

PROOF OF LIFE

original screenplay

by

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REWRITE
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OPEN ON:

SWISS CURRENCY. Hundred franc notes. Fifty bills spread across an oil-stained mattress. Serial numbers visible.

TERRY (VO)

"...a final ransom settlement of 750 thousand dollars in non-sequential, unaltered Swiss currency..."

FLASH! -- a picture of the money and --

WE'RE IN

AN OLD STONE BARN. Some shitty upstairs room. Bitter cold. WIND howling through plastic draped over a broken window. Splayed ancient floorboards. A frozen toilet in the corner.

TERRY (VO)

"...this was a fourth-round number, down from an initial demand of three million..."

TERRY THORNE is alone in this room. He's forty-three. English. Working-class makes good in British Special Forces. He's no longer a soldier but the smell of it will stay on him forever.

There's A SUITCASE packed with Swiss Francs at his feet. Blankets, hung from the rafters, draped like a tent over a rusted iron cot. There's a camera inside. TERRY is trying to photograph this money as quickly and discretely as he can -- FLASH!

TERRY (VO)

"...this placed us within six percent of our original target figure, a number consistent and in-line with recent ransom final figures in the West-Asian, post-Soviet republics..."

He's scrambling -- it's cold -- he's not had sleep, hot water or a decent meal in days -- checking his watch -- fuck -- he's running out of time --

TERRY (VO)

"...given the actively dynamic field conditions and fluid nature of our transfer schedule, normal photographic documentation of the payment package was unfortunately limited..."

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So it's TERRY talking and we're watching TERRY, and there is some vague similarity between what he's saying and what we're seeing, but that's as far as it goes. The voiceover could hardly be more calm and dispassionate. What we're watching is anything but...

TERRY (VO)

"...the transfer itself, was for the most part, routine and without incident..."

CUT TO

OUTSIDE. THE STONE BARN one of several crumbling structures parked here in the bleakness. This used to be a village.

CHECHNYA

Post-Soviet grim. Frigid shades of gray. Evidence of war all over. Shattered trees. A dead tank.

TERRY (VO)

"...reports of local Russian command's difficulty in delivering consistent field support had been independently confirmed..."

RUSSIAN SOLDIERS waiting around a some vehicles. Hangovers. Weary nasty faces. Worn-in weapons.

TERRY (VO)

"...given the delicacy of transfer protocol and based upon real-time, on-site observation, it was determined that local military command had strengths that lay elsewhere..."

A RUSSIAN COLONEL standing at an armored personnel carrier watching TERRY haul the money suitcase from the barn. His driver must speak English, because --

TERRY

(over the wind)

YOU -- TELL THE COLONEL -- TELL HIM HE'S RESPONSIBLE NOW, RIGHT? TELL HIM -- HE FUCKS ABOUT, I'LL BE THE LEAST OF HIS PROBLEMS!

Translation in progress as THE SUITCASE is tucked into a lockbox beside a machine gun housing and --

CUT TO

TERRY watching THE RUSSIAN CONVOY pull away.

TERRY (VO)

"...given the region's historical unpredictability and in light of the assessments described above, it was determined that Russian military command's exposure in the transfer be minimized..."

THREE SCRAWNY RUSSIAN SOLDIERS left behind to guard the barn. A VODKA BOTTLE already passing from hand to hand.

TERRY (VO)

"...to that end, a back channel of communication had been established with group holding Mr. Lenoir prior to the final proof of life..."

CUT TO

THE STONE BARN'S REAR DOOR. TERRY ducking out the back with a canvas duffel. Jogging toward a stand of trees. There's A JEEP waiting. A NERVOUS LOCAL DRIVER and --

TERRY (VO)

"...as Russian escort proceeded to the primary drop area, I was directed to a secondary position..."

CUT TO

AN UGLY MOUNTAIN ROAD. THE RUSSIAN CONVOY has pulled to a stop. THE COLONEL watching impatiently as two soldiers snap open the lock box and pull out the suitcase --

TERRY (VO)

"...given the prevailing apprehension regarding Russian command, it was determined that I retain possession of the ransom payment until a later date..."

THE SUITCASE ripped open. Surprise. Nothing but bricks.

CUT TO

A HUGE DEAD FIELD. Frozen farmland. THREE CHECHEN TANKS parked for protection. A couple JEEPS. A FLATBED TRUCK. CHECHEN SOLDIERS ready for everything.

TERRY (VO)

"...rendezvous was engaged at the secondary location as agreed..."

TERRY'S JEEP parked two hundred yards away. He's got binoculars and a walkie-talkie. The airwaves alive with INCOMPREHENSIBLE RADIO CHATTER and --

TERRY (VO)

"...with the exception of some last minute negotiations over landing air transport, the protocol was fairly straightforward..."

A CHOPPER angling in over the field -- landing another hundred yards off to one side. --

CUT TO

TERRY WITH THE DUFFEL. Walking out across the field. Totally wide-open. It would be so easy to die right now. The set-up just sucks. His body language is tough as nails, but as we get closer there's no hiding the dread in his eyes.

TERRY (VO)

"...assuming local complexities described above, and based upon our prior negotiations, a simultaneous transfer was deemed necessary..."

CUT TO

A CHECHEN FLATBED TRUCK. THE HOSTAGE -- MR. LENOIR -- kneeling there. Blindfolded. Two AK-47s up his ass. He's recently lost an ear and three fingers. Bandages brown with blood. He's dazed -- bruised -- freezing --

TERRY (VO)

"...Mr. Lenoir, was found to be in an excellent state of health given the circumstances..."

CUT TO

THE DUFFEL BAG -- as it's ripped open -- THREE CHECHEN OFFICERS tearing through the money --

TERRY (VO)

"...following a review of the ransom payment, Mr. Lenoir was released into our care..."

LENOIR kicked off the truck. Face first.

CUT TO

THE RUSSIAN CONVOY speeding back past THE STONE BARN and --

TERRY (VO)

"...apparently Russian military liaison was confused by the lack of information available..."

CUT TO

THE DEAD FIELD -- faster and louder -- TERRY and LENOIR making for THE CHOPPER -- LENOIR is weak and disoriented -- TERRY all but carrying him -- it's going to be a long two hundred yards and --

TERRY (VO)

"...initiating an effort to confirm that a parallel process was indeed underway..."

CHECHEN SOLDIERS getting a bad report over the radio --

TERRY (VO)

"...abandoning the primary site, Russian command endeavored to reach our secondary location..."

THE CHOPPER PILOT starting to freak -- rotors idling -- watching them come -- let's go --

TERRY (VO)

"...unfortunately, the situational demands made it impossible to properly debrief our hosts..."

OUT OF NOWHERE -- AN ANTI-TANK WEAPON -- rocketing in from the horizon -- some completely unanticipated angle --

TERRY (VO)

"...as a result, some local residual confusion is to be expected in future..."

WHAM! -- A CHECHEN TANK just wiped off the screen and --

THE RUSSIAN CONVOY coming hard from the distance and --

THE CHOPPER PILOT looking ready to bail and --

TERRY -- fifty yards to go -- SCREAMING FOR HIM TO WAIT! --

WEAPONS ripping through the wind and --

TERRY'S JEEP -- THE LOCAL DRIVER -- stuck in the mud --
panic making it worse -- just finding traction as TRACER
ROUNDS tear into him and --

THE TWO CHECHEN TANKS searching for targets --

TERRY still coming -- waving a sidearm at THE CHOPPER PILOT
-- "don't move!" -- dragging LENOIR in under the rotors --

A RUSSIAN JEEP EXPLODING behind them and --

INSIDE THE CHOPPER -- total chaos -- LENOIR scrambling in
-- THE PILOT SCREAMING IN SLAVIC -- he's freaking out --
pulling up already -- too soon because --

TERRY hasn't cleared the threshold -- tossed back -- head
slammed against the door as he falls -- rocked -- grabbing
at the doorframe -- hanging there! -- nothing but instinct
keeping him from falling and --

THE GROUND pulling away and --

LENOIR reaching for TERRY -- trying -- but THE PILOT --
there's something wrong -- something new -- no time --
suddenly he's jerking the stick and --

THE CHOPPER spilling sharply to one side and --

TERRY falling -- falling into the cockpit and --

WHOOOOOSK! -- AN ANTI-TANK ROCKET -- a blur -- already on
them -- already past -- they've been hit! -- creased --
A LANDING SKID torn away from the undercarriage! -- the
helicopter tilting -- overreacting -- stalling -- for a
moment it looks like they're beating it in and --

THE PILOT fighting to keep it up -- CURSING AND SPUTTERING
IN SLOVAK -- LENOIR rolling on the floor in pain -- his
bandaged hand crushed in the turbulence and --

FINALLY TO

TERRY pulling himself into a window seat. He's dazed.
Looking down as the earth begins to pull away. As the
chopper starts to level off.

TERRY wiping at the blood from a deep cut above his eye.
Wiping it away so he can see. Trying to get a grip.
To focus. Something.

TERRY (VO)

"...following our departure, we were made to understand there had been some difficulty implementing local exit strategies..."

TERRY watching it all get smaller. Emptiness more than relief. Exhaustion more than triumph. The shock of still being alive. Wiping at the blood pouring down into his eye, wiping at it one last time before he passes out, and we --

CUT TO

A CASE BOARD. A big presentation-style chart. Eighteen international kidnapping cases listed here. Actually it's only seventeen because the Lenoir/Chechnya case has been crossed out. Boxes after each name -- categories and info -- date of abduction -- first demand -- target figure -- last proof of life -- Ecuador, Philippines, Kenya, Mexico, Guatemala, Pakistan, Colombia --

TERRY (OS)

...Mr. Lenoir was examined by mobil medical and transported to Athens yesterday for surgical treatment...

WE'RE IN

A CONFERENCE ROOM. Spare, efficient decor. Hi-tech and a little shabby. Corporate logo along one wall:

RISK MANAGEMENT INTERNATIONAL

A DOZEN PEOPLE -- ten men and two women -- seated around the table. TERRY wrapping up his report. Bandage above his eye. Wound still fresh.

TERRY

...Given the region's historical instability, and the fluid nature of this most recent project..."

HARRY LUTHAN at the head of the table. Company Director. Slick suit. Slick everything. Beside him, IAN HAVERY, K&R Chief of Operations. He's sixty and clear-eyed.

TERRY

...it's recommended that further extractions be studied carefully and that all appropriate insurance representatives be made aware of increased liability and costs.

He's done. Barely a beat, before --

LUTHAN

Eastern bloc -- what was the total insurance billing last year?

HAVERY

Aggregate?

PAMELA at the table. Thirty. Beautiful. Sri Lankan.

PAMELA

Thirty-eight million dollars.

LUTHAN

And what was the ransom total?

PAMELA

Covered on policies?

(checking fast)

...twenty-six million.

LUTHAN

Jesus...

(to Havery)

I think we need a meeting with the insurance carriers this week. Wave the red flag a bit. Let them know our costs are rising.

(almost forgot)

Excellent job, Terry. Thank you.

As always. Outstanding.

(files before him)

All right, where are we next?

We've got Pakistan, Colombia...

TERRY folding up his shit. HAVERY catching his eye. Wait for me.

CUT TO

A CABLE CAR. Nothing fancy. Steel pipe, wood planks and corrugated tin. Construction site pragmatism and quality. We're ascending slowly and steeply. Half a dozen yellow hardhats visible inside as the car passes.

TELACCA

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

A JUNGLE RIVER GORGE. Steep canyon walls. Lush vegetation wherever it can grab hold. Sweet, fast-moving water below.

PETER (OS)

-- no, no, wait -- no, you wait...
Keith, excuse me, but that is pure
Oklahoma horseshit --

CUT TO

THE CABLE CAR. Pulling to the summit. A patch of green shaved away to make room for quonset huts, warehouses and a couple mobile homes. Headquarters for a large construction project still in the preliminary stages. A ubiquitous corporate logo: GEM-CARBON

PETER (OS)

-- because I've got sixty people
sitting up here in the damn jungle
with nothing to do! --

The doors open. PETER GEHRIG out onto a timber platform. He's maybe forty. Texan. He's an engineer. Cowboy boots. Glasses. Dirty hands. And a satellite phone --

PETER

-- blasting canopies, blades,
gantry assemblies -- we're supposed
to be building a dam here and I
don't have a working dragline! --

Behind him now, FIVE ENGINEERS. Multinational crew.

PETER

-- oh, screw the pipeline! We're
down here making you guys look good
and I can't even get anybody to
return my damn calls!

A WORK GANG -- twenty local laborers -- parked in the shade. Dead eyes tracking the boss as he paces around.

PETER

Well, what the hell am I supposed
to tell my people? What the hell
is going up there anyway?

(dead air)

Keith? Keith.

(connection gone)

Goddammit.

PETER looks around. Dead silence. Everyone here is counting on him. And he knows shit. Just standing there as the pressure washes over him, and we --

CUT TO

RISK MANAGEMENT LONDON. TERRY with his bag and briefcase coming through the office. The place is busy. Desks and phones and cubicles -- clearly global and urgent --

PAMELA

Terry...

(coming after him)

Ian wants to see you.

TERRY

I'll give him a call.

PAMELA

What about me?

He stops. She's smiling.

TERRY

What happened to your City banker?

PAMELA

I'm bored.

CUT TO

A BIG OPEN-AIR MARKET. The outskirts of Telacca City. It's all here. Meat, fish, produce, clothes, hardware. Too many colors and sounds to catalog.

ALICE GEHRIG is lean and tan. She wears local sandals and a Cartier tennis bracelet. She smiles easily. Her Spanish sucks and she's the only Anglo face we'll see here, but she's at home in a market. Parisian mesh bags packed with produce.

Two men stand at a sheet of plywood covered with dozens of varieties of chile peppers. Call them ABBOTT and COSTELLO. Under discussion, a handful of black goathorn peppers.

MARIA is Alice's housekeeper. She's forty-five. Stern and protective. She's doing the talking with these two clowns.

MARIA

He says is too much for you maybe.
(translating)

Too strong. He says this is most powerful chile in Telacca.

ALICE

Does he eat it?

MARIA in quick repartee with ABBOTT --

[Note: There's Spanish in this story. Anything in the film meant to be subtitled, will appear in parentheses. Everything else will be either paraphrased, translated -- as in this scene -- or assumed to be understandable.]

MARIA

He says yes. He eats this chile
but he is a man. A country man.
(rolling her eyes)
He is the King of Chiles.

ALICE smiles. Picks a pepper from the cluster. Pops it in her mouth. Like nothing.

ALICE

Why don't you ask His Majesty if
he'd care to join me?

MARIA throwing down the gauntlet. Con gusto. COSTELLO is already laughing, mocking out his partner, as we --

CUT TO

LONDON/THE STRAND. Day. TERRY has just come out of the RMI building. Walking away with his luggage, when --

HAVERY

(rushing after--)
Terry! Terry! Hang on then...

CUT TO

TELACCA NATIONALE COUNTRY CLUB BALLROOM. As splashy as it sounds. A garish approximation of a fantasy American sunbelt golf club. A local fiesta on tonight. THE BAND is great. The food plentiful. Buffet tables dripping with flowers and ice sculpture. Service up the ass.

TWO HUNDRED GUESTS grouped at big round banquet tables. Two-thirds are wealthy Telaccans -- business elites and drug traffickers masquerading as business elites. A few high-ranking uniforms: blue for cops, green for military. Heavy on the cabbage and epaulets. The women deep with cleavage and latina perfection. Mixed into this crowd are the ex-pats. Europeans, Japanese, Americans, and --

PETER and ALICE alone at a table for twelve. Centerpiece says: GEM-CARBON OIL. ALICE taste-testing several plates of food. PETER drinking.

ALICE
You gotta try these panitos.

PETER
I'm not hungry.

ALICE
You wanna dance?

PETER
I want to know what the hell is
going on.
(beat)
And nobody called?

ALICE
I was home all day.

Here comes IVY with a plate of food. She's a forty-five-year-old bottle-blond Alabaman. Ex-pat lifer.

IVY
Hey ya'll. Sorry we're late.

ALICE
Where is everyone?

IVY
Nobody called you?
(to Peter)
Are you shitting me? Unreal.
Fellner, Buddy, their whole group
had to go to Houston this morning.
Some kinda powwow.
(back to Alice)
Peggy said if he was going, she
was going and then I guess all the
girls jumped on that.
(c'est la vie)
So I guess it's just us...

PETER
Is Jerry here?

IVY
He was behind me... Probably off
doing a comparative cleavage survey.
(whispering)
I mean, do these women get into it,
or what?

PETER
What kind of powwow?

But here comes JERRY juggling a couple Dewars and a plate.

JERRY

Hey, hey, hey...

(Ivy helping him
lighten his load--)

Alice, you look stunning tonight...

(sitting down
with Peter--)

Ivy tell you?

PETER

Houston.

JERRY

This morning. All of them.

Fellner chartered a plane.

PETER

So what's in Houston?

JERRY

Money.

PETER

That doesn't sound good.

JERRY

Only if they don't come back with it.

ACROSS THE BALLROOM

THE BAND slipping into a killer groove and THE TELACCANS starting to laugh and clap hands -- they know this song and what's coming next --

BANDLEADER

(My friends, we have some young
dancers here with us tonight, and
maybe if everyone will join me, we
can get them down here...)

(beckoning to--)

A TABLE IN THE BACK

A TELACCAN COUPLE. Call them FRED and GINGER. They're not kids. She fills every moment of her dress. He dyes his hair too dark. They're feigning reluctance, but clearly they've played this scene before, as we --

CUT TO

LONDON/COVENT GARDEN. Day. TERRY walking with his luggage. HAVERY trying to keep up. This just moments after HAVERY has flagged TERRY down on the street.

[Note: If you haven't guessed, time is passing differently in London and Telacca. We're following two stories here. Things will fall into synch as events unfold.]

HAVERY

So you're all right then? Still in one piece.

TERRY

I'm a little wound up.

HAVERY

Of course you are. It goes away. You know that.

TERRY

What do you want, Ian?

HAVERY

Am I that transparent?

TERRY

No. You always want something.

LATIN MUSIC rising beneath this, as we --

CUT TO

THE CLUB BALLROOM. Night. FRED and GINGER dancing -- laughing off the cobwebs -- it's been a while -- but they are really good. The dance some local cousin to the tango. Dreamy and sexy and demanding all at once and --

ALICE reaching over for PETER. Her hand on his shoulder. He reaches back, his hand covering hers, but he and JERRY too wrapped up in their own urgent whispering to stop --

PETER

How did it get so bad so fast?

JERRY

Where the hell have you been?

PETER

I've been trying to build a dam.

JERRY

You oughta pick your head up every now and then. Take a look around.

CUT TO

FRED AND GINGER starting to sweat and --

JERRY (OVER)

You got a billion dollar pipeline
hasn't spit out a gallon yet. You
got oil prices in the toilet...

CUT TO

ALICE watching other couples venture out onto the floor --

JERRY (OVER)

...between the drug cartel, the
army, the blue cops, the local
cops -- Christ, everybody in this
room has their damn hand out...

CUT TO

THE BANDLEADER jumping down from the stand -- cutting in --
FRED relinquishing GINGER and --

JERRY (OVER)

...toss in half-a-dozen coked-up
revolutionary groups and, I mean,
come on, you don't need a research
analyst to tell you this deal is
ripe with shit...

CUT TO

PETER looking grim, listening to --

JERRY

...market close today, Gem-Carbon
stock was down ten and falling...

PETER

So who're they talking to?

JERRY doesn't want to say. PETER just waits.

JERRY

OXO.

PETER sags. Bad, bad news. IVY tapping him on the shoulder
-- check it out -- he turns to see --

FRED leading ALICE to the dance floor and she's laughing
and looking back at the table a little embarrassed, but
ultimately she's game. FRED starting slowly with her.
And now they're dancing. The dance floor filling up around
them. ALICE getting into it, as we --

CUT TO

LONDON/COVENT GARDEN CAFE. Day. HAVERY has persuaded TERRY to sit down over coffee.

HAVERY

We picked up call from Telacca.

TERRY

You're not asking me to go down there, are you?

HAVERY

I think if you hear me out...

TERRY

Ian.

(his luggage)

I just got off the bloody plane.

HAVERY

Listen to me, I need five days.
You saw the board. I needn't tell you how busy we are at the moment. You heard about Jenkins and Clyde?
(obviously not)
They've just left us to go work at Vanguard.

TERRY

Didn't you poach Jenkins from Vanguard last year?

HAVERY

That's not the point.

TERRY

Look, I'm not good right now.

HAVERY

You're tired. It's the jet lag talking.

(flat out now)

Terry, I need you down there. I'll have Jules in to take over in five days.

(a smile now)

I want you to consider this your first management assignment. The first of many.

TERRY

Look at me.

Silence. Long history between these two.

HAVERY

We all get rattled. Right?
It's not the first time.

TERRY

That was sort of my point.

CUT TO

TELACCA/RESIDENTIAL DRIVEWAY. Night. A JEEP pulling in. The house one of several large, newish homes on this street. Mountains in the distance. This could be a moneyed suburb outside Denver or Phoenix.

CUT TO

INSIDE THE JEEP. SANDRO at the wheel. Peter's driver. He's fifty. Quiet and solid.

SANDRO

Mañana?

PETER and ALICE in back. Just getting out.

PETER

No. Take the day. Call me Sunday.

ALICE

Night, Sandro...

SANDRO nods, watching them go, and --

CUT TO

THE KITCHEN. The house is large and modern and well-built. The kitchen is huge and open. Glass all at the back to the garden and pool. And scorpions -- we'll see them etched into glass, tile, drawer pulls, carvings -- anywhere and everywhere -- this design motif so runs through the entire property we will know this location as The Scorpion House.

ALICE and PETER have just come in. They're both a little drunk. She's loose and horny. He's quietly flipping out.

ALICE

Any messages?

PETER

Zip.

She passes. Runs her hand down his back. He pulls away.

PETER
Nothing like dancing with a drug
lord to get a girl revved up.

ALICE
He's a lawyer.

PETER
Right.

ALICE
They play tennis. He's a lawyer.

She's rooting in a cupboard. Something falls to the floor.
PETER in that place where everything is irritating.

PETER
What are you doing?

ALICE
Trying to find Maria's cigarettes.

PETER
I don't know, maybe you missed
it, but this happens to be a very
big deal for me.

ALICE
I think I know that.

PETER
You sure don't act like it.

ALICE
By having a cigarette...

PETER
Forget it.

ALICE
How should I act?

PETER
I don't know. Maybe like you
understand what's at stake.

ALICE
So we can both be freaking out?

PETER
You tell me. This thing falls
apart then what was the point?

ALICE
The point of what?

PETER
Of what? How about Africa?
How about Thailand? How about
eight years of shit postings?

She's pouring herself a glass of wine.

ALICE
You forgot Egypt.

PETER
And you're saying what? Just flush
the whole thing? Is that it?
Because this was the payoff, Alice.
My project. My people. My budget.
This was the one. And if it's OXO?
If Jerry's right? They take this
over and I am fucked.

ALICE
Who knows, maybe OXO wants a dam
of their own.

PETER
They don't build dams. They kick
ass. They'd rather have a civil
war than a water system. You know
what they call it? What we do?
Humanitarian window dressing."

ALICE
(raising her glass)
Here's to flushing Africa...

PETER
You're drunk.

ALICE
Maybe it's a sign that it's time
to go home.

PETER
Oh, that's great, Alice...
(disgusted)
This thing craps out and I'm back
at a drafting table and you know it.
I'm losing my brass ring -- I'm in
the middle of a total professional
meltdown and you think now? -- you
make this as a good time to start
back promoting this agenda?

ALICE
Going home is not an agenda.

PETER
Your timing's impeccable.

ALICE
You don't like this place either.

PETER
I like the project.

ALICE
I don't have a project!

PETER
And that's my fault?

ALICE
I'm not getting pregnant again in
the third world. You want to have
a family, we're going home!

Married silence. Some line has been crossed.

PETER
Maybe you should go home. Take
a break. Even if the project's
dead it's gonna take a while to
close it down.

(she is staring)
That's what you want, isn't it?

ALICE
I never said that.

PETER
Then I guess it's me.

And he walks. ALICE alone with it, as we --

CUT TO

HEATHROW AIRPORT. Duty Free. Who knows what time it is?
A consumer casino. A high-end assault of neon and display
cases. TERRY walking through like he's done a thousand
times before. Buttoned down for travel, with the carry-on
and briefcase, he looks every inch the corporate road
warrior. The bandage above his eye the only thing out of
place. World-class alienation.

CUT TO

THE SCORPION HOUSE KITCHEN. Day. ALICE just waking up. Wandering downstairs and --

ALICE
Peter. Peter?

There's coffee. But he's gone. She's alone, as we --

CUT TO

AN AIRPLANE CABIN. Night. TERRY in first class. A dark, empty red-eye. He's in the pin spot of a reading light. Tired past sleep. In motion again. How did this happen?

CUT TO

TELACCA CITY. Day. A BLACK BMW speeding through --

CUT TO

PETER driving with the car phone loud over speakers, but it's a bad connection --

FELLNER'S VOICE
-- I don't know what to tell you,
Peter. We need help. OXO has
its own way of doing things --

PETER
-- it's not just me, Ted, I'm not
the only one gonna fight for this --

CUT TO

OXO CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS. Houston. A hallway outside the boardroom. Lawyers in the BG. TED FELLNER, longtime oil company survivor, hunched over a cell phone --

PETER'S VOICE
-- you better tell OXO how much
local support we've got down here --

FELLNER
If that's a threat, Peter, I'm not
sure what that is, but --

CUT TO

PETER downshifting -- there's a corner coming fast --

PETER

-- I've got people down here who
burned their bridges to come and
work with us --

FELLNER'S VOICE

-- can barely hear you --

PETER

What the hell am I supposed to
tell my people?

FELLNER'S VOICE

Tell them to get their resumes out.

A burst of STATIC -- the call is really breaking up --

PETER

Ted? Ted? I'm heading for the
office -- I'm gonna call you back
on a landline. Can you ju--

Dialtone. PETER just incredibly frustrated, but there's
no time to react, because, up ahead -- TRAFFIC -- fiesta
traffic -- a major jam-up and --

PETER slamming on the brakes -- no time for this -- new plan
-- looking back -- swinging a hard U-TURN, as we --

CUT TO

TERRY'S PASSPORT. Night. Pages turning. A TELACCAN
IMMIGRATION OFFICER trying to find a clear place to stamp.
Forget it. Every page is wall-to-wall embarkation imprints.

TERRY standing there waiting for the guy to do his thing.
Ca-chunk. Handed back his passport, as we --

CUT TO

TELACCA CITY. Day. Outskirts of town. THE BLACK BMW
speeding along a narrow, much-funkier road. Slums rimming
thick sugar cane fields.

INSIDE THE CAR

PETER looking for a shortcut -- looking a little lost --
juggling the wheel, a map, and the phone --

PETER

-- call Ted Fellner and tell him
I'll be at the office in twenty
minutes. Tell him to wait, I'm on
my way.

PETER punches out the call, focusing ahead, and --

PETER

Oh, fuck this...

BECAUSE UP THE ROAD

SOME SORT OF ACCIDENT. An old tanker truck on its side.
A couple flares burning and --

CUT TO

PETER downshifting -- looking back -- shit, there's another
truck right behind him and --

CUT TO

A BLUE-UNIFORMED COP appearing beside the flares -- he's
waving a submachine gun like a highway flag -- waving Peter
around the tanker and --

CUT TO

PETER hesitating -- should he turn back? -- could he? --
then the truck behind him STARTS BLOWING ITS HORN -- he's
got no choice -- sucking it up -- pulling past THE BLUE COP,
around the tanker and --

PETER

Oh, shit...

HIS POV

IT'S A ROADBLOCK. Twenty cars stopped here. Up ahead,
at the checkpoint, police lights turning. There's a dusty
embankment along one side of the road. The other slopes
down to the cane fields that stretch all the way to the
mountains.

BLUE UNIFORMS working the line, searching cars. Drivers
spreadeagle against their vehicles. Thirty, forty people
standing around. Lots of guns. Lots of tension and --

CUT TO

PETER trying to stay calm. You're boxed in. You're going
nowhere. Stay cool. Keep breathing. Checking his watch.

AND THEN SUDDENLY

A MOTORCYCLE -- up ahead -- TWO TEENAGED KIDS pulling out of the line -- skidding up onto the embankment -- making a run for it -- coming this way -- BAM!-BAM!-BAM!-BAM!-BAM!-BAM! -- GUNFIRE ripping in out of nowhere -- THE KIDS -- their bodies -- jerked back -- into the dust -- the bike flying away like a toy and --

CUT TO

PETER just -- in shock -- just can't believe it and --

CUT TO

THE SHOOTER -- THE BLUE-COP -- the guy who waved him past the tanker -- he's jogging toward the downed motorcycle -- one of the kids isn't dead -- trying to crawl -- SOMEBODY SCREAMING IN SPANISH and --

CUT TO

PETER turning -- something else now and --

CUT TO

GUYS WITH SKI-MASKS -- camo-suits and weapons -- running out of the cane field toward the road and --

CUT TO

PETER diving down under the dashboard and ----

CUT TO

THE SKI MASKS -- twenty of them -- THE GUY WHO'S SCREAMING -- he's got a red bandanna -- he's in charge and furious -- yelling at the shooter cop and everyone else and --

CUT TO

PETER on the car floor -- trying to punch up the cell phone -- going too fast -- messing it up -- and then --

VOICE

Venga! Venga! Rapido!

In the window -- A SKI MASK -- a machine gun, and --

CUT TO

A TENNIS COURT. The country club. ALICE hitting with the pro. Working out. Just banging the ball. And hard. She's good. Focused.

CUT TO

HOTEL FRONT DESK. Night. TERRY checking into The Intercon Excelsior. Telacca City's biggest and best.

DESK CLERK

Welcome back, Señor Thorne...

(a smile and--)

I believe we have a fax that came for you...

TERRY handed an envelope. Fax pages from London.

CUT TO

THE ROADBLOCK -- PETER -- in motion -- SKI MASKS rushing him toward a pick-up truck parked by the cane field --

PETER

-- just -- hang on -- lento, por favor -- una mome--

(silenced by--)

A gun butt hard into his back -- PETER GASPING -- falling -- TWO SKI MASKS muscling him up -- dragging him now past other drivers -- witnesses -- RADIOS START SQUAWKING and --

CUT TO

SKI MASK LEADER -- red bandanna -- running down the line YELLING ORDERS -- "let's go! -- they're moving out fast --

CUT TO

TWO PHONY BLUE COPS -- strafing a stolen police car -- just shooting the shit out of it and --

CUT TO

PETER -- IN THE PICK-UP TRUCK -- it's crazy -- A DOZEN TELACCAN HOSTAGES all crammed in here -- SEVERAL SKI MASKS jumping on -- GUNS FIRING from the road -- RADIOS CHATTERING AWAY -- everything akimbo as the truck jumps into gear -- PETER pushing a gun barrel away from his face as --

THE PICK-UP TRUCK rattles off the main road onto a dirt path that disappears into the cane field. Heading for those mountains in the distance, as we --

CUT TO

THE TENNIS COURT. ALICE just as we left her. Slamming the ball with the pro. Lost in it.

BUT NOW THE SHOT WIDENS

THE CLUB is busy today. Courts on either side all in use. Faces we may recognize from last night's big shindig.

IVY walking quickly. She's not here to play. Something's wrong. Barely excusing herself as she cuts across the courts. FRED and GINGER -- the dancers -- surprised to see IVY walking through their doubles match and --

We see ALICE turning -- breathless, confused -- as IVY comes toward her. We see IVY tell her about Peter. We see ALICE not believe what she's hearing and having to hear it again before it makes sense. We see the racket slip from her hand, as we --

CUT TO

INTERCON HOTEL SUITE. Night. TERRY has just come in. Looking around the room. All too familiar. He pulls open the envelope he was just given at the front desk.

FAX PAGES. Peter's Gam-Carbon employment file. There's a blurry headshot. A brief work history. Slim pickings.

CUT TO

A MOUNTAIN VILLAGE. Day. A dirt street. Tin-shack store. Cinderblock church. Rebel soldiers hanging out around some vehicles. The ski masks are gone now, they feel safe here. And now we see how young they are -- kids really. Just a bunch of teenagers bragging about the days events.

CUT TO

PETER'S BRIEFCASE open on a table. His passport, credit cards, keys, papers, cell phone -- a photograph of Alice -- all of it scattered there.

WE'RE IN

THE CHURCH. A poor church. Folding chairs for pews. An old door makes a table and the altar. PETER standing here. A couple teenage rebels standing guard and --

THREE REBEL HONCHOS -- older men -- seated like judges.

BIG HONCHO

You know what is TAL? What this means?

PETER

The Telaccan Army of Liberation.

BIG HONCHO

You are a prisoner In this armed struggle to rebirth Telacca.

PETER

Okay, so can I -- can I talk now? Because this, this is wrong --

(not sure who's
in charge--)

-- I'm a humanitarian worker, I'm here to help the Telaccan people
-- I'm here to build a dam -- la
represa -- a la Rio Chimaya!

HONCHO #2 holding up Peter's Gem-Carbon I.D. -- passing it around the room like a bad smell --

HONCHO #2

Si, por el pozo petrolero...

PETER

No. That's what I'm trying to tell you. I don't work on the pipeline. No trabajo por la pozo petrolero. I'm building a dam in Chimaya. La represa de Chimaya -- to stop the flooding --

(somebody here
must understand--)

La represa de Chimaya!

BIG HONCHO

For the pipeline.

PETER

No! I don't build the pipeline! I'm here to help the people!

HONCHO #3 has heard enough -- talking past him now --

HONCHO #3

(He goes with Turo tonight.)

PETER

-- wait a -- didn't you hear me?

BIG HONCHO

No mas!

(silence)

You are a prisoner. Una preso de guerra.

PETER quiet now. It's real. This is actually happening. He points to the table. Something there he wants to take.

BIG HONCHO nods.

PETER picking up THE PHOTOGRAPH OF ALICE, as we --

CUT TO

ANOTHER PHOTOGRAPH. This one framed. PETER AND ALICE on a tennis court in Egypt. Smiling and happy. A mixed-doubles trophy. A WOMAN'S HAND lifting the photo away as we --

CUT TO

ANOTHER PHOTOGRAPH. Another frame. PETER AND ALICE on a motorcycle. Kilimanjaro in the background. They're dusty and grungy and thrilled with it all. Again -- A WOMAN'S HAND lifting the photo away and --

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

THE SCORPION MASTER BEDROOM. Night. The woman gathering the photographs is NORICIA PEREZ. She's late-thirties. A prosperous Telaccan neighbor and friend of Alice's. In her arms, a dozen or more pictures she's cherrypicked from around the house and --

CUT TO

SCORPION HOUSE DOWNSTAIRS. Just brimming with activity. That first blush of energy when people are introduced to emergency. This will soon grow tiresome, but for tonight everything is urgent and dramatic.

MARIA running food out from the kitchen. Helping her is CINTA, a much-younger woman who usually cleans the house.

SANDRO, the driver, here with several of his trusted Telaccan buddies. These guys in deep discussion with ZEV and BRUNO, two of the engineers we saw up at the dam.

ELIODORO -- Noricia's husband -- hunched over a cell-phone and notepad in the study. Looking up as NORICIA enters with the armful of pictures. He's on hold, the two of them trying looking for the best picture of Peter, as we --

CUT TO

THE PATIO. ALICE out here listening to JERRY as he paces around the pool, with a cell phone --

JERRY

-- no, it was completely random,
he was out, I guess, out near the
barrio, they have these roadblocks,
they steal cars, money, whatever
they can get...

(pause)

No, we have no idea what's --

(realizing that

Alice is staring--)

Look, let me call you back.

And the moment he hangs up --

ALICE

You're telling him we don't know
what's happened.

JERRY

Alice, at this point, we're --

ALICE

-- he's been kidnapped, Jerry! --

JERRY

-- look, until we have contact --

ALICE

He got taken by the TAL at gunpoint
in a roadblock! Twenty-five people
saw him driven away in a goddam
truck! I don't know -- maybe it's
me -- but it sounds pretty fucking
definitive!

JERRY silent, looking past her to --

IVY

(phone in hand)

It's your sister-in-law again...

ALICE

(taking it--)

Janis. Did you get the flight?

...Of course I'll be there.

JERRY and IVY exchanging a look. Like maybe they know
how ugly his could all get before it's through.

CUT TO

INTERCON HOTEL BATHROOM. Day. TERRY at the mirror shaving. Catching his reflection --

TERRY

Oh, bloody hell...

He's bleeding. His eye, the bandage has come loose in the wet. Perfect. Just delightful.

CUT TO

MOUNTAIN JUNGLE -- day -- motion -- A JEEP -- too fast -- rattling along a mud path. PETER getting hammered in the back. A burlap hood pulled down tight over his head. Armed TAL guerrillas hanging on for the ride. Splashing through a washed-out section of the path, as we --

CUT TO

TELACCA CITY AIRPORT. Day. ALICE waiting with SANDRO outside customs. She's tired. Trying to perk up, as --

PASSENGERS start clearing customs. Almost first -- but not for lack of trying -- JANIS GEHRIG. Peter's older sister. She's smart and tense and hyper. She and Alice have never hit it off. She's in from Los Angeles where she lives with her lawyer husband and three kids. She has never been to Telacca before, but that won't faze her.

JANIS with open arms. ALICE absorbed into her embrace.

JANIS

Are you okay? Are you?

ALICE

I'm fine. Yes. I'm okay.

JANIS

We're gonna get through this.
You know that.

(Alice nods)

We have to be strong.

ALICE

That's the plan.

JANIS smiles. Like a parent. Thank God I'm here.

CUT TO

THE SCORPION HOUSE PATIO. TERRY out here alone, flipping through the fax pages of Peter's Gem-Carbon dossier.

[Note: At this point, time has shifted. It's Terry and Alice who are now in sync. Peter's story will unfold in it's own way, in it's own time.]

CUT TO

THE SCORPION LIVING ROOM. ALICE and MARIA checking him out through the glass.

MARIA

He is here maybe, I don't know,
twenty minutes after you go.

JANIS with Terry's business card in her hand.

JANIS

What is Risk Management?

ALICE

He's a negotiator.

CUT TO

THE PATIO. TERRY turning as the glass doors behind him slide open. Standing quickly and --

JANIS

(leading the way)

Hi. I'm Janis Gehrig...

TERRY

Terrence Thorne. How do you do?

JANIS

And this is Alice...

ALICE coming into the sun. Toward him. They shake.

TERRY

How do you do?

(pulling a business
card--)

I'm with Risk Management. We're
an international consultancy...

JANIS

I have one.

(in her hand)

...your card.

TERRY

Right. I'm with RMI. We're based in London. I'm with our security and crisis response unit and I'm sorry to just appear like this, but we try and--

JANIS

You're not selling something, are you?

ALICE

(mortified)

Janis...

JANIS

What?

TERRY

Please, no, it's all right...

(amused)

Must be the shirt...

(reset)

My company, we work with AGP, they're the insurance company that carries the K&R -- Kidnap and Ransom policies -- for Gem-Carbon. We're the designated consultants for Peter's case.

(beat)

I'm here to help you out.

JANIS

There's insurance for this?

TERRY

There certainly is.

JANIS

Covering what?

TERRY

Pretty much all of it. Everything from our services straight through to the ransom payment.

JANIS

You're kidding...

(chastened)

You can understand why I'd be...

TERRY

Please. Don't even think about it.

ALICE
So you just flew in?

TERRY
Last night.

ALICE
You've spoken with Gem-Carbon?

TERRY
London may have, I don't know.
(the fax pages)
All I have at the moment is this
very useless employment dossier.
What I'd like to do is get a proper
file going. I have questions.
I'm sure you do as well. I'll try
to explain as much as I can.

JANIS
Good. We need some explaining.
Maybe somebody can tell us why
nobody from the police has even
bothered to come by, or take a
statement, or try and find witnesses
from this roadblock.
(incredulous)
I mean, this is what I'm hearing
and I can't believe it.

TERRY
Right. Well, I spoke to a police
inspector before I came over, and
for what it's worth, they're aware
of the situation.

JANIS
What the hell does that mean?

TERRY
Mrs. Gehrig, we have a lot to talk
about, so maybe if we --

JANIS
Omgod, no, I'm not Mrs. Gehrig...
(amused)
I'm Peter's sister.

TERRY hesitates. Okay. There's ALICE. Sorry.

ALICE
Why don't we go inside and...

CUT TO

THE MOUNTAIN JUNGLE. The rebel jeep parked in a clearing. PETER standing there as the burlap hood is pulled away. His new escort -- A PLATOON OF GUERRILLAS -- staring back from the vegetation. Heavily armed. Heavily scarred.

TERRY (VO)

"First off, you need to try and relax. You need to know that you're in good hands. We're not some local, part-time operation. This is what we do, we do it the world over, and we're very good at it..."

CUT TO

THE SCORPION LIVING ROOM. ALICE and JANIS and --

TERRY

...Kidnapping is a business in Telacca. You need to accept that. Thirty years ago the TAL was a serious revolutionary movement. Those days are long past. They got fat running protection for the drug cartels. They got fat and hungry for more. One day they woke up and realized kidnapping was a better profit center than propaganda tool...

CUT TO

A JUNGLE PATH. Rising gently through thick, beautiful forest. PETER and THE PLATOON walking in loose formation.

TERRY (VO)

"...We're not trying to find the people who've done this. We're not trying to locate Peter or rescue him or bring anyone to justice. What we want to do -- all we want to do -- is find a number -- a dollar amount -- that gets him back in one piece as quickly as possible..."

CUT TO

THE SCORPION LIVING ROOM. As we left them.

TERRY

...Technically, paying a ransom is illegal in Telacca. Like most things down here, it's negotiable.

(MORE)

TERRY (cont)

The police are essentially useless. There's not much they can do to help and a great deal they can do to muck it all up. We have a few people we trust. We use them sparingly...

CUT TO

A MOUNTAIN FARM. Small and poor. PETER and THE PLATOON crossing a field. Indian farmers know better than to look.

TERRY (VO)

"...The army's no better. Weak, corrupt, irrational -- the last thing we want is heroics. So we count on nobody..."

CUT TO

THE SCORPION LIVING ROOM. As they were.

ALICE

What about the embassy?

TERRY

All you're going to get from the embassy is a smile and pat on the back. The U.S. mission here right now is to keep their heads down, keep things quiet, and get the oil flowing. You don't fit into their plans.

ALICE

How long is this going to take?

TERRY

Truth is I don't know. Last year, things were much more predictable. There's a lot going on right now.

ALICE

Meaning what?

TERRY

It's hard to negotiate when the people you need to deal with are on the move.

ALICE

You mean fighting.

TERRY

Yes.

JANIS

How long would it have been then?
Last year.

TERRY

Best case? Two months.

ALICE

And the worst?

TERRY

Longer.

JANIS

You keep talking about negotiating.
What's to negotiate?

TERRY

Everything.

CUT TO

A MOUNTAIN CHASM. Dawn. PETER crossing an insane rope bridge. Platoon guys ahead and behind. Don't look down. Just keep going. Absolutely terrifying, and --

TERRY (VO)

"This is a game. It's a game you play whether you like it or not. For you it's emotional. To the people holding Peter, this is business. You're in the market and he's the product. And the sooner you get comfortable with that, the easier it's gonna go."

CUT TO

THE SCORPION LIVING ROOM. ALICE and JANIS looking pale.

TERRY

...Pay too fast. Pay too big. Make it look too easy. And instead of getting Peter back you'll have a new message thanking you for the down payment and asking for more.

ALICE

Where is he? Where's Peter through all this.

TERRY

In the mountains. La cordillera. Somewhere.

They fall quiet. TERRY watching ALICE. Watching her try and bury her nerves.

TERRY

The people who've taken him, it's in their interest to keep him well. It's a rough business, but they know what they're doing too. He's gonna be all right.

(pulling a pen--)

Let's talk about Peter. How's his health?

JANIS

He's always been healthy.

TERRY

Does he take any medication?

JANIS

No.

TERRY

What about allergies?

JANIS

No. Nothing.

TERRY looks to ALICE for confirmation.

ALICE

He's allergic to chlorine and strawberries. A blood vessel broke in his eye last month, he's been taking drops. He's very prone to ear infections.

JANIS silent now. TERRY scribbling it down.

TERRY

How about emotionally? This kind of stress...

ALICE

What kind of stress are we talking about?

CUT TO

AUTOMATIC WEAPONS -- burst after burst -- tearing the shit out of a big old tree --

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

A VALLEY BIVOUAC. Sunset. Platoon supper of sardines and coffee. PETER sitting off by himself. Several new faces have met the platoon here. TWO WOMEN -- CARA and LINDA -- dressed in shitty camo. They're teenagers. No great beauties. Loading supplies onto two tired pack mules

The idiot firing the gun is JUACO. He's maybe seventeen. Stupid, angry, and unpredictable. Waving the gun around. Careless. Laughing. The platoon soldiers watching him with contempt. Even they don't like him.

PETER watching everything. He's being handed off to these people. He knows it. Scared and trying not to show it. Forcing himself to eat everything in his bowl, as we --

CUT TO

THE PHOTOGRAPH OF PETER AND ALICE -- the tennis shot -- the two of them looking gorgeous and happy and holding that crazy Egyptian trophy and --

WE'RE IN

THE SCORPION KITCHEN. TERRY with the photo. He and ALICE are alone here. He's sitting there with his paperwork. She's hustling up a meal. And she's very good at this. But there's a real edge of panic to her activity.

ALICE

So you're just what? You're just filling in?

TERRY

You'll have someone permanent by the end of the week.

ALICE

And what are you? I mean, the people who do this? Are you lawyers, foreign service, what?

TERRY

Some law enforcement. A couple people come out of intelligence. Mostly it's military.

ALICE

Which are you?

TERRY

I was a soldier. I was in the
SAS -- Special Air Service -- for
ten years.

ALICE

Special means what? Like special
forces?

TERRY

Exactly.

JANIS suddenly audible in the background. Yammering into
a cordless phone. Wrestling her family into line from two
thousand miles away.

ALICE

She's a trip, huh?

TERRY

How do they get on?

ALICE

With Peter? She drives him crazy.
Sometimes I think we've been
bouncing around the world just
so he can avoid her.

TERRY

I see that.

(the file)

I mean, the bouncing around.

She's pouring wine. Her hand is shaking.

ALICE

We were supposed to go home -- we
were in Africa -- that was the
plan. Peter's father's been sick
and a bunch of things, really.
So we were all set to go home and
then this project came up. It's
very competitive -- these projects.

(turning--)

I'm pouring this, I'm realizing
I don't even know if you want any.

TERRY

I'd love some, thanks.

She's trying to stay calm, but it's not working.

ALICE

He knows better than to be out
there alone...

TERRY

You can't think about that.

ALICE

Sandro gets paid for Sunday...

(just raw now)

And that stupid goddam car...

TERRY

You get comfortable. You forget.

It's natural.

JANIS passing again. That voice. Like cold water.

TERRY

So what I really want to know...

(Alice focuses)

What's with all the scorpions?

ALICE

Oh, God...

(she brightens)

This place. I know. It's insane, isn't it? Some big drug guy, "El Scorpione," he built this for one of his mistresses.

(looking around)

I was absolutely determined to have a decent kitchen down here.

(she smiles)

We rented it in the dark.

(she drinks)

Cinta -- one of the maids -- she brings Holy Water every Monday. Sprinkles it around. All that bad juju...

(then reality
slamming back)

So this is what you do, right?
I mean, this is your life. Go to people's houses and tell them how it is and...

TERRY

That's part of it.

ALICE

Try to figure out what they're like? How they're gonna be. How they're gonna hold up? That's what you're doing, right?

TERRY

I'm on your side, Alice.

ALICE

So how am I doing? I mean, you know, for the bereaved spouse?

TERRY

Your husband's alive. He's alive and he's coming home.

ALICE

You've done a lot of these things.

TERRY

Too many.

ALICE

And it always works out?

TERRY

This is a good place to be kidnapped.

ALICE

So these two Brazilians they found dead last month. They were hostages. What happened there?

TERRY blindsided. Hanging for a moment.

TERRY

First of all, one of them was Venezuelan. Second, they were arms dealers. They were doing a gun deal when they were taken. It's a little different.

ALICE

This won't work if you bullshit me.

TERRY

I can see that.

ALICE

So we'll be straight up then?

TERRY

That's how we'll do it.

A moment as this compact is struck. And a moment longer. And then, JANIS, just off the phone, comes barging back --

JANIS

Sorry. God, you'd think I'd been gone for a month...

(beat)

So where were we?

CUT TO

SCORPION HOUSE DRIVEWAY. Night. Later. TERRY leaving. Opening the door to his rental Jeep. Tossing in his stuff. Hesitating. Turning back toward the house. Listening. Looking around. Sightlines. Perimeters.

Music playing from across the street. TERRY moving now, in the dark around the house. A strictly professional security survey. Checking angles. The gate.

And then he stops.

There -- through the window -- ALICE alone in the kitchen. Smoking one of Maria's cigarettes. Unaware she's being watched.

TERRY just staring. Free to stare. Even in this much pain she's beautiful. Or is it because she's in pain?

But it doesn't matter, he's frozen there.

Startled -- the spell broken -- as A DOG STARTS BARKING across the street. And when he looks back, she's gone, and we --

CUT TO

THE INTERCON LOUNGE. Later. A fern bar off the lobby. It's a familiar decor. Lots of glass and the patio beyond. But scratch the surface and smell the intrigue. Arms deals. Drug deals. Money launderers and --

TERRY finds an open spot at the bar. No sooner there than THE BARTENDER lays out a Black Bush with a Coke back.

TERRY

Do I know you?

THE BARTENDER points down the bar. TWO GUYS waving.

ANGLE ON

THESE TWO GUYS as TERRY comes around to join them. DINO is an American. Sharp and aggressive. A walking rumor. An old hand at thirty-five. WYATT is English. Fifty and bloodshot. A bit past it. One thing they share in common, they're both K&R consultants.

DINO

(as Terry arrives)

We've been waiting for you.

TERRY

Stick around long enough and it
all turns up, right?

TERRY with a bearhug for WYATT and a gladhand for DINO.
Some real fraternal affection behind the ugly banter.

WYATT

(Terry's eye)

What's this then, a face lift?

TERRY

Yeah, I'm doing one side at a time.
You're good?

DINO

Looks like shit, but he's working.

WYATT

Thank God, you're here, Terry, the
quality of conversation's been just
bloody appalling.

TERRY

So what are we celebrating?

DINO

Life, liberty and the ability to
purchase happiness.

TERRY raises his glass. They drink.

WYATT

Someone said you were in Turkey.

DINO

Chechnya. The Frenchman, right?
Lenoir?

TERRY

You're keeping up, Dino.

DINO

Yeah, we turned that job down.
(shaking his head)
What the fuck is Ian doing sending
you out there anyway?

TERRY

We've been very busy.

DINO

Everybody's busy. Christ, if
Wyatt here's working, you know
the world's in trouble.

TERRY

(to Wyatt)

I thought you were retiring, mate.

WYATT

Well, I was, but Security Dynamics rang me up with a sob story.

(drunken ennui)

Could I please? Old time's sake.
You know the routine.

TERRY

Who's the hostage?

WYATT

Canadian fellow. Geologist.

TERRY

(to Dino)

And you?

DINO

Come on, dude. Where you been?
I'm working the biggest thing
down here.

WYATT

He's doing the Italian. Calitri.
The banker. He's very pleased
with himself.

DINO

And Ian's got you off in fucking
Chechnya. Astounding.

WYATT looking for another drink now as --

DINO

You heard about Clyde and Jenkins?

TERRY

(lying)

No. What happened?

DINO

They're back working for us.

(amazed)

What is Ian doing? Keeping you
under a fucking rock? You gotta
get informed. I'm gonna open your
eyes while you're down here.

TERRY

Better do it quick. I'm just
passing through.

DINO

I thought you had this Gem-Carbon thing going.

TERRY

No, I'm just in holding hands. Just waiting for the cavalry.

(downing his drink)

And then I'm gone.

WYATT

(glass still empty)

I think someone's kidnapped the bloody barman...

CUT TO

THE GEM-CARBON BUILDING. Downtown Telacca City. Chaotic morning traffic in the streets. As we hear --

FELLNER'S VOICE

...I flew back last night, we've had everyone working the phones...

CUT TO

A GEM-CARBON CONFERENCE ROOM. FELLNER up front --

FELLNER

...we've been going full out here trying to access the information we need to make some informed decisions. And make them quickly. The right decisions.

ALICE and JANIS directly in the line of this bullshit. Also present, JERRY, and SEVERAL OTHER GUYS IN SUITS.

JANIS

Why isn't Mr. Thorne here?

JERRY

The guy from Risk Management?

ALICE

We thought that's what this was about.

FELLNER

There's been a change in plans.

JANIS

What kind of change?

FELLNER

We think it's best -- for all of us -- under the circumstances -- to go with a local representative.

JANIS

Not use Risk Management?

ALICE

What circumstances?

A heavy pause.

FELLNER

There's no insurance.

(dead air)

None of us -- no one at Gem-Carbon has been insured for kidnapping since last July.

Heavier still.

ALICE

How is that possible?

FELLNER

They stopped paying premiums. Some idiot in New York was trying to cut costs and didn't know what they were doing and...

JANIS

That's crazy.

FELLNER

That's one way to describe it.

(I feel your pain)

Alice, please. This could be any one of us.

ALICE

But it's not, is it? It's Peter.

FELLNER

Look, OXO is buying the pipeline. What we need to do -- what we've been trying to do -- is make sure they're aware of these important obligations.

ALICE

I bet they can't wait for that.

(flame-on)

I'm sure they're just standing-by ready to jump in and help out.

JANIS

This is absurd.

(to Fellner)

Where's Gem-Carbon in all this?

FELLNER

Gem-Carbon is evaporating. They're selling off what they can. It's just a little late for miracles.

JANIS

(to Alice)

We need to speak with an attorney immediat--

ALICE

Janis.

(freezing her)

Don't.

(to Fellner)

So you're all out of work?

FELLNER

It would seem so.

ALICE turning -- there's a guy sitting in the back of the room. He's Telaccan. Fifty. Well-fed. Cheap suit.

ALICE

And who're you?

FELLNER

(quickly)

Alice, this is Arturo Fernandez...

MR. FERNANDEZ on his feet. Like a puppet. Most gracious.

FERNANDEZ

Mrs. Gehrig...

FELLNER

Mr. Fernandez has helped out with our local security coordination for years. He's very well connected. Very experienced. I think if you give us a couple minutes to talk it over, you're going to realize just how lucky we are to have him working with us.

ALICE

I can't wait.

CUT TO

INTERCON HOTEL LOBBY. Front desk. TERRY checking out.
DESK CLERK handing him his bill, and --

ALICE

Boy, did you have me fooled.

TERRY blindsided. There she is.

TERRY

I was about to call you.

ALICE

Where? From the plane?

(she's just raw)

You stood in my house and told me
I didn't have to worry anymore.

You stood there.

TERRY

Look, we all thought Gem-Carbon was
still a client. A claim gets called
in. It's the weekend...

(off-balance)

It's not a perfect system.

ALICE

What about us? We can't be the
client?

TERRY

It's not that simple.

ALICE

You get ten thousand a week plus
expenses. We checked it out.
How do you know we can't pay?

TERRY

Really, I am sorry, but this isn't
a good situation for us either.

ALICE

Us?

(savage incredulity)

You. You stood in my kitchen and
told me my husband was coming home!

TERRY

Look, Gem-Carbon's out, okay?
OXO spends forty million a year on
K&R insurance around the world.
My company has a nice piece of that
and the last thing OXO wants is a
conflict.

ALICE

But Peter doesn't work for OXO!

Loud enough so that a few heads start to turn.

TERRY

That's the point. That's how they want it. No confusion. No exposure. No liability.

(beat)

I'm not even supposed to talk to you.

ALICE

So this is what? This is you being brave?

TERRY

No. This is me doing my job.

(hot now)

Look, I'm really sorry, okay? But I haven't seen my own bed in five months. I'm two minutes off my last job, they're telling me to hustle down here and I come. Now I wake up this morning and the phone's ringing and they're telling me it's over.

(point blank)

I don't make policy, okay?

ALICE

Well, it's good I came by then, right? Let you get that off your chest.

TERRY

I'm sure it's going to work out.

ALICE

They're giving me some local guy. They're giving exactly the kind of guy you warned me about.

TERRY

I don't know what else to tell you. It's not my call.

ALICE

Great, so when this is over and my husband's dead and I'm suing the shit out of these scumbags, you can tell the judge you did everything you could to help me out!

TERRY has taken his fill. He's walking. She's so stunned, for a moment she lets him go. And the next she's after him. Pursuing him through the lobby --

ALICE

Wait. Wait. Please, just -- just please -- you can't go -- just listen to me, all right?

(he's trying to
tune her out--)

I'm sorry to be like this, but I mean, my husband is somewhere, God knows where and I haven't slept in days and I'm at war with two international oil companies and my sister-in-law and some terrorist group I don't even know, and you're the first -- you're the only person I've met who knows what they're talking about and I'm begging you -- I'm totally fucking begging you to help me on this -- I don't care about the rules or the liability or being right or whatever it is -- and if it's the money -- really -- we could pay. Peter's father isn't poor --

TERRY stops. Near the door.

TERRY

You asked me not to bullshit you, right?

ALICE

Right.

TERRY

I've got a plane to catch.

She is immobilized. Stunned. Standing there in shock as TERRY walks briskly for the door and --

OUT INTO

THE STREET. There's a cab waiting. His bag's in the trunk but he's not even checking. TERRY forcing himself to not look back. Forcing himself to get in quick and close the door. Dying by degree as the driver rushes around to get started. Wondering what the hell he's just done and yet powerless to change it, as the car pulls away and we --

CUT TO

A MOUNTAIN PATH. Hard rain. Who knows what time it is? Everything everywhere is wet. Here they come, slogging through the mud. First to pass is CARA. Fifteen. Illiterate. Overweight. Leading two unhappy pack mules. Angry about all of it.

Behind her, LINDA. Sixteen. She's small. The AK-47 strapped over her poncho looks ridiculous. Indian blood that can walk forever. Speaks a little English.

Then PETER. He's been given a poncho and a backpack. He's exhausted and soaking and hungry and terrified. But what do you do? You keep walking.

Finally, JUACO. The little maniac in charge.

They've reached a clearing. The whole soaking caravan slows to a stop. Up ahead, there's a break in the greenery. Some sort of vista. They're stopping here. CARA and JUACO arguing about mule-packs being so wet.

PETER pushing ahead, up toward the trail break, where --

HE SEES

A VALLEY below them. Simply incredible. A volcanic basin. Huge, stone peaks rim the horizon. The valley floor -- what we can see of it -- a thick carpet of green. The rain clouds trapped above. Beautiful and terrifying.

BACK TO

THE PLATEAU. PETER near the ledge with LINDA. CARA and JUACO arguing with increasing fury in the background --

PETER

Aqui. Esta? Por nosotros.

LINDA

Si. We stay here.

PETER

How long?

She doesn't answer, turning back because the argument behind them has stopped and JUACO is pulling a rifle from the mule pack and he's coming toward them -- toward the ledge -- pulling the safety as he comes and --

PETER

What are you doing? Por que?

(scared)

Que pasa? Por que? Linda?

JUACO

(to Linda)

(Tell him to shut the fuck up.)

JUACO raising the rifle -- PETER with no place to go --

PETER

-- por que? What're you--

(to Linda)

-- what's he doing? --

JUACO waves the barrel in PETER'S FACE -- smiles -- and then, BANG! BANG BANG! -- three shots -- right over his ear -- into the sky -- off over the valley.

PETER on his knees. Shaking with fear. Ears ringing. Is he crying or is it just the rain?

JUACO laughing at him. The two women standing silently as the rain keeps falling. All of them waiting...

And then -- bang -- bang -- bang -- the response, three muffled shots from the valley below, and we --

CUT TO

CAMP INSANITY. That's what we'll call it. Three simple huts pitched around a clear patch of mud. A tin shed hidden back under the trees. There's a stream fifty meters down a little slope. Two cows. A couple chickens.

Two teenage boys, ALEX and BERTO have been roused from a three-day party. They're both wasted and fucked out. Shirts off. Cigarettes going. Rifles slung carelessly.

PETER slogging in behind the mules. Trying to remember the trail. But he's exhausted. Which way did they come from? Where's the sun? Where is he now? Pulled back, as --

JUACO

(screaming at the boys)

(Where's the fire? We've been walking two days and you can't keep a fire for us! You lazy faggot bitches! Go! Put down the guns and make the fire!)

(to Cara now--)

(Get these animals unpacked!)

(to Linda--)

(Get the gringo into his place!)

They fear him. Everyone getting to it. LINDA quickly motioning for PETER to follow her, and we --

CUT TO

DARKNESS. And then a door opens. And there's enough light to see PETER'S HUT. Six by four. Rough wood plank walls. Leaking thatched roof. Wet dirt floor with stones from some old fire in one corner. A mattress made of leaves and straw slapped over a rusted tin sheet.

LINDA moves aside. PETER at the door. Looking in.

PETER

Aqui? Para mi?

LINDA

Si. You wait.

(pushing him in)

Wait here. You will have fire.

Fuego, comprende? Soon.

PETER hunches down through the door. Sitting there on the little bed. As she closes the door. And the whole thing goes dark. And the sound of the rain. And JUACO outside screaming at the boys to move their sorry asses, and we --

CUT TO

LONDON/THE THAMES. Day. A YACHT PARTY. Champagne. Good tailoring. Prosperous laughter. Seventy people trying hard to pretend they're not doing business. A banner reads:

AGP INSURANCE WELCOMES LONDON

THE CAMERA FINDS

TERRY dressed for it, standing near the bar. Across deck, PAMELA laughing it up with HARRY LUTHAN and several other plutocratic types.

HAVERY turning back with two glasses of champagne.

HAVERY

Here's to dodging bullets.

(raising his glass)

Can you believe we almost lost a twelve million dollar account over this Gem-Carbon fiasco?

(he drinks, Terry hasn't yet--)

OXO got quite put-off by the whole adventure. I'm sure you did as well. And rightfully so. I'll make it up to you, Terry, I will.

TERRY

What's gonna happen to them?

HAVERY

Who?

TERRY

The Gehrigs. These people.

HAVERY

Oh, come on... They'll find a way through. Christ, we've got half-a-dozen firms breathing down our necks as it is. Believe me, somebody wants this case. They'll be fine.

(onto the future)

So look, I've got a trip to Bangkok needs doing. Two, three days at the most. Strictly management assignment. Wave the flag. Talk to a few people. After that, I thought you might want a week at the beach in Phuket.

(he smiles)

I was thinking of sending Pamela along. Back you up.

TERRY smiles. Tries to. Downing his champagne, as we --

CUT TO

DARKNESS. Then -- A DOORBELL RINGS -- loud -- a hand -- searching for the light -- something falling -- GLASS SHATTERING across the floor and --

LIGHTS ON TO REVEAL

THE SCORPION BEDROOM -- ALICE -- the shock of being awake turning to fear. It's three a.m. There's broken glass across the floor. THE DOORBELL AGAIN -- insistent now --

CUT TO

THE FRONT DOOR -- moments later -- KNOCKING now and --

ALICE

(rushing down)

-- who's there? --

JANIS

(behind her)

-- Alice --

ALICE
(waving for quiet)
Who is it?

A VOICE
(through the door)
Alice, it's Eliodoro. From next door. Please, hurry...

ALICE rushing open the door. ELIODORO, her neighbor, standing there in robe and slippers. NORICIA, running across the street in her nightgown --

ELIODORO
-- Alice, I'm sorry -- we had a call -- about Peter -- they said to look in our car -- we'd find a cell phone --
(there's a phone in his hand)--
And this, it was there...

NORICIA
They're calling back -- to this phone -- in twenty minutes.

ALICE taking the phone. Looking back to Janis, as we --

CUT TO

THE SCORPION HOUSE. Half hour later. MR. FERNANDEZ with the cell phone. It's a clipped, hushed conversation and rapid-fire Spanish. He's making notes.

ALICE with a cigarette. JANIS pacing. ELIODORO and NORICIA on the couch. Everyone waiting.

FERNANDEZ
Si. Si comprendo.
(he's wrapping up)
Ire yo mismo si fuera neccesario.
(listening)
Si, adios.

It's over. FERNANDEZ puts down the phone. Gathers his notes. He's wearing a sweatsuit. He turns to them.

FERNANDEZ
He says Peter is alive. He is a prisoner of war. They want two million dollars for his release.

JANIS
Omigod...

FERNANDEZ

Obviously this is negotiable.

(calm and careful)

He says to make a better condition for Peter's food and care, okay? And also for them to prove for us that he's alive -- they want to make a first transfer -- like a good faith -- as soon as possible.

ALICE

First transfer being what?

FERNANDEZ

(his notes)

Six hundred thousand pesos -- is maybe fifty thousand dollars.

ALICE

Can we talk to him?

FERNANDEZ

This guy? On the phone?

ALICE

No. Peter.

FERNANDEZ

I don't think so. I doubt this. This guy, he's going to make one more contact, okay? He's going to tell us where to go for this.

(beat)

But, Peter is okay. And this -- it's very fast for a case like this. Very fast.

Nobody quite sure what to say for a moment.

ALICE

Okay, I'm making breakfast.

(stabbing out her
smoke--)

Anybody hungry? Mr. Fernandez?

FERNANDEZ smiles. Sure. He'll eat.

CUT TO

CAMP INSANITY. Night. PETER'S HUT. Rain still falling hard. A smoky little fire going in the corner. PETER sitting on his cot. LINDA kneeling there, wrapping a steel chain around his ankle. JUACO in the door. Watching.

PETER

Ask him. Where does he think I'm going to go?

JUACO explodes with a burst of fast, bad-mood Spanish.

LINDA

(translating)

If he says you wear the chain, then this is how it goes.

JUACO staring. Like a challenge. Fuck with me.

PETER

Ask him how long I'm here for?

(to Juaco)

Quanto tiempo? Para mi?

JUACO spits. Another burst of incomprehensible Spanish and he's swaggering off. LINDA locking the chain, as we --

CUT TO

BANCO TELACCA NATIONALE. MR. SANTOS, bank Vice President, flipping through paperwork. ALICE, JANIS, and FERNANDEZ sitting at his desk. Heavy uniformed security all over.

SANTOS

You want to wire some monies into Telacca and you are requesting that we waive the normal forty day holding period. Correct?

ALICE

Yes.

SANTOS nods. Proud. Bored. Angry. Not into gringos.

SANTOS

Who is this, C. H. Gehrig?

ALICE

That's my father-in-law --

JANIS

-- my father. This is from his bank in Galveston. In Texas.

SANTOS

You have a choice on this form, two choices, these monies are for investment purposes or for living expenses. You have marked both...

ALICE

We made a mistake. We crossed-off
living expenses, it's supposed to
be investment, you can see here --
(trying to show--)

JANIS

-- we wanted to get another form,
but then, apparently, this was the
last one available --
(to Fernandez)
-- tell him...

SANTOS

Yes, I understand.
(fast Spanish to
Fernandez now--)
(Maybe you should tell them it's
their country that brings this
shit down on our roof.)

ALICE and JANIS completely lost now. Spectators.

FERNANDEZ

(I don't tell these two anything.)

SANTOS

(Say that we'll do what we can,
but explain that there's going to
be a waiver charge -- you know
what to say.)

ALICE

Look, if you have another form,
I'd be happy to fill it out...

SANTOS freezing her out. Walking away with the documents.

JANIS

What the hell is going on here?

FERNANDEZ

He can fix this up, okay? But
it requires a commission.

ALICE

You mean like a bribe?

FERNANDEZ

(cooler now)
No. Like a commission.

ALICE and JANIS exchanging a look, as we --

CUT TO

HEATHROW AIRPORT. Duty free. Who knows what time it is? The glittering consumer casino. TERRY walking through like he's done a thousand and one times before. PAMELA right beside him. As they go, she spots something she wants. She stops. Motions for him to wait. Just be a moment.

It's a bikini shop she's just dashed into.

TERRY standing there as the travellers and shoppers pass all around him. Frozen there as the whole world washes by him. And there's a sickness inside him that no one here can cure. A sickness that we alone can see. TERRY still standing there, even as we --

CUT TO

TELACCAN CURRENCY. Pesos. Small bills in unbound stacks across a dining room table. HANDS trying to stuff two stacks into a plastic bag. Forcing it. And the bag breaks and the bills go flying everywhere and --

JANIS (OS)

-- shit --

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

THE SCORPION DINING ROOM. Six hundred thousand pesos piled everywhere. JANIS standing there with the broken bag and the money all over the floor. ALICE and FERNANDEZ across the table. They've been having trouble with this.

JANIS

This is ridiculous.

FERNANDEZ

Maybe we use two bags...

FERNANDEZ with the bag. Like he's gonna make it work.

ALICE

I tried that already.

ALICE and JANIS trading a look like, "What the fuck are we into here?"

FERNANDEZ

(Where did you get these bags?)
(calling into--)

THE LIVING ROOM

RAYMO and NINO -- his two deputies -- making themselves at home. Shoulder holsters and plenty of macho and the stink of trouble.

RAYMO

(This is bullshit if you ask me.)

FERNANDEZ about to argue, when THE DOORBELL RINGS -- the room goes dead quiet.

FERNANDEZ

You have someone coming?

ALICE shakes her head no. FERNANDEZ unstrapping his holster, as we --

CUT TO

ALICE opening the front door. TERRY standing there.

ALICE

What are you doing here?

TERRY

I wanted to apologize.

ALICE

I thought you did that already.

TERRY tries to smile. This is gonna be tough.

TERRY

I wanted to talk to you about the case.

ALICE

That's great, it's just we're kind of in the middle of something here.

JANIS

(behind her now--)

Omigod, it's you...

TERRY

Hello, Janis...

ALICE

What do you want?

TERRY

I wanted to tell you how sorry
I was about the way things went.
And I understand how you might be
reluctant to hear me out, but...

(to both of them)

I wanted to offer my services.

ALICE

I thought your hands were tied.

TERRY

They were.

ALICE

What about your company?

TERRY

I'd be doing it on my own.

FERNANDEZ

(behind her)

Señora...

JANIS

(over her shoulder)

It's okay.

TERRY can see FERNANDEZ and RAYMO behind her in the hall.

TERRY

What's all this?

ALICE

We're actually putting together
a payment, so...

TERRY

What kind of payment?

ALICE

For Peter. A good faith payment.

TERRY

Good faith?

JANIS

We're getting a proof of life.

TERRY

Really...

(he's feigning
amusement--)

Who put this together?

FERNANDEZ has heard enough --

FERNANDEZ

Señora, I must insist -- right
now -- is not good for visitors.

TERRY

Is this your guy?

ALICE nods. Just sensing now how messed-up this may be.
TERRY moving past her and she's not stopping him and --

WE'RE INTO

THE SCORPION HOUSE -- TERRY in motion -- full forward --

TERRY

-- hey, how you doing? --

(hand out--)

Terry Thorne, nice to meet you...

FERNANDEZ is thrown -- looking to ALICE and JANIS and --

FERNANDEZ

-- I'm sorry, you can't -- we
can't have people in here --

TERRY

-- c'mon, man, where's all that
good faith? --

FERNANDEZ

-- señora, please --

ALICE

-- I said, it's okay --

TERRY still smiling, blowing past RAYMO now --

TERRY

-- what's up? Que pasa? How
you doing? --

RAYMO baffled -- looking to FERNANDEZ -- who is this guy?
-- SPANISH starting to fly back and forth and --

JANIS

-- no, really, it's okay, this
is what he does --

TERRY has reached sight of the living room and --

TERRY

-- whoa, look at all the money --

(--and NINO with
his gun drawn--)

-- sweet Jesus --

(like he's really
surprised)

Hey, there's a guy in here with
a gun --

FERNANDEZ rallying now, pushing past RAYMO and --

FERNANDEZ

You -- ola! --

(see my holster?)

You stop right there, okay?

TERRY holding up, just as --

ALICE

(sees Nino--)

...omigod...

(to Fernandez)

Tell him to put that gun away!

FERNANDEZ waving at NINO to lower the gun --

FERNANDEZ

-- Señora, please, okay? -- I have
my job to do, okay?

JANIS

We told you we know him!

FERNANDEZ ignoring her. Staring hard at TERRY --

FERNANDEZ

I asked you not to come in, okay?
These ladies, okay, maybe they
don't understand so good, but you,
I think you understand, okay?

TERRY

Definitely. I definitely get it.

FERNANDEZ

You want to talk to these ladies
you come back later.

TERRY

When the money's gone.

FERNANDEZ

There you go.

TERRY

(fast and loose)

See, here's the thing --

(to Nino who's
very confused--)

-- and you guys, you're probably
well-aware of all this --

(to Fernandez)

-- and I promise I'll be brief.

(to Raymo)

Good faith is for losers, okay?

(to Nino)

You don't buy proof of life.

(to Fernandez)

You don't pack money in a client's
house unless it's an emergency.

And you sure as shit --

(to Nino)

-- and I think you know exactly
what I'm talking about, right? --

(quick back to

Fernandez--)

-- you don't flash weapons around
people you're trying to help.

(and the moment

he says that--)

NINO is already collapsing -- TERRY with a single, brutal
kidney shot -- like a blur -- like it never happened --
TERRY just lifting Nino's gun as he drops to his knees --

JANIS

-- no! --

ALICE

-- omigod stop! -- stop! --

And it does. TERRY turning to see FERNANDEZ and RAYMO
with their guns pointed right at him. With Nino's piece
hanging by his side he's looking mighty vulnerable.

FERNANDEZ

Okay, asshole, what are you
gonna do now?

TERRY

(calm to Alice)

Ask them to leave.

ALICE

What?

TERRY

Thank him for his trouble and
tell them you want them to leave.

FERNANDEZ
Me? You're telling me?

ALICE and TERRY -- eyes locked -- stay cool --

ALICE
You're taking the case?

TERRY
Yes.

FERNANDEZ
(Nino groaning)
(Get up off the floor you pussy!)

JANIS
How much?

ALICE
Janis...

TERRY
Expenses.

FERNANDEZ
Enough with this!
(dead silence)
Okay, put the gun down or I blow
your head off.

TERRY nice and slow, drops the gun. And then...

ALICE
Mr. Fernandez, I'd like you to
leave.

FERNANDEZ looks over. This is funny.

TERRY
You heard the lady.

FERNANDEZ
I'm not going anywhere.

Pressure drop. This just got very ugly.

TERRY
Can I make a suggestion?

FERNANDEZ
I would like to hear this.

TERRY
I think first off you want to
take a deep breath, okay?

TERRY all smiles. So loose.

TERRY

Then very slowly...very nice and easy, I want you to turn around and meet an old friend of mine...

A NEW ANGLE REVEALS

DINO in the hallway. Perfectly positioned behind RAYMO and FERNANDEZ. Holding a shotgun. Total ambush.

DINO

Now, gentlemen, this is what I call good faith.

FERNANDEZ and RAYMO lowering their weapons, as we --

CUT TO

A RESIDENTIAL STREET. Half hour later. Down the hill from the scorpion house, there's a half-assed guardhouse. SANDRO'S JEEP racing past and --

INSIDE THE JEEP

SANDRO on a cell phone. Eyes scanning as he drives and --

SANDRO

-- I don't see nobody so far --

CUT TO

TERRY at the other end of the line --

TERRY

-- yeah, well, take one more pass around before you come up.

(hanging up as--)

WE PULL BACK TO REVEAL

THE SCORPION HOUSE LIVING ROOM. The money's been bagged. Trash sacks lined up near the door. DINO with a drink, huddled over his cell phone. JANIS out on the patio and now she's smoking. TERRY moving --

INTO

THE KITCHEN. ALICE off in a corner. She's crying and trying to stop, which is only making it worse.

TERRY

Alice? Are you okay?

ALICE

I'll be okay.

TERRY

Sandro and Dino, they're gonna take these dummy bags back into town. Make it look good. We'll keep the cash here.

(gently)

What I need to know is, was there any sort of plan -- was there any contact scheduled, or...?

ALICE

...he had...we didn't...there was nothing. We were just waiting.

(finding him)

I haven't, I haven't cried since this started. It's just -- the tension. Finally, you just...

TERRY

You've got to let it out.

ALICE

(suddenly)

Why are you doing this?

That throws him. He rallies with a smile.

TERRY

Nobody else was gonna take your case. Nobody any good.

ALICE

I know, but you came back.

TERRY

And we're gonna do this my way, right? Even if it's tough, right? You're gonna trust me.

ALICE

I'm trying to thank you for being here...

She's overwhelmed -- she's on her feet -- she's embracing him -- she's holding him and she's weeping and TERRY doesn't know what to feel or think or do with his hands or any of it, and there's --

DINO in the doorway. Watching. A little smile and sip of his drink. Nodding toward the door. Sandro's here.

TERRY giving him a look like, "Hey, I'm trapped here."

CUT TO

RISK MANAGEMENT LONDON. Night. HAVERY through glass. An apoplectic tantrum in a sound-proofed office. Two employees watching him pace and blather, and --

CUT TO

CAMP INSANITY. Day. The sun fighting its way through the valley haze. PETER stripped to shorts and rubber boots is hanging some wet clothes over a length of rope.

ALEX vaguely guarding him. Kicking a soccer ball. Smoking a joint. All while juggling a loaded submachine gun.

BERTO and LINDA bathing down at the stream. Those insane-looking mountains rising through the fog behind them.

And JUACO on the steps of the cooking shack. Smoking cheap brown cocaine paste -- basuco -- from an old homemade pipe. He is wasted. Sucking down a filthy bowlful, as --

THREE RIFLE SHOTS echo over the valley.

PETER -- all of them -- turning -- CARA rushing out of the cooking shack and --

JUACO

(Give me the gun. Bring it!)

(weaving toward

Alex with his

hand out--)

(Give me the fucking gun!)

ALEX is reluctant but what can he do? Glancing at CARA as he turns over the rifle. JUACO aims skyward unsteadily, launching THREE ANSWERING SHOTS, and then --

JUACO

(Get the gringo back in the box.)

ALEX wandering back to PETER. Waving for him to come on. PETER quick grabbing his shit off the line.

PETER
Mi camisa, mi cuchara...
(pointing to--)

An oil drum full of water across the yard. Peter's shirt is there. It's not far.

ALEX
Okay, okay, vamanos.

PETER starting across the yard, when --

JUACO
(What did I fucking tell you?)

ALEX
(What? He wants his shirt...)

JUACO
(to Peter)
(I give an order for you, you stinking faggot gringo then you do what I say! You understand!)

PETER
Quiero mi camisa, mi cuchara...

JUACO weaving toward PETER with the rifle --

CARA
(from behind him)
Juaco, por favor...

JUACO
Callate!
(back to Peter--)

PETER has had it. Staring back daggers.

PETER
You know what I'd love?
(mess with me)
Five minutes alone with you without that gun.

JUACO
(You don't tell to me, okay!
I tell to you!)

PETER
I'd take your whole fucking world apart without breaking a sweat.
(with a smile)
Comprende?

JUACO

(screaming now)

(I tell to you! Move, you fucking gringo faggot! Move! Now!)

PETER

I want my shirt and my spoon!

CARA is yelling for them to stop -- LINDA and BERTO are jogging back from the stream -- ALEX just standing there, too stoned to move fast and --

JUACO

(waving the gun)

(I said to move, asshole!)

PETER

You point that fucking thing at me one more time and I don't care how badass you think you are, I will make you eat that goddamn rifle! I want my shirt!

JUACO snaps -- the gun starts firing -- BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! -- the oil drum -- the shirt -- slaughtered -- water flying and -- BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! -- the ground at Peter's feet -- dirt flying and bullets ricocheting -- BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! -- it's just chaos for fifteen seconds until the clip is empty and suddenly --

Silence. JUACO standing there shaking. He looks spent. PETER hasn't moved. That's his big victory. And --

ALEX

(like a whimper)

(...look, look what you did...)

ALEX has been hit. His foot. He's just realizing it now -- dropping to the ground -- stunned -- one of the bullets must've ricocheted -- and here comes the blood --

CARA

Juaco!

JUACO turns to her. She yanks the rifle from his hands. And then she slaps him. Hard.

So ALEX is weeping. LINDA and BERTO are running toward them. And JUACO -- drunk as he is -- is just starting to realize the magnitude of this fuck-up and there's PETER staring at him, as we --

CUT TO

CAMP INSANITY. Night. LINDA walking toward Peter's hut with a bowl. A TAL PLATOON bivouacked here, maybe a dozen soldiers eating dinner around the yard, watching her --

CUT TO

PETER'S HUT. PETER sitting there, tending his little fire, as the door opens. Tense. LINDA hands him his dinner.

LINDA

You go. In the morning. With the soldiers.

PETER

Where?

She doesn't answer. In her hand, HIS SHIRT, the one that caused all the problems. She throws it down. Closing the door tight behind her as she leaves.

PETER waits. Making sure she's gone.

And then -- he's got the shirt -- working at the collar. Some secret thing tucked into the hem -- pulling it out --

It's the picture -- THE PICTURE OF ALICE -- ragged and wet and worn but she's still there. He's staring at it by the light of the fire. Trying not to cry, as we --

CUT TO

INTERCON RESTAURANT. Breakfast. TERRY on his feet, rushing to sign the check. ALICE has just come in --

TERRY

Who talked to them?

ALICE

Janis answered the phone, I was in the shower. Thank God Maria was there to translate...

TERRY taking her arm. They're walking out fast --

CUT TO

TELACCA CITY. Day. A funky, old street. SANDRO'S JEEP pulling up before A CAFE and --

CUT TO

INSIDE THE CAFE. A dive. Quiet this early. A couple people turning, as TERRY comes striding through and --

CUT TO

THE CAFE MENS ROOM. Nasty and tight. TERRY kicking open the stall door. Straight to the toilet tank. Feeling around the back of it. Checking quickly for booby-traps -- now pulling off the lid, as we --

CUT TO

STREET OUTSIDE THE CAFE. ALICE waiting. And here comes TERRY. Cool and brisk.

TERRY

It's good.

(piece of paper)

Radio frequencies. Times to call.

(walk with me)

We're on for Friday night.

CUT TO

AN AIRPLANE HANGAR. Night. A shitty little airfield on the outskirts of Telacca city.

TERRY'S VOICE

Got any handies?

CUT TO

INSIDE THE HANGAR. Dino's HQ. The room littered with hard-shell cases and footlockers. A mini-warehouse. TERRY here loading up on supplies. DINO opening his stash. Gear spread on a folding table.

DINO

Somewhere...

(digging around--)

TERRY

And I need a scramble phone.

DINO

There's one on the table...

WYATT flopped in a beach chair. Sucking a beer. Drunk.

WYATT

Haven't had a client die on me since '91. And that was Mexico for godsakes.

TERRY

(the scramble phone)
Jesus, it's ancient...

WYATT

I had no idea Canadians could be so bloody emotional. Keening away like a bunch of bloody Brazilians.

DINO

What was it, heart attack?

WYATT

Massive. Massive coronary.

TERRY

Dino...
(amazed)
This is my old funny phone.

DINO

Ah, yes, back when life in Telacca was oh, so simple.

WYATT

Twenty-five thousand for the body. They have no clue what a bargain that is.

(downing his beer)
Well, I'm well out of it, I'll tell you that.

DINO

Okay, here's the handies...
(radios from a box--)

WYATT

You poor bastards are in for it down here. This place, I'll tell you, it's taken on a decidedly hinky-dinky-stinky feel to it.

TERRY

You'll be back, Wy, you'll see.

WYATT

No, I'm afraid not, mate. I'm out of the business. I'm retiring.

DINO

Get over it, man. You're gonna
wake up on a job in the Philippines
and not even know how you got there.

WYATT snorts. Opening another beer. DINO looking for
something in the boxes. TERRY still messing with the
scramble phone. And off this weird little tableau, we --

CUT TO

A MOUNTAIN PASS. Day. PETER and THE PLATOON marching
down. A couple mules holding the whole thing together.
It's beautiful and terrifying. Suddenly -- THE SOUND OF
HELICOPTERS FROM THE DISTANCE --

THE PLATOON diving -- scrambling for cover in the treeline.
Mules pulled into the deep shadows and --

PETER'S FACE pushed down into the dirt and --

HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS -- three of them -- blitzing in low
over the jungle treeline -- banking directly overhead and
then turning and circling away as WE BEGIN TO HEAR --

THE VOICE. The radio voice of Peter's captors. A harsh
and distinctive voice. And we won't need the subtitles
yet, because his fury is clear -

VOICE/RADIO

("What kind of bullshit game do you
think this is here, anyway? That
we're stupid about this? That we're
not serious? Because I tell you...")
(continuing, as we--)

CUT TO

THE SCORPION HOUSE. Night. A study off the living room.
TERRY has set up the communications gear in here. Like a
radio station. Transmitter. Recorder. Microphone.

ELIODORO is their voice. TERRY coaching. NORICIA and
JANIS shotgun. ALICE pacing. All listening to --

VOICE/RADIO

("...if you think this is how
things are done it's clear you are
not serious people and that this
can only be a waste of our time.")

ELIODORO

(quiet translation)

-- he's angry -- he's asking, do we think he's stupid? --

TERRY

Tell him that the people he spoke with before did not represent the family. Tell him that the family wants to do this in a way that's good for everybody. So that nobody feels stupid.

ELIODORO presses the button and spits this back in Spanish. TERRY catching a look at ALICE in the doorway.

VOICE/RADIO

("We had an arrangement and you pull this bullshit with us. Forget it. Where's the family? Put the family on to talk.")

ELIODORO

-- he says -- the family -- put the family on --

TERRY

Tell him forget it. Tell him we speak for the family.

(Eliodoro hesitates)

Do it.

ELIODORO

(About the family, we speak for them so it's not possible. None of the family has Spanish anyway, so, it's not good at all.)

There's a pause in the airwaves. And then --

VOICE/RADIO

(in English)

"You're going to put his wife on the radio or we're going to forget the whole fucking thing."

Dead silence. TERRY taking the microphone from ELIODORO.

TERRY

Who is this? What's your name?

VOICE/RADIO

"Who is this?"

TERRY

Tio. You call me, Tio, okay?

(flat out)

You're not setting all the rules here. We have to work together to get this going. And we want to work with you. But we need a proof of life and we are not going to pay for it. If there's good faith, it can start with that.

VOICE/RADIO

"So you, Tio? Are you the one in charge here now?"

TERRY

That's right.

VOICE/RADIO

"Then you'll be the one with this man's blood on your hands."

And the transmission ends. Static doubling.

JANIS

Omigod.

ALICE

He's gone?

TERRY turns off the radio. All of them staring.

TERRY

Get used to it. This is how it's done.

JANIS escaping into the other room. Like she's sick. ELIODORO going after her with NORICIA. ALICE and TERRY left here alone.

TERRY

I said you'd have to trust me.

ALICE

I'm working on it.

CUT TO

CANON VERDE. Tucked in the highlands, a small guerilla encampment. A river cuts hard against a stone plateau that frames one side. Behind us, the foothills of those big volcanic mountains that form the cordillera. Jungle cover across the bottomland hides the tarp sheds and out-

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buildings tucked here and there. There's a peasant farm terraced up to the West. The valley opens to the South where the clouds sit much of the time.

Maybe that sounds pretty. Now add mud and shit and stray dogs. Add thick camp smoke that hangs over everything. Add twenty or thirty teenaged soldiers.

THE CAMERA FINDS

THE PLATOON slogging into camp. PETER limping. He's weak. The beard is heavy by now. But he's still going. Marching across a swampy open yard. Trying hard to take it all in. There's news from the platoon and people are coming from the woods yelling to one another and --

CUT TO

A MUD SHACK. PETER entering. Crouching through the door. TWO SOLDIERS just outside -- MONO and RAMBO.

MONO

(You stay here. There's food coming later. You understand?)

PETER nods. And a mildewed piece of canvas falls down over the door. And now this is home. It's small, but dry. Crumbling adobe walls. A thatched roof. Straw bedding scattered in the corner.

PETER pulls off his boots. Blood everywhere. His feet are just ragged. And now that he's sitting down, he can barely keep his eyes open, already drifting, as we --

TIME CUT TO

THE MUD SHACK. Night. PETER asleep. As we left him. But the door's open now. Campfires burning in the yard. Shadows eating. Music from a radio in the distance.

PETER opens his eyes suddenly. Disoriented. Jumping back -- there's someone there --

KEZLER

-- don't.

(hand to Peter's mouth--)

Shhh.... Quiet, jah? Whisper.

(Peter nodding, heart pounding--)

You came today from the mountain.

(MORE)

KEZLER (cont)
(hushed and fast)
I'm Kezler. Erich Kezler.

KEZLER is fifty. Looks older. Matted white beard.
Bad teeth. He's a German missionary. Another hostage.

PETER
Peter. Peter Gehrig.

KEZLER
Kezler. You know this name?
Something perhaps. My situation.
(hopeful)
Some news, jah? Something.

PETER
No. I don't know...
(confused)
You're a hostage too?

KEZLER blinks away his disappointment.

KEZLER
There is an Italian at the farm.
Up the hill. He came a week ago.
He's your friend?

PETER
No. No, I was taken alone.

KEZLER
He was sick. I hear them talk.

PETER
What kind of camp is this?

KEZLER
It was once for only drugs. To
make cocaine at the river. Now
from the fighting, it's all the
soldiers. And us.

PETER
How long have you been here?

SOUNDS from outside. Too close. KEZLER with his hand up
for silence. He's gonna have to go. Really quiet now --

KEZLER
You need soap for your feet.
Maybe tomorrow. We'll see.
(at the door--)
They think I'm crazy.

PETER
How long have you been here?

KEZLER
Nineteen months.

And he's gone. Into the dark. Like a dream. PETER left there with his bloody feet and the rest, and we --

CUT TO

A NAME PLATE: DOVER MCLOON -- ASSISTANT TO THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION.

DOVER (OS)
...it's an open visa, so you're cleared from our end...

DOVER'S OFFICE. U.S. EMBASSY TELLACA CITY. Bright and tight. Requisite photos and emblems. DOVER is a Foreign Service lifer. TERRY, ALICE, and JANIS, the recipient of this visa, all in attendance. It's a bullshit meeting.

DOVER
...And, as you may know, the TAL has a political office in Mexico and we've lodged a formal protest.

TERRY
Well, that's great then, Dover.
(standing--)
And thank you. For the visa.

TERRY wants this over. So does DOVER. ALICE and JANIS a beat behind the farewell. There's a moment of awkward standing and shaking of hands goodbye, and then --

The windows rattle suddenly for a second. And there's a muffled THUD. CAR ALARMS -- dozens of them -- all going off like mad --

JANIS
What was that?

TERRY
That was a bomb.

DOVER already at the window -- his phones ringing and --

CUT TO

THE EMBASSY PARKING LOT. Moments later. TERRY leading ALICE and JANIS out of the building. They're looking for the jeep, but it's chaotic out here. The bomb must've been on the street just past here. There's a lot of dust and smoke just clearing now and the car alarms all going wild and embassy marines running in and --

There's the Jeep.

But ALICE hesitates, staring back toward the bomb site. Because the dust is finally falling away and now you can see it through the fence, or what's left of the fence. And it's horrible.

TERRY

Alice...

She turns back. He's there taking her arm. Turning her away from it. Walking her toward the Jeep, and --

CUT TO

INSIDE THE JEEP. TERRY unlocking the doors -- JANIS in back -- ALICE up front -- TERRY about to get behind the wheel, when he stops --

AN ENVELOPE -- there -- on the seat -- TERRY grabbing it --

ALICE

What is that?

TERRY ignoring her -- tucking it beside him -- hustling to start the engine --

JANIS

What? What is it? Terry?

TERRY all business. He can't get out of here fast enough.

ALICE

What are you doing? Open it.

TERRY

Not here.

CUT TO

INTERCON LOBBY. Minutes later. TERRY, ALICE and JANIS walking through quickly --

CUT TO

TERRY'S INTERCON SUITE. As he, ALICE, and JANIS come through the door. It's lived-in but tidy. An office set up in the living room. Decks of cards. But decor is hardly on anyone's mind right now.

TERRY

(moving, pointing)

Sit down. Both of you.

TERRY opens his desk drawer. A little tool kit.

ALICE

Can we just..?

TERRY

Sit down.

They do. Carefully -- with a handkerchief -- he's pulling the envelope from his pocket -- smelling it --

TERRY

Normally, I'd try to see this first. On my own, right?

Now -- with a knife -- he's opening it -- two pieces of paper fall out onto the desk --

JANIS

Is it a proof of life?

TERRY checking it out --

ALICE

How did they get it in the car?

TERRY

Listen to me. Listen good.

(he stands)

You never get a pretty picture, okay? This is meant to shake you up. You understand?

They nod. Too nervous to argue. TERRY's reluctant, but handing it over and --

INSERT -- THE PROOF OF LIFE PHOTO -- PETER crouched beside a tent. In his hands, a copy of La Verdad, a local newspaper. One eye is swollen. He looks sick.

ALICE

Oh, Jesus...

TERRY

What did I just tell you?

ALICE
...I know, but...

JANIS
(looking up--)
What're you doing?

TERRY -- in the corner are stacks of local newspapers
and magazines -- rifling them quickly, trying to find --

TERRY
Here we go. This is it, right?
(matching the
headlines--)
That he's holding?

JANIS
What do you do? You save all
these papers?

TERRY
This was last Tuesday. So three
days to get it up there. Three
days back.
(surprised)
He's not that far away.

ALICE
The letter? Is it from Peter?

TERRY
It's new radio frequencies and
times...some bullshit threats.

JANIS
Read it.

TERRY
Look, this is good news, okay?
This is what we wanted.

JANIS silent. ALICE staring at the photo, as we --

CUT TO

PETER -- crouched by that tent -- holding that newspaper
-- his eye swollen -- looking sick -- FLASH!

WE'RE IN

CAÑON VERDE. A TAL OFFICER with the camera. A couple
soldiers standing around.

OFFICER
(Take him back.)

CUT TO

THE YARD. Minute later. PETER limping really badly now. He is sick. RAMBO reluctantly helping him through the mud. And here comes --

KEZLER
(waving a Bible--)
(In the name of God, leave this man to me! Enough of this! Let him come with me! Let him go!)

RAMBO
(Get the hell out of here, before I do something about you.)

KEZLER
(He's sick! Look at his feet. The man needs help. Let Jesus heal him! Let Jesus work!)

RAMBO about to jump ugly, when --

THE OFFICER
(Let him take him!)
(back by the tent)
(Don't worry, one can't walk and the other can't think.)

PETER and KEZLER stumbling off across the yard, as we --

CUT TO

TELACCA CITY AIRPORT. Night. TERRY and ALICE walking JANIS to her departure gate.

TERRY
No lawyers. No interviews. No publicity. Promise, me, Janis.

JANIS
I've got to say something.

TERRY
Ask for money.

JANIS stops. They're near the gate.

JANIS
How much?

TERRY
Five-hundred thousand.

JANIS
Jesus.

TERRY
That's my gut. That's what we'll
shoot for.
(she looks dazed)
Fly safe. We'll talk.

TERRY gives her a quick farewell peck on the cheek and
backs away. ALICE and JANIS all alone now.

JANIS
It's a lot of money.
(ugly pause)
That's all of Peter's inheritance
and then some. I've got four
college tuitions coming up in the
next five years. You know that.

ALICE
It's your brother, Janis. Get
the money.

JANIS nods. Shamed. ALICE all strength and forgiveness.
Opening her arms, pulling JANIS toward her. As we begin
to hear -- A BELL CLANGING -- louder and louder, as we --

CUT TO

THE MUD SHACK. Dawn. THE BELL HAMMERING AWAY outside on
the yard. PETER waking up. Disoriented. Looking across
the little room to the shadows --

KEZLER
(one eye open)
They're going out. The bell.
They go out to fight.

PETER slipping back the canvas door and --

ON THE YARD

SOLDIERS scrambling. Telaccan fire drill. Guys running
and weapons clattering. All with surprising speed and
competence. THE BELL STILL GOING as the soldiers muster
on the yard, and we --

CUT TO

SCORPION HOUSE PANTRY. Midnight. MARIA in a nightgown. Drinking coffee. Talking on the phone. CINTA in the BG, watching a soap opera.

CUT TO

THE RADIO ROOM. TERRY shutting off the light. Closing down shop for the night.

CUT TO

THE PATIO. ALICE at the table with a couple candles and a cigarette. Still some wine in the bottle. Watching TERRY come out around the pool.

ALICE

Still no word?

TERRY

We'll try again tomorrow night.

TERRY sits. Finds her cigarettes on the table.

ALICE

I've never seen you smoke.

TERRY

I smoke when I play cards

ALICE

I didn't know we were playing.

TERRY

I'm making an exception.

ALICE

You know so much about me and I know almost nothing about you. It's very unfair.

TERRY

What do you want to know?

ALICE

Dino told me you'd been married.

TERRY

That's no secret. What else did he tell you?

ALICE

That you have a nineteen-year-old son.

TERRY
Were you shocked?

ALICE
Yes.

TERRY
Think how I feel.

ALICE
What's he like?

TERRY
What's he like? He's great.
You'd like him. He loves to eat.
He's a big talker. Very sweet.
Very smart. I look at him, all
done out, and I think, God, he's
still a boy in there. And then
I realize that he's older now
than I was when I met him.

ALICE
And he's a soldier like his dad.

TERRY
No, no, no. He's a pilot.

ALICE
And his mother?

TERRY
Now there's the soldier.

ALICE
So what happened?

TERRY
I went out the window, she went
out the door.

ALICE
Did you love her?

TERRY
We were very young.

ALICE
Is that a yes or a no?

TERRY
Are those my only two choices?

ALICE
And you never remarried?

TERRY

She did. She's on number four.

ALICE

My God.

TERRY

Thought I was kidding, right?
She's a bloody gladiator.

ALICE

But not you.

TERRY

I took up the veil.

ALICE

Not even close?

TERRY

I guess not.

ALICE

Confirmed bachelor.

TERRY

Please. Man of the world.

(pause)

You start moving like this, you
get a rhythm. It takes over.
You wake up to it. Stay away too
long, you forget what you're trying
to get back to.

ALICE

You never stop? You never look
around?

He hesitates. And don't forget the candlelight.

TERRY

Sometimes I do. Sometimes I
can't help it.

Current between them. Something in the way he said it.
Something maybe she wanted to hear. It's low voltage,
but current. Recognition. Fear.

TERRY

We'll try again tomorrow.

ALICE

Yeah.

TERRY stands. Brushes off. And leaves her there.
Leaves her with the candles and her confusion, as we --

CUT TO

CANON VERDE. Day. PETER AND KEZLER crouched in a lean-to, staring out through hard rain. Guerilla soldiers returning from battle. Carrying pieces of a downed army helicopter, like ants from the picnic. AS WE BEGIN TO HEAR --

TERRY/RADIO

"...because he's an aid worker.
This is not a businessman. This
is a working family. This guy..."
(continuing, as we--)

CUT TO

SCORPION RADIO ROOM. Night. TERRY at the microphone. All the equipment humming. ALICE pacing in and out --

TERRY

...this guy was here to build a
dam. You're talking about numbers
we could never put together, so
you tell me who's wasting time."

VOICE/RADIO

"Oh, come on with this. Like this
is a game. We're saying concrete
things and you are having us suck
cocks here with this bullshit."

WE'RE INTO A SEQUENCE HERE -- if there's MUSIC -- and there should be -- it should start now. Something that throbs. Something tense and simple. Something that mixes with the static and the bleed-ins of live sound and the overlapping snippets of radio negotiation we're going to sample here. And that's what this should be like, less montage than sample. Bits and pieces of a dozen conversations here. Into the tunnel, as we --

CUT TO

TELACCA CITY DOWNTOWN. THE JEEP pulling over in traffic. ALICE out first, TERRY right behind her. Shielding their eyes, looking up at --

VOICE/RADIO

"...what you're proposing, I can't take this back to anyone, it's not even a base to start from..."

THE GEM-CARBON BUILDING. Except there's a crane angled up there. A new sign going up. This one says: OXO.

CUT TO

CANON VERDE. Night. PETER and KEZLER eating fishheads and gruel. Grimly making the best of it.

VOICE/RADIO

"...hello, Tio..."

TERRY/RADIO

"...I'm gonna move to two..."

VOICE/RADIO

"...repeat, repeat..."

CUT TO

RADIO ROOM. It's hot tonight. TERRY stripped down to a singlet. ELIODORO in from the pool. ALICE in shorts and --

VOICE/RADIO

"...because we keep moving from the issue here. I keep telling you, the maintenance alone for this product is very high."

ALICE can't help but study Terry's back -- his shoulders -- his skin soaked with perspiration -- the old scars that landscape his body -- looking away quickly -- almost caught as ELIODORO turns around --

TERRY

Marco, look, you keep talking as if this were a company. There is no company. There's no insurance. There's no one here but the family.

CINTA coming in with beers. Nervously setting them out.

VOICE/RADIO

"This family is bullshit, okay? They need to start thinking harder, because we're getting nowhere with this shit you're putting out."

CINTA backing out -- spilling one of the beers and --

CUT TO

AIRPORT GATE. Day. WYATT is wasted. TERRY and DINO all but carrying him to his flight out.

TERRY/RADIO

"...I'm moving to two. Are you there? Marco, do you copy?"

VOICE/RADIO

TERRY/RADIO

"...we're done with this..." "...pesos not dollars..."

CUT TO

CANON VERDE. PETER AND KEZLER sitting by a campfire. KEZLER peering down at Peter's photograph of Alice.

VOICE/RADIO

"...he's losing faith in the family and the wife and this whole thing. We try to say how this is going, but it's very bad for him now..."

CUT TO

THE COUNTRY CLUB PATIO. ALICE walking through, frozen by something she sees --

TERRY/RADIO

"...because these people, they're going to their friends for this money. They're trying to borrow the money..."

FELLNER, JERRY and IVY, DOVER MCLOON and SEVERAL FRESH-FACED OXO EXECS all laughing over lunch.

VOICE/RADIO

"...this is so much bullshit for one night, I'm telling you. I'm saying now, let's just fuck it..."

ALICE burning as she watches them and --

CUT TO

THE RADIO ROOM. Another night. ALICE and MARIA and --

TERRY

"...we need a new proof of life. We need something to show these friends, so we can get this over with. Do you copy?"

VOICE/RADIO

"Yes, I copy. I think maybe we just put a bullet in his head and sell you the body, okay? You think we won't do this? For what you're offering? Tell the family, they can buy his bones."

ALICE jumps up. Pained. TERRY finding her with his eyes. We're cool. Don't freak out. She holds his gaze, as we --

CUT TO

CANON VERDE. PETER coming back from the latrine at the edge of the jungle. Soldiers all playing soccer on the yard. There's a table strewn with their belongings --

VOICE/RADIO

"...so this offer, this is nothing from where we were. Another fifty changes nothing for us..."

A MAP -- on the table -- PETER lifting it as he passes -- down into his pants as he hobbles along --

TERRY/RADIO

"...proof of life..."

VOICE/RADIO

"...have to do better..."

CUT TO

SCORPION PATIO. Night. A dinner party. ALICE, TERRY, DINO, ELIODORO, NORICIA, SANDRO, one or two faces we don't recognize -- lots of wine and amazing food -- troubles on hold for now, everyone talking all at once and --

TERRY/RADIO

"...going back and forth over the same issues here..."

VOICE/RADIO

"...yes, go ahead, Tio. You have a better offer for us tonight?..."

DINO watching TERRY and ALICE. Watching them laugh at something. Some private moment. How they look at each other. Mighty tense. Mighty cozy.

TERRY/RADIO

"...look, if we're close at three hundred, let's get a new proof of life and get on with it..."

The power -- the lights in the house -- flickering for a moment -- then failing -- then flickering back on -- this a regular occurrence judging by their reactions --

VOICE/RADIO

"...to your best offer, because the communication with my friends is very complicated now..."

TERRY/RADIO

"...another twenty-five..."

VOICE/RADIO

"...Marco, do you copy?..."

CUT TO

ALICE ALONE IN BED -- staring at the ceiling fan and --

TERRY/RADIO

"...I'm not, I'm getting too much interference..."

VOICE/RADIO

"...or else let's move to the..."

CUT TO

CANON VERDE. Day. PETER and KEZLER crouched at the shack door. SOLDIERS -- fifty -- maybe more -- pouring into camp from the mountains.

TERRY/RADIO

"...Marco, do you copy? This is Tio. Marco, do you copy?..."

PETER -- suddenly -- something catching his eye --

TERRY/RADIO

"...come in, Marco. Do you copy? This is Tio. Do you copy?..."

JUACO slogging into camp. No gun for him, he's been relegated to wrangling the mules.

TERRY/RADIO

"...Marco, do you copy, come in..."

JUACO turns -- we see him find PETER -- that sick little smile blossoming -- pointing a finger as passes -- bang.

TERRY/RADIO

"...do you copy?...do you copy?..."
(echoing away, as we--)

CUT TO

THE MUD SHACK. Night. The music has stopped. PETER in the dark with KEZLER -- whispering urgently --

PETER

I've got a map. We're not far from the pipeline. If we could get to the river, we'd have a chance.

KEZLER

Pieter...

PETER

I'd rather die running.

CUT TO

TERRY'S SUITE. Night. A PHONE RINGING. TERRY up from his desk to answer it --

INTERCUT WITH

ALICE at the other end. Close-up to start. We're not sure where she is just yet.

ALICE

It's me. Hey.

TERRY

Hey.

ALICE

Maria never showed at the house.

(breathless, upset)

Sandro, there was another bombing, there's a curfew in his neighborhood. Noricia and Doro are gone for the weekend -- the phones -- I've been trying -- everything's jammed up...

TERRY

Is Cinta there with you?

ALICE

I'm not there. I left. I got completely freaked, and I--

TERRY

Where are you?

CUT TO

THE LOBBY. Empty this late. ALICE on the house phone.

ALICE
I'm here. I'm downstairs.

TERRY/PHONE
 Okay, give me a minute, I'll be right down.

ALICE
 Forget it. I'm coming up.

She hangs up. Heading for the elevator, as we --

CUT TO

TERRY'S SUITE. And he is rattled. She's coming up. What is that? The room's a mess. He's a mess. What can he do? What does this mean? All of that at once, and then --

The lights flicker. And then they go dead.

TERRY
 Great.

CUT TO

THE HOTEL CORRIDOR. It is dark. One lame emergency light fluttering down the hall. TERRY coming through with a flashlight -- where is she?

TERRY
 -- Alice -- Alice --

ALICE (OS)
 (faintly)
 -- Terry -- here -- I'm stuck --

TERRY jogging to the ELEVATOR BANK -- she's inside -- the door open just an inch or two -- stuck like that --

TERRY
 (through the crack)
 Are you okay?

ALICE
 I can't see a thing.

TERRY
 Hang on.

He braces himself against the frame -- hands wedged in the gap -- pushing with everything he's got and it's tough but it's moving -- bearing down until there's just enough room for her to squeeze up and through and --

ALICE
(she's out)
God, what a night...

TERRY
The whole city's dark.

ALICE
I couldn't stay there.

TERRY
You drove in on your own?

She doesn't answer. None of it makes any difference now.
Because she's reaching for him.

Kissing him. Just like that. Starving for this. Both of them. Everything. Everything all at once. So much pent-up tension. To just have skin. Just that. To be here. With her. With him. The flashlight playing wildly over the walls as Terry's hands rush to make sense of her body -- the light falling to the floor -- wedged there, shining up at them through the dark. All of that, as we --

CUT TO

MOTION -- sunlight -- PETER -- KEZLER -- running like mad through THE JUNGLE -- escaping! -- DOGS BARKING -- SOLDIER VOICES behind them in the distance and --

CUT TO

SOLDIERS IN PURSUIT -- a blur -- weapons -- faces --

CUT TO

PETER -- KEZLER -- downhill now -- a path -- faster now -- total adrenaline -- suddenly --

A TRIP WIRE!

PETER -- already falling -- hard -- but more than falling -- something worse -- his leg -- there's blood and --

KEZLER
 (rushing to him)
 -- Pieter...vas is? --

PETER is screwed -- God knows what he's broken from the fall, but there a stake -- a booby-trap spear -- impaled in his calf -- he's rolling on the ground in pain --

KEZLER
 -- Pieter -- get up -- come --
 (trying to help--)

PETER
 -- you gotta go --
 (through the pain)
 We agreed! Go!
 (but Kezler's not moving--)
 Go goddamit, go!

KEZLER -- up -- off -- running now -- disappearing down toward the river and --

CUT TO

JUACO -- running -- possessed -- gun in hand -- wild with chase -- crashing through the brush and --

Then he stops.

PETER on the ground. In the path. Rolling in pain.

JUACO with that asshole smile -- raising the gun like an executioner and --

CUT TO

RIO CAYA -- the river -- fast water below -- KEZLER on a ledge about to jump -- A BURST OF GUNFIRE up the hill -- KEZLER turning back -- realizing -- omigod, they've shot Peter! -- stalled for a moment by this and --

Mistake!

TWO SOLDIERS -- the ridge above -- FIRING! -- BLAM! -- BLAM! -- and --

KEZLER -- hit! -- his shoulder -- blood spattering back against the stones -- falling -- jumping -- out over the water -- disappearing into the foam and current, as we --

CUT TO

TERRY'S INTERCON SUITE. Morning. TERRY asleep in bed. ALICE across the room in a chair by the desk. Her hair is wet and combed out. We feel she's been sitting here for some time. Peter's files spread before her on Terry's desk. Peter's face staring back. That picture of the two of them on the tennis court.

Her emotions on the brink of calamity. Guilt and fear and all the rest.

TERRY opens his eyes. Finds her there.

ALICE

You're a good sleeper.

(a brave little smile--)

I took a shower. I've been trying not to wake you.

TERRY

The power's back on?

ALICE

Yup.

Guilty silence. More than enough to go around.

TERRY

Are you okay?

ALICE

I don't know. What happens now?

TERRY

I don't know.

ALICE

You've never done this before?

TERRY

No.

(pause)

Sort of the cardinal sin.

ALICE

So I guess we're breaking all the rules then, right?

(a nervous laugh,
then before he
can respond--)

I'm trying to think if we'd just met. If it wasn't like this.

If it was just, I don't know...

TERRY

Somewhere else.

ALICE

What would that've been like?
If I was just in my life and you
came through.

(absurd)

Like we could know that, right?

(but she needs
to talk--)

This is just so not like my life,
that's all. Nothing that's
happened is like my life anymore.
So I'm a little lost here...
Maybe for you it's not that
confusing. I mean, this is your
life, right?

TERRY

Is that what you think?

ALICE

No. I don't know.

(now quick to
correct that--)

And I don't -- I'm not saying,
oh, I'm so stressed out, or I was
drunk, or it was late or anything
to -- I'm not trying to let myself
off the hook. Because this was me.
I know that. You never would've
made a pass at me. I know that.
So obviously, I'm--

(stumbling)

The idea was I could clarify things.
I know how that sounds with me
sitting here like this but...

(brave again)

What is it? Want something bad
enough you'll talk yourself into
anything, right?

TERRY

Alice, look at me.

She does.

ALICE

I think about Peter.

(silence)

I can't help it. Where is he
right now?

TERRY

You're not hurting Peter. That's
not what we're doing.

She nods. Trying to get with that for a moment. Desperate
for solid ground.

ALICE

I was looking for a blow dryer.
(her wet hair--)

TERRY

They can send one up.

She nods. Looks away. TERRY stranded there. So much he
would like to say. All those bridges burning around him,
as we --

CUT TO

INTERCON SWIMMING POOL. Day. TERRY underwater going the
length of the pool. Coming up, and there's --

DINO

You better get out.

TERRY

What's up?

DINO

Kezler. The German.

TERRY

The missionary?

DINO

He came out last night.

TERRY

What? He saw Peter?

DINO

He's been with him. They made a
run for it.

(beat)

Doesn't sound good.

TERRY hanging there. Dripping. Tripping.

CUT TO

SCORPION HOUSE DRIVEWAY. TERRY leading ALICE and MARIA out of the house. They know. ALICE looks completely dazed. Sunglasses over red eyes. MARIA too, has been crying. Bolstering ALICE as they walk toward the jeep.

TERRY opening the doors. ALICE doesn't even look at him as she climbs in the back. MARIA will join her there.

TERRY closes the door. Comes around the driver's side. He'll chauffeur. God, this sucks.

CUT TO

A SAFE HOUSE. Day. Near the airport. Overgrown and out of the way. The Jeep parked here and --

CUT TO

SAFE HOUSE BEDROOM. Shades drawn. KEZLER is bandaged and bruised. Hooked to an IV unit. ALICE is seated beside him. He's hoarse, his voice thick and quiet. She is shattered. Sobbing. A nurse off in the corner.

KEZLER

...for the meals, some nights we could eat together. But the food, it's just to keep you alive. Just rice or sardines. Maybe for weeks the same thing. But Peter would say, "Tonight, Alice has made for us..." -- and he would have this menu, from his memory, you know, describe this feast that we were eating. So many wonderful dinners I've had at your table.

(like a memory)

Bouillabaisse and lentil salad and cold Muscadet...

(she wants him to
stop, her hand
moving to his mouth,
please...)

Listen to me, Alice...

(like medicine)

He found a love for you inside him that made sense of everything that had happened. He loved you more with every day.

She's nodding. Weeping. Just lost here. Completely.

CUT TO

SAFE HOUSE DRIVEWAY. Same time. TERRY and DINO alone.
TERRY mightly worked up. DINO is tense.

TERRY

This is bullshit, Dino. He didn't see the body. He didn't see shit!

DINO

He sounds pretty sure about it.

TERRY

I don't buy it. Work that hard on a deal and then kill the hostage?

DINO

When was your last radio contact?
A week ago? Two weeks ago?

(gotcha)

Maybe there are no more deals.
Maybe it's all coming apart.

TERRY

And maybe he's alive.

DINO

Yeah, well, here's what's for sure. My guy's still up there. And they don't know Kezler made it out. Nobody does. He knows every inch of that camp and he's willing to help. This has gotta stay quiet. She's gotta know that.

TERRY

What're you doing, Dino?

(new problem)

You're not thinking about going up there...

DINO

Shit, man, that's all I'm doing is thinking! Sitting around like this, waiting for the goddam phone to ring? What the hell else am I gonna do?

TERRY turns. ALICE out into the sun. Simply shattered.

TERRY

(sotto to Dino)

You talk to me before you do anything. You got that?

DINO nods. TERRY pulling his car keys, as we --

CUT TO

SCORPION HOUSE. Half hour later. TERRY and ALICE have just come in. Already deep into ugly territory --

TERRY

-- because we don't know for sure
and until we do, until we're sure,
it's got stay in play --

ALICE

-- you think he made it up? --

TERRY

-- he didn't see it --

ALICE

(so much pain)

-- why are you doing this? --

TERRY

Alice, look at me...

(forcing her)

I've been at this for twelve years.
In all that time -- all those
cases -- I've seen it happen
twice. You don't kill a hostage
before the pay-off!

(look at me)

He's worth half-a-million dollars
to them and they know it!

ALICE

And if you're wrong? What happens
then? What are we supposed to do?
(she wants to
escape--)

He grabs her. Pulls her around. Face-to-face.

TERRY

I am trying as hard as I can to
keep it together here. And stay
professional. Stay on the protocol.
I am trying to do what I'm supposed
to do. And until I'm sure -- till
I know he's dead -- I am looking to
close this deal.

She pulls away. Running up the stairs and --

CUT TO

SCORPION PANTRY. A minute later. TERRY enters to find MARIA and SANDRO trying to calm down CINTA. They're all grieving, but the girl seems nearly hysterical.

TERRY
What's going on?

MARIA
She's very upset.

TERRY
I can see that. Is she okay?

SANDRO about to answer, when MARIA blisters him with a look. CINTA keeps sobbing.

MARIA
She's a young girl.

TERRY
Cinta?

SANDRO
(to Maria)
(He's too smart for this shit.)

MARIA
(Get out of my kitchen, go!)

SANDRO
(Tell him what you told me.)

TERRY may not understand the quick local Spanish, but the vibe is clear. Turning to MARIA and --

MARIA
I told you. She's a young girl.
She can't be in this.
(protective)
She's had enough trouble.

TERRY
What kind of trouble?

MARIA in pain to share this. Just plain fear.

MARIA
This voice. From the radio. She
thinks maybe she knows this man.

TERRY
On the radio? Marco?

CINTA whispering frightened Spanish to MARIA.

MARIA

She thinks maybe her mother does
laundry in this man's house.

TERRY

Have her...

(going direct)

Cinta, por favor...

(to Maria)

Tell her, yes. Tell her I'll
keep her out of it. And her
mother. Tell her.

MARIA passing it on, as we --

CUT TO

MOTION -- PETER rolling on the ground -- his leg -- blood --
the booby-trapped spear -- we're in THE JUNGLE -- we're back
at the escape -- Kezler has run off to the river and --

CUT TO

JUACO -- running -- possessed -- gun in hand -- wild with
chase -- crashing through the brush and --

Then he stops.

PETER on the ground. In the path. Rolling in pain.

JUACO with that asshole smile -- raising the gun like an
executioner, when -- A BURST OF GUNFIRE EXPLODES BEHIND
HIM AND --

THE CAMERA WHIPS TO FIND

A REBEL OFFICER

Cuidado, loco!

(machine gun in hand--)

El representa dinero!

MORE SOLDIERS rushing in behind them, and then -- BLAM! --
BLAM! -- shots ringing out from the distance and --

VOICES

(from the river)

Lo mato! Lo mato!

The chase is over. They've got Peter. They think Kezler
is dead. PETER realizing all hope is gone, as we --

CUT TO

COUNTRY CLUB PATIO. Crowded for lunch. TERRY strolling through. All very posh and reactionary. Golfers and women all done up and a healthy scattering of uniforms.

TERRY stops at a table. Sits. FRED looks up. Fred the dancer. Fred from the ballroom.

TERRY

How you doing?

FRED

(Excuse me. Do I know you?)

TERRY

Here's what we'll do. I'll be Tio. You be Marco.

FRED

(Look, I'm sorry, my friend,
but I don't speak English.)

TERRY smiles. Cheery. Pulling something from his pocket. Placing it on the table. A CASSETTE TAPE.

TERRY

That's a tape of my friend Marco.

FRED

(I'm sorry, but this is not...)

TERRY

Maybe I'll play it for some of
your military friends here.
See what they make of it.

(that smile)

And if you think I'm in the mood
to fuck about, you're in the wrong
line of work.

FRED with no cards. He's folding.

FRED

(all English now)
So what are we talking about?

TERRY

Is he alive?

FRED

He tried to escape. He was hurt.
He's alive.

TERRY

Is he with the Italian?

FRED is stunned. Affirmation in his silence.

FRED

How did you find me?

TERRY

That's the least of your problems.

FRED

It's not up to me. I'm just a voice. I'm nothing in this.

(quiet panic)

Instructions come, I spit them back. That's all this is.

TERRY

What happened to our deal?

FRED flipping out -- other tables so close --

FRED

Listen to me, I don't kidnap these people. I never see them. I'm no different than you. We do the same thing. We talk for money. Someone else decides. It's the same thing.

TERRY

I want him back.

FRED

It's too late.

(truth in his fear)

They couldn't get him down now anyway. There's not even radio now. If it's war, it's not worth the danger. The money's not worth it. They don't care any more.

TERRY

(relentless)

We're gonna close this deal right here, right now.

FRED staring at him. Don't you get it?

FRED

You think OXO is just buying the pipeline? No. They're buying the narcotics. They're buying the army. We're fighting for our lives.

(beat)

There are no more deals.

Grim silence. TERRY slides the tape over.

TERRY

You say one word to anybody and
I'll know about it. I won't have
to mess you up. Your friends'll
do it for me

TERRY walks. FRED left there in shock. as we --

CUT TO

TERRY IN THE JEEP. Minutes later. Driving fast and --

TERRY

(car phone)

Dino. Where are you?

(pause)

Because my project is alive.

(pause)

Not on this phone. Where?

CUT TO

THE SHITTY LITTLE AIRFIELD. Day. THREE TELACCAN MERCS
looking up from a domino board as TERRY'S JEEP pulls in
sharply alongside the building.

CUT TO

INSIDE THE HANGAR. Dino's HQ. MAPS -- half a dozen --
taped to the wall. TERRY and DINO standing at a cheap
folding table, poring over THE BIGGEST MAP OF ALL --

DINO

Here's the camp. Right here.

(pointing it all

out as we go--)

He said they call it Cañon Verde.

Here's the river.

TERRY

Rio Caya...

DINO

This valley, the big one below.
It's very active. Every time the
Army moves through here there's
a skirmish. This is March...May...
June...

THE MAP -- battles -- river -- camp -- it's all there --

DINO

Kezler said they'd muster up every couple weeks, the whole camp would run out to fight.

TERRY

For what?

DINO

The TAL has units all the way from the highlands down to the barrios outside the city. If they get in trouble...

TERRY

That's the best way back to the mountains.

DINO

Exactly. So this camp. That's their mission. They gotta keep the back door open.

TERRY

Where's the pipeline?

DINO

Right there. Fifteen clicks down the river.

TERRY

So what's your plan?

DINO

My plan? Right now? Fly in. Get shot at. Get my guy killed. Limp home in disgrace. Quit the business. I have no fucking plan.

TERRY lost in the map. All over it.

TERRY

What you want to do, you get a battle going down here. Drain the camp. Come while they're marching. Drop in from behind.

DINO

That's great, Terry, so let's call the Army and schedule a battle. "How's Wednesday around three? That good for you?"

TERRY

You have pilots?

DINO

That's easy.

TERRY

We'd want two birds. A big loud one and real quick quiet one.

DINO

What are you, in love with this woman? Is that it?

(silence)

Because if we're running options here, I mean, hell, let's go all the way. We go in -- it's your raid -- he dies and you come back.

Bad. B) You die. He comes back.

Bad. C) You both die. Bad.

(incredulous)

What are you holding out hope for? You save her husband she'll see the light and run off with you?

TERRY

What's in it for you?

DINO

Hey, man. I want out. I'm looking to cash in. I want my own thing. I pull this off, I mean, this is the stuff of legend. You can sell that. So don't get me wrong, I'd love to go out on a winner here, but come on...

(the map)

This is completely fucked.

A beat. Both of them staring at the map.

TERRY

So we're on then?

CUT TO

A CORPORATE HALLWAY. In transition. Boxes. Files. And ALICE sitting there. Looking up as --

FELLNER

Alice, I'm so sorry to keep you waiting. Nothing's quite working

(MORE)

FELLNER (cont)

here yet.

(so tender)

How are you?

ALICE

You can skip the bullshit, Ted.
I think we're past that.

FELLNER quickly tuning to this more complex frequency.

FELLNER

Okay.

ALICE

They want a million dollars for
Peter. They won't move. We don't
have it.

FELLNER

It's a lot of money.

ALICE

If I gave you information that
was critical in protecting the
pipeline would OXO step up and
do the right thing?

FELLNER

What kind of information?

ALICE shoulders her bag. Forget it. She's leaving.

FELLNER

Alice, wait.

(she stops)

You think I don't get up every
morning and think about Peter.
I've had a dozen meetings with the
transition team about the whole
situation and how wrong it is...

(dewy here)

I'm not sure what we're talking
about, but you give me something
to work with and maybe I can push
this the last mile.

ALICE trying to read him. What to risk?

ALICE

The TAL is gonna go after the
pipeline tomorrow. I know where.
Do you step up for Peter, or not?

Big news. Hanging there.

FELLNER

How could you know that?

ALICE pulls an envelope from her bag. Hands it to him.
He glances at it quickly --

FELLNER

Who the hell is Erich Kezler?

CUT TO

THE HANGAR HQ. Empty and forlorn. TERRY messing with an assault rifle. Stripping it. Checking it. Something he's done a million times before. ALICE sitting there watching him. Listening to the metallic sounds. Seeing a side of him she's only imagined. Finally, he stops --

TERRY

What the hell's he doing?

(checking his watch)

I'm giving him five more minutes.

ALICE

I've never seen you nervous.

TERRY

Yes you have.

DINO

You must've done a helluva job.

(there he is,
smiling in the
doorway--)

I've just had an urgent phone call
from our friend Dover Mcloon at
the Embassy.

(bingo)

Is it true what he's been hearing
about a rebel offensive?

TERRY

They bit?

DINO

It's on. They tracked down Kezler
in Hamburg. He laid it on thick.

(backing out--)

I gotta call the boys. We gotta
get prepped -- like now -- like
three minutes...

DINO racing off. TERRY and ALICE alone again.

TERRY

Sandro can come and pick you up.

ALICE

I can take a cab.

TERRY

Don't.

(beat)

I don't want to worry about that too.

ALICE nods. This just awful silence. And then --

He reaches for her. And she's there. Kissing her with everything. Both of them. Losing themselves. The whole world falling around them. Until...

He pulls away.

It's time to go. A BELL STARTS RINGING -- a familiar sound -- only GETTING LOUDER and LOUDER, as we --

CUT TO

CANON VERDE. Dawn. A TEENAGE SOLDIER clanging THE ALARM BELL as hard as he can -- SOLDIERS already rushing toward the yard -- mustering up as fast as they can and --

CUT TO

A TIN SHED. Ten by twenty. Wood frame. Thatched roof. Dappled light on a dirt floor. Wood double doors at one end. A crudely boarded-over window at the other.

PETER in the corner. His leg -- his good leg -- chained to a large empty ammo box that's been poured full of concrete. Splint on his bad leg from the booby-trap. His knee's swollen. He's filthy. Listening to THE BELL RINGING from outside. Listening to it stop, and --

CUT TO

REBEL PLATOON -- SIXTY SOLDIERS -- double-timing it out of camp and --

CUT TO

TWO HELICOPTERS flying side-by-side -- BIG BIRD is an old Huey gunship. LITTLE BIRD is sleek and fast and --

CUT TO

INSIDE LITTLE BIRD. Up front, A GRIZZLED TELACCAN PILOT. In back, TERRY, DINO, and the THREE TELACCAN MERCENARIES we saw playing dominos at the hangar. They are CARLOS, RICO, and TOMAS. All in their late twenties. Buff and brutal. We are in the presence of real battle-hardened professionalism. We feel this in everything all of these men do.

All five wear light tropical camo reinforced with Kevlar flak vests. All five have light pro-tec helmets fitted with radio earplugs and a wraparound microphones. Each man carries a one-day battle pack. Sidearms, automatics, all the rest are personal choices.

It's loud in here. There's a map taped to the floor. TERRY pointing out spots to RICO and TOMAS. DINO ripping lengths of gaffer's tape, reinforcing A BIG BLACK DISC to the back of CARLO'S PACK.

CUT TO

CANON VERDE. The camp has emptied out. RAMBO walking quickly across THE YARD -- escorting a stumbling figure with a hood pulled over his head and hands tied and --

CUT TO

THE TIN SHED. PETER looking over as the door opens for a moment. The HOODED HOSTAGE thrown inside. Falling as he comes. RAMBO quick shutting the door --

PETER

Hey. Over here. In the corner.

CUT TO

BIG BIRD and LITTLE BIRD -- splitting formation as they near the mountains --

CUT TO

THE TIN SHED -- PETER pulling off THE HOOD. A sixty-year-old Italian face. Bearded and pale. Meet CALITRI.

CALITRI
(gasping)
...madonna...

CUT TO

THE YARD -- RAMBO -- MONO -- TWO OTHER REBEL SOLDIERS --
jogging out toward the open -- hearing something --

MONO
(-- it's there! -- the river! --)

THREE MORE REBELS running from the treeline -- TWO MORE
WOUNDED REBELS limping from the cookhouse -- but this
looks to be it -- the full complement left behind --

RAMBO
(-- it's a helicopter! --)

Instant energy -- DOGS BARKING -- everyone grabbing guns
-- THREE GUYS already running toward the river and --

CUT TO

BIG BIRD -- rolling in low and loud -- coming up from
the South -- following the river -- RADIO CHATTER like
wallpaper in the background -- all sound disappearing
as BIG BIRD'S FIFTY CALIBER MACHINE GUN STARTS RATTLING
-- bullets tearing up the river -- making as much noise
as they can and --

CUT TO

TIN SHED -- PETER trying to untie the ropes binding
CALITRI'S HANDS -- both men startled to hear GUNFIRE
CHATTERING AWAY in the far distance --

CALITRI
Is helicopter...

PETER
(sweating)
Hold still.

CUT TO

LITTLE BIRD -- rising -- straight up a stone cliff --
nose to the wall -- rotors so close -- just about to
crest the summit --

THERE'S A LEDGE -- TERRY -- DINO -- CARLOS -- RICO --
TOMAS -- at the door -- THEY'RE DEPLANING! -- jumping
across -- one after another and --

CUT TO

THE RIVER -- THREE REBELS running the bank -- away from
camp -- chasing BIG BIRD and --

CUT TO

STEEP JUNGLE INCLINE -- TERRY scrambling down -- DINO --
TOMAS -- RICO -- CARLOS -- right behind him -- moving
fast and low -- sneaking in the back door and --

CUT TO

TIN SHED -- PETER and CALITRI trying like hell to pull
his chain free from the concrete and --

CUT TO

A CHICKEN COOP -- JUACO sleeping one off -- AN OLD INDIAN
FARMER trying to kick him awake --

OLD FARMER
(-- get up you piece of shit! --)

CUT TO

INSIDE BIG BIRD -- THE PILOT banking over the river --
TA-TA-TA-TA-TA! -- drawing fire! -- SMALL ARMS FIRE
clinking against the belly armor -- THE BIG BIRD SLICK
GUNNER wheeling around -- SPRAYING THE SHIT BACK and --

CUT TO

A RIDGE JUST ABOVE THE CAMP -- DINO and RICO splitting
away -- TERRY -- CARLOS -- TOMAS -- heading down and --

CUT TO

TIN SHED -- they've quit trying to free the chain --
it's hopeless -- PETER now trying to hoist CALITRI up
toward the roof but he's weak and it's hard and --

CUT TO

THE CAMP TREELINE -- TERRY and CARLOS tucked in low --
TERRY hand signalling to TOMAS -- you go right -- we go
left and --

CUT TO

THE FARM -- JUACO with a rifle -- half-drunk -- barefoot
-- but terrified he'll miss the action -- running for the
path that will take him down to the camp and --

CUT TO

THE YARD -- RAMBO in a lather -- yelling back at THE TWO
WOUNDED REBELS just standing around --

RAMBO

(-- get the perimeter! -- and get
the radio! -- hurry up! --)

CUT TO

CAMP TREELINE -- TERRY with binoculars and --

BINOCULAR POV

RAMBO heading for the TIN SHED -- yelling for MONO and
A FAT REBEL SOLDIER to hurry up and stand guard and --

CUT TO

HILL ABOVE CAMP -- DINO and RICO heading up to the farm --

TERRY/RADIO

"Dino. This is Terry, you copy?"

CUT TO

CAMP TREELINE -- TERRY still eyeballing --

TERRY

(into his radio)

There's this tin shed here at the
North East corner. I'm watching
two shooters set up position."

DINO/RADIO

"Roger that. Standing-by."

CUT TO

THE RIVER -- BIG BIRD banking in -- RAKING THE TREELINE
LIKE CRAZY and --

CUT TO

THE CAMP LATRINE -- far side from the tin shed -- TOMAS
flat against a lean-to as --

RAMBO

(running past--)
(-- where's the radio? -- where's
my goddam radio! --)

CUT TO

THE TIN SHED -- PETER struggling to hold CALITRI up near
the roof -- CALITRI trying to pull away the thatch to see
what's going on and --

CUT TO

OUTSIDE THE TIN SHED -- MONO and THE FAT REBEL standing
guard -- GUN BATTLE FROM THE RIVER CHATTERING AWAY in the
distance and --

CUT TO

DINO AND RICO ducking down as -- JUACO comes running
down the hill from the farm -- forty yards away and --

CUT TO

TERRY AND CARLOS crawling for the TIN SHED --

DINO/RADIO

"We got a straggler coming down
from the farm here."

TERRY

(back at him)
Hold your fire.

DINO/RADIO

"Roger on that."

CUT TO

A REBEL COOK -- behind the cookhouse -- trying to load a machine gun -- it's jammed -- A DOG STARTS BARKING behind him and he turns and --

CUT TO

TOMAS -- no choice -- wide open -- FIRING FIRST -- BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! -- ALL HELL HAS OFFICIALLY BROKEN LOOSE --

DINO/RADIO

"-- we're hot! -- we're hot! --"

CUT TO

TERRY AND CARLOS up -- running -- FIRING! and --

CUT TO

FAT REBEL turning -- too late -- TAT!-TAT!-TAT!-TAT!-TAT!-
TAT! -- he's blown back and --

CUT TO

MONO FIRING BLIND -- as he's falling back -- spraying the TIN SHED from his side and --

TOMAS/RADIO

"-- on my right -- venga! -- "

CUT TO

PETER AND CALITRI diving for the floor as bullets shred a swath through the tin and --

CUT TO

CARLOS on his knees -- pivot firing stance -- covering TERRY as he kicks open the door and --

CUT TO

PETER AND CALITRI seeing the shed door fly open and --

TERRY

Peter?

CUT TO

DINO and RICO on the ridge --

TERRY\RADIO

"Dino, Dino!"

DINO

Talk to me.

TERRY/RADIO

"Abort the farm. They're both
here -- we have two --"

CUT TO

TOMAS with a new problem -- WOUNDED SOLDIER #1 has a gun
-- behind him -- TATATATATATATAT!!!!

CUT TO

JUACO pinned at the treeline -- BULLETS flying over his
head from the TOMAS/WOUNDED gun battle and --

CUT TO

MONO -- with good cover -- leaning out -- popping off
BURSTS toward the tin shed and --

DINO/RADIO

"-- Little Bird, Little Bird --
this is Delta-Delta -- we are
good to go! Do you copy? --"

CUT TO

LITTLE BIRD rising high over the mountains now and --

CUT TO

THE AMMO BOX -- the one Peter's chained to -- TERRY just
blasting it to shit -- CONCRETE SHATTERING and --

CUT TO

RAMBO trying to get back to the TIN SHED -- diving down
away from CARLOS'S COVERING FIRE and --

CUT TO

JUACO still hiding -- is it fear? -- confusion? --

CUT TO

THE TIN SHED -- CARLOS holding THE BLACK DISC like a
football -- TERRY ripping stuff from his utility belt --

TERRY

(to Peter)

You ever play baseball?

PETER

Sure. Why?

TERRY

These are flashbangs.

(handing him two)

Pull the pin. Toss. It goes off
on impact.

TATATATATATAT!!!! -- MONO getting bolder -- everyone down
now and --

CUT TO

DINO AND RICO on the far hillside of camp --

DINO

(into his radio)

-- Where the hell's the LZ? --

CUT TO

TOMAS up -- running -- BAM BAM BAM BAM!!! and --

CUT TO

WOUNDED SOLDIER -- getting off A BURST! -- cut down
mid-shot and --

CUT TO

TOMAS is hit -- his vest! -- knocked back and --

CUT TO

THE TIN SHED -- they're ready -- TERRY at the door --
PETER wedged beside him -- CARLOS clutching THE BLACK
DISC, poised like a sprinter at the blocks --

TERRY

-- go! --

TERRY out the door -- FIRING BACK AT MONO -- PETER right
behind him -- hucking that grenade and --

BOOM!!! -- FLASH!!! -- BIG SOUND AND LIGHT -- meant to
blind and shock and --

CUT TO

MONO caught flat -- rocked back and --

CUT TO

CARLOS sprinting into the yard -- tossing THE DISC and --

DINO/RADIO

"-- you're covered! --"

CUT TO

THE BLACK DISC -- WHHOOOOOSSSKK!!!! -- it's a signal flare -- a smoke pack -- just sizzling with the shit -- so much smoke, rising so fast it seems impossible and --

CUT TO

DINO -- RICO -- hitting positions around the yard -- BURSTS HERE AND THERE! --

DINO

(into his radio)

-- Terry -- talk to me -- let's get a perimeter! --

CUT TO

LITTLE BIRD -- dropping from high above -- smoke towering from the yard -- marking the LZ and --

TERRY/RADIO

"-- we're still taking fire! --"

CUT TO

RAMBO crawling around a mud shack and --

DINO/RADIO

"-- we're on it -- we're on it --"

CUT TO

JUACO hugging the dirt -- shit flying around him and --

CUT TO

THE TIN SHED -- CALITRI looks ready to cry -- PETER still clutching that other flashbang and --

TERRY

We're gonna run, okay? Run.

You understand? Capisce?

(Calitri nods)

We've got a chopper coming in -- this smoke is gonna spread wide and fast -- when I say go, you go as fast as you can -- straight and fast -- dritto, capisce? --

MONO AGAIN -- TATATATATAT!!! -- this one closer and --

CUT TO

THE YARD -- just fucking filled with smoke and --

PILOT/RADIO

"-- down in thirty! --"

CUT TO

JUACO crawling lost -- blinded by the smoke -- he can hear THE CHOPPER COMING but he can't see it and --

CUT TO

MONO trying to reload -- going too fast -- dropping something -- no chance to look -- BAP!-BAP!-BAP!-BAP!-BAP!!!! -- DINO right there blowing him away and --

CUT TO

LITTLE BIRD COCKPIT -- dropping fast and bold -- into the heart of the smoke -- the ground rushing up -- rotors kicking dust now too and --

PILOT/RADIO

"-- let's go! -- let's go! --"

CUT TO

RAMBO crawling behind the tin shed and --

DINO/RADIO

"-- Terry, you copy? You're all clear behind. I'm coming up --"

CUT TO

TIN SHED -- PETER with that length of chain on his leg --

TERRY

Can you run?

PETER

Watch me.

DINO -- like that -- in the door --

DINO

Mr. Calitri?

CALITRI nods -- completely confused --

DINO
Nice to meet you.
(grabbing him)
Let's get the fuck out of here.

CALITRI doesn't know what hit him -- DINO pulling him
out the door and they're running --

TERRY
(to Peter)
After you...

CUT TO

PETER out the door -- running for the yard -- TERRY about
to bolt -- turning and --

CUT TO

RAMBO -- behind him -- through that back window -- but
late -- FIRING MADLY AT THE SHED DOOR and --

CUT TO

TERRY reacting -- BURST! -- BURST! -- and --

CUT TO

RAMBO'S GUN SPRAYING as he falls wounded and --

CUT TO

THE DOOR FRAME -- shattering -- RAMBO'S BULLETS CHEWING
IT UP -- TERRY hit -- his eyes -- the shrapnel and --

CUT TO

LITTLE BIRD -- CALITRI clambering on -- DINO pushing
him up -- TOMAS and CARLOS hauling him in and --

CUT TO

PETER halfway there -- looking back through the smoke
and dust and --

CUT TO

TERRY stumbling forward -- half blind -- all this shit
in his eyes and --

CUT TO

LITTLE BIRD -- DINO at the door -- in a fucking frenzy --

DINO
PETER, COME ON! -- TERRY!!!
(jumping down)

CUT TO

TERRY wiping at his eyes -- almost falling and --

TERRY
I'M COMING!!!

JUACO turning -- there's Terry behind him -- right there -- ten yards away! -- and he's helpless -- JUACO raising his rifle to shoot and --

PETER
JUACO!!!!

JUACO turning -- just in time to see --

PETER -- in motion -- throwing something -- THE OTHER FLASHBANG GRENADE! -- a high hard one -- coming straight at him and --

KABOOM!!! -- JUACO disappearing for a moment -- like a human flashbulb and --

DINO running past PETER -- FIRING as he comes --

JUACO in flames -- DINO'S ROUNDS chewing him up and --

PETER grabbing TERRY -- here's DINO -- they've got him and they're all coming back and --

CUT TO

LITTLE BIRD -- TOMAS and RICO -- pulling them in --

DINO
(scrambling on)
-- let's go! -- we're up --

THE PILOT dropping the hammer and they're rising and --

CUT TO

THE TWO HELICOPTERS -- back in formation -- leaving the mountains and --

CUT TO

INSIDE LITTLE BIRD. It's loud and crowded. A mix of elation and post-stress trauma. CALITRI in shock, slumped on the floor behind the cockpit. DINO reaching over him, trying to get something from THE PILOT --

PILOT

-- look behind the seat there --
there's a toolbox, see it? --

CARLOS and RICO are way pumped up. Laughing and goofing. TOMAS is sore -- pulling off his Kevlar vest -- a big chunk of near-death spattered there to think about.

WAY IN THE BACK

TERRY is just exhausted. Winded. Flushed. Too old for this. Sucking down water. Sweat just pouring off him. Looking up, and --

PETER staring. Filthy and ragged. But smiling.

PETER

(over the rotors)
Who are you?

TERRY

Terry Thorne...
(his hand)
...nice to meet you.

DINO with bolt cutters -- climbing back over TOMAS -- kneeling down by PETER -- pulling the chain away and --

PETER

How's my wife? Is my wife okay?

DINO ain't looking up. Not for this.

TERRY

She's great. She missed you.
She's waiting for you.

PETER smiles. DINO coming up with the chain. TERRY wiping at some shit still caught in his eye, as we --

PILOT

(calling back)
Hey! -- Hey, check it out...

WAY OUT THERE

PAST THE BIG VALLEY -- huge flames and smoke rising over the greenery -- some massive point of destruction --

ANGLE BACK TO

DINO -- TERRY - ALL OF THEM -- at the open bay door --

DINO

Oh, baby...

(to Terry)

We're in the gumbo now, dude.

PETER

What is that?

TERRY

That used to be the pipeline.

CUT TO

A FUNKY AIRFIELD. ALICE standing with SANDRO beside the Jeep. AN AMBULANCE and some other vehicles parked off to the side. ITALIANS gathered here -- CALITRI'S PEOPLE -- a couple sons -- some Embassy types -- all eyes on --

LITTLE BIRD lowering to the tarmac. ROTORS slowing -- DINO off first -- helping CALITRI over the skids --

ITALIANS running out -- tears before they get there --

PETER -- there he is -- looking around -- there she is --

ALICE running toward him -- PETER limping out to meet her -- arms open -- gathering her in ----

PETER

-- I missed you so much --

ALICE

-- I know -- me too --

PETER

-- I can't even --

ALICE

-- don't -- not now -- just --

CUT TO

TERRY on the tarmac. Muscling up his pack. Watching ALICE and PETER cling to each other. How she holds him. How they comfort each other. How they fit.

DINO

You all right?

Startled, he turns. DINO as sympathetic as he gets.

TERRY

Sure.

DINO

Rico's getting the van. We'll
clean up at the safe house.

(gently)
We can't hang.

TERRY nods. Got it.

CUT TO

SANDRO helping PETER to the jeep and --

CUT TO

ALICE walking toward TERRY. Behind him, A VAN whipping
up beside the chopper -- TOMAS and CARLOS off-loading
gear as fast as they can.

TERRY

We did it.

ALICE

You did it.

THE AMBULANCE -- the ITALIANS -- they're leaving --

ALICE

What's going on?

TERRY

You gotta get going.

ALICE

What?

TERRY

We're all gonna be very unpopular
around here in the near future.

ALICE

Jesus...

(thrown)

I thought we'd have a chance to...

TERRY

To what? Sit around and talk?
The three of us?

ALICE stunned. No answer for this.

TERRY

There's a six o'clock United flight to Dallas. You can just make it. There's a provisional passport for Peter in the Jeep. Noricia's gonna pack up the house and send it all up.

ALICE

Terry...

TERRY

His leg looks bad, but it can wait till Dallas.

ALICE

Terry...

TERRY

This is important.

(she's quiet)

No phone calls. No high fives. No champagne. You go straight to the airport and get on that plane.

ALICE

Where are you going?

TERRY

I don't know. Whatever's leaving first.

ALICE just reeling. Desperate. Out of time.

ALICE

Terry, you've been my rock. Tell me you know that. Tell me you know how much you mean to me.

TERRY

So we're even.

ALICE

We'll never be even. I've given you nothing.

TERRY

Alice, look...

(fighting to keep
it together--)

I forgot what it's like to want something, okay?

(his brave smile)

Believe me, we're even.

Here it is. The end of the trail. They both know it.

ALICE

You deserve better than this.

(trying so hard
not to cry)

And it will break my heart more
than anything if you don't know
how much I mean that.

He nods. That's all he's got left.

ALICE takes a breath. Pulls back her hair and turns for
the Jeep.

CUT TO

PETER inside the Jeep. Watching ALICE walk toward him.
The door is open.

PETER trades a look with TERRY. He knows. He doesn't
know. None of it matters now.

TERRY

(calling to Sandro)

Get them on that flight.

ALICE takes her seat. Pulls shut the door.

PETER taking her hand in his.

TERRY watching her turn back. One last look.

SANDRO drops it into gear. Pulling out sharply and --

FINALLY TO

TERRY standing there watching her go. Imploding. A whole
other life leaving him behind.

DINO

So here's the plan, okay?

(standing there
with two cold
beers in hand--)

The two of us, right? We do our
own shop. I run New York. You run
London. We meet once a month in
the Caymans to visit our money.

TERRY just watching the Jeep -- watching everything -- the
whole wide world getting smaller and smaller.

DINO

Strictly white glove. Lots of long lunches. No more frontlines. Sell some policies. Do a little consulting. Shit, man, think of it...

(cackling)

We'll give Ian a heart attack before we open the doors!

TERRY turns back. Takes the beer. Pops the top.

TERRY

I don't know if I want you visiting my money.

DINO smiles. The two of them standing there, sucking down those beers, as we --

FADE OUT

THE END