

A Hard Place

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FADE IN:

EXT. ROOF OF DOWNTOWN PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Two FBI agents stand on top of a parking structure, looking down through binoculars at a BUSTLING SHOPPING AREA.

BRACKENS, late 40s, male, is a well-respected leader. COOPER, female, is exceptionally pretty, 30s, athletic, strong.

The street is filled with people, making their way from store to store. J.Crew, Pottery Barn... all the yuppy joints.

The St. Louis Arch looms in the background.

Brackens trains his binoculars on a black WOMAN standing on a corner, a blue duffel bag clenched tightly in her hand.

He talks into a radio.

BRACKENS

Check in.

ON THE STREET:

A WOMAN reading a romance novel on a bench -- She scratches her nose and speaks into her sleeve:

WOMAN

Street 1, clear.

A homeless-looking MAN strums a guitar, a hat full of change in front of him:

GUITAR MAN

Street 2, clear.

Another MAN, wearing a Johnny Rockets hamburger uniform, sits on the edge of a fountain, smoking. He looks like he's on his break:

HAMBURGER MAN

Street 3, clear.

Brackens swings his binoculars to the rooftops across the shopping area. He spots three other sets of AGENTS, all strategically positioned with clear views of the woman holding the duffel on the street.

Cooper checks her watch, turns to Brackens.

COOPER

Three minutes to the drop, sir.

BRACKENS
 (into the radio)
 Three minutes to kick off. Be
 alert for anything.

Brackens looks at Cooper, who scans the street, concerned.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)
 What're you thinking, Cooper?

COOPER
 I think Wallace should be here.
 This was his case. He'd know what
 to look for.

BRACKENS
 Would it help if I said I agreed
 with you?

COOPER
 IC could've waited a week before
 they benched him.

A VOICE crackles through the radio:

RADIO VOICE (O.S.)
 Roof three to TOC, I've got --
 I've got a man on the street --
 Sir, it's Agent Wallace.

BRACKENS
 What? Where?

RADIO VOICE (O.S.)
 Outside the record store, north end
 of the street.

Everyone trains their binoculars north.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

WALLACE, 30s, rugged but good-looking, moseys up the street. He nonchalantly glances in a record store window, then continues on. He's wearing jeans and a flannel shirt, like he's been working in the yard.

Next he approaches a hardware store. The windows are covered with brown paper, and a sign in the window indicates that it's "CLOSED FOR INVENTORY."

In a flash, Wallace flips out a metal device, quickly picks the lock, and walks right in the store.

BACK TO:

THE ROOF:

Everyone watches Wallace bust in.

BRACKENS

What the hell?

They lose sight of him in the store, the brown paper obstructing the view.

BRACKENS

Roof three, can you get a visual?

ACROSS THE STREET, ON THE ROOF:

A SHARPSHOOTER peers through a scope at the windows across the street. There's an opening in the paper just big enough for a glimpse inside.

SHARPSHOOTER

Sir, I got bits and pieces. Looks like Wallace is -- shopping.

CUT TO:

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Everything about Wallace's demeanor is completely relaxed. Everything except his eyes, which scan the empty aisles, ready for anything.

He scoops up a hand-basket and moves down an aisle like he doesn't have a care in the world.

Wallace picks up a WRENCH, checks it out, drops it in the basket. The same for a HAMMER and some ROPE. He inspects a SCREWDRIVER and slides it up the sleeve of his jacket.

As he makes his way to the back of the store, he notices a wooden, SWINGING DOOR marking an entry-way to a back room.

A surveillance camera peers down at him.

Suddenly, a large THUG comes out of the doorway and stands in front of it, checking out this guy shopping in the aisle. The swinging door SQUEAKS as it swings back and forth.

The thug wears an ill-fitting, orange employee vest.

THUG ONE

Buddy. We're closed here.

WALLACE

(paying him no mind)

The door was open.

Wallace moves closer to the thug and the door, painfully deciding which spray lubricant would be best for him. He chooses WD-40.

A second thug, THUG TWO, comes out of the doorway.

THUG TWO

No, it wasn't.

He reaches behind his back and touches a GUN tucked in his waistband, out of Wallace's sight.

Wallace looks at the NAME TAG on Thug Two's tight, orange vest. It says, "Browning."

WALLACE

Browning, huh? Like the poet?

THUG TWO

Like the rifle. Now beat it.

WALLACE

Is this a holiday or something?

THUG ONE

Yeah. It's Get The Fuck Out Day.

The door is still swinging slowly, SQUEAKING every time the hinge turns.

Wallace looks at the door, grabs the WD-40 from his basket.

WALLACE

Let me spray that for you.

He reaches to squirt the door, and when he does, he actually sprays the first thug in the face.

The guy reels. Thug Two pulls his gun, but Wallace uses the can like a hammer and CRACKS him square across the face, knocking the gun to the floor.

Wallace then pushes in the swinging door, and we see what he sees:

IN THE BACK ROOM:

Thirty feet away, a nervous, spooky-looking little weasel, FOSTER, has a GUN aimed at a nine-year-old AFRICAN-AMERICAN BOY.

CLOSE ON: THE GUN

Wallace focuses on the revolver, then notices a hole has been recently jackhammered into the floor's foundation, a hole large enough for a couple of bodies.

Wallace's eyes dart from the hole back to the weasel's face.

The guy takes two wild SHOTS at Wallace, not coming close, as Wallace is yanked back...

INTO THE HARDWARE STORE:

...by the thug who got sprayed in the eyes. The guy is still blinded, with tears streaming down his face, but he's got a good grip on Wallace.

The second thug steps in front of him, missing a few teeth from the hammer punch.

He measures Wallace for a haymaker, but before he can throw the punch, Wallace drives the back of his head into the blinded thug's nose, and in the same motion kicks the other guy in the stomach.

Freed up, Wallace grabs a garden hoe off a hook and swings the handle into the first thug's face like he's taking batting practice for the Yankees. The guy goes down hard, as the hoe SNAPS upon impact.

Wallace is mystified by the hoe handle, like he can't believe the thing cracked in two.

Suddenly, he's yanked off his feet by the furious second thug, and thrown over an aisle of garden supplies. He lands hard on the other side, his body going limp.

CUT TO:

THE ADJACENT ROOFTOP:

Wallace's body falls into view of the sharpshooter.

SHARPSHOOTER

(into his radio)

Wallace is down!

BRACKENS' ROOFTOOP:

Brackens grabs the radio.

BRACKENS
(into the radio)
That's it! Grab the football and
surround the store! Now!

ON THE STREET:

The Johnny Rockets guy grabs the black woman off the corner and throws her and her duffel into a CAR that races up.

All the other AGENTS race through the crowd for the hardware store --

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE STORE:

Thug Two approaches Wallace, grabs him by the pants cuffs and starts to drag him down the aisle, headed toward a rack of sledgehammers.

The big guy drops Wallace's feet and picks out the biggest hammer he can find.

He turns back, ready to smash Wallace's movie-star looks to pieces, when --

CLICK.

He finds the business end of a Glock waiting for him.
Wallace stands there, icy. The possum alive and well.

IN THE BACK ROOM:

Foster is freaking out over all the commotion in the other room. He keeps the gun aimed at the little boy. A dirty rag keeps the child from yelling out.

His eyes dart to the VIDEO MONITOR that shows nothing but an empty store.

ON THE MONITOR:

The metallic SHAKING of a paint can and then, PSSSSH. Black paint is sprayed on the lens, ending the show.

BACK TO THE DOOR:

The guy just stares at it, growing more and more nervous.
The door slowly starts to open... BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM!
Foster unloads into the thin wooden door.

What's left of the door squeaks open as Thug Two falls
through, four holes poetically placed in his gut.

Wallace is behind the body and lets it fall to the ground.

Foster aims the gun at the boy.

FOSTER
I said no F.B.I.!

WALLACE
You're dry.

Foster looks at his gun, points it at Wallace and it CLICK,
CLICK, CLICKS.

The little rat tosses it aside, holding the boy by the
throat, backing away, even more nervous.

FOSTER
I said we'd kill him unless it was
the mom and the money only!

Wallace looks at the hole in the cement.

WALLACE
You were gonna kill him anyway.

The weasel grabs a razor blade from a work table and puts it
up to the boy's neck.

FOSTER
That's guaranteed now.

WALLACE
You'll never make it out of here.

Foster keeps backing up the whole time, as Wallace moves
forward, sure-footed, waiting for his distraction.

He gets it when Foster backs into a bird-bath. The thing
rattles and the second Foster takes his eyes off of
Wallace...

THWAP!

Wallace flings the hidden screwdriver -- it rockets through the air -- and buries into Foster's shoulder, causing him to drop the knife and the boy. The screwdriver misses the boy's head by inches.

The little boy sprints away from the kidnapper and leaps up to be caught in Wallace's arms.

Only, Wallace doesn't let him make it. He catches him all right, but keeps him at arm's length, like he's holding a wet animal.

Fear, relief, and misunderstanding all fill the boy's eyes, which Wallace goes out of his way to avert.

The kidnapper has dropped to the floor, his sleeve blood soaked, clutching his useless arm.

He lets out a SCREAM OF PAIN which is lost in...

EXT. HARDWARE STORE PARKING LOT - LATER

...the roar of POLICE SIRENS.

Police cars and unmarked government vehicles are parked haphazardly. Wallace sits on the hood of a gray Bonneville, an ice pack on his lip.

Cooper climbs out of an ambulance and approaches Wallace.

COOPER

The boy's gonna be fine.

WALLACE

I know.

Cooper takes the ice pack from him and holds it to his bruise, tenderly.

COOPER

You just gave the Internal Committee the reason they needed --

WALLACE

I saved the kid.

COOPER

They'll suspend you.

WALLACE

I was already suspended.

COOPER

No, you were just off the case.

WALLACE

Come on, Cooper. I get results, and that's all the Bureau cares about. If I have to take a little wrist-slap every now and then, then that's the way the game is played. Nothing's gonna change.

She shifts the pack on his face, roughly.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

Ow!

COOPER

(angry)

I'm saying it may not be a wrist-slap this time. You violated about ten code of conduct provisions this morning. I.C. may not be so willing to let it slide.

He doesn't look concerned.

WALLACE

What're they gonna do? Find someone better?

COOPER

I won't watch you burn yourself.

WALLACE

You're not gonna have to.

That's it, she's had it. She drops the ice in his lap and stalks off.

A distraught couple, MR. and MRS. DUKES, step out of the ambulance, Mr. Dukes holding his rescued son.

An AGENT leads them over to Wallace.

Mrs. Dukes is the same woman who was holding the duffel bag. She looks at Wallace, tears in her eyes, and kisses him on the cheek.

MRS. DUKES

Thank you, Agent Wallace.

Ernie hands his son off to his wife, who heads back to the car.

MR. DUKES

(whispered)

They were gonna kill him, weren't they?

The STARE from this man says it all: anger... and the need for the truth.

Wallace shoots it straight.

WALLACE

Yeah.

MR. DUKES

And my wife?

WALLACE

That hole was big enough for two.

The father's eyes grow narrow at the thought.

MR. DUKES

I owe you. My family... owes you.

WALLACE

Just... my job, sir.

Ernie nods and walks away, toward his family.

Wallace watches him go until his field of vision is interrupted by Brackens coming toward him.

Wallace scoots over to give Brackens a place to perch on the hood. Before Brackens can open his mouth...

WALLACE (CONT'D)

(chuckling)

I don't want to hear it.

Brackens laughs. After a moment...

BRACKENS

How'd you know they'd be in the store, cowboy?

WALLACE

When I heard about the drop area, I ran a check on the local businesses. I figured the kidnapppers would try and set up where they might get some eyes on us.

He points at the store sign. It reads: FOSTER'S HARDWARE.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

The accountant the Dukes fired last year was named Foster. I didn't think it was a coincidence.

Bracken's nods, impressed.

BRACKENS

Good job. I.C.'s gonna blow their usual shitstorm at us again. Do you know how much extra paperwork I gotta fill out every time you go off without a net?

WALLACE

Not as much as you'd have if that kid was buried in the floor.

BRACKENS

(smiling)

Good point.

DISSOLVE TO:

P.O.V. OF A SECURITY CAMERA

It's a view of the back room of the hardware store. From the scratchy video we see Wallace enter as the kidnapper tries to fire his empty gun.

Wallace flings the screwdriver, taking out the kidnapper. From this omnipotent angle it's scary, the screwdriver narrowly missing the little boy.

The video FREEZES with that screwdriver zipping right past the kid's head.

The fluorescent lights flicker on, revealing --

INT. FBI MEETING ROOM - DAY

The place is sterile.

Wallace sits in a chair in the middle of the room, a table separating him from seven emotionless faces. The INTERNAL COMMITTEE in flesh and blood. Cold blood.

COMMITTEE MEMBER 1

(accusingly)

Did you take that child's life into account for even a second, Agent Wallace?

WALLACE

Of course I did. I was thinking about nothing else.

COMMITTEE MEMBER 2

Yet you'd been removed from the case a week earlier, after you --

(he reads from a folder)

"ran over a federal witness with a Volkswagen Bus."

WALLACE

That guy was setting us up to be ambushed at the drop site.

COMMITTEE MEMBER 3

Which is what he said after you brutalized him. If I was in ICU with a broken pelvis my story might change too.

Wallace shakes his head.

WALLACE

He was a scum bag. You know that. Three months ago, he was selling pictures of kids over the internet. He only turned witness to make...

COMMITTEE MEMBER 3

He still has rights.

WALLACE

Uh-uh. Not when you're sub-human. You lose those rights.

A committee member starts to say something, but Wallace interrupts...

WALLACE (CONT'D)

I know the way I do things may not be the safest...

COMMITTEE MEMBER 2

The way you do things may not be legal!

Wallace takes a moment, speaks slowly and clearly.

WALLACE

Look. I do whatever is necessary to get the job done. You may not approve, but I bet you haven't gotten any complaints from parents once they're holding their kids again!

COMMITTEE MEMBER 1

Okay, that's enough. I think we've heard all we need to hear.

Wallace leans back in his chair.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI HALLWAY - DAY

Wallace retrieves his cup of coffee from a dispensing machine in the crowded hallway.

He turns and sees Brackens just exiting the room labeled 'Internal Committee,' a sick look across his face.

CUT TO:

An array of papers, folders and junk is SWEEPED from a desk into a waiting box.

INT. F.B.I. OFFICE - DAY

It's a small office with two desks pushed together. One desk is neat, and has a nameplate that reads "Agent Cooper." It contains a picture of her, a few years younger as she is being handed her diploma and shield.

Wallace is cleaning out the other desk, which is a disaster area.

BRACKENS (O.S.)

This job ain't gonna be the same without you.

Wallace looks up to see Brackens, fidgeting in the doorway.

WALLACE

I can't believe this.

Wallace grabs a folder with an Internal Committee stamp on it.

WALLACE (CONT'D)
The I.C. can't just hand down
judgment like --

BRACKENS
I found out it's not just I.C.

Wallace stops, looks up.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)
You scare the other G-2's. No team
besides Cooper and me is willing to
work with you.

This hits Wallace like a truck.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)
They told me the Bureau had six
requests for transfer over the last
eighteen months. Agents trying to
get away from you. That's why
I.C.'s hands were tied.

WALLACE
(in disbelief)
What?

BRACKENS
It's the training, Wallace.
They're taught procedure,
procedure, procedure and when
someone like you comes along and
throws the book out the window,
other agents don't know how to
react.

Wallace shakes his head; it's all sinking in. He picks up
his box.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)
I'm not done fightin'. Let's get
some distance and then come back at
'em in a couple of months. I just
need some time to change their
minds.

Wallace nods.

WALLACE
Sure.

BRACKENS
What are you going to do?

Wallace takes a look around; he's going to miss all this.

WALLACE

I don't know.

With that, he's gone.

CUT TO:

EXT. F.B.I. OFFICE - DAY

Wallace beelines across the parking lot, his box of personal items in tow.

As he snakes through the cars...

VOICE

What are you gonna do?

Wallace turns to see Cooper propped against her car.

WALLACE

Thought you were taking the day off.

COOPER

I was. But Brackens called and I --

(beat)

You wanna go get a beer or something? Talk about all this?

WALLACE

I don't think so. Not right now.

Cooper nods.

COOPER

Sure. When you're ready...

WALLACE

Thanks.

(beat)

Be good to yourself.

With that, he's off toward his car.

EXT. WALLACE'S HOUSE - DAY

Wallace pulls into the driveway of his house. A run-down colonial in the suburbs. He's in a dark mood, as he pulls his box out of his car and heads...

IN THE GARAGE:

Shit is everywhere. Boxes with case files and mugshots spilling out, grocery bags filled with cans waiting for recycling, garden tools never used, hanging at crazy angles from a peg board...

Wallace drops his box on a table amongst all the crap.

He then eyes the pegboard in front of him, the tools... he spins and heads back to the car, returning with the broken garden hoe from the hardware store, handle duct-taped together.

Wallace hangs it on the peg board with other tools, but the peg gives way and the hoe knocks off some tools before careening into his box of office stuff, toppling it and spilling all his shit on to the ground.

Wallace has had enough. His anger and frustration boil over.

He sweeps his hands across the board, knocking off the tools, but that's not enough. Next he goes after some shelves with coffee cans of nuts and bolts, which EXPLODE all over the floor. Now he's warmed up. Pure rage is driving him, and he takes it out on the boxes, grocery cans, even the old lawn mower.

After completely destroying the garage, Wallace, exhausted, falls to his knees, then lays down, right in the middle of the carnage, his eyes closed.

Finally he opens them... only to see a face staring back at him... a child's face, printed on a grocery bag stuck to the side of the table... the words "Have you seen me?" above the little girl's head. Under her picture: "\$10,000 Reward."

Wallace looks deep into her eyes, and she seems to look right back, challenging him to find her.

Wallace leaps up and grabs the bag, carefully tearing out the picture and contact info. He races inside.

INT. WALLACE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

This place is a mess too, but no one is there to care.

Wallace finds a phone under a stack of papers, dials.

WALLACE

(into the phone)

Yes, I'm calling about...uh...

Phoebe Blake...

(MORE)

WALLACE (cont'd)
She's still missing then? Okay,
listen, I'll find her for you...
No please don't hang up. I did
this -- I do this kind of stuff...
Yes, ma'am... What can you tell me
about your daughter...

INT. THE GARAGE - LATER

Wallace charges into the garage and knocks a few remaining
tools from the peg board so it's completely clean...

...and tacks the picture of Phoebe Blake to it.

He takes a step back, a new look on his face. A look of
purpose.

DISSOLVE TO:

A MONTAGE:

The peg board turns into a living being, the picture of
Phoebe is soon surrounded by leads and maps, phone numbers
and polaroids...

The garage is transformed into a literal command center.

The peg board continues to fill, but now with new pictures,
new cases Wallace is working on...

Wallace on the phone...

WALLACE
(into the phone)
I understand that, doctor, but I
faxed you parental consent. If you
could help me out, I'd really
appreciate it.
(he listens)
Thank you.

He hangs up and studies the board, honing in on a map. He
picks up a marker and draws a circle around something...

More maps, more polaroids, more phone numbers, pictures from
yearbooks, school photos, dental reports. The whole wall is
getting filled, Wallace pacing in front of them all, lost in
thought...

Over the images, we HEAR an answering machine with a series
of calls:

PHONE VOICE

BEEP. Yes sir, you left me a message about uh... Phoebe Blake's stepdaddy. Well, I seen this fella the other day down in Doverton, coulda sworn it was...

PHONE VOICE TWO

BEEP. Umm... Hello, this is Ms. Wilder, Phoebe Blake's second grade teacher. I have a photo from our Christmas party that you might...

PHONE VOICE THREE

BEEP. Hi, I got your number from a...well, a friend. My name is Cedric Bowden and my...uh...my son has been missing for eleven months. Listen, if you could give me a call, I would really...

All of this is played out as more photos continue to go up.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT./EXT. WALLACE'S HOUSE - DAY

FROM INSIDE THE GARAGE we see Wallace in the driveway, a middle-aged woman, PHOEBE'S MOM, putting a bear hug on him.

PHOEBE'S MOM

She's everything I have. My only family left...

(beat)

Thank you.

We see her force something into Wallace's hand. He takes it as the woman climbs in the back of a cab, scooting next to a little girl who looks out at him from the rear window. She waves little fingers at him as the cab takes off, and there's no mistake, it's the same little girl from the first photo he put on the peg board.

Wallace JOINS US in the garage, looks at the peg board, and then the check in his hand made out for \$10,000.

He takes down the original grocery bag picture of Phoebe Blake. Challenge met.

After a moment, he picks up the phone, already putting up a new picture in its place, a small boy named Arnold Bowden.

WALLACE
(into the phone)
Hello, Mr. Bowden? This is Martin
Wallace...

The area around Arnold's face starts to fill up with a new set of maps, charts, phone records, and we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WALLACE'S BACKYARD - DAY

A RADIO plays nearby, a St. Louis Cardinals game.

Title: "One Year Later."

Wallace is working in the garden, which looks great. He's even using the taped-up hoe from the hardware store.

The tape on the hoe gives way and Wallace just smiles. He wipes his dirty hands on his pants, POPS a beer from a cooler and lies on a chaise lounge in the shade.

A yellow LABRADOR joins him on the lounge as the Cards hit a home run.

Wallace is pretty damn content.

IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE:

A tan, government-issued sedan rolls up the block and turns in his driveway. Agent Brackens steps out of the car with a manila envelope.

BEHIND THE HOUSE:

Brackens comes around from the front, enters the white picket yard and spots Wallace. He smiles, warmly.

BRACKENS
Who's that son-of-a-bitch sleepin'
on the job?

Wallace opens a sleepy eye as his lab jumps up to greet Brackens.

WALLACE
Brackens!

He gets up quickly and the two men embrace like old friends.

BRACKENS
You look good.

WALLACE

No more federal coffee and donuts.
You should try it.

Brackens pats his stomach.

BRACKENS

I'm workin' on it.

They laugh.

WALLACE

How are things at the nation's
finest?

BRACKENS

Oh, you know. The FBI's middle
name is still 'Bureau.'

Wallace smiles at this. Brackens surveys the yard.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

How bout you, Wallace?

WALLACE

I'm not complaining.

BRACKENS

(chuckles)

Been hearin' you've got quite an
operation down here.

WALLACE

Just doing things my way.

BRACKENS

Like you ever did it any different.

Brackens turns the envelope over and over in his hands.

WALLACE

So, what brings you out to see the
FBI's most unwanted?

BRACKENS

A job.

WALLACE

(in disbelief)

Come on.

BRACKENS

I keep showin' your results to the Internal Committee, and believe me, everybody's taken notice. You've done a helluva service since you got out. Lots of happy families out there.

WALLACE

But...

BRACKENS

But... it's not what you're trained for. It's not what you're best at. It's not kidnapping and ransom.

WALLACE

What are you getting at?

BRACKENS

I'm getting at a deal to finally get you back in the Bureau.

Wallace's eyes go wide. He can't believe it.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

I've been workin' on this for a year, so hear me out: you bring a guy in for us and the Committee has agreed to reinstate you. Hell, every kid you find only makes 'em look worse for canning you. So do this for us and they'll put you back on the team.

WALLACE

(stunned)

You're kidding me.

BRACKENS

And you can focus exclusively on the knee-highs. Whatever you want.

WALLACE

(puzzled)

You said bring in a guy?

BRACKENS

That's right.

WALLACE

A man-hunt's a different animal. You know that.

Brackens opens the envelope and withdraws a folder. He flips inside and dangles a picture in front of Wallace: a school photo of a seven-year-old little girl, smiling sweetly.

BRACKENS

They got his daughter too.

CUT TO:

INT. WALLACE'S GARAGE - LATER

Brackens spreads the file out on the large work table in the middle of the room. On top is an eight-by-ten black and white PHOTOGRAPH of a middle-aged GUY. The guy looks like he's spent a few years inside a jail cell.

Brackens flips to the picture of the little girl.

BRACKENS

Her name's Grace. Seven years old. She'd be starting second grade this fall. Her daddy's no saint, but neither of 'em deserves this.

WALLACE

What's the father's story?

Brackens flips back to the picture of the father.

BRACKENS

Fella goes by the name of Papa Rollo. He was into fencing below the line weapons sales when we made a deal with him, hoping to flush his clients. Next thing we know, the suppliers nab him out from under us.

Wallace lets out a low whistle.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

Yeah. They're gonna blow the whole thing up in the press if we don't back off their operation.

WALLACE

How long'd they give you?

BRACKENS

Two days. If they go public with this, the Senate Oversight's gonna have a field day.

WALLACE

So call in Hostage Rescue.

BRACKENS

(shaking his head)

This has to be a non-sanctioned job. The Director isn't about to hang anything out for this guy. Begs too many questions. Like why we're dealing with a hit man in the first place...

WALLACE

This Rollo guy?

BRACKENS

(nods)

Did weapons work for a heavy-hitter in Chicago named Slippery Coombs til he showed up at our door a couple of years ago. This Rollo's a live-wire, enemies on all sides. You might need to strong-arm him to get him out of there.

Wallace nods.

Brackens unrolls a map of Texas.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

A snitch tipped us to an address outside of Waxahachie, Texas. It's about thirty miles South of Dallas.

Wallace looks back at the picture of the girl, really zeroing in on it.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

Just rescue this guy and his daughter and that's it. You're back in.

WALLACE

I'm gonna have to work alone.

BRACKENS

(smiling broadly)

I figured you'd say that.

Wallace stares at the little girl, thinking, and the SOUND OF A PLANE TAKING OFF...

DISSOLVES TO:

INT. AIRPLANE - FRIDAY MORNING

Wallace sits in the back, in his own row, near the flight attendant's station. Brackens' research is spread out haphazardly in front of him, covering the tray table and the two adjoining seats.

It's all very professional: satellite photos, personal files, receipts for the weapons Rollo was buying for the Feds.

Wallace looks closely at the photos of the house, where he sees multiple GUARDS, some on horseback. He also sees surveillance cameras on various parts of the house.

He takes a black pen and draws angled lines from the cameras, getting a feel for their lines of sight.

There is a conspicuous area next to the house, a storm cellar door, that the cameras don't see.

He circles it.

Wallace reads the file on Papa Rollo:
Chicago gangster... Gun runner... Suspected of multiple murders... Nothing ever proved...

Wallace looks up to see a LITTLE BOY waiting for the bathroom with his MOM.

LITTLE BOY

What are you doing?

WALLACE

Homework.

LITTLE BOY

I don't like homework.

Wallace motions the boy to come closer.

WALLACE

(whispers)

I don't care.

The mother jerks the boy away from him, and Wallace goes back to his work.

He consults his map of Texas, and THE CAMERA PUSHES WAY IN on the little dot marked "Waxahachie."

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTRAL TEXAS - DAY

Wallace lies belly-down next to a couple of scattered rocks. He's wearing a dusty tan jumpsuit, matching the dirt of the land around him.

He's also holding a pair of binoculars, scanning something across the desert prairie.

POV OF BINOCULARS:

There's a two story tract-house, like something Habitat For Humanity would throw up in an afternoon. It seems quiet enough.

But then, the binoculars pick up a couple of MEN on horseback, trotting out from the other side of the house.

They each have shotguns, side-arms, sophisticated binoculars.
They mean business.

BACK TO WALLACE:

Wallace's face registers his concern. He picks up some more movement and returns the binoculars to his eyes.

POV OF BINOCULARS:

A pick-up truck rolls up the long gravel driveway, and stops next to the house. No other cars are visible.

The DRIVER gets out and shares a joke with the two horsemen.

The binoculars track down the side of the house and zero in on the storm-cellar leading into the house's rear.

BACK TO WALLACE:

Wallace makes three marks on the back of his hand with a black piece of chalk.

He then squints up at the sun, checks his watch, uses his hand to check his shadow against the boulder, and then does a curious thing: he places the binoculars at an angle on the rock, checks his watch again, squints at the sun again, and sneaks out of there.

EXT. BEHIND A WOOD PILE - NEAR THE HOUSE:

Wallace sneaks behind the wood pile.

The two horsemen and the driver of the car are between Wallace and the house, and are still talking:

HORSEMAN ONE
 (southern accent)
 ...a guy I was in the service with
 would eat those damn things raw.

DRIVER
 You gotta be kidding me.

HORSEMAN ONE
 My hand to God.

From his vantage point, Wallace can peer into the cab of the pick-up truck. He notices that the driver left the keys in the ignition.

Wallace looks at his watch again, checks out the sun, and then squints out to where the boulders stand, about a quarter-mile away.

As if on cue, the sunlight catches the glass of the binoculars, and a bright REFLECTION shines from the boulders.

The horsemen notice it too.

HORSEMAN ONE (CONT'D)
 (checking the sun)
 Did you see that yesterday?

HORSEMAN TWO
 No. And we swept the perimeter
 this morning.

HORSEMAN ONE
 (into his radio)
 We've got something about 500 yards
 out - north-northeast. We're going
 to check it out.

RADIO VOICE (O.S.)
 Roger that. You'll have cover.

HORSEMAN ONE
 (to Horseman Two)
 Let's go.

He and the other horseman ride off, and the driver starts to go inside, but remembers his keys, taking them from the ignition before he goes in.

Wallace watches the driver put the keys in his pocket. He starts his stopwatch, and scrambles...

NEXT TO THE HOUSE

...to the blind spot that he'd marked on the photos. Wallace can hear the MURMUR OF VOICES, but nothing is clear.

Based on what he hears, he makes three more black chalk marks on his hand. There are six marks now.

Wallace sneaks along the side of the house and eases up to the cellar door.

From his vantage point, he can see the horses getting close to his binoculars on the horizon.

Wallace checks out the cellar door (which is in two sections) and finds a filament wire stretching between the two handles.

He reaches into a side pocket on his jumpsuit and pulls out some of his own filament wire. Slowly, carefully, he feeds enough slack from his own spool into the wire to open the doors.

One last check of the horsemen. It seems that they've stopped at the rock where he left his binoculars, dismounted, and are checking it out.

Suddenly, a RUSTLING NOISE gets Wallace to turn his head. He has a gun in his hand quick as lightning, ready for anything.

But an armadillo emerges from the tumbleweed behind him.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CELLAR - DAY

It's dank, dark and dusty down here. Wallace carefully walks down a wooden staircase into the basement. His head is on a swivel, his eyes looking for anything.

VOICES are coming from the door above the opposite wooden staircase, which rises up on the other side of the cellar and enters the house.

An old water heater stands near those stairs.

VOICE ONE

(from a walkie-talkie)

...pair of binoculars...

professional...

VOICE TWO

(muffled)

...we'll do a complete premises
search...

On the stairs, Wallace checks his watch.

Before proceeding through the basement, he pulls some white powder from his pocket and tosses it on the floor which illuminates a laser grid. A grid impossible to cross without tripping.

Concern registers on Wallace's face. These guys were ready for anything.

He looks back up the door from which he came.

CUT TO:

OUTSIDE THE CELLAR:

The armadillo scratches at the earth, searching for grubs.

Suddenly, Wallace's hands pop into frame and snatch it up by it's tail. Little claws try to stay on the dirt.

CUT TO:

UPSTAIRS BEDROOM:

A buzzer goes off near a TECHNICIAN who is monitoring a computer screen.

TECHNICIAN

(into a radio)

We've got an intruder in the
cellar.

CUT TO:

DARK CELLAR:

The door leading to the house is THROWN OPEN, light bathing into the decrepit basement. Two GUARDS slowly come down the stairs from the house.

Everything looks normal down here. But it's not --

The CAMERA FINDS Wallace, now across the grid near the stairs leading to the house, hiding behind the clunky hot-water heater, crouched down, his gun out and ready.

GUARD ONE moves through the darkness toward Wallace's hiding place, his eyes peering into the darkness. GUARD TWO checks the other side.

Just as Guard One is about to find Wallace...

GUARD TWO
Forget about it. False alarm.

Guard One turns to find his partner holding up the armadillo.

GUARD ONE
I hate those big fucking rats.

He gives one last look in Wallace's direction, and gives up, when --

The armadillo SQUEALS and shakes loose from Guard Two's grasp. It scampers around the basement floor.

GUARD ONE (CONT'D)
Christ!

Guard One tries to dodge the mad charge of the armadillo.

The animal finally gets caught up in his feet and the guy falls down, right next to the water heater.

Face to face with Wallace.

Wallace doesn't wait for the surprise to settle on the guy's face. He PISTOL-WHIPS the poor guy, knocking him out.

Guard Two sees his partner fall back, out cold, and tries to scramble up the stairs, but Wallace is on him before he can react.

He tackles him off the stairs, knocking the guy's head into the pavement in the process. The guy falls out next to his partner.

Wallace wipes two marks off his hand (leaving four), grabs a radio off one of the guys and heads up the stairs to the house.

THE FOYER:

Right as the Driver is coming down from upstairs.

DRIVER
Hoover? What's going on with your radio...?

CLICK. Wallace's Glock introduces itself to the driver, who stops cold.

WALLACE

Keys. Front pocket. Now.

The driver's eyes scan the scene quickly, like a pro.

As fast as a jackrabbit, the guy ducks under Wallace's arm, and knocks the gun away. Damn, this guy is quick. He pile-drives Wallace into...

THE KITCHEN:

...where the two of them tumble on to a table of dirty dishes, the guy getting blows in on Wallace left and right.

They tumble off of the table, creating a racket of crashing dishes, while we can hear on the radio...

ON THE RADIO (V.O.)

Nothing else out here, not even tracks. We're coming back...

...and through the window we can see the horsemen in the distance mount back up again.

Wallace and the Driver both scramble up and the Driver is able to snatch a knife up off the kitchen counter. He spins it in his hand like he's had some experience with slicing men open.

As the Driver comes at him, Wallace looks desperately at the counter, grabs the cord of a bread-maker out of the socket and swings the appliance like a medieval mace.

The thing connects with the Driver's nose, whipped around at thirty miles per hour.

That's all she wrote for the Driver.

Wallace wipes off another chalk mark, leaving three. He quickly fishes the keys out of the driver's pocket, retrieves his gun and races up the stairs.

UPSTAIRS:

Where the technician walks out of the bedroom door, his gun drawn.

TECHNICIAN (O.S.)

Skeet?

BAM! In the same motion, Wallace knocks the gun out of the guy's hands, and uses the man's momentum to send him tumbling down the stairs.

Okay, Wallace is getting warmed up now.

He wipes off another mark, leaving two. Out a window, he can see the horsemen closing the distance back to the house.

SCUTTling and WHISPERS can be heard inside the bedroom.

IN THE BEDROOM:

When Wallace pokes his head in, the bedroom appears empty.

He moves over to a closet, can hear WHISPERING inside.

Wallace steadies himself, rears back and KICKS in the door.

IN THE WALK-IN CLOSET:

The door kicks in, right into PAPA ROLLO'S face, knocking the poor guy silly.

Wallace steps into the closet, gun in hand, and sees the sweet, little seven-year-old, GRACE, standing over her father.

He notes the sorry condition that Rollo is now in.

WALLACE

Shit. Help me with him. Let's move.

GRACE

No!

WALLACE

What?

GRACE

We're not going!

WALLACE

I don't have time for this, kid!
Let's go!

GRACE

No!

Wallace wipes his brow with his gun hand, and she catches a glimpse of the weapon.

WALLACE

Move it!

Not taking her eyes off the gun, she shuffles toward him, starting to cry.

Wallace manages to get Papa Rollo up, and half-carries him over to the bedroom window. Quickly, Wallace knocks out the window glass and tosses Papa Rollo outside onto the roof of the porch.

OUTSIDE THE HOUSE:

Papa Rollo's dazed body slumps on the roof and then drops eight feet to the dirt, landing right by the truck.

If he wasn't a little loopy before, he is now.

IN THE FIELD:

The horsemen are closer and can see what's happening. They pull their shotguns.

IN THE WINDOW:

Wallace appears, holding Grace. He carefully slides out the window himself, keeping the girl safe, and drops the eight feet to the dirt.

He tosses her into the front of the truck, and then rolls the barely-conscious Papa Rollo into the bed of the truck.

Wallace jumps the hood, races into the driver's side, and throttles the pick-up, leaving the chasing horsemen as they FIRE their shotguns.

He rubs off the last two chalk marks on his hand and points the car West.

EXT. ROAD TO THE WAXAHACHI AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

The pick-up truck hauls ass down the two-lane highway toward this little prop-plane airport. In the rearview, Wallace sees that Rollo is still out.

Grace huddles in the passenger seat, unable to take her eyes off Wallace's gun.

Wallace dials a few numbers on his cell phone.

WALLACE
Brackens? I've got 'em.

CUT TO:

EXT. WAXAHACHI AIRPORT - DAY

Brackens stands by himself on the tarmac, next to a puddle jumper.

BRACKENS
(excited)
Wallace! I knew you'd do it, you son of a bitch.

He can barely contain his excitement.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)
What's your locale?

BACK TO:

THE TRUCK:

WALLACE
Maybe a mile from you. Uh-huh.
He's fine. Uh-huh. You got it.

Wallace hangs up the phone to see Rollo shaking out the cobwebs in the bed of the truck.

Oil pumps do their business in the surrounding fields.

Rollo crawls to the back window of the truck, and spots the gun in Wallace's hand, his daughter scared shitless in the seat next to him.

He palms the glass and slides the window open, sticking his face inside the cab.

PAPA ROLLO
(through the window)
Whatever you're being paid to kill me, I'll double it.

WALLACE
What're you talking about?

PAPA ROLLO
I'm talking about whatever you need. I will double your fee to let us out of this truck right now.

Wallace maneuvers the truck through the entrance to the small
AIRPORT:

WALLACE
Take it easy. I'm with the good
guys. The Feds hired me to pull
you out.

PAPA ROLLO
(astonished)
What?

WALLACE
I used to be a Fed, now I do this.
Wallace steers through an open gate onto the
AIRPORT TARMAC:

PAPA ROLLO
Do what?

WALLACE
Find missing children. I threw you
in for free.

Papa Rollo is stunned, shocked, confused.

BRACKENS stands near the small plane, five-hundred yards
away, alone.

PAPA ROLLO
Oh my god.

Realization blankets Rollo's face.

WALLACE
What?

PAPA ROLLO
You don't know what you just did.

WALLACE
What're you talking about?

PAPA ROLLO
You've gotta stop, Mister.

WALLACE
Stop?

PAPA ROLLO

Those were Federal Marshals back there! You just broke us out of Witness Protection!

Brackens is within spitting distance now. He's got both his hands behind his back, smiling, waiting.

It doesn't make sense to Wallace. He SLAMS on the brakes, and the pick-up truck screeches to a halt, slamming Rollo around the bed.

Wallace and Brackens are squared off, twenty feet separating them. Rollo climbs back toward the window.

WALLACE

Witness protection?

PAPA ROLLO

Yeah!

Wallace can't believe it.

There's Brackens, smiling, waiting for them to get out of the truck.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

(slowly, carefully)

I... think... you should get down.

Grace ducks down.

Wallace hollers out the window...

WALLACE (CONT'D)

Where's the team, Brackens?

BRACKENS

(casually)

They couldn't make it. Come on, let's go.

Wallace is still in shock.

WALLACE

What do you mean "couldn't make it?"

BRACKENS

(a little perturbed)

Let's go. Come on. You did a great job. I got a plane waiting. Let's hustle.

It all comes clear to Wallace. He can't believe what he has to say next...

WALLACE

How 'bout you let me see your hands.

BRACKENS

What?

Wallace shakes his head, this pains him...

WALLACE

Let me see your hands, Brackens.

BRACKENS

(rolling his eyes)

Yeah, sure, but why the --

Suddenly, Brackens pulls up his hands, fisting two Glock semi-automatics.

BAM! BAM! BAM! Brackens unloads both barrels into the cab, bullets whizzing into the windshield.

Wallace doesn't wait to see what's next, he just SLAMS his foot on the gas and races the truck at Brackens.

Just as the grill of the truck is about to slam into his knees, Brackens leaps up, smacking on to the hood, eye-to-eye with Wallace.

Wallace then slams the truck into reverse and spins out of there, as Brackens rolls on to the pavement and comes up firing until his gun is empty.

Rollo covers his head, sprawled out in the back of the pick-up as bullets PLINK, PLINK, PLINK into the frame.

The truck races across the tarmac, smashes through a chain-link fence, and up the embankment to the

HIGHWAY:

Wallace takes out his white-hot anger on the accelerator. Grace is WHIMPERING next to him.

Rollo, who's been through a helluva rough ten minutes, pulls himself back to the small window.

Grace turns on her knees and reaches through the window, trying to get a hold of her dad.

GRACE

Daddy...

PAPA ROLLO

It's okay sweetheart, it's okay.

(to Wallace)

Did you really believe...

WALLACE

(interrupting)

Just let me think!

Wallace's cell phone starts RINGING. He stares at it a minute.

PAPA ROLLO

You gonna get that?

Wallace clicks the phone.

WALLACE

(into the phone, pissed)

What the fuck're you doing?

AT THE AIRPORT:

Brackens stands by his plane, a cut across his forehead.

Airport Police cars are ROARING his way.

BRACKENS

(on the phone)

I should ask you the same thing.

He holds up his F.B.I. BADGE as the cops approach, not moving the cell phone from his ear.

Intercut:

WALLACE

You set me up.

BRACKENS

It's over, Wallace. Just turn around.

WALLACE

How long've you been in the pocket?

BRACKENS

Do you hear me? It's over! You were fucked the moment you busted into a safehouse and broke out a federally protected witness. Either you bring him back or I get to hunt him out in the open. Whichever way, yours is the face on all the wanted posters.

CLICK. Wallace hangs up the phone.

PAPA ROLLO

Nice work, Mister.

Wallace just sits there, fuming, driving lights out.

PAPA ROLLO (CONT'D)

Real clean job, you pulled. If it weren't for the bruise on my head possibly causing permanent brain damage not to mention headaches, blurred vision, and probable nausea, I'd probably --

SLAM! Wallace pulls the sliding glass shut, cutting off Rollo's sentence, but not stopping his mouth.

Grace is still crying.

WALLACE

(to Grace)

You need to zip it.

But she can't. Wallace opens the partition again and Rollo hasn't stopped talking.

PAPA ROLLO

...as ignorant as a monkey.

WALLACE

Shut her up or she's riding back there with you.

PAPA ROLLO

You leave her out of this, tough guy.

Wallace shakes his head; he can't believe this situation.

Papa Rollo looks in at Grace.

PAPA ROLLO (CONT'D)

Don't cry, honey. I'm right here.

There's real love in his voice.

The pick-up truck heads down a narrow highway, off the beaten track.

Suddenly, Wallace slams on the brakes and pulls off to the shoulder. There's nothing around but cow pastures.

Wallace gets out of the truck, while Rollo climbs out of the back. Grace leaps out and jumps in her daddy's arms.

WALLACE

(wearily)

Go.

PAPA ROLLO

What?

WALLACE

Go on. You're free to go.

PAPA ROLLO

What's that supposed to mean?

WALLACE

It means you have nothing to do with this.

He lowers his head on the side of the truck.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

You did nothing wrong, Mister...

PAPA ROLLO

Papa.

WALLACE

(exasperated)

Papa. Just go turn yourself in to the nearest authorities and they'll get you back to a safe harbor. Dallas is just up the highway from here.

Rollo looks at Grace, then back at Wallace like the guy has two noses.

PAPA ROLLO

Ho-ho, no thank you. I don't think so.

Wallace isn't sure what to make of this.

PAPA ROLLO (CONT'D)

You said the guy that hired you was
a Fed?

Slowly, Wallace nods.

PAPA ROLLO (CONT'D)

And told you exactly where I was?

Again the nod.

PAPA ROLLO (CONT'D)

Then turning myself in would put me
back to square one, smart guy. I
don't know who I can trust, now.
Certainly not the Fibbies. The way
I see it, the only person more...

He covers Grace's ears with his hands and mouths "fucked."

PAPA ROLLO (CONT'D)

...(fucked) than me is you.

She wriggles out from where he covered her ears.

GRACE

(to Papa)

Where're we going now?

PAPA ROLLO

I don't know, baby.

GRACE

Is he going with us?

He slides his arm around her and pulls her in tight.

PAPA ROLLO

You're damn right he is. He knows
that he got us into this mess and
if he has a quarter of a heart and
half of a brain... which is up for
serious contention right now... he
also knows that the only way to
exonerate himself is for us to live
through this and to testify for
him.

Wallace isn't liking the looks of this.

PAPA ROLLO (CONT'D)
Right, mister?

WALLACE
It's Wallace.

PAPA ROLLO
Wallace? Like the racist governor
from Alabama?

WALLACE
It's better than being named after
some shitty candy bar.

PAPA ROLLO
Hey!

He quickly covers Grace's ears.

PAPA ROLLO (CONT'D)
Have some respect.

WALLACE
Just get back in the truck.

The three of them climb back into the cab. Wallace points at
Grace.

WALLACE (CONT'D)
And keep a muzzle on her.

The truck starts to roll away, kicking up dust where the
wheels meet the road.

CUT TO:

INT. F.B.I. FIELD OFFICE - DAY

Brackens stands in front of a giant Texas road map with
dozens of AGENTS, FEDERAL MARSHALS, TEXAS RANGERS and LOCAL
POLICE grumbling around him.

BRACKENS
(heavily)
I took up for Wallace when there
wasn't a soul in the Bureau who
wanted him around. Nobody's more
beat up about this than me.

MARSHAL
What can you tell us about him?

Brackens blows out a deep breath.

BRACKENS

Quantico trained, head of his class in weapons and combat. A good thinker but near the bottom in every category that required taking orders. The truth is he's had a grudge against our department since he was fired.

RANGER

Sounds like a dog that needs his teeth pulled.

BRACKENS

In the year Wallace has been out of the Bureau, he set himself up a nice little kidnapping grift with some OC's out of Chicago. We got wind of it a couple months ago and were running an operation, setting him up, when well...

Brackens points at the driver from the safe-house who got cracked in the face. A bandage covers his poor nose.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

(to a Marshal)

You're a Federal Marshal, right?
And you were there?

The man nods.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

(to the whole crew)

These fellas had six of their best at an electronically secured confidential locale and Wallace walked in there like he was ordering himself up a corn dog at the Circle K.

He points to the highway map behind him.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

Let's set up nests here, here and here.

(to the bandaged Marshal)

You guys take the lead for now.
Let's not lose him a second time.

The dig burns like a lodged jalapeno in the Marshal.

MARSHAL

Don't worry. He's not leaving the state.

BRACKENS

All right, let's load up.

The men scatter out of the building and we see...

EXT. F.B.I. FIELD OFFICE - DUSK

...that there's an army of POLICE, RANGERS, MARSHALS and F.B.I. AGENTS ready to scatter all over the state.

Brackens walks out and watches all this activity, a grim appreciation in his eyes.

A car races up and skids to a stop. Agent Cooper jumps out.

BRACKENS

Cooper. Finally. Walk with me.

Brackens and Cooper walk around the side of the office.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

When was the last time you spoke with Wallace?

COOPER

His last day on the job.

BRACKENS

Me too. Turns out there was a reason why he fell out of contact.

COOPER

Why? What's he been doing?

BRACKENS

In the last year he's been helping set up fake kidnappings...

COOPER

What?

BRACKENS

Uh-huh. So he could extort families under the guise of being a good guy. Rescue the kids, collect a fat fee. We've been watching him for a month now.

COOPER

You were running a sting on
Wallace?

BRACKENS

We know he had a personal vendetta
against the Bureau since he got
booted. For now, we were just
watching, mapping out our next
move. But no one thought he would
resort to this.

COOPER

Why wasn't I brought in?

BRACKENS

I wanted to let you in, but
upstairs balked.

COOPER

I think I could've been trusted...

BRACKENS

Agreed. But here we are, and I
need your help.

COOPER

Whatever you need me to do.

Cooper's pager goes off. She stares at the strange number.

BRACKENS

Great. Go check in and we'll get
started.

COOPER

Yes, sir.

She walks toward the field office and Brackens watches her
go.

CUT TO:

INT. ROADSIDE RESTAURANT - FRIDAY NIGHT

Papa Rollo watches Grace, who is working the coin-operated
toy-crane game in the corner, trying to pick up a cheap teddy
bear with the metal claw. His eyes scan the place, looking
for anything out of the ordinary. His scan ends on Wallace
as he returns a pay-phone receiver to its cradle and moves
toward his booth in the back.

A LITTLE KID is sprawled out on the floor, playing with plastic trucks that look like they came out of a happy-meal.

Papa watches Wallace step right through the kid's play area, scattering the toys, not even looking up as he makes it over to Rollo's booth. Blinking tears, the kid gets up and runs to his mother.

Wallace slides across from Papa Rollo and picks up a glass of Coke.

PAPA ROLLO
(re: the phone call)
Anyone at home?

WALLACE
We'll find out in a minute.

PAPA ROLLO
Let me tell you something. The way I see it, as sloppy and misguided as you were, you did my daughter and me a favor. If it wasn't you blasting through the door it would've been somebody else, and who knows...

He looks at Grace. She is quite a cutie, concentrating hard on that crane. Rollo has nothing but love in his eyes.

Rollo sets those eyes back on Wallace, who is dumping gobs of ketchup all over his fries.

PAPA ROLLO (CONT'D)
Can I ask you something?

Wallace shrugs.

WALLACE
I'd say 'no' but you haven't listened to me yet.

PAPA ROLLO
You said you used to be a Fed and now you find missing children...

Wallace nods, the fries thoroughly covered.

PAPA ROLLO (CONT'D)
...but inside of five minutes I can tell you don't like kids too much. I find that curious.

WALLACE

Find it however you'd like.

Rollo shrugs as Wallace shovels fries in his mouth.

Rollo has a club sandwich cut into wedges in front of him. He carefully takes each wedge apart and takes off the tomato. He then stacks the tomatoes perfectly on his plate.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

What? You don't like tomatoes?

PAPA ROLLO

Nope.

Wallace helps himself, messing up the order that is Rollo's plate. Rollo lines everything up again.

WALLACE

So you were into weapons sales?

PAPA ROLLO

Naah. I never sold weapons. I just used 'em. I worked for Slippery Coombs.

WALLACE

The heavy-hitter in Chicago?

PAPA ROLLO

Yep.

WALLACE

You were a shooter?

PAPA ROLLO

Something like that.

Wallace has ketchup all over his fingers. He licks 'em off with no self-consciousness.

WALLACE

(with his mouth full)

There aren't a lot of saints in the Program. What'd you do? Turn state on your boss?

PAPA ROLLO

Let me tell you about Slippery Coombs. Craziest son-of-a-bitch you've ever met.

(MORE)

PAPA ROLLO (cont'd)

He was christened Cotton Coombs,
but he didn't like the way the name
made him sound like a Georgia
hillbilly. So he moved up to
Chicagoland, started calling
himself Slippy. Thought that name
meant something. Thought he could
slip and slide out of any
situation. You hear the story of
his Stingray?

WALLACE

(with his mouth full)

Nope.

PAPA ROLLO

You gonna keep talking with your
mouth full?

WALLACE

(still with his mouth
full)

Yep.

Rollo waits, deciding whether or not to let it go.
Finally...

PAPA ROLLO

Anyway, this story. Slippy's got
this '75 Stingray that might as
well be his lady...

CUT TO:

EXT. MECHANIC'S SHOP - NIGHT

Slippy's Stingray Corvette roars up to the mechanic's
station, HONKING the horn loudly.

A burly MECHANIC walks out from the garage and squints in the
headlights.

PAPA ROLLO (V.O.)

Well, he'd just gotten his car back
after a check-up. Oil changed,
tires inflated, odometer rolled
back, the standard pick-me-up, you
understand.

SLIPPY COOMBS, a large, well-dressed black man jumps out of
the driver's side, hotter than a hornet.

A smaller goombah, DONNIE, slides out of the passenger side
looking a little uneasy.

SLIPPY COOMBS
(extremely pissed)
Get over here, grease-monkey!

MECHANIC
(innocently)
What'd I do?

Slippy approaches the guy and yanks him toward the passenger door. He forces the guy's head over to the side-view mirror.

SLIPPY COOMBS
What is that?

MECHANIC
(scared now)
What?

SLIPPY COOMBS
That!

He puts the guy's head right up to the mirror. Now, we see what Slippy's showing the guy: there's a crack in the glass running the length of the side view mirror.

MECHANIC
I didn't...

With that, Slippy starts RAMMING the guy's head into the mirror, cracking it worse, knocking the whole thing off the car.

SLIPPY COOMBS
(enraged)
You didn't... You didn't...

The other guy that got out of the car, Donnie, is quite dismayed. He tries to pull Slippy off the guy.

DONNIE
Hey! Slippy! Easy!

Finally, Slippy gains his senses and leaves the guy bleeding on the pavement.

DONNIE (CONT'D)
All right, Slippy. Let's slide out of here. We need to slide the hell out of here.

Slippy's still collecting himself, breathing hard.

Suddenly, WHAP, WHAP, WHAP, WHAP!

Slippy jerks his head around to find the mechanic on his feet smashing the shit out of the Stingray with a crow bar.

MECHANIC

(screaming)

It's a fucking car, you goddamn
goombah! It's just a fucking car!

The rage boils up inside of Slippy like Mount St. Helens, watching this guy crack a pipe into his beloved.

Slippy reaches into Donnie's coat and whips out a six-shooter, a big ol' Smith and Wesson and unloads five bullets into the mechanic. BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! and then the gun jams.

The camera pushes in on Donnie's horrified face and we...

GO BACK TO:

INT. ROADSIDE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Papa Rollo finishing his story, amused.

PAPA ROLLO

Turns out the other guy in Slippy's car is a Fed, a sleeper been working him for months. They were hoping to nail Slippy on racketeering, dealing, this-n-that, but instead they hit the mother-lode. First degree murder... with a government-issue firearm no less!

WALLACE

Where do you come in?

PAPA ROLLO

I'd been planting people for Slippy for a decade. He trusted me. He gave me the gun to get rid of.

FLASH: Slippy handing that gun over to Papa Rollo.

WALLACE

So you took the gun to the Feds?

PAPA ROLLO

Nope. I went to the Feds. The gun with Slippy's fingerprints all over it stayed hidden away, waiting for Slippy's day in court, which is this Monday, I might add.

(MORE)

PAPA ROLLO (cont'd)

The sixth bullet is still in it from when it jammed. The Fibbies get that gun on Monday and I get a free ride out of here.

WALLACE

Why do they need the gun? They have an Agent who witnessed the whole thing.

PAPA ROLLO

The sleeper? Donnie was dead twelve hours after he came up for air. Slippery has some long arms.

WALLACE

You can say that again.

Wallace is soaking all this in. He wipes his fingers off on his pants leg.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

So why'd you do it? Why turn him in?

Papa Rollo points a finger-gun and Wallace follows it to where it points. Grace standing at the game. Enough said.

The pay phone RINGS, interrupting them. Before the waitress can reach it, Wallace springs up and snags it.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

Cooper?

CUT TO:

INT. MOBILE HOME - NIGHT

Agent Cooper stands among a bunch of Agents in front of a map of Texas and a dry erase board.

She immediately takes her cell phone...

OUTSIDE:

...where we see ten mobile homes lined up. Agents and cops are all getting ready to hit the road.

COOPER

(whispers)

Wallace? Jesus. Where are you?

WALLACE

Listen to me. Brackens set me up.

Intercut:

COOPER

Set you up? Into smashing a guy
out of Wit-Pro?

WALLACE

You have to believe me.

COOPER

Your evasion of a Federal sting
makes that a little difficult right
now.

WALLACE

A sting? Is that what he's saying?
Come on, you know I wouldn't do
something like this.

COOPER

Yeah? What about the last year?

WALLACE

What do you mean?

COOPER

Who've you been working for?

WALLACE

Whoever needed me. Come on! This
is all a set up! Brackens brought
me the job. He came to my house,
said this guy was kidnapped and if
I broke him out I'd get my job
back.

COOPER

That's the idea behind a sting,
Wallace. He said you've spent the
last year setting up kidnappings so
you could collect a fat fee from
the families.

Just then, Brackens steps out of the motor home.

BRACKENS

Agent Cooper?

She quickly pushes the END button on her phone.

COOPER

Coming.

And she hurries back to him, as casually as she can muster.

BACK TO:

INT. ROADSIDE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Wallace is left staring at a dead receiver.

WALLACE

Shit.

He hangs up the phone and goes back to Papa Rollo. Grace has joined him and is tearing into her hamburger.

Wallace reaches down and snags a few last fries without sitting down. Ketchup drips on to the table, right in front of Rollo.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

We should find a place to hole up.

Grace pulls the pickles off her burger, then licks the ketchup off her fingers.

PAPA ROLLO

Honey, use your napkin.

She looks at Wallace, who is also licking his fingers.

GRACE

Okay.

She obeys her dad.

PAPA ROLLO

(to Wallace, re: the
phone)

Any luck with the call?

WALLACE

I don't know.

PAPA ROLLO

With your batting average, it's probably safe to put it in the strike-out column.

WALLACE

Keep testing me, Papa.

PAPA ROLLO

(innocently)

What'd I say?

Wallace walks off, leaving them to catch up.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Our view from inside a motel room. The place reeks of drunken sleep-overs and one night stands. It's a trash dump.

The door swings open and Wallace, Rollo and Grace enter. Distaste is evident on Rollo's face, but Wallace surveys the room like it's just fine.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Streams of cars roar by on the road, streamers flying, horns HONKING, and bottles broken. The motel is the two-story variety with landings on either side of the rooms.

The CAMERA FINDS an upstairs room by the stairs with a flickering light coming from it.

INSIDE THE MOTEL:

The lights are off but the TV is on. Grace sleeps peacefully in one of the doubles.

Wallace gets up and takes his Glock from a holster in his pants.

PAPA ROLLO

(whispered)

A Glock man, huh? I should've guessed.

WALLACE

Yeah.

PAPA ROLLO

May I?

Wallace tosses it to him, lets him hold it. Rollo examines the weapon.

PAPA ROLLO (CONT'D)

When was the last time you cleaned this?

WALLACE

How the hell should I know?

PAPA ROLLO

(moving on)

These Glocks, there a little small
for me. I was always a .357 kind
of guy. Single action/double
action. A real piece of machinery.

He looks down at Grace, strokes her hair.

Wallace looks too and Papa catches his look. Rollo tosses
the gun back to him.

PAPA ROLLO (CONT'D)

(re: Grace)

Ever thought about it? Settling
down?

WALLACE

No.

PAPA ROLLO

Your general lack of any
cleanliness whatsoever goes hand in
hand with your conversation skills,
you know that?

They sit there in the quiet, the TV MUTED. Rollo gets up and
carefully folds back the covers on his side of the bed. He
slides in slowly, like it's distasteful.

WALLACE

All right. I got a question for
you. How much does your daughter
know? About you? About what you
did for a living?

PAPA ROLLO

(shamed)

Nothing. I haven't told her a
thing. She didn't ask for this.

WALLACE

Where's her mom?

PAPA ROLLO

(wryly)

There's a missing person's case for
you.

(beat)

Ahhh.... We haven't heard from her
since Grace was in diapers.

Wallace nods, doesn't know what to say. He puts his gun in the night stand next to him.

Rollo rolls over, closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. MOBILE HOME - NIGHT

Brackens sips a cup of coffee, staring at a map of North Texas.

His eyes trace the highways around Dallas, but a cell phone rings, interrupting his thoughts. He answers.

BRACKENS

Brackens here.

CUT TO:

INT. LARGE KITCHEN - NIGHT

The one and only Slippy Coombs carefully cuts a piece of ahi into sushi pieces. Strange to see such a violent man act with such elegance.

A speakerphone sits on the counter next to him.

SLIPPY COOMBS

You're not fucking this up, are you?

BACK TO:

INT. MOBILE HOME - NIGHT

Brackens visibly winces.

BRACKENS

Uhh... hey, let me...uh... move outside.

He exits the mobile home and starts walking through a field.

INTERCUT:

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

I told you not to call me on this phone.

SLIPPY COOMBS

I don't do too well with directions.

BRACKENS
It's just that...

SLIPPY COOMBS
Shut up, Brackens.

Brackens does.

SLIPPY COOMBS (CONT'D)
So I just found out that my former
employee rolled out on you.

BRACKENS
I'm handling it.

SLIPPY COOMBS
And that means my gun is still "at
large," as you cops like to say.

BRACKENS
I said I'm on it.

SLIPPY COOMBS
Obviously not enough. Tell you
what. I've sent you some backup.

Brackens looks across the field to where a barbed wire fence
lines the property.

Three strange looking, enormous BROTHERS, all dressed in Puma
Warm-up suits, stare back at him from the fence.

SLIPPY COOMBS (CONT'D)
That's another police cliché in
case you missed it.

Brackens continues to check out the puma-wearing brothers.

BRACKENS
That isn't necessary.

SLIPPY COOMBS
Don't make me call you again.

Slippy presses a button with his sushi knife and the phone
cuts out.

BRACKENS
Hello?

Brackens hangs up the phone, exhaling, a look of concern etched into every feature of his face.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - SATURDAY MORNING

Rollo still with his eyes closed.

He opens them as Wallace comes out of the bathroom.

WALLACE

I'm gonna walk down to the station
and grab some food.

Grace is already up and walks over to him.

GRACE

I'll come with you.

WALLACE

I don't think so.

... but she's moving out the door.

GRACE

I've already decided.

Wallace looks to Rollo for help, but Papa just SHRUGS and disappears into the bathroom.

Wallace turns and follows out to...

EXT. MOTEL - DAY

...the front of this decrepit motel. A GAS STATION
CONVENIENCE STORE sits on the corner of the street.

Grace is already down the stairs and halfway there,
independent as hell.

CUT TO:

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

Wallace walks down an aisle, picking out the worst bit of
junk garbage the store can stock. He adds to his collection
some Milk Duds just as...

Grace steps in front of him, handing him a package of pink
Sno Balls.

WALLACE

Oh, okay. Those're good.

She doesn't move out of his way.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

What?

GRACE

You find missing kids?

WALLACE

Yeah.

GRACE

Why do you do that?

WALLACE

Because I don't care about them.
It's the not caring that makes me
good at it.

He starts to walk around her, when she stops him.

GRACE

The trial's on Monday.

This gets him to stop.

WALLACE

(uncomfortable)

Yeah... You know about that?

She nods.

GRACE

Um-hm. What I want to know is:
are we gonna live til Monday?

Wallace doesn't answer. This is new territory. But for the
first time, there's something new in his eyes: respect.

LATER:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Wallace and Grace open the door to come back into the room,
but no Rollo...

GRACE

Dad?

Then, Wallace hears some WHISPERING coming from the bathroom.

He puts his ear right up to the bathroom door, puzzled.
Grace doesn't know what to do.

Suddenly, Wallace takes a step back, and KICKS in the door to reveal...

THE BATHROOM:

Papa Rollo talking into a cell phone.

PAPA ROLLO

What?

...as he clicks off the phone.

WALLACE

Who were you talking to?

PAPA ROLLO

(defensively)

I was getting my bets down. Kerry
Wood's throwin' for the Cubs today.

WALLACE

(panicked)

How long've you been talking?

Wallace grabs the phone out of his hand, drops it on the
floor and smashes it under his foot.

PAPA ROLLO

Hey!!???

Wallace pulls a little chip from the phone carnage.

WALLACE

This is how they've been tracing
you! It's how they knew where your
safe house was!

Rollo looks at the chip, not understanding.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

Let's get out of here.

Wallace moves to the front door, opens it, steps outside and
immediately BULLETS DESTROY THE DOOR FRAME!

OUTSIDE THE ROOM:

Wallace dives behind a Coke machine just outside their door
as Rollo leaps back by the bed.

PAPA ROLLO
Get back, honey.

Grace crouches down against the far wall, hugging her knees to her chest, trying her best not to cry.

More bullets tear into the Coke machine, ripping it to shreds.

Wallace takes a peek out from behind the machine and sees:

The three brothers wearing matching Puma warm-up suits standing in the middle of the motel parking lot, each holding enormous guns.

Wallace can only peek out for a second before all three level their guns in unison and unload at him.

He waits for the shots to dissipate, gets his own Glock out, and fires back at them.

When he stops shooting, he calls out...

WALLACE
Brackens!

No answer. Again...

WALLACE (CONT'D)
Brackens! I know you're out there.

IN THE PARKING LOT:

Brackens steps out from behind a car. The three Puma wearing dudes make head signals to each other and one of them disappears behind the building.

Wallace stays behind his cover.

WALLACE
Brackens!

BRACKENS
(reluctantly calls out)
Yeah, Wallace.

WALLACE
What's it worth, huh? How much did Slippy pay you to murder a father and his daughter?

BRACKENS

(amused)

Thirty pieces of silver.

(beat)

Don't forget he's a killer,
Wallace. We're just cleaning up a
little trash.

Inside the room, Rollo's eyes narrow.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

Now why don't you come down from
there and let us do our business.

WALLACE

Why don't you come a little closer
and I'll give you an answer.

With that, Wallace swings out from his position and gets a
few more shots off. His gun CLICK, CLICK, CLICKS at the end.

He looks through the open hotel door at Rollo.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

Papa!

PAPA ROLLO

Yeah.

WALLACE

I thought you were a hit man!

PAPA ROLLO

I was. Now I'm a pacifist.

WALLACE

What?

PAPA ROLLO

I turned my heart. I'm a pacifist.

WALLACE

You're a hit man turned pacifist?

PAPA ROLLO

That's right.

A BARRAGE of bullets rips through the Coke machine again.

WALLACE

Well toss me another clip!

Rollo moves to the night stand, snags the clip from it, and scrambles to the door.

He's just about to toss the clip to Wallace when a CRASH erupts through the room.

THE CAMERA SWINGS OVER TO THE WINDOW AND WE SEE:

One of the triplets snatches Grace off the floor and yanks her through the window.

PAPA ROLLO

(crazed)

No!!!

Rollo dashes for the window and the Puma man clubs him across the head with a pistol, laying Rollo out. The guy disappears with Grace tucked in his other arm like a football.

Wallace roars into the room, grabs the clip, loads it, and is out the window.

He spots the thug carrying a howling Grace down a set of stairs. Wallace levels his gun, looking for his shot.

Papa bursts through the window, sees Wallace pointing his gun at his little girl.

PAPA ROLLO (CONT'D)

Wallace! No!

Wallace ignores him and steadies his arm. BAM! He squeezes off a shot that somehow misses Grace but hits the thug in the leg, just as he disappears around the corner.

OUTSIDE THE MOTEL:

Wallace gives chase down the stairs and carefully moves around the corner, just in time to see a Crown Vic SCREECH out of the parking lot.

Rollo runs up, about to lose it.

PAPA ROLLO

What were you doing shooting at her! You could have killed her!

Wallace looks at him, confused, still in the zone, still in the moment. He ignores the rage in Rollo's eyes and sprints for their truck.

WALLACE

Come on! We gotta move! Now!

They jump in, and Wallace tries to start it. Nothing.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

Shit!

CUT TO:

THE TRUCK'S ENGINE:

The hood pops open and Rollo and Wallace stare down at it.
Half the wires have been cut.

Wallace looks around, desperate. Rollo is still in a daze.

HIGH ANGLE- The parking lot is empty... except for a NEW FORD PICKUP pulling in. In the back window, near the gun rack, is one of those little guys peeing on a Chevy symbol.

IN THE PICKUP:

A young couple.

TAP TAP TAP.

They look up to find Wallace tapping on the window with his gun.

CUT TO:

EXT. TEXAS BACK ROAD - DAY

Wallace races their new ride down the highway; Rollo in the passenger seat looking despondent.

WALLACE

Where's the gun? The one Slippy used.

PAPA ROLLO

Why does that matter?

WALLACE

Kidnapping happens when there's an exchange to be made. As far as they know, anything happens to you, the gun shows up at the courthouse.

PAPA ROLLO

(realizing)

Yeah... so they won't hurt Grace until they get it.

WALLACE

That's right. So where is it?

PAPA ROLLO

Chicago. The trial's in Chicago; I figured it'd be easier if I hid it there.

Wallace's cell phone RINGS. He flips it open.

WALLACE

(into the phone)

Wallace.

EXT. TEXAS ROAD - DAY

Brackens is in the car with his three Puma hit men. Two of them are working on the bleeding leg of the third.

BRACKENS

Looking for something?

Intercut:

WALLACE

Where's the girl?

BRACKENS

(into the phone)

Hog-tied in the trunk of my car.
Where's the gun?

WALLACE

Chicago.

BRACKENS

Then that's where the girl'll be.

WALLACE

If you even begin to...

BRACKENS

I'd watch out, Wallace. I just heard on my police scanner that John Q. Citizen reported seeing you at the motel back there...

CLICK.

Wallace hangs up his phone just as the black Ford truck crosses an intersection and four TEXAS HIGHWAY PATROL CARS swoop around behind him.

WALLACE

Brackens just gave us up.

He punches the pick-up as hard as it will go down this dirt road, as the patrol cars (which are souped-up Camaros) roar in behind him.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

He figures he gets you into custody
you'll sing to save Grace.

PAPA ROLLO

He's right about that.

Wallace moves to the middle of the road so that the cop cars can't get by. Barbed wire fences and deep ditches border the road.

Wallace keeps gunning it, kicking up clouds of dust like the truck's got a rocket engine behind it.

He whips it around a bend and out to the access road to I-35. A quick hop-on and he's heading toward the Dallas Skyline.

Directly ahead is one of those huge, highway mixmasters.
Don't know who designed this thing but there had to be a better way...

Wallace guns it harder, out-racing the cop cars as he heads to the tangle of highways.

He takes the truck up to the uppermost single lane highway, the cars right behind him. As he steers, he keeps looking out his driver's window, trying to time something.

PAPA ROLLO (CONT'D)

Oh, you're not gonna...

Wallace grits his teeth and guns the pick-up harder. Suddenly, he jerks the steering wheel to the left, breaks through the cement barrier, and flies the car down to the next level.

The cop cars all skid to a stop on the uppermost level.

The truck lands hard, right into on-coming traffic on the second level.

In the split-second before he gets smashed by an eighteen-wheeler, Wallace slams the wheel the other way, and repeats the feat, CRASHING through the embankment on the other side and flying the car down to the bottom level, landing on the front end of a little Toyota, but at least going the right direction.

Wallace guns the truck, roars off of the Toyota, and hauls ass down the road.

The cop cars aren't going anywhere, trapped on the top.

Rollo is a little disheveled as they get off of the highway and disappear into the South side of Dallas.

Finally the frustration of it all boils over.

PAPA ROLLO (CONT'D)

This is all your fault you know.

WALLACE

Come again?

PAPA ROLLO

How the hell could you not know we were in a safe house? Because you're sloppy. You live that way and you act that way.

WALLACE

I'm sloppy?

PAPA ROLLO

Look at you. And you're dangerous. Shooting at a little girl.

WALLACE

I didn't shoot at -- How bout looking at yourself! You spend your life killing people, then you feel guilty or find Jesus or whatever it is you did and now you can't even protect your own daughter!

PAPA ROLLO

I had her protected until you busted us out!

WALLACE

You think so? You said it yourself! If it wasn't me, it would've been someone else?

(MORE)

WALLACE (cont'd)
Someone who didn't give a flying
fuck if you lived or died? Wake
up, Papa!

Papa just stares out the window, Wallace's words lingering.
They're both right.

Papa is finally able to look Wallace in the eye.

PAPA ROLLO
(grudgingly)
One request.

WALLACE
What is it?

PAPA ROLLO
I'm trying to instill some good
habits in my girl and... well...

WALLACE
What?

PAPA ROLLO
When we get her back, would you
mind chewing with your mouth
closed?

Wallace can't help but start laughing, a little levity going
a long way right now. Papa Rollo laughs too...

PAPA ROLLO (CONT'D)
I just got her to stop doing that
and I think she kind of looks up to
you.

WALLACE
Then she's got some serious
problems she's gonna have to work
out.

PAPA ROLLO
Naaah. You're not such a bad guy.

WALLACE
Yeah? Tell that to the U.S.
Marshals next time you see 'em.

PAPA ROLLO
I will. After we get Grace back.

WALLACE
Fair enough.

Papa looks back out the window, but smiles, feeling a little better about things.

PAPA ROLLO

Where to, now?

WALLACE

Chicago.

PAPA ROLLO

We'll never make it in this truck.

WALLACE

I don't plan on driving.

(beat)

Let's find a pay phone.

The truck hooks a right down an elm lined street.

CUT TO:

INT. F.B.I. FIELD OFFICE - DAY

Activity buzzes around the room. A HIGHWAY PATROLMAN argues with a Federal AGENT.

HIGHWAY PATROLMAN

My guys did exactly what they were trained to do.

AGENT

You train your boys to let people get away?

Amidst it all, Cooper sits at a desk working on a laptop. On the screen is an electronic version of Brackens' FBI profile. Frustrated, she scrolls through the information.

The door bursts open and Brackens charges in.

BRACKENS

How'd we know about the vehicle?

Cooper quickly shuts the laptop.

COOPER

A call came in reporting a stolen truck by a guy matching Wallace's description. H.P. sent four cruisers.

BRACKENS

And he still got away?

This comment is pointed at the Highway Patrolman.

HIGHWAY PATROLMAN

Yes, sir. He jumped two levels of mix-master south of Dallas and we lost him downtown. Got eyes in the sky but no luck so far.

COOPER

We've got every airport, Greyhound station and car rental outfit covered in the area.

BRACKENS

Okay, let's move on over to Love Field in case we gotta hop.

Everyone moves off to make new arrangements. Brackens sits on Cooper's desk.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

I want you to do some background. Does Wallace have any relatives nearby? If he's trying to get his captives outta the state, he's gonna need some help. Find out who might help him.

COOPER

Yeah, sure.

BRACKENS

Is something wrong?

COOPER

No, sir.

She says this without really meaning it. She hurries off, laptop in hand, and Brackens watches her go.

CUT TO:

EXT. TEXAS ROAD - DAY

Wallace negotiates the smashed-up, barely-held-together pick-up down a long dirt road.

Rollo is glum, looking out at the farmland rolling past.

He turns from the window, wanting to get something off his chest...

PAPA ROLLO

I'd been killing people for a long time, for Slippery Coombs, before that for Casper Ono, before that Tony the Tiger, a long time.

WALLACE

Yeah?

PAPA ROLLO

Yeah. Got to be pretty good at it, where I didn't even think about it, just pulled the trigger.

Rollo stares off.

PAPA ROLLO (CONT'D)

Anyway, six months ago, Grace wants me to show up to her school, but she doesn't tell me what for. A pageant or something like that she tells me.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HOUSE IN CHICAGO - DAY

Papa Rollo rolls into the school, smug smile on his face. He makes his way down the hallway, smiling all the way, gets to Grace's classroom, spots some other FATHERS in the back of the class, takes a seat down next to them, back of the class, still smiling.

All the kids are in their seats. This is no pageant.

At the front of the class, a father dressed in full FIREMAN uniform, is talking.

FIREMAN

...then I have to be ready at a moment's notice. Down the pole, put on all this gear, hustle on to the truck, and out the door. We get the red light whirling and we're on our way.

All the kids are excited.

We swing back around to Rollo as the smile fades. He takes a side-look at the other fathers: a business man, a chef, a police officer. The smile is completely gone.

BACK TO:

EXT. TEXAS BACK ROAD - DAY

PAPA ROLLO

Bring-your-father-to-school-day.
How was I gonna stand up there and
say I was a gun man for Slippery
Coombs?

WALLACE

What'd you do?

PAPA ROLLO

She got me there for a reason. We
both pretend she doesn't know what
I do, but I know she knows.

He nods to himself, seeing it clearly.

PAPA ROLLO (CONT'D)

Now my future is in helping people,
not hurting them anymore.

(beat)

And you, Mr. Fibbie? What's your
story?

Wallace turns back to the window.

PAPA ROLLO (CONT'D)

Oh, I see. You don't feel like
talking when the subject is you.
What else is new?

Just when he thinks this conversation is over...

WALLACE

I had a wife once. A long time
ago.

Rollo sits up, excited.

PAPA ROLLO

Great. See. That's great. Go
ahead.

WALLACE

I was a ballplayer.

PAPA ROLLO

Baseball?

WALLACE

(nods)
Minor leagues.

PAPA ROLLO

You ever make it to the show?

WALLACE

Three days.

PAPA ROLLO

What happened?

(beat)

Awww, come on. Tell me --

Wallace looks at the ranchland spread in front of him.
Finally...

WALLACE

I was young. My wife was finishing college. We had a baby, a two year old.

Rollo nods encouragement, and Wallace goes on.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

The day I got called up to the bigs we were playing in a small town in New Mexico. Roswell, I think. That same day, Julie called me to tell me Nicholas was sick, had an upset stomach or something, she wanted me to come home. I told her our dreams had come true, that I couldn't come home, I was joining the show in Houston. I told her to give Nick some Pepto and pack her bags. I thought it was all coming together.

PAPA ROLLO

It wasn't an upset stomach?

WALLACE

No.

PAPA ROLLO

Nicholas?

WALLACE

Didn't make it.

PAPA ROLLO

You quit after that?

WALLACE

I changed my priorities.

PAPA ROLLO
And Julie?

WALLACE
(sadly, reflective)
If you ever see her, tell her I'm
sorry.

Rollo nods.

PAPA ROLLO
So now you find other people's kids
for 'em.

WALLACE
Irony, right?

PAPA ROLLO
(shaking his head)
Irony implies chance. I don't
think there's any of that at work
here. And you just pretend like
you can't stand 'em.

WALLACE
(shrugs)
None of them are Nicholas.

PAPA ROLLO
Bullshit. Every one of them is.

Wallace guides the truck off the road and through an open
gate.

WALLACE
We're here.

Rollo raises his eyebrows.

PAPA ROLLO
What's this?

EXT. THE DUKES'S ESTATE - SATURDAY AFTERNOON

It's like South Fork, this ranch in the plains outside of
Dallas. A thousand acres of mesquite trees, lolling cattle,
and grazing horses with a plantation-style great house set
back a mile from the road.

Wallace guides the truck down the long driveway.

WALLACE
Part of why I'm not a Fed.

PAPA ROLLO
Because of this guy?

...eight enormous ROTTWEILERS spill out of a doggie door in the front of the house like hell-beasts from the pit of darkness. They surround the car in formation, a platoon of killers.

The front door to the mansion opens and a gigantic black man, Ernie Dukes, steps out carrying his five-year-old boy in his arms. The boy clutches a toy helicopter.

It's the father and son from the opening scene.

Ernie looks nothing like a Texas rancher, more like he stepped out of the mean streets of Brooklyn.

ERNIE DUKES
(shouts)
Dead!

Immediately, all of the dogs roll over on to their backs as a big grin spreads across Ernie's face.

ERNIE DUKES (CONT'D)
Wallace! Got-damn, son. What took you so long? Rochelle give you bad directions?
(yells back in the house)
Rochelle!

Wallace opens the car door and steps out.

ERNIE DUKES (CONT'D)
I told that woman which way to take you, but she...

WALLACE
Good to see you still know how to use that Brooklyn charm, Ernie.

ERNIE DUKES
Them dogs are the only things around here that listen to a word I say.

Uneasily, Rollo climbs out of the car and gingerly tiptoes around the dogs.

As Wallace walks up to the big man, Ernie turns to his son.

ERNIE DUKES (CONT'D)

Ernie Jr., you remember who this is?

The boy checks out Wallace.

ERNIE DUKES (CONT'D)

This is the dude who brought you back when those motherfuckers took you away.

Ernie's son, Ernie Jr., immediately smiles.

WALLACE

(to Papa)

Papa Rollo... this is Ernie Dukes.

Papa shakes Ernie's massive hand.

PAPA ROLLO

Nice to meet you.

ERNIE DUKES

Likewise. You look different than you do on TV.

WALLACE

TV?

ERNIE DUKES

Shit. You guys are famous. Even ran Oprah off.

(beat, seriously)

I've been waiting for you.

He leads him inside, with Rollo left to come in last. Rollo takes one last look at the eight dogs, still lying on their backs next to the car, and steps into the

MANSION:

Even more opulent on the inside. If Bill Gates were a two-hundred-and-fifty pound black man in Dallas, this would be his spread.

Rollo walks through the house, looking at the PICTURES of Ernie on the cover of FORTUNE magazine, Ernie at a ribbon cutting for a computer factory, a younger Ernie standing in front of a very old computer, the first off an assembly line.

Technology is in evidence everywhere, and a giant screen television dominates a whole wall.

Sure enough, CNN is reporting on the manhunt in Texas.

Their two pictures come on the screen, Wallace's from his ID badge with the F.B.I., Rollo's from an old mug shot.

PAPA ROLLO

Awww, man. I don't even look like that anymore.

ERNIE DUKES

You guys hungry?

PAPA ROLLO

(anxiously)

Hungry? We need to get to Chicago.
Grace is --

Ernie looks at Papa with the affection that only two parents that have had a child taken from them could share. He ruffles Ernie Jr.'s hair, looks back at Rollo.

ERNIE DUKES

I know. But first, have you had anything to eat?

WALLACE

No.

ERNIE DUKES

We eat first. Then we'll talk Chicago.

Papa nods, grudgingly.

DISSOLVE TO:

IN THE KITCHEN:

Ernie's wife, Rochelle, is making chili in a huge pot at the stove. She looks much different than she did holding that bag of money on the street corner.

Rollo stands across from her, carefully dipping a chip into some salsa.

IN THE BACKGROUND, Wallace stands at a bar, looking out a window into the backyard.

Ernie Jr. is out back, racing his helicopter among the eight Rottweilers like they're cute little puppy dogs. Wallace watches the kid, deep in thought.

IN THE FOREGROUND, Ernie Sr. grabs up a wooden spoon for Rollo to taste.

ERNIE DUKES

You brave enough to try some of
Rochelle's dragon-breath chili?

Rollo takes a bite and his mouth catches on fire.

Ernie hands Papa a beer, which he quickly gulps down. After coming up for air...

PAPA ROLLO

(still hurting)

It's good, real good.

Ernie Jr. comes inside, followed by Wallace.

ROCHELLE

Ernie Jr., wash your hands. We're gonna eat soon.

ERNIE JR.

Okay, mom.

ROCHELLE

You too, Martin.

WALLACE

(cowed)

Yes, Ma'am.

He heads for a bathroom. Ernie Jr. starts to follow, hanging on to his chopper.

Papa watches Ernie Jr. shuffle out of the room. Another reminder that his daughter is missing.

Of course it's Rochelle who picks up on this.

ROCHELLE

Mr. Rollo, you okay?

PAPA ROLLO

What? Oh, yeah, I'm fine.

He's lying.

PAPA ROLLO (CONT'D)

You gotta nice family.

ERNIE DUKES

You're gonna have your own back
before you can shit and wipe, mark
my words.

ROCHELLE

Ernie...

ERNIE DUKES

Sorry, baby.

PAPA ROLLO

(admiringly)

Ernie, I gotta tell you. You seem
like... you seem like a normal
fella.

ERNIE DUKES

You don't know how good that
sounds. It took a while to make
people think that again.

PAPA ROLLO

Yeah, yeah, I guess the whole world
thought they had you pegged. Rich
computer guy, kid ends up missing,
claims its a kidnapping, but
everyone just assumed you'd had
something to do with it. The
media...

ERNIE DUKES

Lemme tell you something. If it
weren't for the cat in the
bathroom, my boy would be dead.

PAPA ROLLO

(amazed)

Wallace is the one who nailed the
kidnappers?

ERNIE DUKES

The F.B.I. wanted to pay. Even had
my wife standing on a street corner
holding a bag full of green. Do
you know they dug a hole big enough
for her too? Had a bag of cement
ready to fill it in.

Ernie stirs the pot, just the thought of that idea adds ten
degrees to the chili.

ERNIE DUKES (cont'd)
That was when Wallace stepped up.
He even lost his job... but he
saved my son.

Rollo nods.

ERNIE DUKES (CONT'D)
Wallace buried a screwdriver in
that motherfucker...

Rochelle slaps his hand with the spoon.

ROCHELLE
Watch your mouth.

ERNIE DUKES
You gonna say that cocksucker
wasn't a motherfucker?

She gives him a death-stare.

Ernie shrugs, tastes a little of his wife's concoction.

ERNIE DUKES (CONT'D)
(shouts)
Soup's on!

In the background, Wallace starts heading their way.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI FIELD OFFICE - NIGHT

Cooper sits in a dark room going over files on her laptop.

It's Brackens' personal file, and with a few pecks of her keyboard, she ends up with a series of flight bookings over the last year, all going from St. Louis to Chicago and back again.

Cooper looks at it, puzzled.

BACK TO:

INT. ERNIE DUKES'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Ernie, Rochelle, Ernie Jr., Wallace and Rollo sit around a large dining table, eating chili. Wallace and Rollo look really tired.

Rollo tries to act interested in the conversation going around the table, but it's obvious that his mind keeps wandering.

He stares at Ernie Jr., and Wallace notices this.

WALLACE

It's okay, Papa. Get some sleep.
We'll take off at first light.

Papa nods.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI FIELD OFFICE - NIGHT

Cooper pecks away at the keyboard and retrieves an old case file featuring Brackens. A much younger photo of the agent surrounded by older AGENTS pops up on the screen.

A newspaper clipping has been scanned in below the photo. The headline reads: Chicago Field Office Gets New Recruit.

Cooper checks it out, pecks away some more.

BACK TO:

INT. ERNIE DUKES'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rochelle moves over to the living room couch and puts a blanket over Rollo, who has fallen asleep there.

Wallace, sitting in a chair across from the couch, looks at Rollo with something bordering on affection.

Ernie Jr., now in his PJ's, comes out of the bathroom, and Ernie scoops him up to take him to bed.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI FIELD OFFICE - NIGHT

Cooper pecks away some more and pulls up Wallace's FBI file. There is a crime scene picture on her screen of the Dukes' kidnapping, mention of Wallace's last job.

She stares at the picture of the crime scene, homing in on Ernie Dukes.

CUT TO:

EXT. TEXAS BACK ROAD - NIGHT

Cooper hauls ass in an old sedan down a pitch black road.

BACK TO:

INT. ERNIE JR.'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ernie tucks his son into bed.

CUT TO:

EXT. ERNIE DUKES'S MANSION - NIGHT

Footsteps on Ernie's gravel drive. PAN UP to see Cooper slinking along through the darkness toward the lights of the house.

Some MOVEMENT in the trees along the drive gets her to draw her gun.

She comes around the garage and looks through a window. Ernie is turning the light off in the kitchen.

Cooper slips past the window and comes around the back of the giant house. She walks through a garden and is about to check the lock on a door, when...

WALLACE

It's locked.

Cooper spins, her gun ready. It's Wallace, standing in the shadows.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

You should've rung the doorbell.

COOPER

I didn't know who I could trust.

Wallace smiles.

WALLACE

We've been watching you since you parked your car down the road. You could've been dog food.

COOPER

It's just a matter of time before Brackens checks this place.

They stand there a moment in the middle of this dark garden. Flowers all around them.

COOPER (CONT'D)

I looked over his flight schedule for the last twelve months. He's made twenty-one round trips from St. Louis to Chicago.

WALLACE

(nodding)

He's on Slippy's dole.

She nods.

COOPER

I dug a little deeper and found that when Brackens was a junior agent, he was working on a strike force going after Coombs. His two superiors were killed and Brackens shut down the strike a month later, said the case against Coombs was flimsy at best, a waste of taxpayer money. The boys upstairs were eager to agree, the strike had been a nightmare. That's when Brackens transferred to St. Louis.

WALLACE

Slippy got to him.

COOPER

It sure looks that way.

Cooper nods, despondently.

COOPER (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I doubted you.

WALLACE

I don't blame you for that.

He looks at his feet, then meets her eyes.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

A flight schedule isn't enough to save me.

COOPER

I didn't think so either. But there're other ways.

He nods, thinking.

WALLACE

I'm gonna need your help.

Cooper smiles.

COOPER

I know.

CUT TO:

INT. DUKES'S ESTATE - NIGHT

Rollo yawns and gets up off the couch. Ernie is sitting at the kitchen table, pouring over some data on his laptop.

PAPA ROLLO

Which way's the bathroom?

ERNIE DUKES

Third door on your right.

Rollo nods, walks down the hall. He gets to the second door on the right and opens it.

But it's not a bathroom. It's a GUN CLOSET and inside is every firearm known to man.

Rollo's eyes are fully alert now, looking at all the hardware. He starts to finger a gun belt, when A NOISE causes him to quickly shut the door. He finds the bathroom, one door down.

CUT TO:

INT. LOVE FIELD HANGAR - NIGHT

Cooper tries to sneak back in but there's Brackens, sitting in a folding chair, cup of cold coffee in his hands. The place is quiet, with only a few AGENTS working in the background.

BRACKENS

Any luck?

COOPER

Nothing so far.

She doesn't offer anything more. Brackens fiddles with his coffee, thinking. Finally...

BRACKENS

(wearily)

Maybe you're right.

(MORE)

BRACKENS (cont'd)

We should move on to Chicago. Who know's what Slippy Coombs'll try and do. I do know that ever since the Dukes case, Wallace has been his...

Brackens seizes on his last sentence.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

The Dukes case!

Brackens jumps up and looks at a map of Texas, running his finger from Waxahachie up to Dallas.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

Of course, Ernie Dukes isn't more than 30 miles from here.

He YELLS to the agents in the background, as Cooper's face falls.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

I need every available man, truck, and chopper here in ten minutes.

He looks at the clock on the wall which says it's nearly 3 a.m.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

I wanna hit Wallace with everything we got before the sun comes up! Now, move it!

The agents scramble to life.

CUT TO:

EXT. TEXAS ROAD - NIGHT

First, all we hear is the sound of TIRES ON A DIRT ROAD. Lots of them, flying by. The Texas night is still too dark.

But then, as our eyes adjust, we see what it is: a convoy of police VEHICLES, marked and unmarked, streaking by with their lights off.

IN ONE OF THE SEDANS:

Agent Cooper sits in the back seat, next to Brackens. AGENTS in the front seat check and recheck shotguns. Ernie's mansion appears on the hill.

AGENT 1

There it is.

Cooper furtively slides her cell phone from her jacket pocket. She tries to dial it in the dark, without Brackens seeing her, but can't.

BRACKENS

Everyone understand their business?

AGENT 2

Yes, sir.

Just then, a POLICE CHOPPER skims the tops of the cars, then another and another.

BRACKENS

What the hell're they doing? Are those ours?

AGENT 2

Looks like Marshals.

BRACKENS

Well get on the radio and get them back here! They're gonna blow our approach!

CUT TO:

INT. ERNIE DUKES'S MANSION - NIGHT

A red light BLINKS and BEEPS on a panel near the front door. Ernie and Papa appear in the hallway and check out the light. Papa is wearing a long 'duster' jacket worn by ranchers.

Wallace hurries up to them.

WALLACE

I think we've got company.

Ernie Jr. appears in his pajamas from the hallway.

ERNIE JR.

Daddy?

ERNIE DUKES

Go back to bed, son.

ERNIE JR.

But there's helicopters in the front yard.

ERNIE DUKES

Yes, I know your helicopter is out there.

Just then the house is ROCKED as a helicopter flares over it and lands in the yard, right on top of Ernie Jr.'s toy chopper.

The men look out a window and can't believe what they see. Ernie Jr.'s eyes are wide as plates.

ERNIE JR.

Mother-fu...!

The boy's word is lost in the ROAR of the helicopters.

The men turn from the window and hurry down a hallway.

WALLACE

Okay, no problem. We just have to leave a little early.

ERNIE DUKES

I've got an electrified fence that runs around back. It might slow 'em down.

He calls to his son, still moving...

ERNIE DUKES (CONT'D)

Ernie Jr.! Tell your mama I'm going out for a while.

CUT TO:

ERNIE'S BACK FORTY:

Wallace, Papa and Ernie race past the pool toward a GIANT BARN.

More HELICOPTERS circle, lights searching the area. A light finally grabs the running men and latches on.

BRACKENS'S CAR:

It bounds up the front drive, past the other cars which are starting to slow and let out MEN and DOGS.

IN THE CAR:

RADIO VOICE

We've got 'em. Heading for the back barn.

BRACKENS

Go around the house!

Cooper just sits, staring at her useless cell phone.

CUT TO:

AT THE BARN:

The three men work together to push open the giant door.
Rollo's jaw drops.

There's a freaking CESSNA sitting in the barn.

The men race to the plane.

WALLACE

You coming with us?

ERNIE DUKES

You learned how to fly yet?

Wallace shakes his head. Ernie smiles big enough to break a lesser man's face.

ERNIE DUKES (CONT'D)

Then get in this motherfucking plane!

CUT TO:

BRACKENS'S CAR:

It races around the house toward a giant metal gate with
WARNING: ELECTRIFIED signs all over it.

BRACKENS

Bust through it!

COOPER

It's electrified!

BRACKENS

I said keep going!

The Agent driving guns it and the car hits the gate, SPARKS
and METAL going everywhere.

But the car continues on...

CUT TO:

IN THE BARN:

Ernie's flipping switches as fast as he can.

ERNIE DUKES

This might get a little bumpy.

He pushes a lever and the plane lurches forward...

ERNIE DUKES (CONT'D)

Been a while.

WALLACE

What's a while?

ERNIE DUKES

Couple a years... give or take.

CUT TO:

THE BARN:

The Cessna Caravan BURSTS from the barn and heads down a long, makeshift

RUNWAY:

The plane sways back and forth on the uneven, dirt track. It doesn't look very stable.

Brackens's car swerves to change course and races alongside the plane. Wallace looks out at Brackens's car.

WALLACE

How long til we're up?

ERNIE DUKES

When it goes up, we're up!

Brackens's car can easily keep up as the plane tries to gain speed.

BRACKENS

Cut it off! Cut it off!

COOPER

No! That plane'll flip!

BRACKENS

Do it!

The Agent races the car ahead of the plane, then steers it into the plane's path.

ERNIE DUKES

What's that little um-um trying to pull?

Ernie attempts to steer the plane around the car, which just causes it to swerve more.

ERNIE DUKES (CONT'D)
(shouts out the window at
the car)

We're going to get this man back to
his motherfucking daughter!

Cooper looks out the back window, sees the plane wobbling down the runway, the single propeller getting closer to the car.

Ernie pushes the lever forward and the plane gains on the car.

Just before the propeller hits the back of the car, Cooper reaches over the seat and forces the wheel to the side.

BRACKENS
What the hell're you doing!

The car swerves out of the way as the plane gains speed and catches the air, lifting off into the night.

IN THE PLANE:

Ernie keeps pulling on the steering wheel.

ERNIE DUKES
Goooooooootttttt- damn!

PAPA ROLLO
What about the choppers?

WALLACE
They can't keep up with us.

IN THE SKY:

Sure enough, the Cessna breaks between two of the helicopters and roars out of there, toward the rising sun.

ON THE RUNWAY:

Brackens's car has spun out in the prairie grass. He jumps out and sees the plane disappearing into the night. Cooper and the other agents join him.

BRACKENS
What the hell was that?

COOPER

They were gonna slice us open with that propeller.

BRACKENS

My ass. You wanted him to get away.

COOPER

What the hell's that supposed to mean?

He sizes her up.

BRACKENS

(to the other agents)
Get me a helicopter here, immediately!

AGENT 1

Yes, sir.

They turn to call in a helicopter.

Brackens gives Cooper a death-stare. Finally, Cooper spills the beans.

COOPER

Fine, you want to hear it? I'm in love with Wallace.

Brackens' eyes bore into her.

COOPER (CONT'D)

I don't know what he's doing, but I definitely don't want anything to happen to him.

BRACKENS

Are you shitting...

(disgusted)

Are you telling me you can't do your job anymore?

COOPER

I'm telling you I don't know.

BRACKENS

You don't -- what? Well, here's what I know -- Pack your bags, Cooper, you're finished. Get outta my sight.

A helicopter flares and lands. Brackens jumps in.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)
(to the pilot)
Let's go!

The helicopter takes off, leaving Cooper alone in the field.

IN THE CHOPPER:

PILOT
Where to, sir?

BRACKENS (CONT'D)
Just fly.

CUT TO:

THE SKY - SUNRISE

The Cessna churns up the sky.

WALLACE
You cool, Papa?

PAPA ROLLO
As Alaska.
(beat)
We need an Amtrak schedule.

ERNIE DUKES
Amtrak? I thought we were goin' to
Chicago...

Wallace pulls out a map. Papa looks at it and points to a town in Missouri.

PAPA ROLLO
There we go. Branson. We gotta
stop there.

ERNIE DUKES
Branson? Ain't no motherfucking
way this plane touching down in
Branson.

PAPA ROLLO
They got a station there and a nice
big place for you to put 'er down.

ERNIE DUKES
They also got the Oak Ridge Boys.

WALLACE
He's right Ernie.

ERNIE DUKES
Why Branson?

WALLACE
The key to a safe retrieval is
getting to the kidnapper before the
exchange. Strike from behind while
they're looking ahead like I did
with your son.

ERNIE DUKES
Yeah?

WALLACE
And Papa knows where they're gonna
be before they get to the exchange.

ERNIE DUKES
You do?

THE CAMERA PUSHES IN ON PAPA:

PAPA ROLLO
On a train.

CUT TO:

EXT. AMTRAK STATION - SUNDAY MORNING

The three PUMA WARM-UP GUYS walk down the AMTRAK platform
like they're soldiers marching into Kuwait. They walk past a
sign that says:

AMTRAK WELCOMES YOU.

One is rolling a large trunk behind him. A security guard
approaches.

SECURITY GUARD
You're gonna have to store that
below deck.

Just then, Brackens steps out of nowhere and holds up his
badge.

BRACKENS
They're just watchin' that for me,
sir.

SECURITY GUARD

No problem.

The guard scoots away.

The Puma-wearing gunmen pause by the loading steps on to the train, let Brackens pass in first, eyes darting everywhere, then disappear on the car behind him.

BACK TO:

IN THE SKY:

Ernie's plane banks over Branson, Missouri. Down below, The Osmond Family Theater, The Mel Tillis Theater, and Silver Dollar City all reside, just to name a few.

WHITE FOLKS with fanny packs make their way up and down the famous "76 Strip" as the plane buzzes by overhead.

IN THE PLANE:

Ernie looks like he's going to be sick.

ERNIE DUKES

I'll be damned.

ON A GRAVEL ROAD:

The plane loops around and comes in for a landing, spinning the heads of the RETIREES.

Papa jumps out of the plane as soon as it stops and races across the parking lot toward the Amtrak station.

Two seconds later, he's back out the door.

IN THE PLANE:

Papa reappears with the schedule.

ERNIE DUKES

Let's go man! I'm gettin' paler
just lookin at this place!

PAPA ROLLO

I got it! Go!

The plane revs and takes off, back into the sky.

IN THE SKY:

Papa goes over the Amtrak schedule.

PAPA ROLLO

Here it is. St. Louis to Chicago.
Train 816. That's the one.

Wallace looks at it and checks his watch, jams some MILK DUDS into his mouth, wiping the chocolate on his shirt.

PAPA ROLLO (CONT'D)

Do you think maybe because you're a slob is why you have such a hard time making friends?

WALLACE

I'm the only one you've got.

PAPA ROLLO

Yeah, I gotta work on that.

Wallace's face changes, all business.

WALLACE

(to Papa)

So tell me about Slippy's guys.

PAPA ROLLO

Slippy brings in the triplets when he wants a satisfaction guarantee. They're cold-blooded killers, and that's it. They'll be on that train.

ERNIE DUKES

How you know they're gonna be on a train anyway?

PAPA ROLLO

Train's don't have metal detectors. You can stay packed all across the country.

ERNIE DUKES

No shit?

PAPA ROLLO

How'd'ya think shooters get around?

ERNIE DUKES

I never thought about it.

The plane banks over a treeline and approaches a set of railroad tracks. It turns North to follow the parallel lines.

ERNIE DUKES (CONT'D)

We got the tracks.

Wallace looks out the window.

WALLACE

Okay, here's the deal.

CUT TO:

INT. SECOND TO LAST RAIL CAR - DAY

The CAMERA moves down the aisle past PASSENGERS, some snoozing, some reading, keeps on going, passing the last two passengers and pushes through the dividing door and into the last car, which is a full baggage compartment.

IN THE BAGGAGE COMPARTMENT:

Brackens sits in here next to his large trunk, smoking a cigarette.

The CAMERA PUSHES IN on that trunk, as we cut...

BACK TO:

THE PLANE:

WALLACE

The triplets will have her out of the way, most likely in the baggage car. They don't want to risk her causing a scene.

PAPA ROLLO

So we hit them there.

Wallace shakes his head.

WALLACE

Your guys won't be there. They're not expecting us, they'll be ready for something, but no one wants to sit in a baggage car if they don't have to.

CUT TO:

ON THE TRAIN:

The CAMERA zooms backwards, away from the baggage car, through ONE passenger car, speeding backwards, through a DINING car, through ANOTHER passenger car, and into a

THIRD PASSENGER CAR:

CAMERA STOPS when it gets to a row of seats filled with the three big, Puma hombres.

BACK TO:

THE PLANE:

WALLACE

But first things first. We have to get on board without them knowing.

THE SKY:

For the first time, WE SEE the train, a big 816 painted on top of the engine car, speeding North on the horizon. Ernie throttles the plane, racing toward it.

ERNIE DUKES

Get your wings on.

IN THE PLANE:

Wallace swings the door open, flying over a hundred miles per hour. As the wind whips at their faces...

PAPA ROLLO

(over the air)

You ever done this before?

WALLACE

What kind of a question is that?

PAPA ROLLO

I'm just asking.

Wallace puts his hand on Ernie's shoulder.

WALLACE

Thanks, brother. I couldn't have done this without you.

ERNIE DUKES

You know I'd do anything for you.

PAPA ROLLO

So we'll start a bridge club when this is over. Let's go!

WALLACE

(to Ernie)

You got the phone number to call?

You know what to do?

ERNIE DUKES

Who you talking to?

The plane gets over the train and then matches the train's speed.

About ten feet separate the plane from the top of the train. Wallace shouts over the wind!

WALLACE

Papa! Remember, there's one common thing in every bust!

PAPA ROLLO

What's that?

WALLACE

There's always something you don't expect!

Papa nods.

PAPA ROLLO

On three!

As Rollo prepares to count the number one, Wallace jumps out of the plane, lands on top of the train, and rolls to a stop.

Rollo can't believe it.

ERNIE DUKES

You better move it!

Now Rollo sees what Ernie's talking about, the train is about to go under an overpass.

Rollo steadies himself, then closes his eyes and makes the jump, hitting the deck just as the train rolls under the overpass, and Ernie swings high.

The plane speeds off into the sky, leaving Wallace and Rollo alone on top of the train.

Rollo crawls over to Wallace.

PAPA ROLLO

Change of plans. I'm going for Grace.

Wallace shakes his head.

WALLACE

No, I go for Grace. You distract the muscle.

PAPA ROLLO

Uh-uh. I'm saving my daughter.

WALLACE

But you're a pacifist!

PAPA ROLLO

Not today.

Rollo starts scrambling down the train.

Wallace watches him crawl away and blows a deep breath. The train rounds a bend and the CHICAGO SKYLINE appears on the horizon.

Wallace can't waste any more time. He clambers off in the opposite direction as Rollo.

CUT TO:

INT. PASSENGER CAR - DAY

The three brothers remain in their seats, not too worried at this point.

One gets up and limps forward toward another passenger car. As he goes by the bathroom compartment, he peeks inside. Empty.

As soon as he passes, WE SEE Wallace's hands slide down from above and open the bathroom window.

Outside the bathroom, the triplet pokes his head into the

FORWARD PASSENGER CAR

A quick scan reveals nothing out-of-the-ordinary. He backs up and his brothers watch him enter the bathroom.

IN THE BATHROOM:

He steps in and pulls up his warm-up pants to look at the bandage on his leg from where he was shot. But he notices something different. The window is open.

Strange.

Suddenly, Wallace swings into the room, feet first. He and the triplet are equally surprised to see the other.

A half second passes as neither moves. Then Wallace sees the bandage on his leg and belts him with a hard right hook to the leg.

The triplet HOWLS in pain but isn't about to go down easy. Inside this three foot by three foot space, Wallace and the triplet engage in a battle royal.

They both whack each other with everything they got, but neither is able to get much traction or force.

Wallace manages to get his gun out first, but the triplet knocks it out the open window. It's gonna be fists from now on.

IN THE PASSENGER CAR:

The other two brothers look quizzically up at the bathroom car. Was that a noise?

IN THE BATHROOM:

Wallace manages to knee the guy in the jimmies and then bend his head over the toilet, where he proceeds to ram the guy's head with the ceramic toilet seat. BAM, BAM, BAM!

IN THE PASSENGER CAR:

One of the brothers stands and makes his way up to the bathroom car.

He knocks on the door.

IN THE BATHROOM:

Wallace FLUSHES the toilet, as he slams the guy's head one more time. There is officially one brother down.

IN THE PASSENGER CAR:

The toilet flush satisfies Triplet Two enough to move back down to his seat.

CUT TO:

THE TOP OF THE TRAIN:

Rollo has made it all the way down to the last car and slides down into the space between the cars.

He's able to look in to the last car window, and he spots:

Brackens in there, smoking a cigarette impatiently, right by the window.

Rollo ducks down out of the way before he's spotted.

BACK TO:

IN THE BATHROOM:

Wallace straightens his jacket in the mirror, steps over the down-and-out triplet and opens the bathroom door.

He steps into the car that holds the other two brother's.

WALLACE

(loudly)

Hey!

Everyone in the car stops what they're doing to look up.
Wallace eyes the two brothers.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

(like he's being discreet)

I think your brother had an
accident in here.

The two remaining triplets immediately start heading his way,
but Wallace has already slid into the forward-most car.

Triplet Two says something into his sleeve.

CUT TO:

IN THE BAGGAGE CAR:

Brackens talks into his sleeve.

BRACKENS

Got it. I'm on my way.

BETWEEN THE CARS:

Rollo realizes Brackens is going to cross between cars, and
walk right into him.

Desperate, Papa quickly ducks around to the side, as the
scenery whips by. Brackens slides open his door and crosses
into the SECOND PASSENGER CAR.

When he closes the door again, Rollo swings back around to
get between the cars.

BETWEEN THE CARS:

Rollo gets his footing and is about to open the door to the BAGGAGE CAR.

He steps inside...

IN THE BAGGAGE CAR:

Standing in the middle of the car, larger than life, is the one and only SLIPPY COOMBS.

SLIPPY COOMBS

(pleased as pie)

Papa Rollo! What'dya say, my man?

He's got a giant GUN out, one foot on a large TRUNK, and a smile wider than the Mississippi.

Rollo holds up his hands.

PAPA ROLLO

(nervously)

Hello, Cotton.

SLIPPY COOMBS

Heh, heh. That's funny.

This isn't looking too good.

CUT TO:

IN THE PASSENGER CAR:

The two remaining triplets look in the bathroom door at the ignominious sight of their brother.

They slide open the passenger door, make hand signals to each other, and then slide the door open for the forward-most car.

IN THE FORWARD-MOST CAR:

As soon as the first one steps inside, Wallace is standing by the door and yanks him into a row of seats.

Passengers jump out of the way, as the second brother launches through the opening and pounces on Wallace.

He and the second brother go flying over seats and tumble out into the aisle.

An ELDERLY SECURITY GUARD watches from the very front of the train. The old guy's not gonna stick his neck out for this lousy job.

The altercation rages in the front car between Wallace and the two twin brothers.

Just when it looks like Wallace has the advantage over one, the other brother recovers and jumps on his back.

It's a melee of fists.

CUT TO:

IN THE PASSENGER CAR:

Brackens makes his way up to the window looking into the forward most car. Next to him is the bathroom where the first triplet is laid out.

Through the window, he can see Wallace giving it to the two remaining twins.

Brackens gets a panicked look on his face. Out the side windows he can see the train moving into Chicago.

He slides the door open to step into the forward-most car.

CUT BACK TO:

THE BAGGAGE CAR:

Rollo standing with his hands up.

Slippy still has his foot on the trunk.

SLIPPY COOMBS

Papa, papa, papa. It's a damn shame you had to turn yourself into a rat like that.

Rollo keeps his eyes on that trunk.

SLIPPY COOMBS (CONT'D)

But you know what I heard? I heard you lost your nerve. I heard you some sort of a pacifist now, that you don't like to pull the trigger no more.

PAPA ROLLO

Is that right?

SLIPPY COOMBS

That's what the boys're sayin' on Michigan Avenue. So I figured we needed to get a hold of somethin' that meant a little somethin-somethin to you.

PAPA ROLLO

Is she okay?

Slippy shrugs.

SLIPPY COOMBS

Where's my gun?

Papa hesitates.

Slippy coldly drops his gun and FIRES into the trunk beneath his foot.

PAPA ROLLO

(alarmed)

No!

SLIPPY COOMBS

I'm done playing with you, Papa.

Papa stares at the trunk, gripped with fear.

PAPA ROLLO

Okay okay okay... You want the gun? I've got it with me.

SLIPPY COOMBS

Yeah? Let's see it.

Papa slowly starts to open his duster jacket.

PAPA ROLLO

You know, my friend told me there's always one thing you don't expect.

SLIPPY COOMBS

Is that right?

PAPA ROLLO

Yeah.

Like a flash, Papa's jacket flips open, revealing a frigging arsenal of firepower.

We get to see just how good of a gun man Papa really is. In the time it takes for Slippy to pull his gun up, Rollo's two-fisting Smith and Wessons from out of shoulder holsters.

BAM! BAM! Slippy falls with bullet holes perfectly positioned in the middle of his forehead.

Papa dashes over to the trunk to pop it open.

PAPA ROLLO (cont'd)

Gracie!

FROM INSIDE THE TRUNK:

Darkness, followed by Rollo's face as he opens the lid:

Our view is of the disappointment in his every feature and we...

CUT BACK TO:

THE FORWARD-MOST PASSENGER CAR:

Wallace uses a luggage rack as leverage and swings a full kick into one of the triplets.

The guy goes smacking into a window, shattering it, and flips on out of the train with panic in his eyes.

The last remaining triplet watches the fate of his brother with horror.

He turns his eyes on Wallace with a new resolve, and WALLOPS him hard in the jaw, sending him flying over another row of chairs.

At the back of the car, Wallace spots Brackens entering and standing on a seat, fishing a trunk out of the top luggage rack.

Brackens yanks the trunk down, and it hits the floor hard, popping open. Grace's limp body falls to the floor, a rag jammed in her mouth. She GROANS as Brackens scoops her up and heads out of the car.

WALLACE

Grace!

Wallace tries to get to Brackens but is yanked up by the remaining triplet. This guy is hell-bent on revenge.

He picks Wallace up and shoves him into the roof of the car, once, twice, and then tosses him about ten feet forward like a friggin' shot put.

Wallace lands at the feet of the elderly security guard. He squints up at him from his prostrate position, gasping.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

(to the guard)

You have a gun?

The guard just looks at him.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

A gun? A taser? A nightstick?

The old man just shakes his head, scared-to-death.

At the same moment, Wallace feels his feet being picked up. He's dragged, head bumping against a few seats, before he's lifted back to his feet.

The final triplet looks just about rabid. He measures Wallace again, HEADBUTTS him hard, and then spins and flings him toward the back of the car.

Wallace lands next to a WOMAN who is cowering with her CHILD.

Wallace lifts his head enough to see the last triplet pulling a large HANDGUN out of a holster, just as the train is coming to a stop.

Woozy, drained, defeated, Wallace's eyes come to rest on the mom holding her little boy tight, and then on to the little boy's BASEBALL which he has in his lap.

Clearing his head, Wallace leaps up, SNATCHES the baseball from the kid's mitt, and in the same motion, launches a perfect strike, right at the last triplet's nose.

The connection sounds like a sledgehammer hitting a hollow tree trunk.

The guy's nose just disintegrates, his eyes go to the back of his head, and he hits the ground like someone just yanked him down with a rope.

Wallace watches him drop and then moves into...

THE PASSENGER CAR:

... where he is joined by Rollo coming the other direction. Neither slows as they...

PAPA ROLLO
No Grace in the baggage car!

WALLACE
I know. Brackens has her. He just
got off the train.

...exit the train.

IN THE CHICAGO STATION:

They come pouring out of the train, and Wallace spots
Brackens dragging Grace across the station platform.

WALLACE
There!

Brackens starts to pass a row of cement columns when...

WHAM! A TOURIST with one of those baggage carts smashes into
him.

Brackens falls flat on his back, clutching Grace. He quickly
gets to his feet, immediately fisting a large gun, just as
Rollo and Wallace race up.

Brackens points the gun at Grace.

Everyone puts up their hands, not wanting to make a move with
Grace right there.

WALLACE (CONT'D)
How can you do this, Brackens?
She's only seven.

BRACKENS
My job isn't easy, Wallace.

WALLACE
But setting me up was?

BRACKENS
(winks)
You're right about that.

Brackens grabs Grace's wrist with his free hand.

WALLACE
You could be put away for a
statement like that.

BRACKENS

Yeah? It's your word against mine,
and I don't think anyone's gonna
believe a fugitive and a felon.

WALLACE

I know someone they might believe.

Wallace's eyes lock in on Brackens'.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

You had me walk into a Federal
stakeout. I wanted you to know how
it feels.

Agent Cooper and a team of FBI agents spill out from behind a
large newsstand.

COOPER

You're under arrest, you son-of-a-
bitch.

The tourist who nailed Brackens with the cart starts to pull
out a gun, also a Fed.

Brackens, cornered like a rat, decides to bare his teeth.

He SHOOTs at the tourist fed, driving him behind the tipped
cart, and then OPENS FIRE at the approaching Agents, who dive
for cover. In a flash, he scoops up Grace and hauls ass out
of there.

Wallace and Rollo book after Brackens.

OUTSIDE THE STATION:

Brackens hurries out and throws Grace into a convertible
Caddy as two unsuspecting people are saying their goodbyes.
He keys the ignition and guns it out of there.

Wallace is a second too slow and dives for the car, but only
catches the exhaust.

Rollo arrives, looks desperately around, trying to find
something, anything, and his eyes seize on:

PAPA ROLLO

Slippy's Stingray!

Parked in the handicapped space is Slippy's beautiful
Corvette.

Wallace and Rollo break in a full sprint for it.

WALLACE
I'm driving!

They hop in the convertible, and Wallace cracks the ignition open, and in two seconds, hot-wires the car.

They peel out after the Cadillac, kicking up white smoke in their wake.

CUT TO:

THE STATION:

Agent Cooper is on the horn.

COOPER
I want every available man in this
city on this! Now!

She hangs up.

The team of agents races out of the station.

CHICAGO HIGHWAY:

Brackens pushes the Caddy to the limit, as Lake Michigan looms in the distance.

But Wallace and Rollo are right on his tail, practically flying in Slippery's stingray.

IN THE STINGRAY:

Suddenly, Rollo dives between Wallace's legs as he drives.

The car swerves all over the road, nearly plowing into a mini-van.

WALLACE
What the hell're you doing?

Rollo keeps digging around between his legs.

Wallace can barely control the car, as Brackens gets further away.

Rollo's hands fish around until they come across some duct tape under the seat. He's able to undo the tape and...

...pull his hand back out.

WALLACE (CONT'D)
What the hell was that?

Rollo holds up his hands, now clutching a SILVER PISTOL.

PAPA ROLLO

The gun.

WALLACE

The gun?

PAPA ROLLO

That's right.

WALLACE

It was in his car the whole time?

PAPA ROLLO

I told ya. He never goes anywhere without this car. I figured that as long as I knew where he was, I'd know where the gun was.

Wallace nods and guns it.

CHICAGO STREETS:

The cars race down LAKE SHORE DRIVE, Lake Michigan just off to their side.

They weave in and out of Sunday traffic, Brackens hellbent on shaking the Corvette.

POLICE cars join the chase, but are no match for what the Caddy and Stingray have to offer.

In a desperation move, Brackens spins the wheel and races off Lake Shore Drive and into an

INDUSTRIAL AREA

near the Chicago River.

The El ROARS overhead as the cars ROAR underneath. They swerve in and out of trucks, forklifts, and pallets of goods waiting for loading.

The Stingray presses hard on the Cadillac.

Brackens spins the wheel and has a way out of the area: a ramp leading away from the river and up to a freeway.

Just as the Caddy is about to hit the ramp...

Grace sees her opening and attacks Brackens, causing him to miss the ramp and spin out on a dock at the

EDGE OF THE RIVER:

Desperately turning the wheel of the car, Brackens drops his gun into the passenger floorboard. Grace scrambles for it, has it for a second, but a hard SLAP from Brackens sends it flying into the river.

The Stingray skids to a stop next to him.

Papa and Wallace jump out of the car to find Brackens with his arm around Grace's neck.

BRACKENS

Any closer and I'll kill her!

GRACE

He doesn't have his gun.

BRACKENS

I'll fucking snap her neck and toss her in, how bout that?

WALLACE

I don't think you're gonna do that.

BRACKENS

Why not, Wallace? Huh? You haven't known a goddamn thing from the start! I had you spinnin'.

WALLACE

You're right, you did. But not anymore.

Wallace pulls out the famous gun. He points it right at Brackens, just past Grace's head.

PAPA ROLLO

Wallace! No!

WALLACE

I'm a pretty good shot.

BRACKENS

Who are you fooling? You'll kill Grace too!

Wallace has the gun leveled, there isn't much room. Brackens is right.

GRACE

(to Brackens, knowingly)
The key is not to care.

Wallace looks at her... Before he could have wasted Brackens no problem. But he does care now.

He lowers the gun.

BRACKENS

That's what I thought. Here's what's gonna happen. You slide that gun over here, I turn the kiddo loose.

As much as he hates to, Wallace tosses the gun to the ground near Brackens' feet.

Brackens releases Grace to pick up the gun and she scrambles away.

She races to Wallace and jumps in his arms. She hugs him tight, and he hugs her right back, as tightly as he can.

WALLACE

Okay, okay. You're all right. You're safe now.

He puts her down to face Brackens, who has a slimy smirk to go with his new gun. Both pointed directly at Wallace.

BRACKENS

Okay, lovey-time is over.

Grace grabs on to her dad.

Wallace starts to walk toward Brackens.

BRACKENS (CONT'D)

I appreciate that Wallace. Take it like a man.

Brackens pulls the trigger, but nothing happens.

EDGE OF THE RIVER:

Wallace keeps walking toward Brackens, who keeps trying to fire the gun.

WALLACE

You wanted the jammed gun, Brackens. Well, you got it.

CUT TO:

FLASH:

Slippy Coombs shooting the auto mechanic, his gun JAMMING on the last shot.

BACK TO:

WHAM! Wallace knocks out Brackens with a HAYMAKER filled with three days of pissed-off aggression, knocking Brackens ten feet into the river.

Wallace then steps into the river himself, the filthy water coming up to his waist, and drags Brackens back out just as...

...every LAW ENFORCEMENT VEHICLE in the city of Chicago pours down upon them, Cooper and Ernie included.

Wallace drops Brackens on to the dirt and walks over to Papa and Grace, soaking wet and filthy.

PAPA ROLLO

You just can't stay clean, can you?

Wallace doesn't answer, just hugs the three of them, getting them wet too. Grace laughs as she gets filthy, hugging Wallace, and her laughter gets lost in...

CUT TO:

EXT. ERNIE'S RANCH - DAY

The smack of a baseball against a bat.

Grace takes off, laughing as she runs from home to first.

Ernie Dukes is pitching underhand from a mound on a diamond cut into the acreage behind his house. Ernie Jr. is the next up to the plate, his batting helmet too big for him.

ROCHELLE

Let's go Ernie, Jr.!

Wallace and Cooper sit with Rochelle in some makeshift stands, all comfortable together.

Rollo walks up with a hotdog, hands it to Wallace.

PAPA ROLLO

Grace might be giving Jeter a run for his money in a few years, eh, Wallace?

WALLACE
She's a natural.

They watch Ernie Jr. smack a single and Grace zip around the bases, making a perfect slide into third.

PAPA ROLLO
What about you Wallace? What'd'you
got planned for the future?

Wallace looks at Cooper.

WALLACE
I think we're gonna go freelance
for a while longer. Look for
missing kids.

PAPA ROLLO
We?

COOPER
(smiling)
Yeah, Wallace convinced me to get
outta the FBI and go straight.

PAPA ROLLO
Good for you.

Rollo sits down in front of them, watching the kids run on the field.

WALLACE
Papa?
He turns to them.

PAPA ROLLO
Yeah?

WALLACE
We were kinda hoping you might
wanna join us, be our partner. If
you're not doin' anything.

Rollo's eyes light up.

PAPA ROLLO
Help you?

WALLACE
That's right. Something Grace can
be really proud of.
(beat)
(MORE)

WALLACE (cont'd)

We can do the bridge club too if
you want.

PAPA ROLLO

(genuinely moved)

I'd love to. But with one
consideration...

(smiling big)

You gonna clean up your ways?

WALLACE

Sure.

He sticks his hand out to shake Rollo's, and when Papa pulls
his back, it's dripping with ketchup and mustard.

He looks at it, starts laughing, and they all join him.

FADE OUT.