

FADE IN:

The VOICE of an old woman whispers into cupped hands, pressed tightly against praying lips.

OLD WOMAN (V.O.)

Ave María llenes eres de gracia
El Señor es contigo. Bendita tú
eres entre todas las mujeres,
y Bendito es el fruto de tu
vientre, Jesús. Santa María, Madre
de Dios, Ruega por nosotros
pecadores, ahora y en la hora de
nuestra muerte.

INTO:

CLOSE ON - PAIR OF MALE HANDS:

One hand firmly holds a gun, the other pulls back on the notched cocking handle of a short muzzle MAC 10 automatic pistol. The ammunition magazine 'clip' is slammed into the handle, engaging against the 'locking catch' with a pronounced mechanical, CLICK!

INT. IGLESIA DE LOS ANGELES - DAY

Sun streams through the majestic towering stained-glass windows. A tall painted statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary appears prominent at the front of the chapel. Surrounded at her feet are hundreds of glowing candles. An Old Woman's whispered prayers echo like shuffling feet between the massive arches and Gothic columns.

INT. LOW-RIDER - DAY

RAMIREZ - a Chicano male wearing a greasy T-shirt and jeans sits in the backseat of a 'tricked out' low-rider. In his hands he holds the same MAC 10 automatic 'pistola'. His finger nervously dances along the edge of the trigger guard. Ramirez has a crazy look about him as do his three COMPAÑEROS. They are parked next to the curb with the engine running. They seem to be waiting for someone.

INT. IGLESIA DE LOS ANGELES - CONTINUING

Three attractive COLLEGE AGE HISPANIC GIRLS wearing ivory lace veils and carrying seminary books walk through the chapel. As they pass the statue of the Virgin Mary, they each stop, kneel, and quickly say a silent prayer;

curtsy and continue. Our attention is on the third young woman, REBECCA ANGELISTA; a silver cross that hangs around her neck. She lights a candle, kisses her tiny crucifix, crosses herself, and rushes to catch up to her two giggling friends.

EXT. BARRIO - SAME

Stereotypical East L.A. Ghetto neighborhood, in the center of a predominant Latino barrio. At the center of the community stands IGLESIA DE LOS ANGELES (Church of the Angels).

A YOUNG MEXICAN GIRL:

Approximately 15, with long black hair and dark features - wearing a sassy top and a short skirt - suggestively dances barefoot in the street to the music blasting from a massive pair of boom-box speakers - in the back window of a Jalopy; sitting on blocks without any wheels.

INT. IGLESIA DE LOS ANGELES - CONTINUING

An OLD MEXICAN WOMAN (same old woman) wearing a simple peasant shawl, kneels in the center aisle between the pews near the front of the church, repeating over and over the whispered words of a prayer. At the end of each verse she shuffles another Rosary Bead between her trembling fingers and begins reciting over again.

REBECCA:

Glances over at the Old Woman, apologizing with her eyes for giggling in church.

The Old Woman glances back at Rebecca, crosses herself with a look of fear and premonition, and reverts to her endless state of repetitive prayer.

REBECCA'S TWO FRIENDS:

Make their way towards the front doors of the church.

BACK TO:

YOUNG MEXICAN GIRL:

Dancing in the street, as 'blinged-out' Chrysler 300C heads casually in the direction of the church.

LOW-RIDER:

Ramirez kicks the back of the driver's seat, as the car passes.

The DRIVER takes a big swig of his 40 oz. beer, wiping his arm across his lips, stuffing the 'cahuama' tightly between his legs.

STATUE OF THE VIRGIN MARY - CONTINUING

The flames of the candles around her base dance and flicker as if being fanned by an ethereal gust of wind;

WHOOSH!

FRONT DOORS:

The three young women push open the doors and step outside...

FRONT STEPS:

...and burst out laughing.

LOW RIDER - CONTINUING

RAMIREZ
 (to driver)
 Alli!
 (There!)

Pointing at the direction of the 300C;

EXT. DOWN THE STREET FROM THE CHURCH - ON 300C - CONTINUOUS

A couple of sharply dressed black STREET THUGS emerge. One of them opens the back door for the rear passenger. A GOLD TOOTH THUG rises out of the backseat of the dark window tinted 300C in total 'dude' style.

OLD WOMAN - CONTINUING

Faster, the Old Woman continues reciting her prayer trying to reach the end of her beads with time being an urgency.

LOW-RIDER - CONTINUING

The driver of the 'tricked-out' low-rider slams the car's chrome 'skull' shifter into gear. The tires squeal;

EXT. STREET - CONTINUING

As the low-rider roars up the street.

OLD WOMAN:

Tears begin to trickle down the her cracked and weathered face.

FRONT STEPS:

The three young women continue down the front steps of the church, unaware of the chaos that is about to unfold.

IN THE STREET:

The Black Thugs from the 'blinged-out' 300C whirl around and hit the deck as a number of shots from an automatic pistol ring out in rapid succession.

OLD WOMAN:

Cringes at the sounds of the gun shots, racing to the end of the verse.

STREET IN FRONT OF IGLESIA DE LOS ANGELES - CONTINUOUS

Chaos reigns - gunfire - squealing tires - roaring engines - screams and prayers as EVERYONE on the street ducks for cover - except for the young Mexican girl dancing in the street as the low-rider roars past.

CHRYSLER 300C - CONTINUOUS

The apparent intended targets of this barrage of bullets peel away in their car, tires squealing in hot pursuit.

OLD WOMAN:

OLD WOMAN

(muy tristemente)

Dios te salve, María - llena eres
de gracia - el Señor es contigo -
Bendita tú eres entre todas las
mujeres y bendito es el fruto de tu
vientre, Jesús - Santa María, Madre
de Dios - ruega por nosotros
pecadores - ahora y en la hora de
nuestra muerte.

She crosses herself and sadly sighs.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Así sea.

(*thus it is*)

EXT. STREET - CONTINUING

The young Mexican girl's dance comes to a stop as the chaotic music ends. Her rapid rhythmic breathing slows into the silent deep breaths of dreamtime - Her eyes follow down the street at the passing speeding cars. Slowly she turns in the direction of the front steps of the Church of the Angels - her eyes focus - She lifts her long hair from her face - it falls across her shoulders in slow-motion.

ON REBECCA'S SILVER CROSS AND CHAIN:

Falling in dreamtime. And at the moment that the tiny cross hits the ground - the ethereal silence is broken by Rebecca's two college friends as they SCREAM!

INTO:

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF IGLESIA DE LOS ANGELES - SAME - LATER

Flashing police car lights, cops, ambulance and coroner's van surround the scene. Police barricades cordon off the area. Uniformed cops mingle about looking for evidence as a crowd of onlookers gather.

GREY CHROMELESS POLICE SEDAN:

Pulls up to the curb and a plain clothed Police Detective, JOHN FUNK, emerges from the car. He has the appearance of a man who has not slept or shaven in days.

A cold cup of 'take out' coffee in his hand, he clips his badge to the pocket of his wrinkled suit jacket.

EXT. IGLESIA DE LOS ANGELES - FRONT STEPS -

Funk looks up at the church - lifts the yellow 'crime scene' tape and walks in the direction of the body of Rebecca Angelista lying at the foot of the steps of the church.

COP SUPERVISOR

Funk! You're late..!

FUNK

I was just leaving the station when I got the 'dead body' call. I figured they weren't going anywhere!

COP SUPERVISOR

Yah, but the living have other things to do.

FUNK

That's why donut shops are open 24 hours.

Muttering loudly to himself as he walks towards the body.

COP SUPERVISOR

I heard that!

ON-LOOKERS:

Gather and gawk.

A FORENSIC TECHNICIAN:

Snaps a number of evidence pictures. With each FLASH of his camera - flashback images of a year ago flash before our eyes.

JUMP BACK TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN CITY SHOPS - NIGHT - IN FLASHBACK

Amidst the Christmas lights and festive displays, John Funk's (Hispanic) wife DARIA, and eight year old daughter MARIANNA, exit a shop. Other than her hair and clothing, Daria bares a striking resemblance to the young slain woman.

DARIA AND MARIANNA:

Stop at the intersection and wait for the light to change.

TRAFFIC LIGHT:

Changes from 'red' to 'green', reflecting off the rain wet street. A happy and excited, Daria and Marianna's arms filled with colorfully decorated Christmas packages, enter the crosswalk.

HEADLIGHTS:

Fill the scene as a dark colored car races up the street towards them.

SUDDENLY:

A rain of shots ring out, as the car roars past - speeding through the crosswalk - beneath the solid glow of the 'red' traffic light, as Daria and Marianna are gunned down in a hail of bullets in the middle of the street.

INTO WHITE...

BACK TO PRESENT:

EXT. FRONT STEPS IGLESIA DE LOS ANGELES - DAY - CONTINUING

Funk kneels next to Rebecca Angelista. Her silver chain and crucifix lie in a pool of blood next to her body.

FORENSIC TECHNICIAN

(to Funk)

I'd put her somewhere in her early to mid twenties.

FUNK

Any I.D.?

FORENSIC TECHNICIAN

(shakes his head)

No.

With a quick glance back at the girls sitting in the back of the patrol car.

FORENSIC TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)

But her friends say that her name
is Rebecca Angelista -- and they
were just on there way home.

Funk reaches into his inside pocket. With a pen he picks up
the tiny cross. It dangles from it's broken chain. He places
it back down on the ground. Funk gently brushes her hair from
Rebecca's face;

JUMP CUT TO:

CLOSE ON - DARIA - IN FLASHBACK

Lying dead in the street. A wisp of hair blows across Daria's
cold staring eyes.

BACK TO:

EXT. FRONT STEPS IGLESIA DE LOS ANGELES - CONTINUING

Funk looks up at the Forensic Technician,

FUNK

Are we done here?

The Forensic Technician takes a final picture.

FORENSIC TECHNICIAN

She's all yours.

Funk's eyes pan the on-lookers, staring at Rebecca's body
lying in a pool of blood at the foot of the steps.

FUNK

Then can somebody please get a
blanket - and cover her up?!

Funk's eyes follow to the two young girls sitting in the back
of a patrol car, sobbing. Their pretty dresses speckled with
their best friend's blood.

His eyes pan the stares of the onlookers: emotionless, cold,
blank, surreal.

DISSOLVE BACK
TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT/RAIN - IN FLASHBACK

John Funk is being restrained by a pair of UNIFORMED OFFICERS from rushing to the side of his wife and daughter, lying dead in the street. He struggles.

FUNK

DARIA! - MARIANNA! - MARIANNA! -
MARIANNA!

Painfully sobbing - trying to push his way through the barricade of police.

Bits of ribbon and colored Christmas paper scatter across the wet, blood stained street in the wind.

Funk collapses to his knees in tears.

INTO:

EXT. SAME STREET - SAME CORNER - SAME NIGHT

Still in dreamtime, a young HOOKER (Angel) stands motionless - her eyes focused on the empty spot where Daria and Marianna's bodies once lay. The only thing that remains are bits of crime tape tied to a pole, and a scattering of tinsel, blowing aimlessly in the breeze.

A car passes and the shimmering image of the young Hooker is gone.

DISSOLVE INTO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - POLICE STATION - PRESENT

Funk is in a typical police interrogation room with the suspected target of the 'drive-by'.

FUNK

The way I heard it, you guys were on the ground before the shots were even fired.

GOLD TOOTH THUG

You hear a car racing up the street - But like I said - I didn't see nothin!

Funk tosses a photograph of the murdered young woman on the table in front of the GOLD TOOTH THUG.

INSERT: POLICE PHOTO - REBECCA ANGELISTA

FUNK

Her name was Rebecca Angelista!

Gold Tooth Thug cranes to look at the picture - shrugs.

GOLD TOOTH THUG

Pretty girl!

Leaning smugly back in the chair - fondling the gold rings around his fingers,

GOLD TOOTH THUG (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

But I didn't see nothin.

Playing too cool to be moved.

Funk slams the Thugs head into the table.

GOLD TOOTH THUG (CONT'D)

I DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING, MAN! I hit the ground like everyone else!

Funk steps back. The Gold Tooth Thug composes himself.

GOLD TOOTH THUG (CONT'D)

Hey..?!

Straightening himself out in dude style.

GOLD TOOTH THUG (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

You think if I knew who did it, they'd still be walking around?!!

His eyes lock on Funk's eyes for a moment.

FUNK

There was a time when a man knew when his friends were coming to kill him..!

GOLD TOOTH THUG

Yah, well, now a days, you don't know who your friends are!

Funk's frustration is etched across his face.