

MILES AHEAD

Written by

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INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME - DAY

Black.

Then a frozen image - MILES DAVIS (DC), 29, full youthful glory, on stage on a soundstage, at the mic, in front of the first great sextet, 1955, beautiful. The image begins to move, fast forward, whirs (stock), images blurring by to a performance, many years later -

CREDITS ROLL

MILES DAVIS, 53, speaks in his cool rasp. You have to lean forward to hear. He really knows how to make you listen.

MILES (O.S.)
This one. Right here...

The tape slows, plays at regular speed. DAVE BRADEN, 38, speaks.

DAVE BRADEN (O.S.)
Ok. Agartha...

MILES (O.S.)
Osaka, Japan. - '75.

"Prelude 2 Agharta" plays. Funky. Nasty. Gutbucket bass, guitar...

SUPER: **Prelude** Fades up. Fades out... (NOTE: All SUPERS in the script are Miles Davis songs)

ON STAGE: A trumpet player stands at the center, the hub of a quintet. Tilt up to reveal: MILES DAVIS, 48, adorned like a psychedelic pimp-god. Hunched over, horn bell pointed at the floor, soaked with sweat, his back to the audience, iconically Miles, searching for something buried in the music.

DAVE (O.S.)
Funky...

MILES (O.S.)
Yep... Cut the sound down...

TECHNICIAN (O.S.)
Couple more minutes here guys.

DAVE (O.S.)
No, other side, Nick.

A GEAR BELLY wipes frame -

PULL BACK FAST, 70s style, focus and refocus, revealing Miles Davis, looking a little older, but clean as grandmom's chittlins. He sits in a chair while the interview is set-up. Miles holds a RED TRUMPET, a small mic attached to the bell.

IN THE ROOM - He noodles on the horn, intermittently playing with the music during the conversation. (Throughout the interview the camera plays a modal phrase, its attention between Miles *here* and the Miles *there* in Japan).

IN JAPAN - Miles straightens, looks out into the crowd; we see FANS grooving to the rhythm reflected in HIS SHADES. HIS POV: a dark void, flashbulbs, shadows, a crowd of *unseen* fans. He starts to play again but stops - *for the first time in thirty years not knowing what to say*. We see the moment from multiple angles and angels. From high up, Miles looks small.

Miles looks to the wings, searching... for someone among those standing around, and beyond... a face he cannot find...

REVERSE ANGLE - POV of Miles from an empty void in the wings, CAMERA moves a little. Alive...

TWO SHOT - Miles here and in Japan. **Japan Miles is sitting over '79 Miles' angel shoulder, but no longer playing in his ear.**

DAVE (O.S.)(CONT'D)

So, Miles, I know it's always "go forward, go forward", but even if just for *context* we have to get into (explore) your earlier stuff and modal jazz's influence -

MILES

I don't *like* that word; "jazz"

DAVE (O.S.)

Nope, I...

MILES

(helping them to "get it")
That's a made up word. Tryin' to box somebody in.
(get it)

Don't call my music *jazz*.

DAVE (O.S.)

Right. You refer to it as the music of the times....

MILES

Social music.

DAVE (O.S.)
Social music. Perfect.

On TV, Miles mashes out an atonal chord with his right hand and cranks the volume louder and louder, silencing the band. As the din of the chord reverberates, recedes, he contemplates the trumpet's bell, etched with a curvaceous scroll, his name in bold, flickering blue in the stage light.

DAVE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(going quickly through the checkpoints)
So Be-bop, *boom*. Gil, the Nonet thing... Then let's dig in a little bit... Kind of Blue, So What, modality, *of course*, binary compositions and how that applies to life, *your* life, women and art, the *boxing* -

MILES
(obvious)
Right. Just not... "jazz."

Miles noodles.

DAVE
(to techy)
We getting close?

TECHY (O.S.)
Almost.

DAVE (O.S.)
Cool.
(to Miles)
Ok, so I start; In seventy-five, one of the most prolific and influential artists in all of music, shockingly, *stopped playing*. Went silent, leaving the world -

MILES
Look, you're gonna tell it, don't say it all corny and shit.

On the TV screen, a surreal moment -- just the horn and Miles surrounded by mute musicians. Freeze frame.

DAVE (O.S.)
Well, what would you say, Miles?

Framed as it is, it looks like '75 Miles is waiting to hear the answer too. Long beat as Miles thinks, composing in his head. Miles puts his horn to his lips.

BAM-BAM-BAM! - GUNSHOTS tear into the aural landscape TAKING US TO:

INT/EXT. MILES DAVIS' GREEN(4 SEATER) JAGUAR - NIGHT

SOUNDTRACK: "Aghartha" pumps up to full, 1970s Blaxploitation shoot 'em up volume.

The car ROARRRRRRRING across a mostly deserted LOWER MANHATTAN street in the midst of a GUNFIGHT BAM-BAM-BAM!

MILES DAVIS, passenger, DAVE Braden, white, driver, a black eye, fat lip, dry blood on his jacket, both dressed slick, stylish, cool and ducking for cover -

A BLACK LINCOLN TOWN CAR with blacked out windows TEARING after them - we don't see who's in there, just one GUN out the driver's window blasting the Jaguar...BAM-BAM!

Miles, Dave, crazy ADLIBING: "Fuck, shit, motherfuckers..."

The Towncar is ultimately no match for the ROCKETING Jaguar - Dave wrestles the wheel, stick, pedals, on the job training, FISHTAILING the beast AROUND THE CORNER -

Dave loses control - the Jaguar SKIDS toward the wall -

A BULLET pierces the Jaguar's body - one SLAMS into MILES' THIGH - (or ricochets off the sidewalk as Walter scrambles out of his car and into Miles' hip there)

Miles HOWLS as the Jaguar spins, almost RAMS into the WALL of a MEAT PACKING WAREHOUSE, before screeching to a stop; it stalls out. Dave can't start it. The Towncar's GUNNING right for them -

Miles and Dave scramble out of the car, Miles clutches a BRIEFCASE, hobbling. Dave helps him -

Miles FIRING at the oncoming Towncar - It swerves, grinding to a halt by the Jaguar. WALTER, a serious looking black dude jumps out of the car -

Miles and Dave, scramble INTO AN ALLEY, Miles tripping, dropping the briefcase, contents spilling out:

A bunch of STAFF PAPER with musical notes scrawled on them fly away in the wind - plus A REEL TO REEL TAPE in a can rolls out... (labeled: 7-9-78).

Miles lurches for the tape, and at the storm of papers blowing around him - it all means everything to him.

CUT TO:

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME- DAY

LOW CRAZY ANGLE. Where are we. All is SILENT save for a guttural, soft, scratchy, scattling. The CAMERA MOVES along the floor, discovering a COCKROACH, moving quickly, darting in and out of pockets of light, and over clutter, scattered debris, discarded food wrappers, searching for something clearly not found. A wad of paper crashes to the floor near the bug, sending it scurrying off for cover. We TILT UP a pair of raggedy SLIPPERS, dark, ashen heels stuffed into them, up rusty CALVES, the back of a worn out CHAIR and up over the slumped shoulders of a man hunched there, HEADPHONES plastered on his ears, a pair of wrinkled, charcoal hands jammed tightly over them. A REEL TO REEL tape machine spools out unheard music. 7-9-78 written on the label.

MILES

Duh - duh - da - dee - da - Da -
dee - da -

We PAN finding Miles framed like a never before seen iconic photo of the cool; his ebony skin challenging the darkness of his surroundings - he's a stunning sight. His chiseled features softened by shadow, his lithesome form draped in pale silks. In an instant, his spidery fingers run tender circles around the perimeters of his scattling lips, like a memory of lost, but not forgotten love, then to a nearby PAD of STAFF PAPER. Miles scrawls, jotting hieroglyphics, the encrypted language of the papers just seen blowing in the wind...

MILES (CONT'D)

Da - dada - dee - dumdum - da -

A DISTANT ANGLE. Dark. Steamy sunlight begs at the hems of drawn curtains. A former church. Little recollection of religion in the ghostly curves of the place. Now it feels haunted. Weeks, months of clothes strewn about, dirty dishes, empty Heineken and cognac bottles, magazines, newspapers and grime carpet the floor, spiders perched in spiderwebs.

Drips of errant flickering light from a TV OFF-SCREEN play with the corners of the frame. On the silent screen, GRAINY STOCK FOOTAGE of boxer JACK JOHNSON, July 4, 1910, the "Fight of the Century" against Great White Hope JAMES J. JEFFRIES before 20,000 people in Reno. In the 15th round Johnson knocks Jeffries down, and the nearly all white crowd jeers, spitting rage...

We gather details of a lusciously frayed, once elegant tricked out pad of animal skins, Lucite and leather.

PHOTOS on the wall shelves, on top of the piano, of Miles with everyone who's anyone, playing everywhere on the planet. The world-beater. A sign says: "No Visitors"

MILES (CONT'D)

Da - datdat - dedaw - dat - dat

Miles sits riveted, eyes squeezed shut, 7-9-78 coming through the headphones, as he scrawls on the pad, like a physicist trying to work out The Theory of Everything. Miles' face contorts *as a sudden pain shoots through his hip*. He reaches for it, his arm in the headphone cable, inadvertently pulling it from the machine and letting in an almost painful CACOPHONY OF SOUNDS:

STREET NOISES; car HORNS, shouting, other people's shitty music, etc.

A TEA KETTLE on the KITCHEN STOVE WHISTLING for all its worth...

The PHONE RINGING and RINGING...

INCESSANT KNOCKING ON THE FRONT DOOR...

ON THE RADIO: Miles Davis, "So What" from "Kind of Blue".

Miles sits in the midst of it all for a beat.

MILES (CONT'D)

...fuck...

Miles takes the headphones off, his concentration blown. He stuffs them into the table DRAWER the reel to reel machine sits on. The drawer sticks and Miles battles with the broken thing, frustration ultimately winning, and leaves it half shut. This writing session is over.

Miles' eyes adjust to the light, peek up, like flickering embers - stare at his TRUMPET on it's stand, shimmering brass beneath the dust, like a glimmer of life, staring at him, challenging him to pick it up and play.

MILES (CONT'D)

'Fuck you looking at?

As to a wife in a marriage that has climbed downward from love, to war, to neglect. In an instant, and unresolved.

Miles painfully stands and we almost hear the creaks of rough living. He squints hard as he turns to go into the kitchen, pivoting on his ruined hip. When Miles opens his eyes he sees-

FRANCES TAYLOR, early 30s, staring at him, perfection in milk chocolate, uncorrupted by the decay around her, with an aura of where you want to be. She glides by locking him in her gaze, an enigmatic look on her face.

Miles straightens up, locks into her eyes. He starts to speak but Frances almost imperceptibly shakes her head, "no," and walks on, HER LEGS, forever, and ever, as she turns and goes up the staircase especially designed for this singular perfect view, and disappears into the BEDROOM, Gone from his sight.

Miles nods, picks up a half empty Heineken off the table and tugs it back on the move, navigating through shadows thrown by the cracks of light. Lays the empty beer bottle down on a table with others.

Passing, ignoring the RINGING PHONE...

Passing, ignoring his own sounds on the RADIO

Passing, ignoring the KNOCKING ON THE DOOR...

Passing the TV - throwing a stiff right hook into the air in unison with Jack Johnson, who knocks Jeffries down for a second time...

INTO THE KITCHEN...stove on, pours green tea into a cup - sips, soothes his throat, lights a cigarette. After a long drag Miles focuses in on the blue flame of the stove burner. He's captivated by the significance of the vision, if only for himself.

The FRONT DOOR KNOCKING STOPS and the cessation of this sound snaps Miles out of it. He crosses back to the living room.

TAPPING ON THE WINDOW now, Miles ignores it; through a CRACK IN THE CURTAIN, we see the face of a pissed off Dave Braden...

Finally, Miles has had it, and Miles picks up the RINGING PHONE:

MILES (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
What?

KINGSTON MACK (V.O.)
 (thick Kingston accent)
 Ah, you dere, huh, bumbaclot? You
 gonna make me hurt you, man.

MILES
 Oh, is that right?
 (yells at the window)
 Get the fuck away from my window.

Dave pops his head back out, leaving his post, disappears.

KINGSTON MACK (V.O.)
 Don't play 'round with your life,
 junkie. I *fronted* you product. You
 know what that means.

MILES
 Fuck you, Mack. Get in line.

KINGSTON (V.O.)
 You show your junkie face in *any* my
 spots and -

Miles hangs up.

ON THE RADIO, "So What" ends - DJ PHIL SCHAAP comes on,
 rapping in the background:

SCHAAP (V.O.)
 Phil Schaap with you on KCWC-FM,
 New York, with the Miles Davis
 Marathon. That was the seminal "So
 What", from "Kind of Blue", 1959.
 That's the one in the time capsule,
 folks. The one they'll be talking
 about in a thousand years. The one
 you save from a burning building.
 The culmination. The mountaintop...

Miles looks at the stereo SPEAKER, doesn't like what Schaap's
 saying.

Miles pulls some reading glasses out of a little drawer
 filled with the things and grabs a YELLOW PAGES off the
 floor. He lights a cigarette, rips through the book until he
 finds a number,. THE PHONE RINGS. Miles picks it up -

DAVE (V.O.)
 (on phone)
 Hello, is this Mi -

Miles hangs it up, picks it up again and dials. While it rings on the other end, Miles runs his finger over some cocaine residue on the table, and brushes his upper gums.

SCHAAP (V.O.)

If you're out there listening,
Miles, we miss you, the world
misses you. Five years is just too
long. Please, come back.

RADIO OPERATOR (V.O.)

WKCR-FM.

MILES

It's Miles Davis... Yeah, really.
Put that motherfucker Schaap on the
phone.

SCHAAP (V.O.)

After Miles put his stamp on this
new music, the modal form, he went
on to --

(beat, stunned)

Really? Oh, my goodness, this is
incredible... Folks, I believe we
have *the* Miles Davis on the line.

(picks up the phone/on
air)

Mr. Davis, is this really you?

MILES

Yeah, it's me.

SCHAAP

My goodness. What an honor. This is-

MILES

You talk too damn much. A time
capsule is for old shit, dead shit.
And I missed on "Kind of Blue".

SCHAAP (V.O.)

Missed? But Mr. Davis, I think most
people would say it's a
masterpiece. How exactly did you
miss?

MILES

This ain't a interview. I'm a tough
guy and I know tougher guys. If you
tape this, I'll kill you. You got
that?

SCHAAP (V.O.)
Yes sir, I got that.

MILES
Good. Now, forget it.
(shift)
And throw on some of that Sketches
of Spain for me.

Miles hangs up the phone. Sips more tea, fleetingly butts out his cigarette in an overflowing ashtray, lights another one -

Dave Braden reappears, starts KNOCKING ON THE WINDOW again.

Miles ignores him, goes to an EASEL with an in-process, wet OIL PAINTING of a lush, mostly red and black, Picasso-esque woman in the stands of a bullfight, a dark-skinned matador stands in the ring.

He stops, steps back, picks up the paint brush, dips it in color, adds a couple strokes to the work, studies it for a few moments...

SCHAAP (V.O.)
This one's for you, Mr. Davis.
Concierto De Aranjuez (Adagio),
from Sketches of Spain...

As "Concierto De Aranjuez (Adagio)", the romantic, epic music of battle...comes on the radio...

A muffled conversation in front of his door pulls Miles' attention then - PHUMP -today's mail comes through the slot, landing on a pile of weeks of unopened mail. Miles walks over to the mail and with his bare foot sifts through today's arrivals.

Dave starts knocking again, creaks open the mail slot.

DAVE
Mr. Davis. If you could just open
the door for a moment...

Miles doesn't find what he's looking for. A storm cloud forms around him.

Miles walks over to the phone, dials. On the other end, George Butler's secretary answers:

GEORGE'S SECRETARY (V.O.)
George Butler's office.

MILES
It's Miles.

GEORGE'S SECRETARY (V.O.)
Yes, sir. Hold a moment.

A few moments later, HEAR GEORGE on the other end answer.
He's solicitous, respectful. But this an old conversation.

GEORGE (V.O.)
Hey, how are -

MILES
My money didn't come today.

GEORGE (V.O.)
Hello, Miles.

MILES
Where's my check? \$20,000.

GEORGE (V.O.)
(careful but firm)
Where is the session tape?

MILES
You trying to piss me off?

GEORGE (V.O.)
(sighs)
Of course not, Miles, but we've
been over this; we can't release
more money -

MILES
Same shit -

GEORGE
- until Columbia gets that new
music.

MILES
George-

GEORGE
I know there's *gold* on that tape,
Miles. \$20,000 is chump change
compared to the business we're
going to do.

Miles fumes silently.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Come on, man, let's do it. Let's
put our heads together and *really*
start working on that comeback.

MILES

I didn't go nowhere, George. Now
you want some music, send me my
money.

Miles slams the phone down. Dave starts knocking again as
"SKETCHES OF SPAIN" swells. Miles crosses tears open the door
with the chain on, his jaw seriously working his chewing gum -

Dave Braden stands there dressed differently than in the
opening shoot out. No style: tweed, corduroy, loosened tie,
drops of red on his shirt, fresh scrape on his cheek,
reddening around his eye. Dave's wearing some kind of story
that he's in the middle of.

DAVE

Mr. Davis, hello. Really sorry to
bother you but, I'm Dave Braden,
Rolling Stone Magazine?

Miles shuts the door - Dave sticks his foot in, preventing
the door from closing. Miles' look - are you crazy?

DAVE (CONT'D)

Waitamminute...I'm here to do your
comeback story.

Wrong word. Miles expression changes. He nods.

MILES

Okay.

The door closes. Dave straightens up, tucks in, slicks back
his hair, trying to appear half-way presentable.

Miles flings the door open and - POW - clocks Dave in the
face, Dave stumbles back -

DAVE

What the - ?

- recovers, fending Miles off. He blocks another punch -
grabs hold of Miles shoving both of them into a crazy dosey-
doe, and suddenly:

Miles is OUTSIDE, barefoot, while Dave is INSIDE. Dave slams
the door in Mile's face.

INTERCUT: MILES OUTSIDE, DAVE INSIDE - Miles pounds on the
door.

MILES

Open the door!

DAVE
Take it easy!

MILES
Open it!

Dave backs away from the door, takes the opportunity to walk up the three steps, push open the saloon doors and peer into the room.

ANGLE: PANS TO tape on the reel to reel, painting, boxing on the TV, the ruinous decadent decay, evidence of empty cocaine bindles and residue; not what he was expecting. Dave pulls out a small pocket camera (Agfa Optima 535); flash, flash, flash... Stows that then produces a TAPE RECORDER, pushes RECORD.

DAVE
(on hush, quick)
Inside the master's disheveled
lair, the rumors now reality,
jazz's Howard Hughes reviled and
revealed -

MILES
Open the goddamned door!

Dave stows his works, comes back to the door.

DAVE
Alright. No more punching, man.

Dave opens the door and Miles charges in, his hip aching, coming at Dave -

MILES
Get the fuck outta my house.

Hands up, Dave back-peddles, defensively away from Miles and deeper into room...

DAVE
Calm down, Mr. Davis, *please*. I'm -

MILES
That's the wrong way!

Miles goes to a nearby drawer and retrieves gets his .38 special.

DAVE
Shit, *hold it*... I... It's a job -

Dave trips back over a table, falls to the ground - as Miles arrives over him, and Dave blurts it out like a safe word.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Columbia! Your record company set
it up!

Miles stops -

MILES
Columbia.

DAVE
Yes. I'm just a writer, man.

After a scary moment -

MILES
Can you drive, motherfucker?

SUPER: **Splash** Fades up. Fades out...

INT. MILES' JAGUAR/EXT. MILES' MANHATTAN HOME- A MINUTE LATER

Dave is in the driver's seat, checking out the freshest reddening "mouse" under his eye in the rearview mirror -

DAVE
Prick...

The front door of the house opens - Miles peeks out gingerly into the sun, then exits, now wearing a dope brocade robe, silk scarf and sunglasses, looking around, paranoid -

MILES
Open the damn door.

- as he hobbles down the stairs to the car - Dave reaches across the console and pops open the passenger door for Miles, who gets in. Clocks Dave's running tape recorder on the dashboard.

MILES (CONT'D)
What the fuck is that?

DAVE
You mind?

MILES
Take that thing off my goddamned dash or I'm gonna slap you in the mouth with it.

Dave starts to comeback on Miles but bites his tongue, coming out like something between a cough and a laugh. He pockets the thing, *but not before he depresses RECORD*. And Miles is already scouring the car's interior for cocaine - glove compartment, map pocket, finding nothing but empty BUNDLES which he crumbles up and tosses. Dave clocks the behavior. Miles looks at him -

MILES (CONT'D)

Let's go.

Dave works the ignition but it's not turning over.

MILES (CONT'D)

Pump it.

DAVE

Yeah, I know how to...

The car grumbles to life - ENGINE ROARS - the 5/4, 6/4 break, kinetic freedom of "**Splash**" on the SOUNDTRACK, and they pull away from the curb just as an MG with 2 people inside, JANICE 25, black, and DIETER, 50, white, pulls up right where they were. Dieter opens the door and stands. Janice hops out, runs to the front of the car, calls out.

JANICE

Miles!

Miles and Dave don't hear or see Janice and Dieter.

Dave studies Miles for a beat.

DAVE

So, where're we going?

No answer.

INT./EXT - JAGUAR - CITY DRIVING/STOPLIGHT - DAY

DAVE

Look, maybe we got off on the wrong foot. I just need to get a little background -

MILES

I gotta do your homework for you?

DAVE

Well, I could write some bullshit I got out of some...*magazine*.

(MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)

But it'd be nice to hear it in your own words, you know?

MILES

Miles Davis story. My words.

DAVE

That would be great.

MILES

Ok. I was born... went to New York, met some cats, made some music, did some dope, made some more music... ..then you came to my house. Take a left.

DAVE

(beat)

That's it?

MILES

That's it.

DAVE

Great. Guess I'll fill in the blanks later.

MILES

It's what all you motherfuckers do anyway.

Miles points. Dave turns left -

EXT. COLUMBIA RECORDS - A BIT LATER

*

Dave parks in front of the Columbia Records Building. Miles snatches the keys out of the ignition, gets out. Dave isn't moving -

DAVE

I'll wait down here.

MILES

Get the fuck out of my car.

Clear enough. Dave opens the door -

INT. COLUMBIA RECORDS/GEORGE'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

Miles storms in with disheveled Dave, breaking up the meeting.

Photos of Miles performing, and with George, populate the office. All eyes turn to the duo. GEORGE BUTLER, 48, black, soft-spoken style, stands up behind a large desk.

In front of George's desk, 2 WHITE EXECUTIVES, 40s, sit in chairs. In a 3rd chair off to the side is another white exec, well dressed and coiffed, KEN SCHWINN, 30.

GEORGE

Miles -

MILES

Don't send people to my house.
Write some dumb, fucking article...
 Write a *check*, George.

George's secretary, outside the office, looks in at George, shrugs, "sorry" - George waves her off, "it's okay" - she returns to her desk.

Sitting on the couch behind Miles and Dave (and unnoticed by them) is a slender man, white, sharply tailored, a touch of the royal slick: HARPER HAMILTON, 35, his right hand man, Walter, and JUNIOR, 22, thin, black, good looking, jittery, jonesing, a little sweaty, but sharp, if a bit wrinkled. His trumpet case at his feet. When Junior sees Miles, he perks up, his idol right in front of him.

GEORGE

Wait a second, Miles, I -

Miles pushes Dave over toward George, Dave jerks his arm away, handled enough for one day.

DAVE

Hey -

MILES

Take your boy back.

GEORGE

I didn't send anybody to your house, Miles.

DAVE

Ok, guys -

MILES

You send this motherfucker to my house to write some comeback story?

GEORGE

I've never laid eyes on this guy.

Miles slow burns Dave.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Who are you?

DAVE
Dave Braden.

George is waiting impatiently -

DAVE (CONT'D)
--- Rolling Stone Magazine.

George buzzes his secretary -

SECRETARY (V.O.)
Yes, sir.

GEORGE
(to his secretary)
Get me Jann Wenner at Rolling
Stone, please.

DAVE
Um, I'm not sure Jann, himself,
actually knows I'm here.

GEORGE
And why is that?

DAVE
Look, a source here at Columbia,
not saying who, told me about
Miles' session and that you guys
were probably already long lead
planning for the whole, you know,
comeback, *promotional* thing and -

Dave peters out. It sits there like a log for a beat.

MILES
Man, you see this? This is the
bullshit that happens when y'all
start -

GEORGE
Miles -

DAVE
Can I say something -

GEORGE
You can get out -

MILES

I do a session ya'll already got it out over the wire.

GEORGE

In fairness, that was almost a year ago -

MILES

So what?! Can't wait to saddle me up again, huh? The fuckin' comeback.

GEORGE

Call it whatever you -

MILES

There is no Columbia without me. How many records I cut for you, George? And I can't take some time off?

GEORGE

Of course you can. And you have. And now you have new material and we're all incredibly excited to -

MILES

My material, man, my tape. And if I don't wanna give it to you -

Ken, a take charge guy, puts up his hand, nods at George -

KEN

Guys, guys, can I get in here a sec...?

Miles snaps a look.

GEORGE

(a warning)

Ken...

KEN

S'okay. I got it. Ken Schwinn, A&R. Now, Miles, as you know, you're under contract here, and we paid for that recording session, so we actually own that tape and whatever music is it. *Legally*. And I don't mean this as a threat but - and George, back me up here -

GEORGE (O.S.)

Miles!

BAM - GUNSHOT! the LAMP right next Ken's head shatters. Ken yelps, ducks.

Miles stands still, .38 smoking in his hand. Dave's looking at Miles, sort of "holy shit" impressed. Ken and the other white guys are cowering.

MILES

You own my music? You must be a rich man, then. How much money you got?

KEN

What?

George's Secretary runs to the door flushed. George holds up a staying hand, freezing her. Miles walks up to Ken.

MILES

On you. Right now. How much?

KEN

Uh, uh...I...uh...4-5 hundred -

MILES

You know what they say in Missouri? Show me!

Ken takes out a gold money clip, Miles grabs it, tests its heft, turns to George -

MILES (CONT'D)

You 'bout nineteen thousand light, but that's a start.

- stuffs it into his jacket pocket. Harper stands, impressed, laughing, clapping.

HARPER

Oh, man. Check that motherfucker, Mr. Davis. I love that.

Miles swings around, business end gun not exactly pointed at Harper, but close enough - Walter reaches like he might have a piece too, but Harper stops him -

HARPER (CONT'D)

(nice)

Hey, hey... be nice...

Walter relaxes. Harper reaches out to shake Miles' hand.

HARPER (CONT'D)
Harper Hamilton...

Miles and Harper eye to eye. Game recognizing Game.

HARPER (CONT'D)
What an honor, sir. If I may, I'm a
producer, working with this kid -

He points to Junior.

HARPER (CONT'D)
That's Junior...

Miles looks sideways at the kid, Junior's gaze, semi-defiant,
looking back, trying to be cool.

Harper cocks his head, nonchalantly plays air trumpet -

HARPER (CONT'D)
Scary. He's playing a late set at
the Vanguard tomorrow night. Love
it if you'd be my honored
guest...*label mate*.
(drops the bomb, gesturing
to George)
We're working out a deal here, too.

Miles looks at George. Judas. George shrugs, "What do you
want from me? It's business." Miles shakes his head, just
been replaced. Harper goes on.

HARPER (CONT'D)
You're a fight fan, right?

Harper reaches back toward Walter, snaps - Walter puts two
passes in his hand.

HARPER (CONT'D)
I got a boxer on the card at the
Cathedral tomorrow night. Maybe
you'd like to check that out *too*,
we can talk a little shop...

Harper holds out the passes to Miles. Beat. We hear Dave's
tape recorder CLICK off in his pocket and all eyes turn to
him. Miles sticks out his hand. Dave sheepishly reaches into
his pocket and turns the tape recorder over to Miles.

MILES
And I'm the asshole in the room,
right?

Miles chucks the tape recorder into the waste basket, and walks out, Junior watching his every step.

GEORGE
 (calling after)
 Miles...
 (to Dave)
 You. Let's go...

George grabs Dave's arm, starts escorting him out.

DAVE
 Hold it, hold it...

INT. COLUMBIA RECORDS/OUTSIDE GEORGE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Dave pulls away. Harper watches, out of focus in the office BG.

DAVE
Wait a minute, Mr. Butler! Listen, listen...
 (steps up close)
 I get you that tape, me and you can do some business?

George starts to answer then stops himself. He gives Dave a hard look *but doesn't say "no."* And in that space -

DAVE (CONT'D)
 Got it. Don't say another word.
 (he turns to the receptionist)
 Stairs!

The receptionist points. Dave flies off toward a door, knocking past a worker.

Harper's made his way to the doorway, leans on the jamb -
 RACK FOCUS -

HARPER
 Man. What a waste. He's probably more profitable dead than alive now, huh?

George out of focus in the foreground.

INT. COLUMBIA RECORDS/ELEVATOR - SAME

Miles sits back against the rail - what these muthufuckas just made him do. His hip now. Dull persistent ache. Can't escape himself - his music: the be-bop, uptempo "**Tempus Fugit**" mocks him from the speakers as a collage of Columbia covers/artists silently study him. Chief among them is Frances, again - on the cover of "Someday My Prince Will Come". He wants to look at her, but doesn't, won't...but she's looking at him. Miles pushes at the back wall of the elevator and it rolls back on casters opening onto -

INT. LOS ANGELES CLUB - NIGHT 1957

A small group playing on stage, seen from the wings. The CAMERA moves around the band members - winds, brass, drummer, the pianist and eventually comes around finding Miles Davis, 18 years younger, stepping up to the mic, center stage, killing it in this intimate venue. Watch him blow.

SUPER: **Tempus Fugit** Fades up. Fades out...

INT/EXT. CONVERTIBLE CAR - LOS ANGELES 1957 NIGHT

Buddy, 30s, drives. Pretty NORA, black, 20s, up front with Buddy. Miles, stylish, hair done in a marcel process, is in back with his beauty, AVA, 20s, white. Miles is high, you can see that shit in his eyes. Laughs and good times all around.

Ava stands, arms raised, all sexy abandon, starts screaming as loud as she can. Miles pulls Ava back down, rubber necks for cops. Zoom...

EXT. FRANCES' HOUSE - NIGHT

Buddy pulls over to the curb, parks.

BUDDY

Gotta give this little bird a thing
for my friend. Be right back.

Gets a Tiffany's box from the glovebox. Buddy exits the car, crosses the road to a small APARTMENT BUILDING, open air, California-style, rings the buzzer.

Miles' attention is snatched away from Ava as Frances appears at the top of the landing of her building. She walks down the stairs - those legs. The first time he's laid eyes on her. Takes his breath away.

As Ava and Nora talk, Miles gets out of the car, leans on it, lights up a cigarette.

Buddy and Frances greet, he gives her the Tiffany's box, she's pleased, thanks him, they chat a minute, but her eyes find Miles across the street, and they lock in a forever moment sealing their future. Miles turns back to the car, masking the following: Miles dips into his pocket, comes out light, only a couple singles.

MILES

(smiles)

Ava, Let me hold Mr. Jackson.

AVA

(giggles)

Sure, Miles...

Ava hands Miles a \$20 bill.

MILES

And, hand me that pen.

Ava reaches into her purse, hands Miles her pen. He drops his cigarette, grinds it out as he strides across the street. Buddy turns to walk back, Miles passes him and steps up to Frances.

MILES (CONT'D)

Hi. I'm Miles Davis.

FRANCES

I know. - Frances Taylor.

Miles pulls out the \$20, writes his details on it, holds it out.

MILES

Now you don't have to stare.

Frances smiles, shrugs, let's him just hang for a beat before eventually taking the bill. Miles *smiles*, turns, walking back to the car cool as shit. Somewhere a phone rings.

MILES (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Hello?

FRANCES (V.O.)

(soft, smoky)

Come watch me dance, Miles.

INT. NYC THEATRE/GRAND THEATRE - DAY

Miles steps into the shadows of the wings, smoking a cigarette, digging the PORGY AND BESS rehearsal; for him it's all about the lead dancer: Frances.

Standing by Miles is his close friend and arranger, GIL EVANS, 40s - white, rail thin, a natty argyle style, contrasting Miles' finely tailored Italian suit.

Frances is playing Bess - lusty, steamy in her moves. She inspires Miles, she seems to be looking right at him, dancing just for him - it's all over his face, he's falling in love.

His inspired eyes drift to the TRIO; he ZOOMS IN ON the piano keys, the ways the musician moves, collecting, co-opting - and then back to FRANCES, the key to it all -- dancing a sexy pas-de-deux with the chiseled, handsome LEAD DANCER; Miles clouds over.

Fran stops the music with a wave of her hand.

FRANCES

Hang on. Let's do that last section again. From the diminuendo?

CHOREOGRAPHER

Sure.

Frances cues the pianist, they begin again.

Miles clocks a couple white men (producers/financiers) , looking, in Miles' mind, at Frances like he does - with desire; he's suddenly jealous knowing the men can see up her skirt as it flies and flutters around her.

Miles looks threatened, angry, his gut turning, surprised by his reactions, all new for him, this obsessive desire to *possess* a woman.

Frances spies Miles in the wings, and locks in, relishing her power over him. She purposefully pushes away from her partner and pirouettes in Miles' direction, using him as her spot. Almost there, she trips... Miles grabs for Frances, but BEFORE he catches her -

INT. COLUMBIA RECORDS/STAIRWELL - DAY

Dave surfing/tripping down the stairs, "*completes*" Frances' fall but now in '79. Dave hits the landing hard.

DAVE

Ow. Shit -

He scrambles to his feet, continues limping, down the flight of stairs.

INT. COLUMBIA RECORDS/LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Miles exits the elevator as Dave emerges from the stairwell, trailing Miles through the lobby and eventually outside.

EXT. COLUMBIA RECORDS BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Dave bolts from the building, gets to the car as Miles get in, the Jag a little boxed in by parked cars -

DAVE
Hey, I got you, it's cool, I'll drive.

Miles shuts his door. Dave talks through the closed window.-

DAVE (CONT'D)
Look, I should've told you what was up right off -

Miles sticks the key in the ignition, cranks it but the ignition won't turn over -

DAVE (CONT'D)
Look, I understand where you're coming from with those guys up there -

The car finally roars to life and Miles put it in reverse preparing to pull out. Dave rushes in front of the car, making his case through the windshield.

DAVE (CONT'D)
- it's never enough, right! They just suck you dry and fuck you over!

INT/EXT. JAGUAR - CONTINUOUS

Miles looks back to check behind him, the turn itself hurting - that hip's a bitch today -- and no medicine yet - fuck! Dave clocks it.

DAVE
Listen, listen, listen, listen -

Sidling up.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 - fuck the interview, okay? Let's
 get *right*. I know what you need,
 man. Let me get you *right!*

Miles looks at him sideways, eases off the gas a bit.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 (mouthing big)
 I probably shouldn't shout this
 next part.

Dave gambles, creeps around to the drivers side, motions
 Miles to crack his window --

DAVE (CONT'D)
 I know a guy, gets it like, whooo,
 from the root, it's good, not
 stepped on, we can go right now.

Beat. They stare at each other. Then Miles gets out of the
 car. Dave steps back, makes space for this pissed off man
 with a gun.

MILES
 You're a crazy, white motherfucker,
 you know that?

DAVE
 Yeah, I know.

Miles crosses around the Jaguar, gets in the passenger seat.
 Daves looks in at him -

DAVE (CONT'D)
 So...?

Dave gestures toward the driver's seat.

MILES
 You waitin' for me to put a hankie
 down?

Dave slides behind the wheel -

INT/EXT. MILES' JAGUAR STATIC - CONTINUOUS

Miles watches the street for a beat then -

MILES
 Where we going?

DAVE
Columbia.

MILES
We just left Columbia, muthafucka.

DAVE
The other one, muthafucka.

They drive off into traffic...

EXT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY - A BIT LATER

Dave and Miles Drive up in the Jaguar right in front of a dorm building, in the red zone.

INT. MILES' JAGUAR - CONTINUOUS

Getting out of the car - Miles looking around like, "really?"

DAVE
(trust me)
Really.

EXT. DORM BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Dave holds the dorm building door open for Miles.

DAVE
I did a story on this kid's father.
Big shot doctor who... crazy shit,
doesn't matter. Anyway, the rich
little fucker's got the goods...

Miles follows Dave -

INT. DORM BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

At a dorm room door down the hall now.

DAVE
How much you holding?

MILES
Whatever's in that clip.

DAVE
Alright, just follow my lead.

Miles scoffs. Dave knocks on a dorm room door. The only reaction to Dave's knocking is the volume on the music going up. Is that the sound of fucking under the music?

Dave raps harder. Miles' got *that* look on - 'shit better be here or you're dead.

JUSTIN (O.S.)

Later.

Dave really bangs on the door, when finally it opens -

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

What the -

Revealing an exasperated and slightly out of breath 22-year-old skinny white kid, boxer shorts, severe bed-head: A jam plays on the stereo. A bong and weed on the table, the kid wasn't expecting company.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

(especially *this* company -
in fact the last person
he'd expect to see)

No, uh-uh -

DAVE

Justin, wait -

Justin goes to close the door, but Dave leans in - stalemate.

JUSTIN

Who the fuck are you to show up at
my - you know what "off the record"
means, asshole?

Justin tries to close the door, Dave holds it.

DAVE

Aw, c'mon man, you knew what was up
with that. You wanted to burn your
old man and I helped. So what -

JUSTIN

So what?!

MILES

(enough)
Get on with it, man.

That signature voice draws Justin's attention. It takes a second to register but when it does, a "holy fuck... Is that Miles Davis?" look spreads across Justin's face.

DAVE
 (that's right)
 Uh huh.

Dave pushes the door open revealing Miles Davis to Justin.
 Dave and Miles enter.

JUSTIN
 Yeah, I'm... Come in.

They already are in but Justin is a little stunned with one of his idols in front of him. Dave closes the door.

INT. DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Inside, a naked blonde co-ed, TAMI, is on the bed, covering herself with a sheet. She's real cute.

Look around the room, state of the art, daddy paid for stereo system - kind of a loungy pad, old leather couch, couple cool books strewn about, signed posters on the wall; Coltrane, Jimmy Page, James Brown.

Justin can't take his eyes off Miles.

DAVE
 Let's do this quick.
 (off Tami)
 We don't want to take up too much of your time.

JUSTIN
 C'mere a second, man -

But it's Justin who moves in close to Dave - authoritative and star-struck at the same time -

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
 What is going on? Why is he with you, I mean, why are you with *him*.
 What do you -

DAVE
 Hey, genius...

Dave stares at him, waiting for the nickle to drop. Justin looks to Miles, back to Dave, gets it.

JUSTIN
 Oooohhhh, right. Yeah, yeah, yeah -

Justin moves to and opens a locked drawer, a scale and cocaine inside.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
So, what can I do you for?

DAVE
Make it an ei--

MILES
- a quarter.

Dave shoots Miles a look. Miles just stares at him.

JUSTIN
Quarter. Yes, sir.

When Justin scoots off to the stash, Miles pats his pocket, the .38 nestled inside. *"This can go another way too, you know."* Dave tries to keep cool, but this is fucked up. Miles sniffs deeply, clears the pipes as Justin weighs out the dope. He ain't leaving with a flake less than 7 grams. Justin's oblivious.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
You know who the fuck this is,
Tami?

Tami half shrugs. Justin's words come out in an excited whirl.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Wow. What a fucking honor. I have a
bunch of your --
(points across the room)
-- and not just *yours* -- I mean,
the whole, you know... original
experience. Blues, gospel... Black
music is where it's at.

Justin looks Miles up and down, seemingly really seeing him in his dishevelled state for the first time.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
You... want to sit down, Mr. Davis?

In Miles eyes, "fuck you and your pity" - but he covers.

MILES
Yeah. Scoot over, Tami.

Dave chuckles. Tami grins, scoots over, pats the mattress next to her. Justin smiles, shakes his head -

JUSTIN
Alright.

Justin holds out the bag of coke to Miles -

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
That's eight-hundred even.

Miles tosses Justin the short clip. Dave goes in:

DAVE
Whoa, whoa, whoa, *what?! Yeah, it's \$600 any other day I don't come in here with him, right?!*

JUSTIN
What are you talking -

MILES
What?

JUSTIN
(to Dave)
Whoa, whoa, whoa? C'mere, man!

Justin goes over close to Dave again. Less sycophantic.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
First you fuck me and now you're gonna fuck me?

Dave talks loud.

DAVE
Forget this kid, Miles. He's a crook. You're a crook, Justin.

JUSTIN
Fuck you -
(makes his case to Miles)
- this is the price, Mr. Davis.

DAVE
You've got to be joking -

Dave goes over to Justin's extensive record collection, and pulls out one classic Miles record after another, naming them-

DAVE (CONT'D)
Look at this... Birth of the Cool, Porgy and Bess, Sketches of Spain, Kind of Blue-- Jesus, you got a whole *lifetime* of this man's stuff and you're shystering him -

MILES
(playing along)
Which one does he play, Tami?

Tami hums "So What" the famous first two notes in Miles' canon.

TAMI

Doo-do

TAMI (CONT'D)

He plays that one a lot - that one too. I like that one.

Miles walks over to the collection, has a look for himself, finds "Someday MPWC", pulls it out.

DAVE

Of course you do.

JUSTIN

Listen, I'm not *shytering* you, Mr. Davis. Look -

(counts the cash, peels off a couple bills, puts them on the table)

- This is fine. I'll give you an eighth.

DAVE

Man, you're still stupid...

Dave picks up the albums.

DAVE (CONT'D)

..."give" him an eighth. Go get me a fucking pen.

Dave hits the right note. Justin pricks up. This is gold. Dave glances at Miles who smiles slightly Dave's solo (Coltrane), both of them playing this kid now. Miles then turns, dead serious.

MILES

No.

DAVE

Just do a couple, Miles...

MILES

Um um.

DAVE

Right. Sorry. I was thinking... Forget it. That was stupid. Let's go.

Dave plops the records down.

JUSTIN

Wait, w-w-waitwaitwait...just hold on. Listen...I - I'm sorry -

(in tight to Miles,
confession)

Look, I'd go ape-shit if you would sign a couple of these for me. You do that, it'll cover what you're short.

Justin finds a pen, holds it out to Miles -

DAVE

For the quarter, yeah?

JUSTIN

Yeah, for the quarter, what do you think I'm saying, jerk?

Miles "reluctantly" takes the pen. Justin grabs the records, hands them to Miles with reverence.

As he signs, Miles looks at the iconic record covers for a moment. Been a minute since he's really looked at any of them.

MILES

This is the old shit, man. I've done like fifteen albums since "Kind of Blue."

JUSTIN

Yeah, but *this* is the stuff people dig.

Miles chuckles gravely, signs two but stops on "Someday MPWC". Considers Frances on the cover. Dave can tell, this woman really means something.

Miles signs one more, holds out his hand. Justin gives him his quarter of coke. Miles does a quick bump to test it, nods at Justin -

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Right?

- and pockets the coke. Justin holds out the empty money clip to Miles.

MILES

Keep it.

Miles tucks Frances under his arm.

JUSTIN

Uh...

And exits out the door.

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME/DILAPIDATED CHURCH - DAY

Miles and Frances enter frame arm in arm in the cavernous main room of the dilapidated church. Dusty pews and scary judgemental angels, sun shines through the stained glass windows. Flamenco Sketches plays.

Frances scans the room then slowly strides away from Miles down the center aisle, hands lightly touching the pews. As she passes, pirouetting, the ROOM CHANGES, darkness becoming light (This effect will be achieved with a series of PHOTOS from a "locked off" camera position as the room is dressed ala City of God).

The final PHOTO; Frances reaches the end of the room and turns back to face Miles. The scene comes to life, the space transformed, an elegant stairway as its centerpiece, leading straight up to heaven.

They both bound up the stairs into the bedroom.

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME/BEDROOM - LATER

Miles and Frances make love. Deep, passionate...

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME/BEDROOM - LATER

Frances and Miles lay on the bed having a lively conversation, laughing, sipping champagne. Frances is beautiful and Miles drinks her in...

FRANCES

...so, it's the same...

MILES

(sly smile)

Oh, it's the same, huh?

FRANCES

Yes.

She floats her hand in the air. Miles reaches his up to meet it. She holds her hand in a half finished flourish -

FRANCES (CONT'D)

You know what I mean? When it's right there...and you hold it...and you don't breathe, and they don't breathe, and you're holding them...and then -

MILES

Whoosh...

In a moment of inspiration, Fran hops up, wearing only Miles' shirt, and begins to dance...

FRANCES

We fly...

...Miles' visage slowly changes from rapt by her to rapt by something else.

As Miles watches, HER VOICE FADES out - we see he's in love with her not only entirely, but it's every piece of Frances that he adores; hands, her legs, hair, eyes, etc. Miles focuses on each part, breaking her down, Picasso-esque...deconstructing Chopin --

WE NOW HEAR disparate notes, a chord, then another in the progression; half a tone up, birthing a composition based on *the nine note scale that bookends the composition, Gone*, - the sound-track to Frances' dance. Fran spins, laughs, PUSH IN. Miles eyes narrow as he focuses on what's forming in his mind.

Fran spins, closes her eyes, given over to the rapture she feels. When she opens them, Miles is gone. Fran smiles to herself, slightly high, knowing where he's headed and that she's the elixir he drinks to create. She heads out the door seeing Miles at the bottom of the stairs - calls -

FRANCES (CONT'D)

Sweetheart...

Her voice faint, the chords on the SOUNDTRACK in control now. Miles keeps moving.

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME/RECORDING STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Miles does a warm-up run on his horn as Frances enters. She calls to him but her voice is all but a whisper now. Miles cocks his head listening more closely to the chord, bringing it forward in his mind as well as in the TRACK. He plays to it.

Fran watches, prideful. Miles finishes a phrase, half turns and catches sight of her. She puts on a little fake pout, "You left me alone." Miles playfully pouts back, goes to her.

MILES

Aww, baby girl...

Miles kisses Frances softly, deeply. She kisses Miles back, walks backwards with him toward the couch, pulls him down. He drops down sitting next to her and after a moment, draws away looking in her eyes. Miles, tasting her on his lips, rubs his finger around his embouchure, closes his eyes, languidly blows Fran's softness into the horn.

Then Miles' attention is drawn to the sound of... is that Funkadelic?

EXT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME/STREET - SAME

*

Miles and Dave pull up to the curb. Miles takes the stash of coke and his gun out of the secret compartment, seems somehow effected by the Frances moment we've just witnessed. Miles hops out, pops his hip back in place as Dave arrives on the sidewalk next to him.

DAVE

Jesus...

Miles holds his hand out to Dave.

MILES

Keys.

Dave plops the keys into his hand. Miles heads to the door, taking the Jag key off the ring, Dave following.

MILES (CONT'D)

Tell you what; gas me up, get it washed and then go grab me some catfish.

DAVE

(beat)

Cat- Are you serious?

MILES

You got a problem with that?

Dave sighs, test two, I guess. He'll grin and bear it... until he can get those tapes.

DAVE

Yeah, sure -

Dave holds out his hand for the key but then they both cock their heads to the door. (Miles Davis ?) Music on, people's voices. Miles and Dave exchange a look, then Miles turns the knob, pushes in.

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Miles is stunned. There's a party in full swing; FUNK MUSIC blasting on the stereo.

40 PEOPLE, black, white, shady, musicians, drug addicts, the kind of people who party in your house when you're gone. Dieter, who got out of the cab earlier with Janice, is the first to spot Miles, pokes Janice, points. They work their way over to get to Miles.

Dave is waiting for Miles to blow up, as other guests greet him like a famous stranger in his own house. Janice, zooming a little, puts her arms around Miles -

JANICE

Hey, baby, you didn't hear me calling - ?

MILES

What the fuck is going on, Janice?

JANICE

It's Tuesday?

MILES

So what?!

JANICE

Don't you remember? You said we could party over here Tuesday.

MILES

I ain't talked to you in *forever*.
When I say that?

JANICE

You know, like... *weeks* ago.

Miles makes his way over to the reel to reel machine, Janice in lockstep with him.

MILES

You always pulling some shit -
How'd you get in anyway?

JANICE

Remember? That key you hid from me
that time?

Miles pushes a couple stoned people away whose tipsy drinks
threaten to spill on the machine - and his tape...

MILES

Move, muthafuckas -

Dieter jams up to Miles while he hurriedly fast forwards the
tape, removes it from the machine. Dave notes it, moves in
behind him, staying close to his prey. As Miles puts his tape
away, Dieter rambles on:

DIETER

Miiiiiiiiles Daaaaaaaaviiiiiiis. Good
to see you again, my man.

Dieter holds out his hand for a shake, Miles doesn't even
notice.

You know, you are so *far out* the
way you just stopped making music
because *you* decide when you live
and die, the artist is God...

Miles gets the tape in it's can, stuffs it into a drawer as a
few gawkers pass here and there, clocking Miles "Shit, that's
him... etc."

Miles struggles with the sticking drawer.

DAVE

Let me help you, man...

Dave helps Miles find the slide, constantly clocking the
tape, it's date, trying not to be obvious.

DIETER

And when you're dead, you will be
bigger than *ever*, and you should
burn your body in the Ganges River,
the *holiest* water -

MILES

Get the fuck off me, Hitler.

DIETER

HITLER! OUTRAGEOUS!

Miles finally gets the drawer shut.

JANICE
Dieter, cool it.

DAVE
Yeah, man. Back up!

Dave playing bodyguard now as Miles locks the drawer with one of the keys on his ring, Dave clocking it all. Miles scoops up Frances and turns to Janice.

MILES
Get all these muthafucka's outta -

JANICE
(quick)
Please, Miles. You promised me. And I straightened up and everything. Look, I'll tell everybody to leave you alone, and we won't go too late, ok? *Please...*

Beat. Miles stares at her, holding on to Frances. He points to his reel to reel.

MILES
Keep your simple-ass friends away from my shit.

JANICE
Of course, baby.

MILES
And stay the fuck out the basement.

Janice turns pushing Dieter off.

Miles heads toward the door leading downstairs, flips through the keys.

DAVE
Want me to stay up here, keep an eye on things?

Miles opens the basement door with his key.

MILES
C'mon.

ANGLE DAVE: Dave glances at the tape, follows Miles THROUGH THE DOOR.

As the door closes behind them, glimpse the saloon doors opening and Harper, Walter, and Junior enter. Junior has his trumpet case in hand.

WALTER

Told you.

HARPER

Yes, you did. Kudos to your sources.

JUNIOR

I don't know about this, man.

HARPER

You don't need to know - I know. You just do your thing.

JUNIOR

We're just gonna walk right up on him in the middle of a party?

Harper puts an arm around Junior.

HARPER

You know who John Coltrane was before he was John Coltrane? A bar walker. He literally walked across the bar playing his horn, people throwing nickels at him. Then Miles *hears him play* -

(Harper mimes a plane taking off)

Whoosh...! "John Coltrane". You think you're worse than a bar walker? Trust me. We'll find a little corner, you'll play and that'll be it.

JUNIOR

(wary)

Yeah, he didn't look too much like he wanted to -

HARPER

Junior, stop playing with your pussy, alright! This is 'take a shot' time.

JUNIOR

(low, looking away)

Fuck you, Harper...

Harper smiles. Junior is just like he likes him; edgy. Ready to blow.

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME/RECORDING STUDIO- MOMENTS
LATER

Miles and Dave enter Miles' sanctuary; a State of the art
studio. The Sorcerer's Cave.

MILES
(muttering)
India... muthafuckas are crazy..

A trumpet on a stand, an electric piano, drums. His Grammys
on a shelf, one is used as a doorstop - his gold and platinum
albums line the walls, boxing photos of Sugar Ray, Jack
Johnson, Joe Louis, and of Miles sparring in the ring. A
heavy bag hangs from the ceiling. Dave looks around,
impressed, realizing he's inside Miles' brain.

DAVE
Okay. Cool... You record a lot down
here?

MILES
Yeah, sometimes...

Miles puts the "...Prince..." record down, dumps some coke on
Frances and cuts some rails. She looks at him disapprovingly.

MILES (CONT'D)
So what...?

DAVE
Man, she's beautiful. That look in
her eye, that's something.

MILES
Umhm.

DAVE
Frances, right?

Miles shoots Dave a quick look then both men's attention is
drawn to the door upstairs and the jiggling of the knob.
Miles shakes his head, tears off a piece of staff paper
covered in his scrawl of musical notes, rolls it up and
snorts a line. Holds it out for Dave.

DAVE (CONT'D)
I'm good.

Miles shrugs - suit yourself, starts to put it to the side.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Uh...

Dave reconsiders, reaches for it. Miles hands it over and Dave does a rail -

DAVE (CONT'D)

Oh, man... Holy fuck, man. Fuck-fuck -

MILES

Yeah, Tuesday, like a motherfucker.

Dave sits, stands, sits, shakes his head, really playing it up.

DAVE

Wow.

MILES

You gonna make it?

DAVE

I'm gonna need a drink, man, or a, or a Valium, or a Quaalude, or a brick...

Miles chuckles at his jester, shares the laugh with Frances, veiled in dope like lace, twinkling back at him. Miles reaches to the side, pulls a couple Heinekens out of a MINI FRIDGE.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Uh, I was thinking something a little stronger, you know. One of those drinks upstairs. You mind?

Points up. Beat. Then Miles smirks.

MILES

Go head.

Miles tosses Dave the ring of keys -

MILES (CONT'D)

Lock it behind you. Little silver one. And grab me some of that brown.

DAVE

Cool. Good. Yeah.

Dave exits with the "keys to the kingdom". Miles looks at his trumpet - it looks at him - he wanders over to the heavy bag, starts jabbing it. POP-POP-POP - musically rhythmic - something stirs in him, eyes pass over Frances without looking at her, to the piano.

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME/MAIN ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dave locks the basement door behind him, his gaze drawn to the reel to reel table and the drawer holding the tape.

DAVE

Dave Braden, you are *so* bloody good...

He makes a beeline for the it.

Arriving at the table Dave looks for something to conceal the tape in, spies Miles' valise on a shelf next to the cabinet, papers brimming over - that'll do. He tags the small key on the ring and shoves it into the lock, opens the cabinet drawer - double checks the label on the tape, the date (PUSH) - *Bingo*.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Hello...

He pockets the keys - his wheels spin for a hot second, a defining moment: "Am I a thief, or am I a journalist...?"

HARPER (O.S.)

Rolling Stone...

Dave *casually* drops the valise and hip closes the cabinet drawer (but it sticks and doesn't close all the way) as he turns to find Harper pushing through people to get over to him, Junior trailing.

DAVE

Hey.

HARPER

How'd you weasel your way back in?

DAVE

(a little pointed)
Waltzed right in with the rest of the riff raff.

HARPER

Lucky you. Where's Miles?

DAVE

No idea.

HARPER

So what are you doing here?

DAVE

I'm a writer, man. Kinda what we do.

Walter walks up as Dave grabs a bottle of brown LIQUOR off a nearby table.

WALTER

Chick over there said Miles was with *him*.

HARPER

I heard that too.

DAVE

He *was*. He left.

HARPER

Left his own party.

DAVE

(indicating the room)

It's his house. It ain't his party. People just...show up.

Harper looks at Walter, chuckles, pointing to Dave, "get a load of this asshole."

DAVE (CONT'D)

(cops to it)

Yeah, it's kinda fucked, huh? My understanding, happens a lot.

Dave takes a pull on the bottle.

HARPER

Help yourself.

He takes another swig.

DAVE

It's not yours, the fuck you care?

Insulted, Harper cocks his head at this creature who for some strange reason wants to be abused now. Walter steps around to oblige. Dave takes a slight step back.

DAVE (CONT'D)

OK, relax... take it easy, man. Hey, you mind if I ask you a few questions?

WALTER

...the fuck outta here...

Dave backs away.

DAVE

And he continues, undeterred by
enmity and rancorous spite, fixed
on his prize, his bow string,
taut...

Dave turns, and folds into the party.

WALTER

Fucking clown.

Harper turns to speak to Junior, Dave takes the opportunity
to quickly unlock the basement door and rush inside.

HARPER

This is what I'm talking about,
kid. Don't let this be your future,
okay - bunch of degenerates
partying in your house and you
ain't even home.

JUNIOR

Yeah...

When Harper looks up, Dave's gone. Junior is drawn to the
reel to reel machine, intrigued by what incredible music
might have spun through these wheels.

HARPER

Walter, go get the car.

Junior touches the machine with reverence, then happens to
peek down into the exposed drawer below. His eyes widen.

JUNIOR

Whoa...

Harper clocks Junior, walks over and has a peek for himself.
A Cheshire cat grin spreads over Harper's lips.

HARPER

(to himself)

Fucking Rolling Stone...

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME/RECORDING STUDIO - MOMENTS
LATER

Dave opens the door hearing Miles playing the piano (Chopin
cum Gone), composing on the fly. Miles jots down some
scribble on ledger paper then speaks without looking up.

MILES
What took you so long?

DAVE
(ala Dieter)
Miiiiiiilllles DAAAVIIIS!

MILES
He got you too, huh?

Dave nods, holds the liquor out to Miles.

MILES (CONT'D)
We drink out of glasses here,
muthafucka?

DAVE
Of course. I don't know what I
was... Be right back.

Dave happily starts to head back up.

MILES
Give it here.

DAVE
You sure?

Miles' answer is his extended hand. Dave's gonna be here for
a minute.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Okay.

Miles takes the bottle, throws back a swig.

DAVE (CONT'D)
So... that was beautiful, man. I
didn't know you played piano.

Miles takes another swig, goes back to playing the piano.

MILES
This ain't playing. Playing around,
maybe.

DAVE
Sounds good to me.
(beat)
So you studied piano too, huh?

MILES
Just woke up black and knew how to
play.

DAVE
You're black?

Miles chuckles. Dave smiles. They're starting to ease into it. Dave picks up boxing gloves, casually checks out the wear and tear, ponders their history.

MILES
Frances loves Chopin...

DAVE
(off record cover)
Yeah... She looks...very classy,
you know. Refined... Kinda
mischievous too?

MILES
(on is own beam)
Stravinsky, Bartok, Chopin...
studied all those cats, man. They
broke convention, you know. Pushing
back at that... standard, classical
bag... Bird and Diz was doing that
on stage every night, on the fly.
Didn't write it down. Just came out
of 'em. Shit was scary. I wanted to
quit every night.

Dave slips on the gloves, really starts tuning Miles in.

MILES (CONT'D)
The old people come up to me and
ask, "Why don't you play the way
you used to?" I say to them, 'Tell
me how I used to.'" You have to
play a long time to be able to play
like yourself. Man, don't do
nothing like you used to. It don't
move, then that's dead music. It's
dead.

Miles stops playing. Doesn't move. Neither does Dave. A
weighted moment.

DAVE
So is it...fair to say that

Miles turns to Dave, narrows his eyes.

MILES
Your turn, muthafucka.

DAVE
My turn what?

Miles gestures; "Give it up." Dave smiles.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Oh, you want the Dave Braden story,
huh? Okay... I was born in
Scotland, grew up, wrote some shit,
did some other stuff, then I came
to your house.

Miles smiles.

MILES
You forgot something. Who socked
you up?

DAVE
(smirks)
You going senile?

MILES
Before me.

Dave sighs.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - EARLIER TODAY

Dave standing near a car arguing with someone unseen.

DAVE (V.O.)
(beat)
My wife's cock-sucker boyfriend -

He turns, responding to a voice and gets sucker-punched, hits
the pavement. RALPH, 35, a big ape, starts rummaging through
his pockets.

DAVE (V.O. CONT'D)
- thought it was his job to collect
twenty-dollars and fifty cents of
fucking alimony.

Dave's POV: A beautiful woman, SUSIE, 32, in a parked car at
the curb, looking down at him. She mouths, "I love you..."
Ralph takes Dave's money and they drive off...

A37 BACK TO - MILES' HOME STUDIO - AS BEFORE

A37

DAVE (CONT'D)
Then I came to your house.

Dave does a small bow. Beat.

MILES
Alimony.

DAVE
Yeah.

MILES
So ex-wife...

DAVE
Yeah.

Says it almost misty though.

MILES
(beat)
You really miss her, don't you?

DAVE
Yeah.

Miles giggles, gets up from the piano.

MILES
Man, throw a punch.

Dave is dumbstruck for a moment.

MILES (CONT'D)
Come on...

Miles goes to the bag, holds it. Dave throws an easy punch.

MILES (CONT'D)
Now throw a real one.

Dave looks at him, hits the bag hard, moves Miles back a bit. Miles recovers, winces, his hip. Dave doesn't see, or care. Miles plays it off.

MILES (CONT'D)
Hold the bag.

Dave holds the bag for Miles.

MILES (CONT'D)
Naw, you don't lock down chicks
like that, man...

Miles hits the bag.

MILES (CONT'D)

Punch comes from the hip, right.

Hip. Miles hits the bag again then holds the bag for Dave - braces. Dave throws a hard punch. Miles absorbs, returns the bag for Dave to hold.

MILES (CONT'D)

Turn your wrist over, snap it.

Miles keeps punching - fuck the pain - like the pain - need the pain -

MILES (CONT'D)

Wives are for kids, and serious shit. You don't mess with that.

(beat, mutters a rare admission)

Yeah, I coulda done that better...

DAVE

What?

Miles shakes his head - nothing. He steps into his PUNCH -

INT. RECORDING STUDIO MIDTOWN/ENGINEERING BOOTH - DAY

The horns on the track Gone from Gil and Miles Porgy and Bess, blare out strong. *Miles in the booth drops hard onto the couch, making a phone call.*

TEO

Let's get another one, Gil.

TWO SEXY GIRLS are perched next on the couch too, looking at Miles like he's the daily special. In the studio, musicians play. The European ring is replaced.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)

Savoy Hotel, London.

MILES

Frances Taylor. Room 516.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)

Yes, Mr. Davis. One moment.

Miles listens, waits. PLAYBACK streams over the speakers, the opening passage of "GONE". A bit of a mess. Then -

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)

I'm sorry, Mr. Davis, there doesn't seem to be an answer. Would you like to leave another -

MILES

You muthafuckas know how to slip a note under a door?

Miles hangs up. He takes a long drag on his cigarette and exhales, his countenance clouded, finally focusing on the girls on the couch for a beat, saying nothing. He takes another drag, stubs out his cigarette. Walks back into the studio, interrupting the take.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO/BOOTH/MIDTOWN- CONTINUOUS

Philly Joe Jones, Paul Chambers and a 12 PIECE GROUP, conducted by Gil Evans, are working through "**Gone**" from "Porgy and Bess".

Gil Evans, his face a cipher, stops the group... again.

GIL

(waving his hand)
Alright, alright...

The musicians groan.

MILES

Timing's all messed up.

PAUL

I played my nine in perfect time.

MILES

That's the problem, man. Everybody ain't playin' the chart like it's written, at least be musical about it.

ERNIE ROYAL

Man, this is some tricky shit.

MILES

So what? Be wrong strong. Otherwise lay out. Teo, can you hear the Jerome and Phil?

In a SERIES OF CUTS we see Miles genius as he rearranges the players, maximizing the acoustics, changes a note or two for the woodwind section, confers with Gil, etc. Then -

CUT: A light an airy moment - a break in playing...

MILES (CONT'D)

Yeah, we were all up in that shit
like a muthfucka. Cleaner than a
broke dick dog.

ERNIE

Yeah that suit was somethin' else.

MILES

Yeah, Prez turned me on to that
cat.

CUT:

GIL

Okay, let's take it from the head.

ENGINEER (O.S.)

"Gone" take fourteen.

They play again, fumbling to the same result. Before Gil can stop them, Miles plays his solo, his eyes daring anybody to cut his wisdom. The group powers through the song...

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME/BEDROOM - LATER/NIGHT

RINGING. Miles is in a silk robe, in a chair in the master bedroom, slumped back, looking bored. He answers the phone as we begin to DOLLY around him.

MILES

What?

FRANCES (V.O.)

Hey.

MILES

Hey? I've been calling you all damn
day.

FRANCES (V.O.)

Honey, it's 6:30 in the morning
here. I just woke -

MILES

Oh... Okay... I just uh... Okay...

Miles puts his finger to his lips, "shhhh...", turns away.

FRANCES (V.O.)
 Guess what, baby. We're a royal
 hit! We got extended. Three more
 weeks.

MILES
 I want you to come home, Frances.

FRANCES (V.O.)
 (beat)
 Honey, did you hear what I just
 said -- I can't.

MILES
 Just come home. Come home for two
 days.

Frances says nothing.

MILES (CONT'D)
 They can get by without you for two
 or three damn days.

INTERCUT FRANCES in ECU sitting on the edge of the bed in her
 room at the SAVOY HOTEL, looking beautiful at 6:30am, like
 some women do.

FRANCES
 Baby...

The TWO HOT GIRLS we met at the recording studio are naked in
 bed stifling giggles, silently gesturing Miles to join them.
 A Polaroid camera with a bunch of Polaroid photos of the
 three of them in various combinations, fucking, are strewn
 about.

MILES
 It's because I didn't marry you?

FRANCES
 What?

MILES
 I've been thinking about it, it's a
 good thing, we should do that.
 Let's have a real serious talk
 about it when you get here.

FRANCES
 I'm sorry, can you hold on a
 second, baby?

Frances takes the receiver away from her ear, covers the mouthpiece. Beat. Then puts the phone back to her ear and just listens.

On the other end of the line Miles' agitation starts to slowly mount.

MILES
Fran...? Frances...

Frances finally speaks.

FRANCES
I'm back.

MILES
I'm having a plane pick you up tomorrow.
(beat)
Okay?
(beat)
I need you.

FRANCES (V.O.)
I'll... work it out with my understudy...
he scans his surroundings but no there's no Miles. Dave thinks about the night, smiles to himself, grabs some ledger paper of the piano, starts furiously composing his thoughts, flowing, getting some good shit down.

But then, CRASH. Upstairs Miles is cursing, thrashing about in a panic...

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME/LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Miles finally jerks the reel to reel cabinet drawer all the way open - tape is definitely not there - he rifles through the debris around the machine - zip. Dave enters the space, sees Miles who whips around to him.

MILES
Somebody stole my fucking music!

Dave's face goes slack. This ain't good.

DAVE
Oh, man. Those assholes... *Shit!*

MILES
Shit, what?! *What* assholes?!

DAVE
That Harper guy from Columbia, and
that kid were here.

MILES
Here last night?

DAVE
Yeah.

MILES
...the fuck you didn't you tell me
that last night?

DAVE
I was blasted, man. Shit went right
outta my head. Aw, man -

Miles goes to the phone and dials, muttering while it rings.

MILES
Columbia motherfucker's...think
they own my shit? We gonna see. Try
releasing it. Go ahead. My
lawyer'll be on your ass so fast -

The phone picks up.

RECORDING (V.O.)
Hello. Because of the Yom Kippur
Holy Day, Columbia Records will be
closed today, Wednesday, September -

MILES
Yom fucking Kippur!?

Miles slams the phone down.

DAVE
Wait... Village Vanguard. Junior's
playing there tonight, right?

Dave checks his watch.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Maybe catch him at rehearsal?

MILES
Come on.

(PRE-LAP JUNIOR'S JAM SESSION)

Miles heads upstairs, powering through his aching hip. Dave follows behind.

MILES (CONT'D)
Come and drink my liquor,
freeloading thievin' muthafuckas...

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME CLOSET- CONTINUOUS

Miles stands at a double door, jerks them open -

MILES
You ain't driving me around looking
like that no more.

- his massive closet - hundreds of outfits, shoes, shades, hats.

INT. VILLAGE VANGUARD BAR - LATER/DAY

Miles and Dave enter, decked out like we first saw them at the top of the movie, drawing stares from the few setting up for the show later, BARTENDER, MANAGER, BUSBOYS, etc...

MANAGER
Oh, hey! Great to see you, Miles.

A busboy walks by with a bus bin with dishes.

BUSBOY
Aw, *man*. You said this nigga was
dead -

Manager shoots daggers at him, turns back to Miles.

MANAGER
What're you doing here?

MILES
I'm not here.

The BARTENDER leans over the bar.

BARTENDER
(butting in)
Hey, Miles, I heard you put it *down*
on that new session y'all did.

Miles flashes him a quick look.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

My cousin play with your man Larry
Coryell sometime.

The guy gives Miles a knowing, insiders wink. Miles half acknowledges it, drawn by the sounds of a quintet warming up, fucking around, running phrases, chord changes, on the Miles composition, "**All Blues**" (bootleg version) - the trumpet player is where Miles' ear goes - clear, bright sounds... something... The bandstand just out of sight...

Comes round the bend and sees Junior on the bandstand - Miles is stopped in his tracks, the quintet is great, but he's truly captivated by the virtuosity of Junior. Dave is blown away by the kid, goes to comment to Miles, stops, seeing him differently now, 'Miles appreciating greatness', something new.

The band is having a good time, laughing as one or another calls out rapid chord changes - trying to one up each other as the players have to catch on/up to the changes - but not Junior - he's right there, a monster, not only keeps up, but anchors the band, bringing the music back around on the soar, like Kelly Slater killing it on the wave of a Tsunami - ..

PIANO PLAYER

G flat -

SAX PLAYER

I can do that -

JUNIOR

Uh huh -

BASS PLAYER

C minor -

The drummer switches from 4/4 to 3/4 time.

BAND

Whoa...

JUNIOR

D - double flat --

PIANO PLAYER

Damn...

BASS PLAYER

Ahhhh - yeah -

DRUMMER

Wait, what key is this in -

Watch those "speed skaters" whip around the musical bend, low and lightening fast - "All Blues" has been de-constructed, reconstructed, and turned inside out - these guys are flying -

JUNIOR

B flat -

Junior blows a bright clear solo, then takes over the song suddenly blasting the punch-line to the joke - quotes the musical phrase, "Anything You Can Do I Can Do Better", too loudly, non-musically, and they all lose it, cracking up -

ECU - Miles' hand, fingers, they start to twitch almost imperceptibly but it's there. Ghost fingering keys. We hear the - whoosh, whoosh, whoosh of Miles' pulse as it slows. His hand flinches, clinches shut as if zapped by electricity.

INT. VILLAGE VANGUARD - LATER/NIGHT

ON STAGE: Miles with his quintet - "Blue in Green (3:28)"

Miles blows through his solo, meditative, focused. The song sounds like an apology for an argument gone unheard. We let this great music play.

Others are present but Frances is about the only thing we clearly see - shimmering, illuminated, sipping a martini, silently accepting his musical mea culpa. The rest of the set falls off into near darkness, a cigarette tip here, the glint of a glass there, smoke throughout the room...

Miles finishes his solo and Bill Evans comes in to tie a bow on it. Miles takes off the mute, puts his trumpet on the stand, strolls off stage, lights a cig.

The audience cheers and he and Frances lock eyes for the briefest of beats, when a blonde beauty, looks rich, ERICA, 34, steps into his line of vision, blocking Frances.

ERICA

Hi Miles.

MILES

Erica, yeah...

ERICA

Would you walk me out and help me get a cab? I don't feel it's safe for a girl out there by herself.

Miles looks over at the stage.

MILES

Y'all play that bossa.

Miles glances back to Frances, half shrugs. Frances' face is a cipher, giving up nothing. She casually takes a cigarette out of a pack and gracefully holds it, suspended in air for the all too willing nearby gentleman to light.

MILES (CONT'D)

C'mon...

Frances takes a drag, sips her drink.

EXT. VILLAGE VANGUARD - CONTINUOUS

Miles walks Erica across the street to catch a cab.

ERICA

Oh my God. When you play like that...it's as if I can hear the words even though no one's singing, you know what I mean? It's like a transfusion of life I feel all throughout my body.

She swoons, nuzzling close, whispering the adorations in his ear. He doesn't reciprocate, but he doesn't fight her off either. She's welcome to touch, but she can't own.

Miles holds up his arm to hail a cab.

Frances is at the door of the club, fresh drink in hand, looking at Erica hanging off Miles.

A BEAT COP, 45, white, across the street watches Miles and Erica - something doesn't feel right to the cop. Something he just doesn't like.

Frances turns back inside the club.

A cab stops. Erica puts her hand in Miles' hand, ever the lady, and he, ever the gentleman, as he helps her into the cab, she reaches into her purse and goes to hand Miles a \$50 bill (the way it used to be) - she's sweet, a couple years back he'd take it - he holds up his hand -

MILES

Naw, baby, I'm good, I got it.

Miles takes a \$20 out and hands it to the cabbie. She looks at Miles, with a call-me-anytime look -

ERICA
Maybe you want to come by later.

MILES
Good night, Erica.

Miles taps on the cab and it drives her away. He lights a smoke.

The cop crosses the street. Miles watches him approach. What does this motherfucker want?

A white MAN in a suit down the block takes notice -

COP
No loitering. Move on.

MILES
I work in there, man.

COP
I don't care where you work. Move.

MILES
I'm taking a smoke break. I'm Miles Davis. That's me on the marquis.

COP
I don't a give a shit. Move your ass off this corner now or I'll lock it up.

MILES
I'm on public property, man. I can stand here and have a smoke.

The cop takes hold of Miles. Miles pulls away. Then leans into the cop, like a boxer, fists instinctively rising when he thinks the cop's about to hit him. The cop stumbles back while going for his cuffs and nightstick.

And at that moment, Miles is cracked on the back of the head with a nightstick courtesy of the white man in the suit - who turns out to be a PLAINCLOTHES COP.

Miles stumbles - dazed, weaves but doesn't go down, bleeding from the head, runs down his face - Detective Plainclothes cracks him a second time, then he goes down.

The cops rough him up while he's down on the sidewalk. CLOSE ON Miles as he absorbs the punishment.

Mr. Plainclothes cuffs Miles and yanks him up as a small crowd (20 people) starts to form.

He flashes his badge, voices yelling: "Stop it, stop it!"
 "That's Miles Davis." "Fucking cops!" Etc.

Frances, and a few others, rush out of the club. All
 happening so fast.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - A BIT LATER/NIGHT

Miles is lead in roughly by the cop thrown in the tank. Miles
 plunks down on the bench. Defiant. Wears the blood on his
 face like war paint. I'm Miles Davis. Fuck you. We HEAR the
 din of people/reporters outside the jailhouse.

INT. JAIL CELL - A BIT LATER/NIGHT

Miles sits with his head in his hands, the beating,
 surroundings, the utter lack of solemnity. Suddenly, outside
 the cell we hear a loud argument. He looks up, the blood
 dried on his face -

FRANCES (O.S.)
 ...Do you have any Goddamn
 worldly idea what you've
 done?! I said, let him out of
 that cell! That's Miles Davis
 in there. Miles. Davis. You
 dumb cracker, mutha -

PLAINCLOTHES COP (O.S.)
 Listen lady, you better watch
 your -

Miles rubbernecks, through the bars and down the corridor, he
 sees a sliver of his muse, love, savior, on a tear, at war
 for him - he laughs, yeah, baby -

FRANCES
 Better watch my what?! You gonna
 beat me too, you son-of-a - bitch!?

MILES
 Ha, check those motherfuckers...

REVERSE ANGLE - ON Frances blowing up at the cops - a couple
 stand back and watch, a couple pass by wanting to "take this
 bitch's fucking head off", but the presence of Miles' lawyer,
 HAROLD LOVETT, 40s is her protection.

FRANCES
 We're gonna sue the shit out of all
 you racist sons of bitches. Tell
 'em, Harold -

HAROLD
The whole damn police department!

Frances brushes past the cops, comes up to the cell, peers in, her beautiful face framed by the bars -

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME/BATHROOM - LATER/NIGHT

Miles sits in the tub staring at the water. White candles adorn the room, flickering light, (*sounds of Chopin fill the house), wine, the mood set. The door opens and Frances comes in wearing a robe. She drops it to the floor; Whoa. Frances slides into the tub behind Miles. She wets the soap and starts washing him, gently, lovingly, his wounds, the dried blood. Miles closes his eyes, surrendering to it.

She whispers in his ear, sexy, close...

FRANCES
It's ok. I got you.

Long beat.

MILES
Baby, I want you to stop dancing.

FRANCES
What?

MILES
I want you to stop dancing, Fran.

FRANCES
(disbelief - check)
You want me to quit West Side.

MILES
Quit dancing altogether.

She stiffens, straightens, he sits up, turns to her.

MILES (CONT'D)
I know. It's a sacrifice. But you're my wife now. Your place is with me.

FRANCES
Sacrifice.

She looks at him askance, giving him a moment to take it back; yet knowing he meant exactly what he said. She lets out a little laugh, calling his crazy-town and raising him a crazy-town -

FRANCES (CONT'D)

Yes, baby. Love is sacrifice. Let's do this: I'll hang up my dancing shoes, you hock your horns, we'll move to Rome and open a little Trattoria. Just the two of us. Yes. I like that.

- hoping he'll fold. Miles is a statue. She leans into him eyes closed for a beat, then gets out of the tub. Frances slips on her robe, disappears into the darkened bedroom beyond.

Miles left behind in the tub, vulnerable, exposed, unanswered.

CLOSE UP: The look on Miles' face slowly changes - a glower coming on.

INT. VILLAGE VANGUARD - DAY/AS BEFORE

Junior/Quintet on stage Junior finishes his solo, killed it, rubs the back of his head, sits, looks up, remorse creeping in. Junior peers into the darkness - "Is that...?"

Miles stares at him - extracting the truth. Junior realizes, "Oh shit."

Junior steps off the stage like he's coming to over to talk, then bolts, running through a SIDE DOOR.

Miles and Dave give chase but Miles' is hobbling - he'll never catch Junior - he holds out the gun to Dave -

DAVE

No-no, we don't need that -

Miles smashes the gun into Dave's hand.

MILES

Go. Get him! Go!

Dave chases after Junior. Miles hobbles behind. The band starts to follow but Miles goes sorcerer on them, holds out his hand in a crazy claw shape as he passes.

MILES (CONT'D)

Stay!

They freeze.

INT. CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

Junior hits the exit door but the thing won't budge. When he turns Dave is running up, inadvertently cornering this panicked kid with the gun, the busboy stacking boxes seeks cover.

DAVE

Hey, take it easy!

JR

So what, you gonna shoot now me over a fucking tape?

DAVE

What? No, man, he just wants to talk -

Not shooting? Great. Junior throws a crushing right hook, connecting with Dave's jaw- Dave stumbles backward - drops the gun - it goes skittering off. Junior hits him again - Dave smashes into stuff, recovers, lands two solid punches on Junior, stunning the kid, pleasing himself. Junior returns with a combo that lays Dave out.

Junior picks up the gun, stands over Dave (like Miles stood over Dave with a gun at their initial meeting at the house) - when Miles comes up behind Junior and puts cold steel to the back of Junior's head - his mouthpiece. Junior stops cold.

JUNIOR

Okay, okay, be cool...

- Miles reaches around and takes his gun back from Junior. Junior turns to see Miles - and that he just got played with that mouthpiece. Damn. Miles pushes him in his back and he goes tumbling into some boxes in the corner out of breath. Miles closes in, Dave flanks.

DAVE

Where the fuck's his music, man?

MILES

Lie to me, I'll kill you.

Junior let's out a sigh, a deep, guilty sigh.

JUNIOR

I got it. But I swear, Mr. Davis, I was just trying to help.

MILES

Don't tell me the lies you tell yourself. You're a hype.

(MORE)

MILES (CONT'D)

I can see that shit in your eyes.
George put you up to this.

JUNIOR

Geor- ? No, Harper just thought -
*Waitamminute, first lemme tell you
something* - This cat right here is
a crook, Mr. Davis. He was gonna -

DAVE

Ha! Says the thief.

JUNIOR

You're the fucking - Mr. Davis,
believe me, he's -

MILES

Shut the fuck up. What Harper give
you to snatch my music?

Junior stammers, feeling stupid.

MILES (CONT'D)

Answer me!

JUNIOR

Nothing. Just a... a chance to
maybe get to work with you, you
know. Help you come -- *back*.

MILES

Right. 'Cause you just the hype
with the heart of gold, huh?

JUNIOR

(salty)

Yeah. You remember that move,
right?

Miles gestures to the door with the .38 and the trio head
toward the stairs, Dave and Junior glaring at each other.

INT. VANGUARD - CONTINUOUS

The band, crowded around the door scurry back, clearing a
path for the three guys. Junior goes to the stage, grabs his
horn and case.

MILES

And don't play E flat over that D9.

JUNIOR

Huh?

MILES

You played E flat over that D9.

JUNIOR

So what?

MILES

So don't. That's Dm9. And only
sometimes.

Junior snaps his case closed, looking irked.

JUNIOR

I can play Eb there, it's just a
voicing thing.

MILES

Man, you don't know shit.

Miles pushes Junior toward the door.

EXT. TENEMENT BUILDING - A BIT LATER - DAY

Sketchy hood. Jaguar parked at the curb. Miles, Dave and Junior get out. Passing a couple drunks paper-bagging it, and a TAGGER, hitting up Dali-esque Miles, *prettying up* the grime. Seminal Hip-Hop coming out of windows, or is that modern Jay-Z on the reel to reel?

Miles, Dave and Junior enter the rundown building -

EXT. TENEMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

They take the stairs. Junior puts his key in the door and opens it - enters the apartment with Miles and Dave.

INT. JUNIOR'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The place is a little ransacked. Hear CHERYL (2 year-old girl) crying in the bedroom. Junior quickly heads into the bedroom leaving Miles and Dave.

Miles' head cocks almost imperceptibly, an inexplicable sense of familiarity; these threadbare surroundings, the cacophony of smells and sounds, the chili spaghetti on the stove - coagulated, somebody didn't make it home for supper; one empty bowl of the stuff on the table, and a dirty highchair drawn with browning flung bits of it.

And a cockroach scurrying across the light into darkness.

The crying kid, the conversation between Junior and Irene, becoming a movement inside an unfolding composition -

ON MILES, and on his POV of Junior in the doorway of his bedroom - talking to his wife, IRENE, 24. All we see are her legs, sitting in a chair, comforting Cheryl in her lap.

JUNIOR
What happened?

Irene doesn't answer -

JUNIOR (CONT'D)
Irene!

She doesn't need to speak; looking around, it hits Junior. He disappears from the doorway. Hear him rummaging. Crash, boom. Irene never raises her voice - she's past that.

IRENE
It's not in there. *He* took it.

Junior reappears in front of her, whirling - fuck!

JUNIOR
Harper?
(he knows it)
Muthafucka.

IRENE
The other one...muthafucka.

JUNIOR
(seething)
He sent Walter?

ON MILES - Fuck!

JUNIOR (CONT'D)
(then)
-- Did he touch you? He didn't lay
a hand on you. Is she -

Reeling, Junior drops to one knee to comfort his daughter, but Irene pulls Cheryl close to her chest.

IRENE
This ain't all about you, Junior.

Junior drops his head in shame.

IRENE (CONT'D)
What's wrong with you, man?

Irene stands -

IRENE (CONT'D)
C'mon, Cheryl, mama's gonna change
your diaper.

- exits the room with Cheryl.

JUNIOR
Irene, I'm sorry... Rene?

Irene spots Miles and Dave down the hall. Stops. Her energy changes when she looks at Miles. Recognition, or something else? Miles just stares back. A strange moment. Irene goes into the bathroom with Cheryl. Junior enters the room - his hands upturned, like a kid caught with his pants down.

MILES
Where's my shit?

DAVE
Nice job.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)
(to Dave)
I'll break your fucking jaw right
now.

DAVE
Yeah, that'll fix everything.

MILES
(at Junior)
HEY!

JUNIOR
(snaps to, answers Miles)
Harper's got it.

MILES
Yeah, I figured that part out.
Where is he?

Junior checks the clock on the wall.

JUNIOR
I don't know. His studio, I guess.

Miles pushes the phone over.

MILES
Call him. Tell him you're coming
over.

JUNIOR
I can't just walk in there with
you, man. He's gonna kill me.

MILES

You don't do what I say, *I'm* gonna
kill you.

Junior sighs, picks up the phone. Starts dialing, looks over
at his trumpet case - ANGLE - it looks back at him.

JUNIOR

I'll take y'all over there... but I
gotta do something first.

Miles knows exactly what he means.

JUNIOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Harper.

EXT. PAWN SHOP - LATER/EVENING

We see Junior's horn go into the shop window as he walks out
the front, mouthpiece in hand. He gives the horn a sideways
glance, then walks toward the Jaguar parked outside. Off
screen a phone rings.

HARPER (V.O.)

Junior.

JUNIOR (V.O.)

You sent Walter to my house?

Junior hops in the back seat.

INT/EXT. JAGUAR - LATER/NIGHT

A different street, car running, the window cracks and a hand
reaches in holding two balloons.

HARPER (V.O.)

You didn't deliver the tape last
night, Junior.

JUNIOR (V.O.)

I got...held up.

HARPER (V.O.)

(chuckles)

Oh, held up? Held up. Oh, okay,
then everything's fine.

Junior exchanges money for the drugs but before he can pocket
them, Miles grabs his arm. Junior grabs Miles' hand like
he'll tear it off - that's his life's blood in that rubber.

MILES

This ain't fly away time, we got
work to do.

Miles snatches one balloon away and Junior lets his arm go.

HARPER (V.O.)

My mistake. See you later,
barwalker.

JUNIOR (V.O.)

Waitwaitwait - I blew it, I know.
Just lemme just come by - talk man
to man. I can put in some work on
the music, too, you know.

(beat)

Give me another shot, Harper,
please.

HARPER (V.O.)

(beat. He chortles)
Come and get it.

Hangs up.

INT/EXT. JAGUAR - A MINUTE LATER

Miles and Dave lean on the car. Dave looks back, peeks in as
Junior ties off.

DAVE

Jesus... shouldn't we...say
something, man?

MILES

Go ahead.

In the car, CLOSE ON JUNIOR, a rapturous look of instant
relief on his face. The pulse slows. We hear it, (sounds like
Miles' when he saw Junior play), *whoosh, whoosh, whoosh.*
Time slows. Junior inhales deeply -

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME/BATHROOM - DAY

We hear a harsh SNORTING - then MILES' (37) head jerks into
frame, wiping his nose after doing a bump of coke.

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Miles heads DOWNSTAIRS, eyes dilated, trying to focus. Frances is on the phone, a little miffed, a little drunk, and looking at decorating swatches, to further gild her cage.

FRANCES

Listen, listen, this is way too complicated. Just tell everybody to meet at Diahann's and I'll teach one big class, okay.

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME/RECORDING STUDIO -MOMENTS LATER

Miles joins the 2nd great quintet (young guys) who are messing around, warming up. HERBIE HANCOCK on piano, RON CARTER on double bass, TONY WILLIAMS on drums, and Wayne Shorter on tenor saxophone.

Miles picks up his trumpet and they play, "Nefertiti" a little quick. They soar. As Miles solos, in the deepest thrall of it, the reflection of a RED LIGHT starts FLASHING on his face - we don't get it, but Miles does - it's the phone silently ringing - but that's not what breaks his concentration - he cuts it off, band stops -

MILES

It's too fast.

Miles starts counting it off, about to play when, (a couple seconds after the blinking red light went off), the angry voice of Frances upstairs breaks through:

FRANCES (O.S.)

Who is this?! No, he is not! Who the hell is this calling my house?!
(Etc.)

Miles, frustrated, grabs the phone. Dialogue overlaps:

MILES

What's going on, Fran - ?

PEGGY (V.O.)

Hi Miles, it's Peggy, I -

FRANCES (V.O.)

Hi Miles?!

PEGGY (V.O.)

- just called to say hi, I didn't mean to -

MILES

Hang up the phone.

FRANCES (V.O.)

Who are you talking to?!

MILES

Both of you - hang up the -

Frances is still going off at Peggy. Miles hangs up the phone. Counts it off for the band -

MILES (CONT'D)

Keep going.

Miles heads upstairs. The band continues sans Miles.

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME/LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Frances is railing at Peggy when Miles storms in. She's drinking - near empty bottle of wine, a glass next to her, and a broken glass on the floor.

FRANCES

Listen to me, you bitch, don't ever call here again -

Miles snatches the phone from her, hangs up.

MILES

Why you doin' that?

FRANCES

Why am I -

MILES

I told you, don't worry about nobody else.

FRANCES

This is my house, Miles! My house! Don't have them call my fucking house!

MILES

I didn't tell nobody to call here.

FRANCES

It's too much, Miles. It's too much.

MILES

Then just don't answer the phone,
Frances.

FRANCES

My, God... Oh, my God... Did you
just say that to me...?!

Frances starts pacing like a caged tiger, then stops and
turns to face Miles.

FRANCES (CONT'D)

I make your life beautiful, Miles.
I take care of you, feed you, lie
down in that...fucking bed next to
you and -- You're my husband!
You're with *me*. I gave up
everything for you. I stopped,
dancing, for Godssake. And you
haven't sacrificed anything.
Nothing. I deserve better than
this!

His face gives away nothing. She will crack that fucking
cool. She picks up knick knacks and starts throwing them
dangerously close to his head. Deliberate.

FRANCES (CONT'D)

Fraud. Phony. Asshole. Liar.

Miles barley sidesteps each piece.

MILES

You better stop throwing shit,
Fran. You're drunk.

FRANCES

I'm amazing.

She does a slow turn so he can see.

FRANCES (CONT'D)

And your friends, your so-called
friends, let me know it all the
time -

A flash in his eye (she's lying) turns to contained rage
(she's *not* lying), she sees it, knows him, digs deeper -

FRANCES (CONT'D)

- wanted me so bad -

MILES

Who?

FRANCES

They come knocking when you're not around, whispering sweet to me, telling me how much better they would treat me than you-

MILES

Who you talking about?

FRANCES

It doesn't matter who! I'm not *you*, Miles. And what do I get -- "Hey, baby, it's one of your whores. When am I going to see you again?"

A beat. Miles could apologize...if he could.

MILES

Then don't answer the phone.

She slaps him, full attack mode, pulling hair, swinging, athletic, a dancer who's sinews haven't been fueled by passion in a while, awakening. Miles is trying to hold her off - the boxer knows defense is offense and somewhere in the melee, Miles snaps, and slaps her across the face!

MILES (CONT'D)

Stop!

It hurts, in all ways, they both know it, feel it, but Frances only barely reacts, keeps swinging, coming forward. He grabs a fistful of blouse, pulls back to strike Frances again and they both go tumbling sideways over a coffee table. Loud crash.

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME/RECORDING STUDIO - SAME

The players react to the sound upstairs, quietly vamp. Tony, an 18 year old kid, puts down his sticks concerned, starts to come from around his drum set. Ron, older, wiser -

RON

(a warning)

Tony...

Tony sits, starts playing softly.

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME/LIVING ROOM - SAME

Heavy breathing from both of them, Frances stands over Miles as he grits his teeth to stand - can't quite manage yet, that hip again, throbbing. Frances doesn't offer to help. *Is that a smile?*

Long pause as Miles stands, extricates himself from the rubble, straightens his clothes, hair. He turns, goes...

An ashtray whizzes by his head and smashes into the wall. Miles just keeps walking.

Frances puts her face in her hands and weeps.

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME/RECORDING STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Miles enters. You can faintly hear her weeping upstairs until the door closes. He's looking at his band, "are you my 'so-called friends'?"

HERBIE

You okay, Miles?

Miles glares at Herbie. He could kill somebody, or he could pick up his horn, which he does - sees Frances on the "Someday My Prince Will Come" gold record framed on the wall. He blows fire. Fueled.

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME/BEDROOM - NEXT EVENING

An empty bottle of wine and a glass on the night table. Frances wakes in bed from a nap, surrounded by presents. Emerald ring, sapphire bracelet, mink coat, clothes...

Miles is peeking around the circular wall quietly watching her...

She spots Miles and when she turns further, he sees her black eye, it jolts him.

MILES

There's a... necklace in there.

Frances nods, cold, unmoved by the gifts - shell shocked.

MILES (CONT'D)

(beat)

Wanna go out? Dinner...dancing, or something?

Dancing? He didn't even hear it. Frances did. A dagger, reminding her of everything she gave up.

FRANCES

You don't like to dance.

MILES

You do.

He makes it worse.

MILES (CONT'D)

Okay...

(then touching his eye,
referring to hers)

Maybe you wanna... put on a
little... make-up or something...

Miles comes in, picks up the ruby choker and moves behind Frances, gently brushing aside her hair and clasping the thing on her. Love and ownership at the same time. Miles sits behind her on the bed and pulls her back into him, the blood red droplets suspended in platinum laying on Frances'. Miles rubs his neck.

EXT. HARPER HAMILTON'S STUDIO/OFFICE - NIGHT

Junior rubs his neck, getting focused, standing outside the small warehouse/studio. He pushes the buzzer. Miles and Dave are hanging back, away from the door.

WALTER/INTERCOM (V.O.)

Yeah.

JUNIOR

It's Junior.

Junior is buzzed in - Miles and Dave push in behind him, staying low to avoid the security camera -

EXT. HARPER'S BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Miles and Dave following Junior across the gangplank, over the atrium. Dave looking none to sure. They enter the outer office.

INT. HARPER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Miles and Dave enter, Miles keeping Junior in front of him, cautiously looking about.

WALTER (O.S.)
 Boy's got a glass jaw, Harper, I'm
 telling you. K.O. round 3.

HARPER (O.S.)
 Walter, you are dumb but at least
 you're pretty. I love taking your
 action...

Miles pushes Junior into -

INT. HARPER'S OFFICE/STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

The place is the low rent version of Miles' home recording studio. Photos of Harper with music stars, fighters, movie stars, framed on the wall. Miles' tape in the valise is on the console behind Harper's desk. Walter sits in a chair. As "Go Ahead John" plays on the radio, Miles Davis Marathon.

Before Walter can react Miles has his gun pointed 6 inches from his head. Everyone knows the score. Harper, dressed to the nines, looks at Junior, the turncoat.

JUNIOR
 (resigned and ashamed)
 They made me do it, man. I -

Harper puts up a quieting hand, all the while staring at Miles.

MILES
 (to Dave, re: Walter)
 Get his gun.

Dave looks at Miles like, "why I do I always gotta take the gun?" Dave grabs Walter's gun out of his waistband half points it at Walter. Miles points his gun at Harper takes a few steps toward him.

HARPER
 Easy...

- holds his coat open, shows he's not armed. Miles spots his valise and tape. Moves toward them, gun trained on Harper.

Harper sits on the edge of his desk, bemused.

HARPER (CONT'D)
 This is great.
 (points at Junior and
 Dave)
 Junkie and the flunky.

WALTER
Fucking Larry and Moe...

HARPER
Love them.

Miles snatches his valise - makes sure it's all in there -

HARPER (CONT'D)
So, guess you're not gettin' 'em
either, huh, Rolling Stone?

Miles pauses, checks Dave, second time he's been called out;
Dave scoffs.

DAVE
Yeah, you and this kid's story.
Tryin' to lump me in that shit.

Miles continues to stare at Dave -

DAVE (CONT'D)
What?

Harper starts to laugh -

HARPER
*Damn. This is your boy? Ha! Yeah,
you go ahead and take that tape.*

MILES
(zips the valise)
I just did, muthafucka...

HARPER
And that's the second time you
pointed a gun at me, you know?

MILES
I can count.

HARPER
Right. I almost forgot - you used
to be a musician.

PHIL SCHAFF ON RADIO (V.O.)
*That was Miles Davis, "Go Ahead
John" from the Jack Johnson...*

MILES
You did this for George?

HARPER (CONT'D)
Let's go, *Junior*.

Junior obeys, Harper handling him roughly, pushing him out a side door. Walter books it out the other direction.

EXT. GANESVOORT STREET - SAME/NIGHT

Reprise "**Go Ahead John**" on the SOUNDTRACK as it builds...

Miles strides purposefully toward the Jaguar, Dave in lockstep.

DAVE
You're not saying you bought all that bullshit back there.

MILES
Fuck you, Dave, gimme my keys.

Dave doesn't do anything. Miles stops, turns, glares.

DAVE
Fuck... Alright, alright, but let me just say one thing; I never wanted the tape, okay? Just the story. I was trying to help.

MILES
That's *three* things. Now, gimme the fucking keys!

Miles starts ripping at Dave's coat pockets.

DAVE
Okay, okay -

Dave starts to pull out the keys, but before he does - Clink-clink, glass bottle. Miles and Dave turn as Walter tries to hug the shadow, but knows he's been clocked -

MILES
I'm not playing with you, man.

WALTER
C'mere, Miles. Let me talk to you a second.

Miles and Dave sees the glint of Walter's gun barrel. Miles pulls out his gun -

DAVE
Let's go, man.

Dave runs to the Jaguar, unlocks the door and hurriedly jumps in. He reaches over, pops the lock.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Come on!

Miles slowly walks backwards toward the car, pointing his gun in Walter's direction, pops off a shot next to his head, Walter drops left, taking cover behind some cars.

DAVE (CONT'D)

(trying to start the car -
to Miles)

The fuck, come on!

Dave is frantically pumping the gas, torquing on the ignition. Miles jumps in the car.

MILES

Go, go, go! Come on!

DAVE

I'm doing it!

Walter runs back, jumps into a black TOWNCAR at the curb, guns it.

The Jaguar roars to life as Dave finally gets going and burns rubber out of there.

INT/EXT. MILES' JAGUAR - NIGHT

"Go Ahead John" builds on the TRACK - into "the heist has taken a bad turn let's get the fuck out of here" music.

We've come full circle - Reprise the OPENING SHOOTOUT SCENE... (** in the course of this to be choreographed chase scene Miles will run out of bullets).

Miles in Jag, Walter in his car, exchanging gunfire, Jag ahead - Dave ADLIBING: "Fuck, shit, etc" -- Walter gaining...

MILES

Shoot, muthafucka!

DAVE

I tossed it!

MILES

What the fuck is wrong with you?!!

DAVE
 LIKE I KNEW THIS WAS GOING TO
 FUCKING HAPPEN!!

Screech-screech - the cars jockey for position -Miles shoots
 across Dave out the window at Walter -

DAVE (CONT'D)
 Fuuuuuck me!

Walter's car falls back, Miles leans way out the passenger
 window, pops off a couple more. Walter drops further back,
 evading -

DAVE (CONT'D)
 What the fuck! Get back in the car,
 Miles!

MILES
 Go right! GO RIGHT!

Dave guns right - Walter drives straight past, brakes - outta
 sight...

Dave and Miles zooming under train trestles - plowing into a
 pile of boxes, fishtailing, papers from the boxes flying...

Everything "*slows down*" in an extended impressionistic beat
 from Miles' POV

CAMERA moving around the Jag...Dave screaming at Miles -

DAVE
 (Go! Go! Miles! Miles!...etc.)

But Miles, "elsewhere", can't hear Dave...PUSHING IN ON
 MILES, watching what is clearly now staff paper fluttering
 down all around them, and Miles "composing" ---

MILES
 Duh - duh - da - dee - da...

DAVE
 MILES!

Dave finally snaps Miles back into reality, squealing out of
 the fishtail, as Walter is racing back at them in his car -

Dave loses control - the Jaguar SKIDS toward the wall -

Bullets pierce the Jaguar's body - one SLAMS into MILES'
 THIGH, he howls in pain as the car screeches to a halt, near
 a MEAT PACKING WAREHOUSE -

Miles and Dave scramble out of the car as the Towncar bears down on them. Miles clutches his valise, shooting at the oncoming car - Walter swerves. Dave and Miles head into an ALLEY...

The Towncar screeches to a stop near the Jaguar. Walter jumps out, gun drawn -

EXT. NYC ALLEY - NIGHT

Miles trips, drops the briefcase, the tape and staff paper spill out. The tape in the can rolls away - Miles tries to go for it, Dave drags him to safety behind a dumpster, Miles grasping helplessly at the air, at the papers flying away.

THEIR POVS behind the dumpster (Miles struggling to break free of Dave) - Walter snatches up the tape *and the valise*.

MILES
(hollering at Walter)
Leave it! No!

DAVE
(holding Miles back)
Forget about it -

MILES
(at Walter)
Don't do that!

Miles shoots at Walter - click-click empty gun.

MILES (CONT'D)	DAVE
(at Walter)	(to Miles)
LEAVE IT!	Gonna get us killed, man!

Miles, in an impotent last ditch, throws his gun at Walter - it barely leaves his hand (with Dave all over him), bouncing off the dumpster, and back at Miles.

Walter never utters a sound in the scramble, calm, doing his job, as if Miles can't be heard or seen, barely a flea.

SIRENS heard in the distance... approaching. Miles can now only watch as

Walter hustles out of the alley, hops in his car and bones out. Miles gritting his teeth in pain, staring straight ahead - "now what?"

Harper reaches back toward Walter, snaps - Walter puts two fight passes in his hand - holding out the passes to Miles.

HARPER

I got a boxer on the card at the Cathedral tomorrow night...

B72 BACK TO THE ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

B72

Dave starts to hustle Miles into the passenger seat but he pushes off, heads to the driver's side -

DAVE

Your hip, man. Shouldn't I -

Miles ignores him, starts up the car. Dave climbs in the passenger set. Miles races from the scene in the same direction as Walter.

INT/EXT. JAGUAR - CATHEDRAL ALLEY- MINUTES LATER

Miles eases around the corner, spots Walter's empty car in the alley, and parks next to it.

DAVE

Jesus, *just go make some more shit up!* You're Miles fucking Davis!

MILES

I'm getting my goddamned music back-

He opens the door and starts to get out. Dave grabs him, Miles pulls away -

DAVE

Listen, Miles, that's it. You're on your own. This is *mad*.

Miles snatches a coat from the back seat -

DAVE (CONT'D)

I'm not dying for this music cuz that's what's going to happen if you go in there. *You hear me?* He's gonna kill you.

Miles pulls the coat on as he gets out of the car, when his leg hits the ground, a sharp pain shoots up his leg.

MILES DAVIS - THE OPERATION

SPLIT SECOND CUTS: Stock footage of a bloody hip operation.

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME/BEDROOM - NIGHT

1966. A dark black hand holds three white pills. Miles pops the painkillers back, chases them with a big slug of cognac. He's sweaty, hurting, fucked-up fish-eye style. A cane sitting next to the bed. Miles pulls down his waistband and looks at the bandages on his hip. He painfully bends and straightens his leg, curses under his breath.

On the TV an innocuous comedy/laugh track. It's all enough to make you want to kill somebody. Miles grabs the remote, turns down the volume. It's faint, but there it is again - laughter. A man's. Followed by another sound; a flirtatious giggle... A woman now whispering - "Stop it, he's going to hear us..." Miles pushes himself up, straight backed. Calls -

MILES

Frances...? Hey, goddamnit...!

Miles whistles loudly. No response. Miles breath quickens, eyes burn. He grabs the cane and swings his leg around the side of the bed, forces himself to stand.

EXT. CATHEDRAL ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Miles gets out of the car, standing, painfully strides toward the line of people waiting to get into The Cathedral. Dave gets out of the car, can't believe what he's seeing, watching him go.

Miles moves through the crowd, patrons' expressions quickly shift from piqued to geeked as this reclusive celebrity pushes past them right to the front of the line. Miles walks right up to the door but the DOORMAN there stops him.

DOORMAN

Hold it, buddy, hold it... You see that line-

His words die in his mouth as it begins to dawn on him who this is. Miles says nothing.

VOICE (O.S.)

That's Miles Davis, man.

DOORMAN
 (recognizing)
 Oh, yeah. Of course. Mr. Davis. I'm
 sorry...your ticket?

Miles points to his world famous face.

MILES
 You looking at it.

- and as Miles rolls into church, *Ding Ding...*

INT. CATHEDRAL - CONTINUOUS

"So What" '64 (Miles in Berlin) on the TRACK. Inside The Cathedral, smoky, shadowy, a well worn boxing ring plopped in the center, bleachers surround, a couple hundred people in here...maybe. It's hard to tell. Not well lit except for the ring. In the seats we only ever see small groupings.

Folks flow in and out of the aisle, getting beers, but mostly hurrying back to see the fight; A BLACK AND WHITE MAN in the ring, middle weights, scrappy, not scared to mix it up. Round 3, you can see it on the card the girl carries as she climbs out of the ring, *Ding- Ding...*

Miles looks left, right. POV back from wide; nobody. Miles looks to the left. Harper up there, Junior next to him. He ducks back into the shadows. *Whoosh-whoosh-whoosh* in his ears as he studies his prey. And in an instant Miles doubles over and throws up in a nearby WASTEBASKET.

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS/AS BEFORE

"So What" '64 growing on the TRACK. Miles hobbles down the hallway, head on a swivel, searching, his gait made all the more crazy by his injury, paranoia, mounting rage.

MILES
 Frances...!

Miles reaches the bathroom, pushes open the door finding Frances putting on make-up.

MILES (CONT'D)
 Where is he?

FRANCES
 What?

Miles looks inside the room, the shower curtain. Frances knows this dance.

MILES

Come here.

FRANCES

Miles-

He grabs her arm. Shit... here we go.

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME/STAIRS - CONTINUOUS/AS BEFORE

"So What" '64 on the TRACK. Miles drags Frances down those stairs, those legs and those stairs, no love here now though, or love on kilter, worse.

FRANCES

Let go of me, Miles, goddamnit!

She fights him, scared to, scared not to. Miles almost can't hear her, inside steeling himself for the rival he's going to kill before he kills Frances. And on a bad leg too? Fuck!

MILES

Tell me where he is!

FRANCES

There's nobody here, Miles.

MILES

Don't give me that shit. I HEARD him!

He drags her toward the kitchen, pulls out a drawer, too far, CLATTER, cutlery spills everywhere.

FRANCES

Miles-

MILES

(crazy)

Shhhhhhhhhh...

Miles cocks an ear, listens for a crazy beat then impulsively moves the cutlery aside with his bare foot, bends down and picks up a butcher knife.

MILES (CONT'D)

I'll *kill* his ass! Come on!

FRANCES

Miles!

INT. CATHEDRAL - CONTINUOUS/AS BEFORE

Miles straightens up, moves into the room, cutting through the people, headed in Harper's direction. He cuts back against the grain, calculating a pursuit angle on the fly so that he can... *what?!*

"So What" '64 on the TRACK. In the aisle of the bleachers, Walter leans across Junior, speaks quietly to Harper. Harper covers but he's seething. Junior, wedged between the men, looks sick to his stomach at the news he's hearing.

HARPER

So now I gotta worry about this son of a bitch showing up again or going to the cops?

WALTER

Cops?

(Walter shakes his head,
"No.")

He shot at me first, Harp. Self defense. And like you said, ain't really *his* music anyway.

Harper looks down at the valise in Walter's hands.

WALTER (CONT'D)

He'll stay down. He knows what's up.

Harper looks slightly nervous, scans the surroundings a bit.

HARPER

(low)

Don't fucking count on it...

You can say that again. Through the people, Miles stares at Harper, stalks.

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME - CONTINUOUS/AS BEFORE

"So What" '64 on the TRACK. Miles kicks open a door.

MILES

WHERE IS HE!?

Frances changes her tactics mid-scream.

FRANCES
Miles, Miles! Oh, my God, he's over
there, Miles!

MILES
What?! Where?!

FRANCES
Down there, down there, he went
down there!

She points to the basement door. Miles spins his head in that direction, drags Frances with him, but she digs in her heels, knowing what we fear; you go down those steps you might not come back up. Time for crazy-town.

FRANCES (CONT'D)
No! NO...! Miles, you go get him!
I'm too scared! Please. He's a
monster! Said he'd kill me if I
didn't leave you.

The gears collide in Miles brain, teeth chipping off, but in his insane state, it works. He re-calibrates.

MILES
Muthafucka...! Go upstairs and wait
for me.

FRANCES
Ok, Miles...okay...

MILES
Mutha-fucka...

Miles crazy lopes to the door. Frances turns and runs.

INT. CATHEDRAL - CONTINUOUS/AS BEFORE

ANGLE: Harper quietly, intensely digging into Walter's ass.

HARPER
Take this tape to the safe, sit
there and don't move 'til I -

Harper stops mid-sentence seeing Miles coming. Junior sits up taller, "WTF?" Walter follows Harper's gaze, peeps Miles, reaches inside his coat.

HARPER (CONT'D)
Hey -

But the big man springs up - this is his life right now, fuck a job. He steps past Junior, jerking him aside as he does. All Harper can do is stand too.

HARPER (CONT'D)
 (to Walter)
 Easy -

WALTER
 He's got a gun, man.

HARPER
 Not in his fucking hand, take it easy...

Miles hasn't dropped a step, lasered in on Harper.

SEEN FROM ACROSS THE RING, through the boxers wiping frame, it looks like nothing special; people moving to their seats -

But hold on - THROUGH the boxers wiping frame... PICTURE BLURS...is that MILES and the QUINTET in the distance ON STAGE killing "**So What**" '64 ?...maybe for a second, as the PAN CONTINUES until we see we are in the CATHEDRAL...still IN THE RING, the boxers are going at it, good fight (white hope keeps dropping that left when he throws that right hook though... uh-oh)...

Miles stomps up the steps, each one a knife in his hip, fire feeding fire. He sees the valise near Harper's feet, Walter's gun in his hand. Miles raises his arms ala' Harper, "I'm not armed." Harper sighs.

HARPER (CONT'D)
 You don't know what the word "lose" means, do you, Miles?

Then a distant voice pierces through.

DAVE (O.C.)
Miles!!

Everyone turns seeing Dave running at breakneck speed, carrying a stand-up ashtray, two security guards on his ass. He smashes his elbow into a FIRE ALARM box, setting it off -

Miles takes the opportunity of the distraction to sucker punch Harper. Harper rocks back, falling into Walter, Junior, knocking them back into others, one RUBBERNECKING DUDE none too happy about it, pushes them back.

Harper screams, enraged, dives on top of Miles and they tumble down the stairs.

Walter elbows Rubbernecking Dude off of him to go help Harper, kicking *that* tangential beef off. Here we go...

Miles and Harper roll around trading messy blows. Miles reaches into his waistband pulling out his empty .38. *Fuck...* Walter sees it, raises his piece to shoot Miles but Junior sucker-punches Walter from behind and his gun goes off, hitting Harper. Holy shit. Harper falls spins as he falls over off Miles, looking back at Walter, disbelieving.

WALTER

Harp!

Patrons scream, run off in all directions just as Dave arrives, swinging the stand-up ashtray into Walter's jaw, putting him down. Miles yells to Junior, points -

MILES

Grab my shit!

Junior runs back up and grabs the valise swimming through the crowd now in full frenzy. Dave helps Miles to his feet.

IN THE RING/JAPAN, Miles finishes his solo, winded, spent, alive, the man, the great white hope laid out on his back beneath him, vanilla Sonny Liston, Ali/Miles standing over him.

INT. CATHEDRAL - HALLWAY

Miles, Dave and Junior burst out the door into the hallway, moving fast, Miles clutching his tape like a father reunited with his lost child.

In a surreal moment, '79 Miles passes '64 Miles chasing after Frances, running in the opposite direction... he looks back - '64 Miles isn't there, swallowed up by the crowd...

Miles, Dave, and Junior fling open the side door into the night -

EXT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME - CONTINUOUS/AS BEFORE

Frances bursts through the front door and into the New York night, Gone, Gone, Gone...

Miles hobbles back up the stairs, screams for all he's worth -

MILES

Frances! FRANCES!!!

"So What" '64 - done.

EXT. CATHEDRAL - CONTINUOUS

The three jump into the Jaguar and Dave fishtails away from the curb.

INT/EXT. JAGUAR - CONTINUOUS

Dave and Junior check the mirrors and all around, heads on a swivel.

JUNIOR
Anybody back there?

DAVE
No, man, we're good, we're good.

JUNIOR
You sure?

DAVE
We're good.

Beat. Then they start to out-gas, relieved laughter, oblivious to Miles' state in the back.

JUNIOR
Ho-ly shit... That was, I mean... I mean, that was -

DAVE
Holy shit...

Miles remains quiet. They finally tune into him.

JUNIOR
Don't worry, Miles, we're gonna get you right, man.

DAVE
Yeah, yeah...

MILES
(almost a whisper)
No. Take me home.

Junior checks him out, bleeding caked over now. Dave nods - tugs on the wheel.

Miles stares off as we PUSH IN. Somewhere, a phone rings.

FRANCES (O.S.)
Hello?

MILES (O.S.)
 You thought I wouldn't find you?
 (silence)
 If you make me come out there, the
 only thing left is gonna be
 bullets.
 (beat)
 You hear me?

FRANCES (O.S.)
 I'm not coming back.

Long beat. Miles breathing.

MILES (O.S.)
 I'll... I'll kill myself, Frances.
 I swear to God.
 (breathing, then)
 Frances- - I love you...

FRANCES (O.S.)
 I know you do. Goodbye, Miles.

Click. Dial tone.

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME - NIGHT

Miles enters first, Junior holding the crook of his arm, Dave trailing slightly.

DAVE
 I'll go find some...gauze,
 something-

JUNIOR
 Yeah. And some alcohol. Clean that
 shit out.

Miles goes to his work area. Junior follows at a respectful distance as Miles threads the tape and hits play. Tape spools through the heads.

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME - KITCHEN - SAME

Dave goes through the sink cabinet looking for supplies, then stops, hearing the indecipherable sounds emanating from the other room.

INT. MILES DAVIS' MANHATTAN HOME - SAME

Dave returns with the stuff finding Miles sitting at his station, full concentration, Junior behind him. Dave sidles in next to Junior. They listen, waiting to hear something resembling music. But it's just disorganized noise so far; conversations about music, stops and starts, flirtations with concepts but nothing concrete.

Dave looks at Junior - "Am I missing something?" Junior's look - "Give it a minute."

Miles fast forwards the tape but even at it's sped up tempo we can tell he's not running over music. He hits stop. Play. Listens. It's more of the same.

DAVE

When do you come in?

MILES

I'm already in there.

DAVE

I don't hear any-

MILES

I played organ...

Jesus Christ... Dave squints at Junior - "This is it?" Junior looks at his shoes, crushed, witnessing his hero falter. He sighs.

Hearing the sound, Miles snaps his head around, sees Dave's shock, but worse; Junior's look of pity. Pity; Miles Achilles heel.

Miles stands up, goes to his trumpet case, pops it open. Dave perks up. Miles Davis' first notes after five years? An incredible moment about to unfold. But Junior is unchanged, a horn player knows...

Miles returns to his station, spreads out his musical scrawl. He pulls out his mouthpiece, pops it on, holds open the spit valve and blows through the dormant instrument. No spit, no mist, just dank air. Miles licks his lips, the mouthpiece, takes a deep breath... and blows...

Nothing. The labored, ragged sound of an atrophied embouchure after a five year lay off. He tries to play it off, let's out a dark chuckle.

MILES (CONT'D)

Damn...

Miles licks his lips and blows again gets the same result. Not funny. Junior looks like he might cry. Miles get pissed now, tries to overpower the instrument, blows hard, manages to coax out a squeak. Then silence except for the musical mish mash playing in the background.

JUNIOR

Aw, that ain't nothing, man. Hit them scales, right? Your chops come back. Real quick.

Junior chuckles.

DAVE

Yeah. It's just like... some practice, right?

Their "help", neither solicited nor appreciated, has the opposite effect. Miles looks at his horn, nods gravely and lays it down. There's a long uncomfortable silence as Miles starts to walk away. Junior gently puts his hand on his shoulder.

JUNIOR

You'll get it back, man.

Miles digs in his pocket and pulls out the last balloon of heroin he took from Junior earlier. Hands it to him.

MILES

Bye bye.

Miles flops down onto the couch. Done. Dave starts chuckling, darkly -

Junior stares at the baggie in his hand, contemplating. He sits down in front of the spinning reel and the gibberish poring out of the speakers.

Miles looks over, finds a half drunk bottle of booze, wipes the top of it with his sleeve and then takes it to the head. Finshing it off, he let's out a deep sigh. Dave can't believe what he's looking at.

DAVE

This is not... are you kidding me?

Miles clicks on the TV. Focuses on the fight playing there. Dave nods, laughs a long hollow, "How'd I not see this coming," laugh.

DAVE (CONT'D)

(quietly to himself)
What was I thinking?

DAVE (CONT'D)

(to Miles)

Going back in your hole, huh? Guess I should've expected that. It's a good thing I came prepared. You *mind?*

Dave pulls out his camera. Snaps a shot. Miles squints, finally looks back at him.

DAVE (CONT'D)

I gotta hunker down too. Got work to do. See, I'm coming out with the fuckin' story, you better believe that. Forget about the comeback piece. It's dirt time. And I'm coming *with* it.

Dave gestures sprinkling dirt on his grave. Miles swigs as Dave rolls on.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Rolling Stone passes, so what? Have any idea how many people'll want to buy what I got? You may be a fucking quitter, but you're still an *earner*, baby.

He pops off a shot and Miles chucks the bottle at his head. Dave ducks it quick, guffaws. He pops another picture.

DAVE (CONT'D)

That's it! But remember, you're Miles Davis! Don't be *repetitive*. Switch it up a little bit. I mean, you already did the self-pitying, junkie, jazz burnout, asshole thing, right?

Realizing it's all falling on deaf ears -

DAVE (CONT'D)

FUCK!

Dave plops down into a chair, sick to his stomach.

Then, a loud trumpet run cuts through Dave's rant.

Junior, Miles' trumpet in his hand, looking at the scrawl, deciphering it. Inspired, Junior cuts off the reel to reel and rips another musical phrase, having mined some gold. Miles and Dave watch and listen in silence as Junior grabs the treasure map ledger pages -

JUNIOR

Ima go over to the piano

Junior strides over to the piano, reads, plays a few chords...

MILES

What is that?

JUNIOR

(squinting at the scrawl)
That's what you have here...

MILES

That's not in there...

JUNIOR

(grinning at the scrawl)
Yes it is, it's the 5 sus chord...

Zooming to the two, Miles walks over, Junior plays a chord with his right hand.

MILES

Ok -

JUNIOR

- to the 3rd, f# major, to the tonic minor, to the flat 6 ...B major...

Miles puts the mute in the trumpet bell and they figure it out together for a few bars, Junior humming Miles to the right notes also with head movement...

MILES

Why don't you change that 2nd chord from f# major to f minor 7?

JUNIOR

Ok sooo....like this?

Junior plays the progression...

MILES

Yeah yeah...start over start over...

They play a bit more together...

MILES (CONT'D)

Yeah yeah ...see what I'm sayin?
Gives it a lil color..

JUNIOR
Yeah, yeah, ok, ok, I see....

DAVE
So, that's really in there, huh?

Miles peeks at Dave a sec, "guess so..."

POV from the staircase, someone or something watches the trio working out. *Frances?* We hold on the tableau from this vantage point for a beat.

Junior nods, plays another chord, Miles blows too, ragged edges ever so slowly smoothing out.

Dave walks up to the piano, grabs a pencil from the stand, takes a sheet from the pile of staff paper, flips it over, starts feverishly writing the story. Stay here until too long becomes.

CROSSFADE:

Later now and Junior fades away -

CROSSFADE:

Later now and Dave fades away -

CROSSFADE:

Miles by himself, working it out, his composition taking shape.

FADE BLACK, PLAY
WITH SHADOWS:

DAVE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
So what should we tell the folks,
that Miles Davis has mellowed with
age or that folks are just now
listening to what he's been saying
or -

MILES (V.O.)
Don't tell 'em nothin'. Let 'em
guess.

DAVE (V.O.)
You like that, huh? The mystery...

MILES (V.O.)
They like it. I'm cool.

INT. MILES' HOUSE - NIGHT

Miles and Junior at the piano. Dave watching. Tableau. The tableau then goes away - Dali-esque transition - becoming Miles in the interview chair. The wraparound. Trumpet leaves Miles' lips. A beat then.

DAVE

Yeah. Dig it. That was a better answer. I was really drawn in. Beautiful playing, Miles.

MILES

Something clicked.

DAVE

I'll say. Great. And is there a way that you can put what you just played into words?"

Miles shakes his head, chuckles, rises, puts his trumpet on a stand, picks up the valise stuffed with staff paper, the record SMPWC tucked in behind the tape cannister, and walks off camera.

MILES

(over his shoulder)
Keep rolling...

Dave enters frame, turns to the camera, shrugs; "Is he fucking serious?" Dave calls out to Miles.

DAVE

Hey, are you coming back?!

Black.

INT. NYC CLUB - FEBRUARY 22, 20-- NIGHT

The stage. The band comes on - Gary Clark Jr. Esperanza Spaulding, Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock...

Miles jumps it all off, stepping up to the mic and firing a run, looking good now, strong, back. The band locks in and they begin to run the voodoo down, no one leading, everyone following, searching for all that is said and unsaid, the particles that make up the fabric of life itself.

CREDITS ROLL

Miles finishes his solo and steps to the side to watch. PUSH IN on Miles, you can see it up close, the corners turn up slightly -- Miles Smiles.

END