

Cars & Criminals: The Mechanic
by

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EXT: MID-MORNING, FEBRUARY, COLD, SUNNY, BREEZY

TREE LINED RESIDENTIAL STREET, WEEKDAY

In jeans and a bulky black hooded sweatshirt, the mechanic is changing the water pump on a 1962 Cadillac, green-apple green with darker green swirls, lines, and other pattern. The mechanic leans over the front grill and the radiator, both hands in the engine cavity. A tool box is ON the ground near feet covered by thick work boots. A Dodge pickup truck is parked several feet in front of the old Cadillac. Footsteps on the sidewalk get attention but the mechanic doesn't look up. TROYA and MARCIANA JAYDE saunter along the sidewalk, stopping at the car to watch the work.

TROYA

It's so cool that you can do this kind of work, Frankie. The shops just want to rip you off.

Frankie pushes off the hood, revealing long dark brown hair in a pony tail and blue eyes behind eye glasses. As she stands up, the sweat shirt can no longer conceal that the mechanic is a woman.

FRANKIE

They have a lot of overhead. Having a shop isn't all its cracked up to be. Expenses, employees who know nothing, don't hardly do any work, but still want to get paid.

TROYA

(Leaning over the front driver side fender to watch Frankie tighten the remaining bolts.)
We need another car. Can do?

FRANKIE tightens the last bolt, picks up her tools, and tosses them into the tool bag at her feet. She wipes her hands on a rag and tosses the rag into the toolbox before facing TROYA again.

FRANKIE

Sure. What, where, when?

TROYA

Van or SUV. Saturday morning. 9 am. In front of the bank, downtown.

FRANKIE

Ok.

TROYA

The usual five hundred.

TROYA pulls an envelope with FRANKIE's name on it from her inner jacket pocket.

FRANKIE

Yeah.

FRANKIE puts the envelope in her pocket and continues working, adding antifreeze to the radiator and other minor details while talking with TROYA.

FRANKIE

Man, what you do with the cars?
Drive em once, break em and throw
em away? Sheesh.

A rustle of movement to FRANKIE's right draws a swift glance. MARCIANA had put her hand on the grip of the pistol tucked in her waistband. FRANKIE picks up the remaining tools, tosses them into the toolbox.

TROYA

You know these kids can't drive
for shit. We only use em once, to
get away after we rob a bank.

FRANKIE

Quit it. You ain't robbing no
banks.

TROYA

Seriously. We've robbed close to
thirty of them in two counties.
Stolen car, once ditched, can't be
traced back to us. Clean getaway.

FRANKIE

Really? Can't believe it. In broad
daylight? With a bunch of people
around? No way.

TROYA

Yeah, we case the joint the day
before, then at the chosen time,
some of the girls go in, steal the
money from the counter tellers,
and leave in under a minute. In
ski masks, no one can identify or

(MORE)

TROYA (CONT'D)

describe them. Me and Marciana
wait down the street for them.

FRANKIE closes the hood of the car, turns, picks up her
toolbox, and puts it in the back of her truck.

FRANKIE

Ok. I'll park it in front of the
doors and leave the key in the
ignition.

TROYA

I need someone who can drive...I
swear these punks are afraid of
the damn car. Worse than my
granny...nearly got us caught last
time.

FRANKIE

You need a drag racer...race car
driver. Can drive in and out of
traffic and not get anyone killed.

TROYA

I've heard of several famous ones.
They won't do this. I don't know
anyone that can drive like that.

FRANKIE

Yeah, you do. Me. And I know
others.

TROYA stares at FRANKIE and then grins, flashing teeth.

TROYA

You aint no drag racer. Are you?
You wanna drive the car? Get a
piece of the take?

FRANKIE

(FRANKIE meets TROYA's
stare)
K, equal share.

TROYA

(after a moment's
hesitation)
Deal.

The two women shake hands. Frankie gets in her truck and
drives away as Troya and Marciana turn around and walk back
the way they had come.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOONLIGHT, COLD, FEBRUARY - NIGHT

EMPTY PARKING LOT, SECLUDED CORNER BEHIND BUILDING

Driving an old Thunderbird, FRANKIE drives into the parking lot, past the dark building closed for the night, and turns into the secluded area between the building, the low wall extending from the corner of the building to the edge of the parking lot and along the grassy edge. She turns the car around facing the direction she came and shuts off the car.

Just minutes later, another vehicle comes around the corner of the building driving slowly toward her. The driver stops the SUV alongside FRANKIE's car and the driver's window opens. BRETT turns off the SUV and darkness settles over the area. Tucked back in this corner, they cannot be seen from the street or the grounds.

BRETT

What have you got?

FRANKIE

These idiots are planning a bank robbery. And they've done others already.

BRETT

I knew you wouldn't call me out here for chit chat. What idiots? Which bank? Where? When?

FRANK

The Gang, the girls, Provident Bank, downtown, Saturday, 9 am

BRETT pulls a small notebook from the breast pocket of the uniform he wore for his one day a week stint at the courthouse. He notes the details as FRANKIE relays them and falls silent.

BRETT

There's more. You could have called me with this.

FRANKIE

I'm supposed to steal the getaway car and drive them away from the

(MORE)

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
bank when it's all over. Not my
favorite kind of racing.

BRETT
(after a moment of
thought)
Okay. We can work with it. I'll
pick you up at 730 Saturday
morning, drive you to the next
county and drop you off at the
vehicle. Then I'll head back and
meet up with the rest of the task
force. You'll head to the bank
where they expect you to be, and
wait.

FRANKIE
And if they actually make it out
of the bank and into the car?

BRETT
It shouldn't get that far but...
Drive them. We'll catch up.

FRANKIE
Okay.

BRETT
Names-street names if not the real
ones.

FRANKIE
Troya Jayde, the gang leader, runs
things; Marciana, her cousin, same
last name, Troya's right hand man.

BRETT
They've pulled other robberies?

FRANKIE
Troya says they have, nearly
thirty, though neither has
mentioned specifics. Their MO is
to steal a car, rob a bank, drive
off, and then ditch the car
somewhere.

BRETT
I'll check with Robbery/Homicide

FRANKIE
I thought she was joking, or
bragging lying but she was dead
serious. They all have guns, too.

BRETT

Of course, they do. How bad could this get?

FRANKIE

If nobody does anything stupid...should go smoothly and quickly, under a minute.

BRETT

If anyone else is in the bank that early, civilians are highly unpredictable when panicked. If the stupid move is made...

FRANKIE

It'll be a blood bath. Look, this is an all female gang-they have to do twice as much twice as hard to earn half the respect the male gangs get. That may or may not include shooting people just for street cred.

BRETT

Looks like I'm getting the captain out of bed.

He turns the key and the engine roars to life, the headlights brightening the secluded spot.

BRETT

Later.

He waves, backs up the SUV, and drives away. FRANKIE watches him leave.

FRANKIE

Don't fuck it up, buddy. Don't let anyone else fuck it up.

CUT TO:

EXT: UNOFFICIAL DRAGSTRIP, NEARLY DESERTED ROAD AT THE EDGE OF TOWN. NIGHT, FULL MOONCRISP COLD AIR FEBRUARY

The roadway appears deserted except for the group of cars parked on the sides of the road. Leaning against the driver side door of her car, FRANKIE studies the gathering crowd and the familiar cars waiting to roar at top speed down the road. The drivers gather in the middle of the road, forming a circle around the unofficial drag race leader for the drawing of names. She walks toward the group to find out who her first opponent would be.

The rumbling roar of a well tuned big block V8 shatters the night, drawing all eyes, including Frankie's, to the late arrival. A gleaming black 67 Plymouth GTX glides over the road as though on its own air cushion. Heavily tinted windows hide the driver from view. Frankie stoops in the middle of the road allowing the car to pass. It slows as it goes by, giving her the impression of a cowboy on his horse tipping his hat to her.

FRANKIE

(UNDER HER BREATH)

Nice car.

Running footsteps stop right next to her as her mechanic helper and substitute little brother/nephew Jerry points at the new car.

JERRY

Nice car!

FRANKIE

It is a nice car, Jerry. Very nice. I've never seen it before. Have you?

JERRY

Derek had the same car but not as nice. It needs paint and he took the motor out.

Frankie turns, looks at Jerry—a young adult male with the mind and communication skills of a ten-year old who obviously adores his older brother, whom she has never met. She listens when Jerry idolizes a man who probably doesn't deserve it

FRANKIE

When was the last time you saw him?

JERRY

Saw who?

FRANKIE

Your brother, Derek.

JERRY

This morning.

FRANKIE

Are you sure? You know how you are with the passing of time.

JERRY

(Looks pleased with himself)
I'm sure. I looked at my watch. It was 9:12 am, Friday, 14 Feb. Using my watch for time and day was a good idea, Frankie. Now I can remember when important things happen.

FRANKIE

I'm glad it helps you, Jerry.

Frankie watches the Plymouth park on the opposite side of the road. The driver's door opens and the driver stays in the car, hidden in the shadows.

JERRY

I thought I would see him. He said he was gonna race tonight.

FRANKIE (DISTRACTED)

Okay, I need to find out who my first opponent is.

Frankie joins the drivers' circle and waits to find out who had drawn her name. After her fourth win, she stopped drawing a name herself, agreeing to race whoever drew her name in the first race.

DRAG RACE LEADER (NEED NAME)

Sorry, Frankie. No one drew you tonight. Do you want to challenge anyone? You have that option since we seem to have an odd number tonight.

FRANKIE

Is there anyone here who hasn't
raced me?

She looked through the crowd for the stranger who owned the GTX but didn't spot an unfamiliar face.

FRANKIE

I feel stupid challenging anyone.
I'll just make a lone run, put the
car through the paces and test the
new nitrous set up.

MALE VOICE (OS)

I'll race you-and your nitrous.

Frankie squints against the lights, peering at the far edge of the group.

She scans the group, every face nearly as familiar to her as the cars they raced each week. They all look back at her, expecting..

FRANKIE

If you own that gorgeous GTX that
rolled in here a few minutes ago,
you're on.

MALE VOICE

I do and it's more than a match
for whatever you throw at it.

Frankie shrugs, still looking for him but she didn't see a stranger except a shadow fading into the darkness at the edge of the road, easing into a gleaming black muscle car from days gone by.

FRANKIE (TO HERSELF)

I think I was born in the wrong
era.

CUT TO:

EXT; DRAG STRIP ROAD ON THE EDGE OF TOWN, SEVERAL CARS PARKED ON THE SIDES OF THE ROAD. IMAGINARY STARTING LINE MARKED BY A WHITE LINE.

The GTX rumbles into place, idling smoothly. The small crowd of spectators stop talking to admire the sleek, gleaming

beauty of rolling steel. The rumble of a powerful engine is the only sound until a second powerful engine joins the first in perfect harmony. As Frankie drives her 63 Corvette Stingray up beside the GTX, all eyes swing her way.

FRANKIE

They really want to see this race.

She looks over at the other car, her expression one of reluctant admiration. After a last glance at the dark windows, she focused on Jerry holding the flags to start the race. The boy lifts both flags, one in each hand, counts back from 5 to 1, and drops both flags. Before the flag hits the ground, Frankie floors the accelerator and the corvette roars off the starting line. Eyes on the finish line, Frankie lets her surroundings fade until it was just her and the car-holding the gas pedal to the floor. Speed increased. The car glided easily over the finish line. Frankie slowed the car by easing off the gas pedal until she could safely engage the brakes. She turned the car around and spotted her opponent turning around as well. She had lost track of him, aware only that she had crossed the finish line first. She is still undefeated.

Jerry runs up to her, gives her a body lifting hug, which she returns.

JERRY

You won, Frankie! It was close but you finished first. Derek couldn't catch you.

Frankie steps back in surprise.

FRANKIE

That driver is your brother, Derek? That is his car? You said it wasn't.

JERRY

He washed it, put the motor back in. He fixed it to race.

(He looks down as though
ashamed and chastened.)

I forgot.

FRANKIE

Don't worry. The car looks great. Not sure about your brother since I haven't actually seen him yet.

JERRY

He was behind you for the whole race. I've never seen him lose before.

CUT TO:

INT: FRANKIE'S CURRENT TEMPORARY RESIDENCE, LATE NIGHT

Frankie enters the house through the front door. Scott is passed out on the sofa, empty beer bottles covering one end of the coffee table. Plates, food containers and snack wrappers litter the surface of the coffee table. The other end of the table displays a small clean area and the residue of cocaine. Scott sprawls over the sofa, passed out, in his underwear.

FRANKIE

I know what you did all day and it wasn't job hunting.

Scott grunts, rolls over, and snores. Frankie makes her way through the living room mess and into the hall, to the bedroom she used, where her minimal cleaning effort look better than the rest of the house. A light knock on her door... Frankie frowns, looks at her watch to see 2:20am.

FRANKIE

I need to sleep, Angie. I have to get up in a few hours.

ANGIE (OS)

It will just take a minute, Frankie, please. It's important. Please!

FRANKIE

Okay, but I need to get some sleep for a job tomorrow morning.

The door opens and Angie enters the room, closing the door behind her.

ANGIE

Thank you, Frankie. I hate to ask... but... I dont know...

FRANKIE

Spit it out, Angie. What do you need?

ANGIE

The rent. Rent money.

Angie drops her gaze, stares at the floor, ready to cry. She steps back, clearly expecting a Frankie to be angry.

FRANKIE

I gave Scott my rent. Didn't he pay it? Never mind, I can tell he didn't. Though he mentioned being late...

(She pauses, watching Angie struggling not to cry but losing as tears welled in her eyes)

How far behind is he with the rent? Have eviction processes been started?

ANGIE

Not that I know of, I haven't seen anything. But we always seem to be a month, or two, behind.

FRANKIE

How is anyone paying anything? Neither of you has a job!

ANGIE

I had a job until a month ago.

FRANKIE

What happened?

ANGIE

The owner closed the business. She has terminal cancer and can't deal with it anymore. Her doctor advised her to lessen the load. So the restaurant had to go. So, everyone lost their jobs.

FRANKIE

How much you owe for rent? How far behind are you?

ANGIE

At least one month, and we pay 1400/month.

FRANKIE

Who do you pay it to? The owner? A management company-name and address. I'll take care of it. And Scott and I are going to have a long talk when I get back tomorrow.

ANGIE

okay, thank you, Frankie. I thought you'd be all mad and stuff.

FRANKIE

Mad? Yeah, I'm a bit ticked that he spent rent money on dope.that he isn't facing his responsibilities, just sits here getting high all the time. I fixed up a car for him and it sits in the driveway gathering dust. It irks me that he never seems to appreciate what anyone does for him. He's kind of self-centered, only thinks about what he wants..

ANGIE

Oh, not always. I thought you'd get mad and throw things or something. Scott said... ,

FRANKIE

I have been known to throw a tool or two but I'm not working on a car right now, I'm trying to keep my brother and you from sleeping on the streets. I'll take care of the rent tomorrow. Now, let me get to sleep.

ANGIE

Good night, Frankie.

Angie leaves the room. Frankie strips down to t-shirt and panties, sits on the edge of the bed, and opens the night stand drawer.

CUT TO:

EXT. SATURDAY , 730 AM, SUNSHINE BUT COLD - MORNING

STREET OUTSIDE FRANKIE'S CURRENT RESIDENCE

BRETT, in street clothes, stops his personal truck at the curb in front of the house as the front door opens and FRANKIE walks out, turns in the doorway, and says something to her sister inside the house. FRANKIE crosses the dirt and weed front lawn, pulls the truck door open, and slides into the seat.

BRETT

Game on?

FRANKIE

Unfortunately, yes.

FRANKIE looks out the window. BRETT hands her a Styrofoam cup of coffee.

BRETT

What happened?

FRANKIE

Nothing, yet. These girls are all carrying guns. They're not exactly a stable bunch. TROYA loses her temper too easily. If something happens, if she panics, somebody is gonna be dead. Maybe several somebodies.

FRANKIE looks out the window as BRETT drives past nearly deserted parking lots. FRANKIE sees the vehicle she needs.

FRANKIE

There's one-sitting by itself, too.

BRETT turns into the parking lot and stops near the other vehicle.

BRETT
See you after.

FRANKIE gets out of the car, takes a step, and hesitates, glancing back at BRETT, who looks grim.

BRETT
Don't get dead.

FRANKIE
You either.

CUT TO:

EXT. SATURDAY , SUNSHINE, COLD, FEBRUARY, OUTSIDE THE FRONT DOOR

Three young girls walk in staggered single file. Another group of three approaches from the opposite direction. At the corners of the building, each girl stops to pull on a black ski mask before entering the building. In moments all six are in the bank.

CUT TO:

INT: 3RD FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM, BUILDING DIRECTLY ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE BANK. LIGHTS ARE OFF BUT SUNLIGHT FILTERS THROUGH THE DIRTY WINDOW.

BRETT stands to the side of the window, watching the front of the bank, the street, and the surrounding area through binoculars. RON, his partner, listens to police radio chatter while drumming his fingers on the dusty tabletop. BRETT moves his line of sight in a slow panorama, spotting various members of the task force in concealed places.

BRETT
Should have blocked the street off.

RON
Yeah, but the Lieutenant doesn't believe it's going to happen-and the Captain listens to him over the rest of us cause we don't have bars on our shoulders. You sure about this? Your snitch is reliable?

BRETT
She never misses. If she says it's going down, it's going down.

Brett looks through the binoculars again, and then motions RON to join him.

BRETT

Those girls are sure up to something. It's about to hit the fan.

RON joins BRETT at the window, both men watching the street. Two women, taller and heavier than the girls in the bank, pass each other on the street. The slightly taller one goes to a car sitting at the curb halfway to the intersection and gets into the driver's seat. The shorter one walks past the opposite intersection and keeps going, fading from attention two blocks down the street. BRETT focuses once more on the bank as FRANKIE drives up and stops the stolen car at the curb in front of the double glass doors.

CUT TO:

INT. BANK LOBBY, , MORNING, SUNLIGHT STREAMING THROUGH FLOOR TO CEILING WINDOWS - DAY

The six girls spread out among the 8 or 10 patrons in the bank lobby. Three tellers, 2 female and 1 male, occupy alternating teller windows behind the bullet-proof glass. Beyond them, glass walls showed various offices, a conference room, and an office with a closed wooden door. To the side, a wide corridor lined with closed doors led to the vault-which stood open. A few employees carried trays in and out. Just inside the vault, a low square table held stacks of money.

Three girls approach the tellers while the other three take up positions in front of the doors. One girl holds up a black handgun for everyone to see. She looks at the female teller in front of her.

GIRL 1

Put the money, all of it, in the bag. Now. No alarms...

The male teller shifts position. The girl aims the gun at him.

GIRL 1

No heroics.
(He tosses another bag to the male)
Fill it up-all of it in the bag.

The girls leave the bags with the tellers, who are dropping stacks of cash on the floor in their panic to obey. One girl watches the tellers while the other 5 control the crowd. The girl closest to the door aimed her gun at the security guard who eyed her back with malice.

GIRL 2

No heroics, Pops. Ease your hand away from that gun and put it in front of you where I can see it.

She nods at her nearest cohort and looks at her watch.

GIRL 2

Relieve him of that gun, then grab a bag and get some of that dough

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GIRL 2

Relieve him of that gun, then grab a bag and get some of that dough from the vault. 30 sec. Now!

The third girl does as ordered, grabbing the guard's gun, and runs to the vault, now empty of employees, and begins stuffing stacks of money into the bag.

GIRL 2

On the floor, all of you. Stay
still, stay quiet. No one gets
hurt.

A hush falls over the bank lobby, broken only by the rustle
of clothing as people obey the girl's command. Something
falls over (off camera) with a metallic clang. A gun is
fired. Pandemonium erupts, cries and screams, pounding
footsteps..

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CUT TO:

INT. STOLEN CAR, , MIDMORNING, COLD - DAY

FRANKIE waits in the driver's seat of the stolen car, one foot on the brake and the other on the gas. At the sound of gunfire, her hands tighten around the steering wheel.

The bank doors open. Six girls, each pushing a terrified patron ahead of her, flee the bank. Three of them get to the car, push their human shields away, and scramble into the car...two in the back seat and one in front. Out the rear view mirror, Frankie sees Troya pull her car away from the curb, the other three girls riding with her.

FRANKIE speeds away from the curb, diving into traffic, dodging cars with years of racing experience. The dye pack explodes, a fine red powder filling the car like smoke. Unable to see, Frankie stops the car just past the intersection. The girls jump out and run, scattering in three different directions. Frankie puts the car in park and opens the driver's door. The ratcheting sound of rifles being cocked to fire halts her in the seat. She puts both hands on the steering wheel, trying not to cough and startle anyone..

TO BE CONTINUED

