

# REPO MAN

1983

Universal Studios. Screenplay by Alex Cox. Directed by Alex Cox.  
Produced by Jonathan Wacks and Peter McCarthy.

Setting: Los Angeles, 1980s

Repo Man is the story of Otto, an alienated youth whose nihilistic personality prevents him from finding a "normal" job.

Otto is eventually taken under the wing of a crafty repo man who teaches the young punk everything he needs to know about repossessing cars. Meanwhile, an alien spacecraft has crash-landed in the desert. A member of a secret UFO organization has absconded with the alien corpses and is driving them to L.A. in the trunk of his car. The radiation and whatever other cosmic forces are evident in the dead extraterrestrials gradually encompasses the car and driver — turning both into a potentially lethal weapon.

The car turns up on the repo computer printout, and all repo men are on the lookout for it. This modern fantasy comes to a close when Miller, the brain-fried handyman who works for the repo company, drives the car up over the city and out of sight.

## MILLER

*The weirdly esoteric handyman explains his theory of coincidence to a confused Otto. As his theory gets more and more complex, Otto begins to suspect that he took too much acid back in the 1960s.*

A lot of people don't realize what's really going on. They view life as a bunch of unconnected incidents and things. They don't realize that there's this, like, lattice of coincidence that lays on top of everything. I'll give you an example, show you what I mean: Suppose you're thinking about a plate of shrimp. Suddenly somebody will say, like, plate or shrimp or plate of

Hey, look at that! Look at those assholes over there. Ordinary fucking people. I hate 'em. What do you know, kid? See, an ordinary person spends his life avoiding tense situations. Repo Man spends his life getting into tense situations. Assholes. Let's go get a drink. Tense situations, kid. Get into five, six of them a day and it don't mean shit anymore. I mean, I've seen men stabbed and it didn't mean shit. I mean, I've seen guns, too. They don't mean shit. But that's when you gotta watch yourself. Here, I'll handle it, pal. Try to settle down. Have a nice day — right. Night, day — it doesn't mean shit. There's gonna be some bad shit coming down one of these days, kid. I'm gonna be right here, heading north at one-ten per.



# REUBEN, REUBEN

1983

20th-Century Fox. Screenplay by Julius J. Epstein. Based on the novel by Peter de Vries and the play *Spottford* by Herman Shumlin. Directed by Robert Ellis Miller. Produced by Walter Shenson.

Setting: A small town in New England, 1980s

*Reuben*, *Reuben* is the story of Gowan McGland, a world-renowned poet whose alcoholic debauchery has prevented him from writing poetry for years. To support himself, Gowan travels the small-town lecture circuit where he encounters amorous wealthy housewives who are only too happy to subsidize his lifestyle in return for temporary attention and affection.

Gowan's ex-wife Edith has been offered a small fortune to write a biography of McGland and has traveled to New York to discuss the project with him. On the train back to the small New England town where he has been speaking, he encounters beautiful young Geneva, with whom he falls in love. Geneva is a bright young college student who is quite taken with the poet's attentions. She soon falls under his spell and, despite her family's disapproval, becomes Gowan's lover.

Their love affair is doomed, for Gowan's alcoholism has progressed beyond the point where he can maintain a functional relationship. When a pregnant Geneva breaks it off with him, he falls into despair and plans to hang himself. As he ties the noose and sets up the chair, he addresses his ex-wife Edith on the small tape recorder she has given him. Atop the chair with the noose around his neck, Gowan speaks of his loss and suddenly creates a new poem. So enraptured is he by this long-awaited breakthrough that he decides to go on living. Unfortunately, just at that moment, Reuben — the old English sheepdog belonging to Geneva's grandfather — bounds into his room and knocks the chair out from under him.

## GOWAN MCGLAND

*The poet talks to Edith on the tape recorder she has given him in hopes that he will provide material for her book on his life. He tells her of his love for Geneva.*

shrimp out of the blue — no explanations. No point in looking for one either. It's all part of a cosmic unconsciousness. I'll give you another instance. You know the way everybody's into weirdness right now? Books in all the supermarkets about Bermuda Triangles, UFOs, how the Mayans invented television — that kind of thing? Well, the way I see it, it's exactly the same. There ain't no difference between a flying saucer and a time machine. People get so hung up on specifics they miss out on seeing the whole thing. Take South America for example. In South America, thousands of people go missing every year. Nobody knows where they go. They just, like, disappear. But if you think about it for a minute, you realize something. There had to be a time when there was no people, right? Well, where did all these people come from? Hmm? I'll tell you where: the future. Where did all these people disappear to? And how did they get there? Flying saucers! Which are really — yeah, you got it: time machines! I think a lot about this kind of stuff. I do my best thinking on the bus. That's how come I don't drive, see? I don't want to know how. I don't ever want to learn, see? The more you drive, the less intelligent you are.