ignores its persistent ring and continues painting, until the answering machine cuts-in:

DOCTOR (V.O.FILTERED)  
Kyle, this is Doctor Ellis from  
the Southside Clinic. Kyle,  
you've missed your last two  
appointments and you must be due  
for more medication. Please,  
Kyle,-

KERASH:

A HEAVY ROCK smashes into the ANSWERING MACHINE silencing the message.

**LATER:**

A ratty-looking TV set is on in the background.

It's showing a live news-broadcast covering a shoot-out between armed police and robbers in a failed liquor-store holdup/siege.

Kyle appears from the bathroom, dressed to go out.

He picks up his phone and dials a number:

**INT. ART GALLERY - CONTINUOUS**

An elegant and flamboyant, over-dressed and over-coifed round little MAN is fussing as he ensures that the paintings -- each one a surreal image in the style of Salvador Dali -- are all perfectly lit and beautifully displayed.

A cellphone RINGS, which he retrieves from his coat pocket:

MONTY  
(he speaks in a  
'very' British  
accent)  
Montague Beauregard.

KYLE (V.O.FILTERED)  
Hey, Monty,-

MONTY  
Kyle, dear boy, how are you?

SERIES OF INTERCUTS:

Kyle takes a deep breath and steels himself.

KYLE  
I can't do it, Monty.

MONTY  
To what, precisely, are you  
referring?

KYLE  
Tonight, I just can't go through  
with it.

MONTY  
Nonsense, dear boy,-

KYLE  
You handle it for me.

MONTY  
The previous occasion at which  
you failed to put in an  
appearance, provided me with a  
surfeit of embarrassment which I  
have found difficult to live  
down. However, tonight, you  
simply have to attend.

KYLE  
But I can't do it!

MONTY  
And you'd like a note excusing  
you from class, because you have  
a cold?

KYLE  
Something like that.

Monty doesn't have the time to wet-nurse Kyle:

MONTY  
This exhibition is a very  
important event for us both,  
Kyle. I suggest you either take  
your medication like the good boy  
you are, or find something else  
to work its magic. However, if  
you are not here by eight  
o'clock, then I shall no longer  
be able to continue representing  
you.

(a beat)  
You must decide.

He snaps shut the cellphone, and continues organizing the  
exhibition.

**BACK WITH KYLE:**

He shuts his eyes, sighs deeply, and repeatedly smashes the  
phone into the cradle, until it's all busted-up.

He switches-off the TV set, and as he leaves the apartment,  
a cheap clock reads 7:30PM.

**EXT. SIDEWALK - LATER**

It's a poor area of the city.

He exits his apartment building, and turns into a nearby --

**EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS**

He approaches a GUY just hanging around.

They obviously know each other:

Kyle hands him some folded money, and in return he palms a  
tiny package.

They nod their 'okays' to each other, and Kyle walks away.

**INT. STATIONARY CAR - LATER**

Kyle gets in, unwraps his purchase -- a tiny BLUE pill -- which HE SWALLOWS.

**EXT. SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS**

After several attempts, he starts his battered, old car and drives away in a cloud of blue smoke.

**INT. MOVING CAR/CITY STREETS - CONTINUOUS**

He negotiates the heavy traffic, swearing continuously at the other motorists and pedestrians until he arrives at:

**EXT. CITY STREET/DETOUR - CONTINUOUS**

Armed police, SWAT teams and PARAMEDICS are in attendance.

TV news crews, reporters and photographers crowd along the police lines as they try to cover a breaking news story.

His route is CORDONED-OFF by more police, who direct the traffic along a detour.

He follows the directions, and turns off following the other traffic.

**EXT. ART GALLERY/SIDEWALK - LATER**

Huge signs proclaim: TONIGHT - GRAND OPENING. EXHIBITION OF WORKS BY KYLE IRVINE.

There are no parking spaces free, so he drives past, and dumps his car further down the road.

He gets out of the car, slams the door and doesn't bother locking it.

As he walks back towards the art gallery building, he sees -- approaching him and pushing an old shopping cart -- a homeless VAGRANT with a RED ROSE in his lapel buttonhole who pan-hands him. The Vagrant hasn't changed at all in ten years. Same clothes and even the same mis-matched tennis shoes.

They EXCHANGE EYE-CONTACT as Kyle hurries past without speaking.

**INT. ART GALLERY - CONTINUOUS**

As he enters the room, he is greeted by MONTY:

MONTY  
Dear boy, lovely to see you  
again.

Monty hugs him, but Kyle doesn't respond.

KYLE  
I'm here, because I have no  
option. Can we just get it over  
with?

MONTY  
(sotto voce)  
Now don't be so silly. There are  
lots of lovely people here who  
are all just dying to meet you...

And he leads Kyle into the center of the room.

The buzz of conversation mutes as:

MONTY (CONT'D)  
Ladies and gentlemen: it is my  
great pleasure to present to you,  
the artist himself, the immensely  
talented -- Kyle Irvine.

Polite applause ripples around the room.

Monty smiles widely as he basks in the reflected glow of  
Kyle's popularity.

Kyle looks very uncomfortable as he forces himself to smile  
and nod graciously.

KYLE'S POV:

He's surrounded by a tight ring of polite and expectant  
guests.

Movement from an upper-floor balcony catches his eye, and he very briefly glances up to see:

A SILHOUETTED figure -- backlit from an open door behind it by a BRIEF BUT INTENSELY BRILLIANT FLASH OF LIGHT -- staring down at him.

Kyle looks away for a fraction of a second, and then looks back again during which time: THE BACKLIT FIGURE HAS GONE.

WIDE:

Monty takes him by the elbow:

Kyle isn't sure what he just saw.

MONTY (CONT'D)  
Let me make some introductions.

Monty introduces him to several well known [CAMEO ROLE] guests who are attending the exhibition. They include politicians, musicians, businesspeople and celebs in general.

He nervously shakes hands with them and moves onto the next one as quickly as possible as he tries to speed up the socializing, each time he looks more uncomfortable than the last time.

MONTY (CONT'D)  
(to Kyle)  
Please be nice to this lady.  
She's from Art Nouveau magazine.  
(approaching the  
woman)  
Kyle, this is Tanya McCullogh.

TANYA MCCULLOGH: late 20s and pretty in a timeless way with an easy smile.

They shake hands:

TANYA  
I've been so looking forward to  
our chat.

Kyle shoots Monty a look: 'What chat?' He shoots Tanya a weak smile and steers Monty through a 180:

KYLE

Chat? What fuckin' chat, Monty?

MONTY

(hissing)

Really, Kyle! Art Nouveau?

Exhibition? Magazine? Journalist?

Interview? Hello?

Monty turns Kyle back through 180. Tanya senses his nervousness:

TANYA

I don't bite.

(off his expression)

Your paintings seem to indicate that you have an uneasy take on life, what's your greatest fear?

KYLE

My biggest nightmare?

(a beat off her nod)

Probably being at the opening night of an exhibition that never ends, and being asked a question by a journalist that I can't answer.

Monty's expression says it all: 'Here we go again.'

She thinks he's kidding, and laughs:

TANYA

You have a quick sense of humour.

KYLE

Who says I'm kidding?

The smile disappears from her face as she realizes he's being serious.

TANYA

Do you have a problem with the media?

KYLE

No. I have a problem with people.

TANYA

In what way?

KYLE

People always want something.  
 (off her expression)  
 Even if it's only an interview,  
 everybody wants something.

TANYA

I thought that was called 'give-  
 and-take.' Isn't that what makes  
 the world go 'round?  
 (off his 'so-what'  
 expression)  
 Okay... If I could grant you  
 three wishes, what would they be?

Barely able to mask his impatience, he thinks briefly:

KYLE

I'd wish for a desert island of  
 my own, an unlimited supply of  
 materials so I could paint  
 forever, and a bottle of Jack  
 Daniels that never ran dry.

Her smile flashes across her face again:

TANYA

Great for a couple of weeks, but  
 what then? Totally alone?  
 Forever? No friends? No pets?

KYLE

Maybe my cat.

She smiles, he is human after all:

TANYA

You like cats? If you had to be  
 an animal, would you like to be a  
 cat?

His patience is starting to wear thin with the banality of  
 her questions. Kyle flags-down a passing waiter, scoops-up a  
 tumbler of Jack Daniels, and knocks it back.

Monty senses the situation, and attempts to change tack:

MONTY

Tanya, have you noticed the change in style of Kyle's recent works as his confidence is growing?

She's just about to reply to Monty's question:

KYLE

A dead one.  
 (off her wide-eyed look)  
 If I were an animal, I'd like to be a dead one. Any sort, so long as it's dead.

TANYA

Why?

KYLE

Because nobody torments them after their dead.

She nods, 'I see', but she doesn't understand at all.

She, too, attempts to change the subject:

TANYA

(to a now-uncomfortable Monty)  
 Yes, I had noticed Kyle's style-evolution.  
 (to Kyle)  
 Do you feel your work has grown in confidence?  
 (off his nod)  
 I'm interested to know about your obvious attempts to replicate Salvador Dali's surreal depiction of life...

She pauses as she formulates the rest of her question:

KYLE

My what?

(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)

(off her stunned  
expression)

My 'obvious attempts to replicate  
Salvador Dali's surreal depiction  
of life?' That's what you said  
isn't it?

She nods. Monty places a hand on his arm as he tries to  
wheel him away.

Kyle knocks it away.

KYLE (CONT'D)

So are you saying my work lacks  
originality?

(off her 'I didn't  
mean that'  
expression)

Then what did you mean?

TANYA

I simply meant that you obviously  
see life in a similar way, but  
you are still developing your own  
form of artistic voice.

KYLE

So now I'm guilty of plagiarism.

She shakes her head and goes to speak but he cuts across  
her:

KYLE (CONT'D)

Lady, why don't you go finish  
reading 'Understanding Art One-  
Oh-One' then go get some real  
experience. Cos when you've got  
enough to understand my work,  
you'll be too fuckin' old to do  
anything with it.

As Monty steers Kyle away from her, several people who were  
within earshot all stop talking as they watch the action  
unfold.

MONTY

Oooh! That went well! Look at the admiration on her face! Well done, dear Boy!

Kyle breaks away from Monty's grip and heads back towards Tanya:

KYLE

In the meantime, drop the hypocrisy and go produce something yourself.

TANYA

I'm only a humble journalist, you're the artist.

KYLE

Journalism? Is that what you call it? Go take a copy of your own pseudo-intellectual, platitude-spouting, P-O-S magazine, roll it up as tightly as you can, and shove it up your ass.

TANYA

Thank you for your suggestion, but I'll pass on that one.

Monty grabs him by the arm -- shoots an apologetic look in Tanya's direction -- and drags Kyle away.

MONTY

Dear God, have you completely lost your mind?  
(a beat)  
Do I need to remind you who she is?

Kyle scoops another tumbler of Jack from a waiter, and throws it back.

KYLE

I don't give a fuck. Did you hear what she called me?

MONTY

She didn't call you anything --  
And lower your voice -- people  
are listening.

KYLE

LET THEM LISTEN.  
(to other guests)  
Did you hear what she called me?  
(off their  
expressions)  
Did you hear? Or you?  
(nobody wants to get  
involved)  
She called me a plagiarist.

MONTY

She called you no such thing! She  
paid you a compliment you  
buffoon. She likened your  
perception of life to Dali's, and  
said you were still developing  
your voice --

KYLE

Yeah, yeah.

MONTY

(hissed energetic  
whispers)  
Which means -- if you'll allow me  
to translate from English into  
numbwit-speak: 'when you really  
hit your stride, you will be  
absolutely world-class'. In other  
words, you could become the  
greatest surrealist painter of  
the twenty-first century.

KYLE

Bullshit!

Monty is dumbstruck at Kyle's stupidity and refusal to hear him.

Their conversation is cut short as A HEAVILY-PREGNANT, WOMAN approaches. Her ostentatious clothes, jewelry and general style reek of just one thing: enormous wealth.

CECI  
 Monty! Finally! I've been waiting  
 to meet this man for ages.

Monty shoots Kyle a 'be nice' look before air-kissing with  
 Ceci.

MONTY  
 (to Kyle)  
 Kyle, I want you to meet Ceci Van  
 Gelder.

Kyle forces a smile and, much to her annoyance, shakes her  
 hand.

MONTY (CONT'D)  
 Ceci is a big fan of yours.  
 (to Ceci)  
 Is it two or three of Kyle's  
 pieces you have?

She smiles like the cat who's got the cream:

CECI  
 I've just bought my fourth.

Monty's delighted:

MONTY  
 Which piece?

She leads them to a canvas on display, in which the  
 centerpiece is a LENGTH OF 35mm FILM STOCK (on which  
 individual frames are plainly visible as standalone images)  
 which loops back on itself with A SINGLE TWIST in the  
 middle:

CECI  
 It's a present for my husband.

MONTY  
 That's my favourite piece in the  
 entire exhibition.  
 (looking at Kyle to  
 give him an 'in')  
 What do you call it?

KYLE  
 The Mobius Strip.

CECI

What's a mobious strip?

KYLE

Take a long, narrow length of paper or ribbon, twist it once, and re-attach it back to the other end, you get infinity with a twist.

Ceci is impressed:

CECI

How very clever of you! I would never have thought of something so clever in a million years.

(conspiratorially)

It's a surprise, he hasn't seen it yet.

KYLE

Then how do you know he'll like it?

CECI

He's an investment banker. All investment bankers like anything which increases in value! He'd buy Martian real-estate if he thought he could make money out of it!

Obviously a joke big in investment-banker circles... but Kyle doesn't move in investment-banker circles.

He stares at her like he doesn't believe what he's just heard.

Ceci looks uncomfortable, looking between Kyle and Monty as she tries to understand what's happening.

Kyle stomps across to where the corporate hospitality buffet table is groaning under the weight of the food, snatches a CARVING KNIFE from a chef's hand, and stomps back to the painting.

He slashes it to ribbons, and flings the knife on the floor.

KYLE

Let's see if he still likes it,  
now it's worth Jack Shit.

Monty looks skywards in horror.

Ceci stares at him open-mouthed as he storms towards the exit.

Monty hurries after him:

MONTY

Find yourself a new manager, dear  
boy, I quit!

Middle finger raised in response, Kyle storms out of the building.

KYLE

Screw you, motherfucker!

And he's gone.

**EXT. ART GALLERY/SIDEWALK - NIGHT/CONTINUOUS**

Kyle strides -- half running -- to his car, gets in, starts it and zooms away

**INT. MOVING CAR - CONTINUOUS**

He races through the traffic, weaving in and out of spaces.

His battered, old car hasn't traveled so fast for years.

From nowhere, A GUY RUSHES IN FRONT OF HIM frantically waving his arms trying to slow him down.

Kyle swerves to avoid him, and:

Jumps a red light without stopping:

KERRASH...

As it SLAMS into the side of another car, crossing the intersection at right angles.

**EXT. CITY STREET/INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS**

The other car flips through 180, then through another 180 and slowly crashes down onto its wheels and comes to rest as, around them, the other traffic comes to a halt.

Kyle stumbles from his car, and lurches across to the other vehicle.

KYLE'S POV:

He stares in through the side window, to see:

The DRIVER slumped over the steering wheel.

Her hair covers most of her face -- but her open EYES stare directly into his own.

WIDE:

Kyle recoils as he realizes what's happened:

A SHOUT attracts his attention:

GUY  
HEY!

KYLE'S POV:

He turns and sees an unidentifiable Guy standing in the shadows on the sidewalk, SILHOUETTED WITH A BRIGHT LIGHT SHINING FROM A DOORWAY BEHIND HIM, waving his arms wildly at him.

WIDE:

Kyle turns and sprints away...

**EXT. CITY STREET/SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS**

KYLE'S POV:

Pushing his way through groups of pedestrians, he flees the scene of the accident -- as approaching SIRENS pierce the night sky.

WIDE:

He sees, driving towards him, a police car, so he turns down:

**EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Where he collapses behind a huge dumpster, unaware that he's being watched by the red rose-wearing VAGRANT with whom he earlier exchanged eye-contact, outside the art gallery.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

**INT. ROOM - LATER**

Kyle regains consciousness. He's laying directly on the floor's bare wooden boards.

He looks around at his Spartan surroundings:

The room is windowless and empty of any furniture. The walls -- a nondescript, neutral color -- are devoid of any pictures or paintings.

There are TWO DOORS -- each on OPPOSITE WALLS.

AND A MAN:

A physically imposing figure with short cropped hair and heavily decorated in PRISON TATTOOS, this NEANDERTHAL is an intimidating sight to see.

Kyle hauls himself to his feet, he's dazed and confused.

NEANDERTHAL

Ya can't leave.

Kyle looks at him; 'oh shit, he's being held hostage by some Jeffrey Dahmer, psycho-pervert.'

He looks scared as he puts some space between the two of them and tries to figure his way out.

He pulls his wallet from a pocket, and hauls out a bundle of notes, which he offers to the man, who:

Takes a couple of steps towards him and KNOCKS THE MONEY OUT OF HIS HAND, where it flutters to the floor.

NEANDERTHAL (CONT'D)

I just said ya can't leave.

Kyle pulls his credit cards from his wallet and offers them, instead.

The guy shakes his head in a disbelieving way, and LEANS AGAINST A DOOR, as though blocking it.

NEANDERTHAL (CONT'D)

What is it with you? Deaf or fuckin' stupid?

Kyle stoops down, and retrieves his money.

He again moves away from the man as he tries to distance himself:

Then the SECOND DOOR catches his attention.

He bolts towards it like a rabbit out of a trap, and crashes through it, into:

**INT. ART GALLERY/BALCONY - DAY**

He stops in amazement: 'What the hell's he doing here?'

Down below him, he can see --

**INT. ART GALLERY - DAY**

-- His own exhibition.

The guests are all socializing, Monty is laughing and entertaining Ceci who's smiling and laughing with him.

Kyle visibly relaxes -- he looks over his shoulder back towards the room, the expression on his face saying, 'I know what's going on, this is all just some practical joke, right?'

Then he looks back down at the floor below:

KYLE'S POV:

He sees Monty escorting HIMSELF into the exhibition...

WIDE:

He clutches for the balcony railings for support as he screws his eyes shut, 'this isn't happening -- this is an acid-flashback.'

He opens his eyes and looks down again:

KYLE'S POV:

HE SEES, down below, HIMSELF -- surrounded by a circle of applauding guests -- FLICKING A QUICK GLANCE IN HIS DIRECTION ON THE BALCONY... as they make momentary eye-contact.

WIDE:

Now he's really beginning to get scared.

Quickly, he retreats backwards through the open doorway, back into:

**INT. ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

The Neanderthal has now been joined by --

-- A WOMAN --

-- Who walks over to him and SLAPS HIM hard across the face.

Kyle holds his cheek, leans against, and then slides down, a wall as he slumps into a heap, trying to catch his breath.

KYLE  
Why d'you do that?

WOMAN  
Go ask my kids.

KYLE  
You kids? Why would I do that?

WOMAN  
Go ask 'em and find out.

KYLE  
I think you're got me mixed up  
with someone else.

NEANDERTHAL  
Shut the fuck up, will ya? I'm  
tryin' ta think.

Kyle goes to speak, thinks better of it, so he just shakes his head and shrugs his shoulders.

There's a long, uncomfortable silence till finally:

NEANDERTHAL (CONT'D)  
That's your way out of here.

Kyle stares at him gesturing towards the other, second door. He leaps to his feet and snatches the door open.

He's completely bewildered at what he sees:

**EXT. SIDEWALK/CITY STREET INTERSECTION - NIGHT**

He's standing at street-level.

Looking behind him, he sees the room containing the NEANDERTHAL and the WOMAN:

But in front of him, the sidewalk looks familiar. So does the intersection...

His face reveals his realization:

SUBLIM:

KERRASH -- as the two cars impact.

WIDE:

He stares hard at the intersection...

There's no wreckage.

He looks back up the traffic, and sees:

His old car weaving through the gaps as it HURTLES towards the intersection.

He stops; what's going on? Slowly at first -- then getting faster -- he runs towards the intersection.

Frantically, he rushes towards the edge of the sidewalk.

He steps into the road, waving his arms at it:

KYLE  
STOP, STOP FOR CHRISAKES STOP!

At the last moment the car swerves as it avoids him, and he leaps out of its way, just in time to see it jump the red light:

KERRASH -- as it impacts into the other car -- which slowly does two, 180s and thumps down onto its wheels.

He covers his face with his hands and moans aloud.

KYLE (CONT'D)  
Oh God, oh God, oh God!

When he looks back, he can see himself, already out of the wrecked car, staring through the driver's window at the driver of the other car.

He waves his arms wildly in his direction:

KYLE (CONT'D)  
HEY!

He sees himself turn and look in his direction, before sprinting away.

NEANDERTHAL  
D'you have any idea what you did?

Kyle jumps -- he didn't realize the big guy was so close.

He looks at him with a 'what is all this shit?' expression.

But his eyes betray his fear...

The Neanderthal grabs him around the throat with a huge fist.

NEANDERTHAL (CONT'D)

Well, do ya? Asshole!

Kyle tries to shake his head.

FADE TO BLACK:

SOUND UPCUT: THE RHYTHMIC BEEP-BEEP, BEEP-BEEP SOUND OF AN I.C.U. HEART MONITOR AS IT FLATLINES...

FADE IN:

**EXT. L.A./SIDEWALK OPPOSITE THE BRADBURY BUILDING - DAY**

The sound of the flatlining heart monitor FADES away completely.

Kyle, who by now is walking away DIVIDES INTO THREE IDENTICAL REPLICAS marching in step, side-by-side...

One turns left; One turns right. The third crosses the intersection and goes straight ahead.

WE FOLLOW THE KYLE WHO'S LIFE TURNED RIGHT AS WE FLY AROUND THE CORNER TO CATCH HIM UP --

**EXT. LOS ANGELES SKYLINE - DAY/NIGHT**

Day becomes night. And night becomes day. The traffic blurs. It repeats faster and faster: day/night, day/night, daynight/daynight, daynightdaynight, etc. as time flashes by.

**INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT/STUDIO - DAY**

ON SCREEN: LATER TODAY

Kyle's EYES --

-- Are staring out through a glass wall at a cityscape down below him.

He suddenly snaps-back as though returning from a day-dream.

He's in a ritzy, glitzy penthouse apartment, with an adjoining glass-walled studio offering a superb view over the whole city.

This is the preserve of the seriously wealthy.

He is immaculately groomed, totally in control of himself, swathed in designer-chic and surrounded by fine things.

He saunters across to where (the same canvas that we saw earlier) a half-finished, dark-and-surreal, Daliesque canvas is resting on an easel.

He smiles benignly at it, kisses the tips of two fingers, and touches them to the canvas, before --

-- Turning to the glass wall, and revelling in the panoramic view, as a monarch might regard his kingdom.

This guy is content and confident to the point of arrogance.

He turns, walks towards a computer, and moves the mouse.

He's checking his investments on-line.

He stabs a hands-free button on a nearby phone, gets a DIAL-TONE and hits another speed dial key, which BLEEPs- OUT as it dials.

BOBBY (V.O.FILTERED)  
Robert de Windt.

KYLE  
Bobby, Kyle Irvine.

BOBBY (V.O.FILTERED)  
Hey, Kyle! What can I do for you,  
sir?

KYLE  
What's hot, and what's not?

BOBBY (V.O.FILTERED)  
Nasdaq, Dow, Hangseng or Footsie?

KYLE  
Today's gonna be a good day.  
Nasdaq; tech-stocks I think.

BOBBY (V.O.FILTERED)  
Ten minutes ago, C-A revised  
their profit forecast -- upwards.  
They're starting to feel really  
bullish again.

He nods in understanding:

KYLE  
Okay, Bobby, sell all my Apple  
holdings and switch me into C-A  
stocks before the fund managers  
get on-board and send the bid  
price through the roof. If it  
looks like it's gonna peak  
anytime short-term, offload them  
and we'll just profit-take.

BOBBY (V.O.FILTERED)  
Sure thing, Kyle. Anything else?

KYLE  
Not today. Ciao, Bobby.

He disconnects before hearing the reply, vacates the desk,  
ambles back towards the easel and starts dabbing colour onto  
the canvas.

MATCH CUT TO:

**LATER:**

More paint is now on the canvas.

He reaches across to another phone, hits the handsfree  
button, and dials another stored number:

**INT. ART GALLERY - CONTINUOUS**

An elegant and flamboyant, over-dressed and over-coifed  
round little MAN is fussing as he ensures that the paintings --

each one a surreal image in the style of Salvador Dali --  
are all perfectly lit and beautifully displayed.

A cellphone RINGS, which he retrieves from his coat pocket:

MONTY  
(he speaks in a  
'very' British  
accent)  
Montague Beauregard.

KYLE  
Hey, Monty,-

MONTY  
Kyle, dear boy, how are you?

SERIES OF INTERCUTS:

KYLE  
Today, I feel like a million  
dollars.

Monty laughs:

MONTY  
Doubtless, a carefully chosen  
phrase.

Kyle smiles as he continues to dab paint onto the canvas:

KYLE  
Very perceptive of you. Does that  
mean you've closed the deal for  
the digital repro rights for my  
new works?

MONTY  
Dear boy, I try extremely hard  
not to rain on your parade, so  
why do you always rain on mine?

KYLE  
Ah, so I'll take that as a yes,  
then?  
(a beat)  
And I'll guess that you were  
planning on telling me tonight?

MONTY

Absolutely correct on both counts.

KYLE

Well come on then, dear boy, cut to the chase. Talk numbers to me.

MONTY

The advances for the total worldwide repro rights are just a smidgen under one-point-five, and with the percentage points, could generate in excess of five million over the next three years. To use a modern-day euphemism, you are really hot.

Kyle thinks for a couple of seconds.

KYLE

I think we can do better than that.

Monty is astounded.

MONTY

I'm sorry, did you just lose my signal? I said --

KYLE

I heard what you said. And I said --

MONTY

Yes, I heard. Look, Kyle, let's discuss this tonight. I promise you when you've heard the detail, you'll be delighted with the terms.

KYLE

I hope so, cos those numbers did not get me hard at all. How's the exhibition shaping-up?

MONTY

Beautifully, dear boy. And you just would not believe the guest list. You will have the city's A-list in the palm of your hand.

KYLE

Now that sounds encouraging.

MONTY

Don't be late.

KYLE

Toodle-pip, old chap!

He ends the call, smiles and stretches his muscles like a predator who's just caught the goose that lays the golden eggs.

**LATER:**

Wearing a beautiful designer suit, Kyle re-enters the room.

In the background, an expensive-looking TV set is showing a live news-broadcast covering a shoot-out between armed police and robbers in a failed liquor-store holdup/siege.

Without paying too much attention, he zaps the TV with the remote, and heads towards the door.

An antique GRANDFATHER CLOCK chimes the half hour; he pauses as he checks his Rolex:

7:30PM.

**INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING LOT - LATER**

The mufflers on his Ferrari growl as he fires it up. Tires squeal as he pulls away.

He stops at the barrier and his window drops.

SECURITY GUARD

How's it going, Mister 'I'?

KYLE

Cool, Jake.

Kyle hands him several folded bills.

The security guy passes him a tiny plastic envelope which Kyle slips into an inside pocket.

He winks conspiratorially, and the security guards nod in understanding.

The barrier lifts and he's out in the city traffic.

**INT. MOVING CAR/CITY STREETS - CONTINUOUS**

He turns-up the Ferrari's hi-fi, and A LOUD ROCK TRACK accompanies him as he negotiates the heavy city traffic.

He's calm and serene as he threads his way along his route.

Tires SCREECH as he slams on his brakes, as:

A homeless VAGRANT -- wearing a red rose in his lapel buttonhole, pushing all his belongings in a battered shopping cart, steps out into the road in front of him.

Kyle HONKS THE HORN repeatedly, and leans out of the window:

**EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS**

KYLE

Are you in a rush to meet your  
God?

The Vagrant just stares back at him.

KYLE (CONT'D)

I'm in a hurry, will you please  
get the fuck outta my way?

(a beat as the

Vagrant does nothing)

Okay, I'll do you a deal, you  
promise not to walk on the road  
in front of me again, and I  
promise not to drive on the  
sidewalk.

The Vagrant slowly resumes his journey across the road, Kyle lays two trails of black rubber as he lights-up his tires.

**EXT. CITY STREET/DETOUR - CONTINUOUS**

Armed police, SWAT teams and PARAMEDICS are in attendance.

TV news crews, reporters and photographers crowd along the police lines as they try to cover a breaking news story.

His route is CORDONED-OFF by more police, who stop the traffic to allow more SWAT vehicles into the area.

As he stops, one of the camera teams notices him, and they run towards his stationary car.

He lowers the window and beams a warm smile at them:

REPORTER

Kyle! Kyle Irvine, the hottest  
pop artist since Andy Warhole:  
any comment on what's going on?

The Reporter shoves a mic under Kyle's face.

KYLE

I haven't any idea what's going  
on! Would you like to give me a  
clue? I can make it worth your  
while!

Other media people crowd around the car:

REPORTER

A liquor-store holdup's gone  
wrong.

(off Kyle's 'what can  
I say?' expression)

Where are you heading?

KYLE

Opening night of my new  
exhibition...

A cop waves him forward, but he's surrounded by a throng of media.

KYLE (CONT'D)

There should be some real  
interesting people attending...

The cop has cleared his way, and he inches the car forward:

KYLE (CONT'D)

Come along and cover it, I can  
get you in for free. I'm  
connected -- I know people!  
Gallery 825 -- West Hollywood!  
North La Cienega.

He waves and follows the traffic along a detour.

He follows the directions, and turns off following the other  
traffic.

POV:

We go up high and over the police line, into:

**EXT. CITY STREET/LIQUOR STORE SIEGE - CONTINUOUS**

WIDE:

Heavily armed SWAT officers have already taken up fire  
positions.

From INSIDE THE LIQUOR STORE, A SHOT RINGS OUT...

Immediately, a SWAT TEAM sniper SHOOTS a single round into  
the liquor store's plate glass window.

It disintegrates into fragments.

Immediately, other SWAT operatives fire several TEAR GAS  
grenades into the store.

Seconds later, with HANDKERCHIEF MASKS covering their faces,  
TWO PERPS run out of the shop, HANDGUNS BLAZING wildly.

Two SWAT snipers each fire a single shot, and the two men  
drop to the ground.

**EXT. ART GALLERY/SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS**

Kyle parks his Ferrari right outside the main entrance, gets  
out and heads:

**INT. ART GALLERY - CONTINUOUS**

As he enters the room, he is greeted by MONTY:

MONTY  
Dear boy, lovely to see you  
again.

Monty hugs him, and Kyle hugs him back.

KYLE  
Let's meet and greet the  
beautiful people.

Monty leads Kyle into the center of the room.

The buzz of conversation mutes as:

MONTY  
Ladies and gentlemen: it is my  
great pleasure to present to you,  
the artist himself, the immensely  
talented -- Kyle Irvine!

Polite applause ripples around the room.

Monty smiles widely as he basks in the reflected glow of  
Kyle's popularity.

Kyle looks very comfortable as soaks-up the applause and  
works the room.

KYLE'S POV:

He's surrounded by a tight ring of polite and expectant  
guests.

He swiftly glances upwards towards an empty balcony.

WIDE:

An expression flashes across his face, 'why do that? This  
all feels very familiar.'

Monty notices:

MONTY (CONT'D)

Are you okay?  
 (off Kyle's nod)  
 Sure, fine.

Monty takes him by the elbow:

MONTY (CONT'D)

Let me make some introductions.

Monty introduces him to several well known [CAMEO ROLE] guests who are attending the exhibition. They include movie stars, politicians, musicians, businesspeople and celebs in general.

Kyle is delighted to meet them, and responds with many [AD LIB] complimentary remarks about their own high-profile talents.

He's really working the room.

KYLE

Monty, would you excuse me for  
 just one minute?  
 (off Monty's  
 expression)  
 Urgent appointment.

He grins confidently.

**INT. MEN'S ROOM/CUBICLE - LATER**

On the toilet tissue holder, he tips the contents from the tiny plastic envelope he got from the security guard, and using A HUNDRED DOLLAR BILL from his wallet, he snorts the line.

He relaxes briefly as it buzzes his brain.

**BACK OUTSIDE, MOMENTS LATER:**

High and happy, he glad-hands other guests as he approaches Monty.

He's talking to a very attractive woman:

MONTY

Kyle, this is Tanya McCulloch.  
Please be nice to her, she's from  
Art Nouveau magazine.

This Kyle gives her the full-on treatment of schmooze and charm.

KYLE

Hey, Tanya, great to meet you at last. I love your writing; when it comes to perception you leave the hacks in your wake.

They shake hands. She's all smiles:

MONTY

I'll leave you two to chat for a couple of minutes.

He moves away leaving them alone together.

TANYA

I've been so looking forward to meeting you.

He stares directly at her.

KYLE

Let me get you a drink.

He scoops two glasses of CHAMPAGNE from a passing waiter, and passes one to her.

They toast and drink:

TANYA

Your paintings seem to indicate that you have an uneasy take on life, what's your greatest fear?

KYLE

My biggest nightmare?  
(a beat off her nod)  
Probably being at the opening night of an exhibition, and being asked a question by a journalist that I can't answer.

She laughs. He looks like he's having another 'déjà vu' moment.

TANYA  
You have a quick sense of humour.

KYLE  
Thank you. I work hard to cultivate it!

TANYA  
Then if I could grant you three wishes, what would they be?

He laughs lightly:

KYLE  
Great light and a bottle of Jack Daniels that never ran dry -- talking of which...  
(gesturing with his champagne glass)  
I can't stand this stuff. Do you mind if I get a proper drink?

Again she chuckles and smiles:

TANYA  
Me neither. Get me one, too?

He smiles widely, gestures to a waiter, and trades the two champagne glasses for two Jack Daniels.

This time they enjoy their toast.

TANYA (CONT'D)  
That was only two.

He thinks for a moment:

KYLE  
A soul-mate.  
(off her look)  
Someone who really understands me.

TANYA

Self-confessed vulnerability, now I was not expecting that from you.

(a beat)

So if you were an animal, what sort would you be?

KYLE

On or off the record?

TANYA

Both.

KYLE

On the record, I'd guess I'd like to be a dolphin -- an intelligent free spirit. But just between the two of us, I guess I'm more of a fawn.

TANYA

A fawn? So are you by nature nervous, shy and insecure? Flight more than fight?

He nods.

She rests a hand on his arm:

TANYA (CONT'D)

How did Don McLean put it, 'This world was never meant for one as sensitive as you?'

He nods again, and she smiles a warm, comforting smile back at him. But is she being genuine, or just working her subject for the interview? Or is there maybe something more?

Monty returns:

MONTY

Tanya, have you noticed the change in style of Kyle's recent works as his confidence is growing?

TANYA

Yes, I had.

(MORE)

TANYA (CONT'D)

(to Kyle)

Do you feel your work has grown  
in confidence?

(off his nod)

I'm interested to know about your  
obvious attempts to replicate  
Salvador Dali's surreal depiction  
of life...

An expression of familiarity flashes very briefly across  
Kyle's face as yet another 'déjà vu' moment hits him:

KYLE

I consider myself very fortunate --  
on both counts.

TANYA

Which are?

KYLE

First that I'm able to see the  
world the same way as the great  
man did, and secondly that you  
even compare my abilities to his.

A quick look flashes across Monty's face as he looks away,  
understanding that Kyle is positive-stroking her.

As he does so, his (Monty's) attention is caught by a  
heavily pregnant woman waving to him from across the  
gallery.

Monty nods, then:

MONTY

(to Tanya)

I'm awfully sorry, but could I  
drag this immensely popular man  
away for no more than five  
minutes.

(off her 'if you  
must' look)

There is somebody he simply must  
meet.

She nods, reluctantly. Monty smiles apologetically and takes  
Kyle gently by the elbow:

KYLE  
 (to Monty)  
 Give me just one minute, and I'll  
 be right with you.

MONTY  
 One minute.

He smiles at Tanya, and heads towards the other woman.

KYLE  
 Could we continue this interview  
 over dinner?

TANYA  
 I have to work.

KYLE  
 I was thinking tomorrow. I'll  
 pick you up from your offices?

TANYA  
 Are you hitting on me?

KYLE  
 Would it be so bad if I was?

She shakes her head... No...

KYLE (CONT'D)  
 Say... six-thirty?

Another nod from her, and a cool smile goodbye from him and  
 he heads over to join Monty.

On his way, he scoops another fresh Jack Daniels from a  
 passing waiter...

Then turns back to look again at Tanya, raises his glass to  
 her. She giggles like a schoolgirl. Something's happening...

MONTY  
 Kyle, I'd like you to meet Ceci  
 Van Gelder.

KYLE  
 Van Gelder as in: Van Gelder  
 investments?

(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)  
(off her surprised,  
but flattered  
expression)  
Hey, great to meet you, Ceci.

A strange expression crosses his face:

KYLE (CONT'D)  
Haven't we met before?

CECI  
No, I've been waiting a long time  
for this.

MONTY  
Ceci is a very generous patron of  
yours.  
(to Ceci)  
Is it two or three of Kyle's  
pieces you have?

She smiles like the cat who's got the cream:

CECI  
I've just bought my fourth.

Monty's delighted:

MONTY  
Which piece?

She leads them to a canvas on display:

CECI  
It's a present for my husband.

KYLE  
That's my favourite piece in the  
entire exhibition. I'm so glad he  
likes it.

CECI  
It's a surprise, he hasn't seen  
it yet.

KYLE  
Then how do you know he'll like  
it?

CECI

He's an investment banker. All investment bankers like anything which increases in value! He'd buy --

KYLE

(interrupting and finishing her joke for her)

Martian real-estate if he thought he could make money out of it!

Kyle laughs, but at the same time he looks somewhat puzzled -- where'd he hear that line before?

Ceci looks puzzled:

CECI

Bizarre! That's exactly what I was gonna say.

KYLE

Yes, I thought it was.

CECI

Perhaps we met in a previous life.

KYLE

Speaking of which, tell your husband the sad thing about being an artist is that we have to die before our works can become really valuable.

CECI

There's always an exception to every rule.

MONTY

Kyle, Ceci has just had a most remarkable idea.

(off Kyle's 'I'm interested' expression)

She would like you to paint a portrait of her.

Kyle is surprised:

KYLE

But I'm not a portrait painter.

CECI

Which is exactly why I think you'd be just fantastic at it. I can get any photographer to capture a likeness, but I really want someone to capture my character.

KYLE

Surrealism certainly lends itself to that.

CECI

So you'll think about it then?

KYLE

(looking at Ceci's  
'bump')

When's the happy event?

She laughs:

CECI

He's already one-day overdue. Typical Van Gelder, has to keep everybody waiting till he decides to make an appearance.

KYLE

Well, if you and Monty can agree the business details, why don't I paint you both?

(off her ecstatic  
expression)

That way I can capture your character, your future, and immortalize your baby, too.

She leans forward and kisses him on the cheek.

CECI

You just got yourself commissioned, Kyle.

KYLE

You haven't even agreed a fee, yet, with Monty.

CECI  
Whatever it is, I can afford it.

She is on cloud nine.

MONTY  
(to Ceci)  
Will you excuse us, there is just  
one more person I need Kyle to  
meet.

She nods happily, and turns to gaze at her newest  
acquisition as Monty leads Kyle away.

KYLE  
Not tonight, Monty. I'm all  
celebrity-out for one day.  
Setup a lunch meeting with  
whoever it is.

He heads towards the exit, Monty hurries along beside him:

MONTY  
She is one very important former  
New York Senator and Presidential  
candidate..?

Kyle pauses, empties his glass, and hands it to an  
astonished Monty:

KYLE  
No. Give her my apologies -- tell  
her I have a headache, tell her  
anything, but not tonight.  
(a beat)  
If everybody gets all of me at  
once, there's nothing left for  
the future, to intrigue them.

Kyle waves over his shoulder as he leaves.

**EXT. ART GALLERY/SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS/NIGHT**

He starts his Ferrari, and launches it into the torrent of  
traffic.

**INT. MOVING CAR (FERRARI) - CONTINUOUS**

He cranks up the volume -- the music is so loud it's tangible. He's really high on the results of the exhibition, and because he's pumped on booze, adrenaline and coke, he drives like he's a man in a real hurry to get on with his life -- weaving in and out of empty spaces as he changes lanes.

He claps his hands together and punches the air triumphantly with both fists as he lets out a quick whoop.

**EXT. CITY STREET/INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS**

He jumps the red light without stopping:

KERRASH...

Both cars spin around wildly and come to rest as, around them, the other traffic comes to a halt.

Kyle drags himself from his car, and lurches across to the other vehicle.

KYLE'S POV:

He stares in through the side window, to see:

The DRIVER slumped over the steering wheel.

Her hair covers most of her face -- but her open EYES stare directly into his own.

WIDE:

Kyle recoils as he realizes what's happened:

He turns and sprints away...

**EXT. CITY STREET/SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS**

KYLE'S POV:

Pushing his way through groups of pedestrians, he flees the scene of the accident -- as approaching SIRENS pierce the night sky.

WIDE:

He sees, driving towards him, a police car, so he turns down:

**EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Where he collapses behind a huge dumpster, unaware that he's being watched by the SAME homeless VAGRANT he shouted abuse at earlier.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

**INT. ROOM - LATER**

Kyle regains consciousness. He's laying directly on the floor's bare wooden boards.

He looks around at his Spartan surroundings:

And scrambles to his feet.

The NEANDERTHAL and the WOMAN watch him closely as he tries to make sense of his situation.

He collapses heavily into a corner:

KYLE

Okay guys, this has gone well  
beyond a fuckin' joke.  
(off their non-  
committal stares)  
Tell me what's happening.  
(no reply)  
Do you know who I am?

NEANDERTHAL

Who gives a shit.

KYLE

I have money, I mean real money,  
not on me, but I can get it. I'll  
pay you well, but I think I'm on  
a bad trip. Get me to a clinic, I  
need medication. Please?

WOMAN

Can't you tell anymore what's  
real and what's not?

He screws his face up in terror, and shakes his head  
pathetically.

FADE TO BLACK:

SOUND UPCUT: THE RHYTHMIC BEEP-BEEP, BEEP-BEEP SOUND OF AN  
I.C.U. HEART MONITOR AS IT FLATLINES...

FADE IN:

**EXT. L.A./SIDEWALK OPPOSITE THE BRADBURY BUILDING - DAY**

Kyle, who by now is walking away DIVIDES INTO THREE  
IDENTICAL REPLICAS marching in step, side-by-side...

One turns left; One turns right. The third crosses the  
intersection and goes straight ahead.

WE FOLLOW THE KYLE WHO'S LIFE WENT STRAIGHT AHEAD --

**EXT. LOS ANGELES SKYLINE - DAY/NIGHT**

Day becomes night. And night becomes day. The traffic blurs.  
It repeats faster and faster: day/night, day/night,  
daynight/daynight, daynightdaynight, etc. as time flashes  
by.

FADE TO BLACK:

**INT. APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY**

ON SCREEN: LATER TODAY

The sound of the heart monitor completely fades away to be replaced by a ringing telephone.

Kyle's EYES open and focus as he awakens...

He's laying on a bed.

He reaches out for the phone on the night-stand:

And grunts into it.

**INT. ART GALLERY - CONTINUOUS**

MONTY

Kyle? Monty. How are you, dear boy?

SERIES OF INTERCUTS:

KYLE

Best I've felt all day.

MONTY

You haven't forgotten about tonight, have you?

Kyle grunts again:

MONTY (CONT'D)

I'll take that as a 'no', shall I?

KYLE

Yeah.

Monty looks uncertain, is that 'Yeah' as in 'I had forgotten' or 'yeah' as in 'yeah, take that as a no, I hadn't forgotten.'

KYLE (CONT'D)

What time is it?

MONTY

It is now, five minutes before  
six. I want you here by eight.  
Don't be late.

Kyle grunts again, and replaces the phone.

**INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Wearing only his underwear, he reaches for a couple of aspirin from the medicine chest, walks barefoot into:

**INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

He washes down the aspirin with the final swig in a bottle of J-D.

He tosses the empty bottle into the trash, where it CLINKS against several other empties.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

It's a regular/ordinary apartment -- neither squalid nor chic, just clean, tidy and comfortable.

He slumps down into a sofa, holds his head, and groans aloud.

He sniffs his armpit. It whiffs.

**INT. SHOWER - LATER**

He's getting ready.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER**

Dressed and ready to go out, he leaves the apartment.

A clock on the wall by the front door reads 7:00PM.

**EXT. A SERIES OF SIDEWALKS/ALLEYWAYS - LATER**

Kyle's not driving, he's WALKING... Taking all the short cuts to:

**EXT. SIDEWALK/LIQUOR STORE - CONTINUOUS**

He enters:

**INT. LIQUOR STORE - CONTINUOUS**

He selects a bottle of Jack Daniels off a shelf, and takes it to the check-out.

KYLE

And a pack of Marlborough Lights.

He pays for them, and heads for the door.

Just as he's walking through the door, TWO MEN barge their way into the store, knocking him out of the way.

One of them is the NEANDERTHAL.

Kyle squeezes past them.

**EXT. SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS**

And hurries away.

He turns into:

**EXT. A QUIET ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Where he opens his bottle, and takes two really good pulls from it.

**EXT. A SERIES OF SIDEWALKS/ALLEYWAYS - CONTINUOUS**

He continues his journey and every so often, he stops in a quiet area for a surreptitious swig from the bottle.

At one of his stops, he hears:

VAGRANT (O.S.)

Could I get a quick pull from  
your bottle, too?

He looks around, and sees the same HOMELESS VAGRANT in a doorway, shrouded in a blanket.

Kyle nods, walks towards him and offers the bottle.

As the Vagrant takes a small pull, the blanket drops away from around his shoulders. Sure enough, in the lapel buttonhole of his dirty suit jacket, is the PRISTINE RED ROSE. He hands the bottle back.

VAGRANT (CONT'D)

Nectar. Truly, much appreciated.

Kyle takes his cigarettes from his pocket, and offers the guy a smoke, which he readily accepts.

Kyle joins him in the doorway, and for a short while, they just smoke and pass the bottle between one another in a comfortable silence.

From somewhere nearby, the sound of several approaching POLICE SIRENS can be heard.

VAGRANT (CONT'D)

You don't look like you live on the streets.

KYLE

I don't.

VAGRANT

So what do you do?

KYLE

I paint pictures.

VAGRANT

Y'any good?

(off Kyle's non-committal shoulder shrug)

You make money at it?

(off Kyle's nod)

You rich?

KYLE

I do alright.

VAGRANT

I'll take that as a yes. You famous, then?

KYLE  
Famous? No. But I am known.

Kyle pulls a sketch-pad and pencil from his coat pocket:

KYLE (CONT'D)  
Do you mind if I draw you?

VAGRANT  
You gonna pay me?

KYLE  
Nope...  
(a beat)  
I'm gonna give you the drawing to  
sell.

VAGRANT  
I'd prefer it if you just paid  
me.

KYLE  
Trust me, this could change  
everything.

VAGRANT  
Bullshit. No 'one-thing' changes  
everything.

Kyle starts sketching him.

KYLE  
Some 'one-things' do.

VAGRANT  
Nah.

KYLE  
Why not?

The vagrant takes another drink:

VAGRANT  
I just want you to know, it  
wasn't always like this for me.  
(off Kyle's 'go on'  
expression)  
I used to be a lawyer, and a  
damned good one too.

KYLE  
What happened?

Kyle is still rough sketching him:

VAGRANT  
Life.

KYLE  
Huh?

VAGRANT  
John Lennon once wrote in a song,  
"Life is what happens to you,  
while you're busy making other  
plans."

Kyle stares at him as if to say -- 'That's familiar'.

VAGRANT (CONT'D)  
The classic riches-to-rags story.  
(a beat)  
Too much pressure, too much money  
and too much of this stuff.

He hands the bottle to Kyle who takes a swig, and hands it  
back.

KYLE  
No family?

VAGRANT  
Wife and two kids somewhere. Ex-  
wife...

KYLE  
Ever see them?

He shakes his head, then remembers:

VAGRANT  
Yeah... one time, downtown. She  
looked at me like she'd seen a  
ghost and literally ran away.

KYLE  
Ouch.

The vagrant snorts in agreement.

VAGRANT

Guess she didn't approve of my  
tailor.

(a beat)

Tell me how?

(off Kyle's look)

How could this change everything?

Kyle continues sketching:

KYLE

Like I just said, I'm known. Some  
of my stuff sells for big money.  
This should get you somewhere to  
live. Then, if you want to get a  
job...

He doesn't need to complete the sentence:

VAGRANT

Don't mess with my head -- it's  
not kind.

KYLE

You're a lawyer, you should be  
able to tell when someone's  
speaking the truth.

VAGRANT

I was a contracts lawyer over at  
Fox amongst others, not a defense  
lawyer. Ya know, I worked on the  
contracts for that movie... what  
was it -- Blade Runner. Are you  
for real?

The vagrant stares at him as he tries to determine if he is.

**EXT. ART GALLERY/SIDEWALK - LATER**

The two of them approach the art gallery.

Kyle points up to all the banners and notices announcing his  
exhibition.

The vagrant looks at them, and back at him as an expression  
of understanding dawns on his face.

Face full of emotion at the kindness he's just been shown, he grasps Kyle by the hand, and shakes it warmly.

VAGRANT

If you ever need a lawyer...

Kyle smiles at him.

KYLE

Let's go see about realizing your asset.

They haul the vagrant's shopping cart up the steps to the gallery, just as:

Monty bursts out of the main entrance:

MONTY

I said eight o'clock,-  
 (recoiling as he sees  
 the vagrant)  
 And who is this?

VAGRANT

Counsellor Kenneth LeVoi the third.

KYLE

Proud owner of an original Kyle Irvine sketch, which I'd like you to sell for him.

Monty looks at Kyle like he's lost the plot.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Can you arrange it tonight?

Monty takes Kyle aside:

MONTY

This is an exclusive, invitation-only opening night, dear boy.

KYLE

I invited him.  
 (off Monty's  
 incredulous  
 expression)  
 Shall we go in.

**INT. ART GALLERY - CONTINUOUS**

The invited guests all turn as Kyle and Monty enter, and the buzz of conversation dies-away as the vagrant follows.

A few self-conscious smiles flicker across several faces as the guests radiate their, 'unusual but, hey -- I'm cool with this situation' reactions.

KYLE

(to the vagrant)

I've gotta leave you now, but if you're hungry, there's a buffet over there, and just grab a drink from any waiter.

(off his nod)

This is Monty. He'll arrange to find a buyer for your sketch.

(to Monty)

See he gets all the gross, I'll pick-up your percentage.

MONTY

Let's not keep your guests waiting any longer.

And he leads Kyle into the center of the room.

The buzz of conversation mutes as:

MONTY (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen: it is my great pleasure to present to you, the artist himself, the immensely talented -- Kyle Irvine!

Polite applause ripples around the room.

Monty smiles widely as he basks in the reflected glow of Kyle's popularity.

KYLE'S POV:

He checks the balcony. There's nothing up there.

WIDE:

He looks relieved; Monty notices. He shoots Kyle a quizzical look. Kyle nods that everything's cool.

After the applause has died away, Monty introduces Kyle to various [CAMEO ROLE] celebrities amongst the guests.

Kyle grabs a drink from a passing waiter's tray:

KYLE

I wouldn't want my liver thinking  
it's got the night off!

MONTY

There's no fear of that  
happening.

(a beat)

I hope you're paying it danger  
money.

Kyle shoots him a 'screw you' look.

Tanya McCulloch waves and approaches them from across the room:

MONTY (CONT'D)

(grabbing a glass of  
champagne from a  
passing waiter)

Be nice to her, she's from,-

KYLE

Art Nouveau.  
(extending his hand)  
Hey Tanya, how's it going?

She looks surprised:

TANYA

Have we already met?

MONTY

Have you already met?

KYLE

Guess so, not sure where though.

Monty offers her the champagne:

KYLE (CONT'D)

She doesn't like champagne.

(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)  
 (off another  
 surprised reaction)  
 Jack Daniels?

TANYA  
 This is too spooky for words.

KYLE  
 Am I right?  
 (off her nod as he  
 scoops a glass from  
 a waiter's tray)  
 You'd be amazed at what I know.

They toast. Just as he's about to drink:

SUBLIM:

**EXT. SIDEWALK/INTERSECTION - NIGHT**

KERRASH -- two cars collide.

**BACK TO SCENE:**

He recoils physically at what he's just seen in his mind's eye.

Tanya and Monty glance at each other:

TANYA  
 Hey, are you alright?

He re-focuses back on them; a couple of seconds later:

KYLE  
 Have you ever had that feeling of  
 déjà vu? You know, when you feel  
 that everything has that sense of  
 being really familiar...  
 (to Monty)  
 Is there someone here called...  
 Ceci somebody?

MONTY  
 Ceci Van --

KYLE  
 Gelder?

Now Monty stares at him closely.

MONTY  
 You know her too?  
 (off Kyle's shaken  
 head)  
 You know of her?

KYLE  
 She's pregnant.

TANYA  
 Everybody knows that.

MONTY  
 Kyle never reads the gossip  
 columns.  
 (to Kyle)  
 She has confirmed that she will  
 attend, she especially wants to  
 meet you. Maybe her baby has  
 decided it's time to arrive?

KYLE  
 No, it was only due yesterday.

Monty is not sure what's happening, but this isn't normal  
 for Kyle.

SUBLIM:

**INT. ART GALLERY - NIGHT**

Surrounded by a tight ring of guests, movement from an upper-  
 floor balcony catches his eye, and he very briefly glances  
 up to see A SILHOUETTED figure -- backlit from an open door  
 behind -- staring down at him.

**BACK TO SCENE:**

He rubs his hand across his face, and empties his glass:

TANYA  
 Are you sure you're alright?

KYLE  
 It happens all the time. Where do  
 you think my inspiration comes  
 from?

TANYA

Is it okay if I start then?  
 (off his 'be my  
 guest' expression)  
 Your paintings seem to indicate  
 that you have an uneasy take on  
 life, what's your greatest fear?

KYLE

My biggest nightmare?  
 (a beat off her nod)  
 Probably being at the opening  
 night of an exhibition, and being  
 asked a question that I can't  
 answer by a journalist, while  
 suffering déjà vu flashbacks!

At that moment, Ceci Van Gelder makes her entrance -- she waves at Monty, and makes a bee-line towards him:

CECI

I'm so sorry I missed the  
 opening, but the traffic was just  
 impossible. Police and swat teams  
 everywhere.

MONTY

How dreadful.

SUBLIM:

**EXT. CITY STREET - DAY**

He's sitting in a Ferrari, press jostling around his car:

**BACK TO SCENE:**

KYLE

Liquor-store holdup.

They turn and stare at him.

CECI

Yes... one dead and one injured.

He stares into the distance -- vague and uncertain.

SUBLIM:

**INT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY**

He's leaving the store, and the Neanderthal barges in past him:

**BACK TO SCENE:**

He reacts sharply as his memories come flooding back.

KYLE

I'm sorry, guys, I'm gonna have to bale out.

(to Tanya)

Can we continue this some other time?

(off her nod)

Monty'll sort something out for you.

SUBLIM:

**INT. APARTMENT STAIRWELL - DAY**

Concrete, cold and inhospitable.

He sees THE WOMAN leading TWO KIDS to an APARTMENT DOORWAY.

**BACK TO SCENE:**

What the hell? This makes no sense at all...

He staggers heavily, and Monty stops him from collapsing to the floor.

MONTY

(hissing with fury)

Tell me you're not bloody tripping! Not here for God's sake! What have you taken?

KYLE

I gotta go. I gotta go.

He breaks free and runs towards the front door.

**EXT. ART GALLERY/SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS/NIGHT**

He half-walks/half-runs and finally breaks into a full run as he gets away.

SUBLIM:

**INT. ROOM**

He sees the Neanderthal and the Woman staring at him:

**BACK TO SCENE:**

A moan of despair escapes his lips as he sprints along the sidewalk -- unseeingly jostling and bumping other pedestrians.

**EXT. CITY STREET/INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS**

Oblivious to the oncoming traffic, he charges across the street:

And is HIT BY A CAR crossing at right angles.

It flips him over the hood and he lands in a heap on the road, before it:

Swerves violently, and crashes heavily into a nearby building.

Behind him, other traffic screeches to a halt, and a series of tail-end fender-benders IMPACT aloud.

Dazed, Kyle hauls himself to his feet, and stumbles across to where the crashed car has come to rest.

KYLE'S POV:

He stares in through the side window, to see:

The DRIVER slumped over the steering wheel.

Her hair covers most of her face -- but her open EYES stare directly into his own.

WIDE:

Kyle recoils as he realizes what's happened:

He turns and stumbles away...

**EXT. CITY STREET/SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS**

KYLE'S POV:

Limping heavily IN OBVIOUS PAIN, he pushes his way through groups of pedestrians as he flees the scene of the accident.

Approaching SIRENS pierce the night sky.

WIDE:

He sees, driving towards him, a police car, so he turns down:

**EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Where he collapses behind a huge dumpster, only this time, there is NO SIGN of the red rose-wearing VAGRANT...

But in the shadows -- TWO UNIDENTIFIABLE PEOPLE -- watch him in silence.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

**INT. ROOM - LATER**

Kyle regains consciousness. He's laying directly on the floor's bare wooden boards.

He looks around at his Spartan surroundings:

And scrambles to his feet.

He flexes his muscles and rubs his limbs -- they don't hurt him anymore.

The Neanderthal and the Woman watch him closely as he tries to make sense of his situation.

He recognises them and collapses heavily into a corner.

KYLE  
Why are you doing this to me?

The Neanderthal smiles:

KYLE (CONT'D)  
What's so funny?

NEANDERTHAL  
You remember us, then?

SUBLIM:

**INT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY**

He's leaving the store, and the Neanderthal barges past him:

**BACK TO SCENE:**

He recoils again as his memory intrudes.

KYLE  
Jeez, I can't fuckin' forget you.

WOMAN  
How much of your life do you  
truly control?

Kyle stares at her; she isn't making any sense to him.

KYLE  
What's that supposed to mean?

WOMAN  
How much of it can you change  
when you really need to?

KYLE  
No more psycho-babble bullshit --  
please -- get me to a doctor. I  
offered to pay you already. What  
do you want from me?

NEANDERTHAL

Nothing.

KYLE

Then why are you fuckin' DOIN'  
THIS TO ME?

WOMAN

We're not doin' anything.

KYLE

You're kidnapping me, and keeping  
me prisoner.

(off her 'no'  
expression)

And you've drugged me.

WOMAN

No we're not. We're here, just  
like you.

KYLE

Then who is?

WOMAN

You are.

(off his expression)

Cos you won't accept what's  
happened.

KYLE

So who brought you here?

WOMAN

You did. Why do you think your  
clothes keep changing?

He looks at his clothes:

SUBLIM:

FLASH, FLASH... Kyle dressed as he was, on the TWO previous  
occasions:

**BACK TO SCENE:**

He stares at her confused and unable to make sense of  
anything:

KYLE  
What are you talkin' about?

She beckons him to follow as she walks towards the door.

He drags himself to his feet and lurches after her:

KYLE (CONT'D)  
Are we going to a clinic?

**INT. APARTMENT BLOCK STAIRWELL - DAY**

Concrete, cold and inhospitable.

From an UPPER FLOOR -- out of sight -- a bright LIGHT shines, followed by the sound of a DOOR CLOSING.

Kyle and the Woman walk DOWN the staircase

KYLE  
What sort of clinic is this?

She gestures to him to keep his voice down.

She sits, and gestures to him to do the same. Reluctantly, he does.

KYLE (CONT'D)  
(sotto)  
Is this real?

She nods.

He looks relieved.

KYLE (CONT'D)  
Then how did we get here?

She doesn't reply:

He looks away, frustrated at her lack of response.

On the floor below where they're sitting, an apartment door opens, and a WOMAN exits VERY QUICKLY leading a little BOY by the hand, and carrying a little GIRL aged about two years.

She knocks on a neighbour's front door, and waits.

She looks around her, and Kyle sees it's her -- she's THE SAME PERSON as the woman he's sitting next to.

He groans:

KYLE (CONT'D)

You said --

She puts a finger to her lips as she indicates quiet:

He looks at her -- she has tears trickling down her cheeks.

WOMAN

(to Kyle)

Mikey, six and Carly just turned two.

KYLE

But how?

WOMAN

(to Kyle)

Later; just watch and learn while you have the chance.

The NEIGHBOUR opens the door, and smiles when she recognizes her:

WOMAN (CONT'D)

(very stressed)

Janice, I hate to drop this on you at short notice, but could you take the kids for a couple of hours?

NEIGHBOR/JANICE

Sure, is everything okay?

WOMAN

I've just had a call from the hospital. Deke's been in a shooting.

(off Janice's expression)

I don't know how bad, but if he's in the hospital...

Janice reaches for the kids:

JANICE

Take as long as you need. They'll  
be fine here till you get back.

She kisses her kids then runs down the stairs.

Seated next to Kyle, the woman turns and stares inquiringly  
at him.

KYLE

So? What?

The woman looks at him, gets up, and gestures that he should  
follow her.

They walk back up the stairs -- again the bright light  
SHINES out...

**INT. ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

The woman shuts the door behind her.

Kyle first stares at the Neanderthal, then back at her:

KYLE

I thought you agreed to get me to  
a Goddam clinic?

She shakes her head.

NEANDERTHAL

You still haven't figured it out  
yet, have you?

KYLE

What am I, the weakest link? Why  
don't you explain it to me?

He shrugs his shoulders and stares back at Kyle, 'why should  
I? Go figure it for yourself.'

Kyle ROARS aloud in frustration.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Am I supposed to have brought you  
here too?

(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)  
 (off his head shake)  
 Good, cos just for the record, I  
 don't even know who the fuck you  
 are.

NEANDERTHAL/DEKE  
 I'm Deke.

KYLE  
 Is that supposed to mean  
 something to me?

Deke shoulder-shrugs.

Kyle stares at him, and then at the woman, and back to him  
 again.

KYLE (CONT'D)  
 (pointing between the  
 two of them)  
 Are you two..?

Deke nods.

KYLE (CONT'D)  
 So how did you get here?

DEKE  
 You really wanna know?  
 (off Kyle's nod)  
 Follow me.

He heads towards the other door, and waits until Kyle  
 catches-up:

**INT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY**

A FLASH OF LIGHT O.S.:

Deke and Kyle stand in an internal doorway leading into the  
 store from the back store-room.

Kyle stares and stares -- unable to tear his wide-eyed gaze  
 away from something -- the expression on his face gradually  
 changing to utter disbelief...

KYLE'S POV:

He sees HIMSELF collecting, and paying for, his cigarettes and bottle of Jack Daniels.

WIDE:

He looks at Deke for some explanation...

Who just indicates that he should continue watching.

He sees himself leaving the store, just as Deke and the other guy enter -- barging him out of the way -- before he manages to slip past them and out of the door to the street.

Kyle turns and heads through the connecting door:

The bright light again pulses out from the store-room:

**INT. ROOM**

Kyle enters, followed by Deke.

KYLE  
I've seen enough.

DEKE  
Trust me, you didn't.  
(off Kyle's look)  
You need to see how it ends.

KYLE  
So what'd you do -- rob the old  
bastard?

Deke beckons him to follow, and again, they exit through the door:

**INT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY**

The bright light flashes, and they're back in the store-room doorway:

Only this time, they can see -- through the plate-glass window of the storefront:

FLASHING LIGHTS from police vehicles.

In front of Deke and Kyle:

Deke The Neanderthal and his accomplice are each carrying a GUN, and they're crouched down behind a shelf of stock, out of sight of the window.

Also flat on the ground, a gun to his head, the store keeper.

ACCOMPLICE  
Let's just get the fuck out back.

The Neanderthal shakes his head:

DEKE  
I checked earlier, they've  
blocked the fuckin' door.

ACCOMPLICE  
Then if we die, so does this old  
bastard.  
(beat/thinks)  
Aw, fuckit!

He FIRES a SINGLE SHOT into the store keeper who dies.

Immediately -- from outside -- another SINGLE SHOT is fired, and the PLATE GLASS WINDOW DISINTEGRATES, as:

Several TEAR GAS grenades are FIRED into the store.

ACCOMPLICE (CONT'D)  
SHIT! Now what?

DEKE  
(pulling a  
handkerchief across  
his nose and mouth)  
Run or wait?

They decide in a split second:

BOTH (TOGETHER)  
RUN!

With guns in hand, they sprint out of the front door, firing wildly.

Neither of them have taken more than two paces when, from outside (O.S.) TWO SHOTS ring out, and both men drop to the ground.

In the back of the store:

DEKE  
(to Kyle)  
Now you've seen enough.

He turns and heads towards the store-room door:

**INT. ROOM**

They enter:

KYLE  
But if that was you out there,  
how come --

He stops in mid sentence:

ANOTHER MAN is now in the room with the woman.

He looks completely bewildered at what's happening...

But when he sees Deke, he looks relieved. He goes up to Deke and claps him on the shoulder in recognition.

ACCOMPLICE  
Hey Deke, good to see you! What  
the fuck's goin' on?

KYLE  
(to the other Guy)  
Who're you?

DEKE  
Don't you recognize him?

Kyle shakes his head, and looks at him again:

SUBLIM:

**INT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY**

Two guys barge him out of their way: he's DEKE'S ACCOMPLICE in the liquor store holdup.

**BACK TO SCENE:**

Kyle recognizes him -- but he just saw him shot down by the SWAT snipers:

KYLE  
What the fuck is going on?

ACCOMPLICE  
Suppose you tell me.

Kyle holds his head in his hands. And then it dawns on him:

KYLE  
Oh shit, oh fuck, oh shit.

DEKE  
Finally figured it out?

Kyle looks at him.

KYLE  
It can't be that.

WOMAN  
(pointing to Deke)  
We figured it out just before you  
came-to first time 'round.

DEKE  
Still want a clinic?

Kyle shakes his head.

KYLE  
I wanna know what happened to me.

WOMAN  
Go, take a look.

Alone, Kyle heads toward the door:

**EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT**

A door opens and the BRIGHT LIGHT blasts out, backlighting and silhouetting him, before he closes it.

At the far end of the dark, unlit alleyway is a main street. A huge commercial DUMPSTER is along one wall.

There is no sign of the VAGRANT.

Approaching SIRENS cut through the noise of the city, just as:

Kyle sees himself staggering heavily as he turns the corner from the main street, stumbles, and collapses to the ground in a heap behind the dumpster.

He looks dumbstruck at what he's looking at -- confirmation of what he's figured out.

His inert form SHIMMERS very briefly and then returns to normal.

He turns and opens the door, and enters the bright light.

**INT. ROOM**

WOMAN

(to Kyle)

Now you know.

They both look at the Neanderthal's accomplice, who's huddled into a corner, in virtual shock.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

(to Kyle)

I just explained it to him.

KYLE

So how come you two know so much?

WOMAN

We've been here a long time.

(off his look)

Don't ask me how come; that bit I don't know.

KYLE  
So what do we do now?

They don't know:

WOMAN  
Guess we'll find out eventually.

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. ROOM - LATER**

They're all killing time, just waiting.

Kyle huddles himself into a tight ball and closes his eyes.

He hears a CLICK and starts alert, staring around.

The door closes.

Kyle is now alone in the room.

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. ROOM - LATER**

The door swings open... it's waiting for him...

He stares at it, gets to his feet and cautiously moves towards it...

**EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT**

Kyle comes-to laying behind the dumpster.

Groaning, he sits himself upright, then drags himself to his feet and he lurches out of the alleyway.

**EXT. CITY STREET/INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS**

It's very late at night/early morning because there is no traffic.

The center of the intersection -- where the accidents happened -- is clear of any wreckage or debris.

He turns and walks slowly up the sidewalk towards:

**EXT. ART GALLERY - CONTINUOUS**

Where he pauses outside...

And turns and looks back towards the intersection.

MONTY

Dear boy! How are you?

Kyle jumps.

KYLE

Dammit Monty, you scared me half  
to death!

MONTY

(smiling warmly)  
Interesting choice of phrase.

He gestures towards the art gallery door.

Kyle looks at it and nods.

**INT. ART GALLERY - NIGHT**

The place is deserted of people, though Kyle's exhibition is  
still set out.

KYLE

How come you're still here?

MONTY

I'm not exactly sure, but I've  
been expecting you.

KYLE

Some really weird shit's been  
happening to me.

MONTY

I'd suspect that you've been  
mixing chemicals with alcohol?

Kyle nods:

KYLE  
What's the last thing I did?

MONTY  
Caused a frightful scene, and  
then ran out.

Kyle runs across to his MOBIUS STRIP painting still on display:

It is unmarked and undamaged.

Kyle looks relieved.

The expression of his face changes as he turns to look directly at Monty:

KYLE  
What do you mean, 'you've been  
expecting me?'

Monty looks uncomfortable, unsure how to handle the answer:

Instead, he gestures that Kyle should follow him, and they walk into a different area of the gallery.

Seated behind a long table, are THE VAGRANT and TANYA McCULLOGH.

An empty chair is between them, and another on the opposite side of the table on its own.

Kyle stops when he sees them, and stares at Monty:

KYLE (CONT'D)  
What's going here?

Monty gestures to the solitary chair, and goes to the other side, and sits between the two others.

MONTY  
It seems we have to make a  
decision.

Kyle stares at them:

KYLE  
About what?

TANYA

About you.  
(off his look)  
About your future.

KYLE

What is this bullshit?  
(a beat)  
Okay, I had some bad stuff and  
was a little rude, I apologize,-

TANYA

It's more than that.

KYLE

(to Tanya)  
So you wanna write a bad review  
about me? Go ahead.  
(to Monty)  
You don't wanna manage me any  
more, okay, if it makes you  
happy, I'll find a new manager.  
(to the vagrant)  
But why are you here? Didn't you  
like my sketch?

VAGRANT

It's excellent, that's not why  
I'm here.

KYLE

Well, don't stop now, it's just  
getting to the interesting part.

MONTY

Come with me, there's something  
you need to see.

Monty leads them to a door. Kyle follows him into:

**INT. TANYA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

They appear through the door and stand watching.

Kyle looks around and groans, 'shit, I thought this was all  
over.'

Laying in the bed, sleeping soundly: Tanya McCullogh.

Monty beckons, and they exit through the door into:

**INT. MONTY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

So too is Monty.

Kyle nods slowly.

Again, they exit, into:

**INT. HOSTEL FOR THE HOMELESS - NIGHT**

Running the length of a long room, dormitory-style, are two rows of beds on opposite sides.

The room is filled with men, sleeping -- oblivious to the fact that:

Around one bed, MEDICS are tending quietly to a sick ELDERLY MAN already on a stretcher gurney.

They cover his FACE and wheel the dead man out of the room.

Monty and Kyle walk the length of the room between the beds.

An ELDERLY MAN approaches them, and -- without speaking a word -- stares directly into Kyle's face as they pass each other. He has the same face as the dead elderly man who the medics just wheeled away.

They pause at the foot of one bed, and Kyle can clearly see the face of this sleeping vagrant, Kenneth LeVoi the third.

KYLE

Then how..?

Monty shrugs.

**EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT**

A blinding flash of light as the doorway opens and the FOUR of them enter the alleyway.

Flashing lights from a cop car and an ambulance. Up near the dumpster, PARAMEDICS and COPS work.

They load a MAN onto a gurney and wheel it to the ambulance.

The look on Kyle's face is pure horror.

**INT. ART GALLERY - CONTINUOUS**

They re-appear through the door.

Monty, Tanya and the Vagrant sit on one side of the table.  
Kyle slumps into the chair opposite them:

KYLE

What am I supposed to have done?

TANYA

You were responsible for the death of another person. We have to decide on your future.

KYLE

Says who?

TANYA

They're the rules.

KYLE

Rules? What rules?

TANYA

There has to be a judgment when somebody dies at the hands of another.

KYLE

And who appointed you?

TANYA

This is what we do. We use the term Guardians. We guide, we protect and we chastise where necessary.

KYLE

Just me?

TANYA

No. Everybody has a Guardian.

KYLE

I still don't gettit.

TANYA

There are millions of you, and thousands of us. People can only move forward with our recommendation.

MONTY

Which brings us back to why we're here; do you accept that you're responsible for taking a life?

Kyle is just about to protest his innocence, when:

**INT. MOVING CAR (OLD) - NIGHT**

SUBLIM, KYLE'S POV:

KERRASH! As he slams into the side of the other car crossing the intersection.

**INT. MOVING CAR (FERRARI) - NIGHT**

SUBLIM, KYLE'S POV:

KERRASH! As he slams into the side of the other car crossing the intersection.

**EXT. CITY STREET/INTERSECTION - NIGHT**

SUBLIM, KYLE'S POV:

He's being tossed over the hood of a moving car, landing on the tarmac of the road, looking up just in time to see:

KERRASH! As the car slams into a nearby building.

**BACK TO SCENE:**

He holds his head in his hands and groans:

KYLE

No, you gottit wrong, that didn't happen.

MONTY  
It did.

KYLE  
Which one?

TANYA  
All three.

He looks up at them questioningly.

KYLE  
How could all three of them  
happen? Which one was real?

TANYA  
They all were.

KYLE  
That's bullshit! How can all  
three be real?

TANYA  
You make choices in life, that  
way you feel in control. But  
sometimes, no matter which  
choices you make, you always seem  
destined to face a particular set  
of circumstances.

KYLE  
Why?

TANYA  
Perhaps because it's the prime  
lesson a person needs to learn  
before he or she can move  
forward.

KYLE  
And what is this 'prime lesson'?

TANYA  
It varies from person to person.

KYLE  
And what's mine?

TANYA

The same as most people's -- you have to learn to be responsible for your own actions.

Kyle nods in understanding.

KYLE

So how do we know when we've learned it?

TANYA

Because you don't keep making the same mistake.

KYLE

And if we don't learn the lesson?

MONTY

Then you can't progress until you do. Some people are fated to keep making the same mistake time after time until eventually they figure it out.

KYLE

Are you saying...

MONTY

Call it déjà vu if it helps you understand.

TANYA

I'm saying we can't always escape the responsibility for our actions. Sometimes they're just too big.

KYLE

So how can I go back and change things?

TANYA

You can't. It's over. You've had your chances. You have to start again, with no memories of what happened this time around.

KYLE

How do you know all this stuff?

TANYA  
Guardians were children once,  
too.

KYLE  
Who was she?

MONTY  
Who? The woman whose death you  
caused?

Kyle nods.

TANYA  
Are you serious?  
(off his nod)  
You don't know?

He thinks for a second:

**EXT. CITY STREET/INTERSECTION - NIGHT**

SUBLIM, KYLE'S POV:

He stares in through the side window, to see:

The DRIVER slumped over the steering wheel.

Her hair covers most of her face -- but her open EYES stare  
directly into his own.

**INT. APARTMENT STAIRWELL - DAY**

SUBLIM, KYLE'S POV:

Concrete, cold and inhospitable.

Sitting next to him on the stairs is THE WOMAN -- Deke's  
partner aka the car wreck victim aka the mother of the young  
kids aka the Woman in the room.

**INT. ROOM**

SUBLIM, KYLE'S POV:

WOMAN  
Tell that to my kids.

WIDE:

**INT. ART GALLERY - CONTINUOUS**

Kyle looks shocked:

KYLE

She was Deke's partner... Oh,  
those poor kids -- both parents  
in one night?

He jumps to his feet all decisive now.

KYLE (CONT'D)

I'm done fuckin' around with you  
guys. Whoever you are, get the  
fuck outta my life and let me get  
on with living it myself.

He strides towards the main door and exits into:

**INT. ART GALLERY - CONTINUOUS**

He's back where he started.

He pulls the door open and looks behind him and in front --  
it's the same room whichever way he goes.

He runs over to another door and wrenches it open: he sees  
the same thing.

He does the same at another door with the same result.

Defeated, he slumps to the ground.

KYLE

This is no dream, or bad trip, is  
it?

The others all stare back at him; he's right.

KYLE (CONT'D)

How do I make things right again?

MONTY

It's too late for that now.

KYLE  
It's never too late to change  
anything.

MONTY  
This time it is.

KYLE  
But you're all asleep. You're not  
even here!

VAGRANT  
Are you?

Kyle is getting really stressed -- this can't really be  
happening.

KYLE  
But I wasn't responsible. It  
couldn't be helped.

The three are all impassive. Oh shit...

KYLE (CONT'D)  
So how come you guys get to make  
the decision on my future?

MONTY  
Because someone has decided that  
we are your peers.

KYLE  
FUCK'S SAKE -- IT WAS A FUCKIN'  
ACCIDENT! IT COULDN'T BE HELPED!  
FUCKIN' SHIT FUCKIN' HAPPENS, YA  
KNOW!

The three stare at him:

**INT. ONE-ROOM APARTMENT - DAY**

SUBLIM:

As a NAKED Kyle paints, his answering machine has already  
cut-in:

DOCTOR(V.O.FILTERED)  
...And you must be due for more  
medication. Please, Kyle,-

KERASH:

A HEAVY ROCK smashes into the ANSWERING MACHINE silencing the message.

**EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY**

SUBLIM:

Kyle hands the pusher some folded money, and in return he palms a tiny package.

**INT. STATIONARY CAR**

SUBLIM:

Kyle gets in, unwraps his purchase -- a tiny blue pill -- which HE SWALLOWS.

**BACK TO SCENE:**

He's getting stressed as he remembers:

**INT. MEN'S ROOM/CUBICLE**

SUBLIM:

On the toilet tissue holder, he snorts the line of white powder up both nostrils.

**INT. ART GALLERY (THE PRESENT) - CONTINUOUS**

He gets to his feet and paces, becoming even more stressed:

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

SUBLIM:

He washes down the aspirin with the final swig in a bottle of Jack.

**EXT. A SERIES OF SIDEWALKS/ALLEYWAYS - DAY**

SUBLIM:

Every so often, he stops in a quiet area for a surreptitious swig from the bottle.

CUT TO:

**LATER:**

SUBLIM:

He's sketching the vagrant, and swigging more Jack Daniels from the bottle.

CUT TO:

**INT. ART GALLERY (MONTAGE)**

SUBLIM:

Several different times, Kyle grabs more booze from passing waiters:

KYLE

I wouldn't want my liver thinking  
it's got the night off!

**BACK TO SCENE:**

He's seated on the floor, knees under his chin, hugging his shins:

KYLE

Oh sweet Jesus. There must be  
something I can do to make it  
right.

MONTY

I think it's too late for that,  
dear boy.

(to the other two)

We have to decide.

(to Tanya)

Ladies first.

TANYA

He's irresponsible, selfish and conceited. I can't agree to him moving forward. He must stay where he is in the situation of his own making and learn his prime lesson.

Monty looks to the vagrant:

VAGRANT

I met Kyle twice...

**EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS**

VAGRANT (V.O.)

One was arrogant...

The Ferrari screeches to a halt:

KYLE

Are you in a rush to meet your God?

The vagrant just stares back at him.

KYLE (CONT'D)

I'm in a hurry, will you please get the fuck outta my way?

**EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY**

VAGRANT (V.O.)

The other couldn't'a been more different...

Kyle is preparing to sketch the man:

KYLE

Trust me, this could change everything.

VAGRANT

Bullshit. No 'one-thing' changes everything.

Kyle starts sketching him.

KYLE

Some do.

**BACK TO SCENE:**

VAGRANT

Like most people, there's more grey in his character than extremes of black or white. But that doesn't make him malicious. I found that the good outweighed the bad. If we move him forward, he'll struggle to achieve the grade, but I think in struggling, he'll mature. I think we should move him forward.

KYLE

What's with this forward and back stuff?

MONTY

Think of it as a class when you were in high school, dear boy. The differences are that you can't remember your previous class and you have no idea what to expect in your next class.

KYLE

More bullshit?

VAGRANT

Can you remember who you were before you were born?  
(off Kyle's head  
shake)  
And you have no absolute knowledge of what happens after your body dies?

Again Kyle shakes his head.

MONTY

Then I fear I have to make the casting decision. I think your weakness stemmed from your selfishness and belief that your priceless talent would allow you to behave exactly as you pleased. What's more, I think you should go back.

(a beat)

So we each have a different idea how to solve this situation.

VAGRANT

Correct me if I'm wrong, but don't the rules say that if we are unable to arrive at a unanimous verdict, then he should go neither forward nor back, but we should impose a life sentence on the accused?

The other two nod.

VAGRANT (CONT'D)

Then we have no alternative.

Monty stares at Kyle, and nods slowly:

**INT. ART GALLERY - NIGHT**

SUBLIM, MONTY'S POV:

The HEAVILY-PREGNANT Ceci Van Gelder makes her entrance.

**BACK TO SCENE:**

Kyle stares up at them from his position, seated on the floor.

MONTY

Kyle Irvine, the decision of this hearing is that you are sentenced to life.

**INT. HOSPITAL/PATIENT'S ROOM - NIGHT**

The room is in total darkness.

A WOMAN CRIES aloud in pain.

The room lights go on, and we see CECI VAN GELDER pressing a call button, and continuing to moan in distress.

A NURSE enters the room:

NURSE  
Okay, Mrs Van Gelder, just  
breathe slowly.

A SECOND NURSE enters, and together, they help Ceci into a wheelchair.

**BACK TO SCENE:**

Monty kneels down in front of Kyle:

KYLE  
I didn't mean to do it, Monty.

MONTY  
We know. All parents love their  
children. Follow me, you've got  
to complete this last part on  
your own.

KYLE  
Monty, I'm scared.

Kyle gets to his feet and together they walk towards a door:

MONTY  
I know you are.

KYLE  
What's gonna happen to me?

MONTY  
You'll be fine, dear boy.

KYLE  
Monty, I'm scared.

Monty opens for him:

KYLE (CONT'D)  
I can't do this. What's gonna  
happen to me?

Monty puts a hand on Kyle's shoulder and squeezes reassuringly:

MONTY  
Be brave, Kyle, be brave.  
(a beat)  
I'll make a point of keeping an  
eye on you, dear boy. You really  
were a very talented artist.

Kyle nods, and exits through the door into:

**INT. HOSPITAL/INTENSIVE CARE UNIT (THE PRESENT) - NIGHT**

He enters the room, and looks around himself in amazement.  
What's he doing here?

NURSES and DOCTORS go about their business.

Nobody approaches or challenges him as he:

Slowly walks towards one of the beds in which a sick patient is connected to a whole plethora of life support systems -- including a brain-scanner with electrodes attached to the patient's shaven head, a cardiac control unit which rhythmically beeps as it stimulates the patient's heart and ventilator unit which pumps air into the patient's lungs.

He stares closely at the man in the bed, and sees HIMSELF.

Now he really does understand the reality of the situation.

He's brain-dead... being kept alive by the machines.

**INT. HOSPITAL/DELIVERY ROOM - (THE PRESENT) - CONTINUOUS**

Ceci Van Gelder is surrounded by a TEAM OF MEDICAL STAFF as she goes into labour.

**INT. HOSPITAL/INTENSIVE CARE UNIT (THE PRESENT) - NIGHT**

TWO DOCTORS are checking the results from the brain-scanner:

FIRST DOCTOR  
It's my diagnosis that this  
patient...  
(checking the notes)  
Kyle Aloysius Irvine... is  
clinically brain dead. Do you  
concur?

FIRST DOCTOR'S POV:

There is no sign of Kyle: only ONE OTHER PERSON standing at  
the foot of the bed: the SECOND DOCTOR who nods in  
agreement.

SECOND DOCTOR  
I concur.

WIDE:

Kyle watches them Both:

FIRST DOCTOR  
Then please switch off the life  
support unit.

The second doctor hits the unit's master switch:

FIRST DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
Time of death: zero-three fifty-  
one; cause of death: brain  
aneurysm due to subdural  
haematoma.

The ventilator falls silent and --

-- THE RHYTHMIC BEEP-BEEP, BEEP-BEEP SOUND OF THE I.C.U.  
HEART MONITOR CHANGES AS IT FLATLINES...

KYLE  
No!

SECOND DOCTOR  
In which part of the brain did  
the blood vessels rupture?

Kyle moves towards the unit.

FIRST DOCTOR  
(checking the notes)  
In the visual cortex of the brain  
stem.

As he does so, he passes THROUGH the doctor who is standing in his way -- but he doesn't realize it.

He reaches for the life support system's master switch:

SECOND DOCTOR  
Wow! He must've had some amazing  
visions as he passed over.

Under Kyle's touch, the unit re-activates...

The SECOND DOCTOR frowns as he examines the control panel as the unit starts working again.

Kyle watches them Both:

FIRST DOCTOR  
Switch it off again, disconnect  
the power and have maintenance  
check it out, I'll sign the death  
certificate.

A nurse draws a curtain around the bed, leaving Kyle -- standing in the center of the I.C.U. separated from his physical remains.

AS AROUND HIM:

The colour desaturates from his SURROUNDINGS, leaving him in colour, and the remainder of the ward in shades of gray.

A nurse walks past the drawn curtains, and STRAIGHT THROUGH HIM, as:

Gradually, his surroundings begin to fade away TO BLACK, leaving him IN COLOUR -- but surrounded as though IN A SPOTLIGHT -- against a totally black background.

Then he too begins to:

FADE TO BLACK:

SOUND UPCUT:

In the DARKNESS, Kyle Irvine begins to SOB, YELL, CRY, HOWL, WAIL AND GROAN as though in pain. Eventually, he collapses to his knees screaming in pain as:

SLOW FADE IN:

Over his continued screams, in the blackness, a TINY WHITE SPOT OF LIGHT APPEARS, and seems to be coming closer as it grows to fill the entire field of vision:

SMASH CUT TO:

WHITE -- EVERYTHING IS DAZZLINGLY BRIGHT WHITE AND DEAFENINGLY LOUD...

SOUND UPCUT:

Over Kyle's continued screams, REGULAR HEAVY PANTING as someone breathes heavily after a tremendous exertion.

A SLAP...

SOUND MORPHING:

Kyle's continued HOWLS of pain transform into the FIRST CRIES of A NEW BORN BABY.

BABY'S POV:

The dazzling whiteness dissipates, but everything's blurred and out of focus...

Snatches of FACES covered with surgical GREEN MASKS can be half discerned and occasionally HOSPITAL EQUIPMENT swims briefly into and out of view...

**INT. HOSPITAL/DELIVERY ROOM - (THE PRESENT) - CONTINUOUS**

The SURGEON has wrapped the SHRIEKING BABY in a delivery towel, and hands him to Ceci.

SURGEON  
 Congratulations, Mrs Van Gelder!  
 You have a beautiful baby son.

Ceci smiles exhaustedly as she sees her SON for the first time:

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

**INT. KID'S BEDROOM - DAY**

ON SCREEN: FIVE YEARS LATER...

A five year old BOY sits at a small desk drawing quietly. Behind him, Ceci Van Gelder enters.

CECI  
 Time for bed, Aloysius.

BOY  
 Look, Mommy.

He shows her his drawing:

She's somewhat shaken at what he's drawn.

CECI (V.O.)  
 (trying not to show  
 she's nervous)  
 That's beautiful! Mommy's so  
 proud of you. I just don't know  
 where you get this talent from  
 because neither your father nor I  
 can draw.

The boy turns his head and stares expressionlessly directly into the camera at you, breaking the fourth wall, because he knows; and now so do you.

ANGLE:

As we close in on his drawing, we can see it's a beautiful piece of dark, surreal, Daliesque art -- enchantingly-disturbing and seductive in a melancholic sort of way. It's a drawing of a --

-- MOBIUS STRIP.

FADE OUT:

**THE END**

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