

FOUR BROTHERS

by

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FADE IN:

OVER BLACK:

We hear the grumble of an old eight cylinder big block and the Whump-Whump of windshield wipers.

FADE UP INSIDE AN OLD EL CAMINO - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: a pair of white fuzzy dice swaying from the rear-view mirror, two black dots on each.

Through the moving car's sleet-covered windshield, we see one dilapidated and boarded-up store-front after another.

Whump-Whump. Whump-Whump. Like a heartbeat, the windshield wipers beat an ominous rhythm. Whump-Whump. Whump-Whump.

ON AN ICY SIDEWALK - SAME

EVELYN MERCER (fifties) makes her way down the deserted street, huddled against the blowing snow.

Barely visible, a rusted El Camino rumbles past.

BACK INSIDE THE EL CAMINO

Whump-Whump. Whump-Whump. TWO GUNMEN watch Evelyn enter a corner grocery store. As the driver pulls to the curb, the passenger slips on a ski-mask.

INSIDE THE STORE / BUTCHER SECTION

Evelyn peers through the glass counter at several frozen turkeys.

EVELYN

This one here's not a bad lookin' bird. It's Sokari, right? Have you been enjoying your first week in America?

The Nigerian night clerk, SOKARI, heaves up the turkey for Evelyn's inspection.

SOKARI

Yes, ma'am. Very well.

EVELYN

Just in time for Thanksgiving.

SOKARI

Yes, ma'am. And though I am new to the country I am thankful--

The door BANGS OPEN, bells JINGLING. Evelyn and the clerk spin, shocked to see the masked gunmen storm in.

One goes right for the surveillance camera, spray-painting out the lens.

MASKED GUNMAN  
Yo! Kunta Kinte! Get over here!! Open  
the fuckin' drawer! Now!

Shaking, the clerk hands over the entire money tray.

SOKARI  
Please! Take it! Please! I want no  
trouble, sir!

The gunman smirks.

MASKED GUNMAN  
This America, homeboy. Black folks  
don't get to get what they want.

BOOM! The gunman blasts the night clerk back into the liquor bottles behind the register.

Evelyn SCREAMS, drawing the gunmen's attention. She falls instantly silent.

The second gunman stalks after Evelyn as she scrambles away, knocking cans of food off the shelves in her desperation.

SECOND GUNMAN  
Fuckin' Russians. I hate fuckin'  
Russians. Don't you?

He spins the cylinder of his revolver as she backs away.

SECOND GUNMAN  
Who let 'em in? They everywhere. Taxi  
drivers. Hookers. Mechanics.

EVELYN  
I'm not Russian! I've lived here my-

SECOND GUNMAN  
Point of the story idn't who's Russian  
and who's not, bitch. Point of the  
story is, only good thing ever came  
out of Russia was a game called  
'Russian Roulette.'

He stops spinning the cylinder and fires at her. CLICK.

SECOND GUNMAN  
Whoop! Lady luck.

He spins the chamber and aims again, laughing. CLICK. Evelyn runs out of room to back away, cowering against a freezer.

SECOND GUNMAN  
You like this game?

He spins and takes aim again. The first gunman appears at his shoulder.

FIRST GUNMAN  
The fuck you doin', Stanly?

SECOND GUNMAN  
Just playin'.

The first gunman shakes his head with a sigh and raises his shotgun.

SECOND GUNMAN  
Oh, man. You no fun.

The second gunman covers his ears. Evelyn understands her fate.

EVELYN  
May God forgive you both and save your  
souls.

CUT OUTSIDE TO:

A wide shot of the store front.

BOOM! A flash of gunfire fills the store. The door JANGLES as the two gunmen casually exit the shop and drive away.

Snow continues to drift down silently.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO OPENING TITLES.

Marvin Gaye's Motown classic 'What's Going On?' plays over images of four hard-looking men returning home:

A hulking '75 Thunderbird crosses the icy Ambassador bridge into Detroit.

IN THE BEAT-UP THUNDERBIRD

SHAWN MERCER (grizzled beard over scars) stares stoically out the windshield.

As he exits the bridge, Shawn's POV leads us through this dying city.

Deserted blocks of condemned and forgotten buildings.

Abandoned and crumbling auto manufacturing plants, snow blanketing their massive, empty parking lots.

Faded billboards still exclaim: 'Labor built America';  
'United we stand!'

Welcome to Detroit, a modern American ghost town.

AT THE DOWNTOWN BUS STATION - SAME

JEREMIAH MERCER (Latino) is dressed for a funeral in a decent suit and a dark overcoat. He leans against the fender of his station wagon, watching a line of weary passengers file off a grimy Greyhound bus.

JACK MERCER (white, mid-twenties) is one of the last off the bus. He spots Jeremiah and heads over.

As Jack approaches Jeremiah shakes his head at Jack's tatoos and haircut.

JEREMIAH

Look at you...you look like ten bucks.

JACK

Fuck you.

They laugh and hug briefly and get in the car.

A NONDESCRIPT HOTEL ROOM - DAWN

ANGEL MERCER (black, good-looking) quietly packs his belongings into a worn U.S. Army-issue duffle bag.

He throws the bag over his shoulder and steps out the door. As the door latches closed, an ATTRACTIVE WOMAN wakes up in his bed. She blinks and looks around.

ATTRACTIVE WOMAN

Angel?

BACK TO SHAWN'S THUNDERBIRD

As Shawn navigates the streets of 'Paradise Valley', one of Detroit's worst neighborhoods. After a moment, he wheels the huge car into the parking lot of St. Anne's Cathedral.

Shawn gets out of the car and joins the flow of mourners headed toward the adjacent hillside cemetery.

Up ahead, Jeremiah and Jack see Shawn approaching and wait for him to catch up. They each bump fists and hug. Shawn takes in the whole scene. The mourners. The soot-stained church. The crappy weather.

SHAWN

Sorry excuse for a homecoming.

END CREDITS.

EXT. ST. ANNE'S CATHEDRAL - MORNING

Shawn, Jeremiah, Jack, and a young PRIEST carry a black flower-draped casket out of the cathedral and down the (salted) stone steps leading the funeral procession toward a

HILLSIDE CEMETERY - LATER

The wind howls over the frozen hillside, snow whipping up and around a hundred black-clad MOURNERS.

Jeremiah stands at a small podium next to Evelyn's coffin which hangs suspended over an open grave.

JEREMIAH

Being sad's easy. Being pissed off's the easy thing to do. Hanging our heads. The hard thing to do is what Evelyn would want you to do. Us to do. Hold your head up. You know? She was in this city for a long time and saw so much that was terrible. But she stayed hopeful. She still believed that things were getting better. Sometimes despite all evidence to the contrary. That's the hard thing to do. Stay hopeful. Even when you can't find a reason. She'd want all of you, all of you that loved her, to laugh today. Not cry. To tell a joke or something. That's the hard thing to do.

ON A NEARBY HILLTOP

LT. GREEN (African American) and his younger partner, DETECTIVE FOWLER (both in dress blues) watch the proceedings from afar. Jeremiah's voice is largely lost to the wind.

Fowler nods at the sizable crowd.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

I've been to Pistons games with a smaller turn out.

JUMP CUT TO:

Jack has taken the podium. He's hung-over and barely able to string a coherent sentence together.

JACK

...I used to steal a lot. You go from foster house to foster house. Lot of these people just wanted the extra check from the state. They didn't want you. They didn't give you anything. Barely even anything to eat.

(MORE)

JACK(cont'd)

You learned to take whatever you could, soap, a towel. Like bein' at a motel. You knew you'd be out of there soon enough and back at the shelter.

IN THE FIRST ROW

Shawn nods at the empty chair between him and Jeremiah.

SHAWN

Nothing from Angel?

Jeremiah shrugs and shakes his head.

BACK ON THE PODIUM

JACK

When Evelyn took me in, it was no different to me. Till she caught me with my pockets all full. She sat me down and tried to explain what it meant that she had adopted me. What it meant to have a last name. All I remember from what she said was, ah, 'there's no reason to steal your own toothbrush anymore, Jack'. She took both my hands and was talking about what else I could do with them...

Jack's voice starts to quiver and break. He tries to finish his story but chokes up.

Shawn steps up to the podium to help him out, patting him on the back and comforts him.

Shawn turns to the crowd and begins to speak but he's at a loss for words. After a long moment, he says simply:

SHAWN

Mom never liked long good-byes.

*He turns to a nearby PRIEST.*

SHAWN

Father.

The FATHER nods to a cadre of cemetery workers who begin to lower Evelyn's coffin into the ground.

The casket scrapes against the frozen earth of the narrow grave.

EST/EXT. JEREMIAH MERCER'S HOME - EVENING

A decent middle-class suburb. At Evelyn's funeral reception, the first MOURNERS are visible through the windows, dozens more make their way toward the door.

UP THE STREET / IN AN UNMARKED POLICE CAR

Lt. Green and Detective Fowler watch as Shawn rumbles past in his hulking Thunderbird, parking a few houses away.

Green plunks down a thick manila file onto Fowler's lap. Fowler opens it to a mug shot.

LT. GREEN

Shawn Mercer. Heavy-weight champion fuck-up of the family. And that's a well-defended title. Would've made his daddy proud if he ever had one. I knew Shawn a little bit. Played hockey with him.

Fowler sizes up his African-American partner.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

You played hockey? No shit, negro? You on the swim team, too?

LT. GREEN

Fuck you. I was goalie. Ole Shawn was good. Spent three years in the minor leagues. Real finesse player.

*FLASHBACK INSERT: Shawn beating the dog out of three opponents. As the last guy hits the ice, Shawn turns to his nearest teammate, a faucet of blood spilling from his nose.*

SHAWN

*I love this sport!*

*FREEZE FRAME on Shawn, a crazed smile on his face.*

LT. GREEN

Got thrown out of sixty some-odd games before the league had enough. Called him the Michigan Mauler.

Detective Fowler turns the file-folder vertically as if looking at a Playboy centerfold.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

Yeah, this guy's a real sweetheart. His turn-ons include: burglary one, grand theft, aggravated assault, and long walks on the beach.

On the street, Jack walks past, drawing the cops' attention. He stops nearby to light a cigarette.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

Who's the kid?

LT. GREEN  
The youngest. Jack.

*FLASHBACK INSERT: Jack's on stage, wailing away on his guitar finishing up a hardcore, post-punk song. He smiles down at a half-a-dozen sexy groupies on the front row.*

LT. GREEN'S VOICE OVER  
First-class fuck up. Third-class rock star.

*As the song reaches a crescendo, Jack runs across the stage, crashing head-first through a stack of amps. In the front row, the groupies go crazy.*

CUT BACK TO:

Jack on the street, smoking. He's got dyed, jet-black hair and two arms full of tattoos.

LT. GREEN  
Don't let his refined, clean-cut appearance fool you. The young man's as volatile as his brothers.

Green and Fowler watch Shawn and Jack head toward the porch where Jeremiah Mercer stands with his WIFE and TWO DAUGHTERS greeting the arriving GUESTS.

SHAWN  
Nice house, Jerry. Not bad at all.

Back in the car, Detective Fowler nods at Jeremiah.

DETECTIVE FOWLER  
Whatta we got over here? Another model citizen, I'm sure.

LT. GREEN  
Jeremiah's alright. After Shawn and the others left town, he made something of himself. Man found a cause...

*FLASHBACK INSERT: Jeremiah leads a line of a hundred picketing UNION MEMBERS outside an auto plant.*

LT. GREEN'S VOICE OVER  
Became a union rep. After a couple years, they made him one of their top negotiators. Had a real thoughtful approach...

*FLASHBACK INSERT CONT'D: Aghhhhhhhhhh! Jeremiah charges past a TV camera wielding a picket sign like a billy club. Crunch!*

*He and the picketers smash into a huge group of SCABS trying to break the line.*

Fowler shakes his head.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

Glad to know there's a voice of reason in the family. We got one MIA? Thought you said there were four?

LT. GREEN

Angel. 'Bout Shawn's age. Got in 'bout as much trouble. 'Bout got thrown out of the army. Definite problem with authority. Definitely a sharp hustler. Looks like he's a no-show.

*FLASHBACK INSERT: A gate ATTENDANT at the Las Vegas Airport smiles as a tall, handsome black man (Angel Mercer) hands over his ticket. She clicks some keys and then frowns.*

GATE ATTENDANT

I'm sorry, Mr. Wong. Your credit card seems to have been reported stolen.

ANGEL

Stolen? How can--this keeps happening to me! I'm going to call them right this instant! Where's a pay phone!?

*CONTINUE INSERT: Angel hurries away from the counter*

GATE ATTENDANT

Mr. Wong!? Security would like to talk--Mr. Wong!? Mr. Wong!

BACK TO THE DETECTIVES

As they step out of the car and head toward the reception.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

I don't get it. If this woman's such a Goddamn saint, how'd she end up raising four total fuck-ups?

LT. GREEN

You kidding me? Evelyn musta cycled hundreds of kids out of the foster system and into permanent homes. In thirty years she only came across four lost causes. Four delinquents so far gone, she couldn't convince anybody to take them in. So she did. Trust me, Fowler, these boys are congressmen compared to what they would've been.

INT. JEREMIAH'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Shawn and Jack enter the kitchen to find Jeremiah's daughters, AMALIA (4) and DANIELA (8) dressing-up their dog in one of the girl's dresses.

JACK

Hi there. You must be Daniela and...

Shawn points to the dog.

SHAWN

You must be Amalia.

Daniela laughs and Amalia squeals.

AMALIA

I'm Amalia!

SHAWN

You two have never met us, but I'm your Uncle Shawn and this is Uncle Jack.

DANIELA

You're not my uncle! You're white!

SHAWN

I'm a different kind of uncle. Your grandma adopted me and Uncle Jack. Like your dad.

Lt. Green and Detective Fowler enter the kitchen in their dress blues. The girls look up and point.

AMALIA

You're a policeman!

LT. GREEN

That's right. And you're all under arrest. Nobody move!

The girls GIGGLE and run out of the room.

SHAWN

What about me, Green? You gonna arrest me too?

LT. GREEN

It depends. You keepin' straight, Shawn?

Shawn shrugs.

SHAWN

Straight-ish.

They laugh and shake hands warmly.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM

Jeremiah's wife, CAMILLE, watches the exchange between Shawn and the cops. She turns to her husband.

CAMILLE

Thought you said he wasn't coming.

JEREMIAH

I said I didn't know if he'd come or not, baby. Barely spoken to him in five years.

Camille elbows him in the ribs, playfully.

CAMILLE

Well, I been asking for a flat-screen anyway. In case you guys decide to pull a job for old times sake.

JEREMIAH

Ha ha.

BACK TO SHAWN AND THE COPS

SHAWN

Thanks, Green, for coming. Mom would've been happy you made it to the service.

LT. GREEN

Shit. Your mom would be happy you made it back for her funeral.

SHAWN

I didn't come back for the funeral.

The implicit threat hangs uncomfortably in the air.

LT. GREEN

Thanks for the offer, but we're not looking to round up a posse on this one.

SHAWN

Oh, so you busted them already?

DETECTIVE FOWLER

We've got it under control.

SHAWN

Yeah, I could tell that by the look of things when I drove in. Detroit's finest.

LT. GREEN

Easy, Shawn. We're going to nail these punks. We got a solid witness. Kid playin' basketball across the street saw a couple gang bangers go in shooting--

SHAWN

C'mon, Green. I used to make a good living around here 'cause cops like you couldn't find tits in a strip joint.

BACK TO JEREMIAH AND CAMILLE

Camille gathers up her purse and keys.

CAMILLE

Jerry, you sure you won't come to my mother's for the weekend with us? You outta be with your family on Thanksgiving.

JEREMIAH

These guys are my family, too.

CAMILLE

Oh, Jerry, don't you know you're the only one who believes that.

JEREMIAH

No, mom never stopped believing it. Now c'mon, let me help you load the van. I gotta get Shawn and Jack over to mom's place.

INT. SHAWN'S 75 FORD THUNDERBIRD (MOVING) - LATER

Shawn follows Jeremiah's Volvo as it winds through the dark streets of the neighborhood they all grew up in.

Jack sits in the passenger seat, silent for a long moment. They pass the middle school they attended, its concrete playground ringed with a ten-foot high fence topped with razor wire.

Finally, Jack breaks the silence.

JACK

So shit, Shawn. Haven't heard nothin' from you in years. Whatcha been up to all this time?

SHAWN

Me? I'm a fuckin' college professor, Jack. Whattya think I've been up to?

They both laugh as they pull up to Evelyn's house. The home next door was burned down long ago. Gang tags are everywhere.

Shawn shakes his head.

SHAWN

There's no place like home.

They step out of the car.

ON EVELYN'S PORCH

Shawn and Jack follow Jeremiah onto the front porch where he opens the screen door and begins to unlock the dead bolts.

Jack jumps when a voice cuts through the darkness.

VOICE IN THE DARK

'Bout time. Been waiting for an hour.

Jeremiah flips on the porch light and they see Angel sitting comfortably in his mother's rocking chair.

JEREMIAH

What an asshole.

SHAWN

Angel, you shithead!

ANGEL

What? I missed my flight.

SHAWN

No, ya jarhead, you missed your mother's funeral.

ANGEL

Knuckle up, asshole.

They square off. After a tense moment, they both break into LAUGHTER.

SHAWN

Yeah, no big deal, you can catch the next one.

INSIDE / EVELYN'S LIVING ROOM

Angel steps in stamping his feet, still cold.

ANGEL

I'm serious, I got used to that desert heat. You guys leave me out here to freeze. How long ya'll been back...

Angel trails off, he and his brothers suddenly hit with the weight of their mother's empty house.

Evelyn's absence strikes them like a blow. They stand for a long moment, speechless and uneasy among their mother's belongings.

The moment seems particularly difficult for Angel who's had the least time to get used to the idea that she's gone.

Overwhelmed, he walks out of the room, toward the kitchen.

ANGEL

I'm gonna eat or something. Anyone hungry?

Everyone just shakes their heads or grumbles. Shawn hoists back up his bag.

SHAWN

I'm gonna get some sleep. Jack, you can take your old room. Angel, take yours. I'll sleep in Mom's.

IN THE MASTER BEDROOM

Shawn enters the room, haunted by his mother's belongings. A mystery novel lies open on the nightstand, never to be completed. Shawn sadly flips through the pages.

When he looks up from the book, he imagines he sees Evelyn at the end of the bed folding and putting away laundry.

EVELYN

How are you, Shawn? Still running that club?

SHAWN

Yeah, Ma.

EVELYN

You're surrounded by all those beautiful women all the time. When you gonna pick a nice girl to take care of you, son?

SHAWN

There are no nice girls at the Foxy Hole, Ma.

They share a quiet laugh.

IN THE BATHROOM

Shawn washes his face, trying to shake it off. But as he reaches for the hand towel, he breaks down, quickly turning on the shower to cover the sound of his sobs.

He buries his face in the towel.

## INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jack's stretched out on one of two twin beds, playing his guitar. His eyes look red as if he'd been choked up as well. Shawn steps into the room.

SHAWN

Whattaya been cryin', you fairy?

JACK

Leave it alone, man.

Shawn sits on the tiny bed across from his brother and unbuckles his suitcase. He nods at Jack's guitar.

SHAWN

You used to make some freakin' racket on that thing.

JACK

Still do.

Shawn snags a cigarette out of Jack's pack.

JACK

Too weird in Mom's room?

SHAWN

Too fuckin' weird.

Jeremiah sticks his head in the room, smiling at the image of two grown men stretched out on the tiny twin beds.

JEREMIAH

Camille and the girls are at her mother's. I'll be back in the morning with a ham or something. We'll have a nice Thanksgiving like a real family. For once. Mom would want that.

## ACROSS THE HALL

Angel sits on the bed in his old room, staring sadly at the old memorabilia on the walls: Players magazine centerfolds, Jet covers, a Vanity poster, photos of old muscle cars, etc.

After a poignant moment he gets up, shaking it off. He heads

## INTO THE HALLWAY

Angel starts to walk right past Jeremiah, who is still standing in the doorway of Shawn's room.

JEREMIAH

The hell you goin'?

Angel half steps into Shawn's room.

ANGEL  
Damn, man. It's too heavy in there.  
Too emotional. I can't stay here.

His brothers nod their heads somberly before...

SHAWN JEREMIAH  
Bullshit. Not buying it! Not a chance.

ANGEL  
What?

JEREMIAH  
What? Don't go see her. That's 'what.'

ANGEL  
I ain't even talkin' about her.  
SHAWN JEREMIAH  
Yeah, sure. Listen to him, Seriously, Angel. I heard  
Angel. Don't open that she's living with a new man  
chapter back up. That's now. Leave her alone.  
closed.

ANGEL  
I'm standing here tellin' you I'm not  
going to see her. And I'm not.

CUT TO:

Angel on a dead sprint, fully naked, holding his clothes,  
running down an icy residential street.

Next to him, SUMI (30, beautiful, Asian-American) runs for  
all she's worth, also half-naked. Angel shouts:

ANGEL  
How serious are you with this guy?

An orange muscle car SCREAMS around the corner behind them,  
fish-tailing wildly on the ice.

BANG! BANG! BANG! The DRIVER unloads his .38 from the  
driver's side window.

SUMI  
Pretty serious!

They dive aside just as the car BLASTS by, the driver  
SCREAMING. Angel and Sumi hastily pull on their clothes.

SUMI  
The hell you been, Angel?

ANGEL

Vegas.

SUMI

Vegas? Of course.

ANGEL

Damn, baby, you're so beautiful. You should be an actress.

SUMI

You're so full of crap.

They kiss passionately for a second, before taking off on a full sprint, headlights closing in.

EXT. EVELYN MERCER'S HOME - EARLY THE NEXT MORNING

Angel approaches the house, a little extra swagger in his step. His feet crunch through the hardening snow.

Halfway up the path, he stops. Evelyn sits on the porch waiting for him (his memory/imagination).

EVELYN

What are you doing staying out all night? I said you're too young.

Angel smiles as he walks up onto the porch.

ANGEL

Come on, Mom. You know how it is.

EVELYN

I know exactly how it is. That's why I'm trying to teach you something. You can't just be running around all the time, Angel. You gotta get some kinda game plan goin' on.

Angel smiles.

ANGEL

I got a lot of game going on.

Evelyn laughs a little.

EVELYN

You know precisely what I mean, son. Listen to me. No one's gonna give you anything you don't earn in this world. You're a young black man. No one's gonna cut you a break.

ANGEL

I hear you, Mom.

EVELYN

You're gonna have to use your mind.  
Start paying attention. Get a game  
plan. And stick to it.

INT. EVELYN'S HOUSE / DINING ROOM - LATER

Chaos. Thanksgiving day at the Mercer house.

Music blares ('Do it, Baby' by the Miracles). Arguments boom.

SHAWN

Yoko-fuckin'-Ono is not  
staying in this house!

ANGEL

Fine, fuck you. I'll tell her  
to sleep at the bus station.

Shawn slaps a hockey puck across the room with one of his old  
sticks, 'scoring' painfully off one of Angel's feet.

SHAWN

Let's go play some fuckin' Turkey Cup.

Jack sets a plate of food on the table, calling out from  
across the room as he heads back into the kitchen.

JACK

Why do you guys call her Yoko Ono?

ANGEL

'Cause they're dickheads.

Angel casually arranges a stack/queue of fifteen .45s on  
Evelyn's vintage, multi-disk record player.

He has a handful of the yellow plastic disks that allow the  
.45s to spin. He's whizzing 'em at Shawn, one after another.

SHAWN

Man, why'd you always do that?

JEREMIAH

Yeah, why'd you always do that?  
It's so fuckin' annoying.

ANGEL

That's why I did it.

Shpack! Shpack! Angel beans them both in the face.

SHAWN

Cut it out!

Shawn slaps another puck at Angel. This one goes wide,  
bouncing off the wall and into the

## KITCHEN

Where it skids to a halt at Jack's feet. He's drinking a Budweiser, putting together a makeshift Thanksgiving dinner.

*Evelyn tastes the mashed potatoes from the bowl (a memory).*

EVELYN

Not bad, Jack. Not bad.

JACK

I had a good teacher.

He smiles and picks up the bowl, and starts to head out of the room, but Evelyn catches his arms softly.

EVELYN

Jackie, I know bad things happened to you before you came to me. But you're safe here now.

## IN THE LIVING ROOM

Jack enters and sets down the bowl of potatoes on the table and grabs another beer.

SHAWN

Let's get on the ice. You're fuckin with God-damn tradition. Thanksgiving means the Turkey cup.

JEREMIAH

I'm not playing hockey.

SHAWN

Hey Jack, let me ask you something. It's important.

JACK

Yeah. Sure. What?

Shawn nods at the bowl of salad in Jack's hands, hilariously juxtaposed against his tattooed arms.

SHAWN

You come out of the closet yet?

JACK

Fuck off, Shawn. Goddamn it.

SHAWN

What? It's all over the talk shows. You gotta admit to yourself who you really are...A homo.

JACK

Shawn, I promise you, I'm fucking way more women than you are.

SHAWN

And they're okay with you bein' gay?

JACK

Fuck off, Shawn. Go back to Chicago.

Jeremiah and Angel join in, Jeremiah on Jack's side...

JEREMIAH

Why do you let it bother you?

JACK

'Cause I'm not fucking gay!

...And Angel on Shawn's side.

ANGEL

Don't be ashamed, little sister.

His brothers laugh hysterically. Jack shouts over them.

JACK

A lifetime of this shit! It's not fucking funny!

At the loudest moment of the scene we cut to

TOTAL SILENCE - LATER

At the table, the brothers grasp each other's hands briefly, heads lowered in a moment of silence.

They let go and dig in, eating quietly for a long time.

Jeremiah looks up, chomping on a big mouthful of food. He sees Evelyn watching him with a pained look (a memory).

EVELYN

Close your mouth, Jeremiah.

He does, smiling a little bit and nodding.

As they eat, the brothers notice, one by one, the empty chair sitting at the head of the table. Evelyn's chair.

They try to ignore it, but it's a haunting sight.

Finally, Shawn gets up and takes the chair out of the room. He sits back down. But everyone's still too uneasy to finish.

Shawn slips his false front teeth out and drops them into his whiskey on the rocks, swirling the glass.

SHAWN  
Who's ready for a pick-up game?

CUT TO:

CRUNCH! The hardest check in the history of the Detroit River as Shawn annihilates an OPPONENT.

The four brothers have found a pick-up game on the frozen river.

CUT TO:

SCHBAP! CRUNCH! WHUMP! Three more bone-breaking checks from the 'Michigan Mauler.'

CUT TO:

A YOUNG GUY with a mullet makes an incredibly fast break for the brothers' goal (an up-turned trash can). He slaps a hard, accurate shot but...

Out of nowhere, Angel flies into frame, skidding dramatically to a perfect halt, easily collecting the puck. To the kid:

ANGEL  
Nigga, please.

He skillfully flicks the puck up to Shawn.

CUT TO:

Jeremiah talking on his cell phone with his wife mid-game. His man sails right by.

JEREMIAH  
No, baby. One more hour, I promise--

--Shawn jerks the phone out of his hand and slaps it with his stick. It skitters 200 hundred yards out onto the lake.

SHAWN  
Pull your head out of your ass!

CUT TO:

A young PLAYER jukes easily past Jack and sinks a goal into the garbage can.

SHAWN  
Quit looking at his ass, you fucking fairy! Check him! Check him!

CUT TO:

Shawn and Angel beating the shit out of three or four guys. After Shawn punches the last one to the ice, he turns to his brothers, nose clearly broken. He smiles a toothless, bloody smile...

SHAWN

God, I love hockey.

AT THE BACK OF JEREMIAH'S VOLVO - LATER

The brothers exhaustedly load in their hockey gear. Angel takes a big breath, gazing happily at the downtown skyline.

ANGEL

Ahhhhh. Being back in Detroit always makes me feel like stealin' an American car.

The guys laugh.

JEREMIAH

Yeah, well listen, before the nostalgia wears off and you high-plains drifters blow back out of town, we've got some important affairs to take care of.

ANGEL

Like what?

JEREMIAH

Like the will, cowboy.

INT. OFFICE BLDG. DOWNTOWN DETROIT - THE NEXT MORNING

An older lawyer (ROBERT BRADFORD) slides a copy of Evelyn's will across a table to the four brothers.

ROBERT BRADFORD

Gentlemen, I am truly sorry for your loss. Although I only met Evelyn the one time, your mother made quite an impression. She was a lovely woman.

He flips through his copy of the will.

ROBERT BRADFORD

I understand it's difficult to deal with mundane financial matters while your heart still grieves for a loved-

JACK

How much do we get?

Cuff! Shawn slaps the back of his head. Off Jack's grimace

CUT TO CHASE WESTERN BANK:

A narrow safe-deposit box slides out of the drawer.

Jeremiah sets the box on a table in front of his brothers. Layer by layer, they rifle through the contents: birth certificates, adoption papers, etc.

Shawn finds a brittle envelope filled with military service medals and a picture of Evelyn's late husband.

THE PICTURE: A good-looking man on a beach in camo pants and no shirt, M-16 over his shoulder. He's smiling warmly, having just drawn a huge heart in the sand and written 'Evelyn' inside of it.

JACK

You ever know him, Shawn?

SHAWN

Never came back from the war. They were only married a couple years.

Shawn finds a stack of one hundred dollar bills.

ANGEL

Here we go. Lunch money.

Shawn counts them out quickly.

SHAWN

...seven, eight, nine, one thousand.

He divvies up the cash on the spot.

SHAWN

One two three. (to himself) One two three. (to Angel) One two three (to Jeremiah) and one for the sissy.

He hands Jack the last hundred.

JACK

What the hell?

HIS OLDER BROTHERS

Shut up. Quit whining.

IN JEREMIAH'S NEW VOLVO STATION WAGON - MOVING

Out the passenger window, Angel sees another old, faded union billboard. 'Labor. We Put The World on Wheels!'

Shawn looks over his brother's foreign car with a smirk.

SHAWN

You got a lot of nerve, Jerry. Ex-union rep driving a Swedish car in Detroit.

JEREMIAH

Every magazine says this is the safest car on the road, jackass. I have two daughters. Now shut up, I wanna show ya'll something. Little dream of mine.

CUT TO:

The brothers standing in front of a massive, abandoned auto-manufacturing plant that looks like it's about to collapse. A half-fallen and rusted sign reads: 'American Labor Forever!'

ANGEL

They finally did it. Sent the jobs to the third world and brought the third world to Detroit.

Jack turns to Jeremiah, confused.

JACK

You're going to make cars?

JEREMIAH

No, moron. Luxury live/work lofts. Height of urban sophistication.

*Sound advance of BOISTEROUS LAUGHTER.*

CUT INSIDE

The guys trudge through standing water, GIGGLING hysterically at the grim, graffiti-scarred factory floor.

JEREMIAH

The whole ground level will be lavish offices and storefronts--

JACK

I'm really impressed.

Jack starts to relieve himself in the middle of the room.

JEREMIAH

Jack! C'mon!

Jack jumps back as if genuinely apologetic.

JACK

I'm sorry, is this the master suite?

Shawn and Angel laugh.

JACK

Smells like I might not be the first  
one to take a leak here.

JEREMIAH

You punks laugh all you want.  
Detroit's different than when you  
left. Money was leaving before, now  
it's coming back. Construction.  
Remodeling. That's the new game in  
town. And I got in just in time. You  
guys oughta stick around. I could put  
your asses to work.

His brothers drain their beers, shaking their heads. They  
hurl their empties across the room. BASH! BASH! BASH!

SHAWN

Let's get a real drink.

INT. THE OLD MIAMI (A DARK DIVE BAR) - NIGHT

Twenty PATRONS at the bar turn when the brothers step in from  
the cold, dusting the snow off their coats.

The boys are greeted warmly by those who knew their mother.  
The bartender, JOHNNY, sticks out his hand to Shawn.

JOHNNY

Shawn Mercer! Where the fuck you been?  
Whattaya been doin'?

SHAWN

I'm an interior designer, Johnny. What  
the fuck you think I'm doin? Pour the  
house a round, will ya? And whiskey  
for me and my brothers. And an orange  
juice for our little sister, here.

Jack starts to protest, but Shawn cuts him off with a smile,  
raising his whiskey to the room.

SHAWN

To Evelyn Mercer! The greatest mother  
any four mongrel bastards ever had!

Everyone toasts and cheers. Shawn downs the whiskey.

AN HOUR LATER

The brothers sit in a stupor, shrouded in smoke. Angel takes  
a big draw and sets his glass down by a dozen others.

ANGEL

Boys? I think we're getting drunk.

After a long beat, Jack pipes up.

JACK  
Yeah. Me too.

Everyone laughs. After the laughter fades, Johnny pours them yet another round.

JOHNNY  
That's real goddamn bad stuff about  
your mom, you fellas. Fuckin' gangs.  
Worms. Someone oughta step on them.

SHAWN  
Which gang, Johnny G.?

JEREMIAH  
I knew it was coming. And here it is.

ANGEL  
Yeah, Johnny, come with it. You heard  
anything?

Johnny wipes down the bar for a moment.

JOHNNY  
Yeah, I heard something.  
Neighborhood's real upset by this.

JEREMIAH  
Same ole Shawn. Mom always said, 'As  
bright as Shawn is, he just really  
doesn't like to think.' No good will  
come from this, Shawn. Let the police  
do their job.

SHAWN  
The police? Half of the cops in this  
town are dirty. And you think the  
other half give two shits about  
another liquor store hold up?

JEREMIAH  
No, c'mon, ya'll. Green's on our side  
on this one.

ANGEL  
Still, what's it hurt to bang on a few  
doors. We owe her that much.

Jeremiah sighs and turns to Jack who shrugs.

JACK  
We walked away from her once.

JEREMIAH

This is bullshit. You're trying to convince me this is about Mom? You're gonna somehow honor her death with more violence!? The guys who did this aren't evil. They're just a product of the same shitty streets we came from. Mom would have seen that. She'd have been the first one to forgive them.

Shawn downs his drink.

SHAWN

Well, we can't all be saints.

Jeremiah shakes his head.

EXT/INT. SHAWN'S 75 FORD THUNDERBIRD (MOVING) - NIGHT

The huge car rumbles past a dilapidated Victorian mansion.

From the back seat, Jack nervously eyes a dozen GANGSTAS and their GIRLFRIENDS milling outside on the porch and yard.

Music THUMPS OMINOUSLY from inside. Jack's shitting himself.

JACK

You think this is a good idea? We could come back.

Shawn pulls to a halt at the end of the block.

ANGEL

Stay in the car if you want. Keep the windows rolled up.

JACK

Fuck you. I'm just asking.

Shawn opens the glove box and takes out a heavy .45 revolver.

SHAWN

You got a gun?

ANGEL

I flew in.

Shawn hands Angel the pistol.

INSIDE THE TRUNK (DARK)

The trunk POPS open. Shawn leans in, unscrews the spare tire and fishes out a shotgun and a red five-gallon gas can.

JACK

What about me?

Shawn finds a tire iron for Jack then SLAMS the trunk.

BLACK

JACK'S VOICE

Thanks.

INT. GANG MANSION - SAME

A smoked-out, dimly lit gang haunt. Forty, maybe fifty GANG BANGERS and their LADIES in the midst of a full blown party.

MUSIC POUNDS. Guns everywhere: pistols in waistbands and lying on tables, shotguns and semi-automatic rifles leaning in corners.

No shortage of dope and alcohol. A vipers' nest.

OUTSIDE ON THE STREET

Shawn, Angel, and Jack crunch through the snow toward the gang house. The THROBBING BASS rattles the windows.

From a few houses away you can see dozens of silhouettes through the windows. Jack tries to keep his cool.

JACK

Fuck, man.

SHAWN

Relax, Jacquelyn. This isn't our first time at the rodeo.

Shawn lights a cigarette, swings the shotgun to his shoulder, and nods at Angel, who cups a hand to his mouth and shouts.

ANGEL

Five-Oh!!!

Shawn plays the cop, his voice booming.

SHAWN

Hands where I see 'em! Now! Police!  
Up! Let's see 'em up!

The reaction is immediate and swift.

The punks on the street panic, repeating the warning. Shouts of 'Five-Oh' ripple up the block like an echo.

ON THE PORCH

The gang bangers toss their blunts and run

# INTO THE HOUSE

The homeboys burst in, shouting

GANG BANGERS

Five-Oh! Fuckin' Po-lice! Clean it up!

Pandemonium.

The GANG LEADER throws aside a rug and flips open a trapdoor in the living room floor.

Guys come pounding down the stairs, arms loaded with guns. Several more burst out of the kitchen with bags of dope.

One after another, they hurl the weapons and contraband into the hole.

The gang leader slams the trap door shut and whisks the rug back into position. A couple of guys set a table of drinks and booze back over the trapdoor.

The gang leader sits down calmly in a Lazy Boy recliner.

All eyes turn to the front door just as BOOM! it flies off its hinges revealing Shawn and Angel in the doorway holding the only two guns left in the house.

GANG LEADER

Ya'll ain't cops.

ANGEL

Chump.

The gang leader starts to stand but WHACK! Shawn boots him back into the chair, pinning him there with the gun barrel.

Jack looks around the room at five, six pissed-off but defenseless men and their girlfriends.

JACK

How ya'll doin'?

Shawn winks at Angel.

SHAWN

Just like old times.

GANG LEADER

Whatchall want?

Shawn answers by handing the shotgun to Angel, pulling the rag out of the gas can and drenching the gang leader from head-to-toe.

GANG LEADER

Hey man, what--

Shawn jams the dirty rag into his mouth.

SHAWN

No. No. No. This is not the talking part.

ANGEL

This is the listening part.

The guy can't take his eyes off the cigarette burning in Shawn's mouth. Shawn takes a big glowing drag that silences everyone.

Angel takes the gas can and douses the rest of the room, right across the lap of the homeboys and girls on the couch.

ANGEL

Sit your ass back on that couch. I don't care if it does smell.

Shawn leans in close to talk to the guy, the cigarette dangling precariously from his mouth as he speaks.

SHAWN

This is probably what's going to happen. You're not going to tell me what I want to know and I'm going to light you on fire. And you'll run around like a headless chicken lighting all your friends on fire.

The gangstas are dying to intervene, but no one knows how.

ANGEL

But, hey, he's no fortune teller. Prove him wrong, tell us which two of your boys shot up the liquor store on 104th and killed our mother. Cops got a witness, so don't bullshit us. You have one chance to answer this question correctly. Or the crazy man here's going to burn you down.

The gang leader nods his head, nearly overwhelmed with fear.

SHAWN

Okay, asshole. This is the talking part.

Shawn pulls the rag out of his mouth.

GANG LEADER

Man, that shit's counterfeit as a motherfucker. Ain't no witness playing no basketball when that shit went down. Why you think cops ain't arrest no one they so sure we did them two people?

Angel CLONKS him upside the head with his pistol.

ANGEL

How do you know no one was playin' basketball if you weren't there!?

The guy rubs the knot on his head.

GANG LEADER

Cause, bitch, po-lice said those people wasn't killed 'til eleven o'clock.

SHAWN

So fuckin' what?

ANGEL

Did you just call me a bitch?

GANG LEADER

So fuckin' they turn the court lights out at ten.

Shawn looks at his watch: it's 9:40. He snatches the kid up out of the chair by his shirt and hurls him toward the door.

SHAWN

Let's go.

On his way out the door, Angel thumps the gang leader across the back of the head with the .45.

ANGEL

That's for callin' me a bitch, bitch.

Jack's the last one out. He turns back and waves to everyone.

JACK

I hope ya'll have a very nice evening.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURTS - NIGHT

A brightly-lit complex of six basketball courts across the street from the corner store where Evelyn was killed.

The courts are deserted, slashed with freezing rain.

Shawn, Angel and Jack stand, guns drawn, the nervous gang leader wedged between them. He shivers in his still wet t-shirt (they didn't even let him get his coat).

Shawn checks his watch. The second hand sweeps past 10:01 p.m. He looks at the lights: still very much on.

GANG LEADER  
They gonna shut off.

Shawn nods.

SHAWN  
They better.

Standing in the middle of the abandoned courts, they wait. An eternity passes for the gang leader.

Then, finally: Boom. Boom. Boom. Boom. One by one, the courts fall into darkness as the banks of overhead lights shut off.

The four men disappear into blackness as the final bank of lights cuts off. The gang leader's relieved voice is heard in the dark:

GANG LEADER'S VOICE  
Told ya. Ya'll fools been played.

INT. DINER - LATE THAT NIGHT

Shawn, Angel and Jack sit at a twenty-four hour diner.

ANGEL  
This stinks of a professional kill.

The WAITRESS clearing away their plates leaves in a hurry.

JACK  
On mom?! Why would you think that?

SHAWN  
Boy, it's sad. You growing up without a father. No one taught you anything, did they? I should have stayed around longer.

ANGEL  
Sometimes pros'll cover their shots with another crime. Usually a burglary. Pay a witness to throw the cops off.

JACK  
Yeah, mom never taught me that. But let me just make a point: why the hell would anyone want to assassinate the sweetest woman in the Goddamn world?

ANGEL

Hit could've been on homeboy behind the counter.

SHAWN

Tell ya what, soon as the liquor store opens up in the morning, we'll find this witness and ask him.

Shawn reaches for his wallet but Angel cuts him off.

ANGEL

No, no. I'll get it. You got drinks.

SHAWN

You're payin? Get out. Is it a full moon?

JACK

Must still be in mourning.

ANGEL

You shitheads want me to pay or not?

SHAWN

By all means. Pay. I just wish mom was still around to see it.

INSIDE SHAWN'S THUNDERBIRD

Shawn starts up the engine and backs out of the parking lot.

The waitress stalks out the diner, YELLING, waving the check. The guys realize they've unwittingly skipped the tab.

SHAWN

You fuckin' black Jew!

ANGEL

Chump.

The guys laugh as Shawn peels out.

INT. ANGEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Boom! The door flies open and Sumi's luggage hits the floor. Angel and Sumi crash into the wall, kissing passionately.

Things quickly heat up. Angel turns her around facing the wall and lifts her skirt. Sumi bites her lip to keep from crying out.

Interrupting the height of passion, she laughs and points at a picture on the wall.

SUMI

Is this you? How cute!

ANGEL

Wha?

Angel looks up, hair ruffled and eyes wide, to see a picture of himself at nine-years old standing next to his mom holding a fish he'd just caught.

He rakes his childhood pictures off the wall with a CRASH! and throws her on the bed.

EXT. EVELYN'S HOUSE - SAME

Jack and Shawn are smoking, sitting on the window ledge of their old bedroom.

JACK

It's weird. Milk in the fridge hasn't even gone bad yet.

He stares down at the high snowdrift that's gathered on the side of the house two stories below.

JACK

Why you'd take off on her like you did, Shawn?

Shawn sits staring at nothing for a moment before he answers.

SHAWN

There were no jobs left. Nothing for us here. She knew where we were headed. The devil makes work for idle hands. Mine and Angel's especially, I guess. She asked us to leave. Knew we'd have a better shot somewhere else. Pushed us out of the nest.

JACK

I didn't know that.

Shawn notices Jack's wearing an enormous gold crucifix around his neck like a rock star.

SHAWN

That her's?

JACK

Yeah. I found it in her room.

SHAWN

You should pick out a pair of her ear rings, too.

Shove! Out of nowhere, Shawn pushes Jack backwards off the ledge. With a yell, he drops twenty feet off and FUMPH! disappears into the snow, leaving a body-shaped imprint, a la Wylie Coyote.

SHAWN

There. You're out of the nest, too.

Jack's laughter carries up from deep under the drift. Shawn laughs too until-

Angel shoves Shawn off the ledge. He falls with a shout and a POOOF!

ANGEL

What are you laughin' at?

Angel climbs out the window in his boxers, poses like a cliff-diver, and leaps off the edge of the roof and belly-flopping in the snow.

UP THE STREET

Detective Fowler sits alone in an unmarked police cruiser, watching the brothers goof around. He's not smiling.

INT. LOCAL GROCERY/LIQUOR STORE - THE NEXT MORNING

Shawn, Angel and Jack wait outside the corner store where their mother was shot, breathing into their cold hands.

After a moment, Jeremiah walks up, dressed for work and already impatient.

JEREMIAH

Okay, I'm here. What do you want?

ANGEL

It wasn't random, Jerry. The witness was paid. The gang story was a fake.

JEREMIAH

The fuck you talking about?

The conversation's interrupted by IBRAHAM, the older store-owner, who approaches, keys jangling. He's taken aback by the sight of the four huge guys loitering in front of his store.

IBRAHAM

Can I help you, gentlemen?

JACK

Hi. We're Evelyn Mercer's sons.

IBRAHAM

Oh, Christian Jesus. Boys, she was a good lady. I liked her a lot. Let's come inside.

IN THE STORE

The evidence of the shooting is haunting: A freezer door boarded up, shotgun-pellet scars in the blood-stained linoleum.

SHAWN

Son-of-a-bitch.

While his brother's take in the grisly scene, Jeremiah paces the aisles, dazed. He sees Evelyn shopping, picking various items off the shelf (pasta, Ragu sauce, cans of tuna, etc.).

CUT TO THE BACK ROOM

On a computer monitor, a digital recorded image of the two masked gunmen stepping into the store. One of them immediately hits the lens of the camera with spray paint.

ANGEL

They're pros. He knew where the camera was without looking. They cased it.

He turns to Ibrahim, the store-owner.

ANGEL

Any reason to think your nephew had enemies. Was he into drugs, was he-

IBRAHAM

Sokari just moved here! His suitcase is not yet unpacked! Who has an enemy in one week?

Angel and Shawn exchange a glance.

ON THE SCREEN the camera pans across the store. Despite the paint, a smudgy image of Evelyn scrambling away is visible.

FLASH. A brief pop of light fills the screen as the gunman shoots Evelyn. Jack reaches up and turns off the monitor.

JACK

I wish I hadn't seen that.

IBRAHAM

Is there more I could do?

SHAWN

Do you know who told the police this was a gang shooting? They say there was a witness.

Jeremiah's having a hard time digesting all of this.

JEREMIAH

Someone hired someone to kill Evelyn? Is this really what you're thinking?

IBRAHAM

The police talked for a long time with one man. One man more than the others.

ANGEL

You seen him before? What's he look like?

IBRAHAM

He comes in for the Gatorade after the games. Crazy man never wears a jacket. Even with snow or rain. He has a big dog with him always.

Shawn looks at the empty courts across the street which are abandoned due to the bad weather.

SHAWN

Is he on the courts a lot? I mean, when it's not such shitty weather?

IBRAHAM

On the courts or at the gym.

Ibrahim nods past the outdoor courts at an adjacent community center gymnasium.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

The brothers march across the street through the hellacious sleet toward the gym. A faint ROAR of a crowd swells behind the doors as they approach.

INSIDE THE GYMNASIUM

Five hundred BASKETBALL FANS and PLAYERS choke the bleachers, stomping their feet, cheering and waving towels.

On the court, it's the last two minutes of a street-ball tournament final. The scoreboard BUZZES, the coaches and players shout to one another, pulling off more and more crazy tricks.

Shawn, Jeremiah and Jack are the only white people in the building. Jack nervously scans the hundreds of black faces.

JACK

Man, we are going to get killed.

Angel smiles at Jack.

ANGEL

What do you mean 'we,' white boy?

Angel and Shawn nod at one another and head off in different directions. Angel heads out of the gym back into the hallway. Shawn steps right onto the court in the middle of the game, shocking the crowd.

JACK

Oh fuck. You're kidding me, right?

The REF blows the WHISTLE stepping quickly between Shawn and several ANGRY PLAYERS who look ready to kick his ass.

The ref snaps at Shawn, holding back a monstrous POWER FORWARD.

REF

Listen, friend! I don't know what you think you're doin, but you better get outta here while there's still two minutes on the board.

SHAWN

I'd love to, friend, but I can't.

NAB! Shawn grabs the ball out from under the Ref's arm, prompting the huge forward to stalk up to him.

HUGE FORWARD

Yo, bitch! I'm gonna--

Shawn punches the guy in the throat and slams him face-first into the floor. Before anyone else can jump him, Shawn opens his coat, revealing his .45. He turns back to the crowd.

SHAWN

My name's Shawn Mercer. Some of you probably knew my mother. And some of you probably know she was shot about a week ago across the street. I'm looking for a guy who witnessed it. A ball-player. Big guy. Supposedly never wears a coat? Dog lover. Ring any bells?

The fans BOO and HISS. In the back of the bleachers, a gangly TEENAGE FAN jumps down and slips out of the gym.

SHAWN

Tell me where we can find this guy and  
ya'll can finish your game.

IN THE HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE GYM

The gangly teenager sprints toward the front glass doors.

He pushes the door open and CRASHES! headlong into it, his  
head bulging a spider-web in the glass.

Angel tsks. His foot was holding the door closed. He casually  
opens the door and looks down at the teenager. After a  
second, Angel reaches down and lifts him up by the collar.

ANGEL

Got something to tell me?

BACK ON THE COURT

Shawn hears the impact ECHO in the hallway. He tosses the  
ball causally back to the ref.

SHAWN

I appreciate your help very much.  
You've all been upstanding citizens.  
Assalamu Alaikum.

IN FRONT OF THE GYM

Shawn steps out of the broken glass door to find Angel  
holding the teenager by the collar.

ANGEL

Shawn, meet Keenon. Keenon, this is  
Shawn. Something tells me Keenon was  
on his way to deliver a warning.

SHAWN

You know him, Keenon?

Keenon rubs the knot on his head from where he hit the glass.

KEENON

He my brotha.

SHAWN

He's your brotha? No shit? These are  
my brothas.

Keenon looks at them, confused. Angel's black; Jeremiah's  
Latino; Jack and Shawn are white.

KEENON

Nah, man. He my real brother.

SHAWN

Yeah, man. These are my real brothers.  
This is Angel, I'm Shawn. That's Jack  
and Jeremiah. What's your brother's  
name?

Keenon hesitates.

KEENON

Damian.

ANGEL

You two close? He still live at home?

Keenon nods.

KEENON

I can't tell ya'll shit else.

SHAWN

Good man. I wouldn't sell out my  
brother either.

Yank! Shawn jerks Keenon's backpack off his shoulder and  
rifles through it. He finds a report card with Keenon's home  
address on it. He shows it to Jeremiah.

JEREMIAH

That's the gardens. Right there.

Jeremiah points to two twin housing projects in the distance.  
He holds the report card back out toward Keenon who's looking  
down. Jack takes the report card and puts it in Keenon's  
backpack. He glances at the kids marks.

JACK

Nice grades. Stay in school.

Angel rubs him on the head as they walk away.

*INT. SHAWN'S THUNDERBIRD - AN HOUR LATER*

The brothers are staking out the entrances to the drab  
housing projects. They've been there for a while. Several  
inches of snow have accumulated on the car.

JEREMIAH

Well, I've got gymnastics. (they  
laugh) To hell with you all. I've got  
to pick the girls up from gymnastics.  
Don't get your asses shot off.  
Christmas is coming up.

He gets out.

Jack sits in the back, head leaning against the frosted window, watching the snowfall accumulate on the piles of junk stacked against the building. In a serene voice, he sings 'Plastic Jesus' from 'Cool Hand Luke' to pass the time.

JACK  
I don't mind if it rains or free-zes,  
Long as I got my plastic Je-sus,  
Ridin' on the dashboard of my car,  
Comes in colors pink and plea-sant,  
Glow's in the dark, he's phosphore-scent.  
Take him with you when you travel far.

Jack's eyes change as a figure appears in the snow.

JACK  
It's him.

INT. HOUSING PROJECT / LOBBY - DAY

DAMIAN dusts snowflakes from his big afro as he taps the elevator call button. The outside door BLASTS open, the narrow glass window SHATTERING as it slams against the wall.

Shawn and the others sprint down the long hallway, closing in fast. Damian's eyes go wide at the sight of Shawn's .45.

DAMIAN  
Who the fuck?

The elevator doors slide open. Damian jumps in the elevator.

He frantically bangs the 'close' button over and over. Finally, the doors begin to wheeze shut.

The second they come together, he hears Shawn slam against the other side, cursing.

IN THE HALLWAY

Shawn kicks the door a couple times and turns for the stairs. His brothers start to follow him, but Shawn stiff arms Jack.

SHAWN  
Wait here! Tell us what floor the  
elevator stops at!

Shawn and Angel sprint toward the stairs.

Jack hops nervously, watching the elevator numbers light up.

IN THE DANK STAIRWELL

Shawn and Angel take the stairs two and three at a time, their boots thundering on the dirty metal steps.

## IN THE ELEVATOR

Damian's shitting himself, hammering the 'six' button. Finally, the elevator stops and he squeezes through the crack.

## IN THE STAIRWELL

Shawn and Angel pound breathlessly higher and higher. Shawn's slowing.

Angel kicks it into high gear and blasts by. On the first floor, Jack kicks open the door and shouts.

JACK

Six! He stopped on six!

Shawn sees a '5' written in flaking paint on a door. He wills himself up to the next floor.

## A DIMLY LIT CORRIDOR

Angel bursts out and sees Damian at the other end of the hall. Damian's hands shake as he tries to unlock all four deadbolts on the door to his apartment.

DAMIAN

C'mon, c'mon, c'mon!

Angel's about half-way to Damian when Shawn blasts past him from out of nowhere, re-taking the lead.

SHAWN

Gettin' old, Angel?

The last lock turns and Shawn watches the big man vault into the apartment and two sandy-brown pit-bulls vault out.

SHAWN

Fuckin' A!

The dogs are on him. He goes down in a screaming, growling blur of motion.

SHAWN

Get 'em off me! Get 'em off me!

He flails and punches but the dogs are ferocious and fast as hell, catching his bare hands in their teeth.

The animals tear clean through the arms of his heavy leather jacket and into his flesh.

SNAP! One dog comes away with half of Shawn's right ear. The other goes for his jugular, when--

WHOOOOOOOSH! A powerful cloud of carbon dioxide powder blasts the dog in the face. It jumps back, snapping at the noxious dust, confused.

Angel's pulled a fire extinguisher from the wall. He douses the psychotic dogs point blank and kicks at them, trying to boot them back off Shawn.

ANGEL

Get back! Get outta here!

A few sustained blasts manage to back them off far enough for Shawn to stagger back to his feet, but one of the dogs is still clamped down on his forearm.

Shawn lifts his arm into the air, exposing the vicious dog's underside. BOOT! He kicks the animal in the balls, sending it SQUEALING.

At the same time, the second dog bares down on Angel, leaping through the air toward him. Angel slips the attack and nails it in the jaw with a left hook.

Both brothers have just enough time to duck into

DAMIAN'S APARTMENT

SLAM! Angel shuts the door behind them, the dogs barking and howling in the hallway. Shawn gropes blindly at his eyes. He's a mess, covered head to toe in white powder and blood.

SHAWN

Shit! That shit stings!

Angel grabs an open bottle of beer from the sink and douses Shawn's eyes.

SHAWN'S BLURRY POV: snow whips into the wide-open window.

SHAWN

Goddamn it, he's out.

ON THE FIRE ESCAPE

Angel jumps through the window and crashes down onto his back-the metal fire escape is completely iced-over.

ANGEL

Fucksake.

ON A LOWER LEVEL

Damian tries to run down the icy stairs, slipping and falling several times, tearing the hell out of his bare knees.

HIGHER UP

Shawn and Angel try to follow but every hand and foot hold is dangerously slick.

At one point Shawn trips and plummets face first down a whole flight of stairs.

BACK INSIDE ON THE SIXTH FLOOR

The elevator doors PING open and Jack runs cluelessly out, wielding the tire iron.

JACK

Shawn! Shawn!? Whoa, shit!

The two pissed-off pits perk up their ears and turn their dusty white heads his way, growling with Shawn's blood in their teeth.

JACK

Good boy?

He dives back into the elevator and the doors slide closed.

BACK TO ANGEL AND SHAWN

As they slam and slip down the outside metal stairs. Angel looks over the ledge and almost catches a bullet between the eyes.

ANGEL

Goddamnit.

BENEATH THEM BY A COUPLE FLOORS

Damian flees, Shawn's return fire exploding around him.

Damian reaches the second floor and tries to lower the ladder leading to the alley, but it's frozen stuck.

He desperately stomps the ladder but the ice won't give.

CLOSE ON: Shawn and Angel's boots hammer down the slick stairs.

Nowhere else to go, Damian climbs over the rail and tries to shimmy down the outside of the fire escape.

He looks up to see the brothers pounding closer. In a panic he tries to move too fast, losing his grip.

He falls, doing the backstroke for twenty feet before landing on the snow-covered concrete below with a sickening THWACK!

CUT TO BLACK/FADE UP TO:

DAMIAN'S DELIRIOUS POV FROM THE GROUND: snowflakes drift ethereally down next to the building, landing on his face.

After a long moment, footsteps crunch ominously his way. Jack's face appears in the sky above him, his signature smile so pleasant it's almost comforting. Almost.

JACK

Man, you must be freezing.

REVERSE: Damian lies twisted in the snow, still wearing just his basketball shorts and tank-top. His left leg juts out into the snow at a horrible angle, obviously broken.

The heavy snowfall is already beginning to cover him up.

ANGEL

Is this an image thing? Not wearing a coat? It's working for ya.

SHAWN

You know why we're here, Damian?

Damian barely manages:

DAMIAN

Get me an ambulance, man.

Shawn pulls out his cell phone.

SHAWN

Make you a deal. You tell us why you lied to the cops about the robbery and I'll dial the magic three digits.

DAMIAN

I didn't shoot no one. I didn't never shoot no one.

Angel makes a show of putting a hand to his ear.

ANGEL

What's that? It's hard to hear you in this wind! If we walk away, no one else'll hear you, either.

JACK

It's going to be a cold night.

Damian groans in agony.

DAMIAN

These two fools paid me a few dubs to say I saw some gangstas shoot up the place. But I didn't hurt no one.

SHAWN

Give me a name and I'll save your life. Who shot those people, Damian?

DAMIAN

They'll kill me.

ANGEL

Fine, turn into a fuckin' fudgesickle.

DAMIAN

Man, please. I can't say nothing.

Shawn slaps closed the phone.

SHAWN

Fair enough. You can die right here.

The brothers head off down the alley. Angel picks up Damian's fallen pistol as they walk. Damian watches them slowly enveloped in the blowing snowstorm.

DAMIAN

Oh man. Fuck. I need an ambulance.  
Hey! Hey! Someone!

After a few seconds alone, Damian comes completely unglued.

DAMIAN

Hey! Wait! I'll tell you where to find them! I'll tell you what they look like! Call an ambulance!

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Damian lies in a half-body cast, leg up in a hospital bed. Lt. Green and Detective Fowler stand next to the bed.

LT. GREEN

Damian. Who made the 911 call for you? Who was with you in the alley?

DAMIAN

Santa Claus. Old fool got his holidays mixed up. Thought it was Christmas 'stead of Thanksgiving. Now leave me alone. I'm tryin' to watch the Lions game.

He cranes to see the pre-game football commentary on TV. Fowler deliberately blocks his view.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

We got reports of shots on the fire escape. Your dogs attacking some dudes. Who was there, Damian?

DAMIAN

I tole you. Santa Claus came around checkin' his list and checkin' it twice. He go, 'Damian you been naughty as a motherfucker' and throws me out the window...Oh, man!

Damian points at the TV.

DAMIAN

They cancelin' the game!

CUT TO:

EXT. NORVILLE DOWNS - DAY

The mile-long oval track sits deserted, buried in fresh snow.

ABOVE THE GRANDSTAND

The modern clubhouse is inexplicably busy, its bright lights shining like a beacon in the blizzard.

IN THE CLUBHOUSE / SPORTS BAR

The track maybe closed, but the sports bar in the clubhouse is very much open. Hundreds of PATRONS boo and jeer the dozens of big screen T.V.s.

RABID FANS

You can't cancel the game! For snow!?  
It's Detroit! What the hell!?

BOOM! The doors blast open, saloon-style, and Shawn, Angel and Jack enter, a gale of snowy wind whirling in around them.

Everyone senses trouble right away. The room falls quiet.

Wordlessly, the Mercer brothers wade through the tables, searching.

The TELEVISION ANNOUNCER'S VOICE now booms in the quiet bar.  
ON THE SCREEN: an image of the opposing team's bus, snowed-in on the highway outside the airport.

TV ANNOUNCER

...snow plows have been unable to clear the highway in time to allow the players and fans access to the stadium, and so how do you like that?

(MORE)

TV ANNOUNCER (cont'd)

We've got weather canceling a game at  
a domed stadium.

AT A TABLE IN THE BACK OF THE ROOM

We see the two hit men who killed Evelyn Mercer. Under the table they draw their 9mm pistols and advance a round.

They watch as Shawn and Angel close in, methodically scanning faces. Jack cluelessly points toward the two hit men.

JACK

There they are!

The hit men stand up SHOOTING. Bedlam breaks out. Shawn and Jack drop behind an upturned table, bullets SPLINTERING the wood. The glass wall overlooking the track SHATTERS.

SHAWN

Nice work, Jackie-O.

JACK

Sorry! I'm new at this!

Everyone in the room panics and stands up, so Angel (his training kicking in) drops down, knowing he'll have a cleaner line of fire. He draws a bead (with Damian's Glock) on the shooters' feet as they break for the fire exit.

Bam! Bam! Bam! He unloads, bullets cleanly zipping past the legs of the stampeding crowd and slamming down all around the shooters' shoes.

ON THE RAMP LEADING TO THE PARKING LOT

Jack's the first out the door behind the shooters, eager to make up for his blunder. He catches a glimpse of them disappearing down the ramp.

IN THE PARKING LOT

Jack catches up to the killers as they pile into the El Camino and race backwards out of the parking lot.

JACK

Aaaaaaaaaahhhhhh!

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! Jack shouts furiously, emptying the shotgun into the lumbering car as it reverses, disappearing into the blinding blizzard.

The gun CLICKS empty. He turns to see Shawn and Angel watching.

SHAWN

You go, girl.

CUT TO INSIDE SHAWN'S THUNDERBIRD

The engine HOWLS as Shawn stands on the gas, hurling the gigantic steel machine out of the frozen parking lot after the El Camino.

Racing down the icy streets, the headlights reflect right back off the swirling snow, reducing visibility to zero.

SHAWN

I can't see a fucking thing!

ANGEL

There! He turned right!

Shawn heaves the wheel right and all four tires immediately slide on the ice.

CRUNCH! Shawn sideswipes a row of parked cars, crushing them up onto the sidewalk, before getting back under control.

IN THE EL CAMINO

The back window's frosted-over and the passenger has his head (and gun) out of the window watching for Shawn's car.

In the blowing white-out he just catches a glimpse of headlights and empties half a clip.

THE PASSENGER

They're still on us!

ON A WIDER BOULEVARD

The cars race side by side between five-foot high walls of plowed snow that narrowly encloses the wider street.

Despite the snow-blindness, the cars travel faster and faster, both drivers barely able to control the wildly fish-tailing vehicles.

IN SHAWN'S CAR

BAM! BAM! Incoming rounds reupholster the car's interior, the muzzle flashes barely visible in the storm up ahead.

SHAWN

Where's the Goddamn shotgun!?

JACK

There's no shells!

Angel steadies his pistol as much as possible and BAM! BAM! unloads several shots. It's a moving target from a moving car with no visibility, but still Angel manages to find his mark. BAM! BAM! The shots slam in all around the driver.

One tears through the back of the seat, stuffing flies as the driver rocks forward, his shoulder hit badly.

SPACK! The side window shatters, sending a shard of glass into the driver's eye, causing him to SHOUT and stomp the brakes.

The El Camino is flung around 360 degrees, crashing up onto the curb.

The gunmen are totally disoriented by the 360. The driver covers his bleeding eye. The passenger scans for any sign of Shawn's car, squinting into the blizzard.

#### THE PASSENGER

Where is he!? Where is he?!

The grill of the Thunderbird appears out of the void, hurtling right at them. CRUNCH! Shawn's car pummels the El Camino, sending it twirling away on the ice.

Shawn tries to chase the hobbled car as the driver gets it back underway. But the impact was so powerful the Thunderbird's bumper and fenders were crumpled back into the front wheels.

The jagged metal rips through the cold rubber, popping and shredding both tires as Shawn takes off after the shooters.

The exposed rims slip and slide on the snow and ice as the cars again pick up speed, racing down the block, careening toward

#### AN OVERPASS

The two hulking vehicles BELLOW into the dimly-lit tunnel where there's no snow or ice on the cement.

With an ear-splitting SCREECH, the steel rims of Shawn's Thunderbird grind into the pavement, sending up a comet of sparks. The dark tunnel flashes gold and orange.

Then with a sudden WHOOSH, the cars vault out from under the bridge back in the snow.

The hit men make a final break away.

#### ANGEL

You're losing 'em!

Shawn manages to will the car up next to them, CLIPPING the bumper, sending the El Camino into another wild tail-spin.

#### IN THE EL CAMINO

#### THE DRIVER

I got it!

He counter-steers and manages to correct the spin out, just in time to drive head-first into the blade of a parked snowplow.

#### IN SHAWN'S CAR

The brothers watch the El Camino corkscrew off the snowplow, rolling and skidding a hundred feet on its roof before burying itself in a massive snowdrift.

#### IN THE INVERTED EL CAMINO

The shooters are dazed and bleeding, hanging upside down from their seatbelts.

The shooters desperately try their doors but they're pinned in by the snow bank. The passenger stretches, reaching for his gun which has fallen onto the roof.

Shawn's headlights slowly approach, illuminating their car. The hit men hear three doors opening and closing.

THE DRIVER'S INVERTED POV: in the rearview mirror, the driver sees the silhouettes of the three brothers approaching his car, backlit by the Thunderbird's headlights.

As the three men methodically close in, the falling snow gradually covers the car's rear window, slowly whitening out the driver's view of the advancing brothers.

For a terrifying moment, the shooters can't see anything. They have no idea where the brothers are.

#### OUTSIDE THE CAR

Jack's pace has slowed, his steps growing more tentative as they approach the car. Shawn and Angel trudge on, heads lowered against the wind.

It's the height of the blizzard, visibility reduced to only a few feet. Jack watches his brothers disappear into the white.

ON JACK'S FACE: as we hear the shooters pulled roughly from the car, protesting and struggling.

Jack takes a few steps back.

HIS POV: Through the blinding snow Jack can only make out glimpses of what's happening. Just shapes and forms.

The SHOUTS are fragmented, WORDS muffled by the HOWLING WIND.

Then abruptly, it's all over. Silence.

As if stepping out of a curtain of blowing snow, Angel and Shawn suddenly appear a few feet away, marching back towards Jack, the expressions on their faces more telling than anything else he's seen or heard.

Angel and Shawn grab Jack as they pass, pulling him back towards the car.

DISSOLVE TO THE NEXT MORNING

The brisk sun is out. The entire city lies blanketed in three feet of virgin snow. There's no traffic noise so the city seems eerily silent.

Lt. Green and Detective Fowler tromp quietly down the street.

Green's grumbling, annoyed as they take in the path of destruction left by Shawn and his brothers.

Hulks of twisted metal that were once parked cars lie partially buried as if un-earthed by some great tectonic force.

LT. GREEN

It's like the Goddamn four horsemen of the apocalypse.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

Let's bring these assholes in. I've had about enough.

LT. GREEN

Bring 'em in on what? Bar full of a hundred people last night. One of them talk? We got nothing.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

We got nightsticks and fuckin' flashlights. I don't care if you played hockey with them or not. I don't care if you went to church with 'em. Let me slap some answers out of these shitheads. Rattle their cage.

The detectives reach a bustling crime scene, a wide empty lot between two buildings cordoned off by yellow caution tape.

As the detectives duck under the tape, Green's foot punches through the blanket of fresh white powder, revealing a splotch of bright red. He lifts his foot and turns to Fowler.

LT. GREEN

Rattle their cage, huh?

The camera booms up to reveal a BIRDS' EYE VIEW of the empty lot. The (covered) bodies of the men who killed Evelyn Mercer lie twisted and lifeless.

INT. EVELYN MERCER'S KITCHEN - LATER THAT MORNING

Shawn sits at the table, hands around a cold cup of coffee, clearly still haunted by last night. Yoko Ono (Sumi) pours iodine over dozens of bleeding puncture wounds the dogs left on his arms. Shawn grimaces painfully. Sumi laughs.

SUMI

Such a pussy.

For the first time we see that Shawn has a large faded tattoo (among many) down the side of his ribcage. In big block letters it reads: **No Mercy**.

SUMI

I think it should be illegal for people to keep dogs out where someone like you can get to them.

Shawn smiles at her.

SUMI

I'm not going to let Angel go this time. We're going to get married. Come hell or high water.

SHAWN

Well then God help us all.

She smiles and gently wraps gauze back onto his forearms.

IN THE GARAGE - SAME

Next to Evelyn's old Chevy station wagon, Angel hits his old canvas heavy-bag in the garage, working through his own ghosts from last night.

Two kids in dirty winter coats, one twelve, the other nine, walk up the driveway. Angel lays off the bag.

TWELVE-YEAR OLD

Who are you? Where's Ms. Evelyn? We're hungry.

Angel's caught completely unprepared. He can't think of a thing in the world to say.

ANGEL

Shit, man. Ah, Evelyn's not here.

TWELVE-YEAR OLD

We come Fridays.

NINE-YEAR OLD

To eat!

ANGEL

Is it Friday? Well, listen. She's  
ahhh, Evelyn's not gonna...Look here's  
twenty bucks. Have a blast.

The kids' eyes go wide at money. They grab the bill and  
split. As they take off, Angel sees Lt. Green and Detective  
Fowler drive up in the street. He opens the door from the  
garage to the kitchen and shouts:

ANGEL

Cops in the house.

He closes the door and meets the cops on the front yard.

LT. GREEN

Morning, Angel. Mind if we come in?

ANGEL

You kidding? Po-lice always welcome at  
the Mercer household. Makes us feel  
safe and cozy.

IN THE KITCHEN

Shawn and Sumi quickly clean up the first aid gear.

SHAWN

Give me something to cover up my arms.  
Hurry.

BACK IN THE LIVING ROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Shawn steps into the room. He's squeezed into his mother's  
flowery robe.

LT. GREEN

Looking good, Shawn.

Shawn smirks and sizes himself up, pleased.

SHAWN

Thanks. Jack wanted this little  
number. But I fought him for it.

LT. GREEN

You remember a conversation we had at  
your mom's wake about not sticking  
your nose into this investigation?

SHAWN

I was pretty much three sheets to the  
wind. We all were.

LT. GREEN

Yeah, well, the thing is, that nose of yours looks awful broken. Which makes me wonder if you've been sticking it where it doesn't belong.

SHAWN

Oh, no. That? Turkey Cup. Hockey. It's an old Mercer family tradition. You remember that, don't you, Green? You played hockey.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

And the ear? That from hockey, too?

SHAWN

Those guys were animals.

Fowler nods at Shawn's bloodied and bruised knuckles.

SHAWN

Ever hear the joke, 'I went to a fight and a hockey game broke out?'

The cops don't laugh.

LT. GREEN

Where's your car, Shawn?

There's a pregnant pause--the guys were caught off guard. Sumi pipes up casually.

SUMI

We left it at Jeremiah's.

ANGEL

Yeah. Jerry drove us home. Did you know Volvo makes the safest car on the road? We figured with the snow falling like it was and all...

Fowler holds up a tiny evidence bag with a single hair in it.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

You know what this is?

SHAWN

A hair from your wife's tit?

DETECTIVE FOWLER

Try from your thick skull. Forensics took it off a pair of contract killers we found dead this morning.

Sumi freezes up, shocked. But Shawn laughs. He snatches the baggy out of Fowler's hand and flicks it into the trash.

ANGEL

Fishing for a confession with a phony hair? That's an old one, boys.

Angel pats Green on the back.

SHAWN

You know when I'll know you've got my hair off a dead body? When I hear the jail house doors close behind me.

Lt. Green laughs, knowing they've been beat.

LT. GREEN

What did they tell you, guys? Who hired them?

SHAWN

We really have no idea who you're talking about.

ANGEL

But if they were professional shooters like you say, they probably wouldn't have given up who hired them or much else. Even if they took one hell of a beating.

Fowler feigns laughter.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

Very cute. Very smart. Everyone's a smart guy. 'Till I bust 'em in the mouth.

Lt. Green intervenes.

LT. GREEN

Everyone take it easy. Angel, Shawn, you cats got something legit, give it over. I'll run with it. But if I connect you to these killings, I will put you away, whether these psychos killed your mother or not.

AT THE FRONT WINDOW - MOMENTS LATER

Hair mussed and just half-awake, Jack watches Lt. Green's car pull away from the house, tires spinning.

Angel passes by, noticing that Jack's pitchin' a tent in his jockies. Jack sees Angel looking at his heel Hitler.

JACK

Sorry, man. Caught me with my guns loaded. Just got up.

ANGEL

Well get dressed, fool. Revenge is a full-time job.

EXT. JEREMIAH'S HOUSE / FRONT YARD - DAY

Jeremiah's two girls, Daniela and Amalia, are playing in the freshly fallen snow, their colorful winter coats almost incandescent against the white backdrop.

On the street, a dirty sedan approaches, slowing as it passes, the DRIVER eyeing the girls.

INSIDE - SAME

Jeremiah's standing on a ladder, half-hidden in the attic. Camille paces below him, arguing.

CAMILLE

I'm not going out of town! I'm not going anywhere! Goddamnit, Jerry!

Jeremiah pulls a shotgun out of its hiding place.

CAMILLE

What's come over you all of sudden! I thought you got rid of that thing. I don't want it near the girls!

He shows her that the gun has a safety lock on the trigger.

JEREMIAH

The combination is a 7-4-7 if you need it. I'm putting it under the bed.

(as he walks out)

Those boys keep knocking on hell's door, sooner or later, someone's going to answer.

EXT. PEPPERS ITALIAN RESTAURANT - EVENING

A white Lincoln Navigator eases to a curb. A DRIVER/BODY GUARD steps out of the front seat and opens the back door.

Pappa was a Rollin' Stone by the Temptations plays over the scene. VICTOR SWEET (Black, 37) steps out of the back of the SUV and heads right into his restaurant.

INSIDE PEPPERS RESTAURANT

At a large corner booth, FIVE HOODLUMS, their GIRLFRIENDS and WIVES are laughing, enjoying their meal. It's all smiles, and jokes until Someone spots Victor entering the place.

HOODLUM

Oh shit. Vic's here.

Vic stalks through the restaurant to the table. The group of hard men goes dead quiet, cowed by their boss's mere presence.

VICTOR SWEET

Ladies?

The women at the table all know the drill. They immediately move to the far side of the room, out of earshot. Victor stands over his men for a moment.

VICTOR SWEET

Out-of-town shooters.

The guys stir uncomfortably, staring at their plates.

VICTOR SWEET

Out-of-town shooters. That's what I said. I remember hearing myself say it. Out-of-town shooters.

Vic begins to pace, circling the table.

VICTOR SWEET

There's an old saying I like, goes like this: You don't pay a hooker to have sex with you. You pay her to leave.

No one breathes.

VICTOR SWEET

You pay her to leave. Pay her to leave. What do you pay an out-of-town shooter to do?

No answer.

VICTOR SWEET

To kill people? Do you?

The guys lower their eyes.

VICTOR SWEET

No. You pay 'em to leave. That's why I asked for out-of-town shooters. Not in town shooters. Out-of-town shooters. That's what I wanted. What did I get? What'd I get?

No one dares say a word.

VICTOR SWEET

Out-of-town shooters? No. No, no. I got in-town shooters. In-town shooters. Shooters from in town.

(MORE)

VICTOR SWEET(cont'd)

Someone decided to hire in town shooters. You know what else I got for my six thousand dollars? In-town cops. In-town police. In-town trouble. Who caused this trouble--

One of the guys, EVAN, absently takes a bite of his pasta. Vic's reaction is instantaneous.

VICTOR SWEET

You hungry, Evan? You must be hungry.

Evan knows he's fucked.

EVAN

Sorry, Vic, I wasn't think--

Vic snatches up his plate.

VICTOR SWEET

Don't apologize, dog's got to eat. Right? Dog's got to eat. Tell you what, you wanna come in my restaurant and eat. Well, alright.

Vic sets the plate on the floor.

VICTOR SWEET

Go ahead, dog. Eat.

Evan can't even look at his friends. Vic stands there waiting. It's clear that he's not kidding.

Evan gets down on his hands and knees, shaking with humiliation and fear. He starts to lap at the pasta.

VICTOR SWEET

Good boy. That's a good boy.

Evan's wife glares at Vic from across the room, unable to hold back her disdain.

EVAN'S WIFE

This bullshit!

Vic turns on her.

VICTOR SWEET

Shut your mouth, bitch. I'll put you down there with him.

The frightened woman looks away. Vic turns back to his guys.

VICTOR SWEET

Now, find out who killed the shooters.

INT. EVELYN'S HOUSE / DINING ROOM - EVENING

FOCUS ON: the Michigan drivers' licenses of the two dead hit men. WIDER to see Shawn, Angel and Jack sitting at the table.

SHAWN  
Stanly Millar. 1108 Marine Street. Apt  
8a. Marine's near the river. Let's  
take a look.

OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

The brothers climb in their mother's light blue station wagon. Keys in the ignition. Guns are loaded. With a ROAR, Shawn throws the car into reverse and heads into the street.

The boys are ready for action except--SCREECH! Sumi's standing in front of the car.

Shawn sighs and turns off the ignition. Sumi walks up to Angel's side of the car.

SUMI  
Excuse me. Sorry, guys. (to Angel) Now  
Sweetie, I don't want to sound like a  
whiny bitch, all possessive and stuff,  
but...where the FUCK do think you're  
going?

ANGEL  
C'mon, baby. We're dealing  
with important shit here.

SHAWN  
Yoko-fuckin'-Ono.

SUMI  
Shut up, Shawn! Don't start  
that crap. This is why you  
don't have a girlfriend. No  
one will put up with you.

SHAWN  
I get a new girlfriend every  
week.

ANGEL  
Both ya'll, cut that shit out. Don't  
even go there. Don't go there.

SHAWN  
She came out here. I didn't  
go anywhere. She came out  
here. She came out here.

JACK  
(singing)  
'Imagine all the people'...

SUMI  
You said we were having dinner! I  
spent an hour cooking, asshole!

Sumi storms away from the car back into the house, leaving Angel sulking, trying to decide what to do. Shawn and Angel share a look.

SHAWN

You're a tough guy. Macho man. C'mon,  
macho man. C'mon, macho man.

ANGEL

Fuck you.

Angel gets out and slams the door. Pissed, Shawn starts the car and barks back over his shoulder.

SHAWN

Get in the front seat! I ain't your  
fuckin' chauffeur.

As Shawn guns it and speeds away, we see Jack climbing awkwardly over the bench seat.

INSIDE / THE KITCHEN

Angel sips tomato soup at the kitchen table.

Sumi smiles happily and sits in his lap. They start making out. As always, things heat up quickly with these two. Mom's dishware crashes to the kitchen floor.

ANGEL

Damn you're gorgeous. Serious, you  
could be an actress.

He slips her out of her jeans and is about to unbuckle his.

SUMI

Wait! Come here. It'll be like being  
sixteen again.

She pulls him into the tiny

LAUNDRY ROOM

Just off the kitchen. She kisses him. He laughs, looking at the cramped room.

ANGEL

We only came in here 'cause it was the  
only private room in the house.

Sumi jumps up onto the dryer and pulls him close.

SUMI

Wait, wait. The dryer has to be on. To  
cover up the sound.

He laughs and flips the dryer on '60 minutes. Most Dry' and the ancient machine RUMBLES loudly to life. DA-DUM! DA-DUM! DA-DUM!

Angel lifts Sumi up onto the lid and they start to go at it, the drier about to come apart beneath them.

Sumi knocks on the wall and calls out, throwing her voice, pretending to be Angel's mom.

SUMI  
Angel? What are you two doing in there?

Angel laughs, answering breathlessly.

ANGEL  
Just finishing the laundry, Mom.

SUMI  
What do you want for dinner?

ANGEL  
Whatever you wanna make, Mom!

SUMI  
Sumi, honey, are you staying?  
(switching back to her own voice) Yes, Ma'am. If that's okay!

The doorbell rings loudly. They both sigh.

THE FRONT DOOR OPENS - A MOMENT LATER

To reveal a graying, INSURANCE INVESTIGATOR. Angel peers out.

INSURANCE INVESTIGATOR  
Good evening. Mr. Mercer? I'm with State Farm. I have a question or two about your mother's policy...

IN THE KITCHEN - SAME

Sumi's pacing around, now wearing only Angel's leather jacket and panties.

She impatiently shoves her hands into the pockets. She finds a pack of condoms. A frown washes over her face.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

The investigator opens his briefcase on the coffee table.

INSURANCE INVESTIGATOR  
I don't want to sound any alarm bells. The check is being processed. But, nonetheless, some red flags have been raised.

ANGEL

Yeah, man, here's the thing. I don't know what the hell you're talking about.

INSURANCE INVESTIGATOR

The premium. On your mother's life insurance. The pay-out of the policy to you and your daughters?

ANGEL

No, no, wait. I'm not Jeremiah Mercer, I'm his brother. When did--

Sumi marches into the room, Angel's leather jacket wafting open. She stops short, noticing the investigator avert his eyes from her legs. She smiles politely at him.

SUMI

Excuse me. Sorry to interrupt. Would you like a tea or something to drink?

INSURANCE INVESTIGATOR

No, no. I'm fine. Thank you.

SUMI

Angel, dear, can ask you something? What the FUCK are these!?

She waves the fold-out packet of condoms.

ANGEL

They're breath mints. Can you give me a minute?

The investigator turns away from her exposed breasts.

SUMI

You know I'm allergic to latex.

Uncomfortable, the investigator starts packing up his files.

INSURANCE INVESTIGATOR

Sorry for the miscommunication, Mr. Mercer.

ANGEL

Wait, you said there was a red flag?

SUMI

Angel, who are they for!?

ANGEL

Hold on, Sue! This is serious.

SUMI

Oh! And this isn't? Who is she?

ANGEL  
 Put the koo-koo back in the clock,  
 baby. I bought them in Vegas before I  
 even knew I was coming here!

INSURANCE INVESTIGATOR SUMI  
 I should go. Who'd you buy them for!?

ANGEL  
 For no one!

SUMI  
 Oh that's safe sex, isn't it? Jacking  
 off with a rubber.

Angel realizes she's just not going to give it up.

ANGEL  
 If we're going to talk about this, can  
 we at least do it outside?

SUMI  
 You wanna talk outside? Fine!

Angel jerks open the front door and Sumi storms out, half-dressed. BAM! He closes and locks the door right behind her.

He turns back to the shell-shocked investigator. Sumi YELLS AND BANGS on the door for the rest of the conversation.

ANGEL  
 What kinda red flag was raised? Did he  
 take out the policy or something?

INSURANCE INVESTIGATOR  
 No. But for several months, the  
 insurance premium was paid via check  
 from your brother's bank account.

ANGEL  
 Just 'cause he's getting paid, doesn't  
 mean shit. This is bullshit.

INSURANCE INVESTIGATOR  
 These have been unforgiving times in  
 Detroit, Mr. Mercer. Desperate people  
 become capable of desperate things.  
 And with your brother's business in  
 bankruptcy...well, it's our  
 responsibility to check it out.

Angel's taken aback by the revelation.

ANGEL  
 Jeremiah's bankrupt?

INSURANCE INVESTIGATOR  
Could you have him call me, please?

The insurance investigator heads for the door.

ANGEL  
Wait. One more thing. How much is he  
getting? Can you tell me that?

INSURANCE INVESTIGATOR  
If it's approved? A little more than  
six hundred thousand. Ask him to call?

Angel opens the door and Sumi blasts back inside, shouting.

SUMI  
You fucking dick-

BAM! Angel steps outside right behind the investigator.  
Before Sumi even turns around, he's gone.

INT. DARK APARTMENT - SAME

Gloved hands hastily snatch objects off tables and counters,  
stuffing them into heavy black trash bags--photos, pads,  
papers, seemingly everything. Whole drawers are up-turned in  
the bags as the place is ransacked by Shawn and Jack.

EXT. COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

An office building is being gutted and completely refitted.  
Only the exposed steel girders and I-beams remain.

A good-looking Native American guy in a hard hat, BILLY  
PIPESTEM, hoists a beam out onto a crane with another three  
WELDERS. The massive piece of metal swings out over the  
traffic, six floors below.

Something catches Billy's attention: Angel's headed right  
toward him from the opposite end of the floor.

Billy's eyes squint and the muscles on his back and neck  
flare. He's a big bastard.

ON ANGEL

As he catches Billy's eye. Billy reaches down and comes up  
with a three-foot length of iron piping.

Angel doesn't even slow his approach. As he nears, Billy  
lifts the pipe onto his shoulder like a bat. Angel steps up  
and the men look each other dead in the eye. Billy glances  
over the open edge of the scaffolding and smirks.

BILLY PIPESTEM

I should knock your black ass right off this building.

ANGEL

Man, that shit was twelve years ago. Who gives a fuck what crew we used to run with. Put that pipe down, Geronimo. And unball your fist.

Billy eyes Angel for another moment. The confrontation draws attention. Billy's friends are gathering. Angel doesn't even look at them, keeping his focus dead on Billy.

ANGEL

I said, put that pipe down and unball your fist. We ain't boys any more. We're gonna talk. Like men.

Billy looks at his friends and then back to Angel. We hear the pipe CLANG to the ground.

BILLY PIPESTEM

You wanna talk? Step into my office.

He turns and gestures in front of him as he walks fearlessly onto a single I-Beam that jets out over the street ninety-feet below. Billy's footing is remarkably sure.

ANGEL

Shit.

He sucks in a big breath and with a sigh heads onto the beam.

CUT TO:

Angel trying not to look down as he stands next Billy, who stands casually eating a sandwich on the end of the I-Beam.

BILLY PIPESTEM

I don't know what you need to know, Angel. But me and your brother aren't doin' business anymore.

ANGEL

And why's that?

BILLY PIPESTEM

I didn't want any part of that Studebaker plant. I told him it was gonna blow up in his face. A project that size, you had to know they were gonna come knocking for their share.

ANGEL

Who's they?

BILLY PIPESTEM

The Jehovah's Witnesses. How do I know? You know how things work in Detroit. Can't open a lemonade stand without someone's goon stopping by for a piece. Jerry should've paid up.

Angel's jacket snaps and his breath gets shallow as a gust of wind whips past, testing his balance. After a moment...

ANGEL

Who shut him down, Billy?

Billy Pipestem looks at tiny pedestrians walking by below.

BILLY PIPESTEM

Last thing I'll say, and I'm sayin' it for Jerry, not for you. Everything on the project was going aces 'till a city shit-head named Douglas torpedoed your brother's boat. Get it?

EXT. BRICK APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Detectives Green and Fowler climb a few stairs and buzz a doorbell, patting themselves to stave off the cold.

The door CREAKS open and the building's LANDLORD peers out.

LT. GREEN

Detroit Homicide. We're warranted to search and retrieve evidence at the apartment of 'Stanly Millar.'

Green shows him a document.

LANDLORD

Search warrant, is it? (He chuckles) You're a little late, I'd say. Someone's already searched it over pretty nicely.

CUT TO:

The landlord pushing open the door to unit 8a to reveal that the entire apartment has been trashed. Green huffs a sigh.

LT. GREEN

Michigan fuckin' Mauler.

INT. EVELYN'S DINING ROOM - SAME

Shawn dumps a huge trash bag of the shooters' belongings out onto the dinning room table.

SHAWN

They say dead men tell no tales, but sometimes they leave important shit lyin' around.

Jack and Shawn sift through the pile.

The *FRONT DOOR* opens and closes in the other room. Shawn quickly picks up his revolver.

Jeremiah enters and spots the mess on table and sees the gun in Shawn's hand.

JEREMIAH

The hell you guys doing now?

SHAWN

Just getting a head start on next year's taxes.

Jeremiah sighs and looks around. The clean, quaint house Evelyn left behind is unrecognizable.

JEREMIAH

Look at the way you're treating mom's house. You should be ashamed.

He starts cleaning up pizza boxes and other fast-food containers, beer bottles, etc.

He picks up a coke can off the table and does a double-take. Something in the pile of collected evidence catches his eye: a matchbook from Peppers (Victor Sweet's Restaurant).

He's the only one that thinks anything of them. He casually pockets the matches and walks away.

Jack thumbs through the pictures on the memory card of a digital camera. After a moment:

JACK

Shawn, check it out.

He shows Shawn picture after picture of surveillance photos of their mother. Leaving the house, arriving at work, etc.

A pall hangs in the air.

SHAWN

They're following her.

JEREMIAH

Where the hell you'd guys get this shit?

Angel waltzes in.

SHAWN  
Where the fuck have you been? I've  
been calling you.

Angel looks directly at Jeremiah.

ANGEL  
Just been followin' up a few leads,  
Shawn. This the shooters' stuff?

Jack pipes up again.

JACK  
Wait. That's that guy. That lawyer.

Everyone leans in, getting a closer look.

Jack clicks through a dozen photographs of their mother and her estate lawyer, Robert Bradford, in various settings: walking downtown on a crowded street; in his car, etc.

JACK  
That shithead said he only met her  
once.

Shawn turns to Jeremiah.

SHAWN  
You got gymnastic practice today. Or  
you with us?

EXT. UPSCALE DETROIT SUBURB / EVELYN'S CAR - EVENING

The four brothers circle the block, casing Robert Bradford's house. The lights are all off. Jack hangs up his cell phone.

JACK  
No answer. No one's home.

Shawn nods at the car stereo.

SHAWN  
That's you singin', huh?

JACK  
Yeah. That's the CD I just recorded.

SHAWN  
You got more copies of that?

JACK  
Yeah, tons back in New York.

SHAWN  
Good. Then you won't miss this one.

Shawn hits eject and tosses the cd out the window. Jack can't believe it. He punches Shawn hard as hell in the shoulder and gets smacked in the mouth for his trouble.

JACK

Owe.

IN THE BACK SEAT

Angel presses Jeremiah, fishing for information.

ANGEL

You live near here don't you, Jerry?  
Nice neighborhood. Business must still  
be solid.

JEREMIAH

Thank God. Long as interest rates stay  
low. Everyone can afford a  
construction loan.

ANGEL

Interest rates, huh? You still workin'  
with that redskin? What's his name,  
Billy?

We see the slightest flash of uncertainty on Jeremiah's face.

JEREMIAH

Billy Pipestem. Of course I am. Why,  
you wanna kick his ass again?

Jeremiah laughs but then notices Shawn pulling over.

JEREMIAH

Wait. Where you going? You said we  
were just going to talk to--

BAM! Shawn's door closes and he heads across the street  
toward Robert Bradford's house. Jack and Angel follow,  
leaving Jeremiah cursing in the car.

NEXT TO THE HOUSE

Shawn, Angel and Jack crouch behind a hedgerow on the side of  
the house. After a second, Jeremiah trots up.

JEREMIAH

Don't tell me you're gonna break in?

The window's got an alarm trigger and a warning sticker.

SHAWN

We are if Angel can beat the alarm.

ANGEL

I'll see what I can do.

He walks over to the external fuse box on the side of the house. And WHUMP! shuts down power to the whole house. Shawn shrugs.

SHAWN

Huh. Never would have thought of that.

He forces the window and they crawl inside.

JEREMIAH

Fuck me.

Jeremiah takes one more look around and ducks in.

IN THE DARKENED HOUSE

The brothers search Robert Bradford's office with flashlights. Jack reaches to turn on the computer but remembers it's dead.

JACK

Shit. No power...Ah ha. Cool.

He sees a laptop and turns it on. It powers up off its battery.

Angel and Shawn carefully go through the filing cabinet, Jeremiah stands on look-out.

JEREMIAH

C'mon! He's gonna be home soon, guys.

ON THE LAPTOP SCREEN: Jack clicks through a calendar program with the lawyer's schedule. Several entries have 'meet E.M.'

JACK

Hey, you think E.M. is 'Evelyn Mercer?'

They all gather around, including Jeremiah.

ANGEL

November 22. He met her the day she died--the night she died. Who has a meeting with their lawyer at eight o'clock at night?

The tense silence comes apart when a car horn out front  
BLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAARES!

Head lights sweep through the house. The guys hit the deck, hiding, but then a familiar voice is heard shouting out front:

SUMI (OFF SCREEN)  
 Help! Come quick everybody! There's  
 robbers in the house! Come quick!

OUT FRONT

Sumi stands next to her car in the circle driveway.  
 BLAAAAAAREEE! She lays on the horn again and flips her  
 headlights on and off.

SUMI  
 Robbers! Everybody come quick!

INSIDE THE HOUSE

ANGEL  
 Shit! She must have been following us!

JACK AND JEREMIAH  
 This whole time!? Well, shut her up!  
 Shut her up!

Angel runs out and after a second, the guys hear a full-blown  
 SHOUTING match in the middle of the quiet residential street.

Shawn shakes his head.

ANGEL (OFF SCREEN)  
 How's it even possible that you're  
 here!? You're inventing new ways to be  
 crazy!

ON THE STREET

Lights in the nearby houses start coming on.

SUMI  
 You do not slam the door in my face in  
 the middle of an argument, asshole! Be  
 straight with me, Angel! You're gonna  
 leave again, aren't you?!

ON THE SIDE OF THE HOUSE

Jeremiah piles headfirst out of window, followed by Jack and  
 Shawn. Angel and Sumi are still shouting at one another.

IN AN APPROACHING MERCEDES - SAME

Robert Bradford comes around the corner whistling delightedly  
 along with a classical music concerto on the radio.

His headlights reveal the odd sight of four huge men carrying  
 a kicking and screaming woman off his front lawn.

ROBERT BRADFORD  
Good lord.

Shawn turns toward the car and their eyes meet.

ON THE STREET

Shawn runs over and jerks open the Mercedes' door, pulling Bradford from the car before it even stops moving.

JEREMIAH  
Shawn! What are you doing!?

The old guy struggles but Shawn quickly overpowers him, pulling his dress shirt out of his pants and up over his head, hockey-fight style.

Shawn quickly ties the shirt tails together, binding the old guy's arms over his head and leaving him standing in the middle of the street, bare-bellied and pathetic.

SHAWN  
You lied, you old fucker! You said you didn't know her. You were the last one to see her alive!

WHACK! Shawn slaps him so hard across the belly, it leaves a red hand-print swelling on the guy's flabby skin.

The old man's almost speechless with fright, his babbling muffled by the shirt and undershirt.

ROBERT BRADFORD  
It's just that, that, well I felt so guilty I, I didn't know--

ANGEL  
Didn't know what!?

Jeremiah's shitting himself. NEIGHBORS have come out of their house to see what's going on.

JEREMIAH  
You idiots! We have to go! Now!

ROBERT BRADFORD  
I'm not sure how to say this--

SHAWN  
Say what!?

ROBERT BRADFORD  
You're mother and I were...seeing each other. Socially.

Shawn's face changes. A look of confusion washes over him.

SHAWN

Socially?

The brothers look at each other for a beat before they put it together and gross out.

THE BROTHERS

Noooo! Oh my God! I'm leaving!!

Shawn hastily unties the shirt tail, revealing the old guy's beet-red face.

ROBERT BRADFORD

I didn't want to sully your mother's reputation. She was a fine, fine woman. I have some of her night things if you want--

THE BROTHERS

Nooooo! Gross! Keep them!! Let's get outta here!

The brothers make a break for their car, laughing.

INT. EVELYN'S HOUSE / ANGEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Angel comes into the room, weary. He sits on a chair in the dark and sparks a cigarette. He turns on the lamp and

ANGEL

Jesus!

Sumi was waiting in the dark, tears on her cheeks.

SUMI

Listen. Every time I see you, you promise you're gonna stay, but--

ANGEL

I'm not gonna go anywhere, Sumi, I--

SUMI

No, no, no. Just hush up. You don't wanna live in Detorit? Fine, I'll go with you somewhere else. You wanna go, you wanna stay? I don't care. There's only one place in the world I wanna be, Angel. Right next to you.

Angel's about to interrupt again.

SUMI

Please, don't say anything. I don't wanna hear anymore bullshit. I just want you to think about what I just said.

She kisses him and pushes him back on the bed.

INT. EVELYN MERCER'S BATHROOM - MORNING

Angel walks into the room wearing only his underwear. He's got the waistband out, staring down at his own package.

ANGEL

Damn, man, let me ask you something.

Shawn's taking a dump on the pot.

ANGEL

Sumi and I did a lot of catchin' up last night. Woke up with a little rust on the tools, down here.

SHAWN

Good conversation, was it? Let me take a look.

Angel stands right in front of the commode. Shawn peers in. Jack leans his head out from behind the steamy shower curtain, conferring in the examination.

SHAWN

What do you think? Just a rug burn?

JACK

Definitely. A battle scar.

ANGEL

Thank God. Thought my luck was finally running out.

Angel lets the waist band snap shut.

ANGEL

Listen up, Jerry hasn't exactly been straight with us. His dream project's in more than a little bit of shit.

JACK

You mean the luxury office suites?

ANGEL

Yeah. Someone mighta bribed a city official named Joe Douglas to bury him. Why don't you two pay him a visit, find out who signs his checks?

Angel starts to head out of the bathroom.

SHAWN

Wait! Why didn't Jeremiah tell us anything about this? You think this has something to do with mom?

ANGEL

I don't know, Shawn. I'm gonna go to check into a few things right now.

SHAWN

What the fuck does that mean?

ANGEL

It means keep your ass on that porcelain. This isn't a shoot first and ask questions never situation. It's gonna require a little finesse and given your prior reputation as a hot-head--

SHAWN

Finesse? I wrote the book on fucking finesse. Give me a second to wipe my ass! I'm going with you. Angel! Ang-

Angel disappears down the hall without answering.

EXT. JEREMIAH'S HOUSE - MORNING

After a moment, the garage door opens and Jeremiah pulls out in his Volvo and heads up the street.

We hear another car start and see that Angel was watching the house. He shifts into gear and follows his brother.

AT A BUSY INTERSECTION

Jeremiah's on a pay phone, talking heatedly. After a moment, he slams the receiver and gets back into his car.

WIDER. Again, we see Angel watching.

INT. CITY OF DETROIT BUILDING - THAT AFTERNOON

City COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS, approaches his office. He stops abruptly when he sees Lt. Green chatting with his SECRETARY.

SECRETARY

Joe, this is Lt. Green. He'd like to meet with you this morning.

LT. GREEN

Good morning, Councilmen. (turns back)  
Nice talking to you, Kathryn. Thanks for the help.

The Councilman eyes his secretary uneasily.

IN COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS' OFFICE

Green reads his notes from the secretary's statement.

LT. GREEN

How well did you know Evelyn Mercer?

Councilman Douglas stirs and fidgets.

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS

I don't believe I knew her at all.

LT. GREEN

Hmmm. I was at her office this morning. Saw on her computer that she wrote you a dozen some-odd letters.

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS

We get lots of correspondence from our constituency.

LT. GREEN

That was a lot of big words.

Lt. Green flips to Evelyn's phone records.

LT. GREEN

Phone records show she also called a lot the week before she was killed. Any idea why Ms. Mercer wanted to talk to you?

Councilman Douglas rocks nervously in his chair.

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS

What did my secretary tell you, Lt.?

LT. GREEN

Do you not want to answer the question yourself, Councilman?

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS

I simply meant that I personally have no idea why this woman was contacting my office. I was hoping Kathryn did. As I said, we--

LT. GREEN

--'get lots of correspondence from your constituency.' Think it could have something to do with your sudden decision to shut down her son's development project?

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS  
Zoning is a very complicated decision-making process, Lieutenant.

LT. GREEN  
Is it? Seems simple enough to me. You guys change the zoning on the fella and he can't operate his business.

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS  
Of course it's not that simple--

LT. GREEN  
How'd you vote on that project, Councilman? For it? Or against it?

Councilman Douglas pauses for a trace too long.

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS  
Against it.

INT. BASEMENT PARKING STRUCTURE - A MOMENT LATER

Frazzled, Councilmen Douglas hurriedly exits a dirty old elevator and trots toward his new Cadillac DeVille.

He opens the car door and sits down but--the seats are soaking wet. His nose screws up. Something stinks. He presses his hands into the leather seat cushion under him, curious.

He smells his hands. It's gasoline.

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS  
What the--

He freezes up when he sees Shawn standing in front of the car holding a five-gallon can of gasoline.

The councilman quickly tries to start the car but it doesn't even make a sound. Shawn holds up the car's starter.

CRASH! The starter shatters the windshield.

The councilman panics and locks the doors as Shawn walks up and begins to soak the entire car with gasoline, blurring the councilman's view.

When the gas slides off the driver's side window, it reveals Shawn casually smoking a cigarette, politely giving him the universal symbol for 'wind down the window'.

With a whirrrrrrrrr the terrified councilman lowers the window. Shawn doesn't even have to ask.

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS  
Victor. Victor Sweet.

INT. ANGEL'S CAR (MOVING) - AFTERNOON

Angel pulls into the parking lot of the brand new 'Greektown' casino in downtown. He parks, flips open his cell and dials.

ANGEL

Shawn, go to Greektown. Come in the bar entrance.

INT. A PACKED CASINO - LATER

The loud din of one Detroit's biggest casinos. An endless aisle of slot machines BANG and WHIR, as low-stakes GAMBLERS feed them tirelessly.

IN A QUIET BAR NEAR THE BACK

Angel and Jack sit in a booth drinking whiskey. Shawn approaches.

ANGEL

Councilman helpful?

JACK

Wanna drink?

SHAWN

Yeah, a real public servant. (He nods at Jack) Beer. Guy just wanted to help people. Could tell right away. You remember a punk named Victor Sweet?

ANGEL

I remember Malcolm Sweet.

Jack walks down to get Shawn a beer from the bartender.

SHAWN

Victor was his nephew. Used to deliver things for his uncle. Not very nice things. Like mail bombs and beatings. Malcolm used to love to humiliate him in public all the time.

ANGEL

Yeah, alright. I remember that dude.

SHAWN

Apparently little Victor got sick of the whippings and sunk his uncle in the river. Took over the family business. They own the whole neighborhood now.

JACK

This the fucker that bribed the councilman to shit on Jerry's dream?

ANGEL

That explains a thing or two.

SHAWN

Explains what?

Angel points across the floor at a guy playing the dollar slots with his wife. We recognize him as Evan, one of Victor Sweet's men.

ANGEL

That dude in the blue jacket works for a thug named Victor. Must be the same guy.

SHAWN

Sure. That's Evander Pearson. Used to be alright, that guy.

ANGEL

Yeah, alright, now I remember. He goes by Evan now.

JACK

You guys are putting this stuff together quick.

Shawn lifts a beer to his mouth with his bandaged hand.

SHAWN

Yeah, we should have been cops.

They all laugh.

JACK

But what's this got to do with mom?

ANGEL

That's what we're here trying to figure out, fool.

Shawn's suddenly far from laughing.

SHAWN

Don't be shy. We've been talking all around it. Tell your little brother. What's the only connection we've got between Sweet and Mom's killers.

Angel hesitates.

JACK

What?

ANGEL

Well, here's a hint...

He nods across the room just as Jeremiah steps out of the bathroom, heading back over to the stool next to Evan.

JACK

What's he doing here?

They watch Jeremiah pick up his coat and keys as he and Evan exchange a few furtive words. Jeremiah heads for the exit.

ANGEL

Who first?

SHAWN

Fuck Jeremiah. We'll find him later.

CUT TO THE DOLLAR SLOTS

Evan spots Shawn and Angel headed his way, hands hidden in their coats. Jack hangs back a bit. Evan turns to his wife.

EVAN

That's it, Miriam. Game's over. Cash us out.

He hands her the bucket and she steps away quickly. Evan slips out his 9mm, covering it with his wife's pink sweater. Shawn nods as he approaches.

SHAWN

Evander.

EVAN

Nice to see you boys, but we were just leaving.

ANGEL

Mind telling us what you were talking to our brother about first?

Shawn nods towards the machines which are incredibly loud.

SHAWN

Nice spot for a private talk. No one'll overhear a damn thing.

EVAN

No, no. Nothing like that, Jerry just stopped by to say hello. We go way back. From the union days. You know that, Shawn.

SHAWN

Angel tells me you're one of Victor Sweet's boys now. Hear he's running things like his uncle used to, treating ya like his house nigga.

ANGEL

That guy used to be a punk, Evan. What happened? You got no self-respect?

EVAN

You've been gone a long time, fellas. Times change.

ANGEL

I guess they do. Because when I left you were a pretty stand up guy. Now what? You out killing old ladies?

EVAN

You two really gonna make this happen here?

The men stare each other down for a moment. Shawn and Angel look around: cameras and security guards everywhere.

SHAWN

No, Evan, you can take the wife home. We'll see you again soon. Real soon.

OUTSIDE THE CASINO - A MOMENT LATER

The brothers watch Evan drive out of the huge parking lot. Shawn turns to Angel.

SHAWN

Stop fucking around. Tell me what else you know about Jeremiah.

ANGEL

I'll tell you on the way.

SHAWN

On the way where?

ANGEL

To find out how much he knows...

The brothers get back in the car and head out.

As they leave the parking lot, REVEAL that Fowler's been sitting in his cruiser watching them the whole time.

INT. SMOKE-FILLED BASEMENT - NIGHT

An unlicensed gaming room with six card tables. At a table in the back, Vic plays five card draw with his body guards.

Despite the language, smoke, booze and guns on the table, several of the guys' kids are also present, sitting nearby at a tiny blue and red plastic table, playing go-fish.

The kids and Victor are the only ones having the least bit of fun. Victor trades in three cards to Evan, who's dealing. Vic picks up a second queen.

VICTOR SWEET

You're giving away the store,  
cocksucker.

One by one, the men discard their best cards; throwing back two of three tens; deliberately breaking up a flush, etc.

VICTOR SWEET

Sixty to call.

His boys cringe. Two of them fold immediately and the rest call, throwing away their hard-earned money.

The bet's to Evan. He's somehow ended up with three kings. He eyes the three hundred dollars in the pot. He'd like nothing more than to stick it to his boss but...

EVAN

Fold.

Vic spreads his cards out proudly. Two queens.

VICTOR SWEET

Ha! Queens! Won again. I'm telling you boys. I've got a sixth sense. I know things.

Everyone bites their tongues. A guy named CHARLIE deals.

VICTOR SWEET

So Charlie, I heard you're marryin' that fine piece of ass of yours. Tell me something? What's she see in you?

Charlie tries to smile and play it off.

CHARLIE

I don't know, boss. My mom asked me the same question.

VICTOR SWEET

You give it to her good, Charlie?

Charlie just keeps dealing, eyes down.

VICTOR SWEET

Emm. How bout I send you on a little out-of-town work, Charlie. Give me a little one-on-one alone time with that cute little thing of yours. How'd that be? I'll teach her some nice tricks for you.

Charlie's boiling under the skin. The tension's cut when Councilman Douglas approaches the table.

VICTOR SWEET  
Councilman! Pull up a chair!

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS  
Vic? Could I get a word with you?

VICTOR SWEET  
I said, pull up a chair, shit stick.

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS  
I'd feel more comfortable in private.

VICTOR SWEET  
We're all friends here, Douglas. Me and my boys have a completely open relationship based on mutual trust and respect. Right boys? Three.

He discards three cards. Charlie deals him three replacements. The councilman cautiously pulls up a chair.

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS  
Vic, a cop came to see me today. He was asking about (hesitates) that woman.

VICTOR SWEET  
I wouldn't worry about the cops. We got cops.

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS  
I'm not, Vic. I'm worried about this guy Shawn Mercer. He came to see me after the cop. He knows something.

VICTOR SWEET  
You mean you told him something?

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS  
No, no. I didn't tell him anything. He already knew. He's coming for you.

VICTOR SWEET  
You tell him my name?

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS  
No, Vic! I wouldn't do that, but listen, this has got to stop.

VICTOR SWEET  
You tell him my name, Councilman?

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS

No, but we can't just keep changing the zoning every time it suits you. Outside money is pouring into the city. Your neighborhood is no exception. Times are changing.

VICTOR SWEET

Nothing's changing.

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS

It is, Vic! But competition can be good. A small piece of a bigger pie-

VICTOR SWEET

No, no. Competition means I gotta compete. Monopoly is my game. I might wanna start my own casino. I don't want no competition.

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS

Look, Vic, I'm--

VICTOR SWEET

Did you tell him my name?

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS

No, Vic! I didn't tell him anything. I'm telling you! Trying to help!

VICTOR SWEET

Councilman, we don't need your help. Evan and I were just talking about this fella, Shawn Mercer. Let me borrow your gun a second, Evan?

The guys tense up. Evan hands Vic his 9mm.

Councilman Douglas starts to stand but Vic catches him by the tie and jerks him back into the chair, jamming the heavy barrel of the Berretta under his fleshy chin.

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS

Please, Vic! I didn't tell him!

VICTOR SWEET

Did you tell him my name!?

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS

No! I swear to God!

VICTOR SWEET

Did you tell him my name!?

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS

NO!

Vic pushes Douglas away from the table with a smirk.

VICTOR SWEET

Yes you did you fucking coward. I smelled it on you. The second you walked in here. Go sit at the other table.

COUNCILMAN DOUGLAS

I'm sorry, what?

Vic points at the tiny kids' table.

VICTOR SWEET

Go sit at the other fucking table! I'm not through with you! And I'm not through my hand. So sit your ass down.

The Councilman realizes he's not kidding. Vic's guys can't look, embarrassed for him. But Vic watches. Every step. Douglas shuffles over to the kids table, head hung like a scalded child, shaking with fear.

He sits carefully sits his big butt down into a bright blue plastic chair.

ONE OF THE KIDS

Are you in trouble?

Douglas manages a little nod.

ANOTHER KID

He's on time out.

Vic picks his cards back up.

VICTOR SWEET

Now. Let's finish this hand. I got nice cards.

The guys dutifully go along with Vic, disgusted.

VICTOR SWEET

Told you boys, I gotta sixth sense. Didn't you smell it? Fucking rat over there. Oof. You smell it?

The game continues with the Councilman at the kids' table, humiliated.

VICTOR SWEET

Now. What I would like is a whole handful of out-of-town shooters. Let me repeat that again, just to be clear this time. Out-of-town-shooters.

The guys go through the motions of finishing the hand.

VICTOR SWEET  
To find those fucking brothers. And do  
what out-of-town shooters do best.  
Shoot 'em. And then fucking leave.

Victor calls and the guys show their cards. Not  
surprisingly...

VICTOR SWEET  
Ha! Won again!

Vic collects up the money on the table, a huge smile on his  
face. He picks up Evan's 9mm, advances a round into the  
chamber and walks over to the kids' table.

VICTOR SWEET  
Alright, kids. Who wants ice cream?  
Why don't you run upstairs and we'll  
get you some ice cream. How's that?

The kids cheer and run upstairs, but Vic doesn't move. He  
never takes his eyes off the Councilman.

VICTOR SWEET  
Go ahead, kids. I'll be right up.

EXT./EST. JEREMIAH'S HOUSE IN THE SUBURBS - EVENING

Jeremiah and Camille are getting ready for bed.

JEREMIAH  
I knew they'd bring us nothing but  
trouble. Someone's gonna wind up  
killed.

CAMILLE  
It's not your responsibility,  
Jeremiah. Let them go. They let you go  
along time ago.

Jeremiah notices Amalia standing in the doorway.

JEREMIAH  
What are you doing up, Amalia?

AMALIA  
I heard someone downstairs, daddy.

Jeremiah grabs Amalia and pulls her into the room with her  
mother. He reaches under the bed and pulls out the shotgun.

CAMILLE  
Jerry, don't--

JEREMIAH

Get Daniela and stay in here.

He flips to the combination and drops the trigger lock off.

ON THE STAIRCASE

Jeremiah quietly descends the stairs, gun raised. He goes carefully from room to room searching. He hears footsteps

IN THE KITCHEN

Jeremiah steps in quickly, ready to shoot, but the room's empty. The sliding glass door leading to the backyard is wide open, the cold night air blowing in.

Someone BANGS out of the back gate, fleeing. Jeremiah grabs the glass door and slides it shut. He jumps back, startled.

JEREMIAH

Shit!

A huge note's taped to the glass right in front of his face.

Written in red marker: 'I have proof Victor Sweet killed your mother. Meet me at the Lion's Head pub in ten minutes.'

Jeremiah tears down the paper, heart pounding. He looks at the clock, nervously. It reads 11:20 p.m.

He rips the note into several pieces and throws it away.

IN JEREMIAH'S BEDROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Jeremiah steps in, still obviously anxious.

CAMILLE

What was it?

JEREMIAH

Nothing. Let's get some sleep.

He gets into the bed and pulls up the covers, obviously not going anywhere.

He clicks out the light and his bedside clock glows. It's already 11:28.

EXT. EVELYN'S HOUSE - THE NEXT MORNING

Jeremiah drives by his mother's house first thing in the morning, looking for parking. He rounds the corner and finds a place.

## INSIDE EVELYN'S HOUSE

Jeremiah walks in the back door, through the kitchen, and into the living room.

He stops in his tracks when he sees Angel and Jack sitting on the couch, staring at him. They do not look happy.

JEREMIAH

What?

Jeremiah's confused until he sees the note he threw away last night sitting on the coffee table. He turns on Angel.

JEREMIAH

You left the note, didn't you? What are you, ten-years old!? What are you trying to prove, you son-of-a-bitch?

ANGEL

That you knew who killed mom, Jerry. 'Cause if you didn't, you'd have gone to the pub. What are you covering up?

The first thing Jeremiah thinks of is:

JEREMIAH

Where's Shawn?

SHAWN (OFF SCREEN)

Right here.

CRUNCH! Out of nowhere Shawn crushes his brother's nose with a right cross.

Jeremiah flies back into an old TV with a CRASH!

As Shawn stalks after him, Jeremiah throws up his hands up to protect his head, so Shawn drives a boot into his stomach.

SHAWN

Why didn't you fucking go, Jerry!? What are you hiding!?

Shawn kicks and stomps at his brother as he tries to crawl away and protect himself.

SHAWN

Why'd you throw the note away!?

Jack and Angel don't bother to intervene.

Jeremiah makes it to his feet. WHUMP! Shawn hurls him into the kitchen table which comes apart on impact.

SHAWN

Sweet did it! Didn't he!? You knew!  
Why are you covering up for him?

Shawn picks up a heavy table leg with ragged nails sticking out. He's about to bludgeon his brother...

...but catches himself.

Jeremiah looks up. Shawn looms over him with the club, his ear half torn off, and his face and arms still mauled all to hell. Jack and Angel walk up next to him.

SHAWN

Now. Angel wants to ask a few questions. And, brother, I shit you not, the time for lying is over.

He hefts the chair leg menacingly.

ANGEL

We know Sweet buried your business. We have a pretty good idea he had mom killed. What we don't know is, Jerry, what we don't know, is why?

Jeremiah drags himself painfully to his feet.

JEREMIAH

What are you saying? You think I had something to do with mom's death!? What could I possibly gain from--

ANGEL

You just got a six-hundred thousand dollar check from mom's life ins--

JEREMIAH

Mom took out the policy for the girls! What the fuck? I can't--

ANGEL

You paid for the policy. You made the payments.

Jeremiah falls instantly quiet, looking at his three brothers, sadly.

ANGEL

A guy from the insurance company came by.

There's a terrible silence in the room.

The look on Jeremiah's face is so pained it looks as if he's about to confess.

JEREMIAH

I paid her insurance payments? I paid  
her fucking insurance bills, Angel? I  
PAID ALL HER BILLS!

Jeremiah explodes, violently shoving Shawn back into the old television. Angel steps forward to intervene but the old Jeremiah is back. CRUNCH! He clocks Angel with a hard punch.

JEREMIAH

Where were all of you!? For ten years  
I took care of her!

Shawn and Angel keep their distance for a moment as Jeremiah loses it, pacing and seething like a mad dog.

There's a faint knocking in the other room but no one hears.

JEREMIAH

I shoulda never said anything. I  
shoulda kept my damn mouth shut around  
her. You know how Evelyn was. If  
there's an injustice in India, she's  
gonna show up at the Taj Mahal with a  
bull horn raising hell about it.

JACK

What'd you tell her?

JEREMIAH

I lost everything, Jack. She knew  
that. I let it slip that it had to be  
a bribe. I told her there was nothing  
she could do about it.

ANGEL

But she tried anyway.

JEREMIAH

Turns out she did, yeah.

Shawn's about to hit him again, he's so irate.

SHAWN

Why didn't you tell us this shit when  
we got here, you asshole!?

JEREMIAH

'Cause I just found out, Shawn! Green  
called it a gang shooting. What the  
fuck was I supposed to know!? I didn't  
start putting it together till you  
assholes started shaking up the town.

He flicks the 'Peppers' matches at Shawn's chest. Shawn catches them.

JEREMIAH

They're from Sweet's restaurant. You guys took 'em off the shooters. That's the first connection I got to Sweet. Then I started asking around too. Went to her work. Talked to some of Sweet's boys. Turns out Evelyn was callin' everyone she knew at the city; threatening to go to the police.

ANGEL

And Sweet killed her to shut her up?

JEREMIAH

It would seem fucking so, wouldn't it? She was threatenin' the guy's whole way of doin' business.

There's a long moment where everything sinks in.

JEREMIAH

I'm sorry I was keeping things from ya'll. Maybe I just didn't want to believe it.

SHAWN

Didn't want to believe it? Sticking your head up your ass doesn't make it nighttime, Jerry!

JEREMIAH

Fuck you, Shawn! I have a family! I have two little girls to protect. What? Was I supposed to tell you every little suspicion so you could go get them shot. Along with your dumb asses?

Jeremiah dabs his broken nose with a dish towel. This time, Jack notices the knocking and heads out of the room.

ANGEL

How did he know!? How did Sweet find out mom was trying to tear him down?

JEREMIAH

What do you mean, how'd he know? He's got people everywhere. People at the city. Probably talked to one of his dirty cops.

SHAWN

Who? Any idea who?

The knocking again.

This time Shawn hears it, too. He realizes that Jack's not in the room. His radar goes up.

SHAWN

Nooo! Jackie, don't open the door!

IN THE FRONT HALLWAY

JACK

It's just another kid!

As he swings open the door.

JACK

Look, I'm sorry, dude, but she's dead--

BOFF! He gets hit in the face with a snowball. An Eighteen-year-old PRANKSTER flips him off.

PRANKSTER

You're mother was a whore!

JACK

Fuck you, you little shit!

Shawn rounds the corner, shotgun already in hand. He sees Jack take off after the prankster, running into the street.

SHAWN

NOOOOOOO! JACK! DON'T!

ON THE STREET

Jack hightails it after the teenager who runs between two old panel vans parked on the corner.

Jack stops and turns around when he hears Shawn calling from behind him. He sees the shotgun pointed past him.

Jack turns back to the street, a chill running up his spine.

INSIDE THE TWO VANS

The panel doors SCRAPE open, revealing three or four SHOOTERS in each van, automatic rifles trained on Jack standing in the wide open.

IN THE YARD

The volley of GUNFIRE is deafening. Jack's torn to shreds.

On the porch, Shawn watches in horror as hundreds of rounds cut through his younger brother.

He raises his shotgun but before he can take more than a step, the rifles swivel and train on him.

Shawn dives behind a pillar on the front porch, the bricks explode into pieces around him.

Several of the gunmen pile out of the van, immediately closing in on Shawn.

#### IN THE HOUSE

Angel stalks out of the kitchen with a kitchen chair in one hand and his 9mm in the other. Without breaking stride, he hurls the chair through one of the two windows in the room.

#### OUTSIDE

The chair CRASHES! through the window and onto the lawn, drawing the gunmen's fire away from Shawn. They wheel around, shooting the hell out of the wrong window.

BA-BAP! BA-BAP! Angel's gun barks four rounds from the second window. The two lead gunmen slump silently to their knees, two red splotches less than an inch apart on their sternum.

BOOM! Shawn springs up from the porch and manages to take out a third shooter before the gunmen rain down on both of them.

#### INSIDE

Angel ducks back as BULLETS cut the front of the house to pieces, windows SHATTERING, hunks of plaster filling the air.

Jeremiah scrambles back away from the approaching wall of bullets. He's pushed out of the living room and into the kitchen.

The house coming down around him, Jeremiah dives out the back door and flees down the alley, not even looking back.

#### ON THE SNOWY FRONT LAWN

Several additional gunmen have left the van, approaching more carefully now, one covering the house with relentless bursts while the other advances.

Shawn and Angel are quickly pinned down by the much heavier weapons, barely able to return fire at all.

The killers close in on them.

#### ON A SIDE STREET NEXT TO THE HOUSE

Jeremiah sprints to his Volvo, nerves so shot he's barely able to open the door.

He climbs in and SCREECHES off down the street.

## INSIDE THE VOLVO - MOVING

Jeremiah grips the steering wheel, scared and confused. He speeds away from the chaos.

## JEREMIAH

God damn!

## INSIDE THE HOUSE

Angel lies on the floor covering his head, debris raining down around him.

SPLACK! A round cuts through Angel's right hand.

## ON THE PORCH

Shawn's tightly pinned down by relentless fire from two gunmen. The red bricks shattering to dust over his head.

Unbeknownst to Shawn, a third shooter has circled around to his blind side. The shooter finds a clear line of sight. He's about to unload a burst into Shawn's exposed back when...

WUMPH! Jeremiah's Volvo runs under the shooter, having jumped the curb at sixty-miles per hour. The impact breaks the hitman's back and tosses him into the air like a bull rider.

## IN THE CAREENING VOLVO

Jeremiah runs down a second surprised shooter, splaying him onto the hood.

The men lock eyes for an instant before the speeding Volvo plows into the parked van full of the remaining shooters, nearly cutting the guy in half and flipping the van over several times.

On impact, Jeremiah is pitched violently forward into...

...the driver's side airbag, one of six to perfectly deploy. Jeremiah lands with luxurious POOF!

## BACK ON THE STREET

The remaining hit men are disoriented by the collision.

Two of them drag themselves to their feet, turning their guns toward Jeremiah who sits pinned in what's left of the smoldering Volvo. The guy's about to pull the trigger.

For a second, Jeremiah's thinks he's dead for sure, but then the smoke blows aside and he sees Shawn and Angel step off the porch.

BLAM! The first shooter's neck and shoulder are blasted out by Shawn's shotgun.

The other gunman spins towards them only to BA-BAP! BA-BAP! have Angel tear apart his chest.

CRACK! CRACK! two bullets whiz past Shawn's head.

The two remaining hit men have stumbled bloodied and bruised out of the wrecked van. One of them has his pistol up pointing it shakily at Shawn. CRACK! CRACK!

Shawn calmly turns the huge gun on him. BOOM! The pellets pulverize the guy's outstretched gun arm before taking off half of his face.

The final shooter tries to crawl away on the snowy street. He sees Shawn stalking his way, looming over him.

He pleads for mercy. Shawn racks the shotgun and without another thought CLICK!

He's out of shells. The assassin's relieved.

THE SHOOTER

Thank God.

Shawn lifts the gun stoically and hammers the butt down--

BLACK

*We hear the brothers' terrified voices trying to revive Jack.*

FADE UP: Jack's eyes dart about, blood oozing from his ears. He's barely alive, bleeding all over Shawn, who holds him in his lap.

SHAWN

Goddamn it, Jack! Goddamn it! Get an ambulance! Get an ambulance!

Jack's eyes start to flutter, his breath weakening.

ANGEL

No! No, Jack! Stay with us! (calling out) Jerry! Where's the Goddamn ambulance!?

Shawn and Angel desperately cover the gaping wounds with their hands, trying to stem the bleeding. Their mother's large gold crucifix is slick with Jack's blood.

SHAWN

Don't you die on me, you fairy!

Jack manages a weak smile. He looks up at his three brothers who kneel over him. Evelyn steps into frame behind them, smiling.

EVELYN

You're safe, Jackie. Come home. Come home, son.

Jack's eyes close. Shawn falls apart, shouting and crying.

EXT. EVELYN MERCER'S HOUSE - AN HOUR LATER

The facade of the house is unrecognizable, pocked and scarred with bullets.

The entire area has been cordoned off. A FORENSICS TEAM combs the yard, collecting ejected shells and other evidence.

TWO PARAMEDICS work on Jeremiah, taking his blood pressure, checking his pupils, etc. They can't believe nothing's wrong with him. One of them nods at the horribly mangled Volvo.

PARAMEDIC

Freakin' Volvo. Safest car on the road.

Fowler stands near the curb with a FORENSIC TECH, looking at what appears to be drag marks leading up to one of the shooters' bodies on the edge of the lawn.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

Dragged?

The forensics guy nods. Fowler looks across the yard, watching his partner questioning Shawn and Angel by their

UNMARKED POLICE CAR

Shawn has the large bloody crucifix Jack was wearing.

SHAWN

Someone told Sweet she was onto him. Jeremiah thinks she went to the cops and they passed it on.

LT. GREEN

You think she talked to a bent cop?

ANGEL

In Detroit? No. That's completely impossible.

LT. GREEN

Your mother would have come to me. She's known me since I was ten.

Fowler approaches, interrupting them. He nods towards the nearest body under the sheet.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

Take two of you to drag that big boy  
over there back onto the property?

Shawn surveys the scene, evidence of carnage everywhere.

SHAWN

They came to our house. You think we  
won't make self-defense stick? You  
really are a rookie.

LT. GREEN

I'll look into it, fellas. Meantime  
you all keep clear. Hear me?

SHAWN

You oughta look quick.

Shawn turns and walks back to Jack's body.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - EVENING

Lt. Green approaches the DESK SERGEANT in the front lobby.

LT. GREEN

Hey, Bart. Gimme a look at the  
register?

The desk sergeant nods to a gigantic old-fashioned log book.

CUT TO:

Green flips carefully through several ledger pages of  
entries. After a moment, he finds Evelyn Mercer's signature  
on November 19th. Sign in time: 6:05 p.m.

IN AN AUDIO/VIDEO ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Green and a YOUNG TECH scan at high-speed through  
surveillance video of people whipping through the front.

The monitor shows Evelyn Mercer arriving in the staccato  
movement of a six-frames per second video camera.

LT. GREEN

Find her leaving. See how long she was  
here.

ZZZZZZIP. He scans through till they see Evelyn leaving,  
escorted to the door by Detective Fowler.

YOUNG TECH

Looks like 7:11. Like the store. Here  
for an hour.

INT. EVELYN'S KITCHEN - SAME

Shawn sits with Jeremiah and Angel, oblivious to the freezing cold wind that blows through the shot-out windows. Their breath is visible in the kitchen. Their clothes are stained with Jack's blood. Shawn's bare arms shiver from the cold.

JEREMIAH

You oughta put a coat on or something.

Shawn doesn't say anything. After a long moment, the phone RINGS jarringly loud. Shawn picks it up.

CUT TO:

GREEN'S POLICE CRUISER

GREEN (INTO HIS CELL)

Shawn, listen to me. Looks like Evelyn mighta talked to a dirty uniform. I'm on my way to see him now. I'll go to the mat for ya'll on this. But you gotta give me a couple days to circle around these guys.

BACK TO SHAWN

SHAWN

Who is it!? Green!? Who she talk to?

But Green already hung up.

INT. POOL HALL - NIGHT

Fowler's shooting pool and drinking beer in a predominantly Latino pool hall. Behind him we see Green enter the bar and scan the room. He sees Fowler and heads over to his table.

Fowler makes a good shot on the eight ball.

LT. GREEN

Nice one.

Fowler looks up.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

Green. What's cookin', boss? You're out after hours.

Fowler racks the balls for another game.

LT. GREEN

That councilmen I went to see? His wife came in today. Talked to missing persons. No sign of the big man.

Fowler shakes his head, almost clucking his tongue.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

Mercer boys roll back into town stirring up a hornet's nest, and low and behold people get stung.

Ka-Pow! Fowler breaks. Two balls go in.

LT. GREEN

Victor Sweet owns this place, doesn't he?

DETECTIVE FOWLER

I've heard that. So what?

LT. GREEN

So people ask questions. What's a cop doin' hanging round with the same thugs he grew up with. More than a couple times I've had to answer that question. Tonight's the first time I found myself asking it.

Fowler tries to keep it cool, continuing to shoot.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

You kidding, Green? Half what I know about what goes on on the streets I get from those boys. Keep your friends close and your enemies closer.

LT. GREEN

Yeah, that's what I figured. Except it did occur to me that you were the one that took that bogus eye-witness report that got us off on the wrong foot to begin with. Then the Mercer brothers start going on about how Evelyn mighta talked to someone at the station couple days before she died.

Fowler lines up for a shot. Crack! He makes another.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

Look, Green. I see where you're driving and I don't like it. Yeah, I talked to the old lady. For all of five minutes. Came in with her usual meddling. Some kids taggin' up her block. That kinda shit.

LT. GREEN  
Vandalism, huh?

DETECTIVE FOWLER  
Yeah, sure. I didn't think anything of it. I sent her over to the Parks Department. They clean that shit up.

Green watches Fowler make a difficult bank shot.

LT. GREEN  
Five minutes, huh?

DETECTIVE FOWLER  
Yeah. Couldn't have been much more than that.

Fowler finally misses a ball.

DETECTIVE FOWLER  
You're shot.

Green takes the cue and SMASHES it to pieces over Fowler's shin. Fowler goes down HOWLING, banging off the pool table and grabbing his leg. Everyone in the place goes dead quiet.

Green snaps Fowler's weapon out of his belt.

LT. GREEN  
Get a lawyer, you piece of shit.

Green turns and heads for the door. Fowler calls out:

DETECTIVE FOWLER  
You're out of your mind! You got nothin' on me! You're going to go to I.A. with this? They'll laugh at you!

IN THE PARKING LOT - LATER

Lt. Green heads for his car. He just gets his door open when he hears Fowler's voice behind him.

DETECTIVE FOWLER  
Green? There is one thing I forgot.

LT. GREEN  
Yeah, what's that?

DETECTIVE FOWLER  
I forgot they installed those damn surveillance cameras in the lobby at the station.

A moment passes between the men. Fowler goes for a second pistol, this one stashed in the back of his belt.

Draw. They raise their guns but Fowler's faster. BAM! BAM!  
BAM! He shoots his partner down.

Green gropes at his wounds, the snow beneath him turning red.

Fowler wipes the prints off the gun and pitches it into the snow. He draws a second gun, his regular police-issue revolver and unloads a few shots into a brick wall.

He slaps his 'officer in distress' button on his radio and squawks into the radio.

DETECTIVE FOWLER  
Officer involved shooting! Green's  
down! Suspects: young black males.  
Two. Vehicle white Ford panel van!

BAM! BAM! He fires two more shots past the radio receiver. He clicks off his radio and exhales.

BEGIN DOUBLE-FUNERAL SEQUENCE

The images play out on screen like an ethereal silent film as we intercut between Jack and Lt. Green's funeral:

A police bugler; A 21-gun salute; fifty Policemen in their dress blues in front of a flag-draped coffin; Angel, Shawn and Jeremiah carry Jack's casket toward the graveyard, their feet slipping in the snow; the brothers watching a tape of Jack on stage playing guitar.

AT LT. GREEN'S FUNERAL

Next to a hundred fellow officers, Fowler gazes down at Lt. Green's casket coldly, no emotion on his face.

He looks up to see Shawn, Angel and Jeremiah arrive glaring at him from across the grave. They stare each other down before Fowler finally looks away.

INT. EMPTY CHURCH - DAY

Everyone's cleared out after Green's funeral except Shawn, Angel and Jeremiah. They sit on one of the back pews in the otherwise empty church.

They sit in silence for a long moment, heads low as if praying. Jeremiah speaks up.

JEREMIAH  
You guys don't wanna hear this but here it is: we cannot go head to head with Victor Sweet. He'll put together an army of thugs. And we sure as hell can't shoot a cop. Even if he's dirty.

ANGEL

If? Green gets shot half-an-hour after he calls to say he's going to see a dirty cop. And there's only one witness: a cop. Fowler. He's not walking away from this, Jerry. If it wasn't for him, mom'd still be alive.

JEREMIAH

Look. I gotta a plan. I just got that check from her insurance. I can pay Sweet to call off the dogs. He's a business man. He'll deal.

SHAWN

Jerry, it doesn't count as a plan if it takes you longer to say it than it did to think it up. Mom used to say I don't like to think?

ANGEL

He's right, Jerry. Sweet'll take the meeting, take your money and we won't find your body till the river thaws.

SHAWN

If it gets that far. More likely you'll never even get close enough to make the offer.

JEREMIAH

Yeah, I could. I can talk to Evan. He knows everything's negotiable. He's an old union man.

EXT. TRACT HOUSE - THE NEXT MORNING

A small tract home on a non-descript block. A snow-covered tricycle sits on the icy lawn. Jeremiah pulls up in his minivan, checking over his shoulders as he gets out and trots up and knocks on the door.

The door opens. Evan can't believe his eyes.

EVAN

Jesus Christ, Jeremiah. What are you doing here!?

JEREMIAH

I came to do a little collective bargaining.

EVAN

With Sweet!? Get the fuck. Did you not get the message? He wants blood. That's not negotiable.

Evan tries to close the door, but Jeremiah shoulders it, knocking Evan back.

JEREMIAH  
People said we'd never get thirty  
dollars an hour on the line, either.

EVAN  
What are you putting on the table?

JEREMIAH  
Six hundred thousand dollars.

That catches Evan's attention.

JEREMIAH  
To call off the hit. To buy my  
brothers' lives back. And mine.

Evan hesitates for a long moment.

EVAN  
Get inside. You can't be seen here.

INT. JEREMIAH'S HOUSE - DAY

Jeremiah steps inside to find Shawn and Angel waiting.

JEREMIAH  
He went for it.

SHAWN  
He says he went for it.

ANGEL  
When's the meet?

JEREMIAH  
Four o'clock.

SHAWN  
Today? That's three hours from now.

JEREMIAH  
No choice. Sweet's goons are going to  
go off any second. We've got to do  
this fast.

SHAWN  
Look, even if Sweet likes the sound of  
this deal, Fowler's not going to let  
him go along. We know he killed Green.  
He wants us dead. So--

ANGEL  
So we take him out before the meet.  
I'll do it.

SHAWN  
No, we'll all do it.

ANGEL  
Not enough time, Shawn.

Shawn turns to Jeremiah.

SHAWN  
You're not going anywhere near Sweet  
until Angel has Fowler out of the  
fucking way.

JEREMIAH  
Fair enough.

Angel grabs his keys and his gun. Shawn shakes his head.

SHAWN  
I still think this plan sucks.

ANGEL  
I've seen better.

JEREMIAH  
It's the only plan we got, guys.

Shawn finishes his cigarette and tosses it out.

SHAWN  
Well then...we got three hours. Let's  
make it happen.

The three brothers hug briefly.

OUT FRONT / ANGEL'S CAR - A MOMENT LATER

ANGEL IN THE CAR

Angel fires up the engine and start to drive away. As if to steady his nerves, he flips on the radio.

MUSIC CUE: 'Super Bad' by James Brown kicks on, beginning the

FINAL MONTAGE

Images of a gathering storm, hard men on both sides of this battle locking and loading, preparing for the coming showdown.

## EVAN'S HOUSE

Evan holsters three different firearms, preparing for the coming showdown. His wife straightens his jacket collar as if he were going to an ordinary business meeting.

## EVAN'S WIFE

Now don't get shot. And don't shoot anyone, either...Unless you have to.

## INSIDE CHASE WESTERN BANK

Jeremiah sits across from the CONCERNED BANK MANAGER as he counts out six hundred thousand dollars in hundreds.

## IN THE BANK PARKING LOT

Shawn opens the trunk of the car and Jerry puts a suitcase full of money inside. Off the SLAM we cut to

## ANGEL'S CAR ON THE FREEWAY

Angel swerves dangerously through lanes of traffic on the freeway, the big .45 sitting on the seat next to him.

He pulls the car off the freeway and into the parking lot of

## A SEVEN-ELEVEN

Inside, Angel grabs a box of clear garbage bags and the entire display box of Kit-Kat candy bars. He approaches the counter, checking the clock on the wall. It's five till four. Angel cuts in line.

The look on his face is intense enough that no one in line dares say a word. The AFFABLE CLERK tries to laugh it off. He nods at the Kit Kats.

## CLERK

Emergency sweet tooth, eh?

## ANGEL

Something like that.

## OUTSIDE JEREMIAH'S HOUSE

Jeremiah stands with Camille outside their minivan. She doesn't want to get in.

## CAMILLE

Why does it have to be you!? Why can't Shawn go meet them? This is too dangerous.

JEREMIAH

They only trust me, Camille. I'll call you at your mothers. Now go.

Their daughters sit in the back seat, confused. Jeremiah leans in and kisses them.

JEREMIAH

Keep Mommy company until I come get you. I'll be there soon enough.

Camille slams the door and drives away, crying.

AT THE END OF THE BLOCK

She sees Shawn round the corner and both cars slow. She rolls down her window. He rolls down his.

CAMILLE

I know I don't know you, Shawn. But don't you let him get hurt. Bring him back to me.

SHAWN

I will, Camille.

EXT. DETECTIVE FOWLER'S HOUSE - SAME

Angel pulls the car to a halt across from an old Craftsman house on a quiet residential street.

He turns off the engine and watches the house for a moment while he slips his thick belt off. Ten inches from the buckle he pokes a new eye-hole in the leather with a pocket knife.

He leans out of the car when he sees a ten-year old kid on a banana seat bike rolling by through the muddy slush.

ANGEL

Hey, kid? I need a favor. I'll give you fifty bucks and a box of Kit-Kats.

BACK TO JEREMIAH'S HOUSE - SAME

Up the street, one of Sweet's white Lincoln Navigators rounds the corner and approaches Jeremiah's house.

IN THE HOUSE

Shawn and Jeremiah watch the SUV pull into the driveway. The HORN SOUNDS. They can see Evan in the back through an open window. Jeremiah checks a clock. It's almost four.

Shawn shakes his head.

SHAWN

Not until we hear from Angel.

The HORN WAILS again. Off the sound we

CUT TO FOWLER'S FRONT PORCH:

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK! A small fist wraps on the door.

After a beat, the door jerks open a crack and Fowler peers out, looking frazzled and nervous.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

What do you want!?

The little kid Angel just recruited stands on the porch with the box of Kit Kats. He speaks timidly from rote memory...

KID

I am selling candy to raise money for my basketball team, we want to-

DETECTIVE FOWLER

Get the hell off my porch, you little shit!

He SLAMS the door, scaring the kid away.

IN THE HOUSE - AS THE DOOR SLAMS

REVEAL: Fowler was holding his 9mm behind the door. He turns around and gets a clear plastic trash bag over his head.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

Whaaaaaaa!

Fowler's gun CLATTERS to the floor as Angel roughly jerks him off balance and up against the banister of the staircase.

In one deft motion, Angel belts the bag around Fowler's head and secures it tightly around a post.

Fowler's eyes bug out in fear and he's already out of breath, desperately sucking against the plastic.

His hands grope madly for the belt but it's too tight. He's helpless. Angel is frighteningly calm.

ANGEL

This is a big fucking problem. A big fucking problem for you.

Angel nods at a clock in the hallway.

ANGEL

Even a completely calm person will asphyxiate in four minutes without oxygen. And you're not exactly calm.

Fowler sucks and jerks his head around wildly.

BACK TO JEREMIAH'S HOUSE - SAME

The Navigator's still parked out front. The HORN WAILS impatiently again, this time for several seconds. Evan's BANGING on Jeremiah's door.

EVAN'S VOICE OUTSIDE

Jeremiah! What the hell!? You in there?

Shawn won't let Jeremiah answer.

JEREMIAH

I have to go. What else are we going to do?

Finally, Shawn's cell phone RINGS. He flips it open.

ANGEL'S VOICE ON THE PHONE

I got him. Go.

SHAWN

He's out of the way?

ANGEL'S VOICE ON THE PHONE

You wanna ask him? I'll put him on.

Shawn hears Fowler's frantic muffled cries. Shawn hangs up and turns to Jeremiah.

SHAWN

Go.

OUTSIDE - A MOMENT LATER

Jeremiah steps out of the house, carrying the old green suitcase approaching the SUV on uneasy legs.

Two of Sweet's THUGS immediately pat Jeremiah down. Evan's clearly annoyed by the wait.

EVAN

That our money?

Evan picks up the case and opens the door for Jeremiah.

INT. LINCOLN NAVIGATOR (MOVING) - DAY

Jeremiah sits uneasily in the backseat, wedged between Evan and Charlie. Evan speed dials his cell.

EVAN (INTO THE PHONE)  
He's on board, Boss...Got it.

Evan hangs up, shaking his head with a sigh.

CHARLIE  
What'd he say?

EVAN  
He said, 'Finally some good news, you asshole.' And hung up.

Charlie smirks and they drive for another moment, the Four Tops' track 'Still Water' playing on the radio.

EVAN  
You like the Tops, Jerry?

BACK AT FOWLER'S HOUSE

Fowler's face is turning blue. He's digging his nails in the flesh of his neck under the belt. Angel shakes his head.

ANGEL  
You'll never get the belt. Trust me.

Fowler's just about out of time when it dawns on him. He reaches up and tears open the plastic bag, gasping painfully for breath.

Angel claps condescendingly.

ANGEL  
People never think to go for the bag.  
It's always the belt first for some reason. Bag has to be clear, though.  
Black doesn't work.

INT. A SMALL ROOM - DAY

Sumi's in a full-blown melt down. She babbles almost incoherently, waving an airline ticket.

SUMI  
He promised he wasn't leaving! I found his ticket. For tomorrow morning! He wasn't even going to tell me! He's gonna end up killed! We were going to Vegas!

REVEAL: She's talking to a POLICE SERGEANT at the station.

POLICE SGT.  
Whoa, slow it down a gear, little lady. Who's going to end up killed?

SUMI  
This isn't even his fight! It's his stupid brother's fault! I hate him! He's ruined everything! Everything!

She breaks down, crying.

POLICE SGT.  
I can help you but you have to think clearly. Who are you talking about and what's about to happen?

SUMI  
My boyfriend. He was talking about killing a cop. He's on the way to the guy's house. Right now.

CUT TO:

SIRENS WAILING, lights flashing. Police cars respond en masse, skidding around corners, ROARING out of the police station garage, flipping dangerous u-turns...

INT. WHITE LINCOLN NAVIGATOR - SAME

The big truck winds through traffic near the lake.

IN THE BACK SEAT

Jeremiah's breathing a bit easier when the driver abruptly wheels the vehicle off the main road and into a parking lot adjacent to Lake St. Claire, which is completely frozen over.

EVAN  
Only a slight change of plan.

JEREMIAH  
We're not meeting at Vic's office?

THE DRIVER  
Not exactly.

The driver swings the vehicle down a boat ramp right out onto the frozen lake.

They drive for a long moment in the tense silence, the thick ice creaking under the SUV's tires.

Jeremiah's heart sinks as he watches out the back window. After a few moments, the cityscape starts to sink beneath the horizon.

BACK AT FOWLER'S HOUSE

Fowler's still panting for breath.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

*Whattaya gonna do, asshole? Kill a  
cop? You'll never even make it to the  
station. Cop killer's get shot with  
cuffs on, resisting arrest.*

In the distance, we begin to hear police SIRENS closing in.

CUT TO:

A fleet of squad cars and S.W.A.T. vans racing to Fowler's.

BACK TO THE SUV - (MOVING ACROSS THE LAKE)

Jeremiah's eyes dart about. They're now a half-a-mile from the shore and absolutely alone.

Just the pristine white expanse of frozen ice.

After a moment, Jeremiah sees a flash of orange a hundred yards ahead. He can't make out the source of the flames in the blowing, swirling snow.

Soon he can see a second Lincoln Navigator parked in the dead middle of nowhere.

Their car stops next to several more of Victor's men.

JEREMIAH

What do we do now?

EVAN

We get out.

Jeremiah clutches the small suitcase nervously. He's the last one to step into the blowing cold

ONTO THE FROZEN LAKE

No sign of Victor Sweet. Jeremiah's heart leaps when he sees the source of the flames.

One of Victor's guys is on his knees, cutting a grave-shaped hole in the ice with a blow-torch.

JEREMIAH

Jesus Christ. What's that for?

EVAN

Ice fishing. Tommy here's part Eskimo.  
What the fuck you think it's for?

Off Jeremiah's look of terror...

OUTSIDE DETECTIVE FOWLER'S HOUSE

A S.W.A.T. COMMANDER gives his guys signals as they silently take up position getting ready to storm the place.

More and more cop cars arrive at the scene, SIRENS wailing.

INSIDE FOWLER'S HOUSE

Still belted to the staircase, Fowler hears the cops.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

Ha! You hear that?! That's my boys out there! You're so fucked!

ANGEL

Your boys? See if they're still your boys when word spreads that you pulled the trigger on Green.

Fowler laughs.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

That's your angle? You're going to walk out there and tell them that I killed Green. (laughs again) That's your story?

ANGEL

It has the advantage of being true.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

So what? I killed my partner. I could kill the whole police department if you were the only witness, I'd just get promoted to Chief. You're one of the Mercer brothers, brother. No cop in the world's going to believe your word over mine.

Angel lowers the gun and starts to undo one shirt button after another...

ANGEL

Probably not. I mean, other than ones that have been sitting in a van out front listening to every word of this conversation.

A look of confusion washes over Fowler's face.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

Bullshit.

REVEAL: Angel's got a wire taped to his chest. He smiles.

ANGEL

'Fraid not.

A PLAYFUL MACRO SHOT: follows the wire from the microphone, down Angel's chest and into his pants--where's it's attached to absolutely nothing but his bare ass.

Angel nods at the window, unbolting Fowler from the stairs.

ANGEL

Take a look.

Fowler jerks back the blinds and sure enough, the house is being surrounded by squad cars and S.W.A.T. vans.

Of course, Angel doesn't bother to tell him that the cops are there for him. A BEAT COP spots Angel in the window and points excitedly. Angel waves and smiles at the guy.

Angel talks into the phony mic.

ANGEL

Okay, Lieutenant. I'm brining him out.

Fowler buys it, beginning to panic. Angel pushes him toward the door but--

Fowler bolts for his 9mm from the floor. Angel dives after him, but Fowler comes up with the gun, jabbing the barrel into the back of Angel's head. Angel throws his hands up.

ANGEL

Easy! Easy!

DETECTIVE FOWLER

*I'm gonna pop your head like Champagne cork.* (he yells into the police wire).  
You hear me! I'm takin' your clown down with me. You getting this on tape?!

Fowler chambers a round, about to pull the trigger. Angel shouts.

ANGEL

Wait, wait! I'm your only way out,  
Fowler. Be smart. I'm your only way out.

BACK TO JEREMIAH ON THE LAKE

As he nervously shifts on his freezing feet, holding a suitcase full of money, surrounded by five men with guns.

Finally, ominously, another SUV appears on the horizon, silently closing in on them, a cloud of snow swirling up behind it.

#### IN THE APPROACHING SUV

The driver and two more ARMED GANGSTERS escort Vic who sits in the back seat drumming his knees.

VICTOR SWEET

Fool showed up. And they say there's no such thing as a free lunch.

The SUV pulls up and stops.

VICTOR SWEET

Alright, shitheads, let's sink this dumb ass and get outta here. I gotta candle-lit date lined up with a hot piece of Puerto Rican ass.

THUMP! He pushes open the door.

#### IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FROZEN LAKE

Vic steps into the chilling wind, snow whirling up around him.

VICTOR SWEET

Jeremiah Mercer! Businessman.

He turns to his driver.

VICTOR SWEET

Pat him down.

EVAN

We already did.

VICTOR SWEET

Well I'm sayin' pat him down again.

Vic's driver roughly pats down Jeremiah, first checking for a hidden weapon and then ripping open his shirt to see if he's wearing a wire.

VIC'S DRIVER

He's clean, boss.

VICTOR SWEET

Thanks, fuckwit. I got eyes.

Jeremiah stands there, desperately trying to keep his cool, surrounded by a circle of seven armed gangsters.

Vic steps into the circle and jerks the suitcase out of Jeremiah's hand. He pops it open and, sure enough, it's filled to the seams with stacks of hundreds.

Vic whistles and smiles.

VICTOR SWEET

Goddamn it. I like the way you do business. You're a reasonable man. Should have let me in on your project. Could've been partners.

He holds up the suitcase.

VICTOR SWEET

Could've been a Sweet deal for both of us. Now it's just a Sweet deal for me.

Victor Sweet laughs as he snaps closed the case.

JEREMIAH

We gonna do some business?

VICTOR SWEET

Oh right, right, right. Down to business. What were the terms again? You give me six hundred grand. And I pardon you and your brothers. Forgive and forget.

JEREMIAH

Not exactly. That was my original plan but Shawn and Angel called me a moron. Figured you'd agree to the deal and then shoot me in the face and take the money anyway.

Victor laughs.

VICTOR SWEET

You're hurting my feelings.

JEREMIAH

The whole thing got me to thinking about my old organized labor days. Got me to thinking about negotiating with corporate profiteers and their pimps and lawyers. The more I thought about it, the more you reminded me of those guys, Vic. Especially the way you disrespect and abuse your working men here.

Victor's losing patience.

VICTOR SWEET

You been doing a lot of thinking, boy.

JEREMIAH

I have. My brothers and I been thinking about it all morning. By the time I stopped by Evan's we had a whole new proposal to put on the table.

VICTOR SWEET

A whole new proposal. Is that right?

JEREMIAH

Yeah, check this out. Now this is a Sweet deal. Instead of giving the six-hundred grand to you, we decided we should give it to the mistreated employees you've got standing behind you.

He gestures to Evan and the crew.

Vic smirks, rage lighting up in his eyes. He steps back, hand outstretched.

VICTOR SWEET

Someone give me a pistol. I'm gonna kill this motherfucker.

EVAN

Nah, hold on, Vic. The thing you probably don't know about me is, I was in the union a long time. And I never missed a meeting.

Vic turns around and looks at his men who show no sign of backing him up. It dawns on him. They've already made a deal behind his back. He's fucked.

Vic's whole world implodes. He spits and tries to walk away, but his guys block his path.

The circle of protection turns into a cage.

VICTOR SWEET

So what now? You gonna kill the hand that's been feeding you? Over some stupid old lady? You dumb-shits. I already told Fowler all about this meeting. You kill me you're all straight down for murder one. He's probably on the way here right now.

It's Jeremiah turn to smirk.

JEREMIAH

I wouldn't count on that.

BACK TO FOWLER'S HOUSE

The COPS all duck and raise their weapons as the door swings open and Fowler pushes Angel out of the house at gunpoint.

DETECTIVE FOWLER

I swear to God, I'll kill him! You set me up you fuckers. You getting this on tape?!

The utterly baffled cops look at one another. They expected a hostage situation but the reverse version of this one.

BAFFLED COP

Fowler! What the fuck!?

DETECTIVE FOWLER

Back off! I'm serious!

SECOND CONFUSED COP

Fowler, what are you doing!? Drop the fucking gun!

DETECTIVE FOWLER

Not a chance!

He FIRES several warning shots into the sides of the squad cars. Thirty cops hit the ground.

THIRD COP

Jesus, Christ, Fowler! Put down the weapon!

DETECTIVE FOWLER

Clear away! I'm serious! Now!

All along the perimeter, the cops have no idea what to do. S.W.A.T. snipers are tensing up, fingers closing in on triggers.

At the height of the standoff, a tiny smirk passes across Angel's face. He whispers to Fowler.

ANGEL

Chump.

Angel throws an elbow into Fowler's gut, and dives to the ground. Left without a hostage, Fowler panics and takes aim at the cops.

Wrong choice.

KASPLAT! A volley of SNIPER-FIRE annihilates Fowler. His lifeless body slumps to the snow next to Angel.

BACK ON THE LAKE - SAME

Victor turns in a full circle, looking at each of the guys, most of who still won't look him in the eye.

He tries to find the weakest link.

VICTOR SWEET

Okay, so c'mon! Which one of you tough guys is going to do it? Who's gonna take on the champ? Who's the man thinks he's more man than Victor Sweet!?

Then, as if on cue, he sees a solitary figure, tromping methodically through the snow.

VICTOR SWEET

Who the fuck is that?

PAN UP from a pair of heavy boots crushing the snow, continuing up past a thick longshoreman's overcoat, before settling on the crucifix that Jack wore, now caked in his blood and dangling from Shawn's neck.

Shawn reaches the group of men. He nods to Jeremiah.

The guys step back, widening the ring for the lion and the bear. Shawn steps in, eyes locked with Victor Sweet.

Vic shrugs off his coat, raising his huge, club-like fists.

They begin to circle each other.

VICTOR SWEET

Shawn Mercer. Back in town. Well, I'm tellin' you boy, you better take a moment to think long and hard about what you're about to get into.

SHAWN

My mother always said...I never liked to think.

HAMMER! Shawn lands a monstrous right cross.

But rather than go down, Victor counter-punches with a stunning upper cut.

Victor's men grimace. But...

WHAM! WHAM!

Shawn lands a hard left-right combination.

Charlie's enthusiasm gets the best of him.

CHARLIE

Take him, Shawn!

His outburst is infectious. The others guys begin to ROAR, rooting on Shawn, letting out a decade or more of frustration, humiliation and abuse from Victor sweet.

ALL OF THE GUYS

Kill him, Mercer! Take his head off!  
That's it! Again! Again!

Shawn and Victor have locked each other up, standing toe to toe, trading one short, violent hook after another.

JEREMIAH

Stick him, Shawn! Don't let up!

And then, almost as fast as it started, the fury ends. Victor steps into a crushing right cross from Shawn that audibly breaks Vic's jaw.

The huge man takes one awkward back-step before dropping like a felled tree.

SLOW MOTION: Snow plumes up around Vic's head as it hits the ice.

The wind swirls the snow away, revealing Shawn lording over Victor's unconscious body.

BELOW THE FROZEN SURFACE OF THE LAKE

It's almost dark. The only light filters down from the grave-shaped hole high above.

There's a muffled splash as a body is dumped into the icy water.

The corpse descends languidly. After a moment we see Vic's lifeless face drift by, eventually sinking out of frame.

BACK OUTSIDE FOWLERS HOUSE

The first cop to arrive whisks Angel out of harm's way, while others pounce on Fowler, kicking the gun from his dead grip.

The cop escorts Angel away from the crime scene. Sumi pulls out of the police sergeant's grip (the one she duped), running to his side.

SUMI

Oh, baby! Thank God you're okay!

POLICE SGT.

What the hell happened in there?

ANGEL

He killed Green. I confronted him and he went ballistic. Good thing you guys were here.

POLICE SGT.

Yeah, well, you're going to have to make a statement.

The Sgt. ducks Angel's head into the back of a police car.

The cop heads back into the action. Sumi walks quickly up to the window, which is cracked just enough to speak.

ANGEL

They bought it. Told you, baby, you should have been actress.

BACK ON THE LAKE / INSIDE THE MOVING NAVIGATOR

In the back seat, Jeremiah and Shawn drive off the ice in silence for a long moment.

ON THE RADIO we hear Marvin Gaye's 'What's going on'.

JEREMIAH

Just like old times.

The brothers grasp hands for a moment. Charlie hands a package from the front seat back to Evan.

CHARLIE

Here you go, boss.

Evan hands three bundles of cash to Shawn and Angel.

SHAWN

What's this?

EVAN

You're out. We did this together. (to Jeremiah) Call it union dues.

OUTSIDE JEREMIAH'S HOUSE

The Navigator pulls up and Shawn and Jeremiah get out. Evan rolls down the window.

EVAN

One more thing. You guys back in business? We working together?

Shawn and Jeremiah exchange a glance.

SHAWN

Nah. Haven't you heard. Detroit's changing. There's a lot of legitimate opportunity for guys like us. Right Jeremiah?

JEREMIAH

You bet your ass.

EVAN

Well, keep an eye out. Sweet had a lot of cops on the dime. They're going to come looking for you, Shawn.

SHAWN

I'm not worried about cops. Cops love me.

CUT TO AN INTERROGATION ROOM

SCHWACK! A COP backhands Shawn across the table.

INTERROGATING COP

I'm going to ask you one more time where were you last night, shitbag?

SHAWN

I told you, man. I gotta locked tight alibi. But I don't want to tell you unless I have to.

INTERROGATING COP

Believe me, you have to, you piece of shit!

SHAWN

Alright, from five p.m. yesterday until eleven or so, I was, well, I have to admit, I was fucking your wife.

CRUNCH! Another hard punch to the face.

MATCH CUT TO:

CRUNCH! Angel recoils from a similar punch from a SECOND COP. He dabs his busted lip...

ANGEL

...enough, alright? Enough. You got me. I did it. I did it, alright?

SECOND INTERROGATING COP  
You did it? Then I wanna hear you say  
it. Tell it to the tape. Go on. What'd  
you do?

Angel clears his throat and talks into the tape recorder.

ANGEL  
I nailed her good, man. I nailed this  
dude's wife. I'm truly sorry for my-

SLAP! Another backhand.

CUT TO:

CRUNCH. Jeremiah takes a hard punch. A THIRD COP looms over  
him, fists still up.

THIRD COP  
You wanna go another round?

JEREMIAH  
With your wife? Nah, man, it wasn't  
even that good the first time--

CRACK!

CUT BACK TO:

Shawn smiles at his interrogators, his teeth now bloody.

INTERROGATING COP  
Smile all you want, I don't need you  
to tell me shit. I got you already.

SHAWN  
Oh, yeah? That true? Whatcha got?

The cop grandly slaps down a small evidence bag.

INTERROGATING COP  
I got your hair, scum bag! Taken off  
Victor Sweet's dead body.

Shawn roars back in his chair, laughing.

AT THE FRONT DESK OF THE STATION

Sumi and Camille are pleading with the DESK SERGEANT.

SUMI  
Have you let them call a lawyer!?

CAMILLE  
What are they charged with!? I want to  
see my husband right now!

BANG! Jeremiah gets tossed ass-backwards through a side door into the lobby.

SUMI

What about Angel!? Where's--

SLAM! Angel's tossed out on his butt skidding next to Jeremiah. Everyone turns to the door, expectantly.

BOOM! A different set of doors fly open. But this time it's a cop who comes flying through, barely keeping on his feet.

Shawn walks out behind him, dusting his hands.

SHAWN

Don't put your hands on me, rookie.

Shawn notices his brothers splayed out on the floor in front of him. He shakes his head.

SHAWN

Pansies.

OUTSIDE

The three brothers burst out the front door of the police station, laughing their asses off at the expense of the cops. Camille and Sumi follow, shaking their heads.

CAMILLE

You guys are exactly alike, aren't you?

SHAWN

Whattaya want? We're brothers.

They head away from the station, laughing.

JEREMIAH

So what do you say, guys? Ready to start back in business together?

ANGEL

Long as you come up with a better idea than those stupid artists' lofts.

SHAWN

C'mon. I've got an idea.

EXT. EVELYN'S HOUSE -- DAY

The sound of buzz saws and hammers. Angel, Shawn, and Jeremiah in the midst of rebuilding the façade of Evelyn's shattered house. Off their laughing and joking around we...

FADE OUT.