

FERRARIS AT TWENTY PACES

an original screenplay by

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FADE IN:

INT. CLASSROOM - AN AFTERNOON IN 1995

Empty desks face ROBERTO "BOB" MARTINEZ (17), an earnest latino kid, as he fixes a bicycle.

A WOMAN reads out loud in the background.

WOMAN (O.S.)

"In the final analysis, Galileo Franconi is a passionate car man who strove to fulfill a destiny."

Bob holds the seat in his hand, its mounting post bent in an earlier mishap.

WOMAN (O.S.)

"He attacked the race track to prove his mettle and defeat his naysayers."

Bob pulls a triangular drafting ruler from his knapsack and slips it into the pipe where the mounting post had attached.

WOMAN (O.S.)

"He assaulted artistic norms with designs that trumped the competition"

A perfect fit. He mounts the seat onto it and tightens everything down.

WOMAN (O.S.)

"And he plunged his piston into every starlet who would have him."

BOB

Fixed. It'll get ya home anyway.

The woman, Bob's TEACHER (60s), looks up from the essay she was reading.

TEACHER

This Franconi sounds like an asshole.

BOB

Wouldn't you be, in his shoes?

TEACHER

When I said write about a historical figure in Italian history, I meant Da Vinci. Or Mussolini.

Bob scratches his cheek, leaving a smear of chain grease.

TEACHER

After reading your essays on Ford,
Loewy and Iacocca, however, I should
have known better.

She walks over to Bob and hands him his essay.

CLOSE ON HIS GRADE, IN BOLD RED: AN "A+"

TEACHER

I appreciate the repair job, Roberto,
but anyone can fix things. Your
knack is writing. Use it.

Bob stares at his grade in wonder.

CUT TO:

INT. SPEEDY OIL CHANGE - PRESENT DAY (18 YEARS LATER)

CLOSE ON A HAND as it removes a plug from beneath a car. A
stream of oil pours out.

BOB MARTINEZ (now mid-30s) catches the oil in a pan from
where he stands in the dingy grease pit.

Worry lines and tired eyes do little to mar Bob's handsome
Latino features. His muscular frame suggests manual labor
more than a gym and his stance, an innate groundedness.

As the oil empties, Bob's attention strays to a handwritten
sign on the wall of the shop.

CLOSE ON THE SIGN, which reads: "A 'Plus' effort for our
customers = A+ benefits (sic) for our employees."

BOB

Is that right?

RUFUS (20s), a tattooed muscle head, reads a *Hemmings Motor
News* from his perch on a 55-gallon oil drum.

RUFUS

What?

BOB

That sign. Nigel gettin' us bennies?

RUFUS

Why? You feel the flu coming on?

Bob catches the last drip of oil. He glances at the 55-gallon
drum.

RUFUS
Big auctions in Cali this weekend.
Ferraris. Lambos. You been?

BOB
To California, or an auction?

RUFUS
Pick one.

BOB
I like Michigan fine.

RUFUS
That's small thinkin'. Imagine the
cars. The tasty chicks.

BOB
I'm taken. Could you--?

RUFUS
--Taken is another word for nuts in
a purse. A dude needs freedom.

BOB
I need to dump this.

RUFUS
Be a man and play the field. I got
two or three on the hook.

BOB
I'm good on the bench--did Johnson
get canned?

RUFUS
Damn fool was sellin' parts on the
DL. You eyeing management?

BOB
Why? Are you--?

NIGEL
(O.S.)
Martinez! You working or watchin' a
parade?

Rufus jumps up and grabs the oil drip pan from Bob's hands
in one well-practiced motion.

NIGEL, overweight and overbearing, leans his considerable
girth down to scrutinize them.

BOB
Not a marching band in sight, sir.

NIGEL

The sign says "Speedy" oil change.
What say we attempt some truth in
advertising.

RUFUS

Just the one stud down here, chief.

NIGEL

Don't get a big head, stud. Martinez
is a better mechanic than you'll
ever be. What you got to say for
yourself, Roberto?

BOB

My mind's a blank.

NIGEL

What a surprise.

Nigel tosses a key fob to Bob.

NIGEL

Caddy's making a noise. Drive it
and fix it.

BOB

Now--?

NIGEL

--You worked your ten hours yet? Do
it when your shift is over.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE PARKING LOT - LATER

Bob steps from a Cadillac CTS-V into the wilting heat. He
grimly eyes the passel of motorcycles in front of the store.

Bob pulls a note pad from a beat-up messenger bag and circles
the Cadillac. Far from just a mechanical examination, Bob
studies the car, taking notes as he goes.

A pack of athletic TEENAGERS burst from the store. QUINN
(17) and ENNIS (18), both gung-ho jocks, thrust their
purchases into the arms of the youngest among them.

QUINN

Here, rookie. You get to play sherpa.

The rookie - KYLE (15), a strapping all-American boy - juggles
the various energy drinks and power bars.

KYLE

Seriously? Like, how--?

ENNIS

--And don't lose anything. You heard
coach: losing ain't an option.

Kyle stuffs merchandise down his shirt as he scrambles onto a motorcycle behind Quinn. He glances around as the other riders mount their bikes.

And locks eyes with Bob.

The motorcycles roar from the parking lot. Kyle sneaks a glance backward as Bob watches them go.

INT. BUNGALOW KITCHENETTE - EVENING

The home's nerve center, a cramped space filled with kitschy decor, stacks of mail and unfolded laundry.

Bob detaches a broken chrome and fake wood grain handle from a mustard yellow refrigerator.

Kyle and MARCY yell in the background.

KYLE (O.S.)

--I didn't wanna ride along--

MARCY (O.S.)

--You said you were going to practice--

KYLE (O.S.)

--I did. I was.

Bob grimaces. He fits what appears to be an old shovel handle to the fridge and bolts it on.

MARCY (O.S.)

So motorcycles belong to, what, a
new defensive strategy the coach is
trying--?

KYLE (O.S.)

--We were lifting and they got
thirsty. It's six blocks--

MARCY MARTINEZ (36), a steamroller with porcupine hair, towers over the kitchen chair where Kyle sits.

MARCY

--It's money we don't have to buy
water you can get from a fountain--

KYLE

--I didn't buy anything--

MARCY

--No drinks, no urge to ride along.
So, they put a gun to your head?

Kyle sits on his hands, his burgeoning athletic body a powder keg ready to explode.

MARCY

You said football was your chance to
get into college--

KYLE

--Like I'll ever be good enough to
play college ball.

Marcy directs her icy gaze at Bob.

MARCY

The man of the house have any input?

Bob shifts uncomfortably but meets his son's gaze.

BOB

Lying ain't good, son--

MARCY

--You're grounded. Two weeks, and
you're in your room by eight--

KYLE

--But my room's a thousand degrees--

Marcy shuts him down.

MARCY

--I have class in one hour. I want
dinner in ten minutes.

She exits in a huff.

Kyle bolts from his chair. He pauses a moment to assess the absurd new fridge handle before yanking the door open and rifling the fridge for food.

Bob regards Kyle with palpable affection and tries to verbalize several thoughts. Finally:

BOB

Those the best role models--?

Kyle slams a frying pan onto the stove.

KYLE

--At least they get me.
(MORE)

KYLE (CONT'D)

School sucks, summer sucks. I'm just a frigging short order cook around here. I'm not going anywhere, I'm no good at anything.

Kyle deftly assembles cheese sandwiches and a salad.

BOB

You'll have college--

KYLE

--Right. I'll join the long line of Martinez's that went to college--

Bob takes the comment like a punch and abandons the kitchen.

Kyle bangs a spatula against his forehead.

KYLE

God, you are such an idiot.

BUNGALOW BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Bob scrubs his hands in the cheerful, one-person bathroom.

Marcy barges in to apply make-up, forcing Bob to wedge against the shower enclosure.

MARCY

God, that kid. He won't be happy until we pick him up at the morgue.

BOB

He's a good kid--

MARCY

--He's a speed freak, much like someone else I know at his age.

BOB

So, Johnson got fired today.

MARCY

When will Kyle get serious about life?

BOB

You were so serious at fifteen?

MARCY

What's my asshole brother pay managers like Johnson?

BOB
He's gotta dream a little, hon--

MARCY
--Perfect. Another dreamer. Maybe
he'll start sending fiction to
magazines too--

KYLE (O.S.)
(yelling)
Dinner's ready!

BOB
It ain't fiction--

MARCY
--Whatever it is, it's not helping.
You need to talk--

BOB
--We, talk--

MARCY
--Talk to Nigel. You deserve that
manager job and we need the money.
And you're family--

KYLE (O.S.)
(yelling, louder)
While the damn things are still hot!

MARCY
(shouting back)
Shut your hole! I'll get there.

She slams the vanity drawer shut.

MARCY
Just once, if you'd play the bad cop
instead of the indifferent one.

Marcy stomps from the room. Bob meets his own gaze in the
mirror and doesn't like what he sees.

BUNGALOW HALLWAY - LATER

Bob pauses outside a bedroom door, then taps on it.

KYLE (O.S.)
Just a sec--

Bob waits, listening. Kyle opens the door part way and stands
sweaty and shirtless behind it.

KYLE

Just doin' push-ups.

BOB'S POV looking past Kyle: automobilia on the walls, pencil sketches on Kyle's desk, a rumpled bed, a box of tissues--

BOB

I was, um, John Stewart's on--

KYLE

Gotta finish working out. You know--

Kyle attempts a half smile, fails and eases the door shut.

BUNGALOW KITCHENETTE - MOMENTS LATER

Bob fills a jelly jar with wine from a gallon jug. He opens a laptop, pulls out his Cadillac notes and begins to type.

BOB (V.O.)

The Cadillac CTS-V sedan resembles a vehicle from the latest Batman movie--

A text buzzes into Bob's flip phone. The text messages superimpose on the film screen.

TEXT - KYLE

"I was stupid."

TEXT - BOB

"You were honest. What R U drawing?"

TEXT - KYLE

"A Testarossa. A bitch to draw IMHO."

TEXT - BOB

"Not for you, sport."

Bob considers his phone with a smile, then returns to his writing.

BOB (V.O.)

But what is it like for the guy without a cape?

INT. RATTY NISSAN - MORNING

Bob pulls into a parking space across from the Speedy Oil Change. He stares at the Speedy sign.

The "*James Bond Theme*" blares from his pocket. He pulls out his flip phone, squints at it, then answers.

BOB
Yeah. This is. You're what magazine?

A look of lottery-winning bewilderment crosses Bob's face.

BOB
I'm layin' a patch right now. Be there in ten.

EXT. SPEEDY OIL CHANGE - MOMENTS LATER

Rufus steps from the building and lights a cigarette. He takes a long drag and blows smoke into the humid air.

RUFUS' POV THROUGH THE SMOKE: Bob's ratty Nissan as it squeals out of the parking lot across the street.

Nigel storms from the building, one leg in a pair of mechanic's coveralls.

NIGEL
Martinez called in sick, so you get me riding your sorry ass today. Move it.

RUFUS
Huh. Ain't that somethin'?

INT. TRUE•AUTO MAGAZINE OFFICE - DAY

A mid-century modern office with sleek furniture. A large Warhol-esque triptych of automotive logos graces the wall.

SANFORD "SANDY" PETERSEN (50s), thick in the middle but with youthful spirit, sits calmly. His flowing red hair and twinkling eyes suggest a young Santa Claus. He tents his hands as he speaks.

SANDY
Authenticity is passé in this business. It's about online profits, information flow, web uniques.

The EDITOR-IN-CHIEF (40s), suave and stylish, gapes at Sandy from behind his desk. Incredible.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
You copied two paragraphs verbatim from Wikipedia and turned it in as your own.

SANDY
A slight lapse. I meant to edit it.