

FADE IN:

EXT. INTERSTATE 4 - EVENING

A green road sign in the darkness lit by passing headlights reads "Plant City 7"

Many yellow broken lines in the center of the interstate cruise past.

Flash of a blue sign reads "West: Interstate 4."

Solid and broken lines in the center of the interstate.

Slow down dramatically and view the great sign that reads "Plant City, Florida - The Winter Strawberry Capital of the World."

EXT. BLACK SCREEN

MATING SOUNDS of crickets. HOOT of owls. CLICKING of swarms of busy insects.

HIGGINS (O.S.)
(from a megaphone)
Stop the fucking car, Skulls!

The brakes of a STOPPING CAR muffled by mud.

A red bulb flashes.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NEAR SWAMP - LATE EVENING

DETECTIVE HIGGINS, early thirties, black, well-dressed with a Dalton on his head emerges from an unmarked car with the megaphone in his hand staring into the woods and swamp.

There is a car inside the foliage identified by the light inside the car.

Higgins tosses the megaphone back inside the car. He finds a cigarette in his shirt pocket and takes his time taking the first drag.

DETECTIVE GONZALEZ, Cuban, handsome, a slight bit taller, emerges from the driver's side of the car. He walks around to meet Higgins. There is something in his hands.

HIGGINS

Are these guys stupid or what?

GONZALEZ

Let's get this over with. I don't want to miss my daughter's first slumber party.

Higgins pulls a wad of plastic bags from his pocket and hands two of them to Gonzalez. Gonzalez unravels the latex gloves in his hands and gives two to Higgins.

Higgins puts on the gloves as does Gonzalez. They use the car as leverage as they tie the plastic bags around their shoes tied at their ankles.

Gonzalez claps his hands together.

GONZALEZ

Let's do this!

Higgins reaches into the car window. The flashing red lights on the hood go out. Gonzalez leads the way as he and Higgins disappear into the intense darkness of the swamp.

EXT. SWAMP - LATE EVENING

SKULLS, white, tattooed, shaved and sculpted in a white tank hovers behind the open trunk of a big white 90' model on an Oldsmobile. He wrestles with its contents.

Higgins approaches and stands near Skulls. His face transforms in horror for a moment. Skulls glances over briefly at Higgins.

HIGGINS

Two wheel rotations from a disaster, did it ever cross your mind to turn on your headlights?

Skulls doesn't respond immediately. He continues wrestling with the contents of the trunk. Skulls turns to Higgins and gives a slight head movement.

Higgins takes his own cigarette and places it between Skulls's lips. Skulls puffs on the cigarette best he can without hands.

Dusty, mulatto, red hair, discolored eyes and a middle-weight boxer's body, appears to Higgins right.

DUSTY

Whoa! You didn't line the trunk?

HIGGINS

And neither one of you wore any gloves.

Higgins turns around. Gonzalez is standing a good distance behind the car.

GONZALEZ

It's good?

HIGGINS

No, it's fucked up. But, give me three minutes. If I'm not done then come back unloading 'cuz I don't trust these two motherfuckers.

DUSTY

That makes two of us.

Gonzalez disappears into the foliage on his trek back to the street where the car is parked.

Dusty and Skulls lift a body from the trunk. Higgins steps back.

HIGGINS

It's kind of a problem with him being dead.

DUSTY

We did what we could. It was unavoidable.

Higgins puts his hands up in protest. Skulls holds on to the dead man's feet as Dusty holds on to his hands.

HIGGINS

Whoa! You got to take off his clothes. The gators won't eat that shit.

Skulls and Dusty drop the body on the ground and begin undressing it. Dusty notices the plastic bags on Higgins feet. As they undress the man, they throw his clothes in the trunk.

DUSTY

What's up with the plastic bags?

Higgins pulls the dwindled cigarette out of Skulls' mouth and stows it away in his pocket.

HIGGINS

So, if I'm called out to a homicide in the swamp later today, I won't be tracing down my own footprints, just yours.

Dusty and Skulls lift the dead body again and walk around the side of the car. Dusty and Skulls launch the body into slow moving water.

In the distance, alligators become mobilized.

DUSTY

Higgins, our business is done.

HIGGINS

Fuck you, Dusty, and this small town.

Higgins lights another cigarette. Skulls gets in the driver's seat of the car as Dusty straightens up the trunk.

DUSTY

We'll torch the clothes and the car and you can forget about it.

Higgins begins to walk back to the street.

HIGGINS

Have Skulls do that white boy drag racing shit to cover up your guys' footprints before you pull out of here.

Skulls fly's a blind bird.

INT. UNMARKED CAR - LATE EVENING

Gonzalez bangs one fist on the roof and the other he holds on the steering wheel. He SCREAMS cheers out of the window as air rushes by.

GONZALEZ

Yes! Yes! Yes! We are so fucking out of this little shit hole retirement town.

HIGGINS

Not so fast, we still got to get the money and remember our source is now dead.

GONZALEZ

Mijo, no one gives a shit about a rich Jew in this town. They want him out of here anyone.

Higgins lights another cigarette.

HIGGINS

It's another trail.

GONZALEZ

So fucking what? We get this money and we're out of here. Island in the Caribbean here we come.

Gonzalez bangs his first on the roof again. He cheers loudly and honks.

Higgins drowns out his partners cheers. He retreats to his lonely planet out of the passenger's window and stares into this dark world.

GONZALEZ

My kids are going to be home schooled like rich white kids. They'll spend their summer in France, too.

Higgins glances at his partner and allows a fraction of a smile to squeeze through.

INT. BARN - LATE EVENING

A beam of light roams through the barn illuminating stacks of hay and farming tools. Higgins ENTERS behind a flashlight in his gloved hand. A second beam of light and Gonzalez ENTERS.

GONZALEZ

Why would anybody stash two mill here?

HIGGINS

A place that people like you and me wouldn't suspect.

GONZALEZ

Yeah, but you drop one of your cigarettes here the whole place will go a flame.

HIGGINS

I go left, you go right.

Gonzalez points his flashlight to the right and follows the beam of light to the wall. He searches the walls floor and ceiling with the light.

Higgins, on the left side of the barn searches around the stacks of hay. He searches wherever the beam from the flashlight can illuminate. He stops and stares at the stacks of hay. He glances back at his partner.

HIGGINS

Gonzalez?

GONZALEZ

Yo!

HIGGINS

Come give me a hand.

Gonzalez wades through the power tools and makes his way to Higgins. He kicks around hay to make sure there's nothing underneath.

GONZALEZ

You found something?

HIGGINS

We'll see. Give me a hand.

Higgins and Gonzalez begin moving barrels of hay with one man at each end. After three barrels the floor is revealed.

Higgins shines his flashlight where a latch is hiding half way underneath the hay.

GONZALEZ

Little Angel say goodbye to public school and say hello to vacations in Paris.

HIGGINS

Come on.

Higgins and Gonzalez push the barrel of hay backwards to reveal a small door underneath the latch. Higgins opens the door and shines his flashlight down the square hole.

HIGGINS

We got to go down.

GONZALEZ

Lead me to the money.

Higgins starts crawling into the square hole.

INT. BARN BASEMENT - LATE EVENING

Higgins climbs down wooden steps into a small damp, dark room. Flashlight in front of him, he scours the little room for clues. Gonzalez is closely following behind.

GONZALEZ

Higgins. Here we go.

Gonzalez shines his flashlight on a wooden door and latch behind the steps. He holds it there as he walks down each step.

Higgins walks over to the door first and pulls at the latch. It has a lock on it. Higgins turns to Gonzalez approaching.

HIGGINS

Ready?

Higgins draws his firearm. Gonzalez nods in agreement.

Higgins fires a GUNSHOT to break the lock. It falls apart without any resistance.

Gonzalez quickly unravels the lock and opens the door. Inside, a combination safe. Gonzalez pulls a stethoscope from underneath his chest and places the metal against the safe. He begins slowly turning the dials.

Higgins, gun and flashlight first retreat to the stairs. He climbs up and points his gun towards the square hole and waits and listens.

INT. BARN BASEMENT - JUST BEFORE DAWN

Gonzalez is still fiddling with the safe. Sweat has built puddles on his face and he's practically taken off his shirt.

Higgins descends from the wooden steps over to his partner.

HIGGINS

You got maybe an hour and a half before your daughter and her friends get up for school.

There is a CLICK and the door to the safe bursts open a crack as if the air inside has been building up pressure.

Higgins scurries over to the safe and his partner. Gonzalez opens the safe, inside is two small stacks of greenbacks.

GONZALEZ

What the fuck is this?

HIGGINS

Looks like the old bastard was telling the truth about losing money.

Gonzalez picks up the two stacks of bills, flips through them, then slams them back into the safe.

GONZALEZ

Ah Dios Mios, this is why he was supposed to be kept alive.

HIGGINS

No shit.

Higgins leans over his partner, pockets one of the stacks and hands his partner the other. Gonzalez hesitates then snatches the stack.

Higgins paces around.

HIGGINS

We might be fucked.

GONZALEZ

I told you those guys were wild. You gotta think of something.

HIGGINS

For now, we're stuck in Plant City.

Gonzalez kicks the door of the safe.

GONZALEZ

I can't stay in Plant City. I'm the one under investigation.