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AGAINST A BULLET

Current Draft
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"If one were to say in a word what the condition of being a samurai is, its basis lies first in devoting one's body and soul to his master."

-Hagakure: The Book Of The Samurai

"I pledge my client my loyalty and at all times will respect his privacy and his secrets. I vow to protect my client in every way possible and will always put his needs ahead of mine. If necessary, I vow to defend my client's life at the sake of my own, but pray that my skills are such as to keep us both out of harm's way."

-The Oath Of The Bodyguard

"We deal in lead, friend"

-Steve McQueen, "Magnificent Seven"

Five Were Hired To Protect Him

Five Hundred Were Hired To Kill Him

BLACK. From within the darkness we hear the shrill, sustained sound of a BUZZER. Abruptly a peephole cover SLIDES open--

--KU-CHUNG...giving us a glimpse of the man on the other side. FRANK. Late 40's. Off the rack suit. Glasses. Briefcase in hand. Pass him on the street and you'd never look twice.

FRANK
I'm here for Chow.

A pair of big bovine eyes gape back.

DOORMAN
We don't serve food here fuckhead!

FRANK
Mr. Chow sent me, Mensa.

The peephole SLAMS SHUT.

EXT. ALLEY - SAN FRANCISCO CHINATOWN - NIGHT

A beat later, a reinforced steel door CLANGS open and a massive ASIAN MAN emerges, looking like a tattooed redwood tree in a tank top. He grabs up a bar stool sitting near the wall, gripping it menacingly.

He then glares down at Frank, chest-bumping him. Frank fishes for a cigarette, lights up, breathes smoke.

FRANK
You're invading my personal space.

REDWOOD
How 'bout I bust your fucking head?

FRANK
Now you're threatening my safety.

REDWOOD
Fuck you white boy!

FRANK
Now you're using abusive language.

The Redwood brings that bar stool down on Frank like Thor's hammer-- Frank slips it and counters with a vicious, Frazier-like left hook, then a conscious-cancelling overhand right.

The tree falls hard. Face first. Hands at his sides. *Ugly.*

FRANK
Now you're knocked out cold.

INT. BUILDING - NIGHT

A long, warren-like corridor, peeling blue paint and lit with bare bulbs. Frank is led along by JIAN, a Triad Lieutenant.

JIAN

Why'd you punch our doorman out?

Frank doesn't respond, instead he tenders his shoulder-holster with a Rhino 357 Revolver hung inside to Jian as two GOONS frisk him for any concealed weapons.

JIAN

Man of few words huh? You what we call a '*Hundan*' in China: A *Badass*.

One of the goons laughs. Frank grins.

FRANK

'*Hundan*' huh?

A staircase leads up. Frank follows Jian. Somewhere in the darkness ahead a TECHNO BEAT POUNDS. Louder. Stronger. Until--

--WE ENTER an underground Asian rave club. Instant sensory overload. Strobing lights shred reality into snapshots. A wild throng of patrons grind on the dance floor, flying high on coke, X, acid, shrooms and God knows what else.

The Goons push through the crowd. Frank follows, clocking several ARMED GUARDS as they pass through and scale up another set of stairs, past two GIRLS making out and some DUDE, drunk and stoned and spun, head-butting the wall.

INT. BACKROOM OFFICE - NIGHT

Soundproof walls muffle the CHAOS outside. Four CHINESE guys lounge/loiter, playing X-Box and smoking bongos while they gorge on Mu-Shu pork. They're all triad/tattoo-sleeved.

The appropriately handled BOBBY FAT, devours takeout, stuffing potstickers into his maw as he eyes Frank suspiciously. A .380 HK PISTOL rests on the table in front of him. Fat speaks to Jian. *WE SUBTITLE CANTONESE*.

FAT (CANTONESE)

Who the hell is this?

JIAN (CANTONESE)

Chow's bagman. He's clean Mr. Fat.

Fat scowls up at Frank.

FAT (IN CANTONESE)

Where's Chow?

FRANK
I don't speak Chinese.

FAT
(in perfect English now)
I asked where Chow was.

Frank regards Fat for a moment. This small grin forms.

FRANK
Is your name really 'Fat?'

Fat glowers back. His wide mouth glistens with grease.

FRANK
Your mother must have majored in
'irony.'

FAT
What?

FRANK
(back to business)
You don't do this a lot, do you?
Well I do. So let me run point.

Frank sets the case on the table, POPS it open. Money. Lots.

FRANK
You take this. Return the kidnapped
boy to me. Then you and team Won
Ton there can get back to your
X-Box and Mu-Shu and bong smoke.
(beat, big fuck you grin)
Sounds like a slam-dunk, doesn't
it?

WONG
Oh, so you like this, like, super
cool, non-nonsense, Clint Eastwood-
type motherfucker huh?

JIAN
He's a *Hundan* Bobby. A real thug!
He punched Dong out!

FRANK
Wait, your doorman is named 'Dong'?
(laughing now)
No wonder he's so big. He must've
been *tortured* as a kid.

Fat snickers, studies Frank, then addresses his crew.

FAT (IN CANTONESE)
*I don't like this. For all we know,
this whiteboy's an undercover cop.*

JIAN (IN CANTONESE)
Does he look like a cop to you?

Fat turns to one of the henchmen.

FAT (IN CANTONESE)
*Kill him. Then cut off the little
 fucker's thumb and send it to Chow.
 Tell him the price is now triple.
 Either he pays or no more piano
 lessons for his little Prince.*

This gets a laugh from the lapdogs. Har-har. Frank lingers.

FRANK
 What's funny?

FAT
 I told them a joke. Chinese humor.
 You wouldn't understand.

FRANK
 Wait, I got a joke. You want to
 hear it?

Fat and Jian trade glances. Fat burps. Wipes his chin.

FAT
 Yeah. Sure. Let's hear your joke.

FRANK
 OK. *Knock-knock.*

WONG
 Who's there?

FRANK
 '*Hundan doesn't mean*'

FAT
 (sneering)
 '*Hundan doesn't mean who?*'

FRANK
 Hundan doesn't mean 'badass.'
 (to Jian)
 It means 'asshole'...asshole.
 (grins, perfect Cantonese)
You should have taken the money.

Frank pivots and plants a vicious elbow to Jian's face. Cartilage crunches, blood bursts, Jian bleats like a sheep. Before the room can react Frank kicks the table into Fat, pinning him to the wall, inertia slides Fat's .380 back toward Frank, who lunges for it, snags, spins and sites down--

--Team Won Ton, already mid-draw on their weapons--

BAM-- BAM-- Frank POINT BLANKS one, then another, two to the sternum apiece, center-punching them prone.

The third thug clears his holster, Frank double-taps him, chest high. The thug wild FIRES wide into the ceiling, plaster explodes above.

Fat shoves the table back, ducks down, groping for the hold out piece on his ankle. Frank FIRES-- **BAM!** Misses. Suddenly Frank's hit. A nasty concussive jolt that steals his air, one that feels like a vintage Tyson hook to the heart.

He falls, flailing-- and realizes he's been shot.

He lands on his ass, digs, burning his finger tips on the pancaked 9mm rounds smouldering in his bullet-proof vest.

He looks over-- Team Won Ton is alive and well and *pissed...*

...and they're all strapped into Kevlar body armor like Frank, which makes him wheeze in this horribly strained rasp--

FRANK

-you gotta be fucking kidding.

Frank HEARS this ugly little laugh-- and looks up to SEE Fat leering at him from behind the barrel of his back-up .38. Then, from nowhere-- A head shot from hell. *And Fat is fried.*

The rest of Team Won Ton stare at their now deceased boss. Staggered. Shocked. Where did that bullet come fro-- *another head shot takes the middle member out*. His pals split off wide to either side.

Frank takes advantage and blasts them dead where they sit. Standing and crossing to them as he FIRES. He deadchecks both bodies and reloads, wincing in pain as he unfastens the vest, speaking into a small comm-link secreted on his suit.

FRANK

Jesus. You can't shoot anyone in the chest anymore.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

SNIPER'S POV: a REVERSE SHOT on Frank barely visible through a tiny barred window across the street...WE TRACK ALONG THE BARREL of a BULLPUP SNIPER RIFLE, toward a man we'll call:

ROY

I know, what's the world coming to.

INT. BACK ROOM OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Frank dumps the vest. Regards the surrounding carnage.

FRANK

Did God loan you that gun? What the hell did you hit 'em with?

ROY (O.S.)

.223 Penetrator, Green Tip armor-piercing rounds. All that brick and plaster in there, I had to allow for a little 'margin of error'.

FRANK

That's a lot more than 'a little'.

Frank grabs Fat's .380 and one of the Team Won Ton's Glocks and stalks toward a deadbolted door at the far end of the office, guns akimbo-- He kicks that door down.

A little CHINESE BOY is there. No more than six. Cuffed to the bed. Cheeks stained with tears. Frank approaches slowly, waist-bands both guns. The boy shrinks away, scared.

Frank kneels down, his demeanor softening, but just barely...

FRANK

(as he removes the cuffs)
It's ok son...Your father sent me.

He hesitates, searching Frank's eyes, then just bursts into blubbering tears. He wraps the boy in his discarded Kevlar.

EXT. ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

Roy removes the Rifle's long suppressor and reloads.

FRANK

We're walking out.

ROY

I got your six.

FRANK

(to little boy)
I want you to cover your ears and keep them covered.

The little boy nods and does as he's told.

INT. BACK ROOM OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Frank produces a Zippo. Holds it up to a sprinkler--

--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 fires can spread rapidly and mass casualties are a concern. Anyway--

--INT. CLUB - NIGHT

On the dance floor the crowd gets drenched by a cold shower as the sprinklers discharge en masse. Total buzz kill. Everyone freaks. Stampedes for the exit.

Frank slips out of the office, the boy cradled in his arms. He joins the frenzied exodus.

EXT. CLUB - NIGHT

Patrons pour out, pissed off and wet. Frank stays with the herd, head down, hiding in plain sight. He breaks away up the street, SHOUTS echo behind. Frank spins, gun up. TWO GOONS hard charge, they're cut down ugly before Frank can get a shot off...Roy's Bullpup ROARS, reverbs off the buildings.

COMMOTION now. The crowd has heard the shots. Frank double-times it to a primer gray 90's FORD BRONCO, sliding the little boy into the backseat. MORE GOONS rush up the street. FIRING. The Bullpup ROARS again. Bodies crumble mid-sprint.

Frank barrels up the block in reverse, pitching the car around 180 degrees and into an alleyway. He waits. A beat later Roy drops down onto the hood and slides inside.

Frank speeds off.

INT. STUDY - MORNING

Frank watches, hawk-eyed as an ACCOUNTANT counts out he and Roy's shared cut, stacking 100's.

MR. CHOW, 50's, a rival triad boss, looks on sullenly as the money changes hands, the harsh evidence of several sleepless nights haunt his features.

CHOW

Thank you for returning my son to me. They crossed a line. My family aren't coins to be traded on.

Frank -oblivious to anything but the money- doesn't respond.

CHOW

You have children?

FRANK

(half-interested)

I have a son. *Somewhere.*

(beat, to business)

Ok, Fat plus the four dead goons, plus the ones we dropped in the street. Let's call it 5k a head, kill fee. So eight total.

CHOW

I thought your price was inclusive?

FRANK

Not when we start killing people. I made that clear. Call it 'War Tax.'

Chow nods to the Accountant, who adds 40k to the tally.

CHOW

Money is a great motivator for you?

Frank just looks up at Chow, whose gaze hardens behind the realization that Frank is merely a mercenary and nothing more. His loyalty temporary...something both bought *and* sold.

CHOW

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

FRANK

Three reasons. One, you're worth more than what they asked for. Two, you paid too quickly--

CHOW

--And the third reason?

FRANK

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

EXT. CHOW'S MANSION - GATE - MORNING

Roy waits by the car, sipping coffee. Frank hands Roy his cut. Roy whistles at the stack.

ROY

I'll bet yours is already spent.

FRANK

I'm convinced God invented Blackjack to keep me from taking over the world.

ROY

How much are you bent?

FRANK

Just a nip under a hundred K. Call it one-fifty with the vig.

They climb into the car.

ROY

I might have a gig for you.
Spotter, working with me down
south. Maybe a week's work.

FRANK

Spotter? No thanks. Now you got
something for me to shoot or *keep*
from getting shot, I'm all ears.

INT. CAR - MORNING

In the words of Willie Nelson, we're 'On The Road Again.'
Frank is quiet, detached, his adrenaline buzz has worn off
and left him fatigued. Roy is more complete, circumspect...

ROY

I always get a little weird after I
air someone out, I don't know. All
these thoughts go through my head.
I think of their apartments, just
sitting there, dishes in the sink,
unopened mail. Maybe there's a dog
waiting for 'em. It's depressing.

FRANK

Historically, second-guessing *fucks*
with process Roy. It's proven out.

ROY

I've never missed a killshot.

FRANK

Well, thinking about some dead
guy's empty apartment will pull
your aim over time, trust me.

ROY

So all the close protection details
you've done, you don't care about
the people you're protecting?

FRANK

I care about keeping them alive.

ROY

There's a difference?

FRANK

There's a big one.

A beat. They ride along. Roy processing. Then:

ROY

So you don't see the irony in your willingness to stop a bullet for a total stranger, but not give a *shit* about them otherwise?

Frank just looks over at Roy...*what do you think?*

ROY (CONT'D)

You're a *heartless* fuck, Frank.

FRANK

What do I need with heart? Cold hard cash spins this old rock Roy.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Miles removed and worlds apart. Seedy, loud, crowded, colorful and hot as hell. In a word, MEXICO. A huge POLITICAL RALLY is in progress, at the epicenter of which stands a man. 60's, silver haired, dignified, this is ALVARO DIAZ SR...and he's presently holding sway over a crowd of thousands.

On the lectern behind him is RAMIRO RICO, a watchful, vigilant cop and veteran of Alvaro Diaz's protection detail.

ALVARO DIAZ

I've been billed of late as '*The Last Honest Man In Mexico...*'

The crowd exults. Diaz remains restrained. Grim even.

ALVARO DIAZ

...My friends that isn't a cause for celebration...*that* is a cause for grave concern...for it means only that we're *failing*. We're failing if it's only the few now that can be called 'honest' or considered trustworthy.

(now, working up a lather)
For make no mistake. We are in a battle for no less than the soul of this city...a city that represents one of the last real democracies in a country corrupted by the cartels. The 'drug kingpin' Guillermo Montero and his narco-terrorists have dedicated themselves to my destruction...just as I have dedicated myself to avenging the slain policeman and reporters and judges...the ranks of those brave enough to stand against the tide of Montero's tyranny...and end it once and for all...For the soul of this city is priceless and worth fighting for...

(MORE)

ALVARO DIAZ (cont'd)
 ...and never should we, its
 citizens wave the white flag of
 surrender and let *one man, an*
outlaw, bring us all to our knees.

The crowd explodes in cheers. People rush the stage. Placards and signs make it hard to spot threats. Rico searches for would-be assassins, eyes roving the teeming mass, but it's all so overwhelming. Diaz just smiles and waves and shakes hands with his supporters, willfully ignoring his own safety.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A convoy of SUVs BLOWS into frame-- three cars, moving fast, ZERO IN on the middle.

INT. VIP SUV - MOVING

Alvaro Diaz confers with his speech writer as a watchful Rico monitors traffic movement and flow.

Three other BODYGUARDS sit sentry alongside him.

A sudden pothole JOSTLES the ride. Rico flinches. Alvaro, without looking over, intones in a patient, paternal way--

ALVARO DIAZ
 --Ramiro...

Rico shifts, resets his weight.

RICO
 Force of habit sir. Sorry.

ALVARO DIAZ
 I don't mind sitting on pins and
 needles son, I just don't like
 being constantly *reminded*.

Rico nods, removing his .45 from its holster and laying it across his lap. Diaz furrows his brow a bit at this.

RICO
 Sorry sir, God forbid something
 happens, I can't worry about
 clearing my holster.

Alvaro smiles broadly, nodding his appraisal of Rico.

ALVARO DIAZ
 Ramiro, I'm not worried about the
 bullet with my name on it, I'm
 worried about the one addressed:
 'To Whom It May Concern...'

Alvaro erupts in this rich, bellows-like laughter. Rico is confused, a little flummoxed, Alvaro clarifies this comment:

ALVARO DIAZ
If death comes for you.
It just comes for you.

Rico provides a smile of his own, by way of rebuttal.

RICO
That doesn't mean you have to smile
and shake its hand sir.

This comment produces an even *bigger* laugh from Alvaro, who nods what is obviously fond appraisal of the young officer.

ALVARO DIAZ
I've said it before and it bears
repeating. If you ever tire of life
'*in the line*' Ramiro, I could use a
man like you in my administration.
Although a career in politics is
probably a lot more dangerous than
being a cop in this country.

RAMIRO
I'll give it some thought sir.

ALVARO DIAZ
You always say that.

Rico grins over at Alvaro but sees that the older man isn't smiling at all. He's quite the opposite: Deadly serious.

ALVARO DIAZ
Mexico *needs* good men like you. In
this city. In *our* city. Honesty and
Bravery my boy...are in scarcity.

Rico nods. Understands the inherent truth there. Is mulling over its larger meanings when--

ALVARO DIAZ
--Isn't today your son's birthday?

RICO
You remembered. Yes sir, it is.

ALVARO DIAZ
He's--?

RICO
--Five. Going on fifty.

ALVARO DIAZ

Hmm. I'll be 65 here in a few more weeks. Just before election day. Where does the time go?

Alvaro leans back with another laugh, nodding.

ALVARO DIAZ

I can't remember my son Cesar at the age of 5, just that every time I turned around, he was getting *almost* as good looking as me--

--Without warning a .50 cal armor piercing slug plows through the windshield. A SPLATTER OF RED replaces the Driver's head.

We're in Rico's POV as the car FLIPS-- It's like being in the spin cycle of a particle smasher. Inertia versus gravity as the vehicle experiences the pure physical concussive shear of a 60mph, catapulting.

OUTSIDE: the Suburban barrel rolls over and over, shedding metal and glass as it slides to a shuddering halt in the middle of the freeway.

INSIDE: Rico stirs, stares at his blood-soaked hands. Everything tilted at a sickening angle -- SOUNDS muted, distorted -- Alvaro, unconscious -- men SCREAM frantically into their comms, GUNFIRE erupts.

Through the shattered back window Rico can SEE the other SUVs speeding toward them -- coming to the rescue -- but a stalled pick-up truck DETONATES just as they pass -- A VOLCANO OF FLAME AND METAL blown sideways -- the convoy is SHREDDED.

Heavy machine gun fire RIPS into the car -- daylight strafes through the holes -- the BODYGUARD next to Rico is hit in the neck, showering him with his blood -- the man gurgles, hands feebly clutching at the wound, trying to staunch the flow.

Rico, dazed, crawls out of the wreck, more instinct than training.

Outside now, pinned down by the barrage. Inside one of the blown SUVs someone POUNDS on a cracked window as he burns alive. Rico's face, filled with anguish, overcome with terror by GUNFIRE. SCREAMS. SHOUTS AND THE CACOPHONY OF COMBAT.

This is no longer an ambush. This is a massacre... Finally, mercifully, it's over.

MASKED GUNMEN converge from all directions. Faceless. Methodical. Inspecting the dead. Killing the dying.

We ROUND the mangled suburban along with a GUNMAN, revealing RICO, cowering behind it, right where we left him.

He looks up at his would-be-assassin as the muzzle of a tactical shotgun comes to rest against his forehead.

Rico is about to beg for his life when--

ALVARO DIAZ (O.C.)
--Leave him.

The Assassin stops and turns around. And there, staggering to his feet, is Alvaro, his visage torn and tangled and matted with gore yet still somehow strong and dignified.

ALVARO DIAZ
You're not here for him *Sicario*.
You're here for me.

The shotgun is swung down, knocking Rico out. The Assassin slowly turns on Alvaro, racking the pump...

ALVARO DIAZ
...Earn your blood money pig.

Off the deafening ROAR OF THE WEAPON, WE SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Red glow from the sirens washes over the aftermath. Flares. Bodybags. A swarm of POLICE and PARAMEDICS. A car PULLS up to the perimeter of the scene. The driver, late 20's, JFK handsome, CESAR DIAZ, son of Alvaro Diaz.

He leaves the engine running and leaps from the vehicle. Pushing through the crowd, swatting away news cameras and mics being shoved in his face. He ducks under the crime scene tape and into the arms of a COP trying to hold him back.

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

The cop gives up. Gestures toward a crumpled form under a hastily draped sheet.

Diaz approaches. Leans over. Pulls back the sheet. HOLD on his face. His horror. His grief.

A pair of expensive Italian loafers stride through the crime scene, careful to avoid the broken glass. PAN UP to their owner.

POLICE CHIEF MANOLO ORTEGA. 50's. Slick. Padded. Only a few years shy of retiring to a life of sport fishing and fucking Carnival Cruise divorcees in Puerto Vallarta.

He deliberates on what to say to Diaz as he watches a son mourn for his fallen father. Settles for the perfunctory:

ORTEGA
I'm sorry.

Diaz bites back the rage and the pain.

DIAZ
How much?

ORTEGA
Cesar--

DIAZ
--How much did they pay for my
father's life? Ten thousand?
Twenty? A hundred?

ORTEGA
How fucking dare you! Two of my men
are dead! Young cops! Cut short!
Their lives, sacrificed for his!

Ortega dials it back. Glances down at Alvaro's body.

ORTEGA
I warned your father. He wouldn't
listen. He picked this fight and
lost...Leave town Cesar. *Tonight.*

DIAZ
The election is in three weeks.

ORTEGA
Your father's campaign is over--

DIAZ
--I'm taking his place. I'm running
by proxy & declaring my candidacy.

ORTEGA
You have no political experience.

DIAZ
I have my father's name.

ORTEGA
And every last one of his enemies.
Including the man who just murdered
him.

DIAZ
I don't fear Montero anymore than
my father did.

ORTEGA
(pointing to the body)
And look what that did for him.
(beat, severe)
(MORE)

ORTEGA (cont'd)
 I'm not watching another cop take a bullet that belongs to you and I'm not dedicating anymore manpower to this. You want protection Cesar, you find it somewhere else--

SMASH TO BLACK. And then we hear a *sexy whisper*:

FEMALE VOICE
 Vic... Oh, Vic...

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Close on the afore-mentioned VIC. Mid-20's. Lean, handsome, lived-in face. Body like a roadmap of battles, won and lost. He's sleeping. Or at least trying to.

A plush bedroom. Sunlight plays Peeping Tom through the drapes. A hot BLONDE is draped across Vic, her fingers walking down his torso and continuing south. She begins working him below frame as she leans in and whispers:

BLONDE
 ...Rise and shine.

VIC
 (eyes still closed)
 Honey, he's liable to fall off in your hand as hard as he played last night. He's calling it quits.

BLONDE
 (glancing down, sly smile)
 Well let's let the coach have a little chat with him, see if she can coax him out of retirement.

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!

SHIT! Silent panic. Vic scrambles to get the hell out of Dodge. Wrestles with his pants.

VIC
 (whispers harsh/low)
Fuck me running! Are you serious!?

BLONDE
 (exaggeratedly loud)
 Sweetheart! Hey! I thought you weren't back till noon!

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

Vic zips up, throws on his shirt and dashes out.

EXT. SUBURBS - MORNING

Sneaks around the back...and right into the HUSBAND, balding, pudgy and two decades the blonde's senior. *HOLY SHIT!*

VIC

Jesus!
(thinking fast)
Get down!

He grabs Pudgy and pushes him down into a squat, alongside.

HUSBAND

What are you-

VIC

Keep it down! She almost saw me just now! I just snuck into the garage and put a GPS tracker on her Range Rover. Now she can't make a move without me knowing about it.

HUSBAND

Oh right, right. Is this going to cost me any extra? Because we agre--

VIC

No, no, it's all part of the, *extensive* service plan I provide. I've been here staked out on the place all night. I'm pretty sure you have nothing to worry about.

HUSBAND

(hopeful)
You really think so?

VIC

(pats him on the back)
Your wife is a very satisfied woman my friend. Take my word for it.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

A shabby, beat-to-shit '78 El Camino. Vic climbs behind the wheel. Snags a warm can of beer from the glove box, swigs. He pulls into traffic, cutting someone off. Gets an angry HORN.

DRIVER (O.S.)

Asshole!!!

He toasts the pissed-off driver, raising his beer to the rear-view mirror.

VIC
 ...And proud of it.

Vic's cellphone RINGS. He answers.

VIC
 What's up?

CALLER (V.O.)
 Someone's been asking about you.
 Well not you specifically, but
 somebody 'crazy, cheap and good.'

VIC
 'Crazy, Cheap and Good' huh? Are
 they also looking for Unicorns and
 the Lost City Of Atlantis?

CALLER (V.O.)
 Do I tell them to fuck off?

VIC
 What are they offering up-front?

CALLER (V.O.)
 50K is what's promised, plus
 travel, housing and chow.

VIC
 Where?

CALLER (V.O.)
Mexico.

VIC
 Fuck. Weapons?

CALLER (V.O.)
 Whatever cold gear you can pass
 through customs.

Vic stares at that court date.

VIC
 Mexico means cartels. Means
 bullets. Means Bad Hombres.

CALLER (V.O.)
 I'll call 'em back now and tell 'em
 you're not interested--

VIC
 --Nah, don't do that...I'm bored
 stiff banging housewives...and now
 have visions of Mezcal and Donkey
 Shows, dancing in my head.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

CLOSE on an Aeromexico cart being pushed along the aisle by a gorgeous STEWARDESS. She passes by a guy engrossed in a game on his iphone.

His name? Fuck you. *That's* his name. But for the purposes of this document let's call him TERRY. Japanese-American. 30's. If Lee Marvin and Chow Yun Fat fucked...Well, *there you go*.

The stewardess wheels past. A sudden change in air pressure sends a coffee cup plummeting to the floor.

A hand catches it without spilling a drop. PAN UP to the face that's attached. Mid 30's. Aussie. Rugged build. Fierce eyes offset by a permanent shit-eating, shark's grin...SIMON.

SIMON

Hand-eye is *everything* love.

She stares at him, stunned. How the hell did he--? Terry reaches out from the other side of the aisle. Knocks three items off the cart.

SIMON CATCHES THEM ALL BEFORE THEY LAND.

Terry and Simon lock eyes now. Two strangers, two vagabond samurai sensing an equal. An unspoken challenge.

Simon cracks his neck. Motions for her to move a bit. Unbuckles his seat belt. Steps in the middle of the aisle.

*...and explodes up into a fucking **backflip**.*

Now the whole cabin stares, gobsmacked.

Simon bows theatrically. Collects some applause. Sits back down. Smirks at Terry. "Beat that."

Terry nods. Then without warning -- leaps up, parkouring off the seat back and up to the overhead bins, spinning back and suspending himself there, arms and legs locked out.

He stares down at Simon. Then drops to the aisle and takes his own bow, collecting an even *greater* round of applause from the passengers and the cabin crew.

Simon grins that shark's grin, extending his hand.

SIMON

Ahhh, fuck ya mate!

Terry ignores the handshake and sits back down, resuming his game. Simon scowls.

EXT. MEXICO - AIRPORT - DAY

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

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

A CUSTOMS OFFICIAL lazily peruses a well-travelled passport.

CUSTOMS
Purpose of your visit?

REVERSE on the traveller. None other than:

FRANK
Pleasure.

The Customs Official appraises him: Just another gringo in town to drink their tequila, buy their trinkets and fuck their women.

Beat. Stamp.

CUSTOMS
Welcome to Mexico.

INT./EXT. CAB - DAY

Frank sits in the back of a cab. Watches the scenery. The nameless metropolis, vast, frenetic, choking on smog and gridlock. Snapshots: PUSHERS and WHORES crowd street corners.

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

A SHOP OWNER splashes a bucket across the chalk-outlined stretch of sidewalk. Bloody water rushes into the gutter.

INT. HIGHRISE OFFICES - DAY

Alvaro Diaz beams proudly from a pile of discarded election posters. His campaign headquarters is all but deserted and has the air of an abandoned morgue. A lonely RECEPTIONIST lingers behind a desk, bored out of her skull.

Frank approaches. She perks up, affixing herself with one of those quasi-professional, polished/plastic smiles.

RECEPTIONIST
Hello. How may I--

FRANK
--Tell him Frank is here.

That pasted on smile holds fast.

RECEPTIONIST
Follow me please.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Frank is led inside. Posters of Alvaro Diaz still adorn the walls. Black candles burn on the counter nearby.

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Diaz will be with you shortly.

She exits. Frank fetches a napkin, fills it with ice, presses it against his forehead.

Fan blades recycle overheated air as Simon walks in.

SIMON

Now I know why Mexican cabbies hang crucifixes off their rear-view mirrors. Fuckin' hell mate. Saw my life flash two or three times on the way over here from the airport.

Frank doesn't reply. Simon sits down across from him.

SIMON

I think stop lights are more of a "suggestion" down here.

(beat)

So you labor or management?

Frank remains mute.

SIMON

I'm Simon.

FRANK

I'm sure you are.

Simon tries to think of something clever to say. Draws a blank. Fishes out a silver dollar. It travels across his knuckles with alacrity and a lightning swiftness.

Terry strolls in. Settles apart from the rest at the head of the table. Immediately fires up his iPhone game.

SIMON

Should've seen this coming.

Terry ignores him. Chews gum. Inflates. POP. Inflates. POP. Frank stares down Terry with pure disdain.

Three Alpha males in one room. You could cut this tension with a dull butter knife...Make it four men as Vic enters.

Instantly the temperature in the room spikes a few thousand degrees. Frank tenses. Glowers. Vic glowers back.

Two gunslingers separated by seething hatred, a *whole lot* of bad history...and only a few feet of wood.

VIC
 Long time Frank.
 (beat, mean as shit)
 You look, old.

FRANK
 And you look like the 'ass-end' of
 some very poor personal decisions.
 (beat, sore spot)
 --still pissed about Mary Ellen?

Vic looks like he wants to come across the table for Frank.

VIC
 Say her name one more time and I'll
 show you *exactly* how I feel about
 her.

Things are going from a simmer to a boil, fast.

SIMON
 I do love being in a room with
 people that legitimately don't like
 one another. I find it so
comforting for some fucking reason.

Diaz's entrance couldn't be more well timed.

DIAZ
 Gentlemen. I can see we're already
 off to an auspicious start.

VIC
 (a finger at Frank)
 I'm not working with this guy.

DIAZ
Then you're not working for me.

FRANK
 This kid gets all of you *killed*.

DIAZ
 (*cut-the-shit-right-now*)
 Whatever pissing matches you've had
 in the past, leave them there. You
 will all go forward in this fight
 with an undying devotion to this
 protection detail *or not at all*.

The room goes quiet. The only sounds we hear are emanating
 from Terry's game, which he still hasn't stopped playing.
 Diaz presses past the formalities, getting to the point.

DIAZ

I'm prepared to make each of you wealthy if *you're* prepared to keep me alive for the next three weeks.

VIC

Why the time frame?

DIAZ

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

Diaz. A hint of pain. It's hard for him to talk about this.

DIAZ

He was going after the Narco kingpin Guillermo Montero. A man who has put most of Mexico in a chokehold. Corruption. Murder. Kidnapping. This city, *my city*, is the key to his power. I can't let him wrest it away and rob Mexico of its last crown jewel.

(beat)

My father was assassinated for having that same virtue.

(beat)

I am Montero's next likely target.

VIC

What about local law enforcement?

DIAZ

Useless. Cops here make less than a *quarter* of what they do in your country, so most are corrupt. A fraction of the honest ones have been cutdown alongside my father.

FRANK

And the political opposition?

DIAZ

Bought and paid for. Puppets handpicked by Montero. They have mistresses, planes, beachfront homes and no conscience.

(beat)

Rumors have surfaced that my father was *sold out* by these very men for a bounty of 10 million American dollars.

The room reacts to that figure. Frank in particular. Simon now circles the real topic du jour for the men at this table.

SIMON

So what does 'wealthy' mean to *you* Mr. Diaz? Let's say we attach a figure just for fuck's sake, eh?

DIAZ

50 thousand per man, paid up front.

SIMON

Ahhh, that's not wealth mate.

VIC

That's not even *bus fare* for a bodyguard in Mexico.

FRANK

And I don't want to burst any balloons here pal, but *the bullseye* you're gonna have painted on your back will be big enough for just about any swinging dick to hit.

VIC

And some street kid with a zip-gun on a ten speed would do you for a *fraction* of that price.

SIMON

If you don't have eyes in the back of your head, I'd consider growing some.

Terry finally pipes up from behind his Iphone.

TERRY

And a set of rhinoceros-sized nuts while you're at it.

The group takes a moment to regard Terry with curiosity.

DIAZ

I'm aware of the dangers, both peripheral and direct.

A grim beat. Frank cuts to the quick.

FRANK

The money's bullshit. Sorry. You wanna dress up your little David & Goliath story? Disguise it as 'moral imperative'? Be my guest, but it's still a *bullet festival* and I value my life a lot more than 50 fucking grand.

Diaz starts to rise.

DIAZ
 100 thousand upfront. *Half a million each*, if I get elected.
 (off their looks)
 I have wealthy patrons.

That figure gets their attention. Frank sits back down.

DIAZ
 The money's already in escrow. Automatically set to wire after my inauguration. I win, you win.

FRANK
And if you lose?

DIAZ
I won't lose. Not if I'm still alive on election day.

FRANK
 But *if* you lose--

DIAZ
--you still get paid.

SIMON
 I say we go a quarter mil now, a quarter mil later.

DIAZ
No. I'm not a rich man. I've sold everything I owned and borrowed every cent I could. All to make this possible. None of you give a damn about my struggle, *so I'm investing you in my survival*.

A long beat. The group deliberates. Diaz has successfully baited the lure and left it in the water, *just long enough...*

FRANK
 ...Assuming we're in.

VIC
 Don't speak for the group Frank.

FRANK
 Close protection team is a *five* man detail. We need a local. Someone who knows the city inside and out and can't be bought off.

DIAZ
 I've got just the man.

RICO (V.O.)
Why me?

INT. PRECINCT - CUBICLE - DAY

RICO. He's traded plain clothes for a neatly pressed uniform.

DIAZ
 Everyone on that convoy was supposed to die. Including you.

FRANK
 Which would immediately make me *suspect you*.

RICO
 What are you talking about?

FRANK
 Last soul left alive is either a lucky sonofabitch or an *inside man*.

Rico lunges for Frank. Diaz tangles him up.

RICO
 You think I set up the man that I dedicated myself to protecting!?

FRANK
 And did a shit job of? Yeah. I do. But his son trusts you and 100 thousand for 3 weeks worth of work is more than you'll make in years.

RICO
 I don't give a *shit* about the money Gavacho! This is my country!

DIAZ
 Frank, this man is incorruptible--

--Frank suddenly pulls his weapon and has it between Rico's eyes in a split-second. Eyes that flood with dread and fear. The moment suspends and seems to freeze in time...then--

FRANK
 (to Diaz)
 --You're right. He's not corrupt.
 (beat, back at Rico)
 He's completely fucking *harmless*.

Frank stares daggers a moment longer before holstering his weapon and stalking off, leaving a stunned Rico in his wake.

DIAZ

(placating Rico)

I'm sorry. This man and the others
guarding me now...they're *mercenaries*.
They love money and little else.

Rico says nothing. Just studies the floor. Allowing for the
sudden flush of humiliation to ebb off. Then.

RICO

I don't want my wife to have to
bury her husband or my children,
their father...but I believe
Montero to be something so...
Something that must be stopped.
(indicates Frank, scoffs)
These gringos though, they *don't*
care about us! In their country we
clean their homes, wash their cars.

DIAZ

Then I *beg of you* now, as a man and
a fellow Mexican. Help me.

(beat)

My father told me about how he was
encouraging you to consider a life
in politics. Nudging you along now
and then. He saw you as a natural
leader Ramiro and with the *outrage*
you feel, couldn't this just as
easily be you taking up the mantle
for him right now?

(off Rico's reaction)

Don't let Montero lay siege to this
city and overrun it. Make this last
stand with me. Let's both make my
father's legacy manifest...We can
win. *I know we can*.

INT. PRECINCT - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Diaz rejoins Frank. Still upset by his encounter with Rico.

DIAZ

Why did you do that to him?

FRANK

It's a measurement. I want to know
the men I go to war with.

DIAZ

What did putting a gun to his head
tell you?

FRANK

That he's riding in the backseat.
That he doesn't have the salt to
step in front of a bullet for you.

DIAZ
You don't know that.

FRANK
No, I do. *And so do you.* You saw it
in his eyes *the second* I put that
pistol between them.
(beat)
I wouldn't trust him.

DIAZ
My friend, trust is something too
valuable to loan *any* of you.

Frank just deadpans Diaz.

INT. RICO'S APARTMENT - EVENING

At the dinner table. His wife, MARIA. Traces of tears.
Birthday streamers hang overhead: '*HAPPY 5TH MATEO!*'

The tumult of KIDS PLAYING, marauding through the house,
oblivious. Rico picks at a piece of birthday cake. Maria sips
a glass of wine, wiping her eyes.

RICO
Tell me you don't want me to do it.

MARIA
I can't.

RICO
Why not?

She looks at him. Fighting these conflicting emotions.

MARIA
Because then you wouldn't be the
man I married.

Rico. Haunted by the paralysis of fear he experienced before
Alvaro Diaz died...and from the incident with Frank.

RICO
I'm not sure I was *ever* the man you
married.

MARIA
What do you mean by that Ramiro?

Rico drops his fork in the birthday cake.

RICO
When that motorcade was hit Maria,
I just, *froze*. I didn't fight back.
Everything just *numbed*.

MARIA

You'd never experienced anything like that. And I couldn't handle it when I did. My thoughts were of you and Mateo. Not saving Alvaro. Not doing my job.

MARIA

That would happen to anyone love.

RICO

Not a professional. They train to adjust and adapt *quickly* in crisis.

Maria won't let her husband off the hook that easily.

MARIA

Do you believe in what Alvaro's son is doing? Cesar?

RICO

He seems to have his father's will, but not his wisdom. He's hired these gringos, these *gunmen*--

MARIA

--Do you believe in him, Ramiro?

RICO

I believe we want the same things, but that belief isn't bullet-proof.

MARIA

And what's that quote that you love so much? '*The only thing necessary, for the triumph of evil...*

RICO

(finishes it for her)
...is for good men to do nothing.
 (long beat, resolved)
 I'm putting you and Mateo on a train out of town today.

Rico pulls his wife onto his lap and into a deep embrace. Maybe the last one they will ever share.

INT. DIAZ'S OFFICE - DAY

Diaz arrives just as the last of his campaign HQ is loaded into the back of a nondescript moving van.

DIAZ

What's this?

FRANK
We're moving your headquarters.

DIAZ
Where?

EXT. PUBLIC STORAGE FACILITY - DAY

Vic yanks up the sliding door on a large storage unit.

DIAZ
I can't run a campaign out of here!

FRANK
It'll serve as our temporary HQ
until you formally announce.

DIAZ
Why?

FRANK
Place is fenced in with razor-wire,
requires a code to gain entry and
has cameras everywhere. All for 50
bucks a month.

SIMON
It's also the last place they would
ever look for you mate.

FRANK
Change all your numbers. Don't go
home. You either sleep here or in a
safehouse I choose. Any information
about your business and personal
life is on a need-to-know basis.
Your staff can work remotely. E-
mail and texts. No phones. What
about your family? Wife? Kids?

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

FRANK
--Send her out of the country. US
or Europe. Don't have her stay with
relatives or friends. Book multiple
destinations under different names.
Only confirm at the last second.
(beat)
Mistress? Boyfriend? Drug habit?
Anything else I need to know about?

DIAZ
What the hell are you asking me?

FRANK

I'm not concerned with your morality, only your safety. If you have a secret, a weakness, the smallest chink in your armor, they'll exploit it and use it to track you.

Waits for an answer. Diaz deliberates. With difficulty,

DIAZ

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

FRANK

If this woman resurfaces--

DIAZ

--she would never betray me.

FRANK

Always expect the worst Mr. Diaz.
That way you're rarely disappointed.

EXT. TOW YARD - DAY

The team stands before three beat-to-shit, bondo and paint-chipped junkyard relics: A 1972 Plymouth Duster, an '81 Chevy DuraVan and a '91 Ford Taurus.

FRANK

I need a separate 50k upfront.

DIAZ

For *these*? Are you nuts? Why?

FRANK

To refurbish and *retrofit*.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

The team works on 'restoring' the three vehicles. Terry, Vic and Simon toil away as Frank oversees. Diaz looks on, skeptically.

FRANK

Black Suburbans are moving targets.
More than three means motorcade.
Means *someone important is inside*.
(with a nod)
Nobody gives these vehicles a second glance.

DIAZ

Where did the fifty grand go?

Frank starts indicating the vehicles' various 'upgrades'.

FRANK

V-12 short stroke switchout engines. These cars will turn 600 horses apiece and look like everyday drivers. Reinforced bumpers, so we can punch through roadblocks. Run flat tires. UL Level 10 Bullet-resistant glass. And that's as much as 50k gets for three cars. The rest we *improvise*.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. SALVAGE YARD - DAY

A dump-truck offloads a pile of scrap, including rusted-out quarter inch steel plates and a freight train's cow-catcher. Frank examines the salvage.

FRANK

Industrial pig iron. Pittsburgh Steel. Perfect.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. SALVAGE YARD - NIGHT

The group works with band-saws, acetylene torches and welding guns, improvising and 'up-arming' the vehicles. Frank scrutinizes the work. Diaz seems preoccupied, anxious.

DIAZ

I need to declare my candidacy soon.

FRANK

Not until I can procure weapons. We couldn't enter Mexico with our normal load-out, so we need guns.

RICO (O.C.)

I can help with that.

Frank and Diaz turn to find RICO standing there. A gig bag over his shoulder. He sets it down on the ground.

RICO

There's an illegal firearms bazaar called 'Lugar De Las Armas.'

(beat)

(MORE)

RICO (cont'd)
 The problem is, it's in an old
 police precinct and it's protected
 by corrupt cops...and disgraced DEA
 agents.

FRANK
 Then why would they sell to us?

RICO
 They wouldn't.
 (removing his badge)
But they will sell to me.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - DAY

Rico moves through an ad-hoc security array. Metal detectors,
 followed by millimeter-wave radar machines, followed by a
 thorough frisk from fellow cops. He's cleared through.

A corpulent, porcine former DEA AGENT, fat off bribes and
 fried tortillas, escorts Rico down dual aisles of armament,
 laid out by caliber in the precinct's defunct delivery bay.

A ROGUE'S GALLERY of THUGS, KILLERS and DRUG DEALERS peruse
 these selections like Christmas shoppers. Rico takes in the
 scale of the place, the personnel, the specific weapons.

RICO
 Lot of guns. Business must be
 pretty brisk.

COPS in full riot-gear, act as 'loss prevention officers'.

RICO
 I like your 'store security.'
 (beat)
 What kind of guns are they
 carrying?

Fat Boy doesn't respond either out of boredom or
 indifference.

FAT BOY DEA AGENT
 So who you trying to kill?

Rico isn't surprised so much as chagrined by that question.

RICO
 No one in particular. Just need
 some heavier home defense.

FAT BOY DEA AGENT
 How heavy? Full-auto from semi or
 are you talking RPG, anti-
 personnel, armor-piercing--

RICO
--I have to work within a budget.

Fat Boy's face accordions down into this puckering scowl.

FAT BOY DEA AGENT
We don't do vouchers, or *discounts*
Chocho.

WE NOW SEE a small earwig transmitter in Rico's left ear.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. DURA VAN - CONTINUOUS

The team listens in.

VIC
He's gonna fuck this up Frank.

SIMON
He's a *big* bed-shitter this one.

TERRY
Snakebit.

VIC
I say we drive away, *now*.

Frank's jaw clenches tightly, then relaxes as we RETURN TO:

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - CONTINUOUS

Fat Boy glowers at Rico with growing suspicion.

FAT BOY DEA AGENT
Y'know, you remind me of a Narco I
knew, worked undercover against
Montero but couldn't keep his game
face from falling apart under
pressure.
(beat)
The same face that Montero removed
with a *straight razor*, while that
poor fuck was still alive.

Rico fights the softball-sized lump forming in his throat.

FAT BOY DEA AGENT
I call bullshit. There's something
wrong with you.

Rico quickly lays down a stack of cash and sets a list atop.

RICO
Five thousand American and weapons
specs. What's wrong with that?

Fat Boy smiles a smile that looks like someone slicing open a water-bloated beach ball before revealing the .45 AUTOMATIC tucked into the spillage over his waistband.

FAT BOY DEA AGENT
 What if I feel like hanging onto
 that money and kicking your candy
 ass out of here Pendejo?

Fat Boy reaches out and plucks the earwig out of Rico's ear--

FAT BOY DEA AGENT
 (speaking into earwig)
 --How's that sound?

INT. DURA VAN - CONTINUOUS

The team reacts.

VIC
 Fuck. He's fried.

SIMON
 Leave him. Let's go.

Frank wastes no time moving behind the wheel and turning the ignition over. The V-12 switchout ROARS to life.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - CONTINUOUS

Rico is surrounded by an armed Good Squad as Fat Boy leers, laughing as he removes the .45, this dull, predatory glare as he slowly stalks over and levels the gun at Rico's head.

Rico freezes...like he did when Frank did the same thing.
 Then:

RICO
 ...Can I leave here with my life?

Fat Boy stops short of thumbing the hammer back on the .45.

FAT BOY DEA AGENT
 Huh?

Rico, his hands raised pathetically, fairly pleading now.

RICO
 I have children and a wife.
 (beat, big gulp)
 Can I leave here with my life?

Fat Boy gawks, like he just got stumped by a quiz question.
 Then, unexpectedly:

FAT BOY DEA AGENT
 (sing-song, mocking)
*I have children and a wife, can I
 leave here with my life?*
 (snickering, snide)
 Did you mean for that to rhyme? Was
 that *rehearsed*? In advance?

The ARMED MEN around Fat Boy begin to chuckle and titter. Fat Boy milks this little moment of levity for all it's worth, laughing heartily now.

FAT BOY DEA AGENT
 That might be *the most pussy, punk-*
ass shit, that one man has ever
said to another. I'm serious!
 (beat, mocking)
Can I leave here, with my life?

The ARMED MEN now start laughing in full along with Fat Boy.

FAT BOY DEA AGENT
 I mean, what the fuck, we should
 kill him just for *saying that--!*

BOOM-- The side delivery door *IMPLODES*, folding in on itself as the Dura Van, with its cow-catcher reinforced bumper, rips through it like a sheet of tin foil.

Rico uses the diversion to dive for cover as the Armed Goon Squad unload on the encroaching van, which plows across rows of tables *and customers alike*, scattering bodies and weapons everywhere.

Fusillades pound in, spidering the bullet-resistant glass and impacting the engine block as Fat Boy and his Goon Squad try to cut the DuraVan in half.

Frank and the team fall out under *HEAVY FIRE*, overturning tables for cover and quickly finding themselves separated.

Weapons lie everywhere. Amidst piles of ammo.

The team begins foraging fast, like sugar-starved kids sifting through Halloween candy. Frank snatches up an M-4 assault rifle, *SCREAMS* over the commotion.

FRANK
 M-4! *Ammo?*

Simon looks down and *SEES boxes of bullets*, snatches one and slides them across. Frank grabs the box, *looks--*

FRANK
*NO! This is 7.62! I need 5.56
 rounds!*

Fat Boy and his Armed goon squad advance, bullets beating a deafening, impenetrable din as they flank Frank's position.

VIC
Are there mags?

Simon SEES scattered magazines, none of them loaded.

SIMON
Empties!

Terry pops the clip on a Sig Sauer 9mm. Bone dry.

TERRY
Shit.

Vic drops the double breach of a sawed off .12 gauge. *Ditto*.

VIC
THIS IS A CLUSTERFUCK FRANK!!

Fat Boy and his Goon Squad are nearly on top of them when Frank finally seizes control of the chaos.

FRANK
COORDINATE! NOW!!

The team mobilizes behind Frank's command and begins moving.

FRANK
CALLOUT!

The team individually inventory their immediate surroundings.

VIC
AK-47's! FN SCAR's! ACR's!

SIMON
7.62! .223! Steel Shot!

TERRY
Banana and high-velocity clips and 5.56 rounds!

FRANK
TRADE OUT!

NOW WE SEE the split-second precision and pinpoint synchronicity of professional warriors:

Vic and Simon transfer guns and ammo back and forth until each is locked and loaded.

Terry grabs up clips, then boxes of bullets, his fingers as fast and facile as a bank teller's as he loads them--

TERRY
--Five-Five-Six Full Metal Jacket!

FRANK

SEND IT!

Terry skips the mag across the floor to Frank, who fields it like a hot grounder, pivots up, slams the clip into the breach, shoulders the weapon and comes up BLASTING, laying down a steady stream of suppressing fire and sending Fat Boy and his Goons sprawling ass over elbow for cover.

FRANK

LOAD UP THE VAN!

Vic and Simon break cover, BLAZING away, full-auto. Fat Boy and the Goon Squad can do little but cower behind cover.

Frank, his movements greased, combat-quick, drops the spent clip and replaces it with another that Terry slides one in, last second. He starts moving tactically back toward the van.

Rico reappears, flummoxed, embarrassed, trying to toss armloads of random weapons into the back of the van, assault rifles, ammo, RPG's-- anything he can put his hands on.

Vic and Terry and Simon follow suit, shoving him aside.

Frank times his entry into the DuraVan's cab as his last round clears the M-4's chamber. He drops the still-running rig into REVERSE and barrels out of there as Fat Boy and the Goon Squad resume their assault, targeting the van's tires.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

The DuraVan goes rocketing by, sparks flying off its two bullet-torn front tires, rims raking the pavement as it passes by.

INT. DURAVAN - CONTINUOUS

Rico sits, the adrenaline surge not ebbing anytime soon. He catches Frank's glare in the rear-view mirror...and averts his eyes.

INT. STORAGE FACILITY UNIT - EVENING

Results of their raid on 'Lugar De Las Armas' are in evidence as WE PAN ACROSS the pilfered arsenal: Pistols. SMGs. Shotguns. Grenades. Clips. Body armor. Our team takes it in. Diaz looks on in awe.

FRANK

Now you can declare you candidacy.

INT. VACANT STORAGE SPACE - NIGHT

Diaz is working solo, a one-man campaign, on the phone to members of the press and announcing his intention to run.

Frank idles nearby, eyeing his G-Shock, the digital stopwatch readout ticks down...It reaches zero, an alarm beeps--

FRANK
(to Diaz)
--Time.

DIAZ
(into the phone)
Call you back in ten seconds.

Diaz disconnects and promptly rips the battery back off the cellphone he was using, drops it to the ground and smashes it under foot. He then rummages through a nearby box of burner cellphones and selects a new one.

He dials back in. Frank resets his stopwatch.

DIAZ
(into new phone)
Sorry. Where were we? Yes. This has to be an event. We need to make a big show of it somehow and I want everyone there...

Rico approaches Frank. Frank keeps his back turned, but senses Rico lingering there. Finally:

FRANK
...*"Can I leave here with my life"*.
(beat, disdainful)
He pulled a gun and you panicked and panic in this line is as habit-forming as a pack of Menthols.

RICO
What would you have done Frank?

FRANK
The exact *opposite* of what you did, since we wound up with a *shitload* of lead in the air, didn't we?
(beat)
Go home Rico. I don't even know why the hell you're here.

Rico. Staring at Frank's back. Rebukes that statement.

RICO
Because you don't care like I do and I can't even blame you. You can't care like I can Frank. It's impossible. You have the skill and the will here, but not the heart.
(beat)
And heart, is what will win out.

Frank turns back to face Rico.

RICO
You're worried *only* about your own
skin man...your own *white* skin.

FRANK
So it's just *racism* then, right?

RICO
No. It's capitalism. What
incentive, *beyond cash*, would make
you care about a bunch of Mexicans?

Frank has no retort for this. Rico turns to leave but stops.

RICO
...You have children?

A long beat, then.

FRANK
I have a son. We don't get along.

RICO
Where is he?

Frank just deadpans Rico. No reply.

RICO
My son just turned 5 two days ago.
(beat)
My father left our family when I
was barely six months old...and
until I met Alvaro Diaz, I never
knew what having one was like.
(beat)
That man treated me like his own
flesh and blood and I repaid that
kindness by letting him get gunned
down right in front of me. He was a
real hope for Mexico. *For us*. He w--

FRANK
--Rico. Tell your tales of woe
walking...and you're right.
(beat, cold)
You're gonna get me killed.
(beat, colder)
That's all I care about.

Frank's G-Shock beeps. He keeps staring at Rico as he says:

FRANK
--Time.

Rico sulks off. Frank's following stare strafes across a nearby VIC, who's field-stripping a recently acquired weapon...and who returns Frank's stare with equal enmity.

INT. STORAGE FACILITY - DAY

The grease-stained duo of Simon and Terry work on the bullet-riddled DuraVan as Frank looks on, grim.

SIMON

This rig is KIA mate. There's more bullets in that engine than there are spark plugs.

TERRY

Transmission is toast and the chassis is a tie-rod away from falling apart completely.

FRANK

So we're already down a vehicle and Diaz has been in the race for less than an hour...Wonderful.

The nearly declared candidate approaches, looking grave. He holds up a bullet...A *hollow point* to be precise.

DIAZ

This was left at the front desk.
The clerk just handed it to me.
(beat)
It's engraved.

Frank takes it from him, examines it up close. Small stenciled letters spell out: **CESAR DIAZ. R.I.P.**

FRANK

Yes it is...That didn't take long.
(beat)
Ok. We need a new campaign HQ. This place is burned.
(re: DuraVan)
Salvage anything we can off that, leave the rest to rust.
(beat)
Simon, take Rico in the Duster.
Terry you're with us in the Taurus.
Let's go.

Diaz peels off, pulling a cellphone out of his pocket and dialing.

FRANK

Don't use the same phone twice.

Diaz keeps moving off.

DIAZ
One call. Won't be but 10 seconds.

Frank is about to object, but skips it, instead loading up his things. Vic pushes past Frank brusquely, tossing his weapons bag into the backseat.

Packs and armament get loaded into the Duster and the Taurus and trunks get slammed as WE CUT TO:

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

DRIVING OUT. The city lies before them like a minefield, vast and uncertain as the Duster and the Taurus get swallowed up by the teeming, claustrophobic, mid-morning traffic.

INT. TAURUS - CONTINUOUS

Diaz stares at that bullet...Not scared so much as insulted.

DIAZ
 We need to make a stop.

FRANK
 Not an unscheduled one.

DIAZ
 It's important.

FRANK
 How important?

DIAZ
My campaign depends on it.

Frank considers Diaz's request...*Something is off.* He nods up to Terry anyway.

DIAZ
 Take a left here.

EXT. COMPOUND - GATES - DAY

High walls. Huge gate. No idea what's behind it. Terry drives up, looks around, then hits the intercom button.

VOICE (V.O.)
 Yeah?

DIAZ
 Tell him it's Cesar Diaz.

A beat before those big gates open ominously.

EXT. COMPOUND - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Lavishly appointed grounds, seemingly limitless. Vast expanses of perfectly manicured gardens, lush and well kept. Statues. Swimming pools. Soccer fields. Private golf course. An exercise in excess.

TERRY
Who owns this dump?

Diaz doesn't reply. On Frank: His 'Spidey' sense tingling. Going haywire. *What the hell is wrong-- wait.*

FRANK
Turn around.

DIAZ
Frank--

FRANK
--Terry, turn around, now--!

DIAZ
--I know what I'm doing. You have to trust me. It's too late anyway.

They come to the end of the driveway. The house itself is a magnificent brick and marble fortress, complete with watch towers and spires. Uniformed VALETS await our arrival--

--As do a slew of ARMED MEN: Hard, lean faces, devoid of mercy or emotion. Low rent, but lethal. Guys like these are the first wave of cannon fodder you feed to an assault force.

Reactions from the team now, to the opulence and the menace.

SIMON
Fuck...me...*sideways*...

They disembark.

A strapping playboy with a solid gold Rolex and a St. Tropez tan appears. Late 20's. Handsome. Perfectly groomed and oozing that acute, *ice cold charm* of the obscenely wealthy.

PLAYBOY
Cesar. An unexpected surprise.

DIAZ
Not an unwelcome one, I hope.

EDUARDO
Hardly. To what do we owe?

DIAZ

I need to speak to your father.

EDUARDO

Unfortunately he's preoccupied at the moment, but I can pass along--

DIAZ

--He'll want to hear what I have to say Eduardo. It will be of *great* interest to him.

Eduardo nods, regards Diaz a moment longer, then:

EDUARDO

Your 'guests' can wait here.

DIAZ

This is my security team and I require their proximity at all times.

EDUARDO

You're among friends and as you can see, we have our own, highly-skilled close protection team.

DIAZ

Then there's no reason not to let these men accompany me in.
(beat, waiting)
Is there?

Eduardo takes in Frank and the team and shrugs, unimpressed.

EDUARDO

Follow me.

They do as Vic gripes from the rear, to no one in particular.

VIC

This is fucking *dumb*.

FRANK

Stay light and tight.

VIC

What's the play Frank? Gonna go all Butch and Sundance and blast our way out of here? Good fucking luck.

FRANK

Shut up.

Vic hate-glares Frank from behind.

EXT. PATIO - DAY

Serene. Beautiful. The manor's owner lounges in the shade near an Olympic-sized lap pool. A cilantro-garnished mojito in one hand and a rare Cuban cigar in the other, meet--

DIAZ
--Señor Montero.

Somehow we thought he'd be taller, more menacing. He's in his 60's and projects the duality of a peasant's weathered wisdom and a grandfather's genteel bearing. Education and wealth have given him an elitist, almost European aire.

But make no mistake about this man...He built his empire on the blood and bones of his enemies.

MONTERO
Cesar Diaz. In the flesh. How is it we never met in person and you're so friendly with my son Eduardo?

DIAZ
Well, you're a busy man.

An armed coterie of GOONS hover. These men are different from the workaday gun-toters out front. These men are killers: Ex-Spec Ops...Part Praetorian Guard, part Secret Service.

MONTERO
Indeed I am. Probably more so than I would want to be at my age, particularly as my preference for--
(indicates mojito)
--these, and--
(indicates cigar)
--*these*, has grown more, *profound* in the autumn of my life.
(his face up to the sun)
I also find that I much prefer the silence and stillness of days like these.

DIAZ
Well there are ways to achieve that state of mind...*permanently*, Señor.

And with that, Diaz sets that engraved bullet down on the counter next to Montero's mojito. Montero actually *chuckles* at this, but it doesn't deter Diaz in the slightest.

DIAZ
I appreciate that extra effort with the engraving. It's the *little touches* that matter the most.

Frank bristles. His eyes scanning Montero's men. They're getting loose, shrugging their shoulder holsters slack, ready to draw down. These *Leone*-like leers, aimed back at the team.

MONTERO

Do you believe that I took your father's life boy? And is *vengeance* what you might have in mind for me?

Diaz seethes. Frank moves closer, ready to yank him to cover. The Team and Montero's men engage in this mental chess match, subtly positioning their bodies just so, removing the weight off one foot and replacing it on the other.

This is the mercenaries version of a danse macabre.

MONTERO

You know, I tell Eduardo all the time, that his generation, *your* generation, is doomed to its own indifference and the absence of *personal struggle* and yet here you are, directly confronting a man who with the briefest of conversations, could have everything you've ever loved, *removed* from this earth.

Diaz stands firm. Frank keeps his eyes roving over Montero's men, working his way to potential cover as he casually unbuttons his sports coat.

MONTERO

I did not kill your father.
And while I expect that statement to be met with the appropriate skepticisms, it happens to be true.

Montero now considers the bullet sitting on the table.

MONTERO

And I don't send bullets that way son. My method of delivery is much more direct.

DIAZ

Like the ambush of my father?
(beat, leaning closer)
Or like this?

A hideaway .22 Caliber pistol seems to leap into Diaz's hand from his sleeve-- a pistol he promptly plants right between Montero's eyes.

The moment ignites, a flashpoint of fucked up as everyone grabs for their shoulders and waists, going for their guns. Everyone draws, dead-bang on one another, point blank--

--A kill zone at close range.

Montero's men and our team square on one another as things twist into a giant clusterfuck of a Mexican stand-off. Frank immediately clocks Rico, whose aim shifts erratically back and forth-- *He looks like he's got something to prove. Fuck.*

FRANK
Rico. Tranquilo.

Rico, his eyes as frenzied as a trapped animal's, ignores him. It feels like Rico is going to start shooting, simply to prove himself-- shit is going downhill in a hurry.

Montero is apoplectic, his anger aimed right at Diaz.

MONTERO
You arrogant little FUCK!

Diaz draws the hammer back dramatically and just like that, Montero's brazen, bravado-fueled bullshit melts away like feet of clay as he stares, wide-eyed, back down that barrel.

EDUARDO
Put that fucking gun down Cesar!

MONTERO
(to his men)
KILL HIM.

Frank tries to assume the calm in the eye-of-the-storm.

FRANK
Cesar. Don't do this...or we all die. Right here. Right now.

Rico is in full flop sweat, Frank can feel him about to snap.

DIAZ
That's alright Frank. To rid my city of this pompous piece-of-shit, this goddamn *disease*, I don't mind.

MONTERO
You've just made your mortal enemy.
You're looking into the eyes of the man that is going to *end your life*.

DIAZ
Good. I wanted to set the stakes. I wanted you to know how serious I am about winning this election and putting you in prison...I'm gonna be the spark that burns your *whole world* to the ground.
(beat)
And one more thing--

--Diaz pulls the trigger-- *CLICK*. Montero flinches/startles, gasps sharp, his face beet-red, his eyes slamming shut...

...and the fucking gun wasn't even loaded.

DIAZ

That's how you issue a warning.

Diaz knocks that engraved bullet off the table as he turns to address Montero's men.

DIAZ

Decide if this is the day you want to die gentlemen...I'm ready.

EDUARDO

You won't leave here alive boy.

DIAZ

(consults his watch)

No, no, I plan to *walk out of here* right now and meet all the press and media that are gathering at your gates, so I can *officially* announce my candidacy.

(beat, to Montero)

Unless you'd all like to go out in a blaze of glory?

(beat, this icy grin)

I'm good either way.

Montero shoots a glance at one of his men. The latter puts a finger to his earpiece, nods a confirmation. Montero knows that what Diaz is saying about the media amassing is true...

...He turns back to Diaz, the faux-paternal part of his personality shedding away like a snake's skin, revealing the pure predator beneath.

MONTERO

No matter what happens from here on out son, know that I'm going to kill you. Then I'm going to find your mother and shoot her in the head. Then I'm gonna take a trip to your hometown, dig up your grandparents and shoot them too. You will be without a past or a future and you will never be safe, for what remains of your life.

Diaz and Frank and the team beat a slow, tortoise-like retreat. Weapons slowly lower and re-holster...*Even Rico's.*

Eduardo Montero however, stares right through Diaz.

EDUARDO
You think this is over Cesar?

DIAZ
Not for a second.

EDUARDO
You come in here and put a gun to
my father's head?

DIAZ
After he took my father's life.

On the Team...All eyes on Diaz now. A hint of something that
wasn't there before: Respect.

Diaz, with a grin, can't resist one parting shot at Montero.

DIAZ
Don't forget to vote.

Montero. Eyes cold and dead as black marbles. Glowers back.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

The gangbang-like throng of a mass media event. Every print
and TV journalist in Mexico seems to be on hand as Diaz
addresses a bouquet of microphones. Flashbulbs burst blind,
sending sunspots across his vision as he shields his eyes.

DIAZ
Ladies and Gentlemen, members of
the press, it is with great honor
and humility that I announce my
intention to take up and finish my
father's campaign for mayor,
effective immediately. Thank you.

And like a performer who knows when to drop the mic and exit
the stage, Diaz does just that. REPORTERS clamor and cry out,
peppering him with rapid-fire questions--

REPORTER
--Why are you announcing this
candidacy from the home of
Guillermo Montero, the man largely
regarded as the de facto Godfather
of this city and the prime suspect
in the murder of your own father?

DIAZ
This was a '*passing of the torch*'
so to speak.

(MORE)

DIAZ (cont'd)

Mr. Montero realizes that his days as a notorious narcotrafficker are numbered, so he decided to endorse my candidacy on the off chance it might help him avoid a prison sentence.

(beat)

He was mistaken.

Frank grimaces. Fuck. Now they're putting it in Montero's face...and that's dangerous.

INT. MONTERO MANSION - POOL CABANA - CONTINUOUS

An enraged, seething Montero watches the press conference in front of his mansion on one of the cabana's big screens.

DIAZ

Mr. Montero will suffer the same fate as the criminals that have come before him: The cellblock or the graveyard. The road to either, or both, will run through me.

(pure politician's smile)

So, I would very much appreciate your vote on November 7th.

INT. TAURUS - DAY

A loaded beat between Frank and Diaz. Finally and in the most matter-of-fact manner, Diaz offers--

DIAZ

--so Montero probably knows what our cars look like now.

Frank chortles in spite of himself. Then, getting serious:

FRANK

You could have told me Cesar.

DIAZ

You would have objected.

FRANK

Strenuously. You don't stare down the devil and you *sure as shit* don't kick sand in his face.

DIAZ

Montero tried to rattle my cage. I rattled his instead. I like to throw the first punch and land the last. My father taught me that.

Frank articulates some personal wisdom of his own.

FRANK

Revenge is like a knife with no handle and all blade and it draws blood from both parties.

DIAZ

This isn't about revenge.

FRANK

Then prove it by never pulling a stunt like that again.

DIAZ

I needed a big stage. I had to make a splash and kickstart my campaign. That was as much about strategy as it was confronting Montero.

Frank can't help it. Smiles. Diaz smiles back.

FRANK

You have a *cast iron* set of balls.

DIAZ

Good. I'll need both of them to win-
(then, profoundly)
-I'm not scared of dying Frank. I'm scared of my life meaning *nothing*.

Frank regards Diaz. Considers the weight of that comment as WE SMASH CUT TO -- A flurry of BURSTING FLASHBULBS and WHIRRING CAMERA SHUTTERS propel us into a:

MONTAGE

CAMPAIGN STOP: Diaz is a born orator and an even better salesman, addressing throngs of SUPPORTERS, a rabid fan base that's caught fire in the wake of his face-off with Montero:

DIAZ

You can kill a man and drive the life from him, but what you cannot kill...what will *never die*, is the spirit that drove the man. I lost my father, but I found his fight...

The crowd bursts into CHEERS as we TRANSITION TO:

ANOTHER RALLY: Crowd swelling. Growing in size.

DIAZ

...And I intend to use it to win this election and take this city back so that my father's legacy might live on...*and drive us all*.

Frank and the team watch from the wings, trading looks, staying frosty and on point.

FRANK (INTO COMM-LINK)
Eyes out. Moving. Don't drop
details. Keep our principal locked.

Trying to avoid getting caught up in the excitement of Diaz's upstart campaign as WE TRANSITION TO:

MONTERO'S MANSION: Montero stares at Diaz on TV as his Spec Ops detail gets prepared to go to war in the b.g.

DIAZ (V.O.)
The statement we make here will be
heard by the rest of the world...So
what is it we want to say?

...these are Montero's 'LOS TOROS' an elite fighting squad. Specialists brought in to do battle with our team.

DIAZ (V.O.)
...That men like Guillermo Montero,
who have beaten and bludgeoned our
city and bankrupted its soul...

Chief Ortega watches the speech: Cynicism cut with curiosity.

DIAZ (V.O.)
...are beyond the reach of the law?

At the mention of 'the law' Ortega's jaw tightens.

WE RETURN TO DIAZ. Standing on the dais, the crowd held rapt.

DIAZ
*No...Make your refusal our reform
and let's return this city to its
rightful ownership. **THE PEOPLE!***

The crowd EXULTS. Diaz is galvanizing them. Leading them. Frank and the team seem momentarily spellbound...The cheers rise toward a rousing, roaring crescendo as WE SMASH CUT TO--

--INT. HEADQUARTERS - DAY

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

EXT. HEADQUARTERS - BACK BREEZEWAY - DAY

Frank loiters, having a cigarette, collecting his thoughts as he watches the distant whitecaps crashing in, enjoying the salty sea-breeze, blowing in off the beach.

Vic walks out, fishes for a cigarette himself, says nothing.

FRANK
You gonna talk about her at all?

VIC
No...And neither are you.

FRANK
You want an apology?

VIC
From you? What the fuck for? What
good would it do now?
(beat)
The deed is done.

FRANK
She made her choice.

Vic squares on Frank.

VIC
Frank. This isn't a 'Three Strikes'
thing. Make mention of her *one more*
time and you and I are gonna go.

Frank stubs out his cigarette under his boot heel and blows
smoke toward Vic as he stalks back inside.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Frank hangs up the phone. Grim. Approaches Diaz.

FRANK
Montero has hired his own private
army. I've heard of them, they're
called 'Los Toros' Ex-Special
Forces. Death Squad soldiers. The
best killers money can buy.

Diaz goes ashen.

FRANK
Montero also just issued a standing
bounty for you. 20 million dollars.
More than *double* the price he put
on your father's head.
(with some dismay)
Man, when you make enemies, you
make some enemies don't you?

Diaz, staring off, sifting through a ream of emotions. Then:

DIAZ
Having second thoughts?

FRANK

About what? Protecting you from
that bounty or killing you to
collect it?

Frank smiles. Kidding. Diaz digs his knuckles into his temples. The stress and frustration beginning to show their combined strain. He checks his wall clock.

DIAZ

One hour till the debate.

Frank watches Diaz for a long beat, examining him. Finally:

FRANK

Can you win this race?

DIAZ

(without hesitation)
I can win this race.

FRANK

Then you can make me a rich man.

EXT. HALLWAY - DAY

Simon and Terry stand guard at the door of the inner sanctum. Simon rolls a silver dollar between his fingers with amazing dexterity. Back and forth. Terry has headphones on. He's singing along quietly to 'MY GENERATION' by THE WHO.

TERRY

...Things they do look awful c-c-cold...Talkin' 'bout my generation-I hope I die before I get old...

He watches Simon, curious, then spots something on the secretary's desk nearby: A box-cutter.

He picks it up and removes the razor-blade from the inside sheath, then begins mimicking Simon's motions.

The speed picks up. Simon rolling the coin, Terry rolling the blade, keeping pace. Simon is getting pissed.

SIMON

How long you been doing that?

TERRY

Just started today.

SIMON

Bullshit.

Terry stops. Pulls off his headphones. He flips the blade to the end of his index finger.

TERRY

Let's trade. I want to see how fast
I am with the coin.

Simon flips the coin, Terry reaches for it, but Simon snags it mid-air, favoring Terry with a big '*fuck you*' grin.

SIMON

So what do you reckon, mate? Is
this cunt Diaz for real?

TERRY

Why do Brits and Outbacks call men
'cunts'?

SIMON

Why do you call Aussies 'Outbacks'?

TERRY

I thought you were Kiwi.

SIMON

Then why call me an 'Outback'? You
like 'Oriental'?

TERRY

No, I don't...but I don't mind Jap.
Slant. Gook. Chink.

SIMON

Ah, fuck ya mate.

TERRY

Here they come.

Terry and Simon pivot on cue and button their coats.

SIMON (INTO COMM-LINK)

We're loaded and rolling.

Terry grabs the headphones and pulls them back on as 'MY GENERATION' by THE WHO takes over our Soundtrack as The Team moves through the office...

Frank is first in the formation, a tactical half-step ahead of Diaz. Vic and Rico cover the rear and shadow their blind-side. Simon and Terry advance them up the hall apace.

They move through the office. All sound FADES. That's because we're now, SEEING the world through the eyes of our team and going macro on the tiny, almost imperceptible details that could mean the difference between life and death.

OFFICE STAFF answer phones and bustle about. CLOSE on their badges and faces. The Team making matches and confirmations.

A MESSENGER delivers a package. Nothing suspicious about it.

INT. MAIN CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Building OCCUPANTS drift by. The Team assess the threat level of each as he or she passes. CLOSE on the elevator button. Terry presses it. A MAN in a business suit sidles up, a briefcase dangles from his right hand--

DING...the elevator car arrives. Frank steps aside.

FRANK
(waving the man through)
Go ahead. We'll take the next one.

The man gets in. A little confused. The doors close on him. The Team waits. More people pass.

DING...a second car arrives. Diaz enters, moving to the far right corner. The rest cluster around him, a wall of bodies. Rico is the last to board the lift. Frank blocks his entry.

FRANK
Take the stairs. Someone has to be
ground level when we arrive. Make
sure the garage is cleared.

RICO
But you're already--

FRANK
--then you'd better hurry up.

On Frank, smiling as the lift's doors slide shut.

EXT. STAIRWELL - DAY

Rico races down, flight after flight.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

They makes a stop. A little old LADY peers in. Sees four giant gringos. Decides to skip it. Heads for the stairs.

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Rico sprints in. Arrives just as Frank and the rest of the team file out--

RICO
(out of breath)
--All...clear...

Frank brushes past. So do the rest, Rico resumes his spot in the formation, sweating profusely and gasping for air as WE
CUT TO:

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Terry slides out from under the Taurus.

TERRY
Fuel line.

Exhibit A. He SHOWS Frank a de-rigged brick of C-4 plastique.

FRANK
Way too obvious, no?

TERRY
Yeah. I know.

Terry slides back under the Taurus.

DIAZ
I told you they knew what these cars looked like.

TERRY
These are pre-electronic, so a helluva lot harder to plant bombs on. There's only a few places they can conceal the charge as opposed to a new car, where you can rig a detonation off the key fob.

Terry reappears with Exhibit B. The second charge. Another brick of C-4 but wired with much more sophistication.

TERRY
Engine. Heat trigger.

FRANK
That makes sense. We clean now?

Terry opens the door, sticks the key into the ignition and turns the engine over-- Everyone flinches except him.

TERRY
Yup.

FRANK
Good. Make sure the Duster isn't wired to blow and let's hit it.

EXT. STREET - DUSK

In transit. Taurus in front. Duster a few car lengths back in the opposing lane. Staying just close enough to prevent another vehicle from passing.

They pull up to a traffic light. This is when things get tense. Prone positions and standstill situations are a bodyguard's least favorite part of the job.

INT. S GUARD/EXT. STREET - DAY

They resume moving. Turning down a narrow side street.

TERRY

Van.

A lone van sits conspicuously by the side of the road.

FRANK

I see it.

(into the ear piece)

Vic.

INT. DUSTER - CONTINUOUS

Vic clocks the van.

VIC

On it.

He accelerates and pulls up flush alongside the Taurus, essentially shielding it from the van.

RICO

What's going on?

VIC

(matter-of-fact)

If that van is booby-trapped, we take the brunt of the blast.

Rico finds himself scooting over and subtly ducking down.

They're coming up on the van. Closer...Closer...Rico braces. Holds his breath...but they blow past without incident.

RICO

I gotta call my kid.

VIC

How old?

RICO

Five now.

VIC

What's he wanna be? A Cop?

RICO

I'll never let him be a cop.

(beat)

What's your father do?

Vic stiffens.

VIC

He's a professional asshole.

RICO

Yeah, I know a few of those--

--a POLICE CRUISER appears, knifing in abruptly and cutting them off, its SIRENS BLARING.

More cruisers materialize-- boxing them in, forcing both the Taurus and the Duster to the curb. Frank issues orders fast--

FRANK (INTO COMM-LINK)

--Stay in the cars. They look and sound like cops, doesn't mean they are cops.

These 'Cops' spill out of the their cruisers, guns drawn, surrounding them. One of them is armed with a bullhorn.

BULLHORN COPS

Out of the vehicles! NOW!

Vic pulls the middle console up on the Taurus, revealing a portable arsenal inside. Pistols and ammo stored there.

FRANK (INTO COMM-LINK)

Everyone, stay cool. Push meets shove, we're going to blast and bulldoze our way out of here.

(beat)

Is everyone clear on that?

The Team signals back '*affirmative.*' Frank ducks Diaz down as he pulls a sawed-off pump from beneath the seat.

FRANK

Stay as close to the floorboards as you can. Flat as possible.

BULLHORN COP

ABANDON THOSE VEHICLES NOW OR YOU WILL BE FIRED ON!

FRANK (INTO COMM-LINK)

Get ready to punch it. Power brake both cars to get the RPM's up.

Vic and Terry simultaneously lay on both brakes and gas, smoking the rear tires as the cars lurch forward.

The 'Cops' close in, slides and shotgun pumps get racked in anticipation of this thing setting off.

Then, Chief Ortega appears, grabbing the bullhorn.

ORTEGA (INTO BULLHORN)
 Cesar Diaz. This is police chief
 Manolo Ortega. Can you step out of
 your vehicle please?

INT. TAURUS - CONTINUOUS

Diaz peers over the backseat, SEEING Ortega.

FRANK
 Stay down.

DIAZ
 No. He wants to make a scene.
 (beat)
Let's make a scene.

FRANK
 Stay behind me then.
 (to Terry)
 Terry, keep the engine running.
 (into comm-link)
 Everybody follow my lead, keep your
 movements at a minimum.

Frank exits the vehicle, followed by Diaz, who's then book-
 ended by Terry. The rest of the team falls in, fanning out.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Chief Ortega approaches, looking both contemptuous and
 annoyed. Diaz looks to pick a fight almost immediately.

DIAZ
 What the hell is this? We're on our
 way to an official function. A
 televised debate.

ORTEGA
 Mr. Diaz in accordance to Article
 27 of our constitutional law, no
 foreigner is authorized to carry a
 concealed firearm in the Mexican
 Republic. The only exception, per
 Article 28, is when they can
 produce *valid documents* that prove
 they are legal immigrants.
 (with a nod to the team)
 These men appear to be illegal
 immigrants, therefore until such
 time when that documentation can be
 provided, I'm asking that you
 relinquish all weapons, on your
 person, immediately.

(with a nod to the cars)

(MORE)

ORTEGA (cont'd)

Both of your vehicles will need to be impounded as well until they can be properly searched and cleared of any contraband.

DIAZ

These are bodyguards, under my personal employment, to protect--

ORTEGA

--they are paid mercenaries and illegal immigrants. Now either provide the documents I'm requesting, or relinquish your firearms immediately.

The Cops begin disarming our team.

DIAZ

You mean to leave us unarmed, at night, without transportation, *knowing* that there's a price on my head.

ORTEGA

A price you put there.

(beat)

I told you to leave town. Instead you picked a fight with the most powerful mass murderer in Mexico.

DIAZ

The same mass murderer paying your mortgage.

Ortega won't take the bait.

ORTEGA

Your blood is on your hands, *Cesar*.

Frank tenders his guns. A sneering Vic follows suit.

VIC

(to Ortega)

You sonofabitch. Why don't you just shoot us right here in the street?

A Cop finds a vest of knives on Simon. Simon smiles, shrugs.

SIMON

Careful, you'll put an eye out.

The Cop lets Simon hang onto them, but relieves him of his pistols and the hold-out piece on his ankle. Terry is frisked and freed of his weapons as well.

Rico steps forward, flashing his badge and gun.

RICO
Chief Ortega--

ORTEGA
(recognizing him)
--Rico? What are you doing with
these men? Why are you here?

RICO
I'm on a leave of absence sir.

ORTEGA
(pointing to Diaz)
You're working for him?

RICO
(nods, indicates his gun)
My sidearm. Authorized by you sir.

ORTEGA
Do you have a 'concealed carry'
license?

RICO
I do.

ORTEGA
On your person?

On Rico. *Shit.* He's not carrying it right now...Ortega says nothing. A look is exchanged. A pass is quietly issued.

Cops commandeer the Taurus and the Duster and drive off. Ortega offers his 'support' to Diaz as he departs the scene.

ORTEGA
Good luck with the campaign.

Ortega speeds away, leaving the team alone and exposed. Frank quickly musters the men, leading them to the relative cover of a nearby abandoned building.

Then, all four men, Frank, Vic, Simon and Terry, dig down the fronts of their pants and retrieve secreted weapons.

Diaz and Rico look on, dumbfounded.

FRANK
I don't care how well you've been
trained and how thorough you get--

VIC
--no man wants to grope another
man's junk.

SIMON
Besides Gameboy here.

TERRY
 (only half listening)
 I *adore* cock.

FRANK
 Alright. We're on foot until we can
 find a suitable set of wheels.

VIC
 Do we jack someone?

FRANK
 No. We don't.

SIMON
 Then something parked?

TERRY
 I can hot-wire anything.

FRANK
 Nope.

VIC
 Then what Frank?

FRANK
 We walk *around* the ambush that's
 waiting for us, instead of walking
 into it. They stranded us here, on
 purpose. They want us to move out
 of this area, so I'd bet the house
 that Montero's men are bunkered up
 nearby, waiting for us to show.

DIAZ
 It will be Los Toros then.

Rico's hair stands on end when he hears that name.

RICO
 Los Toros!? *What?*

SIMON
 The band?

TERRY
 That's Los Lobos, think-tank.

VIC
Los Toros...Fuck me.
 (beat, shaking his head)
 I've gone toe-to-toe with them,
 twice and got lucky both times.
 They are serious, high-speed, *shit*
hot soldiers...Our best bet is to
 bail. Like *leave Mexico. Now.*

FRANK
Not optional.

VIC
For you. For me it's real simple.
Turn and walk.

FRANK
What makes you think they'll let
any one of us out of here alive?
(beat)
I have a plan.
(beat, plain as day)
We drive right up to them and they
wave us through.

DIAZ
How?

FRANK
Ambulance.

VIC
Where the fuck are we gonna get one
of those?

FRANK
(to Diaz)
You still have one of those burner
phones?
(Diaz nods)
Call 911.

RICO
Ambulances in Mexico are slow and
sometimes don't show up at all. You
need a *real* emergency.

FRANK
(to Diaz, as he dials)
Tell them you have shots fired.
Officer down.

RICO
Huh?

Frank suddenly turns his gun on Rico--

FRANK
--Sorry, Rico--

--and shoots him right in the ass. Rico collapses, wailing,
writhing around in pain.

FRANK

I was wrong.
 (to Diaz, deadpan)
 He took a bullet for you after all.

INT. AMBULANCE - LATER

Flying around the corner, sirens full. WE WATCH through the front windshield as our team appears, huddled around Rico. The Ambulance brakes, but before the EMT's can disembark, Simon is there with a knife at the Driver's throat and Terry opposite him, a pistol trained on the passenger.

INT. AMBULANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Terry drives. Dressed as one of the EMT's. His skin color is camouflage enough and a pair of sunglasses hide his eyes. The lamps are still lit, the siren squealing. From the back:

FRANK

Head on a swivel. If traffic
 doesn't separate, move *laterally*.

Terry does, weaving and wending his way around the traffic, slaloming slower moving vehicles as they pull to the shoulder to allow the ambulance to pass.

A pissed off Rico squats, unable to sit due to the bullet wound in his ass. Frank notes his awkward position, advises:

FRANK

Get some Demerol or some
 painkillers and stop bitching and
 moaning. We made our escape.

Terry rounds the corner and SEES a blockade up ahead. Frank spoke too soon...It's Los Toros.

TERRY

Contact front.

They all turn and SEE the roadblock looming ahead.

VIC

Fuck. *They know*.

FRANK

They don't know. Go right at 'em.
 Flash the high beams and give them
 a strobe blast.
 (beat, to Simon & Vic)
 Turn that gurney over.
 (they do, now, to Diaz)
Get behind that.

Terry hits the blockade with a siren bleat as the high beams illuminate the jocked-up, body-armored, badass Los Toros, who respond by moving saw horses aside to allow them to pass.

TERRY
(quietly hopeful)
I think they're going for it...

WRONG. A massive EXPLOSION rattles close. The shockwave blows out the Ambulance's windscreen as a HAIL OF BULLETS slam in behind it.

Terry flattens himself as rounds blow dime-sized holes in the seatback. He dives beneath the dash a split-second before slugs shred the headrest behind him.

The ambulance pitches sideways. Terry makes a desperate dive for the wheel as they overturn, the ugly momentum slide torques him off the roof as the vehicle capsizes onto its side and plows into a fire hydrant and parked cars at speed.

Smoke pours unabated into the cab from the shattered engine compartment as water rains down from the ruined hydrant. Frank crawls to the back, finds a dazed Diaz alive and well.

FRANK
You alright?

DIAZ
For the moment.

A badly dazed Simon rouses himself, head streaming blood. He gazes at two fingers on his left hand, contorted, broken.

GUNFIRE pounds the ambulance's exposed chassis, street-side. Metal mushrooms as rounds rip up through the floorboards.

The team sprawls flat. Frank crouches in behind the driver's seat, looking up at the van's side-view mirror, which shows LOS TOROS troops moving around the vehicle.

Fire sparks and unfurls across the undercarriage, the hydrant water failing to extinguish it. More Flames rise. Ruined brake and transmission lines leak flammables and ignite.

The chassis is fully engulfed.

VIC
We're gonna fucking burn to death.

SIMON
I'd rather just eat a bullet.

TERRY
Looks like a dealer's choice.

Frank notes the water pooling around the ambulance, he glances back at an overturned crash cart...and the PORTABLE DEFIBRILLATOR lying next to it.

He spots two OXYGEN TANKS, loosened in the tumult of the crash...and a smile spreads across his weary face.

FRANK

Listen up.

(beat)

This needs to happen fast.

EXT. AMBULANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Los Toros Troops unleash torrents of GUNFIRE on the hapless ambulance as tear-gas cannisters get lobbed in...

...A beat before the cannisters are tossed *back out*, followed by the fully charged defibrillator, which crashes down in the pooling water that the Los Toros are presently standing in--

ZZZZZZAP-- It isn't an electrocution, but it is enough current to knock every last Los Toro troop on their ass.

The damaged rear doors on the ambulance are suddenly kicked down, revealing Simon and Terry, wearing respirator masks from the ambulance's supply cabinets, they roll those oxygen tanks out toward the stunned Toros.

Frank and Vic, also in respirators, lie flat in the back of the ambulance, guns extended, aims trained on those tanks--

--THEY OPEN FIRE--

--**KABOOM!!!** Toros are blown apart where they stand as the pressurized tanks EXPLODE behind Frank and Vic's combined gunfire.

The Team exits the ambulance, fanning out through shrouds of pitch black smoke roiling up off the street.

They move in split-second sync with one another, stripping weapons off downed Toros as they advance in a carefully choreographed '*cover and clear.*'

One of the blockade HUMVEES is unmanned. They pile in fast.

Terry slides into the driver's seat and slams the rig into gear, mashing the gas. The Hummer ROCKETS forward. Terry doesn't drive around the remaining Toros. He aims for them.

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

They clear the combat zone, speeding off into the distance.

Alive. At least for the moment.

INT. MONTERO'S OFFICE - DAY

Eduardo Montero slams the phone down. Bristling with rage.

EDUARDO

They got away. The Toros took heavy casualties.

MONTERO

I thought Diaz's bodyguards were disarmed!?

EDUARDO

They were.

Montero. His reptilian eyes flitter across the horizon line, looking for answers...finding none. He crushes a plate glass window, putting his fist right through it.

INT. AUDITORIUM BACKSTAGE - DAY

The team hustles a charred, soot-blackened, threadbare version of their boss and newly christened mayoral candidate to the stage, rushing past a harried STAGE MANAGER.

INT. DEBATE STAGE - DAY

POLITICOS and MAYORAL HOPEFULS man their respective podiums. One of them, the current MAYOR running for re-election, is in the midst of fielding a question from the MODERATOR--

MAYOR

--and increased, *aggressive* economic growth of the more impoverished sections of this city continues to remain my primary--

--Diaz barges in to the collective gasps of the assembled. The crowd immediately begins to CHEER.

Frank remains right off the stage. Terry and Simon cover the stairs and Vic and Rico watch the crowd.

DIAZ

I apologize for my tardiness, we encountered some rather spirited professional soldiers earlier who were seeking to remove me from this race...

(beat, waits for the joke)

No, I meant the human race.

Big laugh from the audience.

DIAZ
 So...my apologies for the attire
 (as he examines his suit)
Or lack thereof.

This gets an even bigger laugh. Diaz holds the crowd firmly in his grasp as they hang willingly on his every word.

DIAZ
 Guillermo Montero wants me dead because he's afraid of what I'll do if I'm elected. That man is about money and power. And he'll bomb and kill and kidnap to perpetuate both.
 (re: the other candidates)
 And these fine fellows, including our present Mayor, will do nothing to stop him.

The hue and cry of insulted politicians as they rear up to defend their character and rebut Diaz's claims--

MAYOR
--This is an outrage! I've spent my entire career fighting corruption!

DIAZ
 --If your efforts against corruption are so strident, then why am I the only man on this panel with a price on his head!

The Moderator bangs a gavel in an effort to restore order.

MODERATOR
 Enough! Gentlemen, *please!*

DIAZ
 Montero thinks that by silencing men like me and my father before me, that he will win. But my father's death, while bringing me great sadness, will do *nothing* to diminish my efforts against stopping his terrible reign!

It starts as a shout, becomes a chant and ends up a battle cry as the crowd energizes and exults behind--

CROWD
--DIAZ!! DIAZ!!! DIAZ!!!!

A battered Diaz. His fist held aloft. The fight alive and well in his eyes. Our Team. Standing tall alongside. Feeling good about themselves for the first time in a long time.

INT. BACKSTAGE GREEN ROOM - LATER

Frank sits with the team, a brief respite from the madness as Diaz answers questions nearby in a jam-packed press scrum. Frank, ever vigilant, monitors the comings and goings of all.

He seems bothered by something as well, this keen sense of uncertainty flickering across a troubled gaze.

SIMON

The cunt got to me. I'll admit it.

Terry, ever engrossed in the video game on his iPhone.

TERRY

Yeah, I maybe shed a tear or two.

SIMON

It feels like what we're doing is actually...I don't know. *Dignified*.

(beat)

Never thought I'd hear myself say something like that.

(beat)

That talk about his father...made me wish my old man wasn't such a ripe old fucking shite.

Rico seems restless and detached from the rest of the team.

TERRY

My father is living as a woman now.

SIMON

(say-fucking-what?)
Again?

TERRY

Changed his name from Hiroto to *Hillary* after the former first lady

(beat, flat as a board)

He's always been a bit odd. I disowned him for my mother's sake, but I still send birthday cards.

SIMON

Jesus Fucking Christ on crutches.

TERRY

Yep. *Kinda*.

(beat, exults abruptly)

High score! Boom! Finally.

(to his iPhone)

Fuck you Candy Crush.

Frank finally rises, this internal frustration that's been building is now forcing him from the room.

FRANK
I'm stepping out for some air. Stay
on Diaz.

EXT. HALLWAY - DAY

Frank strides out of the press room. Rico follows him out.

RICO
Frank.

Frank spins back.

RICO
I'm out.

FRANK
Why?

RICO
I see Diaz and all I see now is my
own son...and what it would be like
to have to leave him behind. How
he'd have to grow up.

Frank has another question he wants to ask. More pointed.

FRANK
You sure that's it Rico?

RICO
Yeah. Why?
(senses Frank's suspicion)
What do you mean?

FRANK
We planned the route here today and
only the team knew about it in
advance.

RICO
So?

FRANK
So Ortega, the police chief. *Your
boss*, shows up out of nowhere and
disarms us. Leaves us high and dry.

Rico intuits where this is going...and gets offended.

RICO
So am I getting the upgrade from
coward to *traitor* now Frank?

FRANK
You tell me...and tell me *right
fucking now.*

RICO
I fought shoulder to shoulder with
you goddammit.

FRANK
And Ortega has sold out his entire
rank...*What's one more corrupt cop?*

Rico attacks Frank, punching/kicking/clawing. Frank rears back on his heels and fight back as the two men engage in brutal, hand-to-hand combat in the corridor. Vic spills out into the hallway a moment later, separating the two.

VIC
Fuck is wrong with you two?

Rico pulls away, spitting blood, glowering at Frank.

RICO
Ask that sonofabitch!

Rico staggers/stumbles off toward the restroom, leaving a partially punchy Frank to lick his wounds.

VIC
What did you do Frank?

FRANK
Accused Rico of selling us out.

VIC
Are you shittin' me?

FRANK
No.

VIC
So you happy now?

FRANK
No.
(beat, grim)
Because it wasn't him.

Vic gazes down at Frank as WE PRELAP THE FOLLOWING DIALOGUE:

FRANK (V.O.)
We have a mole on the team.

INT. AUDITORIUM - PRIVATE ROOM

Diaz and Frank sit in the relative darkness of an empty banquet hall.

DIAZ
What?!

FRANK

Someone gave Montero our route.

DIAZ

We could have been followed.

FRANK

No. We're the only ones that knew about that route. It's too coincidental that Ortega was there.

DIAZ

Could it have been one of the staffers?

FRANK

It was someone on the team.

(beat, reminding him)

Always expect the worst Cesar. That way you're rarely disappointed.

DIAZ

When did I suddenly become 'Cesar'?

FRANK

That's your name, isn't it?

DIAZ

I was getting used to 'Diaz.'

FRANK

Well I wouldn't break out the friendship bracelets just yet.

Diaz laughs at that, an unexpected one that catches him off guard...that levity, however, soon evaporates as they consider the potential turbulence of their immediate future.

DIAZ

So do we disband? Recruit another team?

FRANK

No one would be dumb or desperate enough to join this fight now.

DIAZ

You don't want to quit, do you?

FRANK

No.

(beat)

I just don't want to watch you die.

There it is. The first real flicker of real emotion in those steely eyes. Somehow along the way it became more than just another job for Frank. Diaz sees it too. Then:

DIAZ

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

FRANK

Burn the ships.

DIAZ

That's right. This nation was built on the risk *taken*. Going for broke. It's too late to turn back.

FRANK

You know another famous Cesar got stabbed in the back by someone close to him.

DIAZ

Well he didn't have you, standing by his side.
(beat)

I just hope when that knife is headed toward my back, you'll be there.

FRANK

I will.

DIAZ

(with a smile)
The ships are burning Frank.
(beat)
Let's finish this.

INT. CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Frank walks out. The Team awaits. Including Rico, who just stares back at him, his eye swelling. His lip split. His expression conveying-- *'fuck you, I'm not going anywhere'*.

Frank nods his acknowledgement, his steady gaze playing over the remaining Team members: Terry. Simon. Vic...Any one of them could be the mole.

BEGIN MONTAGE: Close on a TV screen.

NEWSCASTER

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

DIAZ (V.O.)

Twenty seven thousand plus homicides last year alone.

(MORE)

DIAZ (V.O.) (cont'd)
The single highest per capita rate
murder in North America.

RALLY: Diaz addresses another adoring throng. The crowd is
SRO. Our Team is scattered throughout. Guardian Angels.

DIAZ
Is this the country you want to
live in? The future you want for
your children? How many more wrongs
will it take for us to wake up and
make it right?

TV SCREEN:

A blow-dried, bland head of network-friendly hair drones:

ANOTHER NEWSCASTER
*--a huge uptick in the polling,
particularly among the low income
households--*

TRAFFIC: Gridlock. A bike approaches. Terry clocks him.

TERRY
On our six.

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

Diaz complies. The bike pulls alongside. The RIDER's face is
concealed behind a dark visor.

Frank places his gun against the car door. Ready to blow the
Rider away at the slightest provocation.

Seconds stretch like an eternity.

The light turns green. The bike ROARS away. Everybody sighs.

TELEVISION STUDIO: Diaz is on a political pundit program.

INTERVIEWER
What's your response to your
opponents who say you're just a
vengeful rich kid, riding his slain
father's coattails?

DIAZ
I am my father's son and I'm proud
of that fact. But I'm not asking
anyone to vote for the memory of
who he was. I'm asking them to vote
for the vision of what could be.

Frank and the Team watch from the wings, now as swept up in Diaz's improbable political rise as anyone else.

INT. CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Frank is giving instructions to Rico. Things are clearly tense between them.

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 of the bar or the washroom. Make reservations under your name or an alias. Order for the entire party. That way-

RICO

(a step ahead)
--the staff doesn't know who ordered what. Lowers the risk of someone trying to poison Diaz.

Frank nods his acknowledgment and his appreciation. Feels an apology is in order.

FRANK

I was wrong.

RICO

I don't care Frank.

FRANK

Well I do...and I'm sorry I doubted you Rico. You've been busting your ass, despite getting shot in it.
(a nod to his bandage)
I'm sorry about that too.

Rico manages the smallest grin, staring off.

FRANK

Why have you stuck with this Rico? We've all been assholes to you. I called you a traitor, twice. You didn't have to take any of that.

RICO

I don't quit until Diaz makes it to election day and I repay my debt to his father. I want a clear conscience Frank. That's why I haven't walked.

(with some exasperation)
...and after this, I want to go home to my wife and my boy and never look back.

(MORE)

RICO (cont'd)

(beat)

Listening to Cesar talk about his Dad, it just reminds me of Mateo and how little time we really have.

(beat)

You should reach out to your son Frank. Try to patch it up if you can.

FRANK

It's over his mother. My ex.
(with this distant regret)
We don't see eye to eye. Never will.

RICO

That shouldn't stop you from trying to make it right.

(beat)

We're here one day...we're gone the next.

And with that, Rico walks away.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Diaz sits at a table with the current MAYOR, dining.

DIAZ

Why would I accept this offer?

MAYOR

You're the flavor of the month Senor Diaz, but you have no real political platform, beyond your passion for reform and, if you'll permit me to be frank: Favorable public sentiment for your father.

(beat)

I can offer you a key position in my cabinet and we can address the Montero situation as a team.

DIAZ

You see Mr. Mayor, this is where we differ both as men and as candidates.

(beat)

Montero isn't a 'situation' he's a syndrome and syndromes you don't address, syndromes you attack...and defeat.

(beat)

What you seek is a cease fire. What I seek is *cessation* altogether. Of Montero the man...and the monster.

Diaz pushes himself back from the table. Meeting adjourned.

DIAZ
Thank you for lunch.

INT. MALL - DAY

Massive indoor complex. Escalators, elevators, stores, lots of foot traffic. Diaz exits in the close company of our Team.

FRANK
What did he want?

Frank holds this conversation with Diaz without ever looking over at him. His eyes always moving over their immediate air space, scanning, assessing, moving on...

DIAZ (O.S.)
He offered me a cabinet position.
Wants to team up. It's a good sign.
Means we're starting to shake up
the establishment.

A VENDOR rolls his cart without trying to sell. A MAN talks on his cell. Glances at them. Keeps talking.

FRANK
I changed the route. Best not to
walk out the same way we entered.

A woman, pretty, eyes Diaz. Takes an uncertain step toward him. The Team instantly tightens their 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, I appreciate that.

WOMAN
Can I have your autograph?

She reaches inside her purse--

FRANK
--Gun!

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

Not at the woman, but at an OLDER MAN behind them with a newspaper. He crumples and an Uzi falls from within the paper's folds.

The woman SCREAMS. Loses her purse. Its contents scatter. She clutches a pen in her hand, hysterical. They let her go.

WOMAN

Oh my God!!! Oh my-

--BOOM. Vic silences her with a bullet -- *What the fuck?*

In lieu of an answer Vic takes the pen from her lifeless hand. Except it's not a pen...It's a zip gun.

VIC

She gets your attention. Her partner blindsides us. She finishes the job.

Frank clocks the nearest exit.

FRANK

Move.

They hustle Diaz toward it. A YOUNG GUY is headed toward them, an iPod in hand, headphones over his ears, rocking to the beat. They glide toward each other. Slowly. Inexorably.

Dude keeps rocking. Notices he's being watched. Smiles. Moves SUDDENLY, filling his hand with a PISTOL. He gets double-tapped by Frank before he can clear his waistband.

Vic whirls and blasts another HITMAN back at the top of the escalator. He tumbles down dead. Two more ASSASSINS appear at the top of the gallery. Simon and Terry engage them.

The mall crowd SCREAMS itself into a mad stampede as full blown bedlam breaks out and spreads like a brush fire--

FRANK

--*MOVE! MOVE! MOVE!*

Bucking the onrushing crush of people, moving against the mass exodus, the Team tries their best to cover Diaz.

Turn the corner right into two UNIFORMED COPS. They draw. Frank, gunhand up, pistol pointed aloft, non-threatening--

FRANK

--*Security! Close Protection Team!*

But the Cops extend their aims and FIRE before Frank can cover Diaz...who looks to be a dead man--

--Until Rico appears, right in front of him, *taking a round to the chest...A killshot intended for our candidate.*

Rico rolls up and shockingly, RETURNS FIRE, **killing** both cops in cold blood. The Team is shell-shocked. Frozen stiff.

Rico meanwhile writhes around on the ground, heaving air and clawing wildly at his chest, pulling apart his shirt and trying to remove the round, still smouldering in his vest.

Vic is there, overtop of him now, struggles with a thrashing Rico, holding his hands.

VIC
*Rico! Relax! It didn't punch
 through! You're ok! You're ok!*

Rico, wild-eyed, snaps to as if returning from some trance.

VIC
 You're alright.

Rico nods like a bobble-head, tremors racing through his body. Frank's attention remains locked on their surroundings.

FRANK
 Get him on his feet. Let's go.

Terry helps scoop Rico up.

TERRY
 Nicely done dude.

Together our team flees the mall, post haste, hustling through the exit doors and out of the line of fire.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - CONTINUOUS

Moving. Reloading. The team work off of one another. Hand signals and semaphore back and forth as they advance through the parking structure. Rico is getting his bearings back. Clearing the cobwebs. Frank grins over at him.

FRANK
 One in the ass. One in the chest.
 (an even bigger grin)
 Not a bad line of work, is it Rico?

They file into a separate service corridor, moving in an asymmetrical manner designed to throw off foot pursuit.

Daylight beams like deliverance itself at the end of the corridor, leading toward a back alley.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - DAY

They clear the door and **BAM!**-- A SHOT RINGS OUT, seemingly from nowhere, perforating Diaz's right shoulder--

--the Team reacts a split-second too late, pulling a dazed Diaz behind a nearby dumpster and retreating to cover.

Frank promptly rips open Diaz's shirt: A shoulder wound. Clean entry. Clean exit. Frank gets hinked by something. Turns to the wall behind them and the round lodged there...

...The one that travelled through Diaz's shoulder. He gets close enough to inspect it...

...and his face falls behind some unspoken revelation.

Vic has put a pair of range-finders on the surrounding building.

VIC
One shooter. Top of the parking structure. Maybe we can flank him.

Simon peeks out. **BAM.** Nearly gets his hair parted by a bullet-

SIMON
-Nope.

FRANK
We need a diversion.

They trade glances. Who's gonna draw the short straw?

TERRY
I'll do it.

VIC
I'll do it.

FRANK
No. I blew our exit. *I'll do it.*
Vic. Cover. Terry. Car. Simon.
Rico. Stay on the principal. Keep pressure around that wound, make sure he doesn't go into shock.

Frank takes Diaz's briefcase, opens it, papers inside. He peels off his sport coat...a pair of concussion grenades hang just beneath his shoulder holster. He tosses them both in.

FRANK
Here goes a whole lot of nothing.

He pulls both pins, rears up and hammer-throws the briefcase skyward with everything he's got--

--**KABOOM!** It detonates mid-air, pulverizing the briefcase itself and the paper inside, producing a big nebula of ad-hoc confetti designed to *cloud the sniper's line-of-sight.*

The Team double-times it, leaving cover and sprinting back up the corridor. Vic and Terry unload on the building above, wild-firing and running their guns dry.

Rico and Simon carry Diaz. His feet never touching the ground.

Frank feels the sub-sonic snap of passing bullets, whistling by his ears as the sniper tries to reacquire his target.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - DAY

Frank drops a clip and reloads. Vaulting down a stairwell as the Team barrels past with Rico in tow.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - LOWER LEVEL - MOMENTS LATER

Frank bashes out the glass on a DELIVERY VAN. Terry slides inside, under the dash, tearing and swapping wires, bypassing the electronic ignition and **VROOOM!** The engine revs to life.

They load Diaz inside, slam the panel door shut and floor it as WE SMASH CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Terry, Simon and Vic have stationed themselves at positioned intervals along the hallway. Rico sits right outside the exam room, examining the impact bruise that has blossomed across his chest from the bullet he took for Diaz. Frank arrives.

FRANK
How is he?

RICO
He's in surgery now. Getting stitched up.

FRANK
(re: the bruise)
You should get that looked at.

RICO
(gazing back down)
I'm looking at it right now.

FRANK
Smart ass.

RICO
Lucky.

FRANK
(shaking his head)
Timely.
(beat)
You did your job.
(beat)
Call me when he's out of surgery.
I gotta take care of something.

Frank walks off. Rico looks after.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Frank crosses the street. Goes into a bar.

INT. BAR - DAY

Grimy. Hot. Sawdust floors. A few BARFLIES draped over the drink well. Soccer drones on a beat-up black & white. Frank flags down an underworked, bored-stiff BARTENDER

FRANK
Tequila. Anejo. Two shots.

The bartender pours. A MAN approaches from behind.

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

Frank doesn't bother turning around. The man takes a seat across from him...It's Roy.

ROY
You have to believe me Frank.

Frank places the smashed bullet on the table between them.

FRANK
.223 Penetrator Green Tip armor-piercing round.
(beat)
You're like clockwork in your consistency of weapons and tactics Roy. Elevated firing position, targeting peripheral exits. Smart.

ROY
I told you I had a shoot down south.

FRANK
Yeah, imagine my surprise. I thought that gig was weeks ago.

ROY
It was.

Frank grimaces, doesn't get it-- wait-- *oh fuck*--

FRANK
...You were down here for his father...Weren't you?

Roy nods, takes up the smashed slug.

ROY
Put a bullet just like this one into the head of his driver.

FRANK
You killed Alvaro Diaz.

ROY
More or less, yeah...And I intend
to kill Junior too.

FRANK
How much money did you make on the
old man?

ROY
Not as much as I'm making on the
kid.

FRANK
You're not giving Montero a break
on the price? 'Two-For-One'?

ROY
Montero didn't pay me to kill the
old man. That was a third party.

This comment catches Frank completely off guard.

FRANK
Wai-- *what?*

ROY
After I did the old man, I was on
my way out of town when Montero's
people reached out to me.

Frank can't make *any* sense of this.

ROY
I won't miss again Frank.

FRANK
Well why did you miss at all Roy?

ROY
I was aiming for Diaz's head. But
then I saw you and flinched.

Frank, still processing what Roy has told him about this
mysterious 'Third Party' takes up his shot of tequila.

ROY
I'll drink to that.

They clink glasses and throw the shots back. Frank signals
the bartender for two more shots. Roy waves him off.

ROY
No. I got this round.
(pulling out his wallet)
(MORE)

ROY (cont'd)
That briefcase toss was a nice
little buzzer beater.

FRANK
Had to improvise that...I knew
you'd be watching the hospital.

ROY
I have to finish the job.

FRANK
So do I.
(beat)
Walk away Roy.

ROY
I was about to suggest the same.

FRANK
Not for the money sitting at the
end of this thing.

ROY
You won't *make it* to the end of
this thing Frank.
(beat)
Montero has declared all-out-war.
(beat)
That punk kid came into his house
and put a gun to his head?
(genuinely chagrined)
In the *history of* guy's getting a
pass for bad behavior, when has any
guy, that goddamn dumb, gotten one?

Frank doesn't reply. Roy reads the silence.

ROY
Oh, *c'mon*, you're not buying into
the bullshit that this kid has an
ice cube's chance in Hell of living
long enough to win that election,
are you!?

Frank stares at that empty tequila glass. Then, quietly:

FRANK
He's gonna win.

The Bartender arrives with the shots as Roy regards his old
friend with a rueful gaze.

ROY
What happened to old 'Heartless
Frank'? And '*cold hard cash*
spinning this rock'?

FRANK

Am I gonna be one of those guys
who's empty apartment you think
about after I'm dead and gone?

Roy nods. Smirks. Then raises his glass.

ROY

Until next time Frank.

FRANK

Until next time Roy.

They clink. Toast. Toss 'em down the hatch.

ROY

See you when I see you.

FRANK

(intended as menace)
Not if I see you first.

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

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Diaz comes to. His shoulder packed and wrapped. The pain meds
being pumped in intravenously. Frank is sitting sentry.
Sleepless. Slit-eyed. He tosses a newspaper off his lap.

FRANK

Montero didn't kill your father.

DIAZ

What?

FRANK

I met the man that did. The same
man that tried to put a bullet in
you today.

DIAZ

Who hired him to kill me?

FRANK

Montero.

DIAZ

But Montero *didn't* hire him to kill
my father?

(beat, facetious)

Of course! Makes *perfect* sense.

FRANK

He would have no reason to lie to
me.

DIAZ
But reason enough to kill you.

FRANK
He wasn't trying to kill *me*.

DIAZ
Are you still stepping in front of
a bullet for me Frank?

FRANK
If our deal still stands.

DIAZ
Why wouldn't it?

FRANK
Well you're in the hospital Cesar,
with a gunshot wound--

DIAZ
(the glass half-full)
--It's still not the morgue.

FRANK
But it still means we *fucked up*.
And that bullet travels a *half inch*
to the left and the morgue is
exactly where you're lying.

DIAZ
Six days to the election.

FRANK
Six days that will feel like *sixty*
years...and I don't know if I can
keep you alive that long,
especially with someone as *lethal*
as Roy in the mix.
(beat)
Montero is going to make our moment-
to-moment a *living hell* Cesar.

DIAZ
'*Never was anything great achieved*
without danger.'
(beat)
It was a Cesar who said that then.
(beat)
It's a Cesar who's saying it now.

Diaz stands wobbly. Sets his jaw. His gaze hardening.

DIAZ
Get me my clothes.

FRANK
The doctor said--

DIAZ
--I'm not gonna let Montero get the
best of me Frank. Let alone *the*
last of me. You still have my back?

Frank's expression says it all.

DIAZ
Good.
(beat, resolved)
Now let's go win this fucking race.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - NIGHT

The door opens. Vic, Rico, Terry and Simon look up.

Diaz stands on the threshold. Barely. Frank is beside him.

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

DIAZ
No. Let me walk out of here.

Diaz presses on up the hall. Every step a small victory.

WE SEE that the waiting area is packed to the rafters with
SUPPORTERS and MEMBERS OF THE PRESS.

Flashbulbs start illuminating Diaz like Super Bowl Sunday.
Frank moves up the hall to place himself in front of--

DIAZ
--No.

Diaz holds him off.

DIAZ
Let them take their pictures.
(beat)
I want the whole *country* to see me
standing here.

The team looks on as Diaz is illuminated by hundreds of
flashbulbs, firing at once. He raises both hands, waving at
the crowd, backlit by this incredible photo-strobic event.

WE PUSH IN on Frank as WE HEAR:

DIAZ (V.O.)
A friend of mine told to me.
'Always expect the worst. That way
you're rarely disappointed.'

EXT. RALLY - NIGHT

CAMERA PULLS BACK and find Frank, now posted next to Diaz, whose arm is in a sling, but whose spirit remains unbroken.

DIAZ

Well the worst is yet to come. I know this. My father asked only that if he were slain in defense of this city, that another rise up and resume his fight, with an even *greater* ferocity.

(beat)

And that's what I'll ask of you. That no matter what. You fight for this city, to the last man and woman standing and that *none of you* "go gently into that good night."

(beat, for effect)

Good night.

An epic, rousing, thunderous CHEER goes up as placards bearing Cesar Diaz's face are hoisted aloft.

MATCH CUT TO:

An entire city wall is covered with Diaz's likeness.

RALLY: The largest crowd yet. An ocean of humanity. A tapestry of faces. Diaz has brought them to their feet, rounding off another rousing oratory. Thousands are on hand.

The team works overtime, Frank fixed on the elevated areas. Possible sniper nests. Scope glints...signs of Roy.

DEBATE

Diaz is fiery, combative and in complete control. His opponents by contrast, look lost and flustered.

Montero and his son Eduardo watch the debate on television. Montero radiates outright rage.

EDUARDO

(cryptically)

He's going to win this thing.

Montero glowers over at his son.

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

A 'Last Supper' of sorts. The end of a big celebratory meal on the eve of the election.

While they may not be close friends, they're definitely no longer strangers. Everyone's enjoying the moment and one another's company.

Terry and Simon are engaged in some form of one upsmanship involving silverware. Vic is enjoying a scotch and laughing at them and Frank and Diaz are fawning over a pair of Cohiba cigars.

DIAZ
I just remembered, today is my
father's birthday.
(beat, wistful)
He would have been 65.

The Team stops what they're doing. Terry nods to a tray of tumblers just behind Vic, who hands them across to Simon, who then pours a dram of Scotch for each man and distributes.

At that moment, Rico appears, with a birthday cake, tres leches, with lit candles. Diaz is instantly overcome with emotion. Rico sets the cake down.

RICO
We thought it might be nice to
remember your dad and celebrate
your win early, so...we got a cake.

Diaz just shakes his head, wiping his eyes.

DIAZ
Thank you, gentlemen. It's...

He doesn't have the words and they don't force him to find them. He blows out the candles. Frank then hoists his tumbler.

FRANK
Here's to your father.

Diaz nods. The men drink. A rare moment of reflection.

FRANK
Can I take a wild guess what you
wished for?

Everyone laughs. That answer should be obvious.

DIAZ
(somber)
Nah...might not be what you think.

SIMON
Does it involve *winning* a certain
something tomorrow mate?

Diaz. Solemn. A little distant now.

DIAZ
No...It involves having a certain
someone *back*.

Diaz glances at the cake as Rico cuts slices and distributes.

DIAZ
(to Frank)
Is your dad still alive?

Frank digs into the Tres Leches.

FRANK
No. He died. Bad liver. Lifelong
drinker. He was a hard sonofabitch
and not very 'kid friendly.'

DIAZ
You have any kids, Frank?

WE CAN SEE Frank physically and *psychically tighten* at the
mention of his immediate family. He sets his cigar down.

FRANK
Son.

DIAZ
You close?

FRANK
No. No, we're not.

DIAZ
What's he do?

A beat. A deliberation.

FRANK
Similar line of work.

DIAZ
What's the cause of the friction?
Between you two? Sorry, I don't
mean to pry or put you on the spot.

Frank takes another puff on that cigar, as though hoping that
question can pass unanswered. He sets it back down, then:

FRANK
His mother. My ex. She passed away
a number of years ago. He didn't
like the way I behaved but I had my
reasons and those reasons, at least
at the time, felt justified.
(with this obvious regret)
We just couldn't make it right.

The men each seem to be ruminating over their own individual
pasts and personal failures.

Vic hits the wet bar hard, pouring himself a decanter's worth of bourbon in a wine glass and guzzling it back.

DIAZ

I was fighting with my father, just before he died. I guess it didn't really dawn on me, until recently, how much I would miss him.

(beat)

But he was all about sacrifice, my dad. Personal. Professional. He used to tell me: '*Hope is more dangerous than a bullet...*'

This lands with some profundity amongst the team. Then, Simon decides to share a warm little paternal tale of his own.

SIMON

My dad, ol' Bludger that he was, had some equally sage advice for me as a youth...he used to say and I quote...'*Fetch me a carton of fags from the petrol station you cunt or I'll beat you blind.*'

The men ROAR at that, each and every one of them, laughing hysterically. Simon smiles wide, doffing an imaginary hat.

SIMON

And it worked din't it! For just feast thine eyes on this *smashing* success! Sitting before you!

The scotch bottle gets passed around again as WE DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ENCLOSED PATIO - LATER

Frank and Diaz outside, overlooking the vastness of the city below from behind bullet-proof glass. Frank is ever vigilant, his gaze constantly, almost robotically travelling across his surroundings, assessing every single foot of space.

FRANK

Who does this suite belong to?
Those same 'wealthy donors'?

DIAZ

They own the whole hotel.

Frank finger taps the bullet-proof glass.

FRANK

That's hospitality.

DIAZ

Beats a bottle of wine and a fruit basket, doesn't it?

FRANK
 (chuckles)
 Yes it does. All to hell.

Frank and Diaz share a contemplative moment. Then:

DIAZ
 You gonna go home after this Frank?

FRANK
 Assuming it all works out, yeah.

DIAZ
 When you say 'works out', you mean--

FRANK
 --that you live long enough to get
 yourself elected.

A beat. Diaz exhales. Frank senses this sudden tension.

DIAZ
 Do you care what happens to this
 city afterward?

Frank looks over at Diaz.

FRANK
 Do I care what happens to--

DIAZ
 --will any of this matter to you a
 month from now. Six months. A year.

Frank scratches his chin, muses over that for a moment.

FRANK
 ...If I heard that something
 happened to you and Montero was
 behind it, yeah. Yeah, I'd care.

DIAZ
 And would you go after Montero?

FRANK
 Yeah, I would.
 (beat, with a big grin)
If there was money in it.

Diaz chuckles. It's official: Two strangers are now friends.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - LATER

3:30am. Hour Of The Wolf. Diaz heads to bed. As he passes by
 a semi-sober Rico--

RICO
--Thanks Cesar.

Diaz stops, walks over.

RICO
Thanks for believing in me and asking me to be a part of this.

DIAZ
Thank you for answering the call. As a Mexican. As a man. I see why my father was so fond of you.

RICO
You fought impossible odds and did something no one has ever done. Promise me that whatever happens tomorrow, you'll never forget that.

DIAZ
As long as you promise me, that if I should fall, if Montero manages--

RICO
--Cesar, don't say that now--

DIAZ
--if I don't make it Ramiro, if Montero takes me down, then you take up the fight, for me. *For my father...He believed in you.*

Rico. Grim. This confession coming. His eyes mist.

RICO
Your father traded his life for mine...That's the only reason I survived the attack that day.
(beat, emotional)
I can only imagine how proud he would be of his son right n--

--A FLASH hits the room with sudden, white-hot concussion-- and Rico is suddenly weightless, intense heat rippling over him like razors as a *blast wave* uncoils from the RPG that just struck the penthouse wall and detonated behind him.

The force unleashed pinballs Rico off the far wall of the suite. Diaz lies tangled in shock, staggering upright, trying to stand, bloodied, boggled.

Rico lurches to his feet, as the rest of the team comes stumbling through the pall of impenetrable smoke pouring in. Frank appears, reaches Diaz, hauls him to his feet as--

--A HAILSTORM OF GUNFIRE TEARS APART WINDOWS -- FURNITURE, WALLS-- everything is glimpsed in elliptical FLASHES--

The team goes prone beneath the destruction, then crawl/scrambles for cover. GLASS PANES explode as Toros rappel inside from the rooftop, invading the penthouse--

--The front doors are BLOWN off their hinges a moment later as more Los Toro Troops enter in a coordinated breach. They join their comrades and begin sweeping, room to room. Glass and debris CRUNCH under their boots. Red targeting lasers slice through the haze, as they try to acquire our team.

They move cautiously. Clearing rooms systematically. Moving smoothly and swiftly. Not taking any chances.

Crossing over the threshold and into the dining area, they spread out, six Toros in leading bearing body-armor advancing steadily...They move toward a corridor...

...AND WE TILT UP to reveal: Simon and Terry, both wedged above the archway like spider-monkeys.

Suddenly, Frank and Vic appear at the end of the hallway, only their gunhands extended flush along either wall, 9mm held in each-- they FIRE and begin kneecapping Los Toros as Terry finger counts down for Simon...3...2...1--

--Dropping down on top of the wounded Toros and dismantling these men, quickly and efficiently with a ferocious mixture of animal instinct and aggressive martial-arts. The Toros are simply no match.

Rico escorts Diaz out of the shadows a moment later, all banged up, bleeding badly.

RADIO SQUAWK belches from the belt of one of the downed Toros, his comm-link crackling--

VOICE (V.O.)
--Silver Bullet, this is Matador,
Sit-Rep?

Frank plucks the walkie off the Toro's belt, speaking into it.

FRANK
All clear. No survivors.

A blast of static comes back. A long beat. Then:

ROY (V.O.)
This isn't going to be that easy,
Frank.

INT. COMMAND VAN - NIGHT

Roy puts down the walkie. Turns to Montero and Eduardo.

ROY
Your men are dead.

EDUARDO
Then send them *all* in.

MONTERO
Eduardo. *Silence*. This man is a professional.

EDUARDO
A professional what?

Montero slaps his son viciously.

MONTERO
SHUT UP EDUARDO!

Eduardo, his eyes misting, glares back murderously at Montero. Roy can't resist a little insult of his own.

ROY
I don't feed off a trust fund, boy.
(beat)
I end lives for a living.

INT. PENTHOUSE - SUITE

Frank leads the team toward the enclosed patio area.

FRANK
They'll have the elevators and stairwells either covered by Toros or rigged with explosives, so they'll expect us to dig in and take defensive positions.

RICO
What choice do we have? We can't get out of this building.

EXT. ENCLOSED PATIO - CONTINUOUS

They file out. Frank peers over the building's edge, to a high rise scaffolding, 3 storeys below.

FRANK
We're not getting out of this building.
(beat, gazing down)
We're getting off of it.

EXT. HOTEL PENTHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The Toros rappelling ropes appear, tossed over the side, falling and landing just shy of the high-rise scaffolding.

Our team, with Diaz in tow, shimmy the length of the ropes, dropping down onto the scaffolding. They land. Eyes up. Frank inspects the anchor bolts, holding the scaffolding in place.

VIC

We're a stationary target Frank!
What the fuck are we doing?

RICO

Where are we going??

Frank points to the neighboring building, maybe 30 yards away, across a void, nearly 30 floors up.

FRANK

That way.

Just then- a paroxysm of GUNFIRE hits, brutal, teeth-rattling volleys that *obliterate* the scaffolding around them-- Frank responds by aiming his 9mm at those anchor bolts and BLASTING them free--

--and releasing the scaffolding from the building itself.

FRANK

(shouting over gunfire)
--Take it off the wall! Ride it!

The team grips the sides of scaffolding, planting their feet against the wall and rocking back and forth with their combined weight--

--Rotors rise up over the rooftops in front of them-- as a chopper appears, a GUNMAN perched behind a mounted M-134 GATTLING taking aim on them as the anchor bolts give and they pull the scaffolding free, riding it down as it topples over the void, the Gattling gun strafing them as they fall--

--the team trains their combined aims on the approaching building, BLASTING OUT THE GLASS as the scaffolding CRASHES into the adjacent high-rise and they're flung through the broken glass and into a lower level insurance claims office.

They lie in a heap. Everyone accounted for...except for Simon, who has a hole blown cleanly through his mid-section.

Simon gawks up at them, then down at the gaping hole in his middle, the scorched viscera...and realizes that he's about to die.

The team huddles around him, their collective shock and sadness indistinguishable.

Simon offers up his hand, Frank seizes it, fighting emotions he didn't think possible. Simon then locks eyes with Diaz: A gaze full of rage and anger and years of a life left unrealized.

Then, Simon utters the only thing left to say...

SIMON
...*Fucking. WIN. Mate.*

Diaz, also overcome, nods effusively. Simon ebbs away a moment later. After a beat. Frank turns to the others.

FRANK
...Come on.

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

They move up the corridor quickly, round a corner--

--and run right into a group of Los Toros coming up the hallway-- *FUCK!*

Everyone FIRES-- Toros drop-- *fuck tactics*, it's "Zulu" and "Black Hawk Down" it's a freefall, free-for-all of full blown fucking warfare...what they call in combat: A Mad Minute--

--Finally the attack subsides. Surviving Toros retreat. The hallway resembles a war zone. A spent beat.

VIC
...I got half a clip left.

TERRY
I'm almost out.

They scrounge up whatever ammo they have. Diaz turns to Frank. A real desperation in his eyes. They HEAR Los Toros Troops regrouping, amassing. Jackboots falling.

These SOUNDS issue on either side of the hallway. The one they're stuck right in the middle of...Frank looks for a door or service exit that they can reach...but there isn't one.

They stand there, the five of them, as the Los Toros build-up grows LOUDER and more intense. The battle-rattle of guns being locked and loaded echoing along the corridor towards them.

DIAZ
We're done, aren't we?

Frank tucks Diaz protectively behind him. Then, to the remaining team members.

FRANK

Form a wall around Cesar.

(beat)

This is it.

(beat)

Run your guns dry.

(like a farewell)

Don't leave a single bullet behind.

End of the line...They brace for the next assault.

...But it doesn't come. Instead, they hear what appears to be the distant echo of a retreat...The Los Toros pulling out.

They trade glances.

INT. LOBBY

Our crew approaches the exit, cautious. They peer out.

EXT. BUILDING - MORNING

What's left of Montero's Los Toros hold the line outside, but are facing away from them...WE NOW SEE why. Beyond their perimeter, dawn's bruised glow alights the horizon, the sunrise poking through the peaks to the east...

...And with that sunrise come the people.

Dozens. Young. Old. Men. Women. We've seen some of them before. At rallies. At the church. At the hospital.

Phones are raised, recording everything. Someone wields a lead pipe. Another a baseball bat. They flood the street outside. United. Defiant...Bodyguards for our bodyguards.

INT. LOBBY

On Diaz. Overwhelmed with emotion. Tears in his eyes.

INT. COMMAND VAN

Montero and Eduardo observe this event with scorn and awe.

EDUARDO

What the hell is this?

Montero looks out at the gathering crowd. At their faces. At their silent resolve.

EDUARDO

What do we do?

MONTERO

...Nothing.

(beat, with confidence)

Let our friend handle it now.

EXT. BUILDING

The Los Toros fall back, disappearing into the dawn.

INT. LOBBY

Diaz feels the swell of his supporters outside.

DIAZ
 ...I told you Frank...*Hope is more
 dangerous than a bullet.*

He takes a step toward the exit. Frank stops him.

FRANK
Wait...a bullet still has power.

EXT. BUILDING

A slide gets racked, giving way to a RIFLE SCOPE POV: Main entrance. The Sniper waits, patient.

At last our team emerges, clustered tightly around--

CROWD
DIAZ!!! DIAZ!!!!

The Crosshairs track them-- our team covering the principal. WE CATCH fleeting glimpses of Diaz-- The Sniper looks for an opening-- FINDS IT--

--and two things become shockingly apparent in that moment.

A) *It's not Diaz.* It's Rico wearing Diaz's suit.

B) Diaz is now dressed as one of the bodyguards. And Frank isn't among them. That's because--

--EXT. ROOFTOP - MORNING

--Frank's gun is pressed against the back of Roy's head.

Roy freezes. Checkmate. A gallows smile.

FRANK
 (quoting himself)
 You're like clockwork in your
 consistency of weapons and tactics
 Roy. Elevated firing position,
 targeting peripheral exits.

ROY
 Can I talk my way out of this
 Frank? For old times?

FRANK
 We gotta end this now pal.

ROY
What if I disappear?

FRANK
You won't.

A beat. Faced with certain doom and still Roy chooses truth.

ROY
No, you're right. I won't.
(beat, an odd ask)
Let me look up at the sky, one last
time, will you?

Frank relents and backs off to allow a friend's last request.

FRANK
Sure Roy.

Roy turns his face up to the heavens...An unobstructed view:
Columns of cumulous clouds unspool in the breeze and roll
past as the sunlight frames their vaporous outer edges.

ROY
...wow, that's pretty...

It's beautiful...And as good a last look as any. Roy smiles.

ROY
(light, child-like)
...I'm gonna go see my Dad now.

Frank swallows hard...then, not wanting to ruin the
simplicity of these last words, pulls the trigger as WE SMASH
CUT TO:

EXT. SQUARE - NIGHT

People are shouting. Crying. Hugging one another. WE CATCH
snippets of live broadcasts:

TV ANCHOR 1
*--an unprecedented landslide
victory for the last minute
newcomer--*

TV ANCHOR 2
*--the first independent candidate
and the youngest Mayor--*

TV ANCHOR 3
*--Federal troops have been brought
in to restore peace, and arrest
warrants have been issued--*

Rico, Vic and Terry are caught up in the celebration. Frank
remains stoic...there's something still taunting him.

Diaz is at the epicenter of the revelry. And then, for the briefest of moments, as the throng around him parts slightly, he and Frank lock eyes across the crowd.

Diaz wants to say something, but can't...so he simply nods.

And Frank, almost reluctantly, nods back.

EXT. PATIO - NIGHT

Montero by the pool, right where we met him...But now he seems like an old man, powerless, deserted, alone. In the background, a big screen shows election coverage.

An arrest warrant lands in front of Montero. He looks up. A legion of FEDERALES, led by Rico, stand before him.

RICO

The new Mayor sends his regards.

Montero has no reaction. He rises. Extends his hands. Rico happily cuffs him. Montero's lifeless eyes play over Rico.

MONTERO

Tell Diaz I didn't kill his father.
I had *nothing* to do with that.

On Rico. A little unnerved by this statement.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Diaz rises to greet Frank, who takes in the new digs.

FRANK

Moving up in the world.

DIAZ

Thanks to you. The inauguration is tomorrow. Immediately after the ceremony a half a million dollars will be wired to each of you.

Frank feels awkward about this exchange and it shows.

FRANK

I hear you got Montero.

DIAZ

He committed suicide in jail last night, like the coward he was.
(beat, right into)
So, the inauguration. Will you be my 'guest of honor' Frank? Stand with me on that dais one last time?

FRANK

Yeah, but I'd like to put a couple more men on the protection detail, just for added insuranc--

DIAZ

(waving him off)

--Frank, Frank, *forget it*. I'm not asking you to protect me, I want you there as my guest.

FRANK

Well who's gonna watch over you?

DIAZ

Montero's dead.

FRANK

Yeah and Eduardo's not.

DIAZ

I'm not worried about Eduardo--

FRANK

--Cesar, the moment before you actually take office is the moment you have to worry about *the most!*

Diaz...like the cat who ate the canary.

DIAZ

But I'm not Frank. Trust me. Ok?

Something has unsettled Frank. He's bristling, but Diaz doesn't see it...He's busy looking back over some paperwork.

DIAZ

(not looking up)

So? Tomorrow? Yes?

FRANK

No, I'm leaving town tomorrow. Bills to pay. Commitments to keep.

DIAZ

Don't suppose I can convince you to stay? I could use a good man.

FRANK

A good man?

(deadpan)

Then you wouldn't have much use for me.

Diaz smiles wide and extends his hand and for a *split second*, it appears as though Frank won't accept it...but then he does even though the gesture itself seems strangely 'staged.'

DIAZ
Goodbye Frank.

INT. RECEPTION'S AREA - DAY

Frank walks out and starts moving quickly, almost as if he's *running* from something, some terrible thought that's closing in on him-- consuming him. Something that's building in both intensity and resonance as he rushes along...something that's creating this *crippling sense of panic that he can't escape*.

He gets in the elevator and punches the button leading down. He falls back against the wall as the lift doors slide closed. As they're just about to seal, his hand shoots out back through and stops them.

The doors re-open on him...His face a mask of fury now.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Diaz looks up from paperwork. Frank stands there. Vibrating.

FRANK
So you and Eduardo are partners.

Diaz goes dark all at once as he rises up from his desk.

FRANK
I never figured out who the mole was. On the team. Someone tipped off Montero to that route.
(beat)
At first I thought it was Rico: Only one to survive your father's ambush, his relationship to Ortega. But he proved himself in battle beyond a doubt. So did the others.
(beat, his tone turning)
And now Montero commits suicide but it makes no sense...in the same way you not worrying about getting *killed by his son*, on inauguration day, makes no sense.
(beat)
Eduardo Montero was your 'wealthy donor' wasn't he?
(a long beat, then)
'Never was anything great achieved without danger.'
(beat)
It wasn't Ceasar that said that.
(beat)
It was Machiavelli.

Diaz doesn't respond. Frank presses on, piecing it together.

FRANK

You fed Eduardo that convoy route. He hires my friend Roy to kill your father, which immediately makes you the son of a martyr. In return, you declare war on Montero and put *his* father in the cross-hairs.

Diaz is silent.

FRANK

It was a dangerous game, but you played it *perfectly*. You put yourself in harm's way, knowing that every time Montero came after you, it would weaken him and make you more popular, more powerful. You hired a bunch of gringos like us to keep the scent off of you and Eduardo being in league.

(beat)

Then the moment you take office, you eliminate Montero and Eduardo assumes control of Daddy's drug empire.

(beat)

Two little *boys* finally emerging from their fathers' shadows. *Jesus*.

Now the facade drops...and the real Cesar Diaz shows himself.

DIAZ

Even *whores* want to believe in true love Frank.

(beat)

You broke your own rule...Always expect the worst. That way you're rarely disappointed.

Frank bristles at his words being turned back on him.

DIAZ

No one asked about the money. Where the *half a million* I was offering each of you was coming from because no one, not even the hard-hearted hired gun, wants to believe that a son could engage in such treachery...and that's the beauty of it...Everybody buys in.

(beat, matter-of-fact)

But my sentiments are still sincere Frank. I can make *real* change. Change my father could never fathom, much less realize. I can bring a city back from the brink.

FRANK

By turning it over to the Cartels.

DIAZ

A necessary evil...and one that I,
along with Eduardo, can control.

FRANK

(beat, with regret)
I killed a very old friend for you.

DIAZ

And like my father, he chose the
wrong side Frank.

(beat, regretful)

I wish you hadn't found out. But it
doesn't matter. I know you won't
tell the others. No one wants that
kind of truth. They don't have the
stomach for it. We'd all rather be
convinced that the lie is real.

(beat)

The money will be there. Like we
agreed. I have no intention of
going back on our deal Frank.

(beat, like a warning)

I hope you feel the same.

Diaz goes back to the paperwork. Frank stands there.
Defeated. Disgusted...until finally, he walks out.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Terry and Vic have been pillaging the mini-bar. Frank enters.

FRANK

Where's Rico?

VIC

Running an errand. Said he'd be
back soon. Drink!? *We're drunk!*

FRANK

No, thanks.

TERRY

You OK?

FRANK

Yeah.

VIC

When does the money drop?

FRANK

Tomorrow. Right after the
inauguration.

TERRY

Does Diaz need us there?

FRANK
No. We're done.

VIC AND TERRY
...*DONE!*

Vic and Terry laugh and high five and hoot. It's a carefree moment between friends, high on booze and victory and--

RICO (O.S.)
--Diaz used us.

Everyone spins back. Rico stands there, red-eyed, winded.

VIC
What the are you talking about?

FRANK
Rico, I have to talk to you. Now.

TERRY
Hang on--

FRANK
--Now, Rico!

Frank tries to haul Rico off, out of earshot, he resists--

RICO
--He's mobbed up with Montero's son! This wasn't a campaign, it was a coup.
(beat)
And we helped them pull it off!

Vic and Terry reel from the revelation.

RICO
When I arrested Montero, he said '*Tell Diaz I didn't kill his father.*' He was busted. He's likely going to spend the rest of his life behind bars, why would he lie!? Then I heard about the suicide. Why would he take his own life? Then I thought about the campaign. Where did he get the money? There were four of you, I knew he was promising two million dollars total. Where was that coming from? *His 'wealthy donors'...Like who?*
(beat)
Like Eduardo Montero?
(beat)
The man Diaz planned all this with!

Their reactions. Disdain. Disbelief. Rico turns to Frank.

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 it doesn't make a goddamn bit of difference. It's done. He won. He's still paying us--

RICO
--He PLAYED you. He lied! He used us! He used YOU!

VIC
And what do you want to do about it?

RICO
*Go to the press! Go to the cops!
Bring that sonofabitch DOWN!*

Frank...the true mercenary in him, re-emerges...

FRANK
It's not our country...It's not our city...And it's not our fight Rico.

RICO
No and it never was, was it?
(beat, fuck you)
But it is *mine* Frank. It is fucking mine and I'm gonna finish this.

FRANK
Do you want to *destroy* the myth of who Cesar Diaz is now? Those people who showed up in the street to defend him? Did you see the way they looked at him? He is *transcendent* right now Rico and as such, he is also untouchable.
(beat, grave)
What happens to you and to *your family*, if you try and tear that down?

RICO
I don't care.

FRANK
No, Rico. Care. Care a whole lot.
Care more than you have ever
fucking cared.
(beat)
Take Simon's share. Quit the force.
Take your family and disappear.

RICO
This is my city.

FRANK
No. It's his city. He won it. We
helped. Just walk away Rico. Take
the money and walk away.
(beat)
The only hero here is Diaz...and I
don't care how much that hurts.
Dead hurts worse.

RICO
So I just sit here and take it? I
take his money...*He takes my soul.*
(beat)
Is that the best bargain I can hope
to strike Frank?
(beat)
I sat by while his father, a good
man, was slaughtered in front of
me.
(beat)
Alvaro Diaz died a *believer...*and
was betrayed by a son who is
anything but.

Rico storms out. Frank follows.

FRANK
'Suicide' and 'Fighting Back'
aren't the same fucking thing!

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Rico gets into his car. Frank chases after.

FRANK
Rico!

Rico turns the ignition -- THE CAR ERUPTS AS IF PUNCHED BY AN
INVISIBLE FIST FROM BENEATH THE EARTH -- NO WARNING.

Rico is gone, lost in flames rising thirty feet in the sky.

On Frank. Refusing to accept. Unable to process.

Another sound enters his consciousness. The RINGING of his cellphone. He numbly punches up the call, answering.

DIAZ (V.O.)

...I'm sorry Frank. He was a good man and a great cop, but you can't protect people from themselves and I couldn't take the risk...Rico was a *direct threat* to me.

DIAL TONE. An Inferno reflected in Frank's eyes. Frank rushes toward it anyway.

INT. HOSPITAL - MORNING

What's left of Ramiro Rico lies in an I.C.U. recovery room, bandaged head to toe...and barely clinging to life.

Frank and the team sit just outside. His wife is by his bedside. So is his young son, MATEO.

A TRAUMA SURGEON exits the room.

FRANK

Doctor, is that man gonna live?

TRAUMA SURGEON

Are you a relative?

FRANK

(not so sure)

No. I'm, a friend.

TRAUMA SURGEON

I don't give him great odds. He's taken a *tremendous* amount of trauma. His body is burned over 85%...Put him in your prayers. It's about all you can do now.

The Surgeon exits. Frank returns his gaze to Ramiro, watching as his son Mateo slides his small pale hand over his father's heavily bandaged one. It lingers there. Squeezes.

Mateo glances back at Frank. This little boy. *Just looking.* His face then inexplicably softens and he raises his hand, waving at Frank.

Not expecting this and feeling this surge of emotion which he does his best to suppress, Frank finds himself waving back.

A man appears, marching up the hall. It's CHIEF ORTEGA. The Team rises up at his approach as Frank turns to confront him.

FRANK

You come to finish him off?

ORTEGA

I came to make sure you didn't or anyone else for that matter.

FRANK

Montero's dead and suddenly you're on the side of the right?

ORTEGA

Montero *owned* the police. He wanted you disarmed. I couldn't do anything about that then...but I had a feeling that Diaz was dirty.

FRANK

(as this occurs to him)
...that's why you let Rico hang onto his gun.

ORTEGA

You gringos I a give a *shit* about but I've lost *enough* good cops in my lifetime to last me another.

(beat)

And I'm not going to let anymore *die* for Diaz. Those days are done.

(beat, cut-to-the-chase)

So you've been paid? You got the bad guy to the finish line?

Frank can't bring himself to nod an acknowledgement. Ortega doesn't need one as he takes up watch outside Rico's room.

ORTEGA

Then get the fuck out of my country.

INT. AIRPORT - MORNING

Another customs official peruses Frank's passport.

CUSTOMS

Do you have anything to declare?

FRANK

...No.

Customs looks at him. Just another gringo who drank their tequila, bought their trinkets and fucked their women.

Beat. Stamp.

INT. AIRPORT CANTINA - MORNING

Simon's dollar streaks through Terry's fingers. He fumbles. Puts it away. Frank and Vic join with a bottle and shot glasses. Frank pours heavy shots, to the rim.

He distributes the glasses. Raises his own.

FRANK
To our friends.

TERRY
To Simon.

They shoot them back. Frank pours another round.

FRANK
To Roy.

They fire those shots back. Frank fills a third.

VIC
...To Rico.

They raise the glasses. To close the chapter.

But none of them can bring themselves to drink.

Beat. Their eyes lock. Something passes. Nothing is said.

But nothing more needs to be said.

INT. POLICE IMPOUND - EARLY MORNING

A slumbering IMPOUND COP reclines at his desk. BEHIND HIM, a '91 FORD TAURUS blasts right through the cyclone fence and out onto the street.

The Cop nearly capsizes as he lunges for the phone.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

A motorcade ROARS past: A follow escort car. A front escort and two MOTORBIKES flank. The Mercedes S-Guard in the middle of the formation carries our newly minted Mayor CESAR DIAZ.

EXT. INAUGURATION SITE - MORNING

Final preparations. Banners. Brass band. Sound check.

INT. S GUARD - MOVING

Diaz gazes out at the city. A king surveying his domain. Eduardo is in the car with him...as well as several Toros, now acting as Diaz's bodyguards and dressed for the occasion.

DIAZ
...I wonder what they would say if they saw us now Eduardo.

EDUARDO

I don't care. I despised my father.

DIAZ

Well, I loved mine. He was a noble man and that was his downfall. Politics and morality should never be in business together. My dad never appreciated or accepted that.

EDUARDO

Are you getting soft now Cesar? Regretting past miscues? Like letting those gringos live?

DIAZ

Those gringos are mercenaries, to the man. It's the *idealists* you have to look out for--

--from out of nowhere the formerly impounded '91 Taurus rams the S-Guard from the passenger side.

Frank in the passenger side, Vic driving, Terry in the back...*Defenders turned Destroyers.*

EXT. STREETS/INT. CARS - CONTINUOUS

This isn't a chase...**This Is War With Cars.**

INT. S GUARD - CONTINUOUS

Momentary chaos. They SWERVE, Diaz reacts--

EXT. STREETS/INT. CARS - CONTINUOUS

--Vic and Terry OPEN UP on the passenger side of the S-Guard, but the vehicle's armor holds fast--

Toros UNLOAD back on the Taurus-- bullets SHRED their hood, thump the bullet-resistant glass, blinding us-- Vic brakes, cranks the wheel, allowing the rear escort car to slam into them at speed, their reinforced bumper taking the brunt--

INT. REAR ESCORT CAR -- CONTINUOUS

--the dual airbags EXPLODE-- SMOTHERING the escort's driver and passenger. The Taurus appears flush alongside.

Vic sideswipes their car, sending it onto the shoulder as-- A BIG RIG, parked in the breakdown lane, hurtles into view-- too late to avoid--

--the escort car swerves to miss it, but clips the back end and caroms off, spinning wildly out of control and wrapping violently around a light pole.

INT. S-GUARD - CONTINUOUS

Pedal to the metal. Diaz seethes, SCREAMS at the Toros.

DIAZ
KILL THESE SONSABITCHES!!

EXT. STREETS/INT. CARS - CONTINUOUS

They ROAR through the streets-- careening in and out of traffic-- tires SCREAMING-- the lead escort car and the two motorbikes fall back to engage the Taurus.

A full blown mobile gunfight rages across the crowded city streets at high speed.

The two tail bikes weave in behind our guys. Machine guns BLAZE. Bullets thump off the rear end, pinging the up-armored trunk. Vic downshifts, allowing the bikes to blast past. The two RIDERS riddle the Taurus with GUNFIRE as they whiz by.

Frank swings open the passenger door as ROUNDS pound in. He pulls up that sectional middle console, dumps the empty mag on a Glock and smashes the stock down on a customized double drum, reloading and turning it into a *high capacity weapon*.

Now Frank grabs the door handle and pulls. The panelling accordions down vertically, revealing the inside of the passenger door....and those vents to be gun-ports.

He sticks the barrel into the vents and BLASTS-- the two riders are blown clean of their bikes. Vic brakes hard as he hits one and runs over the bike-- the other goes down hard in a heap, his bike skidding across the pavement.

Terry takes his cue.

TERRY
Luck.

He rolls out of the Taurus, puts a bullet in the still writhing Rider as he reaches the downed bike and brings it back up to street level, KICKSTARTING it and THROTTLING UP.

The Taurus resumes its pursuit of Diaz's S-Guard with Terry on the motorbike, bringing up the rear.

INT. S-GUARD - CONTINUOUS

Diaz is freaking out.

DIAZ
GET US OUT OF HERE!

EXT. STREETS/INT. CARS - CONTINUOUS

Frank closes on the remaining escort car. Its sunroof SLIDES open, becoming a shield. A Toro pops out, wielding an RPG--

--Frank and Vic. *OH SHIT.*

Terry SEES they are in trouble. Takes a moment. Makes a decision...and like a man going to the gallows, flashes a big 'what-the-fuck' grin as he softly sings along with THE WHO--

TERRY
...hope I die before I get old...

He guns the throttle, ripping down the sidewalk.

Frank burns a full capacity clip at the Toro, but the rounds PING harmlessly off the Armalite glass he's concealed behind.

The Toro lines up the RPG, shrugs it tight, targeting them.

On Terry-- ROARING UP fast, right into the opposing lanes and up onto the sidewalk, scattering PEDESTRIANS.

On Frank-- they are sitting ducks...

--Terry punches it, pops a wheelie, veers toward a parked car and hits the front end, using it like a ramp--

Toro-- *ready-- aim--*

--Terry appears in the sky overhead-- A DIVE BOMBER ON A MOTOR BIKE-- landing like an anvil on the escort car and sending the discharging rocket *down into the vehicle itself--*

--Both the Toro's escort car and Terry's bike DISAPPEAR in a dense, vaporizing EXPLOSION.

Frank PUNCHES the Taurus right through it.

INT. S-GUARD - CONTINUOUS

The motorcade is no more. It's just Diaz's vehicle now.

DIAZ
Where are the FUCKING TOROS!

EXT. STREETS/INT. CARS

S-Guard's Driver tries to shake off the Taurus-- BARRELS through slower traffic-- cuts into oncoming traffic--

Vic closes, precision driving despite the damaged car. SIRENS in the distance, closing fast.

FRANK
We don't have much time.

Vic FLOORS it. Pulls level with the S-Guard.

The S-Guard SLAMS into them. The two factions trade lead and paint-- sparks fly, metal grinds, as they bash back and forth into one another, demolition derby.

The Taurus is getting mangled-- no match for the sheer mass of the S-Guard, the obliterated engine begins sputtering black smoke, transmission fluid flooding from the ruptured chassis, complete engine failure imminent.

The Freeway overpass coming up fast. Vic times it--

--RIPS THE WHEEL JUST AS THE S-GUARD SLAMS AGAIN--

--Both cars SPIN out of control-- locked in a death embrace, a 720 degree skid TOWARD THE EDGE OF THE OVERPASS, S-Guard leading the plunge as--

--THEY FALL 50 FEET.

The S-Guard takes the majority of the impact, crushing in on itself, the Taurus' makeshift bumper ripping through the cab like a can opener.

SIRENS wail. Seconds away.

A badly damaged, imploded window on the Taurus gets kicked out and Frank, or what's left of him anyway, crawls out. Bloodied and broken, he limps toward the S-Guard.

A battered Toro staggers out. Raises his arms.

Frank kills him without slowing his gait. Ejects the spent mag. Reloads. Limps onward.

He reaches the S-Guard, leans down, peering inside...

...Eduardo Montero hangs upside down, his neck contorted and twisted at odd angles, his body draped in dead Toros.

No Diaz. Frank stumbles back, rounding the S-Guard.

He finds Diaz, leaning against the far side of the vehicle. For a moment they simply regard one another. There's really nothing left to trade...No pledges. No promises. No pleas.

SIRENS are nearly on top of them. Diaz can sense a reprieve.

DIAZ

If you kill me now, the wire
transfer will be automatically
revoked...and the money, gone.

Diaz looks into Frank's eyes, the politician in him still as convincing and *conniving* as ever.

DIAZ

You could end my life Frank and lengthen my legend *that much more.*

(beat)

Or you could take this moment. The moment of my defeat, when you know you could end my life...and you could own it *forever.*

(beat)

Win this one Frank. Win this. It's in your nature. I'll give you the other shares too. For the men you lost. That's *two million* dollars and this--

--Diaz points to his own shattered/battered form--

DIAZ

--This image. My defeat, at your hand, *framed.* To take with you and revisit for the rest of your lif--

--BAM. One bullet. Right between Diaz's eyes.

FRANK

Fuck you.

(as he looks down at Diaz)

I prefer that picture.

The GUNSHOT reverberates across the city, echoing off over:

EXT. INAUGURATION SITE - DAY (TWO DAYS LATER)

Everything is being taken down. The party is over. Diaz's posters are discarded into trash bins. THE CAMERA HOLDS on his winning smile amidst the detritus.

The SOUND of a NEWSCASTER prelaps...

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

...following the shocking revelation that Diaz himself orchestrated the brutal murder of his own father...

INT. AIRPORT CANTINA - DAY

Same table. Bottle. Shots of tequila. Frank and Vic. Bandaged and stitched. Watching the newscast. A pair of PLAINCLOTHES DETECTIVES, Ortega's men, loiter nearby. On hand to *ensure* that the boys make their flight back to the states.

NEWSCASTER (ON SCREEN)

...Cesar Diaz was killed by a 'Special Unit' working under the close command of hero cop, Ramiro Rico, who only barely survived an assassination attempt on his life last week. When asked about recent, persistent rumors that Officer Rico may seek a career in politics after his recovery, Police Chief Manolo Ortega expressed his support.

ORTEGA (ON SCREEN)

...I'd vote for him, tomorrow. Men like Ramiro are a rare breed and embody what could be a very promising future, not just for our city, but for all of Mexico...

The final IMAGE is of Rico himself, still confined to a hospital bed, struggling to lift his hand and in doing so, declaring a simple victory. His wife and son sit by his side. Mateo beams down at his dad with a mixture of pride and awe.

VIC

Two million dollars down the drain. Was it worth it? We're both *broke*.

FRANK

It was worth it...and it had to be done. Who knows what would have happened once Diaz took office.

This somehow lands with Vic.

VIC

Would've gotten a whole helluva lot worse as smart as that prick was.

FRANK

Well, that much we can bank on.

Vic, still stinging over those forsaken *millions*.

VIC

Only thing we can bank on now. *Fuck-*
(this long pause before)
-How could Diaz do that to his old man? *His own father*. I mean, I'm no fan of...

...Vic's voice trails off behind some aborted sentiment.

Frank sighs...about to finally breach the most painful topic that exists between these two.

FRANK

...I'm sorry Vic. I could've done better. I could've done a lot better with Mary Ellen. You know?

Vic remains very still, as if he didn't expect this...Then:

VIC

She wasn't perfect.

FRANK

Neither was I. But I can still make excuses and she can't.

VIC

Well, I don't want those anyway.

FRANK

I know you don't. I don't either.

Now this long, loaded silence stretches, broken only by...

FRANK

...Too much time has been lost.
 (beat, somber)
 And you're all I have left kid.
 (this long beat)
 My ode to this life.

Vic nods. Ponders something...then raises his glass.

VIC

To fathers and sons...

Frank raises his own glass in return.

FRANK

To fathers and sons...

They clink. Drain. Then stare down at their empty glasses.

All around them tourists, families, businessmen, people who've never fired a gun or taken a life, scurry about with harried purpose. Some may wonder about these two disjointed, disheveled Americans as they pass by...but probably not.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK:

THE END