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BLACK. Silent. Still. Then-

We are a '50 caliber armor-piercing bullet ERUPTING out of the chamber of M82 Barrett rifle, 900 meters per second, through the ballistic windshield of the lead SUV and the driver's head. A splatter of red.

What happens next is fast. Chaotic. And brutal.

EXT. STREET - MEXICO - DAY

The car FLIPS. BARREL ROLLS along the street, vomiting metal and glass. Instant road block.

Two more SCREECH to a halt. Full reverse, tires and tracers SHRIEKING all around, hauling ass past a harmless looking red pick-up truck, as it-

DETONATES

C-4. Ball bearings. Point blank range.

The convoy is SHREDDED. Trail Suburban becomes airborne. Lands upside down. Tortoise on its back, wheels spinning in a futile attempt to escape. VIP, out of control. SMASHES into the wall at 95 mph.

The GUNFIRE resumes. We never see the shooters. Only the damage they cause.

Rounds RIP into the wrecked vehicles. Into the survivors, dazed and bloodied, as they attempt to crawl away, fight back or run for cover. But all they can do is try and die.

Acrid smoke. SHOUTS. SCREAMS. Cartridge casings CASCADE on the concrete. Blood mixes with gasoline. Someone POUNDS on the spidered window, as he burns alive.

This is no longer an ambush. This is a massacre.

Finally, mercifully, it's over.

Killers converge slowly from all directions. Faceless. Methodical. Inspect their handiwork.

Dead. Dying. Debris.

One man, still whole, is curled behind the swiss cheesed rubble that was once his ride. Shell shock. Young. A kid, really. Won't get much older.

Looks up at his would-be murderer. At the muzzle of AR 15. Tries to say something, anything, but no sound comes out, except-

VOICE (O.S.)
Leave him.

He stands besides the mangled VIP car. Barely. 60's. Remains of a nice suit. Gray hair matted with sweat and soot. Somehow manages to remain dignified despite his appearance.

OLD MAN
You're not here for him. You're
here for me.

Beat. The gun turns toward him. Others follow suit.

The target. One last breath. One last look. Then,

OLD MAN
Earn your pay.

Off the deafening roar of a SHOTGUN-

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The glow of the sirens washes over the aftermath. Flares. Bodybags. A swarm of police and paramedics.

A car PULLS up to the edge of the perimeter. The driver, mid 30's, leaves the engine running, practically leaps out of the vehicle. Pushes through the crowd, swats a news channel mike shoved in his face, under the yellow tape and into the arms of an officer who does his best to hold him back. No chance.

DIAZ
Where is he?! **Where???**

Yep, that's his name. Harvard Law. JFK handsome. Meet our hero.

The cop gives up. Gestures toward-

A crumpled form under a hastily tossed sheet. Blood seeps through. Red on white.

Diaz approaches. Leans over. Pulls back the cover.

We don't get to see what's under. We just feel its impact on Diaz's face. Hold on his anguish. His grief.

A pair of expensive Italian loafers stride through the crime scene, careful to avoid the broken glass. Stop a few feet away from Diaz. Pan up to the owner.

ORTEGA. Make it Police Chief Ortega. Picture the worst thing imaginable, he's seen it six times. Only a couple of years and a few downpayments shy of retiring to the life of fly fishing and margaritas in the afternoon. Claude Rains south of the border.

Deliberates on what to say. Settles on the perfunctory,

ORTEGA
I'm sorry.

Diaz swallows the pain. Not now. Not here. Not in front of this guy. It doesn't come easy. Rises back on his feet.

DIAZ

How much?

ORTEGA

Miguel-

DIAZ

They knew when. They knew where.
The route. The radio frequency. The
playbook. All of it. So let me ask
again - **how much did they pay you
for my father's life?** Ten thousand?
Twenty? A hundred?

ORTEGA

(snaps)

You want to talk numbers?! Nine
cops died today! Four are in a
hospital! Two won't make it through
the night! All to protect one!

He dials it back. Glances at the sheet.

ORTEGA

I never liked him. He was a trouble
maker and a fool; he would have
made a lousy mayor, and if he was
still alive, I'd say it all over
again to his face. (beat) But I
didn't betray him either.

If looks could kill, Diaz Sr. would have company.

ORTEGA

I warned him. He didn't listen. Don't
make the same mistake. Leave town.
Don't look back. Otherwise you'll end
up just like your old man.

DIAZ

Is that a threat?

ORTEGA

No. It's a goddamn guarantee.

The words hang there. Like a noose. Diaz considers. Finally,

DIAZ

The election is in three weeks.

ORTEGA

No offence, counselor, but we'll do
fine without your vote.

DIAZ
I'm not voting. I'm running in my
father's place.

Ortega gives him a stare reserved for patients of a mental
institution.

ORTEGA
You're shitting me.

Doesn't look like it.

ORTEGA
You have no political experience. No
party affiliations. No campaign funds.

DIAZ
I have my father's name.

ORTEGA
And all of his enemies. Think the
narcos will let you waltz into the
office without a fight? Pick up where
Daddy left off? What the hell are you
going to do about them?

DIAZ
Win. And **that** is a goddamn guarantee.

Ortega shrugs. Que sera...

ORTEGA
I'm not wasting any men on your
protection. You know why? Because
it's a suicide detail. You want to
play David and Goliath, go ahead.
But this isn't the Bible. The big
guy always wins. And I won't order
anyone to take a bullet for you.

On Diaz. Determined. Defiant. Alone against the world.

DIAZ
Then I'll find someone who will.

SMASH TO BLACK. Digit HITS the screen like a GUNSHOT.

From within the darkness we hear the shrill, sustained sound
of a BUZZER. Abruptly a peephole cover slides aside, giving
us a glimpse of the man on the other side.

Call him FRANK, even though that's not his real name. Late 30's.
Average. Off the rack suit. Glasses. Briefcase in hand. Pass him
on the street and never look twice. And that's the idea.

FRANK
Chow sent me.

WHAM, the peephole SLAMS shut.

EXT. ALLEY - SAN FRANCISCO CHINATOWN - NIGHT

The following happens in one continuous tracking shot.

Frank waits. Controlled calm. A reinforced steel door CLANGS open like a portal to hell. A couple of beefy Asian dudes emerge. Living proof of Darwin's evolution theory. One says something in Cantonese. Whatever it is, it doesn't sound pleasant.

FRANK
I don't speak Chinese, pal.

"Pal" barks again. What we have here is failure to communicate.

FRANK
English. No Chinese. Understand?

Fed up, the doorman shoves Frank against the wall. Frisks him not too gently.

FRANK
Don't you want to buy me dinner first?

No reaction. Tough crowd. Satisfied with the search, the doorman waves Frank inside, into the belly of the beast.

INT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Stay with the shot. A long hallway, underlit and in desperate need of a paint job. A staircase leads downward, promising nothing but trouble. Somewhere in the darkness below a TECHNO BEAT pounds away. Growing louder. Stronger. Until-

We enter an underground all-Asian rave club. Instant sensory overload. Strobing lights shred reality into snapshots. A wild throng of patrons, mostly of the fake ID variety (not that they would card you here) grind on the dance floor, out of their minds on coke, X, acid, shrooms and God knows what else.

The doorman pushes through the crowd. Frank follows. He belongs here just about as much as Magic Johnson at a KKK rally. Notes several security guards, cast from the same mold as his guide. One wrong move, and they slit your throat.

Finally our duo arrive at-

INT. BACKROOM OFFICE - NIGHT

Soundproof walls muffle the chaos outside. Four Chinese guys lounge about. All triad, all bad motherfuckers. The leader, BOBBY WONG, devours take-out straight from the carton.

His Glock lies on the table within reach. Eyes the visitor like a side dish he didn't order. *Subtitled Cantonese* (i.e. we know what's being said, but Frank doesn't). End of the shot.

WONG
Who the hell is this?

DOORMAN
Chow's bagman. He's clean.

Wong turns to Frank. English now.

WONG
Where's Chow?

FRANK
He couldn't make it.

Wong snickers, addresses his crew.

WONG
So now he sends a white boy to do his dirty laundry?

WONG'S GOON
I don't like it. For all we know, this guy is a cop.

WONG
Does he look like a cop to you?

FRANK
(interrupts)
Hey, if you want to see the goods, you'd better stop speaking mu shu around me. We're still in America, last I checked.

They quiet down. Frank sets the briefcase on the table, pops it open. So much green inside, you'd think it's St. Patty's day. Bobby Wong breaks into a Cheshire Cat grin. Jackpot.

FRANK
So. We have a deal, yes?

WONG
Of course. I'm a man of my word.

Turns to one of the henchmen. Casually,

WONG
Kill him. Then cut off one of her fingers and send it to Chow. Tell him if he wants to get the rest intact, he's going to have to pay double. Inflation is a bitch.

Gets a laugh out of the boys. Har-har. Frank is clueless.

FRANK
What's so funny?

WONG
I tell them a little joke. Chinese humor. You wouldn't understand.

FRANK
Oh, really? I got one too, you guys want to hear?

They trade glances. Why not?

WONG
Sure.

FRANK
OK. Let's see, how does it go...Oh, yeah, right. Knock-knock.

WONG
Who's there?

And here comes the punchline...

FRANK
(perfect Cantonese)
You should have taken the money.

What happens next is a blur.

Frank grabs a chopstick. Plunges it into the doorman's eyeball. KICKS the edge of the table. The Glock catapults into his awaiting hand. BAM! Wong's brains decorate the wall.

Frank spins. The three henchmen in mid-draw. BAM, BAM, he POINT BLANKS two. The third is about to get a drop on him-

BAM! A bullet out of nowhere to the base of the spine. The last triad dies and falls. In that order.

The air is thick with the stench of gunpowder. Outside the oblivious club rages on. Frank stands amidst the carnage. An angel of death minus the wings. Speaks into a hidden mike.

FRANK
Gracias.

INT. BACKROOM OFFICE/EXT. STREET - NIGHT

We track through a bullet hole in the tiny barred window, across the street, toward the rooftop, along the barrel of a silenced Heckler-Koch PSG-1 semi-automatic sniper rifle modified with a Raptor night vision scope toward the face of a man we'll call-

ROY

De nada.

INT. BACKROOM OFFICE - NIGHT

Back to Frank. Loses the Clark Kent glasses. The doorman GURGLES on the floor. Frank casually finishes him off. Ice cold. Kicks the door into the next room, ready to rumble-

A little Chinese girl is there. No more than ten. Cuffed to the bed. Cheeks stained with tears. A fragile beauty, out of place amidst all this insanity and bloodshed.

Frank approaches. She reacts, terrified, whimpering, shrinks away.

Frank leans over the child. Speaks softly and soothingly, a stark contrast to the violence we witnessed only a moment ago.

FRANK

Shhhh. Don't be scared. I'm here to take you home.

She grabs Frank, holds him tight, feeling safe for the first time. However, since they are still on the triad turf, this isn't over yet. Not by a long shot. Into the mike, cold again-

FRANK

We're walking out.

ROY (V.O.)

I'll be waiting.

Frank produces a Zippo. Holds it up to a sprinkler, as, thanks to the magic of special effects, we go inside its head, zeroing on-

A vial of red liquid. The flame brings it to a boil. And then-

FYI, this is called a "deluge pre-action system." Basically every sprinkler will discharge water at the same time. These devices are commonly used in places where rapid fire spread and mass casualties are a concern. Like a club. Anyway,

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

Out on the dance floor the party crowd gets hit by an unexpected cold shower. Total buzz kill. Everyone freaks. Group dash for the exit. Security attempts to handle the crisis, but it's like trying to control a stampede.

Frank slips out of the office, the child wrapped in his coat and held tightly in his arms. Joins the exodus. Holds his head down. With all the excitement, the guards have their hands full.

EXT. CLUB - NIGHT

Patrons pour out, pissed off and wet.

Frank stays with the herd, hiding in plain sight.

A Tong by the door. Spies the gaijin, reacts. BAM, Frank puts one in his head without breaking stride. Commotion. A van stops on a dime, Roy behind the wheel. Frank hops in. Ghosts.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Moving. The girl speaks for the first time. Small voice,

GIRL
Are you one of my father's men?

FRANK
No.

GIRL
Are you a cop?

FRANK
No.

GIRL
Then what are you?

Tight on Frank's face,

FRANK
Something else.

INT. STUDY - MORNING

Close on the check being signed. Not bad for a night's work.

CHOW (O.S.)
I am a criminal. I offer no excuses
for what I do. But there are lines
that even I don't cross. Involving
family is one of them.

Oak. Paintings by famous dead people. Contrary to popular belief, crime does pay. The afore-mentioned CHOW, 50's, looks more like a banker than a triad boss, puts down the pen.

CHOW
Do you have any children?

FRANK
None that I know of.

CHOW
Then you can't possibly imagine what
it feels like to have a part of you
taken away. Or to have it back.

Hands Frank the payment. Business concluded.

CHOW

How did you know that they wouldn't be satisfied with the ransom?

FRANK

Three reasons. You're worth more than what they asked for, and you paid too quickly. (beat) Your love is their leverage. Next time try not to be so obvious about it.

He rises to his feet. Heads for the door, when-

CHOW

You said there were three reasons. What's the third?

FRANK

I always expect the worst. That way I'm rarely disappointed.

And he's out.

EXT. CHOW'S MANSION - COURTYARD - MORNING

Frank strides toward the main gate. Pauses. In the distance Chow's daughter plays with her puppy. Just a kid in a screwed-up world. A newly assigned bodyguard keeps close watch.

Frank looks at the child for a moment without expression. A glimpse of another life, perhaps a memory of what was or could have been... so close, yet so far away.

When the girl looks in Frank's direction, he's already gone.

EXT. CHOW'S MANSION - GATE - MORNING

Roy waits by the car, sipping a Starbucks. Offer one to Frank.

ROY

My treat.

Frank shakes his head. No wasted words. No wasted moves. He's like a Swiss watch. Precise. Disciplined. Always in control.

FRANK

Throws off hand-eye coordination.

ROY

You ever off the clock?

FRANK

Sure.

ROY

When?

FRANK

When no one's around to ask me that question. Let's go.

INT. CAR - MORNING

In the words of Willie Nelson, "On the road again."

ROY

Where to?

FRANK

Four Seasons.

ROY

First class and room service all the way, huh?

FRANK

Only way to travel.

ROY

I envy you sometimes. Always on the go. No responsibilities. Nothing to tie you down. Me, I got mortgage and Thanksgiving with the in-laws.

FRANK

You know what they say about grass.

ROY

Yeah. (beat) But then I wake up in the middle of the night and look at my wife lying next to me. That's when I stop being jealous of you and wonder how I got so damn lucky.

FRANK

And then she wakes up, looks at the man lying next to her and wonders how she could have been such an idiot.

ROY

(grins)

You know, even though ours is not a sentimental profession, I would expect a little more respect for saving your ass last night. Next time I might miss.

FRANK

You never miss. (pause) And it's not a sentimental profession.

EXT. HOTEL - MORNING

Pull up. Frank gets out.

ROY
Any plans?

FRANK
Nothing lined up yet. If I need you...

ROY
You know where to find me.

Beat. No good-byes. Not these two.

ROY
See you when I see you.

Off. Blends with the morning traffic. Frank watches him go.

INT. HOTEL - MORNING

Enters the lobby. Suddenly,

VOICE (O.S.)
Excuse me, sir!

Frank slows. Turns. Faces the front desk.

CONCIERGE
There's a FedEx waiting for you.

Frank frowns. Accepts the envelope. Tears it open.

Airline ticket. You can guess the destination.

SMASH TO BLACK. GUNSHOT. Return of the TITLE CARD.

2

FEMALE VOICE
(sexy whisper)
Simon...Oh, Simon...

Close on the afore-mentioned SIMON. 30 something. British. Bad boy-ish good looks and attitude to match. The guy that you and I want to sarge at parties, just so we can get his leftovers. Sleeping. Or at least trying to.

A plush bedroom. Sunlight plays Peeping Tom through the drapes. A blonde who looks like she just strutted off the cover of "Maxim" is draped suggestively around the lucky bastard. Rumpled sheets, bare back exposed. No tan lines.

BLONDE
Rise and shine.

SIMON
(eyes still closed)
Five minutes.

She nibbles on his earlobe. Continues further south, trailing butterfly kisses along his chest. They make a cute couple.

SIMON
You're incorrigible.

BLONDE
You're the one to talk.

She disappears out of frame. Oh, what a beautiful morning...

Suddenly the FRONT DOOR opens somewhere off-screen.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Honey, I'm home!

Whoops! Instant silent panic mode. Simon scrambles to get the hell out of Dodge. Wrestles with his pants.

SIMON
Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

BLONDE
(exaggeratedly loud)
Sweetheart! Thought you weren't
coming back till later!

VOICE (O.S.)
Caught an earlier flight!

Simon zips up, throws on a shirt and dashes out.

EXT. HOUSE - LONDON SUBURBS - MORNING

Sneaks around the back... almost there, when he runs smack into the husband, two decades the blonde's senior, lost the battle of the bulge when Margaret Thatcher was in office. Double whoops!

Simon just stands there. Bambi in the headlights. And then...

SIMON
(fake relief)
Jesus! I thought it was your wife!

HUSBAND
What are you-

SIMON
Quiet! I just snuck into the garage
and put a GPS tracker on her car.
Now she can't make a move without
me knowing about it.

HUSBAND
Oh right, right. Is this going to
cost extra?

SIMON

All part of the service. By the way,
I've been watching the place all
night, and so far I'm pretty sure you
have nothing to worry about.

HUSBAND

(hopeful)

You really think so?

SIMON

Absolutely, mate. Your wife is a very
satisfied woman. Take my word for it.

With that, he slips out, leaving the hubby none the wiser.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Drives something aptly cool. Starts the ENGINE. Hits the road.
Cuts someone off in the process. Gets an angry HORN and an-

DRIVER (O.S.)

Asshole!!!

And thus begins his morning.

EXT. BUILDING - EAST END - MORNING

Parks. Whistles, as he approaches a newsstand. Casts about.
All clear. Pulls on the handle and hits the box at the same
time. Pops it open. Extracts the latest edition. Separates
the sports section, trashcans the rest and strolls inside.

INT. CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Ambles along, buried in soccer scores. Cell RINGS. He answers.

SIMON

Speak.

CALLER (O.S.)

Good morning to you too.

SIMON

Not so far, but there's always
hope. What's up?

CALLER (O.S.)

Someone's been asking about you.

SIMON

Tell your mum I'm not interested.

CALLER (O.S.)

A job. Mexico. High risk, high reward,
just the way you like 'em. Game?

SMASH TO BLACK. GUNSHOT. TITLE CARD.

3

Heartbeat in the darkness. Steady. Rhythmic. A human metronome. No other sound is heard.

Pull out of the pupil. Eye. Eyes. Fierce. Alive. A toothpick stuck in the corner of a permanent shit-eating grin.

You want a name? Fuck you, that's his name. But for the purposes of this document, let's call him TERRY. As we continue to widen the shot, two things become obvious. A) He's Asian. B) He's absolutely. Certifiably. NUTS. That's because-

EXT. STREETS - CONTINUOUS - DAY

He's currently flying through a red light intersection atop a modified thunder blue Kawasaki Ninja ZX14. No helmet.

CACOPHONY, sudden and violent, assaults our senses. Horns BLARE, tires SQUEAL, drivers BREAK and SWERVE, missing him by this much. A twilight black Ultimate Aero is neck and neck, weaving through the cross-rushing traffic, matching Terry move for move.

Fastest car in the world vs. the fastest bike in the world.

This isn't a drag race. This is a duel. World Championship Belt meets Russian Roulette with five chambers loaded.

They clear the intersection. All around them neon skyscrapers tower like canyons of glass and steel, signs wink, promising a better tomorrow via various consumer products, Tokyo, Hong Kong, we can neither tell, nor care, because the world is a blur.

Hairpin turn. Terry leans into it, knee practically grazing the asphalt. Aero is right behind, hanging on two wheels, narrowly avoiding a skid. Both level off. Accelerate further.

Distinct high pitch WHINE and low deep RUMBLE of their respective engines cut through the din. Two beasts, growling at one another.

Aero, clearly more powerful, pulls forward. Terry's gauge is at 186, top speed electronically restricted on all commercial models, but he must have rewired his, cause-

VROOM, he drops a gear, closes the gap. Locks eye with the driver. Extends a middle finger. This isn't going to be that easy.

The driver nods, banks left, pushing Terry into the oncoming lane. Fuck you too. Terry downshifts, swings across, comes up from the right. Like dodging a punch at 200-plus mph.

Traffic jam coming up. Ninja BLOWS between two rows of cars, inches to spare. Aero threads the needle, takes the sidewalk. Pedestrians dive out of the way, YELLING obscenities.

A backing semi looms ahead. The source of obstruction.

Terry heads right for it. No hesitation. It's almost as if he has no fear of death. Or is looking for it.

Closer. Closer. IMPACT-

He SLIDES under the truck. Pops up on the other side. Holy-

Neck and neck again. Ben Fucking Hur time. Squeezing every available RPM, pushing their machines to the limit and beyond, neither one willing to give an inch.

Tunnel. They ROAR inside.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

Scrape along each other. Aero crushes Terry against the wall. A shower of sparks.

He falls behind. Tries to retake the lead. No dice, Aero blocks the way. Left. Right. Left. Shit. So-

Terry pull back on the throttle, bike SCREAMING in protest, threatening to disintegrate from under him. One wheel up. Kids, don't try this at home.

Drives onto the Aero and over it.

600 lbs of steel and fuel, not to mention the rider. Craters the roof in the process. Shatters the windshield. Demolishes the hood.

WHAM, airbag deploys. Right into the driver's face.

Aero careens out of control. Becomes one with the tunnel. CRUNCH. 750 K worth of scrap metal. Let's hope he has AAA.

Terry doesn't bother to find out. Zooms away.

EXT. ROOF - DAY

Terry stands dangerously close on the edge. Long way down. Doesn't seem to mind. Sips a beer. Takes in the view. The city lies before him. Chrome plated future world.

Even in the stillness he has the intensity of a live wire.

DING, the elevator chimes. The driver of the Aero. What's left of him, anyway.

They size each other up. Two gunslingers. Waiting for the other to make a move. Finally,

TERRY
You know why you lost? Because you
were trying to win.

DRIVER
And you weren't?

Terry shrugs. Takes a swig.

TERRY
I've beaten better guys than you in
more places than I can count. One more
or less wouldn't make any difference.

The driver stares at him, not comprehending.

DRIVER
Then why did you challenge me?

TERRY
I didn't. I challenged myself. You
just happened to be in the way.

He takes one last pull, tosses the unfinished bottle into the
abyss, not caring where it lands, and walks away. The driver looks
after, wondering what the hell is this guy's problem. So do we.

Terry gets in the elevator. DIALS his cell. And as the
stainless steel panels slide closed, erasing him from our view-

TERRY
I want a ticket to Mexico. One way.

SMASH TO BLACK. GUNSHOT. TITLE CARD.

4

EXT. VILLAGE - OUTSKIRTS - DAY

Darfur. Desert. Dark Ages. A stark, jarring contrast to the
gleaming 21st century metropolis we left only a moment ago.

An ancient village, scorched by sun and time, sits in the
middle of nowhere. Heat waves dance off the playa. You can
practically feel the mercury boiling. There are no signs of
life. Well, almost.

A pair of ragged, mangy-looking dogs fight over the carcass
of one of their own. Snarl. Snap. Then suddenly stop.

A black dot appears in the distance. Doubles. Then triples.
Like a cell diving. Jeeps. Headed toward us. Fast.

The dogs run off. They've been around long enough to know
what's coming. The Jeeps blow past, kicking up dust.

EXT. VILLAGE - STREET - DAY

The locals watch the convoy. Men. Women. Kids. They too know
what's coming. But unlike the dogs, they have nowhere to run.

The Jeeps pull up to a stop. Disgorge a Janjaweed WARLORD and assorted "militia". Killers. Rapists. Thieves. Scum. And-

VIC A.K.A. VICTOR SERGEIVICH VYSOTSKY. As in Russian. Forty years of bad roads and worse luck. Cheap suit. Build like a pitbull. Seen his share of shit. Done a lot of it too.

Soldiers spread out. Commence looting. No one cries or screams or protests. It won't help.

The silence is deafening.

Warlord turns to Vic. His bodyguard. Broken English.

WARLORD

We collect payment. For protection.

Vic's eyes are hidden behind dark sunglass lenses. Impassive. Inscrutable. Says nothing.

WARLORD

You take what you want.

VIC

You hired me to watch your back.
Nothing more. Nothing less. The
rest is none of my business.

Warlord nods, accepting the status quo. It suits him just fine.

SHOUTS. Warlord goes to investigate. Vic trails.

A pair of thugs are YELLING at a villager. The latter is apologetic. Warlord butts in. More yelling and wild gestures.

Warlord's had enough. Brings the argument to a close. Gives the poor guy a magnanimous pat on the back. Then BARKS a command to his underlings.

VIC

What's going on?

WARLORD

(matter of fact)

He can not pay. Is OK. I give him more
time. We take his wife until he pay.

His men drag out the woman in question. She SHRIEKS, as she struggles to break free. In vain.

People watch. We see it in their eyes. Sympathy. Hatred. Horror. Relief that it's happening to someone else.

All they can do is watch.

Vic remains as detached as before.

Villager sinks to his knees. Begs. Pleads. Clutches warlord's feet. Gets kicked in the face in return.

Suddenly lunges, a cornered animal driven by pure instinct and desperation. Grabs an AK from one of Janjaweds. So unexpected it catches everyone off guard. Everyone except Vic.

Draws, lightening fast. One handed stance, his body blocking the client, a well travelled Makarov trained on the target.

But he doesn't pull the trigger.

VIC
Drop the gun!!! **Drop it!!!**

Villager locks eyes with Vic...and for one haunting second time stops, suspended between life and death, before-

REALITY RETURNS WITH A VENGEANCE.

Villager swings the AK toward the warlord. Vic FIRES. Tight two to the chest. Body hits the ground with a dull THUD.

The woman WAILS. They let her go. She clings to her husband's corpse, as if trying to bring him back to life.

Warlord recovers. Unholsters his sidearm. RIPS the luckless owner of the AK. Like swatting a fly.

Takes out a sweaty wad of money. Shoves it in Vic's hand.

WARLORD
You earned it.

Walks back to the vehicles. Realizes his bodyguard isn't following. An owner to a dog,

WARLORD
Coming?

Vic stands still. Stares at the body of the man he just shot. At his reward.

VIC
I quit.

Warlord shrugs. Whatever.

They climb back into the Jeeps. Drive off into the desert toward another village.

Silence returns. The only sounds we hear are the WIND and the CRIES of the widow, as she rocks back and forth, muttering something in the language we will never understand.

A shadow looms over her. Vic. Money extended.

VIC

Take it.

The way he says it sounds almost like a plea.

She looks up at her husband's killer. Spits in his face.
Grabs the offering and tosses it into the dirt.

The bills flutter in the breeze like fallen leaves. Other
villagers fight over them.

Vic slips off his shades. His eyes are deserted. Inevitable.
Bottom of the fucking barrel.

Wipes off the saliva. Lights his last cigarette. In. Out.
Takes in the wasteland. The sum total of his screwed up life.

And that's when Ludwig Van Beethoven enters. Not in person, of
course. In the form of a RING TONE on Vic's sat phone. SMASH TO-

EXT. MEXICO - AIRPORT - DAY

The glistening metal belly of a 747 SCREAMS in for a landing
like a prehistoric bird.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Customs official lazily peruses Frank's fake passport. Even
stamps have stamps. Thailand. Somalia. Columbia. Hong Kong.
Saudi Arabia. Every country in Europe. Guy's been around.

CUSTOMS

Purpose of your visit?

Frank flashes his pearly whites.

FRANK

Pleasure.

Customs looks at him. Just another gringo. Here to drink
their tequila, buy their trinkets and fuck their women. Beat.

CUSTOMS

Welcome to Mexico.

WHAM, he stamps the passport.

INT./EXT. CAB - DAY

Frank sits in the back of a cab. Watches the scenery.

The nameless metropolis, vast, frenetic, decaying, choking on
smog, traffic and noise like its own vomit, rolls by. Mexico
City? Juarez? Tijuana? We can't be certain. Snapshots:

Pushers and whores litter the corner, not worried about the cops.

Two men fight over who knows what, fists flailing, SHOUTING, tearing at one another. Nobody bothers to pull them apart.

A store owner SPLASHES a bucket across the chalk-outlined sidewalk. Blood and water run into the gutter.

INT. HIGH-RISE OFFICES - DAY

Diaz Sr. stares proudly from a pile of discarded election posters. His campaign headquarters, once vibrant, resembles a ghost town missing the tumbleweeds. A lonely receptionist (wo)mans the desk, bored out of her pretty little mind.

Frank approaches. She perks up. A plastic smile,

RECEPTIONIST
Good day. How may I-

FRANK
Tell him Frank is here.

She doesn't skip a beat.

RECEPTIONIST
The conference room is this way.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

RECEPTIONIST
Mr. Diaz will be with you shortly.

She departs. Frank picks up an unopened bottle of H2O. Adds ice. Drinks, careful not to leave any fingerprints on the glass.

The blades of a fan CHURN hot summer air. CHOP. CHOP. CHOP.

Simon walks in.

SIMON
Now I know why Mexican cab drivers have a crucifix hanging off the rear view mirror. If you aren't religious when the trip starts, you will be praying by the time it ends. Hey, mate. Name's Simon.

Frank nods, acknowledging the introduction. Doesn't reply in kind.

Simon pulls up a chair across from Frank. Drums his fingers.

SIMON
So. You labor or management?

FRANK
(beat)
Labor.

SIMON

Cool. Me too.

Tries to think of something else to say. Draws a blank.

Terry barges in. Settles at the head of the table, as if he belongs there. Chews gum. Inflates. POP. Inflates. POP. Inflates.

FRANK

You mind?

Terry locks into him. POPs it again. Smirks. Unspoken invitation.

Frank reaches for his glass. Takes a sip without breaking eye contact. Another time.

Vic enters. Takes a seat at the far end, apart from everyone else.

Silence.

Four Alpha males in one room. You can cut the tension with the steak knife. Tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-

Diaz strides in, diffusing the situation. Brass tacks,

DIAZ

You're all here. Good. Thank you for coming. Time is short, you've had a long flight, so I'll come straight to the point. I will pay each of you ten thousand dollars to keep me alive until the 18th. That's three weeks from now.

TERRY

Why the time frame?

DIAZ

Mayoral election. My father was the front runner. Until two days ago.

A hint of pain. It's hard for him to talk about it, but...

DIAZ

He was a judge. An honest one. He was going after the cartels and those in their pocket. Trying to put an end to the cancer that is consuming our city. Corruption. Murder. Kidnapping. Drugs. That's why he entered the race. That's why he was assassinated. That's why they will try to do the same to me, when I take his place.

FRANK

What about local law?

DIAZ

Useless. Policemen here make less than a quarter of what they do in your country. So most of them are on the take. The rest are poorly trained, ill equipped, disgruntled or too scared to stand up to cartel enforcers. For all intents and purposes, we'll be entirely on our own.

TERRY

And the opposition?

Diaz thumbs a remote. Vertical blinds SNAP open.

DIAZ

You're looking at it.

Nothing but the truth,

DIAZ

Once the word gets out, there will be a contract on my head. Which means every lowlife, every dirty cop, every hitman in the city will be looking to collect. But that's not worst part.

SIMON

(fuck me)

It's not?

DIAZ

Juan Montero. Head of the local Cartel De Gulfo. The man who murdered my father. His soldiers are called Los Zetas. Ex-Special Forces. Former Federales. Death squads from Guatemala. Some were even trained by U.S. instructors at Fort Benning to fight in the war on drugs before they switched sides. They are professionals. Well armed. Ruthless. And highly organized.

Beat. They digest. Simon sums it up for everyone,

SIMON

Four of us. Against an army of killers. This isn't Mission: Impossible. This is Mission: Insane.

DIAZ

You'll be paid.

SIMON

Ten grand? Thanks. That should cover our funerals.

DIAZ

That's all I can afford. Every penny I have is going toward the election. But if I win, I'll have access to the Mayor's discretionary fund. A substantial one. (pause) Five million. Each.

These are not the kind of people who are easily impressed. They are now.

TERRY

And if you lose?

DIAZ

If I lose, then I will be dead. And it won't matter anyway.

Lays it on the line.

DIAZ

I have no illusions about what kind of men you're. I don't expect you to give a damn about my cause. I'm not appealing to your conscience, because you and I both know you don't have any. But this is an opportunity. A chance to make more money than you ever could off nickel-and-dime jobs. Risk high. Win big. What do you say?

He lets the question hang.

VIC

How do you know you can trust us?

Speak of the Devil. We've almost forgotten he's there.

VIC

Five mil is a long shot. Selling you to Montero is a bird in hand. What's stopping any of us from doing that?

Judging by Simon's reaction, the thought has crossed his mind.

DIAZ

You're right. It's a safer bet. But you're not in the safe bet business. You're gamblers. Brinksmen. Outsiders. You'd rather play the odds, cheat, push your luck to the limit, go all in to beat the house than fold. Or did you really think it was an accident I chose **you** as my bodyguards?

Surveys their faces. Reads them like an open book.

DIAZ

Four foreigners. Four strangers. Each of you knows that in your line of work trust will get you killed faster than a bullet. That's why you'll keep on eye on me. The other on one another.

Reactions from the group. He's got them there. Still-

VIC

Someone has to be in charge.

TERRY

(hair trigger)

If you think I'm going to take orders from you-

DIAZ

He's right. But as your employer, I should be the one to decide.

Terry is about to object...

DIAZ

My life. My choice. Non-negotiable.
(beat) How about you, Frank?

On Frank. Suddenly the center of attention. Doesn't like it.

FRANK

You got the wrong guy. I don't save lives. I end them.

DIAZ

That's why you're here. Who better than a predator to stop other predators? You know how to think like them. What to look for. When and where to strike.

Frank mulls it over. Doesn't look like he has any say in the matter. Reluctant nod.

FRANK

Fine. Then we need a fifth.

DIAZ

I thought four-

FRANK

Close protection team is a four man detail. Team leader makes five. If I'm in command, someone else has to take my spot. Plus, we need a local. Someone who knows the city, the people, every street and every stone like the back of his hand. Non-negotiable.

TERRY

Great plan. Half of Mexico is about to be gunning for us, and you want to invite a native to the party? We can't trust a soul in this fucked up town.

Point taken. Diaz thinks it over.

DIAZ

Not necessarily.

SMASH TO BLACK. GUNSHOT. TITLE CARD.

5

The sound carries over. Becomes something else. The CLATTER of keyboard keys. FADE IN slowly on the face of the typist.

If he looks familiar, that's because we already met him back on pg. 1. That's right. The young guy.

His name is RICO. Cleaned up since the last time we saw him. Traded plain clothes for a neatly pressed uniform. Headphones on. Transcribing, as a surveillance tape DROWNS on.

Another cop comes over. Says something. Rico watches his lips move. Then takes off the headphones.

RICO

What?

COP

Some people are here to see you.

INT. POLICE STATION - HALLWAY - DAY

Away from prying ears. Rico processes what he's heard. Then,

RICO

No.

FRANK

How much money you make here?

Rico doesn't respond.

FRANK

Ten thousand dollars. Three weeks work. That's more you'd see in a year.

RICO

Why me?

FRANK

Because everyone on that convoy was supposed to die. You didn't.

(MORE)

FRANK (cont'd)
Like it or not, kid, that makes you
the most trustworthy man in this
precinct. So. Ten thousand dollars.
What do you say?

RICO
Go fuck yourself.

He rises to his feet.

DIAZ
Wait!

RICO
I said-

DIAZ
Wait. (to Frank) Leave us.

Frank shrugs. Complies with the request. Softly,

DIAZ
I'm sorry. This man and others
protecting me...they're mercenaries.
They've come for the money and will
depart, once they've been paid. You
and I...we're here to stay.

Rico says nothing. Studies the floor.

DIAZ
I won't bribe you. I can't order you.
I can only ask. As a man. As a
patriot. As a Mexican.

He searches his face. Rico doesn't look him in the eye.

DIAZ
You protected my father once. You
believed that he was worth dying
for. Now I'm asking you to do the
same for me.

He walks away. Rico finally looks up. Watches him go.

INT. POLICE STATION - HALLWAY

Diaz rejoins Frank.

DIAZ
He'll do it.

FRANK
What did you say to him?

DIAZ
Something you'd never understand.

INT. GYM - EVENING

Police gym. Primitive equipment. Off duty cops mill about.

Rico HITS the bag. Punches like pistons. Hard. Harder.

INT. RICO'S APARTMENT - EVENING

At the dinner table. His wife, MARIA. Traces of tears.

Rico eats his food. She doesn't. Heavy silence. SHATTERED BY-

Two boys, no more than 5, run in, playing with toy guns, riddling each other with imaginary bullets.

BOYS

Bang! Bang!!!! BANG!!!

Maria snaps, all the pent up fear and frustration unleashed by this final straw. Grabs them, towering, terrifying-

MARIA

STOP IT!!!

They do. Eyes like saucers. Scared shitless.

She lets go, regret written all over her features. Rico puts down the fork. Rises to his feet. Calmly,

RICO

Mateo, go home. Your parents must be worried. You can play again tomorrow.

The kid runs off, glad to be off the hook. Rico's son, ANDRES, remains. On the verge of tears.

Rico leans down. Gently touches his cheek.

RICO

I'm sorry, champ. Mommy's just had a long day. Keep it down next time, ok?

ANDRES

(sniff sniff)

OK.

RICO

Good. (beat) Did I ever tell you what your name means?

ANDRES

Manly.

RICO

That's right. And men don't cry. Do they?

ANDRES

N-No.

He pulls himself together. Rico nods. A flicker of emotion.

RICO

That's right. They don't.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maria and Rico. In bed together. Neither one is sleeping. Finally,

RICO

Tell me you don't want me to do it.
Tell me you'll leave me, unless I
turn them down. Just...tell me.

It's as if he's asking for a reason to say "no".

MARIA

I can't.

She looks at him. Fighting emotion.

MARIA

Everyone said "Don't marry a cop".
But I did it anyway. Because I
loved you. And because you made me
feel safe. (beat) If I made you
stay, I'd be a bad wife. And you
wouldn't be the man I love.

They find each other in the night. Hold tight. As if bracing
for the storm that's about to come.

SMASH TO BLACK. GUNSHOT. FINAL TITLE CARD.

BULLET

The firing continues in the darkness. BAM. BAM. BAM.

INT. GUN RANGE - DAY

Rico. Classic two handed stance. Drives lead into the target
until the clip runs dry. Frank watches, poker faced.

Rico lowers the smoking barrel. Takes off the ear muffs.

The paper bag guy. Lots of holes. Nice grouping.

RICO

Told you I know how to shoot.

If Frank is impressed, it fails to register.

FRANK

How about that?

He points toward a metallic silhouette cutout of a chicken. Like the kind you see in an arcade with airguns, only full scale. And yes, it's an actual NRA-approved sport. Don't ask.

RICO
You joking?

It does not appear so. Rico sighs. Whatever. Reloads, ready-

FRANK
Not yet.

He walks out on the range. Moves the chicken closer. A lot closer. Comes back.

FRANK
Now.

Rico looks at Frank like he was mental. Which he probably is.

RICO
It's going to ricochet.

No reaction. Rico scowls. Fine, if that's how you want to play it. Aims. A bit less eager. Pulls the trigger, BAM.

The bullet SPARKS off the target. The WHINE of a ricochet.

Rico ducks. Pure reflex. Frank might as well be a statue.

Rico recovers. Gestures toward the knocked down chicken.

RICO
Happy?

Frank strides out on the range once more. Props up the luckless chicken. Reset. Back to one.

FRANK
Take off your goggles.

Rico is about to protest. Decides not to. Hands them over.

FRANK
Ear muffs too.

OK. Frank drops both items on the floor. Stands behind Rico, using his body as a shield.

FRANK
Gun in the holster. Left hand on me.

Rico complies. Frustration building like a tightly wound spring.

FRANK

Draw. One round per second. And
this time if you move even an inch,
I'm going to kick your teeth in.

Rico has had enough. Whirls, ferocious, intense-

RICO

What the fuck is your problem?

FRANK

(cuts him off, level)

You're not a cop anymore. You're a
bodyguard. You can't run for cover.
You **are** the cover. The only thing
that stands between the principal
and the bullet. You forget that,
even for a moment, the client dies.
And I won't let that happen.

On Rico, as it sinks in.

Beat. Reluctantly he assumes the previous position.

One handed draw. FIRES. Again. Again. And again.

Ricochets WINE. ZIP through the air like angry bees.

Rico flinches. Fighting instinct. Fighting his training. Willing
every muscle of his body, every once of his being to stand
upright and still. To die, if need be, in defence of another.

It's one of the hardest things he's ever had to do.

Finally the magazine CLICKS empty. Silence comes as a relief.

Frank's face is as expressionless as before.

FRANK

Good. Now do it again with your left.

INT. CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Reception area. Vic works the drill, installing a CCTV camera.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Frank gives Simon a list. He reads it. Reacts.

SIMON

Jesus. That bad?

FRANK

(a mantra)

I always expect the worst. That way
I'm rarely disappointed.

SIMON

This is going to cost us.

FRANK

You got three grand.

SIMON

That won't even pay for the bullets.

FRANK

Get creative.

INT. DIAZ'S OFFICE - DAY

Diaz and Frank.

FRANK

Change all your numbers. Don't go home. From this point on you sleep either here or the place I choose. Cancel all your appointments. New schedule or any information about your business and personal life is on a need to know basis only. Any staff you have or hire gets cleared by me first. All the paperwork must be shredded. Vary your daily routine. Clear your desk every afternoon, so there's nothing for the cleaning staff to peruse. Wife? Kids?

DIAZ

Married. No children. Not yet anyway. We both want to, but-

FRANK

(interrupts)

Send her out of the country. US or Europe. Don't have her stay with relatives or friends. Book under different names and multiple destinations. Cancel all but one at the last minute. (beat) Mistress? Boyfriend? Drugs? Hookers? Anything you want to tell me?

DIAZ

What the hell are you implying?!

FRANK

I don't care if, who or what you're fucking, snorting, shooting, smoking or molesting. Your morals are none of my concern. Only your safety. If you have a secret, a weakness, any chink in the armor, believe me, they'll find it and use it to get to you. **Because that's what I would do.**

He waits for an answer. Diaz deliberates. With difficulty,

DIAZ

I had an affair. Once. It was...a mistake. I broke it off. My wife never found out.

FRANK

How long ago?

DIAZ

Three years. We've not spoken since. As far as I know, she moved out of the city.

FRANK

Good. If she resurfaces, wants to talk to the press, fine. Not my department. She calls you, asking for anything - I mean anything - money, a favor, a cup of coffee, the time of day - you tell me the second you hang up phone.

DIAZ

You don't know this woman. She would never betray me.

FRANK

You want to know what I learned in my line of work? Take a person, an average decent human being, and imagine the worst thing, the most despicable thing, the thing it would never even cross their minds to do. (beat, cold) Then assume they have already done it twice.

Off that,

INT. CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - HALLWAY - DAY

Frank and Terry. Walking and-

TERRY

Two cars. Preferably the same make, model and color, so they don't know which vehicle is carrying the VIP. But low profile so it doesn't look like a motorcade either. Something that blends in with the local traffic. No black. Too official. Not too bright. Attracts attention. Fast and maneuverable. Heavy duty suspension, remote start, enhanced lighting, high torque at low speeds, the works. Reinforced bumpers, so we can punch through a road block, if necessary. Run flat tires, plus extra spares. Fire-resistant fuel tank.

(MORE)

TERRY (cont'd)
An auxiliary, in case the primary is ruptured. Police scanner. Bulletproof glass. Tinted windows. Level V armor. Kevlar is good, carbon fibre is better.

FRANK
Anything else?

TERRY
Air conditioning. And a good stereo.

FRANK
How much we talking?

TERRY
250 K. Maybe more. (beat) Let me guess. Get creative.

FRANK
Now you're catching on.

INT. CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Rico looks up from whatever he's doing.

TERRY
Any scumbags in this neighborhood?

RICO
Sure.

TERRY
Good. Let's go.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Graffiti. Storefronts are either closed or inhabited by low budget shops. Prostitutes line the sidewalks, jostling for a spot in the shade. Just another day...

Rico and Terry. The latter eats lunch. The former's getting antsy.

RICO
What are we waiting for?

Terry chews on his burrito. Chases it with a cerveza. Then,

TERRY
This.

And he's off. Heading like a heat-seeking missile toward-

Mercedes Benz S-Guard. German engineering at its finest. Built from the ground up to withstand military grade small-arms fire (including armor-piercing bullets), fragments from explosive charges and hand grenades. Basically a fortress of wheels.

Belches out a local pimp and two of his bodyguards. Act like they own the neighborhood. Probably do. Ergo, they certainly don't expect anyone to mess with them on their turf.

Especially not the guy who looks like a lonely Japanese tourist on the prowl for "me love you long time".

Terry doesn't skip a beat. He just RIPS them APART.

A tire iron unfurls from his sleeve. WHAM. Guy loses teeth. The other reaches for his piece. Terry breaks his hand mid-draw. He pulls the trigger anyway. Blasts his own shoulder. Goes down SCREAMING. WHAM. Third BLOW drops the boss.

It's over. Just like that.

The last bodyguard is still getting out of the car. Sees Terry. His disassembled comrades. Blanches.

TERRY
(calm personified)
Keys.

The thug extends the item in question like a peace offering.

TERRY
Thanks.

HEADBUTTS the poor schmuck into next week. Breaks his nose. Catches the keys before they hit the ground.

Slides behind the wheel. Rico is still a few steps behind. Gun up.

RICO
Freeze!!!

He might as well be holding a feather duster.

TERRY
Get in.

RICO
I'm a fucking cop, you idiot!

TERRY
Think of it as a repossession.

Rico weighs his options. The bad guys are starting to come around. Wisely elects to join Terry. They PEEL out. One of the bodyguards stumbles back on his feet, EMPTIES a clip into their receding tail lights. Not even a scratch.

INT. MERCEDES - DAY

Eastbound and down. Rico fumes.

RICO
You can't just steal a car!!!

TERRY
Why not? Criminals have lots of enemies and deep pockets. How else am I going to get my hands on an armored vehicle? Or would you rather have me carjack El Presidente?

RICO
They'll go to the cops!

TERRY
No, they won't. Gangs are about respect. Someone fucks with you, you don't go crying for help to the law. You get even.

RICO
So they'll come after us!

TERRY
Wrong again, young Skywalker. He'll think it was the competition. Someone trying to muscle in on his business. With any luck, he'll just waste another bad hombre. Or get wasted himself. Dog eat dog.

Rico stares at him. At his casual arrogance. A question forming,

RICO
Then what does that make you?

TERRY
The jungle creed says the strongest feed on any prey they can. (beat, softer) And I was branded beast at every feast before I ever became a man.

They drive in silence. Off that,

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

In the words of Neo, "Guns. Lots of guns". Black market. Dealer is showing Simon around.

DEALER
How about those? Accurate, reliable, high magazine capacity. Just sold three earlier today.

Simon picks up a Walther P-99. Works the slide. Feels the balance. Holds it up to the ear. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. A musician testing the instrument. Then,

SIMON

Firing pin spring is weak. Tell you what, amigo, if I feel like being jerked around, the massage parlor is next door. What else you got?

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The results of Simon's shopping spree are laid out on the table. Pan across. Pistols. SMGs. Combat shotguns. Ammo. Clips. Flashbangs. Grenades. Enough fire power to give Chuck Heston a hard-on. End on our guys, as they take it all in.

FRANK

What about body armor?

SIMON

Had enough for only two. (off Frank's look) Hey, I'm not a miracle worker.

FRANK

Fine. One goes to Diaz. We flip a coin for the other every morning.

TERRY

I don't need it.

SIMON

Me neither. Give it to the kid. After all, he's the one with the family.

FRANK

Suit yourself. Two guns per man. As much ammo as you can carry. Five hour guard shifts, starting now. Rico, take the first watch.

INT. VACANT OFFICE - NIGHT

Quiet. Too quiet. Frank finishes cleaning up a SIG P-226. Starts putting it back together.

VIC (O.S.)

Simon was lying about the vest.

Stands in the doorway. As if he materialized out of thin air. Frank doesn't look up. Just continues assembling the weapon.

FRANK

I know. He got an extra one for himself. That's why he didn't care about drawing lots.

VIC

Why didn't you say anything?

FRANK

Because I want him to think he's smarter than the rest of us.

VIC

So if he tries a cross-

FRANK

It'll be easier to see it coming. Besides, if Diaz is right about the opposition, Kevlar won't be much help anyway. (beat) Terry's good, but he's a cowboy. Simon will cut and run. The kid's over his head. Diaz is all talk. You... I have not figured out. Yet. And that makes you dangerous.

CHA-CHING. Puts the gun on the desk. And finally looks up. They lock eyes. Each trying to read what lies beyond them.

VIC

We all have our faults. (beat)
You don't remember me, do you?

FRANK

Should I?

VIC

Budapest.

FRANK

Ah. Thought you seemed familiar.

VIC

The man you shot was my client. And he was my friend.

FRANK

He was my mark. Nothing personal.

VIC

I spent four months in a hospital.

FRANK

You must have caught me on an off day. I was aiming for the morgue.

The room is like a gunpowder keg. All you need is a match.
Vic slowly reaches inside his jacket. Is he going to draw?...
Comes up with a cigarette. Lights up. A promise, not a threat,

VIC
When this is over - and if we're
both still standing - I'm going to
kill you. Nothing personal.

INT. DIAZ'S OFFICE - MORNING

Close on a bullet. Cold, steel jacketed hollow point.

DIAZ (O.S.)
Came in this morning's mail.

Frank and Diaz cluster around it. Grim,

DIAZ
That's how it begins out here.
Bullets. Letters with dates of your
death. Threats. And then-

FRANK
You haven't announced your nomination
yet. So there must be a leak.

DIAZ
No matter. I knew this was coming.
Sooner or later. And patience is not
one of my virtues.

He picks up the slug. Clutches it tight. Crossing Rubicon.

DIAZ
Let's go.

INT. LOBBY - MORNING

Walking. Five man V formation. Fluid, precise routine, matching
pace with the principle, neither fast, nor slow, loose enough to
be unobtrusive, yet ready to tighten at a moment's notice.

They glide past us, RESERVOIR DOG style. Except for the suits.
FYI, experienced bodyguards try to blend in. Not stand out.

Terry. Chews on his ubiquitous toothpick. Eyes like knives.

Simon. So relaxed, you'd think he's out for a stroll. Winks
at a pretty office girl, as he passes by.

Diaz. A man on a mission.

Frank at his side. A janitor mops the floor to the left.
Frank switches position, putting himself between them.

Rico. Nervous. Sweating. Subtly out of sync with the rest.

Vic. Brings up the rear. Watching everything and everyone. A
bodyguard's bodyguard.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - MORNING

Approach the stolen Mercedes. Diaz gives Frank a look. He passes it over to Terry. Gets a shrug in return.

TERRY
I got creative.

DIAZ
Do I want to know?

FRANK
Probably not.

Diaz's own Mercedes W 220 is the second vehicle. Look fairly similar. Except one is armored. The other...not so much. Terry takes the wheel of the S Guard. Diaz in the back seat. Simon tries to slide in as well. Frank blocks the way.

FRANK
I ride with the package.

Simon sizes him up. Smiles.

SIMON
Sure thing, mate.

Walks to the trail car. Opens the driver side door.

SIMON
Move over, Ivan.

Frank turns to Rico. Quietly,

FRANK
Watch them both.

RICO
So what, you trust me now?

FRANK
No. I'll be the one watching you.

Rico tries to figure out if that was a compliment or an insult. Gives up. Trots to take his place alongside the duo.

EXT. BUILDING - MORNING

DRIVE out. The city lies before them like a minefield, vast and uncertain. We CRANE UP, as they get swallowed up by the traffic.

INT. S GUARD - MORNING

FRANK
For future reference, I need to know
the destination ahead of time.
(MORE)

FRANK (cont'd)
Gives me a chance to study the route.
Look for trouble spots.

DIAZ
This is an unscheduled visit. (to
Terry) Left at the corner.

FRANK
Mind telling me where we going?

DIAZ
Yes.

FRANK
Why?

DIAZ
You'll know when we get there.

EXT. COMPOUND - GATES - DAY

High walls, topped with barbed wire. Heavy gates. CCTV cameras.
Road spikes in a raised position. Whoever lives here knows a
thing or two about security. And has the money to spend on it.
Terry drives up to the intercom. Hits the button.

VOICE (V.O.)
Yeah?

DIAZ
Tell him it's Diaz.

Beat. The spikes lower into the asphalt. The gate OPENS like
a mouth of a beast, about to swallow its prey.

EXT. COMPOUND - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Guard house. Crash barrier. Estate grounds, seemingly limitless.
Garden, lush and well kept. Statues. An exercise in excess.

TERRY
Who the fuck lives here? Donald Trump?

Diaz doesn't respond. On Frank. Thinking. Thinking. Oh shit...

FRANK
Turn back.

DIAZ
Frank-

FRANK
Turn back, **now!**

DIAZ
Frank. I know what I'm doing.
Besides it's too late anyway.

EXT. VILLA - DAY

They come up the end of driveway. The house matches the rest of the estate. Uniformed valets await the arrival of the guests.

So do a slew of armed men. Hard, lean faces, devoid of mercy or emotion. Ear pieces. Full body armor. Assault rifles. Make Praetorian Guard and Secret Service look like a bunch of pussies.

Reactions from the group. Both to the opulence and the menace.

SIMON

Fuck...me...sideways...

They pull up. Get out. A strapping playboy with a Rolex and a Copacabana tan steps out to greet them. Late 20's. Handsome. Imperious. Turns on cold charm.

PLAYBOY

Miguel. An unexpected surprise.

DIAZ

Eduardo. Not an unwelcome one, I hope.

EDUARDO

Hardly. To what do I owe?

DIAZ

I need to speak to your father.

EDUARDO

Unfortunately he's not here at the moment, but I can pass along-

DIAZ

He would want to hear what I have to say. Personally.

Eduardo chews on it. Then,

EDUARDO

Your entourage can wait here.

DIAZ

They go wherever I go.

EDUARDO

No need. You're among friends. And as you can see, we have plenty of our own security.

DIAZ

Then there's no reason not to let my bodyguards accompany me. Is there?

Eduardo takes in the five. Shrugs, unimpressed.

EDUARDO

Follow me.

INT. VILLA - DAY

Interior rivals the facade. Walking. Eduardo on point. Then our group, surrounded by mercs on all sides. Ready to tear them apart at the slightest nod of their master. Under his breath,

FRANK

What the fuck are you doing?

DIAZ

Do you trust me?

FRANK

No.

DIAZ

Fine. Then trust this - I know what I'm doing.

The procession passes through a set of French doors into-

EXT. PATIO - DAY

Palm trees. A breath-taking view. In a word, paradise. Its owner lounges by an Olympic size swimming pool with a Mojito in hand. As you've probably guessed, his name is-

DIAZ

Senior Montero, I presume.

Late 60's. Somehow we thought he'd be taller. Coarse, leathery face of a peasant. Manners of a grandfather. Built his empire on the corpses of his enemies. They don't make them like used to.

MONTERO

You must be Diaz.

DIAZ

I am.

Everyone else stays out of it. This is their moment.

MONTERO

I knew your father. I can see the resemblance. Sit, please. Drink?

DIAZ

No, thanks. This won't take long.

Montero chuckles. Ruefully shakes his head.

DIAZ

Did I say something funny?

MONTERO

Young men. Like you. Like my son.
Always in a hurry. It's only natural,
I suppose. You're hungry. So was I
when I was your age. But the more you
rush, the faster it goes by. Only by
the time you get to be where I am, you
appreciate the value of a cold drink
and a quiet moment. Except by then you
don't have many of them left.

DIAZ

I didn't come here to commiserate
about old age.

MONTERO

Then **why** did you come?

DIAZ

To return this.

He puts the bullet on the pool table. Montero doesn't bat an eye.

MONTERO

You shouldn't have. There's a lot
more where it came from.

DIAZ

So you don't deny-

MONTERO

(cuts him off)

Miguelito. You don't mind if I call
you, Miguelito do you?

DIAZ

I do.

MONTERO

I'm sorry about your father,
Miguelito. As difficult as you may
find it to believe, I respected him.
Hated him too. But we were born of the
same generation. Same struggle. Same
poverty. Something that you, silver
spooners, would never understand.

Eduardo rolls his eyes. He's heard the speech before.

MONTERO

I didn't kill him either. I don't
expect you to believe me. But it
happens to be the truth.

DIAZ

You're right. I don't believe you.

Our bodyguards. Montero's security. Listening to their respective bosses. Needless to say, the mood is tense. Simon locks eye with a nearby Zeta. Smiles. His counterpart doesn't.

Montero sips his drink. Changes the subject.

MONTERO

I hear you're going to follow in
his footsteps. Run for office.
Clean up the city. Put me in jail.

DIAZ

Right again on all counts.

MONTERO

You're ambitious. That is good. But
it's even better to be patient. And
smart. (beat) I can be your best
friend. Or your worst enemy. The
choice is yours.

A pregnant pause. All eyes on Diaz.

MONTERO

This is the part where you tell me how
much it's going to cost. And please
don't say it's the principle of the
thing. That always ends up being more
expensive.

Frank. Simon. Terry. Vic. Rico. They all know it. Diaz is
going to take the deal.

The latter measures the man and the moment. Slowly,

DIAZ

Like I said, I came here to return this-

He nods toward the bullet.

DIAZ

And to give you one of my own.

A hideaway derringer pops into his waiting hand. Blink, and
you miss it. Pointed right between Montero's eyes.

WHOOPS

Everyone draws. I mean **everyone**. One giant clusterfuck John
Woo nightmare of a stand-off.

Montero chokes on his Mojito. All charm and grandfatherly
wisdom gone in a flash like a Halloween mask. Seething rage,

MONTERO

Son of a bitch!

DIAZ

At least I knew my mother. How about you?

EDUARDO

Put down the fucking gun!!!

MONTERO

What are you waiting for? Shoot
this piece of shit!!!

FRANK

Diaz-

DIAZ

(ignoring everyone)

Go ahead. You die, I die. Life for
life. We can end this right here,
right now. **The choice is yours.**

Montero scowls. Shuts up. Diaz has called his bluff.

DIAZ

I didn't think so. Now that I have
your undivided attention, remember
this - it's not about vengeance. It's
about the future. And here's what it
looks like. I **will** be the Mayor. I
will put you in jail. Fire every cop
and every judge you have in your
pocket. Impose martial law, if I have
to. And if you believe that a bullet
or a bribe will change that, you
don't know me any more than you knew
my father. Oh, and one more thing-

He pulls the trigger. CLICK. The gun's even loaded.

DIAZ

That's how you give a warning.

Montero recovers. Opens his pie hole-

DIAZ

Oh, and in case you get any ideas -
this gun may be empty. But those of my
bodyguards' aren't. And you're still
in the kill zone. Your men shoot me,
mine shoot you.

EDUARDO

You'll never walk out of here alive.

DIAZ

I beg to differ. I realize your
security is a little busy at the
moment.

(MORE)

DIAZ (cont'd)
But if they check the cameras, they'll
discover that the press should be
gathering outside right about-

Checks his watch.

DIAZ
Now. Every major paper and TV station.
I promised them a big story. So unless
you want a blood bath on the 6 o'clock
news...

Montero glances at one of the Zetas. The latter listens to the
voice in his ear piece. Confirmation nod. Begrudgingly,

MONTERO
Let them go.

EDUARDO
Father-

MONTERO
Let them go.

Slowly the weapons lower. The mercs part like the Red Sea.

On our bodyguards. Eyes on Diaz. A hint of something that
wasn't there before.

Respect.

If you look closely, you can practically see the smoke coming
from Montero's ears. Eduardo isn't far behind. Diaz...well...

DIAZ
Don't forget to vote.

MONTERO
You won't even live to see your
name on the fucking ballot.

Diaz just smiles. Sticks and stones.

DIAZ
Good day.

EXT. VILLA - DAY

Terry holds the car door open. Diaz gets in. Our guys follow
suit. No one says a word. They drive out.

INT. S GUARD - DAY

Silence. Finally,

FRANK
You could have told me.

DIAZ
If I did, would have you let me?

FRANK
(point taken)
No. (beat) Why?

DIAZ
He tried to rattle my cage. Instead I rattled his. Eventually he would have come after me anyway. That way it's on my terms - and he's mad, which means he's more likely to make a mistake. Always throw the first punch - and the last. That's what my father taught me.

FRANK
This is not just about revenge, is it?

DIAZ
No. If it was, the gun would have been loaded. (beat) I'm not scared of dying, Frank. I'm scared of having my life mean nothing.

Frank looks at him. Seeing him as if for the first time.

They come out of the gates. Camera crews. Reporters. As promised.

FRANK
Are you ready for this?

He doesn't mean the press conference. Neither does Diaz.

DIAZ
Are you?

Deep breath. And he's out.

EXT. COMPOUND - GATES - DAY

Instantly he's surrounded. A flurry of questions, shouted at once-

REPORTERS
Is it true that you intend to run for office?! Who do you think is responsible for your father's killing?! What is the nature of your relationship with Juan Montero?!

He quiets them down.

DIAZ
Yes, I know who killed my father. That's why I asked you to come here, to the house of his murderer.
(MORE)

DIAZ (cont'd)
Trouble with this city, with us, with me is that we always know. But we never do. Because we're afraid. Because we're tired. Because it's easier to look the other way. Unfortunately apathy is a luxury I can no longer afford.

He takes in their faces. Their eyes. Speaking to all and each at the same time. A born leader.

DIAZ
Yes, I intend to run for office. But I won't make any promises, today or ever. You've heard enough of them to last a lifetime. I have neither the experience, nor the connections to win this election. Yet I'm going to try anyway. Because I must. Because if I don't, my father and those who protected him died for nothing. And if I let that happen, I'm no better than the men behind these gates.

The bodyguards watch. Scanning the crowd. We pan along.

DIAZ (O.S.)
It's hard to believe that things can change, when all we see is evidence to the contrary. Violence. Corruption. Evil. But that is the essence of faith, is not? Believing despite the facts. Hoping against hope.

His words have impact.

DIAZ
I'm not my father. He was a better man. He wanted to give this city back to its people. (beat) He's dead. But his dream isn't. Let's make it a reality. Together.

Beat. And as the crowd EXPLODES with more questions and CLICKING OF SHUTTERS, we SMASH TO-

INT. HEADQUARTERS - DAY

The office, once deserted, is now buzzing with energy and excitement. Phones are RINGING. Fliers are being printed. Volunteers scurry about with purpose. The campaign is underway.

INT. DIAZ'S OFFICE - DAY

Frank is playing solitaire. Clean, sharp moves, without a trace of hesitation. Three steps ahead of the game.

Terry lies on the couch. Fast asleep despite the noise outside.

Rico reads last month's magazine. Each in his own private world.

Rico gets up. Stretches his legs. Checks out the commotion.
Wishes he was a part of it.

RICO
So what do we do?

Frank doesn't look up from the cards.

FRANK
Wait. Second hardest part of the job.

RICO
What's the first?

FRANK
Everything that comes after.

TERRY
(eyes still closed)
Either you dying of boredom, kid.
Or you're dying.

EXT. HALLWAY - DAY

Simon and Vic stand guard at the door of the inner sanctum.
Two statues amidst the ocean of activity. Then,

SIMON
What do you think, Boris? Is he for
real?

Vic doesn't respond.

SIMON
Yeah, me too. He talks pretty. I'll
give you that. Whatever gets him
elected and earns us our payday, I
suppose. Right, comrade?

Still no answer.

SIMON
So glad we could have this conversation.

Vic's walkie SQUAWKS for attention.

FRANK (V.O.)
We're moving.

VIC
Copy.

He holds the door open. Frank on the threshold. All clear. Lets
Diaz through. Follows close behind. Terry and Rico cover the rear.

They walk through the office. All sound FADES. That's because we see the world through the eyes of our bodyguards. Broken down into fragments. Tiny, almost imperceptible details.

People looking up from their tasks, as they pass by. Close on their badges. Match. Match. Match.

A messenger delivering a package. Too small to be a bomb.

Main corridor. Secure. Moving along. Building occupants drift by.

Close on the elevator button, as Simon presses it. Is it rigged to explode?... Nope.

Wait. Wait. A man in a businessman suit sidelines.

DING, the car arrives. Frank steps aside.

FRANK

Go ahead. We'll take the next one.

The man frowns. Have it your way. Doors close. Rico raises an eyebrow. Away from Diaz,

FRANK

If they've put a shape charge on the cables, they'll be waiting for us to walk out. Then blow the first car that stops on our floor.

RICO

What about him?

Frank shrugs. Oh well... Rico stares in disbelief.

RICO

Just as I thought my opinion of you couldn't sink any lower...

FRANK

Whatever gets you through the day.

DING, the second car arrives. They get in. Diaz takes the corner. The rest cluster around him. A wall of bodies. Rico is the last onboard. Frank blocks his way.

FRANK

Where are you going?

RICO

I thought-

FRANK

Take the stairs. Someone has to be there when we arrive. Make sure the destination point is clear.

RICO
But you're already-

FRANK
Then you'd better hurry up.

Rico glares. Double times it to the stairwell. Diaz is curious.

DIAZ
I don't get it. You could have just
sent him ahead in this car and then
waited for the next one.

On Frank. The tiniest flicker of a smirk, erased from our
view by the closing doors.

EXT. STAIRWELL - DAY

Rico races down, flight after flight.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

The elevator makes a stop. A nice old lady peers in. Sees
four burly bodyguards. Decides to wait a little longer.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Rico sprints. Arrives just in time for... DING.

RICO
(out of breath)
All clear.

Frank just brushes past him. So do the rest of the bodyguards,
hiding their smiles. Rico re-assumes his spot in the formation,
sweating and pissed off.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Terry finishes examining the vehicles. Rejoins the group.

TERRY
Fuel line.

Shows Frank a dismantled cube of C-4.

FRANK
Too obvious.

TERRY
I know.

Exhibit B. The second charge. Much more sophisticated.

TERRY
Engine. Heat trigger.

FRANK
Anything else?

TERRY
Tell you in a second.

Presses the remote start button.

The car. ENGINE KICKS IN-

Nothing happens.

TERRY
Good to go.

EXT. STREET - DAY

In transit. Trail Mercedes stays close and off the rear to prevent any other car from passing. Pull up to a traffic light. Terry stops half way behind the vehicle in the adjacent lane, to avoid being in their direct line of sight.

INT. VIP CAR/EXT. STREET - DAY

DIAZ
So far, so good.

FRANK
That's what worries me.

They resume moving. Turn on a narrow side street,

TERRY
Van.

A lone van is conspicuously sitting on the side of the road.

FRANK
I see it. (into the walkie) Vic.

INT. TRAIL CAR - DAY

VIC
On it.

He accelerates and pulls up alongside the S Guard.

RICO
What's going on?

SIMON
You don't want to know.

RICO
How about you ease up on "let's fuck with the rookie" and tell me anyway?

SIMON
If that van is bobby trapped, we
take brunt of the blast.

RICO
You're right. I didn't want to know.

INT. CARS/EXT. STREET - DAY

Coming up on the van. Closer. Closer.

Rico braces for it. KA-

They BLOW past without incident.

INT. TRAIL CAR - DAY

Collective sigh of relief.

RICO
Next time I ride with-

EXT. STREET - DAY

WHAM, out of nowhere a police cruiser KNIFES in front of
them, SIRENS BLARING. More to the right. Left. Rear.

Vic and Terry SLAM on the breaks. Cops surround them, guns drawn.

COPS
Out of the cars! Out of the fucking
cars, now!!!

Anyone else would need a change of underwear. Not these guys.

FRANK
Everyone, stay cool. (to Diaz) Thought
you said we can't count on the law.

DIAZ
No. We can't trust them either.

FRANK
(eyes the firepower)
Yeah, I got that part.

They debuss. Our old friend, Chief Ortega, approaches.

ORTEGA
Ah. If it isn't our soon to be Mayor.
Caught your speech. Very moving.

DIAZ
What is the meaning of this? We're on
our way to an important rally, and
unless you're here to provide escort-

ORTEGA

I see you bought some new friends.

DIAZ

At least mine don't hide the fact
that they are for sale.

ORTEGA

Ouch. You hurt my feelings, counselor.
Speaking of the law, in accordance to
Article 27 of the current judicial
code, no foreigner is authorized to
carry firearms in the Mexican
Republic. The only exception, as
established in Article 28, is when
they can provide documentary evidence
that proves they are legal immigrants.

DIAZ

These men are security agents,
employed for my personal protection
and licensed by National Defence
Secretariat to carry and use firearms
in the course of their duties.

ORTEGA

Really? That's odd. They haven't been
cleared by me or any members of my
staff. Must be a mix-up at the office.
Tell you what, I'll look into it.
Unfortunately we'll have to confiscate
their weapons. For the time being.

DIAZ

Listen, you piece of-

ORTEGA

(cuts him off)

Don't worry. If all the paperwork
checks out, your guns will be
returned to. Unless, of course,
you'd like to resist.

Cops tighten their trigger fingers. Beat. Grim,

DIAZ

You realize this is a death sentence.

ORTEGA

No. It's the law, and I'm just
enforcing it. However, you probably
realize right about now that you
should have listened to me, when
you had the chance.

Diaz glances at Frank. Not much he can do here. Calmly,

FRANK

Have your men remove our weapons for us. I wouldn't want them to get nervous and accidentally shoot me, as I'm reaching for my gun. I'm assuming you would have searched us afterwards anyway.

Ortega shifts his attention. Appraises him like an expert jeweler.

ORTEGA

You're smarter than you look.

FRANK

So are you. So why don't we save ourselves some time and skip to the part where you take what you came for and leave us for the wolves. That is the plan, isn't it?

ORTEGA

If you were as smart as you think you are, you wouldn't have taken the job. (to his men) Do as he says.

Cops relieve our guys of their hardware. Rico flashes his badge.

RICO

Police officer on leave of absence. My service weapon and back-up. Fully authorized and cleared. **By you.**

ORTEGA

I see. How did you get mixed up in all of this? Once wasn't enough?

RICO

I'm a slow learner.

ORTEGA

I hate to lose another good cop. You can still come with us. Or die with these gringos.

RICO

With all due respect, sir. Go fuck yourself.

Ortega gives his characteristic shrug. Que sera...

ORTEGA

Don't say I didn't offer. Sorry for any inconvenience, senores. Good luck with the campaign!

Signals his men. They get back in their cars and PEEL out.

DIAZ
How much do we have?

FRANK
Not long.

Takes a gun from Rico. Checks the clip. Tosses the other to Vic. One handed catch.

FRANK
Make every shot count. Simon. Syphon off as much gas you can spare. Rico. I need bottles and bars of soap. Knock on any door. Tell everyone to stay inside, while you're at it. Terry. Still have those charges?

SIMON
I have a better idea. Why don't we just get the hell out of here?

FRANK
Because that's exactly what they expect. Ten to one, they've set up roadblocks around this entire area and are waiting for us to run right into their crossfire.

TERRY
So what do we do?

FRANK
We make them come to us.

INT. CARS/EXT. STREET - DAY - LATER

The sun beats down on the convoy. The street is deserted. Calm before the storm. Frank and Diaz hug the floor. Wait.

FRANK
Whatever happens, keep your head down and stick with me.

DIAZ
Frank, I just want you to know-

FRANK
Save it. That's what you hired me for. I'm just protecting my investment.

Whether or not there's more to it is unclear. Diaz nods, accepting the terms either way. We drift toward the second car. Simon, Vic and Rico crouch. Rico's understandably tense.

VIC
Scared?

RICO
Aren't you?

VIC
Has to end sometime. Today is as
good a day as any.

Rico gives him a look.

VIC
What?

RICO
Nothing. It's just... right now I
wish I had your strength.

VIC
(flat)
Don't. A man who isn't scared of
dying has nothing to live for.

SIMON
Not me, mate. I can think of five
million reasons. Not to mention
senoritas and margaritas.

Rico glares, is about to fire back-

VIC
Here they come.

A Hummer appears at the end of the street. Wait. Make it two
Hummers. Two more coming from the other side. Frank was
right. They were boxed in all along.

They move along brazenly, not expecting any resistance.

The cars sit in the middle of the street. Appear abandoned.

The Hummers halt. Dislodge a score of Zetas. Automatic
weapons at ready. The execution is about to commence...

FRANK
Wait for it...

They close in on the motorcade from all directions.

FRANK
Wait...

Rico's hand wrapped around a bottle. White with pressure.

Zetas almost on top of them.

FRANK
Now.

All hell breaks loose. Literally.

KABOOM. A fire hydrant BLOWS sky high. Unleashes 350 kPa of pressurized H2O. Crashes down on one of the Zetas. CRUNCH.

His comrades whirl. OPEN up. At nothing.

VROOM, Mercedes remote starts. Weapons swing the other way.

There's no one behind the wheel. Confusion. And-

KABOOM. That was second charge. Attached to a power pole. Timber...

Water. Plus high voltage current. Equals-

Mass electrocution. Those with their fingers still attached to the triggers continue to send lead in all directions, as they jerk spastically and fry on their feet. Which is when-

The truck of the S Guard POPS open. Terry is the Jack In The Box. Slits a guy's throat. Uses him as a human shield against his buddy's shotgun. BAM, the unfortunate bad guy dies twice.

Terry slings the knife into the other Zeta in one smooth motion without looking. Lets go of the hardluck corpse, borrowing his SMG in the process. Meanwhile,

Rico tosses the bottle. Frank tracks it, BAM.

Mid-air fireball. Oh, for future reference, if you mix gasoline with ordinary household soap, you get napalm.

Simon throws his. Torches a Hummer.

Vic burns through the clip. Steady sniper pace. BAM. BAM. BAM. BAM. One round per target. All head shots.

Terry joins with the SMG. Short, accurate bursts. Aims for tires and radiator. Scratch another Hummer.

Every time Frank shoots, someone gets his ticket punched.

Rico and Simon scoop up fallen guns. Join the melee.

Diaz stays down.

Smoke billowing. GUNFIRE. Pandemonium. Zetas blasting wildly in contrast to our guys' lethal precision. Not quite the turkey shoot they expected. Frank's satisfied with the damage.

FRANK

Let's go!

Terry doesn't have to be told twice. Jumps behind the wheel. Everyone else retreats to their vehicles. Except Rico.

Instead he advances forward. Keeps firing. Keeps killing. A juggernaut on a mission of vengeance.

FRANK
I said let's go!!! RICO!!!

The latter might as well be deaf.

On Frank. Fuck it, gets out of the S-Guard, strides into the fray, fights his way toward the kid, grabs him by the scruff of his neck.

FRANK
Car. Now. Or I leave you here.

Rico snaps to. Finally obeys the order. Frank covers him.
BAM. BAM. CLICK-

He's out. Reaches for a spare. There aren't any.

Zetas rush toward him. A sitting duck.

BAM. BAM. BAM. All three fall, missing Frank by inches.

Vic stands a few feet away. Pistol extended like a finger of Doom. Tosses a clip to Frank. One handed catch.

VIC
You're welcome.

Frank RELOADS. They take turns covering each other back to their respective vehicles. Jump onboard, just as-

SIMON
Now can we please go?

On Terry. SLAMS into the first. JAMS the accelerator into the floor. Tires SPIN and CATCH, adding to the smoke.

S Guard ROCKETS forward. Terry doesn't drive around the remaining Zetas. He aims for them.

Hits one. Another. Bowling pins. Bugs on the windshield.

Clears the combat zone. Simon stays on his six. The survivors fire after, but don't pursue.

Turn the corner. Two more cars idle in a roadblock. Their occupants stand around, expecting a glorious return of their victorious comrades. Surprise!

Simon slingshots around Terry. Aims for the lightest point in the vehicle. Just behind the rear wheel. RAMS into the roadblock. CCCCRAHHHH! PUNCHES RIGHT THROUGH.

They ROAR into the distance. Alive. At least for the moment.

INT. MONTERO'S COMPOUND - DAY

Eduardo SLAMS down the phone. Barely controlled fury.

EDUARDO
They got away. And our guys took
heavy casualties.

MONTERO
I thought his bodyguards were disarmed.

EDUARDO
They were.

Montero process this. Then,

MONTERO
Find out everything you can about
the men who are guarding Diaz.

EXT. RALLY - DAY

Backstage. The subjects of their conversation hustle in. Some flunky tries to block their progress.

FLUNKY
I'm sorry, but we had to start
without you, and you can't go on
once the debate-

Frank shoves him aside, polite, yet firm, clearing the path to-

EXT. STAGE - DAY

Several politicians man their respective podiums. One is in the middle of answering a question from a moderator.

CANDIDATE
-the economic growth of the more
impoverished sections of the city
continues to remain my primary-

Diaz barges in. Frank stays in the background. Terry and Simon cover the stairs. Vic and Rico watch the crowd.

DIAZ
I apologize for my absence. But it
would appear I didn't miss anything.

Gets a laugh out of the audience.

MODERATOR
(condescending)
Ah. Senor Diaz. So good of you to
finally join us. I realize you're new
to this, but if you kindly refrain
from-

Diaz ignores him. Goes for the crowd.

DIAZ
Do you know why I'm late? Because
someone tried to kill me on the way
over here.

Reactions. Moderator presses a BUZZER.

MODERATOR
I'm sure all of us are relieved to
see that you're alright, but-

DIAZ
(keeps going)
They want me dead because they think
I'm dangerous. Because they're afraid
of what I might say to you today. Of
what I will do if I'm elected.
Because they would rather have you
choose from a selection of their
puppets, like these men here.

More reactions. More BUZZER. Everyone shouts at once,
overlapping, angry. Things are getting out of hand.

MODERATOR
Enough!!!

CANDIDATE
This is an outrage!!!! These
accusations are preposterous! I've
spent my entire career fighting
corruption!!!

ANOTHER CANDIDATE
How dare you? I'm an honest-

DIAZ
If all of you are honest, then why
am I the only one being shot at?

Another point in his favor. They are starting to add up.

Diaz's blowing the debate. He's winning the people.

DIAZ
They will try again. I don't know how
or when. I don't know if they will
succeed next time. But I do know
this. I will not hide. I will not be
afraid of them, as they are of me.
And I will fight for you, for this
city until I'm dead. Or until **we** win.

It starts as a shout. It becomes a chant. And then a battle
cry, as many lips utter one word over and over again,

CROWD
DIAZ!! DIAZ!!! DIAZ!!!!

On Diaz. The Man. Lawrence of motherfucking Arabia.

On our bodyguards. Standing tall. Standing proud. Feeling good about themselves for the first time in a long, long while.
That's our boss. Vic speaks everyone's mind. Into the link,

VIC
I've forgotten what it feels like.

RICO
What?

The others don't need to ask. They know.

FRANK
Righteous.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

WHAM, Frank SLAMS the door shut. Turns to Rico.

RICO
Listen, I'm sorry about-

FRANK
Hit me.

RICO
What?

FRANK
I said, hit me.

Rico takes a half-hearted swing. WHAM, Frank blocks and levels him with one punch.

FRANK
Again.

Rico rushes him, fists flailing, mad as hell. WHAM. Same result.

FRANK
Again.

Third time is the charm?... Nope. WHAM. Down he goes.

FRANK
We are going to do this all day.
Until you learn to carry out my
orders. So. **Hit me.**

Rico scowls. Rubs his battered jaw.

RICO
OK, I get the-

FRANK
No. You don't get shit. We are here to provide protection. That doesn't mean condoms. That means the only mission, the only thing on your mind, the sole purpose for your entire existence is the safety of the client. Not your family. Or your dead buddies. Or whatever little private war you got going on. Number one rule. Never leave the principal's side. Number two rule. See rule number one. And if you ever forget that again, I swear to fucking Christ, Buddha and Allah, I will save those cartel assholes the bullet and end you myself. Are we clear on this?

RICO
Yes.

FRANK
Good. **Again.**

Rico takes a reluctant swing. WHAM. Frank stands over him.

FRANK
And that's so you remember. (beat)
Next time I say "Jump", you say-

RICO
How high?

FRANK
No. You keep your mouth shut and jump like I told you to.

Heads out. Rico glowers in his wake.

EXT. HALLWAY - DAY

Frank strides. Vic sidelines.

VIC
How's the kid?

FRANK
Since when do you care?

VIC
I don't. But you do. Otherwise you would have left him behind.

Frank stops. Eyeballs the Russian.

FRANK

He didn't leave us. I only returned the favor. Speaking of which. **Why?**

VIC

I didn't save your life. I just didn't let them kill you. You and I... we still have unfinished business.

FRANK

I wouldn't have it any other way.

Resumes his progress. So does Vic.

INT. DIAZ'S OFFICE - DAY

Frank brushes in. Straight to the point,

FRANK

Nice speech. I particularly liked the part about refusing to hide.

DIAZ

After what happened today-

FRANK

(cuts him off)

We were lucky. Both times. First they underestimated you. Then they underestimated us. They won't make either mistake again.

DIAZ

You can't win elections by sitting behind closed doors, Frank.

FRANK

You can't win them by dying either. You made your point. Cut back on appearances. Dial back on the rhetoric. Make nice with the cops-

DIAZ

Are you asking me to surrender?

FRANK

I'm advising you to compromise. I watched you out there today. You had them in the palm of your hand. You gave them hope. But the world isn't built on hope. It's built on reality. And I can only protect you for so long before it comes crashing down on you like a ton of bricks.

DIAZ

Are you afraid that you might get caught in the avalanche?

FRANK

No. But I would hate to watch you die.

DIAZ

Because you won't get the money?

FRANK

Because you're a good man. (beat)
And because I'm not.

There it is. A chink in the armor. The first flicker of emotion in those ice cold eyes. Somehow along the way it became more than just another job. Diaz sees it too. Then,

DIAZ

When Cortez landed on the shores of Mexico, he had only 600 soldiers. Against an empire. You know what his first order was?

FRANK

Burn the ships.

DIAZ

That's right. This nation was built on someone taking a chance. Going for broke. I appreciate what you said. I really do. But it's too late to turn back. And I wouldn't want to, even if I could. These people you saw out there today...they deserve better.
The ships are burning, Frank.

FRANK

There are only six of us.

DIAZ

Yes. There are. (beat) You know, for a moment there I thought you weren't speaking to me as my bodyguard.

FRANK

For a moment there I wasn't.

Turn the beat around...

Close on a TV screen.

NEWSCASTER

-a dark horse challenger, given his inexperience and last minute entry into the mayoral race-

INT. FACTORY - DAY

Diaz talking to workers. Shaking hands. Smiling. Man of the people. Our guys have a hard time keeping them at bay.

DIAZ (V.O.)
Two thousand plus murders last year
alone. Highest per capita rate in
North America. Most of them unsolved.
Since many crimes go unreported, the
actual numbers could be even higher.

Newspapers slide off the printer press. CHUNG. CHUNG. CHUNG.

Close on a clip. Bullets lock into place. CHUNG. CHUNG. CHUNG.

Days being crossed off the calendar. Each one a small triumph.

EXT. RALLY - DAY

Diaz at a rally. Speaking from a platform. The crowd eats it up. Our five scattered throughout. Guardian angels.

DIAZ
Nearly 90% of cocaine sold in the
United States is smuggled through our
borders. We are also the largest
supplier of marijuana, methamphetamine
and the second largest source of
heroin for the U.S. market. That is
how the world sees us.

INT. HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Diaz's burning midnight oil. Rico's asleep. Simon shakes him awake. Hands a cup of coffee. Takes over his spot on the couch.

DIAZ (V.O.)
People are dying. Women are raped.
Children are kidnapped. And meanwhile
those who are supposed to protect us
collect bribes to protect those
responsible.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Terry inspects the undercarriage with a mirror.

ANOTHER NEWSCASTER
-gaining in the polls, particularly
among the low income boroughs-

INT. HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Vic runs over the incoming packages with a handheld magnetometer. Checking for bombs. It's a pretty big stack.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Diaz's talking to kids. Rico watches, missing his. Frank notices.

DIAZ (V.O.)
Tell me something. Is this the city,
the country you want to live in? The
future you want your kids to grow up
in? How many more wrongs will it take
for us to wake up? To make it **right**?

INT. S GUARD - DAY

Stopped in traffic. A bike closes in. Terry clocks him.

TERRY
Behind us.

FRANK
I see it. (to Diaz) Get down.

Diaz complies. The bike pulls alongside them. The rider's face is hidden behind the visor.

Frank cocks his gun. Places it against the car door. Ready to blow the guy away at the first provocation.

The light turns green. The bike ROARS away. Whew...

INT. STUDIO - DAY

INTERVIEWER
What's your response to your opponents
who say that you're just an angry rich
boy, trying to ride your dead father's
coattails into the office?

DIAZ
I am my father's son. I'm proud of
that fact. But I'm not asking anyone
to vote for the memory of who he was.
I'm only asking them to vote for the
vision of what could be. It's time for
the new generation of leaders to
spread their wings.

INT. GREEN ROOM - DAY

Frank watches him on the monitor. The rest of the crew sit around, bored. Simon finishes a Diet Coke. Crumples the empty. Tosses into a garbage can. Three points.

Beat. Terry chugs his. Further away. He shoots... he scores!

Beat. Vic rolls up a wad of paper. All the way from across the room. WHOOSH.

Beat. Rico joins in. Even Frank. It becomes a shooting contest. They just toss everything they can at the garbage can, trying to outdo one another, off the wall, over the shoulder, pausing momentarily whenever someone walks by.

It's the first moment when they seem united. Not just individuals. Not five strangers, brought together for one job.

A team.

Diaz walks out. Interview is finished. Instantly our guys are on their feet. A switch being flipped. Back to business...

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Diaz is praying with the congregation. So is Rico. A sea of bowed heads. Families. Children. Couples. Good, common, decent, God-fearing folk. Except-

Simon. Terry. Frank. Vic. Stand out in the crowd like the proverbial sore thumbs. A look passes between them.

They don't belong here. They never will. And they know it.

INT. CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Frank is giving instructions to Rico.

FRANK

A private dining room, if they have it. If not, a table away from the windows and doors, but not in the direct path to the bar or the toilet. Make reservations under your name or an alias, never the principal's. Order for the entire party. That way-

RICO

(a step ahead)

The staff doesn't know who ordered what. Lowers the risk of poison.

Frank nods, pleased.

RICO

How come you know so much about this stuff? What are you, Secret Service?

FRANK

(matter of fact)

No. I'm usually the guy who slips in the poison.

Off Rico's reaction,

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Follow a martini, as it glides on a tray, past patrons and conversations, finally ending its journey in front of-

DIAZ

Don't misunderstand, I'm flattered by your offer. But I prefer to run as an independent.

He picks up the glass. About to take a sip. His lunch companion, a well groomed patrician type, frowns.

PATRICIAN

You're the flavor of the month. That is true. But your campaign funds are stretched to the limit. You have no tangible platform, save for your passion. My party offers you credibility. Benefit of experience. Financial backing. More importantly, we both want the same thing.

Diaz puts down the untouched drink. We keep focusing on it more than the exchange. As if there's something wrong with it.

DIAZ

Do we?

PATRICIAN

As hard as it may be for you to accept, you're not the only one with the public interest in mind. And politics is no place for an amateur.

DIAZ

With all due respect, Senator, the only time you come in actual contact with the word "public" is when you use a restroom. Otherwise you'd know that people don't want politicians. They want leaders. Thank you for lunch.

He leaves the martini and walks out. It just sits there. Guess we'll never know...

INT. MALL - DAY

Diaz exits in the company of our guys.

FRANK

What did he want?

Neither he, nor the rest of the group ever stop scanning. Like human radars, picking up anything that enters their air space. Watching people's hands. Watching their eyes.

DIAZ (O.S.)

What they all want. A piece of the action. A seat at the table. A slice of the proverbial pie. Thought the car was in the other direction.

Bodyguards' POV. Jacket across the arm. Folded newspaper. Bulky shopping bag. Hand in the pocket. A vendor rolls his cart, without trying to sell. A man talks on his cell. Glances at them. Keeps talking. Each one could be a threat. Or not.

FRANK

Never walk out the same way you enter.

A woman, pretty, eyes Diaz, takes an uncertain step toward him. They instantly tighten formation.

WOMAN

I'm sorry, I saw you on the news, and I just want to say I really admire what you're doing.

DIAZ

Thank you, that means a lot, Ms.-?

WOMAN

Sanchez. Oh, I hate to ask, but do you mind if I have your autograph?

She reaches inside her purse-

Shit happens fast.

FRANK

Gun!

Commotion. Rico tackles Diaz. Vic and Terry grab the woman. Frank shoots, BOOM.

Not at the woman in front of them. At the owner of the folded newspaper **behind** them. He crumples, dropping an Uzi from within its pages.

The woman SCREAMS. Loses her purse. Its contents scatter. Clutches a pen in her hand. They let her go.

WOMAN

(hysterical)

Oh my God!!! Oh my-

BOOM. Simon this time. Shuts her up with a bullet. **What the fuck?**

SIMON

Yeah. Yeah.

He picks up the pen. Except it's not a pen. It's a zip gun.

SIMON

One-two-three combo. She draws attention. He blindsides. She finishes the job, if there's anyone left standing. (off Frank's look) I don't trust beautiful women. Call it an occupational outlook.

Waiting for more trouble. None seems forthcoming.

FRANK

Move.

They lower their weapons. Hustle Diaz toward the nearby escalator.

FRANK

Who picked the place, you or the Senator?

DIAZ

Senator.

FRANK

Figures.

Going down. Young guy headed the other way. I-Pod in his ears. Rocking to the beat. Didn't hear the gunshots.

They glide toward each other. Slowly. Inexorably.

Dude keeps rocking. Notices he's been watched. Smiles. Friendly.

Suddenly draws a '45. Gets torn apart by bullets from four different weapons.

Meanwhile, Terry whirls and PLUGS another hitman back at the top of the escalator. Pure instinct. The dead man does a Sonny Corleone. Then tumbles down the stairs, joining our crew.

Nobody says anything. Their guns do all the talking.

Reach the bottom. Shoppers in various stages of panic. React to the sight of armed men.

FRANK

Down! Everybody down!!! It's for your own protection!!!

They comply. One covertly points a camera. Frank pistol whips the guy, rips the Nikon before he can push the button, cracks it open.

There's nothing in it but film. Just a tourist or a paparazzi.

FRANK

Next time a man with a gun tells you to stay down, you might want to listen.

They keep moving. Someone always has one hand on Diaz. Covering him. Passing him from one man to another like a baton. Run, don't walk...right into two uniformed cops. They draw. Shit.

ALL

SSP! VIP security detail! Freeze!
Don't shoot!

Stalemate. One of the cops decides to play a peacemaker. Lowers the barrel, encouraging the others to do the same.

COP

OK. OK. Everyone, just take it easy. I believe you. We'll escort you out of here, sort it out at the station. Now-

BAM, BAM, BAM, Rico drops them both.

RICO

If they were on the level, they would have detained us or waited for back-up. These guys didn't even bother to ask for our IDs. Plus, their safeties were already off.

Frank nods. Scans the floor, searching for an escape route.

FRANK

This way.

INT. SERVICE CORRIDOR - DAY

Make haste, full evac mode. Down the hall, emergency exit door at the end, Frank opens it, daylight pouring in like a sign of deliverance, all clear, they rush outside-

EXT. BACK ALLEY - DAY

BAM.

The first shot, coming seemingly from nowhere, perforates Diaz's shoulder. The second, so close they almost sound as one, SLAMS him against the wall, staining it with red.

They act, a split second too late. Pull Diaz behind a nearby dumpster. Vic and Terry blast back. Then duck behind cover.

Frank rips Diaz's shirt. Finds a flattened slug. The wound, however, does not look good. Diaz tries not to show it.

DIAZ

I'll live.

FRANK

Not for long, if we don't get out of here fast. Anybody make him?

VIC
Top of the parking structure.

RICO
How the hell could he know we'd be
coming this way?

FRANK
Later. Can we flank him?

Terry pops out. BAM, gets a haircut from a bullet.

SIMON
Any more bright ideas?

TERRY
He'll pick us off one by one. Or keep
us pinned until his buddies show up.

FRANK
We stay here, we die alone.

SIMON
We run, we die tired.

FRANK
Yeah, but at least we'll have company.

They trade glances. Someone has to be sacrificed.

TERRY
I'll go.

VIC
I'll go.

FRANK
I need a driver, and I need a shooter.
The exit was my call. So I'll go. Vic,
cover. Terry, car. Simon and Rico,
stay with Diaz. He doesn't make it,
you'd better hope I didn't either.

RICO
What the hell are you gonna do?

FRANK
Move up.

Takes Diaz's briefcase. Produces a grenade. Prepares.

DIAZ
Frank-

FRANK
Yeah. Me too.

No good-byes.

TERRY

Luck.

FRANK

Same.

Pulls the pin. Chucks the grenade into the briefcase, one, two, then throws the whole thing skyward with everything he's got...

KABOOM!!! Mid-air detonation. Bad news: no more briefcase. Good news: it rains paper. White Christmas of confetti.

Momentarily blinds the sniper. That's all the time Frank needs. 40 yards dash toward the parking structure.

Behind him, Vic fires, fast, accurate, never allowing the sniper to steady his aim. The rest scramble toward safety. Rico and Simon carry Diaz. His feet never touch the ground.

Bullets and death all around Frank. Nipping at his heels. Whistling in his ear. Ricochetting off the pavement. Is he going to make it?...

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - DAY

He does. Draws the SIG. Double-times it up the stairwell.

EXT. ROOF - DAY

WHAM, Frank kicks in the door. Expecting trouble.

The roof is empty. It's as if the shooter wasn't even there. Save for a handful of spent shells.

Frank approaches, cautious. Picks up one of them. It's from-

Heckler-Koch PSG-1 semi-automatic sniper rifle

On his face, as the afore-mentioned fact sinks in like a knife.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Rico and Vic guard the hallway. Frank approaches. Alive.

FRANK

How is he?

Both are glad to see him, each for his own reasons. But that doesn't enter their conversation. Not now. Not ever.

VIC

Lost a lot of blood, but stable.
Doctor is with him now. So are Terry
and Simon.

FRANK
Make sure-

RICO
I gave them the file. Blood type,
medical history, allergies. The
doctor has been here for six years.
It's his regular shift.

Frank nods. Beat.

FRANK
Go see your family.

RICO
Thanks, but I'd rather-

FRANK
They know who we are.

Rico processes this. Fuck. Takes off running. To Vic,

FRANK
Call me when he's out of surgery.
I gotta take care of something.

He strides away. Vic looks after.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Frank walks out. Crosses the street. Goes into a bar.

INT. BAR - DAY

Small and grimy. A few regulars at the counter. Soccer game
DRONES on a beat-up overhead TV set. Frank flags a bartender.

FRANK
Tequila. Two shots.

Picks the drinks. Peels off a 20. Sits down at a vacant
table. Waits. Waits. And waits some more.

VOICE (O.S.)
I didn't know.

It's Roy. Takes a seat across from Frank.

ROY
I couldn't figure out why they were so
generous. Why they wanted me so badly
to say "yes". Now it all makes sense.
(beat) You're not surprised to see me.

Frank places the cartridge casing on the table.

FRANK

You're consistent in your choice of weapons. And tactics.

ROY

Sacrifice a few pawns to get the king. Your all time favorite too, as I recall. Briefcase was new though.

FRANK

Had to improvise. Why did you miss?

ROY

I didn't. Well, not unintentionally anyway. Just trying to keep you off. The first bullet. That was a miss.

FRANK

Not for Diaz.

ROY

I was aiming for the head. But then I saw you beside him. And I flinched.

Silence.

ROY

How is he?

FRANK

He'll live. Knew you'd be watching the hospital.

ROY

Had to try. (beat) What the fuck are you doing here, Frank? This is not who you are. This is not what you do.

FRANK

That's why he hired me. Cause I know how the other side works.

ROY

Guess that's why they hired **me**. Cause I know how **you** work.

Silence returns. The elephant in the room.

FRANK

Walk away.

ROY

I was about to suggest the same thing.

FRANK

I can't.

ROY
You can't or you won't?

FRANK
Take your pick.

ROY
And I can? These are not the kind
of people who will take a refund. I
walk, they come after me. After my
wife. And I **won't** let that happen.

It hangs there. Neither one wants to call it. But,

FRANK
Had to end sometime.

ROY
Yeah. You and me...how long?

FRANK
Since Beirut.

ROY
Jesus. Fucking kids back then. Still
knew who the enemy was. Still believed
we could change the world. Sure ended
up being the other way around.

FRANK
Usually does.

ROY
This guy, Diaz. Is the money worth
it at least?

FRANK
Yes. No. (beat) He is a good man.

ROY
Never stopped you before.

FRANK
Maybe that's why I'm doing it now.

ROY
Isn't it a little too late for you to
find religion? Somehow I don't think
St. Peter will let either one of us
walk through the pearly gates.

FRANK
Religion is for people who are
afraid of hell. (beat) Redemption
is for those who've been there.

Roy nods. So be it. Picks up his shot.

ROY
Next time I won't miss.

FRANK
I won't either.

They clink glasses. Down them. Nothing left to say. Except,

ROY
See you when I see you.

He leaves. Frank sits alone at the table. Two empty shot glasses. A spent shell. And ashes of a friendship.

EXT. BAR - DAY

Exits. Heads back across the street. Doesn't see-
Vic, as he watches from the shadows.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Rico. SIREN on. Bat out of hell minus the wings. Speed dials.

INT. RICO'S HOUSE - DAY

The phone RINGS. RINGS. And RINGS.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Rico hangs up. Speed dials again. Goes faster.

INT. RICO'S APARTMENT - DAY

Enters. Gun drawn. Checks the living room. Bedroom. Nothing.

RICO
Maria!!! Andres!!!

There's no answer.

His face. Fear. Hope. Despair.

He can hear the shower running. Goes to investigate.

INT. RICO'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

The curtain is drawn. Water drowns out all the other sounds.

Rico approaches. Reaches for it. Pauses. As if he can't bear the thought of what might be waiting for him on the other side...

Steadies himself. RIPS aside the curtain-

Maria SCREAMS. Rico grabs her.

RICO
Where is Andres?!

MARIA
(trying to recover)
Next door playing. Jesus, you-

Notes his expression. He's more terrified than she is.

MARIA
What's wrong?

He takes her in his arms. His clothes turn damp from the embrace. Doesn't care.

RICO
I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

Whether or not he's talking about scaring her or about something else is unclear. She knows better than to ask.

RICO
Pack up. We need to go.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Diaz comes to. Frank sits in the corner. We get a feeling he's been there for a while.

DIAZ
How bad-?

FRANK
Bad enough.

DIAZ
It's not your fault.

Frank says nothing.

DIAZ
All I need is make it to the polling station. Can you get me there?

FRANK
I don't know.

He means it. Finally,

DIAZ
Get me my clothes.

FRANK
The doctor said-

DIAZ
If I'm going to die, it's not going
to be in bed. At least out there I
can choose how. And for what.

Frank doesn't protest. Knows it won't do any good.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Door opens. Terry, Vic and Simon look up.

Diaz stands on the threshold. Barely. Death warmed over.
Frank beside him.

Diaz takes a step forward. Sways. Frank moves to catch him.

DIAZ
(firm)
No.

Frank relents. Diaz resumes his progress. Every step is a
small victory. And then he sees-

The waiting area is crowded with people. Strangers. Reporters.

FRANK
Thought I told you to keep this
confidential.

TERRY
We did. Word got out anyway.

Frank turns to Diaz.

FRANK
We should take a different exit.

DIAZ
No. They've been waiting.

FRANK
It's not safe.

DIAZ
Never was anything great achieved
without danger.

And as he goes forward to face the crowd and his destiny-

INT. HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Frank stands by the window. Watches the lights twinkling
below. A tired warrior. Rico enters. Stands beside him.

FRANK
How's the family?

RICO
Sleeping. So is Diaz.

FRANK
It's not too late for you-

RICO
Yes. It is.

Frank's eyes are still on the city.

FRANK
You know why I brought you in?

RICO
Because you needed a fifth.

FRANK
I could've called in another outsider.
But I needed a local. And not just
because I wanted someone who knew the
area. Because I also wanted someone of
the same ethnicity and age as Diaz.

RICO
(fills in the blanks)
So they might get me instead of him
by mistake?

FRANK
Yes.

RICO
Why are you telling me this now?

Finally looks at him. First time he's addressed Rico as an equal,

FRANK
Because I owe you that much.

Rico chews on it. We wait for him to explode...

Instead he just smiles.

RICO
Well. That didn't work out so well,
did it? (beat) You cook?

FRANK
What?

RICO
Do you know how to cook?

FRANK
No.

RICO
Come on. I'll teach you.

INT. HEADQUARTERS - OFFICE KITCHENETTE - NIGHT

It ain't much. But it'll do. Rico sets the pan on the burner.
Flips. He's pretty good. Frank chops. For once out of his element.

RICO
Thinner slices.

FRANK
Yeah, yeah... Where did you learn?

RICO
Father was a cook. Broke his heart
when I didn't follow in his
footsteps. (beat) Where about yours?

FRANK
Never met him. Probably best that way.

RICO
Why?

FRANK
Would have killed him, if I did.

Rico is unsure how to respond. Simon wanders in to the rescue.

SIMON
Something smells good.

FRANK
Here. Take over.

Hands him the blade.

SIMON
Is that an order?

FRANK
Yes, it is.

Simon shrugs. Whatever you say. Knife a blur. Razor thin
slices. Missing his fingers by millimeters.

SIMON
These were too thick anyway. (off
Frank's reaction) What?

Frank looks at him. At Rico. And then-

He laughs. All the pent-up frustration, anguish and tension
of what he's been through today and the anticipation of what
awaits him tomorrow unleashed by this final straw.

Rico joins in. Simon looks at them, wondering what the hell they are on, and where he can score some of that. Terry peeks in.

TERRY
What's going on?

SIMON
I have no fucking clue.

They laugh even harder. Off that,

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Last Supper. Remains of a meal. Our five sit around the table. Not quite friends. But definitely no longer strangers.

SIMON
So how is it? Being married.

RICO
Good days. Bad days. Mostly good.
You should try it sometime.

SIMON
No thanks. Too many fish in the
ocean. i just don't see the upside.

RICO
I'll give you one.

SIMON
An annual blowjob on your birthday?

They all chuckle. Rico's flustered.

RICO
No. Things we see out there...
they'll eat you alive if you aren't
strong enough. So, when I leave the
house, I take Maria and my son and
all that is good and pure, and I lock
them away in a safe place where
nothing can touch them. Like putting
on armor before going into battle.
But if they weren't there when I came
back, there'd be no reason for me to
take it off. Pretty soon I'd forget-

As he speaks, growing more confident with every word, we pan
along their faces. First smirking. Then slowly but surely
turning serious, as what he says sinks in. Ending on,

VIC
You forget you're wearing it in the
first place. So it becomes a part
of you. The way you see the world.

RICO
(glad he understands)
Exactly. My family is a refuge from
all this. My fuel. The thing that
keeps me going. Keeps me sane.

Simon tries to reclaim the spotlight.

SIMON
Well, it's official. You're the
world's biggest pussy. Should I go
ahead and schedule a trip to a gyno-

TERRY
(cuts him off)
Simon. Do yourself a favor. Shut
the fuck up.

Simon glowers, miffed. Rico shifts, uncomfortable with being
the center of attention and his own sentimentality.

RICO
Anyway. Speaking of which. I should
probably go check on them.

Exits.

TERRY
He's right. About everything.

SIMON
How would you know?

TERRY
Cause I had a family too.

We didn't expect it. Neither did Simon.

SIMON
I'm sorry.

TERRY
No. You are not. Neither am I.
That's the problem.

Silence. Filled with things said and unsaid. Frank breaks it.

FRANK
OK. Enough fun for tonight. Everyone,
get some shut eye. Tomorrow will be a
long day.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Frank sits alone in the darkness. Without looking up,

FRANK
Can't sleep?

Vic takes a seat across.

VIC
Apparently neither can you. (beat)
The man at the bar. Who was he?

FRANK
A friend.

VIC
Is it going to be a problem?

FRANK
I've killed friends before.

VIC
So have I. (pause) What were you?
Before this, I mean.

FRANK
Does it matter?

VIC
No. We're all men with a past and no
future. Except for Diaz and that kid. I
envy them, you know. We fight other
people's fights. For money. For the
sake of fighting. They do it for
something they believe in. When was the
last time you did that? Do you know
anyone who'll be sad to see you go?

Frank doesn't respond. Vic doesn't expect him to. They both
know the answers.

FRANK
Ever try to become a citizen?

VIC
Sure. Didn't take. War is simple.
Life. Death. Enemy. Friend. The
rest...isn't.

Beat.

FRANK
When this is over, and if we're
both still standing.

VIC
Yeah.

A look between them. Something passes. FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. CITY - MORNING

Red sun peeks cautiously over the horizon.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

The final day gets crossed off the calendar.

Vic. Terry. Rico. Frank. Simon. Getting ready. Loading weapons. Passing each other clips. Neither one says a word. But they move as one.

Diaz appears in the doorway. Takes in the preparations. Then,

DIAZ
I want to help.

FRANK
No.

DIAZ
I can't just stand by-

FRANK
One gun won't make any difference. One man can. You die, it's all been for nothing. You want to help? **Stay alive.**

Diaz watches them, moved. Wants to say something. But for once he's at a loss for words.

INT. OFFICE - MORNING

Rico. Maria.

RICO
If I don't come back...

MARIA
(simply)
I know.

Andres is still asleep. Peaceful. Serene.

MARIA
Should I wake him?

RICO
No. That's how I'd want to remember him. (beat) Don't let our son become a cop.

MARIA
I don't care what he does. As long as he becomes a man. Like his father. The rest will take care of itself.

He looks at her. Wants to say something else...

TERRY (O.S.)
We should go.

Doesn't get a chance.

Kisses his son. Kisses his wife. Heads out to join his comrades.

EXT. BUILDING - MORNING

They drive out.

INT. S GUARD - MORNING

FRANK
Don't stop for anything. Traffic
lights. Pedestrians. **Anything.**

TERRY
(a promise)
I won't.

He flicks on the SIREN.

DIAZ
Won't it make it easier for them to
find us?

TERRY
They already have.

EXT. STREETS/INT. CARS - MORNING

A swarm of motorcycles ROAR out from all directions on the intercept course. Classic high speed ambush, Columbian style.

Skorpions BLAZE away. The armor on the S Guard holds.

Terry downshifts. The incoming rider miscalculates and PLOWS RIGHT into him. Does an ET over the roof instead of the moon. Lands hard. Won't be getting up.

Terry accelerates again, practically within the same motion.

Trail Mercedes isn't so lucky. Back window SHATTERS, spewing glass chips all over the interior. Vic retaliates with a shotgun. PUNCHES the face plate into the guy's brain along with a load of a twelve gauge. Messy.

Another biker, eager to avenge his compadre, tosses a grenade into the breach. It rolls into the backseat. Rico grabs, chucks it back out.

The cylinder spins, end over end, in lazy slow motion.
DETONATES mid-throw.

Both the man and the motorcycle simply disintegrate.

Next bike is carrying two. Dodge the blast. One strafes, full auto mode, preventing our guys from getting a fix. The other gets closer. Reaches out, magnetic mine in hand.

Simon weaves. Right. Left. The rider, cautious, weaves with him. Not falling for it. Into the link,

SIMON
A little help.

TERRY (O.S.)
On three. One... Two....

Simon RIPS the handbreak. The driver narrowly avoids the broadside, shoots past. The passenger aims. Gotcha, gringo!...

Straight into Terry. Becoming a meat in their sandwich. The duo might even have a split second to go "OH SHIIIIIT" before-

The cars swing toward one another. Hammer and anvil. CRUNCH.

Simon drives over the roadkill, adding two very satisfying THUDS to the list of our sound effects. The rest fall back.

Diaz breathes a sigh of relief.

DIAZ
That wasn't as bad as I expected.

FRANK
Those were just scouts. Here comes the cavalry.

A bus blocks the road ahead. Gunmen on the roof. Windows.

A 50 cal slug TEARS through the windshield. Tires are shredded. RPG hits, a whisker away, obliterates most of their backside. The S Guard may be bulletproof, but it's not indestructible.

Terry SCREECHES into a bootlegger turn. Simon covers, taking his share of punishment. No dice. The other end is bottled up by Hummers. And their occupants also have heavy artillery and not afraid to use it. Another BARRAGE. More damage.

There are no turnoffs. No side streets. Just walls. Trapped. Under fire. It doesn't look good.

TERRY
Any bright ideas?

FRANK
Yeah. Head for that RPG.

Terry doesn't bat an eye. Pedal to the metal. Kamikaze run.

The RPG wielder is reloading. Sees the car charging toward him like a wounded rhino. Nearly soils himself. Works faster.

Terry just smirks through the shattered windshield. Chews on that toothpick of his. I believe the word you're looking for is "maniacal". He's going to make it, he must-

He doesn't. Mr. RPG locks the rocket in place, snaps up the weapon, no time to aim, cuts loose-

The projectile SCREAMS toward Terry. The kill shot. Which's when-
Terry SLAMS on the breaks.

Two things happen.

The hastily aimed RPG doesn't hit him. However, it hits the side of a building. Makes a rather sizeable hole in it.

One that Terry makes even bigger by DRIVING THROUGH IT a second later. Loses both side mirrors and most of the paint in process. Like he cares. Simon duplicates the maneuver.

INT. BUILDING - MORNING

Sweatshop. Workers huddle, listening to the gunfire outside.

Enter Terry. A wrecking ball on a demolition derby. Wood. Glass. Clothes. A blur of destruction.

EXT. PARALLEL STREET - MORNING

BURSTS out of the other end. Keeps going. Energizer bunny.

TERRY
Almost there.

Which is when they hear it. Then see it.

CHOPPER

Swoops like a pterodactyl. A Zeta sticks out of the open bay door, manning a Gatling. Depresses the trigger.

High velocity rounds CHEW concrete. Cars.

Frank covers Diaz's body with his own. THUMP, THUMP, THUMP, the roof dents inward, as if punched by an invisible fist.

The trail Mercedes doesn't have any armor. Windshield BURSTS. Engines sputters and dies. Toast.

Vic SLAMS into the dash, head first. Rico and Simon hug the floor. Cut. Bleeding. But alive. At this rate not for long. The chopper banks left, coming around for another pass.

INT. S GUARD

They look back at the wreck. At their comrades. But,

FRANK
(to Terry)
Like I said. **Anything**.

DIAZ
They'll be slaughtered!

FRANK
Then make sure they don't die in vain.

Terry grits his teeth. Knows Frank is right. Keeps going-

Into the path of a Hummer that sideswipes them out of the blue, WHAM. We never see it coming. We just feel the IMPACT.

The S GUARD FLIPS. We FLIP with it. The world is in a spin cycle. Then upside down.

Everyone's dazed. Border line unconscious. Still Frank's first thought is,

FRANK
(to Diaz)
You whole?

DIAZ
I...think...

Frank doesn't wait for him to finish. Punches out what's left of the window, nearly breaking his hand in the process. SHOOTS-

At the approaching Zetas. Destroys their kneecaps and shins. Think chilli cheese omelette with a cherry bomb inside.

They go down. Howling in pain. Firing wildly. Frank and Terry put them out of their misery.

More footsteps. They brace for the second wave.

SIMON (O.S.)
Thanks for the rescue, assholes.

Frank grins. Unbuckles his seat belt. Diaz's stuck. No matter, Frank flips a butterfly knife, saws through.

Simon and Rico rip the doors. Pull them out.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

A mini junk yard. Everyone resembles their demolished cars. The chopper looms in the distance, getting closer. So are more Hummers. Things just keep getting better and better...

TERRY
Any **more** bright ideas?

FRANK
Yeah. Run like hell.

VIC (O.S.)
Not yet.

He stands beside the smashed Hummer. Sways more like it.
Forehead split open. Probably a concussion.

VIC
We won't get far with that chopper.

FRANK
You got a better suggestion?

VIC
Yeah.

Picks up the 50 cal. Leans it against the wreck. Gets into
position best he can. To Simon,

VIC
Hold me.

SIMON
(what the fuck)
How?

VIC
(the fuck do you think)
Gently.

Simon shrugs. Grabs onto the Russian, holding him steady.

The chopper. A lumbering, lead-breathing dragon on approach.
The trigger-happy Zeta UNLEASHES another volley.

Tracers TEAR into the asphalt. Into the corpses of other Zetas.
Into the carcasses of cars, as our guys duck behind them. Mayhem.

SIMON
Shoot!!! **Fucking shoot!!!**

Vic doesn't. And amidst all the sound and fury, we PUSH in on-

His eyes. In his mind all silent. We still see the
destruction. We just don't hear it.

Exhales. In. Out. Pure Zen.

Crass hairs settle on the target. Still a bit shaky.

His hand. His finger caresses the trigger. And SQUEEZES.

The bullet. Roughly the size of a magic marker. EXPLODES out
of the muzzle, travelling at super-sonic speed. Destination-

INT. CHOPPER

And when I say "interior", I mean its insides. As in the gearbox. The horrible GRINDING, as the machine devours itself. And stops.

EXT. CHOPPER

The pilot might as well flap his arms, cause the whole thing PLUMMETS.

KABOOM. A pollen cloud of debris. Hits the approaching column.

INT. HEAD HUMMER

The last thing the driver will see in this life is the rotor blade, as it COMES SLICING through his windshield.

EXT. STREET

The car fishtails out of control. Takes out the Hummer behind him in a spray of metal. Pile-up in progress.

Back to Vic. The understatement of the century,

VIC
Now we can run.

EXT. STREET

Hobble is more like it. Helping Diaz. Helping each other. Marathon runners inching toward the finish line.

Reach the corner. Peek around.

The school they visited earlier. Now a polling station. Only a few hundred yards away. Except-

That distance is also completely exposed. No cover whatsoever.

RICO
What do we now?

FRANK
We go for it.

EXT. SOMEWHERE - MOMENTS LATER

The approach to the school, as seen through the scope of a rifle. Picks up our guys, clustered tightly around the principal, trying to block the shot. The sniper, still unseen, waits, patient. Sees an opening. Settles on Diaz...

CLICK.

FRANK (O.S.)
I wouldn't do that.

The scope whirls, searching. Rico. Terry. Simon. Vic. No Frank.
That's because he's standing right behind Roy on the rooftop.
Roy freezes. Doesn't let go of the rifle. Without turning-

ROY
Nice play. How?

FRANK
Like I said, you're predictable in your choice of weapons. And locations. Sun toward the target, so the glare is in their eyes, and you're shooting out of the shadows. Rooftops over windows. Right angle, since you're a lefty. You know how I work. But there's a flip side to that coin.

ROY
Like I said, nice play. (beat) Do me a favor. Tell my wife.

FRANK
You got it.

No good-byes. Not these two.

ROY
See you when-

On Frank's face, as he pulls the trigger.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Our guys wait. Frank approaches.

RICO
Number one rule. Never leave the principal's side. Number two rule. See rule number one.

FRANK
He knew that too. That's why I broke the rules. (beat) Let's finish this.

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

They enter. Bruised. Bloodied. Victorious. They made it!...

Booths. Ballots. Everything is in place.

Except there are no voters. No reporters. No officials. The place is completely and totally deserted.

On Diaz. Can't believe it. Won't. But there it is.

ORTEGA (O.S.)
They are too scared.

Alone. Not gloating. Perhaps a bit sympathetic even.

ORTEGA
I'm sorry. But you can't change people
any more than you can break the law of
physics. This is Mexico. The big guy
always wins. Just like I told you in
the first place.

Diaz says nothing. What is there to say?

Ortega brushes past. Pauses on the threshold.

ORTEGA
For all it's worth, you would have
made a good Mayor.

And he's out.

You can hear cars pulling up outside. Shouts. Commands. The
noose tightening.

TERRY
What do we now?

FRANK
(simply)
We make it expensive.

They cluster around Diaz. Shoulder to shoulder. Alamo. Zulu.
300. Last stand.

Footfalls. Gunfire. They blast back. We stay on our heroes.
On their faces.

Circle around. Then up. Soar toward the ceiling, looking down
on the battle.

Five guys in a circle around one.

Suddenly more SHOUTS. Sounds of retreat. Gunfire withers.
Then stops altogether.

They are still alive. A minor miracle. Simon articulates it
on everyone's behalf with his usual eloquence.

SIMON
What the fuck?

And then...

People pour into the auditorium. Commoners. Working poor. We recognize some of the faces we've seen before. At the rally. At the factory. Out in the street. At the church. At the hospital.

They are unarmed. But they are united. An ocean of humanity. Swallowing our heroes. Surrounding them in a protective cocoon. Bodyguards for our bodyguards. Off that,

INT. CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Close on a battery of TV screens. Election coverage in progress.

TV ANCHOR 1
-with twelve out of 16 boroughs
reporting one of the highest turnouts-

TV ANCHOR 2
-an unprecedented landslide victory
for the last minute newcomer-

TV ANCHOR 3
-the first independent candidate
and the youngest Mayor-

We don't hear the rest. We don't need to.

People are shouting. Crying. Hugging one another. Rico lifts up Andres. Kisses Maria. Simon is making out with some pretty secretary. Everyone, even Vic, is caught up in the celebration.

Except Frank. Shane at the square dance.

Diaz is at the epicenter of the revelry. The man of the hour. And for the briefest of moments, as the throng around him parts slightly, their eyes lock across the crowded room.

Diaz wants to say something. He can't. He simply nods.

Frank nods back.

Turn the beat around one more time...

INT. CITY HALL - DAY

Diaz gets sworn in. A king assuming the throne.

INT. JUDGE'S OFFICE - DAY

Diaz is arguing with some high level judge. Puts his foot down. The opponent caves in. Signs the warrant.

EXT. MONTERO'S COMPOUND - GATES - DAY

Police cars and tactical vans PULL up.

INT. MONTERO'S COMPOUND - DAY

Empty nest. Dozens of Federales, led by Rico, march through.

EXT. PATIO - DAY

Montero sits in his favorite spot. Enjoying the last few moments of sunshine and freedom. Takes in the approaching army.

MONTERO

I expected you an hour ago.

Rico produces a warrant. Montero doesn't even bother to examine it. Allows himself to be cuffed. To Rico,

MONTERO

Tell your boss it was all for nothing. You know why?

He leans in close. Whispers something in Rico's ear. Rico shrugs. Shoves him into the awaiting arms of the Federales.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

Montero, now clad in prison fatigues, is escorted into a cell. The door SLAMS shut. Stay on him, as he takes in his new home. An old man. Powerless. Alone. FADE TO BLACK.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Frank waits. The familiar receptionist from Diaz's campaign, now an executive assistant, smiles. This time it's genuine.

ASSISTANT

He'll see you now.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE

Diaz rises to greet him.

DIAZ

Sorry you had to wait. Things've been-

Frank waves it away. No apologies necessary. Takes in the new digs.

FRANK

Moving up in the world.

DIAZ

Thanks to you. Speaking of which.

Extends four envelopes.

DIAZ

You've earned every penny.

Frank accepts the offering. For the first time he somehow feels awkward about being paid. It shows. Switches topics.

FRANK

Heard you made good on your promise.

DIAZ

Yes. Wasn't easy. But, for once, it's nice to be more powerful than your enemies. Don't know if you heard. Montero committed suicide in prison last night. Shame. I was rather looking forward to the trial.

FRANK

What about the son?

DIAZ

On the run. Matter of time.

Beat.

DIAZ

"Thank you" doesn't quite cover it, does it?

FRANK

It will have to do.

They shake hands. Firm. Like friends.

DIAZ

Don't suppose I can convince you to stay? I could always use a good man.

FRANK

You know I'm not one of them.

DIAZ

(beat)

Maybe you're wrong about that.

INT. RECEPTION - DAY

Frank walks out. Nods to the receptionist. Heads down the hallway. Stay with him. One long tracking shot, similar to Frank's introduction. As if completing the circle.

The classic "victory walk" moment. Except there are no trumpets. No swelling orchestra. Just the silent honor and the proud loneliness of a man who's done his job.

Brushes past city hall employees. Gets in the elevator.

We move in close on his face. His eyes. His mind working behind them. The final shot of the movie...

INT. DIAZ'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Or not. Diaz looks up from the desk.

DIAZ
Forget something?

FRANK
No. Remembered. Back at the mansion. How did you know Eduardo?

DIAZ
Crossed paths once. Some society function. Why?

FRANK
No reason. I'm just curious. Like what are the odds of me being paired up with a guy whose client I killed years ago, so he can keep tabs on me. Or why Montero chose to commit suicide rather than taking his chances at the trial. Or why they can't find his son. Or who said "Never was anything great achieved without danger."

DIAZ
I believe it was Cesar.

FRANK
No. It was Machiavelli.

Beat.

DIAZ
What are you implying?

FRANK
I'm not implying anything. I just want to know. **How long have you been planning all this?**

DIAZ
I have no idea what you're-

FRANK
There were two men. One was a judge. The other was a criminal. Nothing in common. What so fucking ever. Except they both had sons, eager to get out of their respective old men's shadows. Time for the new generation of leaders to spread their wings. Risk high. Win big. Isn't that what you said?

Diaz doesn't respond. Frank presses on, piecing it together.

FRANK
You feed Eduardo the route of your father's motorcade. He kills him for you.

(MORE)

FRANK (cont'd)

That makes you the son of a martyr. Puts you in the prime position to take over his place in the race. In return, you declare war on Montero. That wins you even more support. You have no experience compared to other candidates. No legitimate backing. But hey, the bad guys are shooting at you. Means you're doing something right.

Still no answer.

FRANK

Youngest mayor in the history of the city. Man of the people. Elliot Ness brings down Al Capone. Too bad they don't know Elliot is just clearing the throne for Al Jr. (beat) You were truthful about one thing. This wasn't about revenge. This was about power.

DIAZ

(finally)

Why are you telling me all this?

FRANK

Because I want to understand. Not why you did it. Or how. But why you lied to me all this time.

On Diaz. Matter of fact,

DIAZ

No one would ever take a bullet for another just for the money. Not for a million. Not for five. It had to be something you were willing to die for.

FRANK

(getting it)

Or someone.

DIAZ

Even whores want to believe in true love. (beat) You broke your own rule, Frank. Always expect the worst. That way you rarely disappointed.

The mask drops. Discarded like a Halloween costume. The real-

DIAZ

(cold)

I'm sorry you had to find out. But I knew if any of you ever did, I would be safe. You know why? Because you're a practical man, Frank. Just like me.

(MORE)

DIAZ (cont'd)
Or did you really think it was an
accident I chose four of you as my
bodyguards?

Frank's turn to be silent.

DIAZ
You'll stew for a while, sure. But
then you'll take your payday. And
you'll leave town. Just like you
were supposed to. Or do we still
have unfinished business?

We'd love nothing more than to watch Frank shove Diaz's money
down his throat, to beat the arrogant, murdering, lying son
of a bitch within an inch of his miserable life, but-

FRANK
No. We don't. (beat) You don't have
to worry about the others. I won't
tell them.

DIAZ
I know you won't. No one wants the
truth. We want to hear what we want
to hear, and then we want to be
convinced that the lie we were told
is the truth we've been asking for
in the first place. After all,
that's how politicians get elected.

He goes back to the paperwork. Frank just stands there.
Unsure what to do with himself. Finally walks out.

INT. RICO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Simon, Terry and Vic over a bottle or two. Frank enters.

SIMON
Ah. Our brave leader returns.
Bearing gifts, I hope?

Frank just hands them the envelopes. Not in the mood.

FRANK
Where's Rico?

TERRY
Running an errand. Said he'd be back
soon. Join?

FRANK
No, thanks.

TERRY
You ever off the clock?

Frank flinches. Roy's line. The friend he killed in cold blood to save Diaz. It takes a supreme effort for him not to lash out at Terry. But he doesn't want to ruin their moment.

FRANK

Sure. When no one is around to ask me that question.

Vic watches him. Detecting something below the surface,

VIC

You OK?

FRANK

Yeah.

SIMON

Of course, he's OK. He's alive! And he's rich! We all are. You know, I never thought I'd say this, but...we actually made a pretty good team.

VIC

That's it. You're officially drunk.

SIMON

I'm going to miss you most of all, Scarecrow.

Vic pulls out a gun.

SIMON

Oh shit, I think I made it angry.

He tries to get up. Can't. He **is** too drunk. They laugh at him and with him. It's a happy carefree moment between three friends, high on liquor and victory. Frank watches, envious, wishing he could be a part of it.

RICO (O.S.)

Diaz used us.

Stands in the doorway. Not laughing.

SIMON

He's baaaack!

FRANK

(to Rico, urgent)
I have to talk to you. **Now**.

TERRY

The fuck you're talking about?

FRANK

Now, Rico.

VIC
Hang on a sec-

RICO
He's in league with Montero's son.
His campaign was being funded by drug
money. How else do you think he could
afford to pay you five million each?

BOOM, the bombshell lands.

SIMON
The discretionary fund-

RICO
There's no discretionary fund. At
least not one he could use to write 20
million dollar checks without anyone
asking questions. This is your reward
for helping Eduardo get rid of his
father. And for Diaz get rid of his.

Everyone reels from the revelation. That is, everyone except-

FRANK
How did you know?

RICO
When I came to arrest Montero, he said
"Tell Diaz it was all for nothing. You
know why? **Because I really didn't kill
his father**" First I thought it was
just bullshit. Every criminal claims
he's innocent. But Montero wouldn't
hide. He would be proud. And then I
heard about the suicide. The money you
four were getting. And it all started
to make sense...

Cold hard facts,

RICO
I took a look at his financial
records. The donations for the
campaign. Every time he got low on
funds, someone threw in a lifeline.
Not enough to raise suspicion. But
just enough to keep the ball rolling.
All of them came from shell companies.
Bet you that twenty mil, if I keep
digging, I'll find Eduardo behind
every single one. Plus, Montero's body
was conveniently cremated before an
autopsy could be performed. (beat)
This wasn't an election. This was a
palace coup. And we helped to pull it
off.

Their reactions. Dismay. Disgust. Disbelief. And-

RICO
(to Frank)
Somehow you're not surprised.

Frank doesn't respond. On Rico, as it dawns...

RICO
How long have you known?

FRANK
A couple of hours.

RICO
Were you going to tell them?

FRANK
No. And you shouldn't have either.

RICO
Why?

FRANK
Because I owed them that much.

Beat.

TERRY
Now what?

FRANK
We do what we always do. We take
the money. We leave town. We live.

RICO
He lied to you! He used you!!!

SIMON
What do you want us to do about it?

RICO
I don't know! Go to the press! Go
to the cops! Help me bring the son
of a bitch down!!!

VIC
He's the Mayor. And we're four gringos
with enough history to bury us seven
times over. That's why he picked us in
the first place.

Frank. Each sentence like a nail in the coffin.

FRANK
It's not our country. It's not our
city. And it's not our fight.

Rico processes this. Then,

RICO
No. But it is **mine**.

FRANK
Forget it, kid. He's already won.
He's got the cops. He's got the
press. Now he's even got the cartels
watching his back. What have you got?

RICO
The truth.

FRANK
It ain't worth shit. We will cut
you in. One million from each. That
makes it four. You've earned it.

Simon is about to chime in, but a look from Frank shuts him
the fuck up. No one else has any objections.

FRANK
Quit the force. Take your family.
Move. A better place. A better life.

RICO
Bought with drug money.

FRANK
It's money. It doesn't care where it
comes from. Neither will the house
your wife will live in. Or the college
your son will go to. They don't have
to know.

RICO
I will know.

FRANK
Stop being a selfish, self-righteous
prick and think about your family!

RICO
I **am** thinking about my family!!!

FRANK
If you were, you would take the
fucking money! What do you want to
do? Be a hero! Save the day! WHAT?

Rico finally unravels. The dam cracking,

RICO
Don't you get it?? I can't take that
money! Because if I do, then I'm a
fucking coward!!! All over again!!!

There it is. His secret. His demons. All laid bare before us.

RICO

I froze. I couldn't move. Couldn't even speak. All I could do was hide. And watch them die. One guy...I don't even remember his name...he was trapped. Begged me to pull him out before the tanks blew. Then begged me to kill him, as he was burning. I couldn't even do that.

They watch. Listen. No one says anything. Midnight of the soul,

RICO

My son thinks I'm a hero. My wife loves me because I make her feel safe. My friends can't believe how lucky I am to be alive. If they only knew... Do you have **any** idea what that feels like? To carry this inside? To hate yourself that much?

He stops. Spent. Softly,

FRANK

We're all running away from something.

RICO

Yeah. And you keep running. Like hamsters in the fucking wheel. So keep the money. Keep running. I'm done.

With that, he walks out.

EXT. RICO'S APARTMENT - DAY

Strides to his car. A man on a mission. Frank chases after.

FRANK

Come on, Rico-

Rico turns the ignition. The car ERUPTS as if punched by an invisible fist from beneath the earth.

Shockwave catches Frank. Knocks him down like a ragged doll.

He lies there. Dazed. Ears ringing. Watches the inferno.

Another sound enters his consciousness. The RINGING of his cell. It takes a moment to process. Punches in the call with an unsteady hand.

DIAZ (V.O.)

I'm sorry. We both know it was the only way. You can't protect people from themselves, Frank.

DIAL TONE. FADE TO BLACK.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Another customs official peruses Frank's fake passport.

CUSTOMS
Do you have anything to declare?

FRANK
(beat)
No.

Customs looks at him. Just another gringo. Here to drink their tequila, buy their trinkets and fuck their women.

CUSTOMS
Thank you for visiting Mexico.

WHAM, he stamps his passport.

INT. AIRPORT ROTUNDA - DAY

Frank joins Vic, Terry and Simon. Somber faces. Beat.

FRANK
One for the road?

INT. AIRPORT CANTINA - DAY

Four shots of tequila being placed in front of our guys.

SIMON
Ah. Tequila. The official drink of
the Third World.

No one laughs. No one even smiles. Each picks up a shot.

TERRY
What do you want to drink to?

SIMON
How about Rico?

FRANK
(flat)
He wouldn't want us to.

SIMON
How about a job well done then?

Vic sums it to for everyone.

VIC
We didn't win. We lost. (beat) We
always lose.

They drink in silence without clinking.

INT. AIRPORT ROTUNDA - MOMENTS LATER

TERRY
Gate 16.

SIMON
Gate 38.

VIC
Gate 3.

FRANK
Gate 21.

Beat.

SIMON
Well, boys, it's been a slice.
Let's do this again soon.

He walks away. Terry does the same. Vic. Frank.

Each headed to his own destination. His own destiny. And just as they are about to be swallowed by the crowd-

They stop.

Nothing is said. Nothing needs to be said.

Frank comes back to their original spot. Then Vic. Then Terry.

Simon looks at them. Shakes his head.

SIMON
Luck.

He leaves. And then there were three.... On Frank,

FRANK
Let's go.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Frank RAPS on the door. The familiar black market dealer opens.

FRANK
A friend of mine did business with you
a while back. British. Kinda an
asshole.

DEALER
Yeah, I remember. Real cheap too.

Frank shows him a wad of bills. A thick one.

FRANK
Money is not going to be a problem
this time.

EXT. STREET - DAY

They sit in the cab of a truck. We don't get to see the vehicle.

TERRY
He's inside. So is Eduardo.

FRANK
Figures. Last place the law would
be looking for him. If they are
even looking at all.

VIC
Too many of them. Not enough of us.

FRANK
If he doesn't already know we didn't
make our flights, he will shortly.
Then we lose the element of surprise,
and he'll have half of the city
hunting for us. Personally I don't
want any more dead cops on my
consciousness. How about you?

They both know he's right. Reluctantly,

VIC
OK. We do it your way. After all,
you're the killer.

FRANK
Yes. I am.

EXT. STREET - DAY

They drive. POV through the windshield. A lone figure blocks
their passage. Terry SLAMS on the breaks. That's right. It's-

SIMON
What took you?

Joins the trio. They look at him. Beat.

SIMON
Shut the fuck up.

Terry just smiles. First gear...

INT. MONTERO'S COMPOUND - GUARD HOUSE - DAY

Bored Zeta peruses a Penthouse. Occasionally glances at the
monitor. All quiet. Turns the page. Glances again. Double takes.

There's a truck coming.

EXT. MONTERO'S COMPOUND - GATES

Correction. It's not a truck. It's Liebherr T 282B. Heavy earth hauler. Height 7.4 meters. When fully loaded, it weighs about 800 tons, twice the takeoff weight of a Boeing 747. Cost - 3.5 million. CD player and air conditioning optional.

In a nutshell, it's a fucking Godzilla on wheels.

INT. GUARD HOUSE - DAY

The Zeta's expression...priceless. Punches the alarm button, as-

EXT. GATES

The behemoth drives over the raised spikes. Bends them right into the ground. BARRELS through the gates. Steel tearing like papier-mâché, bending inward with the force of a nuclear blast.

Flattens the guard house along with its occupants. The crash barrier is next. Designed to withstand a lot. But not this.

INT. VILLA - DAY

Eduardo puts down the phone. Turns to Diaz.

EDUARDO
Your bodyguards.

INT. CAB - DAY

Terry behind the wheel. Chewing on the toothpick. Frank. Vic. Simon. Defenders turned destroyers.

EXT. GROUNDS - DAY

Zetas everywhere. Firing everything they've got. At the tires. At the engine. RPGs. 50 cal. Whatever.

The beast just keeps on coming. A juggernaut.

50 yards from the front of the house. Forty. Thirty...

INT. VILLA - DAY

Diaz tries to wrap his Harvard-educated brain around this. Can't.

DIAZ
We should leave. Quickly.

EDUARDO
It's four of them. And at least
forty of my guys. What can they do?

DIAZ
(matter of fact)
Kill them.

EXT. GROUNDS - DAY

And how right he is...

The mangled truck closes in on the mansion. Ten pins bad guys right and left. Shearing off statues, lamp posts and anything else that gets in its way. And then-

INT. VILLA - DAY

KNOCK, KNOCK

EXPLODES, nay, ERUPTS through the front door. Takes most of the front of the building and the entire lobby with it. Finally comes to a groaning halt.

Which is when the sneak preview ends. And the main feature begins. Pure close quarters carnage.

The first wave converges on the truck. Right into a flashbang.

Imagine a deafening blast and a blinding burst of light which momentarily activates all photosensitive cells in the retina, making vision impossible for approximately five seconds. Subjects affected describe seeing a single frame, as if their vision was "paused", until normal sight returns.

And would you know it, our guys just happen to be wearing ear plugs and polarized shades...

They come out firing and never stop.

No one reloads. There's no time. They simply empty their weapons, discard them and instantly draw new ones. Each covering his own direction. Back to back. A 360 degree battle.

Reinforcements arrive, shooting at them from the upstairs landing.

Frank takes two in the chest. He staggers, but doesn't go down. Kevlar beneath, same as the other guy. They trade bullets. Ballistic chicken. BAM. BAM. BAM.

BAM, Frank nails the opponent in the throat, right above the vest. He loses the AR 15. It drops down into the lobby.

Frank catches the rifle mid-fall, tosses aside his own and keeps fighting without hardly skipping a beat.

BOOM, BOOM, Vic opens with a riot gun. Hurls two mercs backward ten yards, blood spraying toward the heavens.

Simon rolls a grenade. Zetas duck for cover. It spews colored smoke. Safe. They pop back up. Which is when it goes-

KABOOM. Bodies fly.

Terry is a Wild West gunslinger. Twin Tec-9s raining death and brass casings. Cuts down bad guys like wheat.

The formerly majestic lobby resembles a bad day in Bosnia. The Zetas pull back. One word,

FRANK

Diaz.

Terry doesn't even wait. Just takes off.

INT. HALLWAY

Charges into a hallway. Arm extended in each direction. A cross with guns. Dices men on both ends.

Then runs, EMPTYING clips into the drywalls along the way. THUDS of bodies hitting the floor.

INT. ANOTHER HALLWAY

The following happens in one continuous tracking shot.

Frank works his way down. If Terry is a bull in the china shop, he's a scalpel. Methodical and precise. Kicks in a door. Kills the bad guy behind it. Instantly whirls, dropping two more in the corridor. Repaints the walls with crimson.

Another door. A maid SCREAMS. A Zeta looms over her shoulder, gun to the head. A human shield.

ZETA

Move, and she-

BAM, Frank third eyes him in the middle of the ultimatum. The maid SCREAMS some more.

He keeps going.

Around the corner. Straight into another merc. They FIRE at the same time. Frank's right arm spews red, goes limp. He tosses the gun into the left. Annihilates the fucker.

Keeps going. The watchword, my friends, is "relentless".

INT. VILLA - ELSEWHERE

Simon and Vic advance. RPG SCREAMS. Massive, contained detonation. Knocked ass over teacups. Vic takes a piece of shrapnel through the side. Simon's leg is shredded. Both hurt bad. Simon grits through the pain.

SIMON

You ok, Rasputin?

Vic pulls out the bloody piece of jagged metal. Rises back on his feet. Zetas coming toward them through the smoke. Vic stabs the first one with the shard. Grabs his gun. Shoots the second, third, forth guy, slinging corpses out of the way.

Turns around. Extends his hand to Simon. A hint of steel,

VIC
The name is Vic. Not Ivan. Or
Boris. Or Rasputin. We clear?

Simon eyes him. Blasts straight at Vic, BAM, BAM, BAM.

Behind him another Zeta joins his comrades.

SIMON
Next time I'll remember.

Takes Vic's hand. They limp onward, together.

INT. STUDY - DAY

Eduardo surrounded by his own bodyguards. A lot of them.

EDUARDO
Shoot anyone who tries coming
through. Even if it's our guys.

They wait. Sounds of scuffle. Gunfire. Footsteps. Closer. They RIDDLE the door with enough lead to turn whomever is behind it into a pencil. Then,

The window BURSTS inward. Terry comes flying through. Hanging off an abseil rope. The other end attached to the rooftop.

Takes out half the room before he even lands. The other half reloads in a hurry and OPENS UP. A frenzy of muzzle flashes.

Terry gets hit. Again. Again. And again.

But he refuses to go gentle into that good night.

Bullet for bullet. A blood-splattered, death-defying demon. Eduardo hides behind his minions. Loses his cool.

EDUARDO
Kill him!!! KILL HIM!!!

Finally Terry succumbs. Goes down.

The survivors shoot him so more, just to be sure. Approach cautiously. Turn the body over, guns still leveled...

Two things become obvious:

A) That same shit-eating grin, permanently frozen in death.

B) He's holding a concussion grenade. The pin has been pulled.
On Eduardo, a second before he gets ERASED by an explosion.

EXT. VILLA

The window vomits flame and chunks of the kingpin. Ding dong,
the witch is dead.

INT. VILLA

Diaz reacts. To the Zetas ushering him along the escape route.

DIAZ

Faster.

They rush down the hall, sweep the kitchen, all clear, through
the side entrance, car is already waiting, almost there-

Frank steps into their path. The Ghost of Christmas Past.

Simultaneously Vic emerges behind them. Meanwhile,

Simon pops up on the left.

Three way crossfire. But just as we brace ourselves for the
climactic shoot-out,

FRANK

Ten million!

Both groups paint one another with laser dots. But no one
pulls the trigger. Yet.

FRANK

There's ten million in the cab of
that truck. Cash. Divide it any way
you want. One time offer.

Beat.

LEAD ZETA

What do we have to do?

FRANK

Walk away.

DIAZ

He's lying! He doesn't have the money!

FRANK

He knows I do. He paid me.

DIAZ

(to the Zetas)
I'll double it!!!

FRANK

Twenty million later to fight now.
Maybe you get all of us. Maybe you
don't. But we'll certainly get some
of you. Or ten million in cold hard,
interest free to do nothing at all.

SIRENS in the distance. Zeta consider his options. Pure menace,

LEAD ZETA

You killed a lot of my friends.

FRANK

(shrugs)
More for you.

Lead Zeta grins like an alligator. Lowers the weapon.
Gestures for his underlings to do the same.

LEAD ZETA

Via con Dios.

They depart, abandoning their master. SIRENS, closer now.

On Diaz. Reasonably calm under the circumstances.

DIAZ

I thought you were a practical man.

FRANK

So did I. Guess we were both wrong.

Diaz refuses to give up. Still confident he can talk, think,
cheat his way out,

DIAZ

Police will be here shortly. You won't
have time to escape, not in the shape
you're in. All this, plus a dead
Mayor...Hell is nothing compared to a
Mexican prison. Especially if you're a
gringo. Although I doubt you'll even
live that long. (beat) I can still make
it all go away. It's not too late for a
happy ending.

BAM, one bullet. Right between the eyes.

FRANK

Yes, it is.

Diaz dies with an expression of supreme surprise written all
over his features.

Here comes the cavalry. They don't run. There's no point.

SIMON
Think we can take them?

VIC
(brass tacks)
Nope. We're fucked.

SIMON
Great. So much for a Butch and
Sundance moment.

VIC
At least you get a chance to die
with a friend. (to Frank) You too.

A look between them. No longer a threat. The irony of it all,

FRANK
When it's over, and if we're both
still standing.

VIC
Yeah.

Cars RIP SLIDE to a stop, unleashing a small army.

COPS
Drop your weapons!!! Drop them!!!

They don't. They are going to die anyway. Might as well be here
and now. They just wait for the inevitable. Here it comes...

Ortega strides through the ranks. Takes in the devastation.
The corpses. Last but not least, Diaz. Beat.

ORTEGA
I must say this is a first. Even
for me.

The cops wait for his order to fire. So do our guys.

FRANK
Would you believe me if I said that
makes two of us?

Ortega mulls it over. Shrugs. Que sera...

ORTEGA
Everything happens once if you live
long enough. (beat) Newly minted
Mayor dies fighting crime. Like
father, like son. Guess we'll have to
name a school after him or something.

Frank stares at him. Genuinely surprised.

FRANK

You knew.

ORTEGA

I suspected. You don't spend thirty six years in this shithole without having an instinct about these things. Or when to keep your mouth shut. That's why I tried to disarm you. And again, back at the polls.

FRANK

Why didn't you tell me?

ORTEGA

Would you have believed me?

FRANK

No.

ORTEGA

That's the trouble with you Americans. You always think you know better.

He sighs. Glances at Diaz.

ORTEGA

I meant it when I said he would have made a good Mayor. His father was too honest for his own good. He didn't have that problem. (beat) I trust you won't be staying for too long.

FRANK

Next plane out.

ORTEGA

Good. See that you're on it.

He gives them a two fingered salute, nods to his men and strides back to the cruiser.

INT. RICO'S APARTMENT - DAY

Maria opens the door. Eyes red with grief.

FRANK

I'm sorry.

She doesn't say anything. What is there to say. He extends a package bulging with bills. Blood seeps from beneath the sleeve.

FRANK

Four million. This would have been his share.

She doesn't take it.

MARIA

Are you trying to buy my gratitude?
Or your own peace of mind?

FRANK

Neither. Some things are not for
sale, even if the price is right.
(beat) He didn't die for this. He
died... because he wanted something
better. For himself. For you. Don't
let it be in vain.

Beat. She takes the offering. Andres peers from behind-

FRANK

Hey.

MARIA

Andres, go back to your room!

FRANK

It's OK. I was just-

MARIA

(it's not)

Go back to your room!

FRANK

Don't worry. I'm leaving.

He delivers on his word. Until,

ANDRES (O.S.)

Were you my father's friend?

Frank slows. Turns. Holds the boy's gaze.

FRANK

Yes, I was. (beat) He was the
bravest man I've ever known.

Out. Maria watches him go. Something changes in her eyes.

Woman and child framed in the doorway. So close. So far away.

INT. AIRPORT ROTUNDA - BAR - DAY

Simon. Vic. Frank. Patched up best they could, under the
circumstances. Slumped in the seats. Silence. Then,

SIMON

Three weeks of hell. I'll never dance
again. All for a lousy ten grand.
Tomorrow more assholes will come along
and take Diaz's place. And Montero's.

Nobody argues with him. Because they are too drained. In too much pain. And because they know he's right.

All that is left is one question,

SIMON
Was it worth it?

FRANK
(simply)
You tell me.

He takes out a Zippo. Lights a shot of tequila. A blue flame blossoms.

FRANK
Rico.

Another.

FRANK
Terry.

Another.

FRANK
Roy.

They clink the rest. Drink in silence, same as before. Except this time it's no longer heavy.

Sit there. Watch the world go by. Like old friends.

All around them tourists, families, businessmen, people who have never fired a gun or taken a life, scurry about with purpose. Perhaps some of them might even wonder about these three battered strangers and the burning alcohol, as they pass by. Perhaps not. Either way, they will never know about the long road these men travelled to get to this bittersweet moment, or why it will stay with them for the rest of their lives...

FADE OUT

THE END