

# **ASSIST**

by

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**TITLE OVER BLACK:**

**Los Angeles.  
1984.**

FADE IN:

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS STREET - NIGHT

Rain falls as we look up at a skyscraper. MOVE DOWN and PULL BACK to REVEAL a payphone across the street, looming in the foreground. Cars ZOOM by.

A young MAN in a fitted suit, silhouetted, exits the skyscraper. We can't see his facial expressions, but we can see he's in a rush.

He sprints across the street. A car swerves around him and HONKS as he weasels his way toward the payphone.

This is **JAKE HUGHES** (22).

He looks around. Checks his surroundings. There's no one in sight.

He picks the phone up and puts in two quarters. As the phone RINGS, we hear his heart BEAT. He takes three deep BREATHS to calm himself before what he's about to do...

CUT TO:

INT. MAILROOM - DAY

A spacious, stark, and grey mailroom. Blue lockers line the walls. There's some old IBM computers, a few telephones, and in the back corner of the room: a safe.

**TITLE:**

**Six Months Earlier.**

The doors BURST OPEN as Jake runs toward the safe. We see he wears a suit that's too big for him. His hair is a little longer.

He wipes sweat off his forehead and approaches the safe, looks down at his hands. The numbers twenty-five, thirty-nine, and sixteen have been written on his palm.

He enters the code. Turns the knob one way, then the other and...

...CLICK. It pops open. There's a film print inside, which Jake picks up. He places it on a desk carefully. He then grabs a phone and dials a number.

It RINGS three times. Jake looks at a clock on the table.  
7:16 AM.

Many voices will come over the phone during this story. The first is a man in his late twenties with a Southern California accent (NEIL)...

NEIL (O.S.)

Hello?

JAKE

Neil. It's Jake. I have it.

NEIL (O.S.)

Where are you right now?

JAKE

The mailroom.

NEIL (O.S.)

Good. Stay put. Do not let that print out of your sight.

JAKE

I won't let it out of my hands.

NEIL (O.S.)

As soon as I get Russell's exact address, I'll call you back. He lives in Westwood.

JAKE

Okay. I'm right here.

NEIL (O.S.)

Just letting you know, I'm gonna write you a killer evaluation for HR.

JAKE

Really?

NEIL (O.S.)

Yup. With your track record, I wouldn't be surprised if you were the first of your class out of that mailroom.

If Jake were a dog, his tail would be wagging. This is the rare moment where both things he strives for are given to him: validation, and the opportunity for advancement.

JAKE

Thank you.

NEIL (O.S.)  
Well, let's not start sucking each  
other's dicks just yet.

JAKE  
(laughs)  
Sure.

NEIL (O.S.)  
Talk soon.

Neil cuts the call. Jake dials another number. It RINGS.

JAKE  
Bunny -- it's me.

We hear the voice of a young woman and Jake's girlfriend,  
STELLA.

STELLA (O.S.)  
Hey love, I'm leaving.

JAKE  
I'm at the office right now.

STELLA (O.S.)  
What? Why?

JAKE  
I got roped into making a quick  
drop off for one of my bosses.

STELLA (O.S.)  
What?

JAKE  
I know, I'm sorry.

STELLA (O.S.)  
But Jake --

JAKE  
I'm not happy about it either but  
don't worry, I'm gonna be on time,  
alright?

STELLA (O.S.)  
My graduation is in two hours.