

I'll Be There For You

FADE IN:

TITLE: Los Angeles, 2004

INT. LIMOUSINE, REAR - DAY

Plush leather. Flat screen. Disco lights. Wet bar. Total swankness.

DETROIT MURPHY (24) lounges. He's not particularly tall, dark or handsome.

In fact, he's below average in most ways. Drab black suit, clip-on tie, and some kinda mullet/rocker hair thing going.

He sips from a bottle of champagne and reads a celebrity tabloid.

The cover shows a teen idol/boy band type in handcuffs. The headline reads: Bad Boy Johnny's DUI! - but Detroit's studying an ad inside:

NOTHING TO LOSE?

PROVE IT!

AMERICA'S FAVORITE REALITY SHOW

OPEN L.A. AUDITIONS - 2PM

He tears out the ad, humming an odd tune -

DETROIT

Whoh-oha... whoh-oha...

INT. GARAGE -

Four bays and a waiting room/office - messy and disorganized.

Three open bays house limos - a greasy mechanic fidgets under the hood of a white one. Day workers polish a black one.

Detroit pops out of that one's sunroof, half-in and half-out. He lays the tabloid on the roof, checks his watch, nervous.

DETROIT

(to the day workers)

T-minus 67 minutes and counting,
fellas. Almost time to rock. Yeah.

They pay him no mind. No habla Ingles.

DETROIT (CONT'D)
 (a deep breath)
 I know you guys are rooting for me.

FRANK (O.S.)
 Detroit!

FRANK (60s) waddles over, brandishing an envelope. He's maybe Greek, or swarthy anyway. As wide as he is tall.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 Gotchya a ticket. On the double.

He inspects the wax work. Gives a worker a thumbs up.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 Shino es muy bueno, senorita.

DETROIT
 Can't Frank. Got a big audition.

Frank drops the envelope on the tabloid and walks off.

FRANK
 Whatever, kid. Birthday party. Get moving.

Detroit climbs out the sunroof and follows him to the office.

DETROIT
 Frank, I'm serious. I can't haul right now. This is important.

FRANK
 I know. They're always important. I try to accommodate ya, don't I? Today I can't. Catch the next one.

DETROIT
 But Frank. It's *Nothing to Lose*.

FRANK
 Well, you've got something to lose. Your job.

JOSIE (30s) - a buff, attractive transvestite - looks up from coloring her nails and watching TV in the waiting area.

JOSIE
 That the show Johnny Phoenix is on?

DETROIT
 Oh, yeah. He's a judge.

JOSIE

I got something that little fox can judge anytime. And he'll give me a ten. Guaranteed.

DETROIT

(to Frank)

Let Josie take it.

JOSIE

Sure, I'll take it. Let the boy go get famous.

FRANK

I'm not sending tranny-pants to haul a bunch of toddlers.

JOSIE

Good point. I don't do kids. That's in my contract. Sorry, baby.

Detroit opens the envelope and examines the papers.

DETROIT

What time's pick-up?

FRANK

One o'clock.

He dashes back to the limo.

INT. LIMO, FRONT -

He chooses a cassette tape from a pink case. Pops it into a small, old-school 80's boom box on the passenger seat.

He lights a cigarette with a cool flick of his lighter and dons his chauffeur's cap.

Ozzy's monster rock classic comes on: Crazy Train!

OZZY

All aboard!!!!

{A quick note on our music. If you don't dig kick-ass 80's pop-metal hairbands, you're at least aware of their awesome cheeziness. However, if you're like Detroit and for 12 years have listened to nothing but the 10 tapes your Bon Jovi-loving Mom gave you... get ready to rock!}

EXT. FRANK'S LIMO GARAGE -

A pink neon sign tops the bay doors. If all letters worked, it would read Frank's Luxury Limousines. The limo peels out.

EXT. LOS ANGELES -

The limo's a black panther streaking through traffic. Hard polish reflects the LA glitz. Chrome glistens in the Hollywood haze.

INT. LIMO -

Detroit doesn't just sing along, he gives it everything. Full on air guitar and drums - like he's rocking Wembley or drunk in the shower. Self-consciousness completely eludes him.

And he's a star at the wheel. He drives fierce, frenzied and impossibly fast, displaying an expert recklessness.

This big black stretch limo is his entire world.

EXT. 405 FREEWAY, ON-RAMP -

Blasts up the on-ramp to - gridlock! - and skids to a hairy halt... inches between a mint Porsche and a garbage truck.

MUSIC STOPS (for everyone outside the limo anyway).

INT. PORSCHE -

An LA BABE (20s) blares her HORN, then looks over to...

INT. LIMO, LA BABE'S POV -

Detroit's still singing and air drumming to Ozzy, he turns his head to her in full-on rocker mode -

PORSCHE BABE - gives him the finger.

DETROIT - stops, embarrassed. He looks straight ahead.

EXT. ULTRA HIP LA CLUB - DAY

JOHNNY PHOENIX (the tabloid cover boy, 20) stumbles outside, drink in hand. He's far too handsome, in that boy-band way, and far too drunk. Squinting, he dons crazy expensive shades.

INT. LIMO -

Detroit agonizes over traffic, death gripping the wheel. He pulls his face close to the windshield, checks his watch.

DETROIT

Come on, come on, come on, come on!

EXT. 405 FREEWAY, TRAFFIC -

The limo bolts over a lane - stops dead. A five yard gain.

DETROIT (V.O.)

Yeah, baby!

EXT. TOO HIP CLUB -

A VALET pulls up a new Maserati convertible. Plate: "PHOENIX"

Johnny waves to some fawning fans and hops in. No tip. He stalls it... re-starts... and pulls off.

EXT. 405 FREEWAY -

Detroit'S POV - SUNSET BLVD. EXIT SIGN -

LIMO - cuts onto the shoulder and guns it to the off-ramp.

EXT. SUNSET BLVD, BEVERLY HILLS -

The limo blows a traffic light turning red, brazenly cutting off the Maserati.

INT. MASERATI -

Johnny's vision isn't *that* blurred. He swerves...

EXT. SUNSET BLVD, BEVERLY HILLS -

...and t-bones a 'Homes of the Stars' two-level bus full of Japanese tourists and their cameras.

The limo sails up into the hills.

EXT. SECURITY GATES -

Opulent estate gates open for the limo.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS MANSION -

Limo's in the driveway. Detroit runs to the front door. Rings the bell... and waits.

A gun barrel pushes through a nearby hedge. BLAM! SPLAT!

Blasted in the neck by a blue paintball, Detroit reels into the door just as a MOM opens it. He falls into her foyer.

Phone at ear, martini in hand, she looks him up and down. Her Botox face crunches a frown.

MOM
 (into the phone)
 Hold on, the limo's here.
 (yelling into the house)
 BOYS! Your limousine!

Ten 12-year old boys dash out, armed to the teeth for paintball. The mom grabs one and kisses it.

MOM (CONT'D)
 Gi'mommybigkiss.

The rest climb into the limo. She hands Detroit papers.

MOM (CONT'D)
 You get them to Paintball. You wait two hours. You get them home.

She shuts the door.

INT. LIMO, REAR - DAY

The boys play with every control and roughhouse for spots...

DETROIT
 (over the intercom)
 Hang on, boys.

...but they all tumble as the limo peels out.

EXT. SUNSET BLVD, BEVERLY HILLS -

The limo zooms past several cops putting Johnny Phoenix through a DUI dance. The Japanese tourists snap photos.

EXT. PAINTBALL PLACE - DAY

The limo screeches to a halt at a big warehouse. PAINTBALL!
Detroit opens the rear door and the kids pile out.

DETROIT

Let's go, let's go! Move it!

As the last one clears, he jumps back in and tears off.

EXT. STUDIO BUILDING, PARKING LOT -

The limo zips into the lot, more Ozzy blasting. Heads turn in
the crowd waiting in line. A buzz... Who's in the stretch??

Gates to a VIP lot swing open. The limo rolls in. It parks
and PAs rush over. One opens the rear door - to nothing.

Detroit gets out the front.

PA

Where is he?

DETROIT

Who?

PA

Johnny Phoenix.

DETROIT

Dunno. I thought he was a judge.

PA

No shit.

A tubby guy in a dandy suit jumps out of a yellow Jaguar
parked nearby and totters over. MR. MARVELL (50s) has a hint
of a British accent. A snooty hint. He's not British.

MR. MARVELL

Is it him?

PA

No.

(they look at Detroit)

It's nobody.

MR. MARVELL

(to Detroit)

Who are you driving for?

Detroit hands him a business card.

MR. MARVELL (CONT'D)
Frank's?

DETROIT
We're the best.

MR. MARVELL
Splendid. But why are you here?

DETROIT
I got *Nothing to Lose*.

MR. MARVELL
Jesus H! Someone get this imbecile gone. Where the hell is Johnny?

EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD -

Johnny is cuffed in a cop car, watching his totaled Maserati getting towed. The Japanese tourists snap away.

EXT. STUDIO BUILDING, MAIN PARKING LOT -

The limo's parked in the non-VIP lot. Detroit gets out, ducks into the back and gets a bottle of champagne from the fridge.

Walking to the entrance, he pulls an Axl Rose snakey move (you know it when you see it) but a security guard stops him.

SECURITY GUARD
Hey bro. You can't take booze in there.

DETROIT
Oh. Sorry. Bro. I'm kinda nervous.

Unsure what to do, he pops the cork and chugs from the bottle. He offers some to the security guard.

SECURITY GUARD
I'm good.

Detroit chugs more, sets it down and walks inside.

INT. AUDITION ROOM -

Another sad American Idol rip-off. A few hundred contestants sit in the audience. Detroit too. He checks his watch.

STAGE - two black pre-teens perform a hip-hop routine. The show's BACKING BAND provide a beat.

MUHAMMED & KAREEM

He's Muhammed, he's Kareem. And we gonna be famous, cuz fame is our dream. We got what you need, I dare say, indeed. And if you can't see it, you been smokin' dat weed. We're bringin' the heat, straight from the street, to all those motherfuckers we aim to beat. If we don't get your vote, you best take note, Kareem'll follow you home and slit your throat. So, put us on your show, cuz hey, don't ya know, we'll make your ratings go high, not low.

Three big chairs face the stage. One seats a DIM STARLET, one an OLD HIPPIE ROCKER, one's empty.

OLD HIPPIE ROCKER

Wow man, I gotta say, I dig it.

STARLET

Yeah, me too. Was that PC though? Who cares, right?
(turns to the empty chair)
What did you think, Johnny No-show?

OLD HIPPIE ROCKER

Johnny digs it too, man!

STARLET

OK, you're in boys.

The hip-hoppers bound offstage to big cheers.

EXT. PAINTBALL PLACE -

The boys wait at the curb. Multi-colored and confused.

INT. AUDITION ROOM -

The judges check their lists.

STARLET

Next up is number 72, Janey Boulet!

No one jumps up.

STARLET (CONT'D)

Come on Janey Boulet, where are ya?

JANEY (18) is petite and pretty, in a fragile way. A little lost bird. She wears a beret and a cape over a French maid type outfit with a gold Q 'n Q on it - a fast-food uniform.

OLD HIPPIE ROCKER
Janey, Janey, Janey?

She shrinks in her seat and peeks at her number card: 72. She smiles - happy just to hear her name, and looks around -

DETROIT - a row away, checks his watch, then his number: 129.

STARLET
Janey Boulet, going once...

The crowd stirs, looking about for this Janey.

STARLET (CONT'D)
Number 72, last chance.

Detroit catches eyes with Janey. She flashes her number at him with a shy smile, then offers it to him.

OLD HIPPIE ROCKER
OK Janey. A snoozer's a loser, man.

Detroit pops up...

DETROIT
Seventy-two here!

...and hustles to the stage, holding up number 72.

STARLET
Janey?

STAGE - he walks to the microphone, clearly nervous.

DETROIT
Detroit.

STARLET
Detroit?

Detroit nods.

OLD HIPPIE ROCKER
Is that your real name?

DETROIT
Born and raised.

OLD HIPPIE ROCKER
In Detroit?

DETROIT
Scranton.

STARLET
Do you have ID?

DETROIT
Yes.

OLD HIPPIE ROCKER
Show the camera.

Detroit shows his ID.

OLD HIPPIE ROCKER (CONT'D)
It says Paul.

DETROIT
No. It's Detroit. Detroit Murphy.

STARLET
Okay, Detroit. Tell us all about
yourself in thirty seconds?

Detroit checks his watch.

DETROIT
Twenty-four. Chauffeur. \$8.15 an
hour. Tips, not many. Studio
apartment, over Uncle's garage,
month to month. Dial-up.
(unbuttoning his shirt)
ADHD. Ritalin, 50 milligrams,
thrice daily. Drop-out, 10th grade.
Felony, one count, stalking.

He reveals "Debby" - tattooed on his chest in purple script.

DETROIT (CONT'D)
Restraining order, 500 feet.
Mom-less, 13 years. Father, jerk,
MIA. Herpes, simplex 2, oral.
Debby.

He reaches into his wallet...

STARLET
Time's up.

...and holds up his -

DETROIT
Bus pass.

STARLET

Time!

OLD HIPPIE ROCKER

That's quite the resume, man. But
now it's showtime, Detroit. What do
yooooouuuuu have to lose?

DETROIT

Not a thing.

OLD HIPPIE ROCKER

That's what we like to hear. You
got sixty seconds. Sell it, baby!