

MOTOR CITY
by
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WARNER BROS

FIRST DRAFT
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<NOTE TO READER: AS THERE IS LITTLE AUDIBLE DIALOGUE IN THIS STORY, *DIALOGUE THAT APPEARS IN ITALICS* IS DESCRIPTIVE OF CHARACTER REACTION AND/OR EMOTION CONVEYED.>

EXT. DETROIT - NIGHT (1970'S)

The city is lit up. If it glows, or otherwise emits light, it's turned on.

But, something doesn't look quite right as we MOVE OVER downtown.

A Skyscraper or two is missing.

No cell phone towers.

A Billboard advertises a KID who would "like to teach the world to sing"--in perfect harmony, no less. He holds an old school bottle of COCA-COLA.

Donna Summer that echoes from someone's stereo...

GRAPHIC: 30 YEARS AGO.

WE MOVE over buildings, away from Downtown, to a more residential area. Upscale.

A FIRE glows several blocks away. A big one. Fire Engines and red lights. Sirens are still coming.

As we move over the top of a string of Apartment Buildings...

Some MANIAC RUNS RIGHT BY US--carrying a ONE-LEGGED DEAD MAN over his shoulder.

TRACKING WITH MANIAC:

His clothes are torn, blackened by fire, filth, and blood. Cuts and scrapes bleed openly.

His head is shaved boot camp style. His face is covered in a dozen scars--the kind you get from deep gashes that heal without the benefit of stitches.

There's a pistol-grip sawed off double-barrel shotgun in his hand and murder in his eyes.

Meet JOHN MILLER.

Running for all he's worth across the top of an apartment building, he LEAPS into the night air off the edge...

EXT. ROOF #2 - CONTINUOUS

And lands with a BONE JARRING THUD--the DEAD GUY tumbles and skids.

Miller twisted an ankle.

Means nothing right now. If he coughed up his spleen, it wouldn't stop him. Not now.

Not this night.

He picks up the shotgun and drags the Dead Guy to the edge of the building, as the GUNNING OF ENGINES and the SQUEALING OF TIRES ebbs into focus from below...

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Two late 70's MERCEDES 400's roar by, traffic laws be damned.

EXT. ROOF #2 - CONTINUOUS

Miller zeroes in like a hawk on the headlights tearing ass up the street ten stories below.

Wipes his bleeding nose--puts this shotgun down...

And THROWS THE DEAD GUY OVER THE EDGE.

After a BEAT of Miller's heavy breathing--a hellacious BANG below. Tires screech. CRASH.

Miller cracks the shotgun in half--pulls two fresh shells from a pocket, shoves them in, and jumps over the edge on to the fire escape...

Very calm. Very matter-of-fact.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

A leg and a loafer sticks out of the windshield of the Mercedes that's wrapped around a light pole--direct hit with the Dead Guy.

The other Mercedes hit a FIRE HYDRANT--still running as water GUSHES UNDERNEATH the bent front end.

Miller limps off the Fire Escape and Zombies towards the light pole Mercedes, shotgun at the ready.

Makes a beeline for the passenger's window--doesn't even look inside. Just shoves the shotgun into the car and...

BOOM.

Miller heads to the fire hydrant Mercedes further down the street--approaches from the front.

It's obscured by the showering water--halos of headlights in the torrent. The windshield is spiderwebbed--impossible to see through.

Shotgun leveled squarely at the opaque windshield, Miller limps towards it.

Cautious steps.

Slow.

Tense.

THE ENGINE ROARS.

The mangled Mercedes leaps out of the wall of water, nailing Miller, who finds himself on the slippery hood...

TRACKING WITH MERCEDES:

Ripping down the street--engine knocking. Miller desperately tries to hang on to both hood and gun.

He throws a look over his shoulder...

MILLER'S POV:

A cross street. A red light. A river of traffic zipping by. Half a block away and this car isn't even slowing down...

Shit.

Miller punches the shotgun barrel through the already shattered windshield, right where the Driver's head should be...

The BRAKES ARE SLAMMED.

His grip slips.

Thrown from the hood, Miller sails directly into the midst of the passing cars...

A SHOT EXPLODES from Miller's shotgun as he flies backwards...

FREEZE FRAME:

On his back, BETWEEN two passing trucks--firing between his legs in mid-air.

But, it's not buckshot loaded into that shotgun blast.

It's PENNIES.

Smoking, flaming, copper discs--frozen an inch from impacting the windshield...

CUT TO:

EXT. RIO DE JANEIRO - DAY (PRESENT DAY)

The giant statue of "Christ The Redeemer" stands on clouds.

WE MOVE past his open arms and view the city of Rio below. Establishing.

Persian Blue water, freckled with white dot sail boats, kisses an emerald green coast, upon which sits the city of...

GRAPHIC: RIO DE JANEIRO. PRESENT DAY.

WE MOVE over the city, never seeing the slums, up the coast to an...

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING PENTHOUSE ROOF - DAY

An OLD MAN takes in a gorgeous view. Alone. Half of his face is badly scarred.

The few sprigs of white hair left on his head flutter in the ocean breeze.

Easily 75 to 80--judging by the oxygen tank on his arm and the air tube up his snout, not in tip top form.

He can see Death from where he's standing.

Watery eyes close.

His face lifts.

Sun and the ocean breeze bathe his wrinkled skin. A slight smile creeps over what were once lips on a younger face.

A MAID exits glass penthouse doors with a tray in her hand. Atop this tray is a sweating ice filled cocktail...

And a BRIGHT RED PACKAGE.

Sensing her presence as she retreats, the Old Man grabs his cane and hobbles to a deck chair. Carefully seating himself, so as to not break anything, he takes a long luxurious pull from the cocktail, before noticing...

The Red Package.

A tied red bow flapping gently in the wind.

He opens it--a LEATHER SCRAP BOOK.

Curious. Drink in hand, he sits the book in his lap and opens it.

Yellowed. Old. Newspaper clippings.

Unexpected.

Headlines creep by us as page after page is turned.

"Soviet forces invade Afghanistan."

"Muhammad Ali announces his retirement from boxing."

"Pirates win The Series."

INT. PENTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The Maid doles out pills from myriad medicine bottles.

Outside, A GLASS SHATTERS.

She races out...

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING PENTHOUSE ROOF - CONTINUOUS

She explodes out the glass doors, expecting to find The Old Man sprawled on the tiles.

But, he isn't.

Still seated in the deck chair. The Scrap Book across his lap. The shattered glass of his dropped cocktail gleams in a puddle below his shaking hand.

He stares at a faded Headline: "LOCAL MAN CAUGHT IN BIGGEST BUST EVER".

There's a grainy black and white photo of a MAN on the ground--a Cop's knee in his back.

His teeth are bared--forever frozen in time yelling. But, it isn't anger on his face. It almost looks like...

Anguish.

It's John Miller.

The Old Man stares at Miller's face. No reaction. No trace of recognition. No hint of emotion.

Just that dropped glass...

FADE TO:

EXT. FACTORY - (1970'S)

When you think of a shitty industrial job, you think of this place--brick and smoke belching smoke stacks. Hard work for hard working people, or those to whom it never occurred they could do something else with their lives.

The Night Shift just got cut loose.

WORKERS stream out the gates, filthy and tired. These cats ain't your Blue Collar Heroes. This ain't the good Union gig.

These guys work here because they can't get jobs anywhere else. You can see it in their faces--this job is the only thing keeping them from being criminals.

Again.

ONE GUY exits. Head down under a dirty Detroit Tigers ball cap.

The others are paired up along racial lines. Black Guys. White Guys. Hispanic Guys. Friends. Colleagues in sweat and grime.

But not this guy. He walks alone.

The other Workers toss sideways glances at him along the way. Fear? Distrust?

Admiration?

No one even talks to him. Funny thing is, there's absolutely nothing about him that obviously causes it.

He's utterly normal in *this* crowd.

The only thing out of the ordinary? He walks with his eyes down. Never raising them. No bravado. No cocksure swagger like the others.

A quiet humility in his body language the others do not possess.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAWN

The guy in the Tigers cap stops at his beat to hell and rusted '65 Chevy Malibu.

Someone is leaning on the trunk. Judging this book by its cover, he's a fence/pimp/all around shady individual. His name is YOUNGBLOOD.

Our guy lifts his face--underneath the brim of that dirty Detroit Tigers ball cap, a familiar face...

JOHN MILLER.

Glances over their shoulders. On the sly. Miller palms a handful of foldin' money to Youngblood.

Who produces a tiny brown bag like David Copperfield--hands it to Miller.

ACROSS THE PARKING LOT:

On the other side of the asphalt island--a Z28 CAMARO.

EXT. Z28 - CONTINUOUS

Three shady looking mothers, ATHOS, PORTHOS, and ARAMIS, watch between parked cars.

They watch Miller peek into the small brown bag and smile. He slaps Youngblood some skin and climbs into his Malibu.

Aramis starts the Z28--rumbles to life like Detroit engines used to.

INT. MALIBU - DAWN

Pre-morning rush hour traffic--Miller tosses the small brown bag inside the glove box.

He slides a DOOBIE BROTHERS 8-track into the deck--the grooving riff of LONG TRAIN RUNNIN' kicks in...

"Down around the corner,

A half a mile from here,

You can see them long trains run,

And you watch them disappear.

Without love,

Where would you be now?

Without love..."

Miller wipes exhaustion from his eyes, as the Z28 pulls alongside him. Porthos tosses a sideways glance Miller's direction.

The Z28 slows, vanishing from the Malibu's driver window-- Miller never notices.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAWN

The CLERK behind the counter chatters away on the phone in a language as foreign as he appears to be.

He tosses a wave to Miller who just walked through the door, and right out of the frame. The Clerk throws today's WANT ADS on the counter. The Help Wanted section. Already circled.

He presses buttons on the cash register between staccato outbursts of whatever he's speaking--knows what Miller is buying.

Miller returns cup of coffee, grabs the Want Ads, and drops a few coins on the counter--waves goodbye.

Morning ritual between these two. Coffee and Help Wanted.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS

Miller exits for his car.

Problem.

It ain't there.

Takes a second for what he's seeing to careen around inside his tired brain looking for something to connect with.

Drops the coffee when it does. But, not the Want Ads.

Miller whiplashes his eyes up the street.

There's his wheels! Just turning the corner...

EXT. STREET - DAWN

The Malibu rumbles up the street, as Miller careens around a corner on foot--running his ass off after his ride.

Still clinging on to those Want Ads.

The Malibu makes another turn down the block.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Clutching at a stitch in his side, Miller gasps for air. His run slows to a defeated walk.

Can't go anymore. He kicks a garbage can in a rage.

Just as it appears that Miller is about to scream the longest, most creative stream of profanity ever uttered...

A Z28 Camaro roars out of a nearby alley, tires squealing, and blows by Miller. Athos, Aramis, and Porthos lock eyes with him on the way by.

EXT. NEARBY ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Miller finds his car. Driver's door open. Just sitting there.

He panics...

INT. MALIBU - CONTINUOUS

Terrified, Miller opens the glove box. The small brown bag is still there.

MILLER

Thank you, Jesus.

With the greatest sigh of relief mankind has ever witnessed, he opens the bag--pulls out a...

Small VELVETEEN BOX.

Miller opens it and gazes at the ENGAGEMENT RING, with the world's smallest diamond, inside.

A sliver of Cubic Zirconia.

To Miller it's the Hope Diamond.

EXT. THE NEIGHBORHOOD - MORNING

Row after row of tiny houses that have walls going for them and little else.

In front one of these rotten little houses in this rotten little place, sitting atop a perfect little lawn, we find Miller's Malibu.

INT. MILLER'S HOUSE (BEDROOM) - MORNING

Miller sits on the edge of the bed and stares at the Engagement Ring in his hand--listens to RUNNING WATER from the shower.

His shirt is off. Exposed chest and arms covered in the haphazard tattoos of a haphazard life.

Most the kind you get with a straight pin and Bic ink. Jail House Tatts scrawled all over a body that had more time than skin.

But, a few are ornate and professional. Like the one on his shoulder--a small banner with a single word...

RANGER.

But, it's faded. That was a long time ago.

He looks to the bathroom...

MILLER'S POV:

The dark curves of a WOMAN are visible through the plastic distortion of the shower door.

Excitement and fear take root. Courage and determination pull him to his feet. He's gonna do it.

Hard eyes that have seen hard years soften to raw adoration, as he watches the womanly shape on his way across the bedroom.

But, something stops him cold. Like when you feel someone behind you.

He turns...slowly.

And sees himself in a third-hand mirror. Miller and his reflection stand back to back, each staring over a shoulder at the other.

He looks at the Jail House Tattoos. He looks the same to us, but we just ain't seeing what he sees.

Who he sees.

Miller puts the ring in his pocket and walks out, as the woman in the shower hums a pretty song...

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Eggs sizzle.

Her name is SOPHIA and she'd be beautiful if she didn't look so damned tired. She has that "two jobs" look.

Her back is to Miller, who sits at a card table pretending to be kitchen table. The WANT ADS lay before him.

He neatly folds today's classifieds--lays them on a stack of other folded classifieds. A month's worth.

Morning ritual. Complete.

BEHIND SOPHIA:

He kneels behind her back, the Engagement Ring in his hand. Try again. Do it right.

She has no idea he's there. He opens his mouth to speak-- stops. He's trying. Real hard.

Miller tries to find his Zen, and tries again.

Fails. Curses himself silently for being such a wuss.

Then, he looks at the crappy kitchen with the crappy furniture. He looks at her tattered and frayed robe. He looks at that ridiculous little ring in his hand.

He just can't do it.

MILLER

She don't deserve me.

Closes his eyes in resignation--closes the box. Something seems to break inside of him.

When he opens his eyes, he's staring at the front of Sophia's robe.

BUSTED. A plate of steaming eggs in her hand, she's frozen like a deer in headlights.

They stare terror at each other for a long, long BEAT.

Till, she slings the eggs skyward with a HAPPY SHRIEK.

SOPHIA

Yes!

EXT. FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON DOOR WINDOW:

Through the dingy front door window, past the security bars, and down the hall, we watch Sophia and Miller embrace.

She smiles. He smiles. They talk. We can't hear what they're saying from out here, but you can read the lips.

I love you's galore.

Sophia slides the ring on her finger--kisses Miller like it was their last day on earth.

This is what happiness looks like.

PULL BACK:

Ever so slowly--TWO COPS on either side of the front door. Helmets and Shotguns at the ready.

BACK FURTHER:

Two more.

And, two more. And...

EIGHT COPS ready to rock--one with a battering ram at the ready.

The pounding of HELICOPTER BLADES bleeds into audio focus. Coming.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Sophia and Miller end their kiss just as a FLASH BANG GRENADE crashes through the window.

A BRILLIANT FLASH.

WE GO TO BLACK.

A deafening BOOM.

ALL SOUND CEASES.

Slowly, we FADE IN...

COPS swarm. Shotguns aimed. Yelling. We can't hear them.

WE CAN ONLY HEAR what Miller and Sophia hear--that thin, high-pitched, hissing RING when ear drums are overloaded.

Miller and Sophia are thrown to the floor.

EXT. FRONT YARD - MORNING

The Helicopter hovers over the lawn--rotors pound the air, drowning out all sound.

Sophia is in the back of a squad car--anguished face visible through the window.

Yelling. Cursing. Shouting.

At the trunk of a beat up Malibu, a UNIFORMED COP pulls KILO after KILO of COCAINE out.

Miller, in cuffs, can't believe his eyes. Shakes his head. Slowly. Then, faster...

MILLER
This ain't mine. Oh, God this
isn't mine...

He shoots a look at Sophia in the squad car.

"You promised me", she mouths.

INT. SQUAD CAR - CONTINUOUS

Outside, Miller struggles against his cuffs. Screaming at the top of his lungs--all we hear is Sophia's heart breaking.

Anguished sobs.

We watch Miller fight. Struggle.

This is the fight of a man who has been set up and is just now realizing it.

EXT. MALIBU - CONTINUOUS

One Uniformed Officer appears to have a difficult time with the bust.

KENT--a walking recruitment poster.

He looks at the Kilos stacked thigh high. At Miller's House.

The neighborhood.

At Sophia sob in the back of the Squad Car for a lingering moment.

Kent shakes his head. $1+1=3$ in this math. Something ain't right.

EXT. FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Miller is a snarling, growling mess of an innocent man--he's wrestled to the ground. A knee in his back. A boot on his head.

Eye level with the grass, a pair of wing tips approaches.

They belong to a snake in a cheap suit--LIEUTENANT SAVICK. The badge hanging from his belt gleams as he squats next to Miller.

Pitiless eyes fall on Miller's dirt covered face--teeth bared like a trapped animal.

Savick raises a finger to his lips.

SAVICK

Shhh.

Only one man besides Miller happens to catch Savick's gesture--Kent.

FROM ABOVE:

We pull back. Higher. Slowly revealing the scope of this raid.

There must be twenty POLICE CARS here. FIFTY COPS. Streets blocked off.

For one man.

EXT. SEDAN - MORNING

Savick strolls towards an unmarked car--a STYROFOAM COFFEE CUP in his hand.

He passes the parked Z28 Camaro we've seen earlier. Without breaking stride, he sits the Coffee Cup on the T-Tops and keeps walking.

A BEAT later, a hand reaches out of the Camaro--nabs the cup.

INT. Z28 - CONTINUOUS

With Athos and Porthos looking on, Aramis pulls the plastic lid off the Coffee Cup.

A wad of HUNDRED DOLLAR BILLS big enough to choke Oprah. Services rendered.

EXT. Z28 - CONTINUOUS

The Camaro pulls away...

Revealing Officer Kent in his Squad Car half a block away.

INT. KENT'S SQUAD CAR - CONTINUOUS

He tries to forget what he just saw.

It won't let him.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Miller at small table beneath harsh fluorescent light.

His foot taps staccato on the floor. Eyes dart--brain working overtime, trying to figure out what the hell is happening.

His head turns. Just as surely as if he heard someone say his name.

Miller looks past his reflection in the two way mirror...

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM (OTHER SIDE OF MIRROR) - CONTINUOUS

Sophia's hand shoots to her mouth--Miller is staring dead at her. No way on God's Green Earth he can see her.

No way he can know she's there...

But, he does.

The tears come again.

A reassuring hand enters the frame--rests on her shoulder. Savick hands her a handkerchief.

Anger. Heartbreak. It all comes out. Unable to bear it--she bolts out the door.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Miller presses his hands against the two way mirror. Begging physics to give him a break--trying like hell to stare through it...

He can only see himself.

The door opens--a man that narrows Miller's eyes to slits enters. He subconsciously takes a step back.

Impeccably dressed. 40's. This is no Cop. This dude is a Viper in a trendy suit.

His name is RAMIREZ.

He has a seat at the table and unplugs the cord from the Microphone on it--gestures for Miller to sit.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Savick watches Ramirez speak as we...

FLASH CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CLUB - (FLASH BACK)

The joint is jumpin'. The music BLARES, like it does in a real club--you have to scream an inch from someone's ear to be heard.

WE FIND Miller at the bar. Alone. Sipping a beer, and looking as out of place.

This isn't the Miller we've known thus far. This guy is a Thug. This guy's body language is dangerous.

No trace of the quiet humility we've seen.

He hasn't met the woman that inspired it yet.

Miller waves over the BARTENDER, who is all too happy to see him.

The Bartender produces a wad of cash. Miller produces a bag of grass. Pleasure doin' business with ya.

No sooner has Miller stepped away from the bar to leave, someone RUNS into him. Hard.

Ready to punch the drunk in the esophagus, Miller freezes when he lays eyes on the culprit--Sophia. Lip split wide open. Mascara running.

Somebody slapped her around.

She doesn't know him. This must be how they met.

We can read his lips over the POUNDING music.

MILLER

You OK, Lady?

She away--keeps running through the crowd. Miller watches her go. Sips beer from his bottle. Follows.

Not many men can walk away from a beat up girl.

The one's that can aren't men.

INT. RESTROOMS - MOMENTS LATER

Sophia shoves her way past a line. Miller breaks the crowd just in time to see Sophia run into the LADIES ROOM.

Well...that's that.

Fuck it. He tried.

Out of the crowd emerges three men--RAMIREZ and TWO GOONS. They shove Miller out of the way as they do everyone else.

Goons #1 and #2 bully their way into the Ladies Room--drag Sophia out.

She ain't happy about it, cursing them for all they're worth under the BEAT of the deafening music.

Ramirez grabs her arm. They're an item.

No doubt, this asshole is the one responsible for her split lip. And, he seems none too happy with her rebellion--pulls her towards the crowd.

One problem...

Miller stands in his way.

Silently.

Unmoving.

He and Ramirez glare at each other. When two cats stare at each other like this, somebody is leaving feet first.

Hard to tell who swings first in the strobing, flashing dance lights.

Doesn't really matter.

Miller uses that beer bottle like a club, and though he's tangling with both Goons, in short order they're laid out.

Asses properly stomped.

A GLEAM in the seizure inducing lights--chrome.

Ramirez levels a chrome .38 at Miller's gut. Sophia bites the shit out of him, the gun rises and goes off...BAM!

Miller swings the bottle, knocking the gun out of Ramirez's hand--shatters the bottle.

Still gripping the broken neck, he brings the razor sharp edges back across Ramirez's chest--slicing three long gashes deep from collar bone to rib cage.

Ramirez drops to his knees, bleeding a river.

Miller extends his hand to Sophia. An offer.

History between her and Ramirez.

History enough that the choice isn't immediate. She hesitates. Her eyes go back and forth between the two men.

Sheer defiance--she takes Miller's hand. Miller pulls Sophia behind his back--backs towards the door.

The Goons, still seeing stars, help Ramirez to his feet. He never breaks his hate filled stare with Miller. Of all the things you expect him to do, Ramirez does the last in line...

He smiles.

A sinister, evil, from the pit of Hell itself smile. A threat in that smile. A promise in those eyes.

Miller nods, still backing towards the door...

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Ramirez pulls something from his pocket--sits it on the table between he and Miller. Walks out cuckling.

Miller doesn't look. He knows what it is...

That tiny little Engagement Ring that represented his future an hour ago.

Still does...

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING PENTHOUSE ROOF - (PRESENT DAY)

The SCRAP BOOK open on the deck chair.

The Old Man, cane in hand, shuffles for the glass doors as quick as his old bones will let him.

He running from something.

The ocean breeze kicks up, catching pages of the scrap book--flips a few. It stops on a yellowed headline...

"LOCAL MAN GETS 25 YEARS AFTER 6 MONTH TRIAL"

An ink smeared black and white of Miller dead center. Cuffed. Pulled through a crowd of COPS and REPORTERS.

INT. PRISON PROCESSING - (1970'S)

Miller and five other PRISONERS are naked against a tile wall--gritting teeth and yelling in the spray of ice cold water from a hose wielding GUARD.

Towels are thrown to them.

Delousing powder thrown on them.

Orange Jumpsuits are distributed.

Step outta line and you get a baton to the back of the neck, as one IDIOT learns the hard way--dropping like a sack of flour in front of Miller.

INT. GENERAL POPULATION - LATER

Row after row of darkened cells--warehousing of men.

A deafening roar of disembodied voices emanating from the cells is a testament to the people in them.

Threats. Promises...

Fresh meat--caged Predators sense it.

WALKING POV:

WE MOVE along a walk way. Glimpses of angry FACES between bars. Over and over.

A Demon Display at a psychotic zoo.

REVERSE POV:

CLOSE ON MILLER. Stone-faced, walking along the walkway--hands and threats shoot out of the bars at him.

PULL BACK:

He isn't alone. Escorted by three Prison Guards. Three men we've already met.

Three men whose vocations we've incorrectly assumed...

Athos, Aramis, and Porthos.

Uniforms crisp. Nightsticks in hand.

Miller exudes desperation. Anticipation. His jaw is set. He knows where this is going.

So do you.

Athos shoves Miller into an open cell. They follow him inside, disappearing from view.

We stay put, staring down the walk way, cell doors stretching to infinity before us...

Lights Out. The overhead lights are shut off--CLACK, CLACK, CLACK. Darkness races down the cell block in fits and starts.

WE HEAR THE BLOWS--nightsticks connecting with a body. Again and again.

The din of Prisoner voices, that ambient roar, subsides.

Even they're listening.

Quiet.

Except for the sound of a relentless beating--each strike like the thump of boxer's gloves hitting a heavy bag.

INT. MILLER'S CELL - MORNING

Miller's eyes are almost swollen shut--ten shades of black and blue. Lips split. Blood has dried where it oozed from gashes.

Shirtless--his body covered in swollen welts from a hundred strikes of nightsticks.

Remarkably, he isn't curled up on the floor. No. He's struggling to do push ups--body screaming in agony. Guttural whimpers of pain from deep within his throat with every effort.

He doesn't cry out--jaw clenched to keep the sound inside.

Swallow it.

Bury it.

Overcome it.

Boots stop in front of Miller's cell. Aramis chuckles at the sight of Miller--tosses a LARGE ENVELOPE into the cell, and slithers on his way.

Groaning with every movement, Miller opens the envelope.

PHOTOS.

A wedding reception.

Ramirez in a tux, Sophia in white, feeding each other cake with interlocking arms. Married.

A handwritten note reads: "YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THE HONEYMOON. --RAMIREZ"

Miller nods. The kind of nod when life just made a decision for you, and all you can do is come along for the ride.

Swallow it.

Bury it.

Overcome...

INT. HOTEL - DAY

FLASH BULBS POP as Ramirez and Sophia feed each other cake. The moment frozen in forever in that photograph races by.

The Reception.

Good times. Music is pumping. Champagne glasses clink.

Sophia is radiant. Beautiful. Dolled up.

This is how God meant this woman to look. Not tired. Not run down. Not running on nothing but will power and cheap coffee.

One of the PARTY PEOPLE hits the dance floor like he was Travolta. The crowd's attention turns. He's cheered on.

Even Ramirez raises a glass.

But, unwatched, Sophia's radiance dims. The smile goes bittersweet under no one's eyes.

Her jaw sets--she chases the moment away, and throttles it to death somewhere in her mind. Raising a glass of champagne, she drags Ramirez to the dance floor.

Booze and music.

That'll quiet the devils.

She grabs Ramirez's face and kisses him like a Kamikaze.

EXT. RAMIREZ'S COMPOUND - DAY

The fucking place takes up half a city block--the massive courtyard and eight foot tall fence take up most of the rest.

It was built to keep people out. Or, in.

Sophia and Ramirez exit a Limo.

Welcome home.

INT. RAMIREZ'S MANSION - MOMENTS LATER

Palatial. Excessively so.

Sophia is experiencing every Little Girl's dream of becoming a Princess, and she's just been shown the castle. Utterly speechless.

So enamored with her new home, and all that it is, she doesn't notice...

The BARS on windows. The GUNS under the jackets of Ramirez's GOONS.

The subtle similarities to the very prison that Miller suffers in, glossed over in the trappings of wealth and excess.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Sophia walks slowly and seductively towards Ramirez. Coily, she unbuttons her blouse. One button...

Two...

Her blouse falls open, reminding us that much of the 70's was a braless time. Ramirez holds her face, kisses her...

CUT TO:

INT. MILLER'S CELL - DAY

CLOSE ON MILLER'S FACE:

Intense hatred and sweat. Jaw clenched. Nostrils flared.

His face appears and disappears from the frame...

PULL BACK:

Muscles tremble and flex as he SLOWLY executes one-armed push ups. No sign of fatigue. No sign tiring.

REVERSE ON MILLER:

Sophia and Ramirez are in the cell with him. The prior scene in the bedroom between them plays out here in front of Miller...

A broken heart's imagination.

He watches Sophia's blouse fall to the cold concrete floor. Ramirez gets on his knees--caresses her stomach with his face. Kisses it.

He looks Miller dead in the eye.

Miller stares back--gets to his feet. But, he's alone again. No one here.

Just him.

Sweating thoughts of murder.

INT. POLICE STATION HALLWAY - DAY

Christmas lights hang. Goofy decorations.

A COP dressed as Santa gets in Officer Kent's way, as he strides down the hall like a man on a mission.

He opens an office door without knocking.

Behind a desk, sits Savick--doesn't like the intrusion.

Kent could give a shit. SLAMS the door behind him.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Snowing.

The Silly Season upon us. Christmas lights and decorations hang from street lights.

Shoppers, bundled against the wind's bite, slosh through it all for that one last deal at Bloomingdales.

Welcome to the REALLY good part of town.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Among the BUSINESSMEN and WIVES, wearing enough fur to make any member of PETA have an aneurysm, we find Sophia.

A stack of shopping bags sits waist high in the floor next to her. She sips wine--munches on a salad that would've set Miller back a week's pay.

You can tell she's New Money--she shovels that salad into her mouth like she's waiting for someone to come take it all away.

Can't buy refinement, and old habits die hard. Especially, ones born of hunger and lack.

Someone stops at her table.

Her mouth full of salad, she looks up--lettuce hangs out of her lips. The fork frozen halfway back to the plate.

It's Officer Kent, sporting civilian threads.

He's been savagely beaten. Fucked up comes to mind. An eye swollen shut. Face blackened and puffy. Nose bandaged and broken.

Uncomfortable face to look at.

Sophia swallows her salad hard--manages a sickened smile.

Till, Kent tosses that tiny ENGAGEMENT RING on the table in front of her.

He takes a seat. Her smile takes a hike.

A WAITRESS comes by, fills Sophia's glass with water. Kent waits till she's gone.

TRACKING WITH WAITRESS:

Kent and Sophia receding, he begins to speak. Tells a story. What he saw.

What he knows...

INT. FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

The Christmas Tree is massive--has to be to umbrella all the presents under it. Nat King Cole croons.

Ramirez tears into a present, as Sophia sips wine. She hasn't laid off the vino since lunch.

She haphazardly fills her glass, as Ramirez gets to the chewy center of the gift...

It's the tiny Engagement Ring.

Ramirez levels a glare at Sophia that would melt paint. She throws the glass of wine in her hand at Ramirez's head.

INT. PRISON VISITOR ROOM - DAY

Youngblood sits on one side of the glass partition, a telephone receiver to his ear.

On the other side sits Miller--his hair long, his beard full. His face covered in scars--gashes healed without the benefit of stitches.

The fire of Hell burns in his eyes.

Youngblood speaks on the other side of the glass--we can't hear his words, but it ain't good based on Miller's face.

Like he's being stabbed with an ice pick repeatedly, and refusing to acknowledge it--hands clenched into shaking fists.

Youngblood brings his fingers to his eyes, shaped in the letter "C". As if he were looking through...

EXT. BINOCULARS POV - NIGHT

Someone watches Ramirez's Mansion.

Watching through the large windows of the Family Room, Sophia and Ramirez are clearly going at it.

The CONTINUATION OF THE FIGHT that began previously.

EXT. ROOFTOP ACROSS STREET - CONTINUOUS

The binoculars come down--it's Youngblood. A frown spreads over his face--he lifts the looking glasses back to his eyes...

BINOCULARS POV:

Just in time to see Ramirez knock Sophia across the room--hard. She tumbles into that big ass Christmas tree.

He drags her up by the hair, screams God knows what into her face--slaps the shit out of her.

She struggles free--runs for the door.

Ramirez is on her before she reaches the knob. A moment later, a SKINNY GOON enters...

They drag Sophia, kicking and screaming out of the room.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The Skinny Goon holds Sophia down, his hand clamped firmly over her mouth, as she screams bloody murder at the son of bitch.

Ramirez stands over a candle...

CLOSE ON CANDLE:

A bubbling clear mixture on a blackened spoon. The tip of a syringe enters the frame...

Sophia's eyes go wide in horror as Ramirez approaches with the syringe. The motherfucker is going to shoot her up with Heroin.

The Syringe clamped between his teeth, he wrestles one of her arms--ties it off and slaps a vein.

Furious tears pour from her eyes as she goes limp. No use. She can't stop this.

The needle goes in. The plunger goes down.

The Skinny Goon takes his hand from her mouth. She gasps--eyes roll back into her head. Her body goes limp.

Ramirez lays her on the bed--strokes her hair lovingly, as she the breath comes in and out of her open mouth with the moans.

RAMIREZ

Shh...

She smiles.

It ain't her fault.

INT. PRISON VISITOR ROOM - DAY

On Youngblood's side of the glass this time--he sighs like he just shot Old Yeller.

His story finished.

Miller hangs up the phone. Tries to very hard cork the volcano within him. Seethes.

He pulls Youngblood's eyes down to his finger, resting against the glass partition.

Miller tosses a glance over his shoulder...

That fucker Aramis watches closely from twenty feet away. And this quick look-see, just set his Spidey Sense off.

ARAMIS

What are you up to?

CLOSE ON MILLER'S HAND:

A fingernail taps on the glass partition. A SPASTIC tap that means Miller possesses absolutely zero rhythm, or...

It's MORSE CODE.

Youngblood watches/listens intently.

Miller throws another glance at Aramis. Closer. Eyeing him suspiciously.

Breaks Miller's concentration. He fucks up.

YOUNGBLOOD

Didn't get it. What..?

Miller taps again. Faster. Feverishly.

WITH ARAMIS:

Just knows something is up. Can sense it. He runs the last two steps to Miller and sees...

Nothing out of the ordinary.

WITH YOUNGBLOOD:

Aramis looks at Miller--his hands are folded innocently in front of him.

MILLER
Problem, asshole?

Aramis aims a cooked glare at Youngblood.

He flips him off with both barrels, served with a side of toothy smile.

Aramis pulls Miller up by the collar--drags him away. Visit over.

Youngblood watches them go, his eyes and Miller's locked...

MILLER
Don't let me down.

Youngblood nods heavily--weight of the world.

He pulls his jacket from the back of the chair--we see something familiar peek out from under the sleeve of his shirt.

A faded tattoo of an ornate banner with a single word...

RANGER.

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT - TIME UNKNOWN

Dark and small. Four walls. A rack. A sink. A flickering light in the ceiling is on its last leg.

A SOUND.

A series of unrelenting small thumps, hammering like a second hand with metronome precision.

WE FIND Miller in a corner. Wearing nothing but Boxer shorts. The body before us is bigger. More cut. More muscular.

Been putting his time to good use.

One of Miller's eyes is swollen shut and black--the price for pissing off Aramis. That's not surprising.

Expected, really.

What is surprising is that Miller...

IS PUNCHING THE SOLID BRICK WALL.

Fists, raw and glistening with blood, pound away at the solid brick and cement.

Conditioning.

Like Kung Fu Monks toughening their bones by repeatedly punching trees or solid wood planks. Just this side of hard enough to break anything. Methodical.

Each hit wince inducing, for him and us. From the look of that circle of smeared blood on the lime green wall, he's been doing this for hours.

This has to fucking hurt.

He doesn't care.

Miller cracks his bloody knuckles--paces.

Back and forth. Like a lion in a cage.

Rage aching to be set free, as surely as his body aches to be free of this place.

Miller grabs the rack, lifts it over his head, and SLAMS it against the wall with a ROAR of impotent fury.

Again.

And, again.

And...again.

The echo dies. Silence returns.

And, everything is exactly as it was--nothingness.

Panting and very still, Miller lifts his face to an imaginary sun--just as we saw The Old Man do earlier.

MILLER

I'm comin' Sophia.

Calmly. Quietly. Miller resumes his conditioning. Pounding on that solid wall...

Savoring the pain.

EXT. DETROIT RIVER PIER - NIGHT

Ramirez stares at the tiny Engagement Ring ruefully--he flicks it into the water like a mere cigarette butt.

A moment passes, before Savick and a Goon carry a BODY into the frame.

It's Kent.

A bullet hole in his head--a cement block tied to his ankle.

Ramirez walks away, as a SPLASH fills the air.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING PENTHOUSE - DAY (PRESENT DAY)

The Old Man shuffles through the kitchen.

Shaking hands open cabinet doors. Open. Slam. Open. Looking. Hunting like his life depended on it.

Finally, he spots his quarry--a bottle of Scotch

He pours two fingers neat--pouring a second round before he's even got the tumbler back on the counter.

Scared absolutely shitless.

He's halfway through the third pour before his nerves finally arrive in the neighborhood of merely freaking out.

A SOUND BEHIND HIM.

Freezes. Clenches his jaw. Closes his watery old eyes.

Ready to face the Devil himself, The Old Man turns.

No one there.

OLD MAN

*Acting like a Little Girl. Calm
down...*

Turning up his glass, he downs the rest of the scotch. Feeling better. Panic subsiding. He chuckles again...

Till, he notices that damned SCRAP BOOK sitting on the counter.

Sucks the fucking air right out of his lungs.

A headline screams:

"MANHUNT FOR ESCAPED CONVICT JOHN MILLER"

The Old Man steadies himself against a counter--eyes darting.

He backs away. Shakes his head--hauls ass out of the kitchen.

A BEAT after he has left...

CLOSE ON SCRAP BOOK:

As the headline stares us in the eye, sunlight from an open window throws a shadow.

A human shadow oozes over the open book...

INT. PRISON CELL BLOCK - DAY (1970'S)

Harsh fluorescent overhead lights cast a similar shadow, but longer, down the walkway.

It's Aramis The Guard.

Mail call--a stack of envelopes in his hand.

Aramis stops at the cell of a MEAN LOOKIN' DUDE--waves a letter between the bars. But, just as the Mean Lookin' Dude reaches for it, Aramis yanks it away.

Asshole.

Aramis nods at something in the cell.

The Prisoner has a bag of JOLLY RANCHER hard candy, and Aramis wants it.

INT. MILLER'S CELL - DAY

Back to the bars, Miller lifts a trash bag half filled with water--make shift weights. His biceps bulge. His chest is cut.

This man has been working out like a maniac.

Aramis stops behind him, bag of pilfered candy in hand.

The insufferable bastard whistles like he was calling a dog. Miller doesn't acknowledge his presence.

Aramis throws a handful of candy at Miller--Jolly Ranchers THWACK into the back of his head and crack off the walls.

Like getting hit with rocks.

Calmly, Miller puts his water weights down--walks to the bars, oozing MENACE.

Aramis makes the "Oh, I'm soooo scared" face.

Miller looks up and down the walkway.

MILLER

Alone, huh?

He jerks Aramis into the hard steel bars forehead first.

KLANG.

Yanks a RED ENVELOPE out of Aramis's hand--releases him before the Guard can even let out a yelp. Fast.

Aramis wipes the blood away from his just acquired gash--makes sure no other Guards around, and levels a promising finger at Miller.

ARAMIS

(hisses)
Tonight.

Miller watches him go.

MILLER

Yeah...tonight.

Pops a Jolly Rancher into his mouth, and opens the RED ENVELOPE.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Sophia is a mess.

Long gone is the beautiful woman we saw before.

Too thin. Eyes sunken. Dark under the eyes. She's a full fledged JUNKIE. Horrific tracks, half-infected, run up her arms.

Visible as she slams a suitcase onto the bed. Shaky bony fingers play hell getting it open.

Sophia grabs clothes. Doesn't matter which ones. Any will do...

WE GO TO THE WINDOW:

Down in the courtyard, Mercedes 400 SKIDS to a stop.

WITH SOPHIA:

She hears--eyes go wide in horror. She picks up the pace...

Can barely keep herself together, as she empties the contents of a drawer into the suitcase.

A photo of her and Ramirez on the dresser--the woman she was stares at her. Sophia throws it against a wall with all her might, and tries to close the suitcase latches.

It's like her fingers are snakes. Uncooperative snakes tweaked on Bennys.

Her fingers slip. Slide. Miss. It's painful to watch such a simple task so difficult.

CLICK CLICK.

Finally.

She turns on her heel, and...

Finds Ramirez leaning against the door frame, blocking her exit.

For a red hot second, there's a flicker of the Sophia we saw on Christmas--she's still in there, inside this twitching scarecrow of a woman.

Ramirez pulls out a baggie of powder from a pocket...HEROIN.

Dangles it like he was toying with a cat.

Sophia shuts her eyes tight, like a vampire attempting to resist at a blood drive. Nostrils flared and struggling.

Trying.

The suitcase slides from her hand.

Shakes her head, but takes a step forward anyway. Can't stop it. Part of her screams NO.

A tiny part.

Ramirez caresses her cheek. Shoves her to her knees.

Her jaw sets, one last flash of Sophia--like she's about to punch this son of a bitch squarely in the crotch.

Ramirez grabs her face--smears the giggle dust all over her lips.

Before our eyes the struggle leaks right out of her. She's kissing the last vestige of dignity she had goodbye.

And she's fully aware of it.

She unbuckles his belt...

INT. SHITTY APARTMENT - DAY

CLOSE ON:

Someone is BUCKLING a belt.

A leather duty belt--like a Cop might wear. Or...

PULL BACK:

Athos secures his night stick--checks his sideburns in the mirror.

Pleased that he is, in fact, God's greatest gift to women, he grabs his keys--makes for the door across ankle deep shag carpeting.

EXT. SHITTY APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Athos makes for a pimp-a-rific Chrysler Cordoba--almost has a stroke when he spots some jagoff laying on the hood.

THE CLERK from the Convenience Store--another man about whom we've probably made some incorrect assumptions.

His name is SINGH--he hand rolls a cigarette, ignores Athos.

ATHOS
What...the...fuck..?

Arms spread wide in the international sign for "What the hell, man?", Athos goes for Singh.

Never even gets close.

Youngblood slides from behind a car and bashes the fucker with a baseball bat. Drops him like sack of hammers.

Singh lights his smoke--blows a few rings. Clearly visible on his caramel skin is an ornate banner and a single word...

RANGER.

INT. MILLER'S CELL - DAY

Miller sits at the tiny shelf protruding from a wall that passes for a desk/table in a cell.

With a sliver of pencil, he circles what seem to be random letters in the hand written note. On a clean sheet of paper, Miller scribbles.

"AB BA BBAA ABAA..."

The letter in the Red Envelope contains a code--Miller deciphers it before our eyes.

He sets about translating the "AB" code. Glimpses. Flashes of words. Peeks at the content of the message...

"2200 HOURS"

"GUARD SHIFT CHANGE"

"PROCEED CAUTIOUSLY"

"BE WAITING"

Miller pulls apart at the Red Envelope at the seams--flattens it out.

On what was the inside of the envelope, he shades with his pencil revealing another secret...

A MAP.

Indented into the paper, is a detailed layout of the prison--each stroke of pencil lead reveals more and more before our eyes...

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Filthy broken windows allow just enough sunlight in to almost keep the shadows at bay.

Almost.

Athos, in nothing but boxer shorts, is tied to a chair--passed out. He has had the living daylights whipped out of him.

Singh wipes blood off a 3 foot length of GARDEN HOSE--tosses it on a table nonchalantly, and retrieves a notebook of handwritten notes.

ACROSS WAREHOUSE:

Porthos sits at a table, likewise thrashed to within an inch of his life, but still conscious. A CAR BATTERY on the table next to him, complete with JUMPER CABLES.

The other end of the cables are clamped onto Porthos's big toes.

A sniveling mess. Way past crying. Utter regression.

Shaky hands put the finishing touches on A MAP. The exact Prison layout we just saw Miller reveal.

Youngblood pats Porthos on the head like a good boy--takes the map...

Under it is the open RED ENVELOPE--the pressure of Porthos's pencil has imprinted the drawing into the envelope paper.

Youngblood folds the Red paper back into the shape of an envelope--glues the seams. The occasional look of derision thrown Porthos' way when the whimpering sobs get too loud.

Pitiless.

Judge, Jury, and soon to be Executioner.

Youngblood hands the envelope to Singh, who composes the letter Miller was reading, hefts a .357 Revolver.

SOBS echo.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Singh strolls towards a graffiti tagged MAILBOX on the corner--the Warehouse in the background behind him.

A FLASH in one of its dark windows.

Another.

MUZZLE FLASHES we can't hear over the din of industrial traffic.

Singh drops the RED ENVELOPE into the Mailbox, and strolls away whistling.

INT. MILLER'S CELL - NIGHT

Miller strikes a match--burns the Red Envelope, the Letter inside, and the deciphered message.

Goes up quick, leaving only fluttering shards of blackened paper, which he crushes into powder and blows away.

He turns his attention to a disposable razor--breaks it and pulls out the two tiny razors in the head, as he looks through the cell bars to ensure the coast is clear.

It is.

Miller kneels next the electrical outlet in the wall--using the pencil shard, he gingerly pushes a razor into each of the vertical slots of the outlet.

Unbuttoning his Old School prison dungarees, Miller rips the zipper out by the seams and lays it across the protruding razors...

A BLUE SPARK arcs--shocks the shit out of him.

Shakes it off--gathers the JOLLY RANCHERS Aramis pelted him with. Tosses one his mouth and very carefully sits several on the zipper. In seconds, they're SIZZLING.

Quickly, Miller digs into a BAR OF SOAP with the brittle handle of the broken disposable razor...

INT. MILLER'S CELL - LATER

CLOSE ON OUTLET:

The metal teeth are red with heat--blackened with burnt sugar...

Melting Jolly Ranchers drip into a knife shaped cast carved into TWO BARS OF SOAP.

Miller blows across the fast hardening goo--breaks apart the Soap Bar cast.

He inspects the HARD CANDY SHIV--drags the edges across the rough concrete floor a few times, whetstone style--gives it edges.

Time for a test.

He plunges the shiv into his mattress--slices a three foot gash like butter. Perfect.

Miller sits in the middle of the floor--closes his eyes. Calm. Still.

A sadness on him that weighs a ton--turns his face Heavenward.

MILLER

I tried.

CLACK. CLACK. CLACK.

Lights out--plunged into near darkness.

A silent moment. Then...

The FOOTSTEPS come. Louder. Closer. Unavoidable.

A SILHOUETTE stops in front of the bars, nightstick in hand. Keys jingle. The lock clicks.

Aramis steps in--raises the night stick.

An awful sound, wet and brutal. Aramis GURGLES. Gasps.

WE'RE HEARING the sounds of a man dying from being stabbed in the throat. There's absolutely nothing satisfying about it.

Thrashes. The scuffle of boots on concrete. The CHOKING. The rustling of clothes. Then...

The Silence.

INT. OUTSIDE MILLER'S CELL - MOMENTS LATER

Miller exits cell, wearing Aramis's uniform.

He wipes his bloody hands on the uniform, which is already wet with blood--the dark color conceals the stains.

Hat pulled low, Miller beats feet down the walk way.

EXT. PRISON - NIGHT

A familiar nondescript sedan pulls into the prison parking lot--stops next to Aramis' Z28.

INT. SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

It's Savick.

He glances at Aramis' Camaro--reaches into his jacket and retrieves THREE ENVELOPES.

Checks the contents of each--a few crisp hundred dollar bills. Payroll for Athos, Porthos, and Aramis.

INT. PRISON HALLWAY - NIGHT

Miller is just another employee--draws no attention.

Passes a couple of RANDOM GUARDS. Nods are exchanged. They don't look twice.

Miller smiles.

His cool is shot to shit as he rounds a corner--a GUARD OFFICE with a barred door ahead. The OFFICE GUARD watches a ball game on a tiny black and white TV.

Moment of truth.

Miller slides the keys off his belt--there's about twenty of them.

He looks at the lock. He looks at the multitude keys.

MILLER

Shit.

He tries a key. No dice. Another. A third. No luck.

The Office Guard stirs. Miller tries not to look. Tries another key feverishly.

He's tapped on the shoulder. Winces...

It's YOUNGBLOOD. Sporting Athos's Uniform. The real Office Guard out cold on the floor, crumpled under the counter.

Miller grabs his pounding heart--flips Youngblood off.

INT. PRISON VISITOR PROCESSING - CONTINUOUS

Savick hands his gun to the BEARDED GUARD behind the glass--signs himself in.

A BUZZ clicks open the door--he enters the Prison proper...

INT. PRISON HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

WITH MILLER & YOUNGBLOOD:

They approach another barred door and Guard Office.

No problem. Youngblood has the right key from Athos' pilfered key ring.

TRACKING WITH MILLER & YOUNGBLOOD:

So far, so good.

Calm and cool--walking quickly, they round a corner...

Miller bumps into Savick!

Doesn't stop. Doesn't say "sorry".

They keep their heads low and keep going. Miller's eyes "Oh, Shit" wide--resisting the urge to bolt for it.

Savick never saw his face--just arms wide in disbelief.

SAVICK

Frickin' jerks...

TRACKING WITH SAVICK:

Shaking his head, he doesn't notice the front of his shirt IS SMEARED WITH ARAMIS' BLOOD.

A dozen steps later, a GUARD OFFICER exits a bathroom in front of him.

Smearred blood on the light shirt gets attention. Savick follows his gaze...

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE PRISON - NIGHT

Athos' Chrysler Cordoba across the street--parallel with the prison fences.

INT. CORDOBA - CONTINUOUS

Singh blows cigarette smoke out the window, as the haunting NIGHTS IN WHITE SATIN by the Moody Blues blares on the stereo...

"Gazing at people, some hand in hand"

"Just what I'm going through they can't understand"

"Some try to tell me, thoughts they cannot defend"

"Just what you want to be, you will be in the end"

"And I love you, yes I love you"

"Oh how I love you..."

Singh eyes the prison--concentric rows of eighteen foot tall chainlink fences with concertina wire between.

He takes a relaxed drag from his smoke. Confident.

Till, the PRISON ALARM BLARES--a deafening klaxon.

Singh frowns.

TURNES UP the radio.

INT. MILLER'S CELL - CONTINUOUS

Savick and a HANDFUL OF GUARDS stare at the dead body of Aramis...

INT. PRISON VISITOR PROCESSING - CONTINUOUS

Youngblood knocks The Bearded Guard across the floor.

Miller hits the BUZZ LOCK--they haul ass.

EXT. PRISON ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Miller and Youngblood exit--ain't home free yet.

Thirty yards of walkway across the yard to a large STONE GATE ARCH in the fence perimeter. The Gate Arch has huge metal doors to seal off the Prison.

Huge metal doors that are slowly closing.

MILLER

Don't run.

SEARCH LIGHTS from Guard Towers carve through the night, illuminating the yard like a football field.

Faster. The Gate closing. TOWER GUARD guns sweep.

MILLER

Do. Not. Run...

Miller senses the eyes behind him. He turns...

Savick. Who reaches for his gun--ain't there. He checked it in.

Miller and Youngblood RUN.

Savick SHOUTS and waves at the Guard Towers--gestures wildly and points. Can't be heard over the klaxon alarm.

TRACKING WITH MILLER AND YOUNGBLOOD:

They'll never make it. The door is closing too fast.

But, through the closing space between the doors, headlights are coming.

Fast.

INT. CORDOBA - CONTINUOUS

Singh stomps the accelerator, racing the closing doors--THE MOODY BLUES still blaring from the stereo.

Buckles his seat-belt. Flicks his smoke out the window. And...

...presses the car's cigarette lighter.

WITH MILLER AND YOUNGBLOOD:

Running for all they're worth. Guards pour out of the door behind Savick. Tower Guards get a clue--spotlights race towards our boys...

And Singh coming dead at Miller and Youngblood at 50 MPH.

No way he'll stop if he makes it through. He'll run them over. Man vs. Car game of chicken--metal gates in between.

Still closing...

WITH SINGH IN CORDOBA:

On top of the doors. Seven feet of space between them. No way.

Singh bumps the car into neutral, cuts the wheel, and stomps the emergency brake.

The world WHIRLS.

EXT. PERIMETER GATE - CONTINUOUS

The Cordoba goes 180 with a perfect bootlegger turn--ass end SLAMS into the metal gate at the last possible instant.

CLANG. The doors slam shut on the ass of the Cordoba, crumpling it like tinfoil, but holding them open.

Miller and Youngblood, never slowing, leap onto the trunk and over the car, as the still grinding doors rupture the gas tank...

WITH SINGH:

Calmly watches his buddies run over the windshield and down the hood--the first BULLETS ZING BY.

PLINK.

The Cigarette Lighter pops.

EXT. PERIMETER GATE - CONTINUOUS

Singh tosses the RED HOT Cigarette Lighter under the car, and walks away.

Casually.

The gas ignites. Twenty gallons of gasoline--a six foot wall of fire.

WITH SAVICK:

No one is going to run through that. No one can shoot due to the metal doors. The Guard Towers face inwards.

He seethes.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Aramis's Z28 Camaro burns rubber into the night.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING PENTHOUSE - (PRESENT DAY)

The Old Man knocks over lamps. Books from shelves.
Every piece of furniture has it out for him.

INT. PENTHOUSE STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Slamming ornate wooden doors behind him, The Old Man
backs towards a wooden desk you could sail across the
Pacific.

Never taking his eyes from the doors, he opens a desk
drawer--pulls a REVOLVER.

Panting. Hands trembling. He aims at the door--sits in
the leather chair.

Silence.

Just his labored breathing.

His free hand goes to close the drawer--glances down.
He's immediately shocked to his feet.

In the drawer is a yellowed NEWS PAPER CLIPPING.

HEADLINE: "WAR ZONE: DOZENS DEAD."

A front page photo of fire. Cops. Fire Engines.

FOOTSTEPS. Someone is coming.

The knobs on the ornate doors move. He aims the gun...

FADE TO:

INT. RAMIREZ'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The phone rings on a night stand.

And, rings.

Ramirez, alone, wipes the sleep from his eyes. Knocks
over half the stuff on the night stand groping for the
phone.

He knocks that over, too.

EXT. STREET CORNER PHONE BOOTH- NIGHT

Savick is an island of light in a PHONE BOOTH on an
otherwise darkened corner.

Impatiently waits for someone to answer--bundle of nerves.

INT. RAMIREZ'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ramirez picks up the phone receiver from the floor...

EXT. RAMIREZ'S COMPOUND (BACK YARD) - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON PHONE JUNCTION BOX:

Phone line wires dangle. Cleanly cut.

INT. STREET CORNER PHONE BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Savick stares at the receiver. The DO-RE-MI of a Ma Bell ERROR MESSAGE...

ERROR MESSAGE

If you'd like to make a call...

Savick bolts from the phone booth.

INT. RAMIREZ'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ramirez hangs up, annoyed--plays like a crank call for him.

Groggy, he dons the robe and slippers.

EXT. RAMIREZ'S COMPOUND - NIGHT

TWO GOONS in cheap suits lean on either side of the metal gate--eyes wide and ready for anything.

Wait.

Something's wrong here. Unnatural.

They never blink.

CLOSE ON GUARDS:

Eyes wide and fixed. DEAD.

TREE LIMBS, up the back of jackets, keep them upright.

EXT. RAMIREZ'S COMPOUND (COURTYARD) - CONTINUOUS

Another GOON floats face down in the massive courtyard fountain.

ALONG HEDGED WALL:

The Skinny Goon slides up to thick hedges that line the inner courtyard wall.

Lights a smoke. Unzips his pants. Nature's call.

SHADOWS IN THE HEDGES COME ALIVE--he's pulled into the branches. Gone. Silently.

Only a thin fingers of cigarette smoke remain.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

An Unmarked Sedan speeds through traffic--RED BUBBLE LIGHT flashing on the roof.

Behind it are half a dozen CITY POLICE CARS. Likewise lit up and racing.

INT. UNMARKED SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

Savick doesn't pretend to give a damn about the pedestrians and civilians that get in his way.

Steers with one hand--pushes shotgun shells into a Riot Gun across his lap with the other.

INT. RAMIREZ'S LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

The coffee table is a Junkie's Paradise. Horse. Foil. The spoon. Matches and candles.

Sophia is passed out on the floor. Her arm is still tied off--a needle hangs from it. Didn't even get the syringe out of her vein before she went down.

Maybe she didn't care.

She looks dead.

Ramirez enters and...panics.

He leaps over the couch and drops to his knees beside her--checks for a pulse.

Sighs relief.

Ramirez unties her arm--pulls out the needle. He brushes the hair from her face--wipes the drool from her mouth.

This is love in his twisted way.

Gently, Ramirez picks her up. Her head lolls against his shoulder. He kisses her forehead and carries her out.

INT. RAMIREZ'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ramirez lays Sophia in bed--covers her as her eyes flutter open.

They never focus. Her eyes roll--back out she goes.
Trapped in her own head.

Ramirez's lips purse--she was so beautiful. Tell tale
signs of regret cloud his face.

RAMIREZ

I'm sorry.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ramirez is lost in thought--that faraway stare when your
mind is miles away from what your hands are going...

Which, in this case, is preparing a sandwich.

A plate. Slices of bread...

INT. RAMIREZ BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Singh and Youngblood try to rouse Sophia. She stirs,
coming to something that could loosely be called
conscious.

Youngblood pulls back the covers. The tracks. Her gaunt
body. Her sunken eyes.

They share a disgusted look. Angry for her.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ramirez is shoulders deep in the Fridge.

IN FRIDGE:

Mustard. Meat. Lettuce. Is this mayonnaise still good?
Seeing nothing else that trips his trigger, Ramirez
closes the Fridge door, and...

Comes face to face with Miller.

Like a Ghost, he's just there.

A lingering moment--Ramirez frozen in shock. Miller
savors his fear. Long time comin'. There's a baseball
bat in his hand. Knuckles whiten around it.

Ramirez drops the sandwich stuff. Miller knocks the son
of a bitch across the kitchen.

This is not going to be fast or painless.

EXT. RAMIREZ'S COMPOUND (COURTYARD) - NIGHT

Youngblood and Singh walk Sophia across the courtyard.
She's still out of it, but at least she's upright.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ramirez's face is bloody--crawling away from Miller, who boots him in the ribs again. Miller realizes too late, Ramirez ain't trying to get away.

He's going for the knife he dropped.

Just as Miller lifts the baseball bat to deliver the Coup de Grace, Ramirez stabs Miller's thigh.

In a split second, certain revenge has turned into a sincere struggle.

Ramirez grabs the baseball bat--tries to wrestle it away.

Miller head butts him repeatedly.

Ramirez bites hard enough to draw blood.

This ain't a Hollywood fight. This is what a real brawl looks like. Eye gouging. Biting. Head butting.

Miller's military training vs. Ramirez's street earned badassness.

Neither is concerned with protecting himself, only killing the other son of a bitch.

EXT. RAMIREZ'S COMPOUND (COURTYARD) - CONTINUOUS

Youngblood hears them first.

SIRENS.

Coming fast.

Shit.

Their eyes go back to the Mansion. Miller.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ramirez and Miller squared off. Knife vs. Bat, as Sirens fade in.

Ramirez smiles-- TIRES SCREECH outside. The Calvary is here. He dares Miller to make his move.

Hatred vs. Freedom. The decision rips Miller in two.

Miller backs away. Runs for it.

EXT. RAMIREZ'S COMPOUND - NIGHT

Savick and his COPS make for the front gate of the compound. Locked tight.

They climb over...

INT. RAMIREZ'S COMPOUND (COURTYARD) - CONTINUOUS

Youngblood and Singh wave Miller in. Hurry up.

In that moment, Sophia sees Miller running towards and a little bit clarity seeps into her mind.

Can't believe her eyes.

Miller runs into her track covered arms and kisses her. She's barely aware of what the hell is going on.

But this she knows--these arms are where she belongs.

Singh and Youngblood drag them towards a back wall, as Savick and The Cops come over the front gate.

AT BACK WALL:

Singh is a cat, on top of the eight-foot wall on the quick. Pulls Youngblood up...

EXT. RAMIREZ'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Ramirez storms out the front door.

Spitting blood, he pulls a REVOLVER from the holster of a dead Goon on the ground.

AT BACK WALL:

Sophia grabs the hands of Singh and Youngblood--Miller pushes from below.

She's weak.

Her grip slips.

Miller glances over his shoulder--Ramirez with the gun. He pushes her up again.

WITH RAMIREZ:

He aims at Miller--cocks the hammer. Dead in his sights.

Impossible to miss.

AT BACK WALL:

Sophia slips.

Miller catches her.

BAM!

WITH RAMIREZ:

Frozen.

Horror.

The smoking gun falls from his hand, as Savick and The Cops approach.

Unwilling to accept what he sees, Ramirez shakes his head defiantly.

Slow unsteady steps become a run.

AT BACK WALL:

Ramirez falls to his knees beside Sophia.

There's a bullet wound in her back.

He pulls her across his lap. A bloody exit wound in her chest.

Where her heart is.

Was.

Dead.

EXT. RAMIREZ'S MANSION - LATER

No crime scene tape.

No cops other than Savick and the ones he arrived with earlier.

Ramirez watches Sophia's sheet covered body wheeled by.

WE FOLLOW THE BODY:

Ramirez recedes.

We're loaded into a Coroner's Van.

The doors SLAM SHUT.

Through the rear windows, WE SEE an irate Savick approach Ramirez--pissed.

Gestures wildly. Points at us in the van.

SAVICK
I can't cover your ass anymore.

Ramirez protests.

Does no good.

WITH RAMIREZ:

Savick storms away. Relationship terminated.

The engine cranks up in the Coroner's Van, jerking Ramirez's attentions away from Savick.

He watches it drive away...

INT. RAMIREZ'S MANSION - NIGHT

Ramirez closes the door behind him--wipes his face.

Steps in something. DIRT. Lines of dirt on the marble floor.

WE PULL UP:

The lines are shapes. Letters.

Ramirez stands in the midst of a message: "TILL YOU BURY HER."

INT. Z28 - NIGHT

Youngblood drives. Singh in back.

Miller stares out the passenger window.

No one has the words.

Just the GROWL of the engine.

Passing street lamps splash light on the shadows across Miller's face in metronome pulses.

He brings his hands into the passing lights--covered Sophia's blood.

He rubs the blood over his face. Caressing. Smearing. Loving...

This is the closest he'll ever be to her for the rest of his life. This moment. Her blood.

Swallow it.

Bury it.

Kill them all.

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

We're among the gravestones.

Atop a small hill, not far away, PEOPLE are gathered.
Not many.

EXT. GRAVESIDE - CONTINUOUS

The PRIEST closes his Bible. Ramirez crosses himself.
He looks like hell--bloodshot and glassy eyes.

Hasn't slept in days.

ON THE OTHERS PRESENT:

Dark glasses. Constant head movements, looking to and
fro. Everyone here is a DIRTY COP or a paid GOON. All
protecting Ramirez.

He and the Priest are the only ones here for Sophia.

She's still isolated.

Still alone.

Even in death.

Ramirez tosses a handful of dirt on the coffin in the
grave.

Ramirez stares at his hands. Dirt.

Grave dirt.

He can't wipe it off fast enough. It don't let go. It
sticks to his skin.

Like sin.

Like death.

Like the dirt of a not-yet-dug grave coming for him
already.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Singh is covered in grime and sweat.

He rakes a trowel along the RUSTED SKIN of the
dilapidated building--scraping rust into a five-gallon
bucket.

It's damned near full of the stuff.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Youngblood is hard at work.

Six double-barrelled shotguns sit on a shop table--all in one state of modification or another.

Muscles in his arms ripple as he HACK SAWS away barrels and saws off stocks. Effectively creating long 12-Gauge Double-Barreled pistols.

WE MOVE past him...

Past a grinding wheel. Past the twenty garbage bags of RC COLA and PABST aluminum cans in front of it

Past the Z28--it's rear end on jack stands, exhaust pipes laying next to it.

All the way to...

INT. WAREHOUSE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Miller stares through the man staring at him in the grimy broken mirror.

Passionless.

The BZZZ of clippers.

He drags them across his head--shaves it close. A suicide of sorts. Death to the man in the mirror. Becoming someone else.

Someone from long ago.

Head shaved Boot Camp short, he punches his reflection--shattering it.

A reflection he never wanted to see again.

He rips the mirror fixture off the wall and throws it into a wall. Kicks it across the floor.

Stomps it until he's tired of stomping it.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Miller exits the bathroom--ignores the blood dripping from his cut hand.

Sizes up Singh--grinding up Aluminum cans for some reason. Sparks dance.

And Youngblood--boxes of shotgun shells on the table, reloading each one. Replacing the buckshot in the shells with a STACK OF PENNIES.

Miller grabs two sawed off shotguns off the table. A quick flick of the wrists, he closes the breaches and aims them double fisted.

Two thumbs release to levers--he flicks the breaches back open--checks the barrels.

War. Death dealing. Miller nods.

He turns his attention to the exhaust pipes from the Z28--drilling two holes.

Into which he screws two SPARK PLUGS...

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Ramirez's Mercedes is parked out front. Goons guard it.

INT. GAS STATION BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ramirez scrubs his hands vigorously. The grave dirt won't let go.

He soaps, scrubs, and rinses again.

He pulls ten yards of paper towels--glances in the mirror, and fucking vapor locks...

SOPHIA IS BEHIND HIM, looking over his shoulder.

Dead. Like a ghoul. Hysterical laughter with no sound. Her body shudders in silent spasms.

Ramirez practically crawls up the wall.

But, there's no one there.

He throws the paper towels--pulls a VIAL from his jacket.

Dumps a thick rail of COKE across the back of his hand and hoovers it in one pass.

Courage.

Paranoia.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Singh has ground up the aluminum cans into a dust. The rust has likewise been pounded and refined into a talcum consistency.

He mixes the two together--pours them into an EMPTY HALF-GALLON MILK JUG.

Youngblood tapes a ROAD FLARE to the jug--sits it with FOUR OTHERS already prepared.

Aluminum powder and Iron Oxide (rust), properly mixed, create THERMITE.

Across the Warehouse, we find Miller under the hood of Aramis' Z28.

He connects a two wires to the ALTERNATOR.

WE FOLLOW THE WIRES:

Into the cockpit of the car, where they are connected to a simple switch taped to the gear shift.

From the gear shift, the wires continue through the floor board, under the car...

Where they split--each connected to two SPARK PLUGS drilled into each of the dual exhaust pipes of the car.

INT. RAMIREZ'S MANSION LIVING ROOM - DAY

Three GOONS trade looks.

Muffled VOICES in the next room, behind closed doors. Two men. We can't make out what they're saying.

But things are heated. The door is swung violently open.

Savick storms out--shaking his head. Ramirez follows, none too happy.

SNAPS his fingers before Savick makes it to the front door.

A Goon blocks Savick's way, another retrieves a large suitcase and tosses it onto the coffee table.

Ramirez unzips the suitcase--steps away.

RAMIREZ

It's all yours.

It's full of money.

A couple million in cash. Easy.

Ramirez holds it out for Savick. He's scared. Terrified. Can't hide it. Ramirez pleads with eyes as glassy as marbles.

Savick weighs options.

Wrestles.

Deal with The Devil at The Crossroads.

He takes the suitcase and makes for the door.

The Devil smiles.

EXT. CEMETARY - NIGHT

The moon is full.

Quiet and peaceful. Gravestones under the starry sky.

Only thing out of place is THE POLICE CAR parked under a tree. Bushes and tree limbs placed on it and in front of it...

Automotive incognito.

TWO OFFICERS in the car keep an eye on the top of a small nearby hill.

A single lonely headstone...

INT. POLICE CAR - CONTINUOUS

One of The Officers yawns.

Long night.

The other JERKS upright--he sees something. A silhouette approaches the lonely headstone.

Miller.

The Officers pull Revolvers--jump out of the car...

EXT. POLICE CAR - CONTINUOUS

And come face to face with sawed off Double-Barreled shotguns.

One second later, both are out cold on the grass.

Youngblood and Singh watch Miller in the distance--visible under the full moon's light. Turn away out of respect.

We don't.

He kneels at Sophia's headstone and speaks.

Too far away to hear what he's saying, but we can hear his voice. Ain't hard to guess the words.

WITH MILLER:

The moon's light throws a gravestone's shadow across half his face.

Said all he has to say.

He digs fingers into the fresh grave dirt--smears it under his eyes.

War paint.

Miller picks up his shotguns and walks away.

EXT. RAMIREZ'S COMPOUND - NIGHT

A fucking fortress.

Six POLICE CARS surround it.

DIRTY COPS stroll up and down the streets along the block perimeter.

EXT. RAMIREZ'S COMPOUND (COURTYARD) - CONTINUOUS

Every lowlife and thug in Detroit with nothing else to do is here.

There has to be FORTY GOONS, all armed.

Above them all, is Ramirez--overlooking the courtyard from a balcony.

INT. STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Ramirez turns away from the balcony, looking like warmed over death. There's no way the man slept in days.

He hits the Bolivian Marching Powder on his desk--only thing keeping him going.

Teeth gnash. Fingers dance over the pearl grip of the revolver in his belt.

He paces.

Savick, seated in a corner, watches with disgust--glances at his watch.

EXT. RAMIREZ'S COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Along the block perimeter with the Police Cars again.

But, something's different this time...

A MANHOLE COVER is off--as if someone recently came out of it.

No Dirty Cops strolling, that is what's different.

All on the ground--dead.

Throats slit.

Singh emerges from a shadow--drops the last DEAD COP from his arms.

He wipes a bloody blade on his pants and sheathes it.

Silent as a cat, Singh scampers to the manhole, pulls up a rope--at the end are four of the THERMITE HALF-GALLON MILK JUGS with taped on road flares.

He blinks a flashlight up a dark street twice.

Blocks away HEADLIGHTS reply.

INT. Z28 - CONTINUOUS

Miller behind the wheel--Youngblood in the passenger's seat.

Game faces on.

The Z28's 350 V8 idles like a purring lion.

They slide penny-loaded shells into their sawed off Shotgun Pistols.

Miller GUNS the engine once--cracks his neck.

It's a straight shot two blocks to the metal gate of Ramirez's compound.

Miller drops the car into drive...

Youngblood sticks a DASHBOARD JESUS onto the dash between them...

BEAT.

MILLER

Really?

Youngblood shrugs.

Miller STOMPS THE ACCELERATOR.

EXT. Z28 - CONTINUOUS

The rear tires smoke--the car leaps into action.

TRACKING WITH Z28:

The Camaro rips down the middle of the street. The peripheral blurs--the tunnel effect of speed.

IN Z28:

The metal gate zooms closer and closer.

Hands tighten on the wheel.

The speedometer just blew by 80.

EXT. RAMIREZ'S COMPOUND (COURTYARD) - CONTINUOUS

By the time anyone hears it, it's too late.

The Z28 SLAMS into the metal gate, knocking the doors off their hinges in a shower of sparks.

Goons and Dirty Cops run for their lives--most avoid being plowed over.

Most.

Then, just as suddenly as it began, the Z28 is still. Across the courtyard, facing the outer wall--ass end to the Bad Guys.

The ENGINE RED LINES--growls. Just sitting there and screaming like someone has their foot on the gas in Park.

The Dirty Cops and Goons open up on the Z28...

INSIDE Z28:

Miller and Youngblood lie flat, seats reclined. Wincing as glass showers them--bullets ZIP an inch over their faces.

OUTSIDE Z28:

Gunfire slows to a stop. The engine is still screaming.

Cautiously, ten of the Bad Guys ease up behind the car, guns at the ready...

INSIDE Z28:

Miller flips the switch duct taped to the gear shift.

INSIDE Z28 EXHAUST PIPES:

Electricity zips through the wires, causing the Spark Plugs to ARC--IGNITING THE HOT EXHAUST FUMES.

OUTISIDE Z28:

Flames spew fifteen feet out of the dual exhaust of the car--engulfing the Bad Guys moving in.

They go up SCREAMING.

Same instant...

EXT. RAMIREZ'S COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS

Singh, casually smoking a cigarette, POPS the caps on the Road Flares, and slings the THERMITE JUGS over the wall...

EXT. RAMIREZ'S COMPOUND (COURTYARD) - CONTINUOUS

While flaming Bad Guys scream, and confusion and panic freak out the others...

Youngblood and Miller come out of the Z28, shotguns aimed high...

BOOM-BOOM-BOOM-BOOM.

They blast the THERMITE JUGS as they sail over the Courtyard--pennies BZZZ'ing through the air.

Shotgun blasts destroy the jugs--flares IGNITE THERMITE in mid-air.

Powdered burning metal falls all over the Courtyard, literally raining fire at 2500 degrees.

It burns through anything. Can't be put out.

Men scream bloody murder as it gets on them. Fluttering in the wind--burning dust that just hangs there.

Miller and Youngblood climb back in the car. Reverse lights come on.

The car zooms across the courtyard, through the fiery dust, up the steps of the mansion, and CRASHES through the front door...

INT. RAMIREZ'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Youngblood and Miller are already out of the car--Thermite dust burns through the vehicle in a thousand pin holes...

Dripping molten metal.

Outside, the Courtyard looks like Hell. Fire in the air. Fire on the ground. SCREAMS of The Damned.

A handful of GOONS inside race to meet Miller and Youngblood.

They find out what twenty-five cents in pennies loaded into a shotgun shell does to the human body.

Damned near cut in half. Short barrels disperse the shots immediately--one blast drops three Bad Guys at ten feet.

Miller and Youngblood reload--move on.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Ramirez is panicked.

The Mansion is BURNING.

Pinprick holes of burning Thermite eat through walls--sparking fires every where.

Savick grabs him by the arm--they run out of the room.

A BEAT later...

Singh slides silently in via the balcony. The man is like a wraith, for whom the laws of physics seem to bend.

GUNS serenade each other from deep within the house, as Singh glides through the Study--on the hunt.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Youngblood and Miller are Terminators--dropping two and three GOONS at the time, with every blast.

Pennies WHRRR--ripping the air apart at the speed of sound, before shredding flesh.

Youngblood takes a round in the upperchest/shoulder. Odds. It had to happen.

He does little more than wince.

The Hallway T-bones another hall. Miller breaks left. Youngblood right.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Savick and Ramirez look up at the floorboards above them. Hearts in throats. Quiet. Guns aimed up.

Waiting.

WE MOVE UP, THOUGH THE BASEMENT CEILING TO...

INT. HALLWAY WITH SINGH - CONTINUOUS

On cat's feet, Singh creeps along, while smoke fills the air.

His steps are utterly silent.

Till, ever so slightly...

A floorboard CREAKS.

BEAT.

BAM-BAM-BAM--the floor under his feet is shredded by bullets exploding through the wood.

Singh convulses as round after round rips into him from below.

The bullets stop. Silence returns.

Singh collapses in a pool of his own blood.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Ramirez and Savick hear the body hit the floorboards.

They reload--the tick of brass slamming into steel, and make for the basement stairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Miller and Youngblood bump into each other in the thick smoke.

Literally.

Youngblood leans against a wall to catch his breath.

BLOOD leaks down his fingers in tiny rivers.

Miller yanks Youngblood's jacket open...

Bullet wounds. Not just the one we saw him take either. He's been hit at least FOUR TIMES.

Youngblood jerks his jacket closed--pushes Miller away.

He just won't quit.

Takes a few steps...

Collapses against a wall.

Miller, again, goes to him. Once more, Youngblood pushes his help away.

Shaking, he makes it to his feet again.

Flips Miller off with a smile.

Youngblood throws an arm around Miller to steady himself-- together they move on...

For about five steps.

Youngblood collapses to his knees. Again, he tries to stand.

Not this time.

He falls forward on his hands and knees.

Crawls.

Refuses to succumb.

Miller drags Youngblood up the hallway, sitting.

His head lolls. Blood oozes from his mouth. Shutting down. Like a drained battery losing all power.

A helpless Warrior.

No blaze of Glory. No death befitting.

Life ebbs out of Youngblood before our eyes, as Miller drags him.

Heroes rarely die a Hero's death.

EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

Bodies litter the ground. The Mansion burns.

Far away, the BLARE OF SIRENS oozes into audio focus-- Fire Engines.

Ramirez, Savick, and TWO DIRTY COPS emerge from the smoke and make for a GARAGE detached from the house.

INT. HALLWAY WITH SINGH - CONTINUOUS

The bullet holes in the floor are still there.

Singh isn't.

A wide swath of SMEARED BLOOD stretches down the hall-- disappears into the smoke...

EXT. RAMIREZ'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Miller pulls Youngblood out of the flames and smoke--past the half-melted Z28.

He closes his friend's dead eyes.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Two Mercedes 400 sedans sit at the ready--Ramirez, Savick, and the two Dirty Cops enter via a side door.

The instant Ramirez opens the garage door--A GURGLING SCREAM.

All turn to find one of the Dirty Cops IN THE GRIP OF SINGH, getting his throat slit.

Horribly wounded, and bloody as a butcher, Singh lunges for the closest man...

Savick.

Who comes out of his shocked stupor quick enough to shoot Singh squarely in the chest.

He keeps coming.

Singh knocks the gun out of Savick's hand--swings his blade.

Too slow. Savick grabs his wrist. Singh is weak. Dying, as he and Savick wrestle for the knife.

The cars roar to life, and PEEL OUT--Ramirez and the last Dirty Cop leave Savick to his own devices...

EXT. RAMIREZ'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Miller watches the two Mercedes Sedans tear across the courtyard--spots Ramirez behind the wheel of one.

Miller runs after the cars--eyes burning hatred.

INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Hands locked in mortal combat, Savick and Singh struggle for the knife.

No use.

Not even Singh can survive this much blood loss. The color drains from his face.

Savick doesn't have to do anything but let go--Singh crumbles into a heap.

Dead.

EXT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Savick exits the garage just in time to spot Miller hauling ass out of the courtyard.

Singh's knife in his hand, Savick follows.

EXT. STREET WITH MILLER - NIGHT

Miller pounds the ground after the two Mercedes' a block ahead of him, while Fire Engines SCREAM by, headed to the Mansion.

The Sedans make a turn ahead--under huge green sign says the Interstate is that way.

Miller cuts across the street and into an alley...

INT. RAMIREZ'S CAR - NIGHT

A sign telling us the airport is this way via the Interstate blows by.

The other Mercedes ahead of him, Ramirez checks his rear view mirrors.

Nothing.

He laughs.

Pounds the steering wheel, rejoicing.

He got away.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Miller careens around a corner at full gallop--his eye is on an APARTMENT BUILDING dead ahead.

He glances up at the top of it.

INT. BUILDING LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Miller pounds the lobby elevator button.

Grace of God above, the doors open right up.

He gets in, hits a button, and leans back against a wall.

Hands on knees--panting.

A moment's rest...

Till, Savick jumps through the closing doors at the last second--blind sides him.

DING.

Doors close.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Sawed off shotgun on the floor.

Two men.

One knife.

Locked in mortal combat inside the confines of a tiny elevator.

Grunting. Growling. Screaming. Eye-gouging. Clawing. Biting. Slashing...

Only one man is coming out of this box alive.

Savick gets a solid head butt in that sends Miller on his ass.

Who grabs the sawed off--raises it. Savick grabs the barrel, keeping it aimed low and swings the knife.

Miller blocks the thrust with his arm, and pulls the triggers--BOTH BARRELS BLAST...

Blowing Savick's left leg clean off at the thigh--SPLATTERING blood everywhere.

He falls to the floor SCREAMING.

Miller stands. Panting. Bleeding. Pissed.

Watches the Savick scream.

MILLER
Suffer, motherfucker.

Crazed with agony, Savick-tries to stick his leg back on.

Slowly, very, very slowly, so he feels every centimeter of cold steel...

Miller pushes Singh's knife into Savick's heart.

EXT. DETROIT - NIGHT

WHERE WE BEGAN...

A FIRE glows several blocks away. A big one. Fire Engines and red lights. Sirens still coming.

As we move over the top of a string of Apartment Buildings, easing along the rooftops...

MILLER RUNS RIGHT BY US.

TRACKING WITH MILLER:

His clothes are torn, blackened by fire, filth, and blood. Cuts and scrapes bleed openly--hasn't had time yet to congeal since received.

His head is shaved boot camp style. His face is covered in a dozen scars--the kind you get from deep gashes that heal without the benefit of stitches.

There's a pistol-grip sawed off double-barrel shotgun in his hand, and murder in his eyes.

And over his shoulder, he carries the one-legged dead body of Savick.

Running for all he's worth across the top of an apartment building, he LEAPS into the night air off the edge...

EXT. ROOF #2 - CONTINUOUS

Miller sails out of the air and lands with a BONE JARRING THUD from the building next door--Savick tumbles and skids.

Miller twisted an ankle.

Means nothing to him right now. If he coughed up his spleen, it wouldn't stop him. Not now.

Not this night.

He just growls, picks up the shotgun, and drags Savick to the edge of the building, as the GUNNING OF ENGINES and the SQUEALING OF TIRES ebbs into focus from below...

INT. DIRTY COP'S CAR - NIGHT

The Dirty Cop that took off with Ramirez checks his rearview--the other Mercedes, Ramirez's car, is right behind him.

This guy is pretty damned with pleased with himself.

He slows down.

Gets comfortable in the seat.

Relaxes.

About then, SAVICK'S DEAD BODY CRASHES THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD.

INT. RAMIREZ'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Ramirez goes bug-eyed as the Mercedes in front of him fishtails in his path.

He swerves hard to miss it...

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Tires scream as brakes are locked up--an ungodly screeching cacophony of eight tires, asphalt, and friction.

Ramirez's Mercedes nails a fire hydrant--stopping it on dime and sending a geyser heavenward

A BEAT later, the fishtailing other car slams into a telephone.

Then, quiet.

Only the sound of rushing water and a roughly idling engine.

INT. RAMIREZ'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Ramirez is outcold--head on the steering wheel and bleeding.

Wavy shadows and shimmering light fill the car--effect of water cascading over the windshield.

Ramirez stirs. Moans.

BAM--the sound of Miller blowing away the Dirty Cop in the other car jerks Ramirez out of his blow-to-the-head induced haze.

He squints through the shattered windshield.

A shape. A man's silhouette in front of the car. A gun in the shadow's hand...

Miller.

Ramirez wipes blood out of his eyes, grips the wheel tight, and FLOORS IT.

Miller tumbles onto the hood.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

TRACKING WITH MERCEDES:

Ripping down the street, engine knocking, and picking up speed. Miller slides all over the place, desperately trying to hang on to both hood and gun.

He throws a look over his shoulder at where they're headed...

MILLER'S POV:

A cross street. A red light. A river of traffic zipping by. Half a block away, and this car isn't even slowing down...

Shit.

Two options here. Both suck.

Miller raises the shotgun...

INT. RAMIREZ'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Teeth barred in sheer hatred, Ramirez chuckles like a mad man.

Till, a sawed-off shotgun is shoved through the windshield into his face.

He STOMPS THE BRAKES.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Miller is thrown from the hood, directly into the midst of the passing cars...

The Mercedes skids, ten feet from the intersection.

Pennies EXPLODE from Miller's shotgun into the windshield as he flies backwards...

WITH RAMIREZ:

Glass and smoking copper discs ZIIIP through the car-- shredding half his face.

WITH MILLER:

Through the air on his back, BETWEEN two passing trucks...

Towards a passing METRO BUS...

INT. METRO BUS - CONTINUOUS

A LITTLE OLD LADY crochets as the bus chugs along.

Miller crashes through the window of the seat in front of her--bounces off the opposite inside wall, busting that window as well.

BEAT.

She goes back to crocheting.

While Miller writhes in pain on the seat.

INT. RAMIREZ'S CAR - NIGHT

Ramirez has his hand on the shredded half of his face, like he's trying to hold it on--kicks the shattered windshield out and turns the car around.

Furious.

We stick with him as he drives.

Steam spews from under the hood and into the car through the nonexistent windshield.

The engine knocks.

He groans in agony and rage.

Then, out of the blue, the car is rear ended HARD...

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The Metro Bus pulls alongside Ramirez's car as it fishtails--slamming into the side of it.

Trying to force it off the road.

INT. METRO BUS - CONTINUOUS

Miller has the shotgun aimed at the terrified DRIVER's head.

He grabs the wheel from the guy and slams the bus into Ramirez again.

And again.

Ramirez is steers into it--the Mercedes pressed up against the bus.

Matter of fact, he's glaring at Miller through the bus doors.

Miller aims the shotgun at the son of a bitch, and...

CLICK--empty. He already fired twice.

Livid, Miller throws the thing down, opens the bus door, and LEAPS ONTO THE MERCEDES.

EXT. MERCEDES - CONTINUOUS

Miller scampers over the roof--crawls through the gaping windshield area...

INT. MERCEDES - CONTINUOUS

And commences pounding the living hell out of Ramirez.

Problem is, Ramirez still has his gun--pulls it out of his belt and FIRES.

Miller dives over the seat into the back, narrowly avoiding the round.

Behind Ramirez now, he grabs the front seat belt, wraps it around Ramirez's throat, and slides it under the seat's head rest.

Pulls with all his might.

Ramirez gags.

He claws at the belt around his throat--steers wildly. The car skids violently...

EXT. OVERPASS - CONTINUOUS

The Mercedes SLAMS into the overpass guard rail at the edge at a solid 30 MPH.

The Mercedes comes to a VIOLENT and immediate stop--throws Miller out through the glassless windshield area, as the Mercedes teeters half over the edge.

Miller claws at the hood to stop his slide.

No dice.

The car tips.

Miller slides off...

WITH MILLER:

JUST manages to grab the front bumper, as the Mercedes lurches over...

And stops.

The rear axle caught on guard rail metal.

Miller looks down--a twenty-five foot drop to the street below.

INT. MERCEDES - CONTINUOUS

Ramirez struggles with the belt around his neck. It's caught around the back of the head rest.

He's stuck--can't get it off.

EXT. MERCEDES - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON MILLER:

It's been a long night.

Miller tries, but he just can't pull himself up--hasn't got the strength.

He tries again--damned near loses his grip.

Then, the worst possible sound you could hope to hear at this moment...

Metal groans.

The car is going to fall.

In sheer raging panic, Miller claws at the grill and edge of the hood. He HAS to pull himself up.

Now.

But, with a final wrenching moan, the guard rail metal gives way...

The Mercedes goes over the edge...

Taking Miller with it.

EXT. STREET BELOW - CONTINUOUS

The Mercedes SLAMS into the ground roof first--crushing it.

Miller hits the asphalt with a sickening thump fifteen feet away.

He screams in ungodly agony--legs shattered, and God only knows what else.

Battered, bloody, and literally broken, Miller looks over at the Mercedes...

The roof is crushed down to the steering wheel. That fucker Ramirez is dead.

Despite the pain, Miller manages a smile.

Unable to stand, not even able to crawl, his legs all but useless, Miller drags his broken body across the asphalt with his hands.

It's slow. It's agonizing--he does it through sheer will power.

He has to see that bastard dead.

After a Herculean, blinding pain inducing effort, Miller looks into the car...

EMPTY.

It doesn't compute.

EXT. OVERPASS - CONTINUOUS

A hand reaches over the edge.

Another.

Ramirez pulls himself over the edge.

EXT. STREET BELOW - CONTINUOUS

Miller looks up at Ramirez looking down on him.

BEAT.

Chuckling, Ramirez walks away.

WE PULL UP:

Miller sprawled helplessly on the asphalt, the destroyed Mercedes next to him...

HIGHER STILL:

As Ramirez walks along the overpass, walking out of the frame.

Gone.

Miller's voice echoes across the concrete canyon...

MILLER

No..!

The third word we've heard anyone utter, and Miller screams it from the depths of his agonized soul.

FADE TO:

INT. STUDY - PRESENT DAY

The knobs on the ornate door turn...

CLICK--the latch disengages.

The Old Man stands--aims the gun with both shaking hands.

The door opens.

He cocks the hammer--fear courses through his veins.

It's the fucking Maid with the Scrapbook--it was her shadow oozing over it earlier.

She screams at the sight of this decrepid Old Fossil leveling a gun at her.

The Old Man grabs his heart--she damned near killed him.

He throws a vase at her.

Cursing a blue streak en Espanol, she leaves. The Old Man puts the gun on the desk--totters over to the door and locks it.

Double checks the lock. Triple checks it.

Satisfied no one is coming through that door now, he retreats to his desk--reaches for the gun he laid on the desk.

IT ISN'T THERE.

He freezes. Confusion is stamped by ice cold panic.

SOMEONE steps out from behind the heavy velvet curtains framing the large window behind the desk.

A SAWED OFF SHOTGUN is placed to The Old Man's head. He doesn't have to look.

THE OLD MAN

Look at me...

The Someone walks around the desk. We can see him clearly now. Also an Old Man.

MILLER AT SIXTY-FIVE.

He sits opposite the Old Man, who has obviously been Ramirez all along.

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)

You're too late.

(coughs)

Hell already awaits.

No reply.

Miller opens the wheel of Ramirez's revolver--dumps the shells on the desk. Casually, he selects a single random bullet--slides it into the revolver.

He spins the wheel, aims it at Ramirez's face, and pulls the trigger.

CLICK.

RAMIREZ

It was a long time ago. Have you had no life?

CLICK.

RAMIREZ

Name your price. Anything. I can...

CLICK.

Ramirez is a sweating trembling mess by now.

RAMIREZ

Please...

CLICK.

Tears well in his eyes--slides down his wrinkled face.

CLICK.

Horror wracks him at the sound.

Five clicks. Next chamber is the winner. One more pull of the trigger...

Ramirez nods. Death imminent. Deserved. Closes his eyes tightly, and waits for it.

CLICK.

Ramirez's eyes open in amazement--confused to still be alive. Miller holds the bullet between fingers.

Didn't load it.

Ramirez chuckles.

Miller raises his shotgun.

BAM...

The Old Man is blown out of his chair. Miller doesn't smile. He doesn't frown. Wasn't for him.

We can HEAR Ramirez GASPING. A pathetic sound. Miller walks around the desk, to find him sprawled on the floor.

CLOSE ON A BLOODY FINGER:

A shaking old finger, glistening with blood, is dragged across the floor. Then...is still.

PULL BACK:

Before Ramirez's lifeless body are words drawn in blood:
"I LOVED HER"

Miller reads them. Drops the gun...

MILLER

I still do.

And walks away.

FADE TO BLACK.